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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

The Carrot and the Stick

“G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me...” (20:12)

My Rabbi once told me what his grandmother told him at his Bar Mitzvah more than seventy years ago. She said, “In the Next World they hit you with iron bars.” Apparently this is what a Jewish boy was to be aware of when he reached the age of spiritual majority. I’m not sure how well this would go down as a Bar Mitzvah *shmuz* (ethics lecture) from *bubby* these days.

Am I mistaken, or hasn’t the average *mussar shmuz* morphed in the past thirty years, leaving aside any mention of “fire and brimstone”?

It could be that we are so weak as a generation that any mention of the “G” word (Gehinom) sends us into paroxysms of depression and despair, which, of course, is totally counter-productive.

“G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me...”

As a result of the verse, Moshe and Aharon lost the merit of entering the Land of Israel. The Rambam and the Ramban have differing opinions of the sin that caused this. The Rambam says that the main reason for their punishment was that Moshe became angry with the Jewish People and insulted them with the words, “Listen now, you rebels!” (20:10) The Ramban,

however, says that Moshe’s mistake was hitting the rock rather than speaking to it.

Really, the two reasons can be understood as being one. There are two kinds of *tzaddikim*: One type never ceases to exhort his flock with words of fire until they return, while the other type raises them up and makes them feel that it is beneath them to sin. The difference is that the *tzaddik* who brings his flock to return through the goodness of their hearts causes the natural world to subject itself to him and does his bidding for the good of the Jews. This is because the whole world was created to help the Jewish People in their service of G-d.

However, when *teshuva* has to be forced out of the people through stern and frightening reproof, the natural world also has to be coerced physically to act for the benefit of the Jewish People.

When Moshe became angry and admonished the Jewish People with harsh words, the rock was not prepared to respond to Moshe’s words alone, and required physical “encouragement” to bring forth water.

• Source: *Kedushat Levi*

Zevachim 58 - 64

The Unaltered Altar Location

“How did they know the exact location for the mizbe’ach (altar)?”

This question is posed by the *gemara* in order to understand how the location of the *mizbe’ach* was determined in the Second Beit Hamikdash. In last week’s “Talmud Tips” column we discussed how the location for building the First Beit Hamikdash was correctly discerned by King David. This week we delve into a related topic, determining the exact location for rebuilding the *mizbe’ach* in the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Seventy years had passed since the tragedy of the Jewish People’s exile from the Land of Israel and the utter destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Now, Ezra and the *Anshei Knesset Hagedola* (“Men of the Great Assembly”) — who included the prophets Chagai Zecharia and Malachi — led the return from exile and the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash in Jerusalem. Our *gemara* points out that from the remaining foundations of the walls they could discern what area was holy for the *azara* courtyard and what area was holy for the *heichal* structure (Rashi). But there was no physical remnant at the site of the Beit Hamikdash to indicate the location for the *mizbe’ach*. So how did they know where to rebuild the *mizbe’ach*?

Rabbi Elazar said, “They saw an altar that was built, and the great ministering angel Michael was standing and offering sacrifices on it.”

Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said, “They saw the ash of Yitzchak, which was situated in that location.”

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said, “From the rest of the area of the Beit Hamikdash they smelled the fragrance of incense, but from that one location they smelled burnt animal limbs.”

The Maharsha explains the meaning of each of these three opinions. According to Rabbi Elazar they were shown by G-d the “*Mizbe’ach* of Above.” We are taught that there is a “Jerusalem of Above” that corresponds to the Jerusalem in this world. They are in perfect alignment. Therefore, G-d showed them the “*Mizbe’ach* of Above” since it was located *directly* over the exact spot for rebuilding the *mizbe’ach* in the Second Beit Mamikdash.

Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said that they were shown the ash of Yitzchak *Avinu*, gathered together in a specific location. This was an indication for the location of the *mizbe’ach*. Although Yitzchak was not actually sacrificed, his willingness to serve G-d completely was deemed by G-d as if the sacrifice was fulfilled and actualized. The Maharsha elaborates by connecting our *gemara* to a verse and a Midrash. The verse states: And Avraham named that place *G-d will see*, as it is said to this day... Rashi, in his commentary on Chumash (Ber. 22:14), cites a Midrash which explains: G-d will see this sacrifice until this day, and that this sacrifice will serve as atonement for the Jewish People. “It will be said until this day in all future generations: G-d will see the ash that is gathered there and serving as atonement.” This ash showed where the *mizbe’ach* was in the time of Avraham *Avinu*, and also where the *mizbe’ach* should be in the Beit Hamikdash.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeni’s stance is not based on what they were *shown* by G-d, but what G-d miraculously caused them to *smell*. During the time of the First Beit Hamikdash the fragrance of the incense that was offered could be sensed throughout the entire Beit Hamikdash, and even extended as far as the city of Jericho. Now, as they began rebuilding the Beit Hamikdash, G-d miraculously caused the fragrance of incense to be sensed, but not in every site in the larger area that would become the rebuilt Beit Hamikdash. Although the scent pervaded in all other places throughout the Beit Hamikdash area, in one specific location it was only the aroma of burned animal limbs that could be sensed, nullifying the permeating fragrance of the incense in that one spot. This indicated the place where the *mizbe’ach* had once stood, and showed the exact place where it should be rebuilt and stand once more. (Maharsha; also see the Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit Habechira, ch. 2, who rules that the *mizbe’ach* had a very precise location, one that could never be changed, and quotes the source for this ruling.)

There is additional historical significance to the place of the *mizbe’ach*, as the Rambam details there. It is of interest to note, as our Sages teach, that Adam was created from that spot and offered a sacrifice there. They state, “Man was created from the very place where he would find atonement.” (*Ber. Rabbah* 14:6)

• *Zevachim* 62a

PARSHA Q&A?

1. “Take a perfect *Para Aduma* (red heifer).” What does the word “perfect” — *temima* — mean in this context?
 2. How many non-red hairs disqualify a cow as a *Para Aduma*?
 3. A man dies in a tent. What happens to the sealed metal and earthenware utensils in the tent?
 4. What happens to the one who: a) sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the *Para Aduma*; b) touches the water; c) carries the water?
 5. Why was the *mitzvah* of the *Para Aduma* entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aharon?
 6. Why does the Torah stress that *all* of the congregation came to *Midbar Tzin*?
 7. Why is Miriam’s death taught after the law of *Para Aduma*?
 8. During their journey in the *midbar*, in whose merit did the Jewish People receive water?
 9. Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time?
 10. When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this?
 11. The cloud that led the Jewish People leveled all mountains in their path except three. Which three and why?
 12. Why did the *entire* congregation mourn Aharon’s death?
 13. What disappeared when Aharon died?
 14. Which “inhabitant of the South” (21:1) attacked the Jews?
 15. For what two reasons did G-d punish the people with snakes specifically?
 16. Why did the Jewish People camp in Arnon rather than pass through Moav to enter *Eretz Canaan*?
 17. What miracle took place at the valley of Arnon?
 18. What was the “strength” of Amon that prevented the Jewish People from entering into their Land?
 19. Why was Moshe afraid of Og?
 20. Who killed Og?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

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

1. 19:2 - Perfectly red.
 2. 19:2 - Two.
 3. 19:14,15 - The metal utensils are impure for seven days, even if they are sealed. The sealed earthenware vessels are unaffected.
 4. 19:21 - a) Remains *tahor*; b) He, but not his clothing, contracts *tumah*; c) He and his clothing contract *tumah*.
 5. 19:22 - Because Aharon was involved in the sin of the Golden Calf.
 6. 20:1 - To teach that they were *all* fit to enter the Land; everyone involved in the sin of the spies already died.
 7. 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous.
 8. 20:2 - Miriam’s.
 9. 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to *speak* to the rock.
 10. 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the *midbar*. This teaches that one who has adequate provisions should nevertheless purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host.
 11. 20:22 - *Har Sinai* for receiving the Torah, *Har Nevo* for Moshe’s burial, and *Hor Hahar* for Aharon’s burial.
 12. 20:29 - Aharon made peace between contending parties and between spouses. Thus, everybody mourned him.
 13. 20:29 - The clouds of glory disappeared, since they sheltered the Jews in Aharon’s merit.
 14. 21:1 - Amalek.
 15. 21:6 - The original snake, who was punished for speaking evil, is fitting to punish those who spoke evil about G-d and about Moshe. And the snake, for whom everything tastes like dust, is fitting to punish those who complained about the manna which changed to any desired taste.
 16. 21:13 - Moav refused them passage.
 17. 21:15 - The Amorites hid in caves in the mountain on the Moabite side of the valley in order to ambush the Jews. When the Jews approached, the mountain on the *Eretz Canaan* side of the valley moved close to the other mountain and the Amorites were crushed.
 18. 21:24 - G-d’s command, “Do not harass them” (*Devarim* 2:19).
 19. 21:34 - Og had once been of service to Avraham. Moshe was afraid that this merit would assist Og in battle.
 20. 21:35 - Moshe.
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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

