

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHIOT TAZRIA - METZORA - PESACH SPECIAL · 3-22 NISSAN 5763 · APR. 5-24, 2003 · VOL. 10 NO. 26

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Tazria

TWO SIGNS

“And on the eighth day, the flesh of the foreskin shall be circumcised.” (12:3)

The greatness of Shabbat can be seen from the fact that a boy is not given *brit mila* until he is eight days old, until he has experienced Shabbat. In other words, the reason that *brit mila* is performed on the eighth day after birth is so that he can experience Shabbat before the *mila*. Only by passing through the holiness of Shabbat can he reach a level where he becomes fit to enter into the holiness of the Jewish People through *brit mila*.

• Yalkut Yehuda

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

“And on the eighth day, the flesh of the foreskin shall be circumcised.” (12:3)

The custom at a *brit* is to say to the parents “Just as he has been brought into the Covenant (*brit*), so should he be brought to Torah, marriage and good deeds.” Just as he has been brought into the *brit*, which is now an inseparable part of him, thus also should all the other *mitzvot* of the Torah form an inseparable part of him.

WHO’S FIRST?

“When a woman conceives...” (12:2)

If Man is worthy — if he makes his soul the essence of his being — then he precedes all Creation. The spirit of Man that hovered over the depths even before the creation of light. But if he is not worthy — if he glories in his physical dimension — then in terms of the *physical* precedence of Creation, even the mosquito preceded him.

For this reason the Torah deals with the laws of purity in Man after the laws of purity in animals: Just as the *physical* creation of Man follows that of the animals, so too his laws are explained after the laws of the animals. This applies, however, only when Man behaves like nothing more than a sophisticated animal. However, if he relegates his physical side to his soul, if he fulfills the purpose of Creation by recognizing and serving his Creator, then he precedes all Creation.

• Based on the Midrash and Rashi

Parshat Metzora continued on page 8

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Tazria

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara'at* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara'at* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person's status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara'at*. One whose *tzara'at* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara'at* on clothing is described in detail.

Metzora

The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara'at*) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves *korbanot* and immersions in the *mikveh*. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals. Before a *kohen* diagnoses that a house has *tzara'at*, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The *tzara'at* is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC WAR OF SURVIVAL

Tazria

Israel is fighting a war not only against Arab terror, but against Arab demography as well. The widening gap between the birth rates of the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel raises some deep concerns about the future of this country as a Jewish state.

Two of the factors which conspire to keep the Jewish birthrate down are the secularist hostility to large families and the widespread practice of abortion. This is why, outside of religious circles, the average Israeli family reportedly has “one and a half children and a dog”. Add to this the determination of the new government to keep on cutting down child allowance payments and you get a grim picture of official policy towards having more children.

In this week’s Torah portion a woman who gives birth is

obligated to bring a sin offering along with a burnt one as sacrifices in the *Beit Hamikdash*. What sin did she commit to require such atonement? The answer given by our Talmudic Sages is that in the throes of her labor pains the woman giving birth is invariably tempted to vow that she will abstain from marital relations so that she never need to endure such suffering again. Once the experience is behind her she of course relents and goes on having children. But atonement is required for even entertaining the thought of abandoning her G-d-given potential to bring life to the world.

This is a thought which must change the attitude of many Israelis, from government officials to women with child-bearing potential, if Israel is to remain a Jewish state forever.

CAN A LEPER CHANGE HIS SPOTS?

Metzora

And so there will finally be a prime minister for the Palestinian Authority and his name is Abu Mazen! The hopes that this move by Arafat inspires amongst those who still believe that peace can be reached with the Palestinian terrorists must be tempered with a closer look at the man upon whom those hopes are pinned. This fellow, whose real name is Mahmoud Abbas, published a book in Arabic in 1983 titled “The Other Side: The Secret Relations Between Nazism and the Leadership of the Zionist Movement”, in which he repeatedly cast doubt on the fact that six million Jews were slaughtered by the Nazis. Aside from denying the scope of the Holocaust, he sought to

absolve the Nazis for the killing they did by blaming the Zionist leadership for what took place.

