

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Ki Sisa 5765

[From Efraim Goldstein <efraimg@aol.com>]

Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa: A Day of “Introspection and Invigoration.” by Yated Ne’eman Staff

Since the evening in 1968 when 1,000 people packed the auditorium of Bais Yaakov of Borough Park for the sixth Siyum HaShas, the excitement surrounding a Daf Yomi Siyum celebration — both in the weeks prior to the respective event and on the exhilarating day itself — has triggered an increased interest in Daf Yomi learning and Torah study in general.

After the Ninth Siyum, for which an astonishing 20,000 Jews from all parts of the continent and every walk of observant Jewish life gathered at New York’s Madison Square Garden, many new study groups were established in cities across North America, and Daf Yomi services proliferated.

Indeed, seven and a half years later, in an effort to make the most of the Siyum’s great potential for harbotzas Torah, the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudath Israel of America asked rabbonim across the country to dedicate their droshos on the Shabbos before the event to the importance of setting aside regular times for Torah learning either through the Daf Yomi program or the study of other sections of the Talmud or Oral Law.

Not surprisingly, an unprecedented upsurge in Daf Yomi study and services ensued in the wake of the tenth Siyum, which drew the participation of 70,000 Jews in Madison Square Garden, Nassau Coliseum and venues in 35 cities across the continent, as well as in places like Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Melbourne.

Now, as the greatly anticipated eleventh Siyum HaShas draws near, the Moetzes is calling upon shul rabbonim to once again utilize the awesome spiritual energy of a Siyum celebration to motivate their kehillos to intensify limud Torah at all levels. In a Kol Koreh issued February 4, the Moetzes designated Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa, 17 Adar I/February 26, as a day “of introspection and invigoration.”

An English translation of the full text follows below:

A FERVENT PUBLIC CALL

As we approach the joyful day when tens of thousands of Jews will, with Hashem’s help, complete the study of Talmud Bavli through the Daf Yomi program, our hearts are filled with gratitude to the Creator, for having given us the Torah of truth, our beloved labor and path to eternal life.

We praise Hashem for the kindness with which He has favored us in the wake of the destruction of Jewish Europe, as manifested by the vast increases in the number of people “thirsting for the word of G-d” with the resultant need “to add benches to the study-halls” to accommodate the students in the life-giving yeshivos and kollelim everywhere, as well as the masses of individuals yearning for Torah who are part of the Daf Yomi program or other courses of Torah-study. How fortunate is our people! May Hashem grant even more of the same, that the banner of Torah be raised and glorified, and that we proceed “from strength to strength” in both the devoted study of Torah and the numbers dedicated to Hashem and His Law, in the spirit of the Verse: “Let many muse and let knowledge increase” (Doniel 12:4).

We therefore hereby issue a loving call to all rabbis and leaders of congregations to set aside the Shabbos of Parshas Ki Sisa, 17 Adar I as a day of introspection and invigoration, to exhort all of their congregants to recognize the nobility and importance of Torah-study, and the urgent need to appoint set times for it, each person according to his ability, whether through the study of Daf Yomi or other sections of the Talmud and Oral Law.

This is an auspicious time to take delight in the Torah and to infuse ourselves and the entire world with the sweetness of Hashem’s law, until the day — as the Rambam writes — “when goodness will be ever-flowing and every delicacy will be as available as the dust, and the world will only strive to know Hashem... as it states: ‘And the land will be filled with

knowledge of Hashem, like the waters cover the oceans’ (Yeshayahu 11:9).”

MOETZES GEDOLEI HA TORAH OF AMERICA
(COUNCIL OF TORAH SAGES)
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A Yom Tov for Scholars: Celebrating a Siyum Maseches by B. Re’eim

Why is the completion of a maseches such a joyful occasion? What do the words hadran aloch mean? Should a festive meal be prepared for the completion of a maseches? Why is it customary for a hadran to be delivered? The completion of a maseches is an auspicious time for prayer.

Yomo Tovo Lerabbonon is the name of a special volume that deals with every aspect of completing masechtos and the attendant celebrations, as reflected in halochah and aggadah. A new edition has just appeared, in time for the approaching siyum haShas of Daf Yomi.

It is a Great Mitzvah to Participate in a Siyum Maseches

Teshuvos Maharam Mintz writes (siman 119), “When a rov or rosh yeshiva learns a masechta with his colleagues or talmidim and they get towards the end, he should wait a little before ending for a suitable time — a day when a festive meal can be prepared in honor of the Torah and its scholars. It is correct to gather everyone together as they are about to end. Therefore, all the householders have the custom of going to the yeshiva at the first session at the beginning of a zman.”

Yam Shel Shlomo writes (at the end of the seventh perek of Bava Kama): “Even for someone who is not completing this masechta, it is a great mitzvah to rejoice with the mesayeim.” This is how the Shach rules in Yore Deah at the end of siman 246.

A Festive Meal upon Completing a Masechta

The medrash (at the beginning of Shir Hashirim) notes, “This is the source for making a meal upon completing the Torah.” Benayohu Ben Yehoyoda explains that this is to intimate that our extra consumption of food and drink comes to us through Torah. It is not unlawful gain since we merit it through Torah. A meal is thus held when completing a maseches because it is part of the Oral Torah.

Another reason he cites is that the gemora contains halochoh and aggodos which are compared to food and drink respectively. We thus have a meal where we eat and drink. Teshuvos Rav Yedidiah Tiah Weil writes that the meal should contain meat and wine. In Mishnas Chachomim, Rav Meir Chagiz zt’l writes that wine should be drunk at a siyum maseches. HaRav Shach zt’l is quoted as having said that in Lithuania the custom was to wear Shabbos and Yom Tov clothes for a siyum maseches.

Delivering a Hadran Discourse at a Siyum Maseches

HaRav Yechezkel Abramsky zt’l said that it is common to deliver a hadran in which the end of the maseches is connected to its beginning through intricate reasoning. HaRav Zelig Reuven Bengis zt’l (Liflagos Reuven cheilek II, p. 298) writes that this is based on the custom that upon completing one maseches one immediately begins another. Since we discuss halochah, we occupy ourselves with whichever halochah is at the end of the maseches that we are completing. And since we begin a new maseches we have to develop some new understanding of its first sugya. We thus bind the two together permanently.

HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt’l is quoted as having given the reason that we should not mistakenly imagine that our learning has finished, thus providing an opportunity for the Soton to argue against us. With the hadran we show that the end of the maseches is connected with its beginning.

It is a Mitzvah to Complete a Maseches

The Yerushalmi (Pesochim 10:2) writes that someone who starts a mitzvah is told to complete it. Rav Chaim Kanievsky is quoted as saying that it is a mitzvah to complete a maseches. He heard from his father, the Steipler zt'l, that it is a mitzvah to complete every maseches that one is learning because starting and not finishing for one thing may involve an unfulfilled vow and second, it shows disrespect for the maseches.

Reciting the Names of Rav Pappa's Sons at a Siyum

The recitation of the names of Rav Pappa's sons as part of the hadran said at a siyum is cited in Sefer Ha'eshcol (Hilchos Sefer Torah, cheilek II) as being an aid to memory that prevents a person from forgetting what he has learned. Teshuvos HaRamo writes that it is akin to mentioning the aseres hadibros and that Rav Pappa was a wealthy person who supported Torah scholars and thus merited having his sons mentioned.

In his notes, HaRav Yosef Zecharya Stern zt'l, rov of Shavel, writes that it is an aid to memory because we learn their Torah. Teshuvos Mayim Chaim writes that they were very wealthy and that they used to donate large sums to the talmidim at every siyum maseches and that is why their names are mentioned at every siyum.

The Tepliker Rov zt'l is quoted as having said that these ten names correspond to the ten statements that Rav Pappa made about differences of opinion between the rabbonon. This gave him the merit of having his sons mentioned at every siyum maseches. This is also said in the name of the Chasam Sofer zt'l.

A Siyum Maseches is a Time of Divine Favor

The Chasam Sofer completed the entire Shas as a boy and he asked his rebbe HaRav Nosson Adler zt'l what celebration he should make. His teacher told him to fast with a break over three days. On the third day of the fast he encountered a gentile who wanted to kill him. He raised his hand and delivered a blow to the gentile that felled him dead. (He said at the time that the gentile had been a descendant of Amolek and that in the merit of completing Shas he had been given the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of wiping out Amolek. I heard this from Rav Y.M.P. zt'l.)

The gaon and tzaddik HaRav Mordechai Oshminier zt'l was associated with many miracles. In 5676 (1916) there were terrible pogroms against the Jews and people came to Rav Mordechai asking him to liquidate the leader of the marauding bands. Rav Mordechai made a siyum maseches and they said Tehillim and at that time, the leader died without anyone knowing why. Rav Mordechai remarked, "The time of a siyum is a time of Divine favor."

A childless woman approached the Brisker Rov asking for a blessing that she have children. She arrived while a siyum was being conducted and the Rov said, "Hashem will help her." With Heaven's help she had children.

In Mishnas Yosef, HaRav Yosef Leiberman explains that Divine judgment is attenuated at the time of a siyum and it is a time when prayers for children, health and sustenance can be effectively offered (Droshos Uma'amorim, maamar 69).

