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**Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet**  
**Parshas Re'eh 5764**

**YatedUSA Parshas Reeh August 13, 2004**

**Parsha Parables Parshas Re'eh**

**Unspeakable Destruction**

**Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

In this week's parsha, the Torah tells us to obliterate the idols and religious icons of the Canaanites: The words are very powerfully clear and leave no room for misconstruction or misunderstanding: "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations that you are driving away worshiped their gods - on the high mountains and on the hills, and under every leafy tree. You shall break apart their altars; you shall smash their pillars; and their sacred trees shall you burn in the fire; their carved images shall you cut down; and you shall obliterate their names from that place" (Devarim 12:2-3). In the following verse, the Torah adds a seemingly obvious caveat: "You shall not do this to Hashem, your G-d." Simply speaking, the Torah is warning us not to smash or destroy any Jewish places of worship or any sacred Jewish representation. Such a command seems almost superfluous. Indeed, the Sifri quotes R' Yishmael, who asks almost incredulously, "Can it arise in one's mind that Jews would smash their (own) altars? (What the Torah is teaching us is), Do not act in a manner in which your sins will lead to the destruction of your Sanctuary to be destroyed (through Divine retribution)." R' Yishmael's spiritual cause and effect interpretation softens the unbearable image of Jews physically destroying their own Temple. However, the fact that he could not bear to interpret the verse literally, causes Rav Moshe Feinstein, to ask a very poignant question.

"Why is R' Yishmael so alarmed at the simple meaning of the verse that he had to change the meaning from its purest form into one that is solely spiritual? Doesn't the Torah warn us against other base sins?" So why should R' Yishmael be astounded by the p'shuto shel mikra here, and not in the case where the Torah warns us against other deviant acts? In her powerful work, Chassidic Tales of The Holocaust, author Yaffa Eliach recounts the haunting tale she heard from the Bluzhever Rebbe.

The Jews were in the Janowska concentration camp and the kapo in charge was a notorious Jew named Schneeweiss. Schneeweiss was a non-observant Jew who had flagrantly violated Torah law before the war. In the camp he was known for his cruelty. But one Yom Kippur eve, a few of the Jews mustered the heroic courage to ask him for permission to make a minyan for Kol Nidrei, a violation punishable by death. Schneeweiss, for some reason, allowed them. The next morning he allowed them a work detail which did not violate the holy day.

"At about twelve o'clock noon, the door opened wide and into the room stormed two angels of death, S. S. men in their black uniforms, may their names be obliterated. They were followed by a food cart filled to capacity. "Noontime, time to eat bread, soup, and meat," announced one of the two S. S. men. The room was filled with an aroma of freshly cooked food, such food as they had not seen since the German occupation: white bread, steaming hot vegetable soup, and huge portions of meat.

The tall S. S. man commanded in a high-pitched voice, "You must eat immediately, otherwise you will be shot on the spot!" None of them moved. The rabbi remained on the ladder, the Hasidim on the floor. The German repeated the orders. The rabbi and the Hasidim remained glued to their places. The S. S. men called in Schneeweiss. "Schneeweiss, if the dirty dogs refuse to eat, I will kill you along with them." Schneeweiss pulled himself to attention, looked the German directly in the eyes, and said in a very quiet tone, "We Jews do not eat today. Today is Yom Kippur, our most holy day, the Day of Atonement."

"You don't understand, Jewish dog," roared the taller of the two.

"I command you in the name of the Führer and the Third Reich, fress!"

Schneeweiss, composed, his head high, repeated the same answer. "We Jews obey the law of our tradition. Today is Yom Kippur, a day of fasting."

The German took out his revolver from its holster and pointed it at Schneeweiss's temple. Schneeweiss remained calm. He stood still, at attention, his head high. A shot pierced the room. Schneeweiss fell. On the freshly polished floor, a puddle of blood was growing bigger and bigger.

The rabbi and the Hasidim stood as if frozen in their places.

They could not believe what their eyes had just witnessed. Schneeweiss, the man who in the past had publicly transgressed against the Jewish tradition, had sanctified G-d's name publicly and died a martyr's death for the sake of Jewish honor.

"Only then, on that Yom Kippur day in Janowska," said the rabbi to his Hasidim, "did I understand the meaning of the statement in the Talmud: 'Even the transgressors in Israel are as full of good deeds as a pomegranate is filled with seeds.' " This is what Rabbi Yishmael asks. He understands that there are Jews who succumbed to even the most outrageous desires. He understands Jews who could, in a fit of anger, commit flagrant acts of violence. But he cannot understand that the Torah must warn us about trampling and desecrating the holy and sacred symbols of our religion. And so, he reinterprets the verse in a way that is more palatable to his understanding of even the basest Yid.

Rabbi Kamenetzky is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore

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**Rabbi Mordechai Willig (Torahweb)**

**The Loss of a Loved One**

"You are children to Hashem, your G-d, you shall not cut yourselves for a dead person. For you are a holy people to Hashem, your G-d, and Hashem has chosen you for Himself to be a treasured people" (14:1,2)

The specific prohibition against cutting oneself in grief over a death is unique to Am Yisroel. Ibn Ezra notes that gentiles, until his day, mutilated their bodies in mourning. Their practice was entirely appropriate (Kli Yakar, Ohr Hachaim), because they are not described as Hashem's children (Avos 3:18), nor are they his chosen, treasured people (14:2).

The Torah's attitude towards the loss of a loved one, as reflected by the prohibition against cutting oneself, touches on fundamentals of belief. Our personal status as children, and our national chosenness as a treasured people, are explicated by the classical commentators.

Ibn Ezra notes that a father loves his children and does only his best for them. Hashem loves us more than a father, and all that He does is good. If we don't understand, we are like small children who don't understand their father's actions, but rely upon him. So, too, should we respond to personal loss. Indeed, the blessing recited upon such loss refers to Hashem as the true Judge. Sforno adds that grief over the loss of a relative is mitigated when a more honored relative remains. As children of Hashem, the existence of our Eternal Father gives us comfort. In this vein we recite in the upcoming month of Elul, "though my father and mother have forsaken me, Hashem will gather me in" (Tehillim 27:10). Ohr Hachaim goes further and says that Hashem is likened to a father who sends his son on a business trip. When he calls his son back home, it is to the son's benefit. If our relative, a child of Hashem, is recalled to his Father, we ought not grief excessively. This theme emerges, according to Sforno, from the phrase "you are a holy people". As such, "all Yisroel has a share in the world to come" (Sanhedrin 90a), whose pleasures exceed those of this world. As such, we should not feel terrible pain for the deceased, as he is in a better place. Kli Yakar derives this idea from the expression "a treasured people". Just as treasures are placed in a

storehouse, so Hashem preserves the souls of righteous. Why should one feel pain for a soul that shines in Heaven?

