

BS"D



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

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EIKEV - 5764

To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoo.com. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha> (hosted by onlysimchas.com). It is also fully searchable. See also torah links at www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha



From: torahweb@torahweb.org Sent: Aug. 05, 2004
Subject: Rabbi Michael Rosensweig -
Mitzvot Kallot as a Litmus Test of Religious
Commitment
To subscribe, email weekly@torahweb.org For anything
else, email: torahweb@torahweb.org
<http://www.torahweb.org/>

RABBI MICHAEL ROSENSWEG MITZVOT KALLOT AS A LITMUS TEST OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

"Ve-hayah eikev tishmaun eit ha- mishpatim ha- eileh" (Devarim 7:12). Why does the Torah use the unusual term "eikev" in its description of the formula that will guarantee our spiritual destiny? Rashi, based on the Midrash Tanchuma, explains that the use of this term indicates that it is the scrupulous observance of and commitment to the "mitzvot kallot", the easier, or seemingly lighter imperatives that people tend to trample upon (hence the reference to "akev") that establishes our credentials to merit a covenant with Hashem. The difficulty is obvious. Why is observance of the lesser commandments the basis for attaining Divine providence and the fulfillment of our national and personal destiny?

The Kli Yakar (7:12) proposes that "mitzvot kallot" does not refer to any axiological hierarchy but to chukim, those mitzvot whose rationale is obscure and which are therefore taken lightly ("kallot") as they are the object of ridicule by outsiders (Yoma 67b). He notes that the previous pasuk (7:11) speaks about the need to observe both chukim and mishpatim (rational commandments), while the opening sentence of Eikev omits explicit reference to chukim. Kli Yakar explains that the term "eikev" conveys the importance of observing chukim precisely because chukim are trivialized by others. The strict observance of mishpatim does not necessarily reflect an unambiguous commitment to Divine law for its own sake. It is possible that one is simply enamored with the rational values expressed by particular norms. One who exhibits the same intense dedication to chukim as to mishpatim, however, demonstrates unequivocally that the foundation of his conduct is his commitment to Torah. The scrupulous observance of chukim, then, impacts upon the implementation of mishpatim as well. Hence, the Torah formulates the effect of "eikev" on mishpatim ("eit ha-mishpatim"). It is noteworthy that the greatest Jewish rationalist, the Rambam, also accentuates the priority of the mysterious chukim over the logical mishpatim as a gauge of halachic commitment (end of hilchot Me'ilah).

Ironically, the basic theme that Kli Yakar develops applies even more forcefully if "mitzvot kallot" does not in fact refer to chukim, but to mitzvot of lesser stature. After all, the Talmud does use the term "kallot" to refer to a lower level of obligation or to a lesser offense for which

there is easier access to repentance (Yoma 85b). That the avoidance of minor violations should constitute the basis for the covenant between Hashem and the Jewish people is striking, indeed.

The Mishnah in Avot (2:1, and see also Avot 4 ;2- Rashi, and R. Yonah) counsels: "hevei zahir bekalah kebechamurah she- ein atah yodea mattan secharan shel mitzvot." (Be as scrupulous about lighter commandments as you are about the most stringent norms for one cannot know the corresponding reward of different commandments.) The mishnah is generally understood in two ways. According to some commentators, the mishnah establishes that the whole division between "kallot" and "chamurot" may be misleading. Often these categories stem from human perception that does not necessarily correlate with Divine and halachic reality. The assumption that one can gauge sin or obligation on the basis of the severity of its corresponding reward or punishment is inaccurate. Sometimes a severe punishment actually reflects a measure of leniency as it affords an avenue for expiation. Some commentators (Maharsha, Sanhedrin) explain that this consideration underlies the principle of ein oneshin min ha-din (one cannot impose punishments based on logical inferences.) Thus, one should be equally scrupulous in matters that are seemingly less weighty or grave since it is impossible to really determine the hierarchy of the commandments or halachic values. This approach might also explain the role of "kallot" in the context of our parshah, but only if we interpret "kallot" only as a perception.

There is, however, a second approach to the mishnah in Avot, and by extension to the guarantee of Divine protection and the attainment of our collective and personal goals that projects the centrality of mitzvot kallot. Even if we could identify halachic obligations or institutions that are inherently less weighty than others, particular attention specifically to this group of "lesser" values is mandated. The role of "kallot" reflects two dimensions of halachah that are indispensable to its central role in Jewish life.

First, it accentuates the importance of a total integrated commitment. The Ohr Ha- chayim explains that the term "eikev" refers to the totality of one's commitment to Torah life. If one wishes to attain the lofty goals delineated in our parshah, he must integrate all facets of Torah life. It is important to affirm that every mitzvah, even those designated as relative kallot, provides an invaluable opportunity for avodat Hashem. According to this perspective, every mitzvah is of inestimable value. Furthermore, one who neglects even one of the minor obligations or lesser infractions diminishes from the totality of the Torah. His apparent disregard of a minor detail in fact affects his relationship to all mitzvot. It is unsurprising that the kabbalat ol mitzvot of a ger (acceptance of the yoke of commandments by a convert) does not abide the rejection of even a single point of halachah. The refusal to accept one of the "kallot" is not tolerated anymore than is the repudiation of such chamurot as the obligations of Shabbat and kashrut.

Moreover, in line with the Keli Yakar's approach, it is precisely the embrace of kallot because they are kallot that serves as a true litmus test for ultimate halachic commitment. A frivolous attitude toward "kallot" demonstrates that one is dedicated to individual mitzvot or halachic institutions on their own merit, but not simply as an expression of Divine will. By picking and choosing and assigning relative values, one projects himself rather than Hashem as the arbiter of conduct and values.

The ramifications of such an approach clearly transcend the omission or neglect of particular mitzvot. At the same time, the scrupulous adherence of mitzvot kallot reflects a profound allegiance to the authority and process of halachah beyond its details.

One might extend this notion to include punctilious observance of rabbinic laws, as well. R. Yonah (Avot 1:2) observes that the true measure of one's religiosity can best be assessed by the response to rabbinic seyagim (fences) and takanot (enactments). One who exhibits reverence and proper caution in this sphere reflects authentic yirat shamayim (fear of heaven) in a manner that transcends the careful

observance of Biblical laws. There are important halachic differences between rabbinic and Biblical laws, just as there are more subtle yet still crucial differences between "kallot" and "chamurot". These differences are halachically significant and even dictate priorities when it is appropriate to make such halachic choices. At the same time, the central role of rabbinic laws and "kallot" in defining the depth and authentic character of religious commitment is undeniable. Undoubtedly, it is precisely the elusive component of yirat shamayim, that indispensable ingredient in all avodat Hashem, that is the sine qua non of the covenant enumerated in parshat Eikev. The role of "kallot" in achieving this high attainment must be seen to be axiomatic.

Copyright © 2004 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] Sent: Aug. 04, 2004 To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org Subject: daf-hashavua Ekev 5764/2004
UNITED SYNAGOGUE - LONDON (O)
Shabbat ends in London at 9.33pm



THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED
BY: BRIJNET - British Jewish Network - UK branch of Shamash

SIDRA LITE

- * Obedience will be rewarded with prosperity, power and health.
- * Hashem will help the people to defeat the Canaanite nations.
- * A historical review of wilderness experiences is presented to inspire the realisation that the people's survival was due, not to the merits of the Israelites, but to Hashem honouring His commitment to the Patriarchs.
- * The second paragraph of the Shema is taught to the people.

SIDRA INSIGHTS

Rabbi Shaul Robinson, Barnet Synagogue

The Sidra of Ekev prepares the Children of Israel to finally enter the Land of Israel. Moses praises the Land that the Jewish People are about to inherit.

