

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TISA · 16 ADAR 5772 · MAR. 10, 2012 · VOL. 19 NO. 21

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### ONE STEP BEYOND

“...he will give Teruma of G-d.” (30:14)

The entire Oral Torah begins with the question, “When do we read the *Shema* prayer in the evening?” The Mishna answers, “When the *kohanim* go in to eat their *Teruma* (the priestly gifts).”

What is the connection between saying the *Shema* and the mitzvah of *Teruma*? Why didn’t the Mishna just say, “The time to say *Shema* in the evening is when it gets dark”?

The Torah obligation to give *Teruma* is as little as a single grain. The Rabbinic obligation, however mandates between one-sixtieth, which is considered miserly, and one-fortieth, which is generous. The median amount is one-fiftieth. The word “*Teruma*” is an allusion to this median amount, for *Teruma* stands for *trei mi-me’ah*, two out of one hundred — one-fiftieth.

If the Torah was hinting through the word *Teruma* to the median gift of one-fiftieth, why did it express that fraction as two parts out of a hundred? Why didn’t it coin instead a word that used the words for ‘one’ and ‘fifty’ — *Chad* and *Chamishim*? Why wasn’t *Teruma* called “*Chadshim*” or something like that? And why specifically the proportion of two out of a hundred? Why not four parts out of two hundred, or eight out of four hundred?

The Vilna Gaon explains that the core of *Shema* lies in the first verse, *Shema Yisrael*, and in the next phrase *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto le’olam va’ed*, “Blessed is Hashem’s name of the Honor of His Kingdom for ever and ever,” which we say immediately afterward. The essence

of *Shema* is to affirm our belief that everything in existence is One and the smallest aspect of creation ultimately leads to Him alone.

The Gaon of Vilna observed that the twenty-five letters in the first verse of *Shema* and the twenty-four letters in *Baruch Shem* together equal forty-nine.

The number fifty connotes something beyond this world. We count forty-nine days of the Omer from Pesach till Shavuot, but we do not count the final day, the day of Shavuot itself, because Shavuot represents something beyond this world — the supernal moment of the closest encounter between G-d and man.

In this world, we can approach fifty, but we cannot count it; we cannot define or delineate it.

When I say the *Shema* I surrender the ineffable, indisputable knowledge of my own existence and proclaim that there is only One Existence, and that I am no more than just one expression of that Ultimate Existence. That is the ‘one’ that I give to make the fifty complete.

My recitation of the *Shema* – my own closest encounter with G-d — represents the “one” that raises the forty-nine to fifty. And as I say the *Shema* twice daily, it represents the *trei mi-me’ah* – the two out of a hundred.

*Trei mi me’ah* – twice a day, the *Teruma* that I give is the forty-nine letters that make up my declaration of G-d’s total and absolute Unity, together with the ‘one’ — the surrender and elevation of my own existence that joins me to ‘fifty’ — the Ultimate Existence.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**M**oshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. G-d selects Betzalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to

destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

## ISRAEL Forever

### A REINCARNATED HAMAN

**T**he week in which Jews throughout the world celebrate Purim is a time for recalling the danger our people faced when a Persian enemy threatened to destroy all the Jews in 127 kingdoms of Achashveirosh. It is also a time for reflecting on the danger facing Jews in Israel because of the threat posed by a modern version of Haman feverishly working to achieve nuclear capability.

We watch with anxiety the debate among the nations of the world, which are also fearful of Iran, as to whether sanctions are sufficient to deter the Iranians from developing

nuclear weapons or there is a need to take preemptive military action. But we can take comfort by recalling that neither sanctions nor air strikes brought an end to the genocidal plot of Haman. It was the fasting, praying and repenting inspired by Mordechai and Esther which brought about a miraculous salvation.

It is hoped that hearing the reading of the Megillah account of that miracle and its catalyst will inspire our people today to take the same steps which save Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### MOTZA – THE TAX-FREE WILLOW SOURCE

**W**hat was the source for the *arava* willow branches brought daily to the *Beit Hamikdash* during the Succot festival?

