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PARSHA INSIGHTS

ONE MESSAGE WITH ONE VOICE

"If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son, who does not listen to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother..." (21:18)

Three of the essential ingredients in raising happy well-integrated children are "The Three 'F's" – Firm, Fair and Friendly.

Firm : Children need to know where they stand. They like nothing more than clearly defined limits. A parent who makes a demand and then backs down gives a child a sense of insecurity, for the child never knows exactly where the boundary is. Children push the limits precisely because they wish to know that there are limits. When we are firm, we give our children a defined world in which they can establish their relationship to the world at large rather than a vast expanse of frighteningly unknown possibilities. Of course, as parents we should therefore limit our demands to those things over which we are prepared not to back down. We must choose our battlefields wisely.

Fair : A child has a sense of what's fair and what's not. True, children are somewhat biased in their view of what fair consists of, but they are the first to recognize uneven-handed treatment. As parents, we must be unstinting in guarding against any kind of favoritism, either to siblings or to our own agendas.

Friendly : The correct proportion of positive interaction to negative interaction should be 80/20. In other words, every interaction that requires disciplinary

words or action should be balanced by four times as many positive and loving experiences. In addition, however exasperating children can be, it's always more effective to oblige them in a friendly manner. When they need correction, it should be done in a friendly tone of voice. Shouting certainly makes one feel better, but it's nearly always counterproductive in the long run. It shows weakness and insecurity.

Apart from 'The Three F's', there's a fourth ingredient that is equally as important.

Consistency.

Consistency is necessary not just in the behavior of each parent, but between the parents themselves. We learn this message from this week's Torah portion:

"If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son, who does not listen to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother..."

A child is only considered to be in the halachic category of 'wayward and rebellious' if he "...does not listen to the voice of his father and his mother." Among other things we learn from this verse is that both the father and the mother must have similar voices. The deeper meaning of both the parents having similar voices is that they must both speak 'with one voice', that they should not contradict one another in what is expected both of themselves and the child. The message that is broadcast in the home must be consistent, for without this keystone in child rearing, the child cannot be considered at fault.

• Sources: based on Rabbi Noach Orlowek

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son's right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father's desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women's clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. *Bnei Yisrael*

are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara'at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers' pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a *mitzvah* for a man to marry his brother's widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the *mitzvah* to erase the name of Amalek, for, in spite of knowing about the Exodus, they ambushed the Jewish People.

ISRAEL Forever

THE ENEMY WITHIN

Israel is faced by enemies of all sorts. Terrorist gangs threaten it in the north and south, and even its central cities are on the alert against suicide bombers.

This week's Torah portion begins with the words "When you shall go out to war against your enemy". Torah commentators have pointed out that in addition to the literal meaning of these words regarding a military action against our external enemy, there is a subtle message about waging war against the enemy within us.

This is an enemy as old as time. Whether he takes the form of the serpent in the Garden of Eden tempting the first humans to transgress the command of G-d by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, or it is the evil inclination leading us astray, it is the same enemy bent on having us destroy ourselves. Just as one must properly plan and execute warfare against an external, flesh and blood enemy, so too must he have a proper strategy for dealing with the invisible enemy

within.

These are thoughts which we must always bear in mind, but especially in the current month of Elul when Jews prepare themselves for the upcoming Days of Judgment by carefully examining what improvements they have to make in their lives. The most important strategy in the warfare against the enemy within is attacking the source of the problem. The examples are too numerous for one column so we will point out just one of them.

The problem of crime and violence in schools and families cannot be solved with more police and tougher penalties. The root of the problem is the abandonment of traditional Jewish values.

It is our hope that the call to go out to war against the enemy will stir our leaders to attack the root of the problem and reintroduce Jewish values in the educational system in order to guarantee the security of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS

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

HOW THE KOTEL REMAINED

When the Roman Legions laid siege to the Temple Mount in Yerushalayim they divided their forces into four divisions. The officer in charge of each was instructed to destroy one of the four walls which surrounded the sacred mountain.

Three of them indeed carried out this order but one left the wall entrusted to him intact. When the emperor reprimanded him for failing to follow his

orders, the officer explained:

"Had I destroyed that wall as did the other officers, future rulers would not be able to appreciate what grandeur you succeeded in destroying. Now that I left this wall untouched, future generations will be able to marvel at the destruction you achieved!"

Tradition has it that the wall he left alone was the Western Wall – the Kotel.



1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor's house?
2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
3. What will become of a *ben sorer u'moreh* if his parents don't bring him to court?
4. Why is it a degradation to Hashem to hang a criminal's body on the gallows overnight?
5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
13. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
16. "Remember what Hashem did to Miriam." To what event does the Torah refer?
17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
19. Which two people in this week's *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in Hashem's image, and because the Jewish People are Hashem's children.
5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
16. 24:9 - Hashem punishing Miriam with *tzara'at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the "forgotten bundle" for the poor.
18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother's widow).
20. 25:16 - "An abomination (*to'evah*) to Hashem."