This Shabbat, when Jews will read in their weekly Torah portion the laws of *tzora’as*, a form of leprosy resulting from spiritual shortcomings, the question we must ask in regard to Abu Mazen is whether “a leper can change his spots”. Such a change would probably be a miracle. But isn’t this also “Shabbat Hagadol” recalling the great miracle which took place for our ancestors in Egypt on the threshold of liberation?

Miracles happened then and we must pray that they continue to protect Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

SHIMON HATZADIK – THE MYSTERIOUS VISION

Shimon Hatzadik was one of the last surviving members of the *Anshei Knesset Hagedola* (Members of the Great Assembly), who became the *Kohen Gadol* after Ezra who led the return of Jews from Babylonian exile to Eretz Yisrael.

When he was informed that Alexander the Great was leading an army to destroy the *Beit Hamikdash*, which the Jew-hating Kuttites (Samaritans) had convinced him was a threat to his Macedonian Empire, he took immediate emergency action. Donning the sacred gar-



ments reserved for performance of the Holy Temple services, he walked all night, together with Jerusalem notables, to meet this force. When the two groups finally met at dawn, the mighty king descended from his royal chariot and prostrated himself before Shimon Hatzadik, explaining that it was this vision which he always saw leading him to victory in battle. The tables were thus turned on the Kuttites as the destruction which they planned for the *Beit Hamikdash* was visited instead on their idolatrous shrine on Mount Gerizim.

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

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THE SCORNER'S FATE

The scorners – one who makes fun of the reproof given to him because of his evil ways – invites serious trouble for himself. Rabbi Elazar cites a passage from the Prophet Yeshaya to show that a scorners brings suffering upon himself. The same passage is cited by another sage regarding the negative impact that the scorners' lack of seriousness has upon the entire world.

"Now therefore be not scorners," warns the prophet, "lest your suffering be made intense" (*Yeshaya 28:22*).

The reason for scorning inviting suffering, explains Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto in his classic ethical work "*Mesillat Yesharim*", is that while serious people repent their sins when they are reproved by others the scorners mocks those who attempt to correct him. This leaves Heaven with no alternative but to arouse him to repentance through suffering which he cannot just laugh off.

While the first part of the above passage directly addresses the potential scorners with a warning about the harm he brings upon himself, the next phrase speaks generally about the utter destruction for which the scorners is responsible. This, explains Maharsha, led Rabbi Tanchum bar Chanilai to conclude that this passage also includes a prophetic warning about the destruction the scorners brings upon the world. He brings guilt upon others who serve as a welcoming audience for his mockery or at least fail to protest against it.

• *Avoda Zara 18b*

DOUBLE DOSE OF LIFESAVING MEDICINE

"Guarding the tongue" against gossip and slander, which are the sins of an "evil tongue", has become a subject of major interest in the religious community in our generation. All sorts of programs for studying the laws of this important issue and well-attended seminars have become regular features in this society. Even Jews not yet committed to a religious lifestyle have become attracted to learning more about disciplining their speech after realizing how this can enrich their personal lives.

All of these people are following the advice of King David who counseled "the man who wants to live to guard his tongue from speaking evil" (*Tehillim 34:13-14*). One might assume, however, that this can be achieved in a completely passive way by going to sleep in order to avoid speaking. The Psalmist therefore continues his advice by urging the seeker of life to "turn away from evil and do good" (*ibid. 15*).

"Good," our Sages point out, is a reference to Torah as we find in the passage "I have given you a good acquisition, do not forsake My Torah" (*Mishlei 4:2*). As Maharsha explains, it is not sufficient to avoid misuse of the Divine gift of speech by going to sleep. Positive action must be taken in the form of Torah study, which will protect him from the temptations of negative

speech. As King Solomon puts it: "The tree of life (Torah) is a cure for the tongue" (*Mishlei 15:4*).

This double dose of curative medicine for the tongue of the person who wants to live is achieved by regularly studying the laws of guarding the tongue which both warn one to "turn away from evil" and fortify his discipline with the "doing good" of studying Torah.

• *Avoda Zara 19b*

THE COWS THAT SANG

"The cows sang on the way leading to Beit Shemesh" (*Shmuel I 6:12*). This is how Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Meir interpreted the passage describing the miraculous return of the Holy Ark from the hands of the Philistines.

