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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Three Candies

“The she-donkey saw the angel of G-d... with his sword drawn in his hand” (22:23)

A young fellow from a religious family in Bnei Brak decided one day to turn his back on religion. He moved out of his home and into his uncle’s apartment in Tel Aviv, a stone’s throw from Bnei Brak geographically, but as far as Mars religiously.

Time went on and this young fellow met and fell in love with a non-Jewish girl. He got engaged to her. This was too much for his secular uncle, who became very angry with him. However, despite of all his efforts to get his nephew to cancel the wedding, the nephew was determined to marry his fiancée. The uncle at least was able to convince his nephew to go home and tell his parents face-to-face what he planned to do. The young fellow agreed to go back for Shabbat, provided that his parents agreed to “his conditions.” So he spent most of Shabbat night “chilling” on his parents’ porch, with a cigarette in his mouth, and Shabbat morning he was out there again, using his iPhone.

In the afternoon his father came over and asked him if he wanted to go with him to the lectures given by Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman. Surprisingly, he agreed to go. After the lecture, his father brought him over to wish the Rav “Shabbat Shalom”. His father told the Rav that his son was no longer Shabbat-

observant. Rav Aharon looked at the boy and asked him, “How long is it since you kept Shabbat?” “Two years,” the young fellow replied. “And during that time, did you have thoughts of *teshuva*?” “Yes. About four times.” And how long did each time last when you had those thoughts?” “About ten minutes,” he replied. Said the Rav, “Ah, so it comes out that in the last two years you had about 40 minutes of *“in the place of ba’alei teshuva, completely righteous people cannot stand.”* For that, I envy you! Shabbat Shalom.” The young fellow returned to his uncle’s apartment in Tel Aviv, but the Rav’s words would not let him rest. He cancelled the wedding. One thing led to another, until today he has returned completely to Judaism.

People asked what made him want to go to Rav Shteinman’s class. There he was sitting on his parents’ porch playing with his iPhone and puffing cigarettes opposite the windows of the neighbors.

He answered, “When I was in 4th grade in *Cheder*, my class went in to be tested by Rav Aharon Leib. My class rebbe asked that we should be given easy questions, and so Rav Aharon Leib asked questions that everyone could answer. When each boy answered his question, Rav Aharon Leib gave him a candy. When it was my turn to go in, he asked me an easy question, but I didn’t know the answer. So he asked

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Zevachim 65 - 71

How Much is Enough?

It is enough to learn from a kal v'chomer that the result derived for the "target case" should be equal to (but not greater than) that which exists in the source case.

The rule of *kal v'chomer* reasoning is one of the familiar methods widely used throughout *Shas* to explain how numerous unstated Torah laws can be derived from the words written in the Torah. Also referred to as "a fortiori" reasoning, this logical methodology is something that "a person may do on his own" (a very wise person, that is, who is highly attuned to Torah logic). Not every other method can be "man-made" — for example, a *gezera shavah* rule for deriving the halacha in one case from that in another, based on the appearance of the same (or similar) wording in both cases, requires a clear tradition from one's Torah teacher.

The premise of the *kal v'chomer* methodology is as follows: If the Torah reveals a certain halachic feature in a case that is *kal* (relatively less strict), then that same feature should "all the more so" be true in a *chomer* (stricter) case, despite the Torah not explicitly stating it in that *chomer* case. This method of *kal v'chomer* is taught in the *beraita* of Rabbi Yishmael (also known as "the thirteen rules by which the Torah is interpreted"), which is found in the *Siddur* as part of the introduction to our daily morning prayers. (This logic not only works to learn a *stringency* that exists in the *kal* case to apply in a *chomer* case, but, by the same logic, can be used to learn that a *leniency* that exists in a *chomer* case should also apply to a *kal* case.)

However, we find in our *sugya* a limitation to the application of the *kal v'chomer* rule. This limitation is of Torah origin and is called *daiyo*, meaning sufficient or enough. What does this mean? Despite the second case being stricter in nature, we can only extend from the *kal* case to the *chomer* case the *exact* feature of the *kal* case, but we *cannot* derive that the *chomer* case should deserve a more serious halacha than that which exists in the *kal* case.

