

CELEBRATING OUR 25<sup>th</sup> YEAR!

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# OHRNET

SPECIAL

SUMMER

ISSUE

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# CELEBRATING OUR 25<sup>th</sup> YEAR!

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# OHRNET

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SPECIAL SUMMER ISSUE • PARSHIOT DEVARIM-VA'ETCHANAN-EKEV-RE'EH-SHOFTIM • 5778/2018 • VOL. 25 NO. 45

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## PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

*Devarim*

### Words Building Worlds

***“These are the words...” (1:1)***

Shortly before his marriage a young man went to great Torah scholars. He said that he had something that was weighing heavily on him, something that even the day of his marriage would not atone for. “I grew up in Jerusalem when food was a luxury. Nobody even knew what a banana looked like. One day the *rebbe* went out of the classroom for a few moments and left a few coins on his *shtender*. I was hungry and I took the money and put it in my pocket. The *rebbe* came back and immediately saw that the money was gone. He made the whole class stand in a line facing the wall, and one-by-one he checked our pockets. Quickly I dropped the money into the pocket of the boy who was standing next to me. When it came his turn he couldn't believe that the money was there and he started to cry. He pleaded with the *rebbe* and told him that he hadn't stolen the money, but of course no one believed him. After that he got a name of being a thief, and not too long afterwards he dropped out of the *cheder*, and gradually he went down until he dropped religious observance completely and became secular. Even though the day a person gets married is a day of atonement for him, how can I ever atone for what I did to that poor boy?”

The Torah sage said, “This reminds me of something that happened to me when I was in *cheder*. The *rebbe* also made us all stand in a line facing the wall, but when he found the culprit he didn't let on, but simply put the money back in his pocket. When he got to the end of the line, he said, ‘*Tov!* Let us all say together, *Hashivenu... Bring us back to you, G-d, and we will return!*’ That young boy went on to be one of the great scholars of the generation,” explained the wise Torah scholar.

He continued: “You were not to blame for the other boy's dropping his religion; you were young and hungry. And the fellow himself – G-d will understand what he went through and judge him accordingly. The person I'm concerned about is the *rebbe* — through a moment's lack of judgment and sensitivity he ruined someone's life!”

This year the portion of Devarim falls on the 9th of Av — Tisha B'Av — the day of national disaster. The seminal sin of the spies by speaking ill of the Land of Israel caused the Ninth of Av to be a day set aside for disaster and punishment throughout Jewish history. Ostensibly, it's difficult to understand why the punishment for the slander of the spies should be so severe, to the extent that the Gemara compares it to the three cardinal sins of murder, idolatry and immorality. Certainly Beit Din will not execute someone for speaking *lashon hara* as they would for someone convicted of those three cardinal sins!

*continued on page twenty-four*

ADVICE FOR LIFE

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

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BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

**Zevachim 86 - 120**

**Clothes that Atone**

*Rabbi Einini bar Sasson said, “Why does the Torah write about bigdei kehuna (the kohen’s garments) adjacent to where the Torah writes about sacrifices? This is to teach you that just as sacrifices provide atonement, so too do bigdei kehuna provide atonement.”*

Rashi here comments that the adjacency mentioned in this statement is found in the following verses of the Torah portion in *Tzav* (Vayikra 7:13): “This is the law for the burnt offering, for the meal offering, and for the sin offering, and for the guilt offering... and for the peace offering.” Rashi explains that this is followed by a verse that commands Moshe about a different topic, in Vayikra 8:2: “Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments,” followed by naming the various *kohen’s* garments and with Moshe’s putting them on Aharon the *Kohen Gadol*. (Commentaries point out that this same idea is taught in *masechet* Erchin 16a, with a slight variation in wording, and that Rashi cites different Torah sources there, based on verses in the Torah portion of *Tetzave* (chapters 28 and 29.)

Examples of how each of the *kohen’s* garments helps atone for specific transgressions are listed in our *sugya*. For example, the *mitznefet*, the hat, atones for the fundamental transgression of haughtiness. The Maharsha explains that just as a hat is worn on the top of the head, the place symbolic of the negative character trait *haughtiness* — a haughty person feels above the others, with his “nose in the air”. The Maharsha points out that wearing a head covering is conducive to having the awe of Heaven upon the wearer. This is the idea behind wearing a *yarlmuka* (which literally means “awe of the King” and is called *kippah* in Hebrew). We are taught (in Shabbat 156b) that the mother of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak was careful that her son’s head was covered, even as a young child, so that the awe of Heaven would be over him.

• *Zevachim 88b*

**Spring Break**

*“Why? Let the positive commandment come and push off the negative commandment!”*

This question on our *daf* is an illustration of a principle that is found many times in *Shas* called “*asei doche lo ta’asei*” — i.e., a positive commandment pushes off and overrides a negative commandment that exists in a certain case. Fulfillment of a mitzvah to do a specific act takes precedent over the consideration for the prohibition that normally forbids doing that act if no positive commandment would be involved.

So, what exactly is the question in our *sugya*? First we need to examine the positive and negative *mitzvot* here. The Torah teaches that it is forbidden to break a bone of the *korban* Pesach: “And don’t break a bone in it”. (Shemot 12:46) A *beraita* teaches: Rabbi Shimon ben Menasia says, “This Torah prohibition applies whether or not the bone has marrow in it.” (Tosefot explains that the basis for extending this prohibition to include even a bone *with* marrow, and not more narrowly applying it only to a case where the bone has no marrow.)

There is also a positive mitzvah to eat all of the meat of the *korban* Pesach in Shemot 12:8: “And you will eat the meat on that night.”

This leads the *gemara* to ask, “The positive mitzvah of eating the meat (including the marrow in the bones) should push off the negative mitzvah to not break the bone, and thereby permit breaking a bone, based on the rule of *aseh doche lo ta’aseh*? Why does Rabbi Shimon ben Menasia say that Torah law forbids breaking a bone of the *korban* Pesach even if there is marrow inside?”

The commentaries ask an interesting question on this line of reasoning. We are taught that the rule of *aseh doche lo ta’aseh* applies only when the *aseh* and the *lo ta’aseh* would occur at the same time. But, here the *lo ta’aseh* comes

*continued on page twenty-eight*

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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### Devarim

1. How do we see from the beginning of *Parshat Devarim* that Moshe was concerned for the Jewish People's honor?
2. How much time elapsed between leaving Mt. Sinai and sending the spies?
3. Moshe rebuked the Jewish People shortly before his death. From whom did he learn this?
4. Why did Moshe wait until he had smitten the Amorite kings before rebuking the Jewish People?
5. What were some of the achievements that resulted from the Jewish People "dwelling" at Mt. Sinai?
6. Why does the Torah single out the names of the *avot* in connection with the giving of the Land?
7. What did Moshe convey to the Jewish People by saying: "You today are like the stars of the Heavens"?
8. "*Apikorsim*" (those who denigrate Talmud scholars) observed Moshe's every move in order to accuse him. What did they observe, and what did they accuse him of?
9. Moshe was looking for several qualities in the judges he chose. Which quality couldn't he find?
10. Moshe told the judges, "The case that is too hard for you, bring it to me." How was he punished for this statement?
11. Why did Moshe describe the desert as great and frightful?
12. Which tribe was not represented among the spies?
13. Which city did Calev inherit?
14. How many kingdoms was Avraham promised? How many were conquered by Yehoshua?
15. Why were the Jewish People forbidden to provoke Ammon?
16. Why were the Jewish People not permitted to conquer the Philistines?
17. How did G-d instill the dread of the Jewish People into the nations of the world?
18. Why did Moshe fear Og?
19. Who was instrumental in destroying the Refa'im?
20. What was the advantage of Reuven and Gad leading the way into battle?

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## PARSHA Q&A!

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

1. 1:1 - Moshe mentions only the names of the places where the Jewish People sinned, but does not mention the sins themselves.
2. 1:2 - 40 days.
3. 1:3 - From Yaakov, who rebuked his sons shortly before his death.
4. 1:4 - So that no one could say, "What right has he to rebuke us; has he brought us into any part of the Land as he promised?"
5. 1:6 - They received the Torah, built the *mishkan* and all its vessels, appointed a Sanhedrin, and appointed officers.
6. 1:8 - Each of the *avot* possessed sufficient merit for the Jewish People to inherit the Land.
7. 1:10 - They are an eternal people, just as the sun, moon and stars are eternal.
8. 1:13 - They observed the time he left home in the morning. If Moshe left early, they accused him of having family problems (which drove him from his home). If he left late, they accused him of staying home in order to plot evil against them.
9. 1:15 - Men of understanding.
10. 1:17 - When the daughters of Tzlofchad asked him a *halachic* question, the law was concealed from him.
11. 1:19 - Because the Jewish People saw huge, frightening snakes and scorpions in the desert.
12. 1:23 - Levi.
13. 1:36 - Hebron.
14. 2:5 - Avraham was promised the land of ten kingdoms. Yehoshua conquered seven. The lands of Moav, Ammon and Esav will be received in the time of the *mashiach*.
15. 2:9 - This was a reward for Lot's younger daughter, the mother of Ammon, for concealing her father's improper conduct.
16. 2:23 - Because Avraham had made a peace treaty with Avimelech, King of the Philistines.
17. 2:25 - During the battle against Og, the sun stood still for the sake of the Jewish People, and the whole world saw this.
18. 3:2 - Og possessed merit for having once helped Avraham.
19. 3:11 - Amrafel.
20. 3:18 - They were mighty men, and the enemy would succumb to them.

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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### **Va'etchanan**

1. "And I prayed to G-d at that time." Why "at that time"?
2. What characteristic trait is represented by G-d's "strong hand"?
3. What is ha'levanon?
4. What did G-d tell Yehoshua after the battle of Ai?
5. What will happen if the Jewish People fail to keep the mitzvot properly?
6. How did the decree that Moshe not enter the Land affect him even in death?
7. What is hinted by the word v'noshantem?
8. Why were the Jewish People exiled two years earlier than indicated by Moshe's prophecy?
9. "You'll serve man-made gods." Is this literal?
10. Why is east called mizrach?
11. "Keep the Shabbat day as I have commanded you." When had G-d previously commanded us to keep Shabbat?
12. Where did the Jewish People first receive the command to honor parents?
13. What is meant by "G-d, our G-d, G-d is One"?
14. What are two meanings of loving G-d "with all your might"?
15. How well-versed must one be in Torah?
16. Where does the word totafot come from?
17. Who is fit to swear in G-d's name?
18. What does it mean that the Jews are the "smallest nation"?
19. When someone serves G-d with love, how many generations receive reward?
20. Why are evil-doers rewarded in this world?

