

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TISA-PARA · 18 ADAR 5769 · MAR. 14, 2009 · VOL. 16 NO. 21

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### IN THE SHADOW OF G-D

*“See, I have called by name: Betzalel...” (31:2) — “And behold I have appointed with him Oholiav...” (31:6)*

**A** shadow on the ground. Itself without substance, ephemeral, yet it reveals the existence of something somewhere else.

Nothing is as insubstantial as a shadow, and yet the shadow is the silhouette of something that is beyond.

Faith is like a shadow.

The essence of a succa is its shade, its shadow, if you like; a succa that has more sun than shadow is invalid. Our Sages teach that when we sit in the succa we are sitting in “the shadow of faith.” The spiritual masters derived this phrase from a verse in the Song of Songs, “In His shadow I delighted and there I sat, and the fruit of His Torah was sweet to my palate.” (2:4)

We can experience closeness to G-d through tasting “the fruit of His Torah.” We can experience the sweetness of that Existence that is beyond, but, for the very reason that He is beyond, we can never see that Existence. When Moshe asked G-d to show him a revelation of that Existence, God replied, “You cannot see My face, for man cannot see Me and live.”

The name Betzalel means, “In the shadow of G-d.”

It was Betzalel who was responsible for the building of the Mishkan — the Ohel Mo’ed (Tent of Meeting). G-d used the letters of the aleph bet to create the heavens and the earth, and Betzalel’s particular gift was that he knew how to combine the letters of the aleph bet, the DNA of

creation, and create a microcosm of the universe. Interestingly, if you look at the name of Betzalel’s partner in the building of the Mishkan, Oholiav, you will see that it comprises the words *Oheli* — “My tent” — and “aleph Bet.” *Oheli* – aleph bet. It was as though G-d placed into Oholiav’s name “My tent, My Mishkan, is made of the aleph bet.”

This is why the Mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash were beautiful.

The Talmud says “if you never saw the Second Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple), you never saw a beautiful building in your life.” The Beit HaMikdash was called the “eye of the world.” The eye is a physical organ but it receives something that is about as non-physical as you can get: Light. The Beit Hamikdash was called “the eye of the world” because it was the portal for the Light. The Beit HaMikdash was the most beautiful building not because of its dimensions and proportions or its finishes but because it revealed the resting of the Divine Presence in this world.

Faith is like a shadow. Faith is the knowledge of something that you cannot see.

The nation that dwells in the shadow of faith proclaims that existence extends beyond the here-and-now, beyond what can be perceived by the five senses of man. Faith is something that takes place in the shade. In the shadow.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**M**oshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. G-d selects Betzalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy

everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

## ISRAEL Forever

### CALF AND COW

**B**oth the sin of the golden calf and the atonement for it find expression in the Torah portions that will be read in synagogues this Shabbat. While the regular weekly portion describes the sin of our ancestors in transferring their allegiance to a calf made of gold, the additional reading of *Parshat Para* describes the atonement for that sin through the ashes of the red cow.

Rashi, in his commentary on this atonement process, points out the correlation between the calf and the cow. One of the parallels is based on the Torah's requirement that the red cow used for atonement "be without blemish and upon which a yoke has not come" (*Bamidbar* 19:2).

Quoting the midrash of Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan, Rashi

writes that before they sinned our ancestors were without blemish and loyally wore the yoke of allegiance to G-d. The insistence on the red cow being without blemish and with no experience of a yoke was to bring home the message that when man begins to worship his own creation he becomes the victim of both imperfection and irresponsibility.

Our people's history is filled with "golden calves" – ideologies that were worshipped as a substitute for allegiance to Heaven – and the consequences were tragic. It is to be hoped that the correlation between calf and cow will arouse our nation to the need for atonement that will 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

### HAR HAMISHCHA – WHERE THE RED COW WAS BURNED

**A**s Jews throughout the world listen this Shabbat to the special Torah reading concerning the Red Cow (*Parshat Para*), it brings to mind the place where this animal was rendered to ashes which would be used for purification of those who became contaminated through contact with the dead.



