OVERVIEW

Peace.

pure can zealotry lead to "a covenant of peace, for only "He who makes peace in His Almighty. Only when intentions are whatsover other than to do the will of the Almighty. Only when intentions are entirely pure can zealotry lead to “a covenant of peace.”

INSIGHTS

The reason is as follows: Skeptics claim that Moshe couldn’t have been as great as the Torah’s description of him. For if had been so great, if he had really gone up to Heaven and spoken face-to-face with the Divine Presence, he should have merited eternal life. Instead of dying a human death, he should have ascended alive to Heaven like Chanoch and Eliyahu. So, claim the skeptics, the Torah of Moshe must be nothing more than a panegyric of self-glorification.

This claim, however, is laughable. For if Moshe had wanted to write himself a fictitious final scene, he could certainly have written something like “And Moshe ascended to Heaven alive in a fiery chariot.” That would have been a real curtain-closer!

But what does it say in the Torah? “And Moshe died...”

Can there be a stronger proof of the Torah’s truth than those few prosaic words: “And Moshe died...”? How easy it would have been for Moshe to write himself a glorious supernatural exit to rival the biggest Hollywood blockbuster — and add immeasurably to the luster of his memory!

However, the strength of this proof relies on one other factor — no-one knows Moshe’s burial place! Because, if it were known, then Moshe could never have claimed that he ascended to Heaven alive — his grave would be there for all to see.

Now we can understand the words of the Midrash: “Because of Moshe’s hesitation, no man knows his burial place.” If Moshe had stepped in and executed Zimri, had he stepped in and executed Zimri, had he "avenged the vengeance of Hashem,” necessarily he would have merited the reward that Pinchas in fact received — an eternal life without death.

But if Moshe had lived forever, he would never have able to confound the skeptics and prove the truth of the Torah by those few words “And Moshe died...”

CURTAIN CALL

“By avenging My Vengeance” (25:11)

When Zimri, prince of the tribe of Shimon, committed an act of gross indecency with Cozbi, princess of Moav, everyone including Moshe was frozen in disbelief. Everyone, that is, except Pinchas. Pinchas didn’t hesitate to avenge Hashem’s honor and execute the pair. The Midrash tells “that because of Moshe’s hesitation, no man knows the place of his burial.”

What can one thing possibly have to do with the other? Why did Moshe’s hesitation mean that his burial place is unknown?

H

ashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem’s “covenant of peace” as reward for his bold action — executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Cozbi. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the Midianim because they allured the Jewish People to sin.

Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each of the Tribes. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to the Bnei Yisrael. The number of the families of the Levites is recorded. The daughters of Tzlofchad file a claim with Moshe in the absence of a brother, they request their late father’s portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem what the ruling is in this case, and Hashem tells him that the daughters’ claim is just.

The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of an inheritance. Hashem tells Moshe to ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beis Hamikdash.

HELPING DADDY

“By avenging My vengeance...” (25:11)

“He expressed the anger that was Mine to show,” Rashi

When you ask your three-year old son to help you set the table for Shabbos, and he manfully steers the kiddush cup up onto the Shabbos table, you get a tremendous feeling of happiness. You could certainly don’t gain anything from his help, as he is not peace and doesn’t lead to peace. On the contrary, he Aviv and perfection — any peace which lacks completeness and perfection is not really peace. Just as there can only be one real peace — Hashem’s "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action — Moshe tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem’s “covenant of peace” as reward for his bold action — executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Cozbi. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the Midianim because they allured the Jewish People to sin.

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OVERVIEW

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One who honors the Sabbath by properly enjoying it, says Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Yossi (Shabbos 118) will be granted an estate without limits like the one which Hashem promised to Yaakov Avinu. Rabbi Yehuda in the name of the Sage Rav says that his reward will be the fulfillment of all his desires.

At first glance these two rewards may seem to differ. But they are actually complementary. A man who has a hundred dollars, says the Talmud, wants two hundred. Fulfillment of one’s desire only gives birth to another. In order for the Sabbath celebrator to be rewarded with the fulfillment of all his desires, he must be given an estate with no limits at all.

Dear Baruch,

My 14 year old daughter, Batsheva, does quite a bit of baby-sitting and occasionally sits for non-Jewish neighbors. What should she do if she is asked to warm up dinner or a pizza for the children? Would she be violating the laws of kashrut?

Thanks,

Dear Baruch,

She might be violating the Torah command “Don’t cook a kid in its mother’s milk.”

