

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VA'ETCHANAN • 15 AV 5781 JULY 24, 2021 • VOL 28 NO. 33

SHABBAT PARSHAT EKEV • 22 AV 5781 • JULY 31, 2021

SHABBAT PARSHAT RE'EH • 29 AV 5781 • AUGUST 7, 2021

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHOFTIM • 6 ELUL 5781 • AUGUST 14, 2021

PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Va'etchanan

Richard Branson and the Ultimate Joy-Ride

"Safeguard the day of Shabbat to sanctify it..." (5:12)

Billionaire Sir Richard Branson has successfully reached the edge of space on board his Virgin Galactic rocket plane. The UK entrepreneur flew high above New Mexico in the US in the vehicle that his company has been developing for 17 years. The trip was, he said, the "experience of a lifetime." He returned safely to Earth just over an hour after leaving the ground. "I have dreamed of this moment since I was a kid, but, honestly, nothing can prepare you for the view of Earth from space," he said in a press conference following the flight. "The whole thing was just magical."

I think Branson's expensive joy-ride has a deeper motivation though.

Judaism understands that all the pleasures, all the experiences of this world, are given to us for one reason only: that we might feel, that we might sense to the smallest degree... the taste of life itself.

But what is this "taste of life"? And what is "life itself" if not those experiences that it contains?

Imagine that you are standing in front of a firing squad, staring down the long black tunnel of the barrel of a rifle. "Squad! Take aim! And..." Just at that second, a messenger comes running into the square. "Stop the execution! The prisoner is free to go!"

Imagine how you would feel at that moment!

When our life hangs in the balance, when we are saved from a life-threatening experience, that euphoria is the perception of life itself, of existing. That moment of being rescued from death brings us face to face with our own existence. It is the sense of life itself.

There is, however, another less drastic and infinitely more spiritually uplifting way to experience the taste of life.

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 31a, Avodah Zarah 9a) teaches us that the world as we know it will last for six thousand years. In the seventh millennium, about 220 years from now, the world will undergo a fundamental change. At that time, all activity will cease. That world is known as *Olam Haba*, literally, “the World to Come.” If we were to try to imagine that future world, it would be like one continuous Shabbat. Shabbat is really a hint of the future world, the faintest whisper of that reality. On Shabbat we are bidden to refrain from very specifically defined "creative" work, and, by doing this, we are able to make contact with something that is beyond this world.

The essence of the future world is that it is an existence devoid of activity. When all activity ceases, we will be able to perceive “being” itself. In the world in which we live now, we cannot distinguish between life experiences and life itself. We understand reality as being identical with our experiences. This is not true. The activity of the world in which we live now masks the perception of life itself, but when all activity ceases – then we will experience the taste of life itself. And when we experience that, it will be the sweetest thing that can be. That is what is known as the World to Come – existence without activity.

Some 600 individuals have already paid deposits for tickets that will cost them up to \$250,000. These are all people who want to reach a height where they can see the sky turn black and marvel at the Earth's horizon as it curves away into the distance. Such a flight should also afford them about five minutes of weightlessness, during which they will be allowed to float around inside Unity's cabin.

Shabbat gives you 24 hours of “weightlessness” and can cost considerably less than a quarter of a million dollars.

Ohrnet Magazine is a weekly Torah magazine published by Ohr Somayach Institutions,
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel · Tel +972-2-581-0315 · Email. info@ohr.edu

Contributing authors, editors and production team: Rabbi Nota Schiller – Rosh HaYeshiva,
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz - Rav of Kehillos Ohr Somayach, Avi Kaufman, Rabbi Reuven Chaim
Klein, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Yaakov Meyers, Mrs. Rosalie Moriah, Rabbi Moshe
Newman, Rabbi Shlomo Simon, Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair, Rabbi Yehuda Spitz,
Mrs. Helena Stern.

©1992-2021 Ohr Somayach Institutions – All rights reserved – This publication contains words
of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Editor’s disclaimer – Ohrnet Magazine is not intended
to be a source for halachic rulings. In any real and specific case one should consult a qualified
halachic authority for ruling.

Q & A – Va'etchanan

Questions

1. "And I prayed to Hashem at that time." Why "at that time"?
2. What characteristic trait is represented by Hashem's "strong hand"?
3. What is *ha'levanon*?
4. What did Hashem 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 Hashem previously commanded us to keep Shabbat?
12. Where did the Jewish People first receive the command to honor parents?
13. What is meant by "Hashem, our G-d, Hashem is One"?
14. What are two meanings of loving Hashem "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 Hashem's name?
18. What does it mean that the Jews are the "smallest nation"?
19. When someone serves Hashem with love, how many generations receive reward?
20. Why are evil-doers rewarded in this world?

Answers

1. 3:23 - Defeating Sichon and Og, whose lands were part of *Eretz Canaan*, Moshe thought perhaps Hashem 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 that you will serve others who serve idols.
10. 4:41 - It is 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 - Hashem, 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 Hashem 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 Hashem 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.

Q & A – Ekev

Questions

1. What must the Jewish People do to ensure that Hashem 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 Mount Sinai altogether?
7. On what day did Moshe come down from Mount 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 Hashem?
12. Why do the *levi'im* have no portion in the Land?
13. All aspects of man's life are in Hashem'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 Hashem 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 Hashem"?

Answers

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.

Q & A – Re'eh

Questions

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 Hashem?
3. Why does the Torah use idolatry as an example when describing one who strays from the path that Hashem 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 Hashem and then says that the laws of the Torah have been revised, what is done to this person?
13. The Torah says, "To Him (Hashem) 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 Hashem's "special protection"?

Answers

1. 11:26 - Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eval, respectively.
2. 11:27 - On condition that they listen to Hashem'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 Hashem'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.

Q & A – Shoftim

Questions

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 Hashem 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 established?
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?

Answers

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 prophesies 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) Changing 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 found guilty, executed.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

The Ultimate Teacher

Words derived from the Hebrew root LAMMED-MEM-DALET (“learn,” “teach”) appear eighty-six times in the Bible. But if you look at just the Pentateuch, such words appear only in the Book of Deuteronomy and nowhere else. Within the Book of Deuteronomy, most of these words appear in Va’etchanan. In the essay before you we explore three different Hebrew terms associated with the concept of “learning/teaching”: *limmud*, *hora’ah*, and *alef*. We will investigate the core roots of these words and try to zero in on their exact meanings and how they differ from one another.

According to Ibn Janach and Radak, the term *hora’ah* (“teaching”) derives from the trilateral root YOD-REISH-HEY. This root yields words with three meanings: “throwing,” as in *yarah ba’yam* (Ex. 15:4); “teaching,” as in *yoreh deah* (Isa. 28:9); and “rain,” as in *yoreh/moreh* (Deut. 11:14, Yoel 2:23). Similarly, Menachem Ibn Saruk traces these three words to the monoliteral root REISH, adding a fourth meaning “spittle/bodily excretion,” as in *rir/rar* (Lev. 15:3, I Shmuel 21:14, Iyov 6:6).

None of these great grammarians intimate a thematic connection between the four different semantic inflections of the root. However, I propose that the common theme is the concept of unidirectional movement (similar to a *ray* in English). In the case of “throwing,” one who throws an object chucks that item *away* from oneself, as opposed to *toward* oneself. In the case of “rain” and “spittle,” these liquids always flow in one particular direction – *downwards*, but never *upwards*. Finally, in terms of “teaching,” *yoreh/hora’ah* implies imparting information in one particular direction – namely, from teacher to student, and not vice versa. This is reflected in the popular teaching method of a lecture format, whereby the teacher essentially “throws” information at the student and hopes he/she catches it.

