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OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT EMOR • 13 IYAR 5778 - APR. 28, 2018 • VOL. 25 NO. 30

PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Put On Your Dancing Shoes

“And G-d said to Moshe, ‘Say to the Kohanim...’” (21:1)

Arguably, Fred Astaire was one of the greatest dancers who ever lived. And what made him so great? He made it all look so easy, so effortless. While other dancers labored their way around the screen, Fred made it all look so simple. But behind that “effortlessness” were hours and hours of relentless hard work. As his coworkers testified, he was a perfectionist. Yet it never showed. It all looked so, so easy. A Jew is supposed to *dance* through life, not to labor with a heavy heart.

There once was a rich man who arrived at a hotel. He was given the penthouse suite and the clerk assured him that his luggage would be brought up presently. After an hour, and with still no sign of his cases, the rich man phoned down to the bell clerk. “But, sir,” came the reply, “we sent your bags up twenty minutes ago!” Just as the rich man was putting down the phone, there came a knock at the door. The rich man made his way over to the entrance to his suite and opened the door. There was a bell-hop who was turning various shades of puce from his exertions. Under both his arms were two large cases. “Here!”, he gasped, “are your cases, sir!” He then proceeded to sink to his knees from oxygen deprivation. The rich man, without batting an eyebrow said, “Take them back downstairs!”

“What!”

“Take them back downstairs!”

“But I’ve just practically broken my back bringing them all the way up here!”

“Take them back downstairs! These are not my cases.”

“But you haven’t even looked at them!”

“I know they aren’t mine.”

“How?”

“My cases are full of diamonds. Diamonds are very light. If you’re huffing and puffing, these can’t be my cases.”

There’s an old expression in Yiddish that translates as “It’s difficult to be a Jew.” This phrase was obviously coined by someone who was carrying the wrong cases.

“Its ways are ways of pleasantness”, says the Psalmist about the Torah. The Torah may be demanding, it may take a lot of hard work and practice, but the last thing it wants from us is to be a bunch of joyless “laborers”.

One of the hardest things for people who become religious is to add a little touch of “Fred Astaire” to their observance.

And sometimes this can lead to tragic results.

A *ba’al teshuva* wants nothing more than his progeny to be living exemplars of faith and halachic observance, and yet this dream often ends in heartbreak.

Ba’alei teshuva have little to hang on to except their enthusiasm and a lot of *siyata d’Shmaya*. If you stand over your children like a halachic KGB, how can you hope they will stand up to the blandishments of an increasingly hedonistic society? How can you imbue them with a love of Torah and *mitzvot* unless you dance

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ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Zevachim 2 - 8

Sharing the Reward

Shimon the brother of Azariah says, "If he did shechita (ritual slaughter) on the sacrifice for the sake of a 'higher type' (of sacrifice), it is kosher, but if done for the sake of a 'lower type', it is not kosher..."

In this first *mishna* of our *masechta* we are taught the status of a sacrifice which had *shechita* done to it with the wrong type of sacrifice in mind. For example, a person did *shechita* to an *olah* sacrifice, but mistakenly had in mind that it was actually a *shelamim* sacrifice. There are a variety of opinions in the *mishna* as to the *status* of the result of this mistake (kosher or not; does it count for the obligation or not), and whether the *types* of sacrifices involved will affect the final status of the sacrifice offered. The rulings of a number of different *Tana'im* are expressed in the *mishna*, and one view is that of Shimon the brother of Azariah. This name appears quite unusual, since a name is normally expressed in terms of being the son of so-and-so, the father. Why here is Shimon's name stated as the *brother* of Azariah instead of the son of (his father's name)?

Rashi explains: Shimon was poor, and was not able to dedicate himself to Torah study without the support of his brother Azariah, who was a businessman. Azariah provided the means for his brother Shimon's needs, and the brothers agreed that Azariah would receive a portion of Shimon's reward for Torah study as compensation for the support he provided. Since Shimon's Torah study was enabled by his brother Azariah, he was called by his brother's name: Shimon the brother of Azariah.

As a source for this commentary, Rashi cites the *gemara* in Sota 21a, which relates and compares the cases of Rabbi Yochanan (named Rabbi Yochanan of the house of the *Nasi*) who was supported by the *Nasi*, along with Shimon the brother of Azariah who was supported by his brother Azariah, on the one hand, with the Sage Hillel, whose brother Shavna sought to pay him for a share of the reward of Torah study "at the end." Whereas the first two examples are praised, regarding Hillel and Shavna a voice from Heaven called to clarify that the proposed sale of reward would be unacceptable, quoting from a verse in *Shir HaShirim* (8:7) "If a man would give you all of the wealth of his house for your love (your Torah study), he will be scorned with scorn."