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## PARSHA Q&A!

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

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1. 3:23 - Defeating Sichon and Og, whose lands were part of Eretz Canaan, Moshe thought perhaps G-d had annulled the vow against his entering the Land.
2. 3:24 - His willingness to forgive.
3. 3:25 - Ha'levanon means the Beit Hamikdash, which makes "white" (lavan), i.e., atones for, the Jewish People.
4. 3:28 - Yehoshua must lead the army into battle.
5. 4:9 - The non-Jewish world will regard them as foolish.
6. 4:22 - Even his remains weren't buried in the Land.
7. 4:25 - The gematria of v'noshantem, 852, hints at the number of years until the first exile.
8. 4:25 - So that the rest of the prophecy "that you shall utterly perish" would not be fulfilled.
9. 4:28 - No. It means you'll serve others who serve idols.
10. 4:41 - It's the direction from which the sun shines (mizrach means shining).
11. 5:13 - Before Matan Torah, at Marah. (Shmot 15:25)
12. 5:16 - At Marah. (Shmot 15:25).
13. 6:4 - G-d, who is now our G-d, but not [accepted as] G-d of the other nations, will eventually be [accepted as] the one and only G-d.
14. 6:5 - 1) With everything you own. 2) Whether G-d treats you with kindness or harshness.
15. 6:7 - If asked a Torah question, one should be able to reply quickly and clearly.
16. 6:8 - Tot means two in Caspi. Fot means two in Afriki. Together they allude to the four sections of tefillin.
17. 6:13 - One who serves G-d and reveres His name.
18. 7:7 - B'nei Yisrael are the humblest nation.
19. 7:9 - 2,000.
20. 7:10 - So that they get no reward in the next world.



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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### **Ekev**

1. What must the Jewish People do to ensure that G-d will fulfill His promise to do good for us?
2. What were the: a. wonders b. strong hand c. outstretched arm that the Jewish People saw in Egypt?
3. When a group performs a *mitzvah*, whose name is attached to the *mitzvah*?
4. How did the Jewish People do their laundry in the *midbar*?
5. How did the Jewish People obtain clothing for their growing children in the *midbar*?
6. How many days did Moshe spend on Mt. Sinai altogether?
7. On what day did Moshe come down from Mt. Sinai having received complete forgiveness for the Jewish People?
8. How was Aharon punished for his role in the golden calf?
9. Who made the ark in which Moshe placed the second set of tablets? What special function did it later serve?
10. Which sin of the Jewish People was prompted by the death of Aharon?
11. Why were the *levi'im* chosen by G-d?
12. Why do the *levi'im* have no portion in the Land?
13. All aspects of man's life are in G-d's "hands" except one. What is this?
14. What is the "added benefit" of observing the *mitzvot*?
15. What is meant by circumcising one's heart?
16. What are the sources of water for the fields of Egypt and *Eretz Yisrael*?
17. What path does the Torah prescribe for gaining new knowledge?
18. Which activity is "serving G-d with the heart"?
19. When the Jewish People sin, why are they considered worse than the generation of the flood?
20. How does one "cleave to G-d"?

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## PARSHA Q&A!

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

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1. 7:12 - Guard even the "light" commandments.
2. 7:19 - a. Plagues; b. Pestilence; c. Slaying of the firstborn.
3. 8:1 - The person who finishes it.
4. 8:4 - The *ananei kavod* (clouds of glory) cleaned and bleached their clothes.
5. 8:4 - As their children grew, their clothing grew with them.
6. 9:18 - 120 days.
7. 9:18 - The tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.
8. 9:20 - His two sons died.
9. 10:1 - Moshe. This ark would accompany the Jewish People into battle.
10. 10:6-7 - When Aharon died the *ananei kavod* departed, causing many Jews to fear war with the King of Arad and to retreat toward Egypt.
11. 10:8 - Because they did not participate in the sin of the golden calf.
12. 10:9 - Since they served in the Temple, they were not free to work the land.
13. 10:12 - Fear of Heaven, which is dependent upon the person.
14. 10:13 - There is reward.
15. 10:16 - To remove those things that block the words of Torah from entering.
16. 11:10 - Egypt is irrigated by manually carrying water up from the Nile. *Eretz Yisrael* is supplied by rainwater requiring no work on the part of its inhabitants.
17. 11:13 - By repeatedly reviewing what one knows, one more easily acquires new knowledge.
18. 11:13 - Prayer.
19. 11:17 - Because the generation of the flood had no one from whom to learn.
20. 11:22 - Attaching oneself to Torah scholars.

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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### Re'eh

1. What were the sites designated for the “blessings and the curses” to be pronounced by the people?
  2. On what condition will *Bnei Yisrael* receive the blessings from G-d?
  3. Why does the Torah use idolatry as an example when describing one who strays from the path that G-d commanded?
  4. What was to be the sign for the Jewish People that they would inherit the Land?
  5. During the 14 years of the conquest and division of the Land, what types of offerings were permitted on private altars?
  6. What must one do with consecrated animals that develop a blemish?
  7. In what ways does a consecrated animal that develops a blemish retain a degree of *kedusha* (holiness) even after it has been redeemed?
  8. Why was the tribe of Yehuda not permitted to conquer Jerusalem?
  9. In consecutive verses, the Torah repeats the prohibition against eating blood. What two types of blood are referred to?
  10. Why were the Jewish People allowed to see the extermination of the Canaanites?
  11. What forms of idol worship are punishable by death?
  12. If a person performs miracles in the name of G-d and then says that the laws of the Torah have been revised, what is done to this person?
  13. The Torah says, “To Him (G-d) you shall cleave.” How does one fulfill this command?
  14. The trial of a person accused of encouraging others to worship idols differs from the trial of other capital cases. How?
  15. Who has the primary responsibility of inflicting the punishment on one who tried to entice others to worship idols?
  16. What is the “source” of the Jewish People being an *am kadosh* (holy nation)?
  17. How should the Jewish People maintain themselves as an *am kadosh*?
  18. What is the order of priority regarding to whom one should give charity?
  19. What *mitzvah* recalls the Exodus from Egypt?
  20. Which four individuals are under G-d’s “special protection”?
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## PARSHA Q&A!

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

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1. 11:26 - Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eval, respectively.
  2. 11:27 - On condition that they listen to G-d's commandments.
  3. 11:28 - Because those who worship idols are considered as if they have strayed from the entire Torah.
  4. 11:31 - The miracles that would occur while crossing the Jordan River.
  5. 12:8 - Vow offerings or free-will offerings.
  6. 12:15 - They must be redeemed and may then be eaten.
  7. 12:15 - Eating it is permitted, but use of its milk or fleece is forbidden.
  8. 12:17 - When Avraham bought *ma'arat hamachpelah*, he made a covenant of peace with the Hittites who sold it; his descendants honored this pact regarding the Hittite descendants in Jerusalem.
  9. 12:24-25 - Blood that seeps slowly from the incision as soon as the cut is made and again after it no longer gushes. Blood absorbed into the limbs of the animal.
  10. 12:30 - To learn not to follow in their depraved ways.
  11. 12:30 - Slaughtering or burning a sacrifice on an altar, pouring libations, prostrating oneself, and any normal manner of worshipping that idol.
  12. 13:2-6 - He is put to death.
  13. 13:5 - One should emulate G-d's actions by performing good deeds, assisting in burying the dead and visiting the sick.
  14. 13:10 - If he was acquitted and new information of a condemning nature arises, he is retried. If he was judged guilty, he is not returned to court to plead in his favor.
  15. 13:10 - The person whom the guilty one attempted to entice.
  16. 14:2 - The *kedusha* is inherited from the *avot*.
  17. 14:21 - By avoiding excesses even in permitted matters.
  18. 15:7 - The most needy, a brother from one's father, a brother from one's mother, the poor of one's city, the poor of another city.
  19. 16:3 - Eating the *korban pesach* and the *matzah* on the night of Pesach.
  20. 16:10 - A *levi*, convert, orphan, and widow.
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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### **Shoftim**

1. What is the role of *shoftim*? What is the role of *shotrim*?
2. What qualifications should one look for when appointing a judge?
3. May a judge accept a bribe if only for the purpose of judging fairly?
4. What is the source for the concept “seek out a good *beit din*”?
5. Although the *avot* built *matzevot*, the Torah later forbade doing so. Why?
6. “You will come to...the judge who will be in those days.” It’s impossible to visit a judge living at a different time, so why must the Torah add these apparently extra words?
7. What does G-d promise a king who doesn’t amass much gold, doesn’t raise many horses and doesn’t marry many wives?
8. How many Torah scrolls must the king have?
9. How was King Shaul punished for disobeying a minor command of the Prophet Shmuel?
10. Certain kosher animals are not included in the law of “*chazeh, shok and keiva*.” Which ones?
11. Families of *kohanim* served in the *Beit Hamikdash* on a rotational basis. When was this rotation system implemented?
12. Which three categories of false prophets are executed?
13. What does it mean to “prepare the way” to the cities of refuge?
14. How many witnesses are meant when the Torah writes the word *eid* (witness)?
15. “Through the mouth of two witnesses....” What types of testimony does this verse invalidate?
16. If witnesses in a capital case are proven to be *zomemim* (false-conspirators) before their intended victim is executed, how are they punished?
17. Why does the section about going to war follow the laws governing witnesses?
18. The Jewish army is warned of four “scare-tactics” the enemy might employ. What are they?
19. When a murder victim is found in a field, who determines which city is closest?
20. What happens if the murderer is found after the calf’s neck was broken?

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## PARSHA Q&A!

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

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1. 16:18 - *Shoftim* are judges who pronounce judgment. *Shotrim* are officers who enforce it.
2. 16:18 - That he is expert in the law and that he is righteous.
3. 16:19 - No, because it will sway his judgment.
4. 16:20 - “*Tzedek tzedek tirdof...*”
5. 16:22 - Because the Canaanites used them for idolatry.
6. 17:9 - To teach that although a judge may not be as eminent as judges of previous generations, we must obey him nevertheless.
7. 17:18 - That his kingdom will endure.
8. 17:18 - Two. One stays in his treasury and one he keeps with him.
9. 17:20 - He lost his kingship.
10. 18:3 - *Chayot* (non-domestic-type animals).
11. 18:8 - During the time of David and Shmuel.
12. 18:20 - One who prophesies something he didn’t hear, something told to another prophet, or prophecies in the name of an idol.
13. 19:3 - To post direction signs saying “refuge” at the crossroads.
14. 19:15 - Two, unless otherwise specified.
15. 19:15 - Written testimony and testimony translated from a language which the judges don’t understand.
16. 19:19 - They are put to death.
17. 20:1 - To teach that if the Jewish People execute fair judgment they will be victorious in war.
18. 20:3 - a. Clanging their shields b. Making their horses stomp and whinny c. Shouting d. Blowing horns.
19. 21:2 - The Sanhedrin.
20. 21:9- He is tried and, if guilty, executed.



