

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE BEST MERCHANDISE

“...from every man whose heart motivates him...” (25:2)

Question: “How do you make a small fortune in Israel?” Answer: “Come with a large fortune.” The current macroeconomic climate makes the very thought of starting a new company an act of a courageous soul. Private Israeli companies raised only half as much money in 2002 as they did in 2001, and a third fewer companies raised money at all. Seed stage companies seemed to be hardest hit, constituting only two percent (\$23 million) of the total funds raised in 2002, compared to five percent (\$95 million) in 2001 (IVC survey).

Against this background, the fact that there are still entrepreneurs out there with a willingness to start new companies and dream about bringing their innovative ideas to millions verges on the miraculous.

There is, however, one industry whose growth is never in doubt, whose dividends are totally safe, and whose entrepreneurs go to bed with a feeling of total security about their investments.

Many years ago, a group of business people were traveling on a ship. Amongst the other passengers was a *talmid chacham* (Torah scholar). Competitive as business people are apt to be, they were eager to compare their wares.

“What line of business are you in? Where are your goods?” they asked the *talmid chacham*.

“I cannot show them to you,” he replied. Coming from a world of what-you-see-is-what-you-get, this answer provoked their ridicule. In fact, the main pastime on the journey was mocking the scholar and telling him that he wouldn’t show them his wares, they were obviously of

inferior quality.

When the ship finally reached its destination, the Customs and Excise promptly confiscated the entire cargo. The merchants found themselves penniless.

The Jews amongst the merchants asked to be directed to the local Jewish community. They made their way to the *Beit Midrash* (study hall) and found a group of men engaged in a lively debate. The group was learning a difficult section of the gemara. Questions and suggestions were flying in all directions. The *talmid chacham*, who had accompanied the merchants to the shul, quickly ascertained the subject of the debate and joined the discussion. Within a few minutes, he had clarified all the difficulties. The group began to realize that there stood before them a man of great stature and learning. They brought him food and drink and gave him great honor. The president of the shul approached him and offered him a prominent position in the community.

Seeing what was happening, the business people now began to crowd around him and importune him to help them, “Please tell these Jews to provide for us as well. After all, we were on the same ship as you. We deserve their help.”

Suddenly they realized that the Torah is the best merchandise. Its worth is beyond pearls and it can never be stolen or impounded.

When two business people trade goods, each one remains with only one item. The loss of the first item was the price of the new one. When two *talmidei chachamim* meet and exchange ideas, however, they end up with twice what they started with. Each has passed on his own learning without loss, and has acquired the wisdom of the other.

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains

the table of showbreads, the *menorah*, and the golden altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the *kohen gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

ISRAEL Forever

THE GIVING PEOPLE

“The People of Israel give when solicited,” says the Midrash. “When solicited for the Golden Calf they gave and when solicited for the Sanctuary they gave.”

The contributions to the building of the Sanctuary described in the opening sentences of this week's Torah portion, say our Sages, served as an atonement for the contributions made for the creation of the Golden Calf.

Jews are, without a doubt, great givers. But for which causes?

When one compares the vast amount of Jewish money

contributed to all sorts of secular cultural causes and the sums that go for Jewish education, he can only heave a sigh about misdirected philanthropy. It seems absurd that in an age of such affluence *yeshivot*, seminaries and day schools in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world should be facing such a struggle for economic survival. No one is suggesting that Jewish gold today is going for the creation of an idolatrous calf. But should “golden museums”, “golden zoos” and “golden parks” take priority over the “Golden Sanctuary” which only Torah education can provide for Israel forever?

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

POMEGRANATE PIECE PEACE

A Moslem neighbor of the rabbi of the Jewish community in Djerba came to him with his tearful story. “My beloved wife,” he said, “insisted on paying a visit to her father's home against my wishes. I couldn't budge her but I demanded that the visit be a very brief one. If she would not be back home before I finished eating the pomegranate I had just started, I warned her, she would be divorced. This apparently upset her and she intentionally came back much later. According to Moslem law, she is no longer my wife and the truth is that I want her back.”