In Mishnaic Hebrew, the term *hora’ah* refers specifically to the ability/responsibility to render halachic decisions (*Avot* 4:7, 6:6, *Horayot* 1:1, 1:4, *Parah* 7:9). In fact, Tractate *Horayot* deals with the consequences of mistaken halachic rulings/teachings decided by the Sanhedrin and other Jewish courts. This meaning of *hora’ah* also reflects the unidirectional trickling down of jurisprudence, which emanates from a halachic authority and flows down to those less knowledgeable. In Modern Hebrew, the term *hora’ah* retains the more neutral meaning of “teaching/instructing,” without the specific connotation of referring to halachic or legal matters.

Radak adds that the word *Torah* (as well as its Aramaic counterpart *Orayta*) also derives from the trilateral root YOD-REISH-HEY. According to this, *Torah* might be best translated as “a teaching” or “instruction.” Alternatively, Radak also considers Ibn Janach’s view that the word *Torah* derives from the root TAV-VAV-REISH, which primarily refers to “investigation/inquiry” or “scouting/spying”. (This etymology would not account for *Torah*’s Aramaic cognate). A corollary of this meaning are the concepts of “system” and “order,” which are the products of a properly executed investigation. In this way, the word *tor* (“turn,” like “your *turn* in line”) denotes a specific spot within a more clearly-defined arrangement. In this sense, the word *Torah* refers to the Scriptural law as laid out in a systematic and well-defined code.

How does *l’horot* in the sense of “teaching” differ from *l’lamed* in the sense of “teaching”?

Rabbi Meir Leibush Weiser (1809-1879), better known as the Malbim, offers an explanation in the name of Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Luzzatto (1800-1865), known as Shadal. He explains that the sort of “learning/teaching” implied by the term *limmud* entails repeating a lesson over and over until it is engraved in the student’s heart and he/she knows it

well. On the other hand, the term *hora'ah* refers to teaching something one time, expecting that the pupil will learn the lesson and retain that datum of knowledge.

The wicked Queen Athaliah went on a murderous rampage to wipe out the descendants of King David, but little did she know that her own grandson, the future King Joash, was secretly saved from his homicidal grandmother. As a young child, Joash was hidden away in the Holy Temple by his uncle Jehoiada the Kohen Gadol, and then ascended the throne after Athaliah was disposed of. The Bible reports that Joash did what was righteous in G-d's eyes all the years that his teacher and savior Jehoiada was alive, "in accordance with what Jehoiada taught (*horahu*) him" (II Kings 12:3). But the moment Jehoiada died, Joash no longer maintained those teachings, and even ended up deifying himself.

As Shadal explains it, embedded in the Bible's wording of this turn of events is a criticism against Jehoiada's pedagogical methodology. Jehoiada chose to use the modality of *hora'ah* instead of *limmud*. When he was raising and teaching the young king, he never bothered to *repeat* his essential messages of how to properly act as a righteous Jew in the service of G-d. Because of this, the moment that Jehoiada was out of the picture, Joash was left to his own devices and did not live up to what was expected of him. If Jehoiada would have reinforced the important lessons he wished to impart to the boy-king by teaching those ideas again and again, they would have become second nature to Joash – and even when his teacher would later die, he would never stray from those lessons. But alas, Jehoiada did not use the right form of didactics, and when he was gone, his pupil Joash no longer followed in his righteous ways.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 26:5, Deut. 4:1) offers a similar message. He contends that the root of the word *Torah* is not YOD-REISH-HEY or TAV-VAV-REISH, but is rather HEY-REISH-HEY. The latter root begets the verb "to impregnate," as if to imply that the Torah represents the seeds of goodness and morality. When a person is instilled with Torah values, he/she can grow into a true paragon of virtue. However, in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses specifically uses cognates of the word *limmud* to describe his role in instructing the Jewish People. This phraseology, as opposed to *Torah*,

implies that Moses did not suffice with just "planting the seeds," but sought to see to the fruition of those efforts. Both Shadal and Rabbi Hirsch understand that *hora'ah* is just one step in the learning process, while *limmud* implies bringing that process to its logical conclusion.

Malbim explains that the common thread between *hora'ah* and *limmud* (and ostensibly *alef*, see below) is the imparting of new knowledge. He contrasts this with the role of the *madrich* ("guide", "counselor," or "coach") who offers *hadrachah* ("counsel") that guides a student in the practical application of what he or she already knows. This term is related to the Hebrew word *derech* ("path"), as the *madrich* sets up a "path" for those in his counsel to follow. He is not necessarily providing them with new information per se. (The agricultural tool *malmad habakar* in Judges 3:31 refers to an "ox-goad," used in "training" cow-beasts to plow fields, and the early grammarians note that it too is derived from the same root as *limmud*.)

The term *alef* (Iyov 33:33, 35:11, Prov. 22:25) also refers to "teaching." However, the Malbim clarifies that this particular expression refers to teaching inadvertently. In other words, when something or somebody serves as a prototype or archetype from which one can derive important lessons, then that thing or person can be said to be "teaching" that lesson, even if this teaching is not done actively or even purposely. For example, if Bob says his thing, and almost incidentally George was listening and learned a lesson from what Bob said, then we can say that Bob "taught" George a lesson. In Rabbinic Hebrew, the derivation of such lessons is called a *yalfuta* (verb: *yalif*), and usually refers to inducing an idea from a Scriptural verse or hermeneutic homily. This term is also the basis for the Modern Hebrew word *ulpan*, which is a center for the "study" of the Hebrew language.

Menachem Ibn Saruk (920-970) writes in *Machberet Menachem* that the core root of *alef* is ALEPH-LAMMED-PEH, but that sometimes the ALEPH is dropped, and one could also say that the root is also LAMMED-PEH. Menachem and Radak thus suggest that the word *talpiyot* – which appears only once in the Bible (Song of Songs 4:4) – is also related to this root, even though the letter ALEPH is missing. That complete verse reads: "Your neck is like the Tower of David, built as a *talpiyot*." The meaning of the word

talpiyot in this context is obscure, although the Rabbis interpreted it as a portmanteau of the words *tel* (“mound”) and *piyot* (“mouths”), explaining the term as an allusion to the Holy Temple, “the mount to which all mouths direct their prayers” (*Berachot* 30a).

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) traces the root of *alef* to the biliteral root LAMMED-PEH, which refers to a “strong hold from which it is difficult to break free.” In that sense, he explains that a certain type of skin boil known as *yalefet* (Lev. 21:20) is called so because it leaves a scar attached to one’s skin that can never be removed, and an *aluf* (“chieftain”) is a strongman who rules his dominion from a position of strength. The word *elef* means “one thousand” because that is the number of constituents needed before a warlord can claim the title of *aluf*. Malbim explains that an *aluf* is called so because a powerful leader is required to *teach* his consistent how they should act. (In Modern Hebrew, *aluf* means “champion” of a sporting competition, and is also used for the rank of Major-General in the Israeli army.)

Verbs derived from the root LAMMED-PEH-TAV refer to “grabbing” or “grasping” something with a strong hold (see Judges 16:29, Ruth 3:8), and the word *lefet* (“turnip”) in Rabbinic Hebrew (*Kilayim* 1:3, 1:9, 3:1, *Maasrot* 5:2, 5:8, *Chullin* 7:4, *Keilim* 9:4, *Uktzin* 1:4) refers to that root vegetable being firmly entrenched in the ground.

Continuing this theme, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the form of “learning” denoted by the word *alef* can be characterized by the learner’s strong grasp of the materials/lesson that comes about through repeated instruction. Interestingly, like Menachem and Radak, Rabbi Pappenheim also connects the word *talpiyot* to *alef*. However, unlike them, he offers an explanation of this connection: *talpiyot* refers to a tower built for the purposes of “instructing” young soldiers in the art of war, a sort of shooting-range where they can hone their craft and “learn” how to use their weapons.

