

Mazal Tov to Ayelet & Aaron Leibtag on the birth of a son & to the proud grandparents Karyn & Shalom Feinberg

Shabbat Shalom (OU.org)

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A Family's Last Shabbat in Gush Katif

By Menachem Persoff

Through a Father's Eyes

I'm sitting in my son's house in Neve Dekalim. It is Erev Shabbat, perhaps the last "normal" Shabbat in this very cozy Yishuv of 750 families, the 'capital' of Gush Katif. Outside, the wind is kicking around the sand, as if it has nothing else to do, perhaps in despair. In front of the house, a couple of children of the Bnei Menashe community are figuring out how to climb into a tree house overlooking this mild, back street on the edges of this amazing settlement.

Strewed over the table at which I am sitting in this small but very inviting home (with the aroma of the cholent signaling the approach of Shabbat) are papers distributed over the last few weeks by this and that source. They call on the residents to stand firm in their resolve:

"In the next three weeks be sure to stock up with the following supplies..."

"Thank you for your sterling efforts to rouse the spirits of Israel during these hard times..."

"Our aim is to strengthen Emunah in Hakadosh Baruch Hu..."

Among the various instructions, is found a clue as to what awaits these unbelievable people, staunch in their faith in Hashem, their love for Eretz Yisrael, and overall concern for Am Yisrael. For example: "Photograph the police so that your grandchildren will know who threw them out of their homes!"

My wife and I traveled to Gush Katif to join our son, Avi, his wife Shira, and their daughter Emunah, together with our married daughter Michal's family - and to meet up again with our 17-year old daughter Dina who had already spent several days in Neve Dekalim with hundreds of other youth. The goal: to show our identification with the cause, with an eye to helping out wherever possible. In all, we were told, some 5000 people swelled the ranks of the 8000 residents of the Gush. Who knows how they all got in?!

We had an Ishur, permission to spend Shabbat with our children. (Just think!) Consequently, we passed through the three check posts on the way with little trouble. Suddenly, to our right Gaza loomed up, the hundreds of squalid buildings on the horizon reminding us of the bigger picture and to whom all of this abandoned area was to be transferred. I shuddered. Across the bridge into the Gush an Israeli tank kicked up dust as if to offer up a last few moments of darkness to confuse the incoming visitors.

We make it first to Shirat Hayam where my niece's son (to be quoted in the Jerusalem Post as 'lanky 16-year old Ilan') picks up the care package sent by his grandmother in Jerusalem. "I've been volunteering in the vegetable packing," he says, with a bravado look on his straggly face, representative of the scores of kids roaming around in this barb-wired haven on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The girl-soldier at the gate seems not to notice as she tirelessly lets in the incoming cars, as if the Queen of England invited everyone to a Gala Ball.

Finally, we enter the gates of Neve Dekalim. Who could believe that the Gush is about to undergo a siege? People are going about their business, to and fro; cars are weaving in and out to avoid the throngs. But there were those who went in the other direction. For only that morning, Avi's neighbors left in the early light, without even the whisper of farewell. Only a half-hour later, the first squatter settled in the abandoned house. He recognized me when we arrived: "Menachem!" he exclaimed, "Do you remember that I was one of the founders of the army volunteer program Sar'el? Now, I look at their cynical use of the soldiers. I'm shattered."

Meanwhile, there is a fight over another desolate apartment that I have been designated to clean up in anticipation of my daughter's arrival. I'm clearing up the debris, feel like I'm prying into someone else's lives. Among the broken toys, broken AC unit and food remains that I'm sweeping, I discover that the tenants had been out of work. For, in my hands, I'm holding their record cards at the unemployment office in Gush Katif. Now: no job; no home. Even these cards have been discarded.

Another family has turned up. "We were promised this house," they exclaim. Soon a compromise is reached. In days like this it doesn't pay to argue. "You sleep here; we'll sleep there." Now, the electricity has to be connected to the next house and

the one water tap that works checked out. And a lot of patience is summoned for the ten children about to trip over one another.

It is Shabbat. We are in shul. So are thousands of others packed into the main sanctuary, the annex, the courtyard outside, and the Sephardi synagogue. What a sight! What power! The Rav stands up to talk. Words of inspiration flow: "Who could have believed the degree of spiritual awakening among the people, the transformation that has overcome both young and old in the country in the last few weeks? We must not forget that whatever the outcome, there is but one King that we serve..."

We sit around the Shabbat dinner table marveling at what is going on. How, in the face of such anguish, can a community hold itself so high? Look at the people of Israel. We looked back to Erev Shabbat when two girls from Bnei Akiva brought in cakes for Shabbat, and others brought some beautifully illustrated children's books of animals in Gush Katif to raise money for the cause, and another offered flowers with a message of hope... Non-stop was the outpouring of love, concern, and brotherhood, from all directions.

It is now Shabbat morning. We read the fraught words of the prophet in the Haftara and cannot but dwell on the meaning of Shabbat Chazon at this time and place. Soon, however, after the Tefilla, the somber tones dissipate as we join in the celebration of a Brit Mila in the Bet Knesset Merkazi. When the father of the baby boy cries out Shema Yisrael, the response of the Tzibbur is thunderous. Are you sure this is not Yom Kippur? - I ask myself.

As the crowds tumbled out the shul, everyone gravitated to the communal kiddush for long-time residents and visitors alike. In shuls around the country kiddushim were held in honor of Gush Katif. No less than 150 full-sized kugels had been donated, just a fraction of the many gifts that found their way to Gush Katif that Shabbat. Harav Meir Yisrael Lau shlita was among the guests. He spoke about the significance of the baby's new name Levanon Menachem, alluding to the Bet Hamikdash and the Mashiach (may they come speedily in our days).

The shadows are falling on Neve Dekalim. I escort my son-in-law to Ma'ariv at my son's yeshiva, Torat Hachayim. Now it is time for Eichah. Now we hear the voice of Rav Tal, the Rosh Yeshiva, like the Shevarim sound of the Shofar - broken. It takes forever to hear the lines of the Eicha dirge, as one by one they come alive. The Rav is weeping; Jerusalem mourns her glory. Soon the talmidim are crying and real tears splash on the floor of the yeshiva. There is a break in the rendition as all one hears are the moans and sighs. Is this real? So this is what Tisha B'av is really meant to be? Or are we also crying for Gush Katif, for our lost pride, for all that we could have done but fell short?

Somehow, it is over. No one says a word. We have just experienced something too authentic to be talked about lightly. Silently, we return home. We sit around on the floor - a precious family moment. As we awake from the reverie, we recall that there will be a town-hall meeting of all the residents of Gush Katif this Motzei Shabbat, the night of Tisha B'av, 5765. It is the last opportunity for all the residents of Gush Katif to assemble as one.

Avi blowing shofar seconds before the eviction I pick my way among the thousands who have come to listen. The date does not lose its impression on me. Hashem chose this day to get even with us for the sin of the Spies: Were we not diligent enough in our love for the Land, for each other, for G-d? One by one the speakers deliver their message about the righteousness of the cause, about the Kiddush Hashem attached to the campaign, about our respect for those who felt they had to leave, about the need to be firm in the face of psychological and physical abuse. Most of all, steadfastness must not be accompanied with violence of any kind: the soldiers and police are not the enemy.

I am amazed. No one is shouting, no one is catcalling. Everyone should work together (easier, of course, said than done, given the variegated composition of the thousands of 'visitors'.) Everyone duly claps as the righteousness of the cause is espoused. But most impressive was the realization that even when it is all over (it shouldn't happen!), the struggle must continue. The way ahead will be difficult; everyone will have his station; every family will ultimately do what it has to do. And meanwhile, the officials in each yishuv will organize life, will delegate tasks and the "home front" will cooperate in complicating the evacuation process.

In many ways, the leaders of the struggle are correct when they claim that "we have won." A lot has been achieved. Now we are finally attending to some of the important questions regarding the meaning of a Jewish state and what our role and responsibilities are to the wider K'lal. Now, more of the Israeli public understand what the struggle means.

Before leaving, our little family group sings Ani Ma'amin. It seems to sum up everything experienced in these two memorable days. We leave Gush Katif with

mixed feelings, leaving behind Avi, Shira and little Emunah together with our representatives, one daughter and one son-in-law. We also leave behind a determined group of people, the likes of which this part of the world has not seen since the classic days of the Yishuv. We leave a mixed group, most of whom will handle things responsibly, while a few might let the cause down with thoughtless actions.

Leaving forever Our car rolls over the bridge once again, this time on the way to the Kissufim crossing. Suddenly, a sentence jumps at me from our Tachanun prayer: "Spare your people, Hashem, and do not let your inheritance be for a reproach so that the nations should rule over them." I let out a sigh and we continue on our way.

What Next?

It is now a week later. We can sit shiva for Gush Katif. The last Sifrei Torah were taken out today. They also came to remove the contents of Avi and Shira's house from what remains of Neve Dekalim.

I am on my way to see the tent camp near Netivot, set up by the evacuees from Atzmona - Jewish refugees in a Jewish state. Their only sin is that they want to stay together as a community. My children are "safe" in a hotel in Upper Nazareth, that is, until they are taken from the hotel with the rest of the yeshiva on Erev Shabbat.

My daughter Dina recovered from her two-days and night ordeal in the Bet Knesset in Neve Dekalim. One thousand girls in the Askenazi shul sat, prayed, sang, and listened to shiurim until the girl-soldiers came for them. It took five of them to separate my daughter from her friend and take her to the waiting bus. Nowadays, she is busy running to the Kotel to meet the evacuees, entertaining some of their children in a hotel in Yerushalayim, or visiting one of her terror-victim summer campers from Netzarim who lost four family members in one incident.

It is time now for the recriminations and the soul-searching. How did we let this happen? What must we do on a personal level? Was our Avodat Hashem found wanting? The wonder we felt at the reactions of our young people; where did such ideological youth spring from? How can we now prevent their disillusionment? We hold tight to a determination to rebuild shattered dreams - what kind of societies should we build? It is a time to pray. Is Hashem listening? It is time to reach out. Did we closet ourselves too much from the rest of the country? It is the time to pick up the pieces.

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A time to reach out

by Jonathan Rosenblum

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In the long span of Jewish history, the uprooting of 8,500 Jews from Gaza will not rank as one of the worst tragedies, though it was unique in that those doing the uprooting were themselves Jews. This was not 1492 and the expulsion from Spain or the Holocaust. And the attempts by some in the settler community to appropriate symbols of those earlier tragedies - yellow Jewish stars, concentration camp uniforms - and by implication, and sometimes explicitly, to cast the soldiers executing the evacuation orders in the role of Hitler's S.S. troops, only infuriated secular Israelis.