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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

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### Har Habayit — A Tisha B'Av Reminder

“**T**he mountain of Zion is desolate; foxes prowl over it.” These words from the Eicha lamentations of the Prophet Yirmiyahu are said and sung in a sad tone during the special nine days of mourning the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.

What is a more powerful reminder of that great tragedy than seeing an Arab mosque on Temple Mount!

Halacha forbids Jews in their present ritually impure state from ascending Temple Mount, because they may unknowingly be treading on the site of the



Beit Hamikdash, which is out of bounds for anyone who has come into contact with the dead in some way. The closest we can get to this holy site is the Western Wall, which is why the “Kotel” is such a magnet for worshippers and visitors.

The closing words of Eicha are “Return us to You, O G-d, and we shall return; renew our days as of old.”

When all of our people accept the outstretched hand of G-d, and return to Him, we will merit the return of the Beit Hamikdash to the Mountain of Zion in a renewed Israel forever.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Deavarim

**T**his Parsha begins the last of the Five Books of The Torah, *Sefer Devarim*. This Book is also called *Mishneh Torah*, “Repetition of the Torah” (hence the Greek/English title Deuteronomy). *Sefer Devarim* relates what Moshe told *Bnei Yisrael* during the last five weeks of his life, as they prepared to cross the Jordan *into Eretz Yisrael*. Moshe reviews the *mitzvot*, stressing the change of lifestyle they are about to undergo: From the supernatural existence of the desert under Moshe’s guidance to the apparently natural life they will experience under Yehoshua’s leadership in the Land.

The central theme this week is the sin of the spies, the *meraglim*. The Parsha opens with Moshe alluding to the sins of the previous generation who

died in the desert. He describes what would have happened if they hadn’t sinned by sending spies into Eretz Yisrael. G-d would have given them without a fight all the land from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, including the lands of Ammon, Moav and Edom. He details the subtle sins that culminate in the sin of the spies, and reviews at length this incident and its results: The entire generation would die in the desert; Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael. He reminds them that their immediate reaction to G-d’s decree was to want to “go up and fight” to redress the sin. He recounts how they wouldn’t listen when he told them not to go, that they no longer merited vanquishing their enemies miraculously. They ignored him and suffered a massive defeat. They were not allowed to fight with the kingdoms of Esav, Moav or Ammon —

*continued on page eleven*

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

## The Wolf and the Lamb

**From: Henrietta**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*When we observe the animal world, it appears that there is a great degree of meanness and viciousness. A predator tears and mutilates its prey. How can a compassionate G-d sanction this? And if it is nevertheless acceptable to G-d, why is this behavior not condoned in mankind. Contrarily, if G-d demands compassion within human interactions, why didn't He create the animal kingdom accordingly?*

Dear Henrietta,

Your question assumes that terminating life is mean and vicious in all instances. But this is not so. G-d, in His infinite wisdom, imparts life and terminates life. It is G-d's will that living things not live forever. But while alive, they thrive on life. Therefore, the food chain, which is such an integral, vital process of the world, subsists on one organism sustaining its life via the life of another. Accordingly, living things preserve their lives by consuming others not as a moral decision, nor even out of a conscious decision to terminate life. They simply act upon a Divinely-designed instinct to eat. In this respect, a lion's feeding on its prey is no more "mean and vicious" than a grazing cow's tearing away and cutting up living grass in its jaws. Actually, the lion is less vicious than humans insofar as it will never kill indiscriminately and only kills for food what it needs in order to survive.

Thus, it is we, as humans, with free will and an innate sense of morality, who incorrectly transpose our sensibilities to the behavior of the animals, and thus perceive the lion as vicious and the cow as peaceful. But while an animal's decisions to take life is instinctual and not moral (i.e., not mean and vicious), our free will and moral potential makes our decision to

eat, or how to interact with our surroundings, not only instinctual but also moral. Since humans can *choose* to kill, G-d imposes *moral* judgments, restrictions and punishments on unnecessarily killing in order to ensure that it will be justified by G-d, and therefore not mean and vicious.

Regarding killing for food, G-d initially designed that man should not subsist by killing animals, but rather that he sustain his life through consuming the life force of vegetation. This is not necessarily because taking the lives of animals is more "vicious" than doing so to plants, but because plants are a lower life form and preserving the life of animals shows a greater respect for life. However, even if it is because eating plants is more merciful, as we see is a major reason behind many of the laws governing eating animals, such as not eating from the animal while alive, taking its life with a minimum of pain, eating only herbivores and not carnivores, etc. that's only because G-d wants to sensitize us to making the right choices about killing in order to preserve life. But animals' lack of free will and resultant Divinely-instilled instinct removes any element of meanness or viciousness, and thereby precludes the need for any moral judgment or restrictions on what, when, and how much animals kill to eat, since they do so only according to G-d's will and plan for Creation.

As such, the prophecy of Isaiah (11:6), "And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid; and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling shall lie together, and a small child shall lead them," is not necessarily to be understood literally that carnivores will change their diet. Rather, the verse is a metaphor regarding the End of Days, conveying the idea that the strong will no longer harm, exploit and kill the weak, but rather all individuals, peoples and nations, large or small, powerful or feeble, rich or poor, will follow the lead of the Jewish People, the children of G-d, to serve Him in peaceful unison and harmony.

continued from page nine

these lands were not to be part of the map of *Eretz Yisrael* in the meantime. When the conquest of Canaan will begin with Sichon and Og, it will be via natural warfare.

### **Va'etchanan**

**A**lthough Moshe is content that Yehoshua will lead the nation, Moshe nevertheless prays to enter the Land of Israel in order to fulfill its special *mitzvot*. G-d refuses. Moshe reminds *Bnei Yisrael* of the gathering at Sinai when they received the Torah — that they saw no visual representation of the Divine, but only the sound of words. Moshe impresses on *Bnei Yisrael* that the Sinai revelation took place before an entire nation, not to a select elite, and that only the Jews will ever claim that G-d spoke to their entire nation. Moshe specifically enjoins *Bnei Yisrael* to “pass over” the Sinai event to their children throughout all generations.

Moshe predicts, accurately, that when *Bnei Yisrael* dwell in *Eretz Yisrael* they will sin and be scattered among all the peoples. They will stay few in number but will eventually return to G-d.

Moshe designates three “refuge cities” to which an inadvertent killer may flee. Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments and then teaches the *Shema*, the central credo of Judaism, that there is only One G-d. Moshe warns the people not to succumb to materialism and thus forget their purpose as a spiritual nation. The *parsha* ends with Moshe exhorting *Bnei Yisrael* not to intermarry when they enter *Eretz Yisrael*, as they cannot be a treasured and holy nation if they intermarry, and they will become indistinguishable from the other nations.

### **Ekev**

**I**f *Bnei Yisrael* carefully observe even those “minor” *mitzvot* that are usually “trampled” underfoot, Moshe promises them that they will be the most blessed of the nations on earth. Moshe tells *Bnei Yisrael* that they will conquer *Eretz Canaan* little by little, so that the Land will not be overrun by wild animals in the hiatus before *Bnei Yisrael* are able to organize and settle the whole land. After again warning *Bnei Yisrael* to burn all carved idols of Canaanite gods, Moshe stresses that the

Torah is indivisible and not open to partial observance. Moshe describes the Land of Israel as a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, a land of oil-yielding olives and date-honey. Moshe cautions *Bnei Yisrael* not to become haughty and think that their success in *Eretz Yisrael* is a result of their own powers or vigor; rather, it was G-d who gave them wealth and success. Nor did G-d drive out the Canaanites because of *Bnei Yisrael's* righteousness, but rather because of the sins of the Canaanites; for the road from Sinai had been a catalogue of large and small sins and rebellions against G-d and Moshe. Moshe details the events after G-d spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai, culminating in his bringing down the second set of Tablets on Yom Kippur. Aharon's passing is recorded as is the elevation of the *levi'im* to G-d's ministers. Moshe points out that the 70 souls who went down to Egypt have now become like the stars of the Heaven in abundance. After specifying the great virtues of the Land of Israel, Moshe speaks the second paragraph of the *Shema*, conceptualizing the blessings that accompany keeping *mitzvot* and the curses that result from non-observance.

### **Re'eh**

**M**oshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually-oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from G-d. When the nation enters *Eretz Yisrael* they must burn down any trees that had been used for idol-worship, and destroy all idolatrous statues. G-d will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there, not to a private altar. Moshe repeatedly warns against eating animal blood. In the desert, all meat was slaughtered in the Mishkan, but in *Eretz Yisrael* meat may be slaughtered anywhere. Moshe lists the categories of food that may be eaten only in Jerusalem. He warns the nation against copying ways of the other nations. Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added to or subtracted from it. If a “prophet” tells the people to permanently abandon a Torah law or indulge in idol worship, he is to be put to death. One who entices others to worship idols is to be put to death. A city of idolatry must be razed. It is prohibited to show

*Continued on page twelve*

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## Parsha Overview...continued from page eleven

excessive signs of mourning, such as marking the skin or making a bald spot. Moshe reiterates the classifications of kosher and non-kosher food and the prohibition of cooking meat and milk. Produce of the second tithe must be eaten in Jerusalem, and if the amount is too large to carry, it may be exchanged for money with which food is bought in Jerusalem. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor. *Bnei Yisrael* are instructed to always be open-hearted, and in the seventh year any loans must be discounted — G-d will bless the person in all ways. A Jewish bondsman is released after six years, and must be sent away with generous provisions. If he refuses to leave, his ear is pierced with an awl at the door post and he remains a bondsman until the Jubilee Year. The Parsha ends with a description of the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

### **Shoftim**

**M**oshe tells *Bnei Yisrael* to appoint judges and officers in their cities. A bribe of even an insignificant sum is forbidden. Trees are not to be planted near G-d's altar, as was the way of idolaters. Blemishes in animals designated for offerings and other points of disqualification are listed. The Great Sanhedrin is to make binding decisions on new situations according to Torah criteria to prevent the fragmentation of the Torah. A very learned scholar who refuses to accept the Halachic decisions of the Sanhedrin incurs the death penalty. A Jewish king may only have possessions and symbols of

power commensurate with the honor of his office, but not for self-aggrandizement. He is to write for himself two *sifrei Torah*, one to be kept with him wherever he goes, so that he doesn't become haughty. Neither the *kohanim* nor the *levi'im* are to inherit land in the Land of Israel; rather they are to be supported by the community by a system of tithes. All divination is prohibited. G-d promises the Jewish People that He will send them prophets to guide them, and Moshe explains how a genuine prophet may be distinguished from a false one. Cities of refuge are to be provided an accidental killer to escape the blood-avenger from the deceased's family. However, someone who kills with malice is to be handed over to the blood-avenger. Moshe cautions *Bnei Yisrael* not to move boundary markers to increase their property. Two witnesses who conspire to "frame" a third party are to be punished with the very same punishment that they conspired to bring upon the innocent party. A *kohen* is to be anointed specifically for when Israel goes to war, to instill trust in G-d. Among those disqualified from going to war is anyone who has built a new house but not lived in it yet, or anyone who is fearful or fainthearted. Enemies must be given the chance to make peace, but if they refuse, all the males are to be killed. Fruit trees are to be preserved and not cut down during the siege. If a corpse is found between cities, the elders of the nearest city must take a heifer, slaughter it, and wash their hands over it, saying that they are not guilty of the death.



