

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TEITZEI · 11 ELUL 5774 - SEP. 6, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 50

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE WHEAT IS GREENER

*“When you go out to war against your enemy and the L-rd your G-d gives him into your hand...” (21:1)*

Sometimes the words of our Holy Torah leap off the page with a contemporary significance that makes further commentary redundant.

*“When you go out to war against your enemy and the L-rd your G-d gives him into your hand...”*

The upcoming year is a Shemita agricultural Sabbatical year in which the fields of the Land of Israel must lie fallow.

Thus, a matza-baking *chabura* (group) from Bnei Brak was searching the whole Land for a wheat field that would yield grain sufficient for two years of matza production.

They needed very green wheat sown late in the season, watered mainly by late-falling rain. At Kibbutz Sufa right next to the Gaza border they found 2000 dunams, nearly 500 acres of green wheat, sown in mid-January, which was considered very unusual. This was what they had been looking for.

They went to work.

However, their efforts did not escape the notice of the military police who were somewhat surprised to see a group of bearded rabbis with their *peyot* flying, merrily driving their

combine harvesters up and down in clear sight of the artillery barrage in Gaza. (Editor’s note: Their behavior is not recommended or supported by the author or by this publication; it is a report of the event.)

They carried on working even when they heard the sirens, confident in the protection that their work for the good of the community would bestow on them.

The following week, 13 terrorists from Gaza emerged from their tunnel in the middle of these fields, confident that their exit would be screened by 2000 dunams of wheat. Their only problem was that the wheat was now on its way to Bnei Brak!

As soon as the terrorists emerged from the tunnel the army opened fire, saving many Jewish lives by the Grace of Heaven.

*“When you go out to war against your enemy and the L-rd your G-d gives him into your hand...”*

• Source: Rabbi Aharon Samet in a radio interview with Rabbi Moshe Ben Lulu

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son’s right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father’s desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women’s clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. *Bnei Yisrael*

are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara’at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers’ pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother’s widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for, in spite of knowing about the Exodus, they ambushed the Jewish People.

## MO'ED KATAN 27-29 – CHAGIGA 2-5

*“One’s lifespan, children and livelihood are not dependent on one’s merits; rather they depend on one’s mazal.”*

This statement made by Rava on our *daf* appears to contradict a teaching found in other places in *Shas* (such as Shabbat 156a) that state, “There is no *mazal* for Yisrael”, meaning that the Jewish People are not controlled by *mazal*.

Tosefot asks this question and offers two answers. In our Tractate of Mo’ed Katan, Tosefot explains that the statement “There is no *mazal* for Yisrael” is not categorical. It means that *mazal* does not always determine one’s standing in this world. Sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn’t. In Tractate Shabbat, however, Tosefot offers a different answer. In general, *mazal* indeed determines one’s lifespan, children and livelihood. But if one has great enough merit, his *mazal* can be changed for the better in this world to be granted longer life, more children and greater wealth.

• Mo’ed Katan 28a

*“G-d cries for three types of people each day: For a person who is able to learn Torah but does not learn, for a person who is unable to learn Torah but nevertheless does learn, and for a leader who acts with haughtiness over the community.”*

This *beraita* is taught in our *gemara* in the midst of other cases of G-d “crying”, as it were, for tragic events, such as the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and the exile of the Jewish People from the Land of Israel. Of the three types of people mentioned in this *beraita*, one seems to require special explanation: a person who cannot learn but learns anyway. How can this be?

One approach to understand this is that the person is banned from learning Torah due to the decrees of the nation that rules over him at the time, decrees that are unfortunately a part of the long history of the Jewish People. But despite the decree against learning Torah, this person continues to learn Torah in private. G-d “cries” — as it were — as a show of His Divine attribute of mercy kindled by this person’s dedication and commitment to the Torah.

Another explanation I have heard is that the person mentioned here who “cannot learn Torah” refers to someone who speaks *lashon hara* (harmful speech). A mouth that speaks *lashon hara* is not fit to speak words of Torah (see Tehillim 50:16 and Sanhedrin 106b). G-d cries for this person who has lost his right to learn Torah. Only after he repents for speaking *lashon hara* may he continue to speak the words of the holy Torah.

• Chagiga 5b

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor's house?
2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
3. What will become of a *ben sorer u'moreh* if his parents don't bring him to court?
4. Why is it a degradation to G-d to hang a criminal's body on the gallows overnight?
5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
13. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
16. "Remember what G-d did to Miriam." To what event does the Torah refer?
17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
19. Which two people in this week's *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?