The problem in this case, as explained by the commentaries and codified in the Rema in Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 246:1, is that financial support may be offered only *before* the Torah study occurs, in order to enable it to occur. When it is offered after the fact, however, as in the case of Hillel and his brother, the sale is not valid. The reason for this is that reward for Torah study in the World-to-Come is not a physical prize that can be sold like candy. Rather it is a reward that accrues and is due only to the soul which toiled in Torah study in this world. The paradigm for this type of praiseworthy partnership is the partnership of Yaakov's sons,

Continued on page thirteen

EDITOR'S NOTE: This week's issue of Ohrnet Magazine is for Parshat Emor in Israel. Outside of Israel, Parshiot Acharei Mot and Kedoshim are read this week, and they were already included in the previous issue of Ohrnet Magazine.

Since the "8th day of Pesach" fell this year on Shabbat outside of Israel, although the Torah reading in Israel was Parshat Shemini that week, there was a special Torah reading outside of Israel, and Parshat Shemini was read there a week later instead. Israel continues to be "a week ahead" of the Diaspora for the coming weeks, until we all return to the same point when Parshiot Behar and Bechokotai are read outside of Israel, and Parshat Bechukotai is read in Israel.

Therefore, since we are on a production schedule for Israel, we recommend that you keep the Ohrnet Magazine you receive this week, and the coming weeks, for the following week outside of Israel. We suggest reading a fascinating article that addresses this issue in this week's Ohrnet Magazine called "Parsha Permutations 2018 — which week is which?"

For any desired clarification, please write to ohr@ohr.edu

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
 2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
 3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
 4. How does the Torah restrict the *kohen gadol* with regard to mourning?
 5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who “approaches holy objects” while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by “approaches”?
 6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
 7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
 8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a “zar” she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a *zar*?
 9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
 10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
 11. How does the Torah define “profaning” the Name of G-d?
 12. Apart from Shabbat, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
 13. How big is an *omer*?
 14. On what day do we begin to “count the *omer*”?
 15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
 16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
 17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a “*zichron teruah*” (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
 18. What is unusual about the wood of the *etrog* tree?
 19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
 20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one’s parent?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week’s questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 21:1 - *Challalim* — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a *kohen*.
 2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
 3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a *kohen* reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
 4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
 5. 22:3 - Eats.
 6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
 7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
 8. 22:12 - A non-*kohen*.
 9. 22:18 - A *neder* is an obligation upon a person; a *nedavah* is an obligation placed upon an object.
 10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
 11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
 12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
 13. 23:10 - One tenth of an *eipha*.
 14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan.
 15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
 16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
 17. 23:24 - The *akeidat* (binding of) Yitzchak.
 18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
 19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (*Shemot* 2:12).
 20. 24:21 - Death.
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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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LOVE of the LAND

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

Gates of Chulda Monuments to a Prophetess

Two gates in the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem are named for the Prophetess Chulda.

One of the seven women whose prophecies are recorded in Scripture, Chulda was a descendant of



Yehoshua bin Nun and the convert Rachav whom he married.

Her prophecy regarding the hidden Sefer Torah discovered during the reign of King Yoshiyahu is recorded in *Melachim II* 22:14-20.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The *kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *kohen gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral of even his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim*. The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*. The physical irregularities that invalidate a *kohen* from serving in the Temple are listed. *Terumah*, a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free from

any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the *omer* of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Water Quality

From: Natan

*Dear Rabbi,
I am a bit bewildered about the “quality” of water. Sometimes it’s associated with base passion or indulgence. Yet it is also very widely associated with the Torah. What is the resolution of this seeming contradiction?*

Dear Natan,

You are right; water is described as having both qualities.

Water is often associated with physical pleasures in which one may indulge as passions. In such cases, a person is easily swept up in the current of his desires, which inundate him with temptation. A person who quenches the thirst of desire by drinking from the cup of these tantalizing pleasures feels as if they invigorate him with life, while, in fact, they drown him!

Yet, water is widely used as a metaphor for Torah. Thus, the Torah is referred to as “*mayim chaim*”, living waters. And we are encouraged to imbibe this Torah knowledge, as in the verse, “Ho, all who thirst, go to water” (Is. 55:1), where Rashi explains that water is Torah. Additionally, the Talmud (Ta’anit 7a) remarks, “Why is Torah compared to water? In order to teach that just as water flows from a high place and travels to a low place, so does Torah depart from the haughty and reside by the humble.”

The underlying reason why water is compared to these seemingly contradictory qualities is that they are both associated with life. The contradiction arises from the fact that one is related to physical life, while the other is related to spiritual life.

For obvious reasons, water is the basis for physical, organic life. And in His great mercy, G-d made the acts required for life, such as procreation and eating and drinking, to be simultaneously enjoyable. This is the basis for the association of water with physical pleasures.

Similarly, just as water engenders and sustains physical life, the Torah is the source and substance of spiritual life. And as with the acts of physical sustenance, in His great mercy G-d also made the pursuit of spiritual life, such as learning Torah and performing *mitzvot*, to be spiritually pleasurable and fulfilling.