The word *alef* also appears in the Bible when referring to “oxen” (see Deut. 7:12, 28:4, 28:12, 28:51, Ps. 8:8, 50:10, Prov. 14:4, and Isa. 30:24). Malbim explains that *alef* refers to a *trained* ox, which has already “learned” how to work the land. The Book of Proverbs states: “Through a lack of oxen (*alafim*), the trough becomes [an empty] pit” (Prov. 14:4). The Vilna Gaon explicates the word *alafim* as referring to “students,” drawing on *alef*’s meaning of “teaching/learning.” Based on this, he understands this verse as a warning to a teacher: without students, the teacher will devolve into an empty vessel. When a teacher or educator has students to whom he or she is responsible, then the teachers are more likely to fill themselves with knowledge and become conduits for relaying that information. About this, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said: “I learned much Torah from my masters, I learned even more from my colleagues, and from my students – I learned the most.” (*Taanit* 7a, *Makkot* 10a)

This issue of the Ohrnet is sponsored by the
Harry H. Beren Foundation

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

BLESSINGS OVER TEFILLIN: FOREVER FALLING IN LOVE

(PART 4)

"I am not emotional about being the oldest man in the world, but it does mean something to me that I have donned tefillin for longer than anyone else."

Yisrael Kristal (1903-2017) was officially recognized as the oldest living Holocaust survivor in 2014. In January 2016 he was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world's oldest man.

While wrapping the *tefillin* strap around the hand, the following two verses from Hoshea (2:21-22) are recited: "I will betroth you to Me forever. And I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, justice, kindness and mercy. I will betroth you to Me with loyalty and you shall know Hashem."

Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508) was one of the greatest scholars and philosophers of his generation. He was also a brilliant statesman who worked for the Portuguese crown. However, with the death of the king, he lost his royal protection and was forced to flee. After barely escaping with his life, he settled in Spain, where his wisdom and expertise in all matters drew him to the attention of the Spanish monarchy. The rabbi became an essential member of the inner royal court, even during the Inquisition, throughout which he tried every avenue available to save the distinguished and venerable Jewish community. He finally left Spain, together with the remnants of Spanish Jewry, in the great expulsion of 1492.

Among his many works, he wrote an indispensable commentary on the Torah and the Prophets. In his commentary on Hoshea, he explains that the traits mentioned in the verses above are the qualities that encapsulate the characteristics of the Jewish People – to follow the Laws of the Torah with justice and righteousness, and to go even further

than the letter of the law by pursuing kindness and mercy as well. And, by doing so, we shall "know Hashem." This is a truly inspiring and uplifting concept with which to begin our day.

However, the wording of the verses seems to be a little unusual. According to Jewish law, there are two distinct steps to marriage. The first is "betrothal," (*kiddushin* or *erusin* in Hebrew, when the bride is already technically married). This step shares some superficial similarities to the engagement period of today, the difference being that it carries with it significant legal obligations and responsibilities. Afterwards there is the marriage stage also known as *chupah* or *nesu'im*. Betrothal, by definition, is supposed to be transitory. It is the bridge that takes a couple from being without any formal relationship to sharing the ultimate relationship of being husband and wife. The main purpose of the betrothal period of time, which was traditionally twelve months in Talmudic times but generally much shorter nowadays, is to ensure time for the couple to prepare to marry and establish a beautiful Jewish home together. No couple wants to remain in a permanent state of betrothal. Yet, G-d declares, "I will betroth you to Me forever."

Years ago, I heard the most beautiful explanation from one of my rabbis for why G-d chose to use the phrase "I will *betroth* you to Me forever" and

not “You will be *married* to Me forever.” Understandably, remaining in an indefinite state of betrothal is the last thing that any couple wants. Nevertheless, there is one enviable element found in betrothal that marriage often does not possess: constant and recognizable growth. Once a couple settles into the rhythm of married life, their growth together is liable to be less noticeable. Hopefully, growth will always be a part of their relationship, but, over the years the sense of freshness and excitement becomes less evident, and their growth together takes on a less obviously identifiable dimension to it. However, from betrothal until marriage, their growth together is palpable. They learn new things about each other every day, and their excitement and their anticipation draws them to new levels of connection. As the day of their marriage approaches, their emotions reach heights that they never before knew existed. It is this sense of intensity that G-d is conveying to us.

As we put on our *tefillin* in the morning, we declare, “I will betroth you to Me forever.” Each day is a brand new occasion to connect to G-d with verve and passion, and to experience a renewed sense of growth. Just as a betrothed couple does so with every single additional day. Sustained growth in anything is not the easiest of things to achieve – especially when it is in the realm of spirituality. But, as we wind the *tefillin* straps around our hands, we should feel a frisson of excitement as we remind ourselves of the infinite potential in our relationship with G-d.

In closing, I would like to share with you a truly inspiring and poignant story that emphasizes the magnitude of the mitzvah of *tefillin*. Rav Nossou Tzvi Finkel, *zatzal*, was the beloved and revered head of the renowned Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, whose unaffected love and concern for every single Jew was legendary. He was diagnosed with Parkinson’s at the young age of forty, and, despite its debilitating progress, the Yeshiva flourished under his dynamic and caring leadership to become the largest yeshiva in Israel. Towards the end of his life, someone introduced Rav Finkel to Howard Schultz, the (then) owner of Starbucks. During one of their meetings, Howard Schultz signed a blank check and handed it to Rav Finkel to be used at his discretion. At the time, the *monthly* budget for the Mir Yeshiva was *two million dollars*. Despite being stricken with a degenerative disease that was becoming progressively worse, Rav Finkel was responsible for raising that huge amount of money every single month. He could have covered that month’s budget with the blank check, and, presumably, Howard Schultz would not have batted an eyelid. Instead, Rav Finkel filled out the check for \$1,200 and handed it back to Howard Schultz. And then Rav Finkel told him, “Take this check to the store across the street and tell them I sent you to buy a pair of *tefillin*. And then put them on every day.”

subscribe@ohr.edu

*to receive Ohrnet directly to your mail
box each week*

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Va'etchanan: Succah 6-12

Seven Special Fruits of Israel

“A Land of olive oil...” (Devarim 8:8) – This teaches that the size of an olive is the standard measure for all halachic matters.”

In the Torah's description of Eretz Yisrael being a “good Land,” the verse states, “A Land of wheat and barley, vines and figs and pomegranates, a Land of olive oil and honey (from date or fig trees).” The *gemara* discusses the significance of these seven species with regards to their sizes and the halachic implications of these sizes. At first, the *gemara* retracts the assertion that *all* of the halachic measures are based on the size of an olive (*k'zayit*), instead saying that only the *majority* of halachic sizes are based on the olive, but not all.

Eventually the *gemara* concludes that we do not actually know the various halachic measures from this verse, but rather they are what is known as “*halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai*” – halacha that was taught orally to Moshe Rabbeinu at Mount Sinai, but not learned from any Torah verse. The verse, originally thought to be the Torah source, is in reality an *asmachta* – a support and hint to the halacha, without the verse being the actual Torah source.

What is special about these seven species that delegates their status as the fruits with which the Land of Israel is blessed and praised for producing? In fact, their special nature is reflected in the fact that the Torah mitzvah of *Bikkurim* (first fruits) applies specifically to them.

