

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BO - 5762

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND ryfrand@torah.org
Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bo

Rabbi Shimon Schwab Said: I Have A Dream

The Torah teaches that "G-d placed the favor of the people in the eyes of Egypt" [Shmos 11:3]. Prior to leaving Egypt, the Jews obtained gold and silver utensils and articles of clothing from their Egyptian neighbors. This was a fulfillment of a promise that G-d had made to Avraham "... and afterwards they will go out with great possessions" [Bereshis 15:14]. The fact that G-d placed the favor of the people in the eyes of the Egyptians to the extent that they were willing to give them their valuables -- never to see them again -- was indeed miraculous.

Perhaps there could have been a more congruous method of fulfilling G-d's promise to Avraham. Perhaps it would have made more sense if "G-d placed the FEAR of the people in the eyes of Egypt". After all that had transpired during the Ten Plagues, the Egyptians were now in awe of the Jews. Therefore, the more logical way for this event to occur would have been for the Egyptians to give the Jews their valuables out of mortal fear, rather than out of 'favor'.

Rabbi Baruch Leff comments that the fact that the wealth was transferred to the Jews in that way teaches us something about the Exodus. The Exodus from Egypt, our Sages tell us, was the paradigm for all future redemption. If we want to know how the future redemption will take place, we must examine the prototype of redemption that occurred in Egypt. In effect, this means that before we leave this last bitter exile, "G-d will place the favor of His nation into the eyes of the nations".

Before we leave, the nations must admire us. They will have warm feelings towards us. They will love us. That is because the prophet Isaiah said that the role of the Jewish people in the Exile is to be a "light unto the nations" [42:6]. This concept has unfortunately been borrowed and twisted and misconstrued in all different types of wrong ways. But the fact remains that Isaiah the prophet told us that we are supposed to be a "light unto the nations" - a shining example to the nations of what a human being is supposed to look like. The purpose of this world is to fill the world in its entirety with the Glory of G-d. Not only the Jews of the world, but all of humanity should come to the recognition that there is one G-d who created this world and takes an active role in this world. Jews are supposed to be the medium of that message.

The Netziv (1817-1893) writes that had we not sinned and had we remained in the Land of Israel and had we fulfilled our mission by living a proper life style in the Land of Israel, then we would have never had to go into Exile. Unfortunately, we did not do that and G-d had to send us into Exile. Our job in Exile is to be this shining example of what a person is supposed to be.

The pasuk [verse] says "And all the inhabitants of the land will

see that the Name of G-d is written upon you, and they will fear you" [Devorim 28:10]. The Talmud teaches [Berochos 6a] that this refers to the Tephillin that are worn on the head. The Vilna Gaon comments that the Talmudic reference is the homiletic (Drush) teaching of the pasuk. But, the Vilna Gaon asks, what is the 'simple' (pshuto) interpretation of the pasuk? There is a principle in Biblical interpretation that a pasuk always has a simple interpretation [Shabbos 63a]. So what is the simple interpretation of this pasuk? The Gaon said that the simple interpretation of this pasuk is that when a Gentile sees a Jew, he should immediately recognize that the Name of G-d is written upon him. He should immediately realize, "This is a holy person".

We have not yet arrived at that point. The paradigm of the Exodus from Egypt is that until we reach the level of "the favor of the nation is in the eyes of Egypt", signifying that the Gentiles respect and admire and cherish us, unfortunately, we are not holding at the level of redemption. This is the ideal for which we must strive.

Unfortunately, if that indeed will be the standard, one must wonder how close the redemption is today. We look forward to the time when the recognized definition of a "Jew" will be a definition that will make us all proud.

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Parshas Bo 5761 (outline)

RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN

1. Rashi beginning of Bereishis: The Torah should have started with Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem. How could that be? Should all of Bereishis - with all the lessons of Maase Avos Siman Libanim - have been skipped?

2. Gemara in Rosh Hashana - BiAsara Maamaros Nivrah Haolam ... Bereishis Nami Maamar Huh. .

The world was created with ten "utterances", of which Bereishis is the first. But each of the other Maamaros created something (Biasara .. Nivra ...) What was created with the Maamar of Bereishis? And - if it is a Maamar why isn't it written as Vayomer?

3. When we speak of a Maamar of HKB"H we mean a way in which He related to the world; or - even before the world was formed - the way in which He directed the process of its creation.

4. So each Maamar defines a way in which HKB"H directs - in which he "speaks to" - the process of creation. But the first Maamar is the one that creates the process itself.

In fact, the Vilna Gaon explained, Bereishis refers to the very creation of time.

5. Bereishis begins with the creation of time.

Strikingly: The story of our people - as a people - also begins with a statement about time. Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem. The Jewish people are given a new way to think about time.

Because what was new with Yetzias Mitzrayim - was the idea of Geulah. The idea that HKB"H leads the world towards Geulah. And the Jews are His instrument.

6. And this gives us a new way to think about time. Not as an endless cycle of natural events - but as a G-d directed progress towards a specific goal.

We talk of Achris Hayamim. That implies that there is a Haschallas Hayamim. That beginning is Hachodesh Haze h

Lachem; it is the beginning of the process which culminates in Acharis Hayamim

7. And that is what Rashi means when he says that the Torah should begin with Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem. Not that the stories of Bereishis should be skipped. Of course not! But the Torah begins with the beginning of time. And for us time begins with Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem.

8. From up close its often very difficult to see how the events around us could lead to Geulah. But if we step back, if we look at the broad sweep of history - and the history of the Jewish people in particular - we can see that the small nation that left Egypt so long ago have indeed changed the world. And we can catch a glimpse of that world-process which began with Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem.

9. And therefore, while we may not know what is the around the bend, we are confident about what is at the end of the road. It is the end of the process that began with Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem Rosh Chadashim. The day on which Yihiye Hashem Echod Ushemo Echod.

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Bo

AROUND THE MAGGID'S TABLE

By RABBI PAYSACH J. KROHN

To Seize the Moment

The Talmud (Sotah 13a) commends Moshe Rabbeinu for having the presence of mind to think about the concerns of others at a time when most were occupied with their own personal welfare.

It is explained that as the Jews were preparing to leave Egypt they had the opportunity to take for themselves a great deal of the Egyptians' valuable possessions (see Shemos 12:36). Moshe Rabbeinu, however, was concerned with other matters. He remembered the promise made to Yosef many years earlier, before Yosef died, that when the Jews finally left Egypt his remains would be taken to be buried in Eretz Yisrael!. Thus, as all the people were gathering the spoils of Egypt, Moshe sought Yosef's remains, found them, and took them along in fulfillment of the ancient promise.

The Talmud attributes the verse in Mishlei (10:8)"Chacham Lev Yikach Mitzvos" - A wise man takes mitzvos" to Moshe's deed. The following incredible incident which R' Yisroel Grossman, a dayan (rabbinical judge) in Israel, witnessed many years ago, would certainly fall into this exalted category.

The year was 1945, and the Arabs were throwing grenades in many Jewish areas. Sirens wailed and people ran frantically to shelters. R' Yisroel himself was in one of the shelters in Jerusalem when he heard the terrible news that one of his students had been hit by a grenade and now lay dying in the Bikkur Cholim Hospital in downtown Jerusalem.

