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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Words that Speak as Loudly as Actions

“And you will say to him” (26:3)

What was said at the birthday party: “What an absolutely *fabulous* present. I can’t begin to tell you how much I adore it. It’s *just* what I wanted. I can see it now on my mantelpiece. You have such divine taste. It must have been so-o-o expensive. You really shouldn’t have. I don’t know where to begin to thank you!”

What was *meant* at the birthday party:

“You call this a present? It’s the most hideous thing I’ve ever seen. I’ve had better gifts out of a cornflake box. I can see it now in my trashcan. Your taste is worse than an Afghan goatherd. This must have cost you all of fifty cents. You really didn’t. I don’t know where to begin to thank you!”

Because insincerity is a fact of life, it’s easy to err on the side of understatement when it comes to saying thank you. However, this week’s Torah portion teaches us that we should verbalize our gratitude

fully: There is a mitzvah to bring up the first fruits of the Land of Israel to Jerusalem and present them to the *kohen*.

The one who does this makes a moving declaration of gratitude to G-d for His eternal role as the Guide of Jewish history. Rashi says that a person makes this declaration “*so that he should not be an ingrate.*”

The question arises: Don’t actions speak louder than words? Isn’t the gift enough of a demonstration of gratitude to G-d?

The Torah teaches us here that a person should never shirk giving sincere thanks. Even though the currency of verbal gratitude may be debased by insincerity, a Jew has an obligation not just to show his gratitude with actions, but to verbalize and specify the nature of the good for which he is thanking his benefactor, whether it is man or G-d.

• Sources: based on *Da’at Torah*

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Menachot 9 - 15

***Kemitza*: A Complete “Handful” or a Smaller “Fistful”?**

Abayei asked Rava: “How is kemitza done?” Rava replied: “it is done in the same manner as when people take a handful of something (this implies taking with all of the fingers — Rashi).”

An essential part of the Temple service for a *mincha* offering (usually translated as meal-offering since its main component was fine flour) is for a *kohen* to perform an act called “*kemitza*” before bringing it to the altar in the Beit Hamikdash. Other components of the *mincha* offering are oil and *levona* (frankincense). There are four different types of *menachot* that are specified in the Torah.

Did you know that each of our fingers has a distinct name? Abayei asks a question on Rava’s definition from a *beraita* that speaks about the names of the five fingers of each hand, and the significance of each finger. Following is the *beraita* along with Rashi’s explanation for each finger: “This (pinky) is called *zeret* (it indicates the length for the *Choshen*); next is the *kemitza* finger (used for taking the *kemitza* portion from the *mincha* offering); next is the *amah* (the longest finger which served as a standard means of measure in the Beit Hamikdash); next is the *etzba* (which the *kohen* dips in blood when required); and finally is the *bohen* (thumb, as the thumbs play a role in the purification process of a *metzora*).”

Abayei’s question is that if the *kemitza* finger is used for taking the *kemitza* portion — and not the *zeret* finger at the end of the hand — this indicates that the *kemitza* portion of the *mincha* was not taken with all of the fingers as Rava had averred. (It would seem that according to Rava the *kemitza* offering should be called a *zeret* offering!)

The *gemara* presents an answer for Rava: “To even it out” — meaning that when Rava said that all the entire hand was used, i.e., all five fingers, this was in case the amount taken was protruding on the sides beyond the middle three fingers. In this case, Rava is saying that the *zeret* served to wipe away the excess from the *kemitza* finger on the bottom of the hand (and, likewise, the *bohen* wiped off the extra that protruded from the *etzba* finger on the top.) This explanation answers Abayei’s question, and, it would seem, Abayei and Rava both agree that a *kemitza* portion of the *mincha* was only within the three middle finger of the “fistful”, and not a “handful” within all five fingers of the hand.

This agreed-upon manner of doing *kemitza* also jibes with a statement in our *sugya*: “This act of *kemitza* is one of the most difficult acts of service in the Beit Hamikdash.” It wasn’t just merely taking a handful, but involved employing careful dexterity to ensure that the amount was within the middle three fingers in the fist and did not protrude at all — and all done with one hand!

