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PARSHA INSIGHTS

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

"...and deal with love and truth with me, please do not bury me in Egypt" (47:29)

A couple of thousand years ago a famous Jew said that the outpouring of his kindness by dying for the sins of his followers would grant them eternal and unqualified atonement.

Possibly this is the source of our literary and cultural tradition that glorifies unstinting giving.

Our culture's cult of romantic (and ultimately decadent) self-abandonment on the altar of giving makes it difficult to relate to the Torah's insistence on limits.

The well-worn canard that the Judaic "letter of the law" extinguishes its delicate and self-sacrificing spirit is another symptom of this bias.

However, without truth, kindness descends into depravity.

The Hebrew word for kindness, *chesed*, is connected to the word meaning "to pour oneself out" (*ashad*). For example, when the Torah prohibits a certain kind of incestuous relationship, it describes the relationship as *chesed*. (*Vayikra 20:17*)

True kindness is always controlled and appropriate. Thus, the ways of G-d are always described as *chesed v'emet*, "kindness and truth." No Being can be kinder than G-d, and His Kindness is tempered by Truth.

Where would the newspapers be were it not for the

foibles of the young and the restless? Our society adulates romantic abandon, head-over-heels love, and extravagant emotional indulgence.

Unbridled kindness is not what G-d wants from us. He wants kindness with our heads screwed on.

Yaakov knew that Yosef would inter him with all possible pomp and ceremony, but despite the true *chesed* of burying the dead, Yaakov preferred not to be buried at all rather than have his bones rest in the soil of Egypt.

The question remains, however, why was Yaakov so concerned that he not be buried in Egypt?

After seventeen years of living in Egypt, Yaakov had seen the effects of living next to the fleshpots. The Jewish People were already starting to mistake the Nile for the Jordan River. The Exile was so comfortable that it seemed that Egypt was not an exile at all.

Egypt is the matrix of all exiles, and we, the children of Israel, of Yaakov, find ourselves in the last of all those exiles.

Yaakov was sending a posthumous message not just to his children in Egypt, but also to his most distant descendants across the millennia, saying, "Your hope is to live in a land in which I refuse to even be buried."

The more comfortable are our lives, the more difficult it is to feel the reality of the exile in which we languish, and the more important is Yaakov's message in a bottle.

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

After 17 years in Egypt, Yaakov senses his days drawing to a close and summons Yosef. He has Yosef swear to bury him in the Machpela Cave, the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka. Yaakov falls ill and Yosef brings to him his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe. Yaakov elevates Ephraim and Menashe to the status of his own sons, thus giving Yosef a double portion that removes the status of firstborn from Reuven. As Yaakov is blind from old age, Yosef leads his sons close to their grandfather. Yaakov kisses and hugs them. He had not thought to see his son Yosef again, let alone Yosef's children. Yaakov begins to bless them, giving precedence to Ephraim, the younger, but Yosef interrupts him and indicates that Menashe is the elder. Yaakov explains that he intends to bless Ephraim with his strong hand because Yehoshua will descend from him, and Yehoshua will be both the conqueror of *Eretz Yisrael* and

the teacher of Torah to the Jewish People. Yaakov summons the rest of his sons in order to bless them as well. Yaakov's blessing reflects the unique character and ability of each tribe, directing each one in its unique mission in serving G-d. Yaakov passes from this world at age 147. A tremendous procession accompanies his funeral cortege up from Egypt to his resting place in the Cave of Machpela in Chevron. After Yaakov's passing, the brothers are concerned that Yosef will now take revenge on them. Yosef reassures them, even promising to support them and their families. Yosef lives out the rest of his years in Egypt, seeing Efraim's great-grandchildren. Before his death, Yosef foretells to his brothers that G-d will redeem them from Egypt. He makes them swear to bring his bones out of Egypt with them at that time. Yosef passes away at the age of 110 and is embalmed. Thus ends Sefer Bereishet, the first of the five Books of the Torah. *Chazak!*

ISRAEL Forever

A BLESSING FOR CHILDREN

When Jewish parents bless their sons on the eve of a Shabbat or holiday they fulfill the prophecy of the Patriarch Yaakov who told his grandsons that future generations would bless their sons that "G-d would make them like Ephraim and Menashe".

As we listen to these words read this Shabbat in our synagogues we cannot help but wonder why Yaakov insisted on instituting a blessing using his grandsons as models rather than any of his righteous sons.