Because he was the boy's rebbe (teacher) he felt that he had to go to the child. He ran through the streets to the hospital, trying to avoid open spaces where he would be an easy target for an Arab's gunshot or grenade.

As he was about to enter the hospital he saw in the distance the famed tzaddik R' Arye Leib Levin (1885-1969) running with another man towards the hospital. He waited until the two men came to the door, and watched as they entered the building. As the three of them walked into the hospital's main corridor, they were confronted by the horrible sight of many bodies covered with sheets j the fatal casualties of the Arab attacks. R' Yisroel was about to search for a nurse to ask about his talmid's whereabouts, when he saw an unbelievable thing. R' Arye Leib Levin had

walked over to a body, lifted the white sheet that covered it, and was ordering the man who accompanied him to photograph the faces of the deceased.

Going from one body to the next, R' Arye Leib and the photographer lifted each sheet, snapped a picture, and lowered the sheet back over the body. R' Yisroel was appalled. He knew R' Arye Leib's reputation as a man of tremendous ahavas Yisrael (love of one's fellow Jew) j but how could he be so insensitive at a time like this? R' Yisroel thought that perhaps R' Arye Leib desired to have these pictures taken so that they could be sent abroad to show the world evidence of the Arab atrocities. But still, R' Yisroel felt this was wrong.

"R' Arye Leib," R' Yisroel called out. "Where is kavod hames (respect for the dead)?"

"R' Yisroel," the saintly R' Arye said calmly, "you may believe me that what I am doing is for a distinct purpose. I am not a rav, but when I heard all the grenades exploding and realized that people were being killed, I investigated and found out that a new graveyard had been opened to bury these people en masse immediately. If the dead men are not properly identified, then their wives will remain agunos (woman who are uncertain regarding their husband's fate) and may never be able to remarry I thought that perhaps these pictures would aid the rabbanim responsible for determining their status."

R' Yisroel was speechless as R' Arye Leib continued. "I ran out of my shelter to find a photographer. I couldn't find one that would come with me at first. Even when I finally found this one, the sirens had been going for so long that he was afraid to step outside. I tried to explain to him the importance of what we must accomplish j but still he was hesitant. Then I told him, I promise you that you and I will share equally in the reward for this mitzvah in Olam Haba.' It was only then that he agreed to come along."

Now, years later, R' Yisroel ponders with amazement: Who else at a timelike that would have even thought of the plights of people he had never even met? Only R' Arye Leib. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu many years before.

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RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER

JEWISH HISTORY: STRANGER THAN FICTION

The Torah tells us that the month of Nissan is the first month in the Jewish calendar. The Mishna tell us (in the beginning of Rosh HaShana) that common practice was to incorporate into all documents the date in reference to the number of years since the local government had been founded. Each time a king died, and a new ruler was appointed, legal documents would reflect the number of years since the new king had been crowned. If a new government was established on July 4th, for example, one would not wait until the following July 4th to reflect the new ruler. If there was a Jewish king ruling over Eretz Yisroel, Rosh Chodesh Nissan would be considered the start of the new year. Regarding all other governments, the New Year began with Rosh Chodesh Tishrei. The Rav, commenting on the Rif (beginning of maseches Rosh Hashana) understands that this was not merely the conventional practice, rather it reflected a halacha.

The Netziv, in his commentary on the Torah, explains the idea behind this halacha as follows: When God created the entire world in six days, He instituted all the rules of nature. Included among the laws of nature are the principles of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and even the rules of history. Just as a chemistry expert can predict accurately the reaction that will

follow the mixing of two chemicals, so too, one who understands well the rules of history can predict particular events, even the rise and fall of a particular nation. Years prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, an American politician predicted, in writing, that early on a Sunday morning in December, in so many years, the Japanese will attack the American army base. He explained logically why it would take place on a Sunday morning, and why in December, etc., and his prediction was accurate. This is what the Rabbis of the Talmud meant when they wrote that all the nations of the world are "under the control of the stars and the constellations." The history of the nations is controlled by the natural rules of history, instituted by the Creator at the time of creation. It is for this reason that when recording the years of the non-Jewish kings, (i.e., non-Jewish history), the Rosh HaShana is the first day of Tishrei. In other words, the day on which we celebrate the completion of the creation, and the day on which the rules of history began.

However, the history of the Jewish people is above nature. The month of Nissan represents nissim (miracles), and we were commanded to count the months starting from Nissan (as the first month). Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah, writes that in his opinion this point is most crucial to the hashkafa of our religion; namely, that Jewish history is "lemala min hateva." Does it make sense that if the Jews violate the laws of shemittah they lose their control over Eretz Yisroel? Is it logical that if a Jew observes shabbos and kashrus his parnassa will be taken care of? The answer is that "ein mazal leYisroel," that the natural rules of history do not apply to the Jewish people.

Jewish history starts its New Year with Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the month of miracles, to emphasize the idea that all of Jewish history is made up of miracles. Our history begins and ends with the month of Nissan, the month of nissim.

<http://www.tzemachdovid.org/thepracticaltorah/bo.shtml>
THE PRACTICAL TORAH
BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES
Parshas Bo: RABBEINU TAM TEFILLIN

No definitive Halacha LeMa'aseh conclusions should be applied to practical situations based on any of these Shiurim.

In this Parsha, as Bnai Yisrael leave Mitzrayim after witnessing many miraculous events, they are commanded to remember those events of Yetzias Mitzrayim by wearing some kind of sign or reminder with a written record of them on their arms and on their heads (Shemos 13:9, and see Rashi there s.v. Al). This commandment is repeated in the last Posuk of the Parsha (Ibid. Pasuk 16); the reference, of course, is to the Mitzvah of Tefillin. The Mishnah in Menachos (28a) refers to four Parshiyos, or sections of the Torah, which are found in the Tefillin because, as noted by Rashi (Ibid. s.v. Arba), they each contain references to this Mitzvah. The Gemara (Ibid. 34b) then identifies these four Parshiyos, which include two that appear in this Parsha, namely, Kadesh (Shemos 13:1-10) and VeHaya Ki YaViacha (Pasukim 11-16), and two that appear later in the Torah, namely, Shema (Devarim 6:4-9) and VeHaya Im Shamo (Ibid. 11:13-21). The Rambam (Hilchos Tefillin 1:1) and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman 32:1) both codify that these are indeed the four Parshiyos of Tefillin.

As mentioned above, the Torah requires that one wear these Parshiyos on one's arm as well as on one's head; the Tefillin thus really consist of two separate units, the one for the arm being the Tefillah (which is the singular form of the word Tefillin) Shel Yad, and the one for the head being the Tefillah Shel Rosh. One major difference between the Shel Yad and the Shel Rosh relates to the writing of the above four Parshiyos; the Gemara (Ibid.) states that for the Shel Yad, these Parshiyos are written on one piece of parchment, while for the Shel Rosh, they are written on four separate pieces of parchment. The Rambam (Ibid. 2:1) and the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 2) rule accordingly; the Mishnah Berurah (Ibid. Sif Katan 6) explains the reasons behind this, adding, in the name of the Rambam (Ibid.), that even for the Shel Yad, each of the four Parshiyos should be written in a separate column.

