

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

PROCESSED PEACE

“My covenant of peace”(25:12)

Everyone wants peace. Every person wants to sit under his fig tree, secure that no one will come and take away his family and his money. Yet almost since the beginning of time, peace has been elusive, and often, illusory.

If there's one Hebrew word that everyone knows, it's *shalom*. “Peace.” *Shalom* is the Hebrew form of greeting. Why do we greet others with *shalom*?

The Talmud tells us that it is forbidden to say *shalom* in a bathhouse, because *Shalom* is G-d's name, and thus not fitting to be uttered in a bathhouse.

What does it mean that G-d's name is *Shalom*?

Real *shalom* doesn't exist in this world because *shalom* means perfection, completion. This world was created lacking. That's the way it's meant to be. This world strives to arrive somewhere beyond itself for its completion.

The Hebrew word for the “earth” is *aretz*, from the root “*ratz*,” “to run,” because this world is always running, moving towards its completion. However its completion can come only from above, from Heaven. The word “Heaven” in Hebrew is *shamayim*, from the root “*sham*” which means “there.” This world is always “running” to “there” — outside and beyond itself.

This world contains many wonderful things, but perfection isn't one of them. Perfection is beyond the scope of creation.

This is why G-d's name is *Shalom*. G-d is the Perfection of all the lacking of this world. Every single thing in this world finds its perfection, its fulfillment, in Him. It's not here. It's above. It's “there.”

The Peace Connection

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz greets the harvesters by using the name of G-d. From here we learn that a Jew may use G-d's Name as a greeting, and it is not considered taking Heaven's

Name in vain. In fact, there is an opinion that we are *obliged* 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? What's wrong with “Good Morning!” or “Have a nice day!”

Sometimes we look at other people and we think that we are a million miles from them. But no man is an island to himself. When two people meet, the essence of their meeting is to make each other more complete. The fundamental principle of interpersonal relationships is that when I meet my fellow being, I am coming to effect his or her *shleimut* (completion). That's what I'm doing in this world.

G-d placed us in a world which demands to be perfected. Our whole relationship with the world and everything in it is a “Peace Process” — a process of bringing every person and every blade of grass to a state of *shleimut* — the true definition of peace.

In *Parshat Vayetze*, Yaakov lays his head down to sleep on some stones. The stones all vie to be the stone on which Yaakov will sleep. The result is that all the stones gather together and became one stone. What do we learn from this? The message of the stones is that completion results from the connection of disparate entities into a single whole.

When we connect with other people on whatever level, whether in business or in love, whether in school on the bus, our entire connection between ourselves and our fellow beings must be with the intention to bring the other person to a state of completion. That's why a Jew is obliged to greet others with “*Shalom!*” For when we seek to bring each other to a state of completion, to *shalom*, the world reaches its ultimate fulfillment.

And 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

A PASSION FOR THE LAND

When the five daughters of Tzlofchad approached Moshe to ask for a portion in the land that Jews were to inherit they demonstrated the great love that Jewish women had for Eretz Yisrael.

This scene described in this week's Torah portion is pointed out by our Sages as a sharp contrast with the negative attitude of the men whose lack of enthusiasm for

entering the Land condemned an entire generation to death in the wilderness over a span of forty years.

Love of the Land has certainly become an integral part of the Jewish personality ever since then. Jews who demonstrate that love through settling in Israel or supporting it are the ones who guarantee the success 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

MEGGIDO – THE GREAT BATTLEGROUND

Meggido, located on the border of Emek Yizreel and at the base of the Shomron Range, is famous as the scene of many historical battles, ranging from Biblical times till World War One.

Two Jewish kings were slain in battle at this site



and it was here that the British defeated the Turkish-German forces in 1918, earning for their commander the title of Lord Allenby of Meggido.

The term Armageddon, referring to the site of the eventual battle between good and evil in Christian literature, stems from the name Meggido.

לע"נ
מת חיה שרה בת ר' מרדכי 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.

