

OHR NET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

A WORLD OF BLESSING

“A hundred sockets for a hundred kikar...” (38:27)

There’s an elderly lady that sits in a nursing home in New York. Every day, this is what she says: “Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift of G-d. That’s why we call it the Present.”

How does a person sensitize himself to the present that is the here-and-now?

Our Sages mandated that we make at least one hundred blessings every day. Making blessings helps to remind us constantly of all the blessings that surround us: The ability to see, to think, to enjoy the smell of fruit and flowers, the sight of the sea or great mountains, the sight of royalty, of eating a new season fruit, or seeing an old friend for the first time in years. We have blessings when a baby is born, when a loved one dies.

When we surround ourselves with blessings, we surround ourselves with blessing.

The Hebrew word *beracha* (blessing) is linked to the word *beraicha*, which means a pool of water. G-d is like an Infinite Pool of blessing, flowing goodness and enrichment into our life.

Amongst other things a *beracha* must include is the Hebrew word which means “Lord”, which comes from the root *Adon*.

In the construction of the Mishkan, (the portable Temple on which G-d caused His Presence to dwell) there were exactly one hundred “sockets.” These sockets were called *adonim*. What is the connection between the hundred *adonim* and the hundred times that we call G-d by the name *Adon* in our daily blessings?

Just as the *adonim* were the foundation of the Mishkan through which G-d bestowed his Holy Presence on the Jewish People, so are our daily blessings the foundation of holiness in our lives.

Source:

• *Chidushei HaRim*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels, which had been fashioned. *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d’s specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the

Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that G-d’s glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

FIGHTING THE NEXT WAR

Chazak, Chazak Venitchazeik. When we finish the reading of the Torah in the synagogue this Shabbat the entire congregation will rise and cry out “Chazak, Chazak Venitchazeik” as it is customary to do whenever we complete reading one of the five *Chumashim*.

This rallying cry to gird our loins for the next challenge can best be appreciated by referring to the advice of our Talmudic Sages that four things require *chizuk* – steady recharging of our batteries. They are: 1) Torah study; 2) Prayer; 3) Good deeds; 4) Wordly matters. (The craftsman must steadily seek to improve his craft and the soldier his military skills – Rashi.)

The last of these four is easily understood by us all. What sort of army would Israel have if it rested on its laurels and did not steadily seek to improve its ability to defend the nation with new arms and new strategies? What sort of professionals would be providing us with the necessary services

if they did not keep abreast of the latest developments in their fields and continually refresh their knowledge?

When it comes to spiritual matters, however, there is a tragic tendency to be content with the level we have reached and not to try a little harder. How many people do you know who have grown in the quality of their prayer and good deeds? This is especially a problem when it comes to Torah study, which requires concentration and a sacrifice of time and energy. It is for this reason that we make such a public demonstration of the need for *chizuk* when we complete an entire *Chumash* and emotionally prepare ourselves for the challenge of the next one.

The challenge which Jews in Israel face on a daily basis have taught them how to apply the spirit of *chizuk* in continuing normal lives. It is to be hoped that this *chizuk* will overflow into the other three areas and strengthen the spiritual life of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

RABBI GEDALIAH – WHERE STRANGERS TREAD

One of the people who accompanied Rabbi Yehuda Hachasid on his pilgrimage to Eretz Yisrael was Rabbi Gedaliah, author of the book “Seek the Peace of Yerushalayim”. One of the sights which troubled them when they arrived in 1701 was that of Yishmaelite Arabs walking on the Temple Mount.

The Hebrew word *shualim* is mentioned in the Prophet Yirmiyahu’s lament that “Mount Zion is deso-



late and *shualim* tread there”. Rabbi Gedaliah calculated that the numerical value of the letters which make up this word is equivalent to that of the ones which form the word *hayishmaeli* (456), leading him to interpret the presence of the Yishmaelites on this mountain as a fulfillment of the Prophet’s vision, that strangers would some day make a brazen claim to ownership of the site upon which stood the *Beit Hamikdash*.

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SPEAKING OF KINGS

Whenever the term *malchayo* (kings) is found in the Book of Daniel it is a reference to a human king except for one place. When the Babylonian king Nevuchadenetzer asked Daniel to reveal to him the mysterious dream he had forgotten and to interpret its message, this Jewish captive whom the world-conquering king had renamed Beltshatzar thus began his reply:

“You king, king of kings, to whom the Lord of Heaven has granted a mighty, powerful and glorious kingdom” (*Daniel* 2:37).

