

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT EMOR · 15 IYAR 5769 · MAY 9, 2009 · VOL. 16 NO. 28

PARSHA INSIGHTS

IT'S NOT HARD TO BE A JEW

“Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and tell them...” (21:1)

In some ways it's never been easier to keep the Torah. Kosher food is available from Canada to Katmandu. (Mind you I once found myself on a train out of darkest Bristol in Britain having eaten nothing but Pringles for two days.)

The cheapest boxed set of *arba minim* for Succot that you can pick up in a Jerusalem *shuk* today would probably have been prized by the greatest Rabbis in Europe a hundred years ago.

Virtually every Orthodox Jewish home has a Kiddush cup that would dwarf the one used by the Chafetz Chaim.

The “*gashmiut of ruchniut*” — the physicality of spirituality — has never been easier.

What's more difficult is the *ruchniut of ruchniut* — the spirituality of spirituality.

Not more than two generations ago Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, said it took only four words to “kill” a generation of Jews. Those four words were, “*Shver tzuzein a Yid.*” “*It's hard to be a Jew.*” The trials of keeping the faith as an immigrant in early twentieth-century America proved overwhelming to many.

The *Kohanim* are the leaders of the Jewish People. The currency of leadership is inspiration.

You cannot lead by telling people that their lives are going to consist of perpetual drudgery. If you do that they will vote with their feet in droves.

The beginning of this week's Torah portion contains a seeming redundancy: “*Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and tell them...*” If Moshe has to “say” something to the *Kohanim*, why does he also need to “tell” them?

The word “*to say*” — *l'hagid* — implies tough talk. No-nonsense communication. Words as tough as sinews. “*To tell*” — *l'amor* — is the soft speech of feeling. Words of gentleness.

The repetition of the two words is to stress to the *Kohanim*

that in order to bring the people close to Torah they must express eternal laws, which are as immutable as stone in such a way that the ear of the people can grasp their beauty and excitement and relevance.

That it's not hard to be a Jew.

• Sources: “*It's NOT Hard To Be A Jew.*” Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in *Derash Moshe as heard from Rabbi C. Z. Senter*

“...to bring the people close to Torah they must express eternal laws, which are as immutable as stone in such a way that the ear of the people can grasp their beauty and excitement and relevance.”

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

© 2009 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The *kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *kohen gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral of even his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim*. The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*. The physical irregularities that invalidate a *kohen* from serving in the Temple are listed. *Terumah*, a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free

from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the *omer* of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

ISRAEL Forever

SECOND CHANCE

“Why should we be left out?” This was the heartfelt cry of Jews who were informed that they could not participate in the first offering of a *Korban Pesach* following the Exodus and the receiving of the Torah because of their spiritual impurity caused by contact with the dead.

This scene is recalled each year on the 14th day of the Month of Iyar, which occurs this year on Erev Shabbat Parshat Emor. This was the day 3320 years ago when those Jews were given a second chance to offer the sacrifice that was forever called *Pesach Sheini* (a second Paschal sacrifice).

The lesson to be learned from this is that if a Jew feels so strongly the need to be a part of his people in serving G-d with a sacrifice, the opportunity will be Providentially provided for him just as Heaven gave those left-out Jews a second chance.

In an age when so many Jews in Israel and throughout the world feel “left out” of the religious way of life practiced in previous generations and perpetuated by the observant public today, it is hoped that the lack of any foreseeable solution to the problems faced by Israel will motivate all Jews to call upon Heaven for a second chance to return to their roots and secure Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND- THE PLACES

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

TEL DAN AND THE KINNERET SOURCES

In a year with little rainfall one of the main concerns of the Israeli public is the water level of Lake Kinneret. One of the main sources for this major reservoir is the spring called Tel Dan, which is located at the base of Mount Hermon. To its west



is the Hatzbani River and to its east is the Banias River, which together with the Tel Dan spring feed the Kinneret.

The name Tel Dan refers to the hill upon which once stood the city of Dan.

