



SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA · VOL. 16 NO. 32

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 14 SIVAN - JUNE 6 IN ISRAEL AND 21 SIVAN - JUNE 13 OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

PARSHA INSIGHTS

TURNING OVER THE WORLD

"We are contaminated by a human corpse; why should we be diminished by not offering G-d's offering in its appointed time?" (9:7)

A man goes into a shop to buy a watch. His eye settles on the glint of gold and he takes a fancy to a fake Rolex. The owner of the shop says, "Don't take that thing. It's rubbish. In six months it's going to be asking you the time. Take this one instead. True, it doesn't look like much on the outside, but it will last you for more than a lifetime."

But the buyer insists in spite of all on the fake Rolex so the storeowner says, "Okay, if that's really what you want – take it!"

"We are contaminated by a human corpse; why should we be diminished by not offering G-d's offering in its appointed time?"

There's something strange about the above verse.

The group of people who complained about not being able to bring the *korban* Pesach said that the reason they were unable to do so was because they were contaminated. So why then should they ask, "Why should we be diminished?", meaning "Why should we be left out?" Didn't they already answer their own question? Because they were contaminated".

The answer is that their question was not a question at all; it was a cry from the heart. And through this cry from the heart an entire section of the Torah not given at Sinai was written into the Torah – the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni, a second chance to bring the *korban* Pesach.

What a person truly desires, G-d gives that person.

One of the ways that G-d interfaces with His creation is the characteristic called *Hod*. The week of the counting of the Omer that contains Pesach Sheni is the week of *Hod*.

Hod is connected to the verb *l'hodot* – "to admit"; meaning that G-d "admits" to what is in the heart of a person; that G-d will grant what a person really wants if his desire is authentic.

The Avnei Nezer asks why Amalek deserved the punishment of total obliteration. He answers that Amalek truly desired, in his heart of hearts, the removal of the Jewish People from existence. So G-d, so to speak, said, "Fine, you don't want the Jewish People to exist, so I will behave towards you as if they don't exist; and seeing as the entire Creation was for the purpose of the Jewish People to observe the Torah, therefore there is no reason for the Creation to exist – in which case – you don't exist."

When Rabbi Akiva saw that water had carved a channel in a stone, he reasoned that if something as soft as water could shape something as hard as stone, surely the Torah – which is as hard as iron – could shape his heart which was mere flesh.

Rabbi Akiva's feeling was, "Am I worse than a stone? Why should I be diminished?" Not having Torah was impossible to him. That feeling expressed from the deepest place of his heart brought a forty-year-old man who had never learned a thing in his life to be the father of the Oral Torah.

The nature of *Hod* is both frightening and exhilarating. Frightening, because it means that if our minds and hearts are full of superficial desires G-d will let us buy that fake Rolex.

And exhilarating, because if we really want Torah, then like Rabbi Akiva and those people who missed out on the *korban* Pesach, G-d will turn the world over for us.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Aharon is taught the method for kindling the menorah. Moshe sanctifies the *levi'im* to work in the Mishkan. They replace the first-born, who were disqualified after sinning at the golden calf. The *levi'im* are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, G-d commands Moshe concerning the *korban Pesach*. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, allowing a "second chance" to offer the *korban Pesach* one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the *eruv rav* — the mixed Egyptian multitude who joined the

Jewish People in the Exodus — some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. G-d tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. G-d sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. G-d explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with *tzara'at* as if she had gossiped about her brother. (Because Miriam is so righteous, she is held to an incredibly high standard.) Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

ISRAEL Forever

WHEN JEWS WORK TOGETHER

When Jews are in trouble they work together. It's admirable." This is how Philip Carmel, the international relations director of the Conference of European Rabbis, described the joint effort being made by rabbis in the countries belonging to the European Union to prevent passage of a bill by that body which would threaten *shechita* in those countries.

Coming up in June before the EU's Council of Ministers is legislation seeking to ensure "more humane treatment" for animals, which would force cattle breeders to stun the

animals before slaughter, an act forbidden by Halacha.

Although there has been a mixed reaction from governments of European states to the efforts of the rabbis to amend the proposed bill, it is encouraging to see the unity of the effort being made to influence them.

The Torah portion of this week describes sad situations of disunity that led to bitter complaints and tragic consequences. The lesson to be learned in Israel both from the Torah and from the above-described efforts is that there is no need for Jews to wait for trouble before working together to 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

TALE OF TWO SYNAGOGUES

When a Jewish visitor to Tzefat asks for directions to the Ari Synagogue he will inevitably be asked by one of the locals whether he means the Sephardic one or the Ashkenazi one.

Located next to the old cemetery, the Sephardic one originally went by the name of the Prophet Eliyahu. The plaza next to it, once called the "Coal Plaza" because it was where coal vendors sold their goods for heating, is today called "Defender Square".



