

B'S'D'

To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYERA - 5762

To receive this parsha sheet in Word and/or Text format, send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com For archives of old parsha sheets see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/messages> For Torah links see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/> links

From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net
<http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/rneuvayera.html>
RABBI YAAKOV NEUBERGER
CHESSEDUCATION

Ever since our earliest years the phrase "chesed l'Avraham" has served to focus us on the selflessness of Avraham Avinu and encourage us to emulate in some manner the magnificent welcome that he extended to the three angels. We can draw further inspiration and guidance from the careful study of this parsha and its medrashim, even as we have surely grown through helping others and from observing the "masters of chessed" with which our communities have been blessed.

While Avraham is lauded for every gracious move and gesture, there is one phrase in this week's parsha in which Avraham offers water to his guests, draws both praise as well as criticism. Throughout the parsha Avraham personally provides lodging and a hearty meal to his visitors, and speaks to them clearly and without hesitation. However, when he offers his guests some water, his language becomes formal and convoluted, "Please let there be taken a little water". Chazal noted the change, a formal usage of "please", the uncharacteristic "a little", and the distancing manner inherent in the passive "let there be taken".

Some of Chazal view this as praiseworthy, as one medrash attributes our sustenance during the desert years much later as a reward for Avraham's kindness at that time. The desert manna came in response to the butter and bread that Avraham provided; the heavenly and protective clouds were a reward for Avraham waiting on the malachim; and the "little water" brought about that miraculous traveling well that provided Klal Yisroel with water throughout their forty years of traveling. Yet, is it not strange that the provision of a little water won for us the most essential life sustaining divine gift of those years? Furthermore, the order of the presentation in the medrash is inconsistent with the way in which the events actually took place. This leads me to suggest that the medrash draws our attention to the way that Avraham phrased himself, rather than the substance of his offer. Indeed our sustenance came from heaven much as the milk and butter was brought before the malachim, and we felt Hashem's ever watchful clouds just as Avraham anticipated their every need. However, upon hearing, "please have yourselves a little water" the malachim were immediately made to feel that satisfying their needs was really no bother at all. That one word "please" allowed the malachim to feel that they were doing a favor for Avraham. Quite possibly they would no longer focus on the efforts being extended on their behalf. Much the same, for the vast majority of our years in the desert we came to expect the availability of the well water.

Nevertheless, there is another medrash, quoted by Rashi, that resolves the inconsistent grammar of this phrase in a way that is critical of Avraham. "Let there be water taken" is meant to instruct Yishmael to bring some water, instead of Avraham running himself as he did with all the other needs of the malachim. Because Avraham held back ever so slightly, the Jews received their water through a messenger, Moshe, whereas the manna and heavenly clouds came directly from Hashem. At first glance this is very surprising. Is it not the best of chinuch to involve one's children in acts of chessed? Do we not all assume that including our children in our projects and lifestyles gives us the best shot at establishing them as an enduring legacy? Perhaps Avraham wanted to be soft and feared being pushy; nevertheless, Chazal understood that in this case his thoughtfulness communicated timidity and the manner in which he called upon Yishmael belittled the very task he was assigning to his son. Chazal

want us to understand that we should no doubt engage others, and certainly our children, but all the while stressing the great contribution they are making, rather than understating their efforts.

How precious is the advice of Hagaon HaRav Yaakov Kaminetzky Tz"l who counseled parents training their children to say berachos as follows, "describe to them in great detail the tumult in heaven as thousands of angels each proclaim the praises of Hashem, and how when a child makes a beracha, everything becomes suddenly quiet so that the beracha can pass directly to the Throne of Glory where it brings immeasurable pleasure to Hashem himself."

From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom List parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il
To: Shabbat_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il
Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Vayera
by RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN
(Genesis 18:1-22:24)

Is faith that profound inner conviction which impels and informs all of our most significant activities? Or is faith rather to be relegated to the realm of the internal spirit alone, in the sense that one ought to piously pray as if everything depended on G-d, but humanistically act as if everything depended on us alone? The Rashbam's unique and Zionistic interpretation on the akedah (binding of Isaac, would certainly suggest that whatever we do or not do must hark back to our most fundamental faith commitments - but before we study his interpretation of one of the most difficult stories of the Bible, it is important to take note of a Hassidic commentary from last week's Torah reading.

After a difficult but successful military battle in which Abraham frees his nephew Lot from terrorist captivity, the Almighty promises the Prophet ethical monotheism a great reward. Abraham - who is well into his nineties - bitterly complains of the fact that his union with Sarah has not resulted in progeny, whereupon the Master of the Universe takes him outside: "Look now heavenwards and count the stars if you are able to count them; so shall be your descendants" (Genesis 15:5). Most of the commentaries take this to mean that the Jewish people will be innumerable, so numerous that their number will be unable to be derived in a census. If that is the case, however, this prophecy has not yet been realized.

The Nineteenth Century Hassidic Sage of Gur known as the Sefat Emet gives the Divine words another spin: just as it is impossible to count the stars, so will it be impossible to predict the fortunes of Israel; the Jewish nation in the land of Israel defies all historic and sociological logic, and all actions on behalf of Israel must be guided solely by our trust in Jewish eternity and our faith in Divine Providence.

From this backdrop, let us turn to the commandment of the akedah (binding of Isaac), which begins: "And it happened after these things that the Lord tested (nisah) Abraham..." (Genesis 22:1). The Rashbam (Rav Shmuel ben Meir, twelfth century French commentary, known for his strict obedience to the literal meaning of the text) immediately takes note of the Biblical connection between G-d's command of Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and the previous Biblical record of Abraham's peace treaty with Avimelech; G-d is here punishing Abraham "And it happened after these things") for his commitments to the Philistine King, suggest the Rashbam. After all, Avimelech believed that the Negev portion of Israel belonged to him and his Philistine people (Genesis 20:15). He approaches Abraham - together with his military General Pichol - with the request that the patriarch not "rebel (tishkor means rebel or betray, says Rav Saadia Gaon) against me, my great - grand children or my grandchildren" and Abraham swears the oath of a peace treaty.

From the Rashbam's perspective, "the Holy One Blessed Be He was angry at Abraham for this, because the land on which the Philistines were dwelling was part of the boundaries of the Land of Israel," the land promised by G-d to Abraham and his progeny. How could Abraham have relinquished his patrimony to Avimelech? Indeed, it was not even exclusively Abraham's; it belongs to all of his future generations, and so the Patriarch alone didn't have the right to give up what belonged to his descendants!

Hence the Rashbam goes on to explain the word (usually translated as G-d "tested" Abraham) to mean "criticized, railed against" (as in masah u-merivah, Exodus 17:7); in effect, the Almighty is commanding Abraham "to now bring Isaac as a whole burnt offering and see how your peace treaty will help you." In measure for measure fashion, Abraham will not have a living son to whom to bequeath any part of the Divine-given land of Israel!

This interpretation is reminiscent of an incident in the annals of the history of modern Israel, which I have previously brought to your attention. Before the establishment of the Jewish State, David Ben Gurion was offered a Partition Plan, which would have left the Jewish people with a rather paltry slice of land - but it would nevertheless have been the realization of a Jewish homeland! Ben Gurion could not decide - and asked his trusted colleague Yitzhak Tabenkin to make the decision. Tabenkin asked for a day in which to consider his response; he wanted to take counsel with two individuals. At the appointed time, Tabenkin urged Ben Gurion to refuse the offer. "I accept your decision - but from whom did you seek advice?" asked the Lion of Judah. "From two people," answered Tabenkin. "From my grandfather and from my grandson. From my grand-father who died ten years ago, and from my grandson who is not yet born."

The Land of Israel does not belong to any particular generation; it is the patrimony of all generations. And, at least according to the Rashbam, no matter how powerful may be the enemy and how threatening may appear his military general, we must have trust in G-d rather than in treaties of men and have ultimate faith that regarding Israel "the Eternity of Israel will not deal falsely."

Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at: <http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm> Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean To subscribe, E-mail to: <Shabbat_Shalom-on@ohrtorahstone.org.il>

<http://www.artscroll.com/parashah.html>

Parshas Vayeira

Excerpt from BRISK ON CHUMASH, by Rabbi Asher Bergman.

And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak" (Genesis 18:30).

On the surface, it appears that Avraham was pleading with God not to become angry at him for his bold request. This interpretation seems difficult, however. Avraham was offering his prayers on behalf of the people of Sodom. Why should God become angry at him for that?

When Avraham first started to plead for the sparing of the Sodomites, he said (following the translation of Onkelos), "Will You, in Your anger, eliminate righteous people along with the wicked?" (18:23). This should be understood in light of the Talmud's dictum (Bava Kamma 60a) that "Once permission has been given to the Destroyer to destroy, he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked." This is why there are often cases of mass tragedies, when a righteous minority suffers along with the wicked majority. Avraham thus pleaded with god that He should not act upon His anger, for in that case the result would be the elimination of "the righteous people along with the wicked."

