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SHABBAT PARSHAT TAZRIA · 1 NISSAN 5776 - APR. 9, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 27

PARSHA INSIGHTS

BODY AND SOUL

“A woman who gives forth seed and bears a male...” (12:2)

“Says Rav Simlai, ‘Just as (the Torah describes) the formation of man after every domestic animal and wild animal and fowl in the sequence of the Creation, so is (man’s) ‘Torah’ explained after the ‘Torah’ of the domestic animal, the wild animal and the fowl.’” (Rashi)

The “Torah” to which Rashi refers is the set of laws of ritual purity, *tuma* and *tahara*.

The question arises, when placing the laws of man after the laws of the animals, why did the Torah chose specifically to speak of the laws of ritual purity? Why didn’t it choose to segue one of the other many Torah laws that apply to man?

Furthermore, why did Rav Simlai speak of the “formation” (*yetzira*) of man as opposed to his “creation” (*bria*)?

Man has two parts, a physical part and a spiritual part. *Yetzira* — formation — refers to his physical existence, whereas *bria* — creation — refers to his spiritual being.

Man’s physical formation indeed took place after the formation all the animals. However, the spiritual existence of man precedes all.

For this reason Rav Simlai used the word “formation” to refer to man’s physical side coming after the beasts, and for this same reason the Torah singles out the laws of ritual purity, for these laws are only applicable to the “animal” side of man.

• Sources: Chatam Sofer as seen in *Talei Orot*

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

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KIDDUSHIN 30 - 36

Rabbi Chanina said, "A person who is commanded to do a mitzvah and does it is greater than a person who is not commanded to do a mitzvah and does it."

Tosefot offers an explanation for why a commanded person is "greater" and receives more reward for a mitzvah: Since the commanded person is worried and concerned that he may not properly fulfill that which he was commanded to do, he receives greater reward. One who is not commanded to do the mitzvah does not have this fear, since he may simply not do the mitzvah, without repercussions.

The *gemara* cites a fascinating statement by Rav Yosef regarding this teaching of Rabbi Chanina. Rav Yosef, said, "At first (before I learned the teaching of Rabbi Chanina) I thought that if I would be taught that the halacha is like Rabbi Yehuda who said that a blind person (like Rav Yosef) is exempt from *mitzvot*, I would make a festive meal for the Torah students, since I would *not* be obligated and nevertheless I would be fulfilling the *mitzvot*. But now that I have learned the teaching of Rabbi Chanina that one who is commanded and fulfills the mitzvah is greater, if I would be taught that the halacha is *not* like Rabbi Yehuda who said that a blind person is exempt from *mitzvot*, then I would make a festive meal for the Torah students."

Tosefot on the *daf* deduces from Rav Yosef's statement that women, who are exempt from time-bound positive *mitzvot*, should still say the *beracha* for the mitzvah if they choose to fulfill the mitzvah. Otherwise, why would Rav Yosef say that at first he would have celebrated if he would have been exempt from *mitzvot*, if being exempt would not allow him to say the *beracha* for the mitzvah when he fulfilled it despite his exemption? There is discussion in the *poskim* as to whether women may say a *beracha* for a time-bound mitzvah, such as lulav or succah, and the Ashkenazic custom is that women indeed say the appropriate *beracha*.

• *Kiddushin 31a*

Rabbi Yosi Hagalili said, "The word 'zaken' (in the verse) refers to one who has acquired Torah wisdom."

The Torah states in Vayikra 19:32, "You shall rise before an elderly person and you shall respect the 'zaken', and you shall fear your G-d. I am the L-rd." We see in this verse that there is a mitzvah, a positive command, to show honor by standing up for a "zaken". Whom does the Torah refer to with the word "zaken"?

According to the explanation of the *gemara*, Rabbi Yosi Hagalili states that the Torah mitzvah to rise before a "zaken" applies not only to rising for an elderly Torah scholar, but even for a young Torah scholar. This is because even a young Torah scholar is called a "zaken" (although it is usually translated to mean "elderly"), since "zaken" in the verse refers to "one who has acquired Torah wisdom", regardless of his age. Rashi explains that Rabbi Yosi's Hagalili understands the word "zaken" in the verse as an acronym for three Hebrew words: "Zeh kana chochma", meaning "this person acquired (Torah) wisdom". The halacha is according to the ruling of Rabbi Yosi Hagalili and is cited in Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 240:1.