"For the L-d your G-d brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; A land where you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig bronze." (Devarim 8: 7-9)

and
"A land which the L-d your G-d cares for; the eyes of the L-d your G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." (Devarim 11:12)

The well known joke of the 'You Don't Have to Be Jewish' era is that if Moses had turned right instead of left when he came out of Egypt, we would have had all the oil and the Arabs would have had the orange juice!

But, the question must still be asked - why this land? Why, of all the lands, all the countries in the world, did Hashem choose to give Canaan to the Jewish people? And, as the Jewish people's claim to that land in contemporary times is constantly being besmirched and delegitimized, what is the lesson for us in our own day?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the German scholar of the 19th Century and the architect of the revival of Orthodox communal life provides a most beautiful and salutary answer.

It is true, as the verses quoted from this morning's Sidra indicate, that the land of Israel is a beautiful land with the capacity for sustaining its population. But there was another side to the land, too. This was the land of Sodom and Gomorrah - places of great wickedness. This was the land

which, despite its small size, had been fought over by many peoples and armies - the land of the war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings. This was the land whose inhabitants, the Canaanites, had degenerated to levels of moral licentiousness.

Hashem chose the Land of Israel, says Rabbi Hirsch, because it is the land with the greatest potential for violence, bloodshed and depravity. Why did that dubious distinction qualify it to become the homeland of the Jewish people? Because the Jewish People are to enter the land of Israel not just to build a country for themselves. Their mission is to build a society of Goodness, Morality and Torah that will be a shining example to the rest of the world.

"Just that land G-d chose to plant therein his people - who themselves are not the most tractable, whose fundamental character is obstinacy, so that if the Divine Fire of Torah would succeed in winning over this people on this land itself, then there can be no race of mankind in no land who cannot be won."

In choosing to give the Land of Israel to the Jewish people, Hashem is showing his love and hope for all mankind. When the Jewish people - stubborn and rebellious as they can be, enter the land of Israel, the most fought over and violent place on the planet, and in the eyes of the whole world, through loyalty to the Torah they create a society of breathtaking morality and goodness, then every nation and individual will be inspired to replicate such goodness and morality in their own lands.

A Halachic Guide to Life Cycle Events

By Rabbi Daniel Roselaar, Belmont United Synagogue

BAR MITZVAH

When a boy reaches the age of thirteen he acquires the halachic status of an adult and becomes bound by all the mitzvot in the Torah. He is thus a bar mitzvah - a person with a duty to observe the mitzvot. Though it is often said that a boy becomes a bar mitzvah when he is thirteen years old and one day, this simply means that he becomes a bar mitzvah on the first day of his fourteenth year, i.e. on his Hebrew birthday. According to the famous medieval halachist R' Asher, this is a tradition that was communicated to Moses at Mt Sinai.

A further factor in defining someone as a bar mitzvah is that he must also show the first signs of physical puberty. Unless this is the case he cannot fulfil Biblical mitzvot on behalf of others (e.g. he cannot blow the shofar for them on Rosh Hashanah), but he may fulfil Rabbinic mitzvot for them (thus he is allowed to lein from the Torah).

Becoming a bar mitzvah is an automatic event and does not require any special ritual or celebration. Nevertheless, the occasion is usually marked by calling the boy to the Torah, since this is a mitzvah that he was unable to perform as a minor. Massechet Sofrim mentions an ancient custom of taking a bar mitzvah boy to the local Rabbis and elders so that they should bless him, and it is also traditional to host a seudat mitzvah (celebratory meal) in honour of the occasion. Obviously the emphasis at any such celebration should be on the religious dimension of the event. If it is merely an excuse for a knees-up to mark the boy's transition to teenagehood, it becomes a perversion of the true meaning of bar mitzvah.

Hameforshim - The Commentators

Rabbi Dr Michael Harris, Hampstead Synagogue.

RABBI MOSHE FEINSTEIN

Rav Moshe Feinstein was born in Uzdun, near Minsk, Belorussia, where his father was Rabbi, in 1895. He died in 1986, by which time he had become widely recognised as the leading halachic authority of his generation.

Rav Moshe became Rabbi of Luban, also near Minsk, as a single man, later marrying Shima Kustanovich in 1920. He remained in Luban until 1937, when he emigrated with his family to the United States.

In America, he became Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim. His responsa are published in the celebrated collection Igrot Moshe. His halachic decisions covered many areas of modern science and technology and also addressed problems encountered in Jewish life under Communist rule and in the United States.

Rav Moshe is also well-known for his Darash Moshe, a collection of insights on the Chumash together with sermons. He also published Talmudic novellae to Tractates Bava Kamma and Bava Mezia. He was admired for his dedication and selflessness, and was elected to major leadership positions in the Orthodox world.

He was president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and chairman of the American branch of the Mo'ezet Gedolei ha-Torah of Agudat Israel.

IT HAPPENED TODAY

by Rabbi Yisroel Fine, Cockfosters & N.Southgate Synagogue
20th Av

The first printed edition of the Zohar (the basic book of Kabbalist interpretation of the Bible) was published on this day corresponding to the 4th August 1558.

The publication of the Zohar (Splendour) popularised the study of Kabbalah and stimulated the spread of mysticism and messianic movements.

Compiled and disseminated by Moses de Leon of Granada (died 1305), the Zohar was ascribed to the Talmudic Sage, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (second century CE), who is reputed to have received daily instruction from the Prophet Elijah during his thirteen years of refuge in a cave following the Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans.

Its central themes are the nature of the Deity, the mysteries of the Divine Names, the soul of man, the nature of good and evil, the importance of the Torah (written and oral), the Messiah and Redemption.

In a remarkably short time the Zohar captured the minds of the people, and became after the Torah and the Talmud the third sacred source of Jewish inspiration and guidance. In particular, the exiles from Spain following their expulsion in 1492, found in the Zohar a fresh source of strength following their harrowing experiences. They transported its influence to all parts of the Jewish world, but, in particular, it gained its pre-eminence in Zefat in Northern Israel.

The Zohar's main exponents were Rabbi Moses Cordovero (1522-1576) in his work Pardes and the towering figure of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1514-1572), called the "Ari" (the Lion), both of whose graves are to be found in the old cemetery of Zefat. The Zefat school spawned most of the Zemirot sung at meals during Shabbat, and also the compositions Lechah Dodi and Yedid Nefesh.

From Zefat the Kabbalist doctrine spread far and wide but remained the preserve of the exclusive circles of the learned. Only in the 18th century with the rise of Chassidism did it gain wider influence amongst the masses.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

by Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Last week's questions: 1) Shabbat Chazon, Shabbat Nachamu and Shabbat Shuvah have something in common which is not shared by any of our other special Shabbatot. What is it?

Answer: They are the only special Shabbatot that derive their name from the opening word of the Haftarah.

2) EXTRA CHALLENGE In today's Sidra we read the first paragraph of the Shema. There is a connection between the number of words in the opening verse and in the whole paragraph on the one hand, and the Levitical cities on the other hand. What is the connection and what is its significance? [Please note that the verse "Baruch Shem.." is not part of the Shema in the Torah.]

Answer: There are 6 words in the opening verse and 48 altogether. This matches the 6 Cities of Refuge which were part of the 48 Levitical cities. The message that emerges is that the Jewish people can always take refuge in the Shema and its teachings.

This week's question:

1) set by Sam Crowne of Mill Hill. When is a mitzvah and a beracha performed at the same time?

2) EXTRA CHALLENGE set by Dr Lionel Kopelowitz of St John's Wood. Which Haftarah will be recited in 5765 for the first time in 21 years?

Would you like to pose a riddle? Please email the Editor.