As punishment for the sins of Eli Hakohen's sons, G-d inflicted upon Israel a disastrous loss in battle with the Philistines in which the Holy Ark was taken to the conquerors' idolatrous temple. Only after suffering terrible illnesses did the Philistines realize that they had incurred Divine wrath by thus shaming the Holy Ark and thereupon decided to return it to the Israelites.

The wagon upon which they placed the Holy Ark was pulled by two cows who not only headed on their own towards the Israelite town of Beit Shemesh but broke out in a song of praise to G-d. Different versions of what words they sang are offered by the various sages. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish states that it was the "orphaned psalm" which they sang. This is a reference to Psalm 98 of Tehillim which begins with the word "Song" but fails to identify its author or the occasion when it was sung in the *Beit Hamikdash* as is the case in all other Psalms with such an opening.

How the words of this "orphaned psalm" relate to the subject of the cows' singing is explained by Maharsha. "Sing to G-d a new song for He has done marvelous things" refers to the miraculous return of the Holy Ark after a crushing military defeat. In the wondrous way He coerced the Philistines to return the Holy Ark "G-d made known His salvation and revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations".

• *Avoda Zara 27b*

THE ETERNAL EVERGREEN

In the very first psalm of Tehillim we find a Torah scholar being compared to a tree. The blessed man who studies Torah day and night "shall be like a tree planted by streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf shall not wither" (*Tehillim 1:2-3*).

King David's analogy of the tree echoes in the words of his son Shlomo who declared that "where the tree falls there it shall lie" (*Kohelet 11:3*).

Farud was the town in which the Sage Bar Kafra lived until

PARSHA Q&A ?

Tazria

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tazria's Questions!

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

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

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE HERO OF OTNIEL

Noam Apter, may G-d avenge his blood, was a true hero who sacrificed himself to save his fellow yeshiva students.

On December 27, 2002, over a hundred Israeli teenagers sat down for the Shabbat meal at the Yeshiva of Otniel. Four of the students whose turn it was to be the evening's "waiters" went to serve the main course in the kitchen adjoining the dining room. Noam Apter, 23, was among them. Suddenly two terrorists dressed in Israeli army uniforms burst into the kitchen and sprayed the four waiters with fire from their M16s. Hit by the bullets and mortally wounded, Noam used his last strength to run to the door connecting between the kitchen and the dining room, and closed it. He locked it and threw the key into a corner. He then collapsed and died, lying

against the door.

The terrorists tried to open the door. Seeing it locked, they tried to spray fire through a small glass window into the dining room. After realizing that this fire was somewhat inaccurate and wild (it wounded six more students), and having already killed the four student waiters, the terrorists fled the kitchen, later to be hunted down and killed by the Israeli army. According to Yaakov Ohana, an 18 year old wounded survivor of the attack, quoted in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv, "Our great luck was that Noam succeeded in locking the door to the dining room and throwing the key into a dark corner; otherwise the terrorists would have massacred dozens."

A real hero!

PARSHA Q&A ?

Metzora

1. When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?
2. In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?
3. Why does the *metzora* require birds in the purification process?
4. In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?
5. During the purification process, the *metzora* is required to shave his hair. Which hair must he shave?
6. What is unique about the *chatat* and the *asham* offered by the *metzora*?
7. In the *Beit Hamikdash*, when the *metzora* was presented "before G-d" (14:11), where did he stand?
8. Where was the *asham* of the *metzora* slaughtered?
9. How was having *tzara'at* in one's house sometimes advantageous?
10. When a house is suspected as having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?
11. What happens to the vessels that are in a house found to have *tzara'at*?
12. Which type of vessels cannot be made *tahor* after they become *tamei*?
13. Where were stones afflicted with *tzara'at* discarded?
14. When a house is suspected of having *tzara'at*, a *kohen* commands that the affected stones be replaced and the house plastered. What is the law if the *tzara'at*: a) returns and spreads; b) does not return; c) returns, but does not spread?
15. When a person enters a house that has *tzara'at*, when do his clothes become *tamei*?
16. What is the status of a man who is *zav* (sees a flow): a) two times or two consecutive days; b) three times or three consecutive days?
17. A *zav* sat or slept on the following: a) a bed; b) a plank; c) a chair; d) a rock. If a *tahor* person touches these things what is his status?
18. What does the Torah mean when it refers to a *zav* who "has not washed his hands"?
19. When may a *zav* immerse in a *mikveh* to purify himself?
20. What is the status of someone who experiences a one-time flow?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Metzora's Questions!

