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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Breaking the Barriers

“If your brother becomes impoverished...” (25:35)

It's been a while since I visited London in the summer. Last week I got back from a brief trip there. The weather was glorious. After one of the worst winters in years, the country was luxuriating in a proverbial English Summer day. And of course crowds thronged the streets and parks, everyone keen to cast off their memories of winter, together with much of their clothes, in an unabashed display of public indecency.

Apart from making parks a virtual no-go zone for someone who is striving to guard his eyes, I felt sorry for all those bright young souls.

A Victorian girl at least had high necklines and crinolines to flatter her imperfect form, but, nowadays, brutal hours of sweat at the gym are *de rigeur* to even make the qualifying rounds. In our civilization the body rules as never before. It's all about being the most beautiful sculpted animal, so to speak.

“A man who shall take his sister... and he shall see her nakedness... it is a disgrace...” (20:17).

The Hebrew word for “disgrace” here is *chessed*, usually translated as “kindness.” Clearly incest cannot be construed as “kindness.” What then is *chessed*?

If someone comes up to you who is clearly starving, and asks you for some money because he hasn't eaten in days, and you give him money for a meal — that isn't *chessed*. That's called being a normal human being.

If someone comes up to you who is clearly starving,

and asks you for money for food, and you respond by taking him home, sitting him down at your table, and serving him a meal fit for a king, and then send him on his way with money in his pocket and a bulging take-home basket of goodies under his arm — that's *chessed*.

Chessed means forcing yourself to go beyond your comfort zone. *Chessed* can be breaking through the barriers of your normal selfishness, but it can also be breaking through the natural instinctive barriers of inappropriate intimacy.

Secular society standards inevitably influence the “Jewish World” to some extent. Today there are debates even within the wider Orthodox community about subjects that would have been totally shocking 50 years ago, ideas that the Torah unequivocally calls *to'eva*, an abomination.

“If your brother becomes impoverished...”

We live in an era of spiritual impoverishment, a world of almost total physicality.

What we can do?

G-d designed this world as a symbiotic creation. If we are prepared to break through the boundaries of our own spirituality, venture out of our own little cocoons and do just a little bit more — say *berachot* a little better — learn Torah better, really do *chessed* — the result must be that the light of holiness will shine once again in the world.

• Source: “*Chessed*” idea based on Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

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 9 - 15

When Frequent is First

This teaches that if the Pesach sacrifice was delayed and the time for offering the afternoon daily sacrifice arrived, then the daily sacrifice is offered first and only afterwards is the Pesach sacrifice offered.

The Sage Ben Bateira is of the opinion that the entire day of the 14th of Nissan is an acceptable time to bring the Pesach sacrifice, and the afternoon of that day is not the only time for it to be brought. This is how Rabbi Oshiya explains the ruling of Ben Bateira in the *misna*, which states that a *korban* Pesach offered on the *morning* of the 14th for the sake of a *different* type of sacrifice is not kosher, despite the general rule that only if this wrongdoing is done “in the correct time” is the sacrifice not kosher. Rabbi Eliezer disputes this ruling, and states in the *mishna* that if the *korban* Pesach is brought for a different type of *korban* on that *morning*, it is kosher (although it will not count as his Pesach sacrifice) since only that afternoon and not that morning is an acceptable time to bring a Pesach sacrifice.

The position of Ben Bateira is challenged from a number of verses, and the *gemara* successfully explains the meanings of these verses according to the opinion of Ben Bateira. The answer that the *gemara* asserts in one particular case is that the verse teaches, that, although the Pesach sacrifice could be brought in the morning, if it was delayed until the time for offering the afternoon daily sacrifice, then the daily sacrifice is offered first, and only afterwards is the Pesach sacrifice offered.