Yet if the expulsion from Gaza was not one of the worst tragedies in Jewish history, the trauma inflicted on the Gaza residents and indeed on the entire national religious community, is nevertheless overwhelming. Rarely has a democratically elected government treated a part of its own population so harshly.

The loss for those uprooted from their homes took place on many levels - personal, communal, theological, and sociological. The faith in the imminent redemptive process that has animated the national religious community since Israel's miraculous expansion into the Jewish people's historic heartland in 1967 has now suffered an immense blow.

At the same time, the community's sense of itself as the vanguard of Israel society, widely admired as the exemplars of the true Zionist faith, can no longer be sustained. No longer can the national religious world delude itself that only a handful of narrow societal elites stand between it and the realization of a far more Jewish state in Israel. The settlers feel rejected and spit out by a large portion of Israel. And the sense of betrayal and having been stabbed in the back runs very deep.

Secular journalist Ari Shavit, who views the Gaza settlement as misbegotten from the start, even as he is filled with considerable sympathy and admiration for the settlers, captured their feelings of bewilderment in the face of betrayal: "They have built a kind of model of Zionism in the sand. . . . A cruel and naïve Zionism. A Zionism . . . that protects itself with reckless abandon and buries its dead with

deep devotion. And maintains on the dunes of Gaza beach a form of the lost Israeli soul to which Israel is itself already foreign. Israel itself no longer wants it."

The trauma is so much greater for having been inflicted by the state and army in which the settlers so ardently believed. Shavit again: "The soil bound Israelis of Gush Katif could not believe that the digital Israelis of Tel Aviv would throw them out like an object no one wants. And would send against them the army in which they believed so much; would send into their homes people in the uniform they loved so much."

Not only have the Gaza settlers witnessed the destruction of their lives' work, they are without any clue as to what the future holds for them. An army of twenty public relations professionals working for SELA, the body charged with overseeing arrangements with those uprooted from Gaza, has skillfully spread the message in Israel and abroad that all the settlers walked out of Gaza with checks for hundreds of thousands of dollars, an amount sufficient to reestablish themselves anywhere in Israel.

That is a seriously distorted picture. Those who were renting homes are entitled to only modest checks based on the number of years living there. Most of those were teachers or otherwise employed by the Gush Katif Regional Council, and now have neither homes nor jobs. Even those who had large homes - in many cases 250 square meters or more - with lawns and gardens, will, in the best case, be relocated to caravans of 60-90 square meters, for the next two to three years. Those caravans have no room for their ovens or refrigerators, which will be stored for years on Negev army bases, in containers where the internal temperatures are estimated to reach close to 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Far worse, from their point of view, there is no room for their Shabbos tables or their seforim. It will be a long time before they can again host for Shabbos their married children and grandchildren, who, in many cases, were living right next door until last week.

But the image of the generously compensated settlers misses the point in a far more fundamental way. They never wanted the checks in the first place. The idea of providing checks and leaving the former residents of the Gaza Strip to make their own arrangements was to make life easier for the government.

Though the settlers, by and large, refused to carry on individual negotiations with SELA, on the grounds that one does not discuss one's own funeral arrangements, from the beginning they made clear through their legal representative, the Legal Forum for the Land of Israel, that their primary concern was that they be able to remain together with the neighbors with whom they have built their entire lives together over the last 37 years.

The Gaza Strip settlements were not suburban housing developments; they were faith communities of people animated by a shared vision and depth of commitment. Together they built lush, verdant communities out of the sand dunes, and together they mourned many sons and daughters killed in battle and terrorist attacks. Many of the younger generation have never known any other home. And their most fervent wish was that they could remain together.

Those hopes, too, now appear dashed. According to Yitzchak Meron, an attorney with the Legal Forum, less than ten per cent of the Gaza settlers know what their final housing solutions will be. The largest site planned for the refugees on the Nitzanim sand dunes south of Askalon will hold at most 300 (of the 1500 families uprooted from Gaza), and likely take 3 years to complete. In addition, the government inserted a contract clause that if it does not secure all the necessary permits by the end of the year, the whole deal can be cancelled.

Worse, no more than one-third of those removed from their homes even have temporary housing solutions. The government purchased less than 500 caravans all total, and has explicitly said that it will purchase no more.

As of the start of the evacuation, SELA had procured only a thousand hotel rooms around the country for 1,000 families, many of them very large, with no place to go. Only at the last minute, did it scramble to come up with another 1,500 rooms. The exiles from Gaza were shepherded onto busses with no idea where they were going, and, in many cases, when they arrived, they were told that there were no rooms for them. Even at the first stage, the different communities were split up. Residents of Netzarim, for instance, are now housed in eight different hotels in Jerusalem.

Those who did have rooms soon realized that in the haste and circumstances of their departure, they had failed to take even the most basic necessities - soap, toothpaste, diapers - and that they had no place to wash their laundry.

With the school year about to begin, parents have no idea where their children will be attending school. Even if the original ten day stays granted by SELA are extended, families will have to move a number of times in coming months, as the hotels fill up for the Yom Tovim. Those groups that found places for themselves in different dormitories around the country will also have to be relocated at the end of summer vacation. Psychologists have said that each of these moves is a separate trauma for the families already traumatized by the loss of their homes, support groups, and entire way of life.

The recitation of these heart-wrenching facts requires no explanation. Jews must know when other Jews are suffering. And particularly so those who believe in the uniqueness of every Jew and our common mission from Sinai.

But there is another reason as well for dwelling on the situation of those uprooted from Gaza. Now is a time for the chareidi community to reach out in full force to our fellow Jews. Whether we identified in the past with the Gaza settlement effort or not is irrelevant. Those who can learn a Tosofos can surely distinguish between identifying with the settler's cause and feeling their current suffering.

This is not just a matter of dropping money into a pushke, but of reaching out a personal hand – inviting families for Shabbos, offering to do laundry, taking kids to the zoo. The refugees have lost everything, and their entire worldview has been shaken to the core. Who knows what effect have an outstretched hand, a warm embrace, a friendly smile, a shared tear could have at this point.

Some in the chareidi community have already begun to do so. Yad Eliezer, which has received in the past hundreds of thousands of tons of potatoes from the Gush Katif farmers for poor families, was at the Jerusalem hotels immediately. So were Karlin-Stollin and other Chassidic groups. Rabbi Meir Porush has been living in Gush Katif in recent months, and he put his large Jerusalem organization to work on behalf of the refugees. (These examples are illustrative, not an exhaustive or complete list.)

But the chareidi community, which has produced so many entrepreneurs of chesed, has not yet produced its first such entrepreneur with respect to the refugees from Gaza. We should.

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OPPORTUNITIES Rabbi Berel Wein

The distressing events of the past two weeks here in Israel have left us all in a state of sadness and depression. No matter what one's opinion is regarding the government's policies, the events and pictures of the evictions from Gaza are burned into our minds in a tragic manner. Yet, in a perverse and perplexing sense, I believe these events present the religious community here in Israel, if not worldwide, with an opportunity. To a great extent, the ideal of traditional Zionism has waned. The grandchildren of the people who built Israel by settling the land, the people of choma umigdal – stockades and towers, creating new settlements overnight during the 1930' and 1940's – have given up on that ideal. In building a "democratic, Jewish" society here in Israel, large sections of the Israeli public have been demonized, excluded and alienated. No clear message of vision and hope has been articulated to the general public. The divisions in Israeli society are deeper and more pronounced than ever before. Young people in misguided idealism have turned violent against other Jews and those scars are bound to remain for many years, if not longer. Nowhere is heard an encouraging word nor are their many soothing voices heard in our society. The collapse of traditional Zionism and of land building leaves a void in the Israeli society. There is no common ideal that unites us and transcends our significant differences on matters of religious observance, political parties and social direction. Nature abhors a vacuum and this is true for society as well. Something will have to arise to fill that void. And this is where the opportunity for the religious community arises.

The religious community should state that it wishes to build a fair and just society, infused with Jewish Torah values. It cannot insist on coercing religious observance of the mitzvot, a counterproductive policy if there ever was one, but it can offer a vision of a more equitable and just society based upon the traditional values and heritage of Judaism. Democracy is a form of government. It is not an ideal nor is it a panacea for our ills. Subverted, it becomes the tyranny of the majority, no less lethal than other forms of tyranny. A proposal to really teach Jewish values – compassion, solidarity, self-worth, Jewish (not merely Israeli) identity and knowledge of the basic ideas and rituals of Judaism and a respect for the Shabat – coupled with an accurate portrayal of Jewish history and a recognition and appreciation of the achievements of the galut Jews could help unify Jews living in Israel. Instead of using our efforts to deny our legitimate rights and claims as Jews here in Israel, a program that asserts the true nature of our history and emphasizes the miracle of our survival as people, that teaches Jewish values, that understands the importance of Mishna and Talmud in developing a Jewish society should be

implemented. None of the reforms proposed for the Israeli school system will have any lasting value as long as Jewish values and Jewish knowledge are not a very important part of the curriculum. Schools that attempt to teach facts and knowledge will never succeed if they do not impart a sense of vision and wonder as well. In our current situation, only Jewish religious ideas and vision can accomplish this task of providing vision.

The religious political parties and establishment have been woefully silent about this vision thing. Instead, they have concentrated almost all of their efforts and energies in obtaining money for their schools and/or building settlements in the Land of Israel. These are worthy and necessary goals but they do not speak any longer to the majority of Jews living here in Israel. They impart no sense of common vision and have turned out to be divisive policies. The prophet Yeshayahu told us to speak to the "heart of Jerusalem," to its emotions and soul and to comfort Jerusalem with the sense of a vision of a better tomorrow and a lasting vision of inspiration and example. The religious community here in Israel in spite of all of its various shadings and internal divisions, nevertheless now has the opportunity to fill the void in the Israeli soul. Its rabbis and teachers, its political and social leaders should articulate this vision, clearly, softly, with persuasion and talent and to rise above the political frays that so sadden us. Abba Eban once said about our Arab cousins that "they never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." Let us of the religious community not be guilty of that same fault. Our opportunity to help the Jewish people and the State of Israel now beckons.