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

1. 14:2 - At night.
2. 14:3 - Outside the three camps.
3. 14:4 - *Tzara'at* comes as a punishment for *lashon hara*. Therefore, the Torah requires the *metzora* to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.
4. 14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that *tzara'at* comes as a punishment for haughtiness.
5. 14:9 - Any visible collection of hair on the body.
6. 14:10 - They require *n'sachim* (drink offerings).
7. 14:11 - At the gate of Nikanor.
8. 14:13 - On the northern side of the *mizbe'ach*.
9. 14:34 - The Amorites concealed treasures in the walls of their houses. After the conquest of the Land, *tzara'at* would afflict these houses. The Jewish owner would tear down the house and find the treasures.
10. 14:36 - It is *tahor*.
11. 14:36 - They become *tamei*.
12. 14:36 - Earthenware vessels.
13. 14:40 - In places where *tahor* objects were not handled.
14. a) 14:44-45 - It is called "*tzara'at mam'eret*," and the house must be demolished; b) 14:48 - the house is pronounced *tahor*; c) 14:44 - The house must be demolished.
15. 14:46 - When he remains in the house long enough to eat a small meal.
16. 15:2 - a) He is *tamei*; b) he is *tamei* and is also required to bring a *korban*.
17. 15:4-5 - Only a type of object that one usually lies or sits upon becomes a transmitter of *tumah* when a *zav* sits or lies on it. A *tahor* person who subsequently touches the object becomes *tamei* and the clothes he is wearing are also *tmei'im*. Therefore: a) *tamei*; b) *tahor*; c) *tamei*; d) *tahor*.
18. 15:11 - One who has not immersed in a *mikveh*.
19. 15:13 - After seven consecutive days without a flow.
20. 15:32 - He is *tamei* until evening.

Pesach Nuggets for 5763 (2003)

PESACH IN A BOX?

From: Joseph C.

Dear Rabbi,

This year my wife and I are kashering our home for Passover for the first time. We are now purchasing Passover dishes, utensils, etc. My question is, when we remove the everyday dishes, where do they go? May we put them in the boxes that held the Passover dishes? Is it better that the Passover dishes not come in contact with a surface that was touched by everyday dishes? Do we cover the inside of the cabinets? Do we change the plastic containers in our kitchen drawers?

Dear Joseph C.,

First of all, congratulations on your first “Kosher for Passover” home. Many happy returns.

You can store *clean* everyday utensils in the boxes that held your Passover dishes. After Passover, you can put the Passover dishes back into the same containers. Just be careful not to get them mixed up.

It is customary to cover cupboards and utensil holders that will be used on Passover. If you can't do this or can't obtain new utensil holders, remove the inserts, clean the drawers completely and put the Passover cutlery directly into the drawer.

By the way, I must warn you about one of the mysteries of Pesach: The Pesach utensils are taken out of a specific amount of storage space, and yet they never seem to all fit back in again! I have never found a rational explanation for this phenomenon! Symbolically, perhaps we too should resist returning to the confines of everyday living after tasting the spiritual liberation of Passover.

A “TELLING” STORY

From: Fred in Tennessee

Dear Rabbi,

What is the Haggadah?

Dear Fred,

The Haggadah is a book that Jews read on the first night of Passover. It tells about our slavery in Egypt and the miracles G-d did for us when freeing us. The word *haggadah* means “telling,” which comes from the Biblical command: “And you shall *tell* your child on that day, saying: ‘G-d did [miracles] for me when I left Egypt in order that I should fulfill the Torah’s commandments” (Exodus 13:8 and Rashi).

As a Jewish family sits around the festive table on Passover night and reads the Haggadah, all of its members are not only retelling that formative experience of the Jewish nation, but are reliving it as well. Egyptian exile and the Exodus from it,

say our Sages, are blueprints for Jewish history. Each generation can find in the Haggadah great guidance in understanding its own trials and triumphs. The Haggadah is thus simultaneously a crash course in Jewish history and a plan for future redemption.