In our verse as well, then, we can understand Avraham's request "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak," - to mean "Let not my Lord act with anger - against the people of Sodom - so that I can pray on behalf of the few righteous individuals who may live there."

BRISKER RAV

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND ryfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayeira

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayeira -

Wishing a special Mazel Tov to Baruch Yair, his Kallah and their families!

Hospitality: A Mitzvah For The Benefit of the Host

Parshas Vayeira is the paradigm of the Torah's mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim [hospitality]. Avraham our Patriarch excelled at this mitzvah. He was a master of kindness and the host par excellence. Rav Nissan Alpert, zt"l, offered a number of beautiful insights into the mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim which can be derived from our Parsha, from the story of Avraham.

Rash"i cites the Rabbinic teaching that to provide Avraham some respite from guests after his recent Milah surgery, G-d made an exceptionally hot day so that no one would be travelling on the roads. However, Avraham was distressed that he had no guests to whom to offer hospitality. Therefore, G-d sent the three Angels in the guise of Arab guests. Angels are completely spiritual beings who did not need and in fact could not eat the meal that Avraham provided to them. However, they feigned eating the food.

If Avraham was so distressed that G-d had to 'change His mind' and send guests so that Avraham would have someone to feed, why did G-d send Angels who could not really eat? G-d could have sent a thunderstorm that would have cooled off the temperatures. People would then have resumed their travels. A poor person would inevitably have come down the road and Avraham could have invited him in for a meal. This would seem more logical than wasting Avraham's supreme efforts preparing a gourmet meal for the Angels to _pretend_ to eat!

This incident teaches us about the nature of hospitality. Contrary to what we may think, Hachnasas Orchim is not so much a mitzvah for the benefit of the guests or the poor person. Rather, it is a mitzvah for the benefit of the host! The mitzvah is directed at the giver, not the receiver.

More than the host does for the guests, the guests do for the host [Vayikra Rabbah 34]. G-d has His ways regarding charity and acts of kindness. If someone needs food, G-d will get it to him. If an individual or an institution needs money, G-d will ensure they are taken care of. He has His ways. The only question is who will have the merit of providing the charity.

This is why the premiere chapter of Hachnasas Orchim in the Torah is told about people who did not even need it. The lesson is that the host should always remember that _he_ is the one who needs this mitzvah. He should not think that he is doing his guests such a big favor. Ultimately he is doing the favor for himself.

This is further illustrated by the expression "And I will TAKE a loaf of bread" [Bereshis 18:5]. It should have said "And I will GIVE a loaf of bread." Again the hint is that when one GIVES, he is really receiving - namely receiving the opportunity to do a kindness.

In the 6th Verse, the Anonymous Host Suddenly Becomes "Avraham"

The first five pasukim [verses] of the Parsha do not mention the name Avraham. In the entire narration -- in which Avraham clearly plays the primary role -- the pasuk only uses the pronoun 'he' or 'to him'. Then, the sixth pasuk suddenly says, "And Avraham speedily went to the tent of Sarah and said 'Quickly knead three measures of fine flour and make rolls.'" [Bereshis 18:6].

Stylistically, this seems strange. If it is important to know the main character involved in this narration, the Parsha should have begun with the words "And G-d appeared to Avraham" (rather than "And G-d appeared to him"). We would have expected the name Avraham to appear at least once in the first five pasukim. If, on the other hand, we can assume that we know who the protagonist is in this Parsha without mentioning his name, then why did the Torah need to suddenly mention Avraham's name in the sixth pasuk?

The answer is another lesson in hospitality. Guests should never be made to feel that the host is personally being made to serve them. When he began to serve them, it was not 'Avraham' - the famous 'Avraham,' the father of many nations - who was serving them. They did not even realize who their host was. The pasuk speaks anonymously because that is how our Patriarch Avraham acted. He did not want his guests to feel uncomfortable with the idea that he was serving them himself.

However, in the sixth pasuk, Avraham wanted to encourage his wife and children to get involved in the act. Therefore, he emphasized his personality. The Prince of Many Nations himself was running and enthusiastically participating in this mitzvah of hospitality in order that he might inspire his wife and children to do likewise. He thereby impressed upon his family members the idea that these guests are truly worthy of being served by an important individual such as himself -- and implicitly are worthy of being served by individuals such as themselves as well.

The lesson that the Torah is teaching is that a host should always "blend into the woodwork" rather than make it seem like he is going through great effort to accommodate his visitors. This is how Avraham conducted himself and we should emulate his behavior.

If Avraham Worries About Mustard, Then So Must We

Our Rabbis tell us that when Avraham served the Angels, he gave them tongue with mustard. Rav Pam, of Blessed Memory, once expressed surprise that Avraham had mustard available. We can understand that if we peek into the refrigerator of a 'normal' person, we will find pickle relish, sandwich spread, pickled artichoke hearts, and all similar type of foods. However we might imagine that if we looked into the refrigerator of an individual known for his righteousness and piety ('Gadol HaDor') we would find just the basics. We can assume that he would not be 'into' all the condiments that are available. If we would not expect to find pickle relish in

the refrigerator of a contemporary Gadol HaDor, why did Avraham Avinu have mustard in his refrigerator?

Is this telling us that Avraham Avinu only ate his hot dogs with mustard? He was certainly beyond that. He was a holy individual! Why did he have mustard in the house?

Rav Pam explained that the answer is obvious. The bigger a person becomes and the more holy a person becomes, the more he becomes aware of the needs of others. Of course, he personally did not care to spread mustard on his piece of tongue. But precisely because he is in fact this giant among men, this giant of kindness, he knows that although he does not need mustard, the average guest coming down the road does want mustard. He therefore feels that he must have mustard in his kitchen to be prepared for that simple guest who does put more emphasis on the taste of his food. Not everyone is an Avraham Avinu.

We must always deal with others with kindness and with empathy. Furthermore, in doing acts of Chesed, we must remember that a primary responsibility for delivering kindness is in one's home. "From your flesh you should not keep yourself aloof" [Isaiah 58:7]. We must take the lesson of the parsha to heart -- it is our responsibility to worry about everyone's mustard.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD
dhoffman@torah.org These dreivi Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 303, Milk and Eggs In Halacha.

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrاند, Copyright 1 2001 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org depends upon your support. Please visit <http://torah.org/support/> or write to dedications@torah.org or donations@torah.org . Thank you! Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208

<http://www.tzemachdovid.org/thepracticaltorah/index.shtml>
THE PRACTICAL TORAH A Collection of Presentations of Halachah
Based On the Parshas Hashavua
BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES
PARSHAS VAYEIRA: KOL ISHAH

No definitive Halacha LeMa'aseh conclusions should be applied to practical situations based on any of these Shiurim.

The Torah tells us that when the three Malachim, the angels, came to visit Avraham Avinu, they asked him where Soroh was (Bereishis 18:9). The Gemara in Bava Metziah (87a) explains that the Torah here is teaching us a lesson in Derech Eretz, saying that it is proper when greeting someone to ask about the welfare of the members of his household. Rashi, in his commentary on the above Posuk (Ibid. s.v. V'Yomru), spells out that one should ask a man about his wife and a woman about her husband. The source for this point seems to be the statement of the Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah (Parsha 48 Siman 17), part of which Rashi (Ibid.) quotes, that just as the Malachim asked Avraham about Soroh, they also asked Soroh about Avraham. This Midrash is quoted more fully by Tosafos in Bava Metziah (Ibid. s.v. Lama), linking it with the above cited ruling of the Gemara (Ibid.).

Rabbeinu Eliyahu Mizrahi, in his commentary on Rashi on this Posuk (Ibid. s.v. L'Ish), questions how one is allowed to ask a woman about her husband when the Gemara in Berachos (24a) states, based upon a PoSuk in Shir HaShirim (2:14), that a woman's voice is considered Ervah, sexually enticing, implying that it is improper for a man to listen to a woman speak. He explains that indeed this statement in Rashi (Ibid.) that one should ask a woman about her husband's welfare is incorrect, and appears due to a textual error. The fact that the Midrash (Ibid.) states clearly that the Malachim asked Soroh about Avraham does not imply anything; this was permitted specifically because they were angels, and were thus not subject to human desires and urges. An ordinary man, however, should not listen to a woman speak, according to this view.

The Maharal of Prague, however, in his commentary on this Rashi, (Gur Aryeh Ibid. s.v. She'af) quotes this same question, but responds quite differently. He says that there really is no question at all, because the statement of the Gemara in Berachos (Ibid.) refers to a case when a man wishes to listen to a woman speak specifically for the sake of deriving

pleasure from hearing her voice; only then is it improper to listen to her voice. But simply to hear a woman speak, without any intent to derive pleasure from her voice, was never forbidden. It is thus permissible for any man to speak to a woman and ask her about her husband's well-being, as Rashi (Ibid.) says. The Maharsha, commenting on the above cited Gemara in Bava Metziah (Chiddushei Aggados Bava Metziah Ibid. s.v. Lamdah), likewise writes that the prohibition to hear a woman speaking exists only if there is intent to derive pleasure from her voice, otherwise there is no problem. He then supports this view by citing several examples from Tanach where ordinary men (not angels) spoke with women, implying that there is nothing wrong with doing so. The Chayei Adam (Klal 4 Sif 6) thus rules clearly that the speaking voice of a woman is not considered Ervah, sexually enticing, and is thus not referred to in the above cited Gemara in Berachos (Ibid.). He adds, though, that it is nevertheless forbidden to listen to a woman speak with the intention of getting pleasure from the sound of her voice.