Tzefat and the Tomb of the “White Tzaddik”

Jews in Tzefat were faced with a dilemma one year as Yom Kippur approached. The Turkish sultan had prohibited the purchase of white chickens for use as *kaparot* and they were forced to buy black ones.

Just before Yom Kippur they came to the tomb of



Rabbi Yosef Bena'ah, pouring out their hearts and asking forgiveness before using the black chickens for their ritual. Upon their return home they discovered that those chickens had miraculously turned white. From then on this Sage became known as the “White Tzaddik”.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The laws of the *Para Aduma* — the red heifer — are detailed. These laws are for the ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. The people complain about the loss of their water supply that until now has been provided miraculously in the merit of Miriam’s righteousness. Aharon and Moshe pray for the people’s welfare. G-d commands them to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people’s lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock instead of speaking to it. He thus fails to produce the intended public demonstration of G-d’s mastery over the world, which would have resulted had the rock pro-

duced water merely at Moshe’s word. Therefore, G-d tells Moshe and Aharon that they will not bring the people into the Land. *Bnei Yisrael* resume their travels, but because the King of Edom, a descendant of Esav, denies them passage through his country, they do not travel the most direct route to Eretz Yisrael. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities. Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him for 30 days. Sichon the Amorite attacks *Bnei Yisrael* when they ask to pass through his land. As a result, *Bnei Yisrael* conquer the lands that Sichon had previously seized from the Amonites on the east bank of the Jordan River.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Judaism and Native Americans

From: John Thundercloud

*Dear Rabbi,
Might Judaism or Jewish people have special sympathy for the plight of Native Americans insofar as the Indians are also an ancient people which was forcibly exiled from their ancestral land by a mighty European nation intent on eradicating their unique belief system, way of life, culture and language?*

Dear John Thundercloud,

I think any sensitive, thinking and feeling person would sympathize with the plight, suffering and historical injustice that was imposed upon the Native American Indians by the European nations during their exploitation and conquest of the Americas.

It also seems to me that a Jewish person who is aware of his roots, the tragedy of the exile from the Land of Israel, and of the historical experience of dispersion and persecution suffered by the Jewish People in nearly every time period and geographical location for most of its thousands-year-old history, would also be particularly sympathetic to the physical and cultural tragedy experienced by the American Indians.

That being said, people tend to idealize that which was and is no more, especially when the loss was a result of persecution, exploitation and conquest. But our sense of empathy for the “victim” against the “aggressor” in this case might prevent us from considering that most of the injustices of the “White” man against the “Red” were perpetrated with at least as much violence and atrocity among the various Indian nations themselves.

I don't mean by this to justify in any way the ill-treatment of New Americans to Native Americans. But only to point out that Indians suffered greatly at the hand of Indians long before the advent of the Whites, and Native Americans exploited, conquered, murdered, mutilated, enslaved and evicted each other according to each nation's relative strength and prowess against the other. Arguably, the major difference between the two struggles (Indian vs. Indian; White vs. Indian) was more

a matter of vastly superior technology and the spread of deadly disease. But the essential dynamic of one people conquering another people remains very similar.

For example, the feared Iroquois Nation of the Northeast was actually an amalgamation of conquered, subjugated tribes who, after consolidation, went on to conquer, subdue and incorporate into their empire other neighboring Indian nations such as the Mohawks, Huron, Erie and Tuscarora.

Similarly, the proud Navahos of the Southwest actually originated from the Northwest in Canada, invading the cave-dwelling Amasazi, who were forced to flee to Mexico. Even the majestic Lakota of the Great Plains actually migrated from the Northeast, ousting the Cheyenne who had decimated the Kiowa before them.