Weekly Parsha EKEV Rabbi Berel Wein

The word ekev, which is the name of this week's parsha, and is translated as "since" or "because," is associated with another Hebrew word, akeiv, meaning "heel." Rashi already comments that this association indicates the Torah's warning against treating any of the mitzvot lightly, stepping upon them with one's heel in disdain, so to speak. The word akeiv in the sense of "heel" appears in the Torah regarding the birth of Eisav and Yaakov. There the Torah records that when the twins were born, Yaakov grasped the heel of Eisav as they emerged into the world. The symbolism there once again conforms to the idea that Rashi conveys to us in the parsha of this week. Eisav steps on things with his heel. He destroys people and civilizations, holiness and lofty spirituality, by denigrating them, treating them as being insignificant and inconsequential, grinding them into nothingness with his heel. Yaakov's task in life is to hold unto Eisav's heel, preventing him by his efforts from accomplishing that destructive goal. Apparently, he who controls the "heel" controls the fate and destiny of humankind. This is also the implicit message of this week's parsha – that listening to God's word and not treating it with scorn or indifference is the key to maintaining a more human and peaceful society. Stepping on any of the values of Torah, no matter what the seeming ideological justifications for such behavior at that time, leads to untold societal and personal harm. Be careful what one steps upon. It eventually rises up to bite back in return.

The parsha deals with the basic idea of Judaism, that of cause and effect. There are no acts of life that remain truly insignificant. Small things sometimes later assume almost cosmic importance. For the want of a nail, a kingdom can be lost. The rabbis of Avot warned that one should not measure the value or significance of mitzvot. The "light" mitzva may be of vast importance not only because of the unknown systems of God's rewards, but also because the "light" mitzvah may also have heavy consequences of cause and effect. This is in line with the further idea expressed in Avot that one mitzva leads to the accomplishment of another mitzva thereafter. The consequences of a mitzva are inevitably good while the consequences of trampling upon a mitzva – again, no matter what the ideological justification may be – inevitably are detrimental to the individual and to society. The entire chumash of Dvarim pleads for Jews to see the big picture, the vision of a just and caring society. In order for such a vision to take on the flesh of reality, the small things in society

must be accounted for favorably. We all like to talk about the big things in our world – peace, security, democracy, etc. – but as long as we continue to step with our heels on the small things – courtesy and compassion to others, respect for our traditions and Torah, and a sense of satisfaction with our lives – little progress towards the accomplishment of the great goals will take place. So, let us all step carefully in life. Shabat shalom.

TORAH WEEKLY—Parshat Ekev

For the week ending 27 August 2005 / 22 Av 5765

from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

OVERVIEW

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

INSIGHTS

Things

“...Carve for yourself two stone Tablets like the first ones...” (10:1)

Even though G-d told Moshe to make the second two Tablets like the first ones, there were fundamental differences between the two sets. In the first set, not only did G-d write upon the Tablets, He fashioned the Sifre stone himself. Both the medium and the message were G-dly. The second tablets were hewn by the hand of Man, only the inscription was Divine.

However, there was a deeper difference between the two sets of Tablets. When we think of the Tablets, we think of words engraved on stone - words like any other words. However, in the case of the first Tablets this was not so. The first Tablets did not contain words, they contained speech. This doesn’t mean the Tablets were like some kind of Biblical tape recorder. It means that when you saw the words, you saw in them G-d speaking at Sinai. Usually, when someone speaks, their words are present as long as they are still speaking them. When they stop speaking, the words vanish. The first Tablets perpetuated G-d’s giving the Torah at Sinai, His speech at Sinai. That is what the Torah means when it says “all the people saw the voices...” (Shmot 20:15)

The word *davar* - “thing” - in Hebrew has the same root as the word for “speech” - *dibbur*. What is the connection between a thing and speech?

Nothing in this physical world can have an existence without it having a spiritual underpinning. What sustains every object in this physical world is G-d speaking through that object. That object is no more than G-d speaking; it is a *dvar*, an expression of something God wishes to reveal in His world. In the future, we will clearly see the intention behind every

thing in Creation, the *dibbur* behind every *davar*. This is what the prophet Yishayahu means when he writes, “...the Glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh together will see that the Mouth of G-d has spoken” (40:5) Just as at Sinai G-d’s speech assumed a concrete form, so too at that time in the future every concrete form will reveal its purpose, its *dibbur*.

Only the first Tablets contained the level of revelation where it was possible to see the *dibbur* as though it were an object. Usually a physical object does not reveal the intent of its maker. The first Tablets, however, revealed G-d’s intent; they were a *davar* that revealed *dibbur*. However, after the sin of the golden calf the world was a different place. It could no longer contain the level of revelation epitomized by the first set of Tablets. That is why the Tablets grew suddenly heavy in Moshe’s hands and they fell to the ground. From that time until Mashiach, things will not reveal their true identity as being no more than the Word of G-d.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

PARSHAS EIKEV

Arise, descend quickly from here, for the people... has become corrupt; they have strayed quickly from the way... they have made themselves a molten image. (9:12)

The Torah here records Klal Yisrael’s sin in the phrase, “they made themselves a molten image.” In Parshas Ki Sissa, the Torah elaborates and “adds” three more sins to their original iniquity. After creating the idol, they bowed down to it; they sacrificed to it; and they declared “These are your gods, Yisrael!” Creating the Golden Calf was a terrible sin, but venerating it through service and sacrifice magnified their sin. Why does Moshe Rabbeinu seem to gloss over the additional sins, focusing only on the actual creation of the idol?

At first glance, we suggest a simple explanation. The making of the idol involved a major segment of the nation. What followed, however, worshipping it and the other invidious activities, were sins perpetrated by only a small fraction of the people. Moshe was addressing the sin that involved the entire nation - or - at least, its majority.

Horav Shmuel Truvitz, zl, offers an insightful explanation that focuses on the root of sin. In the Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Vayikra, Chazal explain the concept of *Aveirah goreres aveirah*, “Sin leads to another sin.” An individual sins inadvertently and hardly notices it. He does not, however, realize that now the entranceway to sinning has advertently been opened. Thus, the primary criticism against the individual who stands ready to embark on a dangerous and evil path away from Torah and mitzvah observance, concerns his initial sin. He is to be blamed only for his earliest misdeed. Everything else “follows” naturally, because *Aveirah goreres aveirah*. A natural consequence of falling into the abyss of sin is that the sinner will continue to fall.

He also cites Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, who, in one of his letters, explains the statement made by Chazal in the Talmud Succah 52a. The Talmud relates that in the End of the Days, Hashem will slaughter the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, in front of the people. To the righteous, the evil inclination will appear as a large, insurmountable mountain. They will wonder, “How were we able to conquer this mountain?” In contrast, the wicked will view it as a hairbreadth, which will cause them to wonder, “How is it that we could not vanquish it?” In other words, the righteous and the wicked will have totally opposing perspectives on the *yetzer hora*. How are we to explain this?

Rav Yisrael explains that every sin is weighed and measured according to the challenge it presents to the sinner. The easier and less challenging it is for a person to withstand the temptation of sin, the greater is the demand against him for committing the sin. In contrast, one who must surmount a powerful challenge does not receive as extreme a punishment.

We now understand the words of Chazal. A *rasha*, wicked person, has not always been wicked. At one point, he was a simple Jew. The *yetzer hora* did not seem to be so overpowering. Only after his first act of sin did the process begin, and *Aveirah goreres aveirah*. Now, the sin appears to him

to be as tall as a mountain. The more one sins, the more difficult it is for him to refrain from sin. The rasha, evil man, is acutely aware that there are serious consequences to his actions. Yet, he continues in his iniquity. Why? He thinks that since, with each sinful act, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to desist from his sinful behavior, Hashem will take this into consideration and limit his punishment. The more sin, the greater the difficulty and, therefore, the punishment should be commensurate. When the time of the advent of Moshiach comes, however, the sinner will have a rude awakening. Suddenly, he will see that the sin was actually like a hairbreadth. It was no accident. He could have halted his sinful behavior at any time he so pleased. What challenges he encountered were the result of his original sin - which was an act of unmitigated defiance. The rest was simply a continuation of aveirah gorreeres aveirah. It was entirely his fault.

In contrast, the righteous person works at his spiritual development, constantly seeking ways to overcome the challenges that confront him on the road to his spiritual destiny. Because he works at it, the road to success has seemed easy. The yetzer hora has not been a factor, because he labored with great intensity to succeed. True, mitzvah gorreeres mitzvah, so it should have been easy, but Hashem looks at the first mitzvah, the genesis of the tzaddik's spiritual ascension. It was not easy then, and Hashem will take that moment into consideration as He rewards the tzaddik for his extreme dedication.

We now understand why the primary focus is placed on the creation of the Golden Calf, despite its apparent insignificance in comparison to the ensuing sins. That is the specific difference: the other sins followed. They were not the primary sin that catalyzed the proverbial ball rolling. This sin changed everything. When Klal Yisrael stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah, they had reached an unprecedented level of spiritual ascendancy. The Golden Calf changed all that, as it caused them to fall deep into the nadir of sin and eventual moral depravity.

We find this often in the world of chinuch, Torah education. A slight change, a minor deviation, is noticed in a student's demeanor. His davening is just not the same. He changes his mode of dress - slightly. His hairstyle seems a bit different than in the past. All of these actions may be nothing, or, they might signal the beginning of a lifestyle change that must be halted - now.

Now, O Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d. (10:12)

Hashem asks very "little" of us: fear of Heaven. This very little thing is the most important aspect in being a faithful, observant Jew. Two questions come to mind: First, what exactly does the term yiraas Shomayim, Fear of Heaven, mean? Second, does not the idea of fear go against everything we believe in and preach in today's day and age? Love should be the optimum goal for a Jew. Fear can be overwhelming. Can a person live in fear and still function properly? Apparently, fear of Heaven has a different meaning than the "fear" to which we are accustomed.

Horav Shlomo Freifeld, zl, explains that fear of Heaven is not the same fear as being afraid of harm. It does not mean actually being afraid of something. Fear of Heaven is something one experiences out of a profound sense of reverence, awe, a deep-rooted feeling of admiration, appreciation and recognition that accompany the knowledge that one always stands in the presence of the Almighty G-d. It is the type of fear one feels when he walks into the Capitol and gazes at the Declaration of Independence or enters the Metropolitan Museum of Art and comes face to face with a Rembrandt. One would never reach out and touch the canvas, even if it were permitted, for fear that he would do something wrong to the canvas. He stands within touching distance of one of the most significant pieces of art or history, and he is afraid to touch it. Why? Because there is a clear boundary that he may not trespass. The canvas is off limits; it is untouchable. One is afraid.

