

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1370 MAY 16TH '20 כ"ב אייר תש"פ

פרשת בהר בחוקותי

PARSHAT BEHAR BECHUKOTAI

ב"ה
40
Years
OU
ישראל



THE
WORK-STUDY
PROGRAM
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi
Hersh Weinreb
see page 16



YOM
YERUSHALAYIM
SPECIAL
Rabbi Azarya
Berzon, Rabbi
Simcha Hochbaum
& Rabbi Moshe
Bloom
see page 68

"ירושלים
הבנויה כעיר
שחוברה לה
יחדיו"

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHAR BECHUKOTAI

Candles 6:54PM • Earliest 6:04PM • Havdala 8:11PM • Rabbeinu Tam 8:48PM



WORD OF THE MONTH



We'll discuss Yom Yerushalayim and Rosh Chodesh Sivan next week. For now, a brief look at combined sedras. There are 7 pairs of sedras that sometimes are read separately and sometimes combined. Four of the pairs relate to one or two Adars. Combined in 12-month years and separated in 13-month years. Tazria-M'tzora and Acharei-K'doshim stick to that distinction. Vayakheil-P'kudei almost do, but in one (rare) 12-month year-type, they separate. B'har-B'chukotai, in Chutz LaAretz, also follows the 'rule' - combined in Shana P'shuta and read separately in Shana M'uberet. In Israel that is so too, except in a P'shuta when Pesach is Shabbat-Friday, we split B & B. **Stats for B&B: Chutz LaAretz, combined 12/19 of the time, 63% and 7/12, 37%, separated.** But in Israel, 45% of the years combined and 55% of the time separated. This year, 5780, combined all over the world. **Now you know!**

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	EARLIEST	BEHAR BECHUKOTAI	HAVDALA	BAMIDBAR		
				CANDLES	EARLIEST	HAVDALA
6:54	6:04	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	8:11	6:59	6:07	8:16
7:11	6:05	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot et al)	8:12	7:15	6:09	8:17
7:10	6:04	Beit Shemesh / RBS	8:12	7:14	6:08	8:17
7:09	6:04	Gush Etzion	8:11	7:13	6:07	8:16
7:11	6:06	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	8:13	7:16	6:09	8:19
7:10	6:05	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:12	7:15	6:08	8:17
7:11	6:06	Netanya	8:14	7:16	6:10	8:19
7:07	6:04	Be'er Sheva	8:11	7:12	6:08	8:16
7:11	6:05	Rehovot	8:13	7:15	6:09	8:18
6:54	6:05	Petach Tikva	8:13	6:59	6:09	8:18
7:10	6:05	Ginot Shomron	8:12	7:15	6:08	8:18
7:02	6:06	Haifa / Zichron	8:14	7:07	6:10	8:20
7:09	6:04	Gush Shiloh	8:11	7:14	6:07	8:16
7:09	6:06	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:13	7:14	6:10	8:19
7:09	6:04	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:11	7:14	6:08	8:16
7:09	6:04	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	8:11	7:13	6:07	8:16
7:11	6:06	Ashkelon	8:13	7:16	6:10	8:18
7:10	6:05	Yad Binyamin	8:12	7:15	6:09	8:18
7:00	6:04	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:12	7:05	6:08	8:18
7:09	6:03	Golan	8:11	7:14	6:07	8:17

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:48pm • next week - 8:52pm



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OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

RANGES ARE 11 DAYS, WED-SHABBAT
 19 - 29 IYAR
 (MAY 13 -23, '20)

Earliest Talit & T'fila 4:48-4:41am
 Sunrise 5:43½-5:37½am
 Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma 9:09-9:06am
 (Magen Avraham: 8:28-8:24am)
 Sof Z'man T'fila 10:18-10:16am
 (Magen Avraham: 9:43-9:41am)
 Chatzot (Halachic noon) 12:35½-12:36pm
 Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) 1:10-1:11pm
 Plag Mincha 6:02-6:07½pm
 Sunset (counting elevation) 7:33-7:40pm
 (based on sea level: 7:28-7:34½pm)

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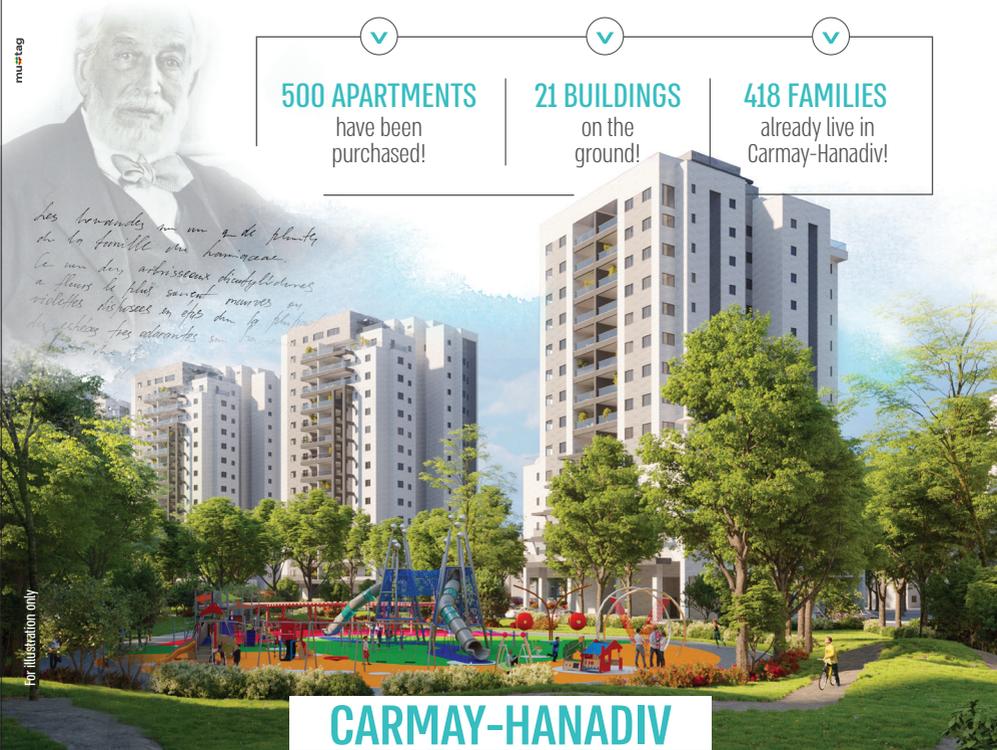
WEEKLY INSPIRATION

Our ancient oath was for the sake of Jerusalem- "If I will forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill" (Ps.137:5). Twice each year, a voice accompanies us in the majesty of its hope: on the holy eve of the Passover holiday, and at the conclusion of the holiest day [Yom Kippur]. This is the voice of the nation's soul, as it calls out the depths of its yearnings and anticipated longing: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l , Mo'adei HaRe'iyah, p.463

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BEHAR BECHUKOTAI



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the Parsha's beginning;

(Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

KOHEN FIRST ALIYA

13+5 P'SUKIM - 25:1-18

[P> 25:1 (7)] One of the most famous sedra openers in the Torah: "And G-d spoke to Moshe AT HAR SINAI saying..."

The unusual nature of the pasuk is based on the rare additional words in the otherwise very familiar pasuk: And G-d spoke to Moshe saying (which occurs 69 times). The mitzvot that follow deal with Sh'mita, the Sabbatical year. A basic element of our belief is that the whole Torah was revealed by G-d to Moshe (and by him to us) at Sinai (and not just the Ten Commandments, as many people - Jews and non-Jews - claim). Why then mention the location of this particular set of commands?

Note too, that the Torah identifies location of G-d's speaking to Moshe, five other times: Thrice B'MIDBAR SINAI and twice B'ARVOT MO'AV. But this time is



STATS

	BEHAR	BECHUK	B&B
of 54 sedras in Torah	32nd	33rd	-
of 10 in Vayikra	9th	10th	-
Lines	99	131	230
Rank (Among The 54)	50th	47th	-
Parshiyot	7	5	12
P'tuchot	1	3	4
S'tumot	6	2	8
P'sukim	57	78	135
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	50/10	46/7	-
Words	737	1013	1750
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	50/10	47/7	-
Letters	2817	3992	6809
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	50/10	47/7	-



MITZVOT

	BEHAR	BECHUK	B%B
Mitzvot (pos/prohib)	7+17	7+5	14+22

Although with "only" 24 mitzvot, B'har does not seem to be in the major league of mitzva sedras, the fact is that there are only 7 sedras with more mitzvot than B'har. There are 46 sedras with fewer. Yet there are only 4 sedras smaller than B'har and 49 longer. Even B'chukotai's 12 puts it tied (with Va'etchanan) for 15th place.



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unique, because all mitzvot were given at Sinai. So why mention it?

One of the principles by which the Talmud teaches us the Oral Torah is "when one issue is singled out for special treatment, the teaching not only applies to the one issue, but to the whole group from which it came." Here the teaching is this: Just as Sh'mita with its details was given at Sinai (it says so specifically right here), so too were all mitzvot given at Sinai with their details (and not just "chapter-headings"). This idea is an important feature of the Chain of Tradition, and is an essential component of "Emunat Chachamim", the trust, faith, and confidence we must have in each link of the chain.

On another level, we still can ask the question: "why was this particular set of mitzvot chosen by G-d, so to speak, to teach us the general rule?" One commentator offers the following insight: The mitzva of Sh'mita teaches us (among other things) that G-d is concerned with the mundane things of this world. He cares about us and our earthly fields and trees. And He exists, not only in the lofty realm of the heavens, but His Essence fills the world. G-d's choice of lowly Har Sinai as the venue for giving us the Torah, was meant to teach us the same idea. How appropriate that the Torah tells us that it was at Sinai that G-d commanded us the laws of Sh'mita.

Putting Har Sinai with Sh'mita also reminds us of the supposed-to-be



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inseparable partnership of Torah and Eretz Yisrael. As if to say, even though the Torah was given outside of Israel, we must never lose sight of the fact that G-d's Will and intention is that we should live a Torah life in the Land of Israel. Exile was and is, our fault. However long the Jewish People have been in exile, and however well we have learned to cope with that exile, we still - always have and always will - belong in Eretz Yisrael. What's Sh'mita doing juxtaposed to Har Sinai? That's what!

"When you come to the Land..." The Land is to be rested each seventh year. For six years one works the fields, and on the seventh there is to be a Shabbat to HaShem for the Land; neither land [326,L220 25:4] nor trees [327,L221 25:4] may be worked. Even that which grows on its own, may not be harvested (in a normal manner) from the land [328,L222 25:5] or trees [329, L223 25:5]. (The Torah uses the term "vineyard", but means to include all trees.) Sh'mita year is for all to benefit from the land (without the usual sharp distinction between land-owner and others); and

for the animals. (Sh'mita gives the land a chance to restore itself, and gives us a chance to put our relationship with the environment and with the other creatures who share the Earth with us, in perspective. It helps us get our priorities straight.) Sh'mita reminds us of Who created the world and still rules it. And it gives us a wonderful opportunity to devote more time to Torah study.

MITZVAWATCH

Note that there are 4 prohibitions here in B'har pertaining to Sh'mita, and there is a positive command to rest the land in the seventh year, in Parshat Mishpatim. It is noteworthy, though not that unusual, that an area of Jewish Law is presented to us by the Torah in this way - with both positive mitzvot and prohibitions (and not necessarily from the same portion of text). Shabbat, Sh'mita, Yom Kippur, Yom Tov, kashrut (to an extent), et al, all are heavy with serious prohibitions. As such, we are duty-bound to "toe the mark" lest we violate G-d's Law. Our motivation would tend to be "fear of heaven". Strong motivations, but not as beautiful and powerful as the motivation of "Love of G-d" that is at play when one strives to scrupulously fulfill G-d's commands. One should not see Sh'mita merely as a

series of "don't do this", don't do that". We should rejoice in the opportunity to serve G-d, demonstrate our faith and confidence in Him, be freer to study His Torah and perform mitzvot. Observing Sh'mita is not just avoiding the prohibitions. It is a positive statement of our belief in the Creator and Master of the World.

[P> 25:8 (17)] (When the majority of Jews are in Israel and the infrastructure of Torah life in Israel is intact,) the Sanhedrin is required to count seven successive seven-year cycles - 49 years [330,A140 25:8]. On the Yom Kippur of the 50th year, the Shofar is to be sounded (as we do each year on Rosh HaShana, and as we do in symbolic fashion at the conclusion of Ne'ila each year) [331,A137 25:9]. This 50th year is to be proclaimed "kodosh" as Yovel - the Jubilee year [332,A136 25:10]. Farming the land is forbidden [333,L224 25:11] (as during Sh'mita), as are harvesting that which grows on its own [334, L225 25:11] and gathering the fruit of the trees in a normal manner [335, L226 25:11]. Yovel is holy; we "eat of the land". During Yovel one returns to his estate.

There is an important connection between the blowing of the Shofar on Yom Kippur of the Yovel year, and the annual Shofar-blowing on Rosh HaShana - the fact of the matter is that we learn about the blowing of Shofar on Rosh HaShana from that of Yovel. The word SHOFAR is not used in the Torah in the context of Rosh HaShana.



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Rosh HaShana is to be a T'RU'A DAY, but we would really have a difficult time knowing what to do on Rosh HaShana had it not been for the Oral Torah teaching us the parallels to Yom Kippur of Yovel. Comparing the texts of the two days, we find a Tishrei-Tishrei match and a T'RU'A-T'RU'A match. The Gemara teaches us that we answer the question as to how to make a T'RU'A in Tishrei (Rosh HaShana), by doing it the same way as the other Tishrei T'ru'a is produced - with a Shofar. This method of learning Rosh HaShana from Yom Kippur of Yovel is known as a G'ZEIRA SHAVA. It is one of the methods by which the Written Word and the Oral Law are linked. G"Sh is part of the Tradition passed down through the generations.