Best wishes to our Ohrnet Readers  
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# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

## Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

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BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

### The Number Eleven

In the first three verses of Deuteronomy the number eleven makes two appearances: “These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel... eleven (*achad-asar*) days from Horeb... in the fortieth year, in the eleventh (*ashtei-asar*) month...” (Deut. 1:1-3). In this passage there are two different modes of writing the number eleven: *achad-asar* and *ashtei-asar*. Truth be told, if we take into account male and female forms of the word, there are a total of four words for “eleven”: *achad-asar/achat-esreh* and *ashtei-asar/ashtei-esreh*. All in all, *ashtei-asar/ashtei-esreh* appears nineteen times throughout the Bible, while *achad-asar/achat-esreh* appears thirteen times. But what is the difference between these two different ways of expressing the number eleven?

Rabbi Yonah ibn Janach (990-1055) explains that *ashtei-asar* is a contraction of the words *al* (“on”) and *shtei-asar* (“twelve”). He understands that the number which is “on top” of twelve is eleven. Ibn Ezra disagrees with this understanding, as he explains that, *au contraire*, twelve is “on top” of eleven, not vice versa. Moreover, if Rabbi Yonah’s explanation were true, then one would expect that for male-gendered situations, the number eleven would be *ashnei-asar*, because the number twelve in such cases is *shnei-asar/shneim-asar*, not *shteim-esreh*. Yet, there is no such term as *ashnei-asar* or *shneim-asar*; only *ashtei-asar* and *ashtei-esreh* — which casts a shadow of doubt over Rabbi Yonah’s innovative proposal.

Instead, Ibn Ezra explains that *ashtei* of *ashtei-asar* is a cognate of the word *ashtanotav* (“his plans”), which appears in Psalms 146:4. He clarifies that just as “plans” are *born* out of one’s thoughts, so is the number eleven *born* from the number ten (*eser*). According to this, *ashtei-asar* literally means “that which is born out of ten [i.e. eleven].” Ibn Ezra admits that there is a “great secret” behind the connection between ten and eleven, but does not further elaborate.

Rabbi Yonah’s connecting eleven to twelve, and Ibn Ezra’s connecting eleven to ten may have interesting implications for Jewish numerology. Nonetheless, Radak rejects both Rabbi Yonah’s and Ibn Ezra’s explanations, and concludes that we do not understand the etymological basis of the word *ashtei-asar*.

*Peirush HaRokeach* offers a somewhat cryptic explanation of the phenomenon at hand. He explains that whenever the number eleven is invoked in a situation

where all the preceding numbers are also included, then *achad-asar* appears. On the other hand, in cases where only the eleventh of a set is spoken about and the others are disregarded, then *ashtei-asar* is used. I am not quite sure what he means, but perhaps he means to draw a distinction between the ordinal eleventh (*ashtei-asar*) and the numeral eleven (*achad-asar*), in the same way the Bible differentiates between the ordinal first (*rishon*) and the numeral one (*echad*), or the ordinal fourth (*revi’i*) and the numeral four (*arbah*).

In a funerary inscription concerning Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit, archeologists found the word *ashtei* in Ugaritic to mean “first”. According to linguists, Ugaritic and Hebrew are somewhat similar languages, and both can be classified under the more general category of Semitic languages. It is thus not totally irrelevant that in Ugaritic *ashtei* means “first”; it fits with our suggestion that *ashtei-asar* means “eleventh” as opposed to “eleven”. Nevertheless, if we try to apply this approach to all cases in the Bible, it simply does not pan out.

Rabbi Meir Mintzberg (son-in-law of Rabbi Leib Mintzberg, the spiritual leader of the Jerusalemite “Masmidim” movement) points out another interesting factoid: Whenever the number eleven appears in the ordinal form as *ashtei-asar* (i.e. the eleventh), the Bible omits the definite article prefix *ha-* from the number (even though for all other numbers, including *achat-esreh* or *achad-asar*, it uses that prefix). In explaining the meaning of *ashtei*, Rabbi Mintzberg explains that the word *eshet* refers to an overly-distended body (see Rashi to Song of Songs 5:14, Jer. 5:28, *Yoma* 34b, and *Menachot* 28a), so *ashtei-asar* refers to the number eleven as a “bloated ten”. Because *ashtei-asar* connotes the number eleven as an extension of ten, it is never attached to the definite article; that is, because it has no real significance of its own. By contrast, the words *achat-esreh* and *achad-asar* connote eleven as an independent number, not as an extension of ten. This might actually be the intent of *Peirush HaRokeach* who also differentiated between an independent eleven and dependent eleven.

### Twin Cities: Zion & Jerusalem

Perhaps many of us have never stopped to think about the names Zion and Jerusalem. We may have always assumed that the two terms are synonymous, and even interchangeable. However, if one closely examines the Scriptures and other traditional works, one will realize that

*Continued on page eighteen*



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## ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

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BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

### Who is Fit to Be a Judge?

*“You shall not show favoritism in judgment; small and great alike shall you hear; you shall not tremble before any man, for the judgment is G-d’s....” (Devarim 1:17)*

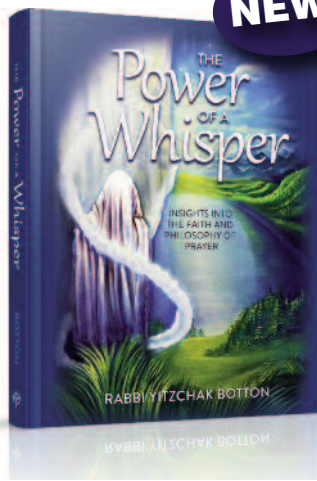
On a basic level the above verse enjoins judges not to show favoritism to one litigant over the other for any reason. Instead, he must judge the case based solely on the facts. Our Sages (Sanhedrin 7b) derive another law from this verse. They explain that when appointing a judge it is forbidden to choose someone who is not well versed in Torah Law. A judge who lacks a clear and complete grasp of the Torah and its application to the various cases brought before him may end up acquitting the guilty and convicting the innocent; he can cause a person to lose his money and another to take money that does not rightfully belong to him.

In addition to having expert Torah knowledge, a judge residing on a Beit Din of three judges must also possess at least these seven good qualities: wisdom, humility, the fear of G-d, a loathing for money and a love for truth. He must be a person who is beloved by people at large, and must have a good reputation.

The transgression of this commandment by appointing a

judge because of his wealth, good attributes, because he is a friend or due to his high stature, is a grave transgression for which the punishment is very severe. This is so because the transgressor who appoints such a judge is seen as responsible for all of the wrongful judgments that occur as a result of the judge’s ignorance of the correct laws.

Also included in the above verse is an injunction against perverting the correct ruling out of fear of one of the litigants. This rule applies even in the face of danger, and certainly if faced with the threat of monetary loss. In fact, the Sifri explains, based on the phrase in the above verse, “You shall not tremble before any man,” that one must rule in accordance with the truth even at the risk of death. Another application of this law is in a case of a student sitting before his rabbi while the latter was presiding over a case, and the student notices that his rabbi has wrongfully ruled in favor of a poor person, awarding him money. The student also must speak up, in accordance with the verse, “You shall not tremble before any man.”



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# Letter & Spirit

Insights based on the writings of Rav S. R. Hirsch

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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

*Devarim*

## Fat or Fit?

The last of the five books of the Torah opens with the introductory words: *These are the words that Moshe spoke*. The Midrash (Sifri) asks: Did Moshe not write the entire Torah? Why are *these* words singled out? *These* words have particular significance. The entire book records the remarks of Moshe, a last will and testament, spoken during the last five weeks of his life. And the essence of those remarks is rebuke. The verse cited by the Midrash, a verse which became the catch-phrase to summarize the entirety of the rebuke, is Devarim 32:15: *Jerushun became fat and kicked; you became fat, you became thick, you became corpulent*. This refers to overindulgence in material abundance and pleasure, leading to forsaking G-d.

Rav Hirsch also attaches great historical significance to this prophetic rebuke, referring to it as the “mournful secret” of Jewish history. In suffering, Israel has generally withstood the test well, but only rarely has it been able to withstand good fortune. Whenever it has grown fat, it has become corpulent and overgrown with fat. The imagery is precise. The more substantial, the fatter the food introduced into the body, the more the body should seek to convert the surplus of nourishment into energy. In theory, the better nourished the body, the more active a person ought to be, and the greater his performance as a result. If successful, he will have control over the abundance and will remain healthy in both mind and body. His greater performance will also increase his moral worth. If, however, he does not act in this manner, and the surplus is merely deposited in his body, he will become corpulent and obese, and instead of having the abundance serve his health, his active self will be overwhelmed by the fat, leading to exhaustion and sluggishness.

Such has been the history of Israel. It failed to utilize its abundance and surplus for increased spiritual and moral performance. Instead, its moral progress lagged behind its material prosperity, and could not remain the master over its riches. Instead of using them for achievement of moral progress, it drowned in its wealth and prosperity, allowing its better self — the spiritual G-dly life within it — to go to sleep. While Israel has weathered danger and persecution, poverty and misery, with remarkable loyalty and commitment, it has not yet stood the test of abundance. *You have grown fat, you have growth thick, you have grown corpulent* has been the outcome whenever G-d has granted

us a period of good fortune.