The world in which we live is perfect. Our bodies are perfect. Hashem's creations reflect a perfect symmetry, a masterpiece of perfection. We have no right to defile it. We must realize that if we taint this perfect creation, we will damage the perfect symmetry and harmony of the cosmos to some degree. Hashem sets the equilibrium of His world. If we really appreciate

its beauty and grandeur, the sense of fear envelops us to the point that we would not dare do anything that would disturb either the physical or the spiritual balance of this world.

How does one achieve this sense of appreciation, this fear of Heaven? It is only through the study of Torah. It is not through the study of morals, ethics and the sciences. History proves this point. Wars, pogroms, greed, chauvinism, a total breakdown of society, have not been prevented through the study of ethics and morals, science and the humanities. One either has Torah, or he has absolutely nothing! The breakdown of contemporary society is a reflection of a lack of yiraas Shomayim. Otherwise, how could people act the way they do?

Yiraas Shomayim is the result of an appreciation of the harmonious integration, the symbiotic assimilation of the material and spiritual dimensions of this world, an appreciation that can be accomplished only through Torah study. Rav Freifeld adds that, just as there is a material ecology, there is also a spiritual ecology and an ensuing integrated ecology of both systems. One must be aware of the Almighty's will, the modes of behavior that He designed for the unified cosmos that He created, lessons that can only be derived through Torah study. The Torah is Hashem's blueprint for Creation and His book of directions for His creations to follow. We must immerse ourselves in its profundities and delve into its lessons. Every breach of the Torah causes a transgression of the Shulchan Aruch, Code of Jewish Law, which introduces a sour note in the incredible symphony of Creation. If we follow the guidelines and learn the lessons, we will develop the appreciation and be instilled with true yiraas Shomayim. Fear of Heaven is something one develops after he understands and appreciates the greatness of Hashem and His creations.

Rather, it is your own eyes that see all the great work of Hashem, which He did. (11:7)

The Torah says that we should be able to "see" Hashem's greatness by looking at His handiwork. While this is certainly true, regrettably, there are many who do not see. Why is it that some see clearly and others seem to have impaired vision? Horav Mordechai Pogremonski, zl, compares this to a visitor to Paris. His host wants to show his guest around the city and showcase its magnificence. First, he takes him to the world-famous Louvre Museum. As he points out the world-famous paintings, he is taken aback that the visitor is unimpressed. They walk over to a Rembrandt. "Is this not something incredible to behold?" the host asks. "I do not know what you see about this painting that impresses you so. I see nothing more than smudges and scratches," the visitor replies.

This went on all day. Every time the host showed his guest another aspect of the city, the visitor replied that he saw nothing but scratches and smudges. Finally, the host asked his guest if he could see his glasses. "Certainly," he responded. Lo and behold, when he looked at the glasses, he saw that they were badly smudged and scratched. He could see, but not through his glasses.

The same idea applies to life in this world. Many of us are wearing smudged and scratched glasses through which it is impossible to see the greatness of Hashem. Our eyes need to be attuned to what they are to perceive, or else we will see nothing more than scratches and smudges. The glasses that will improve and enhance our vision are the spectacles of the Torah which provides us with a clarity of vision, unimpaired and untainted by any external particles or blemishes.

This is what David Hamelech means when he asks Hashem (Tehillim 119:18), "Uncover my eyes, so that I may see the wonders from Your Torah." The text is enigmatic. It should have read, "So that I may see the wonder in Your Torah." Apparently, David Hamelech is intimating that it is through the spectacles provided by the Torah that we are able to see Hashem's greatness. Without the Torah, our vision remains critically impaired.

And to serve Him with all your heart. (11:13)

Le'vavchem is written in the plural. Certainly, man has only one heart. Chazal explain that this is a reference to the two inclinations that work simultaneously within man. The yetzer tov, good inclination, and the yetzer hora, evil inclination, are to be found only within the human being. Angels do not have a yetzer hora. They are "programmed" to carry out

Hashem's bidding. Man, on the other hand, has two contradictory forces working within him. Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, notes this uniqueness of man. His ability to make one dominant over the other - while maintaining divergent emotions within one personality - distinguishes him from the angels. Furthermore, man has both of these forces playing active roles in his life - simultaneously.

We see this idea in action in the dialogue that ensued between the Angels and Hashem as Klal Yisrael stood at the shores of the Red Sea. As the water split and the Egyptians drowned, the Heavenly Angels sought to say Shirah, sing a song of praise, to the Almighty. Hashem's response was, "My creations are drowning in the sea, and you want to say Shirah?" Nonetheless, Klal Yisrael did sing Shirah, to which Hashem responded, "For them, I have waited." He wanted to hear our Shirah, yet He eschewed the Shirah of the Angels. Why?

Rav Eliyahu Meir explains that when an Angel is filled with joy, he cannot sense any other emotion. He cannot feel pain when he feels joy. A person, however, has the ability to sense pain to the point that he is anguished and brought to tears - and still transcend his grief in order to serve the Almighty with complete joy. Avraham Avinu did this when he was instructed to prepare his beloved son, Yitzchak Avinu, as a sacrifice. He stood there willingly, with complete equanimity, ready to carry out Hashem's Will. Yet, Chazal tell us that he stood knee-deep in tears for his son! He did not ignore his emotions of fatherly love. He was not stone cold as he looked into the eyes of his dear son as he raised the knife about to serve Hashem. No, he ignored nothing; he transcended his emotions!

Hashem does not want us to put our human emotions to rest. Instead, He wants us to acknowledge and experience these emotions, but, when necessary, to override them for Him. Avraham stood there in control of his full complement of emotions. He sublimated his fatherly love to Hashem, because he was asked to do so. He was not a heartless, unfeeling robot. He was a loving father who carried his love to the highest level - serving his Father in Heaven.

During Klal Yisrael's darkest periods, this dual emotion was manifest by those who were able to transcend the pain and sorrow to continue to serve the Almighty with a sense of joy and pride. The Gerrer Rebbe would not allow the pain and grief inflicted by the terrors of the Holocaust to diminish his Oneg Shabbos. He experienced the sweet joy of Shabbos amidst deprivation and misery.

It was Friday night, and the chazzan began to chant the Lecha Dodi prayer with the traditional Gerrer niggun, tune. The Rebbe sang along, enunciating the words and emphasizing the melody. His son was standing by, staring incredulously at his great father. "Tateh, tateh," he cried out forlornly, "Maasei yadai tov'eim bayam ve'atem omrim shirah?" "(My, Hashem's) creations are drowning in the sea, and you want to sing Shirah?" This is a reference to the Angels who wanted to sing praise to the Almighty when the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea. The son was asking his father how could he sing with joy amidst all of the suffering and death? The Rebbe looked at his son with piercing eyes, replying with a calm, strong voice, "My dear son, we must always sing Shirah. It is up to the Almighty if He chooses to listen, but we must sing regardless." B'chol levavechem!

Va'ani Tefillah

Eizehu Me'koman shel zevachim

Upon careful examination of the various Klei HaMikdash, we note that the western position of the Sanctuary, with the Mizbayach and the Aron Hakodesh, has a close association with Torah. The northern side, where the Shulchan stood, is affiliated with the physical/material aspects of life. The Menorah is placed in the southern side, thus relating that side with the spirit. The eastern side, which is the location of the entrance, represents the nation as a whole. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains that each of the avodos, services, which are connected with the offering of a korban, also has a symbolic meaning. Shechitah, slaughtering, signifies the renunciation of man's personal will and independence represented by the animal on the Altar. Kabbolas ha'dam, accepting the blood, signifies the acceptance of man's personality. The Matanos, applications of the blood, through: Zerikah, a dashing from afar; Hazayah, the sprinkling of

only a few drops of blood; Nesinah, the act of "direct" giving; or Shefichah, pouring the blood on the ground, are symbolic expressions of one's constant striving to achieve (Hazayah, Zerikah); the endeavor to maintain a high spiritual standard (Nesinah al ha'keren, giving it on the upper corner of the Altar); and the solid implantation of the spirit in the soil of the Sanctuary (Shefichah al ha'Yesod, pouring on the foundation). Arthur & Sora Pollak and Family in loving memory of our mother & grandmother Mrs. Goldie Jundef

Rabbi Yaakov Haber TorahWeb Threefold Purpose of Blessings

"V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta es Hashem Elokecha 'al ha'aretz hatovah 'asher nasan lach" - "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem, your G-d, for the good land which he has given you" (Eikev 8:10). This passage serves as the Biblical source for the commandment to bless Hashem after a meal. (Bread must be consumed to be obligated min haTorah due to the proximity of the passage "a land in which you will eat bread unsparingly" (verse 9) to this passage (see B'rachot 44a). Some rishonim maintain that even the B'racha Mei'ein Shalosh recited after other foods made from grain and after fruit of the Seven Species is also Biblical in nature (see Mishna B'rura to O.C. 209:10).) Although the overwhelming majority of blessings, such as those before eating food and before performing mitzvot, are Rabbinic in origin, Birchas HaMazon is Min HaTorah. Ramban (Hashmatos l'Mitzvos 'Asei 15) and other rishonim maintain that the blessing before Torah study is also of Biblical origin and is derived from the verse "ki sheim Hashem ekra, havu go'del lailokeinu"—"when I call out the name of Hashem, give praise to our G-d" (Ha'azinu 32:3).

However, on a Torah level, a blessing need be recited only after eating food but, by contrast, it is recited before engaging in Torah study. Chazal (our Rabbis) instituted additional blessings before eating bread (and other foods) as well as a blessing after reading the Torah in public. Meshech Chachma suggests a fascinating rationale for the difference in placement between Birchas HaMazon and Birchot HaTorah on a Torah level. All blessings thank the Source of All for His kindness. Birchot HaMazon focuses on physical bounty whereas Birchot HaTorah focus on the spiritual endowment of Torah. With respect to this aspect of praise of G-d, both of these blessings should have been recited in the same location. However, each of these blessings also reinforces another idea, each uniquely relevant to the sphere of life it addresses. This particular theme helps explain the blessing's Biblical placement.