The term “king of kings” here, says the *gemara*, must be understood as a reference to G-d and therefore must be treated in its written form with the respect due to a Divine name. Rashi explains that it cannot refer to the Babylonian king, for Daniel would never have addressed an earthly king, despite the fact that he had conquered the entire known world, as king of kings, a title reserved for G-d only. It must therefore be understood that he said to this earthly king that the Divine King of Kings Who is the Lord of Heaven granted him a mighty kingdom.

A simple reading of this *gemara* leads one to assume that the term under discussion is *malchayo* (kings). The problem with this assumption is that the term *malchayo* appears in only one other place in the entire Book of Daniel (2:44). It is hardly appropriate to speak of “wherever the term *malchayo* is found” if it is found in only one other place. This observation led Rabbi Yosef Caro, in his *Kesef Mishneh* commentary on the Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah* (*Hilchot Yesoedi HaTorah* 6:9), to conclude that our *gemara* is referring to the word *melech* (king) preceding *malchayo*. This term is sacred because it refers to the Divine “King” of all earthly “kings”.

Another fascinating observation is made by this same author on this subject. How, he asks, can the *gemara* declare that the only time “king” is found as a reference to G-d is the one stated above, when we find the Babylonian king himself using this term in praising G-d after being restored to his power (*ibid.* 4:34)? His resolution is that our *gemara* refers only to the use of the term “king” by Daniel himself. In all cases he was referring to his earthly master except for the one time when he referred to the King of Kings.

• *Shavuot* 35b

THE MANY MEANINGS OF AMEN

When a Jew says *Amen* it can constitute an oath, says Rabbi Yossi, the son of Rabbi Chanina. We have already encountered this in the *mishna* (*Shavuot*

31a) which states that by witnesses saying *Amen* to an oath administered to them by someone who wishes them to testify in his behalf, they are considered as if they took that oath. Rabbi Yossi cites as a source for this concept the *Amen* which the suspected adulteress says in accepting the oath which the *kohen* administers to prove her innocence (*Bamidbar* 5:22).

But *Amen*, he adds, can also serve as an expression of commitment, as we find in the *Amen* which the entire Jewish nation proclaimed when they heard the blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival (*Devarim* 27:26).

And finally, *Amen* can serve as an expression of hope that a prayer should be answered, as the Prophet Yirmiyahu used it in regard to a prophecy regarding a quick end to Babylonian exile (*Yirimiyahu* 28:6).

In regard to this last dimension of *Amen*, Rashi writes that it is proper to say *Amen* whenever we hear a prayer or supplication as an expression of our own hope that it will be G-d’s will that what has been mentioned in that prayer will become a reality.

Amen, say our Sages (*Meshechta Shabbat* 129b), is an acronym for the three words we say before the *Shema* which declare that “The Lord is a faithful King”. When we say *Amen* after a blessing which is a praise of G-d we are thus declaring that this praise is true and we believe in it (*Shulchan Aruch Orech Chaim* 124:6). But when we say *Amen* upon hearing one of the blessings in our *Shmoneh Esrei* in which we appeal to G-d, our *Amen* takes on a broader meaning. It is not only an affirmation of our belief in G-d as the source of blessing, but also, as the Rashi above indicates, a prayer on our part that the prayer we heard be answered (*ibid.*, *Mishneh Berurah* 28).

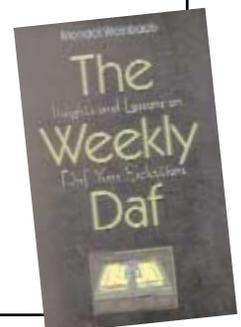
• *Shavuot* 36a

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Why is the Mishkan called the “Mishkan of Testimony”?
3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the *midbar*?
4. Who was the officer in charge of the *levi'im*?
5. What is the meaning of the name Betzalel?
6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?
7. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
8. How were the gold threads made?
9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the *ephod*?
10. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznetfet* and the *tzitzit*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the “tent” which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)?
15. What “testimony” did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the Mishkan?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the Mishkan?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beit Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a “*mashkon*” (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that G-d forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Itamar ben Aharon.
5. 38:22 - “In the shadow of G-d.”
6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the *levi'im*).
7. 39:1 - Linen (See *Rashi 31:10*).
8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See *Rashi 28:6*).
9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes.
10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (*Rashi 39:29*)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan

From: Fred in Dallas, TX

Dear Rabbi,

I was at a party where people were singing songs in Hebrew. One song was about it being a mitzvah to be happy all the time. Nice song, but how can a person who is serious by nature do this mitzvah?