Produced by the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue. Editor: Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis <mailto:editordaf@brijnet.org> Address: Finchley Synagogue, Kinloss Gardens, London N3 3DU Editorial Board: Rabbi Yisroel Fine, Rabbi Philip Ginsbury, Mr Simon Goulden, Rabbi Dr Michael Harris, Rabbi Emanuel Levy, Rebbetzin Sarah Robinson, Rabbi Meir Salasnik, Rabbi Dr Julian Shindler To sponsor Daf Hashavua please contact Anthony Cummings <mailto:Anthony.Cummings@unitedsynagogue.org.uk> Copyright 2004 United Synagogue Publications Ltd.

From: nfried5884@aol.com

A PRECIOUS MITZVA

DR. SAM FRIEDMAN (Teaneck)

One of the eight mitzvos in Parshas Eikev is that the Jewish people are commanded to love those that convert to Judaism, as the Torah teaches "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר..." "And you shall love the convert..." (Devarim 10:19). The Sefer HaChinuch - a classic in Torah literature written by an anonymous thirteenth century author that describes each of the 613 mitzvos explains that at the root of this mitzva is the concept that Hashem chose the Jews to be a "holy people...He therefore guided and ordered them onto the ways of kindly grace and compassion," and warned "them to adorn themselves with every desirable and precious character trait, to find favor in the eyes of all who behold them...And as we attain these good character traits, the good favor of G-d will be bestowed upon us...for good will extends to good persons..." Thus, the Sefer HaChinuch explains that this mitzva teaches the Jews "grace and compassion" and molds good character.

The Sefer HaChinuch points out, based on the Rambam (1135-1204, great Talmudist, codifier of Jewish law, philosopher, and physician), who writes in the Laws of De'os 6:4, that the Torah uses a similar expression when we are commanded to love Hashem. The Torah commands in last week's Torah portion, Parshas Va'eschanan, "וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ..." "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d..." (Devarim 6:5). Because the Torah uses similar language when we are commanded "And you shall love the convert...", the Sefer HaChinuch, based on the Rambam teaches, that the commandment to love a convert is so important that it is equated to the commandment to love Hashem. The Rambam adds that Hashem himself is described as "...וְאֵלֹהֵי הַגֵּר..." "...and loves the convert..." (Devarim 10:18).

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, זצ"ל, is known as the Chafetz Chayim and lived from 1839-1933. The Chafetz Chayim wrote invaluable books on Jewish Law and Ethics, and was famous for his piety and scholarship. The word גֵּר can be translated as stranger or convert. In Sefer HaMitzvos HaKatzar (Positive Mitzva 61), the Chafetz Chayim writes that when the Torah teaches "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר..." "And you shall love the גֵּר..." (Devarim 10:19), the word גֵּר refers to any *stranger* who "comes from another land or city to live among us, and this would, all the more so, include a convert".

It seems that the Chafetz Chayim differs from the Sefer HaChinuch and the Rambam. The Chafetz Chayim clearly writes that the word גֵּר in the sentence "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר..." "And you shall love the גֵּר..." should be translated as a *stranger* who "comes from another land or city to live among us..." The Sefer HaChinuch (Positive Commandment 431) and the Rambam (Laws of De'os, 6:4 and Sefer HaMitzvos, Positive Commandment 207) seem to prefer to translate the word גֵּר in the sentence "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר..." "And you shall love the גֵּר..." as referring to a *convert*. It is interesting that the translation of the Chafetz Chayim, on a simple level, appears to fit in better with the end of the sentence in the Torah, where the word גֵּר is clearly translated as stranger. The entire sentence is: "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם..." "And you shall love the גֵּר, because you were *strangers* in the land of Egypt" (Devarim 10:19). I don't think that the Chafetz Chayim would ever disagree, based solely on his own understanding, with the Sefer HaChinuch or the Rambam, who were tremendous scholars from a much earlier era. Perhaps, the Chafetz Chayim is basing his interpretation on another early great scholar, about whom I am unaware.

Even the Sefer HaChinuch, who translates the word the word גֵּר in the sentence "וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר..." "And you shall love the גֵּר...", as referring to a convert, teaches that we are to learn from this "*precious mitzva* (מצוה יקרה) to take pity on any man who is in a town or city that is not his native ground and the site of the family of his fathers." Based on the Sefer HaChinuch, and perhaps also the Chafetz Chayim, the

commentary in the ArtScroll Stone Chumash, "...broadens this commandment to include *all strangers, such as...a new student in a school, or a new employee.*" It's amazing, that just as we are commanded to love Hashem, we are taught using similar language, to love *any stranger* who may feel uncomfortable because he or she is in a new situation. The Sefer HaChinuch, which describes in detail each of the 613 mitzvos, is so impressed with the "kindly grace and compassion" of this mitzvah that he calls it "מצוה יקרה" "a precious mitzva (commandment)." This mitzva is but one example of the magnificent book of ethics that our precious Torah is.



http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2003/parsha/rsob_eikev.html

[From last year]

RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY

YERUSHALAYIM – THE ULTIMATE GOOD

There are four distinct themes in birchas hamazon. Each theme requires its own beracha. We first thank Hashem for food by reciting the beracha of "hazan es hakol". This beracha is followed by the beracha "al ha'aretz" – thanking Hashem for Eretz Yisroel. We conclude birchas hamazon on a Torah level with the beracha of "bonei Yerushalayim". Chazal added the fourth beracha of hatov v'hamaitiv focusing on the goodness of Hashem.

The first two berachos are easily understood as integral to the mitzvah. We mention food and the land where the food comes from. However, the third beracha is questionable. Why is it necessary to mention Yerushalayim in our birchas hamazon? What is the connection between what we ate and Yerushalayim? The fourth beracha added by Chazal seems to be superfluous. After we have blessed Hashem for food, Eretz Yisroel, and Yerushalayim, what do we add by an all encompassing statement of hatov v'hamaitiv?

Mentioning Yerushalayim in birchas hamazon puts our entire meal in a different perspective. The Torah requires of us to separate ma'aser sheini – a tenth of all our produce. This ma'aser is eaten in Yerushalayim in a state of purity. What appears to be a simple act of eating is described (Devarim 14:23) as a method of attaining yiras shomayim. Yerushalayim has the unique ability of being able to transform the physical world into a spiritual one. Meat, wine, and fruit are no longer physical pleasures but rather korbanos and ma'aser sheini, vehicles used in avodas Hashem. When we complete a meal we must mention Yerushalayim thereby reinforcing that we eat not for physical pleasure, but to enable us to serve Hashem. Eating a simple sandwich is transformed into a spiritual experience by recounting the special quality of Yerushalayim.

Chazal instituted the fourth beracha of birchas hamazon following the tragic events of Beitar. After the churban the city of Beitar was destroyed and multitudes of Jews were killed. Despite this horrible tragedy, Chazal saw a glimmer of good during this event. Although initially the Jewish bodies from Beitar were not allowed to be buried, eventually permission was granted by the Romans to do so. Miraculously, the bodies did not decompose in the interim. Chazal took note of this double blessing and instituted a dual phrase of thanks. The phrase "hatov" thanks Hashem for enabling the burial of the dead, and "v'hamaitiv" thanks Hashem for preserving the bodies until burial.

Why was this beracha incorporated into birchas hamazon? Hatov v'hamaitiv teaches us to look for the good even in tragedy. This lesson is critical in order for us to perform the mitzvah of birchas hamazon properly. It is easy to bless Hashem after an entire meal when we are blessed with having all of our physical needs fulfilled. But, how do we react when we are lacking a complete meal and our physical needs are apparently not met? One would think that there is no need to thank Hashem for the little we have been given if we lack so much. The

beracha of hatov v'hamaitiv instructs us otherwise. Even at a time of tragedy such as the destruction of Beitar we must search for the goodness of Hashem. Even if we perceive ourselves as not blessed with physical abundance we must appreciate whatever blessing Hashem has bestowed upon us.