Eating, or more generally, partaking of material goods yielded through much hard work and energy, can lead to an attitude of haughty self-achievement, without properly recognizing that it is Hashem who has provided the physical wherewithal, the physical goods and infrastructure and the mental acumen (see Targum Onkelos to verse 18) for the production of such bounty. This danger exists primarily after partaking of the material goods, after being satisfied by them. Hence, the Torah directs us: be certain to recognize G-d as the Source of the bounty by praising Him as the "zan es hakol" and the bestower of the Land of Israel from which the food was produced. (See also Eretz Yisrael, by Rav Mayer Twersky in the archives of TorahWeb.) The context of this commandment verifies this approach. Immediately preceding the commandment, the Torah indicates that the miracle of the forty-year daily delivery of man in the desert served to highlight to the Jewish People the fact that "Man does not live by bread alone, but through the word of G-d, does Man live" (ibid. 3) which (among other meanings) can be read as: it is not your efforts alone that bring about the bread, but, just as the manna from the sky was clearly Divinely granted, so too bread from the ground is also Divinely granted through the mask of the natural order created by G-d.[1] After the commandment to bless G-d after eating, the Torah warns us: "and lest you grow haughty and you forget G-d ... who has fed you man in the desert ... and you will say: 'my strength and the might of

my hand produced this bounty.’ And you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, for it is He who gives you strength to produce bounty” (ibid. 14-1). Concerning Torah study, the opposite is true. Once having studied it, plumbed its depths, partaken of its mysteries and delights, the Torah is clearly recognizable as a Divine work, which, due to Divine beneficence, was given to Bnei Yisrael to partake of. However, before studying it, the student must be made aware of its Divine origin: that the Torah is not a wisdom like all other wisdoms, intellectually stimulating, fascinating but not directly Divine in origin. The danger exists of the Torah being utilized as a tool for personal intellectual achievement. Therefore, the learner of Torah must first recognize the Torah’s source. A passage in tractate N’darim (81a) attributes the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash to the omission of the blessing on the Torah. Some commentaries (see Ran and Bach (on Tur O.C. 47)) suggest that the omission of a blessing was symptomatic of treating the Torah like any other wisdom whose study does not require a blessing. R. Chayim Volozhin in his Nefesh HaChayim (4:6-7) writes that it is advisable before and during Torah study to stop learning temporarily to contemplate that one is actually studying the Divine Word and connecting to Hashem “for He and His Will (as expressed in the Torah) are One.” Some recite various tefilos before Torah study (in addition to the one mentioned in the Mishna (B’rachot 28b)) requesting that the Torah study lead to increased fear of Heaven (see standard edition of Yachin U’Boaz Mishnayot). All of these practices highlight this same theme.

From morning to evening, halacha demands of its adherents to constantly praise G-d through blessings: on waking up, on walking, on seeing, on eating, on drinking, on bodily functions, on learning, on mitzvot. Indeed, Chazal legislated the recital of a minimum of 100 blessings a day (see Shulchan Aruch 46:3). The triple themes of praise to G-d for providing for our spiritual and physical needs, recognition that it is He alone Who allows us to succeed, and appreciation of the ultimate sanctity of the greatest of His gifts to us - His wisdom as contained in the Torah which He has allowed us to enjoy - should guide us throughout our engagement in both the spiritual and physical aspects of existence.

[1] This particular point is an addition to Meshech Chachma’s words.

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

**By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt. Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights
A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav
SHE’AILOS U’TESHUVOS**

QUESTION: Is it permissible to wind up a [mechanical] baby swing or a wind-up toy on Shabbos(1)?

DISCUSSION: Winding up a baby swing set could possibly be a violation of a Shabbos Labor, either 1) tikun mana, fixing or creating an object, which is a prohibition derived from makeh b’patish, or 2) boneh, building. Let us explain:

There is a general agreement among the poskim that one is not allowed to wind up a stopped watch on Shabbos. The Chayei Adam(2) rules that winding a stopped watch is Biblically prohibited because of tikun mana. The winding is considered an act of repair, as a clock or a watch are meant to run continuously and are therefore in a “broken” state when they have stopped. Although in the past some poskim(3) have disputed this logic(4), the majority of the poskim(5), including the Mishnah Berurah(6), rule stringently and do not permit winding a stopped watch. Such is the prevalent custom and it may not be changed(7).

The Chazon Ish(8), too, considers winding a watch a Biblical prohibition. Unlike the Chayei Adam quoted above, though, he prohibits it for a different reason. He maintains that by winding a watch one is “bringing to life” a piece of machinery which has been “dead.” When this is done by tightening parts (as in winding a watch where the loose parts of the spring are tightened up), it is considered boneh, building(9).

A major practical difference between these two arguments would be in regard to winding up toys. If we were to follow the Chayei Adam’s logic as to why it is prohibited to wind up watches, then a strong case could be made to permit winding toys. Harav S. Z. Auerbach(10) introduces two

basic arguments to prove that there is a fundamental difference between the winding of a watch and the winding of a toy. In brief:

Winding a watch sets it for a long period of time (thus “transforming” it). A toy, however, “runs” for a few minutes and then stops.

Since the purpose of a watch is to show the time at all times, when it is stopped, it is considered “broken”, and winding it is considered “fixing” it. A toy is not malfunctioning when it does not run. It is made to run at specific times only. Thus, when it is stopped, it is not considered “broken.” Winding it does not render it “fixed.” In other words, winding does not “fix” it; rather, it makes it usable, which is permitted.

The above arguments, however, hold true only if we were to follow the Chayei Adam’s logic for prohibiting winding watches. Were we to follow the Chazon Ish’s reasoning, however, then there would be no difference between a watch and a toy. In both cases the “dead” item is being “brought to life” through the winding process. There is a strong possibility, therefore, that it would be prohibited to wind up toys, either Biblically or by Rabbinic decree(11).

It seems that winding up a baby swing is similar to winding up toys. L’chatchilah, therefore, one should refrain from winding up a baby swing on Shabbos, in deference to the opinion of those who prohibit it(12). When absolutely necessary, however, since the Mishnah Berurah rules like the Chayei Adam, one has an authority to rely on if a crying baby cannot be quieted unless the baby swing is activated. Even then, it would be preferable if the winding were done by a non-Jew(13). If a non-Jew is unavailable, a minor should be asked to do it(14). If a minor is unavailable, an adult should wind the swing, with a shinui, in an unusual manner(15).

QUESTION: Is it permitted to touch, lean or sit on a tree on Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: Since it is Biblically prohibited to tear a branch or a leaf from a tree on Shabbos, the Rabbis erected numerous ‘fences’ [precautionary measures] in order to prevent this transgression. [It is for this reason that Chazal forbade riding an animal on Shabbos, since it is easy to forget and pull a branch off a tree while riding an animal(16). As an extension of this edict, the Rabbis declared all animals to be muktzeh(17).]

It is Rabbinically prohibited, therefore, to:

Shake a tree on Shabbos(18). One may touch a tree if it will not shake (19).

Climb, sit, or lean heavily [e.g., to tie one’s shoes] on a tree on Shabbos(20). One may sit on a dead tree stump(21).

Swing from a branch or from an object directly connected to a tree. Thus a swing or a hammock which is connected to a tree may not be used on Shabbos(22). Even a swing which is connected to a chain and the chain, in turn, is connected to a ring which is attached to the tree is still forbidden to be used(23). If, however, poles are connected to two trees and a swing or hammock is attached to the poles, they may be used, provided that the trees are sturdy and will not move or bend.

To place or hang an object [e.g., a jacket, a sefer] on a tree on Shabbos.

To remove an object from a tree on Shabbos. Even before Shabbos, it is prohibited to place [or leave] items on a tree that are usually used on Shabbos, since one could easily forget and remove them from the tree on Shabbos(24).

To smell a growing, edible fruit while it is growing on a tree, since it could easily lead to picking the fruit from the tree in order to eat it (25). It is even forbidden to eat - on Shabbos - a fruit that has fallen off the tree on Shabbos. It is permitted, however, to eat it immediately after Shabbos(26).

All trees - whether fruit bearing or barren, living or dead - are included in these Rabbinical decrees(27). But the restrictions apply only to the part of the tree which is higher than ten inches from the ground(28). Trees and bushes which do not grow to a height of ten inches are not restricted in any way(29).

FOOTNOTES:

1 Obviously, a musical swing set is prohibited, and is not the subject of our discussion.

2 44:19.

3 Panim Me'iros 2:123; Ya'avetz 1:41; Kesav Sofer 55; Sho'el u'Meishiv 6:53 and others.

4 In their opinion, a watch is made initially as an object that must be constantly wound. When it is stopped, it is not considered broken, and winding it does not fix it.

5 See Da'as Torah 338:3 and Minchas Shabbos 80:241.

6 338:5. See also 252:50.

7 Kesav Sofer 55 and Minchas Shlomo 9.

8 O.C. 50:9.

9 This is similar to the view of the Chazon Ish concerning the usage of electricity on Shabbos.

10 See Minchas Shelomo 9 and Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 16, note 39. See also Be'er Moshe 6:32 for a concurring opinion.

11 Harav M. Feinstein is orally quoted (Sefer Tiltulei Shabbos, pg. 28, note 36) as Biblically prohibiting wind-up toys (even according to the logic of the Chayei Adam); Harav S.Y. Elyashiv is orally quoted (Shalmei Yehudah 5:12) as prohibiting wind-up toys "just like it is prohibited to wind up a watch." Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Minchas Shelomo 9, Tikunim u'Miluim to Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 16, note 39) writes that according to the logic of the Chazon Ish, it may be rabbinically prohibited to wind up toys.

12 Rabbi P.E. Falk (Zachor v'Shamor, sec. 38, pg. 33).

13 Since a non-Jew may do any forbidden labor for a small child's needs;

O.C. 276:1; 328:17. See also Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 338:19.

14 Based on Rama O.C. 259:7; Magen Avraham 269:1; Mishnah Berurah 277:15.

See also Rama O.C. 362:7 and Mishnah Berurah.

15 See also Children in Halachah, pg. 217, who permits winding a swing after first activating it by pushing, since many poskim agree that one is allowed to wind a watch which has not stopped; see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 338:17-18. This leniency is debatable.

16 O.C. 305:18.

17 O.C. 308:39.

18 Unless mentioned otherwise, Yom Tov has the same halachos.

19 Rama O.C. 336:13.

20 O.C. 336:1; 336:13 and Bejur Halachah.

21 Aruch ha-Shulchan 336:18. Mishnah Berurah's position, however, is not clear.

22 O.C. 336:13.

23 Harav M. Feinstein (oral ruling quoted in Sefer Hilchos Shabbos, vol.

1, pg. 62).

24 Mishnah Berurah 336:12 based on O.C. 277:4 and 514:6. [See explanation by Harav S.Z. Auerbach, quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah, pg. 330. See also a more lenient opinion in Tehilah l'David 277:7.]

