

SPECIAL PURIM ISSUE

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

A NICE PATCH OF GRASS

“Command!” (6:2)

The word mitzvah — commandment — sits uncomfortably in the lexicon of today’s pluralistic correctness. Truth be told, the Torah is chock full of commands. In fact there is not a single word of Torah that does not contain a commandment.

Isn’t all that “commandment stuff” rather repressive?

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe once asked a pupil:

“Did you ever say Shema Yisrael with *kavana* (intention and attention)?”

The pupil replied, “Yes, of course, Rabbi.”

Said Rabbi Wolbe, “Tell me, while you were saying the Shema did you feel a hint of rebellion against G-d?”

“*Chas v’shalom*,” replied the pupil, “Of course not.”

“Then you have never said Shema with *kavana*” replied the Rabbi.

A human being is made up of two elements — the physical and the spiritual. They have very different agendas.

The spiritual Masters teach that the first mitzvah of the Shema is to accept upon ourselves “the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Why didn’t they just say, “to accept upon ourselves the Kingdom of Heaven.” Why does it have to be a “yoke”?

The word in Hebrew for physicality is *chumriut*. The word for a donkey is *chamor* and shares the same root. The physical body is akin to donkey. A donkey needs a yoke, for when it spies that first appealing patch of grass it will stray from the path. The natural inclination of the body is to shy away from the yoke of subservience to G-d and the yoke of the *mitzvot* because it wants to graze in the human equivalent of a nice patch of grass.

A true recitation of the Shema demands that we accept the yoke in spite of and only after we have felt the body’s desire to rebel.

THE ULTIMATE CONNECTION

“Command!” (6:2)

The word mitzvah (commandment) has the same root in Hebrew as the word “*tzavta*” which means “connection”.

The word mitzvah shares its last two letters - *vav* and *heh* - with the four-letter Name of G-d (*yud, heh, vav* and *heh*).

Interestingly, the first two letters of the word mitzvah - *mem* and *tzadi* - also hint to the first two letters of G-d’s name - *yud* and *heh* - because using the numerological system of *gematria* known as *At-bash*, *mem* becomes *yud*, and

tzadi becomes *heh*.

If you want to know who someone really is, find out what they want. What a person truly wants is the outward expression of his essence.

The *mitzvot* are, quite literally, what G-d “wants”. And since a mitzvah is what G-d “wants” you can never be more connected to G-d than by doing a mitzvah, for what G-d wants is a “reflection” of Who He “Is”.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burned on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgres-

sion, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *she-lamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

SUCCAH 41 - 47

“At first, the lulav was taken (for the mitzvah) in the Mikdash for seven days, and in the Medina for one day. After the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai decreed that the lulav be taken for seven days also in the Medina, in memory of the Mikdash.”

The first *mishna* on our *daf* commences with this teaching, and Rabbi Yochanan in the *gemara* derives the concept of doing something as a “*zecher laMikdash*” — in memory of the Mikdash — from a verse in the prophecy of Yirmiyahu (30:17). What exact places are meant by “*Mikdash*” and “*Medina*”? One opinion is that *Mikdash* is the Beit Hamikdash, whereas *Medina* is Jerusalem and other places outside the actual Beit Hamikdash (Rashi). Another opinion is that *Mikdash* refers to all of Jerusalem, while *Medina* refers to outside of Jerusalem (Rambam). The definition of these two terms may have implications as to whether one is fulfilling a Torah mitzvah or a rabbinical one in the place one is located after the first day of Succot.

• *Succah 41a*

“This was the minhag of the people of Jerusalem: A person would go out from his home in the morning with his lulav in his hand; he would go to the synagogue with his lulav in his hand; he would say Shema and pray with his lulav in his hand; he would read from the Sefer Torah and say the priestly blessing after putting his lulav on the ground; he would go to visit the sick and to comfort mourners with his lulav in his hand; he would enter the Beit Midrash study hall and send his lulav with his son...”

Rabbi Elazar bar Tzadok taught this on our *daf* as being the practice of the “people of Jerusalem”. Due to the special dear-ness they had for the mitzvah of lulav they held the lulav throughout the day whenever possible. Only when they needed to use their hands to open and roll the Sefer Torah, or lift their hands for the *birkat kohanim* blessing did they put the lulav down temporarily. Also, when they entered the Beit Midrash to learn Torah they handed it to someone else since they feared they might accidentally drop the lulav due to their total immersion in Torah study (Rashi). We find in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 652:1 in the Rema and the Mishnah Berurah fascinating rulings as to “if and how” this constant lulav-carrying applies to us nowadays.

