

OHR NET

SUMMER ISSUE NO. 2 • SHABBAT PARSHIOT EKEV - RE'EH - SHOFTIM • 5762 • 2002 • VOL. 9 NO. 37

THIS ISSUE IS SPONSORED BY KOF-K KOSHER SUPERVISION • WWW.KOF-K.ORG • INFO@KOF-K.ORG

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Ekev

FIRE

"The carved images of their gods you shall burn in the fire... for it is an abomination of Hashem, your G-d." (7:25)

Our sages teach us that extreme anger is like worshipping idols. What is the connection? Imagine you're a courtier in the palace of the king. While walking past you, one of the other courtiers treads on your toe, and rather than apologize he turns around and pokes his tongue out at you.

Do you curse and shout at him? I doubt it. Not, that is, unless you are unconcerned about your head staying in nodding contact with the rest of your body. Your awe of the king, not to mention the fear of his punishment, make it easy for you to swallow your pride and smile a wan and insincere smile at your fellow courtier.

When a person becomes angry it's as though he's saying that he's not in the courtroom of the king. Or worse — there is no courtroom, no king.

Everything in this physical world has a spiritual cause. Anger is always compared to fire. Anger "consumes" like a fire the person who feels the anger. Anger turns the face flame-red. Anger "burns you up".

Sometimes, we may even get a glimpse of the connection of the spiritual to the physical:

The Hayman fire, the largest fire in the history of Colorado consumed tens of thousands of beautiful forest-land. The fire was caused by a 38-year old Forest Service technician who took a letter from her estranged husband and burned it in anger. Apparently, she thought she had extinguished the fire and left, only to find later it was spreading out of control.

When we ignite the flames of wrath, it's very difficult to put them out. If one act of anger can burn half a state, one shudders to think what happens in the spiritual forest-lands above when a person's anger flames.

Re'eh

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL..."

"The blessing — that you listen to the commandments... And the curse — that do not listen and turn aside from the way..." (11:27-8)

I remember being the grateful father of a newborn son. There are very few occasions that compare with the joy of a *brit mila*, the spiritual rite of passage when a Jewish boy is brought into the covenant of Avraham on the eighth day of his life. A feeling of expectancy filled the house. Relatives came from thousands of miles away. The sage and the saintly were duly informed of the time and the place.

Everything was set.

However, as happens quite often, the baby decided to develop non-threatening infant jaundice. It cleared up within a couple of weeks and, with great joy, I brought our young son into the Covenant of Avraham. By that time, however, the eighth day had already been and gone.

In a certain sense, however, I really had brought my son into the *brit* on that eighth day.

At the beginning of this week's Torah reading, when describing the blessings that come from following the Torah path of spirituality, it writes "... that you will listen..." However, when speaking about the devastation caused by not listening to the Torah, it adds the phrase "and you will turn aside from the way..."

Why the additional phrase?

Sometimes we want to do a mitzvah, like bringing our son into the covenant on the eighth day as the Torah mandates, but circumstances beyond our control prevent us. However, G-d, in His infinite kindness, fuses our desire to do with the doing, and considers the mitzvah as though it was actually done it.

The mere thought of doing a mitzvah — "that you will lis-

continued on page ten

Ekev

If *Bnei Yisrael* carefully observe even those “minor” *mitzvot* that are usually “trampled” underfoot, Moshe promises them that they will be the most blessed of the nations of earth. Moshe tells *Bnei Yisrael* that they will conquer *Eretz Canaan* little by little, so that the land will not be overrun by wild animals in the hiatus before *Bnei Yisrael* are able to organize and settle the whole land. After again warning *Bnei Yisrael* to burn all carved idols of Canaanite gods, Moshe stresses that the Torah is indivisible and not open to partial observance. Moshe describes the Land of Israel as a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, a land of oil-yielding olives and date-honey. Moshe cautions *Bnei Yisrael* not to become haughty and think that their success in *Eretz Yisrael* is a result of their own powers or vigor; rather, it was Hashem who gave them wealth and success. Nor did Hashem drive out the Canaanites because of *Bnei Yisrael*’s righteousness, but rather because of the sins of the Canaanites; for the road from Sinai had been a catalogue of large and small sins and rebellions against Hashem and Moshe. Moshe details the events after Hashem spoke the 10 Commandments at Sinai, culminating in his bringing down the second set of Tablets on Yom Kippur.