Some Questions and Answers

The sefer Yomo Tovo Lerabbonon contains Rav Chaim Kanievsky's replies to questions about completing a maseches that were put to him. Here are some of the questions and Rav Chaim's answers:

Q. In order to make a siyum, must one actually say the words?

A. It's better to say the words.

Q. When should the actual siyum be made — in the middle of the meal or before it starts?

A. Some make it in the middle, some beforehand. One can follow either custom.

Q. Does saying the mnemonics in the gemora affect the siyum?

A. It is said in the name of the Shloh that one should say the mnemonics because they contain Torah secrets but it doesn't appear that this affects completing the maseches.

Q. Can one delay a siyum maseches?

A. For a day or two yes, but one can't complete a maseches today and make the siyum a long time later.

Q. A maggid shiur who completes the maseches in the course of his preparation for the shiur — when is he considered to have completed it?

A. The siyum is only when he completes the maseches with the members of the shiur.

Weekly Parsha KI TISA by Rabbi Berel Wein Feb 25 2005

The tribe of Levi distinguishes itself in this week's parsha by responding to the call of Moshe: "Mi laHashem aillie" - "Let whoever is for God rally and come together around me." The tribe of Levi, Moshe's tribe and his relatives, answer the call. The frightful sight of the Jews in the desert, still fresh from the revelation at Sinai and the acceptance of God's Torah, now dancing around the golden calf calls for drastic action. And the tribe of Levi therefore goes amongst its fellow Jews in a violent attempt to destroy the golden calf, its instigators and its ideas and beliefs. Thousands of Jews are killed by the tribe of Levi in this encounter. Moshe, in his final words to Israel, will thank the tribe of Levi for their courage and sacrifice in this incident. However the tribe of Levi, because of this violent incident once again runs the risk of being labeled as perpetual purveyors of violence. The words of Yaakov echo in the ears of the Jewish people: "...Shimon and Levi...the instruments of violence are their wares in life." But the antidote to Levi's apparent penchant for violence, justified as it may be, was also prescribed by Yaakov: "I will divide them among the children of Yaakov, I will scatter them amongst Israel." Moshe now takes the tribe of Levi and elevates it to the perpetual service of God and Israel. The tribe will own no land in the Land of Israel, it will not be mobilized for the armies of Israel, it will be dependent upon the largesse and the goodness of its fellow Jews for material support. Now, it will put aside the sword and take up the pen. It will serve in the Temple and it will be the teachers and scholars of Israel. Thus it will be defanged from its propensity to do violence and its ability to easily slay others.

Levi's streak of violence came from a holy and just source. Levi tells Yaakov: "Shall we allow our sister to be treated as a prostitute?" Moshe sees no nice way to stem the tide of idol worship which is about to engulf Israel because of the presence of the golden calf in its midst. Judaism is not pacifism at all costs. Justified use of self-defense is a cardinal Jewish value. Levi's sense of justice and self-sacrifice are admirable traits. But the use of violence to achieve one's ends, even if those ends are in themselves justifiable and necessary, inevitably leaves scars on the spirit and soul of Israel. Levi can only be saved, so to speak, by channeling its motivation, daring, self-sacrifice and devotion to the causes of God and Israel into a more holy mode and spiritual occupation. Thus, at the moment of Levi's and Israel's greatest crisis, when Levi's violence saves the day and arrests the wave of idolatry, Levi is removed from the front line and becomes a special, holy, elevated tribe. The words of the prophet Zecharia were said directly to the tribe of Levi, and through them eventually to all of Israel:

"Not by might nor by strength shall you prevail, but only through My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." Rambam states that any human being can become a member of the tribe of Levi, metaphorically speaking, by trusting only in God and devoting one's self to His service and cause. Apparently, this is the true antidote to becoming a violent society. Shabat shalom.

Jerusalem Post Feb 25 2005

THE SHABAT TABLE by Rabbi Berel Wein

One of the great joys of preparing for the Shabat, at least as far as I am concerned, is preparing the Shabat table. The halacha provides for the necessity of preparing a Shabat table, unique and glorified over all of the other tables of the rest of the week. Just as there are rules and customs regarding Shabat clothing, Shabat prayers, Shabat leisure and rest, there are rules regarding the Shabat table. A special tablecloth, usually white, is used, and today here in Israel there are embroidered and decorated cloths in honor of the Shabat. Additionally, here and in many homes in the Diaspora as well, flowers are placed on the Shabat table to enhance its beauty and allow us to appreciate the fantastic wonders of God's natural world. The twin chalot, a remembrance of the double portion of manna that fell from heaven on Fridays in honor of the coming Shabat, are placed on

the table. These are the loaves of bread over which the blessing regarding the commandment of the separation of challah from the dough has been pronounced (the bread is named after this mitzva/commandment). A special challah cover is placed over the two loaves. Here also, as with the tablecloth, much room is left for the artistic expression of the Jewish heart. The variety of challah covers that exist today is almost infinite, as is the pleasure and beauty that each one of them brings to the Shabat table. Usually a special breadboard and bread knife, again reserved for Shabat, also find their place on the table under the challah cover.

The cup for kiddush is also placed on the table. This is usually silver and, again, is an individual expression of Judaic art. Today there are elaborate stands that serve as fountains to automatically fill the smaller cups for the guests at the table. There is no end to the innovation and creativity in the design of kiddush cups. There are collectors of unusual or ancient kiddush cups and there are those who possess a single silver kiddush cup. No matter what the case, kiddush cups are treasures, always viewed as heirlooms to be passed on to later generations. They would continue to be used to sanctify the Sabbath, the wine, the table and the family itself. There is nothing as precious in a Jewish home as a kiddush cup of a grandfather or great-grandfather. It is as though the family elder is still present at the Shabat table, reveling in the joy of the successful transmission of Jewish tradition in his family. It is customary for those who possess many kiddush cups to rotate their use over the year so that even the inanimate ritual objects will not be shamed by being ignored. Not shaming anything in God's world is a cardinal Jewish value.

The Shabat table, which commands our finest silverware and plates, is set early on, preferably before noon on Friday. Napkin rings or other objects of beauty and good taste may enhance the table and in most homes there are small booklets that contain the blessings and the beautiful poems and songs - zemirot - pertaining to the Shabat. Here once again, the talented expressions of Judaic design and artistry are on display. The special wine for kiddush and for the meal are also prepared, and all together, the table reflects a royal splendor and holy beauty. There are many who place the Shabat candles on the table as well, while others place their candles on the sideboard in the dining area. Just as the kiddush cup is the male heirloom in the Jewish home, the Shabat candlesticks may be handed down from mother to daughter, continually shining with the light and holiness of the many Shabatot gone by. The beauty of the Shabat table, the emotional tug and the feeling of serenity that it generates is unmatched in Jewish life. The Jewish home that experiences the Shabat and its glorious table, week after week, is truly blessed and rewarded. Shabat Shalom.

“RavFrاند” List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Ki Sisa

The Oil Of Anointing Was Meant To ‘Light The Fire’ of the Kohanim

In this week's parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu is instructed to make the Shemen haMishcha [anointing oil]. He was instructed to anoint Aharon and his sons with the oil to sanctify them for the priesthood and then he was to tell the children of Israel that ‘This shall be for Me, oil of sacred anointment for your generations.’ [Shmos 30:30-31].

Rashi on these last words quotes a teaching of the Sages [Horiyos 11b] that the original Shemen haMishcha that Moshe made to anoint Aharon would remain intact in its entirety into the distant future (l'asid lavoh). When the Temple will be rebuilt - may it occur speedily in our own days - we will use that very same flask of oil to anoint the priests prior to their service in the Third Temple.

It is obviously an open miracle for such a small quantity of oil to last for so long. It is somewhat akin to the miracle at the time of the Chanukah story of the oil that lasted for eight days without being consumed.

G-d does not make miracles unnecessarily. Even if, for some reason, it would have been part of G-d's Grand Plan to have all Kohanim for all time be anointed by the oil prepared by Moshe Rabbeinu, that plan could have been carried out without resorting to such a miracle. The All-Knowing G-d could have figured out how many gallons of oil would be necessary to anoint the Kohanim of all future eras and tell Moshe to prepare large

quantities of oil, instead of merely preparing 12 lug. Why did G-d make this open miracle, (which was perhaps greater even than the Chanukah miracle) that the small quantity of Shemen HaMishcha that Moshe prepared would last forever?

I saw a very interesting observation on this question from Rav Dovid Feinstein. This miracle taught us the lesson that the Kohanim did not become sanctified because of the Shemen haMishcha. If Shemen haMishcha was necessary for sanctifying the Kohanim, it is logical that it would be consumed. The process of transferring holiness from the oil to the person would necessarily consume the oil. By virtue of the fact that the oil did not become consumed, the Torah is informing us that it was not the oil that made them holy.

How did they become holy? They became holy on their own. The Shemen haMishcha was merely a catalyst. It was like a candle. When a second candle is lit from a first candle, the full brightness of the original candle remains intact. The Shemen haMishcha inspired Aharon and his sons to find and bring out the sanctity that was already inherent in the kohanim. The lesson is that people cannot be “made holy”. There is no magic formula to sprinkle somebody with “holy oil” so that he will automatically become holy. It does not work that way.

Holiness must be self-generated. There can be an inspiration for the holiness and the Shemen haMishcha served that function. It was supposed to “light their fire”, so to speak, and inspire them. But the holiness had to come from within. The same is true regarding wisdom and character traits and any form of sanctity.

