

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYAKHEL · 24 ADAR I 5768 · MAR. 1 2008 · VOL. 15 NO. 22

PARSHA INSIGHTS

My HERO

“Every man whose heart inspired him... and everyone whose spirit motivates him.” (35:21)

In this week’s Torah portion, the phrase “motivation of the heart” appears numerous times. The building of the Mishkan showed a great outpouring of love for G-d. Loving G-d isn’t easy. It’s difficult to love a non-physical non-spiritual Entity about Whom ultimately we can know nothing.

How does one arrive at a love of G-d?

The book called *Duties of the Heart* tells us that the most powerful way to come to love G-d is “absolute awe of G-d, profound dread and fear of His presence and His commandments, and keeping in mind always that He observes your secret and your open life, your inner and your outer self.”

At first glance, these words seem more appropriate to fearing G-d than loving Him. How does dread, fear, and awe, lead to love?

Everyone has a hero. Could be your hero can throw a spiral pass from the fifty yard line, or has the best bowling average of anyone this century; or it could be your hero’s fingers fly over the fret board of an electric guitar like a dervish, or whose interpretation of Hamlet left an indelible impression on you as a teenager.

Everyone has a hero.

Now, imagine your hero calls you up out of the blue and invites you for lunch. “What, me?” The palpitations

start in your chest. You stutter, trying to keep your composure, your mind is racing, your heartbeat getting quicker and quicker, “I can’t believe it!” you think to yourself.

Can you think of anything more exciting than that? What if your hero wants to be your friend? You’d *flip out*. You’d fall through the floor.

When someone is our hero, when we think someone is important, we are in fear of them; our respect and awe express how much love we have for them. We don’t need presents from them; we don’t want anything more from them than just to be around them, to be close to them.

In the words of our Sages, that’s called “love which does not ‘hang’ on anything.” We love that person because we think the world of them, and because we think the world of them, we are in fear and trembling of them. We don’t want to put a foot wrong that they might think less of us.

When we fear G-d, when we are awe-struck by His Majesty, it means He is our Hero.

• Source: *The Duties of the Heart, The Gate of Love of G-d, Chapter 3*

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts *Bnei Yisrael* to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the *menorah* and for anointing. The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the *Kohen Gadol's* breastplate and *ephod*. G-d appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen. *Bnei Yisrael* contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers

were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door. Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls. Betzalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold. On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other. The menorah and the table with the showbreads were also of gold. Two altars were made: A small incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

ISRAEL Forever

AN ECHO OF EQUALITY

One of the unattractive features of human society is ethnic discrimination, and Israel is hardly an exception.

The Torah view of equality finds expression in this week's Torah portion. In the very same sentence the two architects of the Mishkan Sanctuary are mentioned – Betzalel and Oholiav. The former is a member of the Tribe of Yehuda, one of the leading tribes, while the

other is a member of the Tribe of Dan, which is descended from one of the handmaids whom Yaakov married. Rashi points out that this equating of the two is an expression of what Iyov (34:19) described as G-d not discriminating between the prosperous and the poor.

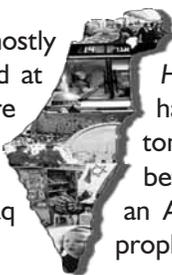
It is hoped that this will serve as an inspiration to all Jews in Israel to strive for an end to ethnic discrimination and thus develop a healthier Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

MASH'HAD – TOMB OF PROPHET YONAH

The Prophet Yonah is familiar to us mostly because the entire Book of Yonah is read at the Mincha service on Yom Kippur. Where he is buried is a matter of dispute with sites as varied as Zippori, Kfar Kanah, Hebron, Halhul, Kfar Azza, Tiberias, Ashdod and Mosul in Iraq mentioned as possibilities.



