

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHAVUOS - 5760

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"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Shavuos -

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 240, An Early Start for Shavuos? Good Shabbos!

The Preface to the Story of the Moshiach

I saw an insight on the book of Rus (which is read on Shavuos), in a commentary called Nachlas Yosef. The second chapter of Rus is quite eventful. The Navi begins by introducing the main players. History is about to occur. Which history? The beginning of the history of the Messiah. We are about to learn of the first meeting between Boaz and Rus -- the union that would eventually produce King David, from whom the Moshiach (Messiah) will descend.

Each pasuk [verse] is laden with great symbolism and significance. When Boaz first arrives "on stage," we learn "Behold, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He said to the harvesters, 'Hashem [G-d] be with you!' And they answered him 'May Hashem bless you!' [Ruth 2:4]". Why is this exchange of greetings necessary to the plot? If, L'havdil [in extreme contrast], we were writing a play about this great historical event, would it be so crucial to insert the line "And Boaz came in and greeted his workers and asked, 'How are you?' and they responded 'Fine. How are you?'" This does not make for good script! And yet the Navi found it necessary to include this exchange of "Shalom Aleichem" in this historic chapter.

The Talmud [Makkos 23b] adds significance to this event by telling us that they were performing an enactment of the Court of Boaz. Early in Jewish history, it had not been the case that friends would greet each other with the expression "May G-d be with you," using the 'real' name of G-d (rather than the substitute generic name 'HaShem,' meaning 'the Name'). A specific judicial enactment was required to permit this form of greeting. Prior to the time of Boaz people never greeted each other in this way, and subsequent to the time of Boaz we no longer perform this enactment. This was a short-term "emergency" enactment.

What was the reason behind this enactment? At this particular time, the Jewish people were in a sorry state. There was a terrible famine. The times were so bad that a leader of the people, like Elimelech (husband of Naomi) could forsake his people and go off to, of all places, Moav. This was symptomatic of what was wrong with the Jewish people at the time.

What did the "Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah" (Council of Great Torah Sages) of that era decide to do to remedy the situation? They decided that everyone should greet other people with the actual name of G-d. The import of this enactment was that every single Jew is so important and so holy that it is worthy for him to be greeted with none less than the actual name of G-d. This is a whole different way of greeting a person than merely saying "Hi".

This enactment changed the mood. It reestablished the easily forgotten concept that every person is created in the Image of G-d (Tzelem Elokim). This enactment emphasized, "All Jews are princes" and they deserve to be treated as such. The psychological impact of greeting someone with the Name of G-d had an entirely different

B'S'Dheaning than that of just saying hello.

The enactment hammered home the idea that we must be careful of how we treat people. People are not merely intelligent animals. The recognition that people are a b'Tzelem Elokim suggests an entirely different approach as to how to relate to others. This was the enactment of the Court of Boaz.

The Medrash tells us that when our time comes to move on to the next world (after 120 years, G-d willing), we will all be asked two questions: 'Did you make G-d your King?' and 'Did you make your friend your King?' In other words, did you treat everyone like you would treat the Queen of England, l'Havdil?

A new era was beginning. It called for a new era regarding how we must deal with each other. That is why this chapter is the introduction to the story of the Moshiach. The story of Moshiach must begin with greeting our friends with the Name of G-d, indicating their importance and prestige, indicating that they deserve to be treated like Princes. This, too, must be our preface to the coming of Moshiach so that after 120 years, we will be able to respond in the affirmative to that question 'Did you anoint your fellow man?'

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From: Rabbi Yaakov Menken [SMTP:yamenken@torah.org] Subject: This Shavu'os, Raise the Torah High! Shavuos -- the holiday celebrating our receipt of the Torah. Celebrate this day, by helping us to spread knowledge of Torah to Jews worldwide! There are several announcements here -- please, bear with me for a minute of your time. We're looking for your involvement in every way, not just your contribution (although that is urgently needed as well). And even if you don't believe that you can support us financially, you may be surprised: on the Internet, you can give us \$15 without spending a dime! [Read on. This is real. See "MONEY FROM NOTHING" below.] PLEASE SEND CHECKS TO THIS ADDRESS: If you aren't into all the new technology, at least where donations are concerned, here's our address for checks drawn on US banks: Project Genesis 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208 USA.... Thank you so much for participating, Yaakov Menken Rabbi Yaakov Menken menken@torah.org Director, Project Genesis (410) 602-1350 <http://www.torah.org> learn@torah.org

From: Jeffrey Gross [SMTP:jgross@torah.org]
Weekly-halacha for 5760

Selected Halachos Relating to Shavuos BY RABBI DONIEL
NEUSTADT

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

EIRUV TAVSHILIN: WHY and HOW?

When Shabbos falls immediately after Yom Tov, or when the second day of Yom Tov falls on Shabbos, a Rabbinic ordinance prohibits cooking or baking on Yom Tov for Shabbos unless an eiruv tavshilin was prepared on Erev Yom Tov(1). The Talmud offers two explanations for this ordinance(2). 1. To guard the honor of Shabbos - The rabbis feared that when Yom Tov falls on Friday, one may become so preoccupied [on Erev Yom Tov] with his Yom Tov needs that he will neglect his Shabbos preparations. Thus they required that a token Shabbos food be prepared before the onset of Yom Tov(3). 2. To guard

the sanctity of Yom Tov - The rabbis feared that were it permitted to cook on Yom Tov for Shabbos without making a manifest sign that the cooking is being done for Shabbos, some people might assume that it is permitted to cook on Yom Tov even for the weekday, which is strictly forbidden. The purpose of the eiruv, then, is to serve as a reminder that on Yom Tov it is permitted to cook only for Shabbos and not for weekday.

THE BASIC REQUIREMENT - L'CHATCHILAH Two types of food, one cooked and one baked(4), are set aside. They are held in the right hand(5) and, while standing(6), the blessing - followed by the appropriate text - is recited. Since the meaning of the text must be understood in order for the eiruv may to be valid, the text should be recited in a language that one understands(7). The eiruv should be held the entire time while one is reciting the blessing and the text(8). The cooked food should be at least a k'zayis. The baked food should be at least a k'beitza. The cooked food should be the type of food which is served as a main dish, e.g., meat, fish or eggs. Deserts may not be used(9). The cooked food should be refrigerated so that it does not spoil. If it rots, cooking for Shabbos is forbidden(10). The eiruv may be prepared and the blessing and text recited on the night before Erev Yom Tov(11). Others allow this only under extenuating circumstances(12).

THE BASIC REQUIREMENT - B'DIEVED B'dieved if the eiruv is made using a cooked item only, or if only a cooked food is available, the eiruv is valid - even for baking(13). The reverse, however, does not hold true. If the proper blessing is omitted but the text is recited, the eiruv is valid(14). If the proper text is omitted it is questionable if the eiruv is valid. If one remembered before Yom Tov that he omitted the proper text, he should repeat the process reciting the text without repeating the blessing(15). If he remembered only after the onset of Yom Tov, he should consult a rav.

HIDDUR MITZVAH The cooked food should be specifically cooked on Erev Yom Tov for Shabbos and for eiruv tavshilin(16). The cooked food should be a sizable portion(17). Others suggest that it should be a k'beitza(18). The cooked food should be either meat or fish only(19). The baked food should be whole, e.g. a whole challah or matzah(20). The challah or matzah should be used for lechem mishneh on Friday night and Shabbos morning, and broken and eaten at Seudah Shelishis(21). The cooked food should be eaten at one of the Shabbos meals(22).

GENERAL NOTES: L'chatchilah, all the food which is prepared on Yom Tov for Shabbos should be edible on Yom Tov(23). This includes hot water which is boiled for Shabbos. B'dieved, or under extenuating circumstances, it is permitted to cook on Friday for Shabbos even if the food will not be edible by the time Shabbos arrives(24). When the first day of Yom Tov falls on Thursday, the cooking for Shabbos may not take place on Thursday(25). It may, however, begin on Thursday night, which is already the second day of Yom Tov(26). Only one eiruv tavshilin per household is required. It includes all of the people who reside in the house, including married children and guests who are spending the Yom Tov as part of that household(27). Eiruv tavshilin is required not just for cooking and baking but also for any food-related activities that are needed for Shabbos, e.g., grinding, choosing, insulating, carrying, washing dishes and lighting candles. One who failed to make an eiruv tavshilin cannot do any of these activities on Yom Tov for Shabbos. A person [or a household] who is not planning to cook or prepare anything on Yom Tov for Shabbos is not technically required to make an eiruv tavshilin. Nevertheless, the poskim strongly recommend that each person [or household] prepare an eiruv tavshilin in the event that something will have to be prepared for Shabbos(28).

IF NO EIRUV WAS MADE: One who forgot to prepare an eiruv tavshilin on erev Yom Tov before sunset may not cook on Friday for Shabbos. There are several strategies that can rectify this oversight, but they are too complex to fully describe here and should only be

implemented with rabbinic guidance. Under certain circumstances one may(29): 1. Make an eiruv tavshilin after sunset during bein ha-shemashos(30). Once Maariv was davened, eiruv tavshilin cannot be made. 2. Make an eiruv tavshilin while in shul even though he does not have immediate access to cooked food(31). 3. Make an eiruv on the first day of Yom Tov [except Rosh ha-Shanah] which falls on a Thursday(32). 4. Rely on the Rabbi's eiruv which is intended to include all those who inadvertently forgot or were unable at the last minute to make an eiruv(33). This can be not relied upon for one who did not make an eiruv due to negligence(34). 5. Cook extra food for Yom Tov so that he will have food left over for Shabbos(35). 6. Give his raw ingredients to another person [who made an eiruv] to cook, and that person will cook for him. The cooking may take place in his house(36).