In business with others, one must deal ethically [336,A245 25:14] (the mitzva is actually the command to the courts to carefully carry out the rules of business conduct); it is forbidden to cheat in business [337, L250 25:14] (since land returns to its original owners at Yovel, real estate purchases are only for a specific period. Prices therefore, should reflect the number of years remaining until the next Yovel. This is the context of the mitzvot regarding proper business practices.)

MITZVAWATCH

Ramam describes certain situations in business in which one can technically get away with something, but he is

considered not to have acted in "a proper Jewish manner". Perhaps the positive commandment (in addition to all the prohibitions) comes to teach us not to take advantage of the technical loopholes, but rather to conduct ourselves with the highest standards of business ethics.

There is more than one way of explaining what a positive command adds to our observance of mitzvot, when the prohibition(s) are already on the books. This was one explanation.

On another note... Let's say that an art dealer passes off a good-quality fake as an original master. To be sure, the art dealer has violated the halacha against cheating. But whose law has he violated? Is this type of cheating a rabbinic prohibition inspired by the Torah's statements regarding cheating vis-a-vis the years remaining until Yovel. No. It's more. Oral Law teaches that Yovel is the particular context for a wide category of prohibition. In other words, in this case, we are not dealing with Torah-inspired rabbinic extension of Torah Law. We are dealing with Talmudic DEFINITION of Torah Law. There's an important difference.

Not only must one not take unfair advantage of his fellow in money-

matters, he must be careful not to "oppress" or deceive others with words [338,L251 25:17]. This prohibition is very serious, as evidenced by the link the pasuk makes between it and the mitzva to revere (fear) HaShem.

Safeguard and obey the statutes and laws of the Torah and dwell in security on the Land. (This link between observance of Torah and continued peaceful, secure living in Israel, is an oft-repeated theme, one that must be kept in mind in modern Israel - and by Jews wherever they live in the world.)

LEVI SECOND ALIYA

6+4 P'SUKIM - 25:19-28

The Land will yield its bounty and we will eat our fill and dwell in the Land in security. No one should question where food will come from (with two years in a row of Sh'mita restrictions). G-d promises to bless the land during the sixth year (two years before Yovel) so that the land will yield enough for three years; the planting of the year after Yovel will supply our needs thereafter.

The land must not be sold forever [339,L227 25:23] since it is to return to its original owners during Yovel [340,A138 25:24].

MITZVAWATCH

Rambam defines the prohibition against selling the land "forever" in the context that we find the prohibition.

**Condolences to Ester Lerner and
Moshe Wrocherinsky on the passing
of their**

מֵהַ מִתְּצֵהָ הַמִּתְּצֵהָ

הַמִּתְּצֵהָ יִנְחָם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שָׂרָר אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

The basis here is that land returns to its original owners in Yovel. An owner isn't really an owner; he's a guardian of the property until Yovel. So here's a person who ATTEMPTS to sell a piece of land forever. Intending that it should not revert to its original owners. Guess what? That cannot be done. The land goes back to its original owners regardless of a transaction to the contrary. The ISUR here is really "attempted" selling of land in Eretz Yisrael forever. It cannot actually be done. Rambam.

Ramban takes the mitzva out of its context and explains the ban as forbidding the selling (or giving away...) of land in Eretz Yisrael to non-Jews, whom we can assume will not abide by the Yovel rule of reversion of ownership.

[S> 25:25 (4)] If a person were forced to sell off hereditary land because of poverty, he or a relative may redeem the land by paying a proportional amount (depending upon how many years remain until Yovel). If not redeemed before Yovel, the land reverts to its hereditary owners with Yovel.

Rashi says that we learn from these p'sukim that ordinarily, one should not sell a field in Eretz Yisrael, except for the extenuating reason of poverty.

SHLISHI THIRD ALIYA

10 P'SUKIM - 25:29-38

[S> 25:29 (6)] If someone sells a house in a walled city (walled, from the time

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of Yehoshua, i.e. original conquest), he has up to one year to redeem it; if not, it remains the new owner's forever. Redemption during the year is by returning the full amount paid, i.e. no deduction for the time that the buyer lived there. (This is technically an exemption from the Torah's ban against interest.) Redemption of a house in a walled city is a mitzva [341,A139 25:29]. On the other hand, houses in non-walled cities have the same rules as land - viz., redemption is possible until Yovel, at which time the house reverts to its original hereditary owners. Houses in Levite cities (even walled cities) are redeemable beyond the one-year limit, and do revert to the Levi at Yovel. The Levi has hereditary rights to those

special (42+6) cities. It is forbidden to alter the areas around those cities by selling off parts of the land on a permanent basis [342,L228 25:34].

[S> 25:35 (4)] We are obligated to help our fellow who has fallen on hard times. We may not take interest for personal loans made to help him out [343,L235 25:37].

This emphasizes G-d's desire, so to speak, for His People to care about each other. Remember what I did for you. Now you be nice to your fellows.

"I Am G-d Who took you out of Egypt, to bring you to the Land, to be your G-d."

See T4 page

R'VI'I FOURTH ALIYA

8+11+3+4 P'SUKIM - 25:39-26:9

R'vi'i is always the bridge Aliya between two combined sedras

[S> 25:39 (8)] If a Jew sells himself into servitude because of poverty (or any other reason), his master may not treat him contemptibly [344,L257 25:39]. He shall be treated like an employee, and stays with his master only until Yovel.

(This is the maximum; under normal circumstances, the Jewish man-servant goes free much sooner.) At Yovel, he and his family return to their hereditary land. We are servants of G-d (and should not be subservient to other people); no Jew shall be sold in the degrading way of the slave market [345,L258 25:42]. Do

not subject him to hard, spirit-breaking labor [346, L259 25:43].

Jews (according to Torah law) may own non-Jewish slaves (only if they intend to practice Judaism and become Jewish if and when they are freed), who become hereditary property. They are not released at Yovel, but remain permanent property of their owners [347, A235 25:44].

[S> 25:47 (11)] If a Jew becomes a slave to a non-Jew, we may not permit him to remain so [348, L260 25:53]. Redemption should be by his close relatives, or himself - if he obtains the means. Equitable calculation should be made for compensating his master. We must not let his master break his spirit. All this is because Israel is subservient to G-d, Who redeemed us from Egyptian slavery. We are to be committed to Him; we may not make false gods nor idols or sacred pillars; nor may we kneel on a "decorated stone" [349,L12 26:1].

"Keep My Shabbat and revere My sanctuary, I Am G-d." Shabbat here might refer to Sh'mita. If so, it makes a matched bookend with the beginning of the sedra. If however, Shabbat means Shabbat, then the juxtaposition to idolatrous prohibitions also makes the point that desecration of the Shabbat is tantamount to idolatry.

[P> 26:3 (11)] If we keep the Torah and mitzvot, then HaShem will provide beneficent, timely rainfall and bountiful crops. The yield of the Land will be so great, that each agricultural season will

blend into the next one. And we will have plenty to eat - on our own Land.

The Gemara says that IM B'CHUKOTAI TEILEICHU is more than just stating the facts: If this, then that; if not this, then something else. The Gemara says that G-d is asking us, pleading with us, to keep the mitzvot and immerse ourselves in Torah. If He asks, how can we not do what He wants - He created us, He put us into this world. There are a few places in the Torah where IM does not mean IF, but rather WHEN.

The promises of prosperity from the opening p'sukim of the parsha are made for Jews who live in Eretz Yisrael. This, says Torat Kohanim, in analyzing the word B'artz'chem.

Further reward for (or results from) following the Torah and keeping the mitzvot, will be peace and tranquility in the Land (of Israel). Both natural disasters (wild beasts) as well as human enemies (sword) will be kept at bay by HaShem. And when we do encounter our enemies, G-d will grant us the ability to vanquish them mightily. If we keep to our side of the deal (so to speak), we will be blessed with fertility and G-d will keep His covenant with us.

CHAMISHI 5TH ALIYA

37 P'SUKIM - 26:10-46

This Aliya begins with the last four p'sukim of the "good" part - the promises for our proper Torah behavior. G-d will be with us; He is the One Who took

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us out of Egypt, broke the yoke of our oppression, and led us out with heads held high.

[P> 26:14 (13)] But then we get to the "Tochacha" containing G-d's detailed admonition to the People, warning of the dire consequences that will result from disregard of Torah and mitzvot. Because it is so painful to hear these terrible words - especially realizing how often they have come true - the custom developed to read this portion in a low voice. We are ashamed that G-d needs to threaten us in so graphic a way. The minhag is to call the Rabbi, Gabbai, or the Baal Korei himself for this portion, so that no one else will feel slighted by receiving this harsh Aliya. The Tochacha is always contained within one Aliya

which begins and ends on "cheerier" notes.

A significant theme of the Tochacha is the connection between the keeping of the laws of Sh'mita and our hold on the Land. We must always realize that we do not keep Eretz Yisrael without any strings attached. We have a clear commitment and responsibility to keep the Torah and fulfill the mitzvot as individuals AND as a community. Sh'mita was commanded in B'har. In B'chukotai, we are presented with the dire consequences of the disregard of this important mitzva.

[S> 26:27 (20)] Continual reference is made of both physical and spiritual benefits from observance of mitzvot, and the opposite, for disregard of the mitzvot. This combination of promise of good and threat of bad, together with the body of mitzvot of the Torah, constitutes the covenant between G-d and the People of Israel at Sinai via Moshe.

SHISHI SIXTH ALIYA

15 P'SUKIM - 27:1-15

[P> 27:1 (8)] In pledging funds to the Mikdash, it is possible to offer the "value" of an individual [350, A114 27:2]. The Torah lists amounts for individuals depending on sex and age. In the event

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that the donor is poor, a kohen may reduce the amount.

[S> 27:9 (26)] If a person pledges an animal to the Mikdash which qualifies as a korban, he may not exchange or redeem that animal (even for one of greater value) [351,L106 27:10]. If he attempts to do so, then both the original animal and its substitute (t'mura) are consecrated to the Mikdash [352, A87 27:10].

That means that he has not really DONE anything wrong, since the exchange doesn't work. It is the ATTEMPT that is the sin. And it is punishable in Sanhedrin with Makot. Further unusual, since no act was performed.

An animal not fit for the Altar is to be evaluated by a kohen [353, A115 27:11], and can be redeemed by adding 1/5 of its valuation.

A person can also offer the value of a house [354,A116 27:14], in which case a kohen (expert in matters of real estate) determines its value, and the house is redeemable by adding 1/5.

SH'VII SEVENTH ALIYA

6+7+6 P'SUKIM - 27:16-34

If a person dedicates the value of his property to the Mikdash, it is to be evaluated by a kohen based on quality and number of years to the next Yovel [355,A117 27:16]. It then becomes redeemable by adding a fifth. If a person did not redeem the land, then Yovel

does not release it to him, but rather to the Mikdash, as consecrated property. The same applies if the officials at the Mikdash sold the property before redemption. At Yovel, it reverts to the Mikdash.

If the property in question is not hereditary, but rather purchased, then the rules differ. The land is evaluated in the same way, but at Yovel it reverts to its original owners, and not to the Mikdash.

A firstling (if it is male) is automatically sanctified to the Altar; one may not consecrate it as another korban [356,L107 27:26], because it is already Kodesh. This rule of not switching one sanctity for another, applies to other categories of korban as well.

A non-kosher animal offered to the Mikdash is sold off.

If something itself is consecrated to the Mikdash (rather than its value), it cannot be redeemed; it remains holy.

Consecrated property goes to the kohanim [357, 358, 359; A145, L110, L111 27:29].

A person under a death penalty has the status of "Cherem" (non-redeemable

items). The land's title (here referring to Maaser Sheni), is sacred; it is (either to be eaten in Jerusalem or) to be redeemed.

The title of the animals (cows, goats, sheep) are to be separated by counting every tenth one regardless of the quality of the animal [360,A78 27:32]. These animals are sacred and to be brought as a korban and eaten only in Jerusalem and under conditions of ritual purity. Maaser B'heima may not be redeemed [361,L109 27:33] (in contrast to Maaser Sheni of produce). Violation of this rule results in both animals being considered holy.

"These are the mitzvot... at Sinai." This final pasuk of the sedra (and book of Vayikra), closes the section that was opened by the first pasuk of B'har, the usual partner sedra to B'chukotai.

HAFTARA 17 P'SUKIM

YIRMIYAHU 16:19-17:14

The words of the prophet contain warnings and admonitions which echo the Tochacha contained in the sedra. But, the haftara - like the sedra - begins and ends on a good note. The last pasuk is like a prayer to be spared and/or healed from the ills of the sedra. ■

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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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IN THE PARSHA

The Work-Study Program

It is quite a long time now since I first heard the term “work-study program.” This was a special federal program designed to assist young adults with limited financial means to achieve a professional education. Recipients of this grant were encouraged to continue with their jobs, to work, but were also paid to enroll in college level training courses, to study. Hence the term “work-study program.”

There was something about this term that struck me as odd. It seemed to make a distinction between work and study. It conveyed, to me at least, the notion that study was not work. To someone who had been trained in the yeshiva system, this notion was unacceptable. Study is work!

In this week’s double Torah portion, *Behar-Bechukotai*, we come across the following phrase: “If you shall walk in My statutes...” (*Leviticus 26:3*) Rashi explains what it means to “walk” in the ways of God’s statutes. He suggests that

“walking” here means that we must “toil in the Torah, *shetihyu ameilim batorah.*”

The concept of “toiling in the Torah” is a basic one to anyone familiar with Torah study. But those less familiar with the subject can legitimately be puzzled by the phrase. They surely can understand learning Torah, or studying Torah, or comprehending Torah. But what does it mean to “toil” in the Torah?

My life-long interest in educational psychology has prompted me to analyze the process of “Torah-toil” and break it down into several components, or stages.

The first stage consists of diligence, of what is known in Hebrew as *hatmadah*. This is a requirement of putting in time. Torah study cannot be done on a piecemeal basis, in small segments of five or ten minutes. It requires sustained concentration and long hours of simply sitting and poring over the text.

The ideal Torah student is constantly studying. His is the image portrayed by the great poet Chaim Nachman Bialik in his masterpiece, *HaMatmid*. There he describes the night and day devotion of the young man to his studying task in moving and inspiring terms. For Bialik, himself once a yeshiva student, the “*matmid*” is the true hero of Jewish history.