The Torah commentaries, such as Abarbanel, say that these fruits uniquely provide all necessary nutrition for sustenance. In addition, Eretz Yisrael is the only place these diverse species grow naturally in close proximity. In a kabbalistic sense, each of these fruits corresponds to one of the seven Divine attributes (known as the *sefirot*). For example, wheat corresponds to Divine Kindness, and grapes to harmony. The human soul possesses all seven of these *sefirot*, and therefore these seven fruits have the potential to be “soul food” last line: to nourish us and help us align ourselves with the way of Hashem in every aspect of our lives.

- Succah 6a

TALMUD TIPS

Ekev: Succah 13-19

Pitchforks and Prayers

Rabbi Elazar taught: “Why are the prayers of the righteous compared to a pitchfork? To teach us that just as a pitchfork turns over the grain on the threshing floor from place to place, so too do the prayers of the righteous turn the governing attribute of Hashem from Divine justice to Divine mercy.”

Rabbi Elazar derives this idea from the verse in which we see Yitzchak Avinu pray to Hashem for a child: “And Yitzchak prayed to the Hashem... because she (Rivka) was barren, and Hashem accepted his prayer, and Rivka his wife conceived.” The word for “prayer” in this verse has the same root as the Hebrew word for “pitchfork,” which begs explanation for their comparison – a comparison that Rabbi Elazar provides with his insight into Hashem’s Divine attributes.

Although farmers are certainly familiar with the importance of a pitchfork in processing their produce in an agrarian society, many city folk may unfortunately think of something quite different and negative regarding pitchforks. But the holy Jewish People know that this item serves as an image for a Divine analogy – the power of prayer for Yitzchak in his time, and for us in ours.

Although any prayer should be viewed as a call to Hashem for mercy, perhaps one of the daily prayer blessings in particular expresses the understanding of prayer being a tool for receiving Divine mercy: *Shma Koleinu* – “Hear our Prayers.” “Hear our voice, Hashem our G-d, spare us and be *merciful* to us. And accept – with *mercy* and favor – our prayer, because are G-d Who hears prayers and supplications. Our King, do not turn us away empty-handed from before Yourself, for You hear the prayer of Your people Yisrael with *mercy*. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who hears prayer.”

• *Succah 14a*

TALMUD TIPS

Re’eh: Succah 20-26

Learning How to Learn Torah

Mishna: “A person on the way to do a mitzvah is exempt from the obligation to dwell in a succah on Succot.”

Rashi offers three of what the *mishna* refers to as a traveling *shaliach mitzvah* (person on his way to do a mitzvah: a person travelling to learn Torah, or travelling to his Rabbi to greet him during the Festival (often as a sign of honor and to receive a blessing), or a person going to redeem captives. The *gemara* explains that the basis for exemption from succah-dwelling in these cases is the rule of *ha’osek b’mizvah*,

patur min hamitzvah – a person who is involved in the fulfillment of one mitzvah is exempt from the need to fulfill another mitzvah during that time. According to some Rishonim, he is not only exempt for another mitzvah, but he is even prohibited from stopping his current mitzvah involvement to do a different mitzvah. Abandoning the first mitzvah in the middle of fulfilling it would be a show of disgrace to Hashem and his mitzvahs, and therefore a transgression instead of a mitzvah.

The commentaries address Rashi's first example, in particular, asking why a person going to learn Torah should be exempt from the mitzvah of succah. The mitzvah to learn Torah, although being a mitzvah like every other mitzvah, also is essentially different in its nature. One should learn Torah with the intent to fulfill the Torah teachings that one learns. Elsewhere in *Shas* we are taught that a person who is learning Torah must stop to do any mitzvah if no one else can so it. If a person must stop learning Torah to do a mitzvah, how much more so should he need to pause his travel to go somewhere else to learn Torah, but is not actually engaged in Torah study at the moment! This question is addressed by many great Torah commentaries, with many fascinating answers. Here I will present one answer, the fruit of the teachings of Rabbi Meir Simcha Hakohen from Dvinsk (also known as the *Ohr Somayach* – the name he gave to his writings relating to the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* – and the Yeshiva's namesake). The following answer is found in his *sefer* called *Meshech Chochmah* on the Torah.

He suggests that the basic mitzvah of Talmud Torah must be paused when faced with another mitzvah, since Hashem commanded the study of Torah in order to know how to properly fulfill the mitzvahs. As the Talmud Yerushalmi teaches, even Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai would interrupt his Torah study to fulfill the mitzvahs of Succot “since if one learns Torah but does not accept upon himself to fulfill the mitzvahs, it would have been better had he not been created.”

However, posits Rav Meir Simcha Hakohen, there is another type of Torah study that is in a category of its own, and therefore follows different rules. This is Torah study that is not just geared to knowing *what* the Torah says and *what* the halacha is, but is Torah study to receive the Torah tradition directly from one's Rabbi(s), who in turn, had received the tradition of the Torah Rabbis of previous generation. This “intimate” type of Torah study of the deepest understanding of the reasons and explanations of the mitzvahs is essential to the continuation of true Torah study and fulfillment for all generations. Accordingly, the *mishna's* case of travelling to study Torah elsewhere is an example of this special category of Torah study. When a person travels to learn Torah, he presumably travels to a place where he is able to study Torah closely with a Rabbi who will transmit the very essence of the Torah to him. This type of Torah study is more than a normal mitzvah, and more than normal study of the words and mitzvahs of the Torah. Its special significance is such that a person even travelling for this purpose is exempt from the mitzvah of dwelling in the succah.

- *Succah 25a*

Shoftim: Succah 27-33

Did He Ever Fulfill the Mitzvah?

Beit Shammai said that the earlier Sages had said to him, "If this is the way you were in the succah (i.e. with the table outside of the succah), you have never fulfilled the mitzvah of succah in your life!"

The *mishna* on our *daf* teaches an important requirement for fulfilling the mitzvah of dwelling in a succah. What if a person's body is inside the succah, but the table he eats from is outside of the succah? Beit Shammai teaches that this is problematic, and from Beit Shammai we learn two halachas: the minimum size of a succah must be large enough to contain a table within the succah, and the table must actually be inside the succah. The halacha follows these rulings of Beit Shammai, as codified in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 634:4.

Beit Shammai's reason for disqualifying a succah when the table is outside of the succah is as follows: Although the person's *body* is sitting inside the succah, since the person is eating food from a table that is outside the succah, the Rabbis were concerned that the person might also move to where the outside table is located and thereby not fulfill the mitzvah of dwelling and eating inside the succah. Therefore, a succah with the table outside is disqualified.

The commentaries grapple with a fascinating question that arises from the wording in the *mishna* , "If this is the way you were in the succah (i.e. with the table outside of the succah), you have never fulfilled the mitzvah of succah in your life!"

Granted, they note, the person with the outside table is taking a risk of even unintentionally moving outside the succah to where the table is with the food. But are we really meant to take Beit Shammai's statement literally, meaning that a person sitting inside a succah while eating from a nearby table that is just outside the succah does not (or possibly ever in his life) fulfill the Torah mitzvah to dwell in the succah during Succot?