MEANING OF LEANING

From: Roger H. in Walsall, UK

Dear Rabbi,

When and why did the tradition of reclining at the Passover meal begin? In the book of Exodus it seems that the people were instructed for all time to eat the Passover meal with sandals on their feet and staffs in hand as if ready to move on. So why do we lean, which seems to indicate a lack of readiness to move on?

Dear Roger H.,

Leaning symbolizes freedom and aristocracy. It is first recorded in the *Mishnah* (c. 200 CE), but dates back much farther than that. Rather than being a tradition, reclining while eating the matzah and drinking the four cups of wine is a halacha. In fact, in certain circumstances, one does not fulfill the mitzvah if one ate matzah or drank wine without reclining.

The reason why we recline, whereas the Jews in Egypt were commanded to “eat on the run”, is because they were indeed getting ready to leave Egypt. But that command was specific for those people and for that year alone. We, however, intentionally recline to demonstrate our being free to serve G-d and to help us really feel it.

Sources:

- *Tractate Pesachim 99b, 108a; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 472.*

IF YOU CAN'T EAT IT, BEET IT

From: Bonnie H.

I am a vegetarian and it is abhorrent to me to have an animal leg on my table at Pesach. I have been told that somewhere in the Talmud it says that a roasted beet can take the place of a roasted shank bone. Can you help me find the source?

Dear Bonnie H.,

The Talmud says that two cooked foods are to be placed along with the other traditional items on the Seder plate. Rabbi Yosef explains that these two foods are to be meat, one roasted representing the Passover offering and the other cooked representing the festival offering. Rabbi Huna says even beets and rice can be used for the two cooked foods. The custom is to use a roasted shank bone and a boiled egg. If an egg is used instead of meat for the cooked

item, perhaps a beet can replace meat for the roasted one.

Sources:

Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 114b; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473:4.

PESACH HUT

Saul “The Maven” Caplan from beautiful, politically correct, Safety Harbor, Florida wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I deliver pizzas 2-3 evenings a week. Do I have to take the entire week of Pesach off?

Dear Saul “The Maven” Caplan,

On Pesach, it’s forbidden to eat, own or derive any benefit from *chametz*. I asked a renowned halachic authority here in Jerusalem about your case. He said that you are not allowed to deliver pizza during Passover. Since you earn wages by doing so, you are thereby considered to be deriving benefit from the *chametz*.

By the way: If this pizza shop delivers on Passover, they probably also put meat on some of their pizzas. If so, you may have to find another job. You see, milk and meat that is cooked together is similar to *chametz* in that you are not allowed to derive benefit from it. You should consult with the nearest Orthodox Rabbi about this issue, or get back to us.

WHAT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

LIONS AND LAMBS

Question: Is it proper for a nation to wage war against the government of another nation which it sees as a threat to its security?

Answer: This question is the one being raised at all of the demonstrations throughout the world as a result of the American-led coalition invasion of Iraq. The answer is obvious from the perspective of Torah law which commands us to take preemptive action against one who intends to slay us.

Those who ignore this Divine wisdom are also ignoring the lessons of history.

World War Two, with all of its agony, could have been averted if the European nations threatened by Nazi Germany would have made a realistic appraisal of that threat and demonstrated determination rather than appeasement.

Seeking “peace in our time” the appeasers allowed Hitler to annex Austria and to swallow up Czechoslovakia. The rest is a tragic chapter in history which may be summed up in a little parable:

A retired diplomat from the appeasement school was appointed director of a biblical zoo. Utilizing his skills and experience he succeeded in drawing tremendous crowds to visit the zoo. The main attraction was a cage occupied by a lion and a lamb, illustrating the prophetic vision of peace. An old friend who was so overwhelmed by this scene asked the director how he managed to have the “lion and the lamb lie down together”, a feat reserved by the prophet for the end of days.

“Simple,” answered the great appeaser. “Every day another lamb!”

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Re: Hamantashen (Ohrnet Purim)

If you look in Guidelines to Purim (Targum publishers), questions 224 and 219, you will find the following:

This three-cornered pastry alludes to a midrash which says that when Haman saw the merits of the three patriarchs, he lost his strength. The Yiddish word *hamantasch* when written in Hebrew — *tash-haman* — means that Haman became weak. The filling is usually made from poppy-seed in memory of Esther.