The formula to reverse this trend was hinted to by our Sages, (Nedarim 81a) in explaining why the Land has gone to ruin: *Because they forsook My Torah, which I had placed before them, [meaning] they did not bless the Torah first*. The first, fateful budding of misfortune was this: They did not *first and foremost* praise G-d for the Torah. While they *did* praise G-d for the Torah, they valued it much as they valued their other possessions and achievements — it did not attain its befitting primacy.

When Torah is in its rightful paramount place, then all roads lead to it. Every step, every endeavor, every object of study, every intellectual pursuit, every celebrated achievement is then approached through the lens of Torah, and is used as a tool in developing our spiritual selves. When the focus is singular and spiritual, then the self does not retreat into an indulgent sleep. In this way, the sluggish corpulence is replaced by an active engagement, and the reserves of abundance can be used as they were always intended — for our personal, national, and global betterment.

• Sources: *Commentary Devarim 32:15; Collected Writings I, Tammuz III, pp. 302-308*

*Va'etchanan*

## Law, then Land

In this week's Torah portion Moshe begins to prepare the people to enter the Land of Israel. *See, I have taught you statutes and ordinances... so that you may act accordingly in the midst of the Land which you are coming to take possession of*. (Devarim 4:5) The laws that I have *already taught you* (past tense) are for you to fulfill in the Land you stand to *inherit* (future tense). Moshe is pointing out is — *See!* — that the laws came before the Land.

The Jewish People is different than all others in that its law preceded its land. Every other nation becomes a nation through its land, and afterward it creates laws for its land. The laws are not intended as a means for building up a national existence and for achieving national independence. Rather, they are the *ends* for which Land, independence and prosperity are given. Thus, in contrast to other nations, Israel became a nation through the Torah, and the Land was given for the sake of observing Torah.

The laws of other nations reflect their own character, engendered by their land, and of the changing needs of the nation's development. In fact, legislators and judges — the

*Continued on page twenty-one*

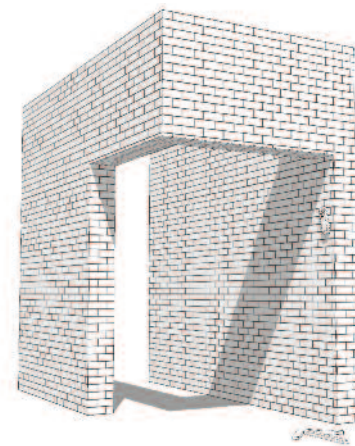
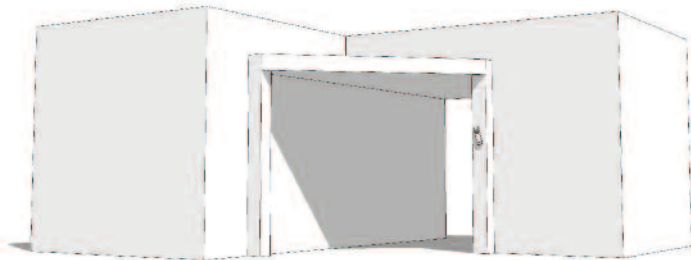
## Alignment of Posts

*Q: My playroom has a right post and a left post, but they are at a wide slant to each other.*

*A: Even if the doorposts are greatly out of alignment with each other, if a lintel connects them on their top,*

a mezuzah should be placed. However, if there is no lintel connecting them, and the ceiling merely flows from one room to the other, your playroom would be exempt from a mezuzah.

• Sources: *Da'as Kedoshim* 287:3; *Agur B'ohalecha*



*Got a mezuzah question or story? Email [rabbi@ohrsandton.com](mailto:rabbi@ohrsandton.com) or submit on my website [mymezuzahstory.com](http://mymezuzahstory.com)  
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See full schedule on page 23

## Student Groups at Ohr Somayach

This summer has seen a record number of groups and students visiting us in Jerusalem to attend classes, go on tours, share ideas and make new friends.

More than 400 students and young professionals from all over the English speaking world (including the U.S., Canada, the U.K., South Africa and Australia) participated in over a dozen programs including Ohr Somayach's own JLE and JLE Connect.

The most popular programs of the year are definitely the internship programs which combine learning with top-class internship placements. Almost one hundred students from all of the

countries listed above spent at least two weeks learning in the yeshiva, and in many cases up to two months.

This summer also saw the "bar mitzvah" celebration of the Mentors Mission with its thirteenth summer program. It was, as expected, fabulously successful with a good number of new mentors joining many veteran mentors and forty-five of the students on short-term summer programs.

It is also worth noting that many of these trips were led by graduates of Ohr Somayach's prestigious Ohr Lagolah Hertz Rabbinic Leadership Program, returning to the yeshiva with

*Continued on page nineteen*



*Part of the student groups visiting Ohr Somayach Jerusalem this summer.*



Zion and Jerusalem do not necessarily refer to the exact same place. In fact, the customary formula recited in consoling mourners already implies such: “May the Omnipresent console you amongst the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” Zion *and* Jerusalem — two different places.

When inaugurating the newly-built Holy Temple, the Bible states, “King Solomon gathered the Elders of the Jewish People and leaders of the tribes in Jerusalem in order to bring up the Ark from the City of David — which is Zion” (I Kings 8:1, II Chron. 5:2). The wording of this passage clearly demonstrates that Jerusalem and Zion are indeed two different places. This proof-text is adduced by Rabbi Ashtori HaParchi (1280-1366), Rabbi David Ibn Zimra (1479-1589), and Rabbi Elazar Azkiri (1533-1600). Indeed, Rashi (to *Sotah* 5a and *Yoma* 77b) writes quite emphatically that Zion is outside of Jerusalem.

Zion is sometimes known in the Bible as the “City of David” (*Ir David*) or “Fortress of David” (*Metzudat David*). That city had its own wall (see Rashi to II Sam. 8:7). However, later on, the outer walls of Jerusalem were expanded to include Zion as well. This may have happened in the late First Temple period, or in the beginning of the Second Temple period. Because Zion was added to the Holy City only later, it may not have had the same halachic status as the rest of Jerusalem regarding permission to eat certain sacrifices and tithes. For this reason, the inner walls known as *chomat beit pagi* separated Jerusalem proper from Zion, even in the late Second Temple period by which time the two cities had already merged. That wall served to demarcate the area inside greater Jerusalem within which one may or may not eat from the ritual sacrifices.

Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer of Vilna (1720-1797), also known as the Vilna Gaon, writes (in his commentary to Isa. 1:9) that the population demographics of Zion differed from that of Jerusalem: the noblemen lived in Zion, while ordinary people lived in Jerusalem.

We all know where Jerusalem is on a map, but where is Zion?

Psalms 48 speaks about the City of Our G-d in the most superlative terms. In that context, the Psalmist mentions that Mount Zion is the most beautiful of all places, is the happiest place on Earth, and is tucked away in the north (Ps. 48:3). Ibn Ezra and Radak explain that this means that Mount Zion is in the *northern* part of Jerusalem. Rashi, on the other hand, cites Dunash ibn Labrat (925-990) as explaining that Mount Zion is another name for Mount of Olives (*Har HaZeitim*).

However, none of these sources are in consonance with

the location of what we call nowadays “Mount Zion”, which is southwest of the Old City. This point is actually made by the Sages, as Midrash *Socher Tov* asks: “Is Mount Zion really in the north of Jerusalem? Is it not actually in the *south* of Jerusalem?” Rather, explains the Midrash, “north” in this context does not refer to the physical direction were Mount Zion stood vis-à-vis Jerusalem. Rather, it refers to the intense elation one can experience at Zion/Jerusalem when one slaughters a sin-offering *north* of the altar (as required by Lev. 1:11). For this reason, Mount Zion is described as being in the north.

The thirteenth century exegete Rabbi Yosef Tuv-Elem (Bonfils), in his super-commentary *Tzafnat Paneach* (to Lev. 1:11), also discusses this. He cites Ibn Ezra’s assertion concerning the location of Mount Zion and disagrees with it. Instead, he asserts that Mount Zion is not *north* of Jerusalem, but *south* of Jerusalem. To this effect he cites the abovementioned *Midrash Socher Tov*, which clearly positions Mount Zion to be to the south of Jerusalem. Rabbi Tuv-Elem writes that this Midrashic source is more believable than Ibn Ezra’s assertion because its author, Rabbi Yochanan, actually lived in the Holy Land. Although he admits that Ibn Ezra also visited Jerusalem, he assumes that Ibn Ezra did so only *after* he already mistakenly wrote that Mount Zion is *north* of Jerusalem. Rabbi Tuv-Elem further notes that he personally lived in Jerusalem, and saw that Mount Zion is south of Old Jerusalem.

Some sources suggest that *Tziyon* is sometimes used as a synonym for Jerusalem (see Jer. 31:5 and Ps. 132:14). Actually, a more accurate term might be synecdoche — which is when a literary device, whereby a term that really refers to part of something, is used to refer to the entire thing. Indeed, in our daily prayers we beseech G-d that He restore the Holy Temple by saying, “May our eyes see Your return to Zion with mercy”. In this case we refer to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by mentioning Zion instead of Jerusalem. Similarly, in the *Mussaf* prayer on Rosh Chodesh we request of G-d: “You shall prepare a new altar in Zion”, again referring to the site of the Temple as Zion, instead of Jerusalem.

Nonetheless, the *Zohar* (*Idra Zuta*, 296b) states that Zion and Jerusalem are two spiritual levels, as one refers to the aspect of mercy and the other to the aspect of justice. This suggests that both terms refer to the same physical location.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky (1871-1955) too disagrees with some of what we have written. He understands that Zion in the Bible does not always refer to a separate city adjoining Jerusalem, but rather refers to a

*Continued on page twenty seven*



@OHR...continued from page seventeen

their students. These include **Rabbi Jon Jaffit** from Toronto, **Rabbi Shalom Garfinkel** from Chicago, **Rabbi Chaim Saidian** from Los Angeles, **Rabbi Yitzchak Greenblatt** from Boston, and **Rabbis Shua Bitton and Simcha Lerner** from London.

When someone is taking part in a short-term program, it is easy to not realize that there are hundreds of other people like you participating in a similar program. This year, for the first time Ohr Somayach combined six different groups with

more than 150 participants for a short event where the Rosh HaYeshiva **Rav Nota Schiller**, the Rav of Kehillas Ohr Somayach **Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz**, **Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb** and **Rabbi Peretz Segal** each shared powerful ten minute ideas, giving a flavor of the range and variety of our Rabbonim, and the types of discussions held in the yeshiva.

With Elul zman falling in the university holiday period and more students and groups to come, this year is shaping up to be a bumper year.



Seasons: Then and Now

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

## Feeling the Loss of the Beit Hamikdash

In this generation it is very hard to even relate to the concept of the Beit Hamikdash on a simple level, let alone to mourn its loss. Many see the three-week mourning period as a time to get through, and are often counting down the days before they can take haircuts and eat meat. Why is this so?