A *beraita* in our *sugya* teaches the source for this concept of *daiyo*. Miriam, the sister of Moshe and Aharon, spoke negatively about Moshe, and as punishment was afflicted by G-d with *tzara'at*. When Moshe prayed to G-d to heal her (with the shortest prayer in the Torah, five words in Hebrew), G-d replied, "If her father were to spit in her face, would she not be humiliated for seven days? She shall be confined for seven days outside the camp, and afterwards she may enter." (Bamidbar 12:14) Rashi in Chumash explains that this statement involves a *kal v'chomer* and the limitation of *daiyo*: If her father had shown her an angry face, would she not have been humiliated for seven days? *All the more so*, when the Divine Presence rebukes her, by the rule of *kal v'chomer* she should be humiliated for fourteen days. But, due to the rule of *daiyo* it is enough to learn from the source case (seven days of shame if rebuked by her father) to be *like* the target case (also seven days but not longer — i.e., *daiyo*, or enough). Therefore, G-d decreed, even as a result of My reprimand she should be quarantined for only seven days.

The logic is that if a parent's rebuke should lead to a seven-day punishment, a rebuke from G-d should result in an "all the more so" punishment, one of greater proportions — i.e., fourteen days. And this would indeed be so if not for the limit imposed by the rule of "*daiyo*," which teaches that we cannot derive by *kal v'chomer* any *more* than the seven day punishment that exists in the source case. But why, you might ask, would we say in the first place that the *kal v'chomer* should lead us to think that the duration of punishment should be *fourteen* days, double that which is found in the source case?

Actually, Tosefot asks this question and offers two answers. One answer is that we learn in another *gemara* (Niddah 31a) that G-d's share in the formation of a new person is double that of a parent. Therefore, we might think that the affront to the honor of G-d in slandering His prophet Moshe Rabbeinu should deserve double the punishment expected in the case of a child's affront to a parent. A second answer, offered by Rabbeinu Chaim in Tosefot, is that the *kal v'chomer* with Miriam should really have resulted in a quarantine that lasted *forever*, due to the seriousness of the transgression against the Divine Presence. However, we find that the *maximum* period of *hesger* prescribed by the Torah for *tzara'art* is only two *hesgerim*. Therefore, the duration of two *hesgerim* — i.e., fourteen days — is the largest amount of quarantine time she could, in theory, receive based on the *kal v'chomer*. Of course, the rule of *daiyo* eliminated any quarantine of more than seven days. (See Tosefot, regarding why this number would be fourteen days and not thirteen, since the last day of the first *hesger* counts also as the first day of the second and final *hesger*, which should add up to thirteen days and not fourteen.)

• Zevachim 69b

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why did Moav consult specifically with Midian regarding their strategy against the Jews?
 2. What was Balak's status before becoming Moav's king?
 3. Why did G-d grant prophecy to the evil Bilaam?
 4. Why did Balak think Bilaam's curse would work?
 5. When did Bilaam receive his prophecies?
 6. G-d asked Bilaam, "Who are these men with you?" What did Bilaam deduce from this question?
 7. How do we know Bilaam hated the Jews more than Balak did?
 8. What is evidence of Bilaam's arrogance?
 9. In what way was the *malach* that opposed Bilaam an angel of mercy?
 10. How did Bilaam die?
 11. Why did the *malach* kill Bilaam's donkey?
 12. Bilaam compared his meeting with an angel to someone else's meeting with an angel. Who was the other person and what was the comparison?
 13. Bilaam told Balak to build seven altars. Why specifically seven?
 14. Who in Jewish history seemed fit for a curse, but got a blessing instead?
 15. Why are the Jewish People compared to lions?
 16. On Bilaam's third attempt to curse the Jews, he changed his strategy. What was different?
 17. What were Bilaam's three main characteristics?
 18. What did Bilaam see that made him decide not to curse the Jews?
 19. What phrase in Bilaam's self-description can be translated in two opposite ways, both of which come out meaning the same thing?
 20. Bilaam told Balak that the Jews' G-d hates what?
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PARSHA Q&A!