The popular explanation is that while all of Yaakov's sons were raised in Eretz Israel and in the home of their saintly

father, Ephraim and Menashe were raised in Egypt. Despite the negative atmosphere of that corrupt society they managed to survive as righteous men. The blessing parents give to their sons is that they should have a similar ability to survive every challenge to their spiritual security.

How ironic it is that there are Jewish youth born and raised in holy Eretz Yisrael who should turn things around and seek to imitate the corrupt ways of modern "Egyptian" culture. Perhaps the example of Ephraim and Menashe will inspire them to follow in their path and thus secure Israel forever.

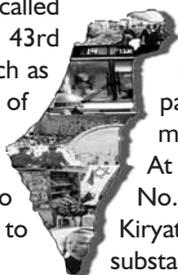
LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

TALE OF 43RD STREET

At the entrance to Jerusalem there is a street called Rechov Ha-mem-gimmel, literally translated as 43rd Street. But this name is not a mere number such as in Brooklyn's Boro Park, Manhattan's midtown, or any of the other big cities of the world that have abandoned names for numbers.

The number 43 given to this street is a memorial to the 43 Moroccan Jews who drowned while trying to reach Israel many years ago.



While the number recalls tragic death, the street itself expresses life. At the very beginning of the street is the Magen David Adom (Israel's counterpart to Red Cross) with its sophisticated emergency medical services, blood bank and fleet of ambulances. At the other end of the street (where the building is No. 43!) is the beginning of the religious community of Kiryat Mattersdorf which was established in 1965 with a substantial influx of American immigrants to Israel.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why is kindness towards the dead called “*chesed shel emet*” — kindness of truth?
2. Give three reasons Yaakov didn't want to be buried in Egypt.
3. How do you treat a “fox in his time” (i.e., a commoner who rules)?
4. “When I was coming from Padan, Rachel died on me... I buried her there on the way to Efrat...” Why did Yaakov say all this to Yosef?
5. Initially, why was Yaakov unable to bless Efraim and Menashe?
6. What does *pillalti* mean?
7. What does “*Shechem*” mean as used in this week's parsha? (two answers)
8. Which individual is called “the *Emori*”? Why? Give two reasons.
9. What did Yaakov want to tell his sons but was unable to?
10. What privileges did Reuven lose due to his rash actions?
11. What congregation from Yaakov's offspring did Yaakov not want to be associated with?
12. What did Yehuda do after he heard Yaakov rebuke Reuven, Shimon and Levi? Why?
13. What does milk do to teeth?
14. Why is Yissachar like a “strong-boned donkey”?
15. With what resource did both Yaakov and Moshe bless Asher?
16. In Yosef's blessing Yaakov said, “They embittered him...” Who are “they”?
17. Which descendants of Binyamin “will divide the spoils in the evening”?
18. From whom did Yaakov buy his burial place?
19. What oath did Yosef make to Pharaoh?
20. Which two sons of Yaakov did not carry his coffin? Why not?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 47:29 - Because the giver expects no reward from the recipient.
2. 47:29 - a) Egypt's ground was to be plagued with lice; b) At the time of the resurrection, those buried outside Israel will suffer; c) So the Egyptians wouldn't make him into an idol.
3. 47:31 - Bow to him.
4. 48:7 - Yaakov thought Yosef harbored resentment since Yaakov had not buried Yosef's mother, Rachel, in the *Ma'arat HaMachpela*.
5. 48:8 - The *Shechina* departed from him.
6. 48:11 - “I thought.”
7. 48:22 - a) The actual city of Shechem; b) A portion.
8. 48:22 - Esav. a) He acted like an Emorite; b) He trapped his father with words (*imrei pi*).
9. 49:1 - When *mashiach* will come.
10. 49:3 - Priesthood and Kingship.
11. 49:6 - Korach and his congregation.
12. 49:8 - He drew back. He was afraid that Yaakov would rebuke him for the incident with Tamar.
13. 49:12 - It makes them white.
14. 49:14 - Just as a donkey bears a heavy burden, so the tribe of Yissachar bears the yoke of Torah.
15. 49:20 - Oil-rich land.
16. 49:23 - Yosef's brothers, Potifar and his wife.
17. 49:27 - Mordechai and Esther.
18. 50:5 - From Esav.
19. 50:6 - Yosef swore not to reveal Pharaoh's ignorance of Hebrew.
20. 50:13 - Levi, because he would carry the *aron* (holy ark). Yosef, because he was a king.