The answer is a small settlement just outside Jerusalem that was called Motza and sometimes referred to as Kalania. Both of these names refer to



the special status that the government gave to this community by exempting it from taxes.

While today's residents of this attractive suburb of the Israeli capital are no longer exempt from taxes, their area still yields a bountiful crop of *aravot* which Jews use for the mitzvah of the four species on Succot.

לע"נ

מרת פייגה בת ר' דוד ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How many “geira” are in a shekel?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
4. The Jews were counted after Yom Kippur and again after Pesach. Both times they numbered the same amount. How can this be? Didn't some 19-year olds turn 20 during that six month period?
5. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
6. According to Rashi, why are sailors called “malachim?”
7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'at* (knowledge)?
8. Shabbat is a “sign.” What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
10. How many books are there in Tanach?
11. From where did the men take the earrings that they donated to make the calf?
12. Why did Aharon build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
13. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
14. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
15. Why did Moshe ask that his name be erased from the Torah?
16. How has the sin of the golden calf affected the Jewish People throughout history?
17. In verse 33:2, G-d says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
18. How did G-d show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. How did Moshe become wealthy?
20. How do the light rays shining from Moshe's face show us the powerful effect of sin?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 30:13 - Twenty.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the *adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the *Mishkan*.
4. 30:16 - Their ages were calculated based on Rosh Hashana, not based on their individual birthdays.
5. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
6. 30:35 - Because they stir (*malach*) the water with their oars.
7. 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'at* is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between G-d and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:18 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 31:18 - 24.
11. 32:2,3 - From their ears.
12. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
13. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah forbids those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation which has estranged itself from G-d!
14. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
15. 32:32 - So people shouldn't say “Moshe was unworthy to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people.”
16. 32:34 - Whenever G-d punishes the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
17. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
19. 34:1 - Moshe carved the Tablets out of precious stone. G-d commanded Moshe to keep the leftover fragments.
20. 34:35 - Before the sin of the golden calf, the people would not have been afraid to look at the light rays, but after the sin they were afraid.

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- Consecrating an unborn first-child as a sacrifice
- Consecrating mother and unborn child
- Is an unborn child considered a part of the mother
- Conflicting designations made by the owner
- The terminology which makes an exchange effective
- Redeeming sacred property for less than its value
- The categories of animals which cannot be sacrificed

## MOTHER AND CHILD

Is the unborn child considered an integral part of the mother or a separate entity? This question arises in regard to a situation in which a man designates a pregnant animal as a *chatat* sin offering. In regard to the child that is subsequently born, we must consider what status it has, since it became consecrated along with its mother.

There is a *halacha* stated in *Mishnah Temurah* (21b) that the child of a *chatat* cannot be offered as a sacrifice but must be allowed to perish. In regard to our present case, however, Rabbi Yochanan rules that the owner of the animal can use for his atonement either the mother or the child.

The reason for this is that in contrast to the situation of the *Mishnah* in which the mother was designated as a sacrifice and subsequently became pregnant, the pregnancy occurred before the designation. The owner, therefore, had the option of consecrating the mother alone, and if he chooses to designate both mother and child it is considered as if he designated two separate animals and can therefore use either one of them for his atonement.

This reasoning, of course, is based on the concept that the unborn child is not considered an integral part of the mother, a concept that has many ramifications throughout the Talmud.

• *Temurah* 25a

## WHAT THE Sages SAY

“An unborn child is not considered an integral part of the mother.”

• *Rabbi Yochanan - Temurah* 25a

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## SIDESTEPPING SHUL

**From: Samuel**

*Dear Rabbi,  
Am I allowed to walk past a shul without going inside?  
Would doing so be disrespectful? Should I go another  
way if possible?*

Dear Samuel,

The Talmud (Berachot 8b) discusses this question by saying that one may not walk past a synagogue at the time the community is praying without going in. The reason seems to be, as you suggest, that it looks disrespectful to pass by when everyone else is praying. Another reason may be to avoid causing a bad reflection on oneself by appearing to disregard the community and prayers.

