

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE WISDOM OF HAPPINESS

“He sent Yehuda ahead of him.” (46:28)

We live in a world where depression has become as common as table salt. Statistics report that between 9 and 10% of American schoolchildren are clinically depressed. That’s an amazing statistic. And that doesn’t include those who are just above the cutoff point of what’s called clinically depressed. And it also doesn’t take into account those who haven’t sought professional help because their symptoms aren’t recognized. And we haven’t even started to talk about their parents.

Why, in spite of a level of physical comfort of which our great-grandparents could only dream, are we more and more subject to depression?

During the reporting of the Nixon/Kennedy Presidential elections, 40% of “sound bytes” (an uninterrupted monologue by a reporter) were one minute or longer. By the time Bush took on Dukakis, a sound byte had shrunk to 9.8 secs, and not one was as long as a minute.

I have the distinct feeling that since George Bush Senior strode the telewaves as President the national attention span has not exactly increased. (Are you still reading this?)

An instant society of drive-thru-everything teaches that haste is a virtue in its own right.

Western society educates our children to be impatient. If it takes me longer than a minute it ain’t worth it.

No being in the universe has a bigger *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) than a baby. A baby is all self. A baby is quite happy to wake up a continent at the most distant rumble of hunger in its tummy. Being a baby has everything to do with having no patience. In the long and difficult ascent to adulthood, we certainly don’t need society’s help in keeping us babies.

Being unable to see beyond the end of our nose, of not being able to see the big picture, is both a cause and an effect of depression. So how do we combat this?

A movie film consists of hundreds and thousands of still pictures. When presented with separate images in rapid succession, the brain ceases to discern them as separate images and links them together. This anomaly is called “the persistence of vision.” The result is the illusion of movement, motion pictures. Persistence of vision accounts for our failure to notice

that a motion picture screen is dark about half the time. A bit like day and night.

In other words, the reality of the movie does not exist in the film itself: it exists in the mind of the beholder connecting separate moments into one flowing existence.

To a small child, every moment is a different world, a different existence. There is no direction in things, no assembly leading towards an overall reality. First this moment happens, then this moment, then this. Being small, however, isn’t limited to being a child.

In Hebrew the word for small is *katan*. *Katan* comes from the word *katua*, meaning “cut”. Someone who is small, or whose perception of the world is small, cuts life’s flow into small segments and treats each of those segments as though that was the whole of reality.

The definition of maturity is that we perceive our entire life as a whole single direction. We take all the disparate events of life, its ups and downs — and unify them into a single cogent direction. Every frame of existence is joined together into the film of our life.

The Hebrew word for adult, *gadol*, comes from the root meaning, “that which continues” (*Bereishet 49:19*). The wisdom of happiness tells us that things are joined together. That’s being an adult. Despite our problems we perceive everything as single system, a single route map, a single film. Happiness means having persistence of vision.

Similarly, during the week in our weekday prayers we say of our Creator “*How many are Your works.*” On Shabbat we say, “*How great are Your works.*” We take all the separate “manys” of the weekday world and unify them into one “great” a view that everything is connected. That’s the “great” of Shabbat. It’s the road map of time.

The essence of taking the wisdom of happiness into the despair of depression is to see that the day and night of our emotions and moods are as connected as day and night itself. Day inevitably follows the night just as night inevitably follows day. Realizing that we have an emotional clock that turns constantly from day to night gives us the perspective to deal with our feelings of disconnection. However black and

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-d's plan. He sends them back to their father Yaakov with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions sets out for Goshen. G-d communicates with Yaakov in a vision at night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt and its negative spiritual consequences, because it is

there that G-d will establish the Children of Israel as a great nation even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and corruption. The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu. Seventy souls in total descend into Egypt, where Yosef is reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that, in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves as his slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Israel become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

ISRAEL Forever

WHO IS PROVIDING SECURITY?

For the last thirty years the government of Israel has been providing monthly subsidies for the families of yeshiva students with low income. In recent weeks the anti-religious media has been conducting a propaganda campaign against proposed legislation that would make it possible to continue this policy of securing economic survival for these families.