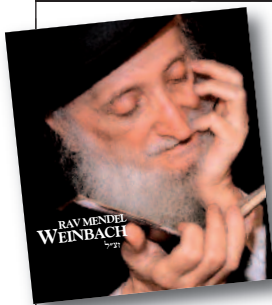
## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in G-d's image, and because the Jewish People are G-d's children.
5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
16. 24:9 - G-d punishing Miriam with *tzara'at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the "forgotten bundle" for the poor.
18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother's widow).
20. 25:16 - "An abomination (*to'evah*) to G-d."

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# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

One of the more puzzling *mitzvot* in this Parsha concerns the ‘wayward and rebellious son’ who can be executed at the age of 13 for what appear to be relatively minor infractions. Briefly, the Torah describes a 13 year-old boy who does not listen to his parents, even after they discipline him. They bring him to the elders of the city and explain: “This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not listen to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard” (Devarim 21:20). He is then stoned to death by the people of the city in order to remove this evil from the populace and to instill fear in them as well.

Abarbanel explains that on the simplest level ‘wayward’ refers to his deviating from the general path of the *mitzvot*, while ‘rebellious’ refers to his intractable defiance of his parents. He is also guilty of explicitly transgressing the requirement to honor one’s parents. And finally, his drunkenness and gluttony places him even lower than animals, which eat only to satisfy their basic needs. The Talmud also says that he is essentially executed on his likely future behavior: stealing from his parents and committing violent highway robbery against the general public. This illustrates the general principle that “It is better to die innocent of transgression than to die guilty.”

Abarbanel explains further that when we look deeper into this situation we can see how far this young man has deviated from behavioral norms. Normally in Jewish law, no one can be executed without the testimony of two ‘kosher’ witnesses. In this case, the only witnesses are the parents,

who would normally be disqualified from testifying against their own son. They also must bring him to the court themselves, another indication of their commitment to a procedure which could result in the death of their own offspring. His behavior and attitude would have had to be egregious in the extreme for the parents to overcome their natural inclination to be merciful toward their child. He is judged and executed publicly and the Torah tells us that “...all Israel will hear and they will fear.” Everyone will shudder to think what such a deviant individual would be capable of once he reaches true adulthood.

The severity of his deviance is also indicated by the Torah’s choice of words in describing his personality. The word “*moreh*” — which is usually translated as “rebellious” — is directly related to the word for “teacher”. Not only does he not listen to his parents and rebels against them, he even seeks to reverse roles and become their teacher, attempting to convince them that his disavowal of the Torah and the norms of human behavior are actually the correct way to conduct one’s life. Anti-religious, anti-social, gluttonous and psychopathic behaviors have characterized human society since time immemorial, but rarely if ever have such individuals advocated their codification as the norms of society. This phenomenon is aptly described by King Solomon in Proverbs (30:11-13): “His father he will curse and his mother he will not bless. He will be pure in his own eyes and from his filth he will not be cleansed. One whose eyes are haughty....”

### LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## OHR AKIVA — ECHO OF MARTYRDOM

Near Caesarea, on the northern coastal plain between Tel Aviv and Haifa, is the city of Ohr Akiva. Named for the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Akiva who was martyred by the Romans in Caesarea, this is a community composed of immigrants to Israel.

The original settlers were North African Jews who



were transferred from an immigrant camp in nearby Hadera to the sand dunes of Caesarea. The massive immigration from the former Soviet Union brought many *olim* immigrants from the Caucasian region to Ohr Akiva and transformed the city into a largely Russian enclave.

## THE SOUL

From Jane in LA:

Dear Rabbi,  
What is the soul?

Dear Jane,

The Torah states that “G-d formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul”. This soul was extremely holy. The Midrash says Adam’s soul was so elevated that the angels mistook him for G-d. In fact, the Talmud metaphorically relates that Adam reached from earth to Heaven. Obviously our Sages were not referring to Adam’s physical size, but rather to his tremendous spiritual stature.

The above-mentioned verse hints to different aspects of the soul. Man became a “living soul” (*nefesh*), and G-d “breathed” into him (*ruach*), the “breath of life” (*neshama*). There are two additional dimensions of the soul, *chaya* (life) and *yechida* (oneness). Therefore the Sages taught that “the soul has five names: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*, *chaya*, and *yechida*.”

Rav Saadya Gaon (10th century) takes this statement literally, meaning the soul is one entity with five different names that describe five different attributes. It is called *Nefesh* since it drives the physical desires and needs responsible for growth, as in the verse “when your *nefesh* desires to eat meat”. It is named *Ruach* since it generates emotions, as in the verse “be not hasty in your *ruach* to be angry”. It is called *Neshama* in that it imparts intellect and thought, as in “the *neshama* gives men understanding”. The soul is also named *Chaya* since it derives its vitality from G-d, and *Yechida* refers to its uniqueness.

