

OHR NET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

LATEST NEWS ON THE PEACE PROCESS...

"My covenant of peace." (25:12)

I just finished reading an interesting book about a young Muslim, born and bred in "England's fair and pleasant land," who becomes a virulent Islamist and then does "teshuva," and reverts to being a spiritual Moslem as opposed to a political one — i.e. dedicated to removing Israel from the map by peaceful means.

The overwhelming conclusion of the book is that not everyone wants peace.

Most of the world, however, wants to sit under its fig tree, secure that no one will come and take away their family and their money. Almost everyone wants peace and yet since the beginning of time, peace has been elusive and often illusory.

The Hebrew greeting *Shalom* is much more than a conventional method of address. The Talmud tells us that it is forbidden to wish someone *Shalom* in a bathhouse because *Shalom* is the name of G-d and a bathhouse is not a fitting place to utter G-d's name.

In the story of Ruth, when Boaz comes from *Beit Lechem*, he greets the harvesters by using the name of G-d. From here we learn that a Jew may use the name of G-d as a greeting and it is not considered to be taking the Name of Heaven in vain. In fact, there is an opinion that we are *obligated* to greet each other with G-d's name by saying "*Shalom*."

Why should we be obliged to greet each other using G-d's name, by saying *Shalom*? What's wrong with "Good Morning!" or "Have a nice day!"?

When we greet someone with *Shalom*, we are blessing them that they should reach their perfection.

This world contains many wonderful things: truth, kindness, love, mercy — but perfection isn't one of them. Perfection and completion are beyond the scope of this world, as it says, "*He who makes peace in His high places,*

He will make bestow peace on us and upon all Israel." True peace comes from above and beyond this world. This world is created lacking; that's the way it's meant to be. This world strives to arrive somewhere that is beyond itself to find its completion.

The word for the 'Earth' in Hebrew is *aretz*, which comes from the root *rutz*, 'to run'. This world is always "running", moving towards its completion. However its completion, its *shleimut*, can come only from above. Similarly, *aretz* is connected to the noun *ratzon*, meaning "will" or "desire." This is a world of striving, or wanting, but not of arriving.

The word for 'Heaven' in Hebrew is *shamayim*, from the root *sham*, which means 'there'. In other words, this world is always 'running', 'striving' to be 'there', outside and beyond itself.

This is why G-d's name is *Shalom*. G-d is the Perfection of all the lacking of this world. That is why, of all words, *Shalom* is His name. He is the Perfection of everything this world lacks. Everything, every single thing in this world finds its perfection, its fulfillment, its completion, in Him. It's not here. It's above. It's 'there'.

That's why we wish people "*Shabbat Shalom!*" Shabbat is the completion of the creation, its purpose and its fulfillment. When we say "*Shabbat Shalom!*" we bless each other that Shabbat itself should be *shalom*, that it should be the completion of all our lacking in this world to the greatest possible extent. For Shabbat is 1/60th of the Future World. Shabbat itself is *shalom*. Shabbat represents the 'there-and-then' in the 'here-and-now'.

The purpose of Shabbat is to bring the whole world to *Shalom*, which is the name of G-d, since He is the completion of all that is lacking in this world.

That's the real peace process.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive G-d's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action - executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. G-d commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites who lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. G-d instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the Levites' families is recorded. Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with

Moshe: In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks G-d for the ruling, and G-d tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance. G-d tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks G-d to designate the subsequent leader, and G-d selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.

ISRAEL Forever

IN SEARCH OF LEADERSHIP

The painful situation in Israel as a result of the public's disappointment with its political leadership recalls the formula for true leadership mentioned in this week's Torah portion.

When Moshe appeals to G-d to appoint a successor he lists a few qualifications for leadership, concluding with the candidate's ability to "lead them out and bring them in". On the surface this seems to be a reference to the

leader's military ability. Rashi, however, comments that this means "he will lead them out through his merits and will bring them in through his merits".

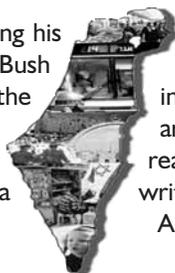
A true leader must have the merits of uncompromising honesty and morality in order to successfully lead his people. Only then can he be deserving of the Heavenly assistance that is an indispensable factor in guaranteeing the security of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

A CUE FOR THE PRESIDENT?

In his historic address to the Israeli Knesset during his recent visit to Israel, US President George W. Bush told a charming story about a British officer, on the eve of the withdrawal of the Mandate forces which set the stage for Israel's proclamation of independence, presenting a key to Zion Gate to a rabbi in the old City of Jerusalem.



This story actually appeared in this column in the Parshat Yitro issue (January 26). What is even more interesting is that in the same week that the president arrived I had just e-mailed the source of the story to a reader who asked permission to use it in a book he was writing.