The *gemara* points out that this particular order of the sacrifices is consistent with what Rabbi Yochanan states regarding when to pray Mussaf in the event that it was not said in the morning. He rules that the delayed Mussaf prayer is said only *after* the afternoon Mincha prayer is recited. The underlying theme for these rulings is that the mitzvah that is done more frequently (“*tadir*”) should precede the mitzvah that is done less frequently (“*eino tadir*”). In both of the above cases, the more frequent mitzvah is fulfilled first when two *mitzvot* come at the same time: the daily sacrifice precedes the Pesach one, and the daily Mincha prayer comes before Mussaf. This concept also explains why a *tallit*, which is daily, is put on in the morning before *tefillin*, which is not worn on Shabbat or Festivals. This concept of “*tadir*” is also a consideration in deciding whether or not lighting Chanukah lights after Shabbat should precede making Havdala (once it is dark and a verbal indication that Shabbat has ended is made). Although one might apply the above reasoning to say that Havdala, which is said at the end of each Shabbat and Festival day, should come first since it is “more frequent,” there is perhaps an equally compelling reason to light the Chanukah candles first, such as hurrying to publicize the Chanukah miracle (see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 681:2, and Mishna Berura and Bi’ur Halacha there for further halachic discussion of this subject).

• *Zevachim 11b-12a*

Continued on page nine

EDITOR’S NOTE:

This week’s issue of Ohrnet Magazine which is titled “Behar-Bechuchotai” is for *Parshat Behar* in Israel this week and for *Parshat Bechukotai* next week. Outside of Israel, *Parshat Emor* is read this week, and both *Behar* and *Bechukotai* will be read next week. Ohrnet Magazine for *Parshat Emor* was already published last week. If further clarification is desired, please write to ohr@ohr.edu

PARSHA Q&A?

Behar

1. Why does the Torah specify that the laws of *shemita* were taught on *Har Sinai*?
2. If one possesses *shemita* food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
3. The Torah commands, “You shall sanctify the fiftieth year.” How is this done?
4. Which two “returns” are announced by the shofar during *yovel*?
5. From where does the *yovel* year get its name?
6. What prohibitions are derived from the verse “*v’lo sonu ish es amiso* — a person shall not afflict his fellow”?
7. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of *shemita*?
8. If *shemita* is observed properly, how long is the crop of the sixth year guaranteed to last?
9. After selling an ancestral field, when can one redeem it?
10. Under what circumstance may one sell ancestral land?

Bechukotai

1. To what do the words “*bechukosai telechu*” (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. When is rain “in its season”?
3. What is the blessing of “*v’achaltem lachmechem l’sova*” (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
4. What is meant by the verse “and a sword will not pass through your land”?
5. Mathematically, if five Jewish soldiers can defeat 100 enemy soldiers, how many enemy soldiers should 100 Jewish soldiers be able to defeat?
6. How much is ‘*revava*’?
7. Which “progression” of seven transgressions are taught in Chapter 26, and why in that particular order?
8. What is one benefit which the Jewish People derive from the Land of Israel’s state of ruin?
9. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
10. How many years did the Jewish People sin in Israel up till the time the northern tribes were exiled?

PARSHA Q&A!

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

Behar

1. 25:1 - To teach us that just as *shemita* was taught in detail on *Har Sinai*, so too, all the *mitzvot* were taught in detail on *Har Sinai*.
2. 25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
3. 25:10 - At the beginning of the year the Beis Din declares, “This year is *kadosh* (sanctified).”
4. 25:10 - The return of the land to its original owner, and the “return” (freedom) of the slave from slavery.
5. 25:10 - From the sounding of the shofar. A ram’s horn is called a *yovel*.
6. 25:17 - One may not intentionally hurt people’s feelings, nor give bad advice while secretly intending to reap benefit.
7. 25:18 - Exile.
8. 25:21,22 - From Nissan of the sixth year until Sukkot of the ninth year.
9. 25:24 - After two years following the sale, until *yovel*. At the beginning of *yovel* it returns to the family automatically.
10. 25:25 - Only if one becomes impoverished.

Bechukotai

1. 26:3 - Laboring in Torah learning.
2. 26:4 - At times when people are not outside (e.g. Shabbat nights).
3. 26:5 - You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
4. 26:6 - No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
5. 26:8 - Two thousand.
6. 26:8 - Ten thousand.
7. 26:14,15 - Not studying Torah, not observing *mitzvot*, rejecting those who observe *mitzvot*, hating Sages, preventing others from observing *mitzvot*, denying that G-d gave the *mitzvos*, denying the existence of G-d. They are listed in this order because each transgression leads to the next.
8. 26:32 - No enemy nation will be able to settle in the Land of Israel.
9. 26:35 - 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *Shemita* and *Yovel* years.
10. 26:35 - 390 years.

