

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT TETZAVE-ZACHOR · 11 ADAR 5769 · MAR. 7, 2009 · VOL. 16 NO. 20

PARSHA INSIGHTS

EXPLETIVE DELETED

“Its sound shall be heard in the Sanctuary before G-d... so that he will not die.” (28:35)

Do you remember the term ‘expletive deleted’? Back in what used to be called the “good old days”, there used to be a ‘beep’ on the TV to cover up an offensive word or sentence.

The days of ‘expletive deleted’ seem rather quaint to contemporary perception. Nowadays, public speech has descended to a level where gross indecency hardly causes the raising of an eyebrow. What pours forth from the television most resembles a stream of untreated sewage. Nothing is considered offensive anymore, except maybe to those who are offended.

The standards of speech that the Torah requires of the Jew are of a different galaxy compared to today’s ‘standards’. A Jew is forbidden to speak badly of someone *even if what he is saying is true*, unless he has a permitted purpose in conveying such information.

The *Me’il* — the robe that the Kohen Gadol wore — atoned for the sin of evil speech: slander, gossip, lewdness.

The color of the robe was blue.

Just like the blue sea, which knows its bounds and keeps within them, just like the blue vault of the sky and all the planets move only within their predefined orbs, so too man must not diverge from his Divinely ordained purpose as a being who guards his tongue.

Bells were attached to the hem of the robe.

They rang whenever the Kohen Gadol walked. The sound of the bells was a reminder that

there are some words that should never be heard, that they need to be ‘deleted’ before they are ‘expleted.’

The standards of speech that the Torah requires are of a different galaxy...

• Sources: *Kli Yakar*

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

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the *menorah* in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *bigdei kehuna* (priestly garments): a breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon

and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the *Mishkan*. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

ISRAEL Forever

REMEMBER, DO NOT FORGET

Anti-Semitism is as old as the Jewish People. This Shabbat there will be heard in every synagogue a special reading of the Torah describing the first attempt to annihilate Jewry. But there is more than history in this account of Amalek's vicious attack on our ancestors. There is a command to always remember the hatred expressed in that attack and to wipe out every trace of Amalek once we have the ability to do so.

Remembering what Amalek did is not only important as

an assurance that we will not forget our mission to rid the world of this cancerous nation. It is also a reminder that the poisonous spirit of Amalek is to be found in all the nations that threaten the survival of our people. Our Sages tell us that when our ancestors became lax in their religious observance they became exposed to the danger of Amalek. This awareness of the connection between our spiritual state of being and our security should motivate everyone who wishes to see a secure 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

TVERIAH – A PURIM DILEMMA

Tveriah was a walled city when Yehoshua led the conquest of Eretz Yisrael. As such the reading of the Megillah should take place on the 15th day of Adar.

There is a problem, however, which was raised by our Sages (*Mesechta Megillah* 5b). Although the city had walls on three sides, the fourth unwalled side



faced Lake Kinneret. The question was whether the definition of a walled city was that it was completely blocked from the vision of outsiders, which would disqualify Tveriah, or whether it was protected from invaders, which would fit Tveriah as well.

Because of this unresolved question the Megillah was read in Tveriah on both the 14th and 15th days of Adar.

WISHING OUR READERS A HAPPY AND MEANINGFUL PURIM

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the *menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

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

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen*, *ephod*, *me'il*, *ketonet*, *mitznefet*, *avnet*, *tzitz*, and *michnasayim*.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants, 2) The court's ruling, 3) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* — the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn. 2) The *Kohen Gadol* must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet*, *avnet*, *migba'at*, and *michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of *kehuna*.

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TALMUDigest

BAVA KAMA 72 - 78

- Slaughtering a stolen animal in the *Beit Hamikdash*
- From when is a witness disqualified by *hazamah* considered an invalid witness
- The space of time between two statements which does not set them apart
- The witness who is contradicted before being disqualified through *hazamah*
- When a thief does not pay the additional fine for selling or slaughtering a stolen animal
- The thief who confesses his crime before witnesses appear to incriminate him
- Testimony that is invalid because it cannot be discredited
- Slaughtering a stolen animal that has been sanctified as a sacrifice
- Situations in which food contract ritual impurity from contact with others
- Is there a fine for selling a stolen animal for which slaughtering will not be fined
- The status of an animal born from crossbreeding in regard to sacrifice and a fine for selling or slaughtering
- Partial sale of a stolen animal or invalid slaughter of it

REPLACING THE LOST ETROG

A Jew borrows a very expensive etrog from his neighbor to fulfill the mitzvah of taking the four species on Succot. Before he has a chance to return it, it somehow gets lost and he must now compensate the owner with another etrog. But why should he be required to purchase a similarly expensive etrog if he can provide him with a perfectly kosher one that is not of the same quality but much cheaper?