A famous question is asked on this explanation. True, I can "see" the words "zeh" and "kana" in the word "zaken", but where is the hint to the key word for "chochma", Torah wisdom, in the word "zaken"?

What is the one and only true possession that a person *acquires*? The wisdom of the Torah. A person who "acquires Torah" turns it into part of his being and owns it for eternity. All other possessions can come and go, and are not truly part of a person's essence. Therefore, although the word "zaken" appears to contain only the words for "this person acquired", it *obviously* means that he has acquired Torah wisdom. "Chochma", Torah wisdom, is *understood* to be that which he acquired, since Torah is the only acquisition that is a true and lasting acquisition. (Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, *zatzal* — "the Steipler Rav")

• *Kiddushin 32b*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the *mikveh*?
2. After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?
3. What animal does the woman offer as a *chatat*?
4. Which of these offerings makes her *tahor* (ritual purity)?
5. Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the *olah* or the *chatat*?
6. Who determines whether a person is a *metzora tamei* (person with ritually impure *tzara'at*) or is *tahor*?
7. If the *kohen* sees that the *tzara'at* has spread after one week, how does he rule?
8. What disqualifies a *kohen* from being able to give a ruling in a case of *tzara'at*?
9. Why is the appearance of *tzara'at* on the tip of one of the 24 "limbs" that project from the body usually unable to be examined?
10. On which days is a *kohen* not permitted to give a ruling on *tzara'at*?
11. In areas of the body where collections of hair grow (e.g., the head or beard), what color hair is indicative of ritual impurity?
12. In areas of the body where collections of hair grow, what color hair is indicative of purity?
13. If the *kohen* intentionally or unintentionally pronounces a *tamei* person "*tahor*," what is that person's status?
14. What signs of mourning must a *metzora* display?
15. Why must a *metzora* call out, "*Tamei! Tamei!*"?
16. Where must a *metzora* dwell?
17. Why is a *metzora* commanded to dwell in isolation?
18. What sign denotes *tzara'at* in a garment?
19. What must be done to a garment that has *tzara'at*?
20. If after washing a garment the signs of *tzara'at* disappear entirely, how is the garment purified?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

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

1. 12:2 - At the end of seven days.
2. 12:6 - An *olah* and a *chatat*.
3. 12:6 - A *tor* (turtle dove) or a *ben yona* (young pigeon).
4. 12:7 - The *chatat*.
5. 12:8 - The *chatat*.
6. 13:2 - A *kohen*.
7. 13:5 - The person is *tamei*.
8. 13:12 - Poor vision.
9. 13:14 - The *tzara'at* as a whole must be seen at one time. Since these parts are angular, they cannot be seen at one time.
10. 13:14 - During the festivals; and ruling on a groom during the seven days of feasting after the marriage.
11. 13:29 - Golden.
12. 13:37 - Any color other than golden.
13. 13:37 - He remains *tamei*.
14. 13:45 - He must tear his garments, let his hair grow wild, and cover his lips with his garment.
15. 13:45 - So people will know to keep away from him.
16. 13:46 - Outside the camp in isolation.
17. 13:46 - Since *tzara'at* is a punishment for *lashon hara* (evil speech), which creates a rift between people, the Torah punishes measure for measure by placing a division between him and others.
18. 13:49 - A dark green or dark red discoloration.
19. 13:52 - It must be burned.
20. 13:58 - Through immersion in a *mikveh*.

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Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Tazria

Why Does Childbirth Require Sacrificial Atonement?

“G-d spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, ‘When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be ritually impure for a seven-day period... If she gives birth to a female, she shall be ritually impure for two weeks... Upon the completion of the days of her purity for a son or a daughter, she shall bring a sheep within its first year for an elevation-offering, and a young dove or a turtledove for a sin-offering to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the *kohen*.’” (Leviticus 12:1-6)

In this week’s portion the Torah teaches us that a woman is required to bring two sacrificial offerings after childbirth — an elevation-offering that is totally consumed on the Altar, and a sin-offering to atone for her transgressions. Abarbanel questions why she has to bring an elevation-offering, and also wonders what sin she did that required atonement after childbirth. In terms of the sin-offering, Abarbanel mentions first the *gemara* in Tractate Niddah which explains that the pain of childbirth causes a woman to swear to abstain from relations with her husband in the future. Such an oath is considered to be taken in vain since a woman is prohibited from

voluntarily abstaining from relations.

