

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TISA · 20 ADAR 5770 · MAR. 6, 2010 · VOL. 17 NO. 21

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### GIVE ME A BREAK

*“And on the seventh day, a Shabbat of Shabbatot” (31:15)*

There are two kinds of rest. The first kind of rest is a rest from weariness, a chance to recharge your batteries, to enable yourself to continue to work. For no one can work indefinitely. Everyone needs a break. The second kind of rest comes at the end of a project. The last brushstroke of a painting. The final sentence of a novel. The last brick in a new home. Then you take a step back and look at your work. You feel the satisfaction of completion. It's finished. It's done. A time to rest and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

“You shall labor for six days and do all your work”. How can you do all your work in six days? Can you build an entire house in six days? The Torah teaches us that when Shabbat comes, even though you're halfway through your project you should think of it as though it was finished completely. In other words, on Shabbat you should picture yourself as experiencing the sense of rest and satisfaction that comes

after a good job well done, and not that you're just taking a break. In a sense, this is what G-d did when the world was six days old. He looked at the Creation and saw that it was finished, the greatest building project ever, the Heavens and the earth were completed. Our rest on Shabbat is a commemoration of that rest.

This is the essential difference between our Shabbat and the secular idea of a 'day of rest'. The secular world understands the day of rest as a break so that you can return to the week revitalized and refreshed. It's only a break. Shabbat, on the other hand, is not just pushing the pause button on life. It's the creation of a feeling that everything in one's life is complete. There's nothing left to do — except sit back and enjoy the fruits of one's labor.

• Sources: Based on Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin in *L'Torah Ulamo'adim*

### LABOR OF LOVE

*“The children of Yisrael shall keep the Shabbat throughout their generations” (31:16)*

After a person leaves this world, his soul experiences a state of confusion. If, in his lifetime, he enmeshed himself in the physical world, so even after death his soul still looks for those same physical pleasures. However, lacking a body to experience the material dimension, his soul frantically rushes from one side of the world to the other in a vain search for the physical. On the other hand, if a person spends his life in a quest for the spiritual, and only uses the physical world to elevate his *neshama* (soul), then, after he passes from the physical world his soul recognizes the next

world, which is entirely spiritual, and rushes to embrace it.

The phrase “*throughout their generations*” in this verse can also be translated “*as their dwelling place*”. When a person keeps Shabbat he spiritualizes himself and, at the same time, creates a dwelling place for himself in the next world — ‘*the world which is entirely Shabbat*’. When he goes to the next world he will find a familiar dwelling — Shabbat will be home for his soul.

• Source: Adapted from the *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

Moshe 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

### THE TIME OF THE "TIMES"

“The Children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath an eternal covenant for their generations.” (Weekly Parsha, *Shmot* 31:16)

We don't know what will happen in the year 2100. It is impossible to predict the future. But of one thing you can be certain. That in the year 2100 Jewish women will be lighting Sabbath candles.”

This is what the Irish Catholic production manager of the New York Times answered when asked why he included Sabbath lighting times in the prestigious paper's Millennium

edition published on January 1, 2000. This special issue featured three front pages – the news from January 1, 1900, the actual news of the day, January 1, 2000, and a third front-page projecting future events of January 1, 2100.

The idea came from a front-page paid ad (at a cost of almost \$2,000 a week), which a Jewish philanthropist sponsored each week for five years until June, 1999. No one, however, paid for the inclusion of candle lighting time for New York for January 1, 2100. It was put in by the Times as a tribute to 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

### ASHKELON – HOME OF THE RED COW

When we read this Shabbat the Maftir of Parshat Parah we recall an historical incident connected with the southern city of Ashkelon.

Dama ben Netina, a gentile who lived in Ashkelon, was blessed with the birth in his flock of a rare completely red cow, which was needed by the Jews for the purification process of those spiritually contaminated by contact with the dead.



Our Sages (*Mesechta Kiddushin* 31a) saw this as a reward for Dama's exemplary honoring of his father by refusing to wake him up a year earlier in order to sell at a fabulous price to the Jewish community a precious jewel needed for the priestly garments.

Although he realized that he could ask virtually any price for so rare a commodity as a completely red cow, Dama asked only for the amount of money he sacrificed for his father's honor.

לע"נ

הרה"ח ר' אהרון בן הרה"ח ר' עמרם יצחק זצ"ל

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## 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.

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- If the testimony of a witness exposed as a liar is retroactively disqualified
- Which relatives are disqualified as witnesses
- When offspring suffer for the sins of their forebears
- Can good friend or profound enemy serve as a witness
- How witnesses are interrogated
- When an admission is not considered to be genuine
- When does the court make a plea on behalf of the defendant

## PLEADING FOR THE DEFENDANT

If someone admits to owing money to another, but when it comes to later paying that debt he claims that he was only fooling when he made that admission, he is believed. If he fails to offer this excuse in making his refusal, the court does not offer it on his behalf.

When it comes to a case involving capital punishment, however, if the court is capable of presenting an argument on behalf of the defendant which he has not put forth, it is obligated to do so. The exception to this rule is when the person on trial is accused of being a *maisit* – one who attempted to persuade another Jew to worship idols.

The source for such a severe attitude towards the evil persuader, says Rabbi Chama bar Chanina, is the Torah command “You shall not have pity on him nor shall you cover up for him.” (*Devarim* 13:9)

Another source mentioned in the name of Rabbi Yonatan is

that of G-d convicting the primeval serpent for persuading Chava to eat from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. There was certainly a plea that could have been made on behalf of that *maisit* and it was not made. What could have been said in the serpent’s defense? “Is one supposed to heed the word of the master or that of the disciple?” – the rationale given as to why when one sins as an agent for another it is he who bears responsibility for the crime rather than the one who sent him to do so.