25 O.C. 336:10.

26 O.C. 322:3.

27 Mishnah Berurah 336:1. There are some poskim who are lenient in the case of a tree which has completely dried out; see Mishnah Berurah, *ibid.* and Aruch ha-Shulchan 13.

28 Mishnah Berurah 336:21.

29 O.C. 336:2. However, if the tree or bush which are under 10 inches high are fruit-bearing, some poskim prohibit those as well; Mishnah Berurah 336:19.

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Halacha Talk

by Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Wining and Dining

Arriving in my study one day, I check my schedule to see what the day's activities will bring. The schedule notifies me that Leah Greenberg (not her real name) has an 11 o'clock appointment. I am curious what issues she plans to bring me today. Leah is highly intelligent and usually has interesting questions to discuss.

An 11:05 knock on my door announces her arrival. After she seats herself, I ask her what has brought her this morning.

"As you know, I do not come from an observant background," she begins. "Although I have been observant now for many years, I always feel that I am missing information in areas of halacha that I need to know. Instead of asking you these questions over the phone, I wanted to discuss all the questions I have on one subject in person at one time. I thought that this way you could perhaps explain the halachos and the issues more thoroughly."

I encouraged Leah to read me her list.

"My first two questions have to do with kiddush on Shabbos morning. I was told years ago that I should make kiddush before eating on Shabbos morning. Recently, someone told me that this is not necessary. What should I do?"

I responded, "Many prominent poskim rule that a married woman does not need to recite kiddush until her husband has finished davening (Shu't Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 4:101:2). In their opinion, there is no requirement to recite kiddush until it is time to eat the Shabbos meal, which for a married woman is when her husband is also ready. Others contend that she should recite kiddush before she eats (Shu't Minchas Yitzchok 4:28:3; Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah 2:153)."

Leah spent a few seconds absorbing my comments, and then she continued. "I know very religious women who do not recite kiddush until the Shabbos meal. Some of them are not married, so the reason you told me above would not apply to them. Should I be telling them that they are making a mistake?"

"There is a custom in some places that women did not recite kiddush on Shabbos morning before eating, and therefore you should not say anything to women who follow this practice (Daas Torah 289). But what you are doing is definitely preferable."

"My next question has to do with a mistake I made last week," Leah continued. "Last Shabbos morning, after I made kiddush and ate mezonos to fulfill the kiddush properly, I recited the after-bracha on the cake, but forgot to mention the parts that refer to the wine that I drank. I didn't know whether I was supposed to recite the bracha acharonah again in order to say the al hagafen or whether I should do nothing."

"What did you end up doing?" I inquired, curious to see how she had resolved the predicament.

"Well, I didn't have anyone to ask, so I waited until my son came home from hashkama minyan and made kiddush, and then he was motzi me the bracha acharonah."

"That was a very clever approach," I said. "You actually chose an excellent option, provided that you didn't wait too long for the bracha acharonah. You could have also decided to drink another cup of wine or grape juice and then recited the appropriate bracha acharonah. But let me ask you first. Why were you uncertain what to do after you had made kiddush?"

"Well, I know that after eating cake and drinking wine or grape juice we recite the long after-bracha beginning and ending with both al hamichyah (for the food you have provided us) and al hagafen (for the vine and its fruits). I had recited this bracha, but I left out the parts referring to wine. So I was uncertain whether I had fulfilled the mitzvah with regard to the wine since I had only mentioned al hamichyah, which refers to grain products."

"Your analysis of the question is very accurate," I responded. "But I want to answer your question with a question. What happens if you only drank wine, and ate nothing at all, and then afterwards recited al hamichyah and did not mention al hagafen at all? Or for that matter, what happens if you recited the full bentching after drinking wine. Did you fulfill your responsibility?"

"I would think that you did not fulfill the mitzvah since you did not recite al hagafen," Leah responded. "But because you are asking the question, I guess I am wrong. I told you that I don't have the strongest halacha background."

I was very impressed by Leah's sincerity. She was always eager to learn more about Yiddishkeit and halacha, and she always felt humble. This is the humility we should always feel before the Almighty. In fact, she was

usually far more knowledgeable than most people who take their Yiddishkeit for granted.

I returned to our conversation.

"I presented you with two cases. If someone bentched a full birkas hamazon after drinking wine but not eating anything, we paskin that he should not recite a new bracha acharonah since wine does provide satisfaction (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 208:17). However, many other foods, such as most fruit, are not satisfying enough that bentching would fulfill the responsibility. Therefore, the bracha of bentching is inappropriate for them, and one would have to recite the correct bracha acharonah.

"In the case of someone who recited al hamichyah instead of al hagafen, there is a dispute whether he must recite al hagafen or not. Most poskim contend that one has fulfilled the mitzvah and should not recite a new bracha" (Levush 208:17; Eliyahu Rabbah 208:26; cf., however, the Maadanei Yom Tov and Pri Megadim 208:16 in Mishbetzos Zahav disagree and rule that one must recite al hagafen.)

"Then it would seem that I should not have recited al hagafen and I did not have to wait for my son to come home. Why did you say that I did what was optimally correct?"

"Actually, your case is a bit more complicated than the ones I just presented."

"Why?"

"In the two cases I mentioned concerning the reciting full bentching or al hamichyah after wine, one did not eat anything at all that would require bentching or al hamichyah, so the bracha can only have referred to the wine. The halachic question we deal with is whether this bracha can ever refer to wine or not. If the bracha can never refer to wine, then it has the status of a bracha li'vatalah, a bracha recited in vain.

"However, when you drank wine and ate cake you were required to include two different themes, one for the wine and the other for the cake, but you included only one. Here our question is whether one theme fulfilled both bracha requirements."

"I find this rather confusing. Either the bracha al hamichyah works for wine or it does not. Why does it sometimes work and sometimes not?"

"Let me give you a different example that will be more familiar. What happens if you recite the bracha of borei pri ha'adamah on an apple?"

"I have been told that one isn't supposed to do this, but if you did one should not recite a new bracha."

"That is exactly correct! Now let me ask you another question. What happens if you plan to eat an apple and a tomato, and you recited borei pri ha'adamah on the tomato? In a way this question is theoretical, because one is supposed to recite the bracha on the apple first. But for our purposes, I am asking what happens if you recited the bracha on the tomato first. Do you now recite a borei pri ha'eitz on the apple or is it covered with the borei pri ha'adamah that you recited on the tomato."

"I understand," replied Leah. "One is not supposed to recite ha'adamah on an apple, but if one did, he fulfilled his requirement. However, if one is eating an apple and a tomato, and recited ha'adamah and then ate the tomato, he still must recite ha'eitz on the apple."

"Precisely!"

"But why is this?" she inquired.

"The ha'adamah does not usually apply to the apple which does not grow directly from the ground. However, when there is nothing else for the ha'adamah to refer to, it does apply to the apple since it grows on a tree which grows from the ground. Therefore when one recites ha'adamah on an apple, one does not recite a new bracha. But when one recited the ha'adamah on a tomato, the bracha does not include the apple."

"Are there any other examples of this rule?"

"There are many. Here is another one. As you know the correct bracha after eating grapes is al ha'eitz ve'al pri ha'eitz (for the land and for the fruits of the land), not al hagafen ve'al pri hagafen (for the vine and for the fruits of the vine), which refers specifically to wine. However, if one recited al hagafen after eating grapes, one should not recite a new bracha since the literal wording of the bracha includes all fruits of the vine,

which also includes grapes (Shulchan Aruch, 208:15). But what happens if someone finished a snack in which he ate grapes and drank wine?"

"I believe he is supposed to recite al hapeiros ve'al hagafen," Leah interposed.

"Correct. But what happens if he recited just al hagafen and forgot to say al hapeiros. Must he now recite a bracha of al hapeiros because of the grapes or was he yotzei with the al hagafen that he recited?"

"Based on the direction that you are leading me, it would seem that he must recite al hapeiros since the bracha of al hagafen referred only to the wine he drank, just like the ha'adamah referred only to the tomato and not to the apple (Shulchan Aruch, 208:14)."

"Excellent"

"May I conclude that someone who recited al hamichyah on wine fulfilled his requirement if he only drank wine, but did not fulfill their requirement to recite a bracha acharonah on the wine if they also ate cake?" Leah inquired.

"Some poskim reach precisely this conclusion" (Shu't Har Tzvi #105), I concurred. "However, others rule that one has fulfilled the requirement of a bracha acharonah on the wine also and should not recite al hagafen. They reason that al hamichyah includes any food that satisfies, even while eating another food (Kaf HaChayim 208:76). That is why I told you that having someone be motzi you in the bracha acharonah is a good choice since it covers all the bases."

"This whole discussion is very fascinating," mentioned Leah enthusiastically, "and I think it leads into the next question I want to ask. I know that the correct bracha after eating grapes is al ha'eitz ve'al pri ha'eitz but the correct bracha after eating most fruit is borei nefashos. What do you do if you eat both grapes and apples as a snack? Somehow it does not sound correct that you make two brachos."

"You are absolutely correct. Although the bracha after eating an apple is borei nefashos, when one recites al ha'eitz ve'al pri ha'eitz anyway, that bracha also covers the apples or other fruit that one ate (Shulchan Aruch 208:13)."

"What happens if I ate an apple and drank some grape juice at the same time? Do I recite one bracha or two afterwards?"

"That a really good question. Rav Moshe Feinstein actually has a tshuvah devoted exactly to this topic. But before presenting his discussion, we first need to discuss a different shaylah: What is the closing of the bracha we recite after drinking wine?"

"All I know is what it says in the siddurim and bentchers. There it says to recite "al ha'aretz ve'al pri hagafen."

"We follow this version (Taz 208:14), but actually there is another text to the bracha that is also acceptable."

"What is that?"

"Some poskim close with al ha'aretz ve'al hapeiros, meaning that the closing of the bracha on wine is the same as it is on grapes, dates, or olives. According to this opinion, the bracha after drinking wine begins with al ha'aretz ve'al pri hagafen and ends al ha'aretz ve'al hapeiros (Rambam). Although I have never seen this text printed in any bentcher or siddur, poskim quote it as a perfectly acceptable text (Shulchan Aruch 208:11). However, according to both opinions one begins the bracha with the words al hagafen ve'al pri hagafen."