Rabbi Chayim ben Altar, author of the *Ohr Hachayim* commentary on Chumash, is reported to have said that when he lived in Peki'in he visited the tomb of Yonah in Kfar Mash'had. This village lies between the Beit Rimon junction and Nazareth and an Arab mosque marks the assumed location of the prophet's tomb.

לע"נ

ר' חיים מנחם בן ר' ישראל ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. On which day did Moshe assemble the Jewish People?
2. Why is the prohibition against doing work on Shabbat written prior to the instruction for building the Mishkan?
3. Why does the Torah specify the particular prohibition of lighting a fire on Shabbat right after it had already noted the general prohibition of doing work on Shabbat?
4. What function did the “*yitdot hamishkan*” serve?
5. What function did the “*bigdei hasrad*” serve?
6. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat’s hair?
7. Why were the *Nesi'im* last to contribute to the building of the Mishkan? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with their actions?
8. Who does the Torah identify as the primary builders of the Mishkan? From which tribes were they?
9. What time of day did the people bring their daily contributions for the construction of the Mishkan?
10. For what was the woven goat’s hair used?
11. What image was woven into the *parochet*?
12. Why does the Torah attribute the building of the *aron* to Betzalel?
13. Where were the sculptured *cheruvim* located?
14. How many lamps did the *menorah* have?
15. Of what materials was the *mizbe'ach haketoret* composed?
16. Of what material was the *mizbe'ach ha'olah* composed?
17. The *kiyor* was made from copper mirrors. What function did these mirrors serve in Egypt?
18. How did the *kiyor* promote peace?
19. The *kiyor* was made from the mirrors of the women who were crowding at the entrance to the *Ohel Mo'ed*. Why were the women crowding there?
20. Of what material were the “*yitdot hamishkan*” constructed?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 35:1 - The day after *Yom Kippur*.
2. 35:2 - To emphasize that the building of the Mishkan doesn’t supersede the laws of Shabbat.
3. 35:3 - There are two opinions: One opinion is to teach that igniting a fire on Shabbat is punishable by lashes as opposed to other “*melachot*” which are punishable by death. The other opinion is to teach that violation of numerous “*melachot*” at one time requires a separate atonement for each violation.
4. 35:18 - The edges of the curtains were fastened to them. These were inserted in the ground so the curtains would not move in the wind.
5. 35:19 - They covered the *aron*, the *shulchan*, the *menorah*, and the *mizbachot* when they were packed for transport.
6. 35:26 - It was spun directly from off the backs of the goats.
7. 35:27 - The *Nesi'im* reasoned that they would first let the people contribute materials needed for the Mishkan and then they would contribute what was lacking. The Torah shows its dissatisfaction by deleting a letter from their title.
8. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from the tribe of Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan.
9. 36:3 - Morning.
10. 36:14 - It was made into curtains to be draped over the Mishkan.
11. 36:35 - *Cherubim*. (See Rashi 26:31)
12. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone else.
13. 37:7 - On the two extremities of the *kaporet* (cover of the *aron*).
14. 37:23 - Seven.
15. 37:25,26 - Wood overlaid with gold.
16. 38:1-2 - Wood overlaid with copper.
17. 38:8 - These mirrors aided in the proliferation of the Jewish People. The Jewish women in Egypt would look in the mirrors so as to awaken the affections of their husbands who were exhausted by their slave labor.
18. 38:8 - Its waters helped a woman accused of adultery to prove her innocence.
19. 38:8 - To donate to the Mishkan.
20. 38:20 - Copper.

- Whether divorce is considered passive silence towards the wife's vow or an affirmation of such
- Preemptive nullification of vows by father or husband-to-be
- Whether hearing the vow is necessary for nullification and whether an agent can effect nullification
- Simultaneous nullification of vows of two wives
- The connection between the husband's obligation of support and his power of vow nullification
- Whether the *yivamah's* vows can be nullified by the *yavam* before he marries her
- Nullification of future vows
- The great debate between Rabbi Eliezer and the other Sages in regard to *kal vechomer*
- How much time does the husband have for nullification of his wife's vow
- Nullification of vows on Shabbat or at night
- The meaning of the silence of the Sage Rav
- Differences between nullification of the Sage and that of the husband
- Qualification needed for nullification by Sages

TWO SIDES OF SILENCE

The great debate among the Talmudic Sages as to whether nullification of vows could be conducted at night led to an interesting incident revolving around silence.