With one exception, it’s permitted to cook non-kosher food. That exception is milk and meat. “Don’t cook a kid in its mother’s milk” means the very act of cooking milk and meat is prohibited, even if you don’t plan to eat it.

This prohibition can apply even to milk and meat absorbed into cooking utensils. A pot owned by someone who doesn’t keep kosher probably has milk and meat absorbed into the substance of the pot. So even if the food itself contains no milk and meat, your daughter is forbidden to heat it up using the family’s cookware.

One solution (which should only be done with the parents’ permission) is that your daughter put the pot on the stove and supervise while one of the children lights the fire; or that she first light the fire and supervise while the child places the pot.

By the way, the prohibition of cooking milk and meat applies to meat from kosher-type animals only. So, for example, if the pizza has ham on it, your daughter may heat it in a clean microwave on a paper plate. Bon Appetite!

This brings to mind a story told of Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, zatzal. The Talmud says that a parent shouldn’t say, “I don’t want non-kosher food.” Rather he should say, “I want it, but what can I do...the Torah prohibits it!” Near Rabbi Kaminetzky’s yeshiva stood a pizza shop. When passing by, Rabbi Kaminetzky would sometimes whiff the enticing aroma of non-kosher pizza, smile, and say “Ahh, smells delicious!”

Sources:
- Exodus 34:26, Chullin 15b
- Rema in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 87:1
- Gilyon Maharsha 87:6
- Pri Megadim Yoreh Deah 105:2 in Mishbezetot Zohar

Dear Alan Goldman,

Bride and groom not seeing one another for a week before the wedding is a custom which should be honored if possible.

One reason offered for this custom is to ensure that no petty argument erupt during what is potentially a stressful period.

Another reason: The seven-day separation enhances the bride and groom’s endearment towards one another.

I asked two of Jerusalem’s noted Poskim about your situation. Under the circumstances, your son’s fiancée may attend the wedding, but she and her groom should avoid socializing with each other. Mazel Tov!

Sources:
- Rema Shulchan Aruch Even Haesser 55:1
- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 192:1

As the sun moves from east to west, Shabbat and Yom Tov occur first in Israel, and then in America. Which mitzva is observed first in New York, and then in Jerusalem?
**WHEN MORE IS LESS**

When the Sixteenth of Iyar, the day on which the *omer* meal offering was made in the Temple, fell on *Shabbos*, the barley required for producing the flour was cut on that holy day because the Torah ordered that the *Shabbos* prohibition against reaping be set aside in order to enable the offering. In deference to the *Shabbos*, ruled Rabbi Yishmael, only three seah measures of barley were cut to produce the flour instead of the five cut on a weekday in order to have more raw material to produce a more refined flour.

What will Rabbi Yishmael rule in the following case? A man is deathly ill and two figs can save his life. The *Shabbos* prohibition against picking fruit from a tree is certainly put aside for saving a life. But the only figs available are: 1) two separate figs each on its own stem, requiring two acts of removing fruit from the tree; and b) three figs growing from one stem and requiring only one act of picking from the tree.

Will Rabbi Yishmael’s rule of minimizing the amount of grain to be cut compel us here also opting for picking the two figs required so as not to pick an extra one?

The Talmud’s resolution is that you certainly will pick the stem with the three figs, for in that fashion you minimize the acts of removing fruit. Picking the two separate stems only increase the number of normally prohibited acts, unlike the *omer* situation in which less barley harvested results in less acts of creative work.

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**SIGN LANGUAGE**

During the Hasmonean dynasty in the Second Temple Era a civil war raged between two brothers, Hierkonys and Aristobalus, over who should rule the nation. The forces of Hierkonys which laid siege to Jerusalem where Aristobalus was entrenched destroyed all the grain fields around the city. When barley was needed for the *omer* meal offering on Pesach and wheat for the two loaves offering on Shavuos the Sages issued a call to the general community for help in locating some fields whose produce was still intact.

In both cases a mute answered the call and communicated, in sign language, the location of a surviving field. Mordechai, of Purim fame, was still alive and it was he who deciphered their cryptic messages with his great wisdom and directed the sages to the distant sites.

The reason for the destruction of the crops, explains Maharsha was to prevent those inside the city from performing the Temple service, just as they also prevented them from offering a lamb as the daily sacrifice by substituting a pig for the animal customarily provided. Loyalists therefore concealed the crops from the enemy in two remote fields whose very names indicated the element of concealment. The only ones in the city whom they could trust with this secret were individuals incapable of speech. It was these mutes who eventually revealed the hiding places known only to them and enabled the sacred service to continue in the Temple.