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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

Netivot — Tomb of the “Baba Sali”

Rabbi Yisrael Abu Chatzira’s tomb in the southern city of Netivot has been attracting large numbers of worshippers since 1984. The spiritual leader of North African Jews, who gained a reputation as a miracle worker through his prayers and blessings, was descended from Rabbi Shmuel Albaz who lived in Damascus where he studied with the disciples of the Arizal. After a



miraculous crossing of the sea from Jaffa to Constantinople on a mat (*chatzira* in Arabic), he changed his name to Abu Chatzira (“father of the mat”).

Baba Sali, as he was respectfully called, came to Eretz Yisrael in the early fifties and first settled in Yavneh. From there he moved to Ashkelon and ended up in Netivot, where he is buried.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Behar

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This “Shabbat” for the Land is called “*shemita*”. The year 5768 was a *shemita* year in Israel. After every seventh *shemita*, the fiftieth year, *yovel* (jubilee), is announced with the sound of the shofar on Yom Kippur. This was also a year for the Land to lie fallow. G-d promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the *shemita* and *yovel* years. During *yovel*, all land is returned to its original division from the time of Joshua, and all Jewish indentured servants are freed, even if they have not completed their six years of work. A Jewish indentured servant may not be given any demeaning, unnecessary or excessively difficult work, and may not be sold in the public market. The price of his labor must be calculated according to the amount of time remaining until he will automatically become free. The price of land is similarly calculated. Should anyone sell his ancestral land, he has the right to redeem it after two years. If a house in a walled city is sold, the right of redemption is limited to the first year after the sale. The Levites’ cities belong to them

forever. The Jewish People are forbidden to take advantage of one another by lending or borrowing with interest. Family members should redeem any relative who was sold as an indentured servant as a result of impoverishment.

Bechukotai

The Torah promises prosperity for the Jewish People if they follow G-d’s commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of being the Chosen People, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process that will fall upon them when Divine protection is removed. These punishments, whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, concludes with a detailed description of *Erachin* – the process by which someone can make a vow to give to the *Beit Hamikdash* the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal, or property.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Mother's Day

From: Michael

*Dear Rabbi,
Mother's Day is coming up and I'm wondering if there's any Jewish basis for celebrating the day in the customary fashion. Or maybe the way Mother's Day is celebrated is not the Jewish way.*

Dear Michael,

First let's briefly explore the history of the modern holiday of Mother's Day. It was first celebrated in 1908 by Anna Jarvis, who held a memorial for her mother Ann, a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War. Anna Jarvis wanted to honor her mother by continuing the work she started, and to fix a day to honor all mothers, because she believed a mother is "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world". In 1914 President Woodrow Wilson enacted Mother's Day to be held on the second Sunday in May as a national holiday to honor mothers.

Interestingly, the founder of Mother's Day later became an active opponent of it. Jarvis opposed the commercialization of the holiday. She believed that card, candy and flower companies exploited the idea of Mother's Day, promoting profit instead of genuine sentiment. She organized boycotts of Mother's Day, and even threatened to issue lawsuits against the commercializing companies. Jarvis argued that people should appreciate and honor their mothers through handwritten letters expressing their love and gratitude, instead of buying gifts and pre-made cards. She protested at a candy makers' convention in Philadelphia in 1923 and was arrested at a meeting of American War Mothers in 1925 while protesting their profiting from the sale of carnations for mothers.

From a Jewish perspective there has always been great emphasis on honoring and respecting one's mother, and on cultivating and expressing sincere appreciation, love and affection. This begins with the adulation of Eve, the first mother who precipitated

bringing all human life into the world. It continues to the holy matriarchs — Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah — the illustrious founders of the Jewish People, whose moral greatness and purity we are constantly enjoined to emulate. Later, G-d mandated the cultivation and display of these feelings by commanding "Honor and respect your mother". In Judaism this is not limited to, or highlighted on, any particular day, but rather it is to be fulfilled to the utmost every day for one's entire life.

Therefore, given the commercialization of Mother's Day, which is not in accord with Jewish values, and due to the fact that in Judaism "every day is Mother's Day," there is no special Jewish reason to celebrate "Mother's Day".