This place is known as Har Hamishcha (Mount of Anointment) or Har Hazeitim (Mount of Olives). Both names refer to the olive trees that once grew on this mountain east of Yerushalayim, whose fruits supplied the high quality olive oil used for anointing a king or a *kohen gadol*.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How many “geira” are in a shekel?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
4. The Jews were counted after Yom Kippur and again after Pesach. Both times they numbered the same amount. How can this be? Didn't some 19-year olds turn 20 during that six month period?
5. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
6. According to Rashi, why are sailors called “*malachim*?”
7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'at* (knowledge)?
8. Shabbat is a “sign.” What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
10. How many books are there in Tanach?
11. From where did the men take the earrings that they donated to make the calf?
12. Why did Aharon build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
13. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
14. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
15. Why did Moshe ask that his name be erased from the Torah?
16. How has the sin of the golden calf affected the Jewish People throughout history?
17. In verse 33:2, G-d says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
18. How did G-d show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. How did Moshe become wealthy?
20. How do the light rays shining from Moshe's face show us the powerful effect of sin?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this week's Questions!

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

1. 30:13 - Twenty.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the *adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the *Mishkan*.
4. 30:16 - Their ages were calculated based on Rosh Hashana, not based on their individual birthdays.
5. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
6. 30:35 - Because they stir (*malach*) the water with their oars.
7. 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'at* is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between G-d and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:18 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 31:18 - 24.
11. 32:2,3 - From their ears.
12. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
13. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah forbids those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation which has estranged itself from G-d!
14. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
15. 32:32 - So people shouldn't say “Moshe was unworthy to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people.”
16. 32:34 - Whenever G-d punishes the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
17. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
19. 34:1 - Moshe carved the Tablets out of precious stone. G-d commanded Moshe to keep the leftover fragments.
20. 34:35 - Before the sin of the golden calf, the people would not have been afraid to look at the light rays, but after the sin they were afraid.

A digest of the topics covered in the seven weekly pages of the Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle along with an insight from them

## TALMUDigest

## BAVA KAMA 79 - 85

- Selling or slaughtering a stolen animal in owner's domain
- When a *shomer* (guardian) assumes responsibility
- Difference between a *ganav* (burglar) and *gazlan* (robber)
- Restrictions on raising animals in Eretz Yisrael
- The single sin of the righteous Jew
- The importance of buying a house in Eretz Yisrael from a non-Jew
- Ten conditions made by Yehoshua for inheriting Eretz Yisrael
- Ten decrees of Ezra the Scribe
- Source for public reading of the Torah
- Ten special rules relating to Yerushalayim
- The civil war of the Hasmonean dynasty
- Danger of raising a dog
- Penalties for a human wounding another human
- Why "eye for an eye" is not to be understood literally
- Jurisdiction of courts outside of Eretz Yisrael
- Evaluating payments due for damage done to a human

### THIRST FOR TORAH

What is the origin of public reading of the Torah? Our *gemara* traces the origin to a passage in the Torah (*Shemot* 15:22). "They went for a three-day period in the Wilderness but could not find water."

The water referred to here, say our Sages, is Torah. Three days without communal learning of Torah led to a serious weakening of the spirit. The prophets among them (led by Moshe) thereupon instituted the practice of public reading of the Torah on Shabbat, Yom Sheini (Monday) and Yom Chamishi (Thursday), so that there should never be three consecutive days without Torah.

In a later period of history Ezra the Scribe added to this

practice the reading of the Torah at Mincha on Shabbat, and instituted in that reading and the ones on the weekdays the requirement of calling up three people for the reading of a minimum of ten passages.

But why were Monday and Thursday chosen as the days for public reading when the same objective of avoiding a three-day break could have been achieved with other days?

Tosefot supplies the answer by citing a midrash that it was on Thursday that Moshe went up to Heaven to receive the Second Tablets and came down with them on Monday. Since these Tablets represented Divine forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf, these days are considered special days of finding favor in the eyes of G-d and most fitting for the public reading of His Torah.

• *Bava Kama 82a*

### What the SAGES Say

"Torah is compared to water as the Prophet Yishayahu puts it (54:1), 'Ho, let everyone who is thirsty come to the water'."

*Anonymous Sages Expert in Torah Interpretation - Bava Kama 82a*

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## DANCE, DANCE, DANCE

**From: Orna in Toronto**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Before I became religious I used to love to dance very much. As I spent several years trying to catch up on Jewish learning and then became involved in shidduchim and marriage, I didn't find an opportunity to pursue dance within the religious community. Now that I'm married and with a child at home, I find myself longing to dance again but I'm not sure if it's appropriate and conducive to spirituality. On the other hand, I feel that my inactivity is weighing on me in more ways than one. What should I do?*

Dear Orna,

Don't let this question weigh you down. Dance is a great thing, and as you'll see, not only for physical health and personal expression, but also for spirituality.