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

1. 22:4 - Since Moshe grew up in Midian, the Moabites thought the Midianites might know wherein lay Moshe's power.
 2. 22:4 - He was a prince of Midian.
 3. 22:5 - So the other nations couldn't say, "If we had had prophets, we also would have become righteous."
 4. 22:6 - Because Bilaam's curse had helped Sichon defeat Moav.
 5. 22:8 - Only at night.
 6. 22:9 - He mistakenly reasoned that G-d isn't all-knowing.
 7. 22:11 - Balak wanted only to drive the Jews from the Land. Bilaam sought to exterminate them completely.
 8. 22:13 - He implied that G-d wouldn't let him go with the Moabite princes due to their lesser dignity.
 9. 22:22 - It mercifully tried to stop Bilaam from sinning and destroying himself.
 10. 22:23 - He was killed with a sword.
 11. 22:33 - So that people shouldn't see it and say, "Here's the donkey that silenced Bilaam." G-d is concerned with human dignity.
 12. 22:34 - Avraham. Bilaam said, "G-d told me to go but later sent an angel to stop me." The same thing happened to Avraham: G-d told Avraham to sacrifice Yitzchak but later canceled the command through an angel.
 13. 23:4 - They correspond to the seven altars built by the *Avot*. Bilaam said to G-d, "The Jewish People's ancestors built seven altars, but I alone have built altars equal to all of them."
 14. 23:8 - Yaakov, when Yitzchak blessed him.
 15. 23:24 - They rise each morning and "strengthen" themselves to do *mitzvot*.
 16. 24:1 - He began mentioning the Jewish People's sins, hoping thus to be able to curse them.
 17. 24:2 - An evil eye, pride and greed.
 18. 24:2 - He saw each tribe dwelling without intermingling. He saw the tents arranged so no one could see into his neighbor's tent.
 19. 24:3 - "*Shatum ha'ayin*." It means either "the poked-out eye," implying blindness in one eye; or it means "the open eye," which means vision but implies blindness in the other eye.
 20. 24:14 - Promiscuity.
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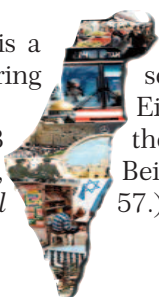
LOVE of the LAND

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

Ein Eitam — Sacred Spring

Somewhere between Jerusalem and Hebron is a spring known as Ein Eitam. *Ein* means spring and *Eitam* was the name of a nearby town.

The waters of this spring, which was located 23 *amot* higher than the floor of the Beit Hamikdash, flowed into the mikveh in which the *kohen gadol*



immersed himself on Yom Kippur for his service in the Beit Hamikdash. (See reference to Ein Eitam as the highest place in Jerusalem and the consideration of it as the place for building the Beit Hamikdash in *Talmud Tips* for Zevachim 51-57.)

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Balak, king of Moav, is in morbid fear of *Bnei Yisrael*. He summons a renowned sorcerer named Bilaam to curse them. First, G-d speaks to Bilaam and forbids him to go. But because Bilaam is so insistent, G-d appears to him a second time and permits him to go. While en route, a *malach* (emissary from G-d) blocks Bilaam's donkey's path. Unable to contain his frustration, Bilaam strikes the donkey each time it stops or tries to detour. Miraculously, the donkey speaks, asking Bilaam why he is hitting her. The *malach* instructs Bilaam regarding what he is permitted to say and what he is forbidden to say regarding the Jewish

People. When Bilaam arrives, King Balak makes elaborate preparations, hoping that Bilaam will succeed in the curse. Three times Bilaam attempts to curse and three times blessings issue instead. Balak, seeing that Bilaam has failed, sends him home in disgrace.

Bnei Yisrael begin sinning with the Moabite women and worshipping the Moabite idols, and they are punished with a plague. One of the Jewish leaders brazenly brings a Midianite princess into his tent, in full view of Moshe and the people. Pinchas, a grandson of Aharon, grabs a spear and kills both evildoers. This halts the plague, but not before 24,000 have died.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Native American Revival

From: John Thundercloud

Dear Rabbi,

I appreciate your informative and straight-forward answer to my question about Judaism and Native Americans. [Published in Ohrnet Chukat — Ed.] I don't necessarily agree with everything that you wrote, but I was certainly intrigued by your perspective. In fact, I have a follow-up question on your conclusion regarding Judaism's non-acceptance of the pantheistic nature of Native American belief.

You do express an awareness of and sympathy for the dire social crisis among the remnants of Native Americans. This is probably the greatest of tragedies we have suffered. But you may not be aware of a movement of cultural and spiritual revival among us, which is mainly about a return to our ancestral languages, ways of life and beliefs.