That being said, if one's expression is original and sincere, avoiding commercialization, and in addition one realizes that even the special attention to Mom on this day falls short of what actually should be done and expressed every day of the year, it would not be forbidden to celebrate Mother's Day. And this might be akin to the way in Judaism that certain themes, which are applicable on a daily basis, are nonetheless given special expression on specific days.

For example, even though we daily recall the redemption of Egypt, we also commemorate it on Pesach, and while we daily express our gratitude for receiving the Torah, we also celebrate the experience on Shavuot. In fact, these appointed days actually draw the influence of their respective themes into the rest of the year, such that the observance of the holidays inspires and fires their daily observance throughout the rest of the year. So too, using the Jewish approach, one might view the observance of Mother's Day as a source from which to draw an example and motivation of how to honor one's mother during the rest of the year.

And if one's mother would enjoy celebrating the day, since this would make her happy (and who would object to receiving flowers, chocolate, being invited out to dinner, or all of the above?), doing so might very well be a fulfillment of the mitzvah of honoring one's mother.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Words of Redemption

The end of Leviticus speaks about different forms of redemption in the legal sense. It mentions the rights — or even commandments — of the impoverished and their extended family to “redeem” property sold out of desperation, and bring it back to the family. This applies to a field, a house of residence, or a person sold as a slave (Lev. 25:25-55). Moreover, the Torah also teaches us about the halachic mechanisms for redeeming consecrated animals, houses, or fields (Lev. 27:9-34). The word used for redeeming in these contexts is sometimes *goel* and sometimes *podeh*.^{*} The noun forms of those verbs are *geulah* and *pedut/pidyon*, respectively. What is the difference between these two different words for redemption and what can we learn from these words?

To better understand the words for redemption, we look to the quintessential act of redemption: the Exodus from Egypt. The Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer of Vilna (1720-1797), explains that the Exodus consists of two parallel redemptions. The *pidyon* (which occurred on the night of Passover) was a form of salvation whereby G-d traded Jewish firstborns for the Egyptian firstborns, saving the former and annihilating the latter. Almost concurrently, the *geulah* was G-d's way of saving the Jews by way of sheer brute force. In this way, *pidyon* implies salvation which comes about through an exchange, while *geulah* connotes a form of rescue which is done without any type of remuneration.

Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk (1853-1918) explained the difference between *pidyon* and *geulah* by using the classical Yeshivish *cheftza-gavra* (object-person) construct. He explains that the term *pidyon* focuses on the object of redemption, and denotes a change in the object's personal status, while the term *geulah* focuses on the owner of the object, and denotes redemption as a change in the ownership of said object.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762-1839), known as the Chatam Sofer, writes that *pidyon* refers to negative redemption — that is, simply being saved from whatever calamity confronts him — while *geulah* refers to positive redemption — that is, not just being saved from something bad, but being raised above one's circumstances and becoming greater. A similar explanation is recorded by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hager of Kosov (1768-1825) who writes that *pidyon* offers temporary relief for whatever ails him, while the

term *geulah* implies a more comprehensive, everlasting form of deliverance.

Along these lines, Malbim explains that the term *pidyon* denotes redemption as the fact of salvation. On the other hand, the word *geulah* denotes redemption that is born of closeness between the redeemer and redeemed. That closeness serves as the impetus for the redeemer's feeling of responsibility in saving the redeemed. When one's relative is murdered, one has a status that may, under certain circumstances, perhaps allow avenging the death. The relative who is named as having this status of carrying out this act is called by Numbers 35:19, *goel hadam* (“redeemer of blood”). In this context, the word *goel* alludes to the avenger's kinship with his murdered brethren.

Rabbi Shmuel Tuvia Stern (1920-2004), the late Rabbi of Miami Beach, explains that *pidyon* refers to taking something which is holy and redeeming it from its holy status by *transferring* the holiness, effectively consecrating something else instead. *Geulah*, on the other hand, applies to the idea of taking something that is of the unholy/non-holy and redeeming it by shaking off those non-holy associations, allowing it to enter the domain of the holy. Alternatively, Rabbi Stern explains that *pidyon* refers to redemption on a case-by-case basis (i.e. the redemption of the individual), while *geulah* refers to mass redemption (i.e. redemption of the public, or nation, at large).