And since both the material and spiritual originate from G-d, the resolution of their seeming contradiction lies in the fusion of the two. For G-d does not prohibit physical pleasure; He created it as part of preserving the life He imparts and desires! Rather, one must divorce pleasure from forbidden indulgence and wed it to the ways of Torah and the service of G-d.

This seeming contradiction is resolved perhaps most clearly in a verse which itself hints to the dual quality of water and the way to conjoin them for good. The verse states (Prov. 20:5), “Counsel in man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw (lit. lift) it out.” Extending the literal meaning of the verse, Rabbi Chaim of Chernovitz (1760-1816) in *Sidduro Shel Shabbat* (Vol. 1; 5:1:14) explains the verse as follows: The lower waters of desire counsel deep within one’s heart, but a wise man will elevate and conjoin them to the upper waters of Torah. In this way the waters of physical desire flow into the sea of Torah, whose current direct one toward G-d, the Source.

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WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

On the Tombstone

This week marks a year since the passing of my grandmother Shprintza (Rose) Klein, and half a year since the passing of my mother Bracha (Edith) Klein. I therefore thought it would be appropriate to share some ideas about synonyms in the Hebrew language for tombstones to serve as an apt epithet.

The common word for a tombstone in spoken Hebrew is a *matzeivah* (literally, “monument”), and, indeed, when Yaakov buried his wife Rachel, the Torah reports that he erected a *matzeivah* at her grave (Gen. 35:20). Elsewhere (Yechezkel 39:15 and II Kings 23:17), the Bible refers to graves that are marked with a *tziyun* (“marker”). A third word for gravestone appears in the Mishnah (*Shekalim* 2:5): According to one opinion in the Mishnah, leftover money collected for the purposes of paying for one’s burial should be used for building a *nefesh* (literally, “soul”) at his grave (see also *Ohalot* 7:1). All in all, we find three words which refer to a tombstone of some sort: *matzeivah*, *tziyun*, and *nefesh*.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky (1871-1955) writes in *Gesher HaChaim* that these three synonyms for tombstones reflect three different reasons as to why such monuments are erected. The word *matzeivah* connotes the tombstone’s role in making sure that the deceased’s tomb is visible and known for anyone who wishes to visit the tomb and pray there. The term *tziyun* connotes the tombstone’s function in delineating exactly where the deceased is buried so that others can refrain from exposing themselves to ritual impurity (especially pertinent for *Kohanim*, who are forbidden from coming into contact with human corpses, see Lev. 21:1–4). Finally, the term *nefesh* conveys the tombstone’s function in honoring the deceased, and especially paying homage to his soul which may loiter around the final resting place of its former body.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich (1863-1944) takes a different approach to the word *matzeivah*. The word *matzeivah* not only means “tombstone” but also refers to a single-stone altar which was halahically permitted for use in ritual worship in the times of the Patriarchs. Tombstones and altars share a common

word because they are both associated with a common feature. Just as sacrifices — which are offered on an altar — have the ability to atone for sins, so does the death of the righteous — who are memorialized with a headstone — atone for sins (*Mo’ed Katan* 28a).

Others explain that all three words for tombstone reflect the deceased’s desire to continue serving G-d and fulfilling the commandments if he would have remained alive. To that effect, the word *matzeivah*, which also refers to a single-stone altar, represents the notion that he whose tomb is marked by this stone wished to continue worshipping G-d, but was forced to stop because he died. In parts of the Bible written after the *matzeivah*-altar became forbidden, the Bible uses the word *tziyun* (“remarkable” or “outstanding”), which conveys the deceased’s desire to strive for excellence throughout his life, and his deathly demise sadly discontinued that worthy pursuit. Similarly, the word *nefesh* is related to the concept of will (e.g., see Rashi to Gen. 23:8), and when it means “tombstone” it conjures the dearly departed’s will to do good.

Rabbi Moshe Shick (1807-1879) posits that we colloquially use the word *matzeivah* for tombstone because it is related to the word *neztiv* (“standing” or “erect”). This instills in us the belief in the future Resurrection of the Dead, by which those who have perished will once again *stand up*. Rabbi Asher Pollak (1900-1989), a great-grandson of Rabbi Yitzchok Zekel Pollack (1813-1891) who was the Chief Rabbi of Bonyhad, adds that the Bible itself alludes to this understanding. When discussing the aforementioned *matzeivah* erected at the Tomb of Rachel, the Bible says “it is the *matzeivah* of Rachel’s burial until today (*ad hayom*)”. The word “today” (*hayom*) is a codeword for the day that Mashiach will arrive. This is found Psalms 95:7, which Eliyahu HaNavi cited as a proof-text to the notion that Mashiach will arrive today — if only the Jews would listen to G-d’s voice (*Sanhedrin* 98a).

Rabbi Pollack also writes that a tombstone is called a *tziyun* because it is like a road marker in that it reminds those who see it where they are going and what is expected of them.

Continued on page nine

NEW
SERIES!

ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Sefirat HaOmer

Though today, according to most authorities, the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer is considered a Rabbinic mitzvah, enacted as a remembrance of the Temple, during Temple times it was a Biblical commandment to count forty-nine days (seven full weeks) from the eve of the second day of Pesach (the sixteenth of Nissan) until the holiday of Shavuot (literally “weeks”).

Today's *Sefirah* is also connected with the Exodus from Egypt. The Midrash relates that when the Jewish People left Egypt Moshe told them that they would serve G-d on Mount Sinai. They asked him when that would be, and Moshe answered, “In fifty days.” Based on this, the Rabbis instituted a mitzvah to “count the Omer.” In these days, when there is no Omer offering, we count in anticipation and joy of the holiday of Shavuot, when we received the Torah (see Aruch HaShulchan 489:2 based on the Midrash).

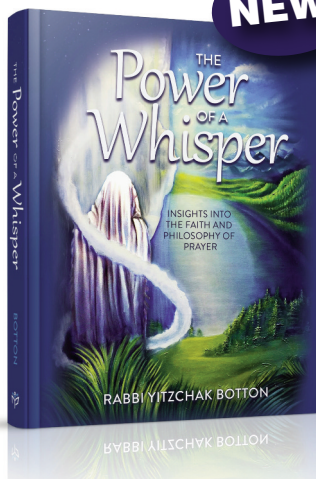
Some explain that although every Jewish person stood at Mount Sinai when the Torah was given, each year on Shavuot we receive the Torah anew. This idea can be understood by looking at time as a circular spiral that ascends. As one follows the circle of the spiral, each time he returns to the same point he will again be directly above the place he stood before. So too, each year as we return to the day of Shavuot, we are standing in a “different but same” place relative to where we stood the

year before. The Kabbalists make this point in connection to prayer. They explain that no two prayers are ever the same, and even if they correspond to the same time or day they are different because no two days are the same.

Why do we keep customs of mourning during Sefirah?

During the days of *Sefirah* it is Jewish custom to refrain from haircuts and shaving, weddings, and listening to music (for the details of these laws consult a local Orthodox rabbi). These customs are practiced because during the days of *Sefirah* 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva died.

On a basic level the connection between keeping some customs of mourning and this period of time called “*Sefira*” is simply because it is the time on the calendar when this great tragedy occurred. But in a deeper sense the Kabbalah reveals that the days of counting the Omer are days of harsh Divine judgment. This is somewhat similar to the concept of counting people in general, which arouses the Divine attribute of judgment. We are taught that the spiritual soul-root of Rabbi Akiva's students also corresponded to the attribute of judgment. All of this, together with the fact that they were on an exalted spiritual level and failed to accord each other the proper respect that was expected of them, resulted in the decree that they should die during the days of *Sefirat HaOmer*.



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE

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BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Say and Tell

We used to know the difference between speaking to a person and speaking to a wall. Alexa and Siri and all of their cousins have changed that. Say to Alexa, “Alexa, lower the volume,” and she will dutifully comply. But try telling her, “Alexa, I have a headache, could you play some softer music?” and you’ll likely hear in response, “I’m sorry, I didn’t quite get that.”

There are two words for speech in the Torah: *amirah* and *dibur*. The most common construction preceding commandments uses both of them: *Daber el Bnei Yisrael v’amarta aleihem*, often translated as *Speak to the Children of Israel, saying*. Our *parshah* begins with an atypical construct — two consecutive *amiras*. *Emor el haKohanim bnei Aharon v’amarta aleihem... Say to the children of Aharon, and say to them...*

Dibur differs from *amirah* as speaking differs from telling. To speak is to express an idea. Whether anyone is listening is immaterial. Telling, however, implies communication. Speech can give precise expression to an idea, but *amirah* conveys a more fully developed idea to the mind of another.

Thus, the common construct that uses first *dibur* and then *amirah* to introduce a mitzvah includes first the concise description of the law in general terms, and then the fuller explanation of the law in detail, appealing to both mind and heart. These terms also correspond to the Written Law, the exact and precise description (*dibur*), and the Oral Law, the full and

detailed explanation (*amirah*). A Sage who interpreted law at the time of the Talmud is therefore called an *amora*.

The Ten Commandments are referred to as the *Aseret HaDibrot*, whereas the ten utterances of Creation are referred to as the *Asara Maamarot*. Those utterances produced immediate results: *And G-d said, “Let there be light.” And there was light*. The term *amirah* is used in Creation because the *word* immediately materialized in the *object* to which it was addressed. However, the word of Torah is not automatically accepted and fulfilled. It has been pronounced, but it is up to the Jew to choose to accept and fulfill.

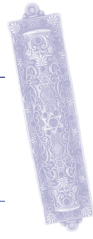
The repetition of the *amirah* terminology introducing the laws of the *Kohanim* is significant. Our Sages understood the two separate ‘sayings’ (*emor...v’amarta*) as instructing the *Kohanim* to instruct their children. Both are the type of instruction that must be *amira*, a full explanation conveyed specifically in a receptive way to another. They are to take to heart the fact that the task of *kehunah* derives from their grandfather Aharon. Before the details of the laws are presented, they must recognize and appreciate that priesthood does not result from their own merit, but it is a task assigned them at birth. An appointment that children must be raised for, so the fulfillment of their task may be true and complete. This must be conveyed in an understandable way, not merely spoken.