לע"נ

ר' יצחק אייזיק בן ר' אליעזר בער ז"ל
ומרת שרה חנה בת ר' משה לייב ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

- Which *milah* can be done on Shabbat
- Caesarian birth, born circumcised and purchased slaves
- The status of a baby that didn't survive for 30 days
- The blessings made at a *Brit Milah*
- Use of a strainer on Shabbat and Yom Tov
- The laws of making nominal construction (*ohel*)
- Will Torah ever be forgotten by Jews?
- The disasters caused by corrupt judges
- Burial on Yom Tov
- When appearances count
- Preparing mustard and other foods
- Some dietary advice
- Feeding the animals
- Indirect handling of *muktzah*
- Care of shoes and clothes

WASTING FOOD OR WASTING BODY

It is wrong to waste anything. The Torah prohibits the chopping down of a fruit-bearing tree for military purposes when there is an alternative. Our Sages extended

this ban of *bal tashchit* to the wanton destruction of anything. Some Sages suggested that this concept can even be applied to eating and drinking.

Rabbi Chisda held that one is guilty of *bal tashchit* if he is capable of subsisting on bread made from barley, which is inferior nutritionally but considerably cheaper, and insists on eating the more expensive and more nutritious bread made from wheat. Rabbi Papa held that one who can subsist on the cheaper beverage of beer and insists on drinking the more expensive but healthier wine is guilty of *bal tashchit*.

These positions are, however, rejected by the *gemara* because "wasting the body is a more important consideration than wasting food".

The observation made by Maharsha about the connection between Rabbi Papa's beer-making industry and his above-mentioned position may perhaps be understood as his considering beer to be of equal nutritional value to wine, thus making the consumption of the more expensive wine a waste of food and money.

WHAT THE Sages SAY

"G-d forbid that we should even consider that Torah will ever be forgotten by the Jewish people for we have been promised that 'It (the Torah) will not be forgotten from the descendants' (*Devarim 31:21*)."

• Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE IN-HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

Two stories recently reported in the local and international media reveal the "inhuman side of the story" with harmless animal life waging unintended battles against humans.

The first concerned a burglar alarm which went off in an Auckland, New Zealand home. When police broke down the securely locked front door, they found no one inside except for the family cat. In the course of exercising its freedom to climb undisturbed over everything in the house while its owners were away, this feline alarmer had inadvertently stepped on the phone buttons which set off the

alarm.

In Israel it was a rooster that caused the trouble. Residents of a quiet neighborhood in Ramat Gan were kept awake for several nights by a rooster who apparently got its timing mixed up and crowed throughout the night. When the efforts of the city veterinarian to apprehend the offender proved unsuccessful because of the rooster's ability to hide in the bushes, a call went out to get a posse from the Ramat Gan Safari Zoo. Armed with rifles and tranquilizing darts, they arrived at the scene and, after a long battle, managed to restore quiet to Ramat Gan.

INTERMARRIAGE

Names@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am in love with a Catholic woman. I want to marry her. She loves me as much but religious beliefs are getting in the way. Please tell me what I should do. My parents say "no way". Help.

Dear Rabbi,

I'm getting married in October to a girl who is not Jewish (she is Hindu, born in India) and we're having a difficult time finding a Rabbi who will marry us. Why is this? And do you have any recommendations for Rabbis that would consider performing the ceremony. It's important to me and my family that we are married by a Rabbi. Thanks.

Dear Rabbi,

I will be married (very soon) to a Jewish woman. I am not Jewish, but would very much like to include several of the Jewish traditions in our wedding, to embrace her heritage as well.

Dear Names@Withheld,

For Jews, "marrying within the faith" isn't a cultural preference or prejudice. Rather, it is one of the commandments G-d gave us at Mount Sinai. A Jew who marries a non-Jew transgresses a Torah prohibition.

The practice of not "intermarrying" is in fact one of the oldest features of Judaism. It dates back to Abraham telling Eliezer, his servant, not to find a wife for his son from the Canaanites. It continues with Isaac's command to his son Jacob not to marry the "daughters of the land." The practice is mentioned in the Bible as a legal prohibition, and is also part of the covenant that Ezra the scribe had the Jews make when they rebuilt the Temple after the Babylonian Exile.

In all the above cases the underlying idea of the prohibition seems to be ideological. As Jews, we have a unique identity that is connected to our purpose in the world. We are the "chosen people." We were chosen to propagate the ethical monotheism of Judaism.

In the words of Leo Tolstoy:

"The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire, and has illumined with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religious. The Jew is the pioneer of liberty. The Jew is the pioneer of civilization. The Jew is the emblem of eternity."

We were chosen as a permanent protest group against idolatry and immorality. Intermarriage is therefore antithetical to the Jewish purpose and to the Jewish identity.

Can we prove that we are chosen? Do we have evidence? Yes. In a brief look at history we can see the antiquity, survival and impact of the Jewish people as unique and remarkable. I don't think that I can put it better than Mark Twain, in his famous description of Jewish history, "An Essay Concerning the Jews":

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim 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 commercial 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 way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendour, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw 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 and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other nations pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Intermarriage is a betrayal of our task and of our "chosenness." It is also a guarantee against Jewish continuity.