The book of Ezra says that upon the rebuilding of the Second Beit Hamikdash the old were mourning while the young were rejoicing (Ezra 3:10-13). The elders who had seen and experienced the superior spiritual nature of the First Beit Hamikdash cried when they saw the decline in the spiritual level of the Second Beit Hamikdash. But the young who had never seen the First Beit Hamikdash were rejoicing, not knowing the great spiritual decline of the new Beit Hamikdash. Our feeling toward the loss of the Beit Hamikdash today is in a way comparable to the feeling expressed by the young at the time of the rebuilding of the Second Beit Hamikdash. Just as the young didn't mourn because they didn't know what they were missing from the First Beit Hamikdash, so too it is very hard for us to mourn for the Beit Hamikdash that we never knew. Since one reason for the inability to mourn the loss of the Beit Hamikdash is that we do not know what it is that we are missing, it is fitting for us to begin by intellectually understanding one basic function of the Beit Hamikdash, and use that as a stepping-stone to help us emotionally feel and mourn its loss.

The commentaries explain that even though G-d fills the entire world, nevertheless there are times and places that enable us to experience G-d's providence more directly (Kad Hakemach "avel"). It was at Mount Sinai, during the Giving of the Torah, that G-d's presence was most intensely felt. All doubt disappeared once the Jewish People heard G-d speak directly to them. This was indeed a truly awesome experience. The Ramban explains that the Mishkan [and later on the Beit Hamikdash] was meant to be a structure that held within it the revelation at Mount Sinai (Ramban on Shemot 25:1). Like Mount Sinai, the Beit Hamikdash was a place that enabled a glimpse into the spiritual world. It was a meeting place between the

physical and spiritual. Therefore, anyone who visited the Beit Hamikdash was able to see first-hand that there is more to the physical world than meets the eye. From the ten miracles that constantly took place in the Beit Hamikdash, to the spiritual high that filled the air, a casual visit to the Beit Hamikdash was a rejuvenation of *emuna* (faith).

The Beit Hamikdash though didn't only reveal spirituality in its structure. Rather, it took that spirituality and spread it out to the rest of the world as well. This is what the verse means when it says: "You shall build for me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in them." The Alshich points out that the verse does not say "I will dwell in it" but rather "I will dwell in them" to teach us that through the Mishkan [and later on the Beit Hamikdash] G-d would dwell in the hearts of *Klal Yisrael* (Alshich on Shemot 25:8; Nefesh Hachaim 1:4 *hagaha*). In this sense the Beit Hamikdash not only revealed the Providence of G-d in its structure but was also a conduit through which the existence of G-d could be felt more directly in every place in the world.

We can now begin to at least touch the surface of one of many things that we lost with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Without the Beit Hamikdash, which connected the spiritual and physical worlds, it is so hard to see beyond what meets the eye. It is hard to see the bond between the physical and spiritual. This is one of the reasons why the world today is so detached from spirituality while being deeply rooted in the physical. As the Gemara says: *From the day the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, a wall of iron separates Yisrael and their Father in the Heavens* (Berachot 32b). Chazal tell us that in every generation that the Beit Hamikdash is not rebuilt it is as if it was destroyed in that generation (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1). By reflecting on the fact that it is our transgressions that yearly destroy this most holy place, we can perhaps begin to mourn on some level the huge loss of the Beit Hamikdash, and, through that, merit doing real *teshuva* and see the day of its rebuilding through the coming of the Mashiach speedily in our days.



lawmakers and the law-interpreters — see their duty more as ensuring that laws are consonant with current public policy than with the founding fathers' vision.

But the law of Israel was given by Moshe, who had never seen, let alone set foot in the Land. He transmitted the law in the wilderness, and was laid to rest there in the wilderness. When the Torah refers to Moshe's resting place, it is called *chelkat mechokek* (Devarim 32:21) — the plot of the lawgiver. That the "lawgiver" remains in the wilderness is a testimony to the eternity and immutability of Torah.

Before the Jews entered the Land they needed to understand this character of the law: the Land, and its accompanying prosperity and independence, were not goals themselves, to be perpetuated by the law, but rather they are the means for the fulfillment of the law. The laws of the Torah do not change in accordance with changes in the people's or land's fortune, but rather the fortune of the people and the land changes in accordance with their faithfulness to the law.

The difference is not semantic. If Torah is related to as the ends and not the means, it ensures the growth of the Jewish People, as a separate nation, who will endure throughout history, with its goals unchanging. If law is above land, and all prosperity is intended to serve it, then the people will not perish in the worship of pleasure and possession, as other nations have.

The people thus stand, at the border of the Promised Land, with the complete Torah in their arms. Throughout their history, whether they live in the Land, or are temporarily exiled from it, the Torah will remain in their arms. We are the people of Torah, not the people of the Land of Israel; without the Torah, the Land is not even the Land of Israel.

*Sources: Commentary, Devarim 4:5;  
Nineteen Letters #8, pp. 115-116*

*Ekev*

## Message of Manna [Daily Bread]

Part of Moshe's will and testament includes a description of how G-d provided for the people's needs for forty years in the desert. On the eve of their entry into the Land of Israel, Moshe wants to make sense of some of their experiences in the wilderness, and to explain how these formative experiences are to guide them in the future. Much is about to change. From the miraculous *midbar*-life, where the clouds of glory not only protected them from the elements, but also, according to Midrash, laundered and

ironed their clothing; where an endless supply of water accompanied them through their travels, and where manna fell from the heavens to their doorsteps, they were to enter a land that would require plowing, planting, sowing, and reaping. Not only would they have to fight natural wars to conquer the land, but they would have to work the land to earn their daily bread. Moshe now recounts the experience of the *manna* with its take-home message to accompany them for the rest of Jewish history.

*He fed you with the manna which you did not know... in order to teach you that not on bread alone can man live; rather, man can live on anything that comes from the mouth of G-d. (Devarim 8:3)*

*Lechem*, bread, shares a root with *milchama*, war. *Lechem* is the food that man wrests from nature, in competition with his fellow men. Bread is the result of nature combined with the intelligence man uses to master the world. Bread — both in its literal sense, and also in its figurative sense of livelihood — is seemingly the product of human intelligence and social cooperation. But creative human power alone cannot produce bread nor livelihood. Rather, the prime factor in man's sustenance, all too often overlooked, is G-d's Providence.

One forgets this at his own peril. The need to provide for ourselves and our families is so legitimate and pressing that were we to believe that it can be met only by our efforts, other considerations would easily fall away. We could easily persuade ourselves that any gain wrested from nature or from fellow men will assure our sustenance, and the means by which we gained our bread would be irrelevant.

But even if the need for sustenance would not so trample our moral sense, the delusion that our fortune is in our own hands would lead to another undesirable result: our thoughts and efforts would undoubtedly be directed beyond our current needs, even beyond our future needs. We would easily become preoccupied with providing for the future of our children and grandchildren. As a result, the concern for breadwinning would become an endless race, leaving us neither time nor energy for purely spiritual and moral concerns.

This is why in the wilderness we were nourished with a bread that lacked the stamp of human achievement. G-d fed us with the manna, day after day, delivered to our humble dwellings, in a way that clearly demonstrated His personal care for every soul. This was preparatory training for life: Human existence does not depend on bread alone — on the natural and human resources represented by bread. Rather, man can, and does live on anything ordained by G-d.

• *Source: Commentary, Devarim 8:3*

*Continued on page twenty-two*

Re'eh

## Sustaining Self-Worth

This week's Torah portion contains a host of laws, mostly ones we have already been taught in earlier books. In some cases the order or grouping of these laws does not seem to follow a logical pattern. For example, the prohibition against heeding a false prophet, and the instructions regarding one who incites the public to sin, are followed by the statement, *You are children of G-d; do not cut yourselves and do not put a bald spot between your eyes [as a sign of mourning] for a dead person.* (Devarim 14:1)

Rav Hirsch explains the connection. The laws relating to a false prophet and an inciter alert the people to those who misuse their influence in order to turn their fellows' hearts away from G-d — whether that influence derives from their spiritual gifts, their gifts of persuasion, their social position, or familial or close relationship. These gifted individuals are to be avoided if they use those gifts to lead others astray.

The next two prohibitions — against cutting and creating a bald spot in response to death of a loved one — are closely related. Although we tear our clothing when a loved one passes, we are not to make a wound in our flesh or create a permanent bald spot. This would imply that the death of a loved one has caused a breakdown in ourselves and in our bodies, and our mourning is not to extend that far. No matter how dear a person may be to us, his death must not negate or diminish the value and meaning of our own lives. These laws are intended to preserve the individual's self-worth, which stems from his belonging to G-d. Hence the introduction: *You are children of G-d.* No human being should have such a strong hold on us that we identify with him to the point of self-nullification, so that when he departs this world we feel compelled to throw ourselves after him.

Both sets of laws, then, warn against excessive devotion to people. The false prophet and inciter alert us to the sway of those who may have won our love and respect, and warn us to keep our commitment to G-d in place at all times. This instruction comes now because the Jews are about to enter the Land, and they will no longer dwell in one camp. This danger can arise more easily once the people are dispersed through the Land. Dwelling in small, scattered settlements, away from the influence of the center, local leaders may gain undue influence.

The Torah here reiterates the prohibitions against cutting and creating a bald spot to remind us that our self-worth is never to be dependent on others, no matter how precious or influential they may be. As *children of G-d* we are first and foremost related to Him.

- Sources: Commentary, Devarim 14:1; Vayikra 19:28

Shoftim

## Prophecy: Proof & Purpose

The Torah warns us in two places about the dangers of false prophets. One sign of a false prophet is any contradiction to the law laid down by Moshe. Another sign of a false prophet is mentioned in our Torah portion: If the prophet's word does not materialize (*lo yehiyeh*) or come to pass (*lo yavo*), then he is not speaking the word of G-d. Even if the content of his prophecy is consistent with the Torah, if the miracles or events he predicts do not come about he is to be regarded as a false prophet.

Our Sages teach (Sanhedrin 89b) that a prophet needed to authenticate his mission by means of miracle or prediction only at the beginning of his prophetic career. Once he satisfied this criteria, he was to be heeded, and did not need to repeat the miracle or prediction before speaking in the name of G-d.

And generally speaking, the prophets did not use their power to perform miracles or to predict the future. For this is not the real calling of a prophet. Rather, the purpose of their mission is to give people insight into themselves and into G-d's ways with them and with other peoples. By revealing an understanding of the present, of G-d's expectations of them, they warn against evil and encourage good. They inspire faithfulness to G-d and His Torah in all situations.