The Ramban quotes both terms, and cites the prohibition to mourn excessively (Moed Kattan 27b.) The Torah does not prohibit crying, since human nature arouses crying when loved ones separate and relocate even when they are alive. Some of us have witnessed the uncontrollable sobbing of a parent or grandparent bidding farewell to a descendant traveling to a distant land. Although the child is in a safe, and perhaps better, place, the expectation that he will not see his child again evokes a powerful emotional response. This emotion abates in a matter of days, as should crying for the loss of a relative (ibid).

The Torah's prohibition against prolonged or excessive grief should not be misinterpreted as fostering insensitivity. Rather, it reflects the fundamentals of our belief and the commandment to act upon them in all circumstances.

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**Jerusalem Post Aug 13 2004**

**THE SHADCHAN Rabbi Berel Wein**

Matchmaking is an old, traditionally blessed and honored Jewish occupation. In fact, the Talmud attributes matchmaking to be the Lord's primary preoccupation. Only Jews speak about the Lord in such an intimate fashion. In any event, the shadchan as matchmaker appears as part of every Jewish society and in all times and places. Reliance on "official" (read professional) shadchanim waxed and waned throughout the centuries. But even when the professionals were not really so much in demand (as in early and middle twentieth century America) unofficial shadchanim always operated. They recommended matches to their friends, scouted for their relatives and generally made themselves useful or annoying in influencing one's search for the right mate. Over the past number of decades, the professional shadchan has made a strong comeback amongst many sections of Jewish society, especially in the Orthodox world. The days of meeting a prospective mate on one's own initiative without having a go-between negotiating on one's behalf are now gone, at least for the time being. Even after the boy and girl have finally met and dated, it is the shadchan who must determine whether both parties are willing to proceed further. In this manner, the parties are technically protected from having to confront each other with harsh questions or disappointing answers. The shadchan is also required to find out all pertinent and even not so pertinent information about the prospective parties before they embark upon an actual meeting. Thus the shadchan really can make or break the match even before it gets started. One would therefore be wise to treat shadchanim kindly since one never knows...

Many shadchanim are professionals who charge a fee for their services. This is also a long-standing tradition in the Jewish world. The rabbinic responsa books are filled with records of disputes between shadchanim and their clients over the payment of fees. What if the couple becomes engaged and then later agrees not to marry? Is the shadchan nevertheless entitled to the fee? What if the shadchan knowingly misrepresented or withheld vital information (a little "puffing" is allowed and even expected in all shiduch cases) about the parties from one another and they then married, only to discover that they were truly strangers to each other? Is the shadchan nevertheless entitled to a fee? These are just some of the complex and often painful and sometimes humorous questions dealt with in the rabbinic responsa on the subject. The general opinion of the rabbis is that a shadchan is legitimately entitled to be paid a reasonable fee if the couple marries. In fact, the money of Shadchanut is considered to be truly "kosher" money, earned honorably in furthering the personal happiness of others and in the general public good. The requirement to pay a shadchan for one's services, even if they be minimal or questionable is so deeply ingrained in Jewish society, that failure to do so promptly and adequately, created a legend that the marriage would have problems if the shadchan remained unsatisfied. Thus in today's world, many a non-professional shadchan who happened to introduce

two people to each other will also receive monetary payment for this kindness.

In a time when so many Jewish "singles" abound, the shadchan has become a necessity in Jewish social life. There are many shadchanim that advertise and publicize their professional abilities and experience. Anyone who has read any of the airlines' magazines in the United States will see full-page references and advertisements for professional matchmakers in the general non-Jewish society as well. For some reason, the old boy-meets-girl and they fall in love and marry scenario is much more difficult to achieve in our post-modern culture. People today seem to need to be "sold" on one another by outside mediators and advisers. Thus the shadchan, who was often represented in nineteenth century Haskala literature as a joke and a buffoon, a relic of an uncivilized past, has now made a tremendous comeback in respectability and profitability. Apparently the Lord's preoccupation still resonates well amongst his human creatures as well. Berel Wein

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**Weekly Parsha RE'AIH by Rabbi Berel Wein Aug 13 2004**

The first word of the parsha itself - re'aih - see - is the key to the entire understanding of the book of Devarim. Moshe speaks to the Jewish people not so much as to faith and belief as he does as to experience and history. Moshe asks that Israel recall all of the experiences of the desert and of Egypt. By remembering they will be able to see their responsibilities and their destiny much more clearly. Moshe speaks against wishful thinking, placing hope over reality, of the tragedy of ignoring lessons of history and those of bitter experience. So Moshe speaks not of esoteric matters but rather exhorts Israel to see clearly the realities and its relationship to God and His covenant. Moshe really states that "seeing is believing," for by seeing the world, past and present, clearly and honestly, one can thereby come to greater heights of belief and inspiration. The prophet scolded Israel by stating: "See your path in the valley; see your past immoralities." If we would only see the past and not merely acknowledge its existence in a superficial manner, how much greater our commitment to achievement and future greatness would be!

The entire book of Devarim concentrates on this weakness of sight of the Jewish people. There are those who are very near-sighted and never see past their nose. There are those who are far-sighted but because of that they are not realistic about the present. Moshe demands of Israel to be clear-sighted, balanced, farsighted and realistic all at the same time. There are aids to help us achieve this tricky goal. Therefore this week's parsha also contains the holiday cycle of the Jewish year. The holiday cycle reminds us of Egypt and the Exodus, of Sinai, and our commitment, of the sojourn in the desert and our arrival in the Holy Land. It paints for us a complete picture of the Jewish past and the Jewish future. It is a corrective lens through which we see clearly how to behave and achieve in our current world. The gift of sight is one of the wonders of the human body. The gift of spiritual and historic sight, the type of sight that Moshe speaks of in this week's parsha is also of inestimable value. We can thank God for this gift of both spiritual and physical sight by renewing our loyalty to Torah and Israel and setting our goals according to the vision of Moshe as expressed here in the book of Devarim. Shabat Shalom.

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**"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Reeh  
A Spoon and a Handle**

**"For you shall surely open your hand to him." (Devarim 15:8)**

First, the Torah tells us (15:7), "If there be a pauper among you, one of your brethren, in one of your gateways in your land that God your Lord has given you, do not harden your heart nor close your hand tight against your impoverished brother." This is clearly telling us to give charity to the poor person. Then the Torah continues, "For you shall surely open your hand to him and provide him with the necessities he is missing." This seems to call for a higher level of charity not covered by the first commandment.

There was once a Jew in Vilna who took a great interest in local history. In the course of his research, he would often go out to the old cemetery and read the inscriptions on the tombstones. He was able to gather a surprising amount of information in this fashion.