Rabbi Abba quoted Rabbi Huna as stating in the name of the Sage Rav that such nullification could take place at night. He then asked Rabbi Huna if he had actually heard Rav issue such a ruling. Rabbi Huna's reply was that he

had stated such a ruling in front of Rav, whose reaction was silence. Rabbi Abba then asked him whether Rav's silence was an expression of acquiescence like one who offers a complimentary toast to another over a glass of wine, or was it a sign of rejecting Rabbi Huna's position.

It was only the testimony of Rabbi Ika bar Avin that Rav once nullified the vow of the Sage Rabbah at night which served as a resolution of this question of how to view the silence of Rav.

• *Nedarim 77a*

What the SAGES Say

"Whoever makes a vow - even if he fulfills it - is considered a sinner."

• *Rabbi Dimi - Nedarim 77b*

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MARK OF WISDOM

From: Mark in a Yeshiva

Dear Rabbi,

I am in a yeshiva trying to learn as much as I can to catch up on years of not having known much about Judaism. However, I'm finding it very difficult, and even frustrating, that I'm not making as much progress as I'd like to. This really upsets me sometimes to the point that I literally cry to G-d. Other guys don't seem to take their learning too seriously in general, and they criticize me for getting upset about my own learning. But I feel like I try and try but often just don't understand the complexity of the gemara, or if I do understand, I'll forget it the next day. Please give me some guidance on how to approach this problem. Thanks in advance.

Dear Mark,

I understand exactly how you feel. Many people have been, and are in, a similar position. However, the first thing I want you to realize and keep in mind is that the very fact that you take your learning so seriously and emotionally is a very good thing if you channel it properly. By that I mean to say you're really on the mark as far as your approach is concerned. You just have to channel your drive in a positive way, maintaining a state of joy that you have gotten to where you are, and then keep going forward. I'm sure if you look back at who, what and where you were not too long ago compared to who you are now, you'll see you've made tremendous progress. It's slow, arduous work, but you've accomplished a lot, and if you keep trying and persevere, you'll accomplish a lot more.

It's very important to remember that we don't make ourselves smart, nor do we make ourselves understand. We see this from such verses as: "The wise of heart who I have filled with the spirit of wisdom" (Ex. 28:3) and "in the heart of the wise I have placed wisdom" (31:6). Wisdom and understanding, particularly in spiritual matters, are gifts from G-d to those who merit it. How does one merit it? By doing just what you describe about yourself: sincerely and humbly beseeching G-d.

In fact, you're in good company. In I Kings 3, G-d addresses Solomon, offering to grant him whatever his heart desires. After recalling the great kindness G-d performed for his father David and himself, Solomon humbly admits his inadequacy to lead such a great nation and therefore requests: "Give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and bad". This finds favor in G-d's eyes who responds, "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life; neither have you asked riches for yourself...but have asked for understanding to discern judgment...I have given you a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like

you before you, nor after you shall any arise like you. And I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like you all your days. And if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David did, then I will also lengthen your days."

We see from this that Solomon merited wisdom and understanding only because his desire for it was even greater than for wealth and long life. This is what is meant by Rambam when he writes, "For the wise and those who seek wisdom, life without Torah learning is like death" (*Hilchot Rotzeach* 7).

Joshua offers another inspiring example. Ramban writes that the spies sent by Moses to investigate the Land were enumerated in decreasing importance and greatness (they were all righteous at that time). Joshua was listed fifth. Furthermore, the spies were all "leaders of fifty" which means that, of a people who numbered 600,000, there were 6000 "leaders of hundreds" and 600 "leaders of thousands" that were greater than them. If Joshua was in place 6605, how did he come to lead after Moses?

