

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAESCHANAN - 5758

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weekly@virtual.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Vaeschanan <http://www.ohr.org.il>

No Switzerland "And you who cling to Hashem, your G-d - you are alive, all of you, today." (4:4) There's an old philosophical dispute among the nations about the nature of Man's connection to the Infinite One. Some say that G-d is so above us that we need an intermediary. Others say that in this world it is impossible to be in contact with G-d; that only after death is this possible. Still others say that while it's possible in this life to have a relationship with G-d, only unique individuals can attain to this; the vast majority of us, they say, will not succeed. And lastly, there are those who say that true contact with G-d is only possible after a life-time of work and effort. The Torah teaches us that none of these philosophies is accurate. All Jews, on any level and at any time, are capable of a close relationship with G-d. We can see this hinted in the above verse: "And you who cling to Hashem, your G-d - you are alive, all of you, today;" Meaning: "And you who cling to Hashem..." Directly to Hashem - you don't need intermediaries. You don't need the neutral ground of an intercessor. Between the Jewish People and G-d there is no "Switzerland." "...you are alive..." You can have this contact in this world as well. You don't have to pass on to the next world to be close to G-d. "...all of you..." It is the birthright of the entire Jewish nation to have this connection with the Creator, not just unique individuals. "...today..." Being close to G-d is not predicated on a lifetime's work and struggle, you can have it today - if you want it.

Forever Picture the feelings of longing that Moshe must have had as he stood on top of the cliff, gazing out over the land that he given so much to enter. There it was stretched out in front of him like a map. The Land of Israel. So close and yet so far. Hashem knew how much Moshe wanted to go into Eretz Yisrael, so why did He 'tantalyze' Moshe by telling him to go up and gaze at this land that he knew he was never going to enter? Furthermore, our Sages tell us that by prophetic insight Hashem showed Moshe every single square inch of Eretz Yisrael - which only must have increased his longing! What was Hashem's purpose? Each of the Avos, the Patriarchs, represent a specific quality: Avraham embodies Chesed (Kindness); Yitzhak personifies Gevurah (Strength/Self-control); Yaakov Emes (truth). The quality that Moshe represents is Netzach - Eternity. Everything that Moshe did was forever. Hashem gave the Torah through Moshe - because the Torah is eternal. If Moshe had gone into the land of Israel with the Jewish People, then their entry would have been an 'eternal entry' - everything that Moshe did had that touch of eternity. After such an entry, the Jewish People could never again leave the Land. Hashem knew that the Jewish People would have to go into exile for they would not be able to maintain the high spiritual standards that the Land requires. If they could not leave, and they could not stay, they would be caught, as it were, in a spiritual vise -- the very real danger of annihilation ("l). Thus, Moshe could not enter the Land of Israel. However, Hashem made Moshe's non-entry into the Land serve a positive purpose: Hashem wanted to sear the memory of the Land of Israel into the collective psyche of the Jewish People. By showing Moshe every blade of grass, by taking him and showing him every corner of the land he was never to enter, Hashem planted in Moshe's heart a longing for the Land of Israel which would be eternal. Look at our daily prayers. Look at the blessings after eating a meal. Our petitions to Hashem are saturated with the name of the Land to which we long to return to -- as a Holy People. Throughout the long, long night of exile, the Jewish People have never lost that same longing for Eretz Yisrael that Moshe felt when he stood on the top of the cliff and gazed into the Land he would

A Gentle Nudge "And you will love Hashem, Your G-d, with all your heart..." 6:5 The philosophers ask: How can you command love? Love is something instinctive which a person either feels or doesn't feel! Can a person be made to love on command?! The answer is to be found in the question itself. From the fact that Hashem commanded us to love Him, it follows that it must be part of the nature of every Jew to be able to love The Creator. All that is required is to awaken this natural strength and give it a gentle nudge!

Haftorah: Isaiah 40:1-26 The Shabbos immediately following Tisha B'Av is called Shabbos Nachamu -- The Shabbos of Consolation. It takes its name from the first word of this week's Haftorah -- "Comfort, comfort my people says your G-d." The Prophet reminds the people that the time of the Exile of Jerusalem has come to an end. The Midrash tells us that Hashem asks Avraham to comfort Jerusalem, but he does not succeed. He is followed by Yitzhak and Yaakov and Moshe who are also unsuccessful. Finally Hashem Himself comes to comfort the Holy City.

Sources: o Forever - Malbim, Rabbi Yerucham Uziel Milevsky z"l o A Gentle Nudge - Sfias Emes <http://www.ohr.org.il/web/sub.htm> Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

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Parashat Va'eschanan - Shabbat Nachamu August 8, 1998

Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler

Va'eschanan [4:6] "Study and live by my commandments...then the nations of the world will affirm that we are a wise, understanding, great nation."

Yalkut Yeshayahu [40:445] "Israel sinned two-fold, she was punished two-fold, and will be consoled two-fold, as it is written: 'Nachamu, nachamu, ami.'" What is meant by "sinned two-fold [kiflayim]"? Two times what? Surely a better term would have been "sinned greatly, grievously, terribly, extensively." The term two-fold harbors within it an important lesson. Transgressions blemish the potential moral and ethical characteristics that we are all capable of developing within our spiritual beings. However, there are some aveiros that also degrade the image of G-d within us. Such sinful acts blur the distinction between man and the other creatures of the world. We sin kiflayim, two-fold.

Jewish family life with its code of sexual morality has been the distinguishing mark of the Jew throughout the centuries. Of course, there were individuals in every generation who fell prey to secular values even in the realm of sexual morality. What distinguishes our generation is that there is a driving force to legalize and ultimately sanctify that which our Torah designates as an abomination. This movement will destroy our humanity and the image of G-d in which we were created. This is the two-fold sin that plagues our contemporary society. Such behavior will ultimately lead to the two-fold punishment in which our humanity will be diminished.

In this week's haftorah message we are consoled by Hashem two-fold.á "Nachamu, nachamu, ami yomar Elokeichem"--we will once again become a holy nation. We need to resume the lifestyle ordained for us by Hashem. A lifestyle that all nations know to be a source of wisdom and understanding, of perfection in the eyes of G-d and man. The haftorah records a rhetorical question [40:25], "To whom can you compare our G-d?" Indeed, do compare. Place our Torah lifestyle, family life, business ethics, social responsibilities alongside the value system of secular humanism. There is no comparison. Secular humanism has led to the moral decay ofá American society and a spiritual holocaust that continues to have a negative influence on contemporary Jewish life. Torah values are our only nechamah, the ultimate consolation in our struggle to fulfill our mission as a holy people and kingdom of priests.

Va'eschanan [4:8] "Is there a great nation that has righteous decrees and ordinances to compare to this entire Torah that I place before you this day?"

Va'eschanan [4:10] "Let them hear My words so that they shall learn to be in awe of Me all the days that they live on the earth and they shall teach their children."

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Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary for Parshat Va'etchanan

[Numbers] are the Chinuch's mitzva count Note: Many other mitzvot besides the 12 counted, are contained in Va'Etchanan, but they are counted elsewhere in the Torah. This is not uncommon, but what it means is that the mitzva count of a sedra is often not a good indicator of the actual mitzva content of the sedra.

KOHEN - First Aliya - 11 p'sukim (3:23-4:4) Moshe Rabeinu continues his farewell words to the People. He tells them that he asked G-d to rescind His decree banning Moshe from entry into the Land of Israel.

SDT - The proper method of prayer of a Jew is to first say words of praise about G-d, and then make requests of Him. This is the structure of the Amida. We learn this from Moshe Rabeinu who first says that G-d has begun to reveal His greatness to Moshe... and then Moshe asked to be allowed to enter the Land.

G-d refused this request and forbade Moshe to ask again. Moshe ascended a mountain from where he saw the Land. G-d then told him to transfer the authority of leadership to Yehoshua. (According to the Vilna Gaon's analysis of the Book of D'varim,) this ends the first section of Moshe's message to the People. He next proceeds to review the laws and statutes (Torah and mitzvot) by which the people are now to live... in Eretz Yisrael. Neither should the Torah be added to nor detracted from [these are counted elsewhere as mitzvot]. Another warning against idolatry follows. Then, "And you who cling to G-d are all alive today". (The Talmud teaches that this is one of the many references to "resurrection of the dead" in the Torah).