However, the Talmud makes several qualifications. For one, we see that the problem would only be if one passes by at the time of the prayers; but at other times, there should be no problem. Also, the teaching notes that this is only if

there is only one door; but if there is another entrance, there's no problem since onlookers will assume he will enter the other door. In addition, even if there's only one entrance, if there is another shul in town, there's also no problem since it's assumed he'll go to the other shul. Furthermore, the Talmud teaches, even if there's only one entrance and only one shul, it's still okay if he's carrying a heavy load, or running or wearing *tefillin*. These extenuating circumstances also preclude disrespect or suspicion: one carrying a heavy load is obviously preoccupied; one who is running must have some urgent need; and one who is visibly G-d-fearing and observant is obviously not disinterested in things of that nature and must also have some justifiable reason for not entering the shul.

Since nowadays most communities have several shuls, and many shuls have several minyans, it seems that in most scenarios, where a person walks past a shul when prayers are taking place it will be assumed that either he has already prayed, or will pray. That being said, if it's not too much of an inconvenience, it might be better to take an alternate route if possible.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### VISITING A SICK ENEMY

**Question:** Should one pay a sick visit to someone whom he hates as a mitzvah of *bikur cholim* and as an exercise of overcoming his negative feelings, or can such a visit be counter-productive?

**Answer:** This question has already been dealt with in *Shulchan Aruch* (Yoreh Deah 335) where the Rema rules that one should neither visit a sick enemy nor pay a condolence visit when he is in mourning lest his visit be interpreted as an expression of joy at seeing the sorrow of the one being visited, and thus causing him pain rather than comfort.

Of course this depends on the degree of the enmity

between the two parties. But another consideration has been raised by some of the halachic authorities. There is the possibility that the sick person may misconstrue the surprise appearance of his enemy as a sign that he must be mortally ill, thus causing his condition to deteriorate because of the psychological impact.

Perhaps the best idea is the one suggested by the *Aruch Hashulchan*. A message should be sent to the patient (or the mourner) asking him if he would welcome a visit from his enemy. If consent is granted, the above-mentioned fears are no longer relevant and a visit is very much in order.

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**B**etween mastering languages and traveling the globe, Chaim David, one of triplets, didn't think much about his two brothers becoming religious, but when he came to Israel for his brother's wedding, Torah started to shine over the horizon. The whole family was inspired by the occasion and began investigating the Torah lifestyle. Ohr Somayach was there for his brothers, and now, with Chaim

David, the trilogy was complete.

Chaim David felt like he was in kindergarten again: non-stop curiosity and discovery. For the first time in his life he was surrounded by Jewish people, Jewish philosophy, Jewish holidays.

Still, he had plans to go to Indonesia that he didn't want to change, and so he left. The next four months in Asia were the worst of his life. Needless to say, he made *aliyah* and is now happily married and living in Jerusalem, learning to get *smicha* as an environmentalist-Rabbi. One brother is a *sofer* scribe in Beitar Ilit near Jerusalem and the other is a doctor in Philadelphia. All three are happy and successful young men who have returned to their family heritage.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### STILL FEEL THE WARMTH

**H**ow is it that someone so distant from religious belief and practice shows such sympathy for the religious community?

In response to this question put to him by a rabbi, the chairman of the council of a pronouncedly non-religious left-wing settlement in Israel told the following story:

As an intellectually gifted youngster he sought to study in the Radin Yeshiva of the saintly Chafetz Chaim. The instructor who tested him for admission reported to the Chafetz Chaim that, although the applicant was well skilled in Talmud, he had some dangerous heretical ideas. Fearful of the negative influence this fellow might have on the other students, the Chafetz Chaim ordered him to leave immediately. Since the last train from Radin had already left, the

rejected youngster asked permission to sleep overnight in the yeshiva. That was impossible, was the reply, but an invitation was extended instead to spend the night in a spare room in the Chafetz Chaim's own home.

That night, as our hero was trying to fall asleep, he saw the door to his room open and the Chafetz Chaim stealthily entering. Certain that his young guest was fast asleep the venerable sage stood there for a moment to test the temperature of the room on this winter night. Convinced that it was uncomfortably cold, he removed his fur coat and covered his guest to keep him warm.

And you know, the unreformed but sympathetic heretic concluded, I still feel the warmth of that coat.

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