- When the renter of an animal is responsible for its death or loss
- When the owner must replace the rented animal or ship which can no longer function
- What is considered a deviation on the part of the renter
- The level of responsibility of a contractor working on his home and that of one who rents an animal
- When the owner is in the service of the one renting from him
- What constitutes a commitment to guard item brought into his home
- The level of responsibility of one guarding an object he found
- The mover who breaks the barrels he is carrying
- Responsibility of employee re hours of work and of employer to provide him with food
- Rabbi Elazar ben Shimon's career as a detective for the government
- The relationship of Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish
- The sufferings which Rabbi Elazar and Rebbie accepted on themselves
- The efforts of Rebbie to bring back to Torah the wayward descendants of great sages
- Rabbi Chiya's unique dissemination of Torah

THE GREAT DISSEMINATOR

Rabbi Chiya undertook a mission to ensure that Torah study would never be forgotten among Jews. He planted flax from which he made nets to capture deer. Those deer would be slaughtered, their flesh given to poor orphans and their skins converted into parchments upon which he would write the five books of the Chumash. These he brought to a community where there was no Torah study and he would teach each one of five children one of the five scrolls. He would also teach orally each one of six youngsters one of the six orders of the Mishna. Upon completion of this education he would instruct each of these young pupils to

teach the others what he had learned, promising to return to see if they succeeded.

Why was it necessary for Rabbi Chiya to go to the bother of planting and trapping when he could simply have purchased the parchment he needed?

Maharsha explains that Rabbi Chiya was determined that every step of the way be done purely for Heaven's sake with none deriving any profit. This eliminated the possibility of buying parchment. Even the meat of the animal whose skins he used for parchment was donated to needy orphans. Only with such meticulous attention to every detail of the operation could he be certain that Heaven would bless his efforts with success.

• *Bava Metzia 85b*

What the SAGES Say

"A single coin in an empty barrel makes a lot of noise."

• *A folk saying quoted by the Sage Ulla - Bava Metzia 85b*

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OUT OF A SHELL

From: Shelly

*Dear Rabbi,
I personally find your column to be very well-written, sensitive and insightful. It is quite uplifting for me, even though I am not the questioner. I imagine that those who you're advising appreciate your responses even more. My question is, of course you're helping a lot of people, but do you ever feel you benefit personally from what you're doing as well? The flip side of my question is, do you ever feel frustrated or dissatisfied either? I'm sorry for being too personal, but since you address people's personal questions, I thought to address this one to you.*

Dear Shelly,

Thanks for your candid compliments, and I appreciate the sincerity of your question as well.

The truth is, if I can help people, I feel rewarded. It's a good feeling to be able to make other people feel good. This is a major motivation behind what I do not only as a writer of this column, but also as a teacher and rabbi in Yeshivat Ohr Somayach and in other contexts as well. This applies even in the realm of guidance and counseling, and even more so in sharing more formal Torah ideas and teachings.

In addition, as in the spirit of the teaching of our Sages "much I have learned from my rabbis and peers but even more from my students", every question requires me to clarify my understanding of the Torah on that topic. In many cases, questions and challenges require research that spurs my own learning and inevitably results in new knowledge. This is also rejuvenating and inspiring for me. Even questions that require research into "secular" topics is rewarding since it broadens my general knowledge and increases my appreciation of how Torah relates to everything.

Another rewarding aspect of what I do results from my interaction with and exposure to a very broad and diverse group of people: young and old, men and women, observant and secular, Jewish and non-Jewish, educated and ignorant, "normal" and odd, mainstream and extreme. I find this both interesting and also helpful in learning how to relate to and deal with all different types of people.