The Kabbalists, however, understood that these five names refer to five different levels of the soul which are connected like links in a chain. The highest level (*yechida*) is attached to G-d, and the lowest level (*nefesh*) resides in the blood. The *nefesh*, or “animal soul” common to all living creatures, drives the metabolism and maintains life. *Ruach*, the first level of the “human soul,” generates feelings and personal qualities. The *neshama* pulls man towards G-d, to the performance of good deeds, to be pious and humble and to seek spiritual knowledge and achievement. The levels of *chaya* and *yechida* are far above the human realm, belonging to the esoteric.

The soul’s role as connector between G-d, the purely spiritual, and man’s purely physical body was described by the mystics with the allegory of a glassblower. When the glassblower breathes into the glass, the outermost layer of air impacts the vessel, fixing its form, and comes to rest there (*nefesh* means rest). This outer layer of air is animated by and connected to the wind (*ruach*) that precedes it. In turn, this wind is an extension of the breath (*neshima*) of the glassblower. Finally, the breath is a manifestation of the life (*chaya*) of the glassblower, while *yechida* would correspond to the “Glassblower’s” unique soul.

According to this, glassblowing can be said to have originated in the Middle East in more ways than one!

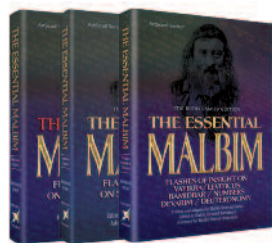
Sources:

- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis Rabba, 8:10 & 14:9
- Sanhedrin 38b
- Deuteronomy 12:20
- Ecclesiastes 7:9
- Job 33:8
- The Way of G-d, part 3, chapter 1

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## THE SHEMONEH ESREI: THE FOURTH BLESSING (PART 3)

**“You graciously grant knowledge to man, and teach understanding to mortals.”**

There are a few questions that arise after reading the first part of this blessing: 1) What is the difference between knowledge (*da'at*) and understanding (*binah*)? 2) Why is it necessary to mention both? 3) Also, why, when referring to knowledge is the word “*adam*” (man) used, while when referring to understanding the term “*enosh*” (mortal) is used?

The Sages explain that the loftiest and most prestigious name of the human being is “Adam,” the name given to the first man. In fact, the Torah states that Adam was created in G-d’s image. In connection to the above the Talmud explains that an animal would never attack a human being, since he was created in G-d’s image.

The obvious question arises: How come people are attacked by animals? The answer is that only when a person behaves in accordance with G-d’s ways can it truly be said that he is created in the Divine image, and only then is he protected from the attack of animals. When, however, a person follows his animal instinct, he loses his Divine image, and as a result the animals no longer fear attacking him.

Therefore, when using the word “*Adam*”, which indicates a person who maintains his Divine image, the word “*da'at*” is used, because the word *da'at* implies the type of knowledge that connects one to his Creator. In fact, the Sages

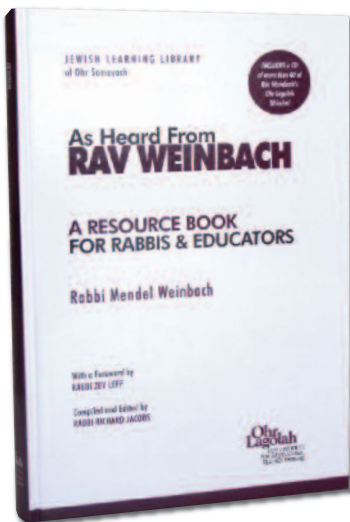
explain that *da'at* can refer to someone who received Divine communication, called *Ruach Ha’Kodesh*.

“*Enosh*” relates to a lower level of human existence, one that is more animalistic and lacking a true and intimate connection with G-d. Accordingly, someone on this level does not have *da'at*, but rather the base level of understanding that was given to all human beings. Even the human “animal,” who can unfortunately sometimes behave worse than an animal, is given the gift of understanding. However, he can still remain debased and corrupt despite achieving high levels of understanding.

**“Graciously grant us from ‘Yourself’ wisdom.”**

Alternatively, the knowledge given to man (*adam*) can refer specifically to Torah knowledge, since only through learning Torah, which is an expression of Divine wisdom, can man unify with his Creator. This is far different from the understanding of worldly matters that is attained through secular study.

Accordingly, we ask that G-d grant us wisdom “from Him.” But can there be any wisdom that is not from G-d? The answer is that the only wisdom that represents G-d’s “innermost” - the wisdom expressed in the Torah - is considered to be “His Wisdom.” All other wisdom, which is external and secondary in the bigger picture of life’s ultimate purpose, is not called “His” in the truest sense.



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