Aharon’s passing is recorded as is the elevation of the *levi’im* to Hashem’s ministers. Moshe points out that the 70 souls who went down to Egypt have now become like the stars of the heaven in abundance. After specifying the great virtues of the Land of Israel, Moshe speaks the second paragraph of the *Shema*, conceptualizing the blessings that accompany keeping *mitzvot* and the curse that results from non-observance.

Re’eh

Moshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from Hashem. When the nation enters *Eretz Yisrael* they must burn down any trees that had been used for idol-worship, and destroy all idolatrous statues. Hashem will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there; not to a private altar. Moshe repeatedly warns against eating animal blood. In the desert, all meat was slaughtered in the Mishkan, but in *Eretz Yisrael* meat may be shechted anywhere. Moshe lists the categories of food that may only be eaten in Jerusalem. He warns the nation against copying ways of the other nations. Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added or subtracted from it. If a “prophet” tells the people to permanently abandon a Torah law or indulge in idol worship, he is to be put to death. One who entices others to worship idols is to be put to death. A city of idolatry must be razed. It is prohibited to show excessive signs of mourning, such as marking the skin or making a bald spot. Moshe reiterates the classifications of kosher and non-kosher food and the prohibition of cooking meat and milk. Produce of the second tithe must be eaten in Jerusalem, and if the amount is too large to carry, it may be exchanged for money with which food is bought in Jerusalem. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor. *Bnei Yisrael* are instructed to always be open-hearted, and in the seventh year any loans must be discounted — Hashem will bless the person in all ways. A Jewish bondsman is released after six years, and must be sent away with generous provisions. If he refuses to leave, his ear is pierced with an awl at the door post and he remains a bondsman until the Jubilee year. The Parsha ends

with a description of the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

Shoftim

Moshe tells *Bnei Yisrael* to appoint judges and officers in their cities. A bribe of even an insignificant sum is forbidden. Trees are not to be planted near Hashem’s altar, as was the way of idolaters. Blemishes in animals designated for offerings and other points of disqualification are listed. The Great Sanhedrin is to make binding decisions on new situations according to Torah criteria to prevent the fragmentation of the Torah. A very learned scholar who refuses to accept the Halachic decisions of the Sanhedrin incurs the death penalty. A Jewish king may only have possessions and symbols of power commensurate with the honor of his office, but not for self-aggrandizement. He is to write for himself two *sifrei Torah*, one to be kept with him wherever he goes, so that he doesn’t become haughty. Neither the *kohanim* nor the *levi’im* are to inherit land in the Land of Israel, rather they are to be supported by the community by a system of tithes. All divination is prohibited. Hashem promises the Jewish People that He will send them prophets to guide them, and Moshe explains how a genuine prophet may be distinguished from a false one. Cities of refuge are to be provided an accidental killer to escape the blood-avenger from the deceased’s family. However, someone who kills with malice is to be handed over to the blood-avenger. Moshe cautions *Bnei Yisrael* not to move boundary markers to increase their property. Two witnesses who conspire to “frame” a third party are to be punished with the very same punishment that they conspired to bring upon the innocent party. A *kohen* is to be anointed specifically for when Israel goes to war, to instill trust in Hashem. Among those disqualified from going to war is anyone who has built a new house but not lived in it yet, or anyone who is fearful or faint-hearted. An enemy must be given the chance to make peace, but if they refuse, all the males are to be killed. Fruit trees are to be preserved and not cut down during the siege. If a corpse is found between cities, the elders of the nearest city must take a heifer, slaughter it, and wash their hands over it, saying that they are not guilty of the death.



THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by
OHR SOMAYACH
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman
Editorial & Web Advisor:
Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
Associate Editor:
Rabbi Reuven Subar
Contributing Writers:
Weekly Daf, Love of the Land:
Rav Mendel Weinbach
Insights, Overview:
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Web Production: **Binyamin Rosenstock**

Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

© 2002 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

* THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

OHRNET is available from the following sources:
• E-MAIL: Write to info@ohr.edu for information.
• WORLD WIDE WEB: Our address is: www.ohr.edu

WEEKLY DAFootnotes

BAVA BATRA 121 - 141

A BLESSING FOR GOODNESS

In our *birkat hamazon*, the grace we say after meals, there are four *berachot* (blessings). Three of them have a source in the Torah. The fourth is of rabbinic origin and has an interesting historic background.