According to what you wrote, since the European ways and beliefs have not done us any good, would you rather we accept Christianity, or perhaps Judaism, and have our young people continue to lead lives lacking meaning, which results in a continuing cycle of addiction, crime and social crisis? Surely it is better for us to rediscover and renew our own spiritual heritage, which is restoring our authentic identity, self-pride, fulfillment, wholesomeness, family and tribal stability and peoplehood, even as "pagans".

Dear John Thundercloud,

First, I will say that your questions are a first for me and are thoroughly refreshing! Second, being very aware of the spiritual crisis affecting the Jewish

People and involved in trying to inspire a return to our ancient, authentic ways of life and beliefs, I appreciate and admire very much the Native American revival that you describe and to which you seem to ascribe.

As far as renewing Native American languages is concerned, that sounds like a fascinating and very positive thing. To whatever extent it may be accomplished, certainly a return to your native language is a major venue to returning to your ancestral roots. In Judaism too, many Jews worldwide are in the process of learning to read, write and speak Hebrew. In addition to being well-integrated into society at large, renewing their connection to Hebrew greatly increases and preserves their unique Jewish awareness and identity within general society.

Regarding a return to ancestral ways of life, this can also be a very enriching and important dynamic. I'm sure that Native American culture is full of wisdom and insight, and consulting the elders in order to ensure that's not lost but rather transmitted to future generations is a praiseworthy endeavor, which also rebuilds a healthy, respect-based society. In Judaism today there is a similar dynamic, whereby people of all ages are rediscovering the age-old wisdom of ancient Jewish teachings that are no less relevant nowadays and infuse modern life with meaning, direction, purpose and fulfillment. The effort to consult the elders — in this case rabbis — who are part of a direct line preserving the authentic ways is rebuilding the traditional Jewish cohesive society.

And if a return of Native Americans to the old ways of life involve a return to a natural and healthy lifestyle, a return to living in and at peace with nature, restoring healthy physical activities such as hunting, fishing, riding and dancing, as well as an artistic renaissance renewing music, arts, crafts and authentic manufacture, that is also a wonderful thing. Here too, I would say that the Jewish People is

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WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Foot Festivals

After being warned not to go with Balak's emissaries, Balaam acted against G-d's command and proceeded to travel on his donkey to curse the Jewish People. Balaam's donkey too disobeyed its master and first veered off the path, then scraped Balaam's foot (*regel*) against a wall, and finally crouched underneath Balaam, refusing to continue. Following each act of disobedience, Balaam hit his donkey. Finally, the donkey miraculously opened its mouth and said, "What did I do to you that you hit me these three times (*shalosh regalim*)?" It soon became clear that the donkey was following the directives of an invisible angel, which suddenly Balaam was now able to see. The angel also told Balaam off for hitting the donkey three times (*shalosh regalim*). Another way to say "three times" in Hebrew is *shalosh peamim*, as each instance is called a *paam*. The word *regel* usually means "foot", so why here does it mean "instance"? Moreover, what is the thematic connection between *paam* and *regel*?

The Malbim explains that the word *paam* means "corner". (It is similar to the word *peah*.) For this reason the four corners on the bottom of the Ark (Ex. 25:12) are called *arbah paamotav* ("its four corners"). That being said, one's feet are also called a *paam* because they are at the bottom corner of his person. In this way, the word *paam* appears to be synonymous with the word *regel* (foot). This explains the meaning of the doublet *raglei ani, paamei dalim* ("the feet of the poor, the feet of the destitute") found in Isaiah 26:6.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) writes that the word *paam* is derived from the bilateral root *PEH-AYIN*. Words derived from this root refer to consistent movement and/or sound. An example of this is the word *efeh*, which refers to the cries of a woman in childbirth (Isa. 42:14), and to the consistent noise of the rattlesnake. Similarly, the verb *po'em* refers to the consistent beat of the heart (Gen. 41:8) and a *paamon* ("bell") is characterized by the sound of the clapper, or uvula, hitting a hollow shell. The word *paam* can also refer to the act of taking a step, or even a foot, because of the foot's metronomous way of moving when one walks. Each time one's foot touches the ground, he has

taken another step, so, in essence, a *paam* is defined as each time one's foot touches the ground. As an outgrowth of this meaning, the word *paam* came to mean "each instance" of anything that happens in the greater context of the world. Parallel to that, the word *regel* also refers to "an instance". Because of this phenomenon, the phrases *shalosh peamim* and *shalosh regalim* can both mean "three times" and "three feet".