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.”



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

On the Post or on the Wall?

Q: *The sides of my doorway are just brickwork, like the rest of the house exterior. Fitted into that doorway is a wooden door with actual doorposts. Should I put the mezuzah on the wooden posts, or should I put it on the brickwork so that it should be on the outer tefach of the house? Which is more important?*

A: There are two customs in this regard, and either may be followed. Some authorities opine that when a doorway is fitted with actual doorposts of wood or metal, the mezuzah should be affixed on these rather than on the walls of the doorway. This is true even if it would mean that the mezuzah will be more than a *tefach* away from the outer edge of the doorway.

According to these opinions, even if there is no space on the inner face of wooden post to place the mezuzah, it should be affixed on the front of the wooden post rather than on the walls of the doorway. Since the mezuzah is within the doorway and under the lintel, it may face outward.



Mezuzah on doorpost under lintel facing out



Mezuzah on wall

Other authorities hold that one should put the mezuzah on the cement or brick surface if that is the outer *tefach*. However, even these authorities point out that if the wooden doorpost is thick and protrudes into the doorway more than a *tefach*, the mezuzah must be placed on it.

- Sources: *Chovas HaDar* 8:3; *Sha'arei HaMezuzah* 12:9; *Aruch HaShulchan* 287:7; *Agur B'ohalecha* 14:4 and 13:6

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What's In a Word...continued from page six

Rabbi Eliyahu Katz (1916-2004), the former Chief Rabbi of Slovakia and later the Chief Rabbi of Beer Sheva, explains that the word *nefesh* in the context of tombstones is actually related to the word *menuchah* (“rest”), as it says “...and on the seventh day, He (G-d) stopped and rested (*vayiNafash*)” (Ex. 31:17). In this

way a tombstone, which marks one's eternal resting place, is itself associated with the verb of resting.

Liluy Nishmat my mother Bracha bat R' Dovid
and my grandmother Shprintza bat R' Meir

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BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

Parsha Permutations 2018

Which Week is Which?

This time of year is an interesting one. For the next month or so the Jewish world will not be aligned. No, I am not referring to constellations, but rather to the weekly *parsha*. A simple innocuous question of “What’s this week’s *parsha*?” will elicit a different response depending on where in the world the question is being asked. This is because the *parsha* will not be the same regularly scheduled one in *Chutz La’aretz* as it is in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Truthfully, this type of dichotomy actually happens not so infrequently, as it essentially occurs whenever the last day of a Yom Tov falls on Shabbat. In *Chutz La’aretz* where Yom Tov *Sheini* is halachically mandated, a Yom Tov Torah reading is publicly *leined*, yet, in *Eretz Yisrael* (unless by specific *Chutznik minyanim*) the *Kriat HaTorah* of the next scheduled *parsha* is read. This puts *Eretz Yisrael* a *parsha* ahead until the rest of the world soon “catches up,” by an upcoming potential double-*parsha*, when each would be read separately in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The reason for this current interesting phenomenon is that this year (5778 / 2018) the eighth day of Pesach, observed only outside *Eretz Yisrael*, fell out on a Shabbat. On this Shabbat/Yom Tov the communities of the Diaspora read the Yom Tov section of ‘*Asser Ta’asser*’ (Devarim, Re’eh 14: 22), whereas in *Eretz Yisrael* communities read *Parshat Shemini*, the next *parsha* in the cycle, since Pesach has already ended.

This odd alignment, with *Eretz Yisrael* being a week ahead of the rest of the world, continues for over a month, until, in this instance, the 27th of Iyar (May 12th), when in *Chutz La’aretz* the reading of *Behar* and *Bechukotai* is combined; while on that same week the communities of *Eretz Yisrael* read only *Bechukotai*, which will give the rest of the world a chance to catch up.

This causes all sorts of halachic issues for travelers to and from Israel during this time period: Which *parsha* should they be reading? If/how can they catch up? Although technically-speaking since *Kriat HaTorah* is a *Chovat Hatzibbur*, a communal obligation, one is not actually mandated to ‘catch-up,’ but is rather *yotzei* with whichever *Kriah* is publicly correctly being read.

Nevertheless, commonly, special *minyanim* are set up expressly for this purpose. In fact, several *shuls* in *Eretz Yisrael*, such as the renowned Zichron Moshe ‘*Minyan Factory*,’ offer a solution by hosting weekly “catch-up *minyanim*” featuring the Torah reading of each previous week’s Israeli *parsha*, which is the *Chutznik*’s current one, until the calendars re-merge.