We as parents can try, can inspire, can cajole and persuade our children. We can try every tool in the book. But we can not pound kedusha [holiness] or chochmah [wisdom] or midos [character traits] into a child. Our children are blessed with an inherent sanctity by virtue of their neshamas [souls]. We can try to inspire that inherent sanctity, to bring it out and make it blossom. However, we cannot impose it or superimpose it on them. This is the lesson of the oil of anointing. This is why G-d felt it necessary to make such a miracle to teach this enduring lesson that sanctity cannot be imposed - it must be inspired.

When Is There An Opportunity To Make Use of Warped Thinking?

There is an interesting Daas Zekeinim m'baalei haTosofos on this week's parsha [Shmos 32:2]. When the masses approached Aharon and asked him to make for them an “Elohim that will lead us” he told them to remove the golden jewelry that was upon their wives, sons, and daughters and bring it to him. When we read this pasuk and take it at face value it appears to be a ringing indictment of Aharon. He appears to be “guilty as sin”. The Daas Zekeinim, however, tells us that Aharon was acting for the sake of heaven.

Aharon reasoned as follows: “If I appoint Kaleb or Nachshon the leader in Moshe's absence, then I will have problems. Moshe will return and there will be a dispute in terms of who will be the leader. If I don't act, the masses will appoint someone on their own. That would be even worse. Who knows whom they might appoint? That person would be even less amenable to yielding his power once Moshe returns. If I volunteer to take over myself, that might offend Moshe. He might think that I am usurping his territory.”

Because of this dilemma, the Daas Zekeinim explain, Aharon resorted to the age-old tactic of stalling for time. “I will tell them bring me gold from their wives.” Aharon expected that the men would get nowhere with such a request and the project would die for lack of material. It was a brilliant tactic. He anticipated that the husbands and wives would start fighting with one another over this request. They would lock themselves in a room to argue about the matter. By the time the dust settled, Moshe would be back. As we all know, it did not turn out that way. But Aharon's thought process prior to issuing his call for jewelry certainly seems a lot more reasonable to us after reading the interpretation of the Daas Zekeinim.

What can we learn from the comment of the Daas Zekeinim? We can learn that we can observe someone doing something that appears to us to make him as guilty as sin. However, despite the appearance that there are no extenuating circumstances, that may not really be the case. One never knows.

Rav Hutner used to say that there is a time and a place for use of every character trait - positive or negative. There is a time for anger. There is a time for jealousy. Sometimes one is supposed to be angry or jealous. If there is a time for everything, Rav Hutner used to ask, what about the character trait of possessing a warped mind (krumkeit)? When is the time and place to use a warped mind? Rav Hutner answered that when it comes to giving someone the benefit of the doubt when confronted with suspicious circumstantial evidence, then one may and should use warped thinking, if that's what it takes, to come up with an explanation why the person may not be as guilty as it appears.

It might be necessary to bend over backwards and to twist oneself into a pretzel to come up with a plausible explanation for a person's suspicious behavior. But removing suspicion from a person is precisely the correct opportunity to make use of warped thinking and to perhaps justify the motives of the person.

All too often we see our Biblical heroes or our next door neighbors involved in activities which make us want to question their wisdom, ethics, or morality. The lesson of this Daas Zekeinim m'baalei ha Tosfos is to not jump to conclusions. Let us use all our creativity and even our 'krumkeit' to figure out why this person may not be as guilty as he appears.

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From Ohr Somayach | [Www.Ohr.Edu](http://www.Ohr.Edu)

Parshat Ki Tisa

Overview

Moshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. G-d selects Bezalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and he destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

Insights

Headraiser

“When you ‘raise the head’ of the Children of Yisrael...” (30:12)

Why does the Torah's choose the expression 'raise the head' to mean that Moshe should take a census of the Jewish People?

G-d explained to Moshe that the Jewish People had placed their lives in jeopardy by worshipping the golden calf. The process of counting them by the coins they were to donate would "raise their heads," elevate them spiritually from the depths to which they sunk, and earn them atonement from their sin.

Moshe supposed that such atonement would require a coin of a very large denomination indeed. Perhaps it would be a kikar of silver, the equivalent

of three thousand silver coins. If not three thousand silver coins, it might be that G-d would demand a coin worth a hundred silver pieces for each. This would be based on the penalty of one hundred silver pieces as the penalty the Torah prescribes for a man who wrongly defames his wife's virtue. Since the Jewish People defamed G-d's name when they proclaimed "These are your gods, Yisrael," this might be the level of the atonement required.

Alternatively, if not a coin worth a hundred silver coins, Moshe surmised that the coin G-d would stipulate might be the equivalent of fifty silver pieces. For that is the penalty that a seducer must pay, and the Jewish People had made idols in defiance of the commandment "You shall have no other gods!"

At the very least, Moshe conjectured, G-d would demand a coin to the value of thirty shekalim. The owner of a goring ox must pay thirty shekels. By worshipping a calf, the Jewish People had traded G-d's glory for the image of a calf.

In the event, Moshe's fears were unfounded. G-d said to him "You need not pay Me coins worth a hundred, or fifty, or even thirty silver pieces. All I ask is that you donate one small coin to the value of a half-shekel."

G-d then took a half-shekel coin from under His Throne of Glory, showing to Moshe its size and shape.

"This is the type of coin they shall give," said G-d.

Those half-shekel coins from the census were melted down and used for the silver sockets, the "adonim", that were the foundation for the walls of the Mishkan. In other words, the Mishkan literally stood on the half-shekalim that the Jewish People donated. They were the new basis of G-d's residing amongst them.

Maybe this is one of the reasons that they were called "adonim." Adon means "lord." It is the root of the word that we say to indicate the ineffable four letter name of G-d. In effect the Jewish People, by contributing those half-shekels, were humbling themselves under the supreme Lordship of G-d which was the new basis of their closeness with Him.

It doesn't take a million dollars to make G-d our "Adon," just a heart that is as broken and humble as a half-shekel.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Ki Tisa Bnei Yisrael shall observe the Shabbos. (31:16)

The concept of shemirah, observing/guarding, is mentioned earlier in 12:17. Regarding the mitzvah of Matzoh: U'shemartem es ha'matzos, "You shall safeguard the Matzos," Chazal say, "Do not read it as Matzos, but as mitzvos (similar spelling)." Just as one may not allow Matzoh to become chametz, leaven, so, too, one may not permit mitzvos to become leaven. In other words, when the opportunity to perform a mitzvah arises, one should not delay, but rather should immediately take advantage of the opportunity. This is the simple p'shat, meaning. Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, suggests that a deeper meaning lies in the concept of shemirah. It is not only an enjoinder with regard to not tarrying in mitzvah performance, it is even an admonition regarding our attitude towards the quality of our performance.

We certainly have a problem with our attitude concerning mitzvos. For example, let us consider the mitzvah of Shabbos. Shemirah means to guard it, think about it, prepare for it: something we all do. We purchase appropriate clothing l'kavod Shabbos, to honor the sanctity of the day. We look for special foods to honor Shabbos. We make all kinds of preparations for Shabbos, but what do we actually do on Shabbos? How do we spend the day? We daven quickly, taking time to socialize. We eat a festive meal and retire for the day. Is that what Shabbos is all about? Is that what we prepared for all week? Is that the definition of shemirah?

The Torah tells us to "safeguard the mitzvos." This applies not only to preparation for the mitzvah, but equally to the quality of our performance. All too often, we make a number of hachanos, preparations, for the mitzvah, but when it comes to our actual performance, our attitude is, at most, unenthusiastic.

Let us look at our daily routine to see if this holds true. We enter the shul and recite a L'shem yichud, preparatory prayer, before donning our Tallis and Tefillin. We place great emphasis on the meaning of the words of this prayer, but when it comes to the Tallis and Tefillin, we put them on quickly, and we soon forget that we are wearing them. We begin our davening with kavanah, but by the time we arrive at Shemoneh Esrai, we are half-asleep.

Rav Sholom cites a few instances from our yearly cycle that support this claim. On Rosh Hashanah, we prepare for Tekias Shofar by reciting Lamnatze'ach (Psalm 47) seven times. Our fervor escalates as we recite the pesukim of Kra Satan, which precede the Tekios. When it comes to the actual Tekios, however, how many of us are ready to be yetzei, fulfill our obligation, in accordance with all the shitos, various opinions, concerning the length and sound of the Tekios? We sing the Piyutim, hymns and prayers, associated with the High Holiday davening, but do we apply ourselves equally to the Vidui, confessional service?

This is all the work of the yetzer hora, evil inclination, who convinces us that we have fulfilled our obligation by the preparation for the mitzvah. Indeed, the yetzer hora sees to it that we expend our entire religious fervor and enthusiasm on the preparations, as long as we do not get "carried away" and fulfill the mitzvah properly. There are situations when the yetzer hora convinces us to become involved in an endeavor that is totally foreign to the mitzvah, in an effort to impede our mitzvah performance. An example is the chazzan of Yamim No'raim who stays up all night in preparation for the next day's davening - and is half asleep when he should be davening with passion and fervor. Another example is the rebbe who decides to go to the mikveh before giving a shiur, when, instead, he should review his remarks again, so that his delivery of the shiur will be more proficient. This is the work of the yetzer hora.