And the illustrious Shoshonis of the Rocky Mountains, the tribe of Sacajawea, the famous female guide to Lewis and Clark, were reduced to near starvation and retreat into alpine seclusion as a result of the horrific and constant atrocities of the Blackfeet. And speaking of Lewis and Clark, it is nearly certain that Clark sincerely intended to effect genuine and lasting peace among the Indians, not for the purpose of White expansion, but for the benefit of the Indians themselves.

As far as the cultural loss of the Native Americans and the broken, impoverished, heart-rending condition of their remnants today, this is truly something that anybody, especially a Jew who values and practices our ancient ways, culture and language, can and should sympathize with. Still, as above, in all honesty, an important qualification must be made.

Insofar as the belief system of Native Americans was not monotheistic but rather polytheistic, pantheistic and animistic, and often involved self-mutilation and other Jewishly-prohibited practices, Judaism would not consider the loss of these beliefs and practices to be tragic, no matter how inspirational or uplifting one might find them to be. Rather, Judaism would encourage modifying original Native American beliefs to become purely monotheistic.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Let Them Eat Bread

When the Jews complained about the Manna, they called that Heavenly food *lechem ha'klokel*, “the insubstantial bread” (Num. 21:5). Throughout the Bible and Rabbinic literature, a plethora of words exists, all of which refer to bread: *lechem*, *kikar*, *challah*, *pat/pita*, *rifta*, and *nahamah*. In this essay we will explore the etymologies of these different words and try to hone in on their exact meanings. Ultimately, we will realize that these terms are not all synonyms for the same thing, and slightly differ from one another.

We begin with the word *lechem*, which appears in the Bible over 300 times! That *lechem* means “bread” may not be a literal usage, but simply a colloquialism. I heard from Rabbi Dr. Guy Matalon that the word *lechem* literally denotes “staple food,” and, depending on one’s society, may assume different meanings. Amongst the Jewish People, bread is the staple the food, so *lechem* refers to “bread”. In Arabic culture the staple food is meat, so Arabic uses the word *lahm* to refer to “meat”. In light of this, it’s no wonder that historians are unable to decipher the original meaning of the town Bethlehem (which could be read as “House of Bread,” “House of Meat,” or “House of (your favorite food — maybe pancakes?)”).

The Hebrew verb which denotes the act of waging war is *lochem*, while war itself is a *milchama*. The root of these words is the same as *lechem*: LAMED-CHET-MEM. The connection between war and bread is fairly obvious. Wars are all-too-often fought over economic issues. In ancient times, people literally fought to put food on the table, and going to war over “bread” was *de rigueur*. The root LAMED-CHET-MEM also refers to soldering or pressing things together. This concept is similar to both war and bread because bread is a food whose components are soldered together via baking, and, in war, enemy combatants join up to meet on the battlefield to fight.

While the word *kikar* appears quite frequently in the Mishnah to mean “bread,” in the Bible it usually bears a different meaning. *Kikar* most commonly appears in the Bible as a measurement of gold and silver — a “talent” — and its secondary meaning is a valley

surrounded by mountains. It seems that the word *kikar* literally means “circle”. So, besides referring to round coins and round valleys, it came to refer to loaves of bread, which were also commonly round in shape. From this comes the Biblical phrase *kikar-lechem* (“a loaf of bread”), which appears in Ex. 29:23, Judges 8:5, I Sam. 10:3, Jer. 37:21, Prov. 6:26, and I Chon. 16:3. The Mishnah later abbreviated that phrase to just *kikar*.

The word *challah* in the Bible also refers to a loaf of baked flour. Jastrow translates *challah* as specifically a rolled/rounded meal-cake. If one looks closely, almost all instances of the word *challah* in the Bible refer to a sort of meal-cake brought as a ritual sacrifice. The only exception to this is the commandment (Num. 15:20) to separate a special tithe for the *kohen*, to be taken from every dough destined for meal-cake (*challah*). In fact, throughout the Mishnah (and especially in the Tractate named *Challah*), the word *challah* generally refers to that tithe. Of course, in the vernacular, *challah* is what we call any loaf of bread.