The answer to this question appears to be a dispute between the Rishonim. One view is that Beit Shammai was not actually saying that the person does not fulfill the Torah mitzvah. Rather, the person is in fact fulfilling the Torah mitzvah, but he has failed to fulfill the mitzvah in accordance with the will of the Rabbis who decreed that the table must be inside the succah. (Rabbeinu Nissim)

There is another view on the Beit Shammai that posits Beit Shammai's words to be quite literal, and perhaps may even sound somewhat "extreme" at first glance. According to this view, the fact that this person did not follow the rabbinical decree to have the table inside the succah actually prevented him from fulfilling the Torah mitzvah to dwell in the succah. Although the person seemed to technically fulfill the requirements set forth by the Torah for fulfilling the mitzvah, since he failed to follow the decree of the Rabbis, his Torah mitzvah is considered "tainted" – and his act of dwelling in the table-less succah is therefore disqualified from being considered as a mitzvah. This view is based on the teaching of the students of Rabbeinu Yona regarding the status of a person who says *Kriyat Shma* after midnight. The Torah sets dawn to be the deadline for saying the night *Kriyat Shma* . Yet, the Rabbis decreed that it be said earlier, by midnight, due to the concern that a person who waits until it is later into the night might fall asleep – and result in his failure to say the *Shma* that night. According to this view, a person who says it after midnight has violated not only this rabbinical decree, but has also failed to fulfill the Torah mitzvah altogether! A decree that was instituted to *help insure* that a

person will fulfill the mitzvah in time can end up seemingly doing just the opposite – disqualifying his saying the *Shma* from being a mitzvah when said after the rabbinically set deadline.

Such is the power of the words of our great Rabbis – not following their will can invalidate a Torah mitzvah, and not be viewed as “merely” a lack of compliance with their wise decrees.

- *Succah 28a*

@ OHR

The students, alumni, staff and events of Ohr Somayach

by Rabbi Shlomo Simon



Dovid Hidai (28)

Oaxaca, Mexico

Instituto Tecnológico de Puebla, BA (2016)

Instituto Nacional de Astrofisica Optica y Electronica Master of Science in Electronics (2019)

Mechina Program since November 2020

Dovid’s family is very academic. Both of his parents are medical doctors. His older brother, Naftali, is an anesthesiologist. His older sister, Hanna, has a Master’s degree in Political Science and his younger brother, Shmuel Nissim, is a lawyer.

Dovid studied electronics as an undergraduate at the Instituto Tecnológico de Puebla (ITP). He did post-graduate work in an area of wireless communications called “antenna array for energy harvesting.” Another project involved developing and managing the design and modeling of controls for a humanoid robot. And a third project, which he worked on together with his older brother, was the development of a mobile application for calculating trans-operative bleeding, a very important measurement for assessing the amount of blood lost by a patient during an operation.

About 25 years ago, his parents, who were members of an evangelical church in Oaxaca, a city in Southwestern Mexico, found some books about *kashrut*. They had read in the Bible that certain foods are permitted to be eaten and certain ones are not. But without the *Torah sh'ba'al peh*, those rules are quite unclear. These books that they had found, however, clearly explained which foods could and could not be eaten.

They asked their church leaders about it. If it said in the Bible that those foods were prohibited, why did they eat them? They did not get any satisfactory answers. On their own, they stopped eating the foods that were listed in those books. They also left their church.

About seven years ago, Dovid's parents met and became good friends with Victor, an observant member of the Jewish community of Mexico. He was a frequent guest at their house. They had many questions about Judaism and Victor did his best to answer them. As their friendship developed, so did their desire to join the Jewish People. Dovid's older brother met with Rabbi Dovid Lehrfeld of North Miami Beach, Florida, who supervised his conversion. Dovid was next.

Dovid's family made contact with Rabbi Zalman Weiss, an Ohr Somayach alumnus living in Jerusalem. Reb Zalman prepared the family for their *geirut*, which was finalized in Mexico by a visiting *Beit Din* from New York.

In October of 2020, on the advice of Reb Zalman, Dovid applied to the Yeshiva. In his application he describes his background and goals:

“Even though my parents instilled in me a love for the mitzvot and Torah from a very young age, I can say that I became attached to Judaism when I started my conversion process (3 years ago). From that moment and until now, I have taken Torah and Halacha classes.

“When I finished my conversion process (a year and a half ago), I fully integrated myself into the activities of the Beth Itzjak Synagogue (in Mexico City), being an active member of the *minyan*. Already integrated into the community, my family and I were able to see that there was a great difference in leading prayers and participations in classes between the young people who have studied in a Yeshiva and those who have not, and an even greater difference within the young people who have dedicated a year study in Yeshivot in Israel.

“As a family we decided that one of us should go to study in a Yeshiva in Israel (as the first and not the only one). Since I can take time off between the master's degree and the doctorate, I can take a year to dedicate myself to Torah study. With the above in mind, I asked Rabbi Zalman to recommend some Yeshivot in Israel in which I could study. He immediately told me about Yeshivat Ohr Somayach. After talking with a number of rabbis, I understood that Ohr Somayach is a great Yeshiva, where, in addition to learning Torah, the students learn to study texts like the Talmud for themselves (of course a teacher is always essential).”

Dovid was not disappointed in his choice. He is very impressed with the *rebbeim* – especially with their caring and their patience. On both his and Reb Zalman's recommendations, his younger brother, Shmuel Nissim, will soon, G-d willing, join Dovid in the Mechina Program at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem.

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Herschman

Va'etchanan

Shema Yisrael

After a brief chronology of the sojourn in the desert, Moshe begins to review the mitzvahs of the Torah. The first sentence of this compendium is the sentence that, to this day, awakens Jewish consciousness in the heart of every Jew. It is the first sentence a Jewish child learns, and it is the last sentence on his lips when he leaves this world. It is the sentence inscribed on the banner which the Jews have carried throughout history, and with this sentence they declare that G-d will ultimately “reconquer” mankind. It is the last sentence that a Jew who has been alienated from his people would discard. Whenever a Jew lies down or rises, wherever he builds his home and places his doors, this verse reminds him of his life’s mission, and of the principles that guide his thought and conduct.

Why do we say, “Hear, O, Israel,” and not, “See, O, Israel?” Moshe has just recounted how the people’s knowledge of G-d is based on *seeing*, and not on *hearing*! (“You have been made known by sight that G-d alone is G-d; there is none beside Him,”

Devarim 4:35). Indeed, their knowledge of G-d was based on seeing. However, only one time in history did G-d enter the earthly present and reveal Himself – when laying the foundation for the creation of His people. From then on, one generation will *tell* another about that Revelation. And by means of this tradition, the revelation will remain the indisputable basis for all the thoughts and actions of every man of Israel. Thus, “Hear, O, Israel.”

Had we been instructed to “see,” man would have been led to search his experiences in nature and history for the existence of G-d, reaching conclusions only by speculative inference and deduction – mere belief. But our *knowledge* of G-d is bound with the certainty of revelation, rooted in a sensory perception which the entire nation

experienced. Our fathers *saw* G-d in nature and history when He redeemed them from Egypt. They *heard* G-d when He gave them the Torah. This testimony, attested to by the entire nation, is the basis of our *knowledge*.

Once knowledge exists, we can then open our eyes to see His workings in nature and open our ears to hear His voice in history. Instead of speculating by deduction, we affirm that everything great and small in nature is His work and everything great and small in history is an act of His providence.

The first fundamental truth of our knowledge is “*echad*” – G-d is one and alone. Although the world is full of contrary phenomena, it is the one G-d who willed and upholds all of these contrasts. What appears to be dual is in fact part of the same rule and purpose – *Hashem* (the Name of mercy), *Elokeinu* (the Name of justice), *Hashem* is one. Even when He appears as *Elokim* in justice, He is *Hashem*, in love and compassion.

- Sources: Commentary, Devarim 6:4

Ekev

Grace of G-d

The purpose of the mitzvah of Grace after meals – *birkat hamazon*, or “*bentching*” – is to remind us of G-d’s direct, personal care, not only when He delivered miraculous food to us in the desert, but also when our nourishment is obtained by natural means. Every piece of bread is to be regarded as a gift, like the manna dropped from Heaven.

The obligation exists only after eating *bread*, reminding us that it is not only luxuries which G-d

provides, but even the bread that sustains us is not within our power alone to supply. Even the barest necessities are a gift.