This understanding of how to perform the *kemitza* for a *mincha* is also consistent with the commentary of Rashi in Chumash in Vayikra 2:2, explaining the phrase *melo kumtzo*: How does the *kohen* take out *exactly* a fistful and not more or less? He covers the palm of his hand with his three fingers and uses his little finger from below and his thumb from above to remove and level out any overflow from the *mincha*. This results in an exact measure of “*kemitza*”. (See *Torat Kohanim* 2:105)

However, the Rambam writes in his *Mishneh Torah* (*Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 13:13), and also states in his commentary on our *mishna* that the act of *kemitza* is done by taking a *complete* handful from the *min-*

Continued on page eleven

PARSHA Q&A?

1. When historically did the obligation to bring *bikkurim* begin?
2. *Bikkurim* are from which crops?
3. How does one designate *bikkurim*?
4. Who shakes the basket containing the *bikkurim*?
5. What does “*v’anita v’amarta*” mean?
6. Which Arami “tried to destroy my father?”
7. When during the year may *bikkurim* be brought? Until when are the special verses recited?
8. Someone declaring that he separated *terumah* and *ma’aser* says: “And I didn’t forget.” What didn’t he forget?
9. What were the Jewish People to do with the 12 stones on Mount Eval?
10. Six tribes stood on Mount Eval and six on Mount Gerizim. Who and what were in the middle?
11. Who “causes the blind to go astray”?
12. How does one “strike another secretly”?
13. Eleven curses were spoken on Mount Eval. What is the significance of this number?
14. Why are sheep called “*ashterot*”?
15. How is the manner of expressing the curses in *Parshat Bechukotai* more severe than in this week’s *parsha*?
16. What is meant by “the Jewish People will become a proverb”?
17. Why did all the curses expressed in 48:16-44 befall the Jewish People?
18. “In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were (last) evening’ and in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were (this) morning.’” Why?
19. To which tribe did Moshe give the Torah first?
20. How long does it take to understand the depth of one’s teacher’s wisdom?

PARSHA Q&A!

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

1. 26:1 - After the Land was conquered and divided.
2. 26:2 - The seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, olives, figs, dates, and pomegranates.
3. 26:2 - When he sees the first fruit ripen on a tree, he binds a piece of straw around it to mark it as *bikkurim*.
4. 26:4 - The *kohen* places his hands under the hands of the one bringing it, and they wave the basket together.
5. 26:5 - Speak loudly.
6. 26:5 - Lavan.
7. 26:11 - *Bikkurim* are brought from Shavuot until Chanukah. The verses are recited only until Succot.
8. 26:13 - To bless G-d.
9. 10. 27:2 - Build an altar.
10. 27:12 - *Kohanim*, *levi'im* and the Holy Ark.
11. 27:18 - Any person who intentionally gives bad advice.
12. 27:24 - By slandering him.
13. 27:24 - Each curse corresponds to one of the tribes, except for the tribe of Shimon. Since Moshe didn’t intend to bless the tribe of Shimon before his death, he did not want to curse them either.
14. 28:4 - Because they “enrich” (*m’ashirot*) their owners.
15. 28:23 - In *Bechukotai* the Torah speaks in the plural, whereas in this week’s Parsha the curses are mentioned in the singular.
16. 28:37 - Whenever someone wants to express the idea of extraordinary suffering, they will use the Jewish People as an example.
17. 28:47 - Because they did not serve G-d with gladness when everything was abundant.
18. 28:67 - Because the curse of each hour will be greater than that of the previous hour.
19. 29:3 - To the Tribe of Levi.
20. 29:8 - 40 years.

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LOVE of the LAND

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

The First-Fruits Parade

This week we read in the Torah about the mitzvah of bringing the *bikkurim* – first crops and fruits of the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised – to the Beit Hamikdash in Yerushalayim.