Rav Sholom cites an incident in which an individual who had Yahrtzeit for his father went to the rav and asked him to gather five Torah scholars who would fast on the day of the Yahrtzeit. He offered to pay them handsomely. The rav replied that if he wanted them to fast, it would be more acceptable for him to ask them himself. Since he was prepared to dole out a considerable sum of money in memory of his father, it would be more appropriate for him to give the money to a Torah scholar who might not be able to purchase a decent meal.

When all is said and done, the meaning of shemirah is to apply one's heart, simas lev: to think; to be cognitive of the various facets of the mitzvah; not to make what is secondary into the primary aspect of the mitzvah; and not to disregard other mitzvos while carrying out a specific mitzvah. We must determine our priorities and focus on them.

And the people saw that Moshe was late to come down from the mountain. (32:1)

How quickly they lost their faith. How quickly they were able to forget everything that Hashem had done for them. Chazal tell us that the Satan showed the people a vision of Moshe Rabbeinu being carried in Heaven. Their leader was gone. He must immediately be replaced. How are we to understand Klal Yisrael's lack of patience and faith? Why would they not wait a little bit longer? Perhaps Moshe would yet return. How did they change from a nation that had received the Torah to a people who were prepared to revert to idol worship?!

I think the answer lies in understanding Klal Yisrael's mindset. At the time, they were scared. They were desperate. Fear leads to despair. Despair leads to the nadir of sin. Indeed, as Horav Aharon Karkner, zl, says, despair is in itself a grave sin. It is the most destructive of all sins, because it represents a lack of hope. When one loses hope, he is susceptible to descending to the nadir of depravity. Hope for the Jew is his elixir of life. We have survived the vicissitudes of the millennia, precisely because we have maintained our hope in a future, our hope for redemption.

The Izbitzer Rebbe, zl, explains that we are called Yehudim, because our ancestor Yehudah demonstrated remarkable resilience and inexhaustible hope. When through Yosef's manipulation, the silver goblet was planted and found in Binyamin's sack, the brothers thought all was lost. They lost hope. They had come to an impasse which they could not surmount. Not so Yehudah. He did not fall apart when faced with adversity. Vayigash eilav

Yehudah, he drew near to Yosef. He came forward and argued. Yehudah never gave up hope and neither do we, his descendants. We are a people whose roots are entrenched in hope and tempered with resilience.

Klal Yisrael was afraid. Their leader was gone, and it appeared that he would not return. They were paralyzed with fear. What should they do? Where could they go? Let me tell you what fear does to a person. In truth, much of human endeavor is motivated by the negative emotions which have been catalyzed by fear. We are afraid of failing, so we act. We are afraid of being called losers, so we undertake various projects to prove that we have something to contribute. We are now getting to the primary source of all fears: the fear that we are insignificant; the fear that what we do is inconsequential; the fear that we do not matter.

Why was Klal Yisrael so afraid that Moshe was gone? I think that in their mindset, they needed him for support. They had just completed a long tenure as slaves in Egypt. During their liberation from the Egyptian bondage, they had begun to connect with Moshe in a relationship that generated a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. They no longer felt lost and insignificant. They were somebodies! Then Moshe disappeared. He promised to return at a specific time, but he did not. They once again reverted to their fear of being nothing. They had to act immediately to counteract that fear: They created a golden-calf.

For many, human existence is a lifelong quest to prove that they have value. People need to feel important and needed. Jews are different - or, at least, they are supposed to be. We are Yehudim. We have hope. We are resilient. We have endured so much and still survived. We have overcome challenge after challenge, obstacle after obstacle, and have become stronger. Our lives are filled with purpose. This gives us hope. We have a mission: To serve Hashem and sanctify His Name throughout the world. We do not need a pat on the back from anyone, for we are members of Hashem's legion. We have overcome, and we will continue to do so.

The frum, observant, community can hold its head up high. Long ago, the world wrote us off as extinct. We have survived and thrived. In the sixty-odd years since the Holocaust, Orthodox Jewry throughout America and Eretz Yisrael has proven that fear is not one of our hindrances. We have demonstrated that courage, resilience and hope conquer apathy and fear. We have built Torah throughout this country, in a land where the pessimists said it would never succeed. We have continued building the world that the Holocaust destroyed. A nation that lives with hope cannot be vanquished.

Let me conclude with a short story that puts the above ideas in perspective. It is about a father and his young son, both of whom had been sent to Auschwitz. In spite of the unspeakable horrors, hardships and persecution, the Jewish inmates were able to cling to whatever scraps of religious observance they could. Shabbos, the Festivals and basic mitzvos were observed to the extent possible - under the miserable conditions to which they were subjected. One midwinter evening, the inmates remembered that it was Chanukah. How were they going to "celebrate" the Festival of Lights? The father had been a craftsman, so he fashioned a small makeshift Menorah from scrap metal. A few pieces of thread plucked from his prison garb served as a wick. For oil, he used some butter that he had been able to procure from a guard.

They were used to taking risks, and this was no different. It was the butter that the young boy could not understand. How could they waste precious food? Would it not have been more appropriate to share the butter on a crust of bread than to burn it?

The father looked at his son, and with a tone the young boy would always remember, said, "My son, you know that a person can live a long time without food. I assure you, however, that a person cannot live one moment without hope. These flames are the flames of hope. This is a fire that we cannot be without - ever! Remember this always!"

They fashioned it into a molten calf. They said, "This is your G-d, O' Yisrael, which brought you up from the land of Egypt. (32:4)

When we peruse the tragic incident of the eigel ha'zahav, Golden-Calf, we note that only three-thousand Jews actually sinned. In fact, these sinners were members of the eirav rav, mixed multitude, who came along with Klal Yisrael when they left Egypt. Yet, the entire nation carried the onus of

guilt. Why? Interestingly, Shevet Levi, who was not involved in the sin at all, was included in this collective guilt. Why? This occurred again later on when the meraglim, spies, returned from reconnoitering Eretz Yisrael, and ten of them disparaged the country. Hashem wanted to destroy the nation and rebuild it through Moshe Rabbeinu. Once again, the proportion of guilt seems disproportionate. There is yet a more glaring episode in Tanach when Achan, one man, took from the spoils of Yericho, and all of Klal Yisrael was held responsible. Why? Is this not taking collective punishment a bit far?

In his commentary to Sefer Yehoshua, The Malbim writes that all of Klal Yisrael is considered as one body. Thus, just as if there is an infection in one organ it affects the entire body, so, too, if one Jew sins, it is viewed collectively and the guilt is shared by everyone. No one sins in a vacuum. His transgression leaves a lasting blemish on the nation. This is the dynamics of a community. Each individual affects the entire unit.

In truth, the idea goes deeper. When an individual sins, it indicates that the community has not condemned this particular sin. If everybody in Klal Yisrael would have accepted the prohibition against taking spoils from Yericho - seriously - then Achan could not have sinned. The feelings would have been too strong. If everybody in Klal Yisrael would have been against creating a golden-calf, then it would not have happened. If everybody in Klal Yisrael was secure in the commitment to enter Eretz Yisrael, then the spies would not have slandered the country. Veritably, in one way or another, everybody was responsible for the community not being as negative towards the sin as they should have been. Collective guilt is the result of collective sin. It is just that Hashem is able to distinguish the overt sinners from the covert sinners. Yes, when another Jew desecrates Shabbos, disdains kashrus, disparages morality and the laws of marriage, it is a taaneh, a criticism, of our behavior. We have become too accepting, too agreeable, too complacent, too secure with our own observance to really be concerned about that of others. Regrettably, the sin is collective, just as the obligation is.

Yehoshua heard the sound of the people in its shouting. (32:17)

In the Nimukei Ridvaz it is stated, "It is written b're'oh with a hay, meaning, 'In its degradation,' but it is read b're'o, 'in its shouting.' This teaches us that when Yehoshua heard all of the shouting connected with their celebration, he thought that it was actually sounds of the war, in which those who still followed Moshe Rabbeinu were waging battle with the idol-worshippers. This news was, at best, ambivalent, since it indicated that the Jewish People was being destroyed by machlok'es, internal strife. This was good news and bad. On the one hand, Jews were fighting for kavod Shomayim, the honor of Heaven. On the other hand, Jews were fighting. This is the double meaning of b're'oh, which in its written expression implies negativity, while in its oral reading intimates a positive feeling.

The lesson we derive from the Ridvaz is simple. Even during those circumstances in which one has no other recourse but to actively dispute those who seek to undermine the Torah, as occurred during the sin of the Golden-Calf, we must nonetheless face the fact that we are involved in a machlok'es - albeit l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven - but a machlok'es nonetheless. Controversy is never a good thing, even if it is undertaken for the purpose of expunging the evil that infests us. Regrettably, at times it is the only avenue that we can employ, but it hurts - or, at least, it should.

And he (Moshe) saw the calf and the dances... And he threw down the Tablets from his hands and shattered them. (32:19)

It is incredible that Moshe Rabbeinu felt obligated to shatter the Luchos. Indeed, if he felt that Klal Yisrael was not worthy of receiving them, then he should have put them away for a later date when they would be worthy. Was it really necessary to act with such finality? The Amar Naka explains that had the Luchos not been broken, no nation would ever have been able to dominate Klal Yisrael. What is so bad about that? He explains that shibud malchios, the slavery to which the gentile nations subject us, is a form of penance for us. It cleanses our sins and purifies us, thereby permitting us to enter Olam Habah, the World To Come. Moshe Rabbeinu knew that if Klal Yisrael received the Luchos then, they would have

forever forfeited their chance to enter Olam Habah, which is the aspiration of every Jew. It is worth all the suffering which we endure, because true life is that which is lived in the spiritual realm.