This question was dealt with by two great halachic authorities in connection with our *gemara*. The Sage Rava rules that if someone set aside an ox for fulfillment of his vow

and that ox was stolen, the thief can replace it with a sheep and the victim cannot demand an ox because he wished to bring a sacrifice of greater quality. One opinion is that the case of the etrog is similar to this case and the ruling should be the same. A dissenting opinion is found, however, in the Responsa of Chacham Tzvi (Responsa 102). In the case of our *gemara*, he points out, the thief did not cause his victim any loss of money, while he did so in the case of the etrog. That expensive etrog had the potential of being sold for a high price, while an animal set aside for sacrifice is not for sale.

• *Bava Kama 78b*

What the SAGES Say

“Witnesses whose testimony is not vulnerable to exposure by other witnesses cannot be considered valid witnesses.”

• *Consensus of the Sages - Bava Kama 75b*

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PUERILE PURIM

From: Pamela in Portland, OR

Dear Rabbi,

I seem to remember some story about school children saving the day for Mordechai against Haman. Could you refresh my memory and explain what that was all about. I teach at a Jewish school and think my kids could relate to the involvement of children in the Purim story. Thanks in advance.

Dear Pamela,

It seems you are referring to the Midrash which relates that after the letters decreeing the destruction of the Jews were sealed and sent in Achashverosh's name, Haman and his cohorts rejoiced. They then saw Mordechai approach three school children, each of which he asked to recite a verse he'd learned (children, according to the Talmud, can be a source of prophetic information even after the destruction of the Temple and termination of true prophecy).

The first child replied by quoting "Have no fear of sudden dread, or of the calamity of the wicked when it comes" (Prov. 3:25). The second answered, "Take counsel [you enemies of the Jews] and it shall be nullified, speak a word and it does not transpire, for G-d is with us" (Is. 8:10). The third child cited a verse in which G-d says, "Until old age I am...I shall endure and I shall save" (Is. 46:4). After hearing these verses, Mordechai became very happy and began to laugh.

When Haman saw that Mordechai, who should have been mourning because of the decree, was actually jumping for joy, he became irate. "What have these children told you that has made you so happy?" Mordechai replied, "They have revealed to me that we need not fear your evil counsel which you have contrived against us because

G-d will rescue us from your evil designs." The enraged Haman retorted, "I'll show you. I shall start the slaughter with none other than these very children."

Of course, Haman's declaration against the children was never executed – he was. But what was the meaning of this exchange with the children and in what way did the verses they quoted prophetically reveal G-d's intention to save the Jews?

Mordechai realized that these three verses allude to the three wars that Amalek waged against Israel whom G-d delivered, and would deliver, from their archenemy. The first time Amalek attacked Israel they did so suddenly after the Jews departed from slavery in Egypt: "And they happened upon you while you were on your way" (Deut. 25:18). The verse quoted by the first child applies to this war, for it states: "Have no fear of sudden dread". The second time Amalek attacked, they plotted against Israel in disguise as Canaanites to trick and confuse the Jews' tactics and prayers. The verse quoted by the second child thus assures: "[Their] counsel shall be nullified".

The third attack of Amalek against the Jews was led by the Amalekite Haman. In the letter he composed in the name of Achashverosh to the nations he wrote that the time had come that this people could finally be destroyed. Their G-d, he claimed, had grown old. Just as He was not able to save His Temple from the onslaught of Nevuchadnetzar, so too could He no longer save His people from destruction. G-d's response to Haman's audacity was communicated through the verse quoted by the third child: "Until old age I am...I shall endure and I shall save."

Thus encouraged by the prophetic inspiration communicated through these pure and Jewishly-learned children, Mordechai led his people to a third victory over the forces of evil as described in the Megilla. May the Hamans of the world and their cohorts be eradicated for good and may we merit the final redemption speedily in our days. Amen.

