

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT PINCHAS · 17 TAMMUZ 5776 - JUL. 23, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 42

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS WEEK PINCHAS IS READ IN ISRAEL AND BALAK IS READ OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

PARSHA INSIGHTS

LITTLE ME

“And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d.” (25:13)

Why wasn't Pinchas anointed with Aharon and his descendents *long before* his extraordinary zeal in avenging G-d's name? Why was it necessary for Pinchas to be *rewarded* with a “covenant of eternal priesthood” rather than having the *kehuna* as his *right*?

The mystical sources teach that the soul of Pinchas came from the same soul-source as Cain. Cain killed his brother Hevel. The Zohar says that any *kohen* who murders is disqualified from the *kehuna* forever, and thus Pinchas, through Cain, “forfeited” his right for his offspring. Cain lost the *kehuna* for Pinchas, and only Pinchas' extraordinary zeal earned the *kehuna* for himself and his descendents.

How did Pinchas' actions heal the damage that Cain's killing created?

The name “Cain” comes from the same root as *kinyan*, meaning “acquisition,” as Chava, Cain's mother, said: “I have acquired a man with G-d” (Gen. 4:1). In Jewish thought, acquisition is synonymous with existence. We talk of G-d “acquiring Heaven and Earth.” G-d's “acquisition” was the action by which he brought Heaven and Earth into existence.

In Cain's eyes he was the only acquisition in this world, its only existence. This is the root of all evil. For there can be no room for G-d in a world which is filled with “BIG ME.” If the

world is filled with the glory of ME, how can there be any other existence? BIG ME is the root of all atheism. BIG ME is the root of all jealousy. And ultimate jealousy leads ultimately to murder. For BIG ME has no more effective means to remove jealousy than to remove the source of jealousy: little you.

However, the sense of self can have a positive side. Every single person is obliged to say to himself, “The world was created for me” (Sanhedrin 37). In some way we are supposed to look at the world as though we were the only *kinyan* in it. In the Book of Chronicles it says, “The heart of King Yehoshofat, (son of David) was *raised up* in the ways of G-d.” A heart can be high with ego and evil, or it can be raised up with a zealotry to serve G-d.

When Pinchas took it upon himself to avenge the vengeance of G-d, even though he was not obliged to do so, he tapped into the positive side of Cain's unregenerate egocentricity.

For it is only when someone does something that they do not have to do can we recognize the paradox of the heart that is raised up to serve.

• Source: based on the *Shem MiShmuel*

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.

BAVA KAMA 51 - 57

A Galilean person said to Rav Chisda, “When the shepherd of a flock is angry with the flock he blinds the leading goat.”

The context for this statement on our *daf* is how to make an acquisition of a herd of animals. Rav Yaakov states that when the seller gives possession of the “front goat” to the buyer, this act constitutes an agreement for the buyer to acquire the *entire* herd, since the entire herd follows the leading goat. The *gemara* cites the above statement of the Gallilean to show that this is the typical manner of “animal behavior”, and is what many refer to as “herd mentality.”

Rashi, however, explains that the *gemara* also cites the statement of the Gallilean to teach an important lesson in *human* behavior, in particular with regard to the relationship between the nature of the *people* to be led and the nature of the leader who is appointed from Above to lead them. According to Rashi we are meant to learn from the goat analogy the following: When G-d feels it necessary to punish the Jewish People, He chooses leaders who are inappropriate, and who will lead their followers to receive the punishment that they deserve.

This statement on our *daf* teaches that the Jewish nation receives a leader that it is worthy of. We have witnessed this Divine appointment of Jewish leaders throughout the Tanach until the end of the era of prophecy. The first “king” appointed by G-d was Moshe Rabbeinu, followed by Yehoshua bin Nun, the *Shoftim* (“Judges”, who were leaders) and the Kings who ruled the Jewish People.

But what about the rulers who were appointed *after* the end of the era of prophecy, and the rulers who are elected nowadays in a democratic system? How does “Divine appointment” continue to provide leaders who reflect the level of righteousness of the Jewish People?

I have heard from a great Rabbi in Jerusalem that the leaders are controlled by G-d even nowadays, as is taught in Mishlei (21:1): “A king’s heart is like a stream of water in the hand of G-d; He turns it wherever He wishes.” Although we have free-will, it seems from this verse that a special exception is made in the case of a leader’s behavior and actions. Even in a democracy. If so, one might ask, what is the point of voting, since the leader is decided from Above?