Mitzva Watch The twin prohibitions of neither adding nor subtracting from the Torah, are mentioned in Va'Etchanan and again in Re'eh (where they are counted among the 613). The Vilna Gaon points out that the plural form is used one time and the singular form is used in the other case. This, he says alludes to two different aspects of these prohibitions. It is forbidden to add or subtract from a particular mitzva - for example, one may not take 5 species or 3 species on Sukkot for the fulfillment of the mitzva of "Lulav & Etrog". Nor may one add or subtract to the total of the mitzvot. To treat a Rabbinic mitzva as a Torah law, or vice versa, would be the idea of the other aspect of these mitzvot.

The Baal Shem Tov commented that Moshe, who had learned the entire Torah, Written Word and Oral Law, from G-d Himself, used the term "You have begun to show me Your greatness..." The more one learns Torah, the more one learns about G-d, the more one will realize that he has just begun to understand Who G-d is.

LEVI - Second Aliya - 36 p'sukim (4:5-40) Once again, Moshe emphasizes that the mitzvot are meant to be kept in Eretz Yisrael. (This not only apply to Land-related mitzvot, but to the entire range of Torah mitzvot).

Editorial... There is repeated reference in the book of D'varim, and especially in Parshat Va'Etchanan, to Eretz Yisrael being THE reason for our having been taken out of Egypt, formed into a Nation, and given the Torah and mitzvot. Prolonged exile has taught us that the Torah can be kept, must be kept, no matter where a Jew finds himself. This was one of the reasons that the Torah was given at Sinai, prior to entry into the Land of Israel. On the other hand, one should not lose sight of the fact, repeated very often in the book of D'varim, that G-d has always intended us to observe His mitzvot IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL. Are there more mitzvot to keep in Israel than outside? YES. But maybe more significantly, every mitzva - even those that are performed all over the world, can reach its full potential ONLY

in Israel. This is a message that, firstly, each of us has to realize, understand, and internalize. Secondly, we must spread this message to family and friends abroad who feel that they "have everything we need to be fully Jewish" in their respective religious communities around the world. Thirdly, the vital significance of Torah and Israel to our lives as Jews must be taught to those less committed Jews here in Israel. This is part of the comforting message of Shabbat Nachamu and of Parshat Va'Etchanan. Yes, Tish'a b'Av marks our rejection of and our exile from Eretz Yisrael. But the message of NACHAMU is that we will return to our home and our home is and will always be the Land of Israel for the People of Israel, governed by the Torah of Israel. We must not forget that Israel today is not the realization of the Dream, but rather a step on the road to the Complete Redemption, the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, and the coming of Mashiach. This idea helps us refocus after the mourning period that ended with 9 Av, and is an appropriate theme to usher in the period of consolation: We must be careful to preserve and perform the mitzvot because (among other reasons) it is the mitzvot that project Judaism as an intelligent religion to the nations of the world. This in turn, sanctifies G-d's Name. We must be infinitely careful to remember and transmit to our children, the "Sinai Experience".

Moshe describes for the new generation the details of Matan Torah. He includes a specific warning against the potentially idolatrous thoughts caused by the combination of the magnificent, tangible universe in which we live and the Invisible G-d. G-d had taken us out of Egypt in order to make us His Nation. He got angry at me, says Moshe, and forbade me to enter the Land. Again, Moshe warns the People against abandoning the covenant with G-d after his (Moshe's) passing. The next portion was read on Tish'a b'Av morning... In spite of the many warnings against idolatry, Moshe prophesies (predicts) that there will come a time when the People will turn from G-d and be exiled from their Land. It will then come to pass that the People will seek out G-d and return to Him. Moshe emphasizes the uniqueness of the People of Israel and their special relationship with G-d and beseeches the People to remain faithful to Torah and mitzvot. One can hear a pleading in his voice, as if he is begging the people not to go in the direction of his prophecy.

SHLISHI - 3rd Aliya - 9 p'sukim (4:41-49) Although the cities of refuge will not function as such until conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael, Moshe (with enthusiasm to do G-d's bidding) designates the 3 cities on the East Bank - Betzer in the Mishor Wilderness area for Reuven, Ramot in the Gil'ad area for Gad, and Golan in the Bashan area for Menashe. These (the mitzvot about to be presented) were taught by Moshe to the People following the Exodus in the lands on the East Bank of the Jordan.

R'VII - Fourth Aliya - 18 p'sukim (5:1-18) Moshe begins the review of mitzvot with a recounting of the Aseret HaDibrot. He emphasizes that the Covenant at Sinai was not only between G-d and the previous generation, but between G-d and all generations of Jews to come.

SDT - There are interesting differences between this version of the Decalogue and the one contained in Parshat Yitro - most notable being the famous "Shamor v'Zachor" of Shabbat. Generally, "Zachor" is interpreted as referring to the positive mitzvot of Shabbat, whereas "Shamor" is taken as warning against violation of Shabbat's prohibitions. The traditional minimum of two Shabbat candles (although one candle would satisfy the halachic requirement), are said to represent these two aspects of Shabbat. It is the intertwined nature of the positive aspects of Shabbat and its prohibitions that is "responsible" for Kiddush on Friday night being obligatory for women. Rather than treat Kiddush as a "time-related positive mitzva" which means that women would be exempt, we view Kiddush as part of the whole of Shabbat, which of course, means full obligation for men and women. Customs vary as to how to read the Aseret HaDibrot in public. Most shuls use the "upper cantillation", which presents each of the Ten Statements separately, without indicating the breakdown of the p'sukim; Jerusalem minhag (followed by many, but not all shuls in Jerusalem - and elsewhere) is to use the "lower notes" except for Shavuot morning. The first 9 "commandments" contain 13 mitzvot, all of which are counted in Yitro. The 10th is worded differently here and is counted as a separate prohibition (in

addition to "thou shalt not covet") against "lust and unhealthy desire" [416]. The mitzva here deals exclusively with thoughts and feelings; its counterpart in Yitro involves acting on those feelings.

CHAMISHI - Fifth Aliya - 15 p'sukim (5:19-6:3) Moshe next reminds the People that those who were present at Matan Torah were afraid to continue hearing G-d's Voice and agreed to listen to the words of a prophet speaking in G-d's Name in lieu of direct communication. Moshe emphasizes that G-d agreed to the People's request. And yet again, Moshe links observance of mitzvot with the only proper environment for Jewish life - Eretz Yisrael. (This idea is actually expressed in THREE different ways in the final p'sukim of this Aliya.)

SHISHI - Sixth Aliya 22 p'sukim (6:4-25) The first portion of this Aliya is the first passage of the Shma. "...HaShem is One." This statement of Jewish faith is also considered the commandment to believe in the unity and uniqueness of G-d [417]. (Note that G-d's unity is also part of the mitzva to believe in Him, but warrants its own mitzva to emphasize this essential element of belief, in contrast with most religions of the world). "Love" G-d with your entire being [418]. (Many mitzvot and Jewish practices and attitudes are considered manifestations of Love of G-d.) We must study and teach Torah [419] (for practical purposes AND purely for the sake of learning). We are to recite the Shma twice daily [420], wear T'filin on the arm [421] and above the center of the forehead [422], put a mezuzah on our door posts [423]. Moshe next warns the People against arrogantly taking credit for the good fortune that will be theirs upon entry into Eretz Yisrael. We must never forget that it was G-d Who took us out of Egypt. We must revere G-d, serve Him and swear in His Name.

We must not turn to alien gods which will be found around us. [Again, we have several mitzvot that are not "counted" from this sedra, although they definitely appear here.]

Concomitant with our commitment to listen to the Prophets, we must avoid over-testing a prophet [424]. (This would impede proper adherence to G-d's Word.) One must keep the mitzvot and behave in an upright manner in order to truly earn "a good life in the Promised Land". When our children ask us about mitzvot, we should put matters in historical perspective. Don't just instruct them in the "dos & don'ts" of Judaism; teach them who we are and where we come from. (Notice the Wise Child's question from the Haggada. Notice too, the different answers that appear in the Torah and the Haggada. We tell him the story of the Exodus as well as the significance of mitzvot. In the Hagada, the implication is that the Wise Child gets a review of Halacha. Yet it is clear from this passage, as well as the whole book of D'varim, that we need to know our history in order to properly commit ourselves to mitzvot.)