The Jewish grace after meals goes well beyond formal gratitude. It is not enough to acknowledge that we owe our existence and sustenance to G-d alone. In the four blessings that comprise the *birkat hamazon*, we also express commitments which are an outgrowth of that acknowledgement.

In the first blessing, we express the truth that G-d not only sustains every soul, but does so with particular Providence. Every piece of bread and every moment of continued existence are gifts of “His goodness, in favor, in lovingkindness and in mercy.” Depending on the merits and deeds of the recipient, he receives his bread and his life, either as a result of favor, lovingkindness or mercy. In reciting this blessing we vow to devote our lives to the One who gives sustenance to all.

In the second blessing, we express the truth that while G-d is near to the fate and destiny of all men, His is in a special relationship to the Jew. As a testimony to this relationship, He promised and gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish People. This Land, in its prosperity, and in its temporary destruction, is the pledge for Israel’s unique historical position on earth. However, the Land is not mentioned in isolation – it is mentioned in connection with circumcision and Torah. Only by living up to our covenant and commitment will we receive that special care of Divine providence which sustains us “every day, at every hour, and though all time.”

The third blessing relates the continued existence and independence of the individual in the context of a petition for the material and spiritual welfare of the community. When the Temple stood, the petition for the community’s welfare was in the form of a prayer for the preservation of the Temple and the Davidic dynasty, but when the Temple was destroyed, this became a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem.

The Sages added a fourth blessing in the wake of Bar Kochba’s disastrous rebellion. It was necessary to warn all generations not to repeat this attempt, for not by their own power should they attempt to

restore Israel’s crown to its former glory. Rather they must entrust this to Divine providence. Thus, when the people were granted permission to bury the hundreds of thousands who fell at Beitar, the Sages instituted this blessing to perpetuate the memory of the defeat at Beitar in the form of thanksgiving. From the text of the blessing it is clear that the intent is to instill an awareness that human assistance should not be the object of our hopes: “*He* has done good for us. *He* does good for us, and *He* will do good for us; *He* has bestowed, *He* bestows, and *He* will forever bestow upon us grace, kindness, and mercy.”

- Sources: Commentary, *Devarim* 8:10

Re’eh

Duty by Day, Trust by Night

The mitzvahs of Pesach are briefly reviewed, and Moshe tells the Jewish People that the reason for abstaining from *chametz* and eating *matzah* is because our Exodus from Egypt was accomplished in great haste, “so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life.”

The aspect of haste was not circumstantial. It was directed by G-d to reinforce the notion that even as we were being freed from the suppressing hand of Egypt, we were still their slaves, forced even to obey even their commands, denying us time to properly bake our bread. Even at the moment of redemption, we were still slaves. This was all to teach us that we did not achieve freedom by our own power, but rather by G-d, at the hand of our oppressors.

All this is so that we will remember the day of redemption as the starting point for all future thoughts and actions. We did not become our own masters, but rather we passed from the oppression of human violence into G-d’s possession. We left the servitude of man for the service of G-d.

The verse clearly spells out the daily nature of the obligation – “all the days of your life.” From the superfluous word “all,” our Sages learn that the

mitzvah applies not only during the day but also at night. Even though the Torah explicitly tells us that the redemption was already accomplished at night, there is a need for a special proof that the remembrance is also to occur at night. This mitzvah, then, pertains primarily to the daytime – a feature that is of great importance to understanding it.

The redemption from Egypt supplied the foundation for two aspects that comprise the substance of our lives: our historical life and our active life. Throughout our history we learned to trust in G-d. Through our actions we received our sense of duty toward Him. Trust is proven in the dark nights of life, whereas our sense of duty must be demonstrated during the daytime.

One might think that the main teaching of the redemption is trust in G-d during the dark periods of life and of history, and therefore the mitzvah applies primarily at night. Jewish thought, however, knows that it is easier to trust in G-d during the nights of dire misfortune than to remain faithful to duty in the daylight of creative activity. The night hardly needs the daily reminder. During the day, however, we are keenly aware of the need to renew our commitment to serve G-d with full vitality.

- Sources: Commentary, Devarim 16:3

Shoftim

Free of Criminal Liability

The Torah portion of Shoftim deals with the authorities empowered to enforce the law, and concludes with a mitzvah that devolves upon these authorities in a striking case. In this case of the discovery of a slain person left out in a field, the authorities are called into G-d's presence, in full view of the public, so as to publicly clear themselves of the suspicion that they were lax in the performance of their duties. Because of the primacy and sanctity of human life, the authorities take some responsibility for a case where a slain person is found lying in an open field, under

circumstances which constitute a downright mockery of the enforcers of the law.

First, the distance between the discovered corpse and the adjacent cities are measured to determine which municipality is most likely the one to be held accountable. Then, the elders of that city take a young calf to a valley, and the calf is killed by a blow to its neck. In the presence of Kohanim, the elders of the city wash their hands and recite the following words of exoneration: "*Our hands have not spilled this blood, and our eyes have not seen him. Grant atonement to Your people Israel, whom You redeemed, O G-d, and do not place innocent blood into the midst of Your people Israel!*"

The Sages dispute whether the "him" that the elders declare not to have seen is the murdered one or the murderer. According to the first opinion, the elders are disclaiming responsibility for not seeing to it that he was sent from the city with an escort, as if to say, "We did not see him and let him leave without an escort and food." According to the second opinion, the elders disclaim responsibility for allowing a murderer to go free, as if to say, "We did not see him and close an eye to his guilt!"

In the first opinion, the elders are saying that they did not allow the man to leave in such dire need that he resorts to highway robbery, thus causing himself to be killed by a slayer in self-defense. Their momentous declaration is: "In our society, no one is left in such dire need that he is compelled by poverty to commit a crime."

The elders curiously seek atonement not just for themselves, or even for the people living in their times, but for G-d's people whom He redeemed from Egypt. Those people were redeemed so that they would build a national life for the sake of G-d, to develop a social life based on every aspect on the Will of G-d, conducted with love and justice. The people alive during this declaration have proven themselves as worthy examples G-d's people, such that if and when even one of their members were driven to poverty to commit a crime, their representatives can stand over this corpse and declare in good conscience, "In our society, no one is compelled by poverty to commit a crime."

This would represent a monumental triumph for G-d's Torah of justice and mercy. A triumph so great, that no matter how gravely the generations of the past (from the Exodus until the present) had sinned, they would find atonement as the ancestors of such a society. The merit of a state based on such brotherly love is so great that it retroactively ennoble the roots from which it emerged.

The final killing of the calf gives expression to the utmost seriousness with which the Jewish community and its representatives regard the murderer, quelling any sense of negligence in not bringing the killer to justice. The act expresses the fact that one who murders loses his right to life, and that Divine providence will execute upon him justice that man could not.

- Sources: Commentary, *Devarim* 21:1-8

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Va'etchanan

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

Moshe predicts, accurately, that when the Jewish People dwell in Eretz Yisrael, they will sin and be scattered among all the nations. They will stay few in number – but will eventually return to Hashem.

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, forgetting their purpose as a spiritual nation. The Torah portion concludes 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 that in doing so they would become indistinguishable from the other nations.

Ekev

If *Bnei Yisrael* carefully observe even those "minor" mitzvahs 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 Hashem who gave them wealth and success. Nor did Hashem drive out the Canaanites because of *Bnei Yisrael's* righteousness, but rather

because of the sins of the Canaanites, for the road from Mount Sinai had been a catalogue of large and small sins and rebellions against Hashem and Moshe.