There is a custom to eat seeds and pod foods e.g. rice, peas and beans. This is in memory of Esther who ate these foods in the palace of Achashverosh in order to avoid eating non-kosher food. She was following the lead of Daniel and his colleagues who acted similarly in the palace of the king of Babylon.

• Best wishes, Yitzchok Jaeger

Re: Ethics – Playing With Fire (Ohrnet Purim)

Shalom. I should also like to mention the horrific effect these meaningless bangs have on our “much loved” animals. I live in South Africa and every year at those times of the year when there is an “excuse” to use firecrackers our SPCA staff are on emergency duty night and day collecting distressed and terrified animals from all over the city.

In spite of publicity campaigns there are many uncaring persons who persist in annually buying bigger and bigger bangs. We have even had instances of persons ramming firecrackers up the rectums of their animals as a “big joke”.

It’s a seasonal challenge to have to go and speak nicely to one’s neighbor, pointing out the possible consequences of their childrens’ revelry, when in reality I could quite cheerfully respond a tad more forcefully.

• Sincerely, Tricia

WEEKLY DAFootnotes

his passing. When Rabbi Yochanan visited there he asked if anyone recalled what Bar Kafra had ruled in regard to the halachic status of wine stored by a non-Jew. When a local scholar named Rabbi Tanchum quoted the liberal ruling of Bar Kafra, Rabbi Yochanan was deeply impressed with the fact that the sage's teaching had been so absorbed by his townspeople. "The tree falls", he explained, refers to the passing of the Torah scholar, so that we cannot interpret "there it shall lie" as relating to his continued presence. We must therefore conclude that even when the Torah tree falls the fruits which have earlier fallen from it — the Torah he taught to others in his community — will remain as they did in the case of Bar Kafra.

We thus have two analogies relating to two different stages of the Torah scholar's impact on others. The first is during his lifetime when he reaches the level that he is capable of teaching others. Back in the first *perek* of the *mesechta* (19b) the Sage Rava said of him that if he "brings forth his fruit in its season" — he teaches Torah when he is capable of doing so — then "his leaf shall not wither" — he will meet with success and earn the blessings of Heaven.

The analogy in our *gemara* deals with the impact of that teaching which survives even after he is gone. The fruits which fell from the tree during its lifetime — the teaching absorbed by his disciples — will still remain.

• *Avodah Zarah* 31a

THE DANIEL DIET

Daniel, whose wisdom and heroism fill an entire *sefer* in *Ketuvim* (The Holy Writings) is best known for its miraculous survival in a den of hungry lions into which he had been cast by the Persian king for defying his ban on praying to G-d.

The Book of Daniel begins, however, with another example of his heroism in the service of G-d. Taken into Babylonian captivity along with the king and members of the royal family, Daniel was chosen to be trained as an attendant in the palace of Nevuchadenetzer. During this three-year course he was served with the nourishing food supplied by the palace kitchen.

"But Daniel determined in his heart that he would not defile himself with the *patbag* of the king nor with the wine of his drinkings" (*Daniel* 1:8). He found favor in the eyes of the officer in charge who replaced these items with a vegetarian diet and water.

What exactly did Daniel refrain from?

Wine is explicitly mentioned and the plural term "drinkings" is interpreted by our Sages as a reference to a second liquid — oil. Daniel abstained from both of these in order to avoid the social contact arising from shared meals which might lead to intermarriage. Whether he adopted this only as a personal discipline or instituted, in his capacity as a leader of his people, a partial ban on such items for all Jews is a subject of debate in our *gemara* between the Sages Rav and Shmuel.

But what is meant by the *patbag* mentioned in the above passage?

The word *pat* is Hebrew for bread, and it would seem that Daniel abstained from the palace bread as well. Rashbam, quoted by Tosefot, states that it is improbable that Daniel and the comrades who joined him in this heroic adventure managed to retain their healthy condition without eating bread along with their vegetarian diet. His conclusion is that *patbag* is a reference to some royal delicacy which they rejected either for reasons of *kashrut* or separation.

• *Avodah Zarah* 36a

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Metzora

INCREDIBLY 'UMBLE

"...and cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop..." (14:4)

"For leprous-looking lesions result from conceit and haughtiness. What is the cure? A person should lower himself like the worm and the hyssop."

(Rashi)

The Baal Shem Tov once arrived in Polana for Shabbat in a beautiful carriage. In that town was a certain individual who loved to create trouble. He accused the Baal Shem Tov of 'lording it up' and behaving in a conceited fashion.