One explanation I have heard is that the act of choosing a leader can be one of “*Kiddush Hashem*” — “Sanctifying G-d’s Name” — if a person shows that he wants a leader who represents the values, ethics and principles taught in the Torah. In addition, if the leading Rabbis of that generation issue clear guidance regarding the candidate of choice, the voter is fulfilling the mitzvah of “obeying the words of the Rabbinical Sages”. The voters can do their part to perform a *Kiddush Hashem* and also fulfill a mitzvah, and regardless of the outcome they need not be concerned since the “heart of the leader is in the hand of G-d”, and He will “turn the heart of the leader as He wishes.”

• Bava Kama 52a

Rabbi Chanina ben Agil asked, “Why is the word ‘tov’ (good) not mentioned in the First Tablets, whereas the word ‘tov’ is in fact mentioned in the Second Tablets?”

Rabbi Chanina ben Agil is puzzled in our *gemara* by the difference in wording in the Ten Commandments regarding the command to honor one’s parents. Specifically, he wondered about the *lack* of the word “*tov*” (good) when the Torah first records the text of this commandment and the reward for its fulfillment, and the *presence* of (a form of) this word “*tov*” in its second appearance in the Torah.

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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 many 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 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. For what transgression did Tzlofchad die?
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.

Pinchas

THE LOTTERY FOR ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

In this week's Torah portion the Torah speaks briefly about how the Land of Israel is to be divided among the various tribes. Abarbanel explains that the commentators are unsure about the exact nature of this division. Does each tribe receive the same amount of land, determined by Divine lottery and regardless of population? Or is the land divided by the people themselves according to population, with the more populous tribes receiving a larger portion of land? The confusion arises from the verses in this Torah portion.

First it appears that G-d is instructing Moshe to divide the land according to the populations of the tribes. However, the Torah then immediately states that "only by lot shall the land be divided, according to the names of their fathers' tribes shall they inherit. According to the lot shall one's inheritance be divided, between the numerous and the few." This lottery was conducted through a specific procedure involving a consultation of the *Urim v'Tumim* which Eliezer the *Kohen Gadol* wore on his breastplate. This Divinely-directed lottery seems to contradict a division based on population carried out by the people themselves.

After challenging the explanations of Rashi and the Ramban, Abarbanel offers his own explanation. He says that there were two stages to the division of the land. First of all, the lottery determined which district within the Land of Israel would be assigned to each tribe. Since the lottery was

Divinely-orchestrated, this would eliminate contention among the tribes. Even though some regions were more fertile or productive than others, everyone would have to recognize that the allotted areas were determined Divinely. However, the exact size of each tribe's portion within that Divinely-allotted region was to be determined by Yehoshua, Eliezer HaKohen and princes from each of the twelve tribes. They would take into account how much area within each region was required for each of the tribes, based on population. The lottery also insured that each tribe's area would be contiguous. Members of any one tribe could never be assigned to a region that was separated from the other members of his tribe.

This interpretation is supported by the verses in Parshat Masei, further on in the Torah. First the Torah states, "...this is the land that you shall divide as an inheritance by lot which G-d has commanded to give...." The Torah then immediately states, "These are the names of the men who are to take possession of the land for you: Eliezer the Kohen, and Yehoshua son of Nun, and one leader from each tribe you shall take to possess the land." After having commanded the division of the land by lottery, the Torah mentions the individuals who will determine the exact boundaries based on population.

TALMUD Tips

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We see this difference in the following verses:

"Honor your father and your mother in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you." (Ex. 20:12)

"Honor your father and your mother as the L-rd your G-d commanded you in order that your days be lengthened, and that it may go well (*"yitav"*) with you on the land that the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you." (Duet. 5:16)

We clearly see the lack of the word "*tov*" in the first

verse.

In conclusion, Rabbi Tanchum bar Chanilai explains the lack of the word "*tov*" in the first verse by stating in the name of the Sage Shmuel bar Nachum: "The First Tablets were destined to be broken, and G-d didn't want the 'goodness' that was destined for the Jewish People to be 'broken' along with the breaking of those Tablets."