Both the Maharal (Ibid.) and the Maharsha (Ibid.), however, point out, as do others, that there is a Gemara in Kiddushin (70a) which states that one Amora was reluctant to send greetings to the wife of another Amora when the latter asked him to do so, because this would involve hearing her speak, which he felt was forbidden. This source seems to imply that even listening to a woman speak is indeed prohibited. The Maharal (Ibid.) explains, however, that the point of this Gemara is to teach that a man should generally avoid talking with women if there is no real purpose to it, as the first Amora felt was the case in his situation. But if there is a purpose, such as to inquire about her husband's welfare, which is a way of being polite, there is certainly no prohibition to talk to and listen to the speaking voice of a woman. Similarly, the Maharsha (Ibid.) explains that the type of greeting referred to in this Gemara (Ibid.) was an intimate one, and the first Amora thus considered it improper. An intimate conversation with a woman which could lead to inappropriate closeness is indeed forbidden, but an ordinary conversation which is necessary and where one simply hears a woman's speaking voice is permitted.

It should be noted that among the Rishonim, there are authorities which indeed forbid men to listen to even the speaking voice of a woman, but many disagree. The Meiri, commenting on the aforementioned Gemara in Berachos (Beis HaBechirah Ibid. s.v. Tzarich L'Adam), entertains the possibility of this broader prohibition, but seems to conclude that hearing the normal speaking voice of a woman is permitted. The Ra'avad, as cited by the Rashba there in Berachos (Chiddushei HaRashba Ibid. s.v. V'Ha), likewise writes that the prohibition implied by the Gemara in Kiddushin (Ibid.) applies only to warm greetings which generate inappropriate closeness; the ordinary speaking voice of a woman, however, may be listened to. Both of these authorities, however, like many others, clearly prohibit a man from listening to the voice of a woman singing. This may be based, at least in part, on a Gemara in Sotah (48a and see Ibid. Rashi s.v. K'Aish) which forbids men and women to sing together and, even more so, prohibits men from listening to women sing and answering them in song, because this will lead to sexual impropriety.

The Beis Yosef, in his commentary on the Tur (Orach Chaim Siman 75 s.v. Tefach), quotes a dispute among the Rishonim as to whether this entire prohibition to hear a woman's voice should be limited to when a man is reciting Kerias Shema (or davening), because that is the context in which this law is originally introduced in the above quoted Gemara in Berachos (Ibid.). He too concludes, though, that the prohibition relates only to hearing a woman singing, and not to hearing her speak normally. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Ibid. Sif 3), clearly forbids hearing only the singing voice of a woman, and it is forbidden only while the man is reciting Kerias Shema. The Magen Avraham (Ibid. Sif Katan 6), however, refers us to another ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer Siman 21 Sif 1) which prohibits hearing the voice of a woman (whom one is forbidden to marry) at all times; the Beis Shemuel (Ibid Sif Katan 4), among others, writes that this too refers only to a woman's singing voice, not her speaking voice. The Perishah, commenting on the Tur (Ibid. Ot 2), explains that only a woman's singing voice is sexually stimulating, not her speaking voice.

Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Yabeah Omer Chelek 1 Chelek Orach Chaim Siman 6) discusses whether a man may listen to a female vocalist on the radio or on a tape recorder when he does not see the singer (as opposed to on television or on a video, which is forbidden even if it is not live), especially in light of the statement of the Gemara in Sanhedrin (45a and See Ibid. Tosafos s.v. Aleh) that sexual desire is generated only if there is some visual temptation. He concludes that listening to a woman sing is forbidden only if the listener can see the

woman, or, even if he cannot, knows what she looks like, either through personal acquaintance or through a photograph. Among others, Rav Yaakov Breisch (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Chelkas Yaakov Chelek 1 Siman 163), however, disagrees and forbids listening to a female vocalist on the radio or on a tape recorder under all conditions.

It is worth noting that the Seridei Eish (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Seridei Eish Chelek 2 Siman 8) quotes views which allow men and women to sing Zemiros together, including one authority cited by the Sdei Chemed (Klalim, Maareches Ha'Kuf Klal 42) that holds that the entire prohibition is limited to hearing a woman singing love songs. He thus argues himself that since hearing Zemiros, with its sacred words, does not generate improper sexual urges, it is permissible, especially for the sake for Kiruv Rechokim, to have men and women singing Zemiros together. It is also worth noting that Rav Moshe Feinstein (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Chelek 1 Siman 26) allows one to hear the voice of a girl who is less than eleven years old if there is some need to do so, because the voice of a young girl will not generate sexual desire. It is clear, however, that one should not listen to any woman's voice if one's intent is to derive sexual pleasure from it, as stated by the Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim Ibid. Sif Katan 17), among others.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2000/parsha/rsch_vayera.html

TorahWeb [from last year]
RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER
"Centrist Orthodoxy"

Our father Avrohom was known for his love of G-d. Yeshaya refers to him as, "avraham ohavi," "the one who loved Me" (Yeshaya 41:8). In what way does man demonstrate his love for G-d?

Rambam, in Sefer Hamitzvos, (3rd mitzvas aseh) quotes the Talmudic comment (Yoma 86a) on the pasuk, "Veahavta es Hashem elokecha" (Devarim 6:5), that the way to demonstrate our love for Hashem is by inspiring other people to love Him as well, just as one who loves another person will praise him in public and try to motivate others to like him as well. The mitzvah of ahavas Hashem belongs to both the list of chovos halevavos and to the category of chovos haeverim.

In the beginning of Parshas Lech Lecha we read about the "nefesh asher asu becharan," the many individuals whom Avrohom and Sara had brought to believe in Monotheism.

Rambam (first perek in Hilchos Avodah Zarah) quotes a medrash that states that Avraham had tens of thousands of followers. He was very outgoing, and the prophet Michah (7:20) singles him out for his middas hachessed, "Titen emes leyaakovB". By showering much love upon others he affected people so that they came to love G-d as well.

Nevertheless, after the Torah relates the story of the akeidah, G-d's comment to Avrohom is mentioned, "Now I know that you are a God fearing individual." If Avrohom would have served G-d through love alone, he would not have been able to withstand the tremendous emotional strain of the akeidah. It was only because his love of G-d was coupled with a fear of Him that he succeeded in fulfilling this divine command (the Zohar develops this theme and uses the expression of "blending fire with water" fire is a reference to the fear of G-d, while water is an allusion to the love of god).

These two emotions are not mutually exclusive. There is no contradiction between them. Generally speaking, fear is a very unhealthy feeling. But fear of G-d is not unhealthy. The pasuk in Mishlei (10:27) tells us that, "Yirat Hashem tofif yamim ushnot reshaim taktzirena," that fear of G-d will add years to our lives. We are all obligated to both of these biblical mitzvos, both to love G-d and to fear Him at the SAME TIME. The extent that one emphasizes one emotion over the other is a matter of one's personality. Each individual must figure out his own balance.

Yitzchak Avinu was known for his fear of G-d. (See Bereishis 31:53, where Yaakov refers to G-d as "pachad Yitzchak", "the One whom my father feared.") But again, this does not mean that Yitzchak DID NOT POSSESS love of G-d AS WELL.

The opening pasuk in Parshas Vayeshev states that Yaakov lived in Eretz Canaan, the land of megurei aviv, where his father (Yitzchak) had lived. The rabbis of the medrash add another level of interpretation to that phrase. They understood the expression, "megurei" to be rooted in the word, "gerus" of conversion. Just as Avraham engaged in mass proselytizing, so too did Yitzchak after him. True, it was not to the same extent as Avraham, as Yitzchak did not seem to have tens of thousands of

followers. Though Yitzchak's dominant emotion was fear, he still possessed a blend with love of G-d in that he also was involved in proselytizing, as is required of all Jews. Without possessing both of these emotions, we would not be able to fulfill all of the mitzvos.

