

BS"D

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

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KI SEITZEI - 5762

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Ki Seitzei "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Ki Seitzei -

Unusual Spelling Calls Out For Our Attention

This week's parsha contains the mitzvah of sending away the mother bird prior to taking her chicks or eggs [22:6-7] (Shiluach HaKen). According to the commentaries, one of the reasons for this Commandment is to teach us the attribute of compassion. The Rambam is careful to explain that this is not an "animal rights" type of mitzvah. Rather, the Torah is trying to teach compassion to mankind. If we must have compassion for animals, certainly we must have compassion for human beings. That is the ultimate 'purpose' of this mitzvah.

The pasuk [verse] begins with the words "Ki Yikareh Kan Tzipor" [when you happen upon a bird's nest]. We would assume that the word Yikareh [happen upon] should be spelled with the letter 'Hay' at the end of the word (from the root Kuf-Reish-Hay [meaning to happen]). However, that is not the way the word is spelled. The word is spelled with an Aleph at the end -- from the root Kuf-Reish-Aleph (meaning to call out). There is no doubt that the intent of the pasuk is that the person happens upon a bird's nest. But, literally translated, this pasuk reads "If a bird's nest is called out to you". What is the meaning of this? Why did the Torah use this strange spelling?

The sefer Kol Dodi offers a beautiful insight regarding this spelling. It is not every day that one encounters a bird's nest. This is a unique event. In fact, it is suggested that this Commandment has mystical benefits (segulah), such that one who is childless should seek to fulfill it and thereby receive the Heavenly blessing of parenthood. It is certainly not an everyday event. Who of us can say that we have ever had the opportunity to fulfill this mitzvah?

A person is walking along and all of a sudden a bird's nest happens to appear in front of him. This is not just a "happencence". The mitzvah of Shiluach HaKen is calling out to him! Perhaps this unusual occurrence is G-d's way of calling out to the person that he needs personal correction in his attribute of compassion. If it HAPPENS (yikareh with a Hay) that this person, of all people, runs into this singular event, then what has really occurred is a Yikareh with an Aleph -- the teaching of the law of the mother bird's nest is CALLING OUT to him that he should take note: perhaps his practice of the attribute of compassion needs improvement.

Many times we miss our messages. They are addressed directly to us, but they somehow go beyond us. Several decades ago, Reb Dovid Dryen wanted to start a Kollel in Gateshead, England, a sleepy coal-mining town across the river from New Castle. He sent out 23 letters to different Rabbis in England inviting them to come start a Kollel in Gateshead. Out of the 23 letters, 20 Rabbis ignored the invitation and did not respond. Two sent back polite letters telling him "no". One person said, "I am interested". That person was Rav Eliyahu Dessler. Rav Dessler met Reb Dovid Dryen, decided to begin a Kollel in Gateshead and turned it into the premier place of Torah study in all of Europe. Rav Dessler might have remained a little Rav in a small shteible in East London for the rest of his life, had he not answered the

letter and gone on to become the "famous Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler". Rav Dessler later became the spiritual leader (mashgiach ruchani) in the Ponevitch Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Rav Dessler authored the Michtav Eliyahu, which has become a modern day classic. One must wonder -- if he had responded like the other 22 Rabbis, would he have in fact become the spiritual leader of the Ponevitch Yeshiva and to author the Michtav Eliyahu? He received a message. He heard the message and he responded.

How many times does opportunity call out to us, but get treated like happenstance? We just go on with our lives. Many times G-d is telling us "This is what you need. Here, I am sending you a message. Just listen to it!"

If You've Got It, Don't Flaunt It

The pasuk says [Devorim 22:10] "Do not plow together with an ox and a donkey". This is one of several forms of the prohibition of Kilayim - mixing of species. There is a form of this prohibition that relates to grains and seeds (Kilaei Zeraim). There is a form of this prohibition relating to garments (Kilaei Begadim or Shatnez). Finally, this pasuk prohibits the yoking together of different species of animals.

The Daas Zekeinim meBa'alay Tosfos provide an interesting reason for this prohibition. A donkey does not chew its cud. An ox, on the other hand, does chew its cud. The donkey and the ox would be walking along, yoked together, and the donkey would see the ox chewing and think that it was eating something. The donkey would become upset: "I missed lunch. When did it happen?" He would become jealous of the ox, because he would think the ox was fed and he was not.

In fact, of course, they both had the same lunch. But the ox chews its cud so it appears to be continuously eating, thus giving the donkey the misimpression that he has been cheated. According to the Daas Zekeinim, the Torah is trying to avoid this psychological pain that the donkey would experience.

Rav Chaim Shmeulivtz says that if the Torah is so worried that we might cause donkeys to be jealous of their yoke-mates, then how must the Torah feel about making another human being jealous? However, it can happen very inadvertently. We might tell our friend about how great things are going, what a wonderful vacation we had, how wonderful our spouse is, how great our children are, etc., etc. This other person may, perhaps, not be in the same situation. He is human. He may experience jealousy and pain. If the Torah is concerned that we should not stir up the jealousy of a donkey over a wrong impression, then how much more so must we be sensitive and careful not to flaunt the goodness with which G-d has perhaps graced us. Contrary to the American ideal of "If you've got it, flaunt it", the Torah ideal is "If you've got it, DON'T flaunt it!"

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (#427). The halachic topics dealt with in the portion of Ki Seitzei in the Commuter Chavrusah Series are the following: 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. RavFrand, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Yissochar Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/rneu_kiteitsei.html

TorahWeb [from last year]
RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Our minhag to read the comforting words of Yehsayahu Hanavi as the haftoros of the seven weeks between Tisha B'av and Rosh Hashana is based on the medrashic account of Hashem's many futile attempts to comfort Yerushalayim. Hashem sends Avrohom, Yitzchak, Ya'akov

and Moshe hoping that each one will find the words that will soothe the raging wounds of Yerushalayim. Each one is disqualified by Yerushalayim until finally Hashem Himself offers words of nechama. Certainly we are reminded of this every time we take leave of a shiva home conceding our inability to offer satisfactory words of strength and asking Hashem to strengthen and comfort the bereaved just as He finally acquiesced to Yerushalayim.

Accordingly, many medrashim place this week as the one when Yerushalayim rejects the idea to hear out Ya'akov and the words he would offer. "Ya'akov?", the Holy City seems to say with equal amounts of disdain and hurt, "Did he not belittle me when he said 'This is but the house of Hashem' - and you wish to bring him to me now?" Apparently Hashem respects Yerushalayim's response that somehow Ya'akov disqualified himself on the very evening that he spent with Yerushalayim praying on behalf of his own welfare and destiny when both seemed to be slipping away rather quickly.