One day, he came across two adjacent graves. According to the inscriptions, the two men were brothers, both talmidei chachamim, both extraordinary baalei tzedakah, philanthropists. Strangely, the two tombstones shared an inscription from Eishes Chayil, the last chapter of Mishlei (31:20). The inscription began on one tombstone with “she extended her palm (kappah) to the poor” and was completed on the other with “and she stretched out her hand (yadeha) to the pauper.”

The man was puzzled. First of all, he had never seen an inscription shared by two tombstones. Second, inscriptions from Eishes Chayil were used almost exclusively for women. There was obviously a story behind all this, and by all appearances, an interesting story. The man sought out one of the oldest men in the Vilna community and asked him about the inscription. The old man indeed had a story to tell.

These two brothers were Torah scholars of the highest order, and they were also wealthy and extremely generous in their charities. They were much respected and admired in the community.

Suddenly, their fortunes took a turn for the worse. Some of their businesses failed. Their investments stagnated. People began to wonder and whisper. Why would such a thing happen to such sterling people?

The Rabbinical Court of Vilna also heard the stories and took the matter under advisement. “How can this be,” declared one of the judges, “that two such exemplary talmidei chachamim should be going bankrupt? It is a chillul Hashem! We have to do something about it.”

“But what can we do about it?” asked another judge. “Should we give them a loan?”

“No, of course not,” said the first judge. “We have to get to the bottom of this and correct it.”

“But how?” said the second judge.

“There is a simple way,” offered a third judge. “We have to summon the brothers to court and interrogate them about everything they’ve done for the past few years. I have no doubt they will answer our questions truthfully.”

The Rabbinical Court questioned the brothers for hours and discovered only one instance of wrongdoing. The Halachah demands (Kesubos 50a) that a person should not give away more than a fifth of his wealth to charity, but the brothers often exceeded this limit. Their only crime was that they gave too much charity!

What was to be done about this? The Rabbinical Court decided that the brothers could not be trusted to stay within the prescribed limits. Therefore, they themselves took control of the finances and decreed that anyone approaching the brothers for charitable donations should come to the Rabbinical Court’s appointed administrator of the brothers’ accounts. The poor appeared on the doorstep of the brothers, and they duly directed them to the court-appointed administrator of their accounts.

“We’ve been to him already,” they protested, “and he is not nearly as generous as you’ve always been. We’ll never feed our children on what the administrator gives us.”

The brothers’ hearts melted, but what could they do? They didn’t have control of their money. So they began to give away the silver in their cabinets to the poor. Eventually, this trove was also depleted, and they were left with one silver spoon between them.

The next day, when a beggar approached each of the brothers, they broke the last spoon in half. One took the spoon part and gave it to a beggar, and the other took the handle and gave it to a beggar.

This wonderful act of charity was memorialized on their tombstones, relying on a wordplay. The beginning of the verse, “She extended her palm (kappah) to the poor” - kappah also meaning “her spoon” - appeared on the first tombstone. The completion of the verse, “And she stretched out her hand (yadeha) to the pauper” - yadeha also meaning “her handle” - appeared on the other.

This is an example of “opening the hand” of the highest order.

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### **Ohr Torah Stone - Rabbi Riskin’s Shabbat Shalom Shabbat Re’eh 27 Menachem Av 5764, 14 August 2004**

Efrat, Israel - “Behold, I present before you this day a blessing and a curse; the blessing when you hearken to the commandments of the Lord your G-d... and the curse if you do not hearken to the commandments of the Lord your G-d...” (Deuteronomy 11:26-28) There are three important and fascinating issues which emanate from these verses. The reader will note that I translated the very first verb in the opening verse, “present” (Hebrew, notein), as in the noun “present” or “gift” (Hebrew, Matana, the noun built from the verb natan) One can well understand the positive elements of a blessing, but how can the Biblical text refer to a curse as a blessing? And clearly, what the Almighty is giving or presenting “on this day” are both a curse as well as a blessing!?

The second issue is the fact that the blessings and curses referred to here are more specifically delineated later on in the Biblical text (Deuteronomy 27:11 -28), within the context of the planned entry of the Israelites into the Land of Israel. Indeed, this is the third covenant, in addition to the national covenant which G-d made with Abraham when He promised our founding patriarch children and a homeland (Genesis 15), and the religious covenant which G-d made with the Israelite nation when He revealed to them the Torah at Sinai (Exodus 20). It is called the covenant of mutual responsibility, of co-signership, by the Sages of the Talmud (B.T. Sotah 32, areivut, Hebrew) Why are the blessings and curses associated with our keeping or not keeping the Torah bound up specifically with the Land of Israel? Does this third covenant of areivut (co-signership) not apply equally to the Jews living in the diaspora communities?

And finally, this third covenant is dramatized around two majestic mountains near Shekem: six of the tribes ascend Mount Gerizim, the other six ascend Mount Eybal, and the priests, Levites and Holy Ark remain below between the mountains. The Levites turn first towards Mount Gerizim with the blessings and then towards Mount Eybal with the curses, and with each pronouncement the Israelites atop the mountains respond Amen (B.T. Sotah, ibid., Deuteronomy 27:12, Rashi ad loc). What is the unique message of these mountains? After all, the very next verse in the opening portion of our Torah reading testifies as to the inextricable bond between this third covenant, the Land of Israel, and the two mountains: “And it will be when the Lord your G-d will take you to the land you have entered there to inherit, then you shall present the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Eybal (Deuteronomy 11:29).” What is the connection?

Let us begin with the Divine gift or present of a blessing and a curse. I believe the Bible is teaching us that the greatest gift which the Almighty bestows upon humanity is the gift of freedom of will, the human possibility to choose between right action and wrong action, between perfecting the world or polluting the world. Undoubtedly built in within the very structure of free will is the possibility of one’s taking the wrong path and bringing about the curse of destruction. However, without free-will, the human being would be no different from a rat in a maze, a mere puppet or pawn; with free will - despite its concomitant dangers - the human being is a partner to the Divine, “but slightly less than G-d, crowned with honor and glory; whose G-d -given task it is to perfect the world in the Kingship of the Divine.