Our Talmudic Sages offer us this colorful description of the procession that took place in the bringing of *bikkurim*:

“The ox bearing the produce walked before them, its horns covered with gold and a crown of olive branches on its head. With the music of a flute



accompanying them they recited the psalm (122) in which King David exclaims, ‘I rejoiced when they said to me let us go to the House of G-d.’ As they neared Yerushalayim they sent a messenger to inform its residents of their arrival and decorated their *bikurim*. Important officials went out to welcome them and all the craftsmen in the city stood up in their honor and greeted them. Music continued to accompany them until they reached the Beit Hamikdash.”

PARSHA OVERVIEW

When *Bnei Yisrael* dwell in the Land of Israel, the first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the *kohen* in a ceremony expressing recognition that it is G-d who guides Jewish history throughout all ages. (This passage forms one of the central parts of the Haggadah that we read at the Passover Seder.) On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and seventh years of the seven-year *shemita* cycle, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner. With this *mitzvah*, Moshe concludes the commandments that G-d has told him to give to the Jewish People. Moshe exhorts them to walk in G-d’s ways because they are set aside as a treasured people to G-d. When *Bnei Yisrael* cross the Jordan River they are to

make a new commitment to the Torah. Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them in the world’s seventy primary languages, and they are to be covered with a thin layer of plaster. Half the tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim and half on Mount Eval, and the *levi'im* will stand in a valley between the two mountains. There the *levi'im* will recite 12 commandments and all the people will say “amen” to the blessings and the curses. Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon *Bnei Yisrael*. These blessings are both physical and spiritual. But if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

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:

אֲחֵינוּ בְּלִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

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

BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Do the Deceased Cease?

From: Jay

*Dear Rabbi,
I was recently confronted with the idea that one's departed parents continue to live in the form of a soul in Heaven, that they are aware of what their surviving children do for good or for bad, and that, "Jewishly speaking", the children's actions have an effect on their parent's status in the World to Come. Quite frankly, I find this to be strange and wonder if it's not an attempt to use people's love and respect for their parents to manipulate them to observe or to part with their money.*

Dear Jay,

Ancient, authoritative Jewish sources are replete with the idea that a person's soul, that which animates his body while alive, continues to exist in the spiritual plane after death. And yes, these souls are very much aware of the deeds of their progeny, primarily because they affect the soul's experience of reward and punishment, i.e., spiritual stagnation or progression.

The reason for this is because while a person's deeds when alive determine his place and trajectory in the World to Come, after death it's too late for him to do anything. Nevertheless, those he leaves behind, whose deeds are affected by his influence on them while he was in this world, are his continuation in this world. This, in turn, has an effect on his state in the Soul World, for good or for bad.

This is not social manipulation to promote an agenda of observance and alms, but rather a genuine, Divinely-inspired truth which is altruistically motivated to benefit a person and his departed loved ones in this world and the next.

The following Talmudic source (Kalla Rabbati, ch. 2) is one of many which illustrate this point and is the source for a mourner's leading prayer services and saying *kaddish* for his deceased parents:

Rabbi Akiva went to a certain place where he saw the departed soul of a person who was walking with great difficulty and carrying a load on his shoulders while screaming and groaning. He asked him, "What did you transgress?" He replied, "There wasn't a sin I didn't transgress and now there are watchmen over me and they don't let me rest." Rabbi Akiva asked him, "Did you leave behind a son?" He replied, "By your life! Don't delay me with your questions, for I am in dread of the angels that hit me with

rays of fire and they say to me, 'Go faster!'. He asked again, "Who did you leave behind?" He replied, "I left behind a pregnant wife".

Rabbi Akiva went to the town of the deceased. He asked the people there, "Where is the son of that person?" They replied, "May his memory be blotted out and his bones crushed!" He asked, "Why?" They replied, "He was a hoodlum who robbed people and distressed the populace. In addition, he had illicit relations with a betrothed young woman on Yom Kippur." Rabbi Akiva went to the home of the pregnant woman and waited until she gave birth to a son. He circumcised the boy, and when he grew older he placed him in the synagogue to pray for the congregation. Sometime later, Rabbi Akiva went to the place where he had originally seen the soul. The soul appeared to him at ease and told him, "May your mind be put at ease, for you have put my mind at ease".