“You shall eat and be satiated and you shall bless Hashem your G-d for the good land which He has given you.” (*Devarim* 8:10).

Rashbam here refers us to this passage which the *gemara* (*Berachot* 48) cites as the source for the first three blessings, based on the three components mentioned in it: 1) a blessing for sustaining us with food; 2) for giving us the Land of Israel; and 3) for giving us *Yerushalayim* and the *Beit Hamikdash*.

The fourth blessing was added by the Sages after the Romans gave permission to bury the Jews who were slain in Beitar. Following the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* by the Romans came the tragedy of the massive slaughter of the Jews of this heavily populated city. So many Jews were killed there, says the *gemara* (*Mesechta Gittin* 57a), that for seven years the heathens who took over the area fertilized their fields with the blood of their Jewish victims. The cruel conqueror of Beitar, Adrianos, wanted to constantly enjoy gazing upon the corpses of the mighty warriors he had overcome, so he ordered that instead of burying them they should be stacked up one atop another to form a human fence around his massive vineyard.

When he finally gave permission to bury them, the bodies were found to be miraculously intact and not decomposed as would be expected. The Sages then decreed that a fourth blessing be added to *birkat hamazon* whose central phrase is a praise of Hashem as “*hatov ve’hameitiv*” (Who is good and does good to others), for preserving the unburied bodies for so long and for putting into the emperor’s mind to permit them to be buried.

In addition to this regular reminder of Hashem’s goodness regarding the dead of Beitar, the Sages also instituted a shorter version of the same blessing when one switches from drinking an ordinary wine to a superior one. This was exclusively directed to wine because of the aforementioned abuses of Jewish blood and corpses in connection with the Roman vineyards.

The day that permission was granted for burial of the Beitar dead was *Tu B’Av* (the fifteenth day of the Month of Av), and is one of the reasons why this is such a special day in the Jewish calendar.

• *Bava Batra* 121b

THE SOUND OF DECEPTION

When Yaakov came to claim Rachel as his wife after working seven years for her father Lavan he was afraid that his devious employer would attempt to underhandedly divert the marriage to be with his older daughter Leah instead. He therefore arranged some code words with Rachel which only she would be able to use in identifying herself. When Lavan indeed substituted Leah for her, Rachel, out of concern for the embarrassment her older sister would suffer by being exposed as an accomplice to this swindle, passed on these code words to Leah.

“When morning came,” relates the Torah about the morning following the wedding, “and behold it was Leah!” (*Bereishet* 29:25)

From this our *gemara* deduces that until he saw her in the morning light Yaakov was not aware that it was really Leah whom he had married, because she had successfully duped him through the code words passed on to her by Rachel.

The question arises, however, as to why Yaakov failed to recognize the voice which spoke those words as not being that of Rachel.

Maharsha’s solution is that Yaakov was so convinced by the code words that he had devised as a positive form of identification that he completely ignored the slight differentiation of voice. A similar situation, he points out, existed in the case of Yaakov, at an earlier stage of his life, presenting himself to his blind father as his brother Esav in order to receive the blessings Yitzchak intended for his firstborn. The hairy clothes with which his mother Rivka covered Yaakov’s arms so convinced Yitzchak that this was his hairy son Esav that he ignored the difference between the voices.

The explanation which Maharsha offers for Yitzchak’s failure to detect the impersonation through voice is at odds with what Ramban, in his commentary on *Chumash*, suggests as the reason. One possibility, he writes, is that the brothers had very similar voices. When Yitzchak commented (*ibid.* 27:23) “that the voice is that of Yaakov but the hands are that of Esav” he was referring, say our Sages, to the content of Yaakov’s words, softly spoken and mentioning Hashem’s Name, rather than the sound of the voice. Another possibility, concludes Ramban, is that Yaakov imitated the voice of his brother as some people are capable of doing.

• *Bava Batra* 123a

JUST IN TIME

For thousands of years Jews have been praying for and impatiently looking forward to the *geula shleima* (the ultimate redemption). When it will take place is the

ultimate mystery.