Since Israel is the land set aside for the Israeli nation-state, the sovereign society which enables us to serve as a “beacon-light to the gentile nations,” the back-drop of the Temple Mount from whence the message of ethical monotheism and a G-d of love, justice and peace will eventually be accepted by the world, the final expression of the success of our mission and the true gift of our free will can only come to fruition in Israel and Jerusalem. And since the task G-d has set for us and we have accepted for ourselves is a formidable one, fraught with danger and demanding enormous discipline and dedication, the best metaphor for our challenge is climbing to the top of a steep and rocky mountain. In the words of Rav Nachman, “The entire world is a very narrow bridge, (from

which it is all too easy to fall into a deep abyss). But the essence is, not to be afraid." And when one succeeds in climbing a mountain like Grizim, Eybal or Everest, the "high" at the top, the sense of accomplishment and success, is a gift of satisfaction which has no equal. A number of years ago, I truly understood the gift of our freedom of choice to fulfill our mission of "tikkun olam", the perfection of the world. One of our Yeshivot which combines Torah study and army service was under heavy enemy attack during this current Oslo War. Forty IDF soldiers and two tanks were protecting the Academy; each Thursday I gave our students a shiur (Torah lecture). One particular Thursday, one of the soldiers came in to hear my class; I noticed him immediately, not only because he took copious notes but mainly because he was very tall and very Black. In a discussion with him after class, he told me he came from Nigeria, his name was Dan, and he became Jewish because of "tikkun olam," his pronunciation of tikkun olam, the perfection of the world. He explained that when a delegation of Israel's 'Peace Corps to the Third World' came to Nigeria to impart new techniques in agriculture and medicine, he was befriended by one of them who happened to be an observant Jew. This "friend" taught him about "tikkun olam," invited him to visit Israel, and the rest is history.

I invited him to share Friday evening dinner with my family and me. He accepted for the following week - but never got to my home. He was killed in the line of duty by a Palestinian sniper's bullet. Only the Yeshiva attended his funeral at Mount Herzl cemetery; his family in Nigeria was informed, but never responded....

Three months later, my wife woke me up from a Shabbat afternoon nap and apologetically explained that I had important guests. I found a middle-aged black couple sitting in my living-room drinking tea, "We don't understand why our son came to Israel, we don't understand why our son converted to Judaism, and we don't understand why our son had to die.

Everyone we asked said that you could tell us, that shortly before he was killed he had a long conversation with you..."

We spoke for more than three hours. A few months ago I was invited to the "hanukat habayit" (house-dedication) of Dan's parents and put up the mezuzah. This amazing couple went to Ulpan Akiba to learn Hebrew, converted to Judaism, and now have made their home in Netanya. I hammered in the mezuzah; Dan's mother spoke. She said, "All my friends back home in Nigeria ask why we made such a move to such a dangerous place. There is only one reason: "tikkun olam." Shabbat Shalom.

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## **TORAH WEEKLY**

**For the week ending 14 August 2004 / 27 Av 5764**

**from Ohr Somayach | [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)**

**Parshat Re'eh - INSIGHTS**

**HyperKosher "You shall not eat any carcass..." (14:21)**

I can remember a slightly more innocent world where the actors and actresses in Hollywood were referred to as "stars." Of course to call a human being a star in itself is a tremendous piece of fantasy and exaggeration.

However, hyperbole, as everyone knows, is subject to the law of diminishing returns. If everyone is somebody and nobody is nobody, then to get noticed being a "star" isn't good enough, and in the 70's a new epithet emerged - the "superstar." Of course, these mere mortals were as tarnished and faded as their predecessors, the "stars," but the march of exaggeration and the debasement of language is not to be halted by squeamish concerns of accuracy or truth.

The "superstars" short reign came to an end with the advent of the "megastar."

Where to from here?

A kosher shechita (ritual slaughtering for kosher food) involves the fulfilling on numerous Halachic requirements. The shochet (ritual slaughterer) must be a G-d fearing person. He must be allowed to work without the pressure of fulfilling a quota. He must be allotted sufficient

time to check the smoothness of his knife and the health of the animal. He must be calm enough to be able to apply the correct amount of pressure to the blade during the shechita itself.

The shochet must check carefully the animal's lungs. An adhesion on the lung is something not easily detected and often a decision must be made about this that will affect whether the animal is kosher or not.

If the lungs are completely free of adhesions, the animal is "glatt kosher." On the average, between two and four percent of all cows that are shechted are "glatt kosher."

How is it, then, that nowadays nearly every restaurant/butcher/deli proclaims that they are "glatt kosher?" It's just not possible.

The answer is that the world of kashrut is not immune from the dreaded disease that affects so much of modern discourse - hyperbole.

Glatt ain't what it used to be.

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**Bar-Ilan University's Parashat Hashavua Study Center**

**Parashat Re'eh 5764/ August 14, 2004**

**Two Tithes, Two Aspects\***

**Rabbi Dr. Hayyim Burgansky - Department of Talmud**

Several halakhic issues in Parashat Re'eh contradict other sources dealing with the same subjects. Here we shall relate to one such contradiction.

In this week's reading the Torah commands us about tithes (Deut. 14:22-23):

You shall set aside every year a tenth part of all the yield of your sowing that is brought from the field. You shall consume the tithes of your new grain and wine and oil, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks, in the presence of the Lord your G-d, in the place where He will choose to establish His name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your G-d forever. Thus we see that here the law regarding tithes is as follows: the owner is to bring it to the place that the Lord will choose and to eat it there, to teach him to revere the Lord his G-d.

The commandment concerning tithes appears quite differently in Numbers, in the list of gifts to be given the Priests that appears in chapter 18 (verses 21-24):

And to the Levites I hereby give all the tithes in Israel as their share in return for the services that they perform, the services of the Tent of Meeting ... for it is the tithes set aside by the Israelites as a gift to the Lord that I give to the Levites as their share. Therefore I have said concerning them:

They shall have no territorial share among the Israelites.

The Contradiction

We see a contradiction between Parashat Re'eh and the passage in Numbers regarding two details of the commandment of tithes: 1) In Parashat Re'eh the tithe is eaten by its owner, whereas in Numbers it is given to the Levite.[1] 2) In Parashat Re'eh it is eaten in the place that the Lord will choose, and in Numbers it may be eaten by the Levites anywhere.

In other words, according to Numbers the tithe belongs to G-d,[2] who gave it to the Levites. When a person gives a tithe of the yield of his crops to the Levite he expresses his recognition that the yield was given him by Heaven and therefore belongs to the Lord, who commands us what to do with our/His yield. The Lord grants the tithe to the tribe of His servants in compensation for their work for Him, and He turns the tithe into their allotment, a share which is more elevated than that received by the rest of the tribes of Israel. According to Parashat Re'eh, a person acknowledges G-d's bounty by eating the tithe before the Lord in the place He chooses. In the language of the Talmud, the tithe is given mishulhan gavo'ah, "from the table of the Lord." It is as if the person were a guest at G-d's table, partaking of the tithe eaten by the members of His household. Eating in a state of purity in the place chosen by G-d expresses the recognition that this is not a present that the owners set aside for themselves and the members of their household, rather it is a present from Heaven; for the person's own share of his yield may be

eaten anywhere and under any condition, in a state of purity and impurity alike.