The second stage is that of struggle, of encountering the text and figuring out its basic meaning. This is difficult even to the student whose first language is Hebrew, and is even more challenging to those of us who grew up speaking English or another language and who come to the texts at a disadvantage.

A person can only study Torah successfully if he makes errors in the process, *elah im kain nichshal bah*

There are skills that must be mastered in order to decipher the give and take of the Talmud and its commentaries. Simple meaning, punctuation, knowing where questions end and answers begin, understanding implicit assumptions, appreciating nuance – these are all aspects of this second stage of wrestling with the text.

In recent times, aids to Torah study have proliferated. Translations, elucidations, and abbreviations make the process much more user friendly. Sometimes, however, in my opinion, these valuable tools come at the cost of the kind of mastery which can only emerge from intense efforts and cannot be achieved through shortcuts.

And here we come to a third stage of Torah study: learning from one's mistakes. The Talmud itself maintains that "a person can only study Torah successfully if he makes errors in the

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process, *elah im kain nichshal bah.*” All Torah students make mistakes in the initial phases of study sessions. They, or their study partners, soon detect these errors and correct them. Then real learning occurs.

Who had each of us explain aloud every passage we learned to the rest of the class until our peers felt that we had explained it well. “If you can’t explain something,” he insisted, “then you don’t understand it.”

In the fourth stage of this toil, the students probes and questions. He searches his memory for passages which might contradict the text at hand. He wonders about the underlying assumptions of what he has just read, and how they fit with principles from other sections of the Torah with which he is familiar. He consults the numerous supercommentaries to see whether his questions were anticipated by previous Torah students, perhaps centuries ago. This is stage four.

A fifth stage, omitted by some but essential in my personal opinion, is the search for relevance. “What personal meaning,” the student must ask, “can I find in the text I have just mastered?” “How can it be applied to current

events, to contemporary problems, or maybe even to my own life experience and personal dilemmas?”

And finally we come to a sixth stage: teaching others. Maimonides, in his *Treatise on the Mitzvot*, asserts that one has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* of Torah study unless he shares his learning with others. *Lilmod*, to study, *ulelamed*, to teach.

How well I recall the process demanded of us by my favorite teacher, Reb Shmuel Dovid, who had each of us explain aloud every passage we learned to the rest of the class until our peers felt that we had explained it well. “If you can’t explain something,” he insisted, “then you don’t understand it.”

I have shared with you my own personal analysis of the many ingredients of effortful Torah study. Others have offered different analyses to be sure. But I hope that my highly personal perspective has helped clarify the idea of “toiling in the Torah” to you.

The fact that the Torah involves so much effort, such intense and diverse tasks, helps us understand why true Torah greatness, *gadlut*, is so rare and so appreciated.

We also understand why the reward for such toil is “rain in its season, a land of bountiful crops, and trees of the field that yield their fruit.” (*Leviticus* 26:4)

Enjoy your Shabbat, and remember that one way to enjoy it is to use it to “toil in the Torah.” ■

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The Power of a Curse

The book of Vayikra draws to a close by outlining the blessings that will follow if the people are faithful to their covenant with God. Then it describes the curses that will befall them if they are not. The general principle is clear. In biblical times, the fate of the nation mirrored the conduct of the nation. If people behaved well, the nation would prosper. If they behaved badly, eventually bad things would happen. That is what the Prophets knew. As Martin Luther King paraphrased it, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."¹ Not always immediately but

1 This is a quote that Dr. King used many times, including during the march from Selma in 1965 when answering the question: How long will it take to see social justice? This is now widely hailed as one

ultimately, good is rewarded with good, bad with bad.

Our parsha starkly sets out the terms of that equation: if you obey God, there will be rain in its season, the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit; there will be peace. The curses, though, are almost three times as long and much more dramatic in the language they use:

"But if you will not listen to Me and carry out all these commands ... then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength...

I will break your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze... I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted... Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins...

As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the

of his most famous quotes, although King was himself quoting 19th-century Unitarian minister and abolitionist Theodore Parker of Massachusetts.

lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them.” (Lev. 26: 14-37)

Therefore, that the measure of reward is greater than the measure of punishment by five hundred to one

There is a savage eloquence here. The images are vivid. There is a pulsing rhythm to the verses, as if the harsh fate that would overtake the nation is inexorable, cumulative and accelerating. The effect is intensified by the repeated hammer blows: “If after all this ... if you remain hostile ... if in spite of these things ... if in spite of this.” The word *keri*, key to the whole passage, is repeated seven times. It appears nowhere else in the whole of Tanach. Its meaning is uncertain. It may mean rebelliousness, obstinacy, indifference, hard-heartedness, reluctance or being-left-to-chance. But the basic principle is clear. If you act toward Me with *keri*, says God, I will turn that same attribute against you, and you will be devastated.

It has long been a custom to read the *tochachah*, the curses, both here and in the parallel passage in Devarim 28, in a low voice in the synagogue, which has the effect of robbing them of their terrifying power if said out loud.

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But they are fearful enough however they are read. And both here and in Devarim, the section on curses is longer and far more graphic than the section on blessings.

This seems to contradict a basic principle of Judaism, that God’s generosity to those who are faithful to Him vastly exceeds His punishment of those who are not. “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands ... He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation” (Ex. 34:6-7). Rashi does the arithmetic: “It follows, therefore, that the measure of reward is greater than

the measure of punishment by five hundred to one, for in respect of the measure of good it says: “maintaining love to thousands” (meaning at least two thousand generations), while punishment lasts for at most four generations.

The Prophet tells the people what will happen *if* they fail to change. A prophecy is not a prediction but a warning

The whole idea contained in the 13 Attributes of Compassion is that God’s love and forgiveness are stronger than His justice and punishment. Why, therefore, are the curses in this week’s parsha so much longer and stronger than the blessings?

The answer is that God loves and forgives, but with the proviso that, when we do wrong, we acknowledge the fact, express remorse, make restitution to those we have harmed, and repent. In the middle of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is the statement, “Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished” (Ex. 34:7). God does not forgive the unrepentant sinner, because were He to do so, it would make the world a worse place, not a better one. More people would sin if there were no downside to doing so.

The reason the curses are so dramatic is not because God seeks to punish, but the precise opposite. The Talmud tells us that God weeps when He allows

disaster to strike His people: “Woe to Me, that due to their sins I destroyed My house, burned My Temple and exiled them [My children] among the nations of the world.”² The curses were meant as a warning. They were intended to deter, scare, discourage. They are like a parent warning a young child not to play with electricity. The parent may deliberately intend to scare the child, but he or she does so out of love, not severity.

The classic instance is the book of Jonah. God tells the Jonah the Prophet to go to Nineveh and tell the people, “In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed.” He does so. The people take him seriously. They repent. God then relents from His threat to destroy the city. Jonah complains to God that He has made him look ridiculous. His prophecy has not come true. Jonah has failed to understand the difference between a prophecy and a prediction. If a prediction comes true, it has succeeded. If a prophecy comes true, it has failed. The Prophet tells the people what will happen *if* they fail to change. A prophecy is not a prediction but a warning. It describes a fearful future in order to persuade the people to avert it. That is what the *tochachah* is.

In their new book, *The Power of Bad*,³ John Tierney and Roy Baumeister argue on the basis of substantial scientific

2 *Brachot 3a.*

3 *John Tierney and Roy Baumeister, The Power of Bad, Allen Lane, 2019.*

evidence, that bad has far more impact on us than good. We pay more attention to bad news than good news. Bad health makes more difference to us than good health. Criticism affects us more than praise. A bad reputation is easier to acquire and harder to lose than a good one.

Humans are designed – “hardwired” – to take notice of and rapidly react to threat. Failing to notice a lion is more dangerous than failing to notice a ripened fruit on a tree. Recognising the kindness of a friend is good and virtuous, but not as significant as ignoring the animosity of an enemy. One traitor can betray an entire nation.

It follows that the stick is a more powerful motivator than the carrot. Fear of the curse is more likely to affect behaviour than desire for the blessing. Threat of punishment is more effective than promise of reward. Tierney and Baumeister document this over a wide range of cases from education to crime rates. Where there is a clear threat of punishment for bad behaviour, people behave better.

Judaism is a religion of love and forgiveness. But it is also a religion of justice. The punishments in the Torah are there not because God loves to punish, but because He wants us to act well. Imagine a country that had laws but no punishments. Would people keep the law? No. Everyone would choose to be a free-rider, taking advantage of the efforts of others without contributing

oneself. Without punishment, there is no effective law, and without law there is no society. The more powerfully one can present the bad, the more likely people are to choose the good. That is why the *tochachah* is so powerful, dramatic and fear-inducing. The fear of bad is the most powerful motivator of good.

I believe that being warned of the bad helps us to choose the good. Too often we make the wrong choices because we don't think of the consequences. That's how global warming happened. That's how financial crashes happen. That's how societies lose their solidarity. Too often, people think of today, not the day after tomorrow. The Torah, painting in the most graphic detail what can happen to a nation when it loses its moral and spiritual bearings, is speaking to us in every generation, saying: Beware. Take note. Don't function on autopilot. Once a society begins to fall apart, it is already too late. Avoid the bad. Choose the good. Think long and choose the road that leads to blessings.

Shabbat Shalom ■

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PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

THE PROPHETS

An elementary school teacher in Chu"l discussed the challenge of teaching a Hebrew text to young students who had partial-but not yet complete-grasp of the Ivrit. He related that, as he discussed with his students the Torah's demand of "V'ahavta l're'acha kamocho", loving one's fellow, he quoted the well-known comment of Rabbi Akiva that this mitzvah was a "klal gadol baTorah." One student quickly raised his hand to translate Rabbi Akiva's statement and said: This is a great curse in the Torah." The student had confused the Hebrew word "klal"-principle-with a similar sounding word "klala"-curse.

A simple mistake-but what a difference!

This bulk of this week's (second) parasha is taken up by the "curses" that would be befall Am Yisrael for a failure to follow the laws of the Torah. In truth, the term "curses" is not a valid description of this section of the parasha. Like the student in elementary school, we make a simple mistake that makes a big difference. The Biblical curse is not the act of using "nivul peh", foul language, against another (as our society mistakenly believes.) To "curse" is, simply, the opposite of to 'bless', to wish someone well: health, success, nachat, etc. A curse, rather, expresses the wish

that an evil should befall another. In this parasha Hashem is warning the people-not, G-d forbid, wishing them evil. He is predicting the punishments that could be sent against them for their faithlessness to Him and to His commands but it is certainly not the Divine hope that they will. Therefore, Moshe is delivering Hashem's "tochacha", a (early) reproof, an admonition; it is a warning-not a curse.

This is a simple, more accurate translation-but what a difference!

It is interesting to note, and also quite important to understand, that this list of could-be disasters is preceded by a list of could-be blessings. Chazal understood this and, perhaps for this very reason, chose precisely this haftarah that we read from Sefer Yirmiyahu 16:19-17:14). Rav Yehuda Shaviv presents suggests the problem that our Rabbis might very well have faced when selecting a fitting nevuah to reflect of the primary theme of the parasha. There are certainly many prakim in the sifrei nevuah that are filled with warnings, punishments and chastisements. But how insensitive (and perhaps even senseless) to have our nation read yet another source that lists only tragedies that could-and over the years did-befall the Jewish people. How terrible to establish a practice of reading

a litany of tragedies to the generation living through the Crusades, or the Black Death, or the Inquisition, or Chmelnicki, or the Cossaks or the pogroms or the Holocaust...and on and on!

Without your reproof, the sinner will continue the sin and therefore you will “bear” his sin, taking some of the blame

And so, Chazal chose a selection which Yirmiyahu, the prophet of the churban, delivered to a sinful nation, because, in the middle of the condemnation, after cursing the individual who abandons G-d (“Arur HaGever”), he blesses the one who remains faithful to Him (“Baruch HaGever”). And this, of course, is what the Torah does as well.

The mitzva of tochacha is found in Vayikra (19; 17) where we are commanded not to harbor hatred against another but rather “hoche’ach toche’ach at amitecha”-you must surely admonish your fellow. That pasuk ends with a curious statement: “v’lo tissa alav chet,” “and you should not bear a sin because of him”. Mary Parshanin discuss the meaning of that phrase and how it connects to the beginning of the verse. I was especially moved by the simple explanation given by the Ramban who explains that, without your reproof, the sinner will continue the sin and therefore you will “bear” his sin, taking

some of the blame.

What impressed me about this approach was the implication of this warning: if you do not reproach one who would cease from his sinning, if you allow him to continue in his sinful ways, then you really don’t care about him and you prefer to continue harboring hatred against him. Just like Hashems tochacha, reproof must come from a place of caring, of love. A place from which one could never harbor hatred against another.

Is it any wonder that the very next pasuk teaches us “V’ahavta l’re’acha kamocho”, to love our neighbor?

It surely is, as Rabbi Akiva taught us, a “klal gadol baTorah”, an important principle in the Torah. ■



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Exile as Punishment for Violating *Shemitta*

ועשית את חוקותי ואת מצוותי תשמרו ועשיתם אותם
ושבתם על הארץ לבטח. (ויקרא כה:יח)

Wherefore you perform My statutes and ordinances and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety. (*Vayikra* 25:18)

The Torah explicitly states that if we fulfill the commandments, we will be blessed with peace and prosperity in *Eretz Yisrael*. However, in the *tokhaha* of *Parshas Behukosai*, the Torah states:

אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה. (ויקרא כו:לד)

Then the land will make up for its sabbaticals. (*Vayikra* 26:34)

Rashi draws out the implication: "Israel is exiled on account of the violation of *Shemitta*, as it says: 'Then the land will make up for its sabbaticals.'" More than any other transgression, failure to observe *Shemitta* leads to exile. This connection between *Shemitta* and *Galus* (exile) demands an explanation.