In his collection of teshuvos entitled, "Meshiv Davar", the Netziv has an essay on the topic of right-wing, left-wing, and centrist Judaism. He explains that whoever does not keep all of the mitzvos is not acting in accordance with the teachings of Judaism. The three groups of Jews acting as Jews- are divided in accordance with how they strike a balance between fear and love of G-d. Some follow Avraham, and place the emphasis on chessed and ahavas Hashem. Others follow Yitzchak, placing their emphasis on midas hayirah. The centrists are those who attempt to maintain more of a balance between the two emotions without emphasizing one or the other.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [SMTP:office@etzion.org.il] To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT - Special Shiur by HaRav Amital
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)
THE FAITHS OF YITZCHAK AND YISHMAEL
BASED ON A SICHA BY HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL
Adapted by Yitzchak Barth Translated by Kaeren Fish

And it came to pass after these things that God tested Avraham, and He said to him: "Avraham," and he answered, "Here I am." (Bereishit 22:1)

What was the point of God's testing Avraham by means of the Akeida ("binding" of Yitzchak)? Early and later commentators alike have debated this question. The Rambam explains that the purpose of the test was to publicize the level that monotheistic faith can attain: Indeed, the story of Avraham and the Akeida includes two important aspects that are pillars of the Torah. One is that it shows us the extent of love and fear of God, how far it can go... for Avraham our father did not hurry to slaughter Yitzchak out of fear of God, that He would kill him or reduce him to ruins, but rather in order to demonstrate to people what is worthy of being done for love and fear of God, not in the hope of receiving recompense and not for fear of punishment. (Moreh Nevukhim III:24)

Indeed, following the Akeida, all the peoples of the world saw that Avraham had been ready to slaughter Yitzchak in the name of his faith in the Holy One. It became known in the world that it is worthy for a person to sacrifice his life - or even the life of his only son - in the name of monotheistic faith. It is important to note that in the opinion of the Rambam, Avraham himself intended in his act to demonstrate to the world "what is worthy of being done for love and fear of God."

At first glance, the Rambam's explanation seems unintelligible. The Rambam himself rules (Hilchos Melakhim 10:2) that gentiles are not commanded in the matter of "kiddush Hashem," and are not required to give up their lives for their faith. This being the case, why did Avraham have to publicize throughout the world the concept of one's readiness to die for his faith?

In order to answer this question, we must first clarify the qualitative difference between Avraham's faith and the faith of the pagans. The God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov is an abstract and unattainable God, Who has no image or bodily form, and Who cannot be conceived by human thought. The gods of Canaan, in contrast, were physical idols created by humans. The significance of the message of the Akeida lay not only in the readiness to sacrifice one's life for one's faith - after all, such readiness existed among the pagan nations too. Rather, Avraham's innovation was his readiness to sacrifice his son for a God Who was intangible and not accessible through the senses. Naturally, the pagans believed that Avraham's faith lacked certainty. While they were able to touch their gods, bow down before them and tend to them, Avraham had never seen his God. In the act of the Akeida, Avraham proved that monotheistic faith is no less certain than belief in gods of silver and gold, and that the community of God's believers would be prepared even to give up their lives at the behest of their abstract God.

Throughout his life, Avraham tried to publicize the belief in God. The Rambam describes: He began to stand up and call out with a great voice to all the people, telling them that there is one God of all the world, and that only He is worthy of being served. He would travel around, calling out and gathering people from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom. (Hilchos Melakhim 1:4)

In all of this endeavor, Avraham was plagued by a nagging doubt:

would the belief in an abstract God, Who could not be grasped by the imagination of the masses, have the power to overcome the darker human inclinations towards injustice, violence and destruction? In order to prove to the entire world that faith in a single God was capable of overcoming human nature, Avraham had to sacrifice his son at the command of that same abstract God. It was only in this way that he could publicize the faith in the Holy One among the nations, and show that this faith was indeed genuine.

Did Avraham succeed in inculcating the message of the Akeida? To a large extent, the answer to this question is positive. Christianity and Islam, the two dominant religions of the western world, are both monotheistic, and are thus preferable to the pagan beliefs that preceded them.

But in reality the same difference that existed thousands of years ago between the faith of Avraham and the beliefs of the nations of Canaan, remains today between our faith and that of the gentiles. The God of the Christians, as we know, is not abstract. Christianity believes in the "holy trinity," which makes the transcendent God a partner with a human messiah. The various denominations within Christianity perceive this arrangement in different ways, but none of them believes in a completely abstract God.

It would seem that in this regard Islam is much closer to Judaism. The Rambam, as we know, rules in his letter to R. Ovadia the Proselyte that Muslims are counted among "the congregation of monotheists," and thus are not to be considered polytheists. But in fact it appears that there is a most fundamental difference between the Jewish concept of "kiddush Hashem," sanctification of God's Name, and its Muslim counterpart.

Like many of the fundamental beliefs of Islam, the concept of faith in a "World-to-Come," a hereafter, was also borrowed from Judaism. But the Muslim version of this principle is qualitatively different from Jewish belief. We believe that in the World-to-Come there is no body or physical existence, but rather only the souls of the righteous without any body, like the ministering angels... no eating nor drinking, nor any of all the things that human bodies need in this world. (Hilkhos Teshuva 8:2)

Muslims, on the other hand, believe in a physical Paradise that awaits the righteous after their death. According to Muslim belief, the World-to-Come provides those who reach it with all the physical pleasures that they were unable to attain in this world. In contrast with the pure, spiritual and elevated Paradise in which we believe, Muslims believe that after death they will reach a place where they will be able to realize their wildest and ugliest fantasies. In contrast to Christianity, Islam succeeded in blocking human imagination from perceiving an image of the abstract God of the universe, but gave human imagination free reign in conceiving of the World-to-Come.

The difference between the original concept of the World-to-Come and the Paradise that the Muslims imagine for themselves is of great significance, and has ramifications for our attitude towards their religion in general. It is true that Muslims believe in One God, but the purpose of their service of Him is in order to reach the World-to-Come that they believe in. Muslim "shahidim" (martyrs) who are prepared to die in the fulfillment of their religious command do not give up their lives for the sake of the Oneness of an abstract God, but rather in order to achieve the World-to-Come. They have turned the loftiest of commandments - that of sanctification of God's Name - into a vehicle for the realization of their most vulgar urges. Their self-sacrifice is not for the sake of God, but rather for the sake of their own physical desires.

In addition to the profanation of the concept of "kiddush Hashem," the belief in a physical Paradise itself causes a "chillul Hashem" (desecration of God's Name). Muslim spiritual leaders support murder, claiming that such acts publicize the name of the Great God. But in fact they are encouraging their followers to sacrifice their lives in the name of the fulfillment of their physical desires.

Various midrashim provide lengthy and detailed descriptions of the three days preceding the Akeida, during which Avraham and Yitzchak walked together towards Mount Moriah. For many years I searched, but among these dozens of midrashim that attempt to describe the conversation between the father and his son being led to slaughter, not a single one mentions the Paradise awaiting. This would seem rather strange: we would expect to read that Avraham calmed and reassured his son by promising that he would arrive in Paradise after his death. But nowhere is there any mention of such an idea.

This surprising discovery indicates the polar difference between

the "mesirut nefesh" (self-sacrifice) of Avraham and Yitzchak at the time of the Akeida, and the self-sacrifice of the sons of Yishmael today. Avraham went to sacrifice his son solely for the sake of Hashem. He never imagined for a moment that the Akeida might be for Yitzchak's own benefit, as a means of reaching Paradise, and did not entertain any illusions concerning the pleasurable experiences awaiting his son after his slaughter. A Jew does not wish to die in order to reach the World-to-Come, but he is prepared to give up his life for his Creator, without any expectation of a better life in the World of Truth.

This is the fundamental difference between Jews, who have given up their lives throughout the generations for the sake of God's name, following in the footsteps of Avraham and Yitzchak, and the Muslim shahidim of today. Although Muslims are among those whose faith is considered monotheistic - "the congregation of monotheists," in the words of the Rambam - they have profaned the concept of "kiddush Hashem," thereby removing themselves from the congregation of those who sacrifice their lives for the sanctification of God's name. Only we, the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, sacrifice our lives when required to do so for the sanctification of His great Name, and not for our own benefit. On this holy day (Rosh Ha-shana), the cry therefore goes out from our mouths to the Creator of the universe: Guardian of Israel, guard over the remainder of Israel, who declare "Hear O Israel."

We have the right to plead and pray before our Master to have mercy on us and guard us from those who rise up against us to murder us:

Guardian of the singular nation, guard over the remainder of the singular nation, who declare the Oneness of Your name - "Hashem our God, Hashem is One." (This sicha was delivered before shofar blowing on the second day of Rosh Ha-shana 5762 [2001].)

From: chrysler[SMTP:rachrysl@netvision.net.il] Subject: Midei Parsha by RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER

This issue is sponsored l'iluy Nishmas Chayim Mordechai ben ha'Rav Yisrael Ezrieli al yedeimishpachto

Parshas Va'yeira

The MITZVAH OF THE B'RI'S MILAH (Part 2)

The Great Sacrifice

According to the Medrash, Rabeinu Bachye writes, the Mitzvah of Milah is compared to a Korban. Bearing in mind that a Korban is a sacrifice, one can conceive few greater sacrifices than offering one's new-born baby to be wounded in honour of his G-d. Indeed, there are a number of similarities between the two. B'ris Milah, like Korbanos, atones; the Mitzvah is performed on the eighth day, just like a Korban, that can only be brought when the animal is eight days old. And in the same way as it is a Mitzvah to eat the Korbanos, so too is it a Mitzvah to make a Se'udas B'ris, as we learn from Avraham Avinu.