"I, Hashem, shall speed it up in its set time." (*Yeshayahu* 60:22)

The prophet's announcement of timing appears to be self-contradictory. Rashi's explanation is that if Jews prove worthy Hashem will speed up their ultimate redemption; otherwise it will come only at the time set for it.

Although this passage relates to a national deliverance it is applied in our *gemara* by the Sage Rava to an individual one. A case came before Rabbi Ilish concerning the laws of inheritance. Rava happened to be present when Rabbi Ilish deliberated the issue and was prepared to issue a ruling which Rava found unacceptable. When he realized that he had erred in his judgment Rabbi Ilish felt deeply embarrassed. He was afraid that Rava was thinking that he was totally unreliable for ruling on halachic matters and that only the unexpected intervention of the superior sage had prevented him from making a mistaken judgment.

Rava, of course, had complete confidence in Rabbi Ilish and viewed the incident in another light. He interpreted Hashem's promise of speeding up redemption to the deliverance He provides for the righteous the moment they are in need of it. With this thought he comforted Rabbi Ilish, assuring him that he had never made a mistaken judgment. The proof was that even in the present situation when he was on the verge of making an error, Hashem placed Rava next to him to rescue him from issuing a mistaken judgment.

• Bava Batra 133b

JOY AND FIRE

The Sage Hillel the Elder had eighty disciples. The greatest of them was Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel and the least of them Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai.

After listing the almost indescribably vast Torah and mystical knowledge of Rabbi Yochanan the *gemara* reaches the obvious conclusion: If the least of these disciples was so great, how great must the greatest of them have been!

Rather than elaborate on Rabbi Yonatan's breadth of knowledge, the *gemara* simply relates that when he was involved in the study of Torah any bird flying over him would be consumed by fire.

Rashi's explanation (in *Mesechta Succah* 28a) is that the Heavenly angels gathered about Rabbi Yonatan to hear his words of Torah, and it was their fiery presence which caused the birds to be consumed.

The Torah's description of Mount Sinai when the Torah was given by Hashem to the Jewish People forms the background for an alternative interpretation presented by Tosafot.

"And Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because Hashem descended upon it in fire." (*Shmot* 19:18)

When Rabbi Yonatan studied Torah he succeeded in reliving the joy which his ancestors experienced at Sinai, a joy which kindles the Heavenly fire which accompanied the giving of the Torah. It was this fire which consumed the birds that flew by.

To support this approach Tosafot cites the Midrash (quoted by Tosafot in *Mesechta Chaggigah* 15a from the Jerusalem Talmud) about Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. These two sages were invited to the *brit* of the son of Avuyoh, one of the leading Jews of Jerusalem, along with all the important people of the city. But they were seated in one house, apart from the others guests in another house. While the other guests celebrated in their way with eating, drinking, singing and dancing, these sages celebrated by studying Torah. Their host saw flames descending from Heaven to encircle the house they were in and became frightened of a conflagration. To his frantic challenge "Did you come to burn my house down?" they replied that he had nothing to fear since this was no ordinary fire but a reenactment of the Heavenly fire of Sinai which was sparked by the joy of their Torah study with which they relived the joy of the Giving of the Torah. (It must be noted that such a fire, while dangerous to passing birds, does not harm humans or destroy their property.)

• Bava Batra 134a

THE SECRET OF A LONGER LIFE

"Mamulai" is what Rabbi Huna, the son of Rabbi Yehoshua, called Rabbi Bibi, the son of the Sage Abaye, when he presented a criticism of a move he had made to secure a gift he had received.

Rashbam explains that this was a reference to the region of Mamlei where the descendants of Eli the *Kohen Gadol* lived. This geographical designation, he points out, appears in a Midrash (*Bereishet Rabba* 59:1) about a visit which Rabbi Meir made to Mamlei. He noticed that there were no older people there, only dark haired youths. He surmised that they must be descendants of Eli, who was told by Hashem that as punishment for the sins of his sons, "all the male adults of his household would die as young men." (*Shmuel I* 2:33). When they confirmed this and begged him to pray for them to enjoy long life, he told them to become involved in charity and they would be blessed with longevity.

A similar idea, adds Rashbam, is found in the *gemara* (*Mesechta Rosh Hashana* 18a) in regard to the oath taken by Hashem that "the sin of the household of Eli would not be forgiven through animal sacrifices and flour offerings" (*ibid*.