"May I ask you something at this point," Leah interjected. "You told me before that if someone ate grapes and apples he recites just one bracha al ha'eitz ve'al pri ha'eitz for both the grapes and the apples. Will this affect whether one can say the same bracha after wine and apples? Even according to the opinion that one concludes by mentioning fruit, he began by saying al hagafen ve'al pri hagafen and does not mention fruit until the end of the bracha. Does this affect whether one bracha suffices for both the wine and the apple?"

I must admit that I was astounded by the pure brilliancy of her analysis. Leah was unaware that she had just unraveled the core issue in Rav Moshe's teshuvah (Shu't Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim #72) on the subject, and that she had zeroed in on a dispute among the poskim whether this bracha that begins with a reference to grapes and ends with a bracha on fruits suffices to fulfill the bracha on another fruit.

“Now I can explain the shaylah you asked about someone who ate an apple and drank grape juice at the same time,” I said. “Rav Moshe says that it depends what bracha he recites at the end of the bracha after drinking the grape juice. If he recites al ha’aretz ve’al pri hagafen then he should recite a borei nefashos afterwards because neither part of the bracha referred to fruit, only to grapes. However, if he concludes al ha’aretz ve’al hapeiros there is a dispute what to do and one should not recite a borei nefashos.”

“May I ask one last question for the day if I might?” Leah’s notebook was still full of questions, but it sounded like she had to leave soon for her next activity of the day.

“Feel free to ask as many as you like. My greatest pleasure in life is answering questions about Torah.”

“I know that when we eat fruit that grew in Eretz Yisroel we modify the end of the bracha acharonah to reflect this fact. Do we do the same thing if we drink wine produced in Eretz Yisroel?”

“After drinking wine or grape juice produced from grapes that grew in Eretz Yisroel one should recite al ha’aretz ve’al pri gafnah, for the land and for the fruit of its vine, or al ha’aretz ve’al peiroseha, for the land and for its fruit, thus praising Hashem for our benefiting from the produce of the special land He gave us.

“What bracha do we recite after eating cake or crackers made from flour that grew in Eretz Yisroel?”

“Some poskim contend that one should recite “al michyasah” on its produce after eating flour items that grew in Eretz Yisroel (Birkei Yosef 208:10; Shu’t Har Tzvi #108). However, the prevalent practice is to recite “al hamichyah” and not “al michyasah” after eating pastry or pasta items even if they are made from flour that grew in Eretz Yisroel (Birkei Yosef 208:10).”

“Why is there a difference between flour and wine?”

“When eating fruit and drinking wine, the different nature of the source country is very identifiable. Therefore its bracha should reflect a special praise of Eretz Yisroel. However, when one makes a product from flour, the source of the flour is not obvious in the finished product. Thus, praising Hashem for the special grain His land produces is inappropriate.”

“I have really enjoyed this conversation, and if possible would like to continue it at a different time with other questions,” Leah concluded.

“It will be my pleasure.”

Leah left with a big smile on her face, having now mastered a new area of halachah. Although I was technically teaching her, I had learned a tremendous amount from her in terms of enthusiasm about mitzvos and humility in serving Hashem.

The Weekly Halacha Overview, by Rabbi Josh Flug

The Mitzvah of Lechem Mishneh

The Gemara, Shabbat 117b, states that on Shabbat, one must start the meal with two breads (lechem mishneh). This is based on the verse (Shemot 16:22) that refers to the Friday portion of the man as “lechem mishneh,” a double portion of bread. Taz, Orach Chaim 678:2, claims that the Gemara’s derivation of this mitzvah from a verse in the Torah implies that the mitzvah of lechem mishneh is a biblical mitzvah. Magen Avraham 254:23, and 618:10, implies that mitzvah of lechem mishneh is a rabbinic enactment.

Tosafot, Berachot 39b, s.v. V’Hilchita, write that on Shabbat, one should not cut the bread until after reciting the beracha of hamotzi in order to fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh. It is implicit from the comments of Tosafot that the mitzvah of lechem mishneh requires that one should use two whole loaves. R. Ya’akov Reischer, Teshuvot Minchat Ya’akov, no. 12, suggests that even if there is a biblical requirement of lechem mishneh, there is no biblical requirement to use two whole loaves. It is sufficient to have only one whole loaf. The requirement that the second loaf be whole is only rabbinic in nature. R. Naftali Z.Y. Berlin, Meishiv Davar 1:21, suggests that there is no inherent requirement to use whole loaves. If the person who is partaking of the lechem mishneh breaks the

bread immediately prior to reciting hamotzi, that bread is invalid for his lechem mishneh. However, if the bread is broken prior to the meal, that bread may be used for lechem mishneh. Tosafot, who caution cutting the bread prior to the recitation of hamotzi, are concerned about invalidating the bread for lechem mishneh by breaking it immediately prior to eating it.

How Many Loaves Must be Cut?

The Gemara, *ibid*, records that Rav Kahana would recite the beracha on both breads but only cut one of them. The Gemara then states that on Shabbat, R. Zeira would break more bread than he did during the week. Rashi, *ad loc.*, s.v. Batza explains that R. Zeira would break large pieces of bread for all of his guests. However, Rashba, *ad loc.* s.v. Rabi Zeira, explains that R. Zeira disagrees with Rav Kahana. R. Zeira is of the opinion that one should break both of the breads of the lechem mishneh. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 274:1, rules in accordance with the opinion of Rashi that one is only required to break one bread. However, the Vilna Gaon, Bi’ur HaGra *ad loc.*, rules in accordance with the opinion of Rashba that one should break both breads. [The Zohar, Parshat Pinchas discusses the twelve breads on Shabbat. Sha’arei Teshuva 274:1, cites the practice of many kabbalists who place ten loaves on the table in addition to the lechem mishneh in order to have twelve breads on the table. The Vilna Gaon, in Ma’aseh Rav no. 123, claims that the intention of the Zohar is not to place twelve breads on the table, but rather to follow the opinion of R. Zeira as per Rashba’s interpretation. The mitzvah of lechem mishneh demands that one use two breads at all three Shabbat meals. Each of those six breads are broken into (at least) two pieces, thus producing twelve breads.]

The Requirements for the Second Loaf

R. Avraham Y. Karelitz, Kovetz Igrat Chazon Ish 1:188, rules that when Erev Pesach coincides with Shabbat, one may use matzah for the second loaf even though it is prohibited to eat matzah on Erev Pesach. It is implicit from this ruling that the second loaf does not have to be bread that is edible. R. Ovadia Yosef, Yabia Omer, Orach Chaim 8:32, notes that one could distinguish between bread that by its very nature is inedible, and bread that is edible but may not be eaten for halachic reasons. This issue is relevant regarding the use of a frozen loaf for the second bread of the lechem mishneh. If one assumes that inedible bread may not be used for lechem mishneh, frozen bread, which is currently inedible, may not be used either. If one assumes that the second loaf does not have to be edible, one may use the frozen bread for the second loaf.

Many Poskim (R. Ovadia Yosef, *ibid*, R. Eliezer Waldenberg, Tzitz Eliezer 14:40, R. Yitzchak Weiss, Minchat Yitzchak 9:42) rule that since the frozen loaf can be thawed out and eaten, it is considered edible even in its frozen state. R. Shmuel Vosner, Shevet HaLevi 6:31, rules that in order to use the loaf for lechem mishneh it must be edible at the time of the meal. The potential to thaw out the frozen loaf should not matter. Furthermore, according to Rashba, one must break (and eat) both loaves, and therefore, the second loaf must be practically edible. R. Shlomo Z. Auerbach (cited in Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata ch. 55, note 39), assumes a compromise position on the matter. He rules that in principle, if the loaf is frozen it may not be used since it is not edible. However, if it will thaw out by the end of the meal, it may be used for lechem mishneh.

The Use of Cakes and Cookies for Lechem Mishneh

Cakes and cookies (pat haba’ah b’kisinin) are considered bread with respect to many halachot. Nevertheless, one does not recite Hamotzi and Birkat HaMazon on these items unless they are eaten as part of an established meal (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 168:6-7). Are cakes and cookies suitable for lechem mishneh? Mishna Berurah 274:1, refers the reader to his discussion of this topic in chapter 168. This discussion does not appear in our editions of Mishna Berurah.

Magen Avraham 188:9, posits that one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh with pat haba’ah b’kisinin because one can only fulfill the mitzvah with an item that requires one to recite Birkat HaMazon. Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim 188:10, notes that if one eats the requisite amount to be considered an established meal, one can fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh, since in that instance one recites Birkat

HaMazon. Sha'arei Teshuva 274:2, quotes an opinion that even if one does not eat the requisite amount that would normally constitute an established meal, a seudat Shabbat is automatically considered an established meal. Therefore, one would fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh. Teshuvot Zerah Emet, Orach Chaim 28, maintains that it is not necessary to establish a meal, and one may fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh with pat haba'ah b'kisin in all instances. [The editor of Shulchan Aruch HaRav notes that the author retracted his position in his later years, and followed the opinion of Teshuvot Zerah Emet.]

Ostensibly, this discussion is limited to a case where both of the "loaves" are pat haba'ah b'kisin. However, if only the second "loaf" is pat haba'ah b'kisin, the meal is considered a full fledged meal by virtue of the actual bread that is used as the first loaf. It would seem that all would agree that pat haba'ah b'kisin may be used as the second "loaf." This is the opinion of R. Avraham C. Na'eh, Ketzot HaShulchan, ch. 82, note 5. However, R. Refa'el Maizlish, Tosefet Shabbat 274:1 arrives at the exact opposite conclusion. He contends that if the pat haba'ah b'kisin is used as the first "loaf," then one can consider the pat haba'ah b'kisin as part of an established meal. If it is used as the second "loaf," since the second loaf is not normally eaten (as per the ruling of Shulchan Aruch), it is not considered a part of the established meal.

One consideration in the use of cookies for lechem mishneh is their size. Many cookies are not the size of an olive (k'zayit). [K'zayit for these purposes is ostensibly measured by the flour content, and not the actual size of the cookie, see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 208:9.] R. Yosef Chazan, Teshuvot Chikrei Lev, Yoreh Deah 1:57, suggests that bread that is smaller than a k'zayit is not considered lechem and is therefore invalid for lechem mishneh. He then states that even if it is considered lechem, one may not use it for lechem mishneh because the lechem mishneh must provide enough bread for the whole meal. R. Chaim Binyamin Pontrimli, Petach HaDevir 274:4, notes that according to the first reason of R. Chazan, bread that is less than a k'zayit is inherently invalid, and may not be used for the second loaf. According to the second reason, as long as the primary loaf provides enough bread for all of those eating from the lechem mishneh, one may use a small bread for the second loaf. However, he quotes R. Chaim Palagi, Kaf HaChaim 36:44, that it is not proper kavod Shabbat to use a small bread when one has a larger bread available.