But first, you should know that it's very common (although not necessarily ideal) that people put aside significant interests of theirs while becoming religious only to reintroduce them into their lives later on. As you say, you had a lot to catch up on Jewishly speaking; and preparing for marriage and building a family is no small task either. But now that you are settling into married religious life, it is essential that you pursue your love for dance for your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being – for your sake and for your family's.

Judaism views exercise as being important. G-d gave us our bodies as vessels and instruments for performing His will. Neglecting the body is tantamount to saying "I am not interested in fulfilling G-d's will in the best way possible, with vigor and alacrity." Rather we are required to

preserve our health in general, and to be in good physical shape in particular, so that our bodies and limbs as vessels and instruments are primed for the service of G-d. On a purely physical plane, then, dance is a great work-out and therefore an ideal way of fulfilling the Divine command to "guard your health".

The command to guard one's health is just as applicable to one's emotional state. In order to properly serve G-d a person has to be stable and happy. Interacting with other people properly and contributing positively to our surroundings is also dependent on being content and emotionally well-balanced. In so far as dance is an excellent way of connecting to, and releasing and expressing your emotions and inner core, dance will invigorate and charge your emotional plane with joy and positivity. This will contribute to virtually all spheres of your life.

Lastly, Judaism views dance as a venue for spirituality and Divine inspiration. When a person walks, one foot always touches down before the other lifts off so that he's always touching the earth. In dance, each step propels one away from the ground and earthliness into the air and spirituality. The body leaps after the soul into a realm that transcends the physical. Particularly when the motion and rising of the body is accompanied by and alights the moving tones of music, the soul can elevate to realms of inspiration and prophecy. In fact, Jewish teachings even speak about *tzaddikim* attaining these levels through dance.

So you see, dance is not only appropriate, but desirable physically and emotionally, and is also inherently conducive to spirituality. Since you have reasonable access to an Orthodox community you should be able to find a women's dance group which would be appropriate. Within that context any genre you like is fine: classical, ballet, jazz, modern, folk or even freestyle. Dance for your body, dance for your feelings and dance for your soul. In this way you'll "dance with G-d".

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## HOLDING A HAND TO SAVE A LIFE

**Question:** I read your column titled “Lesson in the School of Life” for *Parshat Vayigash* in which you stated the right thing to do when seeing a child attempting to cross a street by himself is to take him by the hand and help him across a crosswalk. Here in the United Kingdom someone seen doing something like that could easily be arrested as a suspected child molester. What then is the right thing to do to save the child and yourself?

**Answer:** I must confess that I had Israel in mind when I

made my suggestion because I am unaware of anyone getting into trouble here for helping a child cross the street. It is indeed unfortunate that child molesting is so prevalent in some countries that taking a child by the hand entails a personal risk.

The only solution I can suggest for avoiding this risk while saving a life is to either solicit the help of a lady to take the child by the hand or to merely walk next to the youngster and stand at the crosswalk until he is safely on the other side.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY \_\_\_\_\_

### A PIECE OF LOVE AND HUMANITY

**A**t a fundraising dinner for a school that served children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered an unforgettable speech.

“I believe”, he began, “that when a child like Shay, who was physically and mentally disabled, comes into the world an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.”

He then went on to tell a story about the time he and Shay walked past a park where boys Shay knew were playing baseball. When Shay expressed an interest in playing ball despite his handicap, his father approached one of the boys on the field and asked if Shay could play.

“We’re losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning,” was the reply, “but I guess he can be on our team and we’ll try to put him to bat in the ninth inning.”

Shay’s team scored three runs in the eighth inning but still entered the bottom of the ninth three runs behind. They managed to get the bases loaded with two out, and Shay was scheduled to bat. Not only did his team let him but the opposing team did everything possible — intentionally making wild throws with the ball Shay softly hit – so that Shay could be credited with a grand slam and win the game for his team.

“That day,” said the father softly, with tears in his eyes, “the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world. Shay didn’t make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day.”

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