In the sefer *KeMotzei Shalal Rav*, an idea is brought down by Rabbi Yaakov Hai Zarihan who suggests that the purpose of *Shemitta* is to show the farmer and everyone else that HaKadosh Barukh Hu is in charge. Even though the land is worked for six years and the land should naturally be worn out, Hashem provides us with enough sustenance during the sixth year to sustain us through *Shemitta* and the following growing season. *Shemitta* proves God's providence, showing everyone that Hashem watches over, protects, and provides for each individual.

Rabbi Zarihan suggests that there is another way that Hashem's providence is demonstrated: by the existence of the Jewish people. According to natural law, a small, persecuted, downtrodden nation in exile should cease to exist. Yet, the Jewish people have survived for thousands of years, outlasting the very empires that persecuted them. The only explanation is Divine Providence. Hashem protected and watched over us.

Mark Twain once expressed his amazement at the miracle of the existence of the Jewish people:

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests

a nebulous puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all ages and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself and be excused for it. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away. The Greeks and Romans followed and made a vast noise, and they were gone. Other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, and have vanished.

The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert but aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews. All other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?¹

1 Mark Twain, *Concerning The Jews*, *Harper's Magazine*, 1899.

When the Jewish people do not observe the laws of *Shemitta* in *Eretz Yisrael*, we destroy an opportunity to demonstrate God's providence to the world. Consequently, we are switched to another mode of demonstrating Divine Providence: the miraculous continued existence of the Jewish people in exile among their persecutors.

One expression of Hashem's providence is through the observance of *Shemitta*, another is through the Jews' survival in exile. Today, we are privileged to be able to live in *Eretz Yisrael* and to once again observe *Shemitta and other mitzvos ha'teluyos B'Aretz*. May we fulfill all of them properly so that it can be the vehicle for Hashem's bountiful providence. ■

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Exit Exam

We get the questions to our final exam years before we need to take it; in fact, the entire exam only has a few questions! The first question each of us will be asked after 120 years is *'nasata vnatata b'emunah'*, did you conduct your business dealings faithfully? Were you honest in your business affairs?

Rabbi Dovid Hofstedter in *Darash Dovid* explains this question on a deeper level. Hashem asks each of us if we conducted our business with *'emunah'*, with the knowledge that Hashem is ultimately managing and directing all, with total faith of Hashem's involvement in our life. He quotes the *Siach Yitzchak* who draws our attention to the same terminology of censure the Torah uses with regard to idolatry and unjust weights. One who uses false weights and measures in business is akin to one who serves idols, as he thinks the idols are the source of his success and not Hashem.

Parashat Behar begins with the mitzvot of *shemittah* and *yovel*, both of which teach us the foundations of *emunah*. Indeed,

the Gemara (*Shabbos 31a*) identifies *Seder Zeraim* with the term "*Emunah*", since one who has faith in Hashem will plant and know that Hashem will bring forth produce. When the Torah records *Am Yisrael's* question, "what will we eat in the seventh year?" (*Vayikra 25;20*), explains Rav Schlesinger in *Eleh Hadevarim*, it refers to those who are not farmers! The reassurance given by Hashem underscores the role *shemittah* plays in instilling within us total dependence on our Creator. Hence, following the laws of *shemittah* we have the prohibition of deceiving others in business, as well as laws pertaining to taking interest when lending money. The juxtaposition of these laws reminds us that scrupulous business ethics are predicated on *emunah*.

Did we investigate, give and take in the aspect of *emunah* itself? Is *emunah* something that we take seriously

Rav Schwadron in *Lev Shalom* offers a powerful *mashal* through a story. Many years ago, at the entrance to the main Yerushalayim Tel Aviv highway, stood Toma'le, who would direct traffic whenever the light turned green. He would wave his hands signaling cars

to move ahead or halt. Simple minded Toma'le genuinely believed that he was directing the flow of traffic each day. Likewise, notes Rav Schwadron, how many of us act like foolish Toma'le, thinking that we are the ones directing our business and our work. Indeed, we are not even in control of ourselves!

The Slonimer Rebbe in *Netivot Shalom* gives us a slightly different angle in understanding this final exam question. Did we investigate, give and take in the aspect of *emunah* itself? Is *emunah* something that we take seriously, and do we act on it to acknowledge that Hashem is guiding and administering our lives, individually and collectively? When we can answer in the affirmative, we will ace the exam. ■

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Galus Jews, Geulah Yiden

In the spring of 1920, in the aftermath of World War I, the Allied Supreme Council of the League of Nations gathered in San Remo, Italy, and granted the British Empire a mandate over “Palestine”. In issuing the Balfour Declaration three years earlier, Britain expressed its support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Eretz Yisrael, and when word of the decision reached Jerusalem, a formal celebratory gathering was held in the Churvah Shul of the Old City. Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook zy’a donned Shabbos clothing in honor of the event, and spoke with great passion about the meaning of the San Remo conference as a significant moment for *Klal Yisrael*.

Some of Rav Kook’s extremist opponents criticized his participation in the celebration, and posted scathing

personal attacks on *pashkevillin* posters across the city denigrating Rav Kook and dismissing the significance of San Remo.

Students and supporters gathered around their embattled teacher, waiting to hear Rav Kook’s reaction. The holy Rav responded by expounding upon the Gemara’s statement at the end of Masechet Ta’anis (30b): “Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all who mourn for her”(Yeshayahu 66:10). Based on this, our sages said, ‘Whoever mourns for Jerusalem will merit and see her future joy, and whoever does not mourn for Jerusalem will not see her future joy.’”

Rav Kook explained a *p’shat*, a simple interpretation, in the name of Rebbe Yisrael of Rhizhin zy’a: “Shouldn’t the statement of the Gemara be that one who mourns will merit to see its ‘rebuilding’

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(rather than her ‘future joy’)? After all, the main goal is to rebuild Jerusalem, not just to rejoice...

The deepest form of exile is the concealment of the fact of exile

“When Jerusalem is being rebuilt, everyone will see what is happening (physically). However, only those who mourned over it will experience feelings of joy. Therefore, it is no wonder that there are those who do not rejoice over this monumental, historic conference, for they have not appropriately felt the pain, degradation and humiliation of *galus*, being ruled by foreign powers.”

THE GREATEST TOCHECHA

Our sedra describes the plentiful blessings showered upon us when we fulfil the *Ratzon Hashem* as well as heed the Divine rebukes that are meted out on Am Yisrael for abrogation of our responsibilities and failure to keep Hashem’s commandments. The description of those negative consequences is a dreadful depiction of exile — alienation, placelessness, starvation, death and horrific suffering.

“But despite all of this, while they are in the land of their enemies, *lo m’asteem*, I will not despise them, *v’lo g’alteem*, nor will I reject them, *l’chalosam*, to destroy them completely...and to break

My covenant with them, for I am the Lord their G-d....(26:44)

Throughout our history we have experienced the pain of *galut* and have been deemed unwanted ‘foreigners’ as we wandered from place to place. There has been a tragic and predictable cycle of finding a degree of fleeting respite, comfort, success and acceptance, only to be followed eventually by anti-semitic rejection by our host country. This cycle repeats itself every couple of generations, whether in Spain, Eastern Europe, or other stops on our journey home. Whenever the veneer of our belonging in the Diaspora melts away a little, the hard truth is once again revealed: our exile is a manifestation of the *Tochachah* laid out in our sedra.

The greatest *tochecha* of all, the deepest form of exile, is the concealment of the fact of exile. When we are enjoying life in exile, when we feel comfortable, secure and at home in the thin materialistic bubble we have built there, we don’t feel the corrosive damage that exile is causing us. We become ‘galus Jews’. But exile is an unnatural condition. It is not who we are.

The *Tochecha* is an echo of the *Bris ben haBesarim*, the Covenant of the Parts, when a darkness falls over Avraham. And yet, it is also promised there that our exile will ultimately result in redemption, as described in our sedra (26:45): I will remember the covenant made with the ancestors, whom I took out from the land of Egypt before

the eyes of the nations, to be a God to them....”

The *Geulah* we yearn and pray for is a global process of restoring perfect spiritual health to all of humankind. Klal Yisrael will assume her proper place, physically and spiritually as Hashem’s beloved ‘partners’.

The Zohar teaches (Bechukosai 115) that *l’chalosam* in our sedra is written with a ‘chaser’, a missing element, a letter ‘vav’. As such, the spelling alludes to the word *kallah*, bride. This means that despite all we have gone through, Hashem always sees us as His bride, His *bashert*.

In the Gemara (Megilla 11a), Shmuel explains: *Lo m’asteem*, “I will not despise them”; this was in the days of the Greeks. *V’lo g’alteem*, “nor will I reject them”; this was in the days of Vespasian. *L’chalosam*, “to destroy them utterly”; this was in the days of Haman. “To break My covenant with them”; this was in the days of the Persians. “For I am the Lord their God”; this is in the days of Gog and Magog.”

Hashem’s full commitment and unwavering love of Am Yisrael is revealed in the chaos and confusion of the End of Days. While Galus is a deep test and has given our collective identity a crushing blow, we still yearn for the full revelation of Hashem’s unending love for us. We have not forgotten our ultimate goal, to be chosen representatives role models for the humanity, a light unto the nations, and

bearers of the covenant of the *Avos* and *Imahos*. We will one day succeed.

REJOICE IN THE HOLY CITY

This coming week marks Yom Yerushalayim, celebrating the miraculous affirmation of our covenant with Hashem, an open expression of grace and Divine favor. The swift victory over our enemies, amazingly matching the blessings in Parshas Bechukosai (26:7-8), sparked a resurgence of Jewish pride, and an embrace of our essential identity. All around us, Jerusalem is being physically and spiritually rebuilt; Torah is flourishing, there is so much holy progress. Indeed, the voice of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zy’a continues to resound: “This is the last generation of exile and first generation of redemption!”

More than a century has passed since San Remo, and over fifty years since the miraculous, prophetic victory of the Six Day War. Although it is difficult to remain patient, we are still confident and resolute, faithful and yearning.

We have felt the pain of *shiabud malchiyos*, the subjugation of the nations, and have had enough of the *chilul Hashem* described in the *Tochachah*. We are now ready to rejoice in the Holy City, ready to dance in her streets to the sound of the Divine *Chatan* and the sound of the *Kallah*. May we be counted among the *Geulah Yiden* who celebrate every step in this process of revealing the complete and true Redemption, *bimheira!* ■



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The second of our two *parshiyot* this *Shabbat*, *Parshat Bechukotai* begins with the words; “*Im Bechuotai teleichu, if you walk in my statutes and safeguard my commandments and fulfill them, then I will provide rain at its proper time....*”

Rashi, in a famous comment explains the words, *if you walk in my statutes*, to be an instruction to immerse ourselves in *Torah - Shetihyu Ameilim BaTorah-to immerse oneself in the labor of Torah.*

Rabbi Avraham Borenstein, the *Avnei Nezer*, the first Rebbe of Sokatchov, *zy'a* defines this experience of *ameilut b'Torah*, with these words from the introduction to his work *Eglei Tal*.

“The essential definition of immersion in *Torah*, is that one needs to find fulfillment, and sweetness or

pleasantness in that which is being learned...”

Rav Kook zy'a, in the ninth chapter of *Orot HaTorah*, echoes these sentiments, and says even though it is important that a person strives to achieve basic fluency and fundamental knowledge of all areas of *Torah* wisdom, it is important to recognize that as individuals each of our souls may be drawn more to a particular area of *Torah* study. True *ameilut*, is to find those areas of *Torah* wisdom that most resonate with our hearts and souls, and to let the sweetness of that wisdom permeate our entire being.

Yehi Ratzon, that each of us may find that *chelek* in the *Torah HaKedosha* within which our *neshama* may truly experience that *matikut*, the sweetness of *Torah*. ■

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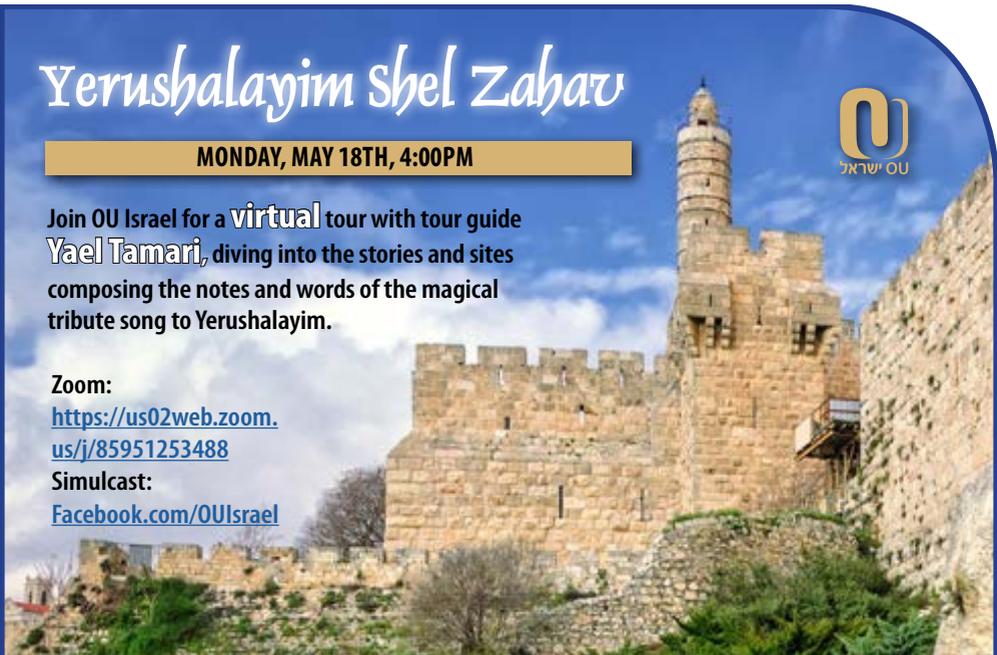
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Rabbi Aharon Adler

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[us/j/403831319](https://zoom.us/j/403831319)

Zoom ID: 403831319

11:30 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Mishlei: Wisdom for Life (L'Ayla)

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82280847618>

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Zoom ID: 82280847618

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura with

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

[us/j/887981820](https://zoom.us/j/887981820)