How are we to understand this discussion which has become ensconced in minhag Yisrael as we read the "shiva denechamta" to lift up our spirits after the despair of Tisha B'av morning? What would Ya'akov have said? Is it not unfair to strip one phrase of its context, "How awesome is this place, this is nothing less the house of Hashem and this is the gate to Heaven" - the very phrase that has adorned countless synagogues over the centuries?

No doubt we can imagine Ya'akov describing that night when he first came to Yerushalayim feeling very alone without family, uncertain of where he will find food and clothing and certainly looking forward to a future of growing ambiguity. Yerushalayim gave herself to Ya'akov at that moment and through her sanctity Ya'akov's prayers were accepted and Hashem Himself reassured Ya'akov. Ya'akov prevailed and came back to his father with a new generation on which his future would be built.

From Yerushalayim's response we sense that had the awe struck Ya'akov simply declared how frightening and humbling it is to stand at the gates of Heaven on earth, he indeed would forever be a source of strength for Yerushalayim. However adding that Yerushalayim is the "beis", the home of Hashem, he at the same time lent the holiest of places familiarity that took away some of the magic of the moment. We understand Yerushalayim very well. If we would forever sense the reverence that Yerushalayim so deserves and never feel comfort that comes with accessibility that is intimidated by one's home - then Yerushalayim today would look much different.

It was in response to the cynical remark of a liberal Jewish leader comparing the respectful decorum of his synagogue to the louder ambiance of the Orthodox shuls, that Rav Shamshon Rephael Hirsch retorted that frequency and familiarity generate these liberties.

Whereas Rav Hirsch quickly put his critic in his place, his observation regarding the beis hakenesses certainly concerned Yerushalayim. If only the many times we pour our hearts out in shul in gratitude and in desperate need would strengthen our appreciation of the sanctity of the shul, we would feel very much at home without taking any attendant liberties.

Many a commentary sees this idea in Dovid Hamelech's one request, "that I may dwell in the house of Hashem... ulevaker - [literally: to visit] His Heichal." In what seems to be inconsistent, Dovid is indeed asking for the gift of constant access to Hashem's holiest places and yet to forever be overwhelmed and awe struck as a visitor would be. Perhaps through our own pursuit of this very difficult balance we can all be sources of nechama to Yerushalayim and her children.

From: National Council of Young Israel [YI_Torah@lb.bcentral.com]
To: List Member Subject: Parshat Ki Teitzei
9 Elul 5762 August 17, 2002 Daf Yomi: Baba Batra 150
Guest Rabbi: RABBI YOEL SCHONFELD Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, NY

Here's a challenge: Ask any learned Jew/Jewess which mitzvot in the Torah are unique in that they offer Matan Secharom B'tzidom — a description of the reward for their performance. The odds are overwhelming that you will hear the answer as Kibbut Av V'em,

honoring one's father or mother and Shiluach Hakan, chasing away the mother bird before removing the eggs from the nest. No doubt you will detect a hint of self-satisfaction on the expression of your learned friend that he/she was so quick with the answer of a not-so-simple question.

The fact is, if this is the answer you receive, the response is only two thirds correct. It is true that in the above two instances the Torah does indeed ascribe "Arichat Yomim" — lengthy days — to one who performs these mitzvot. There is yet a third mitzvah that is often overlooked. That mitzvah is "Evan Shelema V'tzedek Yihyeh Lach — you shall possess accurate weights" as you conduct your business affairs. This is found in our Parsha (Devarim 25:15). The Pasuk concludes with "Lemaan Yaarichu Yomecha Al Ha'adamah — in order that your days will be lengthened on the earth G-d has given you." How sad that the importance of business ethics as a vital mitzvah in the Torah is often neglected.

From pre-school through high school, every Jewish child is taught a vast array of Jewish subjects. Chumash, Rashi, Mishna, Talmud, Tanach and Halacha make up the basics of any yeshiva or day-school curriculum.

Halacha includes, for the most part, Orach Chaim — the laws dealing with our daily activities and holidays — as well as some Yoreh De'ah — laws dealing with Kashrut. Beyond doubt, the developing child should be familiar with the laws of Brachot, Shema, Shabbat, Kashrut, etc., but what about the intricacies of the laws of theft? If "Thou Shalt Not Steal" is important enough to make The Ten Commandments, shouldn't it be given a place in a child's education?

Babba Kamma and Babba Metzia are two favorite Tractates, but the resultant applied laws in monetary matters, derived from these very volumes, are known to very few. How many of us are sensitized to the fact that Geneivat Akum — misappropriating non-Jewish money — is prohibited by Torah law according to most Rishonim, and is certainly prohibited according to Rabbinic law? A quick glance at Choshen Mishpat (348) makes that quite clear. (See also Kitzur Shulchan Arach, 182:1.)

We must begin to teach our children the importance of fiscal integrity as seen through the eyes of halacha. The part of Kitzur Shulchan Aruch that contains a brief digest of the laws codified in Choshen Mishpat should be taught in every school.

There are so many anecdotal lessons that Rebbeim or morot can garner from the Chumash and its traditional commentaries that currently are being ignored... like hidden gems awaiting discovery. For example, Rashi in Bereishit (13,7) explains the dispute between the shepherds of Avraham and the shepherds of Lot as centering around Avraham's objection to grazing livestock in other people's fields. This should serve as a ringing message as to how careful a Torah-observant person must be with the property of others, no matter how petty the loss might be. An even more poignant Rashi in our Parsha (Devarim 25,17) explains the juxtaposition of the laws of business ethics with the commandment to recall the wicked history of Amalek. If Jews are not scrupulous in their business ethics, notes Rashi, then we must be concerned about the aggression of our enemies. Not Kashrut, not Shabbat, not political affiliations, but fiscal matters determine whether Jews can feel secure in their environs.

Simply stated: we must find the means of teaching our children (and ourselves) that treating matters of money with absolute integrity is just as R.C. (Religiously Correct) as Glatt Kosher, Cholov Yisrael, and shemura matza.