Let me illustrate with a conversation heard on the Dr. Laura Schlessinger show in the US:

A woman calls Dr. Laura: "I'm Jewish," she says. "My husband is not Jewish, but he is very active in the Jewish community. We are trying our best to raise our children as Jews and give them a Jewish education. Now my son is almost thirteen, and he tells us he doesn't want a *bar mitzvah* (celebration of the acceptance of one's Judaism). What can we do?"

"Let me get this straight," Dr. Laura says. "You say your husband is not Jewish?"

"That's right," the woman answers.

"How do you expect your son to follow Judaism when you don't?"

Being Jewish isn't a cultural affiliation or a tradition. It's being part of the Chosen People. That means a commitment to the responsibility given to us by G-d at Sinai. Someone who understands this will obviously choose a partner who is likewise committed. Otherwise, it's entering a relay race, but choosing a partner who's running towards a different finish line.

Whom you marry affects every single aspect of your life. It affects your community. It affects your children. It affects all future generations. The Jewish home is the single most important establishment in Jewish life. It outweighs any synagogue or temple, even the Holy Temple built by King Solomon. By marrying a non-Jew one thereby ends over 3,000 years of Jewish continuity, effectively cutting oneself and one's offspring off from what it means to be Jewish.

There have been many other arguments offered against intermarriage. Below is a summary of some of the most

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READING BEHIND THE BACK

Question: I sometimes find myself, while riding in a bus or train, sitting behind someone reading a newspaper. On the page facing me there is an interesting column which catches my attention and I am overcome with a curiosity which compels me to read it over the shoulder of the unsuspecting owner. But just as I approach the most interesting part the owner decides to turn to another page unknowingly leaving me high and dry. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: You certainly realize that the newspaper owner has no obligation to let you continue your reading even if he is aware of your situation. All you can do is request an opportunity to briefly see his newspaper. There is, however, a delicate issue of diplomacy in how to make such a request.

Should you inform him that you had been reading his paper behind his back and wish to finish reading that article, you may invite an angry reaction, justified or not, about your invading his privacy by peeking at his newspaper. Your best bet is not to mention your reading of the paper but to simply ask the owner if he would be kind enough to let you have the newspaper when he is finished or at least a part of it right away.

Simply withholding an admission of your reading behind his back cannot be considered deception on your part. But the other fellow's withholding his newspaper from you at no cost to him is considered to be a characteristic of the wicked city of Sodom whose selfish inhabitants refused to share their prosperity with others even though they would virtually be unaffected by such generosity.

Ask! YOUR JEWISH INFORMATION RESOURCE - WWW.OHR.EDU

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famous.

1. Six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, 12 million were left afterwards. Today there are only 13 million Jews in the world. Where are the rest that by natural increase should number close to 20 million? The answer is that the silent holocaust of assimilation has caused them to disappear as Jews.

2. Intermarriages are twice as likely to end in divorce as same-faith marriages (75% divorce rate!). Some reasons for this are the different identities of the spouses and the differences in culture and family. For example a Jew will naturally turn his head at the mention of "Israel" and "Jew." A gentile who converts in a superficial and insincere conversion only for the sake of marriage does not create a new identity that is now Jewish.

3. One is granting a victory to anti-Semites who seek to destroy the Jewish people. Think of what has been sacrificed in the past by our own ancestors to keep their Judaism. And think of the heritage that is being sacrificed for the sake of personal reasons.

Ultimately, however, all Jews must have a sense of pride in their own identity. We cannot define ourselves by foreign ideologies, nationalities or religions. As a great author once wrote:

"Pride is faith in the idea that G-d had when He made us. A proud man is conscious of the idea, and aspires to realize it. He does not strive towards a happiness, or comfort, which may be irrelevant to G-d's idea of him. His success is the idea of G-d, successfully carried through, and he is in love with his

destiny... People who have no pride are not aware of any idea of G-d in the making of them, and sometimes they make you doubt that there has ever been much of an idea, or else it has been lost, and who shall find it again? They have got to accept as success what others warrant to be so, and to take their happiness, and even their own selves, at the quotation of the day. They tremble with reason before their fate."

Let us not live by the "quotation of the day" but rather by our own heritage, the Torah. When Jews study Torah, and identify as Jews they are really just returning to their true selves.

In the words of the Rebbe of Kotzk:

"If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I; then I am not I and you are not you. However, if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you; then I am I and you are you."

Sources:

- Genesis 24:3-4 & 28:1
- Deuteronomy 7:1-5
- Nechemiah 10:30-31
- Exodus 19:3, 6; Deuteronomy 4:20, 26:17-19; Isaiah 61:6.
- Leviticus 22:32; Maimonides, Book of the Commandments 9
- A Book of Jewish Thoughts, compiled by Rabbi J. H. Hertz
- Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer 16:1
- Maimonides Hilchot Issurei Biyah 12:1
- Isak Dinesen, Out of Africa
- Siach Sarphei Kodesh