FOOTNOTES: 1 M'deoraisa, there is no restriction on cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbos for either one of the following two reasons: 1) Shabbos and Yom Tov are considered as one day [as Yom Tov is also called Shabbos in the Torah]; just as it is permitted to cook for Yom Tov it is permitted to cook for Shabbos. 2) Even though one is really cooking for Shabbos, were unexpected company to show up, the food could be used for the guests. In essence, therefore, one is really cooking "for a Yom Tov need"; see Pesachim 46b for a thorough treatment of this complex issue. 2 Beitzah 16b. In practical halachah, however, the second reason is the dominant one; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 527:67. 3 Our explanation follows the Meiri. See Rashi and Ran who give different explanations. 4 The cooked item is to permit cooking on Yom Tov and the baked item is to permit baking. One who is not planning to bake for Shabbos does not need to prepare a baked food for eiruv tavshilin (Mishnah Berurah 527:6). It is customary, however, to use a baked food for eiruv tavshilin regardless. 5 Mishnah Berurah 206:18. 6 Mishnah Berurah 8:2. 7 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 527:55. 8 Based on Teshuvos M'harsham 2:36. 9 Based on Beur Halachah 527:5. 10 Aruch ha-Shulchan 527:13. 11 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (oral ruling, Koveitz Mevakshei Torah, pg. 216). 12 Harav S. Wosner (quoted in Eiruv Tavshilin ha-Aruch 2 16:3). 13 Mishnah Berurah 527:7. 14 Mishnah Berurah 527:64. 15 Ibid. 63. 16 Beur Halachah 527:6 and 14 (s.v. l'chatchilah). The baked item, however, does not need to be especially baked for Shabbos. 17 Mishnah Berurah 527:8. 18 Eishel Avraham 527:7. 19 Harav S. Wosner (Koveitz Mibeis Levi 1, pg. 52). 20 Ibid. 21 Mishnah Berurah 527:11:48. 22 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Tikunim u'Milumim 2, note 35.) 23 In order to satisfy the second reason quoted above in note 1. 24 Mishnah Berurah 527:3 and Beur Halachah. Other poskim are more lenient and allow this even l'chatchilah; see Aruch ha-Shulchan 527:3. 25 O.C. 527:13. 26 Harav Y. Kamenetsky (Emes L'Yaakov O.C. 527). 27 Eishel Avraham 527; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Koveitz Mevakshei Torah 49. Two or more individual families who are sharing one house, or a person who is sleeping in a hotel and eating elsewhere, should make their own eiruv tavshilin without reciting the blessing. 28 Igros Moshe O.C. 5:20-26; Moadim u'Zmanim 7:122. 29 These options apply also to one who made eiruv tavshilin, but it was either lost, eaten or got spoiled before cooking for Shabbos. 30 O.C. 527:1. The blessing is recited. 31 Minchas Yitzchak 7:36 based on Tiferes Yisrael, Beitza 2:1; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Me'or ha-Shabbos vol. 1, pg. 493 and vol. 2, pg. 633). No blessing is recited. Other poskim do not agree with this option. 32 O.C. 527:22. A special text is recited. 33 O.C. 527: 7. Some poskim hold that one may rely on the Rabbi's eiruv only one time (Mishnah Berurah 527:22) while others hold that it can be relied upon even more than once (Aruch ha-Shulchan 527:18). 34 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 527:32. 35 O.C. 527:21. Thus it is permitted to cook many different foods, so long as one will partake of each of them on Yom Tov; Mishnah Berurah 71. 36 O.C. 527:20.

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Shavuot June 10, 2000 PROFESSOR SMADAR ROSENSWEIG

Megillat Rut is a story of human tragedy and triumph. Elimelech, the scion of a famous Judean family, leaves the Holy Land during a famine and settles in Moav. He dies there, and his two sons, who had married Moabite women, also both die, childless.

Why did such devastation befall this family? Because, the Gemara states, Elimelech panicked when the poor and oppressed approached him for charity after the famine struck. In order to retain his wealth he fled. These punishments were Divine retribution for his selfishness.

His widow, Naomi, is left with two widowed daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. It is up to the women to rebuild the destroyed family. Naomi decides to return to Judea.

Orpah heeds Naomi's prognosis of a grim future and remains in

Moav. But Ruth inextricably links her destiny to Naomi and the Jewish people. Ruth's tenacity and dedication are startling. She could have remained behind. Her options were open. In fact, the Midrash apprises us, Orpah remarried well and had powerful offspring among them Goliath.

With every footstep toward Judea, Ruth can turn back. She can turn back when the Judean women come out to meet them and gloat at Naomi's misfortune. The women don't invite them into their homes. Just like Naomi had abandoned Judea during the famine, the women forsake Naomi and Ruth in their moment of need. Measure for Measure.

Naomi is embittered by the fate Hashem has inflicted upon her. She is so disheartened that she does not even notify Boaz, a prominent family member, of her return.

This is one of the ironies of Megillat Rut. Naomi sees herself at the end of her life and can not be burdened with Ruth, who is just beginning a new life. Naomi thought she would die in peace among her people, but they abandoned her. Only Ruth remains devoted to Naomi and elevates her out of her depths of depression.

Ruth goes out to find food, and finds herself in Boaz's field. Rashi says that Divine Providence caused Ruth to stumble onto Boaz's property. Others say that Ruth intended to find Boaz, and Hashem guided her immediately to his field.

Ruth, with her grace and dignity, makes an impression on Boaz, who remarks that her loyalty to her mother-in-law is exceptional. Boaz blesses her that Hashem will compensate her for coming under His wing.

Ruth responds that Boaz, has comforted her, but that she does not want to be like one of his maidservants, And wants to find favor in his eyes. Here Ruth is implying that she has bigger plans; she wants Boaz to be her redeemer, to marry her. Boaz instructs his field hands to be helpful, but makes no personal commitment to her.

When Ruth returns home and relates the events of the day, Naomi is delighted. She sees this encounter as a heavenly sign that Hashem has not forsaken them. Naomi now talks about the future. This transformation is inspired by Ruth's perseverance.

When three months pass, and Boaz still has not proposed to Ruth, Naomi suggest that drastic measures be taken. She implores Ruth to confront Boaz in the threshing house. Ruth does. I am Ruth your maidservant, she tells him. Spread your wings on your maidservant, because you are my redeemer.

After Ruth and Boaz's wedding and the birth of their son, the women acknowledge that Ruth is truly unique, and that the child born to Ruth will give Naomi a new lease on life. Ruth's devotion to Naomi is so great that Ruth lets Naomi assist in raising the baby.

The transformation is complete. Upon leaving Moav, Naomi exclaimed that she was bitter and had no future. Yet she is rejuvenated by Ruth's valiant efforts and determination. There is a reciprocal relationship. Ruth would not have reached her full potential and merited such a glorious future as the forebear of King David without Naomi's guidance and inspiration.

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From: torahweb[SMTP:torahweb@torahweb.org]

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

RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

Bamidbar and Shavuot

Parshas Bamidbar is always read just before Shavuot. The medrash provides several connections between the very first pasuk in Bamidbar and kabbalas hatorah:

Hashem spoke to Moshe in the desert to teach us that one who does

not transform himself into a "desert" - something hefker, can not acquire wisdom and Torah. The connection between humility and Torah acquisition is found in a number of Talmudic passages. The Gemara (Eruvin 54a) states that one who makes himself like a desert, which all can step on, is given Torah as a gift. Rashi explains that such a quality indicates a lack of arrogance. Another similar passage is found in the Talmudic prayer (Brachot 17a) with which we conclude the amida. "May my soul be like dust" - which everyone can step on - "Open my heart to Your Torah." A final example is a passage (Pesachim 66b) that states that humility is a prerequisite for true Torah knowledge, and haughtiness can cause wisdom to be lost.

Hashem confined His revelation to Moshe, speaking to him from within the tent (Ohel Moed), because modesty is beautiful. The proof text, "and walk humbly with your God" (Micha 6:8), shows that Hashem, too, walks humbly and modestly. The honor of Torah itself, referred to as the bas melech, the child of Moshe the king, is inward - "Pnima". (Tehilim 45:14).

The beauty of modesty (tznius) is cited by Rashi (Shmot 34:3) in the context of Kabbalas HaTorah itself. The first luchos (tablets), which were given publicly, with great noise and fanfare, were overcome by the evil eye, and destroyed. The permanence of the second luchos (tablets) which were given privately to Moshe, demonstrates that nothing is more beautiful than modesty.

As we read Bamidbar and prepare for Shavuot and our own personal Kabbalas Hatorah, we should look at our own great Torah scholars and leaders as role models. It is no coincidence that our greatest sage, Moshe Rabbeinu, was also the humblest man who ever lived.