^{*} While the word *podeh* is generally spelled PEY-DALET-HEY, in one place (Iyov 33:24), the Bible replaces the HEY with an AYIN. Rashi (there) and Nachmanides (to Ex. 21:14) explain that the AYIN and HEY are interchangeable letters, so this word is the same as *podeh*. However, Rabbi Yonah Ibn Janach, Rabbi Menachem ibn Saruk, and Radak, in their respective lexicons of roots in the Hebrew language, have separate entries with a HEY and with an AYIN, implying that they understand the latter is a separate word from the former. To this effect, Malbim writes that *podeh* with an AYIN may be related to a similar-sounding Arabic word which means “removal”.

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

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

The “Heart” of Educating

“G-d said to Moshe, Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and you shall say to them...” (Vayikra 21:1)

Rashi explains that the Torah’s choice to use the double expression of “Say” followed by “and you shall say” is meant to command adults with regard to minors. Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi (Constantinople, 1450-1525) explains that the first “say” is addressed to Moshe, “and you shall say to them” are the words that Moshe is to say to the *Kohanim*. Accordingly, the verse would read like this: You, Moshe, say to the *Kohanim*: “And you *Kohanim* shall say to your children...”

In the Torah portion relating the giving of the Torah, G-d says that the Jewish People will be to Him a kingdom of *Kohanim*, a kingdom of priests. In this light we can view the above verse as addressing the entire Jewish People, charging all adults regarding the mitzvah to educate their children.

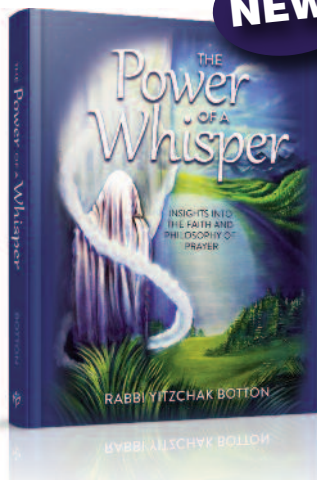
The Hebrew word used here for “say” is explained by the Rabbis to indicate speaking *mildly*, as opposed to speaking harshly. Here is a valuable lesson for effective education in today’s times for instilling in our youth a

love and appreciation for Torah and *mitzvot*. We must speak softly and with love. If the children feel that our heart is invested, then they will also invest theirs. This was in fact the method of Aharon *Hakohen*.

We find in the Torah that students are called “children,” as in the verse in Kings (II 2:3): “And the children (i.e. students) of the prophets went out.” Thus, the mention of “the children of Aharon” in the verse teaches us that we must be *students* of Aharon, following in his footsteps, loving peace and bringing people close to Torah in a warm and pleasant way.

The Mitzvah of Teaching Torah

A father is obligated to teach his son Torah. Beyond the study of the *mitzvot*, a father must also teach his children how to fulfill them. While still at a young age, children begin to perform *mitzvot*. Since human beings are creatures of habit, by helping children get used to doing *mitzvot* while they are young, by the time they become bar or bat mitzvah they will be familiar with exactly how to perform the *mitzvot* properly.



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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Conflict of Interest

Behar

In our “money makes money” world, the prohibition against interest is difficult to understand. Both the borrower and lender recognize the time-value and investment-value of money. The borrower, in the primary situation contemplated by the Torah, borrows money for business purposes. He intends to, and hopefully does, turn the capital into something worth more than the principal. And the lender would not have had his money sit idle; if not for the loan, that money would have been invested, in turn making more money. It would seem only fair for the borrower to repay the lender — the growth he enjoyed comes at the expense of the growth the lender surrendered.

Yet, the Torah contains not one but two prohibitions: The lender is prohibited from charging interest, and the borrower is prohibited from giving it. The two words used in the Torah provide some insight. Interest from the standpoint of the borrower is called *neshech*, literally a “bite,” whereas *tarbit* (excess) is interest from the standpoint of the gain to the lender. If the reason for the prohibition were the immorality of interest, the Torah would not have prohibited, with equal severity, the *paying* of interest. Nor would it have limited the prohibition of interest to transactions among Jews. Rather, the two prohibitions of taking and paying interest reflect the truth that G-d is the Master of our possessions. Just as He is Master of our landed property, as reflected in the proximate laws of Shemitah and Yovel in this *parsha*, He is Master of our movable possessions as well. Were we the true owners of our money, and were our loan acts deriving entirely from our own free will,

then the business model would prevail. Interest would not be considered a “bite” from the borrower (as he expects to grow the principal) nor an “excess” to the lender (as he would have grown the capital if left in his possession). The transaction would merely compensate the lender’s loss with the borrower’s gain.