The rabbi, author of a commentary on *Mesechta*

Me'ilah called “*Me'il Yaakov*”, came up with a brilliant idea.

“It is well known,” he said, “that when one eats a pomegranate some of the pieces which make up its fruit fall to the floor. Go back home and search the floor under your table if there are any pieces there. If so, you did not complete eating that pomegranate and your divorce declaration is not binding.”

The fellow followed these instructions and indeed found some of the pomegranate seeds on the floor. The local Moslem kadi absolved him of his vow to divorce his wife and praised the brilliance of the rabbi whose fame subsequently spread throughout the entire region.

לע"נ
ר' יחזקאל יצחק בן ר' אליעזר ליפא ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A?

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do *techelet* and *argaman* share that *orot eilim m'adamim* do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that *shesh* and *orot techashim* do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "*tachash*" as "*sasgona*." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of: 1) oil 2) spices 3) jewels.
8. The *aron* was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the *keruvim* resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the *lechem haapanim* baked?
12. What does *miksha* mean?
13. What was the purpose of the *menorah's* *gevi'im* (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the *menorah*?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with *nechoshet*?
20. Which function did the copper *yeteidot* serve?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool, *orot eilim* are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; *shesh* and *orot techashim* are not.
5. 25:5 - The *tachash* delights (*sas*) in its multi-colors (*g'vanim*).
6. 25:5 - *Arazim* — cedars.
7. 25:6-7: 1) The oil was lit in the *menorah* and used for anointing. 2) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. 3) The precious stones were for the *ephod* and the *choshen*.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half *amot* plus a *tefach* plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the *kaporet*. (The *kaporet* was a *tefach* thick — see 25:17).
9. 25:16 - It testifies that Hashem commanded us to keep the *mitzvot*.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a *menorah* of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 *amot*.
18. 26:23 - 10 *amot*.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

A GROOM TO THE RESCUE

Years before they had the opportunity of praying at the grave of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov in the Ukrainian city of Uman, the Breslover Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael would gather on Rosh Hashana at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron. For 62 years the Jew who led the services was a Rabbi Kalmanovitz from Yerushalayim. His grandson, Rabbi Yisroel Gellis, relates a fascinating story about how he merited such a long life.

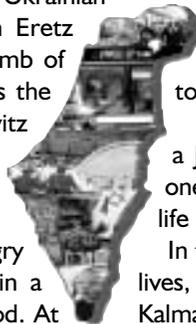
As a young man his grandfather and other hungry youths seized every opportunity to participate in a wedding where they could enjoy some of the food. At one particular wedding the *chatan* failed to show up. It turned out that he had discovered something about the

kallah which he had not been aware of and felt he had been duped.

The rav of Yerushalayim, Rabbi Shmuel Salant, who had been invited to serve as *mesader kiddushin*, turned to the young men surrounding him and cried:

"Have pity on a Jewish daughter! We cannot allow a Jewish daughter to suffer such shame! I promise any one of you who agrees to marry her that he will live a long life and see great-great-grandchildren!"

In those days when famine and disease cut short so many lives, such a blessing was not taken lightly. The young Kalmanovitz agreed to marry the abandoned *kallah* and together they built a happy, wholesome family and lived to see great-great-grandchildren.



TRIPLE TIERED TEARS

“**H**uman tears are an expression of suffering. But they can also be a source of ritual impurity if they are shed by someone who has the status of a *zav* whose liquids are spiritually contaminating.

To prove that tears are considered a liquid, the *gemara* cites the passage which describes the suffering inflicted by G-d on His people in exile as “You have given them to “drink” a *shlish* measure of tears.” (*Tehillim* 80:6)

What is meant by the use of the term *shlish*, which can mean either a third, the third or threefold?

In his commentary on *Tehillim* Rashi offers an explanation for each of these options.

One is that this is a reference to the Babylonian exile which lasted for only seventy years, a third of the 210-year exile in Egypt that is described in the first part of the above-mentioned passage as “You have fed them with the bread of tears.”