Dear Fred,

Your question made me smile! I'm happy you asked.

But happiness doesn't necessarily mean walking around with a big smile on your face. For sure smiling is great, it makes you and others feel good. But true happiness is an inner feeling. A serious demeanor may also have a bright and happy disposition behind it.

A person who feels he's fulfilling his purpose in life, feels good about himself. Through learning Torah and keeping *mitzvot* a person does this, comes closer to G-d, and attains true happiness. Even someone serious by nature can "enjoy" this happiness. Sounds great, but how

do you do it?

Doing simple acts of kindness makes people feel good. I recently met a successful businessman who, as I was told, is miserable despite his wealth. However, all that changes on Friday morning when he's home packing food parcels for unfortunate families who cannot even put the basics on their Shabbat table. Being involved in the mitzvah of giving to others transforms him into a big "bundle" of joy.

The Baal Shem Tov noted that the letters of the word *b'simcha* (to be happy) are the same as the word *machshava* (thought, contemplation). Changing one's way of thinking about things is also a route to happiness. Often people are unhappy because they feel they're not getting what they deserve from life. Setting high goals is good, but expecting less and giving more is even better. In addition, many take for granted what they have. Count your blessings, such as family, health and livelihood. As our Sages teach, "Who is considered wealthy? One who is happy with what he has."

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

TO LEND OR NOT TO LEND

Question: The manager of a Free Loan Fund (GAMACH) requires of those who borrow money to give him personal checks that are dated for a later date as guarantees of payment. The depositing of such checks enables the Fund to lend money to other needy borrowers. Some borrowers have proved delinquent in their responsibilities and their checks have bounced, causing difficulties in managing the Fund and restricting its ability to serve others.

Is it proper for the fund manager to refuse lending to these delinquent repayers in the future or must he overlook their behavior in light of their need?

Answer: If the failure to pay debts causes trouble for the fund and infringes on the ability to serve other borrowers it is certainly the prerogative of the Fund manager to penalize such delinquent payers by refusing to offer them further loans.

An interesting source for the right to refuse loans to such people despite the Torah command to lend money to the needy is to be found in the words of one of the early commentaries, Rabbi Yehuda Hachasid.

He notes that in its command to lend money the Torah states "If you shall lend money to My people, the needy that are with you" (*Shmot* 22:24). Our Sages explain that although the term "if" generally means that something is optional in the case of lending money it is obligatory. Why then, he asks, does the Torah use a term which can be misconstrued as being non-obligatory? The answer is that in certain situations there is indeed no obligation such as in the case of a borrower with a bad record of repayment. In regard to such a person it is up to the lender to decide whether it will be better to lend or refuse.

• Based on the response of Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, Rabbi of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak.

NOT FROM A SPIELBERG MOVIE

“All is darkness.. Then the movement begins, a trailing shot down the birth canal of a hallway, toward the mystery. Suddenly light! A bright room filled with old men in beards and black hats: sages, perhaps from another world. At the far end of the room, on a raised platform, is a blazing red light.”

Is this a scene from a Steven Spielberg movie?

In a 1985 overview of the career of this legendary director, Time Magazine described this event as one which influenced Spielberg’s vision. “It turned out to be his earliest memory from a day in 1948 when he was taken in a stroller to a Cincinnati synagogue for a service.”

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Re: Ethics - Hold that Bus!? (Ohrnet Ki Tisa)

Sometimes, I want to let someone with one or two items “cut into” the line at the supermarket. But I tell that person to ask the people behind me too. It’s their wait also.

This is so right what you wrote about a similar sensitivity one should have when using public transportation.

• Brenda

Re: Mark Twain & His “Jewish” Essay (Ohr Somayach Website Ohr.edu)

I have read the “Concerning the Jews” cartoon exposition/essay on your Ohr.edu website. I think it is important to point out that if the Jews had stayed close to the one and only G-d, the ancient Greeks would not even dare to touch them.

• Niko in Sweden

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