As a matter of fact, he adds, the Bris Milah is more consequential than a Korban, since it is performed with the body, whereas a Korban is only brought with one's money.

Moreover, one performs the Mitzvah with the limb that Chazal refer to as the head (leader) of the body ('Rosh ha'Geviyah'), because the nervous system of all the other limbs is attached to it. That is why, he says, it is compared to the Akeidah (as if one had bound oneself before Hashem [like Yitzchak]) and to bringing G-d a sacrifice, as the Pasuk writes in Tehilim "those who cut the covenant on the sacrifice".

The comparison of the Milah to a Korban has many ramifications. It even has a source in the Torah, for the acronym of 'Mizbei'ach' forms the first letters of 'Milah Z'manah be'Yom Ches'. The Zohar bases the Minhag to place the Orlah in a container with earth on the fact that when a Jew brings his son for this particular sacrifice, it is as if he had brought all the sacrifices. Presumably, this in turn, is connected with the fact that the Torah refers to the Mizbei'ach as "Mizbach Adamah" ('a Mizbei'ach of earth', Sh'mos 20:21).

And the reason that one declines to appoint the same person as Sandek (the person who holds the baby during the B'ris) for more than one of one's sons, the Mateh Mosheh explains, is because the Sandek's legs are compared to the Mizbei'ach on which the Ketores is being brought. That being the case, the Sandeka'us, like the Ketores, is a Segulah (a means) to wealth. And like the Ketores, one does not give the same person the Mitzvah twice, so as not to deprive others of the opportunity of attaining wealth.

The Ba'al ha'Dibros writes that the Minhag for the father to stand

beside his son for the duration of the B'ris is due to the fact that the B'ris Milah is compared to a Korban. Both are based on the Takanah of the early Nevi'im, who instituted the 'Ma'amad' (that a group of people would be appointed to stand by the Korban Tamid each day as representatives of the people, on whose behalf the Korban was being sacrificed). It is not correct, Chazal explain, for the owner of a Korban to be brought when the owner is not present.

And in the same way, it is not correct for a father to donate such a precious Korban, and then to bring it before G-d in abstentia.

Perhaps the Se'udas B'ris is also the result of the comparison of the B'ris Milah to a Korban. Because, Chazal have taught, the day that one brings a Korban is considered a personal Yom-tov. Consequently, the Se'udas B'ris too, is considered a Se'udas Yom-tov.

One of the reasons given that Milah in its right time overrides Shabbos, is in turn, based on the reason that Shabbos takes precedence over most Mitzvos - because to perform them at Shabbos' expense would contravene the 'Sign' of Shabbos. Not so the Mitzvah of Milah, which is itself a 'Sign' (Nachalas Binyamin).

It seems to me however that, if Milah is considered a Korban, then it only natural that it should override Shabbos, just like all Korbanos whose time is fixed, override Shabbos.

Eliyahu the Zealot

The reason that we place a chair for Eliyahu ha'Navi is based on the Pirkei de'Rebbi Eliezer, who relates how an evil decree was issued in his days not to perform the Mitzvah of B'ris Milah. That is what caused Eliyahu in his zealotry, to run away to the cave. And when Hashem asked him what he was doing there, he replied that he was zealous on behalf of his G-d, because they had annulled the Covenant. To which Hashem replied 'By your life, you were zealous on account of the Milah. Therefore, whenever they perform it, you will attend the B'ris and attest to the fact that they kept the Mitzvah. And that is the reason that one places a special chair for the Angel whose name is Eliyahu ... '.

From: listmaster[SMTP:listmaster@shemayisrael.com] Subject: Peninim on the Torah by RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM PARSHAS VAYEIRA

She called his name Moav (19:37)

At first glance, one views the naming of her son as a reflection of her immorality. To publicize that the child's father was none other than his grandfather takes a certain amount of either chutzpah, shamelessness, or plain foolishness. In light of the following incredible story our attitude towards Lot's daughter might change.

Once, Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, was called up to the Torah. Immediately following him was a student of the yeshiva who had an excellent reputation. Rav Moshe took one look at a small skin wound on the student's hand and asked him, "Do you know you have tzaraas?" (A form of leprosy visited upon a person for speaking lashon hora, disparaging, slanderous speech.) The bachur was shocked to hear this. Rav Moshe inquired, "Did you recently speak lashon hora?" "No," the bachur responded. "I am very careful in matters of speech." "Perhaps you spoke against the dead," Rav Moshe queried. "No, I really cannot remember an instance when I spoke against anyone - except, I did recently say that Lot's daughter acted inappropriately when she named her son Moav." "That is the reason for your tzaraas. You slandered Lot's daughter," Rav Moshe declared. "Do you realize that she named him Moav to emphasize the fact that he was conceived from her father and not from G-d - as the Christians have claimed about their god? Moav was not the product of an immaculate conception. Indeed, she should be lauded for her forthright and truthful manner." Needless to say, the student accepted upon himself to do teshuvah, repent, and we are the beneficiaries of a new insight into the parsha.

And G-d tested Avraham. (22:1)

The Chida, zl, cites the Maharam Almusenino, zl, in his sefer Yedei Moshe, who asks a penetrating question. The Torah lauds Avraham Avinu for his adherence to Hashem's command, for his willingness to sacrifice his only son, his beloved Yitzchak. What about the scores of Jewish fathers, mothers and children who have given up their lives Al Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify Hashem's Name? What about the Asarah Harugei Malchus, Ten Martyrs, or those who were murdered during the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the numerous pogroms that decimated European Jewry? Are we to ignore the Holocaust of not so long ago? Is there any question

that if Hashem had appeared to them as He did to Avraham, that they would have done what He asked of them? What aspect of Avraham's act of faith resonates with such distinctiveness?

The Maharam explains that Avraham's uniqueness was evinced in his unparalleled joy in being able to serve the Almighty. He substantiates this idea with the words of Chazal in the Talmud Pesachim 117a, who say that nevuah, prophecy, Divine Inspiration, does not rest on a person unless he is in total joy. If there is any taint of depression, regardless of its insignificance, there will be no prophecy.

Avraham had every reason to develop a feeling of sadness as he held the knife in his hand, poised to slaughter Yitzchak. True, he was following Hashem's command, but it was a command that required him to take the life of his son. How could he execute this act joyfully? He did so because he was Avraham Avinu, our forefather, who set the standard for mesiras nefesh and avodas Hashem. He must have been filled with joy at having the opportunity to serve Hashem. Otherwise, the angel who told him not to slaughter Yitzchak would not have appeared to him.

The martyrs throughout the ages clearly died with faith and conviction. They believed that as a Jew one is asked to sacrifice at times, even his own life. They were prepared to do just that. We would be hard-pressed, however, to assert that it was with joy. They must have been depressed about leaving their families and their communities, about their inability to continue serving Hashem and performing His mitzvos. Whatever the motivation, they had every reason to be sad. This is the difference between our Patriarch and his thousands of descendants who followed his path of self-sacrifice: joy.

In an alternative approach, the Chida explains that Avraham's act of mesiras nefesh was unique in that he acted willingly. Throughout history, Jews have been sacrificed because of their belief, because of their commitment, or simply because they were Jews. Unquestionably, their portion in Gan Eden is of a level that is unimaginable. Yet, they were forced to die - they were not asked to. They did not have a choice. Avraham Avinu's test was unusual in that Hashem requested of him - "kach na" - "please take (your son)." Hashem asked him to give up everything for which he had previously worked. He had a choice.

Avraham could have said no. The Akeidah was counter to everything he had believed. It went against his personality. He was the Patriarch who symbolized chesed, kindness; surely the act of sacrificing his son was not an extension of this middah, attribute. When Hashem asked Avraham, however, he accepted unequivocally. This does not in any way diminish the mesiras nefesh of our martyrs throughout the generations. Rather it raises the degree of Avraham's level of commitment.

Rabbi & Mrs. Naphtali Burnstein In honor of the Bar-Mitzvah of our son May he continue to be a source of nachas to the Ribono Shel Olam and all of Klal Yisrael

From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@ohr.edu]
* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Vayera

KNOCK KNOCK

"For I have loved him (Avraham), because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem..." (18:19)

Our Sages promise that if someone is a Torah scholar, and both his son and grandson are also Torah scholars, then the Torah, like a guest who constantly comes back to stay at the same hotel, will never leave that family.

Given this promise, a great Rabbi of a previous generation was asked why it was that so many Jews have lost their connection to Torah - for since our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov were all Torah scholars, it should be that the Torah should never have become estranged from their progeny.

The Rabbi answered with an experience of his own: "Once I was traveling from place to place selling a scholarly work that I had authored. I arrived at a town I knew well and knocked on the door of the boarding house where I always stayed. There was no answer. So I turned around and looked for other lodgings. The Torah would tell you the same story - the Torah knocks on doors and cries out FOpen up! Let me in!E But seeing as no-one answers, the Torah seeks other lodgings..."