Even if we realize our smallness compared to Torah giants of then and now, we often fail to be hefker lakol, to treat those less accomplished than ourselves with proper respect. This failure to emulate Moshe Rabbeinu and gedolei Yisroel who cared for and respected the common man prevents us from acquiring Torah to the best of our ability and capacity.

We must learn from Hashem Himself and walk modestly with Him. As He modestly hides His greatness, so too, we must avoid flaunting our accomplishments. Indeed, modesty in our actions is a reflection of humility in our hearts.

These timeless lessons take on a greater sense of urgency in our world of publicity seekers and conspicuous consumption. These ills have which have affected the Jewish world at large have also permeated the Torah world. If we think and act with the lessons of medrash Bamidbar, we will be blessed with a greater measure of kabbalas hatorah.

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RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

A Healthy Tension before Mattan Torah

The parasha of Bamidbar is read annually before the yom tov of Shavuot. In Shulchan Aruch O"C 428, we find minu ve-ratzu which means count and celebrate Shavuot. The Torah teaches that the mandate to count Benai Yisrael is couched in the phrase "Se'u et rosh" which means literally "lift the head" or "elevate" the nation of Israel. How is counting an elevation? The Ramban in his commentary (4:13) explains that counting each individual is acknowledging that each person has self-worth, importance, and dignity. You are not only important because you are part of the nation of Israel, but you have your own purpose and mission as well.

It is interesting to note that each person's EKG is different one from another, and no two people have the same fingerprints. Our Rabbis couch this idea as "Kesheim she-ein partzufeihein shavin kach ein deiEoteihem shavin." By this they mean that each person is unique not only physically, but in intelligence and character as well. Because each

person possesses a unique temperament, his spiritual challenges and his yetzer ha-ra are also relevant only to him. Therefore, each person's service of God is different from everyone else's.

While the book of Bamidbar begins with the important message of the worth of each man individually, each person is counted as part of Benei Yisrael. This dual nature might well be compared to a symphony orchestra. The ultimate beautiful end result is the integration and blending of each instrument. However, unless each musician fine-tunes his or her instrument, and practices to perfection, the sum which is even greater than all its individual parts will be lacking. "Minu ve-ratzu" might therefore require that we develop our own individuality to be able to join the collective kabbalat ha-Torah of Shavuot. Moreover, this directive of "minu ve-ratzu" - really thrusts a major philosophical difficulty on thinking Jews. On the one hand we have stressed our own individual avodat Hashem. On the other hand, the greatness of kabbalat ha-Torah is "ke-ish echad be-leiv echad," joining with the rest of the Jewish nation. How is one to budget his time and energies between their own needs for growth and those of others? The Maharsha in his commentary (Sanhedrin 99b) suggests that "adam le-amel yulad" (People are born to work,) le-amel is an acronym for "Lilmod al menat le-lamed" - to study and master in order to share and teach to others. What scale should we use to determine how to balance our personal studying, which as we know never ends, and our communal responsibility, which likewise seems never ending?

Rav Shimon Shkop zt"l in his introduction to Sha'arei Yosher writes that just as in the physical/ material realm we are commanded "Asser te-aaser" (Devarim 14:22), to tithe our possessions on behalf of the Levites, and the poor (depending on the year) and are promised that doing so will bring us blessing, so too regarding the realm of the soul - we are to give a tenth of our time to helping others. (Giving to others is the best way to insure one's wealth). Moreover, the more we give, the more we are promised God will bless us.

Similarly, the Meshech Chochmah in his commentary on "Va-yachel Noach ish ha-adamah" ("Noach debased himself as a man of the earth" ϕ Bereishit 9:20) cites the midrash which contrasts the Torah's depiction of Noach, first as "a righteous man" and subsequently as a "man of the earth," with its description of Moshe Rabbeinu, who is initially referred to as "an Egyptian man" but who ultimately becomes a "man of God." He explains that there are two different ways to serve God. One is to isolate oneself from the community and focus completely on oneself. The other way is to be involved in and with the needs of the community. Logic dictates, reasons Rav Meir Simchah ha-Cohen of Devinsk, that the former will excel to develop himself and his true potential, while the latter, involved with the needs of others, will not be able to attain that level of greatness and maturity. The reality, points out the midrash is just the reverse. Through our helping others, we ultimately help ourselves the most. May we all be zocheh to reach out and spiritually touch not only those around us, but ultimately ourselves, ensuring our successful personal and communal kabbalat ha-Torah.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/1999/moadim/rtwe_shavuot.htm [last yr]

RABBI MAYER TWERSKY

As One Person with One Heart

"And a man will stumble over his brother [which is interpreted to mean] man will stumble because of his brother's iniquity. This teaches that all Jews are responsible for one another (areivin zeh ba-zeh)" (Shavuot 39a).

The principle of areivut teaches that all Jews are bound together in a covenant of mutual responsibility and liability. The fundamental conceptual underpinnings of areivut emerge from consideration of the following halachah. "Ahavah, the son of R. Zeira taught : with regard to

all the blessings the rule is that even though one has fulfilled [yatza] his own obligation to recite a particular blessing he can cause others to fulfill [motzi] their obligation to recite that blessing [with the exception of blessings of enjoyment]" (Rosh Hashanah 29a).

This halachah of yatza motzi primo facie contradicts the rule of the mishna that, "whoever is not obligated in a particular matter cannot cause the public to discharge their obligation [vis-a-vis that matter]"(ibid.). Rashi and other Rishonim ad locum reconcile this apparent contradiction by explaining that the mishnah's rule applies to one who was never obligated in the mitzvah. One who was obligated in the mitzvah, however, even after having performed the mitzvah remains obligated by virtue of any other Jew's unfulfilled obligation and need for assistance. The basis for this continuing obligation is the principle of areivut.

Let us briefly analyze this explanation. In order to cause others to fulfill their obligation vis-a-vis a particular mitzvah, one must be obligated in the same mitzvah. Thus it emerges that areivut is not an independent mitzvah or free-standing concept such as loving one's fellow Jew; rather it is an integral internal component of each and every mitzvah. One's personal obligation vis-a-vis any particular mitzvah dictates not only that he individually perform the mitzvah but also that he assist any other Jew in doing the same.

Let us briefly digress and consider the following teaching of Rav Soloveitchik zt"l. The Rav often explained that Judaism conceives of the Jewish nation (as well as any microcosmic Jewish community) not simply as a large aggregate or massive partnership of individuals, but rather as a distinct metaphysical entity. (Vide the Rav's essay "The Community" in Tradition Vol. 17, No. 2 pp. 9-10, Fn. 4. See also Meshech Chochmah on the haftarah of parshat Devarim.)

Upon further reflection, in light of the Rav's teaching, it emerges that the concept of areivut reflects a fundamental Torah principle. Prior to the giving of the Torah, Hashem promises the Jewish People that if they accept the Torah, "you shall be My special treasure among nations...you will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to Me," (Exodus 19:5-6). Torah was not given to 600,000+ individuals. Rather, the Torah was given to the Jewish people as a distinct metaphysical entity. Every Jew is derivatively endowed with sanctity (kedushat yisroel) and is obligated in mitzvot by virtue of his or her belonging to the Jewish nation. Mitzvot were given to the Jewish people as a whole and thus the derivative obligation of every individual Jew is to facilitate fulfillment of the mitzvot by all members of the Jewish people - himself as well as others. The principle of areivut which underlies the halachah of yatza motzi encapsulates this fundamental notion.

This concept of the Jewish People as a distinct metaphysical entity illumines the gemarah's phraseology regarding areivut. The gemarah's phrase areivin zeh ba-zeh is conventionally understood in terms of the primary meaning of the root ayin-reish-bet, to guarantee. Hence the translation, all Jews are guarantors, or responsible for one another. Nonetheless, it seems quite plausible that the phrase should be understood in light of the root's secondary meaning, to mix or blend. And thus, the gemara's apothegm should be understood thus, "all Jews are bound up with each other," expressing not merely mutual responsibility and liability, but existential unity and identity. The use of the "ba", "areivin zeh ba-zeh" suggests this alternate understanding because in Hebrew idiom when the root ayin-reish-bet connotes guaranteeing it is followed by the propositional letter lamed, and when it connotes mixing it is followed by the propositional letter "bet". [Vide Chidushei ha-Ritva ad locum who apparently advances both interpretations.]

Recognizing the metaphysical identity of the Jewish People allows us to fully appreciate the following teaching encoded in the Torah, decoded by our Sages. The Torah describes the Jewish people's journey to Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah. "They had departed from Rephidim and had

arrived in the Sinai Desert, camping (vayahanu) in the wilderness. Israel camped (vayehan) opposite the mountain" (exodus 19:2). Our sages (Mechilta ad locum), prompted by the Torah's apparent linguistic inconsistency in shifting from the plural (vayahanu) to the singular (vayehan), comment that when the Jewish people arrived at Mt. Sinai they achieved a remarkable degree of unity, hitherto unattained. They were as, "one person with one heart." (ibid.) Hence the shift from the plural to the singular form of speech. In light of the aforementioned remarks, it is abundantly clear that this remarkable achievement did not coincidentally precede the giving of the Torah. Rather it was a sine qua non for the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people who, unified, emerged as a distinct metaphysical entity. As long as divisions and divisiveness separated Jews, they remained individuals, unworthy of the Torah. The Jewish nation crystallized and became worthy of the Torah when this remarkable state of unity was achieved.