With rigorous attention to making Choshen Mishpat uppermost on our list of priorities, we can succeed in becoming the definitive medakdeik bemitzvot — one for all the world to admire... and perhaps even emulate.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalists@shemayisrael.com]
To: Peninim Parsha
PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

PARSHAS KI SEITZEI When you will go out to war against your enemies...and you will see among its captivity a woman who is beautiful of form...If a man will have two wives, one beloved and one hated...If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son...(21:10,11,15,18) People refuse to recognize the consequences of their actions. No one really wants to take responsibility for his own behavior. Cause and effect demand accountability. If we act in a certain manner, we should expect specific results - results for which we have only ourselves to blame. The ben sorer u'moreh, rebellious child, is a classic example of this idea. Our parsha begins with the Jewish soldier going out to war and meeting an enticing captive woman. War takes its toll on the human psyche, and thus, the soldier's guard is down. The blandishments that have basically no effect on a person in everyday life, during a time of war suddenly become overwhelming. The Torah recognizes that a soldier might have a difficult time restraining himself during moments of great strain due to war, and, rather than risk a Jew sinning, the Torah provides an outlet, a dispensation under which it is possible for the soldier to marry the woman legitimately. The laws of yefas toar are followed by the case of the man who had two wives, one whom he loved and one whom he hated. We can well imagine the connection to yefas toar. When marriage is founded in lust, it deteriorates as soon as the physical allure begins to dissipate. This is what happened. Soon after marrying the beautiful captive, he realized that she either did not have the appearance that had originally captivated him, or that there is more to a relationship than physical gratification. He realized that a wife is much more than a plaything. He began to hate her, because she was a constant reminder of his utter foolishness, his moment of weakness. The marriage produced a seed, a wild seed that matured into a rebellious, uncouth son who acted more like an animal than a child. Perhaps, the father is now waking up to the consequences of his original deed. He now realizes that by marrying a captive woman, he will beget a rebellious child. We must ask ourselves, why should marrying a woman whom the Torah ultimately permitted, be the cause of having a ben sorer u'moreh? What relationship exists between the "cause" and the "effect"?

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, explains that while the Torah did provide a legal dispensation for the Jewish soldier to marry the captive, it is only just that - a dispensation, a loophole. It is certainly not the Torah's first choice. In fact, the Torah would much rather that the individual overcomes the urging of his yetzer hora, evil inclination, and not marry this woman. Hence, the entire marriage was based upon failure - a failure to triumph over the yetzer hora. A child born of a union that is founded in failure will likely become a failure. He will become a defiant, rebellious, uncontrollable child, one who is also unable to control his lust.

By definition, the ben sorer is a child who is unable to control his desires. In other words, the ben sorer is not some abstract child who is a glutton; he is the child "next door," the child who has been raised in an environment that is somewhat permissive. He is a child who is used to getting whatever he wants. Discipline is a word with which he is not acquainted. He might even be a good boy - as long as he gets whatever he wants. How did this evolve? How did a young boy, a seemingly nice boy, turn into a wild animal whose demand for meat and wine goes beyond lust, who will one day kill to satisfy his desires. Once again, Rav Gifter renders for us a powerful insight into the child's upbringing. The parents declare, "Our son does not listen to us." His failure to listen to his parents' voice preceded his stealing money from his parents. Indeed, the pasuk does not say that the ben sorer does not listen to his parents' "words" or "commands." It says that he does not listen to their "voice." The difference between words, commands and voice is the difference between a normal boy and a ben sorer. When the Torah enjoins us to honor our parents, it is unequivocal. We obey our parents' voice. We do not need --nor do we expect -- an understanding of what and why they are demanding of us. The mere voice is sufficient, because it is the will of he who is commanding us. Hence, the ben sorer's descent to total iniquity begins with his disregard of his parents' "voice." He must understand what they are

demanding of him and why. He will not fulfill his parents' wishes if he does not understand them.

This is the beginning of the breakdown in Jewish society. Children demand reasons; students demand reasons; people demand reasons from Hashem. If the mitzvah does not make sense to me, I will not carry it out. I am an intelligent human being, and I expect to be treated that way. Regrettably, the individual who feels that as a human being he must understand all of Hashem's ways, is missing a crucial component in his human makeup.

Remember what Amalek did to you...that he happened upon you on the way...when you were faint and exhausted, and he did not fear G-d. (25:17,18)

It is a positive commandment to erase the memory of Amalek. We are equally enjoined to remember their evil deeds in order to inspire a greater hatred of them. It is true that Amalek's insolence supercedes that of the other nations, -- and he was the first to audaciously attack us, but is that a reason to hate him forever? Hashem considers Amalek His and our archenemy. Why is this? Wherein lies his unique evil?

The Brisker Rav, zl, notes the Torah's emphasis upon Amalek's lack of yiraas Elokim, fear of G-d. What did Amalek do that indicates his fearlessness of the Almighty? He cites the Talmud in Bava Kama 79a, where Chazal distinguish between a ganov, thief, and a gazlon, robber. The Torah fines the thief, keifal, double payment, whereas the robber only pays the principle. The ganov steals at night, when no one will find him. He is afraid of people. Consequently, he demonstrates a greater fear of man, the servant, than of Hashem, the Master.

The gazlon, on the other hand, does not differentiate between man and G-d. He steals openly, brandishing his weapon to protect himself from anyone who might attempt to stop him. He fears no one. The thief seems to have greater fear of what humans will think than what Hashem will say. The gazlon does not care about either.

The Brisker Rav presents a penetrating analysis of the minds of the ganov and gazlon. A robber does not make cheshbonos, deliberations, before he acts. He does what he wants. He needs something - he steals it, regardless of who is watching. Conversely, the thief is meticulous in planning, taking great pains to make sure that he is not caught. He does not want people to see him. He is afraid /ashamed of people, but could care less about Hashem. This is chutzpah at its nadir. He knowingly, cogently, with acute awareness rejects Hashem. He acts with extreme aforethought. He contrasts the one who does not think at all, but who acts impulsively. One who acts capriciously is not nearly as invidious as he who acts maliciously, contemplating every step of his actions.

The Torah says that Klal Yisrael was weak and exhausted when they were attacked by Amalek. This means that Amalek was deliberate in his actions, planning his incursion against the Jewish People at a time when they were down. He knew what he was doing. He planned his battle, staging his battle at a time when he knew the people were exhausted and had little fight left in them. He acted deliberately - like the thief. He acted with malice towards the Jews and contempt towards Hashem. He took all the factors into his battle equation - except for one - Hashem. He did not include Hashem in the cheshbon, equation, because he was not a yarei Elokim. He did not care about the Almighty. Therefore, Hashem continues to wage war with Amalek m'dor l'dor, throughout the generations.