SH'VII - 7th Aliya 11 p'sukim (7:1-11) Finally, Moshe tells the People that the nations in Eretz Yisrael whom we will encounter are mightier than Israel. But G-d will give them over into Israel's hands. We are required to destroy the "7 Nations" [425], not to show mercy to idolaters in the Land [426], and certainly not to intermarry with them [427] or any other non-Jews. Regardless of how secure one is in one's belief, intermarriage and other close contact with alien cultures will have an adverse effect upon the Jewish People. We must destroy the idolatry in the Land. We must always keep in mind the basis upon which G-d has built His relationship with us. It is because of G-d's love for us and His promises to our ancestors that He has taken us out of Egypt. Know that G-d is trustworthy to keep His promises and reward those who properly follow His ways, as well as punish those who do not.

The final 3 p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir. The honor of Maftir is usually accorded the rabbi or a prominent member of the shul.

Haftara - 26 p'sukim Yeshayahu 40:1-26 All seven Haftaras of Consolation come from the book of Yeshayahu, and the first word of the first of the seven, gave the name to this Shabbat, Nachamu. Yeshayahu as a prophet of destruction and Divine punishment for faithlessness, can be seen in chapter 1 which was the haftara last Shabbat and in subsequent chapters through #39. With our haftara this week, ch. 40, we see another side of the prophet. G-d commands the prophets (thru Yesha yahu) to bring the message

of comfort and the end of Babylonian captivity. How appropriate a choice as the haftara for the Shabbat following 9 Av.

A New Beginning In essence, what we have in the book of D'varim is a new beginning for the People of Israel. Moshe Rabeinu (in last week's sedra) summarized the history of the first generation of nationhood. That generation is gone (with notable exceptions) and beginning in this week's sedra, Moshe is almost starting from scratch with the new generation. The early history is a vital component of our Jewish Life throughout the generations, but there is definitely a new starting point. The basics of belief in G-d are set down for the people in the form of the Aseret HaDibrot and the first portion of the Sh'ma. A new set of warnings and cautions are presented. At any significant juncture in history (perhaps in every generation), we must be aware of the past, learn from the past, respect the past. But we must have a clear plan for the future, which often means departing from the way things were done previously.

On another note... ponder this. Moshe conveys to us the stern warning from G-d against looking heavenward and straying from faithfulness to Him. There are things in nature that have the potential to turn us away from proper belief. So maybe it would be best not to look. Not to study nature. The Torah implies that there are serious dangers from the animals, birds, fish, etc. and from the Sun, Moon, and stars. Comes the Haftara and exhorts us to "lift our eyes heavenward and see Who created it all". Between Moshe's warning and Yeshayahu's "suggestion" you will find the challenge of a Torah life. Study nature, be a part of the world, but let that bring you to greater belief and trust in Him...

G'MATRIYA - 3+40+9+200+10+1 = 263 The Torah was the blueprint with which the World was created. In Pirkei Avot we read that the World was created with 10 Divine sayings. The straightforward understanding of that statement is that the sayings are from the opening chapter of B'reishit, "And G-d said..." (actually, there are 9 of those phrases, and "In the beginning..." is considered the first of the 10 sayings). On another level of understanding, the 10 Divine sayings are the Aseret HaDibrot. This idea is beautifully supported by the numbers. There are 620 letters in the first account of the Aseret HaDibrot in Yitro. There are 708 letters in the second account from VaEtchanan. Together, there are 1328 letters of the Aseret HaDibrot. The phrase for the acts of Creation is MAASEH B'REISHIT, which equals 40+70+300+5 (415) + 2+200+1+300+10+400 (913) = 1328. With 10 Divine sayings the world was created...

SDT If one gives a Dvar Torah, he fulfills mitzva 419, to learn/teach Torah. If one really gives a dvar Torah - if there is excitement in the presentation, if his eyes sparkle with the novel interpretation of the verse, with the deeper meaning of the passage, if the listener(s) are infected with his enthusiasm and love of Torah, if they get so excited that they can't wait to share the words of Torah with others - then another mitzva has been performed as well - mitzva 418, to love G-d. Speak to the mind - 1 mitzva. But speak to the heart and soul as well, and there is manifold value for all involved. (Sefer HaChareidim)

SDT V'AHAVTA - and you shall love G-d. How? Like Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Rearrange the letters of the command: VAV ALEF HEI, BET, TAV becomes HA'AVOT, the fathers. Also, the three terms - with all your heart, soul, are associated with the three fathers respectively.

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yated-usa@mailserver.ttec.com Peninim Ahl Hatorah Parshas Vo'eschanan by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

"Let me go over, please, and see the good land the goodly mountain and the Levanon." (3:25) Rashi cites the Sifri who interprets the "mountain" as a reference to the Har Ha'Bayis, the mountain on which the Bais Ha'Mikdash stood. The Sifri also views Levanon as an analogy for the Bais Ha'Mikdash. The word Levanon is a derivative of lavan, which means white. The Bais Ha'Mikdash is that place which "whitens" or provides atonement for our sins. The Yalkut Shimoni differentiates among the words with which

our ancestors referred to the Bais Ha'Mikdash. Avraham Avinu referred to it as "har," mountain; Yitzchak called it a "sadeh," field, while Yaakov viewed it as a "bayis," house. What is the meaning of these three names, and what message can be derived from each one?

Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl, offers an explanation of this Midrash which is relevant to us today. The har is the symbol of spiritual ascendancy. It is the place to which only the daring may strive to go. In spiritual matters, the mountain remains a metaphor for those unique individuals who are prepared to elevate themselves to great spiritual heights. "Sadeh," a field, signifies that which everyone needs. The field sustains; it gives nourishment to all. If we were not to have access to the grains and crops that are the products of the field, we would perish from hunger. The "bayis," house, is yet a greater necessity. While the field reaches out to everyone, only some people are actually involved in the process of planting and harvesting the crops. A house, however, is something that everyone requires. Each and every person must have a roof over his head, a place to call home. The house is truly a metaphor for that which we cannot be denied.

During Avraham Avinu's time, Har Ha'Moriah served as the pre-eminent place from which Torah emanated throughout the world. It served as the source of kedushah, holiness, for those unique individuals who had the capability to receive its inspiration. The common person was able to receive his inspiration even from the streets and market places which Jews frequented. The kedushah was so sublime, the spiritual influence so intense, that they were able to absorb the necessary influence everywhere. The "har," mountain, was set aside for the unique Jew, who totally devoted himself to spirituality.

As times changed, people became more "progressive." No longer were the streets and public places centers of Torah influence. No longer could the people suffice by hearing a shiur, Torah lecture, once in awhile from a great tzaddik who occupied himself with pure Torah study. The Har Ha'Bayis, the spiritual center of Klal Yisrael, became a place to which a greater number of Jews gravitated. It was now necessary for the average Jew to spend more time in the halls of the Bais Ha'Mikdash. To a greater extent, people realized their personal need to come closer to Hashem.

Yaakov's times represented the era in our history in which everyone acknowledged the importance of personally studying in the Bais Ha'Mikdash. The streets had become completely decadent. The lifestyle of those who remained outside of the Torah camp had digressed so much that it had become difficult to distinguish between Jew and non-Jew. Those who were "unaffiliated" were completely out of it! It had become evident that the makom Torah was a necessity for all Jews. We remained unprotected outside of the parameters of Torah. Har Ha'Bayis was finally viewed as a "house," a place where all must go to live.

Years ago, the Torah centers, the yeshivos of Europe, were designated for the unique bachur, the student who was prepared to devote himself to the pure study of Torah. The Jewish community of that day and age reflected a standard of dedication to Torah and mitzvos that had been unprecedented. This determination was manifest during the Holocaust when the "pashute yid," the common simple Jew, maintained his emunah and bitachon, faith and trust in the Almighty, despite undergoing cruel suffering and death, unparalleled in Jewish history. Indeed, in those days the Jewish ghetto with its sheltered environment provided a healthy Torah-oriented environment for the Jew. The spirit of Torah and yiraas Shomayim reigned and permeated the atmosphere. Regrettably, in contemporary times the Torah institutions, regardless of their "name" and venue, have become like a field and a house that are an essential pre-requisite for every Jew. We, therefore, must remember that the type of Jewish education our children receive will determine their "Jewish" future.