The Baal Shem replied to him:

"Once there was a king who let it be known that he was searching for the elixir of eternal life. Hearing about the king's quest, a wise man came to him and said, "I have the elixir of eternal life." "Where is it? Where is it?" said the king in great excitement. "I will pay you anything for it!" Replied the wise man "You need pay me nothing for it... But it will certainly cost you."

The king's brow furrowed. "Where is the potion?" he demanded.

Said the wise man: "If you humble yourself and distance yourself from all conceit, you will have imbibed the elixir of life."

The king took the wise man's words and fulfilled them to the letter. He behaved like the epitome of humility, to the extent that he actually ceased riding in the royal carriage and followed behind it on foot along with his servants.

However, the more he did to humiliate himself, the more he heard this little voice in his head saying, "You are the MOST incredibly HUMBLE person in the whole world. Look at you! You are a great king and yet you walk on foot behind your carriage. You speak in whispers, carefully weighing your each and every word. Your shoulders are hunched unassumingly. Your glance is always downward and diffident. You are truly FANTASTIC!"

He sought out the wise man and told him of his problem. The wise man explained, "Walking behind the royal carriage was not what I had in mind. I meant you to go up and sit in your carriage, that everyone should continue bowing to you and treating you with royal deference, and, in spite of all that, in your heart of hearts, you should still feel humble and small. That's a much more difficult thing to do."

But that is true humility.

Pesach By Any Other Name

By **RABBI UZIEL MILEVSKY, zt'l**

It is interesting to note that Passover is the only holiday that we call by a name different from the one that appears in the Torah. The Torah calls it chag hamatzot, "the festival of matzot", whereas we refer to it as Pesach (Passover). What is the reason for this? Why do we accept the names that the Torah assigns to the other festivals and reject this one? No one says, "I'm going home for chag hamatzot". People say, "I'm going home for Passover". Why?

As we all know, a child has an obligation to honor his parents. Now, let us say that a person would ask his parents whether they would like something to drink, and they would respond, "Just water, thank you". In order to fulfill the mitzvah of honoring one's parents, all the person would have to do is to fulfill his parent's request and serve them a cup of water. However, a more sensitive soul might wonder whether his parents would really prefer coffee, and the only reason they asked for water is because they do not wish to inconvenience him. What should the child do? Serve them water or coffee? Should he give them what they asked for or what he knows they really want?

The answer is that the child should serve his parents coffee. Although it is very civil of his parents to try not to inconvenience him, the child's obligation is as binding as ever – to honor his parents. Hence, he must give them what he thinks they really want.

Let us apply the same principle to famous theological question: Why was man created?

The Sages explain that G-d created man because He desired to bestow His goodness upon him. Paradoxically, in order to accomplish this goal, G-d restrained Himself from flooding the entire universe with His goodness in order to leave man a spiritual void, as it were, in which he could exercise free will and thereby earn his reward. Why? Because man inherently does not wish to live on "hand-outs", even if they are Divine in nature. Instead, man longs to earn his reward by fulfilling G-d's will. Therefore, by giving man a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, G-d also intensifies His own pleasure in bestowing His goodness upon him.

However, we find that the Mishna counsels, "Do not be like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward; instead, be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward". (*Avot 1:3*). How can the Mishna say such a thing? We have just finished saying that G-d only created man to heighten man's

appreciation for the Divine gift, the free will G-d granted him. Why then does the Mishna frown upon performing *mitzvot* for the sake of receiving reward? Is this not the ultimate purpose of Creation?

The apparent contradiction can be reconciled with the analogy of the water and the coffee. Just as the parents asked for water out of consideration for their child, so too, from G-d's perspective, His purpose in creating man was to bestow His goodness on him. But just as the child perceived that his parents preferred coffee and not water, so too, we must recognize that G-d's ultimate purpose in creating the universe is to derive pleasure from our righteous deeds. It is for this reason that the Mishna urges us to serve our Master "not for the sake of receiving a reward" – we must reach a level of spiritual purity where the desire to please G-d becomes our sole motivating force.