לע"נ

פרת לאה בת ר' יצחק אייזיק ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

- Shofar blowing on Shabbat in the *Beit Din*
- Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai's decrees regarding lulav taking and *Chadash* grain after destruction of *Beit Hamikdash*
- The late-coming witnesses and the wrong Levite song
- The psalms sung when sacrifices were offered
- The travels of the *Shechinah* and of the Sanhedrin
- The shoeless *kohanim* and other decrees of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai
- Order of the Rosh Hashana Mussaf prayers
- The passages of Torah, Prophets and Writings in those prayers
- The anti-religious decree which moved shofar blowing to Mussaf
- Why Hallel is not said on Rosh Hashana
- What is forbidden to be done in order to have a shofar
- Women and young children in regard to non-obligatory blowing of shofar
- Which sounding of the shofar is not a fulfillment of the mitzvah
- Defining the sounds of the shofar and their lengths
- Sources for these sounds and their number
- When the sounds of the shofar are heard at intervals
- Relationship between the shofar sounds and the prayers
- The role of *shliach tzibur* (Reader) who repeats the silent service

A PATTERN OF PASSAGES

In the Mussaf service of Rosh Hashana we say ten passages in each of the three sections of *malchiot*, *zichronot* and *shofrot*. These passages are taken from Torah (4), Prophets (3) and Writings (3). The order dictated by Rabbi Yossi is to begin with three Torah passages and end with one. No specific mention is made, however, as to what the order should be for the passages from Prophets and Writings said in between.

Our custom is to say the passages from the Writings before those from the Prophets despite the fact that what appears in the Prophets is considered to be on a

higher level of holiness than those of the Writings. (What appears in the Prophets is referred to as *divrei kabbalah* – words received by the Prophet from G-d – while what appears in the Writings is called *divrei kedusha* because it is the product of *ruach hakodesh* – Divine inspiration – rather than prophecy.)

Rabbeinu Nissim (RaN) offers a suggestion for understanding our pattern of passages. We start with Torah passages because we wish to stress the primacy of the Torah which is not only prophecy but our source of commandments. We proceed to the passages from Writings and follow them with those from the Prophets according to the principle that we must always ascend in matters of holiness.

• *Rosh Hashana 32a*

WHAT THE SAGES SAY

“The final and most depressing of the ten exiles of the Sanhedrin was in Tverya, and it is from there that the Redemption foreseen by the Prophet Yeshayahu will begin – ‘Arise from the dust, O Yerushalayim, and take your seat on your throne.’ (52:2)”

• *Rabbi Yochanan - Rosh Hashana 31b*

ME, MYSELF AND I: CLONING PEOPLE

From: Many readers in many places

Dear Rabbi,
What is the Jewish perspective on cloning people?

Dear Readers,

Before discussing the Jewish perspective, I'd like to briefly explain what cloning is and how it is done. Cloning is the reproduction of an organism whereby all the genes of the clone are identical to the original organism, unlike normal male/female reproduction where the genes are a fusion of both parents. Cloning is not necessarily unnatural — bacteria, algae and some yeasts, as well as dandelions and aspen trees reproduce by cloning. In fact, human identical twins, that originate from the division of a single fertilized egg, are genetically identical and are another example of cloning in nature.

A recent breakthrough in the area of artificial or induced cloning occurred in 1996 with the introduction of "Dolly", the first animal cloned from an adult mammal. A skin cell from one sheep, containing a nucleus with a full set of genes, was fused with an unfertilized egg of another sheep whose nucleus was removed (somewhat like a donut). The result, an egg from sheep #2 with the genes entirely from sheep #1, began dividing and was placed in sheep #3. The embryo developed normally, and Dolly, an exact replica of sheep #1 was "born". Amazing! (Who says counting sheep puts one to sleep!)

The fact that Dolly, a large mammal, was cloned from a fully-grown adult animal raises probing and interesting ethical and legal questions from a Jewish perspective about the prospect of cloning. Is it right to play G-d? Does a clone have a soul? Is my clone me, my twin or my child? [The latter question has halachic ramifications regarding the laws of inheritance, levirate marriage (*yibum*) and more.]