Horav Chaim Elazary, zl, offers an alternative approach. He explains that when Moshe finally descended from the mountain with the Luchos in his hands, the people came face to face with the reality that their beloved leader was still alive, and his mission had been accomplished. What should they have immediately done? They should have themselves shattered the Golden Calf. The fact that they did not act decisively bothered Moshe. Apparently, they thought they were not sinners. They had hoped to have their cake and eat it, too. They could have a Golden Calf and the Luchos - together! No! This could never be. Moshe decided to shatter the Luchos in order to teach Klal Yisrael a powerful lesson. The eagal and the Luchos do not coincide. One who has an eagal eschews the Luchos. By breaking the Luchos, Moshe was demonstrating to the people that they were sinners and must immediately repent. Teshuvah, repentance, can only occur after one recognizes and acknowledges his iniquity.

Va'ani Tefillah

u'mosar ha'adam min ha'beheimah ayin. Man's superiority over animals is nothing.

As the Ramban writes in his commentary to Sefer Koheles, this statement is a reference to the guf, body, physical dimension, of man. There is very little that distinguishes us from the animals. We eat, sleep, function and then pass from the world. We do, however, have one major advantage over the animal world: the neshamah, soul. Through our spiritual dimension, we can elevate ourselves by performing the will of Hashem and drawing ourselves closer to Him. In fact, the Maggid Tzedek views the word ayin: aleph, yud, nun, as an acronym for the words, aval yeish neshamah, "but, there is a soul," which, of course, is a reference to man's superiority over the animals. Alternatively, he writes that the average animal lives nine years. David Hamelech says in Sefer Tehillim, "The days of our lives are seventy years." This amounts to a sixty-one year difference between an average animal's lifespan and that of a human. The gematria, numerical equivalent, of ayin is sixty-one. Finally, the Chida says that the acronym of ayin is: amirah, man's ability to speak; yediah, knowledge, his ability to think; and neshamah, his soul, spiritual dimension. These constitute the three areas which elevate man over the animals.

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Ohr Torah Stone - Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Ki Tisa 17 Adar I 5765, 26 February 2005

Efrat, Israel - "Why O Lord are you so angry at your nation whom you took out of the land of Egypt with great strength and with a strong hand." (Exodus 32:11)

Who is to blame when a tragedy occurs to the Jewish people? Is it G-d's fault? Is it the fault of Jewish leaders? Is it the fault of the Jewish people?

A careful look at this week's Torah portion will reveal the answer. The Israelites have emerged from the dizzying and rapturous heights of the Revelation at Sinai only to have descended to tragic immorality with the worship of the Golden Calf. It almost seems as if a glorious potential history will conclude before it has really begun. The Almighty G-d seems to blame the nation, when He says to Moses, "Go forth and descend because your nation which you have taken out of Egypt has become corrupted... and now allow Me to vent my anger against them and I will destroy them; I will make from you a new nation." (Exodus 32:7). From G-d's perspective, it is the Israelites who have defiled themselves by descending from heavenly purity to licentious idolatry.

Moses blames G-d, when he turns around almost the very words which the Almighty used against Israel. "Why O Lord are you so angry at your nation whom you took out of the land of Egypt with great strength and with a strong hand?" (Exodus 32:11) In effect Moses is criticizing G-d who initially brought them into Egypt and now has taken them out of that idolatrous nation before they were really ready for a life of Torah and

commandments. Yes, G-d may very well have wrought many miracles to have gotten Pharaoh to let them go and to have enabled them to cross the Reed Sea. In effect G-d's very greatness of power and strength of hand pampered them and did not give them the inner resources to stand on their own two feet against the challenges of the desert while G-d and Moses (as it were) were otherwise occupied.

And then, to a certain extent, Moses blames himself. After all, he was their leader - and perhaps he should have prepared them much better for a life of independent Divine service even in his absence. Indeed, Moses even suggests that he serve as a vicarious atonement - a kapara - for his nation:

"And it happened the next day that Moses said to the nation, 'You have sinned a great sin; now I shall ascend to the Lord so that perhaps I may achieve forgiveness (be a kapara) for your sin.' And Moses returned to the Lord and he said, 'Please this nation has sinned a great sin... and now perchance You will bear (literally take upon Yourself) their sin; and if not, blot me out now for your book which you have written.'" (Exodus 32:30-32)

The rabbis of the Talmud even compare Moses to the suffering servant of Isaiah (53) who takes upon himself the sins of the multitude and is willing to give up his life on their behalf (B.T. Sotah 14a). In another Talmudic passage, the sages interpret the words, "VaYehal Moshe", usually translated as "Moses entreated G-d", as meaning "Moses made himself a corpse (hallal) before G-d" (B.T. Berakhot 32a). You will certainly be aware that this idea sounds frighteningly like the vicarious atonement of the founder of Christianity, the major subject of the Passion movie of Gibson. Undoubtedly the entire concept of vicarious atonement or kapara stems from the sacrifice of the sin offering, where the animal dies instead of the repentant individual as an expression of G-d's graciousness and forgiveness. Here our rabbis extend this notion to the Jewish leader, to Moses, who seems to be willing to take "ministerial responsibility".

However, G-d does not permit such vicarious atonement! The Almighty responds to Moses in no uncertain terms, "The one who has sinned against Me, he shall be blotted out from My book" (Exodus 32:33). And our Bible stresses this cardinal principle of individual responsibility with the clear exhortation, "Parents shall not die because of their children and children shall not die because of their parents; each individual shall die because of his/her sin" (Deuteronomy 24:6).

And so the Almighty continues to explain to Moses a fundamental truth of Jewish history and Jewish theology: "And now you (Moses) go and lead the nation to where I have spoken to you; behold My messengers shall walk before you and when I exact punishment, I shall exact it upon those who have sinned" (Exodus 32:33).

G-d has told Moses that He Himself is not yet ready to walk in the midst of the nation and to show His face frontally as the manifest leader of the people; to do so would mean an immediate system of Divine reward and punishment which would remove individual free will and which would make G-d ultimately responsible for Jewish history. G-d wants to make the Israelite nation itself responsible. G-d wants the nation to perfect itself and perfect the world. Hence, G-d does not take responsibility for the nation's backsliding nor does He allow for blameless leaders to take upon themselves vicarious atonement. Israel must take responsibility for what happens to Israel.

This is one important place in which Judaism diverges from Christianity. Judaism believes that the people - indeed, all of humanity - has the inner strength to perfect and redeem itself. G-d believes in us, despite our many failures. The least we can do is to believe in ourselves. After all, we have His Torah and all of us humans are created in the image of G-d. Shabbat Shalom.

**Yeshivat Hamivtar - Orot Lev - Parshat Hashavua
Parshat Tetzaveh - Rabbi Chaim Brovender**

Kingship finds expression repeatedly surrounding the person of Ahashverosh, his palace, his court and his celebration: "He made a feast for all his ministers and servants...

The nobles and the princes of the provinces... (Megillat Esther, 1: 3,4)." By means of this display, Ahashverosh accomplishes something:

"He showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and yakar tiferet gedulato—his excellent majesty— many days (1: 5)." The Hebrew tiferet is difficult to translate: "majesty", "his princely way", "his kingship," all faithfully reproduce its meaning here. Still, what happened at the party that showed the King's majesty? Why should a large feast with an impressive guest list reveal "majesty" more than conducting court and the affairs of state? The Persian Empire no doubt had an impressive ballroom, but was that what demonstrated the might and dignity of Ahashverosh?

The Gemara (megilla 12a) has taken notice of the phrase tiferet gedulato:

"R. Yosi the son of Hanina said: 'this teaches us that he wore priestly garments' [the clothes worn by the High Priest]." There the use of the word tiferet in the verse [from Megillat Esther] is seen as an allusion to "priestly garments." In Parashat Tezave, the priestly garments are said to be fashioned "lechavot u'letiferet."

The opinions expressed by Chazal that Ahashverosh destroyed the Temple or that Ahashversosh used sacred objects from the Temple as serving vessels at his party, both fit with the above view that he dressed himself in the High Priest's garments.

Why interpret "tiferet" as an allusion to priestly garments? Apparently, kings can aspire to no beauty more splendid or honor more elevated than that given to the High Priest in his service of God. The Ramban, in his commentary to Parashat Tezave, makes this comparison in the opposite direction. He asks how one goes about making garments that will satisfy the imperative grandeur of lechavod uletiferet? He answers that we copy the sartorial style of kings, especially the kings of Persia, to produce dress of the highest dignity.

The Torah states quite clearly that there must be a high priest; however, the appointing of a king seems to be optional. "Kingship" over Israel can be given to the High Priest who will wield the combined authorities of the "king" and the "servant of Hashem". Only Moshe succeeded in combining the roles. He was called eved Hashem, and passed on to the priestly families their roles in religious service.

The Ramban in his commentary to our parasha points out that the Torah is not clear about how to achieve the status of lechavod uletiferet in making the special garments for the priests. He suggests that we might look at the clothes worn by the kings in the world. This remains curious. On the one hand, the Persian kings serve as a model for the garments of the priests; on the other hand, a king of Persia took the clothing of the High Priest as a special honor for himself.