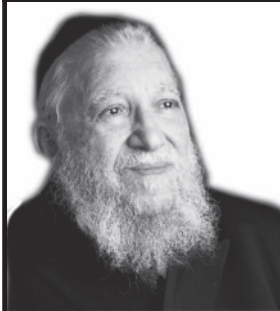
Abarbanel then offers a different insight. Although a sin-offering normally precedes an elevation-offering, the order is reversed here as a result of the unique experience of childbirth. An elevation-offering expresses an individual’s desire to come closer to G-d, to elevate oneself spiritually. A woman who has experienced childbirth recognizes that her Creator has wondrously saved her from the enormous danger of the experience. She naturally wants to express her total gratitude by drawing nearer to G-d with an offering that is totally consumed. On the other hand, we are taught that no one experiences any pain or suffering in this world unless he has in some way transgressed. Abarbanel posits that even if the woman does not transgress blatantly by swearing never to have relations with her husband again, the sin-offering still functions as atonement for transgressions of which she is not aware. The difference between the two offerings is indicated by the language of the Torah. In reference to the elevation-offering the Torah states, “...and he (the *kohen*) shall offer it up (bring it near) before G-d...”, whereas in reference to the sin-offering the Torah states “... and it will atone for her.” (Leviticus 12:7-8)

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara’at* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara’at* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week.

If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person’s status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara’at*. One whose *tzara’at* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara’at* on clothing is described in detail.

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Rav Bulman *zt”l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

MARRIAGE VOWS

From: Anonymous

Dear Rabbi,

I need advice about my marriage. When we were first married, my wife and I got along fine. Over time I started to feel unhappy with the relationship, mainly because I felt it became dull, and also because I expected more attention from my wife, but she always complained that I don't treat her well. Now things are in a stale-mate and neither of us is happy. I'm thinking it would be better at this point to call it quits and move on. What do you think?

Dear Anonymous,

Your situation does not sound anywhere near justification for divorce. What you both need is proper guidance in re-railing your de-railed relations.

In this venue I can not possibly do that, but I can try to put things into perspective and point you in the right direction. But you must get direct, personal help.

From what you describe it seems that you both need some fine-tuning in your understanding and approach to what marriage is all about and how to make it work, and even enjoy it.

But since you are the one who addressed the question and not your wife, I will only comment on what I think you can do to improve the situation. And anyway, *your* focus should be on what *you* need to correct, rather than on what *she* needs to do.

Firstly, you need to realize that your relationship has a lot of potential for fulfillment. After all, you thought enough of each other to get married in the first place, and your marriage was actually initially good. That's a good place to start.

You complain of the marriage becoming dull, and of your wife not showing you enough attention. I suspect it's really the other way around — the lack of attention is the cause of your feeling that the marriage is dull.

But we can start from your being bored. Clearly, if you feel bored with your wife, you make yourself a bore as well, and you won't be particularly appealing to her either. Nor will you have much incentive to treat her nicely and lovingly. The result on both accounts is that you will undermine getting the very attention that you desire, and then wonder what *she* has to complain about.

It's very likely that this is what began the vicious cycle that you're both locked into, and from which you think divorce will liberate you. But it won't, since the same thing will happen in any relationship you have until you change your

approach. So you might as well do so now and save your fundamentally good marriage.

Rather than expecting attention from your wife, not getting enough of it, becoming frustrated and dissatisfied and thereby repelling her and distancing her even further from giving you the warmth you desire, you should shower upon her the attention that you know how to want but not how to give. The more attention you give her and the more love you show her, the more you'll truly feel it, the more she'll desire it, the more she'll be attracted to you for it and the more attention you'll get.

Abracadabra! In such a relationship she'll no longer complain of not being treated well and you'll no longer be bored!

A man once came to a rabbi complaining that he can't tolerate his marriage and he asked for some prayer that his wife might die! The startled rabbi postponed answering, looked into the matter and ascertained that the man was actually quite wealthy, but very stingy with his wife, both materially and emotionally.