The truth is that the word *regel* in the sense of "instance" appears in the Bible in only one other context: concerning the three festivals. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot are described collectively in Exodus 23:14 as the *shalosh regalim* ("the three times"). On those three festivals there is a special commandment that requires all able-bodied Jewish men to present themselves before G-d in the Temple. Those "pilgrims" travelled to Jerusalem *on foot*, which further cements the association between the two meanings of the word *regel*. In this spirit, tradition applies a passage in Song of Songs to the thrice-yearly pilgrimages: "How beautiful are your footsteps (*paam*) in your shoes, daughter of nobles" (Songs of Songs 7:2).

As we already noted, the word *paam* also appears as a component of the Holy Ark, as Exodus 25:12 refers to its bottom corners as *arbah paamotav* ("its four corners"). Both Targum Onkelos and Rashi explain that the four *paamim* of the Ark refer to its four corners. Ibn Ezra, however, disagrees, and explains that it refers to four "feet" which were attached to the bottom of the Ark (see also Ramban there).

Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Walkin (d. 1979) offers a fascinating insight into why the Ark needed "feet" on its bottom. He notes that while the word *paam* might sometimes mean "foot", that is really a borrowed usage. The primary meaning of *paam* is "step". Accordingly, Rabbi Walkin explains that the Ark required "feet" to teach us an important lesson: man must always be on his feet—ready to move forward. Even the Ark — which was the pinnacle of holiness, as it housed the Tablets given to Moshe at Mount Sinai — needs feet, because it is not to remain stationary.

The "feet" on the Ark teach us that just as the Ark

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NEW
SERIES!

ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

A Reason to Look Beyond Reason

Our Sages explain that the Satan (“Accuser”) and the nations of the world taunt the Jewish People regarding the mitzvah of Para Aduma (Red Heifer). They say, “What is this commandment? What purpose does it have?”

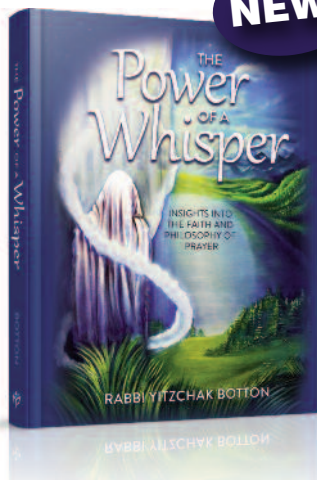
What is the purpose of these derisions by the Satan and other nations? Perhaps two of the most important aspects of a human being are one’s intellectual faculties and the drive for accomplishment. It is these qualities that can lead to mankind achieving greatness; yet at the same time it is precisely these two qualities that can lead to one’s downfall. We thus find that Korach, relying on his brilliant intellect, allowed his desire for accomplishment to lead to his downfall.

We must utilize our intellectual faculties in our service of G-d. Moreover, without using our minds our Divine service would be meaningless, like playing a child’s game. Yet, at the same time, if we were to totally rely on our intellect, not able to go beyond, our service of G-d would forever be limited to our human nature. If all we were able to give G-d was our intellect, then our Divine service would be comparable to a child’s contribution in an adult world.

Knowing the inner makeup of the human being, the Satan and nations of the world approach us with precisely this challenge. They attack our basic human drive. The answer to their challenge is simple, yet profound, something that, with all of their complexities,

they are unable to grasp. We do what G-d asks of us even when we don’t understand it, and, in doing so, we rise above the limitations of human intellect, unifying with the Divine Will on a level that transcends that of the angels. This is the secret of our declaration of *na’aseh v’nishmah* — we will do and we will listen — when we received the Torah on Mount Sinai.