At the heart of the controversy is a failure on the part of a segment of the public in Israel to appreciate the value of Torah study to the security of the country. It is indeed

unfortunate that most of these people will not be in the synagogue this Shabbat where they would hear how the Patriarch Yaakov prepared himself and his family for their life in Egypt.

Yaakov sent his son Yehuda ahead of him to prepare for his arrival. Rashi cites a *midrash* that explains that he sent him to prepare a house of Torah study.

Now, as then, the survival of our people depends on the merit of Torah study. It is the government's continued support of this study that will secure Israel forever.

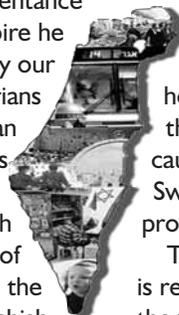
LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

YONAH – THE PROPHET OF NO ESCAPE

When the Prophet Yonah was told by G-d that he had been chosen to deliver a message of repentance to the capital of the mighty Assyrian Empire he attempted to evade this mission. He was afraid, say our Sages, that the positive response of the sinful Assyrians to his call for a return to G-d might serve as an indictment of the Jewish People who showed less interest in heeding the calls of their prophets.

What did Yonah do? As we are reminded each year at Mincha on Yom Kippur when the Book of Yonah is read as the Haftarah, he hired a ship at the port of Jaffa to take him to the foreign port of Tarshish.



His logic was that since G-d bestows prophecy only on people in *Eretz Yisrael* he would be exempt from a prophetic mission if he were outside of the Holy Land.

His attempt to escape his Divine mission was, however, an exercise in futility. A Heaven-sent storm threatened to wreck his ship and, aware that he was the cause of the trouble, Yonah asked to be cast overboard. Swallowed by a giant fish and eventually regurgitated the prophet returned to his land and embarked on his mission.

This dramatic chapter in the history of Jews and the world is read on the holiest day of the year to remind all of us that there is no escape from G-d.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What threatening words did Yehuda say to Yosef?
2. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?
3. Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?
4. What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers "Go up to my father"?
5. What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?
6. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
7. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?
8. What did Yosef mean when he said "Don't dispute on the way"?
9. What happened to Yaakov when he realized Yosef was alive?
10. Why did G-d tell Yaakov, "Don't fear going down to Egypt"?
11. "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?
12. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?
13. Who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?
14. When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?
15. Yosef harnessed his own chariot instead of letting a servant do it. Why?
16. Why were shepherds abhorrent to the Egyptians?
17. Why did Yosef pick the weakest brothers to stand before Pharaoh?
18. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence?
19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, moving the people from city to city. What were his two motives for this?
20. Whose fields were not bought by Yosef?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 44:18 - He threatened that Yosef would be stricken with leprosy, like Pharaoh when he took Sarah from Avraham; alternatively, Yehuda threatened to kill Yosef and Pharaoh.
2. 44:20 - Yehuda feared that if he said his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand to see him.
3. 44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him.
4. 45:9 - We learn that *Eretz Yisrael* is higher than all other lands.
5. 45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke *lashon hakodesh*.
6. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* built in Yosef's territory.
7. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.
8. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes, they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.
9. 45:27 - His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) returned.
10. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.
11. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
12. 46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.
13. 46:10 - Dina *bat* Yaakov.
14. 46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family.
15. 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.
16. 46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshipped sheep.
17. 47:2 - So Pharaoh wouldn't see their strength and draft them.
18. 47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh.
19. 47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being strangers.
20. 47:22 - The Egyptian priests.

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- Improper thoughts during sacrificial service
- When one thought contradicts another
- The dogs that devoured the flesh of a queen
- Who may perform the slaughtering of a sacrifice
- The long knife
- Partial entry of the ritually impure into *Beit Hamikdash*
- The role of *semicha* in the sacrificial service
- The penalty for touching sacred meat in an impure state
- Placing on the altar the parts of a forbidden or wild animal
- Problems in the receiving of blood from slaughtered sacrifice
- If *pigul* applies to something which is not normally eaten
- Improper thoughts which do not result in *pigul*

THE PIGUL PUZZLE

A major part of this *mesechta* deals with the concept of *pigul* — the disqualification of a sacrifice resulting from the *kohen* having in mind, while performing one of the four vital services, that the meat of the sacrifice will be consumed beyond the time limit set by the Torah.

Is this rule limited to human consumption?