Zoom ID: 887981820

8:30 PM

Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski

Megillat Rut (L'Ayla)

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/8724746271>

[us/j/8724746271](https://zoom.us/j/8724746271)

Zoom ID: 8724746271

MON, MAY 18

9:15 AM

Mrs. Pearl Borow

Sefer Daniel (L'Ayla)

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/144986284>

[us/j/144986284](https://zoom.us/j/144986284)

Zoom ID: 144986284

10:30 AM

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

Chasidut on the Parsha

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/700303855>

[us/j/700303855](https://zoom.us/j/700303855)

Zoom ID: 700303855

11:45 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler

Ethics, family and society in the

writings of Rav Hirsch, Rav Kook

and Rav Soloveitchik. Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/81925157325>

zoom.us/j/81925157325

Zoom ID: 81925157325

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua. Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/888974573>

zoom.us/j/888974573

Zoom ID: 888974573

9:00 PM

Rabbi Sam Shor

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TUES, MAY 19

9:00 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Minchat Chinuch

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/89983298537>

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Zoom ID: 89983298537

9:15 AM

Mrs. Shira Smiles

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98629920642>

[us/j/98629920642](https://zoom.us/j/98629920642)

Zoom ID: 98629920642

10:15 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

Parshat HaShavua

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/195174554>

[us/j/195174554](https://zoom.us/j/195174554)

Zoom ID: 195174554

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura with Rabbi

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WED, MAY 20

9:00 AM

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

Halacha and Medina

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/6878683646>

<https://zoom.us/j/6878683646>

Zoom ID: 6878683646

10:15 AM

Rabbi Anthony Manning

Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/460662359>

<https://zoom.us/j/460662359>

Zoom ID: 460662359

11:30 AM

Rabbi Alan Kimche

Great Jewish Thinkers

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/772450422>

<https://zoom.us/j/772450422>

Zoom ID: 772450422

7:45 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Halacha

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

<https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

Zoom ID: 709706986

8:30 PM

Rabbi Ezra Friedman

Practical Kashrut

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/698124792>

<https://zoom.us/j/698124792>

Zoom ID: 698124792

THURS, MAY 21

10:15 AM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/615813416>

<https://zoom.us/j/615813416>

Zoom ID: 615813416

11:30 AM

Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/488542635>

<https://zoom.us/j/488542635>

Zoom ID: 488542635

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey

Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura with Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

Zoom ID: 887981820

8:00 PM

Rabbi Ari Kahn

Parshat HaShavua

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/2624570009>

<https://zoom.us/j/2624570009>

Zoom ID: 2624570009

SPECIAL EVENTS

Mon. May 18, 4:00pm

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<https://zoom.us/j/85951253488>

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O' My Yerushalayim Women's Event with WPCJ and L'Ayla Go to [facebook.com/OUIsrael](https://www.facebook.com/OUIsrael) for zoom link

Thurs. May 21, 8:30pm

Yom Yerushalayim re-broadcast concert with Rabbi Shlomo Katz & Yitzchak Meir. [ouisrael.org/yy](https://www.ouisrael.org/yy)
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Fri. May 22, 9:00am

Musical Hallel with Rabbi Rami Strosberg and inspirational message by Rabbi Ezra Friedman
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Milk and Meat on the Same Table Part 1

Introduction

A unique aspect of the laws pertaining to the prohibition of eating milk and meat is that our Sages extended the prohibition to many areas surrounding eating. The two classic examples are the rabbinic decree to wait in between meat and milk and the prohibition of people eating meat and milk at the same table together, even though each person is only eating either milk or meat.

The next few articles will discuss this second prohibition. This occurrence is more common than we might think. It can happen, for example, at a mall food-court, a school's lunch break, or a family picnic.

The *Gemara* (*Chulin* 103b) states that one may not eat chicken and cheese on the same table. The Sages in the *Gemara* are perplexed by the fact that this seems like a very large

extension of the prohibition. In other words, the original prohibition was to forbid cooking or consuming milk and meat cooked together. This now expands to other types of meat such as chicken. There is also a halacha not to eat one after the other. However, to expand the prohibition so far as to prevent an encounter of meat and dairy on the same table seems like a decree on a decree, which *Chazal* (our Sages) generally do not enact. Most early authorities explain that since both milk and meat are halachically permitted when eaten separately, it is likely that people will not be careful and will come to eat them mixed together. (*Ran Chulin* *ibid*, *Ramban Avodah Zara* 66b, *Ritva Avodah Zara* 67a) *Rashi* (*Chulin* *ibid*) offers another explanation. He claims that when they are on the table together, because the possibility of eating is almost inevitable, it is *as if* one is eating milk and meat together. Thus, it is not an additional decree. (For an expansion on *Rashi's* commentary, see *Moreshet Moshe* on *Chulin* 104b.)

Applications:

The *Gemara* (*Chulin* 107b) states that when two people who are acquaintances (even more so, close friends or family members) and are



eating at the same table, one eating meat and the other eating dairy, this decree is binding. However, when the two do not know each other, there is no prohibition since our Sages were not concerned that one would take from the other's plate or share food. According to this when eating at a mall food court or in an army mess hall with strangers there is no halachic concern if one is eating meat and the other dairy.

It is recommended to keep the bottle away from the table. Creative solutions can be found to prevent the bottle from being on the table

This decree includes not only regular meat and dairy (milk and cheese, see *Yad Avraham* 88:1), but even dishes cooked with meat or dairy may not be eaten at the same table. For example, someone eating a rice dish that was cooked under chicken may not eat with another acquaintance eating pancakes containing milk (*Aruch Hashulchan* YD 88:5). When feeding a young child a bottle of milk during a meat meal, it is recommended to keep the bottle away

from the table. Creative solutions can be found to prevent the bottle from being on the table. (See *Sefer Ben Yisrael LaAmim* 4 note 11.)

There is no difference whether the food items are being eaten hot or cold. (*Gemara Chulin* 104b, *Taz* YD 88:1)

The Gemara adds that the prohibition only relates to a table which is used specifically for eating, but that putting dairy and meat foods next to each other on the counter is permitted. Even though quite often foods sitting on the counter are tasted from time to time, since it is not a constant occurrence there is no concern that someone will mix the two dishes together. It should be mentioned that many religious families have a custom to allocate separate countertops for milk and meat. This is a worthwhile custom and those who do so are praiseworthy (*Yad Avraham* YD 88:1).

More details regarding this halacha will be discussed in future articles. ■

Kashrut Questions in Israel?

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RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Unraveling an Unusual Shabbat Custom

Mystics illustrate the sanctity of Shabbat by comparing it to one entering the *Beit Hamikdash*, the holy Temple. The uniqueness of Shabbat though, is that one does not enter a physical edifice - one enters ‘a Temple in time.’ An allusion to this majestic notion can be found in the final *pasuk* in our parsha: “You shall keep My Sabbaths and fear My Sanctuary, I am the Lord” (Vayikra 26:2).

This parallelism can be understood in the following way: The purpose of both the Temple and the Shabbat is to engage in the experience of meeting the *Shechina*. The Temple is God’s house, where we visit Him to commune with Him. The Shabbat is God’s day when we rendezvous and feel His closeness.

The Chassidic Masters understood that this meeting with the Creator is experienced differently throughout Shabbat. Each part of the day has its own

unique atmosphere and mood. The night is different from the morning, the late afternoon is different from the day time. And in particular, as the day ebbs away, during *Seudah Shlishit*, the third meal, a unique feeling of closeness can be sensed.

With these notions in mind we can appreciate an intriguing practice of Chabad chassidim.

Jewish law states that there is an obligation to eat three meals on Shabbat (*Rambam, Shabbat* 30:9; *Shulchan Aruch. OC* 291). The sages derive this law from the three-fold occurrence of the word ‘hayom’ (today) in *Shemot* 16:25: “Moshe said, eat it **today**, for **today** it is Shabbat for Hashem; **today** you will not find it [manna] in the field.”

However, Chabad chassidim follow a seemingly puzzling practice: They refrain from eating a full meal with challah for the third meal, and suffice with just tasting some food.

How did they adopt a custom that ostensibly is contrary to the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*? The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson zt”l (1902-1994) addressed this question in a discourse to his disciples (*Likutei Sichot, Beshalach bet*, משיחות ש”פ בלק תשמ”ז, אהש”פ תשל”ט).

His approach beautifully weaves together *halacha* and *hashkafa*.

First, the Rebbe quotes the authoritative position of the *Levush*, Rabbi Mordechai ben Avraham Yoffe (1530-1612). He asks us to closely examine the verse where we derive the law of three meals on Shabbat. Take note that the third mention in the verse of *hayom* is followed with the words “לא תמצאו בשדה” *‘lo timza’uhu basadeh’* - ‘You shall not find it in the field.’ This is a reference to the manna or the bread. Based on this allusion, namely that the third mention speaks of manna *not* being at hand, there appears to be a leniency regarding the need to eat bread at the third meal. In a word, there is a halachic basis for a third meal without partaking of a full meal.

Secondly, said the Rebbe, we must take into account the unique motif embedded in the third meal. The *Bach (Tur, Orach Chaim 291)* writes that the first meal of Shabbat corresponds to the first Shabbat of creation, the second to the Shabbat of the giving of the Torah, and the third to the Shabbat of the World to Come. In the World to Come, where one will simply receive spiritual nourishment, there is no eating or drinking.

In a profound sense, the third meal takes us to a place that is beyond eating, and for this reason Chabad do not include bread in the meal. When one ascends to higher realms of spirituality the act of eating has little, if any, appeal.

Thirdly, the Rebbe adds another critical

dimension to explain his custom not to partake in a meal at *Seudah Shlishit*. He states that the mitzvah to eat each meal on Shabbat is rooted in the obligation to feel or experience *oneg*. It is *oneg*, joy we seek to attain. Partaking of delectable food should therefore be regarded only as a means toward achieving a feeling of joy or *oneg*. However, if by the act of eating one diminishes their joy - if eating actually causes one discomfort - one does not have a requirement to eat.

Therefore the same rationale applies to the scenario of *Seudah Shlishit*. At that time, as the sun begins to set, the day bursts with sanctity. How then can one partake of food? One actually fulfills the mitzvah of *oneg* most effectively by abstaining from eating! *Oneg* is now absorbed via the aura of sanctity that permeates the air. The Rebbe describes the third meal of Shabbat as being akin to Yom Kippur in the sense that one simply has no desire to eat due one’s elevated state of mind and soul.

The Kabbalists employed a unique term in describing the closing hours of Shabbat. They called it *rava deravin* - time is suffused with the most favorable *Supernal Will*. It is this time which, dare we say, has a resemblance of the World to Come. Forgoing a meal at this time is therefore to be expected.

A related conceptualization of three phases of Shabbat was offered hundreds of years ago by the *Abudraham* (fl.1340), the fourteenth century sage known for his commentary on the *siddur*. He

compared the Shabbat to a wedding: Friday night is the betrothal, *Kiddushin*; the morning of Shabbat is a symbol of the marriage itself, symbolized by joy; then the third meal is like *yichud*, the coming together of the bride and the groom. The last hours of Shabbat contain exquisite sanctity.

The Tzaddikim who advocated this novel practice wished to move beyond merely theorizing about the Shabbat's sanctity and actually endeavor to attain true elevation and closeness with the Creator.

However, one question is left unanswered. If we do not eat a meal because it is a time we experience God's transcendence, then why do we eat at all? Why not totally abstain from any food or drink?

The Rebbe proposed the following fascinating answer: During this ecstatic hour of Shabbat, one is to have a taste of the World to Come. The position of the *Ramban (Shaar Hagemul)* and his followers state that *Olam Haba* is synonymous with 'the resurrection of the dead,' in which bodies will once again join the soul and jointly receive the reward for all that they accomplished during their lifetime in this world. Therefore, we taste a bit of food to symbolize the anticipated state when our physical bodies will be restored at the end of days.

We should emphasize that this particular practice of Chabad is unique in their circles; mainstream halacha

clearly requires that a meal with bread be eaten at *seudah shlishit*.

A story which concerns two of the Chassidic world's greatest leaders: Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810) and Reb Baruch of Medzibuz (1753-1811). Reb Levi Yitzchak was known for his passion. He could never stand still during davening; instead he would be seen dancing and swaying, from one side of the room to the next. His entire day was taken up with a constant discussion with Hashem, and one never knew what to expect from one moment to the next.

In direct contrast was the holy grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Baruch of Medzibuz. His service to Hashem was perceived as being quiet and extremely dignified. One never saw him shuckling and shaking, and his every action was performed with total control.

It was the great wish of the Berditchever to visit the Rebbe, Reb Baruch, for a Shabbos. He wanted to experience the holiness that permeated the table of the Baal Shem Tov's unique offspring. However, the Medzibuzher refused to invite the Berditchever. He didn't want him to disturb the quiet service that permeated his Shabbat setting, and he felt that the Berditchever would never be able to control himself in such an austere atmosphere.

After some time, the Medzibuzher relented, but only after obtaining a promise from the Berditchever that he would not in any way disturb the serene

avoda, worship of his community. Reb Levi Yitzchak readily gave his word that he would fully abide by their regulations.

Shabbos came and all was well. The guests watched as his quiet host davened the Friday night tefilla. He did nothing but answer amen to the prayers, all the while watching, just watching. The Rebbe's *tisch* began, and then the fish was served.

There was sweet fish, and then there was what was called sour fish. There was actually deep meaning behind the order of eating the fish. Some felt you should eat the sweet fish first, demonstrating that one should experience life's sweetness so that when the difficult times come one would be able to endure. Others felt that one should eat the sour fish first, so that when sweetness comes along it will be enjoyed all the more.

The Rebbe, Reb Baruch did things with a high degree of manners, so a young waiter would go amongst the guests asking which he preferred first, the sweet or the sour fish. This young fellow approached Reb Levi Yitzchak and asked which fish he preferred. "Prefer! I only prefer the Holy One. I love only Hashem!" burst out the holy soul. He jumped up and in so doing, overturned the entire tray of fish. "I love Hashem, I love Hashem!" He was now dancing, with all his pent-up energy finally let loose. The fish flew into the air, finally landing on the tallis of the Rebbe, Reb Baruch that he was wearing for the tisch. From the ceiling, pieces of fish and its oil began to drip down on Reb

Baruch's white tallis. What happened next in this episode was apparently not recorded.