We cannot also understand why Betzalel modified the order in which he was instructed to build the Tabernacle. G-d commanded Moshe to finish building the Ark and the other instruments before beginning work on the main structure of the Tabernacle (*see Exodus 25-25*). Betzalel, however, reversed the order and built the main structure before the instruments. In reference to Betzalel's decision, the Torah states, "Betzalel son of Uri son of Hur of the tribe of Judah did everything that G-d commanded Moshe" (*ibid.* 38.22). As Rashi explains, Betzalel's great wisdom enabled him to perceive G-d's ultimate intention more clearly than Moshe.

What did Betzalel perceive that Moshe did not? Betzalel understood that G-d commanded Moshe to build the instruments first because they represent the Jewish people, and hence they are more precious in G-d's eyes than the main structure of the Tabernacle. Betzalel, however, decided to build the main structure of the Tabernacle first, since it represents the Divine Presence, and hence is more dear to the Jewish people than the instruments. Through his awesome wisdom, Betzalel was able to perceive the ultimate goal of

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Passover – Why Isn't This Night More Different?

by **RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR**

The Hidden Persuaders

In the 1960s, a new form of advertising was discovered and made illegal almost immediately. Madison Avenue realized that flashing one single frame of an advertisement into a movie playing at 24 frames per second left a subliminal message imprinted in the mind of the viewer, a message of which he was totally unaware. Because of its extremely subtlety, the message managed to sneak under the defenses of the consumer and plant itself into his subconscious. And without knowing it, the next time he was shopping, he had this overpowering attraction to buy FidoFeed over his usual brand of dog food.

If the purpose of the Seder is to recreate the Exodus from Egypt, why isn't the Seder more realistic? We eat a little matzo, some not-very-bitter herbs. We recline like princes. We tell over a story. Some have the custom to place a piece of matzo on their shoulder and walk around the table, symbolizing the dough that baked flat without leaven on the backs of our forefathers as they left Egypt. Why isn't this night *more* different than all other nights? Why don't we do things which are more vivid, more realistic?

Why doesn't each town put on a Pesach extravaganza with fireworks and amazing special effects like a rock band on tour? Or at home, why don't we make the Seder much more realistic? For example, half the guests could come dressed as Jewish slaves and the other half as Egyptian taskmasters. The evening would commence with the "slaves" building a large wall with bricks and mortar. Periodically, the "Egyptian taskmasters" could come along and give them an encouraging *thwack* with a broom. In the interests of fairness, halfway through the evening the

roles would be reversed. And just before midnight, everyone would sit down together (on cushions) and have a nice Pesach meal. Wouldn't we feel much more that we had "left Egypt" after that?

And yet, the Torah, which sees to the very depths of the psyche, mandated very subtle observances to create the reality of coming out of Egypt.

Why?

The Stealth Bomber

Over the passed twenty-five years, the American defense budget has spent billions of dollars on a bomber, which can fly to its target at very low heights, beneath the level of detection of enemy radar. The construction of the bomber is non-metallic. It is invisible to radar. It was dubbed the "stealth bomber."

The hidden persuasion of an advertisement consisting of a single frame in a film running at 25 frames a second is more powerful than a campaign of celebrity endorsements, billboards and prime-time barrage. Why? Because we can shield ourselves only from that of which we are aware.

The nature of physicality is that it wants to reject spirituality. To sneak spirituality past our physical radar, we must conceal the spiritual like a stealth bomber: A piece of matzo, some bitter herbs, telling over a 3,300 year-old story. These are things that look very anodyne and unassuming from the outside. Inside however, they contain tremendous power.

By means of the seemingly subtle experiences of the Seder, the subliminal spiritual message of Pesach sneaks under the defenses of the coarser aspects of our physical make-up and lodges itself in the depths of our souls.

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building the Tabernacle from the perspective of a son trying to honor his father. In the context of our analogy, we could say that while G-d asked for water, Betzalel served Him coffee.

Now we can understand why G-d refers to Passover as *chag hamatzot* (the festival of matzot) while we refer to it as Pesach. He focuses on our mitzvah of eating matzah because from His perspective this is the most precious

aspect of the holiday. We, however, focus on the miracles that he performed on our behalf – He "passed over (*pasach*) the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians" (*ibid.* 12:27) – because this is what is most precious in our eyes. While G-d takes pride in our *mitzvot*, we acclaim His goodness.

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