The explanation of this uncanny occurrence is as follows: It is well known that the Torah is divided into 54 *parshiyot*, ensuring there are enough *parshiyot* for every Shabbat of the yearly cycle, which begins and ends on Simchat Torah. Since most (non-leap) years require less than 54 *parshiyot*, we combine certain *parshiyot*. This means that two consecutive *parshiyot* are read on one Shabbat as if they are one long *parsha*, to make sure that we complete the Torah reading for the year on Simchat Torah.

As detailed by the Abudraham, there are seven potential occurrences when we read “double *parshiyot*”. These seven are:

Vayakhel/Pekudei, the last two *parshiyos* of *Sefer Shemos*

Tazria/Metzora, in *Sefer Vayikra*

Acharei Mot/Kedoshim, in *Sefer Vayikra*

Behar/Bechukotai, in *Sefer Vayikra*

Chukat/Balak, in *Sefer Bamidbar*

Matot/Masei, the last two *parshiyot* of *Sefer Bamidbar*

Nitzavim/Vayelech, towards the end of *Sefer Devarim*

However, there are several possible instances in which certain *parshiyot* are combined in *Chutz La’aretz*, yet are read on separate weeks in *Eretz Yisrael*. One such time is for the next month or so, as described above, making it one of the only times where Jews living in *Eretz Yisrael* end up reading a different *parsha* on Shabbat than the Jews living in *Chutz La’aretz*.

One common question asked is why the calendars don’t amalgamate much earlier. Why would two separate double *parshiyot* be passed over and only re-align on the third such possibility?

The *Maharit*, quoting Rav Yissachar Ben-Sussan,

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one of the foremost experts on intercalation of the Jewish calendar and its *minhagim*, in his renowned *sefer Tikkun Yissachar* (written in 1538), explains that *Chutz La'aretz* waits to connect *Behar/Bechukotai* instead of catching up right away in order to emphasize that we are getting *Bechukotai* in just before Shavuot. Tosafot (and seconded practically by the *Levush*) states that since *Parshat Bechukotai* contains *tochacha* (rebuke), there must be a “buffer week” (practically, *Parshat Bamidbar*) between its reading and Shavuot.

This is because we pray that a year and its curses should end, in order to usher in a new year with its blessings. This is apropos for Shavuot, as it is the Rosh Hashana for *Peirot Ha'Ilan*, tree fruits (*Gemara Rosh Hashana* 16a). Therefore, in *Eretz Yisrael*, if the *parshiyot* of *Behar* and *Bechukotai* were to be read together, it would not be noticeable that this is a buffer week. Consequently, they are read separately so that *Bamidbar* becomes the official stand-alone “buffer week” before Shavuot, in order to emphasize that we are getting *Bechukotai* in just before Shavuot.

This might also help explain why the *Eretz Yisrael* custom is not to just split up *Tazria* and *Metzora*, letting *Chutz La'aretz* catch up right away. Since *Eretz Yisrael* is seemingly considered the *ikar* (main) reading, it does not have to take *Chutz La'aretz* into account and slow down due to the independent *luachs* (or to be grammatically correct, *'luchot'*), and only does so when it actually needs the buffer week.

Indeed, the *Tikkun Yissachar* relates that during one year with a similar calenderical makeup to ours, the *Sefardic Chachamim* of Tzfat agreed to separate *Tazria* and *Metzora*, in order to be on par with the rest of the world. However, the response of the *Rabbanim* from the rest of *Eretz Yisrael* was not long in coming. They utterly rejected the idea, and demanded that they

only catch up at *Behar/Bechukotai*, as that was already the established *minhag* for generations.

Another theory posited by the *Tikkun Yissachar* is that we don't want to have *Nega'im*, an intrinsically negative topic that is showcased in *Tazria* and *Metzora*, spread over two Shabbats if we can contain it in only one.

There were variant *Minhagim* in *Eretz Yisrael* over the centuries, and the *Magen Avraham*, and later the *Mishnah Berurah*, cite both as being performed in *Eretz Yisrael*; though by the time the *Chafetz Chaim* wrote this, the universal *minhag* in *Eretz Yisrael* was to split *Behar* and *Bechukotai*, and keep *Tazria* and *Metzora* together. This is further confirmed by Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky's authoritative *Luach Eretz Yisrael*, originally published in 1905, as only the prevailing *minhag* of splitting up *Behar* and *Bechukotai* is cited.

An interesting time of year, indeed!

Postscript: If you think five weeks is a long time to be out of sync, wait until next year, 5779/2019, which, although sharing a similar calenderical structure as this year, with Pesach falling out on the same days of the week, nevertheless, is also a leap year, with two Adars. This is significant as in a leap year most 'double *parshiyot*' are not doubled; rather they are read separately. Therefore, the rest of the world will not actually catch up to *Eretz Yisrael* until *Mattot/Maasei*, around *Rosh Chodosh Av*, almost three months later! The last times this occurred were in 1995 and twenty-one years later in 2016. The next time will be next year— 2019.

This article was written l'zechus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad!

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with the Torah — and not just on Simchat Torah?