When we recite birchas hamazon we thank Hashem for the physical gifts of food and Eretz Yisroel. We then focus on our spiritual existence through recounting Yerushalayim. Once we understand that our physical gifts are only granted to us to enable us to grow spiritually, we realize that whatever Hashem has given us is truly good and sufficient. Perhaps this is why Chazal derived the requirement to mention Yerushalayim from the phrase "ha'aretz hatova" as the word "tov" refers in other places to Yerushalayim. If we focus only on the physical, we will complain if our physical gifts are limited. Yerushalayim is the ultimate "tov". It teaches us that even the limited physical blessing is only to enable spiritual growth. Thus it teaches us that everything is "tov". Only after mentioning Yerushalayim can we conclude our birchas hamazon by saying "baruch hatov v'hamaitiv".

Copyright © 2003 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.



<http://www.chiefrabbi.org/>

Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth [from last year]

Ekev

GEOGRAPHY AND DESTINY

THE TORAH IS A WORK OF WONDROUS DEPTH AND SUBTLETY, so much so that we can easily miss some of its most profound intimations. There is a fine example in this week's sedra. It concerns the character of the land of Israel. Ultimately, however, it is a haunting glimpse into the nature of Jewish destiny itself, then and now.

If we were to ask ourselves what picture we have of the promised land, from the beginning of the exodus until now, the answer is simple. Israel is the land "flowing with milk and honey." (Incidentally, the mid-20th century scholar R. Reuven Margoliot, once pointed out that when the land of Israel is praised in the Torah, it is always in terms of its vegetation, never in terms of its animal products. Why then is there an apparent exception in the case of the most famous phrase of all, the land "flowing with milk and honey"? The honey referred to, he notes, is not from bees but from the date palm. On that, many commentators concur. Margoliot's radical suggestion relates to "milk". We know from many texts that Israel was famed for its grapes and wine. But the biblical yayin, "wine", standardly refers to red wine. Chalav - the word we translate as "milk" - says Margoliot, means white wine, and is called chalav because of its milky appearance).

Even the spies, despite their gloomy report, cannot deny its fruitfulness: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit." Early in this week's sedra Moses delivers a magnificent poem to this effect: "For the Lord your G-d is bringing you into a good land -- a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey, a land where bread will not be scarce, and you will lack nothing." Thus far the promised land conjured up in our imagination is indeed a land of promise, another Eden, an earthly paradise. However, as the lawyers say: always read the small print.

It comes several chapters later and is fateful in its implications. For the first time in forty years, Moses uses a quite different tone when speaking about the land of Israel:

The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the Lord your G-d cares for; the eyes of the Lord your G-d are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

The point is made briefly, almost in passing, yet it makes all the difference. It is indeed a fine land, but . . . It is not like other fine lands. Civilisation began when human beings first turned from hunting and gathering to agriculture and the domestication of animals. This led to the first concentrations of population, the birth of cities, then city states, then nations and empires. The Torah sketches this process in broad outlines. It began in Mesopotamia, in the fertile plain between the Tigris and Euphrates, and then in Egypt, in the Nile delta. These were ideal places for the development of agriculture because water was supplied by rivers, and irrigation was a simple matter of making ditches and channels. Water, on which crops depended, was reliable (the one danger in the low-lying lands of Mesopotamia was of floods - hence the presence of flood narratives, not only in the Torah but in all literatures of that place and time).

The land of Israel, says Moses, is not like that. It is not a fertile plain. It is a land of hills and valleys. It depends on rain - and rain in the Middle East, then and now, is unpredictable. Suddenly, in this discordant note, we recall a whole series of earlier episodes in the book of Bereishith in which we read the words, "and there was a famine in the land." This led, first Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob and his children, into a series of journeys and exiles (the Book of Ruth begins with another famine, which forces Elimelech and his family to the land of Moab). Life in Israel will never be as stable, permanent and secure as it is elsewhere. Those who live there are vulnerable, if to nothing else, then to periodic drought. They will exist in a permanent state of insecurity, never knowing in advance whether the seeds they plant will grow or not. Israel is the land of promise, but it will always depend on He-who-promises.

Is geography destiny? Judah Halevi thought so. He writes, in The Kuzari:

We do not find in the Bible, "If you keep this law, I will bring you after death into beautiful gardens and great pleasures." On the contrary, it is said, "You shall be my chosen people, and I will be a G-d unto you, who will guide you . . . You shall remain in the country which forms a stepping-stone to this degree, i.e. the Holy Land. Its fertility or barrenness, its happiness or misfortune, depend upon the divine influence which your conduct will merit, whilst the rest of the world will continue its natural course. For if the divine presence is among you, you will perceive by the fertility of your country, by the regularity with which your rainfalls appear in their due seasons, by your victories over your enemies in spite of your inferior numbers, that your affairs are not managed by simple laws of nature, but by the divine will. You will also see that drought, death, and wild beasts pursue you as a result of disobedience, although the whole world lives in peace. This shows you that your concerns are arranged by a higher power than mere nature."

Unpacking this in non-mystical terms, we can say that the character of a country - its topography and climate - affects the kind of society people build, and hence the culture and ethos that emerge. In Mesopotamia and Egypt, the most powerful reality was the regularity of nature, the succession of the seasons which seemed to mirror the slow revolution of the stars. The cultures to which both places gave rise was cosmological and their sense of time cyclical. The universe seemed to be ruled by the heavenly bodies whose hierarchy and order was replicated in the hierarchy and order of life on earth. This is the mindset of the world of myth.

Israel, by contrast, was a land without regularities. There was no guarantee that next year would be like this, or this year like last; no

certainty that the rain would fall and the earth yield its crops or the trees their fruit. Thus in Israel a new sense of time was born - the time we call historical. Those who lived, or live, in Israel exist in a state of radical contingency. They can never take the future for granted. They depend on something other than nature (even Ben-Gurion knew this. He once said: "In Israel, in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles"). To put it at its simplest: in Egypt, where the source of life was the Nile, you looked down. In Israel, where the source of life is rain, you had no choice but to look up.

This is a theme we have met before. In the course of the first war the Israelites had to fight for themselves, against Amalek, we read:

As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites prevailed, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites prevailed.

On this, the Mishnah comments:

Did the hands of Moses make or break [the course of the] war? Rather, the text implies that whenever the Israelites looked up and dedicated their hearts to their father in heaven, they prevailed, but otherwise they fell.

Israel - the land "that drinks rain from heaven" - is a place whose inhabitants would be ever mindful of their dependence on the fact that "the eyes of the Lord your G-d are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end". It is the place where you have to look up to survive.

And so it was. Israel's existence as a nation in its land was never secure. Its greatest moment, under King Solomon, did not last. Immediately after his death, the people split into two kingdoms, neither of which could, or did, sustain their independence for long.

Israel is by its very nature a vulnerable place, a strategic location at the meeting point of three continents, always at the mercy of surrounding empires but never the basis of an empire itself. Thus were the terms of the covenant - and the prophetic interpretation of history - set from the outset. Israel would have to depend on exceptional strength on the part of its inhabitants. It was never big enough to sustain a large population. The prophets knew that the very existence of Israel as a sovereign nation was predicated on a people lifted to greatness by a sense of mission and high ideals.

Every individual would count. Therefore every individual had to feel part of the whole, respected and given the means of a dignified life. Injustice, gross inequality, or a failure of concern for the weak and marginal, would endanger society at its very roots. There was no margin for error or discontent. Without indomitable courage based on the knowledge that G-d was with them, they would fall prey to larger powers. When the prophet Zechariah said, "Not by strength nor by might but by My spirit, says the Lord" he was formulating an axiom of Jewish history. There neither was nor would be a time when Israel could rely on numbers, or vast tracts of territory, or easily defensible borders. So it was then. So it is now.