"And you shall not covet your fellow's wife, you shall not desire your friend's house or anything that belongs to your fellow." (5:18) In the beginning of Parashas Kedoshim, the Ramban demonstrates how the Aseres Ha'dibros are parallel to the mitzvos presented at the beginning of Parashas Kedoshim. He cites the Midrash that equates the prohibition, "Do not covet," with the positive command, "You shall love your fellow man as yourself." This is a remarkable chiddush, novel idea. How is not coveting correlated to caring for one's fellow man? One would think that coveting is a consequence of envy and insecurity. How is it analogous to lack of friendship? Horav

Simcha Zissel Broide, Shlita, infers from here that the root of desiring that which does not belong to us is not envy. It does not result from an insatiable greed for more and more. No, Chazal teach us a compelling lesson. True, lust and greed are the reasons we desire to gratify ourselves with more material satisfaction. The fact that we desire that which belongs to our friend is the result of a lack of respect and love for our friend. One who truly cares for and loves his friend does not covet his possessions. Perhaps the greatest proof is derived from a parent's relationship to his child. Is a parent envious of his child's success? Does a parent covet his child's home, or car, or whatever material success he has achieved? Obviously, a caring parent is overjoyed with his child's success. Thus, if the Torah equates "Lo sachmod" with "V'ohavta L'raicha" it is because it goes against the nature of a real friend to covet. The love one feels for his friend supersedes all envy and desire.

"You shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your resources." (6:5) Chazal teach us that regarding he who places greater significance upon his material abundance than on his own body, the Torah says, "With all your resources." For he whose body has greater importance than his money, the Torah says, "With all your soul." Regardless of what is important to us, we must be willing to sacrifice it in the service of Hashem. The Chofetz Chaim examines this statement. What is the most important possession of a Jew? What takes precedence over everything? The Torah! It is our life. Without it, we simply cannot exist. Yet, declares the Chofetz Chaim, the Torah demands that we be ready to give up our most important possession in order to serve Hashem. Even if it means giving up our portion of Torah, we must be willing to be moser nefesh, to sacrifice our Torah learning, in order to serve Hashem. This is remarkable!

The Ponevezer Rav, zl, infers from the words of his rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim, that he who holds the scepter of education, who distinguishes himself as a posek, halachic authority, as a rosh yeshivah, or a magid shiur, must devote himself totally to his students. He must do so even at the expense of his own educational development and spiritual ascendancy. It is the holy obligation and mandate of every mechanech, Torah educator, to give all of himself to his students. He is to devote part of his valuable time which is normally set aside for his own study so that his talmidim will better understand the shiur and grow to greater spiritual heights. This is the true essence of mesiras nefesh, to stand ready to sacrifice one's own ruchnios, to enable others to study Torah. Those who heard this statement made by the Ponevezer Rav noted the intensity of emotion with which he made this statement. This is essentially what the Rav did. After the European Holocaust, he sacrificed his own erudition in order to devote his whole life to rebuilding Torah. This ultimate form of mesiras nefesh ensured the success of his endeavor.

"You shall teach them thoroughly to your children." (6:7) Rashi cites the Sifri that interprets "your children" as referring even to one's students, since the Torah views one's students to be like his children. We may wonder why the Torah did not simply say, "You shall teach your students." Why should this idea emerge only by inference? Horav Yechezkel Sarne, zl, responded with a profound insight. If one does not view his students as his children then not only are they not his children they are not even his students! The definition of a student is simple a spiritual child related through the medium of Torah. By teaching Torah to this child, the rebbe has the capacity for creating and shaping a new being. Does that not define a parent-child relationship?

Horav Sarne extended this idea. Since the Torah uses the word "children" not "students" it indicates that the beginning of a rebbe's relationship with his student should be as a father to a child. As the father is compassionate, caring for every little need of his child, regardless of its triviality, so, too, should the rebbe concern himself with his students' necessities. The rebbe is first a father who must minister to his student/child's physical and material needs. After he has exhibited the love and care that a father has for his child, only then can he imbue the student with Torah.

Horav Yaakov Ruderman, zl, applies this idea to the long-term relationship between a rebbe and his talmid. A son is a son forever. There is no time limit concerning this relationship. Likewise, the

student maintains his keshet, relationship, with his rebbe forever even after he has left the Bais Ha'Midrash. After all, he is his child. There is no doubt that this relationship should be reciprocal. As the rebbe views the student as his child, the student should regard the rebbe like a father. It is interesting that we often find that a rebbe loves his students as a father loves a child, but this feeling is not always reciprocated. Children do not always demonstrate the same affection for parents as they themselves receive. Sometimes it takes years for a student, like a child, to fully appreciate all that his rebbe/parent has done for him.

<http://www.jpost.com/Columns/Article-1.html> The Jerusalem Post
15 Av 5758 SHABBAT SHALOM: Messages in the stars
By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(August 6) "And lest you raise your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, and other heavenly bodies, you should not be misled to worship them and serve that which the Lord God had apportioned unto all the nations under the whole heaven." (Deut. 4:19-20)
Is it conceivable that Jerusalem can serve as host to Moslem mosques, Christian shrines and the Jewish Holy Temple, all at the same time?

The beginning of the answer may be found by studying the quotation from the prophet Isaiah which stands at the entrance to the United Nations: "And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah is not the only prophet who speaks these words. The designers of the UN plaza could just as easily have chosen another prophet, Micah, who uses almost the same words for his description of world peace at the end of days. Almost the same words - but not quite. And the differences in Micah would make him - rather than Isaiah - more appropriate for the United Nations' vision. Micah begins his prophecy just as does Isaiah: "Many nations shall come and say: 'Let us go to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths.' For Torah shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem... (Micah 4:2) ...And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares... nor will they learn war anymore." But Micah then broadens the picture of peace: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree... For let all people walk, everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." (Micah 4:4) Isaiah seems to insist that during the long-awaited millennium the nations of the world will abandon their religions and beliefs to seek truth exclusively on the mountain of Zion from where the Torah will flow. Micah, on the other hand, accepts the possibility that even in the Messianic Age, the other nations will have their own paths to God; undoubtedly they will all accept the seven Noahide laws of morality - which is after all the universal covenant which God made with Noah and is therefore the word of God which will come forth from Zion - but they will maintain separate ways of worshipping the one God. In a word, Micah accepts pluralistic paths to Divine service!

One source for this difference of opinion among the prophets may well be a verse in this week's portion of Va'Ethanah, quoted above, a verse addressing the errors of misguided worship. We don't have to search very far to see that many people - even as we approach the 21st century - spend a considerable amount of time reading their horoscopes, and living in accordance with astrological predictions. In the verse we've quoted, it's clear that Israelites are prohibited from engaging in such pursuits. However, the words: "...which the Lord God had apportioned unto all the nations under the whole heaven" might be taken to give legitimacy to such star gazing for the other nations. Is the Torah indeed telling us that for the other nations "looking to the stars" is theologically sound?

Rashi initially understands the words "which the Lord God had apportioned unto all the nations" to mean "to give them light" - thus removing the verse from the issue of either granting or denying theological legitimacy to astrology. However, the Ibn Ezra maintains that "it is a proven fact that each nation has its own specific star and sign of the zodiac (mazal),"

and Nahmanides concurs: "For every nation has a star and a constellation, and above them, the angels of the Supreme One... this being the reason why they make of them gods for themselves and worship them... [However] you are not to appoint a prince or helper over yourselves except for Him..." (Nahmanides, Deut. 4:15) According to these latter two opinions, it certainly seems that there may be an efficacy to astrology - at least for the gentile nations. However, the gentiles of the world must understand that behind these systems there is a Supreme Being, who directs the entire universe, including the stars. Maimonides differs sharply with Nahmanides and the Ibn Ezra in this regard, declaring in his Laws of Idolatry (Ch. 11) that there is absolutely no efficacy in any system of stargazing, omens, charms, etc. It's all nonsense, thunders the great legalistic philosopher. Those who choose such systems of worship live in darkness, subject to superstition, ruled by fear. Such misguided illusions are idolatry, and must be denied by every God-believing individual, Jew or gentile.