• *Succah 41b*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they completely removed from the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this Parsha?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burned completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burned, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); a *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); an *onan* (a mourner on the day of death of a close relative).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; upon safe arrival from a desert journey; upon being freed from prison; upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - a) Until the morning. b) Until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *mincha* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

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Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT ZACHOR

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

The last paragraph in Parshat Ki Teitzei describes Amalek's attack on the Jewish People in the desert. As a result we are commanded to never forget and to utterly wipe out the nation of Amalek. Abarbanel is bothered by the discrepancy between the description of the attack here and the original recounting of the battle in Parshat Beshalach. There it appears that the battle involved the Jewish nation as a whole, while in Ki Teitzei it appears that Amalek attacked only the weak stragglers who brought up the rear. Also, in Beshalach Moshe instructs Yehoshua to prepare an attack against Amalek, while in Ki Teitzei it appears that the battle was a sudden unprovoked attack by Amalek. Furthermore, in Ki Teitzei there is no mention of Yehoshua's attack and there is no mention of his victory.

Abarbanel answers that there were actually two separate incidents. Ki Teitzei records the initial unprovoked attack by Amalek against the weakened, vulnerable part of the nation. In Beshalach the Torah is telling us that after this cowardly attack and immediate withdrawal Moshe instructs Yehoshua to take a small group of chosen men and retaliate, the result being the defeat of the Amalekites. Ki Teitzei only mentions the initial cowardly attack, to awaken us to the necessity of never forgetting this perfidious action and to focus on their utter destruction.

Amalek's attack on Israel was unique in four different

aspects. First of all, the Jews were not threatening Amalek's territory, nor was Amalek extending its own territory or seeking material booty. Secondly, Amalek attacked without warning without informing the Jews of their intentions, not in accord with the custom amongst warring nations at that time. Thirdly, the cowardly nature of their attack showed that there was no logical purpose to their actions. Finally, the nature of the attack clearly demonstrated they had no fear of G-d. Their action was essentially an attack on G-d.

In order to dispel the notion that only G-d would take revenge against Amalek, the nation is told that since it is goal of Amalek to destroy the Jewish nation, it is the Jewish nation's responsibility to destroy Amalek. Even when they have rested from the conquest of their enemies in the Land of Israel they cannot rest from their responsibility to destroy Amalek.

The admonition to never forget the nature of Amalek and our ultimate responsibility to destroy them extends to all times and all places, even when we are not in a position to challenge them. This is what is meant by "You shall wipe out the memory of Amalek *from under the heaven* — you shall never forget." The expression "under the heaven" is a reference to our situation in exile anywhere on the globe. Even though we may not be in a position to literally wipe out Amalek we must never forget who they are and what they did.

@ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students*

**Adam Pasternak - Age 26
Queens, NY**

**Queens College: Major in Accounting
Insurance Company Accountant
Intermediate and Derech Programs Alumnus**

Adam represents an aspect of Ohr Somayach that characterizes the strength and uniqueness of its environment. It was not in the least bit unusual to see a young man in a suit and black hat carrying three books of *gemara* while engaged in animated conversation with another young man in shorts, T-shirt and no yarmulke. Not only do Jews of every



stripe co-exist and interact, but Ohr Somayach often has the ability to truly transform people. In many cases, in a few short years, the guy in the shorts and the guy in the suit become the same person, an individual truly connected to his Judaism. As Adam puts it, "I feel lucky and blessed to have been able to spend my college summers there."

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT TZAV

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Understanding Sacrificial Offerings

The chapters in the Torah which detail the practice of animal sacrifice in the Temple are some of the most difficult for a 21st century individual to understand. As such practices have completely disappeared from civilized society we tend to view them as cruel, primitive and superstitious. They seem incompatible with other humane and progressive commandments of the Torah, which were revolutionary when the Torah was first given and today form the basis for not only a vibrant Judaism but for the moral and ethical standards of most of the rest of the world as well.