The precise order in which these four Parshiyos must appear on the

parchment of the Shel Yad, as well as the order in which the four separate pieces of parchment are to be placed into the Shel Rosh, each in its own compartment, as stated by the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 45), is the subject of a major Halachic dispute. Rashi, commenting on the aforementioned Gemara in Menachos (Ibid. s.v. VeHaKoreh), writes that the Parshiyos should appear in the same order in which they appear in the Torah, as listed above, that is, with the Parsha of Kadesh coming first, followed by the Parsha of VeHaya Ki YaViacha, then the Parsha of Shema, and finally, the Parsha of VeHaya Im Shemo. This means that on the parchment of the Shel Yad, the four Parshiyos must appear in this order, while in the Shel Rosh, the Parshiyos are to be found in their compartments in that order starting on the left side of the person wearing the Tefillin, so that someone looking at the Tefillin Shel Rosh would see the Parshiyos in that order when reading (as one normally does in Hebrew) from right to left.

Rabbeinu Tam, however, is quoted in Tosafos (Ibid. s.v. V'HaKoreh, and see Shitah Mikubetzet Ibid. Ot 21) as disagreeing; he holds that the Parsha of V'Haya Im Shamo follows the Parsha of V'Haya Ki Yaviacha, and is thus in the third slot, while the Parsha of Shema is in the fourth slot. This means that the Parsha of Shema is the last Parsha on the parchment of the Shel Yad, and that it is in the compartment of the Shel Rosh which is to the farthest right of the wearer and to the farthest left of the on-looker. As pointed out in Tosafos (Ibid.), Rav Hai Gaon concurred with this latter view, noting that in this order, the two "Havayos" that is, the two Parshiyos which start with the word "V'Haya" (V'Haya Ki Yaviacha and V'Haya Im Shamo) are juxtaposed. Tefillin whose Parshiyos appear in the order of their appearance in the Torah are popularly known as Rashi Tefillin, although many other important authorities agree to this position as well, while Tefillin whose Parshiyos appear in the other order, with V'Haya Im Shamo preceding Shema are popularly known as Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin, although many other significant opinions identify with this position also.

Actually, this dispute seems to have long pre-dated the days of Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam. For example, the Mechilta in this Parsha (Parshas Bo and Parsha 18) is cited by Tosafos (Ibid.) as indicating that the order suggested by Rashi is correct, because it says that specifically these four Parshiyos are inserted in the Tefillin since they are the four places where the Torah mentions Tefillin, and it then lists the Parshiyos in that order; the Midrash Tanchuma on this Parsha (Ibid. Ot 14) implies this as well. The Chida, however, in his Sefer Sheim HaGedolim (Ma'areches Sefarim Erech Yerushalmi) quotes those who write that there is a text in the Yerushalmi (which we no longer have today) which indicates that the correct order is as presented by Rabbeinu Tam.

The Mordechai, in his Sefer MeHalachos Ketanos, printed in the back of the Gemara in Menachos (Hilchos Tefillin, 10b Ibid.), writes that among those who agree with Rabbeinu Tam are Rabbeinu Chananel, Rav Sherira Gaon, Rav Hai Gaon, and the Rif; the Rashba (Sheilos V'Teshuvos HaRashba attributed to the Ramban Siman 234) cites Rav Saadyah Gaon as concurring as well. On the other side, the Rashba himself (Ibid.) concludes that Rashi's order is correct, adding that Rabbeinu Yonah and the Ramban held that way too; the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 421) also accepts this position, and mentions that Rav Hai Gaon agreed to it as well. In a Teshuvah, the Rambam (Sheilos V'Teshuvos HaRambam, Blau Edition, Chelek 2 Siman 289) also writes that Rav Hai Gaon himself wore Tefillin with the Parshiyos in the order that they appear in the Torah, and he asserts forcefully that this is the Halacha, as he rules in his Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Tefillin 3:5). The Ra'avad, however, both there (Ibid.) and in a Teshuvah (Sheilos V'Teshuvos Tamim De'im Siman 79), disagrees and accepts the other view.

In his commentary to the Tur, the Derishah (Orach Shaim Siman 34 Ot 1), among others, quotes sources which relate that an ancient pair of Tefillin, which had been buried, was uncovered and the Parshiyos therein were found to follow the order presented by Rashi, implying that this is the correct practice. But he adds that there may not be any proof from this story, since it was perhaps precisely because they were written with the Parshiyos in that order that these Tefillin were buried, because they were invalid, and really the practice was to accept Rabbeinu Tam's position. The Bach (Ibid. s.v. Seder) quotes this story as well, but considers this latter suggestion to be unlikely, and he concludes that the custom is to follow Rashi's opinion. It is noteworthy that Rabbeinu Yaakov of Marvish (one of the Ba'alei HaTosafos), in an interesting collection of Teshuvos written based upon communications from Heaven via dreams (Sheilos V'Teshuvos Min HaShamayim Siman 3), states that this dispute exists in the Heavenly court as well, and thus Elu V'Elu Divrei Elokim Chaim, both practices are Halachically acceptable.

The Rosh, in his Sefer Halachos Ketanos, also printed in the back of the Gemara in Menachos (Hilchos Tefillin Siman 5), writes that because so many great authorities dispute this matter, it is proper to have and put on two pairs of Tefillin, in order to fulfill both opinions. The Tur (Orach Chaim Siman 34) rules accordingly, explaining why this does not constitute a violation of Bal Tosif, which generally prohibits one to add to the performance of a Mitzvah. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Sheilos V'Teshuvos Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Chelek 1 Siman 13) develops this point at length. The Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 1) states that the prevalent Minhag is to follow the view of Rashi and the Rambam that the Parshiyos must appear in the order they are found in the Torah, but he then adds (Ibid. Sif 2) that one who fears Hashem should indeed wear two pairs of Tefillin, having in mind that he fulfills his obligation with whichever pair is truly correct according to the Halacha, while the other is merely a set of straps. As noted by the Magen Avraham (Ibid. Sif Katan 3) and the Mishnah Berurah (Ibid. Sif Katan 8, and see Ibid. Biur Halachah s.v. V'Yikavain), having this in mind will also avoid the problem of Bal Tosif because one of the pairs is invalid and is thus discounted.

The implication of these rulings is that these two pairs of Tefillin should be worn at the same time; the Taz (Ibid. Sif Katan 5) thus discusses which pair should be above which, noting that it is better to put both on at once so that the Berachos recited will count for both, as opposed to putting them on one after the other where the Beracha will not relate to the second pair. This entire idea is based on the statement of the Gemara in Eiruvin (95b) that there is enough space on one's head and on one's arm to simultaneously wear two pairs of Tefillin (properly). As noted in Tosafos (Ibid. s.v. Makom), however, such pairs of Tefillin must be very small; Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Sheilos V'Teshuvos Yabea Omer Chelek 1 Chelek Orach Chaim Siman 3 Ot 18-21) documents that our Tefillin today are much bigger, and it is thus not proper to wear two pairs at once because at least one will lay in the wrong place. The Radvaz (Sheilos V'Teshuvos HaRadvaz Chelek 6 Siman 2 Alafim 276) already implies that it is difficult to wear two pairs of Tefillin at once, and the Magen Avraham Orach Chaim Siman 301 Sif Katan 54) states that we lack the expertise today to properly wear two pairs at the same time. Perhaps with these ideas in mind, the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Siman 34 Sif 2) rules that if one is unable to wear the two pairs at once, one should put on the first pair, remove it right away, and then immediately put on the second pair so that the Berachos will go on both, or he should put on the Rashi Tefillin and wear them throughout davening, and then put on the Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin afterwards without a Beracha, and recite the Parshiyos of Shema and V'Haya Im Shemoa. The Mishnah Berurah (Ibid. Sif Katan 14-15) implies that the common practice of those who wear Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin is to follow this latter view.