When the Torah knocks, all we have to do is to open up our doors!

Avraham said: "Perhaps there are fifty tzadikim in the midst of the city; and will You destroy and not forgive...?" (18:24)

Some irreligious youth were once detailing how they had spent Yom Kippur carousing in bars:

"Yeah - it was great. We had the time of our lives!"

"Did David go too?"

"Nah - not David. HeEs a tzadik...."

In certain circles, apparently, one can become a "tzadik" with very minimal qualifications.

Avraham knew there were no tzadikim in Sodom, so he appealed to Hashem to save the city on behalf of the tzadikim "in the midst of the city" - i.e. compared to the rest! Since people saw them as tzadikim, the people would not understand why they were being destroyed, and consequently HashemEs name would be profaned.

Sources: Knock Knock - Chafetz Chaim Relative Righteousness - Rabbi Zalman Sorotskin Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair (C) 2001 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu
Subject: Internet Chaburah -- Parshas VaYera

Prologue: It was the first birthday party mentioned in the Torah. Avraham Aveinu, the proud father threw a huge Seudas Hodaah when Yitzchak finished nursing. Rashi comments that the party took place after Yitzchak was 24 months old. Why did Avraham wait so long to thank Hashem for the birth of Yitzchak? Why the long gap of two years before offering public thanks for Yitzchak's birth?

The Griz explains that Yitzchak's birth to his mother of 90 was one of two miracles associated with his birth. When Sarah had Yitzchak, her ability to nurse was also a great miracle deserving of a Seudas Hodaah. That Nes was not finished until Yitzchak had finished nursing. At that moment in time, Avraham felt he was able to fully thank Hashem for all the miracles he had shown Avraham and Sarah.

The miracle of birth is a special one worthy of Hodaah. People associate many Minhagei Hodaah with the birth of children. This week's Chaburah examines a well-known, poorly understood Minhag of the early years in life. It is entitled:

Upsherin: cutting the ties that bind?

The earliest mention of the concept of Upsherin appears in the works of the Radvaz (Shut Haradvaz II:608). There, the Radvaz was asked about what one should do if he took on the Neder to cut his son's hair at the Kever of Shmuel HaNovi and discovered he couldn't get to the Kever because it had fallen into the hands of the non-Jews. Apparently, in the times of the Radvaz this seemed to be a common practice, that male children received their first haircuts at the Kever of Shmuel Hanovi. The hair was collected and weighed and a parallel amount of money was donated to the upkeep of the Kever based upon the weight of the hair.

The move to the Kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (a common practice in both Chassidic and Sephardic cultures) seems to be based upon the writings of Rav Chaim Vital (Shaar Hakavanos 87a). He notes that before he began learning with the Ari he was informed that the Ari had taken his son to the Kever of Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai and cut his hair there and made a big party. However, it should be noted that his son's age at the time was not specified, nor is it clear that the child was three. These sources only point to a custom to cut hair of young children at the Kevarim of Tzaddikim and to make donations to Tzedaka and some Seudah as a result. (Shut Mishpat Tzedek, 74 notes that the Minhag of cutting hair at a Kevar is somewhat suspect and perhaps should be limited to those Kevarim, of the Rashbee and Shmuel Hanovi where there is at least precedent for the practice.)

If one examines the Shulchan Aruch and all the Poskim, one will find no mention of the Minhag of Upsherin. The grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek determined (Seder Tefilla LMaHarid) that the story of the son of the Ari must have happened when the boy was three and therefore the Minhag of Upsherin is to cut the boys' hair when they turn three. Some associate the age of three with the age when Avraham first recognized Hahem (See Nitei Gavriel, Tugalachas HaYiladim 1:2). Others find Remazim in the Possuk "V'hisgalach" which appears in reference to the Mitzora where the Gimmel is raised--accepted to be a reference to the age of three (Ateres Yishuah Moadim, 33a). Still others (Shut Arugas HaBosemOrach Chaim 210) associate the age with the age of Orlah. When the child turns three he begins to attend the Yeshiva and to study Torah, like the fourth year in the life of a tree, he can now be dedicated to Kodosh. With all the nice hints and Sodos contained within the Minhag, it has not been prevalent in the

Ashkenazic communities. There are no references to it in the Rishonim and none in the Achronim. The Keser Shem Tov noted that in London (where he resided) there was never any known Minhag of Upsherin. Why?

Perhaps one can suggest that in the Ashkenazic culture, the Minhag was too similar to Minhagei Hagoyim. The Mishnayos in Avoda Zara note that one of the biggest days of celebration for the non-Jew is Yom Tichalachto, the day he cuts his braid. In many areas of the world this is associated with the young mans age of three. Thus, to avoid Chukos Hagoyim, we do not wait to cut the hair of our children and the day of the haircut is not a day of increased celebration.

L'Halacha, one is not allowed to shave the locks on the side of his face. This is the violation of Baal Tashchis. How and when one chooses to cut the rest of his sons hair is a matter of Minhag. However, the source for an Upsherin, seems to be better rooted in that it is the beginning of the child's Yeshiva life, a life we hope will be filled with Limud V'Ahavas HaTorah than in mere haircutting.

***** Battala News

Mazal Tov to Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Tuchman upon the birth of a baby boy.
Mazal tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Yechiel Morris and family upon the birth of a baby boy.

From: Jeffrey Gross[SMTP:jgross@torah.org] To:
weekly-halacha@torah.org Weekly-halacha for 5762 Selected
Halachos Relating to Parshas Vayera

BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

Rav of Young Israel of Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

TEVILAS KEILIM - IMMERSING NEW UTENSILS

Utensils which are bought from a non-Jew, even if they are brand new, require immersion in a kosher mikveh. Just as a convert requires immersion, symbolizing his conversion from non-Jew to Jew, so too, utensils require immersion when being transferred from non-Jewish to Jewish ownership(1). Most of the Rishonim hold that this is a Biblical command(2). What follows is a basic review of which types of utensils require immersion.

Utensils fall into three categories as regards the obligation of immersion: a) utensils that definitely require immersion and the blessing of Al tevilas keilim(3); b) utensils which - For one reason or another-may require immersion and the blessing is not recited; c) utensils which do not require immersion at all.

The halachos concerning which type of utensils require immersion are based on two criteria: 1) The material from which the utensil is made; 2) the purpose for which the utensil is made and how it is used.

Let us review each of these criteria individually:

1. THE MATERIAL FROM WHICH THE UTENSIL IS MADE?

There is one basic rule to follow: The Torah itself mentions only six types of metal utensils(4) as requiring immersion. The Talmud, however, says that all utensils made out of material which "when broken can be melted down and reformulated(5)" are considered like metal utensils and require immersion. The Talmud specifically mentions glass as being the type of dish that can be "reformulated" after breaking(6).

UTENSILS WHICH DEFINITELY REQUIRE IMMERSION - WITH A BLESSING: Utensils made from any type of metal, including brass, steel, and aluminum. Disposable aluminum pans which are used and thrown away do not require immersion. If they are going to be used more than once, most poskim require them to be immersed [even before using them the first time](7), while others allow them to be used two or three times and then discarded(8). Utensils made from any type of glass(9). Pyrex, duralex and corelle are all considered forms of glass(10).

UTENSILS WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE IMMERSION AT ALL: Wood(11). Stoneware(12). Boneware, ivory(13). Plastic, melmac, rubber, nylon(14). Non-glazed earthenware (flowerpot dull finish)(15). Paper, styrofoam.

UTENSILS WHICH MAY REQUIRE IMMERSION BUT WITHOUT A BLESSING: Earthenware which has been lined or coated with lead(16). Heavily glazed earthenware(17). Porcelain or porcelain enamel. Most of today's china dishes are included in this category. There are some poskim who maintain that these dishes do not require immersion at all(18) and one may follow this authoritative view(19). Other poskim disagree and hold that china should be immersed but without a blessing(20). In many places, this has become customary(21). Corningware(22) - follows the same rule as porcelain. 2. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE UTENSIL IS MADE