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights, Rashi notes that Joshua pitched a tent at the bottom of the Mount preparing for his return. Why? In order that he could start learning Torah from Moses as soon as he came down. That means he left his family and the people for 40 days, all for the purpose of saving the time it would take for Moses to walk from the base of the Mount to the camp to start learning. Joshua may not have been the most intelligent or greatest of his peers, but what differentiated him from the others was his desire and effort to be. He thereby fashioned within himself a wise heart which G-d imbued with intelligence and understanding.

One of the great rabbis of pre-WWI Europe, Rabbi Izel "Charif" (meaning sharp) wanted the best Torah scholar for his daughter. He went to the yeshiva in Voloshzin where the best and brightest boys from throughout Europe studied. There, he posed a most difficult question announcing that the one who solved it would be given his daughter's hand in marriage. The boys worked fervently around the clock, but to no avail. None were able to solve the problem. The rabbi left the yeshiva empty handed. After having set out on the road, he heard someone shouting and running after his carriage. Panting, the boy said, "Rabbi, the answer." Rabbi Izel asked, "Do you have the answer?" "No, but I must know, Rabbi, what's the answer?"

The rabbi's face lit up! "You're the one I choose for my daughter. Neither honor nor reward drove you after me, but the sheer love of Torah and a burning desire to understand it is what distinguishes you from the rest." Rabbi Izel then revealed the answer to his new son-in-law-to-be, Rabbi Yosef Shluffer.

You're on the mark, Mark. Keep trying and keep crying. Fashion within yourself a heart of wisdom, and may G-d infuse it with the spirit of understanding.

BITING FINGERNAILS IN PUBLIC

Question: I have a friend who has a nervous habit of biting his fingernails and he often does it in front of me or others. It seems to be rather unaesthetic and I wonder if I should call it to his attention. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: First of all you must understand that biting fingernails is a fairly widespread form of releasing tension, eminently preferable to smoking cigarettes or imbibing liquor.

As regards aesthetics bear in mind what the Talmud (Mesechta Mo'ed Katan 18a) tells us about Rabbi Yochanan who bit his nails in the Beit Midrash during Chol Hamo'ed. One of the halachic conclusions reached by the *gemara* based on his action is that it is not considered unaesthetic to bite one's nails in public.

The only problem which nail-biters face is what to do with the nails. Since discarded nails are a threat to the health of a pregnant woman it is forbidden to cast them in a place where such a woman may pass. Rabbi Yochanan's action took place in a *Beit Midrash* that women never entered. Some nail-biters solve this problem by simply chewing and swallowing their nails while others restrict their nail-biting to areas such as the one mentioned in the Rabbi Yochanan precedent.

In conclusion there is no need for you to say anything to your friend and if his behavior offends your sensitivities, look the other way.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

PLAYING MY SONG

“**H**arei Yehuda” is the name of an album dedicated to the music of Yehuda Gilden and serves as a heartwarming example of what Jews are prepared to do for one another.

A gifted pianist, composer and vocalist, Yehuda spent several years at Yeshivat Ohr Somayach before returning to his native Toronto with his family. He quickly became a fixture of Toronto's Jewish music scene and remained so for over twenty years, entertaining at happy occasions and teaching Jewish music to thousands of local children.

Several years ago he was stricken with Parkinson's dis-

ease and had to abandon his regular activities. In the summer of 2006 his friends and co-workers in the field of Jewish music initiated a project to help Yehuda help himself. Some of the top names in Jewish music contributed their efforts to recording Yehuda's compositions. The magnificent album they produced includes a 19-minute long video documentary describing how all of this was accomplished. Everyone who purchases “Harei Yehuda” is in for a special musical treat and a heartwarming exposure to Jewish camaraderie.

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