Similar to the challenge of the *Para Aduma*, Avraham was challenged to rise above his human nature, and, in doing so, he formed the foundation for the Jewish People. He was asked to sacrifice his son Yitzchak. Aside from the difficulties of asking a father to kill his own son, Avraham was also asked to contradict himself. For many years Avraham had spread the truth of G-d’s ways to the masses. In his times, people indeed sacrificed their children to false gods, and Avraham had spoken out against doing so, explaining that such behavior was appalling to G-d. G-d’s asking Avraham to do this very thing required Avraham to go beyond his intellectual limitation, reaching a level of faith that emanated from the essence of his soul. This faith serves as the ultimate foundation of his, and our, Divine service.



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE

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BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

D.A.: District Attorney or Divine Agent?

In many ways, the sin of *Baal Pe'or* is the most odious of the many committed by the people in the wilderness. The timing — right after the miraculous defeat of the mighty kings Sichon and Og, leaving no obstacles left to enter the promised Land, and the content — unabashed licentiousness combined with a most abhorrent form of idol worship consisting of defecating before the idol — both contributed to the severity of this catastrophe. The sheer number of those killed (24,000 as opposed to the 3,000 after the sin of the golden calf) also attests to its crushing reprehensibility. But there is yet another, more subtle aspect of this chapter, which casts a further web of shame.

Jewish criminal law is based entirely on the process of indictment. The court has no authority to act on its own initiative if there is no accuser. Unlike criminal law as we know it, there is no publicly appointed prosecutor, no district attorney on behalf of the state. Instead, the entire nation acts as the prosecutor, on behalf of the Torah.

A criminal sentence could be issued only under specific, stringent circumstances: 1) Two men must have warned the sinner of the prohibition and of the punishment attached to it. 2) Despite the warnings, the individual committed the crimes within a very short amount of time. 3) The same men who warned him must bring the criminal to court, and by

testifying, in the name of the Torah, demand that he receive the punishment due him.

But in this instance, no one warned, and no one brought the sinners to court. Because there were no willing prosecutors or witnesses, the judges had no legal authority to adjudicate. This very fact elicited G-d's anger, for in this widespread open defection from Torah, no men intervened to warn the offenders, apprehend them, and bring them to court in order to prevent the spread of the evil. This implicated every passive onlooker as an accessory to the crime, inviting blame to the entire nation. In response, G-d instructed Moshe, in a temporary suspension of legal procedure, to bring the offenders to justice himself.

The language used here sheds light on the purpose of carrying out criminal punishment in the first place: the men are to be hanged *for G-d, in the presence of the sun*. The entire procedure must be done *by daylight*. It does not have a dark, vindictive spirit; rather, by removing criminals from the earth, the nation affirms the depravity of the sin, and reestablishes its commitment to purity and their G-dly mission.

Next week, we will examine the acts of one Pinchas, who well understood this mission and acted for the honor of G-d and the honor of Torah.

• Source: *Commentary Bamidbar 25:4*

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

should not expect to remain stationary, so should any Jew never stagnate in his Torah studies. Rather, he should have “feet” with which he must continuously strive to reach greater and greater levels. This is alluded to in the word *paam*, which, unlike the word *regel*, denotes movement, not just the simple notion of a foot. Angels have a single *regel* (see Ezek. 1:7) because they are not destined to move from the way they were created. Angels have no free-choice, and, therefore, no opportunity for growth by making the

correct decisions. Man, on other hand, is a mobile creature. Man has “feet” in the sense that man must constantly contend with changing situations that challenge him to make the right choices. Balaam, of course, failed do so, and so he is undeserving of the word *paam* in any sense of the word.

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



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Fixed Fixtures

Q: We are recently married and are renting a small apartment. The only place for the washing machine is in our kitchen. However, by placing it there, the remaining floor space of the kitchen will be less than sixteen square amot in area. Does the kitchen need a mezuzah?

A: In some small kitchens, fixtures such as washing machines, ovens, sinks and cupboards can diminish the size of the floor space to below the minimal area. However, according to most authorities, these items

enhance the functionality of the room, and thus are not looked at as “blocking” the floor space.

Therefore, if the dimension of the actual room meets the minimal standard of sixteen square *amot* (cubits), a mezuzah is placed on the right side of one going into the kitchen. However, in deference to the opinions that the fixtures do decrease the habitable space of the kitchen, one should affix the mezuzah without a *beracha*.