It is worth noting that the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 3) rules that Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin should be worn only by one who is known to be a very pious person; the Mishnah Berurah (Ibid. Sif Katan 17) explains that it is a sign of haughtiness for anyone else to do this because the accepted practice is to wear Rashi Tefillin. The Sha'arei Teshuvah (Ibid. Sif Katan 6) however, writes that if one is in a place where the practice of most people is to wear Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin, it is not a sign of haughtiness for one to do this, and it is thus permissible. Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Ibid. Ot 22) adds that some hold that haughtiness is a problem only if the two pairs are worn at once, not if the second is put on after davening. It is also worth noting that the Vilna Gaon (Biur HaGra Ibid. s.v. U'Minhag) rules clearly that Rashi's view is correct, and is quoted by a Talmid of Rav Chaim Volozhiner (Sefer Keser Rosh Ot 13) as having said that in order to fulfill all the different opinions about writing and positioning Tefillin, one would have to wear many more than two pairs. The Noda BeYehudah (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Noda BeYehudah Mahadura Tenina Chelek Orach Chaim Siman 4) explains, however, that people are more concerned about the dispute over the order of the Parshiyos because there are so many important authorities on each side of the issue. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Sheilos V'Teshuvos Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Chelek 4 Siman 9) seems to agree, writing that his personal preference was to wear Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin after davening when possible.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/rtwe_bo.html
TorahWeb [from last year]
RABBI MAYER TWERSKY
AL TIKREI
R' Yoshiya says: Do not read the word as "matzos" but rather as

"mitzvos". Just as people do not allow the matzos to become leavened, so should they not allow the commandments to become leavened. Rather if [the opportunity to fulfill a commandment] comes to your hand, do it immediately. (1) The hermeneutical method of "do not read" (al tikrei) is most puzzling, even disquieting. Chazal are seemingly altering the text, or, minimally, the vocalization. How is this possible? Careful consideration of the example cited above suggests one possible approach (2). Let us reflect upon the peshuto shel mikra. The pasuk mandates guarding the matzos, i.e., actively preventing them from becoming leavened. This necessitates that the baking process be carried out with zeal and alacrity. Any laxity or procrastination could result in the baking of chometz rather than matzo.

R' Yoshiya's comment may thus be paraphrased and amplified as follows. The mode in which matzo is baked is paradigmatic; all mitzvos should be pursued with zeal and alacrity.

In other words, the method of al tikrei simply makes explicit what is already implicit in the simple traditional reading of the text. Viewed from this perspective, the method of al tikrei actually provides penetrating insight into the peshuto shel mikra. This insight is corroborated by the homophonic kinship between the simple reading and its al tikrei variant.

The Gemara in Maseches Menachos provides another illustration of the method of al tikrei being applied in this manner.

R' Meir used to say, a person is obligated to recite one hundred blessings daily, as it is written "And now Yisroel what (ma) does HaShem your God ask of you f only to fear him (3). The obvious difficulty is that the pasuk cited by R' Meir does not seem to support his statement. Rashi ad locum resolves this difficulty by suggesting that the word "what" (ma) should be read as "hundred" (me'ah), thus generating the declarative statement "One hundred [blessings] HaShem your God asks of you". In other words, R' Meir is applying the hermeneutical method of al tikrei.

In this instance the explanation proceeds as follows. The pasuk cited by R' Meir is problematic. How can the Torah downplay yiras shomayim and the difficulty involved in its attainment by saying that HaShem asks only for this one thing. Clearly then the Torah is instructing us that yiras shomayim is something natural, even instinctive. This is the thrust of the Rama's first gloss in Shulchan Aruch. If only a person will be forever mindful of Hakadosh Barush Hu, "immediately he will attain fear [of heaven]" (4).

The Torah hints at this by characterizing yiras shomayim as something easily attainable f provided, of course, we do not allow ourselves to be distracted from "Shivisi Hashem L'negdi tamid" ("I have placed God always before me"). (5)

How do we counter our tendency to be distracted and forget that we are always in the presence of HaShem? The Rambam explains that one method Chazal employed was obligating us to recite many berachos "in order that we should constantly remember HaShem" (6).

In other words, the pasuk "And now Yisroel" hints to us that yiras shomayim is natural and thus easily attained if only we will be forever mindful of HaShem's presence. One way in which this mindfulness is encouraged is by the recitation of myriad berachos which inter alia encourages us to recognize the reflections of His presence and handiwork in the natural world. And thus R' Meir's al tikrei which proclaims the obligation to recite berachos simply brings to the fore what is implicit in the pasuk. Yiras Shomayim is easily attained and naturally experienced if only we live mindfully, not mindlessly.

1. Rashi to Shemos 12:17, quoting Mechilta 2. Careful study is required to determine if this approach is adequate for all examples of al tikrei. 3. Menachos 43b 4. Rama Orach Chayim 1:1 quoting Rambam 5. Tehilim 16 6. Hilchos Berachos 1:3

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office[office@etzion.org.il]
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Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)
Student Summaries of Sichot Delivered by the Roshei Yeshiva
Dedicated in memory of Avi Boaz, 72, from Ma'aleh Adumim and Yoela Hen, 45 from Givat Ze'ev, victims of Palestinian terror. Refuah sheleima to the wounded. PARASHAT BO
SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A
APPRECIATING BORROWED VALUES
Summarized by Dov Karoll

In this week's parasha, God commands Moshe that Bnei Yisrael should "borrow" gold and silver from their Egyptian neighbors (Shemot 11:2). Rashi (ibid.) comments that God wanted Moshe to make sure that

the Jews leave Egypt with wealth so that Avraham will not have any claims against God. Otherwise, Avraham could complain that while God fulfilled the promise of slavery in berit bein ha-betarim (Bereishit 15:13-14), He did not fulfill the promise of remuneration ("ve-acharei chen yetz'u birekhus gadol").

Why would Avraham care so much that his descendants leave Egypt with wealth? Furthermore, why would God command Moshe to have the people borrow these utensils, when they had no intention of returning them? The Ar"i says that Bnei Yisrael were supposed to take out the nitzotzot, the sparks of holiness, from Egypt. In other words, they were supposed to take those positive elements of their experience in Egypt - both what they learned from their experience as slaves, and what they gained from the society around them. Egypt was the most developed culture at the time, and they were supposed to draw out those positive values which they learned there. For this reason, God wanted to make sure that while the people should take these values, they should realize that they are borrowed values, and not elements original to Judaism.

Similarly, there are many things in general society through which Torah study can be improved. When the Mishna was compiled, it was intentionally written unclearly so people would need to learn from a Rebbe, and not be able to understand it on their own. It was meant to be learned by heart in a Beit Midrash. In a similar manner, nowadays one can learn from a computer which has stored in its memory all of Tanakh, Gemara, etc., without ever opening a book. However, one should realize that this is not the way one is meant to learn, and that learning should be done primarily from books and teachers.