In a true story of modern times, there was a very righteous woman who generously supported charities, particularly needy Torah scholars. One day, as she was traversing the streets while collecting funds for these charities, a particular man stopped her, asking what she was so preoccupied with. After she explained, he produced a checkbook, appointed witnesses to the transaction, and wrote her a huge sum, instructing her to cash the check at a specific bank branch.

When she arrived at the bank asking to cash a check of such a sum, she was immediately brought before the manager. When he saw the check, he fainted. After he came to, he demanded to know who gave her the check and when. After she explained, he fainted again. When he came to, he explained that for three consecutive nights, his father, who had been the bank manager before passing away, came to him in a dream imploring him to correct his ways and to give charity on his behalf. And if not, the family wealth would pass to another. But the banker refused to take this warning seriously.

The banker further noted that the night before she arrived at the bank, his father appeared, admonishing him, and commanding him to honor a check brought before him by a woman on the morrow. When he questioned the woman about the appearance of the man who gave her the check, her description matched that of the banker's father. And if it weren't for the witnesses, it is doubtful that anyone would have accepted her version. The story itself was made known by the illustrious Rav Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld, who was actually one of the witnesses!

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

On the Straight and Narrow

As a kid growing up in Los Angeles, I was familiar with the city's most famous streets: Hollywood Boulevard, Avenue of the Stars, Melrose Place, Rodeo Drive, Valley Circle, and the ubiquitous Third Street (where my Yeshiva was located). Nevertheless one thing always bothered me: Why was one street called a "boulevard" and another street called an "avenue", this street called a "way" and that street called a "street"? It gets even more complicated on the East Coast, where they also have turnpikes and highways. What determined the appellation applied to each street or road? I eventually realized that the whole naming conventions of streets was entirely arbitrary, and none of these words have any real meaning. However, when it comes to the Hebrew language we will see that the exact opposite is true.

Last week, we discussed at length the difference between *derech* and *orach*. But what about a *rechov*? The Mishna (*Shekalim* 1:1) teaches that on the fifteenth of Adar all of the money collected from the Jewish People was used for repairing *derachim* and *rechovot*. Rabbi Meshullam in his commentary to *Shekalim* explains that *derachim* are roads outside of the cities, which connect the cities together (intercity roads), while *rechovot* are streets within the cities themselves (intracity roads). In fact, in Modern Hebrew, the word *rechov* is the common word for a city street. In other contexts, *rechova shel ir* refers to a wide open space within a city (e.g., the town square); this usage appears thrice in the Mishna (*Bikkurim* 3:2, *Ta'anit* 2:1, and *Megillah* 3:1).

Another synonym for road is *netiv* (or *netivot* in plural). How does this word differ from *derech*? Rabbeinu Bachaya (to Ex. 35:35) explains that while *derech* refers to a wide road, the word *netiv* refers to a very narrow road. The Vilna Gaon writes that a *netiv* is a path used to get to a *derech* (possibly comparable to an exit/entrance ramp on a freeway). The way Malbim explains it, a *netiv* refers to a path that is shorter than a *derech/orach*, and is not open to public use.

The *Zohar* (*Miketz* 197b and *Vaera* 31a-b) says that while a *derech* is open to all people (like we saw last week), a *netiv* is open only to select individuals. Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) similarly explains that a *netiv* is a personal pathway used by an individual as a shortcut. He adduces this view from the

Bible (Judges 5:6), which implies that the opposite of one who walks in a *netiv* is one who walks in a circuitous or roundabout way. In Modern Hebrew, a *netiv* is a "lane" on any given road or parkway.

We still have another four words to discuss: *mesilah*, *maagal*, *mishol*, and *shvill*.

Malbim explains that the word *mesilah* specifically refers to a paved path, and usually denotes the sidewalk on a street's periphery, which is designated for pedestrians. The word *mastul* (a "planned path" or "itinerary") is related to this word. Rabbi Wertheimer adds that not only is a *mesilah* paved, but it is also generally straight. Stars are said to travel in a *mesilah* (Judges 5:20), because they appear to travel in straight, pre-planned path. When the Jews first asked the Edomites for permission to travel through their land, the Jews asked to travel in the Edomite's *derech* (Num. 20:17). Later, when the Edomite rejected their request, they changed their wording to ask if they could travel in the Edomite's *mesilah* (Num. 20:19), which, for some reason, would be more acceptable to them (perhaps because it would not affect traffic?) — only to be rejected again.