However this we know. Not long afterward, the Rebbe Reb Boruch refused to allow his servants to wash that *tallis*, although it was stained. "I want to wear the *tallis* stained with a Yid's love for Hashem," he explained. And so it was. That *tallis* was handed down from one generation of chassidic leaders to the next. Never was it washed, for the stains were holy reminders of what a true Jew should feel.

Over the next hundred years that *tallis* was worn by the great Tzaddikim. The last to wear it was the Munkatcher Rebbe, Rebbe Chaim Elazar Spira (1868-1937), belovedly known as the *Minchas Elazar*, who only donned it at *Ne'ilah* every Yom Kippur. The story is passed down that the Rebbe, realizing through his holy sensitivity that an epoch was coming to an end, asked that upon his passing he be buried in that most holy of *taleisim*. This took place just a few short years before the Holocaust in of Europe (*Torah.org*, Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin, 'Chapter Eighty Four').

Shabbat, for Tzaddikim, is a time when the heart of Jew is aflame. The delight of the day increases one step to the next. One need only enter the holy 'Temple in time', with *kavannah* - sincere concentration, and *hitlahavut* - a burning sense of enthusiasm, to obtain a sense of *devekut* - attachment to the Almighty. ■



DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

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A Brave New World?

Sometimes when we sit alone at home during the Corona crisis, removed from the real world “out there,” we might contemplate what the world will look like after “it’s all over.” So we might then cast our thoughts back to the days of the Yovel, the Jubilee year, which is treated in our Parsha. We might imagine what was in the minds of our people in those distant days when the workers were divorced from the land, property returned to original owners, and slaves freed.

Did these people dream of a brave new world? Did they believe that after the year was over, that society would be refreshed, the moral fiber of the community would be enhanced, and that the pursuit of materialism would recede?

To answer these questions, we might glance for a moment at what has been

written (partially) about the Yovel. Based on the same principles as the Shemittah year, during the fiftieth year from the previous Jubilee, *inter alia*, the land was to lie fallow to indicate that property is not the absolute possession of man. Rather, “the land is mine, and you are but strangers who have become my tenants” (Vayikra 25:23).

The Talmud (Arachin 12b) mentions that from the time Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael until the first tribes went into exile, they kept seventeen Jubilee cycles. However, it is not known from historical records that they observed the Jubilee in practice.

The Yovel was inaugurated by the blowing of the Shofar on Yom Kippur of the “fiftieth year.” The year was sanctified and Liberty –“Dror” – was to be declared to all the inhabitants. Rabbi S. R. Hirsch reminds us that the Dror is an untamed bird of the field that makes



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its nest anywhere; it follows its natural trend. Yovel also represents the horn that the shepherd blows to call his flock. The term Yovel additionally signifies an act of bringing.

Thus, in sum, the Yovel year is designed so that property should be brought “home” to its rightful and natural owner. We might then add that the Shofar summons the people to return to their primal, pure, and unadulterated state. In short, the Yovel year is one of restitution and reclamation, of restoring and returning. Yom Kippur (hopefully) brings about the moral rebirth of the individual, and on the national level, the Jubilee launches a social and political rejuvenation of the nation’s affairs.

For Rabbi Hirsch, Israel is to progress in this freedom and independence from Yovel to Yovel, “until it reaches that ideal state in which it will be a bright and shining national entity in the midst of the nations.” Then, following the prophet, the nations will be drawn to Israel to learn of freedom, justice, and everlasting peace on earth (Isaiah 2:1).

Of course, we, as a people, were to do our part. For R. Hirsch, the proclamation of the release of the land and slaves was to be executed, not as a purely humanitarian or political measure: The shofar blast signified that the Yovel would take place “in the name of G-d” as the owner of all things. ■

Shabbat Shalom!

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Washing Hands after Leaving a Hospital

Question: When visiting a hospital, I saw a *kohen* alert sign. Upon leaving, should I have done *netilat yadayim* due to exposure to *tumah*?

Answer: We will first survey the point of *netilat yadayim* in various cases including yours.

When one becomes *tameh* on the level of Torah law in a manner that he needs *rechitza* (washing) to remove the *tumah* (e.g., due to bodily emissions or contact with dead animals), this consists of immersing his whole body in a *mikveh* (see Eirubin 4b). This does not suffice for one who came in contact with a dead human; a process that involves *para aduma* ashes is also needed. There are times that exposure to *tumah* does not make a person *tameh* according to Torah law, but *Chazal* decreed *tumah* on his hands, such that if they touch something holy (e.g., *teruma*), they render it *tameh* (see Rambam,

Avot Hatumah 8:2). As an extension of the Rabbinic *tumah* for *teruma* foods, *Chazal* required *netilat yadayim* with a *beracha* before eating bread, irrespective of known contact with any *tumah*; it may also be connected to the need for cleanliness (see Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 158).

There is another standard *netilat yadayim* with a *beracha* – in between when one wakes up in the morning and *davens*. There are different opinions among the *Rishonim* if this is because the hands became dirty during sleep or because one is like a new creature who needs sanctification (see Mishna Berura 4:1).

Another reason for washing hands is the prospect of *ruach ra'ah* (literally, a bad spirit) that cling to the hands in various situations. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 4:18) has a list of situations in which one should wash his hands (without a *beracha*), including, upon leaving a bathroom, after cutting nails, and after touching sweaty parts of the body. Some of them are because of cleanliness, especially if one is to partake in something holy, and others are because of *ruach ra'ah* (e.g., leaving the bathroom – Mishna Berura 4:40).

The Shulchan Aruch cites as “some

say” (see Mordechai, Berachot 192) that one washes after being among the dead (i.e., in a cemetery – Mishna Berura ad loc. 42, based on Shut Maharil 42). In Yoreh Deah (376:4) he says unequivocally that one washes after a funeral. Actually, the Tur (YD 376) cites a Gaon who views such a *minhag* as baseless. The reason given for doing it is the *ruach ra’ah*, not the laws of *tumah*. The latter is not an issue because washing the hands (or even going to the *mikveh*) will not remove the *tumah*, but it helps (at least partially) regarding *ruach ra’ah*, as we saw above.

The question, then, is what type of setting of contact with to the dead warrants washing? The Shulchan Aruch (OC 4:18) mentions that after touching the dead, one should wash. The Magen Avraham (4:21) infers that if one is in the proximity of a single corpse without touching it, he does not need to wash. However, he continues that it is customary to wash even if he “comes into [the place of] one corpse, as well as one who escorts it.”

While I lack the understanding of how *ruach ra’ah* works, the sources seem to imply that the intricate laws of *tumah*, especially of *ohel* (roughly, being “under the same roof”) are not the factor, as they are for a *kohen* in a

hospital. One can escort the deceased and not become *tameh*, and yet there is washing. (The Aruch Hashulchan (4:21) cites the *minhag* that it depends if he is within four *amot* of the deceased; while there is a Rabbinic concept of *tumah* within four *amot* of a corpse (Sota 44a), the problem might still be the proximity rather than the Rabbinic *tumah*.) In the other direction, if one is somewhere in a large hospital when a corpse is taken out through the basement, while this could be crucial for a *kohen*, who is bound by the Torah laws of *tumah*, it need not create a connection and corresponding *ruach ra’ah* that would require washing.

Since I have not found a source to say that there is a need to wash after leaving a hospital in which someone has died and the *minhag* is clearly to not do so, we can assume that this is correct. Our explanation is likely correct. ■

Having a dispute?



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Finding a Cure

The world is still in the grip of the horrific Covid 19 pandemic that has had such devastating effects on all of us. The race is on worldwide to find a vaccine to treat the virus, and many labs and units are searching for a medical breakthrough. If a company announced that they have developed a vaccine and are looking for people to be used in the clinical trials, would it be permitted to use this new drug? What would be the halachic requirement for testing a new medication? While the objective of the current pursuit is to find a treatment for Coronavirus, this is not a unique case, and we could ask about the permissibility of using any novel or experimental treatment.

We know the supreme importance in Jewish law of the value of life, so much so that almost all the halachic limitations and requirements are suspended in the case of danger to life. One is obligated to break Shabbat in the case of *pikuach nefesh*, and whoever is swift in this mitzvah is praiseworthy and whoever tarries, even just questioning whether the treatment should be administered, is considered as though they spilled the blood of the sick person.

(See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 328:2)

Rabbi Avraham Gombiner states, in the Magen Avraham, that this is only the case when the medication is well known to people or experts. We are only permitted to break Shabbat to dispense a tried and tested medication or medical procedure. In other cases, the Magen Avraham writes that Shabbat cannot be superseded since this cure is unknown and unproven to be effective.

The Magen Avraham does not stipulate how many times the medication has proven to be successful. The Shulchan Aruch, in a different chapter (301:25), writes that if a treatment has been used effectively three times, this is sufficient to define it as “expert” or proven. The number three is the usual number of times that something must occur to assign it halachic probability and significance. The *chazakah* presumes that if something happens three times it is likely to happen on all occasions. Modern medical trials require stricter criteria than three consecutive cases. We would possibly have to adjust our halachic definition accordingly and say that until a drug has passed all clinical trials it cannot be termed “expert” and proven. Based on the Magen Avraham it would appear that we cannot permit the use of experimental drugs without knowing all the possible harmful side effects. ■

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Dear Friends,

As we continue to share in the concern for everyone's well-being, and in compliance with the directives of the Ministry of Health, the OU Israel Center will be closing temporarily for all regular on-site programs, shiurim, and tiyulim. In the next few days we will be working to expand our on-line offerings of both new recorded shiurim and livestream shiurim capabilities.

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RABBI EPHRAIM

SPRECHER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

Matan Torah – Unity, Not Uniformity!

When Gd gave us the Torah on Shavuot, “the Jewish People all responded with a single voice”, We will keep every word that Gd has spoken” (Shemot 24:3). Was this one-time phenomenon, in which every Jew was identical to every other in his conduct and thought, an ideal situation? Alternatively, might it not be that beyond every Jew’s obligation to fulfill the 613 Mitzvot and to believe in the tenets of Judaism, he has a variety of options regarding how to live a life of faith?

Seemingly, Israel’s division into 12 tribes and the differences between the activities of each are the proof that there exist a variety of options for how the Jewish People must conduct themselves in Eretz Yisrael. Amongst the various tasks is that of serving Gd exclusively, and that task was assigned to the tribe of Levi. As Rambam wrote (Hilchot Shemitah 13:12): “Levi was set apart to worship Gd and to serve Him, and to teach His upright pathways and His

righteous laws to the masses, as it says, ‘They shall teach your Torah to Yaacov and to Israel’ (Devarim 33:10).”

But Rambam adds that this tribal role does not prevent any individual on earth who is so motivated from following in Levi’s path and dedicating his life exclusively to learning and teaching Torah. The tribal “togetherness” mentioned in Devarim 33:5 is referring to Unity, NOT Uniformity.

In Berachot 35b, Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai debated regarding the respective roles of work versus Torah learning. Rabbi Yishmael derived from the verse, “Gather your grain” (Devarim 11:14) that a person must combine work with Torah learning. In response, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asks, “[If everyone performs all the seasonal agricultural tasks required], what will be with the Torah?” In his opinion, the ideal person must trust that his agricultural tasks will be done by others. The Talmud then quotes Abaye, “Many followed Rabbi Yishmael and were successful. Many others followed Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and were unsuccessful.”

Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin in his book, “Tzidkat HaTzadik”, links the debate between Rabbi Yishmael and

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Abaye's conclusion to the differences between the first two paragraphs of the Shema. The first paragraph of the Shema is in the singular, the second is in the plural. The first parsha of Shema says that we must love Gd "with all our might" (Devarim 6:6) which the Talmud explains to mean all our wealth. The second paragraph has no such phrase.

In this world, Gd wants man to cultivate the world and not to leave it desolate

Rabbi Tzadok derives from this that the first paragraph in Shema is addressed to special individuals who receive a divine calling, such as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. That is why they are required to love Gd "with all their wealth." Such individuals are required to abandon even their livelihoods for the sake of serving Gd.

By contrast, the second paragraph of Shema is worded in the plural, makes no mention of sacrificing one's wealth and refers to one's "gathering in his grain." As Rabbi Tzadok explains, this was because the masses "must work, and they must supervise their wealth and worry about earning a living and supporting themselves." According to Rabbi Tzadok, the reason that many followed the path of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai unsuccessfully was that "such is NOT Gd's will. In this world, Gd wants man to cultivate the world and not to leave it desolate." From here we see that

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there is one demand made of the elite Torah Scholar, and still another from the general public.

In Parashat Ekev (Devarim 10:12), the Torah asks a question: “Now, Israel, what does Hashem your Gd want of you?” Netziv, Rabbi Naphtali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, in his commentary, “Ha’amek Davar,” explains that the Jewish People comprise four groups and Gd asks something different of each group.

The first group are Israel’s heads and communal leaders. The second are the Torah scholars, who are called “the Elders of Israel”. The third are the people who work for a living, and the fourth are the children.

Yet it is impossible to ask of someone preoccupied with his business affairs to envelop himself in the love and fear of Gd.

Regarding the four groups, the Netziv writes: “Each of these four groups differs from the rest in what Gd asks of it. Gd does not ask of all of Israel, but rather of each individual Jew in accordance with his stature...That which Gd asks of one He does not ask of another. And sometimes what He asks of one group is almost forbidden to the second group.

There the Netziv elaborates on what is demanded of each individual group. He states: “As far as laymen working for

a living, they must keep the mitzvot in the time available to them and their business must not nullify any mitzvah. Yet it is impossible to ask of someone preoccupied with his business affairs to envelop himself in the love and fear of Gd. You can only ask practical mitzvah fulfillment from this group, and that is what Gd requires of them.”