Another example is the photocopy machine, through which people can read texts without having the book in their library, and without even borrowing it. However, there is a danger in these advancements. While it is very helpful to people who cannot otherwise learn from the original, it is still not ideal to go through life learning only from computers and xerox copies. There is some advantage to learning in a Beit Midrash, from a Rebbe, with a book - the way it was learned for hundreds of years. While it is proper to use these technological advancements for the advancement of Torah, it still must be recognized that they are borrowed techniques, and not the primary, original mode of Torah study. Nothing can compare with the experience of becoming familiar with a book, of interacting with a teacher, and of debating with a chavruta. And only by putting in the effort and mastering large amounts of material will we truly become talmidei chakhamim.

(Originally delivered Shabbat Parashat Bo 5757.)

From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu
To: internetchaburah@yahoo.com

Subject: [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah --- Parshas Bo

Prologue: It wasn't just a Mitzva in the Torah, it was the FIRST Mitzva in the Torah.

And yet, when we consider it, Rosh Chodesh does not carry the same strength in Jewish life as its other holidays do. After all, Yamim Tovim have the status of Mikra Kodesh. Even Chanukah and Purim, days that do not have a Korban Mussaf and are Rabbinically sanctified, carry certain rules of work restriction signifying the sanctity of these times. What is the Jewish view of Rosh Chodesh?

In a famous eulogy for Rav Ze'ev Gold, the Rov ztl (Divrei Hagut V'Ha'aracha, see also Bein Kotalei HaYesahiva vol. 6) tackled the personality Rosh Chodesh. He likened Rosh Chodesh which on the outside seems to be regular and Chol-like. However, internally Rosh Chodesh is Kodesh. While man goes through his daily activities on Rosh Chodesh externally, he internalizes the Kedusha of the day with special devotional prayers. The Rov likened Rosh Chodesh to Yosef whose internal spirituality was not recognized by all. The emotions of his father which Rav Moshe Soloveitchik internalized and the internal care of Rav Gold for all Jews were seen as personifications of the Rosh Chodesh personality. Rosh Chodesh (and these personalities) spoke to man's need not to put all the cards on the table. Whereas one sees all on the Yamim Tovim, Rosh Chodesh does not reveal all, leaving room for a future. To the Rov, the internalizing and Tznius of Rosh Chodesh also was an image of hope and renewal.

Our hopes are raised with the anticipation of a new dawn. Hence this week's Chaburah. It is entitled:

BENTCHING ROSH CHODESH

The concept of Shabbos Mevarchin is an interesting concept. On the one hand, we find no mention of it in the Mishna or Gemara. On the other hand, it takes on a special significance that we do not recite Tzidkasecha Tzedek on the weeks when we "bentch" Rosh Chodesh. Why?

The first mention of Rosh Chodesh Bentching in the realm of Jewish law appears in the writings of the Rishonim (Or Zaruah, Siddur Rasag, and Yerayim). These writings suggest that there was a custom to announce the day of Rosh Chodesh on the Shabbat before. The Mogen Avraham (Orach Chaim, 417) explains that this practice is not similar to Kiddush Hachodesh. Rather the goal of Birkas HaChodesh is to inform the community when Rosh Chodesh will be in order to guarantee that they will sanctify and observe Rosh Chodesh.

From the Mogen Avraham, it appears that the nature of Birkas HaChodesh is in the announcement. Why then must an announcement be made while standing? From the Mogen Avraham, the issue seems to be based in the similarity to Kiddush HaChodesh which was done B'Amida. The Shaarei Ephraim discusses the custom of having a Shaliach Tzibbur with a Sefer Torah during the Birkat HaChodesh. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 142) noted that this practice is reminiscent of the practice of Ibbur HaShanna (leap years) which were done with a Sefer Torah.

But if the issue is merely one of information, or of Kiddush, why stand? After all, Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Orach Chaim, 417) noted that he felt that Birkas HaChodesh should be recited while sitting since the Beis din was Mikadesh Chodesh while sitting. The Sefer Haeshkol felt it should be recited while standing as part of a Gezaira Shava from Sefiras HaOmer. But what is the basis for the argument?

Rav Moshe and Rav Jolti each suggested that there are two critical aspects to the declaration of Rosh Chodesh. One aspect was the Psak Shel Kiddush Hachodesh by Beis Din. This decision was rendered while sitting. At that point, the people rose and declared MeKudash MeKudash. That declaration was B'Amida. Rav Akiva Eiger felt that the main part was Kiddush HaChodesh and that was done sitting and so should Birkas HaChodesh. Sefer Haeshkol feels that the declaration of the crowd was the main part of Kiddush HaChodesh and should be done standing.

Rav Bakshi-Doron (Shanna B'Shanna, 5754) felt that Birkas HaChodesh and its recitation standing is based in an old Machlokes of the Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos, 253) and Ramban concerning the nature of Rosh Chodesh. The Rambam felt that the statement of Mikudash by the crowd was the main part of Rosh Chodesh and despite the fact that Hillel sanctified the months, the obligation of Birkas Hachodesh remains upon us to declare Mikudash which we do the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh. The Ramban disagrees and feels that the main part of the Mitzva is the declaration of Rosh Chodesh by Beis Din. If that is the case, what is the reason for Kiddush HaChodesh. Rav Bakshi-Doron suggested that the Ramban would see the practice of Birkas HaChodesh as a Mitzva but after Hillel's sanctification of the months, the real benefit to Birkat HaChodesh is in its ability to remind people of the upcoming month and of the necessity to pray for it.

***** Battala News - Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Avi Pollak upon the birth of a baby girl.

From: listmaster@shemayisrael.com
PENINIM ON THE TORAH
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
PARSHAS BO

"And it shall be when your children say to you, 'What is this service to you?' B and the people bowed their heads and prostrated themselves." (12:12,27)

Rashi explains that the Jews bowed their heads in gratitude for the news that they would be blessed with children. This is enigmatic. Veritably, the liberation from Egypt is something to be excited about. After what they had endured for all these years, it would make sense that they should be overjoyed and shout their joy from the rooftops. This is certainly something for which they should bow their heads. What is so unusual about being blessed with children? This is a nation that was giving birth to sextuplets. They experienced the first population explosion. Why are they so excited to hear that they would have children?

Horav Elazar Menachem Man Schach, z.l., offers a compelling explanation. When we look around with a penetrating eye, we realize that fathers are not begetting children. What is really happening is that fathers

are begetting fathers! He is raising an individual who is completely independent, thinking and rendering decisions for himself. The father cares not what the son does, nor does the son care what the father is doing. They are independent of each other. The family unit has been shattered. Each one has his own interests and lifestyle. They get together at family social occasions to interact a bit, for "old times" sake. This is the story, regrettably, of the contemporary lifestyle throughout a greater part of the world. We think that if we bury our heads in the ground and ignore the social climate around us, it will not affect us. That is a grave mistake. A problem does not go away just because we close our eyes to it. This was the good news that Klal Yisrael was waiting to hear. This is why they bowed their heads in gratitude. They were told that they would have "banim," children, who would inquire into their customs and traditions, who would question the "avodah," work, that involved so much of their time. This is the first step towards a relationship: the child asks; he inquires; he wants to know, what and why, he wants to interact. This is wonderful news.