After some time he called in the man and explained that while there's no such special prayer, there is a teaching that if one reneges on an oath to charity, his wife and children will die. The rabbi therefore suggested that the man pledge a large donation to the community, not pay, thereby resulting in his wife's death within a month. The rabbi's only stipulation was that at least he must treat his wife extra kindly in the short time she has left to live.

Elated by the prospect of soon being liberated from his wife, the man went out of his way to be kind, pleasant, sensitive and emotionally and materially giving to her. To his great surprise, the man actually found that he enjoyed it, and what's more, he found that his reciprocating wife was not as insufferable as he had thought. In fact, after a few weeks he actually felt a rekindled love that they shared in their early years of marriage.

Toward the end of a month's time, aware of the change for the better, the rabbi approached the man and congratulated him on his efforts to please his soon-to-be-dead wife. All of a sudden he recalled the unfulfilled oath and his wife's pending demise. Alarmed, he explained to the rabbi what had transpired in the interim and pleaded with the rabbi that she not die.

But the rabbi replied, "A deal is a deal. You committed to abrogate your oath to the community so that your wife will die." The terrified man countered, "Yes, but if I abrogate my commitment and rather fulfill my oath to the community, she'll live!" When the rabbi concurred, the man gladly donated generously to the community, his wife's life was saved and the couple lived happily ever after...

IT'S TIME FOR THE MORNING PRAYER

Avraham *avinu* instituted the Morning Prayer (*Shacharit*), as it is written: "Avraham arose early in the morning to the place that he had stood." (Gen. 19:27) Our Talmudic Sages teach that the word in the verse that refers to "standing" means nothing other than prayer — *Berachot 26b*. We are also taught that the "Gate of Heaven", the place to where our prayers ascend, opens at dawn, making it an ideal time for prayer. (Ba'al Ha'Turim to Gen. 28:17)

The Earliest Time

The ideal time for the morning prayer, the morning *Shemoneh Esrei*, is with the sunrise, as it is written, "They will fear You (i.e., recite the Shema, which includes accepting the yoke of Heaven) with the rising of the sun (when the *Shemoneh Esrei* in recited)." If however one prayed after dawn, as long as the sky is already illuminated by sunlight, he still fulfills his obligation. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 89:1)

Some of the later halachic authorities rule that one fulfills his obligation *bidi'eved* (lit. "after the fact", i.e., not the preferred way) even before the sky becomes illuminated, as long as he prayed after dawn (Magen Avraham; Pri Chadash; Shulchan Aruch Ha'Rav and others), while other *poskim* rule that even *bidi'eved* one must wait until the sky has already become illuminated, in accordance with the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch. (Eliya Rabba; Mateh Yehuda; the Vilna Gaon in Sh'not Eliyahu; Magen Giborim)

The Mishnah Berurah concludes that due to this dispute

one should pray before the sky becomes illuminated *only* in a pressing situation ("*sha'at hadachak*"). The Kaf Ha'Chaim and Yalkut Yosef are more lenient, ruling that even when not in a pressing situation one fulfills his obligation *bidi'eved* after dawn.

The Latest Time

The time for *Shacharit* extends until the end of the fourth hour, which is one third of the day. If this time has passed and one did not pray, whether it was on purpose or by mistake, he may pray until mid-day and receive the reward for prayer, although not the reward for praying in the proper time. The Rema writes: After mid-day it is forbidden to pray *Shacharit*. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 89:1)

The Mishnah Berurah mentions an opinion that allows praying up to a half-hour after mid-day. However, he concludes, due to an overwhelming majority of authorities who reject this lenient opinion, it is better not to veer from the ruling of the Rema. However, if he was late unintentionally and nevertheless *did* pray within the first half hour after mid-day, *bidi'eved* he fulfilled his obligation. (Mishneh Berurah in the name of Derech Ha'Chaim) The Kaf Ha'Chaim writes in the name of many *poskim* that praying *Shacharit* after mid-day may likely be a "*beracha levatala*" (wasteful and forbidden blessings), and that one should therefore never intentionally pray after mid-day.

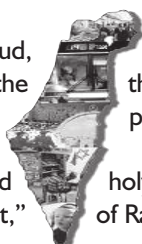
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

EIN ZEITIM — TOMB OF RABBI KURSPEDAI

Although we find no trace of his name in the Talmud, Rabbi Kruspedai is frequently mentioned in the Zohar.