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject: RABBI YAAKOV HABER - Y'FAS TOAR - Avoiding the Temptation of Sin

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Rabbi Yaakov Haber Y'fas Toar - Avoiding the Temptation of Sin "Ki seitzei lamilchama 'al o'y'vecha, v'ra'isa bashivya eishes y'fas toar, v'chashakta bah..." -- "When you go out to war against your foes, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire her" (D'varim 21:10). With these words, the Torah opens the parsha of the eishes y'fas toar, a unique leniency, applying only to the extreme temptations inherent in a time of war, through which the Torah seeks to keep the Jewish soldier within moral boundaries that can be reasonably demanded of him. "Lo dib'ra Torah ela k'hegged yeitzer hara" -- "the Torah [allowed her] in recognition of the Evil Inclination," for if it did not, he would marry her in a prohibited manner" (Rashi 21:11 from Kiddushin 21b). On an allegorical level, many Jewish thinkers (for example, Rabbeinu B'chaye 21:13) see within these verses a reference to the battle of every Jew against his most formidable "foe," the Evil Inclination within, and interpret the above phrase as "the Torah is speaking about the Yeitzer HaRa." The subsequent p'sukim, then, describe one of the methods to achieve victory against this most insidious of enemies. (See R. B'chaye for a different interpretation from that presented here.)

Ben Azzai states in Pirkei Avos (4:2): "hevei ratz l'mitzva kala, uvoreiach min ha'veira, shemitzva goreres mitzva va'veira goreres 'aveira..." -- "run toward an easy commandment, and flee from sin, for one mitzva leads to another, and one sin to another..." Questioning the first part of the Mishna, Rav Chaim Volozhiner, one of the foremost disciples of the Vilna Gaon, notes that it seems to contradict the principle of b'chira chafshis, or Free Choice. If the individual must pursue mitzvos, the implication is that, by default, Divine commandments are "running away," or are not attractive. On the other hand, if one must flee sin, the implication is that ordinarily sin "pursues" Man such that he must run away to save himself. Indeed, the human experience bears witness to this very point. Chazal additionally note that the Evil Inclination is placed within Man before the Good Inclination (see Sanhedrin 91b, Avos D'Rabi Nasan 16, also B'raishis 6:5). Would it not be more consistent with the principal of Free Choice for Good and Evil to be equally desirable?

Rav Chaim's explanation, which is alluded to in the allegorical reading of the section dealing with the eishes y'fas toar, provides a piercing insight into the essence of the human personality. The life spirit, the eternal aspect of the human being is the soul, in the words of the Kabbalists, "a piece of the Divine." Naturally, the soul desires only the "cleaving to G-d" through the contemplation of the Divine accomplished through the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvot, Divine commandments. Chassidic Masters have noted that the word "mitzva" is also derived from "tzavta," company, connection, as mitzvot are all vehicles with which to connect to the Root of the Soul, the Creator of All. The body is merely a tool in which the soul is able to function in This World, having no independent existence at all. In light of this, the battle between Good and Evil would automatically be won in favor of the Good as this represents Man's existential essence. In order to "even out the odds" and allow Man to choose between Good and Evil and thus earn eternal reward, Hashem caused the psychology of Man to be such that mitzvot appear at first less attractive and 'averios seem at the outset more desirable. Or, in an allegorical sense, sins are as sugar-coated poison appearing attractive but ultimately deadly to its consumer, whereas Divine Commandments are like tarnished gold guaranteeing reward for those patient enough to polish it and reveal its true splendor. Therefore, we are charged by Ben Azzai, "Run after mitzvot!;" do not be fooled by the appearance of their initial unattractiveness for that is what G-d ordained concerning the human experience in order to provide challenge and choice. "Flee from sin!;" do not be taken in by its lure and promise of temporary satisfaction. Once one follows this path, the Mishna continues, this leads to a chain reaction. After the person follows the Good, has tasted spiritual pleasure and has overcome the desire to follow first appearances, one mitzva follows another, and he is ready to move up a rung in the ladder of Divine Service whereby he sees mitzvos as vehicles of eternal, transcendent pleasure and happiness. The opposite is true with sin. The more one pursues this path, the more "real" and seemingly lasting

the fake pleasure of sin becomes, and the person becomes more greatly entwined in its web.

It would appear that the very structure of all of physical pleasure, whether permissible or prohibited, has been fashioned to teach us this very lesson. The last few generations have become ever-conscious of the fact that in the realm of diet, those items leading to immediate satisfaction, appearing so tantalizing, are usually the least nutritious or satisfying in the long run and are often harmful. Those items perhaps less tasty at first, lead to greater nutrition and long-term health. The same is true regarding other human pleasures.

The Torah directs us in our parsha: when you see the eishes y'fas toar, when you encounter Sin and you desire it, wait, do not give in to the momentary passions. "vahaveisa el toch beisecha, v'gil'cha es rosha ... v'heisira es simlas shivya mei'aleha," "bring her into your house, and she shall shave her head.. and change her [attractive] garments" (21:13). Contemplate that sin is nothing more than a fleeting image of satisfaction and ultimately leads to disappointment, frustration and a distancing from the Divine. Then, the individual is in a greater position to utilize his b'chira well and choose Life.

As we experience the days of Elul, the days of preparation for the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe, may we all recommit ourselves to 'avodas Hashem as we realize that ze kol ha'adam, for this is the essence of Mankind.

<http://projectgenesis.org/advanced/weekly-halacha/5756/naso.html>
Selected Halachos By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT The following is a discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

MARRIED WOMEN WITH UNCOVERED HAIR

QUESTION: A married female guest at the Shabbos table does not have her hair covered. May Kiddush be recited in her presence or not?
ANSWER: According to Torah law, married women must cover their hair (1) whenever they are outside their home (2). A woman who fails to do so forfeits her Kesuba and should be divorced by her husband (3). Since the hair must be covered, when it is not covered it is considered an Erva, an uncovered area. No male may recite Krias Shema, Daven, make a Bracha or learn Torah when the uncovered hair is visible to him (4). Accordingly, if such a person happens to be at the Shabbos table, Kiddush may not be recited. Many theories have been postulated as to why some women--although meticulous in keeping other Mitzvos--are lax in regard to covering their hair. Some do not cover their hair at all and others do so partially. It must be stressed that this practice is roundly condemned by all Poskim. There is not a single, solitary authority who finds a leniency for married women to have their hair uncovered (5). Indeed, in recent years there has been a gradual improvement and many women who did not previously cover their hair, have begun to do so. In the last century or so, the many women who did not cover their hair presented an Halachic problem. The previously mentioned Halacha that a woman's uncovered hair is considered an Erva regarding Krias Shema and all Brachos, made it practically impossible for men to recite Tefilos and Brachos or to learn Torah in their own homes. A situation developed which was impossible to live with. Because of the prevalence of the problem, the Aruch HaShulchan (75:7) ruled that in a locale where the majority of married women do not cover their hair, we can no longer consider hair an Erva. In his opinion, only in a locale in which most women keep their hair covered can uncovered hair be considered an Erva. This controversial ruling was accepted by some Poskim (6) and strongly rejected by others (7). Harav Moshe Feinstein (8) ruled that one can rely on this leniency only in a She'as Ha'dchak, a time of urgency. Concerning our case in point, therefore, the following is the correct reaction: · If it is possible to explain the problem to the woman in private without embarrassing her, then that would be the preferred solution. · If it is difficult to do so, one should avert his face from her or close his eyes before reciting Kiddush. · If that is difficult, one can rely on the Poskim who rule that under present-day conditions, women's hair is not considered an Erva. If the woman sitting at the table is not-Jewish, her uncovered hair is not considered an Erva (9). If the woman at the table

is not dressed properly [according to minimum Halachic guidelines], then, too, the man saying Kiddush must avert his face or close his eyes (10). The Aruch Hashulchan's leniency does not apply to immodest dress.