Ahashverosh must have noticed that the external form of the garments had copied to some extent the style of Persia rulers. However, clothing designed and used by the High Priest and the other priests, comes to represent a unique kind of political and religious leader. This double-leadership Ahashverosh (and many other a worldly king) coveted. For that further glory, he insisted on wearing the priestly garments. In the State of Israel we have achieved a kind of malchut (kingship). That leadership exercises authority in the political realm but does not inspire devotion in the religious domain of priests and the Temple. This is perhaps the enterprise of the next generation. Shabbat shalom

Bar-Ilan University 's Parashat Hashavua Study Center

Parashat Ki-Tissa 5765/ February 26, 2005

Face to Face

Rabbi Ophir Cohen - Kefar Darom

In this week's Torah reading, there is a verse that characterizes the unique prophetic level of Moses, likening his communication with the Almighty to the way of speech between human beings: "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another . . . and he would then return to the camp" (Ex. 33:11). Maimonides defined the difference between the prophecy received by Moses and that received by the other prophets (Hilkhos Yesodei ha-Torah ch. 7) as follows:

All that we have said applies to the nature of prophetic revelation given all the early and late prophets, save for Moses. All the prophets were shaken by awe and fright, but not our Teacher Moses, of whom it is written, “as one man speaks to another” (Ex. 33:11); that is, just as a person is not frightened to hear his fellow speak, thus Moses had the fortitude of mind to understand prophecy and stand unshaken

The Metaphor of Relation

The imagery given by the Torah is that of one man speaking to another. According to Maimonides this meant speaking in a relaxed way, insofar as a person is not frightened hearing his neighbor speak. Nevertheless, we have yet to understand whether Moses reached an exceedingly elevated position close to the Lord, or whether the Lord reduced Himself to the bounds of the human capacity to hear, as is described in the Midrash (Tanhuma Ki Tissa 27): “The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, – we do not know whether the more lowly raised himself, or whether the High One lowered Himself. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, it would seem that the One who is high as the world lowered Himself, as it is said that the Lord descended to the Tent.” Be that as it may, we see that the desirable manner for human beings to converse with one another is face to face, and from observing two people in communication we can see what sort of relations and degree of closeness there is between them. This was the intention in drawing the comparison between human conversation and the extreme closeness between Moses and G-d.

Or Ha-Hayyim interprets the verse at hand as indicating that the Lord’s closeness to Moses depended on Moses’ preparedness for revelation:

“The Lord would speak to Moses face to face” – this means that in proportion to the preparation that Moses would make to meet the Divine Presence, so would he perceive the face of the Supreme; for as much as a person prepares himself for the impact of sanctity, so does he receive it. The simile “as one man speaks to another,” is explained, accordingly, by the saying (Prov. 27:19), “As face answers to face in water, so does one man’s heart to another.” This means that the human heart can read the mind, so to speak, of the facing person and know whether to respond with love or with hate, for as a person prepares his heart to love his friend, so too his friend’s heart will look on him lovingly; and that is what was said “as one person speaks to another”, that the second will not love the first if the first does not prepare his heart to be his friend; likewise, the Lord spoke face to face; thus a person can discern his standing with his Maker – if his heart longs for the Lord and wishes to serve Him, this is a sign that the Lord loves him.

From Divine to Human

In a more natural vein, Ramhal [R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto] (Da’at Tevunot 154) understood that even if a person does not intend to express his attitude towards another, his body language and facial expression convey this naturally:

It is quite natural that when a couple address each other lovingly they look into each other’s face, and that shows the closeness between them; and when two people become distant from one another, each turns the other way; for facing always indicates closeness and turning one’s back always indicates distance. Closeness and conversation between people is most notable in the relations of man and wife, and similarly of rabbi and disciple, as we see in the gemara (Kiddushin 29b):

Rav Hisda used to sing the praises of Rav Hammuna to Rav Huna, saying what a great man he was. He said to him, “When he comes, send him to me.” When he came, he observed that he did not cover his head with a scarf, and asked him, “Why do you not cover your head?” He answered, “Because I am not married,” upon which Rav Huna turned his face away from him and said, “See! You shall not see my face until you get married!”

Rav Huna was not willing to look Rav Hammuna in the face, despite his great stature, because he had not married. Why did he choose this response to show his dissatisfaction with the fact that Rav Hammuna had not yet taken a wife?

Wives and Disciples

Rabbi Joseph Hayyim of Baghdad (Ben Yehoyadah, Kiddushin, loc. cit.) points out that there is a great lesson here regarding the way a man behaves

towards his wife, and from that one may derive regarding the relationship between a rabbi and his disciple. As long as a person has not acquired the proper relationship of speaking face to face with his wife, he is not deserving of such regard between rabbi and disciple. This is what he wrote:

The best is face to face, ... Therefore when Rav Huna knew that he had not yet married, he wished to punish him in a way that would be measure for measure... So that you not receive abundance from me face to face, as a wife receives abundance from her husband; and as the impact of the husband on the wife should be face to face, so too the impact of the rabbi on his disciple... Thus we see that the metaphor which the Torah uses to illustrate the level of prophecy achieved by the master prophet teaches us about the most desirable manner of communication between husband and wife, between rabbi and disciple, and between one person and another

Last Update: February 21, 2005

Haftorah - Ki Sisa - M’lochim I 18:1

This week’s haftorah reveals to us Hashem’s indescribable love for His people and our inseparable relationship with Him. The setting is one of massive spiritual decline in which most of the Jewish nation was involved in some facet of idolatry. After three years of severe famine and drought Hashem instructed Eliyahu Hanavi to appear before the Jewish King Achav. This wicked leader together with his idolatrous wife were gravely at fault for the Jewish people’s decline. Eliyahu faithfully fulfilled his mission and, at the risk of his life, challenged Achav and his idolatrous prophets to a crucial demonstration at Mount Carmel. Eliyahu, the only known remaining prophet of Hashem represented Hashem while the other prophets represented their false deities. Each would attempt to offer a sacrifice and whoever received a response from above would be proven the real prophet. After several futile attempts of the false prophets Eliyahu stepped forward to prove, once and for all, the authenticity of Hashem. Eliyahu filled a ditch with water, thoroughly drenched his altar and offered his bullock to Hashem. Hashem responded in a miraculous fashion and sent a fire which received the sacrifice, consumed the altar and even dried the water in the ditch. This clear demonstration convinced the Jewish people that Hashem was the exclusive power of the world and after this experience they forsook their idolatrous ways.

This incredible experience is unparalleled in all of Jewish history. Its uniqueness is due to the fact that this sacrifice was, under normal circumstances, a violation of a serious Torah prohibition. The Torah sternly warns us against offering a sacrifice to Hashem outside the Bais Hamikdash. Once erected, the Bais Hamikdash served as the exclusive site for sacrificial purposes. And yet, at this crucial moment of truth Eliyahu involved the Jewish people in a sacrifice on Mount Carmel, one normally punishable by death. Chazal, in resolution of this perplexing issue, quote a Torah passage which states, “To him (the prophet) you shall hearken.” (Dvrim 18:15) This passage establishes the precedent that an unequivocally authoritative prophet may temporarily order the violation of a Torah commandment. In fact, Eliyahu’s sacrifice on Mount Carmel is cited as the prime example for this principle. But, the question begs to be asked, “Why was it necessary to violate a Torah principle at this juncture? Wouldn’t this clear demonstration result from the ordinary sacrificial procedure in the Bais Hamikdash?”

In search for an insight to this let us focus on a specific reference in this week’s haftorah. The Scriptures, in describing Eliyahu’s altar say, “And Eliyahu took twelve stones corresponding to the twelve tribes of Yaakov about whom Hashem said, ‘Yisroel will be your name.’” (18:31) Rashi (ad loc.) comments on the relevance of the name Yisroel here. He quotes the Midrash which explains that Yaakov Avinu foresaw this sacrificial procedure transpiring on Mount Carmel. In fact, this vision was shown to Yaakov at the exact moment of his name change from Yaakov to Yisroel. Hashem told Yaakov, “A nation and an assembly of nations will emerge from you.” (Breishis 35:11) Rashi (ad loc.) explains that the moment will come for the Jewish people to resemble the nations of the world. They will

offer a sacrifice outside the Bais Hamikdash and Hashem will accept it with pleasure.

The above reference suggests a mysterious relationship between the name Yisroel and this sacrifice on Mount Carmel. For one, this revelation transpired at the exact moment Yaakov received his new name Yisroel. In addition, the Haftorah seems to focus on this name change as a prelude to the miracle of Eliyahu's sacrifice. A careful analysis of the name Yisroel will reveal its hidden dimension and its association to the sacrifice on Mount Carmel.

The Torah, in explaining the name Yisroel, states, "For you (Yaakov) have become a prince unto E-l." (Breishis 32:29) The name Yisroel actually includes within itself the name of Hashem suggesting an essential relationship between Hashem and His people. And as is reflected by the essence of a name, this relationship continues to exist under all circumstances and at all times.

With this insight we can now appreciate the sacrifice on Mount Carmel and the necessity for its deviation from the ordinary sacrificial procedure. During Eliyahu's days, the Jewish people's perceived their relationship with Hashem as one confined to the Bais Hamikdash itself. When they approached Hashem in His sanctuary His presence could be truly sensed. However outside of Yerushalayim no tangible presence of Hashem could be felt and, in their minds, no relationship existed. This perverted perspective resulted in the Jewish people's reverting to idolatry for their sense of security.