• Sources: *Chovas HaDar* 4:7:22; *Maharsham* 3:263; *Kuntres HaMezuzah* 286:13:160

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Free “Mezuzah Maven” book for every question or story submitted (when published in the near future!)*

Parsha Insights...continued from page one

me an easier question, and I still didn't know the answer. Then he asked me an even easier question, and I still couldn't answer!

“While everyone was leaving with their candy in their hand, Rav Aharon Leib gestured to me to come over to him. He said to me, ‘In Torah and *Yiddishkeit* we receive reward for our efforts, not for results. All the children tried to answer one question, and they received one candy; you tried to answer three questions, so you get three candies.’ And with a smile he dropped three candies into my hand.”

“...with his sword drawn in his hand.”

Rashi explains that this confrontation symbolizes the eternal confrontation between Yaakov and Eisav.

The power of the voice — “*The voice is the voice of Yaakov*” and the sword — “*you (Eisav) will live by the sword*”. The angel was warning Bilaam that should he try and usurp Yaakov's power of the voice and try to curse the Jewish People, he would be punished by the sword, the symbol of Eisav.

As parents and teachers, how careful we must be to use our heritage, the voice of Yaakov, only to encourage and inspire and give love, and not to turn it into the sword of criticism.

• Sources: *Adi Guttman, Even Bedolach*;
thanks to E. Conick

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BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

Seasons: Then and Now Shiva Asar b'Tammuz

The Mishnah in Ta'anit says that the fast of *Shiva Asar b'Tammuz* was instituted for five major tragedies that occurred on this day (Ta'anit 4:6). Let's look at each one.

The Breaking of the First *Luchot*

Following the giving of the Ten Commandments, Moshe Rabbeinu went up Mount Sinai to receive the entire Torah on the seventh of Sivan. He returned forty days later, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, saw that the people had made the golden calf, and broke the first *luchot* (Ta'anit 28b). Even though we received the second set of *luchot* on Yom Kippur, we still mourn the loss of the first *luchot* since one was able to learn the spiritual depth behind the Torah much more easily through the first *luchot* than through the second *luchot* (see Sifte Chaim, Emunah u'Bechira pp. 355-356). The Gemara also tells us that had the first *luchot* not been broken, no Torah would have been forgotten from the Jewish People (Eiruvim 54a). This was, therefore, a tragic loss.

Discontinuation of the *Tamid* Offering

The *Tamid* offering was discontinued also on the 17th of Tammuz. The Talmud Yerushalmi says that as the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash neared, there weren't any sheep for the *Tamid* offering because of the siege that surrounded Yerushalayim. Every day, the Jewish People sent gold to the Romans in exchange for two sheep, but on the 17th of Tammuz, in exchange for the gold the Romans sent pigs instead, which is how the *Tamid* offering was discontinued (Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:5; see also Rambam, Hilchot Ta'anit 5:2).

Breaching of the walls of *Yerushalayim*

The wall surrounding Yerushalayim was breached on this day, which eventually led to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash three weeks later, on the 9th of Av. The Gemara says that this was only regarding the second Beit Hamikdash, since the *pasuk* in Sefer Yirmiyahu says that the walls were broken on the 9th — and not the 17th — of Tammuz, when describing the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash (Ta'anit 28b).

A fast was instituted on the 17th of Tammuz, and not on the 9th of Tammuz, because the 17th of Tammuz corresponds to the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash. The destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash is more agonizing than the first because it has

not yet been rebuilt, while after the first destruction, the Beit Hamikdash was rebuilt seventy years later (see Tur and Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim 549).

According to the Talmud Yerushalmi, however, the walls surrounding Yerushalayim of both the first and second Batei Mikdash were broken on the 17th of Tammuz (Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:5).

Burning of the Torah

Apostamus, who was a Greek official during the second Beit Hamikdash, burned the *sefer* Torah that Ezra had written. This was tragic, especially since this was the *sefer* Torah that everyone used to copy from in order to write a new *sefer* Torah. Another opinion holds that Apostamus burned all the *sifrei* Torah that he found, in order to abolish the Torah from Yisrael. (Tiferet Yisrael).

Idol inside the Sanctuary

An idol was placed in the sanctuary of the Beit Hamikdash on the 17th of Tammuz. There are varying views in the Talmud Yerushalmi regarding the timing of this event. One opinion says this was also done by Apostamus during the second Beit Hamikdash. Another opinion says it was done by Menashe, king of Yehuda, during the first Beit Hamikdash (see Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:5).