We may add that Klal Yisrael's reaction is a necessary prerequisite for the enduring success of the parent/child relationship. Klal Yisrael bowed their heads in gratitude. They were happy. They appreciated children that question, that inquired, that sought answers, that wanted to understand their parents tradition and lifestyle. A child should ask, but if the parent has no desire to respond the parent has severed his/her relationship with their child. This type of parent neither manifests interest in his/her child nor appreciates the value of the parent-child relationship. Such people have not earned a relationship. They are responsible for the consequences of their lack of engagement.

"And it shall be a sign upon your hand, and for frontlets between your eyes; for by strength of the hand, Hashem has brought us out of Egypt." (13:16)

The Exodus should be memorialized in ways other than an annual celebration of miracles that were wrought for us some thousands of years ago. Its eternal message and lessons should be before the mind of a Jew, by means of a "sign" on the hand and frontlets between the eyes. These reminders, which are called Tefillin, include four sections of passages from the Torah which embrace: kabolas ol malchus Shomayim, acceptance of the yoke of Heaven; achdus ha'Borai, unity of the Creator; and yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt. These fundamental doctrines, the foundation stone of our belief, must never leave our mind and heart, as we dedicate the intellect of the mind, as well as the emotion and passion represented by the heart, to the Almighty.

Throughout the millennia, the Jewish People have maintained their bond with the Almighty through their observance of the mitzvah of Tefillin. Numerous stories recount the devotion of our People to observing this mitzvah under the most difficult circumstances. Tefillin is a reminder of past miracles. Its observance strengthens our faith and commitment. Furthermore, Tefillin are a part of the Jew's uniform, which he dons daily as a proclamation of his deep rooted conviction. I recently came across an inspiring "Tefillin story," which conveys a universal message.

The hero of our story is a young yeshiva high-school student whom we will call David, who volunteered this past summer at the local home for the aged. One of the jobs of the volunteers was to ask the residents if they would like to go to the daily services. Most of the residents were receptive. Those who were not, were generally pleasant about it. There was one man, however, who was rather offensive in his attitude. He not only refused to attend, but he even once cursed the volunteer that had suggested he come daven, pray. Hearing this, David decided that he would go have a friendly chat with his resident.

David went over to the dining room, saw the man, and said, "The volunteers are only here to help you. There is no reason to curse them." The resident looked at David and responded "Wheel me back into my room, I want to tell you a story." David wheeled the man into his room. After he was comfortable, the resident began to relate the following story:

"I had grown up in a prominent, observant home. Everyone but my father and I had already been murdered by the Nazis. In the concentration camp in which we were interred someone had smuggled in a Tefillin-shel-rosh, which is worn on the head. Every morning the men would take turns putting on the Tefillin, even if just for a second."

"The day before my bar-mitzvah, my father became aware of a man who had a whole set of Tefillin. That evening, the man who had smuggled in the pair of Tefillin was killed by the Nazis. After hearing of the man's death, my father decided to go to his bunk and locate the Tefillin so that I could have a complete pair of Tefillin for my bar-mitzvah. On the way back,

my father was seen by a Nazi, who shot and killed him before my very eyes. Somehow I managed to take the Tefillin and hide them."

The resident paused and then asked, "How could you expect me to pray to a G-d who would kill a boy's father right in front of him? He was getting Tefillin for me to be able to pray to Him! Is this the reward? My father was all I had left in the world. Why?"

Another minute went by, and the resident said, "Go to my dresser and open the top drawer." David did as he was told, opened the drawer and found an old black, worn-out bag. The man asked him to bring over the bag. The resident opened the bag to reveal its contents - a pair of Tefillin. "You see these boxes! I keep them to show people what my father died for: dirty black boxes and straps. They were the last thing my father gave me. This is my inheritance!"

One can only imagine the hurt and depression this young boy must have felt. He left the room speechless. He could neither eat nor sleep restfully. He empathized with the resident, but how could he explain to him that he was wrong? The next day, he avoided the man's floor until he was notified that they were one short of a minyan, quorum, and one of the residents needed to say Kaddish. He searched all over for a tenth man, to no avail. He had no choice but to go to the recalcitrant resident and ask him to join them.

David went to the room and asked the resident if he would attend the services so that another resident could say Kaddish. He was prepared for a negative response, so he was taken aback when the reply was, "If I come, will you then leave me alone?" David said, "Yes, if you come I will not bother you any more." David quickly added, "Would you like me to bring along the Tefillin?" To his shock, the resident said, "Yes, but after this, you must promise to leave me alone."

They went down to the synagogue. David wheeled the resident to the back. Just before he left, David showed the man how to put on the Tefillin. When the services were over, David returned to the room to help bring back the residents. He came into the synagogue to find one worshiper - his "charge," the resident whom he had brought to complete the minyan. He was sitting in the back of the shul, with his Tefillin still on. Tears were pouring down his cheeks.

"Should I get a nurse or a doctor? Does something hurt you?" David blurted out. Nothing - no response, just bitter weeping. He was mumbling something. David bent over to listen. He heard the resident saying over and over again, "Tatti, Tatti, it feels so right," as he kept staring at the Tefillin straps on his arm.

David waited until the man calmed down. He took him back to his room and helped him into his bed. The man turned to David and said, "During the hour that I wore the Tefillin, I felt as if my father were with me."

Every day after that, David would pick the man up and bring him to shul to daven with his "newly found" Tefillin. One day towards the end of the summer, David came to perform his daily ritual, but the man was not there. He was told to his great chagrin, that the resident was taken to the hospital during the night. They had just received word that he had died. David was broken-hearted. He had developed a close relationship with the elderly resident over the past few weeks. He would miss him.

A few weeks later, a woman came to the home and asked to speak to David. She said to him, "You do not know me, but you were very special in my father's eyes. Actually, in a way, you saved my father's life." She then introduced herself as the resident's daughter. "Shortly before my father died," she continued, "he asked me to bring him his Tefillin. He knew he had very little time left, and he wanted to put on his Tefillin one last time and pray with them. You truly saved him and made his last days on this world comfortable. You helped him to reconcile himself with his past. My father died wearing his Tefillin. Thank you so much for caring about him." Years of bitterness were made sweet by an individual who cared about another person. This is a Tefillin story with a message about caring, because we do not always realize the difference that a little bit of caring can make.

Sponsored in loving memory of our parents MENDEL & LIBA GOLDBERG By their children and grandchildren Peter and Paula Baum and Family

http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2002/01/17/Columns/SHABBAT_SHALOM: To deny the past is to deny the present
By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(January 17) Parshat Bo Exodus 10:1 - 13:16

"And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, 'What

is the meaning of this service to you?" (Exodus 12:26)

The author of the Passover Haggada, in the fascinating passage highlighting the "four sons," calls the questioner in this sequence "the wicked child." Why? What is there in his question that suggests he is wicked?

The first reason, which the Haggada itself emphasizes, lies in the questioner's exclusion of himself from the family: "What is this service to you." And so the Haggada explains: "Saying 'you,' he excludes himself and denies a basic principle of our faith."