The word *pat* in Hebrew, or *pita* in Aramaic, literally refers to a broken piece or morsel (see Radak to I Sam. 2:36). In Lev. 2:6, *pat* appears in the imperative form *patot* meaning, “break into pieces”. Of the fourteen times that the word *pat* appears in the Bible, eleven of those instances are in the phrase *pat-lechem* (“a piece of bread”). In practice, the word *pat* simply became another synonym for bread in general, and that is how it is commonly used in the Mishnah and Talmud. Even the Targum sometimes translates *kikar* as *pat* (e.g., see Onkelos to Ex. 29:23).

Nahamah is another common Aramaic word for bread, and it appears multiple times in the Talmud and Zohar. Some linguists claim that it is probably borrowed from the Persian word *nan*, which means “bread”.

Another Aramaic word for bread that appears in the Talmud is *rifta*. This word is apparently related to the Arabic *raghif*, which is a flat loaf of bread. In the Bible, *rifot* are pounded or softened grain (see II Sam. 17:19, Pr. 27:22). Linguists claim that *rifta* was originally written with a TZADDIK, associating its root with *retzeph/ritzpah*, which is a floor (that is also flat). In

Continued on page eight

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ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

The Paradox of the Para Aduma

The command of the *Para Aduma* (Red Heifer) is called the “*chok*” of the Torah, a statute of the Torah. A *chok* is defined as a commandment which has a reason beyond the grasp of human understanding. Although this type of command may appear illogical to some, the fact that it emanates from G-d is reason enough to obligate us to fulfill it. In the future messianic era, when the knowledge of G-d will become more revealed, even these commands will become comprehensible.

Of all the *chukim* recorded, the *Para Aduma* stands out as the quintessential *chok* of the Torah. Even the great King Solomon, the wisest of all men, who knew the deepest secrets of the Torah, could not fully understand this mitzvah. He said, “I will attain wisdom,” and yet in the end was unable to fully understand this mitzvah, and he said that wisdom was far from him.

Questions: 1) Perhaps the greatest difficulty regarding the *Para Aduma* is that it both purifies the ritually impure and makes those involved in its preparation ritually impure. How can contact with the same thing render opposite results? Does fire burn some people while cooling others? 2) Another difficulty is that the *Para Aduma* was prepared outside all of the Jewish camps, unlike the other Temple services, which

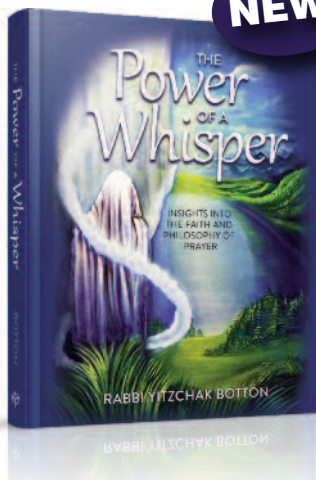
were performed on holy ground. Why the difference?

A Lesson for Life

Just as the *Para Aduma*, which was prepared in a place of impurity, contained within in it the possibility to both purify and contaminate, so too in these times of exile and Divine concealment we have the potential to become contaminated or purified, to build or destroy.

Outside the realm of holiness, the forces of evil can cloud and confuse a person’s judgment, allowing misuse of the tools which G-d provides. When one finds himself outside of G-d’s Temple and the Jewish camp, he will see many opposites existing together. The same bulletin board can be used to advertise a Rabbi’s class - or an ad for a new movie that glorifies murder, robbery, greed and lust. One can use clothes to dress modestly or to do the opposite. This idea applies to a person’s attributes as well: Love and pride can be expressed in a pure and wholesome manner, or can become distorted and used for completely selfish motives.

When G-d’s countenance is hidden from us, we are faced with contradictions from all sides. There are things that we can use to come closer to G-d. If, however, those very same things are misused, they become the very vehicle to take us away from Him.



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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

When Words Speak Louder than Actions

Upon Miriam's death, the miraculous well of water that had accompanied the people for these long years in the desert dried up. The panic-stricken people approached Moshe and Aharon *en masse*, claiming it would have been better to die a natural death in the wilderness (as their brothers had) than suffer and die of thirst. They accused Moshe and Aharon of leading the people to their untimely and torturous demise, rather than to the promised Land.