We do not live in an age of prophets. Yet Israel exists today in the same circumstances as those which gave birth to the prophets. As I write these words, the state is 55 years old. But it is also more than three thousand years old. The terms of its existence have not changed. Israel always longed for security but rarely found it. Neither its climate nor its geography were made for an easy life. That is the nature of Jewish faith - not security but the courage to live with insecurity, knowing that life is a battle, but that if we do justice and practice compassion, if we honour great and small, the powerful and the powerless alike, if our eyes do not look down to the earth and its seductions but to heaven and its challenges, this small, vulnerable people is capable of great, even astonishing, achievements.

When Moses told the Israelites the full story about the land, he was telling them - whether or not they understood it at the time - that it was a place where, not just wheat and barley, but the human spirit also, grew. It was the land where people were lifted beyond themselves because, time

and again, they would have to believe in something and someone beyond themselves. Not accidentally but essentially, by its climate, topography and location, Israel is the holy land, the place where, merely to survive, the human eye must turn to heaven and the human ear to heaven's call.

From: ICJI at Bar-Ilan University [parasha@MAIL.BIU.AC.IL] Sent: August 03, 2004 To: EPORTION-L@LISTSERV.OS.BIU.AC.IL Subject: English articles for P. Ekev from BIU's Parashat Hashavua Center
<http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng>
Bar-Ilan University's Parashat Hashavua Study Center
Parashat Ekev 5764/ August 7, 2004

HOW MANY ARKS WERE THERE?
DR. ITAMAR WAHRHAFTIG School of Law

The passage in Deuteronomy 10:1-5, on the second set of tablets, raises many questions, including the subject of the ark, on which we shall focus here.

Why is the ark mentioned four times in such a short passage? Why the emphasis on the ark being made of wood? In verse 3 we are told that Moses made an ark of acacia wood; was this the same ark that was in the Tabernacle? Several approaches have been taken to these questions:

Nahmanides (in his commentary on these verses) said that this ark was the one mentioned in the commandment to build the Tabernacle and that the Tabernacle was commanded prior to the episode of the golden calf. The commandment to build the Tabernacle was primarily for the sake of the ark that it housed, and Moses was commanded in this regard before receiving the first set of tablets, and again commanded to prepare the same ark for the second tablets. Moses deduced from this that the commandment of the Tabernacle remained in force.

This view answers the questions posed above: the ark plays a central role because it is essentially a repetition of the commandment of the Tabernacle, and it is the same ark of acacia wood that was mentioned in the passage on the Tabernacle (Parashat Terumah).

The difficulty with this interpretation is that if we have before us a repetition of the commandment to build the ark of the Tabernacle, it is here repeated in a rather oblique or offhand manner. Moreover, verse 4 says that Moses placed the tablets in the ark, but actually he would have first placed them in the Tent of Meeting, where they lay until the ark was constructed, after the Day of Atonement. A further difficulty is that here Moses is mentioned as the one who build the ark, whereas in Parashat Va-Yakhel (Ex. 27:1) Bezalel built the ark.

Rashi held that this ark had no connection with the Tabernacle, which had not yet been commanded; rather, it was a temporary ark intended to serve until the ark of the Tabernacle was made. Why was it necessary to tell about this ark, if it did not have a function for all time? Because this was the ark that was to be taken out to battle with them. Nahmanides claimed that this was the view of only one person, Rabbi Judah ben Lakish, cited in the Jerusalem Talmud (Sotah 8.3, and Shekalim 6.1), and that the fragments of the tablets lay in it.[1]

In any event, we learn something new from this interpretation, namely that the ark used to go out with them to battle. There exist other sources as well that support this view, but we cannot go into further detail here.[2]

Nahmanides (relating to the remarks of the Sages) explained the majority view of the Sages in the Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah and Shekalim (loc. cit.), asserting that there was only one ark, which contained the tablets and fragments of tablets, and that this ark was not generally removed from the Tabernacle or the Temple to be taken out to battle. It was taken out to battle once, in the days of Eli, and then it was captured (I Sam. 4).

In his critique of Maimonides' Sefer ha-Mitzvot (shoresh shlishi) Nahmanides added that the ark might possibly be carried forth in "future battles before the Messiah King, as Phinehas did in the battle against Midian, for it says that he was 'equipped with the sacred utensils' (Num. 31:6), and this was interpreted in Sifre as referring to the ark."

If so, the wooden ark mentioned in this week's reading was a temporary ark, in use until it was stored away when the Tabernacle and its ark were built. Hence the emphasis that this was a wooden ark, not covered with gold; for it was not the ark built by Bezalel. Be that as it may, according to this approach there was not a general rule that the ark would be taken out to battle, and each reference to the contrary requires individual explanation.[3]

Perhaps there is an ideological aspect to the disagreement here. According to Rashi, all the battles fought by Israel were sacred and were won with the aid of the ark, as he explained in his commentary on Deut. 20:4: "For it is the Lord your G-d who marches with you to do battle for you – this refers to the camp of the ark." Also see Rashi on Tractate Sanhedrin 20b, where he says that Israel's demand for a king to lead them in battle had been made by the common folk, and that this spoiled things because the battles belonged to G-d.

According to Nahmanides, battles followed the course of nature, and therefore the request of the Israelites to dispatch scouts was not a sin (Nahmanides on the beginning of Parashat Shelah). Only in specific battles did they have need of the ark.[4]

It is also worth studying Maimonides' approach on this, as well as the views of other rishonim, but we shall leave that for another time.

[1] Nahmanides raised the question, where this ark was kept, for there was only one ark in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Possibly the fragments of the tablets were always kept in the ark that was in the Tabernacle, and only in time of war were they taken out and a wooden ark built to hold them and to take out to battle. Tosefot Eruvin 63b and Rabbi Bahya's commentary here (Parashat Ekev) explain that Moses' ark described in our parasha was stored away when the Temple was built, and from then on the fragments of the tablets were kept in the ark made by Bezalel that was in the Temple.

[2] We shall cite several sources, without further discussion: Num. 10:33 and Rashi loc. cit.; Num. 14:44; Deut. 20:4 and Rashi, loc. cit.; Josh.6:2; I Sam. Ch. 4; I Sam. 14:18; II Sam 11:11; and mishnah Sotah 8.1.

[3] Several of the sources are explained in the Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah (loc. cit.): "A verse from Scripture supporting the Sages' argument: Woe to us! Who will save us from the power of this mighty G-d? (I Sam. 4:8) – this was something they had never seen in their entire lives." In other words, the ark was not generally taken out of the camp to battle. Regarding the argument based on I Sam. 14:18, it says: "Thereupon Saul said to Ahijah, 'Bring the Ark of G-d here' – but the ark was in Beth Jearim, so how could the Rabbis use this verse? It meant bring me the frontlet." This reference is either to the frontlet itself on which the Lord's name was inscribed, or to the ark in which the frontlet was placed. This fits in with the opinion mentioned in Sotah, loc. cit. above, on Deut. 20:4, "to bring you victory": "some say that this refers to the Name which was on the ark." Regarding the evidence from II Sam. 11:11, it says: "The Ark and Israel and Judah are located at Succoth – but the Ark was in Zion! So how could the Rabbis use this verse? [Read Succoth not as a place name, but from the verb] sakhakh, meaning that it was kept covered, since the Temple had not yet been built." As for the mishnah in Sotah ch. 8, this might be the view of a single individual (R. Judah), or perhaps it referred to the frontlet – see the Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah (loc. cit.) and the commentary korban haedah.

[4] This explanation is more appropriate to the option presented by the Sages' view that the ark was not obliged to go out to war. But this is far-fetched if one assumes that the ark always had to be taken out with its

adornments and certainly with the Name of the Lord which was on it. Accordingly, one would have to explain that "Torah" (meaning the tablets and fragments of tablets, and according to some, also the scroll of the Torah – see Tosefta Sotah ch. 7) did not budge from its place; see Eruvin 63b, where it is explained that taking the ark out of its place reduced natural increase. According to Rabbenu Bahya (loc. cit., Parashat Ekev), the "Torah" going forth from its place hinted at the Exile.