3:14). The finality of a Heavenly judgment thus accompanied by an oath did not discourage two eminent sages descended from Eli from striving for a life longer than the eighteen years which was the norm for other descendants. The Sage Rabba interpreted the Heavenly decree and oath as only ruling out sacrifices as a means of atonement, but not excluding Torah study, and lived to forty, more than twice as long as other descendants. His disciple Abaye made the same deduction but added *gemilat chassadim* (acts of kindness) to Torah study as a means of achieving atonement and long life. He dedicated himself to both and lived till sixty.

The aforementioned *gemara* also relates the story of a family not in Mamlei but in Jerusalem whose members died at the age of eighteen. When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai learned of this he surmised that they were descendants of Eli and advised them to dedicate themselves to Torah study. They followed his advice and lived longer. In recognition of this, that family was afterwards known as “Rabbi Yochanan’s Family”.

• Bava Batra 137a

THE MAN WHO HAD EVERYTHING

“...And Hashem blessed Avraham with everything (*bakol*)” (Bereishet 24:1).

Both Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehuda understood this passage as a reference to the question of whether Avraham

had a daughter. While Rabbi Meir saw the blessing as his not having a daughter, Rabbi Yehuda’s view is that he did indeed have a daughter and her name was *Bakol* (the Hebrew word for everything).

Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah, explains why it was a blessing for Avraham not to have a daughter. He certainly could not have married her to one of his cursed Canaanite neighbors. To find a husband for her in his homeland as he found there a wife for his son was also not an option. Not only would he be reluctant to let her go live with such a husband because it would mean that a child born from the righteous Sarah would have to abandon *Eretz Yisrael*, but he would also be concerned that she would become an idol worshipper like her husband. Hashem spared him this agony and made his happiness complete by withholding a daughter from him.

Rabbi Yehuda, however, viewed the lack of a daughter as something missing in the blessing of Hashem. “Even a daughter was not lacking” is his interpretation of the totality of this blessing. As Ramban phrases it, “he had everything that people desire with nothing missing.”

In regard to the significance of Rabbi Yehuda informing us that this daughter’s name was *Bakol*, there is an elaborate esoteric explanation to be found in the aforementioned commentary of Ramban.

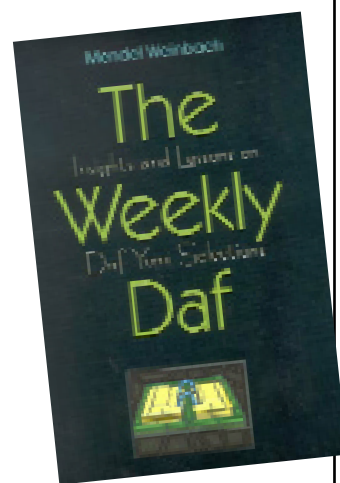
• Bava Batra 141a

The Weekly Daf

by RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

at Jewish Bookstores Everywhere!

Published by Targum Press / Distributed by Feldheim



PARSHA Q&A ?

Ekev

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Ekev's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

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

PARSHA Q&A ?

Re'eh

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Re'eh's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

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

PARSHA Q&A ? _____

Shoftim

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

PARSHA Q&A! _____

Answers to Shoftim’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

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

WARNING: DANGER!

From: Gerald

Dear Rabbi,

We are taught not to put our selves in harm's way/dangerous situations. If we do so we may die before our time; ex:war zone.

Can you explain how or if the following situations/conditions puts a person in such a state?:

1. Eating an unhealthy diet 2. Moving to an area such as Hebron 3. Not looking when crossing a very dangerous street And how do providence and G-d's protective angels play into the outcome.? It seems to me that even if one flirts with danger G-d still has the final say if He chooses to.

Dear Gerald,

The Torah (Deuteronomy 4:9) warns us, "You shall guard yourselves and guard your souls well". This is understood by many as a warning for us to safeguard our physical wellbeing.

To obtain a basic understanding of when this mitzvah applies we need to differentiate between a definite, immediate danger to one which builds up slowly or is only a relatively distant doubt.

Eating an unhealthy diet is certainly not advocated. One who leads a healthy lifestyle is far more likely to live longer, free of many types of sickness that affect those who give in to their sweet tooth.