Perhaps herein lies the difference between Isaiah and Micah. Both agree that, at the end of days, all peoples must come to Jerusalem, to Zion, to learn about Torah and the word of God as it was given to the Israelites. But it may well be that Isaiah believes that the true end of days won't take place until the entire world sees the light according to the vision of Zion, everyone accepting pure monotheism and all 613 commandments.

Micah, on the other hand, can consider an "end of days" with the nations of the world still practicing their individual religions, but accepting the seven Noahide laws of morality as their basic axioms. Ironically, it is probably the more pluralistic Micah who should have been cited at the entrance to the United Nations. Shabbat Shalom

shabbat-zomet@virtual.co.il Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Vaetchanan (Nachamu) "TAKE CARE ... DO NOT FORGET"
by Rabbi Ariel Pikar, Rabbi of Kibbutz Lavie

In his lectures to the nation in Devarim, Moshe is very much occupied with the fear that the past might be forgotten. He reminds the nation of its history, and commands them to continue to pass the heritage on to their descendants: "Beware, and take extra care, lest you forget the things which you saw with your own eyes, lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life; tell your children and their children ..." [Devarim 4:9]. Remembering the past gives significance to the present and provides hope for the future. One who forgets his past and his heritage loses his identity and his inner strength. On the other hand, one who maintains a historic perspective does not lose sight of the hand of G-d, which forever guides world events. As a nation, we left a house of slavery, and we are therefore especially careful in our relationships with strangers or slaves. As a nation, we were redeemed from bondage and received the Torah at Sinai, and we are therefore duty-bound by the word of G-d and his mitzvot. As a nation, we have endured harsh destruction, and we therefore have learned to appreciate salvation and redemption.

The well known story is told of how the sages, with Rabbi Akiva among them, met the challenge of the terrible events of the destruction:

"One time, they were climbing to Jerusalem. When they reached Har Hatzofim, they tore their clothing. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox leaving the site of the Holy of Holies. The others started to weep, but Rabbi Akiva started to laugh. They asked him, why are you laughing? And he replied, it is written, 'Because of you Zion will be plowed into a field' [Micha 3:12], but it is also written, 'This is what the G-d of Hosts says: Old men and women will yet fill the streets of Jerusalem, each one leaning on his cane because of old age. And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing.' [Zecharia 8:4-5]. Until the first prophecy was fulfilled, I was afraid that the second one would not come true. But now that the first has occurred, there is no doubt that the second one will also take place ... They said to him: Akiva, you have consoled us, Akiva, you have consoled us." [Makot 24b]. What was the source of Rabbi Akiva's strength? It was based on a deep conviction that it is the hand of G-d which guides history. If the sages were able to be consoled by the

words of Rabbi Akiva, who in the midst of such harsh tragedies could see the events as part of the history of the nation of G-d, so much more so must we be consoled. For we really do see boys and girls playing in the streets of Jerusalem. Let us feel joy in the consolation of G-d, as described in the words of the Midrash: "G-d immediately said: I must console Jerusalem, as I have written, 'Let the one who lit the flame pay damages' [Shemot 22:5]. I ignited the flame, as is written, 'He sent a flame from on high' [Eicha 1:13], and I will provide consolation, as is written, 'And I will be for them - thus says G-d - a wall of fire around, and I will give honor within it' [Zecharia 2:9]."

yhe-parsha@virtual.co.il Parsha 41: Vaetchanan The VBM and the entire Yeshiva wish a very warm mazal tov to Rav Nathaniel Helfgot (author of a series of VBM-Parasha shiurim on Bamidbar) and Rachel Brenner on their engagement. Tizku livnot bayit ne'eman be-yisrael!

Parashat Vaetchanan The Ten "Dibrot" by Rav Yonatan Grossman

I would like this week to continue in the footsteps of our shiur last week, where we compared Moshe's retelling in Sefer Devarim of an incident from a previous sefer with the original narrative in the Torah. Last week, I advanced two principles to explain the differences: a. In the story of the appointment of the judges, I suggested that certain facts had changed in the intervening years, which Moshe takes into account when retelling the same story; b. In the story of the spies, I suggested that Moshe has a particular objective in his speech, which he emphasizes by stressing certain facts while ignoring others.

This week, I wish to analyze one of the most famous and widely-discussed repetitions of Sefer Devarim, the "aseret ha-dibrot" (the ten commandments). We will, I think, have to formulate a different principle to explain why certain aspects of the dibrot are emphasized differently by Moshe.

The first three dibrot show no differences between the version in Devarim and that in Shemot. Here, Moshe cites the original words of God exactly.

The fifth dibra has two minor differences which do not present a problem for the "pshat." To the command, "Honor your father and mother," Moshe adds "as you were commanded by HaShem your God;" and, to the promise of Shemot, "in order that your days be long," he adds, "and in order that it be well for you." The first addition is meant to stress that Moshe is only quoting mitzvot previously given and not new ones. The second is also not particularly significant for pshat. It is an example of a common parallelism used in Tanakh, whereby Moshe wishes to stress the reward due to one who honors his parents. This does not change the import of the original verse, but continues and strengthens it - not only will one's life be long, but it will be good as well. (Of course, from the point of view of "drash," every variation is significant. We are discussing only those differences which, like the examples of last week, constitute a significant difference in content between the versions.)

Similarly, we need not be concerned by the addition of the "vav ha-chibur" (the introduction of each dibra with the preposition "and") to the seventh and eighth dibrot ("And do not commit adultery and do not steal"). Moshe is summarizing the history of the desert, including the ten commandments. He is not required to exactly cite every word. Use of a preposition to introduce a new verse is an appropriate convention of speech, even if God did not use it in the original. (Again, drash operates on a different level. R. Akiva, as quoted in the midrash, maintains that the addition of a "vav" is sufficient to deduce a halakha).

The difference in the ninth dibra can be interpreted in several ways. In place of the version in Shemot - "You shall not bear FALSE witness (eid sheker) against your fellow" - Moshe says in Devarim, "You shall not bear VAIN witness (eid shav) against your fellow." What is the difference between "sheker" and "shav?" Do both terms refer to the same crime - perjury - or perhaps to two different transgressions?

The Ramban (Devarim 5:16) claims that the version of Sefer Devarim includes a specific addition: "You shall not bear vain witness"

prohibits testifying against his friend even if the content of the testimony is nothing and causes no obligation in court; e.g., if he testifies that someone promised to give money to someone else but did not execute a binding act of obligation (kinyan), for "shav" means something without significance.

According to the Ramban, "false witness" is incorrect testimony which damages someone, whereas "vain testimony" is incorrect testimony of any sort, even innocuous. One could, of course, argue that "vain" and "false" are synonyms, and Moshe is merely introducing a stylistic change.

This is supported by other places where "shav" appears as a synonym for "shaker;" for instance, "They beheld vanity (shav) and false divination" (Yechezkel 13,6), or "you have spoken vanities and beheld lies" (ibid. 8).

Many verses in Tehillim also exhibit a parallelism between "shav" and "sheker" - "Whose mouths speak 'shav' and their right hand is the right hand of 'shaker'" (144:8).

In any event, we are not dealing with a significant change in meaning which would indicate a different context or approach of Moshe in comparison to the original revelation of God on Sinai.

In contrast to all of these examples, the mitzva of Shabbat is expressed in two totally different ways, or rather, is accompanied by two different explanations, which thereby result in two different understandings of Shabbat. Parshat Yitro: Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it; Six days shall you labor and do all your work, But the seventh day is Shabbat to HaShem your God - You shall not do any work, you, your son and your daughter, your slave and maid-servant and animal, and the stranger in your gates. For six days did God make the heavens and the earth, the sea and all in it, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, God blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it. The reason for the existence of Shabbat and its sanctity, as explained in Shemot, is the creation of the world in six days. Since God rested on the seventh day, thereby sanctifying it, man is commanded to refrain from working on this holy and blessed day.