But now, the time had finally arrived for the Jewish people to realize Hashem's presence everywhere and to appreciate their relationship with Him outside of the Bais Hamikdash. To facilitate this, Eliyahu accepted the difficult task of revealing this truth and offered a sacrifice outside of the Bais Hamikdash proper. He reasoned that Hashem's response would prove that His relationship transcended the physical boundaries of Yerushalayim. Hashem could even be found on Mount Carmel at a time when the Jewish people appeared like a foreign nation. Hashem responded warmly and displayed His presence at Mount Carmel by accepting this "foreign" sacrifice. Through this the Jewish people were convinced that their name Yisroel was the true representation of their relationship with Hashem. As their name suggests Hashem maintains an inseparable relationship with His people whenever and wherever they may be found.

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WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5765

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights
A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav
COVERING THE CHALLOS FOR KIDDUSH:

QUESTION: Must the challos which will be used for Lechem Mishneh on Friday night be placed on the table before Kiddush is recited, or may they be brought to the table after Kiddush?

DISCUSSION: According to the basic halachah, there is no need for the challos to be on the table during Kiddush. As a matter of fact, it may be preferable that they not be there during Kiddush at all. This is based on the Talmud's statement(1) that one should cover the food on the table before reciting Kiddush on Friday night. Why? The basic explanation given by the Rishonim(2) is: Yikra de-Shabata, the glory of Shabbos. It is considered a far greater honor to Shabbos if Kiddush is recited first, and only then is the Shabbos food brought to the table in honor of Shabbos which has just been sanctified by reciting Kiddush. By covering the challos during Kiddush and uncovering them once Kiddush is over, we act as if the challos were not really there during Kiddush and were actually "brought to the table" after Kiddush was recited.

Based on the above, it would seem that instead of placing the challos on the table and then "hiding" them, it would be best not to bring the challos at all to the table until after Kiddush is recited. Indeed, that is the opinion of some poskim,(3) and some families observe that custom.(4)

But most homes follow the traditional custom of placing the challos on the table before Kiddush and keeping them covered (at least) until after

Kiddush is recited. While the exact source for this custom is not clear,(5) there are a number of possible explanations as to its origin:

To honor Shabbos by having challos on the table throughout the entire Shabbos, even when it is not meal time.(6)

To allow the table to be moved after the Shabbos candles have burnt out.

(7) By placing challos on the table before Shabbos begins, the table becomes a basis (a base) for the challos as well as for the candles and it is therefore permitted to be moved.(8)

To properly fulfill Shulchan Aruch's ruling of "setting the Shabbos table" in anticipation of Shabbos.(9) Since challos are a main part of the meal, the table is not considered "set" unless the challos are on it.(10)

According to Kabbalistic teachings, placing the challos on the table enhances the holiness of the table.(11)

QUESTION: Based on the aforementioned, should other Shabbos foods be brought to the table before or after Kiddush?

DISCUSSION: Since we have established that for the sake of yikra de-Shabata we cover the challos to make it appear as if they are not on the table, it follows that all other Shabbos foods should only be brought to the table after Kiddush is recited.(12) Indeed, there are many people who are careful to do so.(13)

But this concept applies only on Friday night; on Shabbos morning, yikra de-Shabata does not apply.(14) It therefore makes no difference when the Shabbos food is placed on the table on Shabbos morning.

QUESTION: If yikra de-Shabata does not apply to Shabbos morning, why, then, do we cover the challos during the Shabbos morning Kiddush?

DISCUSSION: Although yikra de-Shabata does not apply on Shabbos morning, there are other explanations given by the Rishonim [for the Talmudic statement mentioned earlier that food on the table must be covered during Kiddush on Friday night] that apply to Shabbos morning as well as to Friday night:

So as to "hide the shame" of the challos. Normally, ha-motzi is the first berachah to be recited and bread is the first food eaten at a meal. When Kiddush is recited, the wine "usurps" the place of the bread, so to "hide" the "shame" of the challos, we cover them.(15)

So as to remember the miracle of the Manna, which fell from Heaven wrapped in layers of dew.(16)

QUESTION: When cakes or pastries are being served at a Shabbos morning Kiddush, do they need to be covered as well?

DISCUSSION: Two of the three previously mentioned reasons do not apply in this case. Yikra de-Shabata does not apply on Shabbos morning at all, and remembrance of the Manna applies only to Lechem Mishneh, not to mezonos items. But the other reason, the one regarding the "shame" of the challos, applies to mezonos as well, since ordinarily the blessing of mezonos is recited before the blessing of ha-gafen. Indeed, some poskim rule that cakes and pastries should be covered during the recital of the morning Kiddush.(17)

But not all poskim agree. Some(18) hold that mezonos items do not need to be covered during Kiddush because only challos - which can be used for Kiddush and are being bypassed in favor of wine - are being "shamed." Mezonos items, however, are generally not eligible to have Kiddush recited over them, so they cannot be "shamed" by the wine taking precedence over them.(19)

QUESTION: May the challos be uncovered right after Kiddush or must they remain covered until after the ha-motzi blessing is recited?

DISCUSSION: Here, too, the answer depends on the exact reasoning behind the halachah. If the main purpose of covering the challos is yikra de-Shabata, then once Kiddush is recited, there is no longer any reason to keep them covered; on the contrary, the challos should be immediately uncovered. Similarly, if the primary reason for the halachah is to "hide the shame" of the challos, then there is no longer any reason to keep them covered once ha-gafen has been said. But if the reason to cover the challos is to commemorate the miracle of the Manna, then it is appropriate to leave the challos covered until after ha-motzi is recited, since that is when the mitzvah of Lechem Mishneh is fulfilled.(20)

In practice, everyone should follow his family's custom, as there are conflicting views(21) and customs and all have valid sources. One who has

no family custom should adopt the following procedure: On Friday night, he should leave the challos covered until after ha-motzi.(22) On Shabbos morning, the challos should be completely covered during Kiddush and partly uncovered for ha-motzi.(23) For Seudah Shelishis, the challos should not be covered at all.(24)

QUESTION: May the challah cover be made from a see-through material? May the cover be perforated or made from a mesh-like material (which will make the challos visible)?

DISCUSSION: L'chatchilah, no, since the challos can be seen. If no other cover is available, such covers may be used.(25)

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FOOTNOTES: 1 Pesachim, 100a. 2 Rashbam and Tosafos, Pesachim 100b, quoting She'iltos. This explanation is quoted by the Tur O.C. 271:9, Magen Avraham 271:7 and Mishnah Berurah 271:15 as the primary reason for covering the challos during Kiddush Friday night. See also Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 271:48. 3 The Gaon of Vilna, quoted in Ma'asei Rav 118. This was also the custom during Talmudic times, when each participant at a meal was served at his own individual table. Food was laid on the tables in advance, but the tables were not brought into the dining area until after Kiddush was recited. 4 As attested to by Aruch ha-Shulchan 271:22 (who objects to this custom). See also Nefesh ha-Rav, pg. 158. 5 See Tosafos, Pesachim 100b, s.v. who write that already in their day it had become customary for the challos to be brought to the table and then covered. Tosafos, however, do not explain why the challos could not be brought to the table after Kiddush was recited. 6 See Taz Y.D. 178:7 that it is customary to honor the Shabbos in this way. See Be'er Heitev O.C. 180:2. 7 Rav Chayim of Valozhin, quoted in Keser Rosh 92. 8 As explained in Mishnah Berurah 277:18.9 O.C. 262:1. 10 Minchas Yitzchak 3:13-10. 11 Ben Ish Chai, Vayeira 17, quoted in Kaf ha-Chayim 262:21. 12 See Toras Shabbos 271:8 and Peri Megadim (Eishel 271:7 and Mishbetzos 12) and that for yikra de-Shabata to be properly fulfilled, all of the foods on the table should be covered. 13 See Misgeres ha-Shulchan 77:1. See also Mi-Peninei ha-Rav, pg. 69. 14 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 271:49 quoting Mordechai; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 47, note 125). 15 Tur O.C. 271, quoting Yerushalmi. 16 Tosafos, Pesachim 100b. Based on this reason, Shulchan Aruch writes that one should cover the challos underneath as well to symbolize the underlying layer of dew. Many people use a challah board or tray for this purpose. 17 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 55:5; Teshuvos Levushei Mordechai O.C. kamma, 46. Even according to this view, however, only the person making Kiddush [and others who are partaking of the wine] needs to cover his mezonos items. All other participants do not need to cover their mezonos, since they are not "shaming" the mezonos by listening to Kiddush; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 47, note 125). 18 Eishel Avraham O.C. 182. 19 Ta'amei ha-Minhagim, 365, Kuntress Acharon; Az Nidberu 2:8. 20 Mishnah Berurah 271:41 quoting Chayei Adam. Peri Megadim (quoted by Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 48), however, maintains that even according to this reason it is sufficient to cover the challos until after Kiddush. 21 Note that some poskim are of the opinion that the challos should not be covered during ha-motzi, since a blessing should be made on an item which is visible, not hidden from sight; see Peri Megadim (Mishbetzos) 271:12. 22 Aruch ha-Shulchan 271:22. 23 Nimukei Orchos Chayim O.C. 271. 24 Aruch ha-Shulchan 291:10 and 299:14; Shulchan Shelomo, addendum to vol. 1, pg. 27. 25 See Minchas Shabbos (Shiyurei ha-Minchah 77:8), Tikunim u'Milluim 47, note 116 and Bris Olam, Kiddush 34.