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1. Why was Pinchas not originally a Kohen?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. Why did Hashem attach two letters of His name to the name of each family?
4. The Torah states that Korach and his congregation became a sign. What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach’s children survive?
6. When the Torah enumerated the families of Asher, why was Serach bas Asher mentioned?
7. How long did it take to conquer and divide the Land?
8. How was the Land divided?
9. Where was Yocheved, the mother of Moshe, born?
10. Why did the decree to die in the midbar not apply to the women?
11. Why does the Torah change the order of the names of the daughters of Tzlofchad in different places?
12. Tzlofchad died because of his own sin. What was it?
13. Why didn’t Moshe know what to answer the daughters of Tzlofchad?
14. Moshe “put some of his glory” upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
15. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
16. When the Jewish People offer the daily *tamid* offering, what satisfaction does Hashem receive?
17. Goats are brought as *muaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
18. Why is Shavuos called *Yom HaBikkurim* (the day of the first fruits)?
19. What is the symbolic meaning of the 70 bullocks offered on Succos?
20. To whom did the lambs offered on Succos allude?

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**I Didn’t Know That!**

In verse 28:11, the Torah refers to “Your New Moons.” *Rosh Chodesh* is the only holiday that has the appellation “Your” because the Jewish People took it upon themselves to celebrate *Rosh Chodesh* as a festive time. • *Sforno*  

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**Bonus Question?**

The daughters of Tzlofchad told Moshe, “Our father... was not among the congregation that murmured against Hashem [the *meraglim*, or] the congregation of Korach (27:3).” Why did they point out that their father was not part of these groups before requesting his inheritance?  

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**Answers on back page**
1. 25:13 - The Kehuna was given to Aaron and his sons, and to their descendants who were born after they were anointed. Pinchas was born prior to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendent of Moav.
3. 26:5 - To testify that they were of pure descent.
4. 26:10 - They are a reminder that the Kehuna was given forever to Aaron and his descendants and that no non-Kohen should ever dispute this right.
5. 26:11 - Although they originally participated in the plot against Moshe, they repented and were spared.
6. 26:46 - Because she was still living.
7. 26:53 - Seven years to conquer and seven years to divide.
8. 26:54 - By lot and by the Urim and Tamim.
9. 26:59 - Between the walls at the entrance into Egypt.

**Answers to this Week’s Questions!**

10. 26:64 - In the incident of the meraglim only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter Eretz Yisrael.
11. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
12. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva said that he was the one who gathered sticks on Shabbos. Rabbi Shimon said that he was among those who attempted to enter Eretz Yisrael after the sin of the meraglim.
13. 27:5 - Moshe was being punished for speaking haughtily and saying to the judges, “A case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me” (Devarim 1:17). Also, because the daughters of Tzlofchad merited that a portion of the Torah should be written because of them.
14. 27:20 - That YeJoshua’s skin also shone. Moshe’s face beamed like the sun, YeJoshua’s face beamed like the moon.
15. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the western side of the slaughtering area, and the evening offering on the eastern side.
16. 28:8 - The satisfaction that the Jewish People obey His command.
17. 28:15 - For ritual defilement of the Sanctuary or its vessels, of which no one is cognizant.
18. 28:26 - Two loaves of bread were brought as an offering on Shavuos. They were the first of the wheat-offerings brought from the new grain.
19. 29:18 - They allude to the 70 nations of the world.
20. 29:18 - To the Jewish People.

**Recommended Reading List**

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**Bonus Answer!**

They knew that neither the meraglim nor the congregation of Korach had a portion in the Land. The share of the meraglim was divided between YeJoshua and Kalev. The portion of the congregation of Korach was divided among all the tribes. Therefore, they told Moshe that their father wasn’t part of either of these groups, and thus was deserving to inherit the Land.

*• Rashbam - Bava Basra 117b*

**HAFTORAH: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3**

“Thus says Hashem: ‘I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me to teach that they were equal in greatness. For had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert. That is the meaning of these verses: ‘I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown.’”

Once there was a sensitive lad, who spent all his days in study and refining his character. While still at a tender age, he was captured by bandits and forced to live amongst them. At first, he was repulsed by their coarseness, and clung to his original demeanor. However, as the weeks lengthened into years and no sign of rescue came, slowly but surely he began to degenerate to the same level of his captors, and eventually he was indistinguishable from them.

When the Jewish People are finally redeemed from exile, the nations that have oppressed them will be held to account, not just for their own misdeeds against Israel, but also for Israel’s transgressions, for had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert.

That is the meaning of these verses: ‘I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown.’

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