• *Bava Kama 54b, 55a*

BAVA KAMA 51 - 57

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BORN THIS WAY

From: Megan

*Dear Rabbi,
I don't understand this concept of working on myself to make myself better, a different person than I am. I like who I am, what I am. As Lady Gaga's song goes, "I was born this way!" Or in rabbi-talk, "G-d made me as I am". If so, why should I change what He willed?*

Dear Megan,

Pardon me for saying this, but from a Torah perspective, what you're saying is a bit "gaga".

The reason is because, since you're talking about personality and not physique, even Lady Gaga would agree that G-d did not actually make you as you are. True, G-d creates each of us with basic traits or tendencies. But any number of factors, together with decisions we choose to make, affect these traits, and are collectively what makes us who we are at any given moment.

Therefore, as far as who we are (and not how we look), the only aspect in which we may say "I was born this way", is regarding free-will. Or in "rabbi-talk", meaning from the Torah point of view, it would actually be more correct to say "G-d made me able to make myself".

In fact, the Rambam (Hilchot De'ot 1:4) writes that there are three main factors which create any attribute: 1. Being born with the trait as one's nature; 2. Having a natural pre-disposition for the trait; 3. Acquiring, or being conditioned to acquire, the trait.

Take for example anger. One may be born with an ingrained angry temperament which naturally results in the

person being easily angered. Another person may not be "naturally" angry, but he may nevertheless be pre-disposed more than others, or be inclined, to get angry. Yet a third person might not be "naturally" nor "inclined" to be angry, but may nevertheless choose to acquire the trait of anger for any particular reason — for example to intimidate others in order to get what he wants.

However, regardless of the cause in all of the above cases, G-d does not want the person to be angry. He wants the person to exercise the free-will with which he was created in order to overcome whatever factor would otherwise lead him to anger. The same applies with all of the other negative attributes or traits that one has.

Even positive traits are not to be accepted "as is" simply because they were implanted within us by G-d. For one, they are not always manifested positively. For example, regarding mercy, our Sages (Tanchuma, Metzora) tell us that one who has mercy on the wicked is actually wicked to the merciful. One explanation of this is that having mercy on the wicked enables them to continue to be wicked to the innocent. Secondly, even a person who is naturally inclined to kindness can always refine, improve and perfect his trait of kindness.

So, far from accepting ourselves as we are, the Torah approach is to first recognize who we are at any given time, understand how we got to be that way, and to use our free-will to bring ourselves in line with the way G-d wants us to be. This can be done either by changing or modifying negative traits, or by improving or perfecting positive ones.

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:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

"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."

RIGHT HAND OVER LEFT

When praying the *Shemoneh Esrei* one should place his hands upon his heart, the right hand on top of the left; standing with fear and awe like a servant before his master. (*Shulchan Aruch* 95:3)

The source of the above ruling is found in the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* (Laws of Prayer 5:4). There is a dispute among the later Rabbis as to whether this ruling is based on the Rambam's own opinion, and is therefore the result of the custom of his time and place (Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav, Bach), in which case this rule would be dependent on the accepted custom in each different place; or if this ruling is based on the *gemara* in *Shabbat* 10a, in which case one could contend that the rule would be consistent in all places (Beit Yosef). The latter opinion appears to be the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* as quoted above.

Many of the later authorities, however, rule in accordance with the first opinion. They explain that the proper way to stand during the *Shemoneh Esrei* is based on the accepted custom of how one stands before a king (and the like) in each place (Magen Avraham, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Mishneh Berurah*). Thus, the *Aruch HaShulchan* writes (*Orach Chaim* 91:6), "Each person is different; for some it is

difficult to pray like this (hands over the heart), and instead they place their hands on a *shtender*. Each person should do whatever is best for him in order to pray." Accordingly, many people do not place their hands on their hearts.

The *Mishneh Berurah* writes in the name of *Asarah Ma'amarot* that the Arizal would place his arms on his heart, the right hand on top of the left. Similarly, the *Kaf HaChaim* quotes the writings of the Arizal (*Sha'ar Hakavanot*), where it is explained that the correct way to stand during the *Shemoneh Esrei* according to Kabbalah is as explained by the Rambam and the *Shulchan Aruch*. He further explains that according to the Arizal this rule is not dependent on the custom of how one stands before a king in the different parts of the world.

The *Darchoi Moshe*, based on Kabbalah, explains that the reason why the right hand should be placed on top of the left is in order to "strengthen" the Divine attribute of *rachamim* (mercy) over *din* (strict judgment). This explanation is also taught in the writings of the Arizal. It is important to note that the Rema (author of *Darchoi Moshe*) did not see the writings of the Arizal, as these writings did not reach Europe until later.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

SILWAN TUNNEL — TOMB OF "THE BARTENURA"

Anyone who learns Mishna is familiar with the commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura, often referred to as "the Bartenura".