The flip side is that, like all rabbis, what I do does take away from my personal time to learn for my own learning's sake and takes a lot of time from my own family. Tending to many different types of people's different needs, literally at all hours of the day and night, is draining and results in less time and more pressure to take care of the personal needs of myself and large family. Sometimes this does make me question whether I should be doing this rather than full-time learning on my own or even just keeping a regular "9-5" job where the rest of the day would be purely mine and my fam-

ily's. The following stories are some of many which have answered the question:

Regarding frustrated: Once I met a young Israeli man at a family gathering and we got to talking (my representing the "religious") about religion. The talk soon escalated into a heated discussion, then debate. By the end of the evening, I was exhausted and so frustrated that everything I had said had fallen on deaf ears. I told my wife that I couldn't believe I had wasted so much time and energy on this guy, which ended up ruining my evening. Several years later, while walking through Mea Shearim, a complete stranger, in full religious garb, "accosted" me with a big hug and smile. I didn't recognize him until he reminded me of the "conversation" we had many years earlier. He revealed how impressed he was at the time by the truth of the Torah and admitted that that was his last tenacious defense before becoming religious. If G-d had not caused our paths to meet, I would have never guessed or known what had transpired since that "fruitless" discussion.

Regarding dissatisfied: Not long ago I was napping on Shabbat afternoon, having had a very trying and tiring week with a few couples I was working with. When I awoke, I was seriously questioning whether I was really doing what G-d wants, or perhaps I should be devoting my energies to family and myself. Lying there debilitated by these thoughts, I heard a knock at the front door. My kids said a student so-and-so from five years ago said he'd come back to visit. I didn't recognize the name and my first reaction in that mood was to tell them to tell him to go away. Of course I didn't, but rather got up. At the door was an impressive looking young Torah student with a large smile on his face. I didn't recognize him at first until I changed his appearance in my mind: I took off the beard, added long hair, put in an earring, dressed him in a tee-shirt and torn jeans and voila – it was him!

I couldn't believe my eyes. This was a kid from an American modern Orthodox religious family who, before dropping Judaism entirely, decided to make a last-ditch effort to find inspiration in a baal teshuva yeshiva. He made me personally responsible for the task. We met one-on-one for many hours, but by the end of his stay he said I had one last chance, and then he was off to experience the world. I didn't seem to succeed, and he was off. Five full years went by until he showed up on my doorstep. He said our conversations kept ringing in his ears through his travels and wouldn't let him rest. Not much time passed before he entered a yeshiva in America where he spent the next five years, becoming the serious student standing before me. He came all this way, he said, in order to thank me and give me the joy of knowing that, unknown to me, all this had happened as a result of our conversations.

The amazing confluence of my doubts and the arrival of this visitor and his message was a clear answer from G-d to my questioning what He really wants me to be doing.

LEAVING BREAD ON THE TABLE

Question: I have noticed that people are careful to leave some bread on the table till they finish saying Grace after the meal. Is it sufficient to just leave crumbs? What is the right thing to do?

Answer: Two explanations are offered by the commentaries for the Talmudic statement “one who does not leave bread on his table will never see a sign of blessing” (*Sanhedrin* 92a).

One is that we must anticipate that perhaps a hungry poor man may come along and so we must be prepared to

give him some bread.

A second reason is that we wish to thus demonstrate our appreciation of the bounty with which G-d has blessed us so that we have more food than we needed for our sustenance.

While even crumbs would seem sufficient for satisfying the second reason, it is advisable, writes the *Mishneh Berurah* (*Orach Chaim* 80:2 in *Sha'arei Zion* 3), for the first reason to leave over a quantity of bread suitable for feeding the poor visitor.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

JUST IN TIME

For weeks the Hatzalah rescue team in the Orthodox community of Beitar Ilit made an effort to find a donor for an expensive piece of lifesaving equipment known as “Life-Pac”. They finally received this valuable machine, which sends electric impulses into the body of someone whose pulse has stopped, thanks to the generosity of a Baltimore Jew. Only eight hours after they held a special ceremony inaugurating its addition to their

lifesaving arsenal, a call came for emergency help.

A 50-year old man had suffered heart arrest while riding a bicycle on the road near Beitar. The Hatzalah volunteers were the first to arrive at the scene and one of them began using the Life-Pac in an attempt to achieve resuscitation. Although the first electric shock failed to produce the desired result, a second one restored the pulse and a life was saved by a machine that came just in time.

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