Whenever the Torah gives the instructions for a halacha, a Torah law, it always uses the expression of *dibur* — speak. *Dibur* is a strong word. It implies a certain toughness and implacability, as would befit the immutable Word of G-d. All *halachot* in the Five Books and also in the Book of Yehoshua are transmitted by using the words *Vaydaber* (“And He spoke”) or *Daber* (“Speak”). All, that is, except one.

In this week's Torah portion we see that the instructions to the *Kohanim*, the Priests, were given over using the expressions “*Vayomer*” — “*And He said*” and “*Emor*” — “*Say*.” These are much softer and lighter expressions. Why the change?

Even though the work of the *Kohen* was extremely exacting and, in some cases, physically taxing, the Torah charges the *Kohen* to perform his tasks with lightness and ease. The *Kohen* was also responsible to teach the Jewish People. Here again, if they showed that their tasks were light and joyous for them, this would encourage the people. But if they made it all seem so difficult, who would want to follow their example?

In life you have to know how to “dance” a little — especially if you want others to dance with you.

• Sources: *The Dubner Magid*, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in *D'rash Moshe*. Thanks to Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Senter.

SEASONS Then & Now

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

The Counting of the Omer and the Omer Offering

There are two *mitzvot* we are commanded to perform the day after Pesach. One is the mitzvah of *sefirat haOmer*. This mitzvah is essentially a counting toward the long-awaited day of receiving the Torah. Similar to a person who counts the days to when he will reunite with his beloved, we, too, count to the glorious day of receiving the Torah (see Sefer HaChinuch 306). The second mitzvah is the Omer offering, which was a barley offering that was brought on the second day of Pesach in the times of the Beit HaMikdash. It was only after bringing this communal offering that one was allowed to eat from, or even cut, the five types of grain (wheat, barley oats, spelt and rye) of that year.

At first glance these two *mitzvot* seem unrelated. However, in both places where the Torah instructs us to count, it does not provide us with the date of when we should begin; rather, it writes that the counting begins the day the Omer offering is brought (Vayikra 23:15, Devarim 16:9). There are opinions that learn from here that today the mitzvah of counting is only *m'deRabanan*, because we no longer have the Omer offering. According to these opinions there is a clear connection between the two *mitzvot* (See Menachot 66a; Ran end of Pesachim). Even according to those who do not make this connection and hold that counting is still a mitzvah *d'Oraita* today, there is still a seeming link between the two *mitzvot* from the fact that we include the mention of the Omer offering in both the text of the *beracha*, “*al sefirat haOmer*,” and in the text of the count, “*Hayom yom... yamim laOmer (baOmer)*” (see Sefer HaChinuch 306). Let's try to investigate the relationship between these two *mitzvot*.

The Omer Offering and the Omer of Mann

We will begin by analyzing the name of the barley offering: the Omer offering (Vayikra 23:9-15). The

Omer is the name of a measurement and is not exclusive to this offering — there are other offerings that also require a measurement of an *omer*, yet they aren't called Omer offerings in the Torah. Why is this so?

Another place where the Torah mentions an *omer's* portion is when discussing the *mann*. In their sojourn in the desert after leaving Mitzrayim, the Jewish People lived off the *mann*, food that fell miraculously from the Heavens. Chazal tell us that in the desert after the *mann* fell, some people took more than their *omer* portion, while others took less. Nevertheless, when they came home and weighed it, everyone had one *omer's* worth (see Rashi on Shemot 16:17).

During this time, it was clear to the Jewish People that it is neither nature nor one's efforts that provide one's needs — it is all from G-d.

The commentaries explain that the Omer offering is so named because it is related to the *omer* portion of *mann* that was apportioned to each person in the desert (See Vaykra Rabbah 28; Be'er Yosef, Parshat Emor). The mitzvah of the Omer offering was meant to be kept for the first time when the Jewish People would enter Eretz Yisrael. As opposed to their sojourn in the desert when they were fed through the *mann*, once they would enter the Land they would have to begin the long process of plowing, planting, etc. for bread, and they may have easily forgotten Who the true Provider is. The mitzvah of the Omer offering was given to them so that every year before they eat or cut any of the new five types of grain, which is one's main food, they would first bring an *omer's* portion of barley, comparable to the portion of *mann* that everyone received in the desert. This was meant to remind them that G-d is behind the seemingly naturally produced grain, as well (see Vayikra Rabbah 28, Sefer HaChinuch 302, Ohr Chadash on Megillat Esther 6:11).

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Remembering the Mann

One of the biggest obstacles to setting aside the appropriate time for Torah learning and mitzvah performance is a lack of *emunah* (faith) in G-d. For example, people often spend more time than necessary earning a living, at the expense of learning Torah. For some, the stress and worry of making a living even leads to committing serious transgressions, like dishonesty in business, laxity in *mitzvot* that require spending money, etc. How can one overcome this test?