While it certainly applies as well to the consumption of its blood or innards on the altar, there is still the question as to whether it also applies to eating the meat by an animal.

Rabbi Yannai offers an interesting source for ruling that if the *kohen* had in mind the sacrificial meat would be eaten by dogs beyond the time limit for consumption, the result would be *pigul*.

The Prophet Eliyahu had predicted that “the dogs shall eat the flesh of Izevel” (*Melachim* II, 9:36) as punishment for

the propagation of idol worship by this wicked queen of Israel. This indicates that consumption by dogs is also considered eating.

What about consumption by other animals?

In his commentary, Rabbi Yaakov Emden directs us to the confrontation between David and the giant Goliyat. Outraged by David’s challenging him with a puny slingshot, this Philistine giant cried, “Come to me and I will give your flesh... to the beasts of the field.” (*Shmuel* II 17:24). The *midrash* states that upon hearing this taunt David concluded that the giant was deranged — since domesticated animals are not accustomed to meat — and that he would therefore succeed in defeating him.

Based on this *midrash* he concludes that having in mind the consumption of sacrificial meat by animals will not result in *pigul*.

• *Zevachim* 31a

What the SAGES Say

“No doorway could be added in the *Beit Hamikdash* to accommodate the *metzora* whose entry was forbidden, because King David had declared, ‘All this has been put into writing by the hand of G-d Who instructed me regarding all the works of the structure’ (*Divrei Hayamim* I, 28:19).”

• *The Sages Abaye and Rava*

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

disconnected we feel, we can remind ourselves that the darkest hour is just before dawn.

For a number of years I have had the privilege to teach young men who have grown up on a diet of MTV. One of the things that never fail to amaze me is how these same young men who have been trained to have attention span of about two minutes and 43 seconds — the average length of a pop song — can sit down and learn Talmud in depth. Learning the Talmud demands the ability to hold in one’s head several pieces of information, to compare them and make very fine distinctions between them, the mental equivalent of juggling balls that are constantly changing their weight, shape and direction. And yet they do it. How?

In this week’s Torah portion, Yaakov prepares to descend

into the darkness of exile in Egypt. The light is about to go out and nearly two hundred years of slavery are about to begin. Before Yaakov goes to down to Egypt he sends before him his son Yehuda to open the Egyptian equivalent of a Yeshiva. Everything the Patriarchs did is a spiritual beacon for their descendants till the end of time. Yaakov was showing us that even in the blackest spiritual darkness of Egypt, the Torah could still be learned. Moreover, the very nature of Torah learning, the mental effort required to assemble all the pieces together, is the very antidote to the “smallness of mind” that the darkness brings.

Learning Torah allows us to see the big picture. It takes the darkness of depression and transforms it into the wisdom of happiness.

WHY KOSHER

From: Arthur

Dear Rabbi,
Would you please explain to me the reasons for keeping kosher?

Dear Arthur,

First of all, as regarding all *mitzvot*, we keep kosher because G-d commanded to do so in the Torah. And even though Maimonides writes that one should meditate upon and search for the meaning of *mitzvot*, he concludes that our performance of them is ultimately not dependent on their reason.

That being said, *mitzvot* in general are viewed as venues through which we connect to G-d by fulfilling His will. Thus the term “*mitzvah*” comes from the Hebrew “*tzav*” which means command, but it is also related to “*tzevet*” which means connection. Similarly, The Zohar refers to *mitzvot* as “*itin*” in Aramaic, which translates as “*eitzot*” in Hebrew, or words of advice – i.e., recommendations on how to get close with G-d.

Regarding the meaning of the *mitzvah* of kosher in particular, several ideas are discussed in our sources.

Initially mankind was intended to be vegetarian (Gen. 1:29). This is because the peaceful nature of plants makes them the food considered most conducive to spirituality, whereas the carnal nature of animals is harmful. Once mankind was permitted meat, G-d desired that people eat the most “plant-like” of animals. Thus, only docile, herbivorous animals and birds are permitted.