From: RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com
Sent: Aug. 05, 2004
Subject: Rabbi Wein's Weekly Columns
Parsha August 06, 2004 EKEV

In this week's parsha, Moshe tell us that he was instructed by G-d to craft an ark of wood in which to place the tablets of stone that he brought down from Sinai and upon which were inscribed the Ten Commandments. The major commentaries to the Bible, such as Rashi and Ramban, differ in their interpretations of the purpose of this wooden box. One opinion states that the wooden box was the ark that went out to war with the armies of Israel. Another opinion is that it was the wooden box that was inserted between the two golden boxes of Bezalel and that the three boxes together formed the great golden ark that contained the tablets of stone in the Mishkan and the Temple. There is also an opinion that the wooden box that Moshe created was merely a temporary home for the tablets of stone, until the Mishkan and the golden ark was completed to house them. It served no other purpose then and disappeared afterward from Jewish life. As with all matters of Torah, all of these different interpretations have validity and a message for our times and us. The different interpretations speak to us of the different situations that Israel faced and faces. The common message is that Israel cannot succeed without the Holy Ark of the Law and the tablets of stone from Sinai that reside within it.

Israel triumphs in war not only because of its superior weaponry and technology but also because of its human morale, spirit, faith and courage. All of these latter attributes are derived from the moment of revelation at Sinai. It is there that G-d told us: "Today you have become a nation!" Thus Moshe's wooden ark must always accompany us when the armies of Israel are forced to go to war. War requires an ark of wood, one of a living spirit, of trees that can bear fruit and provide comfort and shade and not an inanimate one of gold. The golden ark has its place but not on the battlefield. Spirit, tenacity and courage, all Torah virtues, are the stuff of victory and survival.

The golden ark, in order to be effective, must contain within it the wooden ark as well. Gold is royalty but it is also hubris, arrogance and a false assessment of self. To house the Torah it cannot be made purely of gold. The Torah searches for humility and a lack of ostentation, an understated home, if you will. Thus between the splendor and shine of the two golden boxes of the Mishkan and the Temple, resides a wooden box fashioned by Moshe and ordered by G-d as a reminder of the necessity of contriteness of spirit and a true self-assessment.

And finally, the Torah always requires a home, a place to be within Israel. Sometimes the place is great and impressive and sometimes it is small and ordinary. The rabbis taught us not to look at the container but rather at the contents. While the great golden residence of Torah is being built we are still obligated to have it reside amongst us, even if only in a plain wooden box. Over our long history, these lessons have been impressed on our soul and psyche. Wherever we go in life and wherever our destiny takes us, the Torah accompanies us, but only if we create a container – even is only of wood - to carry it along on the journey of life. Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbi Berel Wein will be sitting Shiva for his beloved father, HaRav Zev Wein ZT"L Where: 15 Ben Maimon - Third Floor Rechavia, Jerusalem

He will be getting up Monday morning, August 9. Davening Schedule: Shacharis 7:30 AM Mincha 7:25 PM Maariv 7:55 PM For further information: In Israel, please call Miriam Cubac at 02-571-3430. In the U.S., please e-mail info@jewishdestiny.com or call 845-368-1425.

www.RabbiWein.com's 386 Route 59 Suite 13 Monsey, NY 10952 800-499-WEIN(9346) 845-368-1528 FAX info@jewishdestiny.com

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] Sent: August 05, 2004 To: Peninim Parsha
PENINIM ON THE TORAH
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
Parshas Eikev

And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you but to fear Hashem, your G-d. (10:12) In the Talmud Menachos 43b, Chazal derive from the words mah Hashem, "What does Hashem", as alluding to the word meiah, one hundred; that a Jew should recite one hundred berachos, blessings, daily. What is the relationship between the recitation of berachos and yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven? Horav Yaakov Belfus, Shlita, in his sefer Chaim Shel Torah, gives the following analogy: A small town in Europe lived an idyllic lifestyle; quiet, pleasant, away from the tumult of the large cities. There was a road that passed through the town which was originally used by the peddlers in the community for their horses and buggies. With the introduction of the automobile, lifestyles changed. The little road soon became a busy highway, dividing the town in half. The quick pace of the speeding cars back and forth on the highway became a danger for the citizens of the town and their families. People feared for the safety of their children. Suggestions poured in, but nothing practical enough to address the danger posed by the highway. One day, someone came up with a functional idea to solve the problem: speed bumps, every few feet. Along the road that traversed the town, speed bumps were placed to slow down the cars. Life soon reverted to its original slow-paced, idyllic state.

This same idea applies to yiraas Shomayim. The Rema in the beginning of Orach Chaim, writes that Shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid, "I place Hashem before me constantly," is an important rule of the Torah and a crucial step for those who follow in Hashem's ways. A person's day involves many different circumstances, many of which remove him from the perfect environment for mitzvah observance. Thus, he needs reminders to keep him on track to remember that he is always in Hashem's Presence. The hundred brachos that one is to recite daily are one hundred meetings with Hashem. A berachah recited with the proper kavanah, intention/concentration, enunciated correctly, is a rendezvous with the Almighty during which one becomes acutely aware that he is in the Presence of Hashem. This catalyzes a heightened sense of yiraas Shomayim.

If one only takes the time to think about the meaning of the words Baruch Atah Hashem, Blessed are You, Hashem, he would realize that he is speaking to the Almighty. This alone should generate a feeling of fear and awe.

A talmid chacham, Torah scholar, who was critically ill came to Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl, asking for advice concerning what he could do to merit a speedy recovery. Rav Shlomo Zalman replied, "I do not think that I am the appropriate person to ask, but I know what I would do if I was in your situation. I would be meticulous in reciting the one hundred brachos we are to recite daily."

He carries out the judgment of the orphan and widow. (10:18)

The attitude of our gedolei Yisrael, Torah leaders, towards widows and orphans was exemplary. While they empathized and were sensitive to the needs of all Jews, they were especially circumspect with those individuals who were alone. Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, would go out of his way to ease the plight and loneliness of a widow. He would say, "Any widow, regardless of her strong nature, experiences a feeling of loneliness. It is difficult for her to acclimate herself to her new circumstances. After a while, the reality of her husband's demise seems to settle and she begins to find comfort and the strength to go on. Everything that one can do to assist such a woman in need achieves a great mitzvah."

One of Rav Shach's close students recounts how he was walking down one of the streets of Yerushalayim when he saw his venerable rebbe going into an apartment building. He followed him up a few floors, to the home of a widow whose husband had passed away a few years earlier. Her husband had been a student of Rav Shach and the Rosh Yeshivah felt a strong obligation to see to the needs of his widow. Rav Shach at the time was over 100-years-old. He sat with the widow for about

half-an-hour and talked. He then played with her young children. One can only imagine what such a visit did for the mood in her home.

The Bais HaLevi remarried later on in life after his wife passed away. His second wife was a widow with a family of her own. The Bais HaLevi took her children into his home and treated them as if they were his own. Indeed, if he felt that his own children were mistreating his wife's children, he would exclaim, "An orphan!" and he would then punish his children. This, despite the fact that his own children were orphans. The Bais HaLevi spared no expense in caring for his wife's children, to the extent that when he passed away his own children were in dire financial straits.

This legacy of caring for widows and orphans was transmitted to the next generation. Once Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl, was presiding over an important meeting of rabbanim when a widow came to the door and asked to speak with him. He immediately left the room and spoke to her for about half-an-hour. Those in attendance were reasonably impressed until the widow later said, "That is nothing. His father (the Bais HaLevi) would spend hours talking with me."