In contradistinction, in our parsha we read: Keep the Shabbat day to sanctify it; Six days shall you labor and do all your work, But the seventh day is Shabbat to HaShem your God - You shall not do any work, you, your son and your daughter, and your slave and maid-servant, and your ox and your mule and all your animals, and the stranger in your gates. In order that your slave and maid-servant rest like you. And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt And HaShem your God took you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; Therefore HaShem your God has commanded you to make the Shabbat day.

According to Moshe's speech in Devarim, the purpose of Shabbat is one of social welfare. Once a week, it is important to allow the workers to rest after they have labored all week - and not merely humans, but even animals are included (and therefore the simple "your animal" of Yitro is expanded in Devarim to "your ox and your mule and all your animals"). The creation of the world is not the background for Shabbat, but rather the exodus from Egypt - the contrast of freedom and slavery.

Two different reasons for the mitzva of Shabbat are also two different claims as to the nature of Shabbat. In Yitro, God is active, He sanctifies Shabbat - in fact, He has done so since creation. Man is reacting to this primordial sanctity and refraining from work. In our parsha, on the other hand, the responsibility for the sanctity of Shabbat is placed on Man - "therefore HaShem your God has commanded you to make the Shabbat day." Man is commanded to allow his workers to rest. Moreover, the parsha emphasizes not the sanctity of Shabbat, but its social benefits.

How are we to understand this crucial shift in meaning? If Moshe changes the meaning of Shabbat, he seems to be inventing a new concept of Shabbat, rooted in the moral world and divorced from the world of religious meaning expressed by God in Yitro.

Before we begin to try and understand this problem, it is worth noting that of course we are not assuming that Moshe has invented this new conception on his own. In fact, the social component of Shabbat is already mentioned in parshat Mishpatim: "Six days shall you do work, and on the seventh day you shall cease, in order that you ox and mule rest, and the son of your maid and the stranger be refreshed" (Shemot 23,12). Not

only the themes are similar, the very wording is highly reminiscent of our parsha ("in order that ... rest"), to the extent that it appears that Moshe is quoting that section from Mishpatim. Chazal refer to this duality in the famous phrase, "zakhor and shamor were said simultaneously." Both versions of Shabbat, zakhor (parshat Yitro) and shamor (Vaetchanan), the religious aspect of Shabbat and the social aspect, were said by God.

The Ibn Ezra (Yitro) notices these differences and claims that Moshe in Devarim wishes to emphasize that aspect of Shabbat which the Jews did not hear directly at Mt. Sinai. The main thrust of the question, however, remains. Even if both aspects of Shabbat derive from the word of God, we still have to understand why one aspect was emphasized on Mt. Sinai, while the other was chosen by Moshe to form the central point of his exposition on the plains of Moav.

I believe that the answer is found in the historical situation of the Jews, first at the foot of Mt. Sinai and secondly, at the edge of the Land of Israel. The people who received the revelation of Sinai would have had great difficulty in understanding and identifying with the conceptual world of a farmer who works his land. They were wandering nomads in the arid desert, whose only object is finding water and some food. None of them owned land or employed workers, none of them harnessed an ox or mule to a plow. Under these circumstances, it is very difficult to truly understand the exalted significance of social rest, or, conversely, of the temptation facing the farmer when confronted with the mandated leisure of his workers one day a week. In these circumstances, it is appropriate to stress the religious nature of Shabbat, to understand the religious holiness inherent in the cessation of work on this day. Now, however, on the edge of the promised land, when they are looking forward to the settlement of their portions, now is the time to stress the social responsibility of the landowner in relation to his workers. Following the ten commandments in Vaetchanan, Moshe delivers the main message he has been leading up to in his long speech:

In all of the path that HaShem your God has commanded you shall you go, in order that you shall live, and it be well with you, and you shall live long on the land that you shall inherit. And this is the commandment to do in the land to which you are coming to inherit it" (5,30-6,1). Throughout the speech of Sefer Devarim, Moshe emphasizes repeatedly that he is speaking to them before they enter the land, for the sake of the period which is about to commence. Therefore, Moshe now saw fit to emphasize the social aspect of Shabbat, which was becoming more and more relevant.

This same point explains another small difference in the versions of the dibrot, in the tenth dibra. In Yitro, there are seven examples given in the list of what one should not covet (lo tachmod) - house, wife, slave, maid-servant, ox, mule, everything. In our parsha (aside from placing "wife" before "house"), Moshe adds "field" to the list. In Yitro, fields were not mentioned as an object of desire.

I think that the explanation is identical to the previous point. Moshe sees before him now a people who are about to inherit fields, on which their livelihood will depend. It is therefore appropriate to emphasize that one should not covet the field of one's neighbor. Even if at Mt. Sinai this situation was beyond the conceptual horizon, it is now an immediate reality, and hence, Moshe adds it to the list.

Last week, we spoke of changes in the status of the people and of education considerations in order to explain the differences in Moshe's speech. Today, we have added a third consideration - the historical situation of the people who are about to be transformed from wandering nomads to settled farmers, who will establish a nation on the land promised to their forefathers.

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Dafyomi@virtual.co.il The Weekly Daf #234 Erubin 91 - 97
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A Blessing for the Exempt A woman is not obligated to perform mitzvos which are time-oriented, such as the mitzvah of tefillin which cannot be performed at night or on Shabbos or

Holidays. There is no ban, however, on their doing so. It is common practice for women to come to the synagogue to hear the shofar on Rosh Hashana and to shake the four species on Succos, even though women are exempt from these time-oriented mitzvos. As proof that there is nothing improper in a woman performing a mitzvah from which she is exempt, the gemara cites the example of King Saul's daughter Michal who used to put on tefillin, and the wife of the Prophet Yonah who was accustomed to making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the three Festivals. In neither case was any objection raised by the Sages. But can a woman who performs such a mitzvah say the blessing which a man says before performing it -- "Blessed are You ... who commanded us concerning the mitzvah of ..." -- even though she was not actually commanded to do so? Tosefos cites the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam that she may say this blessing. One proof is that Michal probably did so, and if no objection was raised we may conclude that there is no problem in a woman praising Hashem for commanding Israel as a nation to perform the mitzvah. Another proof cited by Rabbeinu Tam raises an interesting problem: According to the Sage Rabbi Yehuda, a blind man is not obligated in mitzvos by the Torah. There is evidence from another source (Kiddushin 31a) that although he is exempt, he can say a blessing on any mitzvah that he performs. This invites a comparison to a woman, and serves as additional support for the position that a woman can also say a blessing on mitzvos from which she is exempt. Tosefos, however, challenges this proof by suggesting that a blind man is obligated in mitzvos by Rabbinic Law, and can therefore say a blessing praising Hashem for commanding us to obey the laws which the Sages decreed, while women are not obligated in time-oriented mitzvos even by Rabbinic Law. Why did the Sages not obligate women in mitzvos, as they did the blind? Tosefos offers two explanations, one of which is as follows: Women have mitzvos which are not bound by time to distinguish them as Jews, while the blind, if not for the Sages obligating them, would be virtually indistinguishable from non-Jews because of their total exemption. The halacha, however, is that the blind are obligated in all mitzvos by Torah Law, as is the position of the Sages who dispute Rabbi Yehuda's view. Regarding women saying a blessing on mitzvos from which they are exempt, the Beis Yosef rules like the opinion of Rambam that they should not do so. Rema, on the other hand, rules like Rabbeinu Tam that women should say a blessing (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 589:6). This accounts for the varying customs of different communities. It is the universal custom, however, to discourage women from performing the mitzvah of tefillin altogether (ibid. 38:3). * Erubin 96a

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Daf-insights@shemayisrael.com INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld daf@shemayisrael.co.il