לע"נ
הרה"ח ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
4. How does the Torah restrict the *kohen gadol* with regard to mourning?
5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who “approaches holy objects” while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by “approaches”?
6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a “zar” she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a *zar*?
9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
11. How does the Torah define “profaning” the Name of G-d?
12. Apart from Shabbat, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
13. How big is an *omer*?
14. On what day do we begin to “count the *omer*”?
15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a “*zichron teruah*” (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
18. What is unusual about the wood of the *etrog* tree?
19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one’s parent?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week’s Questions!

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

1. 21:1 - *Challalim* — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a *kohen*.
2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a *kohen* reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
5. 22:3 - Eats.
6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
8. 22:12 - A non-*kohen*.
9. 22:18 - A *neder* is an obligation upon a person; a *nedavah* is an obligation placed upon an object.
10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
13. 23:10 - One tenth of an *eipha*.
14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan.
15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
17. 23:24 - The *akeidat* (binding of) Yitzchak.
18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (*Shemot* 2:12).
20. 24:21 - Death.

S U B S C R I B E !

to Ohrnet and other publications delivered to your email

www.ohr.edu

- When the robber of a field who sold it to another purchases it from its original owner
- Selling a field which one has not yet purchased
- Which lost financial documents are returned to owner
- How someone achieves status of a confirmed liar
- The force of obligations imposed by rabbinical court
- Source for a widow from *eirusin* collecting *ketubah*
- Which lost financial documents are not returned to owner
- Why the lost *get* was returned to the Sage Rabbah bar Chanah
- Is emancipation a benefit for the slave
- Gift made by a dying person
- The confrontation between the Sage Rabbah and Rabbi Amram
- When a lost loan document is returned to borrower or to lender
- Which lost objects belong to finder and which must be returned
- If despair of recovering a lost object takes place after it has been found

A CHALLENGING COMPARISON

The Sage Rabbah made a halachic decision in regard to returning a *get* (divorce document) to a messenger who claimed that he lost it, on the basis of an accepted ruling that a lost financial document can be returned in such a case, and that there is no concern that it may have belonged to another party with a similar name.

He was challenged by Rabbi Amram for comparing a case involving something as serious as divorce which is in the category of *issur* to one which is only of a monetary nature. In both an earlier *gemara* (18b) and a later one (27b) we do find such a comparison made. If *simanim* — identifying signs — are sufficient by Torah law for claiming ownership of lost

property, then they also suffice for returning a *get* to one claiming he lost it. This seems to indicate that we need not distinguish between evidence in the serious issue of divorce and in the case of something less serious like a monetary document.

In explaining this approach, Rabbi Zvi Hersh Chayos points out that the basis for differentiating between monetary matters and those of *issur* is that in the former area the Rabbis have the power to expropriate ownership which is not applicable to cases of *issur*. But even in regard to marriage and divorce we find that when they find it absolutely necessary the Rabbis have the power to annul a marriage. Although this power is rarely utilized it does provide a basis for the challenging comparison between divorce and money.

• *Bava Metzia 20b*

What the SAGES Say

“It is the nature of a man to constantly check the purse he is carrying (and is therefore immediately aware of losing).

• *Rabbi Yitzchak - Bava Metzia 21b*

AVAILABLE AT JEWISH BOOKSTORES & WWW.TARGUM.COM

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS

THE WASSERMAN

TALMUDIGEST

SERIES

VOLUME ONE - THE COGUT EDITION

A tantalizing gateway to the incomparable wealth of intellect and guidance contained in the Talmud

NOW AVAILABLE !

VOLUME TWO - THE WINKLER EDITION

VATIK IN JUDAISM

From: Josh in PA

Dear Rabbi,

I have heard of the term “vatikin” used in Jewish contexts, I think in prayer, and I was wondering if there is any relationship between that word and the Vatican? Or is this just a coincidence?

Dear Josh,

Perhaps the most well known Jewish use of the term “vatikin” is in reference to the time of the morning prayers. The Talmud discusses the time period for reciting the morning Shema, commenting that the ideal time, which was the time that the meticulous men of old would recite it, is just before sunrise so that their silent amida prayer would commence with the rising sun. The word used for these pious, elderly men is “vatikin”. Often pronounced “vasikin” in the Ashkenzic tradition, the term has come to refer to the early morning prayer service itself rather than its strict meaning applying to those who used to pray then. This early morning minyan is also called “netz”, an abbreviation of “Hanetz HaChama” which means sunrise.