FOOTNOTES 1 Divorced or widowed women are also required to do so--although some Poskim hold that their obligation is Rabbinic, see Igros Moshe Even Haizer 1: 57. See Machazei Eliyahu 118-120. 2 According to the Zohar and many Poskim, women should cover their hair even in the privacy of their own homes, see Mishna Berura 75:14 and Biur Halacha for a complete discussion. 3 Kesuvos 72:1; Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer 115:1-4; Many Poskim hold that nowadays, when many women erroneously, but sincerely, believe that they are not required to cover their hair, the husband is not required to divorce them since it is their ignorance, not their disregard for the Law, which leads them to conduct themselves so--see Igros Moshe EH 1:114; Doveiv Meishorim 1:124; Lev Avrohom 1:105 quoting the Chazon Ish. 4 OC 75:2. This Halacha applies to one's own wife, sister, mother etc. as well. 5 There are some communities who have allowed women to expose the small portion of hair that protrudes from beneath the covering. Even those who are lenient in this do not allow more than a total of 3.5 inches of hair to show--See Igros Moshe EH 1:58. 6 Ben Ish Chai Parshas Bo:12; Sridei Ish 2:14; Yavia Omer 6:13. 7 Mishna Berura 75:10; Chazon Ish OC 16:8 and most other Poskim. 8 Igros Moshe OC 1:39,42-43; OC 3:23-24; EH 114. 9 Igros Moshe OC 4:15. 10 Mishna Berura 75:1; Chazon Ish OC 16:8. Not all Poskim agree that closing one's eyes helps in this situation.

From: Shlomo Katz [skatz@torah.org] Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2002 11:36 AM To: hamaayan@torah.org Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Ki Tetze
Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz
Ki Tetze: Cause and Effect
Sponsored by The Marwick family in honor of the birth of grandson Moshe Mordechai Marwick
The Sabrin family in memory of mother Bayla bat Ze'ev a"h (Bella Sabrin)
Today's Learning: Daf Yomi (Bavli): Bava Batra 150

Rabbeinu Yonah z"l (12th century Spain) writes that there are three types of mitzvot: those which must be done (e.g. prayer), those which must be done if the opportunity presents itself (e.g. circumcision), and those which are optional, but may only be done according to a certain procedure (e.g. marrying a prisoner-of-war or taking an egg from a bird's nest). These last two examples are both found in this week's parashah, and each introduces a separate line of cause and effect which follows from a person's deeds. These two lines can be traced through the various topics discussed in this parashah:

Chazal say that if one marries a prisoner-of-war, even permissibly, he will likely end-up hating her and her offspring. The son he has from her may end-up stealing from his parents, and thus incur the penalty of a ben sorer u'moreh / a rebellious son. Such a boy is executed, not for what he has done, Chazal say, but so that he may die relatively righteous. Should he live, his future is bleak indeed.

In contrast, Chazal say that if one performs the mitzvah of sending away a mother bird, he will be rewarded with prosperity and will build a house. This mitzvah is therefore followed by the commandment to build a railing around a roof. Also, he will merit to have new clothes, so he is commanded not to wear sha'atnez / the forbidden combination of wool and linen and to make tzitzit. The mitzvah of tzitzit is among the cheapest and easiest of the mitzvot to perform, but its reward is great, for it reminds a person to keep all of the other mitzvot, and thus brings merit to the entire body. (Derashot U'perushei R' Yonah Al Ha'Torah)

"Do not observe the donkey of your brother or his ox falling and ignore it; you shall surely help it up." (22:4)

In Parashat Mishpatim, this same mitzvah is given, but there the Torah refers to the animal of "your enemy." Why this difference?

With regard to the verse in Mishpatim, the Gemara asks: How does one have an enemy? Is it then permitted to hate another Jew? The Gemara explains that "your enemy" refers to one whom you have witnessed sinning. If he refuses to repent, you are obligated to hate him.

However, writes R'Meir Simcha Hakohen z"l (rabbi of Dvinsk, Latvia; died 1926), that was only before the sin of the Golden Calf (which is found in the Torah after Parashat Mishpatim). Before that sin, all Jews were on such an exalted level that they were able to hate someone merely because he had sinned. But today, who can make such a claim?! Rather, we are all brothers. (Meshech Chochmah)

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From: ohr@ohr.edu To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Ki Teitze

* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Ki Teitze For the week ending 17 August 2002 / 9 Elul 5762

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The Spice Of Life

"...and he wrote her a bill of divorce..." (24:1)

Nothing is sadder than family break-up.

Divorce is the scourge of our modern world. In all sectors of the community, divorce is on the rise. In some areas, more people now get divorced than stay married. Pre-nuptial agreements are par for the course. More and more couples enter marriage with fewer and fewer expectations.

The Torah acknowledges that not all marriages will be successful. It gives us the mitzva of gerushin, divorce, in such an unhappy event the concept of "till death us do part..." is not a Jewish idea. However, divorce while being a mitzva is no source for joy. The Talmud says that when a couple gets divorced, the mizbeach, the holy altar, weeps.

How are we to understand this idea - that the mizbeach "weeps"?

Nothing in Judaism is merely poetic. And why specifically should the mizbeach weep? Why not the Tablets of the Covenant? Why not the husbands tefillin? Why not the wife's Shabbat candelabra?

Probably the greatest cause of marital disharmony is misunderstanding the purpose of marriage. The secular paradigm, enshrined in every fairy tale from the Brothers' Grimm to the Brother's Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is that the princess finds the prince of dreams. She finds her fulfillment in Prince Charming, and he finds everything he wants in her: Beauty, poise, intelligence, money, someone who puts the top on the toothpaste - everything!