From this perspective, wickedness happens when one excludes oneself from the Jewish ritual experiences.

There are other more subtle giveaways that tell us the wicked nature of this questioner. The Torah often prefaces a question with a phrase like "when your child will ask you tomorrow, saying..." In this instance, the child doesn't ask his parents, he tells them: "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you 'what is the meaning of this service to you?' " (Exodus 12:26). An honest question reveals a willingness to learn, but a declarative statement implies a certain superiority; herein lies the critical flaw of the "wicked child," who sees himself above the tradition, who is not really interested in answers - only statements.

To add another discordant note to the rebellious music behind the words of this child, the biblical response is v'amartem (verse 27), "you shall say it," without the expected continuation "to him." The answer thereby becomes a general, open-ended statement - giving the impression that the questioner was interested in telling what he thought but not in hearing what the parent had to say in response.

From all of this we could conclude that a wicked child excludes himself from family traditions and traditional explanations; it's not only that he disagrees, but that he simply isn't interested.

What might be our response to such a child? It is fascinating that the Bible itself gives one response: "It is the Passover service to God. He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt [when he smote the Egyptian first-born] and He saved our homes" (Exodus 12:26). The author of the Haggada gives another: "You cause his teeth to be on edge, and say to him, because of this has God done for me when I went out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:8).

Why the difference, and what is the specific message of each? After all, it is critical that we know how to respond to this most difficult child!

Let us begin with the biblical response. We must remember that there are two central pillars in Judaism: family ties and togetherness, as well as Divine laws and directions.

Hence, the Bible tells this wicked child that the Passover sacrifice is a reminder of a critical occurrence in Jewish history, a Divine miracle which preserved the Jewish family. It is precisely the kind of family ritual which is crucial for familial continuity.

The author of the Haggada goes one step further. He cites another verse: "And it will be when the Lord brings you to the land which He swore to your fathers to give you, you shall do this service on that month and you shall tell your child on that day saying, Because of this has God done for me when I went out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:5,8).

THE BIBLE pictures a situation many generations after the Exodus. Nevertheless, parents are commanded to tell their children: God took me out of Egypt so that I continue to perform these rituals. I am my past; my past formed and informed me. To deny my past is to deny my truest essence; to consciously forget my past is to will oneself into a state of Alzheimer's.

The key words here are "done for me." The continuity of the generations requires the ability to transform past history into one's own existential and personal memory. The initial biblical answer emphasizes the importance of familial experiences; the author of the Haggada adds that without incorporating past into present there can be neither meaningful present nor anticipated future! I am my past.

The author of the Haggada has yet another message. Despite the fact that the wicked child has denied his roots (kafar b'ikar), we dare not tear him out of the family. He may want to remove himself from historical continuity, but it's the family's job to bring him back.

And the Haggada instructs us to "set the teeth of the wicked child on edge", the phrase in Hebrew being hakhai et shinav. It doesn't say hika which means to strike, to slap him in the teeth, but rather hakhai, (heh, kuf, heh, heh) from the language of the prophet Ezekiel, "The fathers eat the sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezekiel 18:2) The prophet is here expressing the fundamental unfairness in the fact that the parents have sinned but their children must suffer the pain of exile.

However, this is a painful part of life; children do suffer for the sins of their parents.

Anyone who comes from a difficult or dysfunctional home will bear the burden of his parental actions, or lack of them.

There is a new yuppie term, dinky - "double income, no kids yet." But there is something else which is just as bad: dimka, "double income, many kids already" but nobody to take care of them except a professional caregiver. Children need nurturing, children deserve parental time and concern.

The author of the Haggada is therefore reminding each parent that just as the child has a responsibility to his past, the present has a responsibility to the future. Have we made the sweet grapes of kiddush wine sour for our children?

After all, to what extent have we invested the requisite time to lovingly demonstrate the beauty and glories of our traditions? Have we really been there to hear his/her questions when he/she was still ready to ask them and to listen to answers? Have we been the appropriate models for our children to desire continuity within our family?

The author of the Haggada subtly but forthrightly reminds both parents and children of their obligations to each other, to past and to future.
Shabbat Shalom

From: Jeffrey Gross [SMTP:jgross@torah.org] neustadt@torah.org

Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas Bo

By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

Rav of Young Israel of Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

PROPER RESPECT FOR SEFORIM

Sifrei kodesh, sacred scriptures, vary in their degree of kedushah, holiness, and consequently, one accords them varying degrees of honor. A Sefer Torah is given the most honor,(1) followed closely by other Sifrei Tanach written on parchment. All other seforim, including the Talmud, its commentators and codifiers, do not have the level of kedushah that a Sefer Torah does, but still they must be treated with respect and dignity. In many cases, the Rishonim rule that seforim are to be accorded the same level of respect and honor as Tefillin.(2)

With the advent of the printing press in the fifteenth century, the Torah authorities of the time debated if printed seforim have the same level of kedushah as handwritten works. The consensus of the poskim was that a printed sefer is to be treated no differently from a handwritten one. The Taz,(3) the leading Torah personality of the time, warned that one who demeans the holiness of printed seforim will suffer the consequences in the world to come. With few exceptions, this has become the accepted Halachah.(4)

In the following pages we will cover some of the halachos that pertain to the proper treatment of seforim.

SEFORIM ARE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT. THUS:

1.A sefer should be handed from one person to the other; it may not be thrown or tossed around.(5) 2.A sefer should not be placed face down. If it is found in this position it must be turned face up.(6) 3.A sefer should not be stood upside down. If it is found in this position, it must be stood right side up.(7) 4.A sefer may not be placed, either lying or standing, directly on the floor.(8) 5.A sefer that fell to the ground must be picked up immediately, even if one will have to interrupt his Torah learning to do so.(9) If a sefer falls to the floor during Shemoneh Esrei and that interferes with one's kavanah, he may pick it up after finishing the blessing that he is reciting(10), even if it entails taking a few steps(11). If, however, the fallen sefer does not disturb his kavanah, then he may not pick up the sefer during Shemoneh Esrei(12). 6.One may not sit or lie on a chair, bench, couch or bed if a sefer is lying or standing(13) directly(14) on it.(15) If, however, the bench or coach is made of "split (separate) seats" it is permitted to sit on any seat other than the one which holds the sefer.(16) 7.Some poskim prohibit sitting on top of a bench, chest or chair that have seforim stored underneath,(17) while other poskim permit it.(18) In order to satisfy both opinions it is recommended that there should be at least a tefach of space between the seat and the sefer.(19) 8.One should not place any other sefer on top of a chumash,(20) or any sefer other than a chumash on top of a nach.(21) All other seforim and siddurim, however, are permitted to be placed randomly.(22) Moreover, some poskim maintain that this halachah pertains only to chumashim and neviim which are on a scroll, not to printed and bound chumashim and nach'im.(23)

SEFORIM ARE TREATED WITH KEDUSHAH. THUS:

1. It is prohibited for men (over the age of nine) or women (over the age of three) to be completely unclothed in the presence of a sefer. (24) But it is permitted to learn from a sefer in a swimming pool area. (25) 2. It is prohibited to enter a rest-room or a washroom with a sefer in hand, unless the sefer is concealed in at least one covering. Preferably, the sefer should be inside two coverings, e.g. one bag encased in another bag, or an envelope inside an attach1 case. (26) 3. A child should not be diapered or toilet-trained in a room full of seforim. But it is permitted to diaper or train a child in a room where there is an occasional sefer or bencher, etc. (27)