This leads to the event known as *mei meriva*, the fatal event that deprived Moshe and Aharon entry into the Land. Moshe is instructed to take his staff, and, together with Aharon, assemble the people. Moshe and Aharon are to speak to the rock to bring forth water for the people and their animals. Moshe did take the staff, but instead of speaking to the rock, he strikes the rock twice. Water gushed forth abundantly, and the people drank. Moshe and Aharon are sternly chastised, "Because you did not hold fast to Me, to sanctify Me before the eyes of the Children of Israel, you shall not bring this community into the Land that I have given them."

But what was so terrible about Moshe's conduct? The water miraculously flowed, and the people's trust was restored. And if G-d did not want Moshe to use the staff, why was he instructed to bring it in the first place?

The staff has not been seen since the war with Amalek, some 38 years earlier. Since then, it was deposited in the Sanctuary, next to the Ark which held the Tablets. The staff in the hand of Moshe identified him as G-d's emissary. When Moshe moved that staff, whenever he inclined it, or struck a blow with it prior to an event of which advance warning had been given, this indicated that the event about to occur was the result of instantaneous, direct Divine intervention.

Now, the people accused Moshe and Aharon of betraying their Divine mission, and instead, maliciously bringing the people to a waterless place. G-d instructs Moshe to take the staff as an assertion that Moshe has never, not even for one moment, ceased to be the emissary of G-d. But the staff was not to be used: If Moshe were to strike the rock, as he did when instructed to at the start of their desert sojourn, that would give the impression that the water was coming forth as a new Divine intervention, provoked by the people's uproar. But this was not the message the people needed. This would not put to rest their suspicion that Moshe and Aharon acted of their own accord, and they would be free to assume that their stormy agitation was needed to provoke G-d's intervention.

Instead, the miracle was supposed to teach them that the required water had *already been provided* by G-d, at this predetermined place where G-d instructed them to encamp. No new miracle would be required; one word from Moshe would suffice. Had the miracle been performed in this way, the people would have learned that under G-d's guidance they could banish all worries. They could be certain of receiving the right help at the right time — even without Moshe's staff.

Rav Hirsch here quotes his teacher, Rabbi Chacham Bernays, who explains why this was a critical message for the people to receive before entry to the Land. Now, the visible miracles of the wilderness would be replaced by a new era of invisible guidance. The staff of Moshe in the wilderness would be replaced by the word of Moshe, from now on and forever.

• Source: *Commentary, Bamidbar 20:8-11*

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

Aramaic that *TZADDIK* morphed into the vowel *AYIN*, which was subsequently dropped from the word, to become *rifta*. Rabbi Nosson of Rome (1035-1106) explains *rifta* in *Sefer HaAruch* that it refers to a meal of two identical loaves of bread. These breads probably had some other foodstuff in the middle, and were an

ancient form of what we call a sandwich. [Sandwiches, by the way, were supposedly invented by the English statesman John Montagu (1718-1792), who was the fourth Earl of Sandwich.]

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

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MEZUZAH
maven

BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

“Manhattan” Kitchen

Q: My kitchen is long and narrow; it's what they call a “Manhattan Kitchen”. But I like it because I have all my things stored or hanging exactly where I can put my hands on them easily. Does it need a mezuzah?

A: The Talmud determines that a room smaller than four by four *amot* does not meet the minimal criteria of a dwelling suitable for human habitation, and thus is exempt from many halachic considerations, including mezuzah.

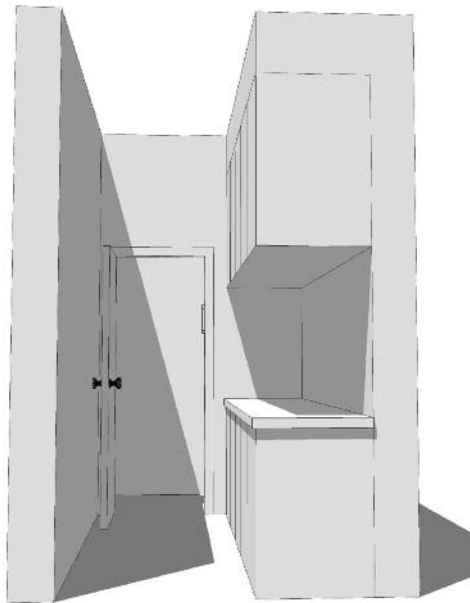
The room need not be square. Even if it is rectangular or even circular, as long as it is at least four *amos* in its length and four *amot* in its width, it is obligated in mezuzah.