Erubin 86 1) HONORING WEALTHY PEOPLE QUESTION: The Gemara says that Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva gave honor to wealthy people. Why did they conduct themselves this way? And why does the Gemara single out Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva? ANSWERS: (a) The GILYON HA'SHAS cites the MAHARIL who writes that Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva were wealthy themselves (see Berachos 57b, Gitin 59a, Sanhedrin 36a, and Nedarim 50a) and they did not want people to respect them because of their Torah wisdom, since one should not take advantage of the Torah and use it for one's personal benefit (Avos 4:5). They therefore taught that being wealthy was a positive attribute for which one should be honored, so that people would honor them for their wealth and not for their Torah wisdom. (b) Since Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva were wealthy, they obviously used their money for Tzedakah and Chesed. Through this, they came to realize the great value of money, when it is used for doing Mitzvos. They assumed, in their modesty, that other wealthy people also used their money for the proper purposes, and therefore they honored them for their Tzedakah and Chesed. (MEIRI, second explanation) (c) A wealthy person is not accustomed to giving honor to other people. Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva honored wealthy people so that they would get a feel for what it is like to be honored. This would lead them to honor others in order to earn their honor, as the Mishnah in Avos (4:1) says, "Who is the honored one? He who honors others." In this manner the wealthy person will learn to honor even poor people. (SIDUR HA'YA'AVETZ, end of Hilchos Derech Eretz; Hagahos ha'Ya'avetz to the Gemara here) (The people Rebbi and Rebbi Akiva honored were affluent but righteous. With regard to giving honor to wealthy people who are Resha'im, see Rabeinu Yonah, Sha'arei Teshuvah 3:9 (#199), and Orchos Tzadikim 24:9 (Sha'ar ha'Chanifus).)

Erubin 88b 1) HALACHAH: POURING WASTE WATER INTO A PIT OR PIPE The Mishnah and Gemara discuss the laws of an Ukah (pit) and a Biv (pipe) with regard to water disposal and describe how one may pour waste water into his Chatzer on Shabbos. How do these laws apply today with regard to pouring water on Shabbos into the drain of a sink, or using any other modern means of waste water disposal on Shabbos (such as flushing a toilet)? The Mishnah differentiates between two different means of water disposal: (1) pouring water into one's Chatzer and letting it overflow into Reshus ha'Rabim (the Ukah), and (2) pouring it into a pipe (Biv) which brings the water directly to Reshus ha'Rabim..... HALACHAH: The RAMBAM rules stringently, in accordance with the Chachamim, that one may pour water near the Biv but not into it. Others, though, rule leniently, and the MISHNAH BERURAH (OC 357:21) is lenient as well and permits pouring water directly into the Biv. However, the SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 357:2) rules, based on Rashi, that one may only pour water into a pipe that goes into Reshus ha'Rabim only if the pipe is made of an absorbent material. If so, one should not pour water into metal or plastic pipes (such as the ones used in modern residential drainage systems), whether one pours it directly into the pipe or only near the pipe, if the pipe leads out into Reshus ha'Rabim. However, in OC 357:3, the Shulchan Aruch writes that it is only forbidden if the outlet of the water opens to an actual Reshus ha'Rabim or a large public street (Karmelis) in the city. If it opens into a valley, sea, or any other Karmelis *outside* the city, it is permitted to pour water into that pipe. Since modern sewage systems lead to a Karmelis outside of the city, it is permitted to pour water down the drain, even directly, on Shabbos.

90b 2) WHAT DOES AN ERUV ACCOMPLISH? QUESTION: Rav Yehudah says that according to Rebbi Meir, all roofs are considered to be one Reshus (and one may carry from one roof to another), all Chatzeros are considered one Reshus, and all Karpifos are considered one

Reshus. According to the Chachamim, roofs and Chatzeros together are considered one Reshus (and one may carry from a roof to a Chatzer), and all Karpifos are considered one Reshus. According to Rabbi Shimon, all three are considered one Reshus. Rashi on the Mishnah (89a, DH Rabbi Shimon) says that according to Rabbi Shimon, an Eruv Chatzeros is needed only to permit carrying utensils from the *house* into the Chatzer, since it is permitted to move items between two Chatzeros (and roofs and Karpifos) even without an Eruv. It seems from Rashi's words that according to Rabbi Meir and the Chachamim, it is obvious that an Eruv Chatzeros is necessary (and that is why Rashi emphasized why an Eruv is needed only according to Rabbi Shimon). Why? Since they hold that all Chatzeros are considered one Reshus, why do they require an Eruv between two Chatzeros? It must be that they require an Eruv for the same reason that Rabbi Shimon does -- to permit carrying utensils from the house into the Chatzer. If so, why does Rashi say this only according to Rabbi Shimon? ANSWER: RASHI (end of 90b, DH v'Chatzeros) says that when we say that Rabbi Meir holds that Chatzeros are one Reshus, that is only with regard to carrying from a Chatzer Shel Rabim (a public Chatzer, into which a number of private homes open) to another Chatzer Shel Rabim. It seems clear from Rashi that Rabbi Meir prohibits carrying from a Chatzer Shel Yachid (a privately-owned Chatzer) to a Chatzer Shel Rabim. The same applies to the opinion of the Chachamim. In order to permit carrying from a private Chatzer to a public Chatzer, Rabbi Meir and the Chachamim maintain that an Eruv Chatzeros between the two Chatzeros is necessary. Rabbi Shimon, though, maintains that it is permitted to carry from any type of Chatzer to any other type of Chatzer, and an Eruv is never necessary to permit carrying from one Chatzer to another. This is evident on 91a, where the Gemara says that according to the Chachamim, it is prohibited to carry from a Chatzer to a Mavoy. The reason is because a Chatzer compared to a Mavoy is like a private Chatzer compared to a public one (since the Mavoy is owned by many Chatzeros). (M. Kornfeld)

Eruvin 92 HALACHAH: BRIDGES OVER "MECHITZOS" The Gemara says that a Mechitzah which people walk over ("Darsi Lah Rabim," or a Mechitzah Nidreses) is not considered a Mechitzah. In many modern metropolitan Eruvin, the wall, or Mechitzah, around the city sometimes passes underneath a bridge over which people travel. What are the laws of a bridge that go over a Mechitzah? May that Mechitzah be used as part of the wall around a city in a modern metropolitan Eruv? The NODA BI'YEHUDAH (OC 2:42) writes a responsa to someone who asked him about bridges over Mechitzos. The inquirer suggested that the only potential problem is that people walk "through" the Mechitzah by way of the bridge above it and that should be Mevatel the Mechitzah because of the rule of "Asu Rabim u'Mevatli Mechitzasa" (Eruvin 22b). We rule (like Tosfos 22b, see Insights to Eruvin 22) that the presence of people walking through a Mechitzah only invalidates the Mechitzah if it is a natural, and not a manmade wall. Therefore, if the bridge goes over a *man-made* Mechitzah, then the Mechitzah should still be valid. The Noda bi'Yehudah argues and says that when a bridge goes over a Mechitzah, the Mechitzah is a Mechitzah ha'Nidreses, a trampled Mechitzah, as mentioned in our Sugya. A trampled Mechitzah is different than one through which people walk, and the presence of people trampling over the Mechitzah will invalidate even man-made Mechitzos.

The MISHNAH BERURAH (OC 373:118) rules that if the bridge is more than ten Amos wide, it will effectively make a ten-Amah breach in the Mechitzah below, invalidating the Mechitzah, and a Tzurah ha'Pesach must be built over the bridge to close the breach in the Mechitzah. If the bridge or the road that leads to the bridge crosses straight through from one side of the Reshus ha'Yachid (that is, the enclosed city) to the other side of the Reshus ha'Yachid, i.e. it is "Mefulash," it will not suffice to erect a Tzurah ha'Pesach to close the breach. In such a case the road (or bridge) coming into the city will require doors. (This applies, in fact, to any Reshus ha'Rabim that is Mefulash to -- i.e. pierces through -- a Reshus ha'Yachid, Eruvin 6b). Therefore, a city that has bridges or roads going straight through it will need doors at the points where the roads enter the city to permit carrying in the city (which is practically impossible to accomplish in today's modern cities).

It is not at all clear, though, what is considered Mefulash (a) RAV MENACHEM KASHER (Torah Sheleimah 15:172) says that any road that starts at one side of Reshus ha'Yachid and exits at the opposite side, no matter how much it turns and bends in between, is considered Mefulash. (b) RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN (Igros Moshe OC 1:140) writes that a street is only considered Mefulash if the road goes straight through the city, without bending at all. (This is obviously a much more lenient ruling, since it is very uncommon to have streets that "pierce" through cities.)