Writing in the early 16th century and incorporating the words of Maimonides, who preceded him by several hundred years, Abarbanel provides a perspective on sacrifices that we can appreciate today. The primary reason for the necessity of these rituals was to assist the nascent Jewish nation in believing in the existence and oneness of G-d and to draw closer to Him by following His directives. Human perfection can be more effectively realized by attaining knowledge and faith through prayer, enlightenment and adherence to the Torah's other precepts than by burning animals on an altar. However, the Jewish People were commanded to devote themselves to the worship of G-d, and the prevailing form of worship at that time was through animal sacrifice in special, designated temples. G-d determined that the Jewish People would not be able to easily abandon such a well-established universal custom. By shifting the mode of worship from polytheistic paganism to the worship of one G-d, idolatry could be eliminated without radically interfering with practices already familiar to the people. In fact, the enormous amount of detail and the many differences between the various offerings symbolize many of the fundamental precepts of man's responsibilities to himself and his Creator.

The first type of animal offering is the *Olah*, or Elevation Offering, which is completely consumed on the Altar. This represents the uniting of the soul with G-d. Just as the animal's body is united with the flames, so too is man's eternal soul united with G-d after death. This offering demonstrates that our sole purpose is to devote ourselves completely to the service of G-d. Since it symbolizes man's Divinely-creat-

ed non-physical soul, material man has no share in it and cannot partake of it

The second type of offering is the Sin Offering. This offering functions as one aspect of the atonement process that is required of one who transgresses Torah commandments unintentionally. It encourages the transgressor to be more vigilant and to consider the consequences of his actions. It functions as a monetary fine as well, since the transgressor must provide the animal. Even if one is unsure whether he transgressed at all he still must bring an offering. The procedures of the offering differ for unintentional transgressions committed by the High Court or the High Priest, as their positions involve greater responsibility.

The third type of offering is the Peace Offering, which is brought by people who are thanking G-d for His numerous favors — for granting us the Land of Israel and for other acts of miraculous Divine intervention. It can represent gratitude for a past favor or act as a way of beseeching G-d to help us in the future. A festive meal is part of the offering. The one who brings the animal and the priests who conduct the rituals are allowed to consume part of the offering as they all join in thanking G-d for His blessings. The internal organs are burned on the Altar, as they are symbols of man's internal thoughts. It is as if the owner is saying that he is pouring out his inner soul before G-d.

All of these offerings always consist of the most expensive animals: cattle, sheep and goats. They are also accompanied by the finest wheat flour, oils and wines. Here the Torah is emphasizing that the finest products of Israel depend on G-d's blessing.

In summary, the Elevation Offering is ideological in nature. It symbolizes the immortality of the soul and its intimate connection with G-d. The Sin Offerings teach the importance of personal vigilance and accountability, the just reward for those who fear and worship G-d and the punishment for those who defy Him. At the same time, it is essential for that person to understand that his sins can be pardoned. Otherwise, there is the possibility that he will lapse even more. Finally, the Peace Offerings illustrate our faith in Divine providence, in our recognition that G-d is the ultimate source of our material blessings.

POOR AND PURIM

From: Henry

Dear Rabbi,

I know there is a special mitzvah on Purim to give to the poor, but I'm not sure why. What's the connection between the poor and Purim, and what are some of the specifics on how the mitzvah is to be performed? Thanks for your time.

Dear Henry,

One particular aspect of the terrible designs of Haman and of the decrees of King Achashverosh was that they intended not to uproot Judaism but rather to annihilate the Jewish People. Therefore, the celebration of Purim is not only a reaffirmation of Judaism, but actually a confirmation of the physical continuation of our People.

For this reason, we eat, drink and give food gifts to each other. It is for the same reason that we give special gifts to the poor on this day, so that no one should be lacking, and in order that everyone should be able to full-heartedly thank G-d for being alive.

The mitzvah is for every person to give at least one gift to each of two poor people. Even poor people themselves who normally subsist on charity are required to give these gifts. The gift to each person may consist of food or money, but should be significant enough for a person to incorporate into a meal.

Even though these gifts are given to the poor, they may not be given from monies tithed for charity, but rather from one's own money. However, one may use charity money to give beyond the required one gift for each of two poor people.