If the kitchen is sixteen square *amot* in area, but one of its dimensions is less than four *amot* (e.g. it is two *amot* wide and eight *amot* long), you should still affix a mezuzah. However, you should then not make a *beracha* since it is not four by four *amot* in both length and width. The

mezuzah should be placed on the right side, based on one who is going *into* the kitchen.

If you are talking about a *real* “Manhattan kitchen,” meaning that its total area is less than the minimal calculation of sixteen square *amot*, many authorities exempt it altogether from mezuzah obligation.

However, others point out that though the kitchen itself is exempt, its door deserves a mezuzah on its right side leaving the kitchen as it also serves as an entrance into the dining room. In deference to this opinion, it is common practice to affix a mezuzah on the right side of one going *from* the tiny kitchen (without a blessing).



Sources: Succah 3a; Chovas HaDar 4:7; Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 286:13; Shach 23; Agur B'ohalecha 19:6,7:21, 18;28;84;

Cf. Shevet HaLevi 2:152; Mezuzos Beisecha 286:52; Chazon Ish Y.D. 168:3; Shevet HaLevi 2:152; Teshuvos V'Hanhagos 1:653

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BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

Yossi Steinman

Age 22 - Born: Baltimore, Maryland

Raised in: Dallas, Texas; Toronto, Canada; Boca Raton, Florida; Los Angeles, California

Mechina Program at Ohr Somayach Jerusalem

As one of five sons of a much sought-after principal of day schools, Yossi has lived in many cities in North America. He started off life in Baltimore, his mother's hometown, and moved as a baby to Dallas, Texas where his father, Rabbi Steinman, was the principal of the Hebrew High School. At the age of three, the family moved to Toronto, where they lived for seven years. His father was principal of Yesodei HaTorah, and then Eitz Chaim in that city. When Yossi was ten the family moved to Boca Raton, Florida, where his father was the principal of the Torah Academy. The latest move was to Los Angeles, his father's home state, where Yossi completed 11th and 12th grades at the Ner Aryeh Yeshiva in the Valley. Yossi's father is now retired from being a school principal, and is engaged in real estate management.

While still in high school, Yossi became involved in making Jewish rap music and putting it online. As his talent developed and his proficiency improved, he found himself in the business of selling "beats" to other rappers. "Beats", as I learned from speaking to Yossi, is, in rapper jargon, the electronic music or rhythm background to the lyrics. The rapper can buy or rent "beats" and put his words to them. Yossi actually supported himself right out of high school from the income generated by this business.

As one might imagine, the music or rap business is not for the fainthearted. To make a living in it, or in the entertainment business in general, is extremely difficult. There are many talented people who all

compete with each other. Yossi was working day and night to succeed, and was seeing the fruits of his efforts. Until March 16, 2016.

That night, Yossi had an epiphany. While he was becoming a success in the secular world, he was neglecting his *neshama*. He felt that he needed to go to Israel and learn Torah. He left everything and flew to Israel the next morning.

He spent the next six months at Mayanot Yeshiva in Jerusalem, and then, after a short visit to LA, returned to Jerusalem to learn at Ohr Somayach, where he spent five months. He then returned to LA for a year, where he wrapped up his affairs and returned to Ohr Somayach in May of this year. He is now in Rabbi Matalon's *shiur*, the highest level of the Mechina Program.

Yossi is still making and selling "beats" in his spare time, and while in LA for Pesach had a successful, first

Jewish rap concert there. He intends to do more concerts and sell more "beats".

Yossi would like to spend at least another year in yeshiva, and then get married and learn in *kollel* in Israel before returning to the US.

Asked about his experience here, Yossi says: "I love Ohr Somayach. There are no words to describe it. I love the architecture of the buildings, the peacefulness and beauty of the campus. Each *rebbe* could be a Rosh Yeshiva. They're personable and available and big *talmidei chachamim*. Ohr Somayach lets you be you and not compromise who you are. It's *mamash Gan Eden*."