The tomb of this great scholar, who made *aliya* to Eretz Israel in 1488, is located on the Mount of Olives



opposite the opening of the Silwan tunnel.

On his way to Eretz Yisrael from his native Italy he visited Jewish communities in Sicily, Rhodes and Egypt and wrote letters describing the customs of these communities.

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Rav Bulman^{zt"l}
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

YM WACHS

Age: 30's - Philadelphia, PA

Hertz Ohr LaGolah Program and Semicha in 2013 - University of Oxford MBA/MsT 2017

YM Wachs, from Philadelphia, was brought up in a yeshiva family, the oldest of nine children. His father is a Rav and involved with *kiruv*. After attending various *yeshivot* in the US, but not quite finding his niche, he sought success in the world of business, and started a number of ventures. In fact, he was a “serial entrepreneur”. Among the businesses he started were: a carpet cleaning and disaster restoration business; a construction firm; a rental real estate business; and eventually he moved into finance. His last venture was a proprietary trading firm and equity trading platform. And all this before he was 26!

Although his formal education was in traditional *yeshivot*, he was an avid reader, devouring books on philosophy, religion, history, science and anything else he got his hands on. He also writes poetry and has traveled extensively. To date he has visited over 75 countries throughout the globe, and almost all of the states in the USA. Eventually, YM decided to re-engage with yeshiva learning, and chose to come to Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. He is an exceptional student, and advanced rapidly through the yeshiva. After completing the Beit Midrash *shiurim* he entered and completed the Ohr LaGolah Program. He has also taught numerous classes and has given “*chaburos*” (in-depth Talmud seminars) to all levels within the yeshiva.

Earlier this year YM decided to re-enter the world of business and entrepreneurship with the aid of a new tool in his tool-box — an MBA degree. He spoke to a number of schools in Israel, but didn't quite find what he wanted. Then he heard about a highly-rated one year MBA Program focused on entrepreneurship at the University of Oxford in England and decided to apply. After he submitted his application he received a very enthusiastic response from them, was invited for an interview, and was subsequently unani-

mously accepted by the admissions committee.

With his colorful background, stellar GRE scores and his Bachelors and Masters of Talmudic Law from Ohr Somayach, YM was also invited to apply to the business schools at MIT, Yale and INSEAD, among others. One of the reasons he chose Oxford was that he found out about an additional program offered through the University, combining the MBA with another Masters degree, focusing on issues of global importance. He decided to explore a Masters degree at the faculty of Theology, reasoning that he could write a thesis exploring Talmudic concepts dealing with issues of economics and religion, thereby keeping his head in learning Torah while in the secular and intellectual environment of Oxford. The application he submitted to the Theology faculty included essays he had written in Hebrew, which he translated into academic English. The subjects were Talmudic discussions in “*basar v'chalav*” (meat and milk), and “*chakiroth*” (Torah debates) of the Rambam and Ra'avad dealing with *bal tosif and bal tigre* (not adding or subtracting from the commandments). The faculty was impressed and extended an offer to him as well. Based on this combination of his interests, the interplay of economics and religion, he was also awarded a full academic scholarship, jointly sponsored by the University of Oxford and the Pershing Square Foundation.

Asked about his many years of experience in Ohr Somayach, YM sums it up: “Along with an eclectic mix of students looking to challenge themselves, what is most resonant to me is the exceptional faculty, each one with his respective *derech* (method) in learning, and *yedias haTorah* (Torah knowledge).”

We wish him much success and happiness in all that he does.



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BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

THE PARSHA DUAL DICHOTOMY 5776

PART TWO

Part One explained that the weekly *parsha* right now is not the same one outside of Israel as it is in Eretz Yisrael. This is due to the fact that in this year the 8th day of Pesach fell out on Shabbat. On that Shabbat/Yom Tov everyone outside of Israel read the Yom Tov reading of “*Aser Te’Asser*” from *Parshat Re’eh*, whereas in Eretz Yisrael we read *Parshat Shemini*, the next *parsha* in the regular cycle, since Pesach had already ended us in Israel. Our question was: Why do we wait so long for the whole world to be realigned — more than three months later?