There are relatively few miracles recorded in our canon of prophetic books. And when a miracle was performed it was not done so as an end in itself. For example, many miracles appear in the lives of Eliyahu and Elisha, with most of them performed in the private lives of individuals. Eliyahu and Elisha operated exclusively in the Kingdom of Israel, as opposed to the Kingdom of Judah. In the Kingdom of Israel the people were corrupted by the influence of their neighboring idolaters. Those people, whose minds and lives were torn between G-d and Ba'al — or in the words of Eliyahu, *dancing between two ideas* (Kings I 18:21) — were in dire need of clear revelation of one Omnipotent G-d, Whose providence reaches even the small matters of private life.

But in the main, the prophet of Israel was not a miracle-worker or a fortune teller. He was an emissary of G-d, who communicated His word and instruction to inspire people in faith. For that, he did not need to work wonders. When his communication revealed a deep understanding of the present national and human condition, and prodded the people to live up to G-d's expectations of them, he had fulfilled his mission.

- Source: Commentary, Devarim 18:22



# Why **we** **WEEP**

## TISHA B'AV 5778

### AT OHR SOMAYACH

#### **MOTZEI SHABBOS-JULY 21**

9:00 pm Maariv & Eicha

Followed by a talk by

Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

#### **TISHA B'AV DAY-JULY 22**

7:55 am Shachris

9:00 am - 12:30 pm Special Kinos Reading &  
Explanation with Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz,

*Rav, Kehillas Ohr Somayach*

#### **ALL-DAY SEMINAR FEATURING TALKS BY:**

12:45 pm Rav Nota Schiller, *Rosh Hayeshiva*

1:45 pm Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz

2:45 pm Rav Nachshon Schiller,  
*Rosh Yeshiva, Ohr Shmuel*

3:30 pm Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

4:15 pm Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

5:00 pm Rabbi Avraham Rockmill

5:45 pm Rabbi Reuven Laufer

6:20 pm Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

7:40 pm Rabbi Yehuda Samet

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7:00 pm Mincha - 8:06 pm Maariv - End of Fast 8:12 pm

Ezras Nashim will be open throughout the day.

**Livestream will be available on [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)**

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The word in Hebrew for a “thing” is *davar*, which has the same root as *dibbur*, meaning a “word”. G-d created everything in this world with speech. There are two parts to this creation: *yeish m’ayin* (ex nihilo) and *yeish mi’yeish* (bringing forth new existences from the raw material of original creation). Only G-d can create something out of nothing, but man also was given the power to create from what already exists. As the verse states, “My words that I have placed in your mouth.” (Yeshayahu 59:21) This is the reason for the extreme seriousness of negative speech: It literally prevents the world from reaching its perfection. It destroys worlds as surely as it destroys lives.

*Va’etchanan*

## Lollipop Nachat

**“...so that you will fear the L-rd, your G-d, to observe all His decrees and commandments that I command you — you, your child, and your grandchild — all the days of your life...” (6:2)**

“**N**achat is something you only get from your grandchildren” runs the quip. Or, as Rabbi Simcha Auerbach jokingly put it, “Granchildren are the prize you get for not murdering your children.”

A few weeks ago I got a big *nachat* delivery. I was leaving a Kiddush and I bumped into an old friend who asked about one of my children, and he then told me this story:

“One of my kids was starting school and it was his first day on the *tender* (school bus). Of course he was nervous and overwhelmed with all the older boys on the bus and he started to cry. He told me that your son, who was a couple of years older, came over to him and gave him a lollipop and smiled at him. His whole first day at school was very different because of that lollipop.”

“Thank you so much for telling me that,” I said.

“No,” he said. “That’s not the end of the story. So now in our family, on the first day of school, my children go out, ‘armed’ with lollipops to give to the little ones on their first day.”

“*Mitzvah goreret mitzvah.*” One good deed doesn’t

just deserve another, it *causes* another. Our actions echo down the years, through other people’s lives, on and on.

“*So that you will fear the L-rd, your G-d, to observe all His decrees and commandments that I command you — you, your child, and your grandchild — all the days of your life...*”

How can the Torah command us to ensure that our grandchildren will fear G-d and keep the *mitzvot*? How much influence can a grandparent have over his grandchild? Unless the grandchild is brought up by the grandparents, the major influence must be the parents.

My father, *a”h*, used to say, “Don’t do as I do, do as I tell you!” is ineffective parenting.” Like it or not, our children mimic us, for the good or the not-so-good.

Maybe the Torah is hinting here that we are responsible even for our grandchildren’s connection to Judaism because the example that we set as parents will be passed down the generations — like a lollipop.

*Ekev*

## You’ve Got a Friend

**“Only your forefathers did G-d cherish to love them, and He chose their offspring after them — you — from among all the peoples, as this day.” (10:15)**

“**F**or those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog, of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations and give them “thumbs up” and tell them I “like” them. And it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator, and a psychiatrist.”

I lol’ed (laughed-out-loud) when a friend of mine

*Continued on page twenty-five*

sent me the above. But after a little reflection, I thought to myself about how sad are the superficial relationships that pass for friendship in the Brave New Web.

Being a Jew means having the Ultimate Friend. *“Only your forefathers did G-d cherish to love them, and He chose their offspring after them — you — from among all the peoples, as this day.”*

The Kotzker Rebbe once said that if we really understood what it meant to be Jewish we would be beside ourselves with joy, and we would rush out into the street and start to do the *Kezatzke* (Cossack dance).

When a person doesn't have a real relationship with G-d, but rather just “friends” Him, then also his relationships with his fellow mortals will be brittle, superficial and manipulative.

How does one build a real relationship with G-d?

I found the following works for me.

I printed out some cards (and some magnetic fridge stickers) with the following inscription:

*I want to be close to G-d  
because He made the world  
and He made me too  
and He wants to be close to me  
and so I want to be close to Him too.*

I said it out loud once or twice a day. I know it seems trite — but it works.

There's nothing like the feeling of closeness to G-d. As the Chazon Ish once wrote, “There is no sadness in the world for someone who knows the light of truth.”

*Re'eh*

## HyperKosher

**“You shall not eat any carcass” (14:21)**

I can remember a slightly more innocent world where the actors and actresses in Hollywood were referred to as “stars”. Of course, to call a human being a star is a tremendous piece of fantasy and exaggeration.

However, hyperbole, as everyone knows, is subject to the law of diminishing returns. If everyone is somebody, and nobody is nobody, then to get noticed being a “star” isn't good enough, and in the 70's a new epithet

emerged — the “superstar”. Of course, these mere mortals were as tarnished and faded as their predecessors, the “stars”, but the march of exaggeration and the debasement of language is not to be halted by squeamish concerns of accuracy or truth. The short reign of the “superstars” came to an end with the advent of the “megastar”.

Where to from here?

A kosher *shechita* (ritual slaughtering for kosher food) involves fulfilling numerous halachic requirements. The *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) must be a G-d-fearing person. He must be allowed to work without the pressure of fulfilling a quota. He must be allotted sufficient time to check the smoothness of his knife and the health of the animal. He must be calm enough to be able to apply the correct amount of pressure on the blade during the *shechita*.

The *shochet* must carefully check the animal's lungs. An adhesion on the lung is something not easily detected, and often a decision must be made about this that will affect whether the animal is kosher or not.

If the lungs are completely free of adhesions, the animal is called *glatt kosher*.

On the average, between two and four percent of all cows that are *shechted* are *glatt kosher*.

How is it that nowadays nearly every restaurant/butcher / deli proclaims that they are *glatt kosher*? Given the statistics it just doesn't seem possible.

The likely answer is that the world of *kashrut* is not immune from the dreaded disease that affects so much of modern discourse — hyperbole. *Glatt* isn't what it used to be.

*Shoftim*

## As Lovely as a Tree?

**“You shall not plant for yourselves an idolatrous tree any tree near the altar of G-d.” (16:21)**

*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;  
A tree that looks at G-d all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;  
A tree that may in Summer wear*

*Continued on page twenty-six*

*A nest of robins in her hair;  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only G-d can make a tree.*

In this week's Torah portion we learn that it is forbidden to plant trees in the Beit Hamikdash, the Holy Temple. What is the reason for this prohibition? Wouldn't trees have been a wonderful way to enhance the beauty of the Holy Temple?

Historically, it was the custom of idolaters to plant beautiful trees, called *asheilot*, at the entrance to their temples.

These trees would be venerated as holy. In the Book of Shoftim G-d commanded the Judge Gidon to "Destroy the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the *asheira* next to it."

The Torah prohibited the planting of any tree in the Beit Hamikdash or its forecourt. The Torah Masters then extended the prohibition to include the entire Temple Mount.

However, apart from the connection to idol worship, there is a more subtle problem here.

When something is very beautiful, it's always a challenge to place that thing in its correct perspective. Whether it's a beautiful person, a beautiful view or a beautiful tree, the nature of beauty is to say, "Look at me! I'm so beautiful!" It's difficult to look beyond the surface of the beauty.

In Hebrew, one of the words for beauty is *shapir*. The name Shifra comes from this root, as does the common Jewish surname Shapiro. In the Book of Iyov it says, "By His breath the Heavens are spread (*shifra*)"

(Iyov 26:13). Iyov describes how G-d's breath spreads aside the cloud cover to reveal the Heavens beyond. The word for 'spread aside,' 'to reveal,' is from that same root — Shifra. In Jewish thought, something is beautiful only to the extent that it reveals what is beyond, what is inside. The part of the body where the personality of a person, his inside, is revealed, is the face. In Hebrew, the word for *face* and *inside* is the same — *panim/pnim*.

In Jewish thought, a beauty that reveals nothing more than itself cannot be called beautiful. "Art for Art's sake" has no place in the lexicon of Jewish thought. Jewish beauty is the revelation of the inner.

On Friday night a Jewish husband sings a song of praise to wife called *Eishet Chayil*, "A Woman of Valor". Towards the end of the poem it says, "Charm is false and beauty is empty; a woman who fears G-d, she should be praised." When charm and beauty don't reveal their source, their *pnim*, they are false and empty. Charm and beauty by themselves are false and empty, but when they are ennobled and animated by an interior life of holiness and spirituality, they radiate the purpose of their gift.

Similarly, in the Holy Temple the beauty of a tree can lead the mind in one of two ways. It can either lead to thoughts of the kindness of the Creator of the tree, how He brought into being such a beautiful thing, or it can stop at the surface: "Wow! That's beautiful!"

Mother Nature is so beautiful that it's easy to forget that Mother Nature has a Father.