There is a second approach that this is a reference to the exile of the Hellenist Greeks which was the third of the four exiles which span Jewish history.

Finally, there is the Midrash which relates this passage to the three tears shed by Esav when he was told by his father Yitzchak that the blessings intended for him had been conferred by mistake upon his brother Yaakov. “He cried with a great and bitter cry” (*Bereishet* 27:34). He was then blessed to live by his sword and to have dominion over his brother and his descendants when they are not faithful to their G-d.

A final note on the historical hints contained in this passage was provided by Rabbi Samlai (*Sanhedrin* 97b) who attempted to calculate the duration of the current fourth exile. His target date has long passed as have those of other calculators throughout history, failures which caused our Sages to discourage calculations when *Mashiach* will arrive and to patiently look forward to his arrival.

• *Niddah* 55b

GRAVE MARKERS OF THE INVADERS

The Kutim in the time of the *Mishna* were considered genuine converts to Judaism who observed only the *mitzvot* which were explicit in the Written Law but not those of the Oral Law. These descendants of the heathens, who the Assyrian ruler Sancherib brought to Samaria (hence the name Samaritan) to replace the ten tribes of Israel he

had exiled, were eventually excluded from the Jewish nation when it was discovered that they had continued their idol worship and that their conversion was not genuine.

During the Mishnaic period the Kutim could only be trusted to testify about a matter of religious observance in which they themselves believed. Our *Mishna* (56b) lists as one of those matters the testimony they provided about the location of graves where humans were buried by placing a marker there. They could be relied on that an unmarked area was free of this ritual contamination.

But how, asks the *gemara*, could they be relied on in regard to marking graves when the obligation to do so is not Torah Law but of rabbinic authority which they did not recognize?

The answer given is that there is a passage in the prophecy of Yechezkel (39:15) which speaks of travelers in Eretz Yisrael who “will see the bone of a dead man and place a marker there”. This passage, which constituted Written Law for the Kutim, is part of the prophecy of Yechezkel about the purification of the Holy Land which will be carried out after G-d destroys the armies of Gog and Magog who will invade the country. There will be so many corpses that a massive effort will be made to locate and bury them. The markers will serve as an identification of a place where there are remains of the dead which will be buried in time by the *Anshei Tamid* (*ibid.* 39:14).

• *Niddah* 57a

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EVIL EYE AND EYE-BEADS

From: Erica

Dear Rabbi,

I was perusing your website and came across a question entitled "The Eyes Have It" regarding the "evil eye". At the very end, the Rabbi cautions against using non-common remedies, as they may be witchcraft. My question is this: Is the little clear marble-looking ball with the black dot in the middle a type of protection that is generally accepted by Jews? I'm not certain what it's called, but it's available on a bracelet with several of the little marble-looking "eyes" and can be had in just about any color. I would really appreciate your help and insight into this. Thank you very much for your time.

Dear Erica,

The myriad variations of the eye-bead, literally found in any shape, size, color and material is generally accepted by Jews (although blue, green or turquoise eye-beads strung on necklaces or bracelets is most common). The same applies to the other common evil eye 'antidote' mentioned in that article, namely the five-fingered *chamsa* hand. This does not mean that Torah sources consider these amulets to really protect against the evil eye, but it seems that the Torah does not categorically prohibit them either. As far as I know, no source encourages using these

'charms', yet their use was and is very common and no Rabbis seem to object.

I can only conjecture as to why these symbols are used: The verse states, "A charming son is Joseph, a son charming 'to the eye' (*alei ayin*); women alighted the wall to see him" (Gen. 49:22). The Talmud (Berachot 20a) quotes Rabbi Yochanan as saying "I am a descendant of Joseph over whom the evil eye had no control", since *alei ayin* can also mean 'above' the eye. Rabbi Yosi said, "Just as fish in the sea are covered with water and protected from the evil eye, so too the descendants of Joseph (who are said to multiply like fish) are protected from the evil eye". Perhaps the eye-bead (which incidentally resembles a big, wide eye of a fish) is meant to recall our being above/covered from the evil eye.