The Brisker Rav, zl, was once approached by a student in Yeshivas Chevron and asked for advice concerning a shidduch, matrimonial match. The rav replied that he does not advise in these issues. The young man then said, "I have no father with whom to discuss my issues, thus, I came to the rav." The Brisker Rav replied, "If that is the case, you may come to me at any time with any sort of question, and I will see to it that you receive the necessary advice."

The Manchester Rosh HaYeshivah, Rav Yehudah Zev Segal, zl, was known for his sensitive and caring heart. This was especially true with regard to widows and orphans. He showered orphans with love and concern and provided emotional support and guidance, and, at times, financial assistance to widows. When no one called, he would call them to reiterate his offer. Once, while paying a shivah call, comforting the bereaved, to a student upon the loss of his mother, Rav Segal confided that from the time the student's father had died more than twenty years earlier, his mother had visited him weekly to pour out her troubles and discuss her situation.

When visiting rabbanim in various communities in England, he made it a point to also visit the widows of the rabbanim he had previously visited. He explained that it was extremely painful to a widow when she no longer could play hostess to those who used to come to pay her husband their respects. He made every effort to attend the wedding of an orphan. When one of his students, a baal teshuvah, who was raised in a secular home devoid of Torah, was forced to leave the yeshivah and return home upon the death of his father, the Rosh Yeshivah told him, "From now on, I will be your father."

Shortly after the Rosh HaYeshivah's passing, the family received the following letter: I include an excerpt from it because of its message to all of us.

"I have been a widow for twenty-one years. Many people do not realize that what is missing most for a person who is alone, is the warmth and caring of another human being. This is where the Rosh HaYeshivah excelled. His genuine warmth and concern was comforting. His initial "How are you?", and his inquiring about my health, livelihood, and all other pertinent matters, always gave me the feeling that someone cared for me. It also gave me the strength I needed to continue carrying my burden. His readiness to listen to my problems at any time and to give them his utmost attention was quite unique..."

"I do not know how I could have managed without his emotional support and guidance all these difficult years. May he be a meilitz yosher, intercessor, for us all."

As a postscript, I would like to add a point and be so bold as to draw focus on another type of "orphan" - those boys or girls whose parents either do not care, or are incapable of caring for their emotional, spiritual and even physical needs. Every community has its dysfunctional families who need our assistance. Are these children to be viewed in a different light? They also have no one to turn to, or in some cases, the one's they turn to are detrimental to them. We must open our hearts, homes and minds to them as well, because they also need our love.

To love Hashem, Your G-d, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (11:13)

In the first passage of Shema, the Torah adds u'b'chol me'odecha, "and with all your money." What is the meaning of this term? Let me share with you two examples of this quality. The Satmar Rebbe, zl, was a towering figure in a spiritual and inspirational sense. His encyclopedic knowledge was only surpassed by his love for his fellow Jew. His devotion to mitzvos was an inspiration to all who came in contact with him. When he came to these shores, a remnant of the fires of the Holocaust, he rallied the other survivors not to lose hope, not to fall prey to apathy, but instead to embrace the Torah and mitzvos with fervor and love, and serve the Almighty as they did before the tragic Holocaust. Slowly, he succeeded in establishing yeshivos, chadorim, schools for girls, chesed organizations and just

about everything that was needed for a vibrant Jewish community. He did not stop with the Williamsburg section in Brooklyn, New York. He set his sights westward and turned to Chicago, to give encouragement and succor to the survivors of that community. The Rebbe gathered his strength and with great resolve traveled to Chicago with the hope that his presence would inspire a renaissance of European Yiddishkeit in the Midwest.

The Rebbe spent seven days in Chicago, during which people from all walks of life thronged to see him. Some came for blessings, others came to imbibe his Torah, and still others came just to listen, to see, to remember what it used to be like in Europe. People gave him money. With every berachah there was a pidyon, money for redemption, and over the week the Rebbe amassed a small fortune. Four thousand dollars was an incredible amount of money in those days - enough money to support his many charitable endeavors in New York. Yes, the trip was very successful in many ways.

Prior to leaving town, the Rebbe made a point to look into the state of the community mikveh, ritualarium. After speaking with a number of lay leaders, he discovered that the mikveh was in dire need of repair. "Why is it not being fixed?" asked the Rebbe incredulously. "We have no money," they replied. "No money for a mikveh! How is it possible that there is money for everything else and for taharas Yisrael, family purity, there is no money?" the Rebbe asked.

The Rebbe began explaining to them the significance of a kosher mikveh in a community until they all agreed that something must be done immediately to repair the mikveh. "How much money is needed?" asked the Rebbe.

"Approximately \$5,000 dollars," they replied.

The Rebbe did not waiver for a moment as he took out from his briefcase the \$4,000 dollars that he had raised in Chicago, and said, "Here, take this money and I will personally sign a note for the remaining one thousand dollars, but, there will be a mikveh in Chicago."

The Rebbe returned to New York with empty pockets and another thousand dollars in debt, but his heart was overflowing with joy. He had been able to express his unequivocal love to Hashem with "all his money."

Horav Nachum, zl, m'Chernobel was told that a nearby community was in need of a mikveh. He turned to one of the great philanthropists of that time and said, "I will sell you my portion in Gan Eden for your contribution to build the mikveh in that community." The man jumped at the notion. What an unparalleled opportunity. The Chernobler's Gan Eden was certainly impressive. To be able to acquire it for mere money was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

When the Chernobler was later asked what motivated him to sell his Gan Eden for a mikveh, he responded, "The Torah instructs us to love Hashem b'chol me'odecha, "with all your money." I have not been blessed with material abundance. I do not have anything of monetary value that I can give up for Hashem. The only item of value that I possess is my portion in the World to Come. I am thus compelled to sell it in order to fulfill the mitzvah of serving the Almighty "with all my money." Otherwise, my Krias Shema which I recite daily is meaningless."

We now have a glimpse of what it means to serve Hashem with all that we possess.

To love Hashem, your G-d, and to serve Him with all your heart. (11:13)

Rashi explains that one must serve Hashem for no other reason than because of deep, abiding love for Him. We are to serve Him with all our heart, which Chazal interpret as a reference to tefillah, prayer, which should emanate from the heart. Perhaps, we might add, that when one prays, it should be indicative that his prayer is out of love for Hashem, not for personal motive. Everything we do should be a reflection of our unequivocal love for the Almighty. We do nothing for ourselves.

I recently read a beautiful analogy in Touched by a Story I, by Rabbi Yechiel Spero, which can be applied here. The story took place in Yerushalayim during the second World War as Rommel and his Afrika Corps were getting closer to the Holy Land. The mood in the country was one of fear and anxiety. Tensions rose as the people prepared for the worst. The Shomer Emunim Shul, in the heart of the Meah Shearim district was the place to be on Simchas Torah. The dancing and singing would attain such fervor that one felt a spiritual ascendancy like no other time of the year. That year, regrettably, the impending doom took its toll on the worshippers and the davening was listless, without the usual heart and passion. After a few minutes, the rav of the shul, Horav Aharon Roth, ordered the dancing to come to a halt as he addressed the crowd.

"My dear friends, I would like to share a story with you that I feel has great meaning for us. There was once a king who decided to make for himself a very festive and unique birthday party. He sent out letters throughout the land inviting the most graceful dancers, the finest musicians, and the most creative choreographers. They were all to assemble dressed in the most lavish outfits for the grand event.

"All was arranged and the special day arrived. Everything was as meticulously planned. What a sight it was. The music, the dancers, the outfits - everything blended together in a most unique harmony as truly befits a king's party. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, the king noticed a slight commotion in the back as an elderly, crippled man struggled to make his way to the dance floor. Not only was he handicapped, he was also blind and, thus, was bumping into the tables and chairs.

"After much exertion, the man finally made it to the dance floor and began to hobble around in a makeshift dance using his crutches as means of support. The king was mesmerized as he ignored the rest of the show and focused on the poor, wretched man who was doing his best to maintain his balance.