The gift should be given on the day of Purim, and specifically after the reading of the Megilla. This is in order that the poor will be able to use the food or money immediately for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah of their own Purim meal. That being said, a person may transfer the gifts before Purim with the intention that they be given on Purim. In this way, an individual or organization can act as an agent on behalf of others to disseminate gifts to needy individuals on Purim itself. If, for whatever reason, a person is not able to give this gift to the poor on Purim, he should put the money aside on Purim and give it later when he has the opportunity.

One is not to be overly-scrutinizing on Purim in determining whether the poor are needy enough to receive these gifts or not. Rather, the Sages declare, "anyone who extends his hand to take – we are to give him". As above, one may use charity money to give to people beyond the halachic requirement.

In some communities children ask for "Purim-gelt". There is no requirement to give to children unless you know they're collecting for adults, such as their parents. Based on proper discretion, one may give them vary small, symbolic amounts. But since children may use the money for harmful things like fireworks, excessive sweets or other things that their parents would not approve of, one should be cautious when giving money to children.

Both men and women from the age of bar and bat mitzvah are required to fulfill this mitzvah. A parent may give his older children money in order for them to fulfill their mitzvah of giving to the poor, but it is a good practice to encourage them to give of their own money if they have, for example from allowances or baby-sitting.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

A MIRACLE WITHOUT HALLEL

As Jews throughout the world celebrate the miracle of Purim the question arises as to why Hallel is not said on this happy day.

One of the answers given to this question in the Talmud (*Megillah* 14a) is that Hallel is not said for a miracle that took place outside of Eretz Yisrael. Even though we



do say Hallel in regard to the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt, that event took place before Jews entered their Promised Land. Once they came to Eretz Yisrael no place outside of it was worthy of having Hallel said for a miracle that took place there.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

There are two famous questions asked regarding the Megillah: 1) Why is G-d's name not mentioned even once in the entire story of Purim? 2) Why did the Sages require reading the Megillah both in the evening, and again the following morning?

Reading a lengthy detailed story twice in one day is hardly logical, since no one will forget the story in the few hours between readings, and since everyone clearly remembers all of the story's details there is seemingly no addition in publicizing the miracle. So why do we have to read it again?

G-d is No Where

We first read the story of Esther and the Jews of Shushan in the evening, which is a time of darkness, because in exile, which is compared to darkness, G-d's presence is hidden from us. All we see is the chaos and danger surrounding us. Everything seems so random, it is impossible to see G-d's hand in the day's events. Instead, we see the oppression of the weak and helpless, the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Chance and luck are the dreams of the needy. Just as G-d is nowhere to be found in such a world, likewise He is not found anywhere in the Megillah. We see only hatred and schemes, bribery and oppression, as the Jews are sold into annihilation. All this is only for the first reading, when all is hidden behind the darkness, and that is why it is called the story of Esther, for in Hebrew - the name Esther means concealment.

G-d is NoW here

In the second reading, which is read in the morning, we reread about all of the same confusing and horrific circumstances that the Jews faced in those days. However this time things are different. We are no longer in the dark, for the morning sun has broken through the dark horizon, turning the sky bright blue, reminding us of G-d's Throne of Glory.

What has changed? We've grown through the night, for what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and smarter. We now know how the story will end since we read it the night before, and knowing that G-d will save us in the end is what turns night into day, changing feelings of fear and anxiety into reassurance and tranquility.

Just as G-d created night, He also created its cure — faith. But what exactly is faith? Faith is remembering that no matter what happens in the middle, the end will be ours. That was G-d's promise to our father Avraham, and it is our

promise to our children.

When we start each day saying, "I believe with complete faith that all that G-d does is for our good, and that He will surely save us in the end," we will never have anything to fear. Once we are not afraid we will be able to look deeper into what is happening in our lives, as well as the world, and suddenly the random events will start to come together. We will see the thread behind all things connecting them together. The hand of G-d will show itself and we will realize that all the times we thought we were alone, abandoned to the whims of the stormy winds, the whole time we were in fact being cradled in G-d's right hand, the hand of kindness. It was merely concealed, until we, through the power of faith, revealed it.

This is why we call the story of Purim a Megillah, for in Hebrew the word megillah means "to reveal". That is what our real job is in each generation — to rewrite the Megillah of Esther, namely, to reveal the hidden hand of G-d in the world.