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MEANING IN MITZVOT by Rabbi Asher Meir

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh.

Finalizing a Purchase

The Tzemach Tzedek, one of the early Chabad Rebbes, provides a fascinating explanation of the supernal parallels to the seemingly mundane laws of commerce.

According to the Amora Reish Lakish, Torah law recognizes acquisition of moveable goods effected either by drawing the good into the buyer's domain, or by picking it up. The Amora Rebbe Yochanan rules that giving money also effects an acquisition according to Torah law, but by Rabbinic decree giving money does not finalize a bargain; if the good has not been handed over, the seller can give the money back or the buyer can ask to have his money returned (SA CM 198:1.

But this is considered bad-faith dealing - SA CM 204). The halakha is according to Rebbe Yochanan. Rebbe Yochanan also rules that purchases from non-Jews are not effected by money according to Torah law. (There is a dispute if we rule this way; see e.g. the commentaries on Rambam Zekhi'a 1:14.)

The Tzemach Tzedek points out that God is known as "The Master [koneh, meaning purchaser] of the heavens and the earth" (Bereshit 14:19), and goes on to explain how He effects this "acquisition".

The foundation for the Tzemach Tzedek's explanation is a widespread convention in Chasidut which distinguishes a particular process in our service of Hashem. The usual order is that first man has to arouse himself to a "lower awakening" (itaruta deletata) of longing towards God; this is then reciprocated by a "supernal awakening" (itaruta deleaila) whereby God showers us with His love and beneficence.

The process of bringing our spirits to Hashem brings with kesef - the word means "money" but also "longing". This longing initiated by man enables Hashem to "draw" our spirit upwards into the higher realms of holiness; this Divine response is the "drawing" of the object which according to Rebbe Yochanan typically follows the giving of money.

This drawing must be into the domain of the purchaser; drawing an object into the public thoroughfare is invalid (SA CM 198:9). The Tzemach Tzedek explains that our souls here below are in a world of separation and alienation, a "domain of the many". Our spirit becomes devoted to Hashem only when it is drawn out of this world into the "private domain" - literally, the domain of the one which we liken to the domain of the One.

The main insight is that "money effects an acquisition" - our longing for Hashem, our lower awakening, is enough to guarantee that our spirits will be borne aloft and be drawn to Hashem.

This is not the case with non-Jews. They too are able to attain closeness to Hashem, to be drawn aloft, but the process is not so automatic. The special love of Hashem to the Jewish people and our special spiritual aptitude means that our turning towards Hashem is certain to be reciprocated, but a non-Jew faces more obstacles. But for others, the "acquisition" or devotion of the soul is certain and irrevocable only after the "drawing" - the actual experience of Divine awakening.

The Tzemach Tzedek also points out that the Land of Israel is generally referred to in the Torah as the Land of Kenaan (Canaan). The word "Kenaani" (Canaanite) is likewise used often in Scripture as a synonym for merchant. This hints that the land of Israel is a particularly auspicious place to carry out this special kind of acquisition, this special "deal" between God and His people.

Based on Derekh Mitzvotekha pp. 72-74

The OU/NCSY Israel Center - TORAH tidbits

WEEKLY DAFOOTNOTES Niddah 65 - 71

For the week ending 26 February 2005 / 17 Adar I 5765
from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu
Fallen Fruits, Fallen Pages

A woman in the Babylonian community of Pumpedita was having some serious menstrual problems which interfered with her ability to maintain normal marital relations. She was advised by one of the Sages to let people know about her condition so that they should pray for her recovery. This was based on the passage listing the restrictions which the Torah imposed upon the metzora which concludes with the directive for him "to cry: Unclean, unclean" (Vayikra 13:46). The purpose of his proclaiming his ritual uncleanness stemming from his physical condition is to encourage passersby to pray for him to become healed. In the same fashion this woman was directed to publicize her problem and the result was that her problem found a solution.

The same idea is applied by our Sages (Mesechta Shabbat 67a) to a sickly tree which prematurely sheds its fruits. In addition to prescribing a method for reducing the tree's energy which causes this premature shedding, they also suggested marking the tree with a red dye. This was to call the attention of the passersby to the sickly condition of the tree and invite their prayers for its recovery.

A unique post-Talmud application of this idea is quoted in the name of today's foremost halachic authority, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv of Yerushalayim. He calls attention to an unusual statement of one of the great Talmudic commentators in his writings on Mesechta Kiddushin. In regard to one particular topic, MaHaRYT states that he had many innovations written on this subject but unfortunately lost his manuscript and can no longer recall them. The point of writing this seemingly unnecessary apology, explains Rabbi Eliyashiv, was to let the students of his works in on his anxiety in the hope that they would pray for him to regain his lost Torah treasure. Niddah 66a

The Stone On The Lions' Den

What is an evven mesamei?

In its discussion of the unique dimension of ritual impurity which pertains to the zav, this mishna mentions the fact that if there are vessels beneath a stone upon which a zav, alive or dead, reposes, they become contaminated. This stone is called an evven mesamei and this passage from Daniel is cited as a source for this term which means "a stone that has been placed": "And a stone was brought and placed on the mouth of the den." (Daniel 6:18)

This den is the lions' den into which the righteous Daniel was cast as the result of a conspiracy against him by some of the ministers of King Darius who were envious of the great power this ruler of the mighty empire of the Persians and Medians had conferred upon this superbly capable Hebrew exile at their expense. They coaxed the king into issuing an irrevocable decree that anyone praying to any force aside from him during the next thirty days would be fed to the lions. When this failed to deter Daniel from maintaining his daily schedule of three prayer services directed to G-d, he was reported to the king who, despite his great affection for Daniel, ordered him confined to the lions' den. The king even sealed the stone which was placed on the mouth of the den with his signet ring to prevent any attempt to free Daniel, but only after assuring this faithful servant that his G-d would surely save him. After a sleepless night he rushed to the den to see if G-d had indeed saved him and happily heard from Daniel that a Heavenly angel had closed the mouths of the hungry lions. Their appetites were subsequently satisfied, however, when the king ordered that those who had conspired against Daniel be cast into that den.

Darius then wrote to all the nations in his empire decreeing that all of his subjects tremble and fear before the G-d of Daniel. Niddah 69b

The Jerusalem Post

Arik, you've let me down

Yehudit Tayar, Feb. 22, 2005

I once so admired you, Ariel Sharon. Now you, along with your patched-up, opportunist government, have joined the pathetic ranks of those who

have caved in to terror, all those "enlightened" people who have, for reasons of overconfidence, corruption and conceit, given up on the ideals this country was built on.

You have with your bulldozer style trampled on our rights as citizens; but even worse, you have virtually ripped the country in pieces.

You, who send our sons into the houses of terrorists, endangering their lives in order to try and save innocent lives, are now releasing those same terrorists and rewarding and encouraging those who have perpetrated and been involved in terror.

You plan to uproot Jewish homes, synagogues, shops and cemeteries for no justifiable reason using our sons, daughters, and husbands as tools of destruction. This will never be forgotten. You will never be forgiven.

We understand the enemy and his plans; it is obvious that you no longer do. No matter how many embraces or promises you receive from any head of the Palestinian Authority or president of the United States you forget one important lesson:

Listen to what is said, not what you wish to hear, or imagine you are hearing. We have been through many signatures, many guarantees from US governments and Muslim leaders. We have paid for these in blood and tears.

You will be remembered in the annals of our history as a gambler, or worse. You will be remembered for your autocratic approach. You will be remembered also as a corrupt politician.

Do not weep crocodile tears for us; do not attempt to embrace us. We see through all of this. We will not be a part of your charade.

The threat of a criminal investigation hangs over your head. While we do not need to curry favor with anyone. At the same time, many, many members of our nation are disheartened, discouraged and have lost direction.

We, however, must live with ourselves and our God.

At the end of the day we will persevere despite the wrong-headed decisions railroaded through by you and your political partners.

We have a mandate to protect our Torah, our Land and our people.

Do not fool yourself. This Land does not belong to you. Many of us think you are attempting to erase your shady, arguably criminal activities by directing media attention toward the disengagement scheme.

I can only express my disdain at your decision to destroy the national fiber, and for what? For nothing.

Abraham Lincoln said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

You are ripping apart the country, and callously using the Israeli Defense Forces, police and Border Police to tear Jews away from their homes. You are threatening to incarcerate citizens of Israel who will oppose your policies, much like the British did in the bitterly remembered days of the Mandate.

You were elected to protect us. Instead we feel you have stolen our votes. We feel betrayed. Still, we have faith in God that your plans will not be implemented.

We represent the covenant that the Jewish people have between our God and our Land. No prime minister or government decision can change that.

As our first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, said: "No Jew has the right to give up parts of our heritage, the Land of Israel. The Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people now and forever."

Some things, Mr. Sharon, do not change.

The Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people now and forever. And we will continue to protect that heritage by being there, in Katif, Judea, and Samaria and building the Land.

The writer, who resides with her family in Samaria, is one of the veteran spokespersons of the settlement movement.

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