Another use of the term “vatik” is in reference to a long-time, dedicated and expert disciple. In Hebrew, and throughout the Talmud, this is expressed by the phrase “talmid vatik”.

A third well-known context where this term is found

is in the spiritually uplifting song or niggun called “Yedid nefesh” which is traditionally sung during the third and final meal of Shabbat through twilight into dusk and nightfall. This moving poem-song which expresses the longing of the Jewish people for G-d and the final redemption is comprised of four stanzas, each starting with the letters of G-d’s name yud, hey, vav and hey. The third stanza thus starts with vav: “Vatik, yehamu na rachamecha v’chusa na al ben ahuvecha...” where “Vatik” refers to the Ancient and All Knowing G-d. (The verse means: G-d, may Your mercy be aroused and please take pity on the son Your beloved...)

From these contexts we see that “vatik” in Jewish terms means age-old, dedicated and consistent and of expert knowledge.

While many might be inclined to ascribe these qualities to things pertaining to the Vatican, no etymological authority I’ve seen has made such a claim. Rather, the various reference materials ascribe the term Vatican to the name of its location prior to Christianity – Mons Vaticanus. However, some suggest that the mount was so called after the seers, called “vates” in Latin, who supposedly delivered oracles there in times of old. [Interestingly, the meaning of the word “vatic” in English is oracular or prophetic.] According to this, there might be some ancient, common, albeit indirect, relationship between the Jewish and Latin uses of “vatic/k”.

NOW AVAILABLE AT YOUR JEWISH BOOKSTORE OR WWW.TARGUM.COM

FROM THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY

QUESTION MARKET

VOLUME ONE - THE KLEIN EDITION

Relevant, informative, and thought-provoking answers to contemporary questions on Jewish law, customs, and ethics

THE TEFILLIN DILEMMA

Question: An outreach activist in Israel asked a Jew whom he was unsuccessful in convincing to become fully observant why he was so careful to put on tefillin. He told him that the tefillin he wears were worn by his grandfather, who inherited them from previous generations during the Holocaust at the risk of his life, so that by wearing them he connected with his forebears. Upon examining the tefillin, however, the activist realized that they were so outworn that they were not kosher. The question then arose as to whether to inform this fellow that his tefillin were not kosher and thus save him from making improper blessings on them, even though such a discovery might totally alienate him from any future connection with mitzvah obser-

vance. What was the right thing to do?

Answer: Although the ruling on this question by a leading rabbinical authority was that it was impossible to allow a Jew to continue committing the sin of improper blessings on unkosher tefillin, even at the risk of his alienation, a solution to the problem was suggested. The Jew was told that tefillin such as those he owned, which had been used at self-sacrifice during the Holocaust, were so precious that they should be donated to the public and he would receive a new pair of quality tefillin in their place. The worn-out tefillin would then be repaired and made available for public use.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

SAVED BY THE SKIN OF THEIR SAVIOR

There seems to be no end to the stories of how some people were saved from the tragedies that Islamic terror perpetrated in Israel and in the United States.

One that recently came to light concerns two young women from the States who were visiting Israel and stopped off at the Subarro Restaurant in central Jerusalem. A saleswoman at the entrance advised them to return in an hour because the place was so crowded that they would not find a place to sit. When they later returned they discovered that the Subarro had in the interim been the site of a terrorist bombing and that the woman who had saved their lives had been badly wounded. They visited her in the hospital and invited her to call upon them if she should ever

be in need of medical help in the States.

As the victim of very serious burns, the woman was eventually advised by her doctors to travel to the States for plastic surgery. She recalled the offer of those two young women and informed them when she would be arriving. Before rushing to the airport to welcome her they debated whether to recommend a hospital in the New York area where they lived and worked or a more prestigious one in relatively distant Baltimore. They finally decided to take off a day from work in order to accompany her to Baltimore.

That day was September 11, 2001 and the office in which they would have been working that day was completely destroyed.

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS

SEASONS OF THE MOON

THE AUERBACH EDITION

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

PRE-ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.OHR.EDU