A telepathic cue for President Bush?

לע"נ
מרת ביילא בת ר' דוד ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the *yud* and *heh* added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a “sign.” What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach’s children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov’s only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How long to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na’aman all have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad’s daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad’s daughters’ names?
14. Tzlofchad died for what transgression?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase “G-d of the spirits of all flesh”?
16. Moshe “put some of his glory” upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called *Yom Habikkurim*?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 25:13 - *Kehuna* (priesthood) was given to Aharon and his sons (not grandsons), and to any of their descendants born *after* they were anointed. Pinchas, Aharon’s grandson, was born *prior* to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
3. 26:5 - That the families were truly children of their tribe.
4. 26:10 - That *kehuna* was given forever to Aharon and his sons, and that no one should ever dispute this.
5. 26:11 - Because they repented.
6. 26:13,16,24,38,39,42 - Zerach, Ozni, Yashuv, Achiram, Shfufam, Shucham.
7. 26:46 - Serach bat Asher
8. 26:53 - Seven years. Seven years.
9. 26:55 - Two portions. That is, the four cousins merit four portions among them. These four portions are then split among them as if their fathers were inheriting them; *i.e.*, two portions to one father and two portions to the other father.
10. 26:24,56 - They came down to Mitzrayim in their mothers’ wombs.
11. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim*, only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. 27:1 - Love for *Eretz Yisrael*.
13. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
14. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva says that Tzlofchad gathered sticks on Shabbat. Rabbi Shimon says that Tzlofchad was one who tried to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
15. 27:16 - He was asking G-d, who knows the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person on that person’s level.
16. 27:20 - That Yehoshua’s face beamed like the moon.
17. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the west side of the slaughtering area and the afternoon offering on the east side.
18. 28:15 - For unnoticed ritual impurity of the Sanctuary or its vessels.
19. 28:26 - The Shavuot double-bread offering was the first wheat-offering made from the new crop.
20. 29:18 - The seventy nations.

- Whether the sea is considered a part of Eretz Yisrael
- What Surya has in common with Eretz Yisrael
- The slave's document of emancipation and entitlement
- The agent who became incompetent before delivery of get
- The rules common to get and emancipation document
- Whether the witnesses signing the document or those witnessing its delivery make it effective
- The status of a Kuttite in regard to testimony and *mitzvot* observance
- Documents executed in a gentile court
- Retracting instructions to deliver a get or emancipation document
- Helping one creditor at the expense of others
- The master's obligation to feed his slave and the husband's toward his wife
- Delivering a get or emancipation document after the husband or master has died
- The instructions of a person on his deathbed
- Transfer of money in irregular ways
- Responsibility of an agent delivering money

THE KISS OF SILENCE

“Like a kiss on the lips is something wisely said.” (*Mishlei* 24.26) This praise of wisdom by the wisest of men was the reaction of Rabbi Yossi to a halachic statement that he heard.

The comparison made by King Shlomo to a kiss has a number of interpretations.

On the simplest level it expresses the idea that one who says the right thing deserves to be kissed. Tosefot, however, favors the interpretation found in some of the Biblical commentaries. Rather than referring to a kiss given as a compliment to the one making the statement, the passage suggests that when one hears a convincing statement his upper lip “kisses” the lower one in a demonstration of silence, expressing acquiescence.

While in the case of Rabbi Yossi this was acquiescence with a halachic point, the context of the passage in *Mishlei*

suggests yet another sort of silent consent. Reproof is the subject of the preceding passage, and the kiss here refers to the reaction of one who hears words of reproof expressed in an effective manner.

In his commentary on *Mishlei*, Rabbi David Kimchi (RaDAK) thus explains the proper method of reproof based on these passages.

Flattering a wicked person that he is righteous will only encourage him in his mistaken path. Totally condemning him will be counterproductive for he will arrogantly insist that he is right. The right strategy is to praise him for the positive things about him while pointing out the shortcomings he needs to correct. His response then will be to close his lips, desist from an arrogant rebuttal and to even resolve to follow the counsel of the gentle reprover.

• *Gittin* 9a

What the SAGES Say

“If one seizes money from a debtor to benefit one creditor at the expense of other creditors, his collection is considered invalid.”

• *Rabbi Yochanan - Gittin* 11b

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SPIRITUAL ANATOMY

From: Steve in Boston

Dear Rabbi,

Is there an idea that the body is somehow connected to the mitzvot on a metaphysical plane? Of course we do the mitzvot with our bodies, and I imagine the Jewish belief is that the performance of the mitzvah affects the body in general, but is there any basis for the idea I seem to have heard that there is a direct relationship between specific commandments and specific body parts? Maybe it has something to do with the number of mitzvot? Thanks in advance for any thoughts on the subject.