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PREVENTING PURIM PRANKS

Question: With Purim coming up there seems to be a proliferation of youngsters storing firecrackers and other noisemakers to celebrate this special day in their strange way. Since many leading rabbis have banned this practice the question arises as to what action should be taken when we see youngsters about to set off an explosion. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: There is certainly no need to elaborate on why the rabbis have come out against this juvenile behavior that presents a danger both to the noisemaker and the people whom they shock. But what can you do to prevent

this?

The simplest thing to do is to confront the potential perpetrator and point out to him the harm that he may be doing to himself and others. If your efforts of persuasion prove to be unsuccessful, you should ask the youngster for his name and address so that you can report him to his parents.

Remember that even if you feel incapable of preventing the noisemaking nuisance, you have an obligation to try. Who knows, perhaps another Purim miracle will take place and you will succeed!

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

FEEDING THE CAT

When the rav of Kovna, Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, *zatzal*, went to a village across the river during the summer to enjoy some fresh air, he forgot something. This is why he was on the main street of the village early in the morning looking for someone to deliver a message to his home.

One young man agreed to take a letter from Rav Spektor across the river. He could not, however, resist

the temptation to read the letter and learn what urgent matter prompted his mission.

To his great surprise he discovered that the rabbi wrote that there was a cat that always visited the yard of his home, and he was in the practice of providing a dish of milk for its consumption. Since he was away he asked that someone take over this responsibility.

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The Pur and the Poor

A PURIM PERSPECTIVE ON PROSPERITY

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

“They therefore called these days Purim after the name of the Pur.” (Megillat Esther 9:26)

Who put the “Pur” into “Purim”? None other than that wicked Haman who tried to execute a “final solution to the Jewish problem.”

Bent on genocide this villain set about choosing a date which would be most suited for carrying out his holocaust. He cast a lot – *pur* in Hebrew – and the result was a day in the Hebrew month of Adar.

Our Sages note that Haman rejoiced when the month that came up in his lot for months was Adar because that was the month in which Moshe Rabbeinu passed away and therefore an unlucky one for the Jewish People. He was unaware, however, that it was also the very month in which Moshe was born!

The conflicting signals indicated in the casting of a *pur* can be seen as an outline for the entire drama of the Purim story. The spiritual decline of our ancestors in the days of Mordechai and Esther in a sense reflects the absence of the influence of Moshe and his teachings. The spiritual renaissance initiated by the leaders in their own days, which effected their salvation, is perhaps a mirror of the arrival of Moshe in the world.

There is an important lesson to be learned from this incident of Heaven dictating the outcome of Haman’s lot. The fate of the Jewish people is neither determined by their enemies nor is the timing of their troubles a matter of coincidence. A Divine plan writes history and every detail is perfectly orchestrated.

One of the *mitzvot* that was instituted in celebration of the Purim miracle is *matanot aniyim* – gifts to the poor. Many wise rationales have been offered for this particular mitzvah. In light of the above-mentioned lesson we may suggest that the Divine plan evident in regard to the economic situation of every individual reinforces our recogni-

tion of Heavenly control.

The realization that it is “G-d Who makes some people wealthy and some poor” is intensified when the rich seek out the poor on Purim in order to fulfill their obligation of giving to them. Our Sages have compared economics to a “rotating wheel” which can bring one down as well as bring him up. The giver must always view himself or his future generations as takers and therefore relate to those dependent on his generosity with compassion.

In a time of worldwide recession and massive unemployment the “rotating wheel” is fairly tangible. The perspective that must prevail at such a time is that such meltdowns are part of a Divine plan, which, like everything emanating from G-d, is for the ultimate good of its victims who are really beneficiaries.

Many soul-searching questions can be asked by people who have lost fortunes and jobs in the past year. Did they contribute as much to charitable causes as they could have? Is their momentary economic suffering a comparatively gentle form of atonement for sins which might otherwise have brought upon them illness or worse?

The conclusion of such soul-searching must be an appreciation of Heavenly control of human events for their ultimate good.

Jews in the time of the Purim miracle were lifted to great spiritual heights as a result of their arousal to repentance in the face of the specter of annihilation. In retrospect they viewed their temporary suffering as a blessing. So too must the lesson of the meeting of the rich and poor on Purim be a reminder that what appears to be a time of crisis will eventually be appreciated as a precious turning point in the spiritual state of every individual and the entire world.

A “Happy Purim and Prosperous Year” for all!