And finally, appreciating the indispensability of Jewish unity to matan Torah provides insight into a famous Talmudic passage. The gemara in Masechet Yevamot records the tragic history of the period spanning Pesach and Shavuot during which time R. Akiva's 24,000 disciples perished "because they did not accord each other proper respect" [as measured by the highest of standards to which they, disciples of R. Akiva, were held] (ibid 62b). Surely, the timing of the divine punishment is not happenstance, but rather is determined in accordance with the sin. Every year between Pesach and Shavuot we prepare ourselves to re-create the giving of the Torah. Reattaining the remarkable unity which was a sine qua non for matan Torah is thus of the highest priority. At a time of heightened sensitivity to and striving for unity, R. Akiva's disciples' interpersonal deficiency was especially egregious and accordingly punished.

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From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom List
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Shabbat Shalom: Shavuot by RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Efrat, Israel -- Over the last decade or so the appearance of charismatic religious personalities who claim unusual powers of healing and reveal divine communication which foretell future events have become more and more numerous even here in Israel. These wonder-working rabbis offer instantaneous remedies for a plethora of ills. If anything, the rational world that I grew up in - the "Brisk-Soloveitchik" intellectual vision of a religio-legal system which emphasizes rigorous analysis and individual responsibility and demands an unflinching commitment to serve the Divine - has given way to vials of holy water, special amulets for barren women and the mortally ill, promises of good fortune for those who vote for the proper political party, and the discovery of ways in which the divine can best serve our specific needs. At times it seems that the revelation at Sinai wasn't in the form of a nation struggling to perfect itself and the world with the help of 613 commandments of obligation but rather a mumbo-jumbo catalogue of magic cures, formulas and potions for every conceivable ailment or desire in the world. The snake-oil charmers of yesteryear have found a new public.

With Shavuot, the festival of the giving of the Torah at Sinai, upon us, we should be aware that there is more than one way to dance around a golden calf, to succumb to simple, magical solutions for profound and existential problems.

What do our Sages say about this old-new brand of blessings dispensers who claim to visit heaven periodically for their "instant doses" of specially divinely ordained wisdom?

In the first Book of Samuel, (Chapter 28, we read about Saul the first monarch of Israel seeking out the witch of Endor (Baalat Ov at Ein Dor) to perform a "seance" and call up the dead prophet Samuel on the eve of

a battle with the Philistines. The witch seemingly succeeds but the blistering message supposedly imparted by Samuel can hardly bring comfort to Saul: "...For G-d has rent the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor, to David." [1 Samuel 28:17] Undoubtedly Saul violated the prohibitions against sorcery and wizardry in the Torah (Deuteronomy 18:10-11) but does this incident not give credence to efficacy of such supernaturalism? And if so, then granted one dare not consort with a "partner of the devil", a wicked witch, but perhaps one may - and even might - seek out (and pay for) the services of a rabbinical "medium" who exorcizes dybbuks and connects with holy souls and divine voices.

Amongst the Gaonim, two positions concerning this Biblical episode surface. Rabbenu Sadya Gaon takes the events in Chapter 28 at face value, but Rabbenu Samuel Ben Chafni Gaon, (in the Responsa of the Gaonim, Ginzai Shechter, part 1, pages 299-30) writes as follows: "In actuality (the witch) did not raise up Samuel from the dead, but the BAALAT OV deceived Saul; it is impossible that G-d would bring Samuel back to life with the strength of witchcraft, because this is against nature, and the only ones who have mystical powers are prophets, and she was not a prophet. She deceived him [Saul] into believing that she had that power."

This second view is rooted in the Talmud and provides an added significance to the festival of the Revelation at Sinai. There is a fascinating difference of opinion between Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages as to the purity of a specific type of oven, and - although Rabbi Eliezer's was a lone voice against the majority- he was convinced that his position was the correct one. Frustrated by the refusal of the Sages to accept his opinion, Rabbi Eliezer finally declares: "If the law is in agreement with my opinion, let a voice from heaven prove it!" Immediately a Heavenly Voice (bat-kol) cried out, 'Why do you dispute with Rabbi Eliezer seeing that in all matters the halacha agrees with him.' Nevertheless, the Sages reject Rabbi Eliezer's ruling since "(the law) is not longer in heaven; "The Torah has already been given at Mount Sinai, and so we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice..." (B.T. Bava Mezia 59b).

The powerful message of this exchange leaves no room for doubt; the festival of Shavuot celebrates the moment in time when G-d gave the Torah to the Israelites - and from then on our lives must be conducted based upon a logical and this-worldly interpretation of the sacred text, and not on the basis of heavenly voices or mystical amulets.

One of the greatest theologians and halakhists in Jewish history - Maimonides, the 13th century author of Mishneh Torah (complete Code of Jewish Law) and The Guide to the Perplexed - pulls no punches concerning his rejection of wonder working rabbis: "One who whispers a spell over a wound, at the same time reciting a verse from the Torah, is not in the category of sorcerers and soothsayers, but is included among those who repudiate the Torah." [Laws of Idolatry 11:12]

After all, he argues, the Bible expresses itself very clearly: "There must not be found among you anyone ... who uses divination, a soothsayer, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or one who consults a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer." [Deuteronomy 18:10-11]

In Halacha 16 of Chapter 11, Maimonides summarizes his position. "These practices are all false and deceptive and were means employed by the ancient idolaters to deceive the peoples of various countries and induce them to become their followers." [Laws of Idolatry]

In case we didn't get the message here, in his Guide to the Perplexed, Maimonides writes about amulets (kameyot): "You must be aware of sharing the error of those who wrote amulets (kameyot). Whatever you hear from them is utterly senseless. Rational people ought not to listen to such men, or believe their assertions." (Part 1, Chapter 61)

For Maimonides, any kind of assertion of heavenly voices is a sham. He calls it 'false and deceptive,' the very words used by Rabbenu Samuel concerning the witch of Ein Dor. And Maimonides' view is accepted by

Rav Yosef Karo, 16th century compiler of the Shulhan Arukh (set table of Jewish laws), where he rules that it is permitted to "whisper (a divination by citing a verse) if someone is bitten by a scorpion, even on Shabbat. "...even though this whispering cannot help at all; however, since the individual's life is in danger, the rabbis allowed "whispering a divination" because they didn't want the person to lose his mind." (Yoreh Deah, 179,6)

>From this context it is clear that Rabbi Yosef Caro believes that such incantations are useless, but in order to appease the false beliefs victim of the bite - and perhaps save his life- a concession is being made.

To be sure, not every rabbinic authority agreed with this position. The famed Vilna Gaon, in his gloss on the very legal decision, launches into a sharp criticism of Maimonides' rational position. He condemns Maimonides rejection of amulets and incantations as coming from the fact that "he(Maimonides) was pulled after philosophy. And therefore he wrote that witchcraft and special divine names, and incantations, and demons, and amulets are all false." The Vilna Gaon cites different Talmudic texts that describe all kinds of unexplainable, superphenomenal events, and that heaven forbid that these should be rejected; they have "... an inner [kabbalistic] layer, which is not the layer of the philosophers."

The Vilna Gaon notwithstanding, normative Judaism - from the Talmudic debate between Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages to Maimonides to the Shulhan Arukh - would resoundingly reject all "holy hucksters". Perhaps the most balanced and accepted view is that of the Rashba (Rav Shmuel Ben Adrat), who addresses his community's query regarding a Rebbi Nissim who claimed that for the past four years G-d has begun to speak to him, while awake or during a dream, and produced a book that G-d wrote for him through an angel. The Rashba writes: "These things are very questionable in my eyes and in my heart, because even though I might believe there could arise a prophet, or an individual to whom an angel speaks, in this case this appears to be an impossibility. First of all, our rabbis have told us prophecy only rests on very special individuals who are outstanding in wisdom, wealth and courage; an individual who goes to sleep without being known for his wisdom, especially in Torah, and wakes up in the morning, claiming to be a prophet is exceedingly far-fetched and suspect.... Moreover, our Sages have taught that such a thing is impossible for the stage of prophecy has ended - this generation is not worthy of prophecy" (Responsa, 548)

For Jews, the festivals are not only the means to commemorate an event of 3300 years ago, but to re-experience the turning points of our history. After the Revelation, Torah was given to human beings to interpret rationally for human beings, who must accept responsibility for their actions and decisions. Only our Torah of reasonable and rational interpretation provides us with a true web-site of infinity.

Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:

<http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm> Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean

From: Yeshivat Sha'alvim[SMTP:feedback@shaalvim.org] ys-parasha@shaalvim.org Subject: Midbar - Preparation for Receiving the Torah

YESHIVAT SHA'ALVIM Parashat Hashavuah
Midbar - Preparation for Receiving the Torah HARAV DAVID LEBOR

"Oh, that I were in the wilderness, in a lodging place of wayfaring menB(Yirmiyahu 9:1) where I was lauded as is written: "Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the village that Kedar inhabits, let the inhabitants of Sela singB"(Yeshayahu 42:11). (allegory) A prince entered a country and its inhabitants saw him and fled, he

entered a second country and again the inhabitants fled. He entered a third country which was desolate and they lauded him. Says the prince: "This country is best of all, here I will build my throne, here I will dwell." So too, when Hashem approached the sea it fled, as is written, "the sea saw and fled" (Tehillim 114:3). And so the mountains danced as rams. He came to a desolate desert, where it greeted and lauded Him, as it says, "Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the village that Kedar inhabits, let the inhabitants of Sela sing." He said this city is the best of all - here I will build my palace and I will dwell within, they were happy that Hashem would dwell within.