Ohr Somayach / TalmuDigest Shabbat 107 - 113
For the week ending 20 August 2005 / 15 Av 5765
by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

Eyes at the Dead Sea

"No one ever drowned in the Sea of Sodom!"

This revelation by Rabbi Dimi concerning the unique nature of the body of water in Eretz Yisrael commonly known as the Dead Sea was not intended to serve as a lesson in geography or geology but rather as information affecting the laws of Shabbat.

Our Sages prohibited using medicines or applying medical treatment on Shabbat unless there was serious danger to life or limb. The reason for this prohibition is that taking medicine might lead to crushing the ingredients required by prescription, an activity which is forbidden by the Torah.

The saline waters of the Dead Sea were considered to possibly have a therapeutic effect for some condition of the eyes. The question therefore arose whether it was permissible for someone on Shabbat to wash his face in these waters to achieve a partial impact on the eyes and to even open and close his eyes in order to allow these waters to enter them in greater force. Rabbi Dimi's observation regarding the nature of these waters determined that they indeed had medicinal value. It was therefore concluded that it was permitted for one to wash his face in those waters despite their therapeutic effect since such an action could be interpreted as mere washing and does not appear to be intended for medicinal purposes and could therefore not lead to any mistaken sanction for

preparing medicine. To open and close the eyes in order to have them absorb the waters, however, is forbidden since this is obviously done for a therapeutic purpose and therefore comes under the general ban on medicines.

What the Sages Say

"My clothes honor me," declared Rabbi Yochanan, an insight which helped us understand the command of the Prophet Yishayahu to "honor Shabbat" as an instruction to ensure that the clothes you wear on Shabbat should not be the same as you wear on weekdays.

Ohr Somayach / The Weekly Daf Shabbos 107 - 113

For the week ending 20 August 2005 / 15 Av 5765

by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

A Fishy Mystery

May one write the Torah chapters for tefillin on the skin of a fish?

This question was put to Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak by the Sage Mar, the son of the Sage Ravina. It appears in the gemara's discussion of which living things are considered as having a layer of skin covering their flesh and the ramifications of this for one who wounds such a creature on Shabbos.

Rabbi Nachman's response was that while it is obvious that a fish has a skin, we will have to wait for the Prophet Eliyahu to reveal to us whether the inherent uncleanness of this skin is removed in processing it for parchment. Since we have not yet merited Eliyahu's arrival, Rambam rules that we may not use fish skin for tefillin.

A simple reading of the gemara suggests that the physical uncleanness is the putrid odor of fish skin. But it is difficult to understand why we need a prophet to reveal to us something which we can determine with our own sense of smell.

Rabbi Nissim (RaN), one of the early commentaries, offers another perspective. The gemara (Shabbos 146a) tells us that when the primeval serpent persuaded Chava to sin by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he instilled a spiritual uncleanness into the entire universe. The Jewish People, and the spirits of their future generations and converts, which stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, were purified of this uncleanness. All animal life, except for fish, was there as well, adds Rabbi Nissim, and was likewise purified. The question remaining for Eliyahu to solve is whether this spiritual uncleanness disappears during the processing of the skin.

A more recent commentary, Sfas Emes, suggests that only animal life requiring shechita, such as animals and fowl, were granted release from spiritual uncleanness, to the exclusion of fish which do not require shechita. Only Eliyahu will tell us whether processing achieves the same effect. Shabbos 108a

When Word is Work

Shabbos is different!

Since this day is holy, our Sages taught us that we must show our respect for this difference in a variety of ways. Not only must the clothes we wear on Shabbos be different than those we wear on the weekdays, and the manner in which we walk be different from how we move about on the weekdays, but even our talk on Shabbos must be different from our talk on the weekdays.

Rashi explains this ban on weekday talk as referring to discussion of weekday business and calculations, activities which are forbidden on Shabbos. Tosefos rejects this approach because discussion of business comes under another category of activity previously mentioned in the gemara. Rabbeinu Tam, one of the leading Tosefists, suggests that the aforementioned curb on speech relates not to the subject but rather to the quantity of talk, even about permissible things.

In support of this point he cites a Midrash which tells of the extremely talkative elderly mother of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. On Shabbos the Sage would remind her that it was Shabbos and she would become silent.

A further support is the Jerusalem Talmud which relates that the Sages stretched the law to its limit in order to permit us to say "Good Shabbos" to one another.

The reason for all of this caution in regard to talking on Shabbos, says Maharsha, is that in regard to Shabbos, word is equivalent to work: The Torah says "(Hashem) rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had done (Bereishis 2:2)," and King David explains that "with the word of Hashem" everything was created (Tehillim 33:6). Since word is work, on Shabbos we must be careful which words we speak and how many of them. Shabbos 113b

The following letter was written by Moshe Simons, a Hatzolah volunteer and close friend of ---- from the Old City of Yerushalayim. The recipient of the letter adds "I am posting this as I run out to the Bochurs Levaya in The Gur Beis Medrash in Geula. The Levaya is taking place only this afternoon due to the inconsideration of the Israeli Police to insist on a Autopsy.Following demonstrations all through the night in the streets of Yerushalayim and at Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital, the Niftars Body was only just released. May we be zoche to the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days."

NEWS ALERT| August 25, 2005

Young Jewish Man Murdered in Jerusalem. His crime - being Jewish.

I sit facing my computer, and words fail me. I have just witnessed one of the most tragic and traumatic events of my life.

A Jewish young man died in my arms tonight.

Yes, you read correctly. A Jewish man died in my arms tonight. His sin? Being Jewish in Jerusalem.

At about 8:25 this evening, we got a call from the MDA dispatcher about a stabbing on Rechov David - the shuk leading from Shaar Yaffo (Jaffa Gate) to the Kotel. I immediately left my apartment and sped over to the chaotic scene not far from there on a Hatzolah ambucycle. Upon arrival, a horrible sight greeted me. A young Jewish man, lying in a pool of his own blood, with a 15" knife sticking out of his stomach. After being at many bombings, car accidents and other traumatic events, this scene had the distinction of being the worst one I have ever seen.

His skin a very pale color, and his eyes half open, I reached him. The only people around were police officers, who didn't really know what to do. The young Jewish man was not breathing, and he had no pulse.

This is the nightmare of any EMT. Alone, as the only person with medical training at the scene, there is not much you can do. Many tasks need to be done, and many people are needed to do them. Starting CPR, connecting oxygen, starting numerous IV's due to massive blood loss and trying to stop the bleeding are some of the things that need to be done, but in the seconds that I was there, my mind stopped working. One cannot think rationally in such situations - one must act like a robot, doing whatever could be done as quickly as possible. First, I called for backup on my MIRS, and then I started CPR. Even with all of the expensive equipment that we have, there are times that the only thing you can use is a simple pocket mask.

Using a bag valve mask on a trauma patient that you are having trouble opening an airway for is a waste of time. It is close to impossible to use on your own on such a patient. I took out my trusty face mask, and started mouth to mouth resuscitation. I felt his lungs fill up with air, and I was slightly encouraged. One of the police officers started chest compressions (as well as he could), and we continued basic CPR for a minute or two.

At this point, an ambulance with a paramedic - Aryeh Yaffe - arrived at the scene, along with Rafi Herbst and another volunteer. We now had four sets of hands instead of one, and could now start to try to save the young Jewish man's life. We

immediately searched for the wounds and tried to stop the bleeding. At the same time we tried to start an IV, but were having difficulty due to the massive amounts of blood that he lost. We continued CPR, this time with a bag valve mask and good compressions, and in the meantime, more volunteers from the Jewish Quarter arrived on foot, and quickly took my place. Shortly thereafter a MDA Mobile ICU arrived and continued to work on the patient - the Doctor I saw on their crew was one of the best I have ever seen working under pressure and keeping his cool - as well as giving fantastic care to the patient.

Soon, we had three IV's running, and we were trying to restart the young man's heart using drugs. Atropine, Sodium Bicarbonate were used among other drugs, and soon we had a heart rhythm on the EKG, although we did not have a pulse. We moved the patient to the mobile ICU who transferred him to the trauma center at Haddassah Ein Karem, but the young man was pronounced dead in the operating room - he had a massive gash in the veins and arteries in his stomach, and we could not save him. When I had arrived at the scene previously - he was no longer with us, yet we tried everything that we could to bring him back - to no avail.

What was the young man's crime? What did he do wrong? Why was he murdered by our 'peace partners'? To us, the residents of the Old City, these answers are clear. The arabs want us out of Israel - out of Jerusalem. They see clearly that violence and terrorism against Jews works, as witnessed in Gaza and Gush Katif - five years of violence culminated in the surrender of the Jews. Now, they clearly say that they want Jerusalem - and the way for them to get it is through blood - our blood.

A friend of mine commented tonight, "Jewish blood is not cheap. It's free."

The terrorism will continue - and will get much worse in Jerusalem. One thing I can tell you - we won't run. We will stand firm, and remain here until one side wins - us or them. The battle is for the soul of the Land of Israel - let no one think otherwise.

In the meantime, I'm sure you are asking yourselves - what can be done? The answer, as I see it, is threefold.

Physical help: This includes writing to congressmen, senators, politicians; trying to influence the viewpoint of others around you; visiting Israel; helping us in our struggle. After tonight, I've realized that every volunteer EMT in the Old City should have a gun with him - we need to raise money for that as well (I can be reached at moshe@hatzolah.org.il for more information as to how to donate). I never thought that as an EMT I'd be trying to raise money for guns - the instruments of death, but times have changed. There are also other medical items that we need - reach me at the email address above.

More importantly, we must realize that our fate is decided in Heaven. When a decree comes from before G-d, we must take a deeper look at ourselves and try to find what is wrong spiritually. Each of us must make additional effort in the spiritual realm to do more mitzvot and study Torah, and through that may we merit the rescinding of the terrible sword that hangs above our heads.

Let us cry together. Let us understand that a Jew murdered in Jerusalem must have an impact upon the entire Jewish nation - we must realize the depths that we have reached. We are a splintered, fragmented nation - each of us finding fault with the other. At the very least, let us join together in sorrow, and cry as one for the blood of a young man, murdered in Jerusalem simply because he was a Jew.

Please pass this message on. We must wake up and realize where this is leading. We must arise to the challenge given to us and join together to be victorious.

Written in sorrow by

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