Marriage is not about finding someone to fulfill you. It's about finding someone you can fulfill. Marriage is a machine for giving - that's all it is. Marriage is about living the principle that you are not the center of the world. In the book of Bereshet the Torah says, "It is not good for man to live alone." When you live alone, you only have one person to give to - yours truly. The world revolves around you. You are the center of the universe.

The mizbeach is the place when man 'gives' to G-d. Man gives of his best and offers it to his creator. The word 'korban' (woefully inadequately translated as 'sacrifice') derives from the root 'closeness'. When you give, you become close. When you take, you distance yourself.

The Torah tells us that no korban could be offered without the presence of salt on the mizbeach. Salt is the archetypal giver. Salt has only one purpose - to give taste to something else. By itself it is nothing. When a person sees himself as 'salt' - when he sees the whole purpose of his existence is to give - he has added the vital ingredient to his marriage.

He has added the spice of life.

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Parshat Ki Teitzei Vol.10 No.1 Date of issue: 9 Elul 5760 -- September 9, 2000

SHNAYIM MIKRA V'ECHAD TARGUM

BY RABBI HOWARD JACHTER

Introduction The Gemara (Berachot 8a) teaches, "one should always finish the Parshiot with the community [by studying] Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum (the Parsha twice and Targum Onkelos once)." The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 285:2) notes that this is a rabbinical obligation. It seems

that women are not obligated to study Shemot (the common acronym for Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum), since it is a time bound positive obligation. In this issue, we will examine the parameters of this obligation. Reason for the Obligation In the introduction to the Sefer Hachinuch, the author explains a reason for this obligation in a simple yet beautiful way: Our sages established that we should read a portion of the Torah every week in the synagogue to inspire us to observe the Torah...The sages also obligated us to study in our home every week the Torah portion that is read in the synagogue to further enhance our understanding of the Torah. The aforementioned Gemara notes that all those who engage in Shemot "have their days and years lengthened." One may interpret the Gemara as saying that this practice greatly enhances the quality of one's life. Surely, the joy on Simchat Torah of one who has fulfilled his Shemot obligation is exponentially greater than one who has not done so. Moreover, the Shabbat of those who observe this Halacha is immensely enhanced. Indeed, the Tur and Shulchan Aruch present this Halacha in the context of Hilchot Shabbat. Rav Soloveitchik told this author that the primary time for Shemot is Shabbat. This author also heard from Rav Soloveitchik (in a public lecture delivered at Yeshiva University) that every Shabbat is characterized by the Parsha of the week. For instance, the Shabbat on which we read Parshat Ki Teitzei is not simply Shabbat; it is Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. One may argue that while the public reading of the Torah characterizes Shabbat as, for instance, Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei, on the communal level, individual Shemot study characterizes the Shabbat as Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei for the individual. Of course, the primary way that Shemot enhances one's life is by promoting fluency in our most basic and holy text, the Torah. The Jew who is not fluent in the Torah certainly does not enjoy a good Jewish quality of life. Accordingly, even women, who are not technically obligated to study Shemot, receive abundant reward for doing so. A Defense for Those Who Do Not Study Shemot Many individuals do not engage in Shemot for a variety of reasons. There is a "Limud Zechut" (limited Halachic basis) for these people. The Bait Yosef (Orach Chaim 285 s.v. Aval Misham) cites the opinion of the Raavan that Shemot is an obligation only for an individual who has not heard Kriat Hatorah in shul. According to the Raavan, Shemot is merely a substitute for Kriat Hatorah. However, the Bait Yosef points out that almost all Rishonim reject the view of the Raavan. For example, he cites the Rambam (Hilchot Tefila 13:25) who writes that "although one hears the communal reading of the Torah he must study the Parsha every week Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum." In fact, the Vilna Gaon (Biur Hagra O.C. 285:1) specifically notes that the Shulchan Aruch rejects the opinion of the Raavan. Accordingly, those who do not study Shemot are not "sinners." However, it is proper to study Shemot in addition to hearing Kriat Hatorah in shul. All authorities concur, though, that one must study Shemot if he did not hear the communal Torah reading. When Must We Complete Shemot Study? The Gemara does not specifically state that one must complete Shemot by a specific time. Tosafot (s.v. Yashlim), however, states that it is preferable to complete Shemot before eating on Shabbat. In fact, the Magen Avraham (285:2) cites the Shelah Hakadosh who writes that it is preferable to complete Shemot on Friday after Chatzot (midday). This preference stems from Kabbalistic concerns (Kabbalists attach profound significance to Shemot study - see Baer Heiteiv and Shaarei Teshuva 285:1). Tosafot notes, though, that it is acceptable to complete Shemot study even after the meal. However, Tosafot believes that Shemot must be completed before Shabbat ends. Indeed, the primary opinion presented by the Shulchan Aruch states that one must complete Shemot before Shabbat ends. Nevertheless, the Shulchan Aruch cites two lenient opinions that appear in the Rishonim. One lenient view allows one to finish Shemot until the Wednesday after Shabbat in which we read the particular Parsha. This view is based on the Gemara (Pesachim 106a) that permits one to recite Havdala until Wednesday if he forgot to do so on Motzei Shabbat. A second, even more lenient view allows one until Simchat Torah to finish Shemot. The Aruch Hashulchan (285:10) writes that this is a viable opinion. The Mishna Berura (285:12) cautions that all authorities concur that it is preferable to complete Shemot before Shabbat ends. When May We Begin Study of Shemot? Tosafot writes that the earliest time to begin Shemot study of a particular Parsha is after the Mincha on Shabbat afternoon when we begin to read from that Parsha. This opinion is codified by the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 285:3, and see Mishna Berura 285:7).