A *maagal* is not a straight road. As the Vilna Gaon explains, the word *maagal* denotes a circuitous road, and is derived from the word *egul* (circle). Rabbi Wertheimer clarifies that this circular road bears no utilitarian function in helping one get from one place to another. Rather, it is used for scenic routes (where the journey is the destination), for play (like a racetrack), or for military training.

When Balaam was *en route* to curse the Jewish People he rode his donkey through the *mishol* of a vineyard (Num. 22:24). The word *mishol* — which is a *hapax legomenon* because it only appears once in the Bible — means "footpath", as its root *SHIN-AYIN-LAMMED* means "step" or "bottom of the foot" (see I Kings 20:10 and Isa. 40:12). Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) writes that a *mishol* is a road that can only sustain the walk of pedestrians or mounted riders, but cannot support the weight of a caravan or wagon. Alternatively, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (1935-2017) explains that the word *mishol* is related to the word *shual* (fox) and refers particularly to the path created by foxes who enter a vineyard and partially destroy it (see Song of Songs 2:15 which speaks of foxes destroying vineyards).

Continued on page nine

NEW
SERIES!

ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Becoming a Star

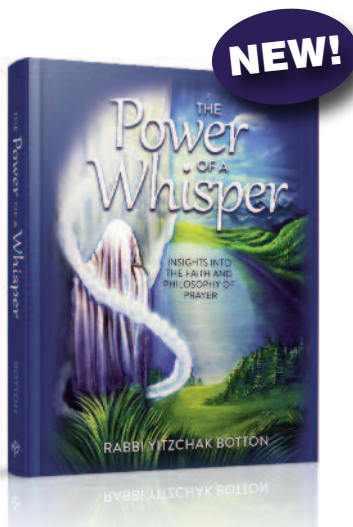
Today, English has become the universal language. And America, in many ways, influences the social climate around the globe. What is so special about America? If asked about America's greatest contribution to the world today, what would the answer be? If I were answering, I would say: America's greatest production is sports and entertainment. Playing games and make-believe is what America has to offer to the world.

What does one get when he reaches the top of the entertainment ladder? He becomes a star. And that is exactly what he gets: a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. This is the reward for all the hard labor that goes into becoming a movie star. When he dies, people will walk on his star for years to come.

The Torah teaches us how to become a real star, how to light up this dark world with the light of truth.

Emulating G-d

Knowing the essence of human nature, G-d commanded the Jewish nation to abandon the empty and vain pursuits of today's culture and instead grab onto a piece of eternity. The Torah commands us to walk in His ways (Parshat Ki Tavo, Devarim 28:9). The Midrash (Sifri Ekev 11:22) explains: Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is compassionate, so should you be compassionate. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is righteous, so should you be righteous. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is holy, so should you be holy. The Sefer Chinuch explains that we are commanded to ensure that all our deeds be good and upright. Legal justifications based on loopholes in civil law do not justify taking what is not rightfully ours. Instead, we must compel ourselves to deal with others with kindness and mercy, according to the instructions of the Torah. This is what G-d wants from us.



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Letter & Spirit

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

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Curse of Hypocrisy

Moshe instructs the people that when they come to the Land they are to arrange themselves on two opposing mountains, Har Gerizim and Har Eival, for a public proclamation ceremony. In the middle, between the two mountains, stood the elder *kohanim* and *levi'im*, who pronounced those acts which bring about curse and their counterpart acts which bring about blessing. The entire nation would answer “*amen*,” in an affirmation that G-d’s rule alone dispenses blessing and curse.

The subjects of the curses include: secret worship of idolatry, slighting one’s father or mother, moving the boundary of one’s neighbor (so as to increase one’s own property), misleading a blind man, infringing the rights of an orphan, stranger or widow, various prohibited incestuous relationships, ‘hitting’ one’s fellow in private [slander], acceptance of a bribe to convict someone, and finally, not upholding the words of the Torah, to carry them out. This list is followed by a repertoire of blessings that will overwhelm he who conscientiously carries out the *mitzvot*.