Not really a new question. Several early *Acharonim*, including the *Mahari”t*, Rav Yosef Tirani, addressed this exact issue almost 500 years ago.

The *Tur*, when codifying the halachah, offered special codes to help us remember the proper order of the *parshiyot* as they relate to the various *Yamim Tovim*. In a leap year like ours, one of the codes is “*Manu V’Atzru*”, referring to Bamidbar being directly prior to Shavuot. This code directly affects our situation.

This is because *Tosafot* in Megillah (31b) states that since *Parshat Bechukotai* contains *tochacha* (rebuke), there must be a noticeable “buffer week” between its reading and Shavuot. The reason for this is that we pray that a year and its curses should end, in order to usher in a new year with its blessings. This makes sense for Shavuot, as the *gemara* in

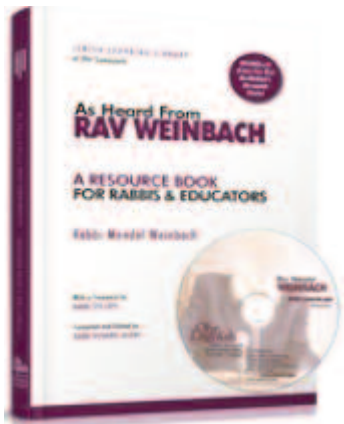
Rosh Hashana (16a) tells us that it is Rosh Hashana for “*peiros ha’ilan*” — tree fruits. Therefore, *Parshat Bamidbar* must be the stand-alone “buffer week” before Shavuot in order to emphasize that we are getting *Bechukotai* (i.e., the rebuke) in just before Shavuot.

Accordingly, the *Mahari”t* explains, if the Diaspora would catch up to Eretz Yisrael before Shavuot, then *Parshat Nasso* would be read on *Shabbat erev Shavuot*, as it will be in Eretz Yisrael, and then all of *Klal Yisrael* will miss the “buffer week” from the *tochacha* of *Bechukotai*. Therefore, he explains, it is more important and preferable that at least the Diaspora be able to follow this rule than it is that they catch up to Eretz Yisrael.

So it turns out that the issue it is not why Eretz Yisrael doesn’t simply slow down for the Diaspora, but rather that the Diaspora will not speed up to catch up to Eretz Yisrael. This “buffer zone” preference answers for *Acharei Mot/Kedoshim* and for *Behar/Bechukotai*.

However, there is still the subject of not catching up by *Chukat/Balak*. Several *sefarim* explain that this is due to the importance of *Parshat Pinchas* — that it should be read specifically during the Three Weeks, the period when we commemorate the destructions of our *Batei Mikdash*.

To be continued...



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RAIN, RAIN COME AGAIN

The Bible uses many words that mean “rain”. The rationale for this might simply be that rainfall was so important to ancient Jewish society who lived in an agrarian civilization. However, given that the words of the Hebrew language bear intrinsic meanings and the Bible is not simply a thesaurus, there must be a deeper implication to the multiplicity of words for “rain”.

The most commonly-used word for rain is *geshem*, but the Bible also uses other words in referring to the fall of precipitating water from the heavens. In a Biblical passage popularized because of its inclusion in the daily *Shma* prayer, G-d says that if the Jews properly listen to His commandments, then He “will give the rain (*matar*) of your land in its time, rain (*yoreh*) and rain (*malkosh*)” (Deut. 11:14). That is, He promises to give *matar* in its proper times, and two time-bound types of rain are *yoreh* and *malkosh*. First, we will explain the difference between *geshem* and *matar*, and then we will discuss the difference between *yoreh* and *malkosh*.

Some explain that *geshem* is a general term which includes all sorts of rain, while *matar* refers specifically to “rains of blessing”. A similar approach defines *matar* as specifically heavy rain, which explains why forms of that word are also used in conjunction with the volley of fire and brimstone that destroyed Sodom (Gen. 19:24) and with the plague of hail in Egypt (Ex. 9:18).

Others take the opposite approach, arguing that *matar* is the general term for rain, while *geshem* refers to a specific type of rain — in this case hard rain or “rains of blessings”.