Tosefot asks why then cannot every *maisit* get away by arguing that his victim had no business ignoring the command of his Heavenly Master? His answer is that only the serpent could have possibly been acquitted with such a claim because he had never been commanded to desist from evil persuasion and was judged only because of the tragedy he caused. The *maisit*, however, has been commanded to refrain from such evil persuasion and is convicted for the attempt itself.

• *Sanhedrin* 29a

## What the SAGES Say

“How do we know that whoever adds to the words of G-d only detracts from them? Although G-d’s command was to refrain from eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Chava added that He also prohibited touching the tree and this led to the serpent tricking her.”

• *The Sage Chizkiah - Sanhedrin* 29a

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## OFF THE MARK

**From: Mark**

Dear Rabbi,

*I would say I'm from a religious family – probably modern orthodox. There was a time that I strayed away from observance, but now I'm heading back. I've started going to classes at a ba'al teshuva yeshiva where I've had problems with a rabbi of one of the classes. I don't find the material very interesting. So at first I took out my laptop to play computer games in order to pass the time. The rabbi got upset and told me to close the computer. The next day I was also bored, and when I asked the rabbi when the class would end, he wouldn't answer me and said I was disturbing the class. So the next day I couldn't take it any more and I asked the rabbi if there was some way he could make the class more interesting. At that point he must have been really upset because he told me to leave the class.*

*Now as a rabbi at such a yeshiva, I ask you, is that any way to treat a student who's making an effort to learn more about Judaism? It seems to me that that rabbi is totally off. Not only does he not make Torah interesting, he doesn't even try to appeal to his students. This is how it seems to me anyway. Please tell me what you think.*

Dear Mark,

Please excuse me for saying this, but it seems to me that you are the one who is off the mark here – not because you don't find the material interesting, but because of the way you yourself describe that you behaved.

I get the picture you are relatively new at this yeshiva, and that you've joined a pre-existing, on-going class. Now just because you don't find the material engaging doesn't mean that others don't. It's more likely that if this is a regular staff rabbi and there are people in the class, that it is interesting at least on some level to some people. I assume it's deemed by the yeshiva to be appropriate for beginners.

For you to have taken out a laptop in the middle of a Torah class in order to play computer games is disrespectful

and immature. You should have politely sat out the first class and then respectfully told the rabbi himself or someone else responsible for the program that you didn't relate to class. Instead, although it sounds like you may have decided to give it a second chance, the next day you interrupted the class by asking the rabbi when it would end. Are you not aware of how inappropriate and rude that must have seemed to the rabbi coming from a new student?

Given the fact that your disinterest was confirmed on the second day, at that point you certainly should have politely sought out a solution after class. But to top it off, on the third day you apparently told the rabbi in the middle of class in front of the others, presumably more long-standing students, that the class is boring. Quite frankly, I can understand why, on only your third time at bat, you were benched. I think the rabbi was right for asking you to leave.

Please forgive me for being so blunt, but it seems to me that you must be told this way in order for you to understand what I think should be obvious to you. Now don't misunderstand me. You're not at fault for not finding the material interesting – that problem has to be tended to. But I think you are at fault for being insensitively blunt yourself toward the rabbi and disrespectful of the Torah you're there to learn. I urge you to admit this to the rabbi and apologize for what you've said and done. And this is not because I think the rabbi is really mad at you, nor do I think you should take his reaction personally. Rather I think he views your behavior as an affront to the Torah, to the yeshiva and to the other students – and he probably cares enough about you too that he wants you to realize that your approach sells yourself short of the mark as well.

Yes, asking a new, ba'al teshuva student to leave class does sound extreme. However, since you're asking my take as a rabbi at just such a yeshiva, I can say to you that I personally never experienced such extreme behavior from a student either. Please make a sincere effort to diffuse the tension and speak privately and respectfully to those concerned about how you can get the most out of the program. After all, the rabbis are certainly in the business to enable you to appreciate the Torah. If you show them a little more respect and appreciation, you will have found the recipe for success.

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## SHARING AN UMBRELLA

**Question:** It was raining rather heavily and I noticed a little elderly man shivering in the downpour, because unlike myself he was not equipped with an umbrella. I very much wanted to protect him from the rain and offered him shelter beneath my umbrella, an offer which he vigorously refused by declaring that he is capable of taking care of himself. What is the right thing to do in such a case?

**Answer:** Many people, especially older ones, have a sense of pride in their self-sufficiency and resent being pitied by

others. In order to overcome such sensitivity it is necessary to make the beneficiary of your thoughtfulness feel as if he is doing you a favor by accepting your offer. This can possibly be achieved by telling him that you feel terrible at seeing him drenched while you are dry and are prepared to close your umbrella to suffer along with him. If you back this up by actually beginning to close your umbrella, there is a good chance that he will do you the “favor” of sharing your open umbrella.

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

### WINE FOR MASHIACH

Some activists in the area of observing the laws of *Shmitah* (the seventh year in which regular agricultural activity is proscribed) were invited into the home of a farmer who was filled with thanks to Heaven for having carefully observed the demanding laws of *Shmitah* for the entire year. In celebration he offered them a drink from a bottle of very expensive wine. Unwilling to have their host incur such an expense they suggested that he save the wine for another occasion.

When the farmer insisted on serving the wine, his guests

came up with an idea: “Don’t open that bottle until Mashiach comes so that you can honor him with the wine you bought in honor of your *Shmitah* observance.”

The farmer excitedly accepted the suggestion and placed the bottle into one of his wooden cabinets on which he placed a large sign stating that the wine inside was reserved for Mashiach.

Soon after this a fire broke out in the farmer’s home and destroyed everything inside except for that highly flammable wooden cabinet containing the wine for Mashiach.

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