Regarding the principle that there can be separate but equal pathways to serving Gd, the Chafetz Chaim derives this from Ta’anit 31a: “In the future, Gd will hold a dancing circle for the righteous, and He will sit in the middle of them in Paradise [see Rabbenu Gershom]. Each of them will point with his finger, saying, ‘This is our God, for whom we waited.’ (Isaiah 25:9).”

The Chafetz Chaim comments: “If one uses a compass to make a circle, then from any point on the circle, the distance to the center will be the same. Likewise, there are many pathways to serving Gd. Any pathway by which one truly and sincerely longs for Gd and seeks Him out will be the equal of any other. Thus, in Gd’s dancing circle, the righteous will dance around Gd from different sides and each will point at Gd with his finger. Each righteous person will be equidistant to Gd.”

The Chafetz Chaim was addressing those righteous people and those scholars that think that they alone are close to Gd. In the Messianic Era, it will become clear that many approaches are equidistant to Gd. ■



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BY RABBI SHIMSHON HAKOHEN NADEL

Mara D'atra, Kehilat Zichron Yosef, Har Nof
OU Israel Faculty

Making Up Missed Torah Readings

As the State of Israel begins to ease restrictions - and synagogues prepare to open their doors - one very practical question that arises is: *Will synagogues have to make up all of the Torah portions missed during their closure?*

This is not the first time in Jewish History the question has been raised.

Writing in the 13th Century, the Or Zarua, Rav Yitzchak of Vienna, records an incident that took place in Cologne, Germany, where the community missed the Torah reading of Parashat Emor. The Or Zarua cites approvingly Rav Eliezer Ben Shimon, who ruled that in addition to reading Behar the following week, the community should also read Emor, making up the parasha they missed. The reason given: "For in the days of Moshe Rabbeinu it was enacted to read from the Torah according to its parshiyot, and complete it each and every year, in order to make heard to the Nation the Mitzvot and Chukim." He

explains that a parasha can be read on an alternative date, as often a parasha is moved if Shabbat coincides with a festival, for example. We don't push it off entirely, but instead make it up at a later date (Or Zarua, Vol. 2, Hilchot Shabbat 45; See also Sefer HaAgudah, Megillah 30).

The Rema (Orach Chayim 135:2) cites the Or Zarua, and rules that if a community did not read a parasha one week, they must make it up the following week.

There is, however, a dispute among poskim as to how to interpret and apply the ruling of the Or Zarua. Is the Or Zarua's intent that each and every missed parasha be made up - even if multiple weeks are missed? Or, is his ruling limited to only one missed parasha?

Writing two centuries later, Maharam Mintz assumes that the above ruling of the Or Zarua is limited to making up only one parasha, with a maximum of reading two parshiyot in one week. He relates an incident that took place in Worms on Shabbat Vayakhel-Pekudei, a 'double parasha.' As the Gabbai called up the Oleh for 7th Aliyah, a fight broke out between two men which lasted for two hours! Most of the attendees got

up and left, taking with them a Sefer Torah and reading the 7th Aliyah in a different location. As only 4 or 5 people were left in the synagogue, they could not finish the Torah reading. Maharam Mintz writes that there is no precedent for reading three parshiyot in one week - especially from two different books of the Torah - and instructs the community instead to read Parashat Vayikra alone the following week.

The Gaon himself had four parshiyot he missed while falsely imprisoned and read for him upon his release

This would also appear to be the position of the Vilna Gaon as well. In his Bi'ur HaGra (Orach Chayim 135:2), the Vilna Ga'on associates making up missed Torah readings with the law of making up missed tefillot (Tashlumin). Just as one may only make up the very last tefillah missed, similarly a community only makes up the very last parasha missed, even if they missed a number of parshiyot (See Mishnah Berurah, Orach Chayim 135:6). Some, however, question the intent of the Vilna Gaon's comments, as it is recorded that the Gaon himself had four parshiyot he missed while falsely imprisoned and read for him upon his release (Tosefet Ma'aseh Rav, 34).

The Magen Avraham, Knesset HaGedolah, Rav Shlomo Kluger, and Rav Yaakov Reicher rule like Maharam Mintz,

and limit the obligation to make up Torah reading to one missed parasha, with no more than two parshiyot read at once. Reading three or more parshiyot together would be a 'tircha d'tzibura,' a burden on the community.

But the anonymous author of the glosses to Sefer HaMinhagim-Tyrnau (41), an important 15th Century work of Halacha and Minhag, disagrees with Maharam Mintz. He assumes a community would indeed have to make up multiple missed parshiyot. The Eliyah Rabbah (Orach Chayim 135:2) rules accordingly, and writes that the enactment since the days of Moshe Rabbeinu is to read the *entire* Torah.

Many later poskim, among them the Beit David, the Chidah, Maharam Schick, the Pri Megadim, and Rav Ovadiah Yosef rule stringently, and require a community to make up any and all parshiyot missed.

The Aruch HaShulchan too rules that a community read all parshiyot missed. He writes that we don't find any limitations on reading only two parshiyot a week, and asks rhetorically, "where is the prohibition in adding [additional parshiyot]?" The Aruch HaShulchan even suggests the community make up the corresponding Haftorot that were missed! (Orach Chayim 135:6-7).

In his authoritative work on the laws of Torah reading, Sha'arei Ephraim, Rav Ephraim Zalman Margolios rules that multiple missed Torah readings need not be made up, but allows for those who want to be stringent and read all of the missed

parshiyot to do so (Sha'arei Ephraim 7:9).

He continues and writes that if the majority of the members of a community were able to hear the Torah in alternative locations, there is no obligation to make up missed parshiyot whatsoever (Ibid. 7,10).

Later, he writes that if there was never a minyan which gathered together to generate the obligation, there is no obligation to make up missed parshiyot, as the obligation in Torah reading falls on the community and not on the individual (Ibid., 7:39).

The leniency of the Sha'arei Ephraim is especially relevant in light of the current situation. Some communities had a majority of members who continued to read from the Torah from mirpasa'ot, in gardens, or outdoors, exempting the rest of the community from the obligation to make up missed Torah readings. While other communities had no minyanim at all to generate the obligation in public Torah reading. Both would be exempt from making up any missed parshiyot according to the Sha'arei Ephraim.

It would also appear that the Zohar exempts communities from the obligation of making up missed parshiyot. According to the Zohar (Vayakhel), the weekly Torah portion is connected spiritually to the specific week in which it is to be read. Accordingly, it cannot be moved from its place and read a different week.

Recently, a number of contemporary poskim have weighed in on the issue.

Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Rav Yitzchak Yosef, ruled that communities must read the parshiyot they missed. But Rav Asher Weiss, Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon and Rav Herschel Schachter all ruled leniently, that communities need not make up missed parshiyot.

As synagogues here in Israel have been closed since mid-March, making up all of the missed parshiyot would take hours and hours, a burden that most communities would not be able to bear. Individuals who would like to be stringent and form a minyan and read all of the missed parshiyot may do so, but communities that do not make up any of the missed parshiyot certainly have whom to rely upon. ■



Adam Farkas, MD



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When Ehud Banai Travels Back in Time

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹבב וְאֶף אֶת בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָקב וְאֶף אֶת
בְּרִיתִי אַבְרָהָםב אֲזָכַר וְהָאָרֶץ אֲזָכַר.

And I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham I will **remember**; and I will **remember the land**. (Lev. 26:42)

I was once the moderator for a panel discussion with two singer-songwriters, Ariel Horowitz and Ehud Banai. They both talked about our connection to the Land of Israel and how we treat it, which is one of the central motifs of this *parasha*. Ariel is the son of famed singer songwriter Naomi Shemer, who composed *Jerusalem of Gold*. He recalled that he is often asked if he shares the same right-wing political views as his late mother and that he has a standard answer to this question: “We are too obsessed with the width of the land, busy arguing about its borders, and split among ourselves between right- and left-wing. This is a terrible shame because we are so concerned about the

width that we have little energy left to discuss its depth, questions of culture, spirit, and substance.”

We have a time span going back three or even four thousand years whereas American history goes back at most two or three hundred years

Ehud Banai spoke about the Land of Israel in a similar vein:

I am very fond of American Blues and of songs that tell the story of a journey. I was always jealous of American musicians who go on never-ending musical tours and write about their experiences on the road from New Orleans to Memphis and on to New York. Here in Israel if you want to write about the long and winding road, your choice would be about the road from Acre to Safed, which is only an hour’s drive.

In one of my songs I wrote, “I am taking time again, between Peki’in and Bet Jan,” but the whole journey takes six minutes, in traffic, at least according to Waze. Another song talks

about “Pardes Hanna and Karkur,” which are less than five minutes apart. All I want is space and freedom. I want to get behind the wheel and just travel as far as I can. I always hoped that the day would come when I could drive to the border, cross it and continue on my journey.

My friend Oded Peled lives in Kibbutz Bet HaNassi and translates American poetry into Hebrew. When I shared my frustrations about the lack of distance in this country, he told me that we have something here that the Americans do not. We have a time span going back three or even four thousand years, whereas American history goes back at most two or three hundred years.

His idea gave me a new perspective on our country and I look at it with new meaning. Now I understood why I was attracted to writing songs that talk about our Jewish heritage: “The Golden Calf,” “David and Saul,” and “City of Refuge.” These are topics that send me back to earlier eras and this is my compensation for not having geographical space here. So instead I sing about the time span of this wonderful country. ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is an Israeli journalist, currently on shlichut of World Mizrahi movement to the US. She is the author of #Parasha (Menorah Press) and Reaching to Heaven (Artsroll). To receive her daily insight on the portion of the week, text your name to: 972-58-679-9000



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THE NEW OLD PATH

BY RABBI BENJI LEVY
CEO Of Mosaic United

Righteousness vs. Self-Righteousness

In its description of the priests, the Torah discusses their unique status, one that differentiates them from ordinary people. In order to sanctify their particular role, limitations are placed on their appearance and on their participation in certain aspects of the Jewish life cycle such as marriage and burial. Only two chapters before this, the entire Jewish nation is also ennobled with the task of being holy, in this case without any limitations: ‘Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy’ (*Lev. 19:2*). Here, the Jewish people are clearly instructed to be holy, and to emulate the holiness of God, which is by definition limitless. It is therefore strange that just two chapters later the Torah presents the priests with a subtly different message: ‘They shall be holy to their God and they shall not desecrate the name of their God; for the fire offerings of God, the food of their God they offer, so they must remain holy’ (*Lev. 21:6*). This unique command to the priests alone contains

the additional requirement of directing their holiness ‘to God’ and predicates the command on their Temple service. What is different about this command and the one that the entire nation received?

Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity. As it says in Tractate *Avot*, ‘Who is considered to be respectful? He who respects all the creations’ (Mishna, Tractate *Avot* 4:1). Beyond this elementary level of respect, however, individuals in certain roles are treated with additional levels of deference. One can be worthy of respect, for example, if born into a position of nobility or royalty, or one can earn esteem through noteworthy achievements.

While the Jewish people are inherently holy and are commanded to behave in a manner that reflects being created in the image of God, the priests hold an elevated status, which is suggested by the restrictions placed upon their behaviour. They play the unique role of the ambassadors of God to the Jewish people, and the ambassadors of the Jewish people to God. Therefore, they are not only afforded a higher level of respect and commanded to behave accordingly, but the manner in which they receive this command is distinct

from the previous generic command of holiness communicated to the nation as a whole.

Many of us... Find ourselves in some type of position of authority that legitimately commands extra respect, whether it is as a youth counsellor, a manager in the professional context, a parent or a communal leader

However, since this command and its details are designed to make the Jewish people view the priests as distinct and special, the Torah is wary that the priests will begin to think too highly of themselves. According to the Netziv, the stipulation ‘to God’ is added to remind the priests that their greatness derives from God and exists in a specific context, and therefore they should not let it make them arrogant (*Ha’Emek Davar* and *Harchev Davar* on *Leviticus* 21:6). Their greatness is a responsibility, not a privilege. It is a duty that comes with their position and should not cause them to think of themselves as better than the rest of the people, but rather should simply be expressed through their different role.

Many of us, at some point in our lives, find ourselves in some type of position of authority that legitimately commands

extra respect, whether it is as a youth counsellor, a manager in the professional context, a parent or a communal leader. The manner in which the obligation of holiness is communicated to the priests is a constant reminder to us that when placed in a position of authority, one should utilise this role to better the situations of those around us, to support them and promote them, rather than to feed one’s own ego. We should constantly endeavour to balance the source and purpose of the respect that we receive, and to carry authority with humility.

As the ‘chosen people’ (*Deut.* 14:2), Jews are sometimes accused of thinking that they are superior to others. Like the priests, who need to be aware that their holiness is specifically directed towards God and the Temple service, we too must realise that we are a ‘nation of priest-teachers – a holy nation’ (*Ibid.*; *Ex.* 19:6). Charged by the source of holiness, God Himself, our task is to redeem the fractured world that we live in by being a ‘light unto the nations’ (*Isaiah* 49:6) through living and breathing moral righteousness without ever letting ourselves fall into the trap of self-righteousness. ■

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Lia Manning
Gush Etzion
Chapter Director

The Fruits Of Our Labor

Who is really free? In this week's Parashot, Behar-Behukotai, there is a main theme: Shmita. The text records the intricate details of the time cycle of agriculture. We are commanded to let the land lay fallow every 7th year. This creates a cycle that is itself part of another cycle of seven. Every seven cycles of Shmita we have a year of Yovel (the forty-ninth year). One would probably not be fortunate enough to witness more than two such cycles in a lifetime. This makes Yovel the time frame of biggest scope in Jewish life. Tefila times repeat themselves daily, Shabbatot do so weekly, Rosh Chodesh comes around monthly, and even Chagim go by a yearly calendar! Shmita and Yovel, however, take us through decades of time, from one stage of life to the next.