• Source: Joyce Kilmer for Mrs. Henry Mills Alden

## PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

*אחינו כל בית ישראל*

*"Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon."*

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

neighborhood within Jerusalem itself.

Rabbi Tukachinsky further notes that sometimes the word *tziyon* appears in the Bible as a synonym for the Holy Temple (e.g., Joel 4:18 and Ps. 2:6) or, as a general term for the Jewish People (such as Isa. 51:3). In those cases, the word *tzion* is not a proper name for a Jerusalemite neighborhood, but is a common noun which means “outstanding” (derived from the word *tziyun*). In this vein, Rabbi Tukachinsky explains that sometimes Mount Zion actually refers to Mount Moriah, where the Temple stood.

Rabbi Ashtori HaParchi — a prominent rabbinic topographer — actually concedes this point by admitting that sometimes the phrase “mountains of Zion” or “mountain of Zion” does not refer to Mount Zion, *per se*, but to the mountains in that general vicinity, which includes Mount Zion, Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. Accordingly, Rabbi HaParchi maintains that when Zion appears in conjunction with the Temple, it refers to the general area of Mount Zion, which can also include the Temple Mount.

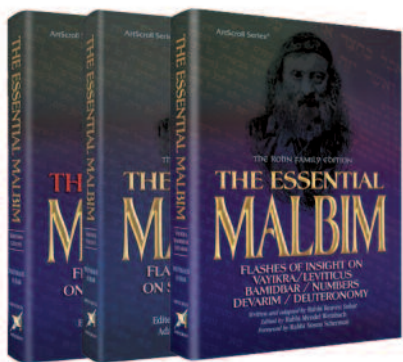
Somebody once asked the anti-Zionist rabbinic figure, Rabbi Yosef Rozin (1858-1936), better known as the Rogatchover Gaon, for his opinion about Zionism. Instead of directly answering the question, Rabbi Rozin playfully replied by explaining that Zion is an area outside of Jerusalem proper where gentile heretics historically gathered. The Mishnah (*Shekalim* 8:1) rules that spittle found in the Upper Marketplace of Jerusalem should be

assumed to originate from a non-Jew, and the Rogatchover Gaon explains that this refers to the area known as Zion. By highlighting the historical fact that Zion in Mishnaic times was essentially a slum, the Rogatchover Gaon registered his disapproval with secular Zionists, whom he deemed akin to said historical heretics.

“A Song of Ascent for David: How good and how pleasant it is, the dwelling of brothers together” (Ps. 133:1). The Targum explains that this refers specifically to the unity between the twin cities of Zion and Jerusalem. In fact, the spelling of Jerusalem in the Bible, and the Aramaic name of the Holy City, *Yerushalem/Yerushaleim* are written in the singular form, as though the city is made up of one singular component (the English name Jerusalem is derived from this form of the name). However, the way we traditionally pronounce the city’s name in Hebrew — *Yerushalayim* — is in the double form, as if to allude to the fact that Jerusalem is actually made up of two cities joined together. Just as the Hungarian cities Buda and Pest united to become one city — Budapest — so do Zion and Jerusalem unite to become one Unified Jerusalem.

Much of the information for this article was culled from *Har HaKodesh* by the late Rabbi Moshe Nachum Shapiro, and *Ir HaKodesh VeHaMikdash* by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky.

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



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first, when he breaks the bone, and only afterwards is the *aseh* fulfilled, when he eats the meat inside.

Many answers are offered and there is much discussion regarding this topic in the writings of our great Torah scholars. One answer is that since the mitzvah to eat the marrow cannot be done with first breaking the bone, when the eater breaks the bone to get to the marrow he has already begun to fulfill the act of the mitzvah to eat all of the meat of the *korban* Pesach. Therefore, it is considered as if the *aseh* is being done at the same time as the *lo ta'aseh*. This explains how to understand the legitimacy of the *gemara's* question. (*Turei Even*)

• *Zevachim 97b*

### Becoming a Kohen

“Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: Pinchas did not become a kohen until he killed Zimri.” (*Bamidbar 25:13*)

“Rav Ashi said: Pinchas did not become a kohen until he made peace between the tribes.” (*Yehoshua 22:30*)

When did Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon HaKohen, become a *kohen*? Wasn't he born into a *kohanic* family? Not really. Since his birth occurred before G-d proclaimed Aharon and his sons who were alive at the time to be *kohanim*, Pinchas, who had already been born at that time, did not automatically receive the status of *kohen* by virtue of birth. (Rashi on *Bamidbar 25:13*)

So, when did Pinchas become a *kohen*? There are two opinions in our *gemara*. Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina that Pinchas became a *kohen* after killing Zimri, the Prince of the Tribe of Shimon. Zimri had been publicly sinning in a very immoral manner. This heroic act by Pinchas caused a terrible plague to end, and earned him the status of *kohen*, as the Torah states regarding Pinchas: “And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal *kehuna*.” (*Bamidbar 25:13*)

Rav Ashi, however, teaches that Pinchas did not become a *kohen* until later. Although, after what he did to Zimri he had received a blessing to be a *kohen*, and, in theory, he could have completed the process to become a *kohen* immediately, there was a delay in the process. Since he had killed a Prince of Israel, there was dissent from the people to his becoming a *kohen* at that initial time. But it was only years later, when he acted as a great peacemaker in preventing a civil war between the tribes (see *Yehoshua 22:30*), did the people consent to finalizing his status of becoming a *kohen* — a process which involved being anointed, wearing the *kohanic* garments, and bringing the special *Mincha* offering that every new *kohen* was required to bring at his inauguration. (*Tosefot*)

• *Zevachim 101b*

### Where Was the Great Flood?

Rabbi Yochanan said, “The *mabul* (Great Flood in Noach's era) did not occur in the Land of Israel. Rabbi Shimon said, “The *mabul* did, in fact, occur in the Land of Israel.”

The *gemara* explains that both of these great Sages derive their views from the same verse in Sefer Yechezkel 22:24. Whether or not the *mabul* was in Israel is of halachic significance, besides it's being part of the world's historical record. Anywhere the *mabul* occurred was a site of possible ritual impurity due to the existence of bones of people who died in the *mabul* being pressed and “hidden” in the ground as a result of the *mabul*.

One verse that Rabbi Yochanan cites as a proof that there was no *mabul* in Israel is: “Everything that had the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils, of all that was on the *dry land*, died. (*Ber. 7:22*) The words “dry land” indicate that part of the world — the Land of Israel — remained as dry land without a *mabul*. Nevertheless, those outside of the ark died due to the great heat generated by the boiling *mabul* waters that were elsewhere in the world. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, on the other hand, interprets the words “dry land” to mean that only life that had been on dry land died in the *mabul*, but not the fish in the sea (and the water was not boiling according to him — Maharsha).

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Talmud Tips...continued from page twenty-eight

The Maharsha also points out that according to Rabbi Yochanan's view that the *mabul* was not in Israel, G-d could certainly have easily provided a "safe space" for land life within the Land of Israel, without the need for commanding Noach to build a large ark. G-d instructed Noach to exert himself for 120 years in building the ark only so that people should see the ark and be warned that a *mabul* was coming as punishment for their ways of transgressions (as Rashi in Ber. 6:20 explains). They were told to do *teshuvah* and cease their transgressions, and in this way they would be spared. And G-d in His mercy gave them a long time, 120 years, for them to choose life and repent.

• *Zevachim 13a-b*

### Golden Silence and Golden Speech

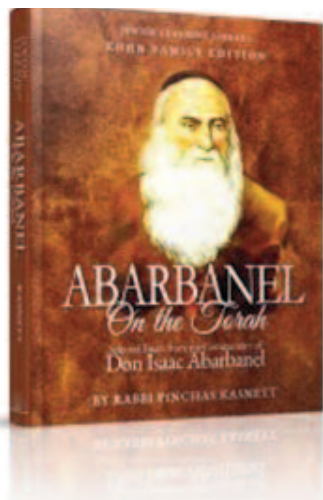
*"And likewise regarding Shlomo the verse states: "A time to be silent and a time to speak" — i.e., at times a person is silent and receives reward for his silence; at times a person speaks and receives reward for his speaking.*

In our *sugya* it is explained that an example of being silent and receiving reward for this silence is Aharon's silent acceptance that it was G-d's will that his sons Nadav and Avihu should die. On the other end of the spectrum, Rashi on Kohelet (3:4) — "A time to *speak* and a time to be silent" — cites three examples of rewarded speech: "*Az yashir*" (Shemot ch. 15) that was sung at the splitting of the sea, the song of the Prophetess Devorah (Sefer Shoftim ch. 5) after Israel's victory over the Canaanites, and the call of the Prophet Hoshea (14:3) for the Jewish People to do *teshuvah* and to "take words with you" — words of supplication and prayer.

Another time when it is certainly a time to speak is when learning Torah. Although the *mishna* in Avot teaches: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel would say, "All my life I have been raised among the Sages, and I have found nothing better for the *body* than silence." The Torah commentaries explain that the silence praised here refers to minimal speech about *physical* matters. Regarding learning Torah and mitzvah fulfillment, however, it is praiseworthy to *not* be silent, but to use the power of speech to the highest degree.

• *Zevachim 115b*

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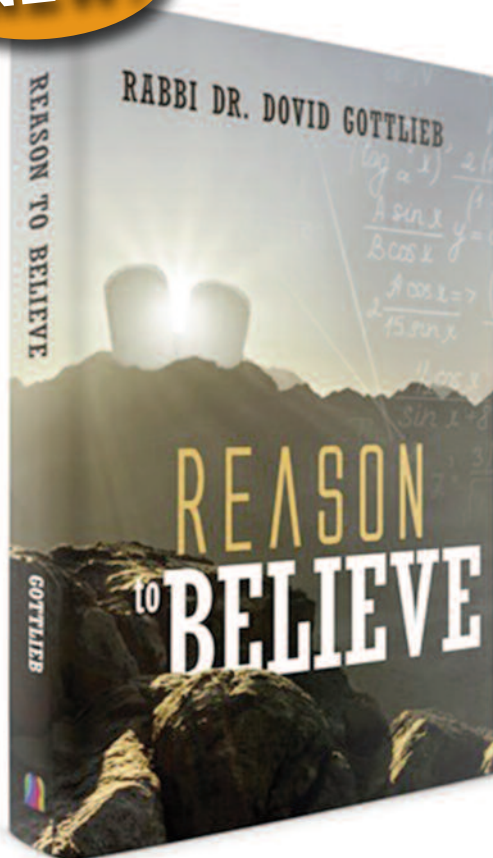
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