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Weekly-halacha@torah.org [Didn't make it into Friday AM distribution]
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5758 SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING
TO PARSHAS V'AESCHANAN By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Parashas V'aeschanan Houses filled with every good thing... orchards and olive trees...and you shall eat and be satisfied (6:11)

BERACHAH RISHONAH: PROBLEMATIC FOODS

The berachah rishonah for many of the foods listed below is problematic, so we have attempted to present a clear decision for each one based on the views of the majority of the contemporary poskim. Most of the decisions follow the rulings of the venerable halachic authority, Harav S.Z. Auerbach Z"l. Many facts must be ascertained before determining the correct berachah rishonah for a given food: What is the nature of the plant or tree from which it is derived? What is the exact make-up of each of its components? What manufacturing processes were used? etc. etc. Based on

all of the data available, the poskim have rendered the following decisions(1): Apple kugel: mezonos. [If the flour is added just to "bind" the apple mixture but not to enhance its taste, ha-eitz is recited.] Apple sauce: Commercially produced apple sauce in which the apples are reduced to a nearly liquid state - shehakol. Home made applesauce which is usually lumpy and contains small pieces of the apple - ha-eitz(2). Barley soup: mezonos(3). Blackberry: ha-eitz It grows on a tree which stays alive throughout the winter months and reaches a height of over 10 inches(4). Blueberry: ha-eitz. See Blackberry. Bread sticks: mezonos - when eaten as a snack(5). When many breadsticks are eaten at one sitting, or when eaten as part of a meal, netilas yadayim and ha-motzi may be required(6). Chalah kugel: mezonos(7). If the individual pieces of challah are bigger than a k'zayis (approx. 1 ounce), netilas yadayim and ha-motzi are required. Cheese cake: Mezonos. If the dough is meant to merely hold the cheese filling together, only a shehakol is recited. Chocolate covered nut or raisin: This is a "combination food," generally eaten because the two items complement each other's taste. According to some poskim, both a shehakol and ha-eitz(8) are recited(9). [Individuals who regard either the chocolate or the raisin as merely an "enhancer" to the "main" food, should recite the blessing on the main food.] Other poskim maintain that only a shehakol is recited(10). Chocolate covered orange peels: shehakol(11). Chicken soup with noodles or croutons: A shehakol is recited over the soup(12) and a mezonos over the noodles, etc.(13) [Even though they merely enhance the soup, a mezonos is still required]. When the noodles or croutons are a majority ingredient [or a very important minority ingredient, i.e. they are the main reason that the soup is being drunk], no shehakol is recited over the soup [unless the soup is drunk separately](14). Chicken soup with matzah ball or kreplach: The proper method is to eat some soup together with some matzah ball and recite only mezonos(15). Even if a bit of soup is left over, no shehakol is recited(16). [One who chooses, however, to drink the soup separately, must recite shehakol.] Corn chips: shehakol. Corn chips are produced from corn meal. Cranberry - ha-adamah(17). Cranberries grow on a bush which does not reach a height of 10 inches. Falafel balls: Mezonos - since generally they are made from a mixture of flour and chumous. The flour is added for taste(18). Fruit cocktail(19): Recite the blessing over the fruit which constitutes the majority of the mixture(20). Fruit salad (large chunks of fruit): Separate blessings of ha-eitz and ha-adamah are required. Halavah: shehakol(21). Ice cream cone: If the cone serves as a cup to hold the ice cream, only a shehakol over the ice cream is required. If the cone is eaten for its own taste (e.g., a sugar cone), a separate mezonos is required(22). Licorice: shehakol. The flour in licorice serves as a binder and does not require a mezonos(23). Mashed potatoes: ha-adamah. Instant mashed potatoes are also ha-adamah(24). Meatballs (small) and spaghetti: mezonos - when eaten together in one spoonful. Onion rings: mezonos. Generally fried in batter made from grain flour(25). Onion soup (made from sauteed onions): ha-adamah(26). If it is made from a dehydrated soup mix - shehakol. Papaya: ha-adamah(27). Peanut butter (crunchy or plain): shehakol(28) - when eaten alone. When spread on bread or a cracker, no blessing is recited over the peanut butter. Popcorn: ha-adamah. Potato chips: ha-adamah. Potato kugel or latke: ha-adamah. If the potatoes are blended into a liquid state and are no longer recognizable as potatoes, several poskim maintain that a shehakol is recited(29). Pringles: ha-adamah(30). Raspberry: The poskim debate whether its blessing is ha-eitz(31) or ha-adamah(32). Because of the doubt, ha-adamah is preferable(33). Rhubarb: ha-adamah. Rice cakes: The majority of contemporary poskim agree that the correct blessing is ha-adamah(34), while a minority tends to rule that the correct blessing is mezonos(35). Stuffed cabbage: The cabbage, meat and rice are usually eaten together in one spoonful. Only one blessing is recited - over the majority ingredient(36). Vegetable salad with croutons: mezonos and ha-adamah are required, even though the croutons are merely "enhancers" for the salad(37). Vegetable soup: ha-adamah. No shehakol is required on the liquid part of the soup(38).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Previous columns have dealt with the proper berachos for breakfast cereals - see The Weekly Halachah Discussion, pg. 159-169, and cholent, ibid. pg. 140-142. 2 Based on Mishnah Berurah 202:40 and 42. One who recites ha-eitz on all kinds of applesauce, has valid

sources upon which to rely - see Pischei Halachah, pg. 136. 3 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 436). 4 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:85. Wild blackberries or blueberries, which grow on bushes that do not reach a height of 10 inches, require an ha-adamah. But often, these berries are infested with worms and require a careful inspection. Commercially available berries are grown on trees, not on low bushes. 5 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Vesain Berachah, pg. 468 and Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 21). Same rule applies to Melba Toast, bagel and pita chips - ibid. 6 See details in The Weekly Halachah Discussion, page 479-481. 7 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Vesein Berachah, pg. 474). 8 First the shehakol on a bit of chocolate, with specific intention not to exempt the fruit, then the ha-eitz over the fruit. 9 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:31. 10 Mekor ha-Berachah 65; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 417); Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 97). 11 Mishnah Berurah 202:39. 12 Or on another shehakol item, while intending to exempt the soup - Chayei Adam quoted in Mishnah Berurah 208:23. 13 Although normally mezonos is recited before shehakol, in this case the order is reversed; Mishnah Berurah 208:23. Igros Moshe O.C. 1:68, however, maintains that even in this case the mezonos is recited before the shehakol. 14 Mishnah Berurah 205:11; Igros Moshe O.C. 4:43. 15 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:43. 16 Based on Mishnah Berurah 168:46. 17 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 294). 18 Ohr L'tzioon 14:19; Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 283, note 58. 19 Or a fruit salad in which the fruit is cut up into small pieces and eaten together in one spoonful. 20 Mishnah Berurah 212:1. Different kinds of ha-eitz fruits (e.g., apples and oranges) combine to form a majority of ha-eitz, and vice versa (Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 94, quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv). 21 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 415). 22 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:43; Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 234. 23 Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 110. 24 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 407). Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 207, however, questions this ruling. 25 Vesein Berachah, pg. 79. 26 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 441); Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 120 (when onions are consumed together with the liquid). 27 Vesein Berachah, pg. 395 and 422. 28 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 410 and in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 207 and pg. 280, note 10). 29 See Vesein Berachah, pg. 407 and Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 207. 30 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 407; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 207). 31 Mishnah Berurah 303:1; Aruch ha-Shulchan 303:5. 32 Taz 304:8; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 49:6. 33 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 396). 34 Ohr L'tzioon 14:21; Harav S.Z. Auerbach, Harav C.P. Scheinberg, Harav M. Shternbuch, quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 108 and in Vesein Berachah, pg. 520). 35 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, ibid. 36 Vesein Berachah, pg. 69; Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 274. The same rule applies to a goulash made from meat and vegetables. 37 Mishnah Berurah 212:5; Vesein Berachah, pg. 60. 38 See Sha'ar ha-Tziyon 202:66; Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 119; Vesein Berachah, pg. 432-434.

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