You might wonder why these tim-

ings are relevant to most people. Aren't farmers the ones mostly affected by agricultural Halachot? While in Israel we might still need to be careful where to buy our produce and to separate the waste of Shmita fruit from other garbage, there is a bigger meaning to this occurrence. In the middle of our Parasha, the text shifts from our main topic onto a different Sugyah. We are told that a Jewish slave must go free during the Shmita year. If he chooses to stay then he must go free when the Yovel comes. Why would a slave that chooses to sell himself to his master have to go free against his will? The Torah tells us this is because we, the Jewish People, are solely slaves to G-d, who took us out of Egypt. The grand frame created by Shmita and Yovel are there to call out attention to the fact that no social construct can enslave us. Even if we make choices in life that take away our own liberty, we are reminded that only G-d's law is truly binding. Even if we think that we are the masters of our own fate and our success speaks to our own mer-



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it, Shmita tells us that the fruits of our labor will only be blessed if Hashem wills it. True freedom comes from recognizing the source of the good in our lives. When we are humbled by the way G-d runs the world, we can finally be free people. ■



Tiferet Spitz
9th Grade,
Alon Shvut

The City That Unites

In this week's Parsha, Behar-Bechukotai, Hashem gives us a choice whether to follow Him and be rewarded, or not to and be punished. One of the punishments for not following God is that the Beit HaMikdash will be destroyed and the Jews will be sent into exile. One of the main consequences of this punishment is that we lose Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the religious and political center of Israel. And that is why we are commanded to go and do mitzvot in Jerusalem at least three times a year. Rav Shimon Biton explains that there is an overlooked consequence of losing Jerusalem. It's

not just about the Temple, it's about how the Temple affects the people. There are two ways that Jerusalem affects the people. One is the kedusha, holiness, that just by being in Jerusalem you surround yourself with holiness and righteousness and you long to do good deeds. The second aspect is that it's a place for everyone to be together and united with different kinds of Jews, from different cultures, traditions and backgrounds. In Tehillim 122 it says "ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחוברה לה יחדיו" Jerusalem is described as a city that connects the nation. The Malbim explains that we are all parts of one body and Jerusalem is our heart. Next week is Yom Yerushalayim and we are so lucky that we live in a time where we can all be together and celebrate this day as a nation. ■

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Har Sinai, with a pair of Luchot at the top. Negation circle over someone planting a sapling. Question mark between them - for the famous question MA INYAN SHMITA EITZEL HAR SINAI? <> abacus for counting seven years of each Shmita cycle and seven Shmita cycles to Yovel <> Also, to calculate fair price of land, depending upon how many years remain until Yovel <> Shofar is blown on Yom Kippur of Yovel. Our blowing Shofar as YK ends, is partly to commemorate the Shofar-blowing of the YK of Yovel <> Liberty Bell is inscribed with the partial pasuk from B'har: AND PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT THE LAND TO ALL ITS INHABITANTS <> NOT FOR SALE sign is for prohibition which includes giving any part of Israel away to anyone else <> a fellow lending money at the Torah-approved interest rate for personal loans between Jew and Jew - 0% <> If you follow G-d's laws... then we will receive our rain in the proper time... <> and 5 will repel 100 (of our enemies) and 100 will push away 10,000... <> And we will have peace (dove with olive branch) <> Silhouette family is for ARACHIN with the baby's amount unclear because we can't tell if it's a boy or girl <> Price tag stands for

ONA'A because mark up is more than a sixth. It's more complicated than this, but the Torah does restrict the amount of profit one can make on what he sells to others <> Steel pen (B'EIT BARZEL) point (TZIPOREN) is in the haftara <> Maaser B'heima, 10th sheep under the rod. Maaser B'heima applies even in our times, but we are forbidden to do the mitzva, by rabbinic ruling, because we don't currently have the option of bringing it to the mizbei'ach <> O DODO O BEN DODO. Literally, either his uncle or his cousin <> Bar-bells are for CHAZAK, CHAZAK... <> The UZI is for the word in the opening pasuk of the haftara, HASHEM UZI UMA'UZI... <> a "fifth" of bourbon reminds us of the added fifth to the value of a non-kosher animal that was dedicated to the Mikdash fund and is now being redeemed <> Back half of a lion who is leaving the ParshaPix through its frame. This stands for the promise if we follow the Torah, that "bad animals" will leave the land (and not pose a danger to us) <> Shabbat candles stand for the reminder to keep Shabbat in the final pasuk of Parshat B'har <> upper-right is half a yo-yo, that's YO and the Latin for Goodbye is VALE, giving YOVEIL. (The Latin word is not pronounced like VEIL, but for PPPurposes, it will do.) <> ANATOT Monopoly-style deed is for Yirmiyahu's purchase of land - haftara <> And former US Sec'y of State? The word KERI (contrariness) occurs seven times in all of Tanach - all in Parshat B'chukotai!



Kinda Sums It All Up

אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָתֵת לָכֶם אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן
 לְהֵיטֵת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים: וַיִּקְרָא כְּהֵלֵךְ (פֶּרֶשֶׁת בְּהָר)

"I am Hashem your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God."

I've written and spoken about this many, many times - but I can't say it enough.

Let's start at the beginning - Moshe's first nevu'a at the S'neh (burning bush). HaShem says to him that He has 'heard' the cries of the People, and

וְאָנֹכִי לְהַצִּילֹם | מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּלְהַעֲלֵתָם
 מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וְרוֹחָבָה
 אֶל-אֶרֶץ זָבֶת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ... שְׁמוֹת גֵּר

"I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey..."

Aside from the promises to the Avot (about which we really shouldn't say 'aside') this was the first time we see Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM and ERETZ YISRAEL linked. A few p'sukim later, we find the middle part of the three-pronged plan, when G-d says to Moshe,

And He said, "For I will be with you, and

this is the sign for you that it was I Who sent you; When you take the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain (Sinai)."

Out of Egypt, Har Sinai, Eretz Yisrael.

We see this again in the beginning of Va'eira, with the famous prophecy of the Terms of Redemption. This time, HaShem doesn't just mention the Avot, He says to Moshe to tell the people that He is upholding His promises to the Avot AND that He is responding to the cries of the people, and

... וְהוֹצֵאתִי ... וְהַצִּילֹתִי ... וְגַאֲלֹתִי ...
 (That's three different facets of the Exodus)

... וְלִקְחוּנִי ... וְהִגִּיתִי לָכֶם ... וְיִדְעֵתֶם ...
 (That's three facets of Matan Torah)

... וְהִבֵּאתִי ... וְגַתִּי אֶתְּהָ לָכֶם מוֹרְשָׁה ...
 (That's two facets of coming to Eretz Yisrael)

This is The Package Deal that comes from HaShem. We were saved from Egypt and became AM YISRAEL in order to receive the Torah and live a Torah Life in Eretz Yisrael.

Our pasuk from B'har, above, sums it up very nicely. And many other p'sukim in the Torah tell us that Torah and Mitzvot ARE, so that we shall live, flourish, and come to Eretz Yisrael to inherit it and settle it.

This was never meant to be choose one from column A and one from column B. It is a Package Deal.

You want to argue whether Yishuv Eretz Yisrael is chiyuvit or kiyumit or whatever? Be my guest. But one cannot deny that it is R'TZON HASHEM.

this blessing is recited upon arising in the morning and not late in the afternoon, when it is time to recite the minchah service!" To which the other fellow replied, "You see, I am a Jerusalemite. At the time that the Holy City and the Wall fell into the hands of Jordan, I vowed that I would walk only in a stooped position. Now that Jerusalem and the Kotel are ours again I can straighten my back. I am now thanking God for *zokef kefufim* - for straightening my back and enabling me to walk in dignity, with my head up, like a man."

When one is in Israel, despite the anxiety for its future, one walks as if he were ten feet tall. One does not have to be abnormally careful of what one says or does not say, of what one does or does not do. One is amongst one's own and acts normally and naturally. That is the result of feelings of *geulah*.

As we celebrate today 53 years of the unification of Jerusalem, let us resolve to do all we can for our people, our State, and our City. We hope and pray that we are approaching the glorious moment of the *geulah sheleimah*, of total redemption and salvation, אמן. ■

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- Can Mom and Dad take out local health insurance now that they're stuck here? *Call E/C*
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Director of Tourism, Chevron

Yom Yerushalayim: An Awakening

The following thought are based on the Zohar HaKadosh - Parshat Bamidbar - the parsha which is always read after Yom Yerushalayim

“Rejoice in Yerushalayim, rejoice in Her - all who love Her” (Isaiah 66:10). The Zohar HaKadosh explains ‘Real joy can only be found when the Jewish Nation is living in their Land’. Only in Israel does the ‘Husband’ and ‘Wife’ unite - and only then is there living complete joy ‘above’ and ‘below’. (The light from above refers to Hashem being the Husband and the light below refers to the Jewish People living in Israel being the ‘Wife’).

However, when the Jewish People are distant and no longer living in Israel - it is forbidden to express joy (outwardly) as the verse says in Isaiah - ‘v’gilu bah’ - ‘IN her (only)’. Real rejoicing is only in Yerushalayim with the Jewish Nation returning and residing in the Holy Land.

The Zohar continues to explain in the name of R Eliezer an apparent contradiction: In one verse of Psalms it states “Serve Hashem with joy” (chapter 100) and a second verse says, “Serve the Almighty with fear” (chapter 2). What is the underlying difference between the two? The Zohar answers: ‘When the Jewish Nation is living in the land of Israel they are able to reach the higher level of serving Hashem with joy. However, when the Nation is living outside of the Land of Israel, they can only reach the level of serving Hashem out of fear’.

Baruch Hashem, 53 years ago, on the 20th of Iyar, G-d opened gates for *Am Yisrael*. Although it took Yehoshua seven years to capture and bring liberation, Tzahal took only six days to return to the biblical borders of Eretz Yisrael. (R Nachman Kahane). The Temple Mount, the Kotel, Kever Rachel, Kever Yosef, Mearat HaMachpela were all brought under Jewish sovereignty. Yerushalayim became ‘*k’Ir shechubra lo yachdav*’ with the unification of East and West Jerusalem.

Not only was there a great military victory and the liberation of holy sites - a great spiritual awakening took place. R’ Shlomo Carlebach would explain

the words “Ir HaKodesh”: ‘Ir’ meaning ‘city’ but also meaning ‘to wake up’. So Jerusalem is called “Ir HaKodesh”, “the Holy City” but really it means - “the City that wakes up all that is holy within us”. When you come to Yerushalayim one wakes up spiritually! And we are just waiting for Yerushalayim to wake up the whole world again.

Torah became a true holistic healing for a spiritually fatigued people

After the Six Day War we witnessed a great awakening and hunger for spirituality and holiness. The ‘Ba’al Teshuva Movement’ began to flourish with the return to the Kotel. Yeshivot and Seminaries began to blossom in Israel, drawing young students from all over the world to study and connect to their Jewish roots.

Although there has been an endless stream of Torah study throughout our years in the Exile a ‘new Torah’ of Yerushalayim began to emerge. “*Ki m’Tzion teitzei Torah u’dvar Hashem m’Yerushalayim*”. A Torah of ‘pnimiut’ - soul teachings / ‘nishmat haTorah’ (R Kook). No longer were we learning and serving Hashem on the level of ‘yirah’ (fear) but now a search of ‘mochin d’gadlut’ - and ‘expansive mind and consciousness’ began to flow from the Spring of Salvation. Torah became a true holistic healing for a spiritually fatigued people. ‘M’sos kol Ha’aretz’

(the joy of the Land) finally began to emerge.

Unfortunately, right now we are all limping. We are all so broken from the Corona crisis. However, we pray: ‘Let it be soon iy”h, let the skies to Israel will open up and we will all be able to celebrate with ‘a new song’ , a song of joy and love which will bring the whole world to Yerushalayim.

Let’s tap into the special energy of Yom Yerushalayim and activate all of the hidden treasures and spiritual jewels. With blessings of *Simcha l’artzecha v’sasson l’irecha!* (Happiness to Your Land and joy to Your Holy City)

Yom Yerushalayim Sameach ■



A graphic for a Zoom event. It features a grid of nine small portrait photos of diverse people. In the center, a blue rounded rectangle contains the text "POST YOUR ZOOM EVENT FOR FREE". Below this, an orange rounded rectangle contains the URL "https://bit.ly/2WXUxgR". At the bottom left, there are icons for a person and a video camera. At the bottom right, the text "LEAVE MEETING" is visible.



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The Obligation To Separate Terumot and Ma'aserot in Jerusalem Part 1

In honor of Jerusalem Day, we will discuss Jerusalem's special sanctity. The obligation to separate *terumot* and *ma'aserot* in the Land of Israel today is rabbinic according to most authorities. Is this different in Jerusalem?

While Rambam writes that the initial consecration of Yehoshua bin Nun is void, he distinguishes between different areas in the Land of Israel (*Beit Habechirah* 6:16):

“Why do I say that the original consecration sanctified the Temple and Jerusalem is for eternity ... Because the sanctity of the Temple and Jerusalem stems from the *Shechinah*, and the *Shechinah* can never be nullified. ... In contrast, the [original] obligation to keep the laws

of the Sabbatical year and tithes on the Land stemmed from the fact that it was conquered by the community. Therefore, when the land was taken from their hands their conquest was nullified. Thus, according to Torah law, the land was freed from the obligations of the Sabbatical year and of tithes because it was no longer *Eretz Yisrael*.”

The halachic ramification Rambam cites is that it is permitted to offer sacrifices despite the fact that the Temple is not standing, since sanctity is always present.

Minchat Chinuch (Rabbi Yosef Ba'abad, 1800-1874) writes (*Mitzvah* 284) that according to Rambam's ruling, crops growing in the ancient Jerusalem would be biblically obligated in *terumot*, *ma'aserot*, and *challah*; if sanctity is still present to allow sacrifices, this surely applies to *terumot* and *ma'aserot*. Yet he adds that this isn't relevant since no crops are grown in ancient Jerusalem, as the Gemara states (*Bava Batra* 82b): “Gardens and orchards are not erected in Jerusalem.”

One generation later, the Minchat Chinuch's ruling sparked a great halachic controversy among the rabbis of Jerusalem regarding the obligation of *terumot* and *ma'aserot* from Jerusalem-grown crops.

More next week. ■



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