#### Two Aspects

What is signified by this contradiction between the two sources?[3] The central thread connecting many of the commandments given in Parashat Re'eh is their relationship to the place that the Lord will choose, beginning with the proscription against sacrificing outside of the place chosen by G-d, stated at the beginning of this week's reading, and continuing through the emphasis placed on the obligation to celebrate the festivals in the place that the Lord will choose, found at the end of this week's reading. Indeed, the existence of a fixed place that the Lord will choose for His dwelling introduces a major new idea, [4] one which is even difficult for us to grasp, since the Holy One, blessed be He, is greater than the world and the world cannot encompass Him, and His glory fills the entire earth. King Solomon, when he inaugurated the Temple, recognized this and said: "Even the heavens to their uttermost reaches cannot contain You, how much less this House that I have built" (I Kings 8:27). And so it is, we are dealing with an unfathomable decree of the King: the Holy One, blessed be He, Who is Omnipresent, chooses Himself a place in which to dwell, and causes His Presence to be in that place.

#### G-d in the World

One could say that the appearance of G-d's Presence in the world has two contradictory aspects: in one sense, His Presence is in everything, and He is close to all who seek Him sincerely wherever they may be. In this respect of G-d being everywhere we are obligated to serve him in all places and all times, as we pray to Him in any place, as in the words of the prophet: "For from where the sun rises to where it sets, My name is honored among the nations, and everywhere incense and pure oblation are offered to My name" (Malachi 1:11). In the second respect, G-d has a geographical identification and He dwells in a specific spot, in the land of one of the tribes of Israel. There, and only there, does a person stand before G-d, and only there can a person worship G-d through the sacrificial service.

This helps us understand the contradiction between the passages on tithes. Insofar as a person finds himself facing G-d everywhere, a specific place does not have especial sanctified value. In such a situation the recognition that the yield of one's field belongs to G-d would find expression by giving the tithe to those who are chosen by G-d to serve Him. Giving to the Levite is like giving to G-d; it is not dependent on a specific place, since anywhere that it might be eaten it would be eaten "in the presence of G-d." A certain extreme example of this can be seen in the wandering in the wilderness, where people wandered from place to place with the Glory of the Lord accompanying them at all times. When they laid down to sleep the pillar of fire illumined the night, and when they arose the pillar of cloud hung over them; when they crossed the Lord, His hand would strike at them, and when they did His will, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet swell. Thus the tithe as it appears in Numbers, a tithe given to the Levite, expresses this aspect of the Lord's presence. From the second respect – there being a specific geographical identification for the dwelling-place of the Divine Presence – the Lord does not dwell everywhere, as it were, and the idea that the yield belongs to G-d is expressed by bringing the tithe to the place that the Lord chooses and eating it there in a state of ritual purity. By bringing a tithe and eating it before the Lord a person fully expresses recognition that the yield belongs to G-d. This also reflects the reality in the land of Israel, where people go to sleep weary from their day's work, and there is no pillar of fire to light up their night. Their morning clouds are not the divine pillar of cloud, rather the source of their hope for rain; their food is obtained by the sweat of their brow and not by way of miracle, and when they act against G-d's word their punishment comes in natural ways, without clear identification of the crime, the punishment and the one who punishes. In this mundane existence there is a clearly-defined place where G-d reveals Himself to human beings, and it is there that the tithe mentioned in Parashat Re'eh is brought – a tithe of which

the Levites do not partake and which is eaten by its owner right "before the Lord."

#### Two Tithes

The Lord's Torah is perfect, and when the written Torah sharpens the seemingly contradictory aspects, the Oral Torah resolves the contradiction in actual practice. Thus, people are obliged by both tithes together, just as both aspects of G-d's Presence exist at the same time: every year a first tithe is set aside from the threshing floor for the Levite, thus proclaiming to the world that the Divine Presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, is in his midst at all times and all places; then a second tithe is set aside and brought to be eaten before the Lord, thereby declaring that the Holy One, blessed be He, caused His Presence to dwell in the place that He chose, in the territory of one of the tribes of Israel.

What follows below is based on the methodology of distinctions developed by Rabbi Mordechai Breuer. For a brief outline of this approach, see M. Breuer, *Pirkei Mo'adot*, Jerusalem 1989, pp. 11-22. A sample of Rabbi Breuer's unique approach may also be read in English: "The Study of Bible and the Primacy of the Fear of Heaven", *Modern Scholarship in the Study of Torah*, ed. Shalom Carmy, The Orthodox Forum Series, New Jersey 1996, pp.159-180.

[1] Especially notable here is the decline in the status of the Levite, a motif which occurs repeatedly throughout the book of Deuteronomy. While in Numbers the Levites are given the tithe as a present from the Lord, the Lord giving them the tithe as their allotted portion, here the Levites are part of the group of indigent recipients of the second tithe, and they are granted it because they have no allotted portion in the land. Indeed, the decline in the Levites' status must be examined in its broader context, although this is not the place to do so; suffice it to say that their decline in status appears to have resulted from the journey through the wilderness having been completed, since the status of the Levites in the wilderness was primarily related to their carrying the camp of the Lord's Presence within the Israelite encampment. In contrast to the Levites, the status of the priests does not decline in Deuteronomy, and may actually even have strengthened in several respects.

[2] That the tithe belongs to G-d also follows from Leviticus 27:30-31: "All tithes from the land, whether seed from the ground or fruit from the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord. If anyone wishes to redeem any of his tithes, he must add one-fifth to them." It does not state there that the tithe is to be given to the Levite, but it is possible to redeem it the way sanctified gifts are redeemed. Perhaps the commandment in Leviticus is a way of mediating between the commandments as stated in Numbers and Deuteronomy, but I shall not discuss this idea further here.

[3] Note that a similar contradiction exists between the passage on the firstlings of one's livestock as presented in Numbers and as presented in this week's reading. In Numbers the firstlings are given to the priest, whereas in this week's reading they are eaten by their owners before the Lord. A comparison of the tithe to the firstling can be found in the beginning of this week's reading (Deut. 12:6), as well as in the passage on tithes (Deut. 14:23), except that the question of the firstlings is far more complex, and we shall not deal with it in depth here. See D. Henschke, "Shiluah Avadim ve-Hakdashat ha-Bekhor," *Megadim* 4 (Tishre 1988), pp. 9, 22.

[4] The contradiction described here first emerges in Parashat Terumah, with G-d's command regarding the work on the Tabernacle. See what the Sages had to say in *Exodus Rabbah* 34.1. Also see my article, "Mizbah Adamah ve-Khruvei ha-Zahav," *Daf Shavua* on Parashat Terumah, 2000 (no. 329).