Dear Steve,

There is definitely a relationship between the performance of *mitzvot* and their effect on the body. One of the meanings of the term “mitzvah” is related to the Hebrew word “tzevet” which means “connected”. The *mitzvot* are a way of connecting to G-d by performing His will. When we do this we bring out the latent power in the mitzvah originating from His will and draw the light and energy from His essence onto ourselves on both a spiritual and physical level.

Since the system was set up by G-d to work in this way, seemingly insignificant deeds can have a relatively non-proportional effect or outcome. Consider a system of pulleys or cogs where through the ingenuity of the network and interconnectedness of the parts, relatively small movements implemented on the system have major outputs. For example, a crane operator can effortlessly manipulate levers on one end of a system moving tons of weight on the other. So too, small acts of charity, tefillin, Shabbat candles etc. effect great outcomes in the spiritual worlds and all that blessing and goodness in turn affects the one who pulled the levers.

That having been said, the sources specifically link the number of *mitzvot* to the number of body parts of a person. Here a distinction is made between the positive commandments that are the “dos” and the prohibitions that are the “don’ts”. The idea is as follows: there are 613 *mitzvot* of which there are 248 dos and 365 don’ts. The 248 dos correspond to what our sources identify as the 248 limbs of the body, while the 365 don’ts correspond

to 365 sinews and ligaments. Clearly, there is a connection between the proactive dos and the limbs as instruments of activity, just as there is a connection between the prohibitive don’ts and the restrictive nature of the ligaments.

However, just as there is an organic, holistic relationship between active limbs and limiting sinews such that both seeming opposites are needed for productive movement, so is true regarding both commands and prohibitions. Consider movements of bones and muscle without the restrictive connective tissue. The body parts would just flop about and would not be able to perform any concerted, specific motion or task. It is the very restrictive nature of the tendons, then, which define the context within which action can occur.

On the human plane, we have drives that would propel us in many directions. Unrestricted, these drives lead to recklessness and harm. However, channeling them within the proper restrictive context leads to constructive, productive and beneficial results. This is the relationship between the dos and the don’ts in the Torah. Be fruitful and multiply – but in the proper context of marriage and its purity laws. Consume food – but with compassion for life and in proper measure. Earn a living – but morally and charitably. The list goes on and on and applies to literally everything we think, say or do.

I’ll conclude with an analogy. There’s no greater potential life-giving material than water. However, in order to harness that potential it has to be restricted, protected and preserved. Too much water can at once destroy and also be wasted. Because it’s so inherently valuable, it has to be guarded from misuse. Since it may be depleted it must be preserved. How is this accomplished? By storing it. Again, it is the very nature of the restrictive walls of the container, then, which enable the productive use of the water. Without those restrictive walls, the potent fluid would spill out in all directions and be wasted unproductively. But it is those very same restrictive walls that enable the water poured therein to be preserved and rise to full capacity.

This describes the nature of the relationship between the positive commandments and the prohibitions. Only by pouring our creative powers and energies into the context of Torah will our endeavors be preserved and productive, resulting in spiritual elevation and enabling us to realize our full potential.

A SILENT SICK VISIT

Question: I am interested in paying a *bikur cholim* sick visit to a friend in the hospital but I have been told that because of his condition I may well find him asleep. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: Your question has already been dealt with by one of the early commentaries. The *Tosefot HaRosh* (*Parshat Vayera*) draws a lesson from the sick visit paid by G-d to the Patriarch Avraham in which nothing was spoken. "This teaches us," he concludes, "that it is proper to visit the sick even if he will say nothing to him, such as in the case where

he finds him asleep and therefore leaves. The reason is that when he wakes up and is told that someone came to visit him he will be very pleased."

The question has also been raised as to whether there is a point in visiting someone who is in a deep coma who doctors say has no chance of recovery. Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, rav of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak, in his *Barchi Nafshi* on *Sefer Bereishet*, makes a strong case for making such a visit, and even cites a case in which someone who recovered after having been in a deep coma recalled something that was said to him in that state.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

A BUSMAN'S HOLINESS

When Ronnie Eliach, a driver of an Egged bus on the Ashdod – Bnei Brak route, conducted his routine check of the bus at the end of the trip, he noticed a black plastic bag which had been left behind by a passenger. Upon opening the bag, which looked like the kind one gets at the grocery store, he was shocked to see that it contained forty thousand dollars in cash!

Aware of his responsibility as a Jew to return a lost object to its owner, he contacted his supervisor, who put him in touch with the special advisor on transportation for the

observant community of Ashdod, Rabbi Moshe Radjuminsky. Only a short while later the latter received an urgent call from one of the Ashdod residents asking him to help locate a sum of money he left on the bus.

After the happy ending of the lost money being returned to the overjoyed loser, that gentleman went with his family to the Tel Aviv home of the honest driver to personally thank him for his holy deed. The Egged Company was very proud of its employee and awarded him a certificate of honor.

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