But the Torah teaches that our money is not absolutely our own. The right to exercise control over our money belongs to G-d, and it is He Who commands us to place some of our assets — which are His, but which happen to be in our hands — into the hands of our brother, to enable him not only to subsist, but also to continue his business endeavors. As soon as the money is lent, it ceases to be the lender’s property and becomes the property of the borrower. The gain he realizes from the capital is *his* gain. Were the lender to demand any part of the borrower’s earning, he would be taking a “bite” from the borrower’s personal assets. The money is no longer the property of the lender, because he is duty-bound by the Torah to lend; any interest *is* in “excess” of what is his.

The Torah concludes this prohibition with the words *and you shall fear your G-d*. Charging interest would be justified as normative social and business practice were it not for the fear of G-d, and the recognition that He is the true Owner of our assets. The duty to lend money without interest, writes Rav Hirsch, is the “granite rock foundation on which the society of the Jewish People is based.” It is a cardinal duty, through which we express our homage to Him through acts of sacrifice in daily life.

• Sources: *Commentary*, *Vayikra* 25:35, *Shemot* 22:24

Continued on page ten

The Ohr Somayach Family shares in the sorrow of the untimely and tragic passing of

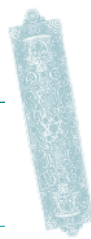
Chaim Kasnett, obm

son of our dear and esteemed colleague

Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett, *shlit'a*

and send our tefilot to him and his family that they may know of no more sorrow.

הַמָּקוֹם יִנַּחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אֲבְלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Q: I'm curious to know why there is a rule that *berachot* (saying a blessing) generally precede a *mitzvah*. Also, what can be done if one forgets to make a *beracha* before affixing a *mezuzah*?

A: Our Sages explain that a *beracha* is not merely a perfunctory obligation. When we recite the words: "He Who sanctified us with His commandments," we are striving to uplift ourselves to connect with the sanctity and spirituality of the act we are about to perform. In this sense, the *beracha* actually breathes more soul into the physical body of the *mitzvah*.

Moreover, the *beracha* focuses our hearts and minds on the reality that what we are about to perform is a fulfillment of the Divine will, and it publicizes that belief to all who hear it.

If one does not recite a *beracha* before affixing the *mezuzah*, many authorities rule that you may not make one afterwards. However, if you are still involved in adjusting the position of the *mezuzah*, you may still make a blessing. Of course, if you are going to be

putting up another *mezuzah* at the time, as you are making a *beracha* on the next one you can have the first *mezuzah* in mind as well. Alternatively, you can take the *mezuzah* down and put a different one in its place with a *beracha*.

These are the preferred procedures. However, many authorities allow a blessing to be recited in the following ways:

Some write that when the time comes to do the periodic check to see if the *mezuzah* is still kosher, one may remove the *mezuzah* for that purpose and afterwards replace it, with a *beracha*.

Still others opine that since the *mitzvah* continues to be fulfilled passively even *after* the act of placement, a *beracha* may still be made. According to this opinion, one may simply put one's hand on the *mezuzah* and make a *beracha*, even long after its original placement.

• Sources: *Ritva*, *Pesachim* 7b; *Agur B'ohalecha* 7:5, 7; *Shach* 286:25; *Aruch HaShulchan* 286:24; *Iggros Moshe* 1:179

Got a *mezuzah* question or story? Email rabbi@ohrsandton.com or submit on my website mymezuzahstory.com
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Talmud Tips...continued from page two

Zevachim 16-22

Drinking and Duchening

"Rav would not teach Torah publicly after eating and drinking during a Yom Tov meal until the next day due to not being completely sober."