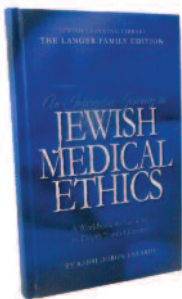
Others explain the difference between the rains of *geshem* and the rains of *matar* by noting a fundamental difference in their origins. They write that *geshem* refers to a natural system in which evaporated waters and other gasses are held in clouds until certain winds drive them to release those

vapors, resulting in rainfall. These rains are not bound to any specific times, but simply materialize naturally whenever enough vapors have collected in the clouds. For this reason, the word *geshem* was borrowed by later sources to refer to all sorts of “material matter” (i.e., *gashmiyut*). *Matar*, on the other hand, refers to a supernatural order by which G-d directly brings rain at certain times. In the passage cited above, those time-bound rains are known as *yoreh* and *malkosh*.

What are *yoreh* and *malkosh*? The word *yoreh* (or *moreh*) literally means “shoots”, as well as “teacher”, while the word *malkosh* is related to the Hebrew word *mekoshesh* (reaper). What do these literal translations teach about these time-bound rains? The Talmud (Ta’anit 6a) explains that *yoreh* falls at the beginning of the rainy season, thus it is called a “teacher” because it “teaches” people when to reinforce their roofs and bring their produce indoors to avoid possibly being destroyed by subsequent rains. *Malkosh* is the name given to rain which falls at the onset of spring (Pesach-time). Its name is related to the Hebrew word for reaping because *malkosh* falls near the harvest season, right before the produce is reaped.

In short, the different words for rain are not simply a product of the agricultural importance of rain; they refer to different ways in which G-d provides for the world. Some elements of Creation require a strong, torrential downpour in order to be quenched, while others require only a drizzle and would otherwise drown in a deluge of water. Moreover, vegetation tends to grow at different times of the year, so rain must drop at those different periods. G-d accommodates all of these different considerations, and the Hebrew language reflects those concerns.

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WHY MOURN? ISN'T IT ALL FOR THE BEST?

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

The *Gemara* says that just like one makes a blessing on good tidings with joy, so too one should make the blessing on bad tidings with joy (Berachot 60b). The commentaries explain that the reason for this is that even when things seem like they are anything but good we must accept G-d's decree with love, and know that it is ultimately for the best (see Rambam's commentary on *Mishnayot*, Rabbeinu Yonah and Chiddushei Hare'ah). Therefore, the *Gemara* adds that one should accustom himself to say that everything that G-d does is for the good. In this regard the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash was no different. Ironically, the destruction itself was the very best thing that could have happened for the Jewish people, as the *Midrash* comes to explain.

The chapter in *Tehillim* that describes the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash starts with the words *Mizmor Lasaf* (a psalm from Asaf) (*Tehillim* 71). The *Midrash* asks: Why is this chapter called a song, a *mizmor*? Seemingly it would be more fitting to call it a lament. The *Midrash* answers that when Asaf saw the Beit Hamikdash set on fire, he understood that the Jewish People's own lives were spared, as G-d had decided to destroy the Beit Hamikdash instead of them. This is why Asaf began to sing, and this is why the chapter is called a song (*Eichah Rabbah* 4:14).

The above ideas prompt the Shlah Hakadosh to ask a few questions regarding mourning the Beit Hamikdash. First of all, why would halachah demand us to mourn over the loss of the Beit Hamikdash? Isn't it more appropriate to accept it lovingly as part of G-d's will? Furthermore, lamenting over the past doesn't seemingly make much sense, since what would it accomplish? The past will not change by our mourning it. Why then do we mourn? (Shlah, *Masechet Ta'anit* 70-71)

To answer these questions let us explore another related topic. The *Gemara* says that anyone who is experiencing *yis-surim*, suffering, should search his ways (and change for the better) as it says: Let us search and investigate our ways and return to G-d (Berachot 5a). We learn from this *Gemara* that since one reason for suffering is to awaken us to change our ways, it is simply not sufficient to say this is also for good and go on in life. Rather, we are expected to take responsibility, and try to rectify our actions that caused the suffering. This is the correct outlook on suffering and tragedies in general.

To clarify the connection between this and mourning the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, let us study an analogy. There was a person who was in a car accident as a result of his own negligence. The only way to save his life at that point was through invasive surgery that would leave him paralyzed. Following the surgery he was glad his life was spared, but bitterly mourned his current state. At the time, the surgery was the best thing for him, since it actually did save his life. However, he mourned the fact that he caused himself to be in a state where a surgical operation that would leave him paralyzed would be the best solution for his health. In other words, he mourned his negligent actions that brought him to the point where he had to choose between dangerous surgery and death.