"One of the king's servants was taken aback with this sight and asked for an explanation. 'My king, we have assembled here tonight the finest choreographed dances, yet, you ignore everyone but that poor cripple who is hobbling around on his crutches.'

"The king smiled and explained, 'You are right. All those who have gathered here tonight are truly talented and their performance is certainly exemplary. But, let me ask you, are they not deriving personal enjoyment from their performance? Are they dancing solely for me, or are they also satisfying a personal desire? But the cripple has nothing personal to gain from his dancing. He cannot see, he cannot dance. Yet, he does so because I requested it. He is acting solely for me! Look at his face, how contorted it is with pain. But, he continues to dance, because he wants to please me. That is why his dancing is so precious to me - because it is for me.'

"My dear friends," Rav Aharon concluded, "In past years our dancing was different. We danced for Hashem, but we also danced for ourselves. We derived personal joy and benefit from the dancing. This year, however, with Hitler pounding down on our doorstep and the fate of the Jewish People on our minds, we have the unique opportunity to dance solely for Hashem. Let us dance tonight - for Him!"

Many of us pray with great concentration and devotion - but, we pray for ourselves. We should aspire to elevate our prayer so that we pray to please Hashem. When we will pray for Him, he will listen to us.

In loving memory of our dear Mother & Bubby Mrs. Chana Silberberg Zev & Miriam Solomon & Family Peninim@shemayisrael.com
http://mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim_shemayisrael.com



From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: August 03, 2004 To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Ekev TORAH WEEKLY - 7 August 2004 / 20 Av 5764 From Ohr Somayach

[www.ohr.edu/Parshat Ekev](http://www.ohr.edu/ParshatEkev) <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1803>
Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR
OVERVIEW

If Bnei Yisrael carefully observe even those "minor" mitzvot that are usually "trampled" underfoot, Moshe promises them that they will be the most blessed of the nations of earth. Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael that they will conquer Eretz Canaan little by little, so that the land will not be overrun by wild animals in the hiatus before Bnei Yisrael are able to organize and settle the whole land. After again warning Bnei Yisrael to burn all carved idols of Canaanite gods, Moshe stresses that the Torah is indivisible and not open to partial observance. Moshe describes the Land of Israel as a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, a land of oil-yielding olives and date-honey. Moshe cautions Bnei Yisrael not to become haughty and think that their success in Eretz Yisrael is a result of their own powers or vigor; rather, it was Hashem who gave them wealth and success. Nor did Hashem drive out the Canaanites because of Bnei Yisrael's righteousness, but rather because of the sins of the Canaanites, for the road from Sinai had been a catalogue of large and small sins and rebellions against Hashem and Moshe. Moshe details the events after Hashem spoke the 10 Commandments at Sinai, culminating in his bringing down the second set of Tablets on Yom Kippur. Aharon's passing is recorded as is the elevation of the levi'im to Hashem's ministers. Moshe points out that the 70 souls who went down to Egypt

have now become like the stars of the heaven in abundance. After specifying the great virtues of the Land of Israel, Moshe speaks the second paragraph of the Shema, conceptualizing the blessings that accompany keeping mitzvot and the curse that results from non-observance.

INSIGHTS

What, Me Worry?

"Now, O Yisrael, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to go in His ways and to love Him and to serve your G-d with all your heart and all your soul." (10:11)

If television puts everyone in the same global meetinghouse, then the Internet creates a myriad of private electronic booths. This is both its power and its danger.

A secular Jew will have no problem asking a question over the Internet to a virtual Rabbi. After all, his beard and peyot are merely virtual. Without the Internet, that person might never hear Torah Judaism in another way. Peer pressure or his own feelings of alienation may keep him from ever crossing the threshold of a yeshiva.

By the same token, the very anonymity of the Internet is why it is so dangerous in a religious home. Even with the best of net-filters, in just a couple of clicks, a youngster could find himself in a virtual bookshop worse than anything you could find near Times Square. Twenty years ago, he would have to be brazen enough to make a journey to such an insalubrious area with his cash in hand. He would have to have conquered his embarrassment and shame to enter such a shop and to ask for the stuff they keep in the brown envelopes in the back room. Nowadays, with no one to make him feel ashamed. All that stands between him and his negative drive is his own yirat Shamayim (fear of Heaven).

And on that, one should never rely.

When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai lay on his deathbed, his students asked him to bless them. He replied, "May your fear of G-d be as great as your fear of your fellow man!"

They answered him, "Rebbe. Shouldn't our fear of G-d be greater than our fear of our fellow man?"

He replied, "Halevai! (If only that!) Would it were that your fear of Him should equal your fear of flesh and blood! When a person commits a sin he is worried that someone may see him. But the fact that G-d is watching him, that doesn't bother him."

- Source: Babylonian Talmud

(C) 2004 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: Aug 03, 2004 To: parasha-qa@ohr.edu Subject: Parsha Q&A - Parshat Ekev PARSHA Q&A - For the week ending 7 August 2004 / 20 Av 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu EIKEV <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1804>
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

1. What must the Jewish People do to ensure that Hashem will fulfill His promise to do good for us?

* 7:12 - Guard even the "light" commandments.

2. What were the: (a) wonders (b) strong hand (c) outstretched arm that the Jewish People saw in Egypt?

* 7:19 - The: (a) Plagues; (b) Pestilence; (c) Slaying of the firstborn.

3. When a group performs a mitzvah, whose name is attached to the mitzvah?

* 8:1 - The person who finishes it.

4. How did the Jewish People do their laundry in the midbar?

* 8:4 - The ananei kavod (clouds of glory) cleaned and bleached their clothes.

5. How did the Jewish People obtain clothing for their growing children in the midbar?

* 8:4 - As their children grew, their clothing grew with them.

6. How many days did Moshe spend on Mt. Sinai altogether?

* 9:18 - 120 days.

7. On what day did Moshe come down from Mt. Sinai having received complete forgiveness for the Jewish People?

- * 9:18 - The tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.
- 8. How was Aharon punished for his role in the golden calf?
 - * 9:20 - His two sons died.
- 9. Who made the ark in which Moshe placed the second set of tablets? What special function did it later serve?
 - * 10:1 - Moshe. This ark would accompany the Jewish People into battle.
- 10. Which sin of the Jewish People was prompted by the death of Aharon?
 - * 10:6-7 - When Aharon died the ananei kavod departed, causing many Jews to fear war with the King of Arad and to retreat toward Egypt.
- 11. Why were the levi'im chosen by Hashem?
 - * 10:8 - Because they did not participate in the sin of the golden calf.
- 12. Why do the levi'im have no portion in the land?
 - * 10:9 -- Since they served in the Temple, thus they were not free to work the land.
- 13. All aspects of man's life are in Hashem's "hands" except one. What is this?
 - * 10:12 - Fear of Heaven, which is dependent upon the person.
- 14. What is the "added benefit" of observing the mitzvot?
 - * 10:13 - There is reward.
- 15. What is meant by circumcising one's heart?
 - * 10:16 - To remove those things that block the words of Torah from entering.
- 16. What are the sources of water for the fields of Egypt and Eretz Yisrael?
 - * 11:10 - Egypt is irrigated by manually carrying water up from the Nile. Eretz Yisrael is supplied by rainwater requiring no work on the part of its inhabitants.
- 17. What path does the Torah prescribe for gaining new knowledge?
 - * 11:13 - By repeatedly reviewing what one knows, one more easily acquires new knowledge.
- 18. Which activity is "serving Hashem with the heart"?
 - * 11:13 - Prayer.
- 19. When the Jewish People sin, why are they considered worse than the generation of the flood?
 - * 11:17 - Because the generation of the flood had no one from whom to learn.
- 20. How does one "cleave to Hashem"?
 - * 11:22 - Attaching oneself to Torah scholars.