The Maharal (Tifferet Yisrael chapter 26), says on the basis of this Midrash the wilderness was the most suitable place for the giving of the Torah, because the mitzvot are not natural and therefore the Torah was fit to be given in a place that is empty of materialism, which in kind enables one to become closer to Hashem.

To understand the Midrash (and the Maharal), we will look at the story of Ruth and Orpah: "and Naomi said to her two daughters in-law" Go, return to your homes, G-d will do kindness to you as you did with the dead and for me. G-d will give you, and you will find rest each woman in her house, and she kissed them and they raised their voices and wept. And they said to her, we will return with you to your people. And Naomi said, return my daughters. Why go with me, do I have sons you can marry, return my daughters, for I am too old to be with a man. If I should say, I have hope, even if I should have a husband tonight, and should bear sons, would you wait for them to grow. Would you, for them, refrain from having husbands? No, my daughters, for it grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of G-d has gone out against me. And they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother in-law, but Ruth held fast to her" (Ruth 1:8- 15).

Our Rabbis say that since Orpah returned to her people she returned to her gods, and immediately served idols. That same night, right after Orpah's emotional parting, they say that Orpah became loose and wanton. Says Rav Yitzchak, the entire night after Orpah left her mother in-law she was with one hundred menB Rav Tanchuma says even one dog" (Ruth Raba 2:20). How do we understand the fact that two girls with similar backgrounds and with similar desires to stay with Naomi and her people and keep the Torah to the extent that they cried hysterically, how did it happen that one, Orpah, deteriorated so quickly and fell so low? Ruth is the symbol of modesty - mother of Mashiach; Orpah - idol worshipper, has illicit relations, sleeps with an animal, and is mother of Goliat. Two girls with identical origins, one attains the extreme of purity while the other the extreme of defilement. The difference of Orpah's behavior requires explanation.

A similar question arises regarding the difference in behavior of Avraham Avinu and Lot. Seemingly, the strong will to keep Hashem's mitzvot of Lech Lecha appeared in Avraham Avinu and was also found in Lot. Lot went with Avraham Avinu. Even though he wasn't given the mitzva, he wanted to live in the palace of the king and to absorb the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael. How can it be, on the one hand, Avraham Avinu wanted to ascend the ladder of the ten trials and Lot deteriorated until, "And he encamped in Sedom." "And Lot travelled from Kedem" - Rashi explains: "He removed himself from Hashem. He said I can't live with Avraham nor with his G-d. Lot desired to live in Sedom and to be like them. Avraham Avinu - symbol of kindness, the father of the Jewish people; Lot - resident of Sedom, a city where it's illegal to practice kindness. The desire of Avraham and Lot to be worthy of Eretz Yisrael appears to be identical, why did Avraham become worthy and not Lot?

Desire and goodwill are not enough to become worthy of being in Hashem's embrace. For this you need preparation (hachana). Desire and goodwill are essential elements for spiritual growth, but without preparation and purification one will not reach their goal.

It is impossible to seed a field which has not been previously plowed nor cleared of thorns and rocks, for nothing will grow. Firstly, one must

remove the rocks and the thorns, plow the ground and then it's possible to plant. So too, man cannot grow and blossom if he has not previously prepared himself. Bad character traits, depraved habits and flawed ideas must be uprooted before he can start his ascent to Torah.

Preparation is the essence as we find in Ezra: "Because Ezra prepared his heart to seek G-d's Torah" (Ezra 7:66), and "Yotam became strengthened because he prepared his ways before G-d" (Divrei Hayamim 2:27:6), and also by King Chizkiyahu: "His whole heart he prepared to seek out G-d" (Divrei Hayamim 2:30:19). All these people prepared beforehand and therefore were successful. But by Rechavam it says: "And he did bad, because he didn't prepare his heart to seek out G-d" (Divrei Hayamim 2:12:14).

Therefore, Avraham Avinu was told to go a) from your land b) from your homeland and c) from your father's house. Seemingly the order should be the opposite. First a man leaves his father's house, then his city, then his homeland and lastly his country. However, Hashem did not command an exclusively physical move, but rather an ideological one. Avraham was told to abandon the depraved character traits of his father's home gradually from the easier to the more difficult. First of all, one must uproot foreign influences from himself - his country's influences, afterwards influences that are closer - that of his homeland, and only then to abandon the influences of his father's home. This was Avraham Avinu's hachana.

This is the difference between Avraham and Lot. Indeed Lot did desire the spiritual growth as Avraham did, but Lot did not prepare himself before his journey. He did not relinquish his homeland nor his father's home. Therefore, he failed in this small trial. Instead of travelling to Eretz Yisrael he journeyed away from Hashem.

Herein also lies the difference between Ruth and Orpah. Orpah did not ready herself before becoming closer to Hashem. Nor did she concern herself with correcting her character. Orpah wanted to cling to Hashem as Ruth did, but she failed because goodwill and desire, despite their importance, are not enough.

Rava says: "What does it mean, and from the wilderness a gift because man makes himself as a desert which is hefker to all; the Torah was given in it as a gift as it is written: "From the wilderness a gift" (Nedarim 55:72).

The Sefat Emet explains that the desert symbolizes the power of nullification (bitul). Man must be mevatel himself before he can receive the Torah. To void everything to be like the wilderness - only to listen to Hashem's word. This is the essence in preparing to receive the Torah; to become batel towards Hashem's ways and his Torah.

The Sefat Emet explains the parable of the prince and the fleeing inhabitants: "The Torah is the most complete entity of creation, and in accordance with the degree that creatures are lacking in their own eyes and strive for completion they are deserving of the Torah. It is very difficult for someone who has free will to see themselves as lacking and unfit, and therefore the inhabitants fled. But the one who is like a wilderness, as in the Midrash, who is not deserving until he makes himself hefker, as a wilderness, has no conflict with the Torah. This is how the Jews prepared themselves before receiving the Torah. They became as a desert, striving for completion.

The wilderness is the preparation. The power of bitul, nullifying oneself, is the desire to correct, to accept leadership, to complete ourselves. It is impossible to get closer to Hashem and at the same time to think we won't change.

The Sefat Emet also applies this same to Shabbat and Sefirat HaOmer. Shabbat is bitul - to be as a wilderness. Cessation of labor symbolizes the power of bitul which is hachana for accepting the Torah. Therefore, Shabbat was given before the Torah like we see in the Pesach Haggada, "And He gave us the Shabbat," and afterwards, "And He brought us closer to Har Sinai." And so it is written, "and the nation rested on the seventh day, and from there journeyed to Har Sinai." Every

Jew has a little of this in him every Shabbat when he stops working, and therefore he is in readiness for receiving the Torah. Our Rabbis teach us that a child must pass one Shabbat before he has a brit and so too, Shabbat was given before the Jewish People entered the brit of Torah at Har Sinai.

In addition, the days of Sefira which are preparation for receiving the Torah are seven Shabbatot. During these 49 days one must ready himself to receive the Torah. There are 48 ways that the Torah is acquired and man must labor on every one of them every day of the Sefira and on the last day repeat them all as is brought down in the books.

Until now we have seen that we need to prepare ourselves before receiving the Torah. But how do we define and actualize this readiness? The Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh (Shmot 19:2) explains there are three main hachanot for receiving the Torah. In Shmot 19:1 the Torah tells us: "In the third month, after Bnei Yisrael's Exodus from Egypt, on that day they came to Midbar Sinai. And they traveled from Refidim and they came to Midbar Sinai, and they camped in the wilderness, and Yisrael camped opposite the mountain." The Ohr Hachayim asks: why make the latter statement first and the first one second? The pasuk which says that they traveled from Refidim should be before the pasuk which says that they came to Midbar Sinai. Also, why was it necessary to say that they camped in the wilderness; is it not understood that they camped in the place at which they arrived? Says the Ohr Hachayim, the Torah's intention is to introduce the three main principles of preparation for receiving the Torah, through which Hashem desires to enable us to inherit His portion; this is our sweet Torah.

The first is strengthening and intensifying our engagement in Torah matters, because laziness is like a weed that can ruin its achievement. Regarding this the Torah states: "And they traveled from Refidim." This statement doesn't intend to inform us of the place from which they journeyed, because if so, then it would have been mentioned before their encampment. It comes to tell us that they stopped holding on to their past midot when they traveled. This is similar to what we find when Chazal explained the pasuk: "And Yisrael fought in Refidim" - they were weakened. Now they traveled from this aspect and they readied themselves to work hard for Hashem. Because of this attitude "they came to Har Sinai".

The second principle is humility. The words of Torah can only be kept by one who humbles himself and makes himself as a wilderness. Regarding this the Torah says: "And they camped in the desert," meaning as humbly as a desert which everyone steps on.