The basic rule to follow is this: The Talmud states that only klei seudah, utensils used for a meal, must be immersed. This includes all utensils which have direct contact with food - either during preparation(23) or at mealtimes. Since the status of some items as klei seudah may be undetermined or in dispute, we will list different kinds of utensils - some that definitely require immersion, others which clearly do not, and those whose status is questionable and thus require immersion without a blessing. Bottle or can openers do not need immersion(24). A stove or oven rack [or a blech] on which pots are normally placed do not need immersion. If it is common for food to be placed on it directly, like a grill or a toaster-oven rack, then the rack requires immersion with a blessing(25). Vegetable bins and refrigerator racks, even if the food touches them directly, do not need immersion(26). A serving tray used to bring plates to the table is exempt from immersion. If food is placed directly on the tray, it requires immersion with a blessing(27). A nutcracker requires immersion. Some poskim require a blessing as well(28), while others rule that a blessing should not be made(29). A fruit and vegetable peeler requires immersion(30). If the peeler is used exclusively for raw, non-edible food, like a potato peeler which is used for nothing else, many poskim hold that no immersion is required(31). An arts and crafts knife does not need immersion, even if the knife is occasionally utilized for food preparation(32). Jars, bottles, or metal containers which are used to store food but are never brought to the table, require immersion without a blessing. If they are brought to the table, then they require immersion with a blessing(33). Any utensil which is normally used for wrapped food only, does not require immersion. If it is a type of utensil which is normally used for unwrapped foods, then it must be immersed even if it temporarily being used for food which is wrapped(34). Some poskim do not require immersion for a toaster(35). Many others require immersion with a blessing(36). Important Note: Many people mistakenly believe that utensils may be used one time before being immersed. This is wrong, and it has absolutely no basis in Halachah.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Ritva ibid. quoting the Ramban, based on Yerushalmi. 2 See Tevilas Keilim, pg. 34, for a complete list. 3 Our custom is to recite this text whether immersing one utensil or many; Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 120:22; Taharas Yisrael 9; Kochavei Yitzchak 1:10-6; mi-Beis Levi (Nissan 5753, pg. 49). 4 Gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead. 5 Based on the interpretation of Rashi. 6 For a more detailed explanation, see Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 120:25 and Emes l'Yaakov al ha-Torah and to Shabbos 15b. 7 Chelkas Yaakov 3:115; Minchas Yitzchak 5:32; mi-beis Levi (Nissan 5753, pg. 47). 8 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:23. 9 Y.D. 120:1. The poskim agree that glass utensils are only Rabbinically obligated. A blessing is nevertheless recited, as in all Rabbinical mitzvos; see Chochmas Adam 73:1. 10 Harav M. Heinemann (Kashrus Kurrents vol. XV #3). There is also some metal mixed in them; Tzitz Eliezer 8:26. 11 Y.D. 120:6. 12 Rambam, Hilchos Ma'achalot Asuros 17:6. 13 Several poskim quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 232. A minority opinion requires them to be immersed; see Darkei Teshuvah 14. 14 This is the view of most poskim, see Chelkas Yaakov 2:163; Kisevei Harav Henkin 2:60; Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in l'Torah v'Hora'ah, vol. 1, pg. 11; vol. 2, pg. 20 and pg. 42); Tzitz Eliezer 7:37; Be'er Moshe 2:52; Yabia Omer 4:8. A minority opinion holds that plastic dishes should be immersed without a blessing; see Minchas Yitzchak 3:76-78; Shearim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 37:4 This is the custom in German congregations. See (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 42, pg. 14) where Harav Y.Y. Weiss rules that a yeshiva may be lenient with this stringency. 15 Chochmas Adam 73:1. 16 Rama Y.D. 120:1. See Darkei Teshuvah 28 who rules that even if they are lined with lead on both the outside and inside, no blessing is said. 17 See Darkei Teshuvah 19 who quotes several views on this issue. 18 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 120:2; Shalmas Chayim 1:13; Harav M. Feinstein (quote d in l'Torah v'Hora'ah, vol. 2, pg. 20). 19 Yabia Omer 4:8. 20 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 37:3 and Misgeres ha-Shulchan. 21 Melamed leho'il Y.D. 47; Aruch ha-Shulchan 120:29; Darkei Teshuvah 12. 22 Harav M. Heinemann (Kashrus Kurrents vol. XV #3). 23 Some poskim hold that only utensils which are used in the final stage of food preparation require immersion, e.g., a pot, but not utensils which are used in the preliminary stages, e.g., a cookie cutter. 24 Shach Y.D. 120:11. Even if the can opener touches the food it does not require immersion; Harav S. Wosner (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 233). 25 Y.D. 120:4 and Pri Chadash 12. 26 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 196). See also Be'er Moshe 4:99. 27 Tevilas Keilim, pg. 213. 28 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 220). 29 Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Ohalei Yeshurun, pg. 46). Shevet ha-Levi 6:245-4 questions if a nutcracker requires immersion altogether. 30 Tevilas Keilim, pg. 221. 31 Avnei Yashfei 1:146 based on Aruch ha-Shulchan 35-36. The same halachah applies to a pocketknife, etc. 32 Darkei Teshuvah 45, quoting Pri Chadash; Aruch ha-Shulchan 40-45. See Tevilas Keilim, pg. 52. 33 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 197); Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Ohalei Yeshurun, pg. 45). 34 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 55). 35 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:24. 36 See Tevilas Keilim, pg. 208. Weekly-Halachah, Copyright 1 2001 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halachah Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross@torah.org. ****Finally!*** The Monthly Halachah Discussion, the third volume of The Halachah Discussion series published by Feldheim, is NOW available at your local Hebrew bookstore. Torah.org depends upon your support. Please visit <http://torah.org/support/> or write to dedications@torah.org or donations@torah.org. Thank you! Torah.org: The Judaism Site 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208

From: RABBI MORDECHAI KORNFELD Kollel Iyun Hadaf[SMTP:kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Subject: Insights to the Daf: Bava Kama 87 INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il> BAVA KAMA 86 - Dr. and Mrs. Andy and Dianne Koenigsberg, of New York, have dedicated this Daf l'Ilyu

Nishmas Dianne's father, Reb Aharon Dovid ben Elimelech Shmuel Kornfeld (Czechoslovakia/Israel/New York), who passed away on 3 Av 5761. May his love for Mitzvos and for Eretz Yisrael be preserved in all of his descendants.

SUPPORT D.A.F. NOW! Submit your Visa donation at: https://juga.safe-order.net/dafyomi/card_donation.htm

Bava Kama 87 A BLIND PERSON'S OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE THE TORAH OPINIONS: Rabbi Yehudah exempts a blind person from all of the Mitzvos in the Torah. Does this mean that a blind man can do whatever he pleases and is viewed like a Shoteh with regard to the Mitzvos?

(a) REBBI AKIVA EIGER and the TUREI EVEN (Megilah 24a, DH Eino) assert that a blind person is Chayav to keep the Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh, even if he is exempt from all Mitzvos Aseh. They prove this from TOSFOS here (DH v'Chen (#2)) and in Megilah who writes that a blind person is Chayav to keep Mitzvos d'Rabanan, and therefore he can make Berachos on Mitzvos that he performs. This is why Rav Yosef was not saddened that he could not recite Berachos when he heard that he was exempt from Mitzvos (since he was blind), because he "could" recite Berachos even though he was blind. The Gemara in Shabbos (23a) explains that one makes a Berachah on a Mitzvah d'Rabanan, saying "Asher Kideshanu b'Mitzvosav v'Tzivanu," because of the Mitzvah d'Oraisa of "Lo Sasur," which obligates a person, mid'Oraisa, to follow the dictates of the Rabanan. Why, then, should a blind person be able to say "Asher Kideshanu b'Mitzvosav v'Tzivanu" for a Mitzvah d'Rabanan, if he is not obligated in the Mitzvah d'Oraisa of "Lo Sasur" which is what obligates people to fulfill Mitzvos d'Rabanan?

Obviously, the blind person is also obligated to observe "Lo Sasur" and all Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh. Rabbi Yehudah means to exempt the blind person only from Mitzvos Aseh.

This is also the opinion of the PRI MEGADIM (Introduction to Orach Chaim 3:29), who cites additional proof from the fact that Rabbi Yehudah requires a verse to exempt a blind person from Misah and Galus when he kills another Jew. If he would not be prohibited to kill, then it would be obvious that he cannot be punished! This is also the opinion of the SHE'EILAS YA'AVETZ (1:75), the CHIDA in MACHZIK BERACHAH (OC 53:5), the MAHARATZ CHIYUS here.

Tosfos writes that the Rabanan obligated a blind person to observe the Mitzvos so that he not be like a Nochri. This seems to imply that a blind person does not even have to keep the Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh that apply to other Jews, which is why he would be like a Nochri. However, as the Pri Megadim writes, Tosfos might simply mean that a Jew needs to perform "positive actions" (Mitzvos Aseh) in order to define him as a Jew, since a lack of action (observing the Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh) does not give him a clear Jewish identity.

(b) The NODA B'YEHUDAH (Mahadura Tinyana, OC 112) argues with the Pri Megadim and writes that according to Rabbi Yehudah, a blind person is exempt even from Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh. The MINCHAS CHINUCH (2:25) points out that this is the opinion of the RID in SEFER HAMACHRIA (#78). Depending on the Girsas in the ROSH, the Rosh in Kidushin (1:49) might also be of this opinion. How will the Noda b'Yehudah, Rid, and Rosh refute the proofs of the Acharonim cited above?