The midrash tells us that in the days of Yirmiyahu many people were too busy earning a living at the expense of learning Torah. In response, Yirmiyahu took out the *omer* portion jar of *mann* that was kept from Moshe Rabeinu's time, and declared that just like G-d provided their ancestors with the *mann*, He will also find ways to provide for them (Tanchuma, Beshalach 21). We see from here that through contemplating the miracle of the *mann* one can strengthen his *emunah* and come to the conclusion that it is not one's efforts that determines a person's earnings,

but G-d's Providence.

Now we can understand one connection between the Omer offering and the mitzvah of counting. During the days of *sefirah* we are supposed to prepare ourselves to receive the Torah. This preparation includes strengthening oneself in our fundamental beliefs. Without knowing that G-d is the all-powerful Source behind everything in this world, one cannot truly accept the Torah. As the Ramban says, one who doesn't believe that everything is miraculous, and there is no such thing as nature, has no share in the Torah of Moshe ("Commentary" at end of Parshat Bo). Therefore, during *sefirah*, as a way to prepare for *Matan Torah* we mention the Omer offering, so named as a reminder of the *omer* portion of *mann* from the desert, to instill in ourselves the fundamental belief that G-d exclusively rules nature. Through improving our level of *emunah* and *bitachon*, we can thereby prepare for receiving the Torah by battling the biggest deterrents to Torah study and mitzvah performance. May we all merit making the most of this time

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Yissachar and Zevulun, as is expressed in the blessing they received from Moshe: And to Zebulun he said, "Rejoice Zevulun in your going out (to do business), and Yissachar in your tents (of Torah study). (Devarim 33:18)

However, if the arrangement was made from the outset, before the Torah study occurred, then both the one who did the Torah study and the one who enabled this Torah study are partners in the mitzvah. This is because both are viewed as "doers of the mitzvah," and therefore both are deserving of the reward for this mitzvah. (Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh De'ah 246:8)

The Maharsha points out that the repetition of the word for "scorn" (*boz*) in the verse cited in the *gemara* indicates that one who is able to learn Torah but does not, and instead relies on his wealth to buy a Torah scholar's reward for Torah study, is deserving of a double punishment. For example, Hillel who studied Torah in poverty without support of his

wealthy brother Shavna was not called "Hillel the brother of Shavna." Shavna was denied this honor. Azariah, however, who supported his brother Shimon's Torah study from the beginning, was rewarded in this world by the honor of being part of his brother's name: Shimon the brother of Azariah. Likewise, Shavna would not be able to have any share in his brother Hillel's eternal reward in the World-to-Come.

There is much discussion and debate amongst the classical commentaries regarding the amount that the supporter needs to provide in order to be a partner in receiving reward (for example see Shach, Y. D. 246:2). Another important topic that is the subject of intense deliberation is whether the reward received by the Torah scholar is in any measure diminished by entering into a partnership with a supporter. Although the Rema seems to indicate that each party receives half of the reward, Rav Moshe Shapira, *zatzal*, told me that both parties receive full reward.

The OHRNET Challenge

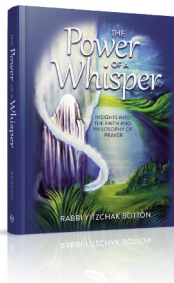
Ohr Somayach's Ohrnet Magazine is proud to announce the historic OHRNET CHALLENGE

As you might remember, before Pesach we announced the historic **Ohrnet Challenge**. For every Torah portion of the next few weeks we have a different question related to the articles of Rabbi Yitzchak Botton and Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein. Whoever sends us the answers to these questions will be entered in our sweepstakes to win a copy of Rabbi Botton's or Rabbi Klein's book.

Each learned answer submitted earns the right to one entry in our grand raffle. Answers should be sent to rcklein@ohr.edu and should include your name and mailing address. The Final Deadline for all answers is next week **May 1st** and the winners will be announced in these pages thereafter. One lucky winner will receive an autographed copy of Rabbi Yitzchak Botton's *The Power of a Whisper* (Menucha Publishers), while another lucky winner will get a signed copy of Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein's *Lashon HaKodesh: History, Holiness, & Hebrew* (Mosaica Press). *Good Luck!*

What's in a Word Synonyms in the Hebrew Language:

1. What is the difference between *tzivah* and *pakad*, which both mean "he commanded"?
2. What is the difference between *sheketz* and *toevah*, which both mean "abomination"?
3. What is the difference between *yoledet* and *chayah*, which both mean "mother who gives birth"?
4. What is the difference between *met-zora* and *tzarua*, which both mean "leper"?
5. What is the difference between a *par* and a *shor*, which both mean "bull"?
6. What is the difference between the word *shaatnez* and *kilayim*, which both mean "forbidden mixture"?



Anatomy of a Mitzvah:

7. How many positive and how many negative commandments are there in the Torah?
8. What do the positive commandments and the negative commandments correspond to?
9. How many words are there in the Ten Commandments, and what is significant about that number?
10. What Aramaic word is *mitzvah* connected to, and what do we learn from it?
11. What is the first *mitzvah* that was given to the Jewish People while still in Egypt?
12. What is the last *mitzvah* that is recorded in the Torah?