One may suggest that this opinion of Tosafot reflects their view that Shemot is a weekly obligation (i.e. that we must study Shemot of a particular Parsha within the week in which we publicly read that particular Parsha). However, the lenient opinion that believes that one may complete Shemot until Simchat Torah regards Shemot as a yearly obligation (i.e. that every year one must complete Shemot). It would appear that just as the lenient view permits completing Shemot late, it also permits starting Shemot as early as Parshat Bereishit. Thus, if one finds difficulty in completing Shemot during the course of the year but is able to do so during a vacation period, he should take the opportunity and complete Shemot for the entire year during the vacation period. Rav Efraim Greenblatt and Rav Mordechai Willig told this author that they agree with this analysis. Rashi or Targum Onkelos The Rosh (Berachot 1:8) and the Tur (O.C. 285) assert that Rashi's commentary to Chumash constitutes an alternative for Targum Onkelos for the study of Shemot. The Bait Yosef (O.C. 285 s.v. V'im Lamad), however, cites the Ri (Rashi's great grandson) as disputing this assertion. He thus rules that a "G-d fearing individual" should study both Targum Onkelos and Rashi. Similarly, in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 285:3), Rav Karo rules that Rashi serves as a viable alternative to Onkelos, but a "G-d fearing person" should study both Rashi and Onkelos. It seems from the Shulchan Aruch that if one had enough time to study either Onkelos or Rashi that one could choose either and that there is no preference between the two. The Mishna Berura and the Aruch Hashulchan also do not seem to indicate a preference between Onkelos and Rashi. It would thus appear that one with limited time is permitted to study either Onkelos or Rashi, according to his own preference. See, however, the Shaarei Teshuva (285:2) who presents a dispute among the Acharonim whether Onkelos or Rashi is preferable for one with limited time. Alternative Translations Tosafot (s.v. Shnayim) cites an opinion that asserts that any translation of the Chumash into the local vernacular constitutes a viable alternative to Onkelos. Tosafot then rejects this opinion stating that Onkelos is special because Onkelos not only translates the Chumash but also explains many obscure words and passages. Both the Mishna Berura (285:5) and the Aruch Hashulchan (285:12) cite Tosafot's view as normative. However, the Mishna Berura writes that if one cannot comprehend Rashi he may use a Yiddish (or any other language) translation based on Rashi and traditional sources that are rooted in the Talmudic tradition. Conclusion The study of Shemot is within the grasp of virtually anyone. If one cannot fulfill this obligation at the optimal level, he should nevertheless make every effort to fulfill this Mitzva as best he can. It might be a good idea to carry a small Chumash in one's attache case or car so that one can seize available moments to study Shemot.

From: Yated USA [yated-usa@ttec.com] Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2002 6:04 PM To: Yated Subscribers Subject: Yated USA, 08-15-2002 KEEPING ONE MITZVAH By Rav Nochum Eisenstein Lakewood, NJ

Gedilim ta'ase lecha al arba kanfos kesus'scha asher techase ba, "You should make strings (tzitzis) on all four corners of the clothes you wear" (Devarim 22:12). The Gemara interestingly asserts that the mitzva of tzitzis equals all of the other mitzvos, that is, a person who performs this mitzva is credited as if he fulfilled all of the others. Some mefarshim reach this result by examining the gematria (numerical value) related to the mitzvah. The numerical value of the letters of "tzitzis" is 600. Adding the 8 strings and the 5 knots on each string equals 613, the total number of the Torah's mitzvos. It is intriguing, however, to realize that the mitzva of tzitzis is not at all mandatory: a person need not wear a four-corned garment and could easily live his entire life without ever having occasion to wear tzitzis. How do we reconcile these two concepts, viz, that this particular mitzvah carries such importance and yet is not really obligatory? The basic design of today's fashions, which generally do not contain four corners, exempts us from wearing tzitzis. We nevertheless go out of our way to wear a talis katan all day and a talis gadol for davening. Why? First, and as we discussed last week, we want the opportunity to fulfill this great mitzva. Second, the Gemara states that in a time of wrath, Hashem takes into account a person's lack of sensitivity to this mitzva and hands out fair punishment for the failure to wear tzitzis-even though the mitzva is not obligatory! People have the ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. We can see and hear at the same time. We can walk and talk. We can eat and read. Because these paired activities do not require special attention, they are fairly easy to execute together. It is said that the gaon Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky zt"l, the foremost Torah giant of pre WW II Europe, was able simultaneously to write with both hands while carrying on a conversation. Such a level of concentration is beyond most of us.

Sometimes, however, we have no choice but to do things simultaneously. Our lives comprise dual missions. We have to provide parnassa for our physical needs. We have as well to provide for our ruchnius, spirituality. Both are full time jobs. The tug of war is on between the two, gashmius against ruchnius. In addition to our personal needs and wants we have to pay attention to the needs and wants of our spouses and children. A family of several children requires more time because each child needs special attention. Parents who are busy juggling many chores often neglect paying due attention to each child. This unfortunately often results in many child-related problems. Had the parents given individual care and nurturing to the child, he would have developed into a well balanced human being. If we could focus on diverse tasks simultaneously, we could avoid this difficulty. In our observance of Torah and mitzvos, too, we face this complex situation. We have 613 mitzvos. And even though all of them do not apply to each of us personally (for example, some mitzvos apply only to farmers, some to Kohanim, some to those living in Eretz Yisrael, etc), as to those that we do have to perform, it is still difficult to concentrate on all of them at once. To some degree, the Rambam alleviated this problem. He states that a person merits olam habah for fulfilling just one mitzvah, on the condition that he is totally dedicated to that mitzva and fulfills it in its entirety. The 613 mitzvos, according to the Rambam, are thus 613 opportunities to achieve olam habah. This, of course, does not mean that one is not obligated to fulfill the other mitzvos or neglect them; it just means that total concentration on one mitzva is sufficient. But this is by no means as simple as it sounds. Imagine a person never missing davening once during his lifetime, or never letting a single day go by without learning Torah. Or, as the Chofetz Chaim did, never in his entire life speak lashon hara. But according to all of the Rishonim the problem still faces us: concentrating on so many mitzvos is really an impossible task. The Torah addressed the issue. Shabbos is a day of rest. We have no pre-occupations on Shabbos and therefore can concentrate on ruchnius. For 24 hours the ever-present weekday conflict is removed. We may neither talk nor read about business concerns on Shabbos. (Thus, perusing the newspaper's business section is problematic.) Traveling beyond the tachum, even by foot, is not permitted. We are not, absent an eruv, allowed to carry from one domain to another. Having removed all of the usual distractions, we are now free to concentrate on our ruchnius. What a beautiful experience we would have if we were able to observe Shabbos with this in mind. Being surrounded by tzitzis all day and with every move, we are constantly being reminded that we obligated to do mitzvos. Although we are necessarily engaged in making a living we can turn that, too, into ruchnius. If we are honest, keep our promises, and honor our verbal agreements, we infuse spirituality into our business dealings. In today's world that, unfortunately, is often quite a challenge. What we will have achieved, though, is a minimization of the inherent conflict between our physical and spiritual aspirations. If we will view money as but a tool to support Torah and to help the needy, our greed would greatly diminish. This, too, would help us to be more honest in business. To this end the mitzva of tzitzis helps us keep focused. We ultimately have only one goal to serve Hashem. We have to concentrate on that goal. The person who fails to wear tzitzis expresses his lack of interest in that regard. Without tzitzis, we cannot focus on our many diverse issues and responsibilities. Without tzitzis, we surely will not succeed in serving Hashem and acting according to Torah principles. We now can understand why tzitzis is held to equal all of the mitzvos. It keeps us focused on one of them, and, thus, all of them, regardless of what we are doing. Therefore it is not necessary to make tzitzis obligatory, either a person is committed to Torah and mitzvos or he is not.