Similarly, since the blood is the vivifying force of an animal, the blood of even these peaceful species is forbidden and must be completely removed before eating them (Deut. 12:23). According to the Torah, the animal soul is rooted in the blood (Gen. 9:4), so the consumption of animal blood incorporates animalism into the fiber and fabric of one’s being. The Hebrew word for blood, “*dam*”, is comprised of “*dalet*” which equals 4 and the “final *mem*” which is a closed letter. This implies that consumption of blood boxes one in within temporality.

Others of the kosher laws are directed less at the qualities imparted by the animal to man, and are rather more concerned with imparting good qualities in the person toward the animal.

So ritual slaughter, for example – with its prohibition against inflicting a wound on the living animal, its requirement of an absolutely smooth blade, and its immediate prevention of blood supply to the brain which terminates the animal’s bodily sensation – is intended to be as humane and painless as possible. [Here, it’s important to note that while the nerve response after slaughter might cause the appearance of suffering, the animal does not actually sense pain. A well-known example of this is the phenomenon of a chicken running around with its head cut off. As eerie as this looks, the chicken can’t possibly feel without a head.]

Similarly, the prohibition against meat and milk is also designed to maintain compassion in consumption. For one, this prohibition forbids slaughtering a mother and her calf on the same day, lest one see the demise of the other. And second, if we choose to eat meat, the absence of milk reminds us during the actual act of eating that not only has a life been taken by our consumption, but the lives of offspring have thereby also been prevented.

In fact, given the logistic difficulties of the kosher laws together with the fact that the ideas they engender are hard to stomach, the commentators note that the kosher requirements are actually designed to discourage one from eating meat except in the most urgent of circumstances. Thus, the full spectrum of the kosher laws, which discipline the most urgent of our bodily needs and desires – food consumption – inculcates self-control and restraint which benefits one in all realms of life for one’s entire life.

A last reason for keeping kosher is that the unique Jewish dietary laws ensure Jewish continuity because they enhance one’s sense of Jewish identity, encourage proximity to a Jewish community and, since food is so central to social life, they discourage one from getting too close to those unwilling to keep kosher and rather guarantee that Jews will socialize with and marry within the Tribe.

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THE SILENT (MIS)TREATMENT

Question: I have a next-door neighbor who causes me great discomfort. The smoke coming into my yard when he burns his leaves and the volume of the music he plays when I am trying to take an afternoon nap are examples of his inconsiderate behavior. Rather than get into a quarrel with him I have just stopped talking to him. Is this the proper approach?

Answer: Definitely not. While your desire to avoid quarreling with your neighbor is highly commendable, your giving him the “silent treatment” is not a commendable or effective way of dealing with someone who you feel has hurt you.

In his *Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Dayot 6:6)* Rambam has the following to say on this subject: “When one man sins against another, the victim should not hate him and maintain silence. This is the way of the wicked, as it is written about Avshalom that “he did not speak with Amnon neither good nor bad, for

Avshalom hated Amnon” (*Shmuel II 13:22*). On the contrary, he is obligated to confront him and to say to him, ‘Why did you do this to me and why did you sin against me in this way?’ This is what the Torah instructs us to do in the command of ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you must surely rebuke your neighbor.’” (*Vayikra 19:17*).

The purpose of such confrontation is to give the other fellow an opportunity to explain himself. He may be completely unaware that his smoke or his noise is actually reaching and disturbing you. In the worst-case scenario that he was truly inconsiderate, your rebuke may well elicit from him an apology for his behavior.

This is not merely good advice for neighbors. Many of the strained relations between husband and wife, parents and children and business associates could be averted if the injured party summoned up the courage to confront rather than let silence prolong the hatred.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

CHARITY SAVES FROM DEFEAT

Charity, said the wisest of men, King Solomon, saves from death. A soccer team in Israel turned this advice into a strategy for avoiding defeat, a fate comparable to death for sports competitors.

Beitar Yerushalayim was scheduled to play against the national champions, Maccabi Haifa, and an extra measure of motivation was needed to overcome superior opponents. Team sponsor Eddie Mor hit on the idea of saving his players from defeat through charity. He set up a partnership

between the team and Aleh, an organization serving children with disabilities with centers in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak and Gedera, and kicked it off with a donation of \$10,000. His players responded with their most inspired play of the year and scored a 4-0 upset.

It’s one of the secrets of team sports, said Mor after also organizing regular visits to the centers by team players. They play better when they look beyond themselves and focus on the team.

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