An interesting legend is attached to the Ashkenazi Ari Synagogue located in the old city of Tzefat. A small crack in the wooden *bimah* opposite the entrance is testimony to an incident that occurred during the War of Independence. A shell that fell in the synagogue courtyard sent shrapnel into the synagogue where Jews were praying. Just as one of them bowed during the silent service a burning fragment passed over his head and struck the *bimah*.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the menorah burn, and why?
2. From what material and in what manner was the menorah made?
3. Moshe was commanded to cleanse the *levi'im* by sprinkling on them "mei chatat." What is "mei chatat"?
4. Which three "t'nuhot" (wavings) are in the parsha?
5. Why did G-d claim the first-born of the Jewish People as His possession?
6. Why are the words "Bnei Yisrael" repeated five times in verse 8:19?
7. When a *levi* reaches age 50, which functions may he still perform?
8. Why was the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini not commanded directly to Moshe?
9. What similarity is there between the menorah and the trumpets?
10. What three purposes did trumpet signals serve?
11. How many tribes marched between the Gershon-
- Merari detachment and that of Kehat? How was the time differential used?
12. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called "the gatherer of all the camps." What did they gather?
13. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?
14. Which aron is referred to in verse 10:33?
15. Which two topics are out of chronological order in the parsha?
16. Which tastes did the manna not offer, and why not?
17. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?
18. Who did Moshe choose as elders?
19. What was the prophecy of Eldad and Medad?
20. Why did Miriam merit to have the people wait for her?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

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

1. 8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so people wouldn't say that the menorah was lit for its light.
2. 8:4 - It was made from one solid piece of hammered gold.
3. 8:7 - Water containing ashes of the *para aduma*.
4. 8:11 - The wavings of Kehat, Gershon and Merari.
5. 8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makat bechorot*.
6. 8:19 - To show G-d's love for them.
7. 8:25 - Closing the courtyard gates of the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash; singing during the avoda; loading the wagons to transport the Mishkan.
8. 9:7 - The people who asked about it were rewarded by being the catalyst for the teaching of this mitzvah.
9. 8:4, 10:2 - They were each made from a single, solid block.
10. 10:2-7 - Announcement of the gathering of Bnei Yisrael, the gathering of the *nesi'im*, and the beginning of a move of the encampment.
11. 10:17-21 - Three: Reuven, Shimon and Gad. In the

- meantime Gershon and Merari set up the Mishkan.
12. 10:25 - They gathered and returned things lost by the other tribes.
13. 10:32 - The children of Yitro.
14. 10:33 - The aron which held the broken pieces of the first tablets, that was taken to the battlefield.
15. 9:1, 10:35,36 - The Pesach sacrifice, and the traveling of the aron.
16. 11:5 - Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic - these are harmful to nursing women.
17. 11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at Taverah (11:3).
18. 11:16 - People who were supervisors in Egypt and had pity on Bnei Yisrael at risk to themselves.
19. 11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."
20. 12:15 - Because she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the river.

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 METZIA 44 - 50

- Business transactions on non-real estate items
- The status of gold and other coins in such transactions and in redeeming second tithe produce
- Why non-real estate transaction cannot be finalized with money
- How *chalipin* (barter) can effect transaction
- The use of an *asimon* – a non-stamped coin – for transactions of second tithe redemption
- The curse for backing out of a deal after money has been

- paid
- The moral obligation of honoring a verbal agreement
- The force of a down payment or security given to guarantee a deal
- When a verbal commitment is not morally binding
- The importance of telling the truth
- The rules of deceit in business transactions
- How much time does the buyer have to claim he was overcharged

OPEN HOUSE

It was just before the beginning of Shabbat when someone came to the home of one of the Sages (either Rabbi Tavos or Rabbi Shmuel bar Zutra) and asked if he could purchase some sesame seeds. When he was told that there were none for sale he asked if he could leave the money he brought for the purchase in the Sage's safekeeping since it was so close to Shabbat.

"The whole house is open for you" was the reply.

The money was then left, but during the course of Shabbat it was stolen.

What sort of responsibility did the Sage have regarding

the money?

A paid guardian is responsible for theft while an unpaid one is not. It would then seem that the Sage who invited the fellow to leave his money might be considered a paid guardian because of the potential of a sale from which he would profit.

But the Sage Rava ruled that not only was the Sage not considered a paid guardian, he was not even in the category of an unpaid one. The reason? Because telling someone the house is open for him may be a nice way of accommodating a desperate visitor, but it is certainly no acceptance of responsibility.

• *Bava Metzia 49b*

What the SAGES Say

"If you gave me the entire world to do so I would not tell a lie."