Through the story of Purim we learn that there are no random events under the sun. Rather, all of the random events of a person's life are in fact hand-delivered to him by G-d Almighty. The reason we must first go through a period of darkness before we experience the light is in order to teach us that G-d is present whether we see Him or not. He is there from before the first word of our life to the last, and even after that. Just as in the days of Purim, G-d is still here, helping and protecting us.

Just in case we sleep through the Purim story, which is in reality our story, we read it again the following day. And, just as G-d, amidst the darkness of night, showed Himself to the Jews of Shushan, He is constantly showing Himself to us amidst our darkness. If we just open up our eyes and look behind the mask, this dark world, where G-d seems nowhere to be found, will transform into a world filled with light, and we will not only see that G-d is now here, but that He was here all along.

In conclusion, one must realize that if the Almighty wants to save someone from harm He need not turn the world upside down, nor inside out. Rather, He can just leave it as it is, continuing to hide behind His mask of "mother nature", which is neither mother nor nature, but the subtle hand of G-d that guides all things as only G-d can. His presence is everywhere and He is in constant control, allowing each of us to play our role.

WHAT MONEY CANNOT BUY

“If it pleases the king, let a decree be written to annihilate them, and I will pay ten thousand *kikar* of silver to those in charge of the king’s business, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.” (Esther 3:9)

It is interesting to calculate how much money in today’s currency Haman was willing to pay to destroy *Klal Yisrael*. The weight of ten thousand *kikar* of silver can be calculated as follows: A *shekel* of silver weighs 15.35 grams (0.54 oz). A *kikar* is comprised of three thousand shekels. So ten thousand *kikar* is 10,000 times 3,000 times 15.35 grams. This is approximately 460 tons of silver. Though the value of silver keeps changing, today one kilogram of silver is worth approximately one thousand dollars, and therefore one ton is worth about one million. This would mean that Haman was ready to pay about half-a-billion dollars. However, it is clear that since the time of the Purim story the buying power of silver has changed dramatically. In those days, a person could meet all his basic needs for a whole year with just fifty shekel, which is approximately \$750 in today’s value. Obviously today, one needs at least ten times as much to pay for all of one’s expenses for a year. Accordingly, in today’s value, Haman was willing to pay about *five billion dollars* — an astronomical sum by any account — to have *Klal Yisrael* murdered. Even though wicked people have a tremendous desire for money, his hatred for *Klal Yisrael* was so great that he was able to overcome his greed in exchange for the opportunity to destroy them. Haman offered Achashverosh such an exorbitant sum because he was asking to kill out a whole nation. He knew that just the profit from taxes from a whole nation in the course of one generation can be expected to reach, at the very minimum, billions of dollars. Therefore, to compensate Achashverosh, he offered to pay for the potential losses.

The knowledge of how wealthy Haman was and how much he was willing to spend for his diabolical plot strengthens the wonder of the miracle. Even though wealth is power and with money one can do many things, and even though Achashverosh the powerful king agreed with the plot; nevertheless, through natural events — all Divinely ordained — the plot fails.

Achashverosh, although he was no less greedy than Haman, refused to accept this astronomical sum of money. Since he too was a Jew-hater, he was concerned that if

Haman would part with so much money, this might dampen his enthusiasm for destroying *Klal Yisrael*, and Achashverosh didn’t want this to happen. This can be compared, *l’havdil*, to a speaker who is offered a huge sum of money to deliver a lecture to a crowd of non-observant Jews who are interested in learning more about Torah and mitzvahs. The speaker may offer to speak for free because he is so happy to take part in the outreach organization’s blessed activities. If he would charge a large sum, then the burden of running that important project may become too heavy and the organizers may lose interest in keeping it going. Similarly, in the worse manner possible, Achashverosh felt that this project of killing out *Klal Yisrael* was so wonderful that he wished to do it for free so that Haman would not be hesitant about carrying it out. When we learn how wicked they were and how much they wished to carry out this evil decree, we have a better understanding of how great the miracle was.