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#### Covenant & Conversation

#### Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS

#### Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

#### Re'eh 5763 [from last year]

TUCKED AWAY IN TODAY'S SEDRA, almost as an aside in the course of explaining the law of shemittah (the year of "release" in which debts were cancelled), is one of Judaism's most majestic institutions, the principle of tzedakah:

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your G-d is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother. Rather, be open-handed and freely

lend him sufficient for his need in that which he lacks. 1 Tzedakah lies at the heart Judaism's understanding of mitzvot bein adam le-chavero, interpersonal duties. An idea going back four thousand years, it remains challenging today. To understand it, though, a brief historical note is necessary.

In a key passage in Bereishith - the only passage in which the Torah explains why G-d singled out Abraham to be the founder of a new faith - we read:

Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just [tzedakah u-mishpat], so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." 2 The "way of the Lord" is defined here by two words, tzedakah and mishpat. They are both forms of justice, but are quite different in their logic. Mishpat means retributive justice. It refers to the rule of law, through which disputes are settled by right rather than might. Law distinguishes between innocent and guilty. It establishes a set of rules, binding on all, by means of which the members of a society act in such a way as to pursue their own interests without infringing on the rights and freedoms of others. Few if any civilizations have robbed law with greater dignity than Judaism. It is the most basic institution of a free society. It is no coincidence that in Judaism, G-d reveals himself primarily in the form of laws, for Judaism is concerned not just with salvation (the soul in its relationship with G-d) but also with redemption (society as a vehicle for the divine presence). A law-governed society is a place of mishpat. But mishpat alone cannot create a good society. To it must be added tzedakah, distributive justice. One can imagine a society which fastidiously observes the rule of law, and yet contains so much inequality that wealth is concentrated into the hands of the few, and many are left without the most basic requirements of a dignified existence. There may be high unemployment and widespread poverty. Some may live in palaces while others go homeless. That is not the kind of order that the Torah contemplates. There must be justice not only in how the law is applied, but also in how the means of existence - wealth as G-d's blessing - are distributed. That is tzedakah. Why then is it set out so briefly in the Torah itself? The answer is that the Torah is a set of timeless ideals that are to be realised in the course of time; and not all times are the same. The immediate focus of the Torah from the exodus onwards is the creation of a society in the land of Israel - the society that actually emerged from the days of Joshua to the close of the biblical era. Its economy (as were all ancient economies) was primarily agricultural. Therefore, the Torah sets out its programme of tzedakah in great detail in terms of an agrarian order.

There was the seventh year, when debts were cancelled. In the seventh year of service, slaves went free. There was the Jubilee in which ancestral lands returned to their original owners. There were the "corner of the field", the "forgotten sheaf", the "gleanings" of grain and wine harvest, and the tithes in the third and sixth years that were given to the poor. In these ways and others the Torah established the first form of what in the twentieth century came to be known as a welfare state - with one significant difference. It did not depend on a state. It was part of society, implemented not by power but by moral responsibility and the network of obligations created by the covenant at Sinai. It was an exceptionally beautiful structure. But the genius of the Torah is that it does not predicate its social vision on a single era or a particular economic order. Alongside the specifics is a broad statement of timeless ideal. That is the role of the verses quoted above, which served as the basis for rabbinic legislation on tzedakah. Tzedakah refers to more than gifts of produce; it includes gifts of money - the medium of exchange in all advanced societies whatever their economic base. Thus what in biblical times was a relatively minor provision became - when Israel was no longer a nation in its own land, and when most of its people no longer lived and worked on farms - the very lifeblood of its system of distributive justice.

Maimonides, in his halakhic code the Mishneh Torah, makes a fascinating observation: "We have never seen or heard of a Jewish community without a tzedakah fund [kupah shel tzedakah]." 3 He adds:

We are obligated to be more scrupulous in fulfilling the commandment of tzedakah than any other positive commandment because tzedakah is the sign of the righteous, the seed of Abraham our father, as it is said, "For I know him that he will command his children to do tzedakah." The throne of Israel and the religion of truth is upheld only through tzedakah, as it is said, "In tzedakah shall you be established" (Isaiah 54: 14). Israel is redeemed only through tzedakah, as it is said, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgement and those that return by tzedakah" (Isaiah 1: 27) . . . All Jews and those attached to them are like brothers, as it is said, "You are sons of the Lord your G-d" (Deut. 14:1), and if a brother will not show mercy to his brother, who then will have mercy on him? 4 Tzedakah was thus, both in ideal and reality, constitutive of Jewish community life, the moral bond between Jew and Jew (though it should be noted that Jewish law also obligates Jews to give tzedakah to non-Jews under the rubric of darkhei shalom, the "ways of peace"). It is foundational to the concept of covenantal society: society as an ethical enterprise constructed on the basis of mutual responsibility. Thus far, deliberately, I have left the word tzedakah untranslated. It cannot be translated, and this is not accidental. Civilizations differ from one another in their structure of ideals, even their most fundamental understandings of reality. They are not different ways of saying or doing the same things, mere "garments", as it were, covering the same basic modes of existence. If we seek to understand what makes a civilization distinctive, the best place to look is at the words that are untranslatable. Aristotle's Athens, for example, contained the concept of the megalopsuchos, the "great-souled man" who, gifted with honour, wealth and rank, conducted himself with the dignity and pride that only came with such endowments. The very word is untranslatable into a system like Judaism that values humility and the kind of dignity that attaches to the person as such, regardless of their income or social position.

Tzedakah cannot be translated because it joins together two concepts that in other languages are opposites, namely charity and justice. Suppose, for example, that I give someone £100. Either he is entitled to it, or he is not. If he is, then my act is a form of justice. If he is not, it is an act of charity. In English (as with the Latin terms *caritas* and *iustitia*) a gesture of charity cannot be an act of justice, nor can an act of justice be described as charity. Tzedakah is therefore an unusual term, because it means both. It arises from the theology of Judaism, which insists on the difference between possession and ownership. Ultimately, all things are owned by G-d, creator of the world. What we possess, we do not own - we merely hold it in trust for G-d. The clearest example is the provision in Leviticus: 'The land must not be sold permanently because the land is Mine; you are merely strangers and temporary residents in relation to Me' (Leviticus 25:23) 5. If there were absolute ownership, there would be a difference between justice (what we are bound to give others) and charity (what we give others out of generosity). The former would be a legally enforceable duty, the latter, at best, the prompting of benevolence or sympathy. In Judaism, however, because we are not owners of our property but merely guardians on G-d's behalf, we are bound by the conditions of trusteeship, one of which is that we share part of what we have with others in need. What would be regarded as charity in other legal systems is, in Judaism, a strict requirement of the law and can, if necessary, be enforced by the courts. The nearest English equivalent to tzedakah is the phrase that came into existence alongside the idea of a welfare state, namely social justice (significantly, Friedrich Hayek regarded the concept of social justice as incoherent and self-contradictory). Behind both is the idea that no one should be without the basic requirements of existence, and that those who have more than they need must share some of that surplus with those who have less. This is fundamental to the kind of society the Israelites were charged with creating, namely one in which everyone has a basic right to a dignified

life and equal worth as citizens in the covenantal community under the sovereignty of G-d.