The third principle is to ensure that our Torah scholars attach themselves wholeheartedly and sincerely to each other and share chidushim and are as one. Regarding this the pasuk says, "And Yisrael camped, in the singular, that all were together as one, and therefore were ready to receive the Torah.

To sum up, the three principles of the Ohr Hachayim are: 1) triumphing in the engagement of Torah matters, 2) correcting midot, 3) the unification of the Jewish people.

The duty of a Yeshiva student is to personify these three principles - triumphing through Torah study - in this we are engaged most of the day - to put more effort into our learning, both in quality and quantity, to grow in our love of Torah, honoring the Torah and laboring in Torah.

Correcting our midot - through learning mussar, striving towards completion, and to be like a wilderness as we explained above.

Unity - to be considerate of others as one man with one heart.

The portion of Bamidbar is always read before Shavuot. Harav Zevin writes: Receiving the Torah is a wilderness and immediately after comes Chag Habikurim. The first fruits ripen. The Torah has the power to change the world from pandemonium to Gan Eden, wherefrom we bring bikurim. Without the Torah the world reverts to chaos - "If not for my covenant day and night I wouldn't have put the laws of Heaven and

Earth." The world which is devoid of Torah is a wilderness - but after receiving the Torah, "And He will make her wilderness like Eden, and Her desert like the garden of Hashem"(Yeshayahu 51:3).

Chag Sameach, Shabbat Shalom

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From: RABBI LIPMAN PODOLSKY
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A Matter of Direction

"Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, return, each of you to her mother's house'... She kissed them, and they raised their voice and wept. And they said, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' But Naomi said, 'Turn back my daughters...' They raised their voice and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Rus (Ruth) clung to her... (Rus 1:8-14)."

Two sisters, Moabite princesses, begged tearfully to return with Naomi to the Holy Land. Rus and Orpah appeared identical, both emotionally and spiritually. Yet, apparently, there is some subtle distinction. Indeed, what is the difference between a hug and a kiss? Are they not both expressions of love?

We read Megillas Rus on Shavuot -- the holiday on which we relive Kabbalas HaTorah (the acceptance of the Torah) -- because Rus is the paradigm of such a Kabbalah. From Rus we learn how to approach Sinai and receive the Torah.

Orpah kissed Naomi. Orpah, it appears, is symbolic of an "almost" Kabbalas HaTorah. Her name (sometimes spelled Horpah [e.g. Shmuel II 21:16]) implies a loosening of the grip, letting go ever so slightly. Rus, conversely, clung to Naomi. She held on with all her might. Orpah gave Naomi a kiss good-bye. She let go. But Torah, as we know, is "a Tree of Life to those who grasp it (Mishlei 3:18)."

True, the divergence was diminutive. Both expressed their love. Nevertheless it is here that their paths parted. Orpah had changed direction. Orpah -- as her name connotes -- had turned away from Torah (Oref is the back of the neck - Medrash Rus Rabba 2:9).

Perhaps, in the short term, the distinction was not so apparent. After all, they were still standing right next to each other. But with the passage of time, the further they continued on their distinct paths, the further apart they grew. The real difference became manifest only after many years.

From Rus descended Dovid HaMelech (King David); Orpah gave birth to Goliath (Goliath) (Medrash Zuta, Rus 1). Dovid symbolizes unswerving Kabbalas HaTorah. Goliath personifies Anti-Kabbalas HaTorah. They were diametrically opposed.

"He [Goliath] presented himself for forty days (Shmuel I 17:16) -- Said Rabi Yochanan, this corresponds [opposes] the forty days during which the Torah was given (Sotah 42b)." Goliath stood in direct contradiction to the very notion of Kabbalas HaTorah.

Thus it makes perfect sense that Goliath eventually fell into Dovid's hands. This was the culmination of the divergence of the paths of Rus and Orpah. "Said HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Let the descendant of the one who kissed fall into the hands of the descendant of the one who hugged (Sotah 42b)."

As the Maharal explains: Because Orpah appeared so similar to Rus, possessing similar potential, by rejecting her calling, she revealed that she was the direct antithesis. Thus Orpah's descendant succumbed to the scion of Rus. So close, but yet so far.

What was the nature of Rus's Kabbalas HaTorah? "Rus said, 'Do not urge me to leave you... for where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people are my people and your G-d is my G-d; where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried...' (Rus 1:16-17)." Rus became virtually one with the Torah of Naomi. She had no reality outside of Torah.

Such a sincere and total Kabbalah was not easy. Remember, Rus was a princess. To sacrifice all worldly comforts and live the humble life of a beggar would challenge even the most ardent believer. Such a decision requires fortitude, conviction, and self-sacrifice. Thus, "[Naomi] saw that she [Rus] was determined to go with her... (v. 18)." Nothing could stand in her way.

It's not easy to decide to do what one needs to do; to do what one knows is right. Effort must be made; war must be waged against materialism, against laziness, against cognitive dissonance.

This is the Kabbalas HaTorah of Rus -- to become one with Torah. "Hashem, the Torah, and the Jewish people are all one (Zohar)!"

Orpah, undoubtedly, assumed that she would be "all right". After all, she had *almost* decided to stay. She too was a strong believer. She even gave a parting kiss, a final expression of her undying love. The problem is, with Kabbalas HaTorah, it has to be a genuine acceptance. An "almost"-Kabbalah such as Orpah's is a sure recipe for downfall. Indeed, in the end, it became clear that it was an Anti-Kabbalah after all.

It's not enough to want to be OK. A person has to decide -- a genuine, heartfelt decision. Let it be clear: It's not a difference between good and better. It's the difference between Emmes and Shekker; between Dovid and Goliath.

Between Kabbalas HaTorah, and Anti-Kabbalas HaTorah.

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From: SHLOMO KATZ [SMTP:skatz@torah.org] Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Shavuot Hamaayan/The Torah Spring is pleased to announce*** the publication of "The Haftarah: Laws, Customs & History" by Shlomo Katz, editor of Hamaayan. This 222 page work looks in depth at one of the least appreciated parts of the Shabbat and Yom Tov service. The \$15 price includes shipping within the U.S. All proceeds benefit Hamaayan. For information: email skatz@torah.org Shavuot 6-7 Sivan 5760 June 9-10, 2000 Sponsored by The Siegman family on the yahrzeit of Avraham Eliyahu ben Shalom Zelig Perl a"h

Shabbat's Learning: Yoma 1:2-3 Orach Chaim 301:46-48 Daf Yomi (Bavli): Ketubot 72

R' Meir Leibush Malbim z"l (19th century rabbi of Bucharest and other cities) writes:

Rambam writes in Moreh Nevochim ("Guide to the Perplexed") that there are three views regarding the origin of the world. Some believe that it is very ancient, having formed itself at some time in the past when conditions were ripe. A second group believes that some higher being created the world, but did so with matter that existed previously. The Torah view, in contrast, is that G-d formed the world "yesh mai'ayin" / "something out of nothing," not because any outside conditions required it, but simply because He so chose.

Rambam also cites three views regarding the nature of prophecy. Some believe that a person need only prepare himself, and prophecy will come on its own. Others believe that even after one has prepared himself, prophecy will come only if and when G-d chooses. Finally,

there are those who believe that no preparation is required, for G-d alone determines who His prophets will be. Note how each view of prophecy roughly parallels one of the views of creation in regard to whether G-d acts alone, circumstances act alone, or the two act in combination.

Interestingly, while the Torah's view is that G-d created the world from nothing, needing and receiving no help from any other source, the Torah's view of prophecy is that "G-d does not reveal his presence except on one who is wise, rich, brave, and humble" (Nedarim 38a). In other words, prophecy requires preparation. Why?

Although Hashem created the world from nothing, He decreed that never again would such a miracle occur. Henceforth, He would work through nature. Thus Chazal tell us that such miracles as the splitting of the Red Sea were ordained at the time of creation (see Chazal's comment on Shemot 14:27.) Why? Because if Hashem would repeatedly change creation it would call into question creation's perfection and (G-d forbid) that of G-d himself.

One time in history, prophecy was given to those who were not prepared for it, i.e., when Hashem appeared to Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai. A new creation was brought into being for their benefit: Prophecy without prerequisites. Why?

Chazal say that Hashem did leave one aspect of creation imperfect. As Rashi (Bereishit 1:31) explains, G-d made the world's permanent existence contingent on one thing. If Bnei Yisrael had not accepted the Torah when it was offered at Har Sinai, the world would have returned to its state before creation. Without Torah, the world cannot exist. It turns out, therefore, that not until the great revelation at Har Sinai was the work of creation finished. It is therefore fitting that just as the world was created by Hashem without preparation, so, when Bnei Yisrael brought it to completion, they should merit a similarly miraculous gift.

(Eretz Chemdah: Drush L'Chag Shavuot)

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MIDEI SHABBOS BY RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER
Shavuos

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Gifts for the Poor

In the parshah of the Mo'adim (Emor 23:22), the Torah issues a command to leave the last corner of one's field standing for the poor to take (Pei'oh), as well as the loose grains of corn that fall during the harvesting (Leket - as long as it is less than three grains that fall together). These two mitzvos per se may well be major mitzvos, typical of the Torah's humane character and unique sensitivity towards the needs of the poor. But why, asks Rashi, does it choose to place them here, in the middle of the Parshah of the Yomim-tovim, with Pesach and Shevu'os on the one side and Rosh ha'Shonoh, Yom Kippur and Succos on the other?