The *mishna* teaches numerous factors that would invalidate the service in the Beit Hamikdash. For example: if the *kohen* was lacking in the number of garments required, or if he was sitting down. A case that is not mentioned in the *mishna*, but is taught in the *gemara*, is the service of a *kohen* who drank wine is invalid. Initially, the *gemara* thought to prove this halacha from the verses: "Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication, neither you nor your sons with you, when you go into the Mikdash ... to distinguish between the holy and the profane." (Vayikra 10:9-10) Rashi in our *sugya* explains this to mean that "service that you do while inebriated is called *profane* (i.e. invalid)." Rashi on Chumash also explains in this manner.

However, the *gemara* concludes that the source for "drunken service" being invalid is actually a *gezeira shava* derivation from the case of a *kohen* lacking the proper number of garments. So what do the verses in Vayikra in fact teach? That a person should not render a halachic ruling when not completely sober, as in the case of Rav who refrained from teaching after a Yom Tov meal that included wine. According to this interpretation, the two verses in Vayikra are not both speaking about the Beit Hamikdash and sobriety. Rather, the second verse comes to teach that when teaching distinctions in halacha — "between the holy and the profane" — one must be sober. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 242:13)

Another halacha regarding sobriety is that a *kohen* who has drunk a *revi'it* of wine may not *duchen* (say the Priestly Blessing). Since *duchening* is comparable to the service in the Beit Hamikdash, and service in the Beit Hamikdash requires sobriety, so does *duchening*. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 128:38)

• *Zevachim* 17b, 18a

Triple Covenant

Bechukotai

At the end of the difficult description of the tragedies that will befall the Jewish People in exile, the Jewish heart is reawakened and is humbled before G-d. When this happens, G-d says He will remember “*My ‘covenant Yaakov’ and also My ‘covenant Yitzchak’ and also My ‘covenant Avraham.’*” These are not the covenants that G-d established with each of the Patriarchs, but rather the covenant named Yaakov, the covenant named Yitzchak and the covenant named Avraham.

These covenants are covenants of historical destiny, rooted in the lives and personalities of the Patriarchs. They represent the periods which mark our emergence from exile, and are recorded in that order — first Yaakov, then Yitzchak, then Avraham.

Our Sages teach that the three Patriarchs established the three daily prayers: Avraham instituted the morning *shacharit* prayer, Yitzchak the afternoon *mincha* prayer, and Yaakov the evening *ma’ariv* prayer. Correspondingly, the lot in life of each accorded with one of these three times of day.

Avraham’s lot was illuminated with increasing brightness. While he challenged the beliefs of those around him, and forged a new path, he was treated with great respect and honored as a “prince of G-d” by his neighbors.

Yitzchak’s lot was clouded with declining light. While he was blessed with the material wealth of Avraham, he did not enjoy the favor of his fellow men. Instead, they envied his blessings, and he was forced to seclude himself and his household.

Yaakov’s lot was enshrouded in the darkness of night. His life was a string of trials and tribulations,

including being swindled by his father-in-law, nearly killed by his brother, the early loss of his beloved wife, violation of his daughter by Shechem, and the loss of his most precious child.

All three, despite the vast differences in their lots, represent the nearness of G-d and the destiny of the Jewish People. Our destiny as a nation has already, and will continue to, reflect similar changes in fortune, albeit in the reverse order.

The covenant “Yaakov” is written first, and is emphasized by means of an extra letter (*ktiv malei*). The *galut* will define Jewish destiny for a long time. But when it is finally perceived and experienced as the rectification it is meant to be, the Jewish heart will find its way back. When the Jewish star transforms even the darkest night into a shining revelation of devotion and loyalty, the suffering and blood will not be in vain; after being the object of hatred, the Jewish People will have become an example for the nations.

The night of exile will begin to wane, and the covenant “Yitzchak” will begin. No longer the object of hatred, the Jew is the object of envy. In the midst of growing prosperity, living among nations wavering between humaneness and envy, the Jewish people will have to preserve their unique character, just as Yitzchak did.

When they have passed the second test of exile, fulfilling Torah amidst prosperity and envy, then they will enter the covenant “Avraham.” They will devote themselves to G-d and His Torah in the midst of the nay-saying nations. Actualizing the full goodness and truth of Torah, they will earn first the respect of the nations, and then *and the Land I will remember* — a return forever to Eretz Yisrael.

• Sources: Commentary, Vayikra 26:42

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:

אָחֵינוּ בְּלִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
“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.”