The importance of paying one's workers on time. "B'yomo siten s'choro v'lo savoh alav hashemesh ki ani hu v'eilav hu nose es nafsho. On that day you shall pay his hire; the sun shall not set upon him, for he is poor and his life depends on it." (19:13) "From where do we learn that a person hired to work during the day must be paid by the following morning? From the pasuk "A worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning." And how do we know that a worker who works through the night is to be paid by the next evening? This is learnt from the pasuk "On that day you shall pay his hire." (Baba Metzia 110B) According to the Chofetz Chaim, the laws of paying workers on time apply to children as well. (Ahavas Chesed 9:5) "I have seen people," writes the Chofetz Chaim, "asking children to do a certain job for them in return for a small reward, but then fail to give them the reward. This is against halacha, since the prohibition against withholding payment applies even to a very small job for which the fee is minimal. To delay even such a payment is a sin. (Nesiv HaChesed) The Aderet writes the following regarding the mitzvah to pay a worker on the same day: "I was in doubt as to whether or not I should go so far as to fulfill the mitzvah according to the Ba'al HaTurim's understanding. The Ba'al Haturim sees the juxtaposition of the pesukim "When you grant your fellow a loan" and "You shall not cheat a poor or destitute hired person...on that day you shall pay his hire," as a lesson in terms of paying a debtor on time. One should not say, "I will withhold your wages in return for the loan I granted you." Rather, he should pay the worker and subsequently collect what he is owed. "This is a very original understanding of the pesukim," continues the Aderet, "and this

restriction is not mentioned by any of the poskim. My dear friend, R' Yisroel Meir HaKohein (the Chofetz Chaim), does not mention this detail in his sefer Ahavas Chesed, either. Nevertheless, since these words were uttered by the holy tzaddik, it is our obligation to conduct ourselves in this way. (Nefesh Dovid) R' Zusha of Anipoli's wife asked her husband if he could buy her a new dress. Despite their dire straits, R' Zusha saved up enough money to buy some fabric and happily gave it to his wife to take to the dressmaker. The next week, R' Zusha's wife was visibly upset. "What is it?" asked R' Zusha. "You have a new dress, Baruch HaShem. You ought to be glad!" "No, I don't have a new dress," replied his wife. "I don't understand. Didn't I give you the fabric last week?" The rebbetzin told her husband that the tailor had completed the job and brought her the new dress, but that he could not hide his anxiety as he gave it to her. She asked him why he was so distressed, and he told her that his daughter had recently become engaged. When his future son-in-law saw that he was sewing a dress, the tailor continued, he was sure that it was for his new bride. "I felt terrible when I told that him the dress was not for my daughter but for a customer. He became so upset, even angry," said the tailor. The rebbetzin told her husband that she felt so sorry for the tailor and his daughter that she decided to give them the dress as gift. "And did you pay him for his work?" R' Zusha asked his wife. "Well, no, I gave him the whole thing instead!" she replied. Rabbi Zusha was very disturbed by his wife's response. "How could you deprive him of his wages?" The poor man worked the entire week for you, and only you not for his daughter. He looked forward to finishing the job so that he could feed his family, but now what will he do?" said R' Zusha bitterly. "It's not his fault that you decided to give the dress to his daughter." The rebbetzin accepted her husband's words and promptly went to borrow some money to pay the tailor for his hard work. (Sippurei Chassidim-Kedoshim) "Motza sfasecha tishmor v'asisa. You shall observe and carry out what emerges from your lips." (23:24) Rabbeinu Yona: In this pasuk the Torah warns us of the need to pay attention to our words lest we forget our promises. As soon as we make a promise, we must be vigilant about keeping it. Forgetfulness is part of human nature and, unless one exercises extreme caution to ensure that his vow is not broken, it is easy for him to forget to keep his word. Shlomo HaMelech says, "Let not your mouth bring guilt upon your flesh, and do not tell the messenger that it was an error. Why should G-d be angered by your speech and destroy the work of your hands?" (Koheles 5:5) In other words, although your vow may have ultimately been broken in error, do not tell yourself that it was unintentional because, after all, you were negligent by not paying close attention to ensure that your vow would be fulfilled. (Mishle 4:21) In Sha'arei Tshuva, Rabbeinu Yona reiterates this message in his comments on the Torah's words two pesukim earlier: "When you make a vow to HaShem, your G-d, you shall not be late in paying it." (23:22) "One will be punished for delaying the fulfillment of his promise even though he does so at a later time. If one pledges money to tzedaka he must give it right away. In truth, the Torah advises that we are not to make vows altogether, as the next pasuk states: "If you refrain from vowing, there will be no sin in you." This implies that there is a degree of sin involved in making vows, since vows are potential stumbling blocks in the sense that if one does not keep his word, he will have sinned. A righteous man will sympathize with others and give to them without having to make a promise. Righteous people only make promises when they pray to Hashem in times of need. This is what Yaakov Avinu did when he awoke from his dream (Vayetze 28:20), as did the leaders of the nation when they gathered the tribes of Yisroel in unity for the purpose of strengthening and encouraging the nation. (V'zos Habracha 33:6) It is told that a gabbai tzedaka once approached R' Issur Zalman Meltzer and requested a donation for a particular cause. R' Issur Zalman reached into his pocket and handed the money he had to the gabbai. "This is all I have on me right now," said R' Issur Zalman. Some time later, R' Issur Zalman knocked on the gabbai tzedaka's door. The latter's family was shocked to see the great rabbi on their doorstep. "I'm sorry to disturb you," said R' Issur Zalman to the gabbai tzedaka, "but when I gave you a donation earlier I mentioned that that was all the money I had on me. However, I subsequently found another coin in my pocket, so it is my obligation to give it to you for the cause you were collecting for earlier." Another very interesting story is told about R' Issur Zalman. Once, while the tzaddik was walking down the street, a poor man asked him for some money. R' Issur Zalman expressed his regret at having only a few coins in his pocket at the time, and reassured the poor man that he would give him whatever he had. When he put his hand in his coat pocket he suddenly remembered that he was carrying an envelope that contained a very large sum of money. R' Issur Zalman felt he had no choice. He had promised the poor man that he would give him everything he had in his pocket, so that is exactly what he did. (B'derech Eitz Chaim)