Rashi answers that the Torah, setting out to stress the importance of Matnos Aniym (gifts for the poor), considers the fulfillment of this mitzvah as if one had built the Beis ha'Mikdosh and brought Korbonos there (bearing in mind, that the Torah is discussing here the special Korbonos brought on the various Yomim Tovim. Rashi's answer however, is seemingly inadequate, since neither does the Torah make any reference to the Beis ha'Mikdosh in this parshah, nor is it clear as to why the Torah inserts Matnos Aniym here in the Parshah of Yom-tov. It might just as well have juxtaposed them to the Parshah of Korbonos in Vayikro, where the message would have been more precise.

The Ohr ha'Chayim therefore offers a different approach. He explains that the Torah is coming to negate the contention that the field which produced the barley for the Omer on Pesach and the wheat for the Shte ha'Lechem on Shevu'os (both mentioned just a few pesukim earlier) are Hekdesh and are therefore exempt from Leket, Shikchoh and Pei'oh. Mentioning them here teaches us clearly that one is obliged to fulfill these mitzvos even in those fields from which the Omer and the Shte ha'Lechem were picked.

The Seforno links Matnos Aniym to our parshah in the following way. The Torah has just discussed the Omer and the Shte ha'Lechem, he points out, two

mitzvos which result in a blessing of one's corn and fruit harvests, respectively, as the Gemoro explains in Rosh ha'Shonoh (16a). It therefore saw fit to insert the mitzvos concerning gifts to the poor here, because, through their performance, one ensures that, once the crops have grown, they do not rot or get stolen, ensuring the continuity of the Divine blessing. The one results in a blessing that ensures their growth, the other in a blessing that ensures a successful harvest.

The Meshech Chochmah presents a most original idea to resolve Rashi's problem. One may well have thought, he explains, that the giving of the Torah was only necessary for the Chukim, the group of mitzvos that defy human logic. Mitzvos which are easily understood, and which the human mind could have worked out on its own, would not perhaps, have required "Kabolos ha'Torah", since they are self-understood. The Torah therefore follows Shevu'os with a set of mitzvos which is self-understood, to teach us that they too, are included in the Divine command.

The reason for this, he explains, is because, if their fulfillment were left to human logic, there would be not the slightest guarantee that we would perform even the most primitive humane acts. There is no guarantee that a human being, left to his own devices, will perform any good deeds, and there is not even any guarantee that, without the Torah's backing, he will not sink to the lowest levels of barbarity - theft, rape and murder. This is because, without Torah, human beings are nothing more than sophisticated animals, who are quite capable of perpetrating acts of cruelty, which no animal would conceive of doing. Without Torah, man is a scheming animal; with it, he can rise to the level of an angel.

And besides, even mitzvos that are self-evident would remain no more than good deeds, and it is the fact that they are ordained by G-d that transforms them into sacred acts - mitzvos - as the text of the birchos ha'mitzvos clearly indicates.

Why did the Torah then pick specifically this set of mitzvos to teach us this lesson? Because the performance of Matnos Aniym coincides with Shevu'os, making it the obvious choice. (Come to think of it, this connection between Shevu'os and Matnos Aniym might even serve as an independent answer to Rashi's question.)

And finally, here is an answer of our own. Chazal have taught us that the entire world was built on Chesed, and it continues to exist on Chesed. Indeed, this is the key reason that the commentaries give for the reading of Megilas Rus on Shevu'os. Because all of Rus' incredible achievements were based on the outstanding acts of Chesed which she performed with her husband (both during his lifetime and after his death), and with her mother-in-law.

So the Torah saw fit to place the mitzvos of Matnos Aniym together with Matan Torah, to demonstrate that Kabbolas ha'Torah goes hand in hand with chesed.

*

Shevu'os Flashes
The Torah - Our Strength

The expression "be'etzem ha'yom ha'zeh" (on this very day) is mentioned twice in the Parshah of Yomim-tovim (in Emor), in connection with Shevu'os, and in connection with Yom Kipur (in Vayikro 23:21 and 28 respectively).

The first Luchos were given on Shevu'os, and the second, on Yom Kipur, representing the day that we accepted the Torah before we sinned, and the day that we accepted it after we sinned, as ba'alei teshuvah.

The strength of the Jewish people lies in the Torah, and their power of eternity was born on the day that they accepted the Torah at Har Sinai, and on the day when, after sinning, they did teshuvah and reaccepted it on Yom Kipur.

Perhaps that is why the Torah uses the term "be'etzem ha'yom ha'zeh" on both of these days, since it can also mean 'on the strength of this day' The strength of Yisroel lies in their ability to accept, on the one hand, and to come back after they have sinned, on the other.

*

Tikun Leil Shevu'os
Why do we study Torah all night on Shevu'os?

Because, according to the Medrash Tanchuma, G-d held the mountain over our heads to force us to accept the oral Torah (due to its limitless content or to its human composition, unlike the written Torah, which is both Divinely composed and limited).

It is well-known that the time to learn the written Torah is by day and the time to learn the oral Torah is by night (as the Medrash derives from Moshe on Har Sinai).

So we stay up all night to make up for our initial hesitation in accepting the oral Torah. Perhaps the term 'Tikun Leil Shevu'os' is a subtle hint that by learning Torah all night, we are achieving a Tikun (a rectification for that sin) on this Shevu'os night.

The better-known reason is based on the Medrash that Yisroel overslept on

Shevu'os morning, so we rectify that sin by staying awake all night and studying Torah.

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Kesuvos 66b

THE QUALITIES REQUIRED IN ORDER TO CONQUER THE JEWS
AGADAH: The Gemara says that when Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai saw the daughter of Nakdimon ben Gurion picking barley kernels from the dung of Yishmaelite's beasts, he said, "Happy is Yisrael, that when they are doing the will of Hashem, no nation or foreigner can overtake them, and when they are not doing the will of Hashem, He gives them over into the hands of the lowliest of the nations...." We see from here that when Hashem deems it necessary to punish the Jewish people, it is a lowly nation that conquers them.

However, this seems to contradict the Gemara in Chagigah (13b). The Gemara relates that Hashem enabled Nevuchadnezar to conquer the whole world so that the nations would not mock the Jewish people and say that Hashem gave His people over to a lowly nation. A similar statement appears in Gitin (56b), "Whoever oppresses Yisrael becomes the head [of a nation]."

ANSWER: The Gemara here in Kesuvos means that Hashem makes the Jewish people subject to a lowly nation *morally*. That nation might be great in power, but it uncivilized and all of the other nations look down upon it. Hashem does not want the Jewish people to learn the ways of the nation that conquers them, and therefore He makes a morally low nation conquer them so that the Jewish people themselves will be disgusted by the ways of that nation and not learn from them.

Nevuchadnezar was the ruler of the nation of Kasdim when he conquered Yisrael. The MAHARSHA points out that the Kasdim were indeed a nation that was uncivilized and looked down upon by the other nations, as described in the verse (Yeshayah 23:13, see Rashi there), and the Gemara (Sukah 52b, which says the same of the Yishmaelim). People who would act in an uncouth manner were referred to as "Bavliyim" (Yoma 66b).

However, when it comes to national conquest (and not just the humbling of individual Jews, as with Nakdimon's daughter), Hashem does not deliver the Jewish people to the hands of a militarily weak nation so that other nations should not mock the Jewish people. Rather, Hashem gives them over to a morally low nation which nevertheless is a nation of great military power. (M. Kornfeld -- See also Insights to Moed Katan 18:1.)

Kesuvos 67

WHY NAKDIMON'S ACTS OF TZEDAKAH DID NOT PROTECT HIS FAMILY AGADAH: The Gemara explains that Nakdimon's daughter suffered a terrible loss of fortune even though her father gave tremendous amounts of Tzedakah. The Gemara asks how such a fate could befall the offspring of such a righteous man, who used to spread out carpets of expensive wool upon which he walked and then distributed to poor people. The Gemara answers that "he did it for his honor." (Perhaps he had the poor people roll out the carpets for him in return for taking the carpets when he was finished.) Because of this, the merit of his acts of Tzedakah was not able to help his descendants in the difficult times that ensued.

Why did Nakdimon's merit fail to protect his offspring? The Gemara in Pesachim (8a; see Insights there) says that a person who gives a Sela to Tzedakah and says, "I am giving this Sela to Tzedakah in order that my [ill] son should recuperate and live," is considered a "Tzadik Gamur." Even though the giver has personal motives, his act of Tzedakah is considered to have been fulfilled in a full and complete manner! How, then, could Nakdimon's acts of Tzedakah not have been considered complete acts of Tzedakah to protect his children? (MAHARSHA)

ANSWERS: (a) The MAHARSHA answers that although an act of Tzedakah that is done for personal motives is considered a full Mitzvah, if it is done for the sake of *personal honor* the act is indeed flawed. Personal honor detracts from the Mitzvah of Tzedakah and makes the Mitzvah incomplete.

Why, though, should this be so?