Moshe details the events after Hashem spoke the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, culminating in his bringing down the second set of Tablets on Yom Kippur. Aharon's passing from this world is recorded, as is the elevation of the *Levi'im* to be Hashem's ministers. Moshe points out that the 70 souls who went down to Egypt have now become like the stars of heaven in abundance. After specifying the great virtues of the Land of Israel, Moshe says the second paragraph of the *Shema*, conceptualizing the blessings that accompany keeping mitzvahs, and the curses that result from non-observance.

Re'eh

Moshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from Hashem. When the nation enters Eretz Yisrael, they must burn down any trees that had been used for idol-worship, and destroy all idolatrous statues. Hashem will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there, but 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 *shechted* anywhere. Moshe lists the categories of foods that may be eaten only in Jerusalem. He warns the nation against copying the ways of the other nations. Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added to or subtracted from it. If a so-called 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 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 and eaten there. 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, and then Hashem 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. This Torah portion concludes with a description of the three pilgrimage festivals: Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

Shoftim

Moshe 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 Hashem'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 have possessions and symbols of power only as 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. Hashem promises the Jewish People that He will send them prophets to guide them, and Moshe explains how a true 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 the nation's trust in Hashem. 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. An enemy 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.

SPECIAL SUMMER FEATURE

Vaccines and Halacha

by Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz

One of the greatest advances in public health over the past hundred years has been the development of vaccines that trigger immunity to a whole host of infectious diseases that formerly produced epidemics that wiped out thousands of people a year.

As a result, in most industrialized countries including the United States and Israel, children cannot be admitted to school unless they have received inoculations against a whole host of diseases. Most parents comply with these requirements with no questions asked. However, some parents do not and their numbers are growing. The reasons for noncompliance vary. Some parents are simply careless and inattentive, others harbor deep sinister conspiracy fears about any government-mandated program, but the most common reason is health concern. Over the past several decades some researchers and organizations have advocated the idea that vaccinations are actually dangerous to children, not only making them susceptible to virulent forms of the very disease from which they are supposed to be protected but in some cases causing

other devastating conditions such as autism. The internet has spread and magnified these fears, and many parents have responded accordingly. The overwhelming consensus of medical research worldwide is that these fears are groundless. Indeed, the researcher who advocated the vaccination/autism link has been censured for intentional fraud in the presentation of his data and has actually lost his license to practice medicine. It is safe to say that most vaccinations do not have any significant negative effects on children other than temporary pain and swelling which can be avoided by a skillful nurse.

The question is, are vaccinations halachically mandatory? To fully understand this question, a bit more factual background is necessary. *Failure to Vaccinate Creates Risks for the Non-vaccinated Child:*

In a world without vaccinations, it is clear that many children would suffer polio, meningitis, rubella, whooping cough, various forms of hepatitis, debilitating conditions that formerly resulted in death, brain damage, paralysis and other severe disabilities. As a result of widespread vaccinations

many of these diseases are virtually extinct. Children have developed immunity and children who would have been infected escape unharmed. It is fairly obvious that a world with vaccinations is safer than a world without them.

However, it is less obvious that an individual child who is vaccinated is tangibly benefitting. If a non-vaccinated child is in a population of vaccinated children it is highly unlikely that he will be exposed to the disease since these diseases are predominantly spread by human carriers, of which there are none (other than the non-vaccinated child himself!). As such, the argument can be made that as long as everyone else vaccinates their children, my child is safe no matter what I do. In economics, this is known as the “free rider” phenomenon. In epidemiology, it is “herd immunity”.

Where the percentage of vaccinated persons reaches a certain level, the risks to the non-vaccinated population sharply drop as well. (To achieve herd immunity the vaccination rate must be at least 75-90% - depending on the disease and its virulence.) Nevertheless, even in a herd immunity scenario a vaccinated child faces less risk than a non-vaccinated one.

Failure to Vaccinate Creates Risks for Other Vaccinated Children

It is important to note that failure to vaccinate a child may not only create risks for the child but, by enabling him to be the carrier and transmitter of an infectious disease may put other children at risk, including children who themselves have been vaccinated. One might well wonder how this can be so since vaccination presumably creates immunity; but the answer is that even the best quality vaccinations have a certain percentage rate of failure due either to product defect or the individual body's idiosyncratic response. As such, enlarging the pool of available carriers can actually endanger even vaccinated children. Thus, whatever authority parents may have to make decisions for their children surely cannot justify placing other people's children at risk.

Basic Halachic Principles

There are two related halachic principles that on their face would make vaccination mandatory. The first is that is forbidden for a Jew to place his life or health in unreasonable danger. The Talmud and the Codes mention a wide variety of activities that must be curtailed or avoided. These include 1) putting one's mouth directly on a pipe in order to drink water; 2) drinking water drawn from a river at night when one is unable to inspect for parasites; 3) drinking liquids that have been left exposed and unattended where there is a possibility, albeit remote, that a snake may have deposited venom; 4) eating food that might be tainted or poisoned etc. It is similarly forbidden to wound or injure oneself. See Rambam, Hilchot Rotzeach, chapters 11-12 and Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat, chapter 426.

In a classic article Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin discusses the halachic enforceability of Shylock's agreement with Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*. It will be recalled that Shylock stipulates that if Antonio does not pay his debt on time Shylock will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh. Rabbi Zevin demonstrates that such a clause would be absolutely unenforceable under Jewish law because (quoting Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the 'Alter Rebbe') “our bodies are not our own; they are the property of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.” In effect, the Torah teaches us that our bodies are not our own property but belong to G-d to be used in His service and to be protected and preserved until such time as He chooses to reclaim it. This is in sharp contrast to modern medical ethics and political theory which posit autonomy and self-determination as supreme values, and enshrine the attitude that “it is my body and I can do with it what I will” – including reckless endangerment. It is of course obvious that if I do not have the right to endanger myself, I certainly do not have the right to endanger my children.

The second focuses on the duty that is owed to others. Just as we are commanded to preserve and protect our own lives, we are similarly commanded to remove impediments or stumbling blocks that cause dangers to others. This is derived from the mitzvah of erecting fences around flat roofs so that people who climb the roof should not fall down. Moreover, even if I am not the source of the danger I have a duty to do what I can to rescue someone from whatever peril

they may be in, such as rescue someone from drowning etc. “Do not stand by idly over your friend’s blood” (Leviticus 19:16). Thus, we have duties owed to G-d not to expose ourselves, our children or others to hazards, risks or dangers. Since failure to vaccinate endangers both my children and the children of others, both obligations would lead to same result - a duty to minimize danger.

Definition of Unreasonable Risk

The matter becomes more complicated, however, when we consider the obvious fact that halacha certainly does not intend to compel the avoidance of any potential danger. If that would be true we would not be allowed to fly on an airplane, drive a car, take a bus or even cross the street (particularly in Jerusalem!). Everything we do contains some element of risk and yet the Torah does not require that we become hermits permanently ensconced in our homes (and even that would not be totally safe).

The laws against danger become triggered only when the dangers to be avoided are unreasonable, excessive and unnecessary for ordinary life. Behaviors must reach a certain magnitude of risk before they become prohibited. When that threshold is crossed is not precisely defined. From the very examples *Chazal* gave, such as not drinking from uncovered water because of snake venom, it might be inferred that even risks that are highly unlikely must be avoided, and indeed Rabbi Moshe Feinstein so concluded, Yet it might be argued that some of these rules represent discrete rabbinic legislation for specific problems and are not necessarily suggestive of a general principle. After all, it is not prohibited to drive, even though the risk of an accident is probably higher than the risk of snake venom in liquid.