Located about two miles from Tsefat the grave of this Sage served as a prayer site for the Jews of Tsefat who fled from Arab riots in the 1830s. "There we sat and also wept,"



wrote a witness from that period in a reference to the Psalmist's words about the Babylonian exile. "We prayed to G-d to save us in the merit of the *tzaddikim*."

Today, as well, Jews who visit Tsefat to pray at the holy tombs include in their excursion a stop at the tomb of Rabbi Kurspedai in Ein Zeitim.

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RABBI ARYEH LEIB BOLEL

Graduated Ohr Lagolah in 2009

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Originally from Gateshead in England, Rabbi Bolel spent the majority of his years learning Torah in Jerusalem. In addition to being an ordained rabbi, he holds a Bachelor of Arts in Judaic Studies, Master of Business Administration and is a teacher certified by the Israel Ministry of Education, and he is a member of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and the Chicago Rabbinical Council (CRC).

Rabbi Bolel, with his warmth, enthusiasm, leadership and knowledge, has

attracted new families, young and senior, to Beth El Jacob, seeing an increase of more than 40% in membership since his arrival. In addition to his dedication and responsibilities at the synagogue, Rabbi Bolel has established outreach programs catering to the Jewish student in three different universities in Iowa, sits on various organization boards, and is the supervising rabbi for the *mikveh* and the *Chevra Kadisha*. Rabbi Bolel is a musician and an accomplished athlete, from football to the Ironman Triathlon.

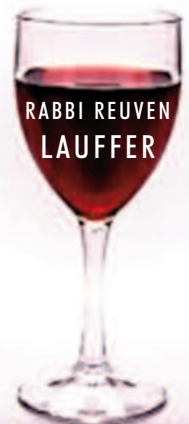


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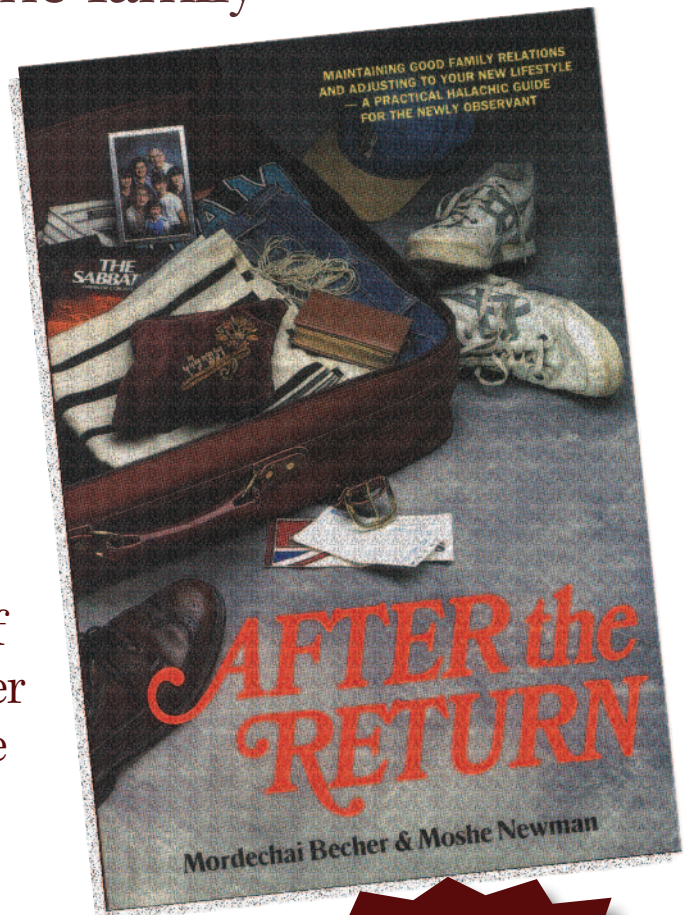
A Quartet of Ideas

FEATURING



An old friend's wedding, an uncle's funeral, Passover at the family homestead — these are but a few of the challenging real-life events that are fraught with conflict and anxiety for the newly observant.

After returning to the faith of their ancestors, many re-enter the secular world without the tools to respond to the inevitable challenges to their newly adopted set of beliefs.



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After the Return

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