1. The CHAFETZ CHAIM (cited in Chafetz Chaim Al haTorah) writes that honor is not a physical experience, but a spiritual experience. Even though no physical pleasure can replace the spiritual pleasure that Hashem gives to a person as reward in Olam ha'Ba for his performance of Mitzvos, nevertheless experiencing the spiritual pleasure of honor in this world can reduce the reward that a person would otherwise receive for his performance of Mitzvos. Accordingly, the words of the Maharsha are easily understood. The honor that Nakdimon received from his performance of the Mitzvah of Tzedakah replaced the reward that he and his descendants would have otherwise received, which includes the Peros (fruits) of the Mitzvah of Tzedakah that they would have received in this world.

2. The HAFLA'AH and BEN YEHOYADA explain that the honor Nakdimon received from his acts of Tzedakah was not a byproduct of the Mitzvah, but it was as if the money that he gave for Tzedakah was being used to *purchase* him that honor by his giving it in such a public manner. As such, it was as if he was conducting a business deal -- he was paying money to the poor in order to purchase honor. He was effectively buying honor.

It is true that when a person gives away his money with intention that Hashem do for him a particular favor in return, his act of Tzedakah is still considered a full Mitzvah. However, since Nakdimon's money was given away to purchase honor directly (and not in order to merit compensation through Divine intervention, like the person who gave Tzedakah in order to merit the recuperation of his child), his Mitzvah of Tzedakah was lacking. This cannot even be compared to a person who does Mitzvos so that he should be honored by others as a righteous person. In such a case his act is not purchasing for himself honor; the honor comes as a byproduct at a later time. Here, though, the act itself was an act of acquiring honor.

(b) The CHAFETZ CHAIM, cited by the KOVETZ SHI'URIM, explains that Nakdimon lived at the time of the Churban of the Beis ha'Mikdash, like the Gemara says in Gitin (56a). That was a time of divine wrath (what the Gemara calls "Idan Rischah"). The Gemara in Menachos (41a) says that although, normally, a person is not held accountable for not doing more Mitzvos than he does (as long as he does not transgress any Aveiros), during a time of Divine anger Hashem does punish a person for not trying to do more Mitzvos. Similarly, at the time of the Churban, which was certainly a time of Divine anger, Nakdimon was punished for not giving Tzedakah in an even better manner, although he fulfilled the Mitzvah of Tzedakah in an acceptable manner. That is why his descendants were not protected.

(c) The HAFLA'AH suggests that the fate of poverty does not always come as a punishment. Rather, it is part of the nature of the world for some families to become wealthy and some to become poor, based on their particular Mazal, as the Gemara says in Shabbos (151b; see also Ta'anis 25a).

The Mitzvah of Tzedakah can save a person from punishment, but it cannot save a person from enduring the fate that he was destined to receive. In order to change his destiny, he has to be perfect in every way and he must have very great merits, like Tosfos says in Shabbos (156a; DH Ein Mazal), and one must give Tzedakah entirely Lishmah with no ulterior motives.

67b

GIVING UP ONE'S LIFE IN ORDER NOT TO EMBARRASS SOMEONE
AGADAH: The Gemara teaches that it is better for a person to jump into a fiery furnace than to embarrass another person in public. The Gemara records a number of incidents that demonstrate this precept.

The Gemara tells us in many places (such as Kesuvos 19a) that there are three Aveiros for which a person must give up his life and not transgress: Avodah Zarah (idolatry), Giluy Arayos (immorality), and Shefichus Damim (murder). If, as our Gemara says, a person is required to jump into a furnace in order to avoid embarrassing someone, why is the Aveirah of embarrassing someone not included in that list?

ANSWERS: (a) TOSFOS in Sotah (10b) explains that the list includes only those Aveiros that are mentioned explicitly in the Torah. The Aveirah of embarrassing someone and the requirement to avoid it at all costs -- although it is derived from the incident with Tamar and Yehudah -- is not an explicitly written Mitzvah in the Torah, and thus it is not included in the list.

(b) RABEINU YONAH (Sha'arei Teshuvah 3:139) explains that the three Aveiros are *general categories*, each of which includes Toldos, or subcategories of Aveiros for which one must also give up one's life. For example, a subcategory of Avodah Zarah is using leafs of a tree of Avodah Zarah in order to heal oneself. (See also RAMBAN in Milchamos to Sanhedrin 74a, end of chapter 9, and Pesachim 25a and Insights to Pesachim 25:1.) Rabeinu Yonah explains that embarrassing one's friend is a subcategory of Shefichus Damim, like the Gemara says in Bava Metzia (58b). Therefore, it *is* included in the list, as a subcategory of Shefichus Damim.

(c) The ME'IRI (Sotah 10b, Berachos 43b) implies that although the Gemara

compares embarrassing one's friend to killing him and says that one must jump into a furnace and not embarrass one's friend, the Gemara is not to be understood literally. Rather, the Gemara is emphasizing to us the severity of embarrassing another person ("Derech Tzachus v'He'arah"). According to the Me'iri, the Gemara might mean that a person should subject himself to discomfort rather than embarrass another person, like Mar Ukva and his wife did. It is not required, though, to actually give up one's life in order to avoid embarrassing someone. (Whether or not it is *permitted* to give up one's life in order to avoid embarrassing someone, if one is not required to do so, is subject to a Machlokes; see Insights to Kesuvos 3:3(c)).

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The Weekly Daf #330 Ketubot 67 - 73 By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

How outstanding the Sage Mar Ukva was in his performance of the mitzvah of tzedaka, charity, is illustrated by one incident: Each year on the day before Yom Kippur he would distribute the generous sum of 400 zuz to a poor family in his neighborhood. One year the son he sent to deliver the money returned and reported that he was convinced that the family did not require assistance. When asked what he observed to create such an impression, he replied that he saw them indulging in the luxury of spraying their home with old wine to give it a fragrance. Upon hearing this, Mar Ukva doubled the amount he had intended to give and sent it, for he realized that if the recipients were so desperately in need of even such comforts then their dependence was even greater than he had anticipated.

Just before his death, Mar Ukva asked to see the record of his charitable gifts. Although he had given away an extraordinarily large sum, he was concerned that he had not done enough, exclaiming: "I take along such meager provisions for the long journey ahead of me." He thereupon distributed half of his fortune to charity.

How could he do so, asks the gemara, when we learned earlier in our Mesechta (50a) that the Sages prohibited a person from giving away more than a fifth of his resources to tzedaka? This rule, explains the gemara, applies only during one's lifetime, because such excessive generosity may impoverish him and make him dependent on charity. When one is about to leave the world and wishes to gain an extra measure of merit for his afterlife, no such restriction applies.

Why did Mar Ukva give away only half, and not all his fortune, in order to better prepare for his "long journey?" The answer is to be found in the attitude of our Sages towards disinheriting children. The Sages, says the gemara (Bava Batra 133b), were displeased with one who gave away his wealth to others and left nothing for his children. Mar Ukva therefore struck a balance between caring for his soul and for his heirs by giving away only half.

Is the formula this sage used the only one, or may one give away even more? Rema (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 249:1) rules that at the time of death one may give away as much as he wishes. How do we reconcile this ruling with Mar Ukva's caution to leave half for his heirs?

One possibility is that the text which Rema had in our gemara read that Mar Ukva gave away his entire fortune, a text which the Birkei Yosef suggests was the one known to some earlier commentaries. Another possibility is the one which emerges from the Bayit Chadash (Bach) in his commentary on the Tur. Mar Ukva gave away so much in his lifetime that there was no need for him to give away everything before his death. Someone who has not been that generous, however, may give away everything for the sake of his soul. This is not considered disinheriting because he is not giving away to enrich others but to save himself.

* Ketubot 67b

TAKING LIFE AND DEATH TO HEART

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of celebration, for this is the end of every man and thus will the living take it to heart." (Kohelet 7:1)

Rabbi Meir explained the practical application of King Solomon's advice in this fashion: The living will take to heart the things that go along with death -- one who eulogizes others will himself be eulogized, one who buries others will himself be buried, one who cries out in sorrow for others will be wept for, one who escorts others will be escorted, and one who carries others to their final resting place will be carried by others.

Rashi understands this gemara as a lesson in the reciprocity which runs through human affairs. Don't feel uncomfortable at having to eulogize another,

because you too will be eulogized -- and so it is with all the other expressions of respect to the dead.

This interpretation blends in beautifully with the preceding gemara which explains that a man who forbids his wife to go to funerals is compelled to divorce her, because he is denying her the opportunity to gain the respect of others when she dies.

Maharsha, however, suggests a very different approach. It is important for every living person to take to heart the fact that he is not immortal and that the "house of mourning" is the inevitable "end of every person." Such an awareness disciplines a person, but it is difficult to always reflect on human mortality. If a person involves himself, however, with those actions connected with death, he increases his awareness that he too will someday reach his own end. When he eulogizes or helps bury another, he will inevitably take to heart that what he is doing now for another will someday be done for him.

This same section of Maharsha contains another interesting observation. The preference King Solomon gives to participating in a funeral over participation in a celebration refers to a celebration which is not connected to a mitzvah such as a wedding. In an earlier part of our Mesechta (17a) we learned that a funeral procession must give the right of way to a wedding procession, an indication that celebration of such a mitzvah takes precedence even to the "house of mourning."

* Ketubot 72a