SEFORIM ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEARNING ONLY; THEY MAY NOT BE USED FOR OTHER PURPOSES. THUS:

1. It is prohibited to place anything, (28) except Chidushei Torah, inside a sefer (29) or on top of a sefer. (30) 2. When learning from a sefer, it is permitted to use another sefer to raise the height of the sefer one is learning from. (31) 3. It is prohibited to use a sefer for personal protection, e.g., to shield oneself from the sun's rays; to block another person's view. (32) But one is permitted to cover his face with a sefer so as to block a forbidden sight from his eyes. (33) 4. It is permitted, when no other item is available, to use another sefer to block the sun from shining on a sefer from which one is learning. (34) 5. When needed, it is permitted to use a sefer as a hard surface for writing Torah-study notes. (35) 6. One may not place a sefer on his lap and lean on it with his elbows. (36) One should also not lean or sleep on top of a sefer. (37)

AFTER LEARNING IS OVER . . .

1. It is prohibited to use a sefer as a bookmark by placing it inside another sefer. (38) 2. Some poskim permit folding a page-corner of a sefer so that it serves as a bookmark (39), while other poskim prohibit doing so (40). 3. One should avoid leaving a sefer open if he is leaving the room for an extended period of time (41) because it is considered degrading to the sefer. In addition, the chachamim say that doing so may cause one to forget his learning. (42) 4. There is no source in the poskim for the custom of kissing a sefer after learning from it. (43) 5. When a sefer ages and is no longer usable, it must be put aside in a safe place or buried in the ground. It may not be burned or trashed. (44)

FOOTNOTES: 1 See The Monthly Halachah Discussion, pgs. 21 -31, concerning the special halachos of honor and respect for a Sefer Torah. 2 Tosfos and Rosh, Berachos 26a, quoted in Bais Yosef, O.C. 240:6. 3 Y.D. 271:8. See also Bejur Halachah 83:5 s.v. ein, where the Chafetz Chayim tells of a severe punishment that befell a particular family because they were not careful in the kedushah of their seforim. 4 Mishnah Berurah 40:4. A minority view, led by the Chavos Yair and Eliyahu Rabba, disagrees and maintains that printed matter is on a lower level of kedushah than handwritten material; ibid. In extenuating circumstances, we take this opinion into consideration; see Kaf ha-Chayim 40:16 and Shevet ha-Levi 2:143; 6:8. In addition, some authorities hold that seforim in offset print are yet on an even lesser level of kedushah since offset is merely a photograph of the print; see Mahrasham 3:357 and Sefer Shevilei Taharah, pgs. 176-180. 5 Y.D. 282:5. 6 Rama Y.D. 282:5. See Shiyurei Berachah ibid. who bemoans the fact that many people are not aware of this strict prohibition. 7 Beis Lechem Yehudah Y.D. 282:7 quoting Maharil; Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:11. 8 Rama Y.D. 282:7. Harav Y.S. Elyashiv and Harav C. Kanievsky are quoted (Nekiyus Vekavod Batfillah, pg. 97 and pg. 187) as ruling that placing a bed sheet or a newspaper on the floor is not sufficient. See also Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 163, who was careful not to place seforim within a tefach of the ground. 9 Bais Lechem Yehudah Y.D. 282:7; Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:11. It is customary to kiss a sefer after picking it up from the floor; ibid. 10 Mishnah Berurah 96:7. 11 Be'er Moshe 3:13. 12 Mishnah Berurah 96:7, based on Pri Megadim. 13 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei 1:16) and Harav C. Kanievsky (written responsum published in Nekiyus Vekavod Batfillah, pg. 188). 14 If the sefer is lying or standing on an object which is at least a tefach high, it is no longer considered as if it is lying or standing on the bench or chair; Shach 282:8 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:12. 15 Rama Y.D. 282:7. [In a crowded beis medrash where it may be difficult to observe this halachah, some poskim permit sitting on a bench together with the seforim; see Shach 282:9. A rabbi should be consulted.] 16 Shevet ha-Levi 3:11. Some poskim permit sitting on the same bench with seforim so long as there is a barrier between them; Teshuras Shai 2:169, quoted in Tzedakah U'mishpat 16, note 61. 17 Taz Y.D. 282:4. If the chest or bench is nailed to the wall, it is permitted; ibid. 18 Nekudos ha-Kesef and Shiyurei Berachah Y.D. 282:7; Pischei Teshuvah 282: 8. 19 Mishnah Berurah 40:13. 20 Y.D. 282:19. 21 Sefer Chasidim, quoted by Beis Lechem Yehudah Y.D. 283:1. 22 Chazon Ish (quoted in Dinim V'hanhagos and Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 162). 23 Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 282:22 based on Rama Y.D. 283:1. See also Beis Baruch 31:187 who agrees with this opinion. 24 Mishnah Berurah 45:5; 75:23. But this prohibition applies only to ervah mamash; we do not invoke tefach b'ishah ervah concerning this issue; Rabbi P.E. Falk (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 46, pgs. 187-194). 25 Shearim Metzuyanim B'halachah 5:8; Ishei Yisrael 53:28. 26 Mishnah Berurah 40:4. Putting a sefer into one's pants pocket is considered as one "cover." When the pocket is covered with a jacket or an overcoat, it is considered as two coverings; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Nekiyus Vekavod Batfillah, pg. 94). [See Machazeh Eliyahu 8:30 who opines that a pocket with a lining is considered a double covering.] 27 See Machazeh Eliyahu 5-8 for an entire review of this subject. See also Teshuvos Vehanhagos 2:137. 28 One should not place parts of torn pages from one sefer in between the pages of another sefer; Ha rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Avnei Yashfei 1:202). 29 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 282:17; Mishnah Berurah 154:31; Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 282:23. This includes blank sheets of paper which will be used for Chidushei Torah. See, however, Igros Moshe O.C. 4:72 who permits placing blank paper intended for Chidushei Torah in a sefer. 30 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:72. 31 Mishnah Berurah 154:31; 315:30. 32 Mishnah Berurah 154:31. 33 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Nekiyus Vekavod Batfillah, pg. 100). 34 Mishnah Berurah 154:31. 35 Mishnah Berurah 154:31. 36 Rama Y.D. 282:7. 37 Chazon Ish (quoted in Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 161). 38 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 282:17; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Avnei Yashfei 1:202). 39 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Avnei Yashfei 1:203). Some recommend that the page should be folded on the margin; not on the spot where there are words printed; Beis Baruch 31:186. 40 Chazon Ish (quoted in

Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 162). 41 Aruch ha-Shulchan 277:2. See also Da'as Kedoshim 277. 42 Shach Y.D. 277:1. 43 Harav C. Kanievsky (Nekiyus Vekavod Batfillah, pg. 189). 44 Mishnah Berurah 154:24. See Chelkas Yaakov 3:161 that a sefer which is no longer in use but is still usable may not be buried in the ground; it must be put aside in a safe place. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright 1 2002 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross@torah.org .Torah.org: The Judaism Site www.torah.org/