Mourning over the loss of the Beit Hamikdash is very similar. As with all other areas of life, tragedies are also for the best. The destruction of the Beit Hamikdash was the best thing for us since it meant that we would continue to survive. G-d chose to give us a second chance by destroying the Beit Hamikdash and thereby hinting to us that we needed to change our ways, rather than destroying us completely. We still mourn, however, over the sins that brought us to a state where the best thing for us was this very loss — the loss of the holiest place on earth, and the meeting point between G-d and us.

We can now begin to answer the questions we started with. The *Gemara* says that any generation during which the Beit Hamikdash is not rebuilt is as though that generation destroyed it (*Yerushalmi Yoma* 1:1). Based on this, the mourning over the Beit Hamikdash is an outer expression of the inner grief and regret over the sins that caused the destruction in the past, and those that continue to prevent its rebuilding in the present. In this sense, the mourning presents no contradiction to the expression that everything that G-d does is for the good. Furthermore, seen in this light, the mourning is not a useless lamenting over ancient history, but rather a productive way of recognizing the negative outcome of our actions and thus inspiring ourselves to change for the better. May we all merit making the most of this time period, and thereby bring about the coming of Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash speedily in our days.

KIRUV SEMINAR

FOR BNEI TORAH

צום הרביעי תשע"ו

Fast of Tammuz, Sunday Afternoon July 24, 2016

at Yeshiva Ohr Somayach - Tanenbaum College

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Maalot Daphna, Jerusalem

1:00 pm - Rav Nota Schiller, Rosh HaYeshiva, Ohr Somayach

1:45 pm - Mincha

2:30 pm - Rav Moshe Shapiro (עברית)

3:15 pm - Rav Yitzchok Breitowitz, Rav, Kehillas Ohr Somayach

3:55 pm - Rav Nissan Kaplan, Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim

4:40 pm - Rav Moshe Lazerus

5:20 pm - Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb

6:00 pm - Rabbi Tzvi Wainstein

6:30 pm - Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

7:10 pm - Rav Zev Leff

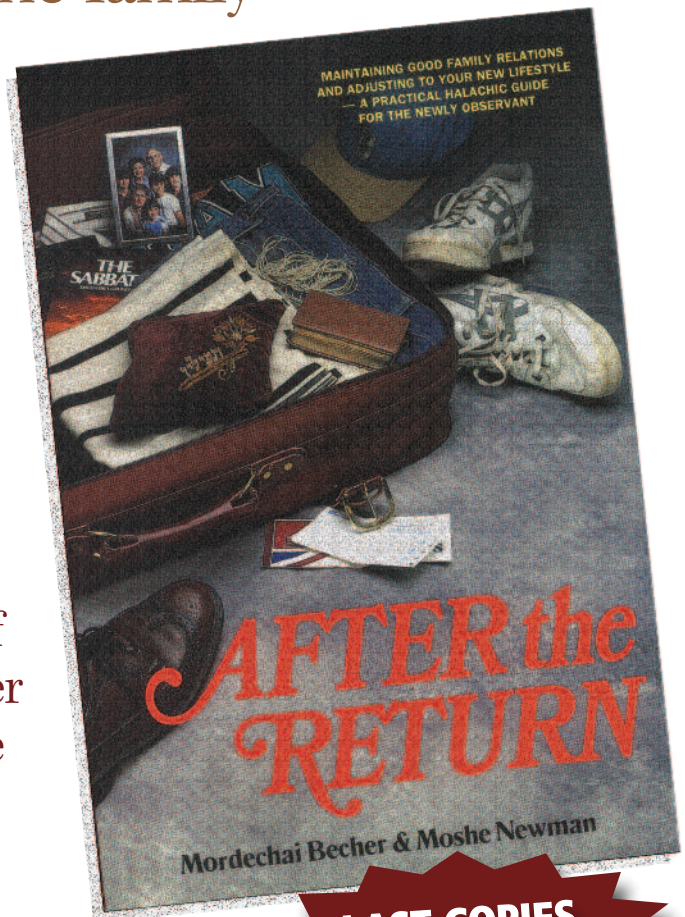
7:50 pm - Rabbi Richard Jacobs

8:05 pm - Ma'ariv (Followed by Refreshments)

Registration 10 NIS - Doors open at 12:30 pm

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.



After the Return

BY RABBI MORDECHAI BECHER AND RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN
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