Nevertheless there is no actual prohibition to enjoy a packet of potato chips and a coke. It's unlikely that a person will have a heart attack upon scraping up the last crumbs of a danish. His only immediate concern is keeping the powdered sugar from dirtying his newly dry-cleaned suit.

Eating the occasional unhealthy food is a normal, accepted

thing to do and does not create a significant danger to life. That what it may possibly affect the person in the long run does not make this bite dangerous.

Living solely on an unhealthy diet is different. The dangers here are significant and more immediate. A person who leads this sort of lifestyle is reckless and neglectful.

Walking into a busy road without looking is a recipe for disaster. Life is in immediate, definite danger. Statistics show that if a car hits a person at just forty miles an hour it will probably kill him. But even a car travelling at a mere five miles an hour can cause severe injury or death. In a situation such as this one cannot rely on G-d's mercy to save him.

As for Hebron, an interesting story comes to mind. A billionaire once hired a team of researchers to seek the perfect place to live. Many different aspects were taken into account, including quality of life, environmental concerns and security. After thorough research and huge expenditure, the Falkland Islands were chosen as the ideal location. Our wealthy friend packed his bags and moved there. Three weeks later the Falklands Conflict broke out!

Hebron might seem to be a dangerous place, but one can never tell for sure. Should the question of moving there arise, one would have to ask one's individual Rabbi.

G-d certainly has the final say in all matters. It's just that in a dangerous situation a person's merits will not necessarily come to his aid. This world was created to run according to nature. Fire burns, and if one puts his hand into it, he will get hurt. G-d is not interested in offering extra protection to provide for a person's foolish recklessness.

Sources:

- Rambam, Rotze'ach 11:4
- Rambam, De'ot 5
- Igrot Moshe C.M. 2:76
- Sefer HaChinuch 546

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

SAUL – A FAVOR REPAID

Saul was anointed by the Prophet Shmuel as the first King of Israel. His first opportunity to demonstrate his leadership came when the Ammonites under Nachash surrounded the city of Yavesh Gilead and demanded the debasing privilege of blinding the right eye of each of its citizens as the price of peace. Saul mobilized a large force from all of



Eretz Yisrael and subdued the Ammonite army.

The people of Yavesh Gilead never forgot the king who saved them. When the Philistines fastened the corpses of Saul and his sons to the walls of Beit Shean after vanquishing the Israelite army, it was the men of Yavesh Gilead who marched all night to remove the bodies and give them honorable burial.

continued from page one

ten" — is itself a mitzvah. However, when a person thinks about doing a sin, until he actualizes his thought, until he "turns aside from the way" it doesn't get marked down on his scorecard against him

Sources:

Be'er Mayim Chaim, Malbim, Mayana shel Torah

Shoftim

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

"When you go out to battle against your enemy... and you see horse and chariot... Let not your hearts be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not be broken before them. For Hashem, your G-d is the One who goes with you, to fight for you with your enemies, to save you." (20:1-4)

The Torah give four warnings here: "Let not your hearts be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not be broken before them." Rashi comments that these four warnings correspond to four strategies that the kings of the nations use in battle: *Let not your hearts be faint* - from the sound of the stamping of horses' hooves and their neighing. *Do not be afraid* - of the sound of shields being banged together. *Do not panic* - from the sound of

horn blasts. And *do not be broken before them* - from the sound of their shouting.

All of these fears are based on sound. The power of sound is that it draws from the world of imagination, intuition. It lacks the immediacy of sight but therein lies its power.

Sound suggests much more than it says: A creaky door in a gothic house; the sound of the wind whistling through a cracked window. These are only sounds but they have the power to petrify. Why? Sound is always alliterative. It hints. It suggests. The nature of sound is that the person who hears has to assemble the sound and make it meaningful.

Sight is unambiguous. When the Jewish People were sinning with the golden calf, G-d told Moshe to go down and see what was happening in the camp. Wouldn't Moshe have believed G-d if He had told him what was happening? If you can't believe the Almighty, who can you believe? And yet G-d wanted Moshe to see with his own eyes what was going on. Because you can't compare hearing to seeing. The very ambiguity of sound is what makes it so frightening.

Did you hear that? Or was it just me?

To our Ohrnet Readers
A Happy and Safe Summer

the OHR SOMAYACH WEB SITE

www.
ohr.edu