Application to Vaccination - Rabbi Auerbach

This is the crux of the vaccination question. Given the empirical reality that the vast majority of the school population does vaccinate, producing the phenomenon of ‘herd immunity’, the particular risk to any given unvaccinated child is relatively small. While the risk is indeed much greater than it would be for the vaccinated child, in absolute terms it is still small. This of course would change if more parents did not vaccinate, but as long as the system functions at a 90%-plus compliance rate the increase in risk for

the 10% may be halachically insignificant. Indeed, it is reported that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ruled, precisely for this reason, that parents do not have a halachic obligation to vaccinate their children as long as a large majority of the population is doing so. (See *Nishmat Avraham C.M.* 427:3; 5). It must be noted, however, that even Rabbi Auerbach considered such vaccination as prudent and proper preventive care and urged physicians to persuade their patients to comply. While he was not willing to rule that vaccination was an absolute obligation, he did characterize it as a highly desirable course of action. Moreover, it is quite possible that Rabbi Auerbach would support the right of a school or parent body to exclude a non-vaccinated student because of the risks he poses to *others*. The halachic permissibility of imposing small risks on me and my family may not justify my imposing them on others.

Application to Vaccination – Rabbi Elyashiv

A second and stricter approach was taken by Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. His basic analysis is that risks are characterized as “reasonable and permitted” or “unreasonable and forbidden” based on society’s general assessment of what is deemed responsible behavior. An activity that is considered normal and acceptable by a majority of people is deemed to be safe notwithstanding a certain level of risk. This would include activities like driving, flying or crossing the street (although even here there may be some objective level of danger that may be so high that it would not be justified no matter how many people did it!). By contrast, activities or behaviors that society labels as irresponsible, reckless and dangerous definitionally become such even when the absolute risk level is relatively low. Since vaccinations are commonly accepted as a normal standard precautionary measure, one who fails to take such a measure is recklessly endangering his children and others. Such precautions become mandatory – not just recommended – because society as a whole considers them necessary.

Rabbi Akiva Tatz MD summarizes this ruling well: [According to Rabbi Elyashiv] “failure to immunize would amount to negligence...refusing childhood immunizations on the basis of unsubstantiated fears of vaccine side-effects is irresponsible...the danger of precipitating epidemics of measles, poliomyelitis and other diseases with potentially devastating

complications is far more real than the dangers attributed to vaccines on the basis of anecdotal claims. Until objective evidence to the contrary accrues, the halachically correct approach is to do what is normal.” (Tatz, *Dangerous Disease and Dangerous Therapy*, p.48).

In a subsequent addendum Rabbi Elyashiv stated that parents of vaccinated students have the absolute right to insist that all other classmates be vaccinated in order to minimize the risks to their own children due to vaccination failure. As noted, Rabbi Auerbach may well have agreed.

At the end of the day the differences between Rabbi Auerbach and Rabbi Elyashiv are small:

- 1) Both agree that parents should be encouraged to vaccinate their children because the benefits far outweigh the risks.
- 2) Both agree that schools and parents of vaccinated children can legitimately exclude non-vaccinated children from the classroom to minimize the dangers to their own children.
- 3) They disagree on whether vaccination is an absolute parental obligation (Rabbi Elyashiv) or “merely” a highly desirable thing to do (Rabbi Auerbach).

From the perspective of a Jew who seeks to do the will of G-d, both positions will lead to the same result.

Special Note on the Polio Inoculation Program in Israel

Due to the discovery, a few years ago, of the polio virus in some sewage found in Ashdod and Beer Sheva, the Israeli government implemented a nationwide polio booster program, inoculating children with a live attenuated virus delivered orally. This program was challenged in the Israeli Supreme

Court. Unfortunately, the complexities of the program are such that one cannot issue any halachic opinion without a more definitive resolution of the medical issues. First, the use of live virus rather than dead strain carries distinct dangers and risks. That is why Israel discontinued the use of live virus in 2005. Second, the purpose of the program is not to benefit the inoculated children who have already received regular polio shots of dead virus, but to provide protection to non-inoculated adults through a complicated mechanism of the live attenuated virus spreading to these people and giving them the equivalent of a vaccine. Using children as protective shields for adults raises issues beyond the scope of this article.

A number of years ago, an adolescent boy in Israel needed a kidney transplant. The only compatible donor was a sibling who had not reached the age of 13 and was therefore a minor. The sibling desired to donate a kidney and the parents were obviously in agreement as well. Notwithstanding the fact that the child could survive with one kidney the halachic ruling was that a minor cannot be an organ donor even voluntarily. Since donation of a kidney puts the donor at increased risk for renal failure, it requires informed consent, which a minor is not halachically or legally capable of granting. Nor will parental consent suffice. While parents undoubtedly have authority to make medical decisions based on the best interests of the child, they cannot impose risks on one child solely for the benefit of another child. The tragic ending is that the adolescent died. The correctness of this particular decision is debatable – one could after all argue that preserving the life of a sibling is not only a benefit to the recipient but a significant benefit to the donor as well and is in his own best interests – but the principle of the decision is sound: one may not impose risks on children and certainly babies solely for the protection of others. The critical question is whether the oral ingestion of live virus into children who have already received inoculations of dead virus puts them at risk.

EXPLORE ISRAEL EXPLORE JUDAISM EXPLORE YOU

J101 is a 10-month program that explores Judaism in-depth, while helping you to launch your career path to the next level. Experience how exciting and relevant Judaism can be in the 21st century.

PROGRAM DATES
AUG 9TH 2021 - JUNE 22ND 2022

Cost of the 10-Month Program
\$20,000 FREE*
INCLUDING roundtrip airfare

**PLUS up to \$4,000
Fellowship stipend!**

In addition, it is possible to earn up to 30 university credits.

*For qualified applicants



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Professional 3-Month Internship in the field of your choice
- Get mentored by Israel's industry leaders and CEO's
- Nice office space in Jerusalem, offering an ideal work environment
- Launch your own professional Startup, and watch it take it off and potentially turn into a career



JEWISH DEVELOPMENT

- Uncover the mysteries of the world through classical Jewish texts, discussion and debate
- Develop interpersonal skills, self confidence, public speaking and much more
- Probe profound topics like Jewish mysticism, why bad things happen to good people, finding your soulmate, Torah and science...



EXPLORE ISRAEL

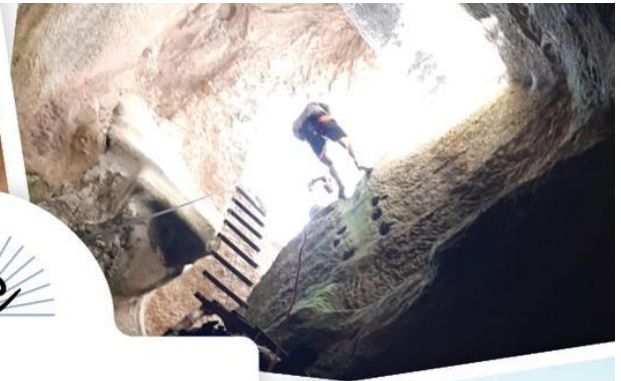
- Engage with Israel's rich culture and history
- Bond with the land and the people of Israel
- Experience Israel like never before!
- Activities include rappelling, pita making, jeeping, hiking, ATVing & more!

LIMITED SPOTS

The program is open to male Jewish university students and young professionals. No prior religious background or commitment is required.



For more info, visit us at
www.Ohr.edu/j101



JLE Israel Experience

2 WEEK ISRAEL ADVENTURE

Israel Experience, Jewish Learning and Delicious Kosher Cuisine

TRACKS FOR JEWISH STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, AGED 18-30

PRICE \$3,000

\$199* INCLUDING AIRFARE!

JLE@OHR.EDU

+972-52-312-5921

For more details:

JLE.ohr.edu

* Subject to eligibility

APPLY NOW!
LIMITED SPACES