Time for *Teshuva*

Obviously it is not a coincidence that these tragedies all took place on this day. Internally, this day, and the three weeks following, leading up to Tisha B'av, is a time of judgment for the Jewish People. Therefore, we fast to help us submit ourselves, and thereby come to do *teshuva*. In the words of the Rambam: We fast on days of calamities because it arouses our hearts and opens paths to repentance for us. It serves as a reminder of our wicked ways and those of our ancestors, which resemble our present ways, and which thereby brought these calamities on them and on us, so that through remembering these things we will return and fix our ways; as it says: They will confess their sins and their father's sins (Hilchot Ta'anit 5:1). May we all merit seeing the time when these fast days turn into joyous days through the coming of the Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash speedily in our days.

ASK...continued from page four

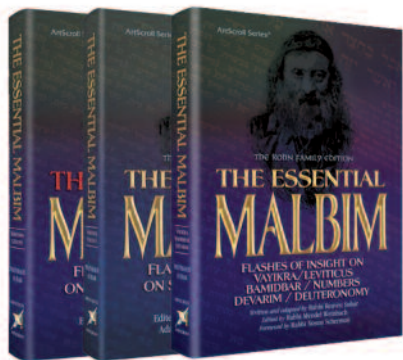
also undergoing a renaissance of their own, particularly in the Land of Israel where there has been great interest in rediscovering the ancient geography, natural resources, agriculture, fauna and flora of the Land, as well as renewing ancient arts and skills which infuse modern life with ancient practices.

Regarding ancient Native American polytheistic beliefs, I wrote: “Judaism would encourage modifying original Native American Beliefs to being purely monotheistic”. This does not mean that Judaism would expect Native Americans to be practicing and believing Christians, or to embrace Judaism. Rather it expresses Judaism’s position that all of humanity are children of the One Creator and are encouraged, or rather required, to recognize this and live their lives accordingly.

A great rabbi and thinker of the early middle-ages, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, addressing a pagan king’s interest in Judaism, wrote in *The Kuzari* that it doesn’t matter what term one uses to refer to G-d (be it Prime Cause, Supreme Will, etc.), rather it’s the

concept that matters. While I’m no expert on Native American theology, it’s quite possible that “The Great Spirit” or “Father in Heaven” would suffice. This Great Spirit may certainly be viewed and perceived as being a unifying, cohesive force, present in all of Creation, and worthy of homage through Creation; but not that Creation, neither in the material nor the spiritual planes, be worshipped in any way.

According to this, it would seem theoretically possible to rediscover and renew your own spiritual heritage, while adapting it within the context of strict monotheism in a general sense (which is what Judaism posits G-d requires of all human beings), and still restore your authentic identity, self-pride, fulfillment, wholesomeness, family and tribal stability and peoplehood through authentic and original Native American languages, customs, and modified spiritual beliefs and practices. By this I envision a type of uniquely Native American version of what Judaism refers to as the Noahide system of ethical monotheism.



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FOR BNEI TORAH

צום הרביעי תשע"ח

FAST OF TAMMUZ: SUNDAY AFTERNOON JULY 1, 2018

AT YESHIVAS OHR SOMAYACH - TANENBAUM COLLEGE

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Ma'alot Daphna, Jerusalem

- 1:00pm **Rabbi Tzvi Wainstein**
- 1:35pm Mincha
- 2:20pm **Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz**
Rav, Kehillas Ohr Somayach
- 3:00pm **Rav Yehoshua Eichenstein**
Rosh Yeshiva, Yad Aharon
- 3:30pm **Rav Nota Schiller** Rosh Yeshiva, Ohr Somayach
- 4:10pm **Rav Moshe Lazerus**
- 4:40pm **Rabbi Dovid Kaplan**
- 5:20pm **Rav Yaakov Hillel** Rosh Yeshiva, Ahavat Shalom
- 6:00pm **Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb**
- 6:40pm **Rabbi Shmuel Bloom**
- 7:10pm **Rav Zev Leff**
- 7:50pm **Rabbi Richard Jacobs**
- 8:11pm **Ma'ariv** (Followed by Refreshments)

Doors open at 12:30pm. Entrance only 10nis. (There is no Ezras Nashim)