• *One of the Sages to Sage Ravina - Bava Metzia 49a*

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NAME FOR LIFE

From: Anonymous

Dear Rabbi,

I have a sensitive question that I'm embarrassed to ask rabbis I know, so I thought to ask through this medium. I hope that's ok. The question is like this: Thank G-d I am expecting, and it looks like it will be a boy. Now my grandfather, unfortunately, is very ill and we don't know how much longer he has. He has had a long, good life, is a wonderful person and is a very righteous man. I would very much like to name the baby after him, particularly since this may be my last child. So you see, I am in a dilemma because no matter how much he's suffering, I want him to live as long as possible and I shudder at the thought of losing him. On the other hand, no one lives forever and I find myself thinking (and I'm really sorry to say this), that if he were to pass on before the birth, I could honor him by naming the child after him. I'm really torn by these feelings between wanting to do what seems right and honorable, but feeling guilty about anticipating what that would entail. Please help me deal with these feelings and give me advice, if possible, about what to do.

Dear Anonymous,

I am happy to hear of your pending birth, and simultaneously sorry to hear of your grandfather's failing health. Because of this unfortunate dichotomy, I completely empathize with your feelings. You must be understandably torn between wanting to honor your grandfather while feeling guilty about wanting to do so.

But first and foremost you must be concerned with your grandfather's life and hope and pray for his well-being. Every moment a person has here in this world has tremendous impact on his well-being in the next. This is not only true regarding the Torah and *mitzvot* one does, but even regarding the suffering one endures, and even (or particularly) towards the end of life, even if the person does not seem to be aware of what's happening to him. You honor your grandfather this way in a more tangible and immediate way than by naming after him, particularly if you are able to visit him and care for him in any way.

Regarding the timing of the pending birth — may you and the baby be healthy — this is something that is in the hands of G-d. And just as He enabled conception, He will decide the proper and best time for birth, and you can rely on Him to take the naming into consideration as well. You have to make every effort, including prayer, to ensure that the baby will have a full and healthy term, irrespective of your grandfather's condition. Similarly, just as you shouldn't want to shorten life, you wouldn't want to lengthen and complicate pregnancy either, G-d forbid.

So what should you do? Pray for your grandfather's health and extension of life while praying for a full and healthy pregnancy and birth. This answer might seem contradictory, which is why you're torn, but it's really not. You have to do what's right in each situation independently, simultaneously praying for the benefit of both your grandfather and baby, and leaving the rest up to G-d since neither outcome is in your hands anyway. In the end, if the situation results in your naming the baby after him, you will be honoring him. If not, his seeing your baby and knowing that his line is being continued through you will also be a great source of pride and honor for him, even if you aren't able to perceive it.

A family once held a *brit* where a great rabbi was present. After a long wait, the family approached the rabbi apologizing for the delay by explaining that the grandfather of the infant was on his deathbed and they were waiting for him to breath his last breath in order to be able to honor him by naming the child after him. They thought the rabbi would understand and appreciate such an honorable gesture. They were taken aback when the rabbi abruptly ordered the *brit* to commence immediately and commanded that the grandfather's bed be placed next to the chair where the *brit* would be performed. Not understanding what the rabbi was thinking, the family nevertheless followed his instructions and the *brit* took place next to the dying man.

Needless to say, the child was not named after his grandfather. After some time, something very unusual happened. The grandfather gradually became well. When the family told the rabbi, he explained that not only Eliyahu is present at a *brit*, but also Raphael, the angel of healing, comes to heal the infant. He said rather than wait for the grandfather to die, I ordered you to bring him into the *brit* so while healing the infant, Raphael would heal his grandfather too.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO? ---

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

RETURNING BOOKS TO SHELVES

Question: In the Beit Midrash in which I learn Torah there is a sign by the shelves containing the *sefarim* urging users of those volumes to return them to their shelves after use. Sometimes I consult a volume for a brief reference and returning it immediately would briefly interrupt my learning session with my partner. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: The volume which you are looking at as a reference may well be the only one of its kind in the Beit

Midrash and someone else may be looking for it while you are holding on to it until your learning session is over. The sacrifice of your momentary loss of learning time cannot compare with the loss of time incurred by someone also walking around the Beit Midrash to locate the *sefer* you are holding on to after you have finished using it.

The signs you refer to are meant to instruct you to immediately return the *sefer* after use and there is no rationalization for failing to comply.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY ---

SHADES OF SANDY

There is something about Yom Kippur that has an impact even on the world of sports. When the owner of the New York Jets football team discovered that his team was scheduled to play against the Tennessee Titans on September 27 in a game set to start at 4:15 pm, he quickly made a calculation that Jewish fans would not have enough time to get home for the beginning of Yom Kippur that evening. It was bad enough that the home opener for his team was on the second day of Rosh Hashana. But to lose Jewish fans two games in a row

was too much.

The situation recalled the heroic move made by Dodger pitcher Sandy Koufax who refused to pitch in a World Series game on Yom Kippur 44 years ago. This time the problem was solved by getting NFL commissioner Roger Goodell to reschedule the Erev Yom Kippur game to 1:00 pm so that fans could arrive home before sundown, undoubtedly emotionally prepared for the big day of soul searching and repentance.

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