The content and order of the cursed behaviors are significant. Growth, prosperity and success will be withheld from one who outwardly is pious, but privately denies G-d; one who outwardly shows respect for his parents, but inwardly despises them; one who develops an honest reputation, but infringes on the rights of his neighbor; one who grovels before the high and mighty, but does not help the weak and helpless; the hypocrite who poses as respectable, but in private indulges in sexual licentiousness; one who does not openly hurt his neighbor, but kills his happiness and honor in conversations with others; one who enjoys a position of authority and trust but abuses his power by corruption in secret.

These are sins which by their nature are done with some degree of secrecy. Because they are not in full view, they cannot be effectively monitored by society or the justice system. For this reason they are placed under the rule of G-d’s dispensation of blessing and curse.

Notice that the list of sins comprises social sins (disrespect for parents, infringement of neighbor’s property rights, slander, bribery) interrupted by a list of sexual sins. The juxtaposition is meant to equate the severity of social sins and sexual sins, and to disabuse us of two opposite notions: (1) while social sins should be condemned as a menace to society, sexual sins are less serious as they do not affect the public welfare, and (2) while forbidden incestuous relationships weigh heavily on the Jewish conscience, social sins such as slander are less serious. The intermingled list refutes both of these notions, and establishes the equal severity of both types.

The final curse is unique in that it curses *inaction*. All the other sins that come under the curse are active violations — and, by contrast, the promise of blessing applies to one who does no more than refrain from violating prohibitions. The final pronouncement of the curse declares, *cursed is he who does not uphold the words of this Torah to carry them out*. This applies to one who is personally faithful, but does not do his part to ensure the Law is observed in the wider community. Similarly, blessing will inure to one who uses his persuasion and abilities to uphold the Torah. It is only in this instance that indifference brings curse. Blessing will be full only when everyone does his share to uphold the Torah.

• Sources: Commentary, Devarim 27:15-26

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BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Garage Doors

Q: My garage door rolls down along fitted railings. I don't know whether to put the mezuzah on the railing or rather on the brick walling so that it will be on the outer tefach (handbreadth) of the house?

In general, can you explain why a garage needs a mezuzah if nobody lives there?

A: Most authorities rule that a mezuzah must be affixed to storage rooms and garages, even with a *beracha*. Although nobody “lives” in them, they are fully obligated if the owner or renter uses them and enters them from time to time.

The general custom seems to follow the opinion that the mezuzah should be affixed on the outer *tefach* of the brick wall under the lintel. Consequently, one

would measure from the floor to the lintel to determine the top third.

Those who hold that, in general, *mezuzot* should be placed on fitted posts within wide doorways would rule that the mezuzah should be put on the railing. If one follows that opinion, he would measure from the floor up to the casement and place the mezuzah on the top third of the railing. Since it is under the lintel, it can be affixed facing out.

- Sources: *Mezuzos Beisecha* 286:14, citing *Teshuvos Rabbi Akiva Eiger* 66; *Agur B'ohalecha* 34:4:9, 22:3; *Aruch HaShulchan* 286:9; Cf. *Minchas Yitzchak* 10:96; *Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* 1:647 allows a *beracha* only if the garage is attached to the house

*Got a mezuzah question or story? Email rabbi@ohrsandton.com or submit on my website mymezuzahstory.com
Free “Mezuzah Maven” book for every question or story submitted (when published in the near future!)*

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

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) writes that *shvill* is related to the word *shafel* (“lowly”), and denotes a path that has a steep incline that goes downwards. The Malbim writes that *shvill* is related to the word *shevel* (Isa. 47:2) which denotes a leg — the body part which continuously hits the floor as one walks. The Malbim and others note that a *shvill* is narrower than a *netiv*. Rabbi Wertheimer explains that *shvill* denotes the shortest and narrowest sort of path — its width can sustain only one ankle at a time, so a person cannot even stand on this path with his feet together. Rabbi

Pappenheim offers the same explanations and supports this from a clever observation. The Hebrew word for ankle is *eikev*, a word which also means “because”. Because of this double-meaning of *eikev*, the Rabbis similarly adopted the word *shvill* — the road associated with ankles — to also mean “because”: *b'shvill*. Keep in mind: Whatever route you choose, make sure you are rooting for the right team.