Tzedakah concerns not just physical needs but psychological ones also. The rabbis gave the following interpretation of the key sentence in this week's sedra, "Be open-handed and freely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he lacks":

Sufficient for his need - means that you are commanded to maintain him, but you are not commanded to make him rich. That which he lacks - means even a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him. It is told of Hillel the elder [head of the Jewish community in the first century BCE] that he bought for a certain poor man of good family a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him. On one occasion he could not find a slave to run before him, so he himself ran before him for three miles. 6 The first provision ('sufficient for his need') refers to an absolute subsistence level. In Jewish law this was taken to include food, housing, basic furniture and if necessary, funds to pay for a wedding. The second ('that which he lacks') means relative poverty - relative, however, not to others but to the individual's own previous standard of living. This is an indication of something which plays an important role in the rabbinic understanding of poverty. Beyond sheer physical needs is a psychological dimension. Poverty humiliates, and a good society will not allow humiliation.

Protecting dignity and avoiding humiliation was a systematic element of rabbinical law. So, for example, the rabbis ruled that even the richest should be buried plainly so as not to shame the poor. On certain festive days girls, especially those from wealthy families, had to wear borrowed clothes, 'so as not to shame those who do not have.' 7 The rabbis intervened to lower the prices of religious necessities so that no one would be excluded from communal celebrations. Work conditions had to be such that employees were treated with basic respect. Here, the proof text was G-d's declaration, 'For to Me the children of Israel are servants' - meaning that they were not to be treated as servants of any human being. Freedom presupposes self-respect, and a free society will therefore be one that robs no one of that basic human entitlement.

One element of self-respect is independence. This explains a remarkable feature of tzedakah legislation. Maimonides lists the various levels of giving-to-others, all except one of which involve philanthropy. The supreme act, however, does not:

The highest degree, exceeded by none, is that of one who assists a poor person by providing him with a gift or a loan or by accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment - in a word by putting him in a situation where he can dispense with other people's aid. With reference to such aid it is said, "You shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall live with you" (Leviticus 25: 35), which means strengthen him in such a manner that his falling into want is prevented. 8 This ruling is the result of a profound wrestling, within Judaism, with the fact that aid in the form of charity can itself be humiliating for the recipient. (One of the most powerful expressions of this is to be found in birkat ha-mazon, the Grace after Meals, when we say, "We beseech You, G-d our Lord, let us not be in need of the gifts of men or of their loans, but only of Your helping hand . . . so that we may not be put to shame nor humiliated for ever and ever"). Aid can also create welfare dependency, reinforcing, not breaking the cycle of deprivation. The greatest act of tzedakah is therefore one that allows the individual to become self-sufficient. The highest form of aid is one that enables the individual to dispense with aid. Humanitarian relief is essential on the short term, but in the long run, job creation and the promotion of employment are more important.

In this context, one detail of Jewish law is particularly fascinating. It specifies that even a person dependent on tzedakah must himself or herself give tzedakah. On the face of it, the rule is absurd. Why give X enough money so that he can give to Y? Giving to Y directly is more logical and efficient. What the rabbis understood, however, is that giving is an essential part of human dignity. As an African proverb puts it: the hand that gives is always uppermost; the hand that receives is always

lower. The rabbinic insistence that the community provide the poor with enough money so that they themselves can give is a profound insight into the human condition.

With its combination of charity and justice, its understanding of the psychological as well as material dimensions of poverty, and its aim of restoring dignity and independence, not just meeting needs, tzedakah is a unique institution. It is deeply humanitarian, but it could not exist without the essentially religious concepts of Divine ownership and social covenant. The prophet Jeremiah says of king Josiah, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is this not to know Me? says the Lord.' 9 To know G-d is to act with justice and compassion, to recognise His image in other people, and to hear the silent cry of those in need.

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**Arutz Sheva Aug 12, '04 / 25 Av 5764**  
**Re'eh: The Mitzvah of Settling the Land**  
**by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner**

"For you are crossing the Jordan to come and to receive as an inheritance ("lareshet") the land which the L-rd your G-d has given to you; and you shall possess it ("v'yirishta") and reside ("v'yeshavtem") in it." (Deuteronomy 11:31)  
Two separate, but complementary, mitzvot are mentioned in this verse: possession and residence. The former means that Eretz Israel must belong to us. The latter, that we must live in Eretz Israel. It may happen that Jews live in the Land, but it doesn't belong to them, as during the British Mandate. Conversely, we may possess areas of Eretz Israel where Jews do not live, as is the situation today in parts of Judea and Samaria.

We are commanded to fulfill both of these mitzvot in the order in which they are mentioned above: possession and then residence. Our rabbis taught, "By virtue of your taking possession, you will (be able to) reside in (the land)." (Sifrei, op. cit.) As long as the Land is not under our control, our residence there is inherently weakened.

There are two ways in which our lawful claim to ownership may be established, and both are expressed by one Hebrew root, "Ch-z-kah" (i.e., chazakah and chozkah), as noted by the Vilna Gaon in his commentary on the Torah (cited in Kol HaTor). We may show that the Land belongs to us by actually settling it - through agriculture and construction on the land - as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Alternatively, we can take possession of the land by military conquest, as Joshua did. Obviously, the first alternative is preferable, but we may also need to use the second.

Only when we reside in Eretz Israel can we truly fulfill the command in the next verse of our parsha, "And you shall take care to fulfill all the laws and the statutes that I set before you today." (Deuteronomy 11:32) Only in Eretz Israel can we properly and completely fulfill the mitzvot of the Torah. At the same time as we continue to build Eretz Israel today, it is building us individually and as a nation, through the wonders of He Who redeems both the Nation and the Land of Israel.

"Our brothers who still live in the Diaspora receive from their brothers, the settlers and builders of Yerushalayim, thousands upon thousands times more than they contribute to Yerushalayim, even when they do so generously. For all the bounty of salvation, blessings, redemption, benevolence, mercy, good fortune, good health, etc., etc., of all of Israel in all their various dispersed places, comes only from Yerushalayim and her construction."—The Vilna Gaon

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**Haftorah - Parshas Reeh Yeshaya 54:11 - 55:5**  
**by Rabbi Dovid Siegel**

This week's haftorah reflects Zion's illustrious future during the Messianic era. The haftorah begins with a call to Yerushalayim to singover the return of her masses. The prophet Yeshaya invites her to expand her borders to allow for the overwhelming influx of Jewish people who are returning home. Yeshaya tells Zion not to be embarrassed because no trace of her previous shame will remain. He assures her that Hashem's kindness is here to stay and that His peace will be with her forever.