Later on, when Achashverosh became suspicious of Haman, he had nothing to lose by falling out with him. Had Achashverosh accepted the money, then even when his feeling toward Haman became negative, his desire to hold on to the money would not have allowed him to cut ties with him completely. If he decided to overturn the decree, he may have even been obligated to return the money, something that no one ever wants to do. Furthermore, we know that once one has been bought by even much smaller favors, it is extremely difficult for him to find fault with the one who has given him the gift. Achashverosh’s enthusiasm at the beginning, which caused him not to take the money, was part of the very undoing at the end. Once he became angry with Haman, he had no ulterior or financial motive to keep the plot going. Again, we see the miraculous ways of G-d even in Achashverosh’s enthusiasm for sinning. As a side note, I have heard that Rav Elazar Menachem Shach *zt”l* would advise people starting a worthy project not be too quick to turn down payment of any kind. This is because of this very danger. If problems crop up, as they tend to do, then if one has absolutely no personal gain, he will give up on the project much more quickly, regardless of his initial positive enthusiasm. If someone is deriving personal benefit from it, however, then the worthy project has a greater chance of lasting longer.

The above is an adapted extract from the recently published “Glimpses of Light”

<http://www.feldheim.com/glimpse-of-light.html> and <http://www.amazon.com/Glimpses-Light-Rabbi-Yehuda-Steinberg/dp/1598269860>

RETROACTIVE READING

“in those days in this time”

The Mishna (Megillah 2:1) brings an interesting halacha, which we follow to this day (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 690:6). “One who reads the Megillah *l'mafrea* does not fulfill his obligation.”

The Hebrew word *l'mafrea* is most commonly translated as retroactively, but what does it mean to read the Megillah retroactively? Normally we read a book from beginning to end sequentially and in order. What other way is there of reading a book?

The most obvious explanation is that the verses are read out of order, the later ones before the earlier. Even if only one verse is read out of order those hearing that Megillah reading have not fulfilled the mitzvah.

The Gemara (Megilla 17a) explains the underlying basis for this halacha. “And these days shall be commemorated and celebrated” (Esther 9:28). The juxtaposition in the verse of the commemoration of the Purim miracle (the reading of the Megillah) with the celebration (the observance of Purim on the 14th and 15th of the month of Adar) informs us that just as the celebration cannot be performed out of sequence (the 15th cannot come before the 14th) so too the reading of the Megillah must be in order.

The Meiri gives two reasons: 1) there is no *pirsumei nisa* — publicizing the miracle — when the Megillah is read out of sequence, and 2) when you read something out of order it is not called reading.

The Kotzker Rebbe offers a novel interpretation of *l'mafrea*. He explains that one who thinks that the events like those of the time of Esther occurred only then and not today does not fulfill his obligation since he has not reached the depth of understanding the message of Purim and Megilat Esther — that G-d runs the world from “behind the scenes”. It is incumbent on us to realize that also today there is no

such thing as chance in the world. Everything is conducted according to the Divine plan.

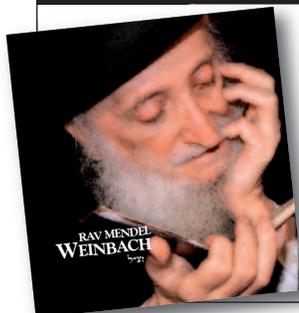
Unfortunately it appears that today there are many who have not realized this depth of understanding. This is apparent in Israel both nationally and internationally.

Nationally: The recent High Court decision to order a re-election in the Beit Shemesh municipal elections is not only the demise of democracy. The same journalist who initiated the call to overturn the election results recently admitted that, having actually examined the evidence for himself, this court decision is based on an unprecedented package of speculations, half-statements and baseless assessments and is therefore a ruling without evidence. The consequence of this admission is that whatever the result of the re-election, the Israeli public has to resign itself to the fact that they live in a country which no longer even maintains the illusion of democracy. Someone attuned to the message of the Megillah will perceive G-d's presence even here.

Internationally: One of the key ways that G-d relates to the world is *midda k'neged midda* — measure for measure. Is it any wonder that the Prime Minister repeatedly fails in his calls to have the Palestinians recognize the Jewish State when his government continuously (even after the recent massive prayer gathering of hundreds of thousands of people) tramples on the needs of the religious segment of the population and declares those who continue to learn Torah instead of serving in the army to be criminals? Maybe he too should recognize the Jewish State?

May it be G-d's will that this year when we hear the Megillah we will read between the lines and realize that G-d's running of the world is not relegated to history, but is part and parcel of our everyday lives.

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Talmud Navigator is prepared by Rabbi Hanoach Zweig and is available at www.ohr.edu