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

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BY RABBI ARI WASSERMAN

Wearing a Kippa in Business School

QUESTION:

Is there a *heter* to not wear a *kippa* in business school?

Following graduation, the students at the premier business schools — such as Harvard and Wharton — typically take jobs at the leading financial and consulting companies, the large venture capital firms and even start their own ventures. Many eventually go on to run the global mega companies and take senior roles in government and politics. And a large part of attending business school, especially a prestigious one, is the networking opportunities it affords.

Creating a strong professional network starting at school is often a key to success down the road. Many students choose schools based on where they will have the strongest peer, faculty, and alumni networking connections and opportunities. And they are right to do so. Indeed, 65 to 85 percent of jobs are found through networking.

Therefore, a number of Orthodox students want to know if they can remove their *kippas* while in business school, due to their concern that it could disadvantage them in networking with peers.

HALACHIC BACKGROUND:

Early sources enumerate a number of reasons for men to wear a head covering. One major reason is that it expresses our subservience to the Almighty. Another is that it imbues us with fear of Heaven.

According to some halachic authorities, going bareheaded violates the Torah's prohibition of "do not follow the traditions of the non-Jews." This prohibition against following non-Jewish practices is often referred to as *chukat hagoyim*.

The *Rishonim* (early halachic authorities who lived between the 11th and 15th centuries) and *Achronim* (later halachic authorities who lived after the *Shulchan Aruch* was written, from the 16th century to the present) debate whether head-covering for men has always been an absolute obligation, or simply a praiseworthy and pious practice (*midat chassidut*).

Today we follow the unanimous view of the *Achronim* that wearing a head-covering at all times is

definitely obligatory. However, this head-covering need not necessarily be a symbol of Jewish identity such as a *kippa*. In fact, it can be a hat, cap, turban or the like.

What about covering one's head on the job? For many Jews in the workforce this can be a crucial issue. Under what circumstances would one be obligated to give up or lose a job for the sake of wearing a *kippa*? Some *poskim* forbid going bareheaded even for *parnasa* (livelihood), while others rule more leniently, permitting it under certain conditions.

Rav Moshe Feinstein discusses the question of whether one may go without a *kippa* when necessary for *parnasa*, in a number of responsa. In essence, Rav Moshe rules that, generally, going bareheaded is a violation of the Torah's commandment against adopting non-Jewish practices. He writes, however, that this ruling applies only in circumstances where the basis for such a practice is related to the non-Jews' religious beliefs. In the United States, a non-Jew generally goes bareheaded not as a matter of religious belief, but simply because of comfort, convenience and contemporary norms.

Therefore, Rav Moshe rules that one may rely on the lenient opinions which permit going bareheaded when there is a question of substantial loss. Note that he states *substantial* loss — not *minor* loss. This would mean that a job which is one's primary source of income is one thing, but an opportunity to pick up a little extra on the side is quite another. If his business will not be seriously affected by a *kippa*, he would not have a *heter* to go bareheaded.

In addition, before deciding to remove the *kippa*, some soul-searching is in order. A hunch that it might hurt one's job prospects is not sufficient grounds to remove the *kippa*. There must be much more solid evidence. If one knows for a fact he will not be hired — as was certainly true for *kippa*-wearing business school graduates in the 1950s — then he can rely on the more lenient rulings. But in today's day-and-age, when religious Jews are a prominent presence in the business world, and the general norms for what's considered acceptable business attire are much more lax, it is hard to make the argument that leniencies apply.

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Business Ethics...continued from page ten

RESPONSE:

I see no *heter* for students in the business school to not wear a *kippa* for a number of reasons:

They are not being interviewed for jobs at this point; they are merely in business school, a two-year educational program.

The connection to suffering a financial loss down the road is too tenuous.