Similarly, the *chamsa* may intend to recall certain allegorical references in the Torah to the hand. The verse "Your right hand is glorious in power, Your right hand has dashed the enemy" (Ex. 15:6) symbolizes strength and protection. "For the Lord has placed his hand on His throne" (Ex. 17:16) symbolizes an oath. Fusing these two verses, the hand represents G-d's eternal commitment to protect us from our enemies. In addition, the *chamsa* is usually an open hand that symbolizes generosity as in "You open your hand and provide all living creatures their needs" (Psalms 145:16). Also, the five fingers of an open palm are associated with blessing: "And Aaron lifted his hands to the people and blessed them" (Lev. 9:22). Accordingly, displaying the open palm may signify our faith in G-d's benevolence and bounty.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

RESPONSE TO APPLICANTS

Question: As the head of a well-known educational institution I frequently receive CVs from people seeking employment. Since we are fully staffed I cannot even consider the request but feel sorry for the applicant. I vacillate between ignoring the request and responding in the negative. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: When someone sends you their CV it means that they have invested some degree of effort – and much hope. Failure to respond at all leaves them with the discouraging

impression that you have no regard for their qualifications.

You should therefore take the trouble to respond that you regret that at the moment you are not hiring new personnel. If you are truly impressed with the applicant's qualifications but have no opening for him, you might suggest another organization which might seek his services.

This is another one of those situations in which one must remember the classical dictum of the Sage Hillel: "Don't do to others what is hateful to you." None of us wants to be ignored when we put our best foot forward.

It's Magic, Not Just Entertainment!

Dear Ohrnet,

As avid readers of your fine publication, my family looks forward to it each week in our home in Rehovot. I was honored to see you featured (Yitro 5765) a synopsis of a recent 1,600 word article from the Jerusalem Post in their Health and Sciences section about my work. However, Dr. Eliezer Beeri of Alyn Rehabilitation Hospital in Jerusalem, founder of their Medical Humor Therapy Program would say, and dozens of other medical professionals I work in conjunction with throughout Eretz Yisroel, the real magic was lost in translation.

Far from my work merely being "entertaining the kids" what I am blessed with from H-shem is an ability to use His gifts for therapeutic ends. Just this week an OT and I worked together as 5 OT students observed me aiding a 3.5 year old boy with 3rd degree burns over the majority of his body achieve the medical goals set for him. By using techniques I created over ten years ago at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and continually refining them, this little boy was able to accomplish fine and gross motor objectives as well as perceptive, tactile and cognitive skills. All this while moving his body in positions which are essential to thwart lifelong damaging effects from his severe injuries. Additionally, my use of music, magic tricks, balloon twisting, play and game therapy are of no less import to battle against burnout of staff when I am in

wards ranging from ICU to rehab.

My lectures and workshops before nursing, medical and social work students to teach them how to use some of my skills for adults as well as children have been greatly accepted from Tzfat to Tel Aviv and are entitled "HaKesem Sh'BeKeshet" or "The Magic of Connecting with People." Now is not the place for the halachic aspects of what I do, but suffice it to say I have received da'as Tora from, shlita, HaRav Dovid Feinstein, HaRav Pinchas Scheinberg, HaRav Shmuel Eliezer Stern of HaRav Wozner's beis din and our Rov, Dovid Stein of Beit Chatam.

A year and a half ago an LA based filmmaker glued himself to me for two weeks and captured footage and interviews of what I do and how I interact with people in my efforts to effect tikun olam/Repairing the World. His work is now a full length documentary film. Although I have not seen it, we hope it is a Kiddush H-shem... We wish you and your readers only success and health as we all strive to improve the world around us!

• *Michael Tulkoff*

A Grandson's Gratitude

I would like to thank Rabbi Weinbach for including my grandfather's story (Mendel Beilis) in his last article.

• *Jay Beilis*

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