Suddenly, Yeshaya takes a sharp turn and proclaims, "Afflicted stormy city who is not consoled." These words indicate a strong unwillingness of Zion to be comforted. Although the ingathering of the exiles has occurred and the land of Israel has been rebuilt, Zion cannot be consoled. Her two thousand years of ruins



demand to be accounted for. In the past, she had served as the focal point of the world, the apex of society. But for agesher respect, dignity and elevated status were taken from her. Instead of splendor and glory she constantly experienced shame, degradation and destruction. When reflecting upon her glorious past she cannot help but remember the shameful years that followed and cannot be consoled.

Hashem responds to Zion and says, "Behold I will lay your floors with precious stones and set your foundation with sapphires." (54:11) Tobegin, Hashem assures Zion that she will be restored to her previous glory. But Hashem expanded this kindness and pledged to render her more desirable than ever before. He promised that her splendor will be so magnificent that her floors and walls will actually be studded with jewels and precious stones. Her physical beauty will transcend every existing structure in the world and she will literally glisten from diamonds. Every moment spent in Zion will be an unforgettable experience which will irresistibly attract the masses to view her splendor.

This development addresses the physical dimensions of Yerushalayim but what about her spiritual heights? For two thousand years Zion has not been functioning as the Torah center of the world. How can she be comforted from this loss? In response to this, the prophet adds a major dimension and says, "And all of your children will be students of Hashem and much peace will be amongst them." (54:13) This means that Torah

perspectives will be readily available to all the children of Zion who will now be students of Hashem. Chazal (see Yalkut Shimoni 479) explain this reference to mean that peace and harmony will exist amongst Torah leadership. As Chazal view things, present day confusion and diversity result from human limitations found within Torah study. Until the era of Mashiach one must rely upon the finite human mind for the transmittal of Torah knowledge from teacher to student. Being that the teacher's intellect is limited it follows naturally that the student's absorption of Torah knowledge will have even greater limitations. Yeshaya reveals that in the time of Mashiach matters will drastically improve. Because, Zion will be privileged to study Torah from its original source, Hashem. One readily understands that because there are no limitations to Hashem few limitations will exist amongst His students. The clarity resulting from this study will produce unparalleled levels of peace and harmony with everyone basically following the same Torah path of observance.

The prophet expands this vision and opens this renaissance to the nations of the world as well. He addresses them and says, "All who are thirsty go and drink water, acquire without pay wine and milk." (55:1) Chazal (Yalkut ad loc.) explain that water refers to Torah knowledge and wine and milk refer to spiritual sustenance. Even the nations of the world will be invited to Torah study and unique spiritual experiences. Radak explains that Hashem's wondrous revelations will yield an unprecedented thirst for knowledge. The nations will be so inspired by Hashem's miracles that they will flock to Zion to study His word. Zion will finally return to her previous spiritual greatness and serve as the Torah center of the world for the Jewish people. But in addition the Torah of Zion will be fully appreciated even by the nations of the world. Even they will see Torah as their true source of life and will flock to Zion to absorb Hashem's every word.

Yeshaya now completes the picture and says, "Behold nations that never knew you, will run to become your servants because the glory of Hashem will shine upon you." (55:5) The inhabitants of Zion will be held in such high esteem that nations from near and far will come to serve their every need. With this final detail, Zion will be totally healed. She has been promised her original splendor. In addition she will become the most desirable physical spot on earth. Her children will be privileged to study Torah directly from Hashem. She'll serve as the center of Torah for the entire world, nations of the world included. Finally, through her reflection of Hashem's glory, she'll attract untold nations who will display total subservience. Her lonely, forsaken past will be erased for eternity and she will forever enjoy her well earned status as the most desirable physical and spiritual site in the entire world.

Rabbi Dovid Siegel is Rosh Kollel of Kollel Toras Chaim, Kiryat Sefer, Israel.

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[From Chaim - One more -

**Divine Zoology  
by Dr. Sam Friedman**

In the Torah portion (Parsha) entitled Re'eh, the Torah tells us that an animal must have split hooves and chew its cud, to be Kosher. In Devarim 14:7-8, the Torah lists five animals that are not Kosher because they have only one criteria. According to the Torah, there are four animals that chew their cud but do not have split hooves (camel, hare, hyrax and the shesuah, which may be a dromedary), and only one animal that has split hooves but doesn't chew its cud (the pig).

The Gemora in Chullin 59a remarks that "The ruler of His Universe knows that there are no creatures that chew their cud, yet are non-Kosher [because they lack

split hooves] except for the camel, [hare, hyrax and the shesuah]...The ruler of His Universe knows that there is no creature that has a split hoof, yet is non-Kosher [because it doesn't chew its cud] except for the pig."

Since the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai over three thousand years ago (see Encyclopedia Judaica under the heading Exodus), no other species have been found that have only one of these criteria. The Torah's list of five animals with only one criteria, which is over three thousand years old, is up to date. It is phenomenal that the Torah's ancient zoology information - that there are five animals with just one criteria, is still considered perfectly accurate over three thousand years later.

Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein lived from 1860-1942, and was the son of Rabbi Yechiel Michal HaLevi Epstein, who wrote the Aruch HaShulchan. According to the Encyclopedia Judaica, Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein declined offers to occupy rabbinical positions in several great communities, "preferring to work in a bank and to devote all his spare time to his studies." He wrote Torah Temimah, which is a magnificent commentary on the Torah, arranged mostly according to quotations from the Gemora. Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein is sometimes referred to as the Torah Temimah.

In his commentary on Vayikra 11:4, the Torah Temimah writes, that the Gemora in Chullin 59a quoted above teaches, that one can recognize the divine origin of the Torah from this exact list of the five animals in the world with only one criteria. A human being would never have written, especially three thousand years ago, that there are only five animals in the world that have only one criteria, for fear of someday being disproven by finding another species with only one criteria. The Torah's exact list of all five species with just one criteria, written over three thousand years ago, has stood the test of time. The Torah Temimah writes that scientists have never found another species with only one criteria. The Torah's teaching that that there are five animals with just one criteria, is still considered perfectly accurate over three thousand years later! The Torah Temimah concludes that this is "one of the wonders [of Hashem] whose knowledge is complete and one of the treasures of His Torah."

This concept is summarized in the commentary of the Artscroll Stone Chumash on Devarim 14:4. "Commentators note that this shows the divine origin of the Torah, for a human lawgiver would never risk being refuted by the discovery of other animals that were not known to him at the time." ]

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