With regard to Rabbi Akiva Eiger's proof from the fact that a blind person may say "v'Tzivanu," the proof can be expanded by asking that if the blind person is not obligated to observe the Mitzvah of "Lo Sasur," then what obligates him to listen to what the Rabanan decree in the first place? This question is paralleled by the question that the Acharonim ask on the RAMBAN in Sefer ha'Mitzvos (Shoresh ha'Rishon). The Ramban (arguing on the Ramban) writes that we cannot derive from "Lo Sasur" that there is a Mitzvah d'Oraisa to keep every Mitzvah d'Rabanan. According to the Ramban, what then "does" obligate a person to listen to the Rabanan? Similarly, the Acharonim (KUNTRUSEI SHI'URIM, Bava Metzia 12:6) ask how the Rabanan can obligate a Katan to keep the Mitzvos (according to Tosfos in Berachos 48a, DH Ad; see RASHI there (DH Ad), and RAMBAN (Milchamos) to Berachos 20b), and how the Rabanan can obligate a Nochri to keep certain Mitzvos (see LECHEM MISHNEH, Hilchos Melachim 10:9).

The KOVETZ SHI'URIM (Divrei Sofrim 1:15-18, and in Kovetz He'oros 16:18) answers that when it is clear to us what the will of Hashem is, we are required to act on that will even if it is not written explicitly in the Torah. Since we know that the Rabanan are able to determine the will of Hashem, we are required to accept what they decree based on what they understand to be the will of Hashem. The same applies to a Katan, even though he is not obligated to keep the Mitzvos. Accordingly, the same may be suggested with regard to a blind person; he is obligated to listen to the Rabanan even if he is not obligated to observe the Mitzvos of the Torah. That is why he may say "v'Tzivanu" when performing a Mitzvah d'Rabanan. (DEVAR YAKOV 87:7)

RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN AUERBACH zt'l (Minchas Shlomo 2:51:1) answers that the Lav of "Lo Sasur" applies to every living person of sound mind, since it is a general statement addressed to the inhabitants of the entire world. Therefore, it applies to a blind person, Katan, and Nochri, even if they are not obligated to observe any of the other Mitzvos of the Torah.

If a blind person is not obligated to keep the Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh, then why does the verse have to exempt him from a Chiyuv of Misah and Galus when he kills? The MISHNAS CHACHAMIM (#2) and the MINCHAS CHINUCH (2:25) write that a blind Jew cannot be obligated in less Mitzvos than a Nochri. Therefore, he is obligated to observe the Mitzvah of Retzichah even though he is exempt from Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh. (IMREI HA'TZVI proves this from Lemech (Bereishis 4:23-24), who was held responsible for killing his son, even though he was blind.)

(c) RAV GUSTMAN zt'l (in Kuntrusei Shi'urim) disagrees with the Minchas

Chinuch and others who obligate a blind person at least in the Mitzvos of B'nei Noach. He points out that the RAMBAM in Perush ha'Mishnayot to Chulin (beginning of Perek 7) writes that Jews are not obligated to perform Mitzvos because of what Hashem told Noach or Avraham Avinu. Rather, we perform the Mitzvos because we were commanded to perform them by Hashem at Har Sinai. Hence, a blind Jew should have no obligations due to Mitzvos that Hashem commanded to Noach before Har Sinai.

If this is correct, then why is it necessary for the verse to exempt a blind person from being punished for killing? Some suggest that after Rabbi Yehudah found a verse to exempt a blind person from all of the Mitzvos, he no longer needed the verse to exempt a blind person from Misah or Galus, similar to what we wrote earlier (Insights to 86b) in the name of TOSFOS here (DH v'Chen). (SHEYAREI KORBAN, Makos 2:5, DH b'Lo)

The MAHARSHAM (OC 53:14) proves from the Yerushalmi that even though the verse exempts a blind person from Mitzvos, another verse is necessary to exempt him from Galus. To explain why, he suggests that it is only after we know that a blind person is exempt from punishment that we can learn -- from the verse which compares Mitzvos to Mishpatim -- that a blind person is exempt from Mitzvos.

We might suggest a third approach to why a verse is needed to exempt a blind person from Misah and Galus. Rav Gustman zt'l quotes the SHITAH MEKUBETZES in the name of MAHARI KOHEN TZEDEK to support his opinion that a blind person is exempt from all of the Mitzvos. Mahari Kohen Tzedek quotes RABEINU TAM who says that the principle that a person who observes the Mitzvos and who is commanded to observe the Mitzvos ("Metzueh v'Oseh") is greater than one who observes the Mitzvos and is not commanded to observe them ("Eino Metzueh v'Oseh"), applies only with regard to Mitzvos that a person would have to keep even if they had not been written in the Torah (such as the Seven Mitzvos of Bnei Noach). Since Rav Yosef was saddened to find out that a blind person is exempt from Mitzvos because he would not receive the reward of a "Metzueh v'Oseh," apparently he was exempt even from the Mitzvos of B'nei Noach. (See Kuntrusei Shi'urim there, and IGROS MOSHE YD 1:6, cited by Yosef Da'as here, who discuss what Mahari Kohen Tzedek meant.)

It seems that Mahari Kohen Tzedek was bothered by the question discussed by the Ge'onim in the Shitah Mekubetzes there, and by Tosfos in Kidushin (31a). They ask why a person is greater when he keeps Mitzvos that he is commanded to keep. It would seem that, on the contrary, Rav Yosef's original assumption -- that a person who is not commanded is greater -- is more logical, since a person who does the Mitzvah even when he is not commanded to do it is conducting himself in the manner of Midas Chasidus (see RASHBA)! To answer this question, Mahari Kohen Tzedek refers us to the Gemara earlier (38a) which teaches that when the Nochrin did not keep the Seven Mitzvos that they were commanded to keep, Hashem repealed those Mitzvos, so that even when a Nochrin observes them he does not receive reward like one who is "Metzueh v'Oseh," but only like one who is "Eino Metzueh v'Oseh." The Gemara makes it clear that a Nochrin "must" observe the Seven Mitzvos nowadays, and nevertheless his reward is for a person who is "Eino Metzueh v'Oseh." How can that be?

It must be that even had Hashem not commanded Noach to observe seven Mitzvos, Noach and his children would have had a moral obligation to observe them based on logical considerations. However, when performing a Mitzvah in such a manner, one receives less reward than a person who was told by Hashem to observe the Mitzvah, since the person who was told to observe the Mitzvah is fulfilling the mandate of Hashem, aside from the moral obligation. This is what the Gemara here means as well when it says that a person who is "Metzueh v'Oseh" is greater. The Gemara is referring only to the Mitzvos that are logical and one would have had to observe not just as Midas Chasidus even if the Torah had not specifically commanded them. (Perhaps for the other Mitzvos, one who is not obligated "would" receive a greater reward.)

According to this, even according to the Kuntrusei Shi'urim who asserts that the commandments that Hashem gave to Noach or Avraham do not apply to Jews after the giving of the Torah, nevertheless a blind person would be bound to fulfill the Seven Mitzvos of B'nei Noach out of a moral obligation. The only difference between a moral obligation and a Mitzvah is the amount of reward received. This might also be the source for the Rambam who writes that we do not perform Mitzvos because of what Hashem told Noach and Avraham. The Rambam learned this from the Gemara (38a) which teaches that the Mitzvos of B'nei Noach no longer apply and their obligation is based solely on moral considerations.

The Gemara in Kidushin applies the dictum that a "Metzueh v'Oseh" is greater with regard to the Mitzvah of Kibud Av Em. This seems to contradict what we have written, since we do not find that a Ben Noach has an obligation of Kibud Av v'Em based on moral considerations. The Gemara in Nazir (61a) says clearly that a Nochrin is not obligated to honor his father, and the Gemara in Kidushin which discusses the acts of Dama ben Nesinah concludes that if a Nochrin who is "not" "Metzueh v'Oseh" receives such reward for performing the Mitzvah of Kibud Av v'Em, then all the more so will a Jew receive such great reward for performing the Mitzvah.

However, we may defend what we have written by pointing out that it is obvious that a person would be morally obligated to honor his parents, even had the Torah not specified that he honor them, as the Rambam writes (Shemoneh Perakim, Perek 6). Therefore, it seems obvious that a Nochrin should be obligated in the Mitzvah of Kibud Av v'Em. The Gemara in Nazir means to say only that a Nochrin cannot be sure who his father is, and therefore he cannot be held responsible to honor his father. In the Gemara in Kidushin, Dama ben Nesinah honored his father nonetheless, because he assumed that the man who raised him was indeed his father. When the Gemara calls

him "Eino Metzueh v'Oseh," it is referring merely to the Gemara in Bava Kama (38a) which asserts that a Nochrin is rewarded for observing his Mitzvos only like a person who is "Eino Metzueh v'Oseh."

Further support for this can be brought from the Halachah (RAMBAM, Hilchos Melachim 5:11; see OR SAME'ACH there) that a Nochrin who converts must respect his parents so that people should not say that he performed more Mitzvos before conversion. This implies that a Nochrin does have to respect his parents before conversion. (See also SEFER HA'ESHKOL, Hilchos Milah #39.)

This is what our Gemara means when it says that a blind person is "Eino Metzueh v'Oseh." He is obligated to keep the Mitzvos only because of moral considerations, and not because they are written in the Torah. (M. Kornfeld)

The *D*AFYOMI *A*DVANCEMENT *F*ORUM, brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf

Write to us at daf@dafyomi.co.il or visit us at <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>