They are basing taking off their *kippas* on a “hunch” that they might be financially disadvantaged.

Numerous *kippa*-wearing students have graduated from top business schools and wearing a *kippa* was not a detriment to them in any way.

POSTSCRIPT

An interesting, true story sheds further light:

Jeff, a second year student at Harvard Business School, told me that in his first year he did not wear a

kippa, thinking the *kippa* would make him stick out and hurt his ability to network and integrate with his classmates.

However, not wearing the *kippa* actually caused him significant problems, the opposite of what he expected. He did not participate in any of the after-class social events at bars, non-kosher restaurants, comedy clubs and the like. His peers viewed him as arrogant and aloof, not understanding that his religious restrictions and beliefs were the reasons he did not join them.

For his second year, Jeff put his *kippa* back on, and things improved immediately and dramatically with his peers. They now understood the reason why he did not participate in certain social events with them, and they accepted him for who he was.

Dedicated *l'Iluy nishmas*
Yehudah ben Shmuel HaKohen Breslauer z"l

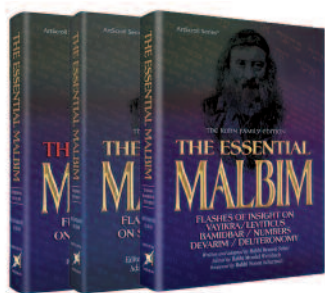
Talmud Tips...continued from page three

cha offering, and not just a smaller fistful with the three middle fingers: “How is a handful taken from those meal-offerings from which it is taken? As any person would take a handful, meaning that he extends his fingers over the palm of his hand and closes them.”

In addition, the Rambam does *not* mention the teaching that “*kemitza* is one of the difficult acts of service in the Beit Hamikdash.” So we see that the ruling of the Rambam, defining *kemitza* as a complete handful, differs from the opinions of both Abayei and Rava in our *gemara* as explained by Rashi here, and also differs from Rashi’s explanation in his commentary on the Torah (Vayikra 2:2).

The various Torah commentaries offer explanations for the manner in which the Rambam learned our *sugya*, a manner which led him to arrive at his seemingly surprising ruling on the definition of *kemitza*. One such explanation is based on Rav Papa stating *later* in the *gemara* that *kemitza* is done by scooping with the entire hand, and not just with three fingers. This ruling by this later Sage shows that he knew, without a doubt, that this definition is the correct one according to halacha. The Rambam saw from Rav Papa’s ruling that the halacha is not like the *beraita*, and that *kemitza* as a handful was not one of the most difficult sacrificial acts. Therefore, the Rambam ruled as he did, in accordance with the teaching of Rav Papa. (*Kesef Mishneh*)

• *Menachot 11a*



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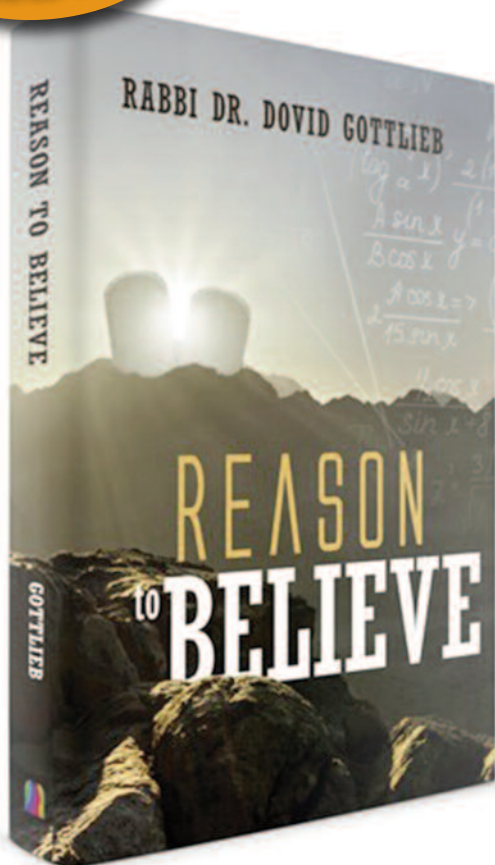
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