Regarding the question of whether man has the right to play G-d, as in many instances of genetic engineering, some claim that it is wrong to play G-d. The Jewish perspective, however, is that since man was created in the image of G-d regarding intelligence, morality and free will, he is intended to be G-d's partner in creation. To that end, G-d intentionally left the world incomplete in order to involve man in its betterment and refinement. Therefore sickness, poverty and other suffering need not be accepted passively. On the contrary, it is G-d's will that man intervene to improve the world.

From the Jewish perspective then, not only is it not wrong to play G-d, but we are actually supposed to play G-d to the extent that doing so will benefit and improve the world and humanity. Given man's license as partner with G-d to create

and innovate, if and when human cloning occurs, the highest rabbinical authorities will have to examine the benefits and detriments of cloning to determine whether it would be acceptable ethically and according to Jewish Law.

Does a clone have a soul?

Some opinions answer in the negative, comparing a clone to a golem (a human-like being), such as the well-known golem made by the Maharal of Prague. Before refuting this comparison let's examine the idea of creating a *golem* as it appears in our traditional sources.

The Talmud refers to *Sefer Yetzira* (Book of Creating), attributed to our patriarch Avraham, which teaches that different combinations of the 32 Channels of Wisdom, the 10 *Sefirot* (Divine Attributes), and the 22 Hebrew letters can be used to create beings, just as G-d did in creating the universe. The Talmud relates that Rava used *Sefer Yetzira* to create a person. Similarly Rav Chanina and Rav Oshiya would study *Sefer Yetzira* every Friday to create a calf which they would eat for their Shabbat meal. *Sefer Yetzira* is an accepted part of the Jewish tradition and was studied by such luminaries as Rav Hai Gaon, Ramban, the Arizal, and the Gaon from Vilna.

The Maharal, a great Jewish 16th century thinker, allegedly created a golem to protect the Jews of Prague from anti-Semitism. Some say that G-d's name was written on the golem's forehead, while others claim that the golem was activated or de-activated by adding or removing the *alef* from the word *emet* on his forehead (Hebrew for "truth" and without the *alef* means "dead"). The golem was left in the attic of the Maharal's synagogue and recent accounts tell of Nazi soldiers fleeing in horror after having broken into the attic.

We find a question in the Responsa about whether a golem is human and may be included in a *minyan*, and the answer is "no". The golem has no internal organs or blood, and therefore it is not forbidden to "kill" a golem, just as the Maharal de-activated his golem. Furthermore, a golem cannot speak, which, according to Judaism, indicates that it has no (human) soul.

A clone, on the contrary, is created biologically, has normal body functions (like a pumping heart and circulating blood), most likely has the power of speech, and therefore presumably has a human soul, just like me.

Is my clone me, my twin or my child?

A clone is genetically identical to the gene donor, unlike normal male/female reproduction where the genes are a fusion of both parents. Therefore my clone, while sharing my genes (we wear the same size), is really the result of the fusion of my parents' genes. In this way my clone cannot be considered me; rather he would be more like my identical twin, just as in nature identical twins share the same genetic material. However, since my clone was created from *my* genes, from *my* body, and later gestated and birthed by *my*

THE CABBIE'S STORY

It is not surprising to meet Israeli cab drivers whose outward appearance belies their attitude to religion. One particular cabbie whose ponytail and earrings clashed with the *tallit katan* under his shirt told the story of how he got started on the road to return which would eventually lead him to removing those residues of secularism.

A rabbi had hired him to take him from Holon to Bnei Brak. Upon arriving at the rabbi's home he was invited to come in for a bite because he looked so hungry. "But I want you to keep the meter running," insisted the host who

would not take no for an answer. After eating and drinking the totally secular cabbie was invited to put on *tefillin* and was again reminded that the meter would continue running so this would be at his host's expense.

When they went out to see the amount on the meter, the rabbi insisted on paying him more than the amount it registered because of the delay he had caused him.

"If there are Jews like that," explained the cabbie to his next fare, "I want to join them and make a complete return to Judaism."

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

A COIN TO THE RESCUE

Question: I recently walked by an automobile parked near a meter and noticed that the owner had overstayed the time for which he had paid. A traffic inspector was approaching and it seemed certain that he would write a ticket unless I took the initiative of putting a coin of mine in the meter. What is the right thing to do in such a case?

Answer: In his explanation of the mitzvah of "Love your neighbor like yourself" Rambam writes that whatever you would want someone else to do for you it is incumbent on you to do for another (Laws of Mourning 14:1).

Since you, like everyone, would want another person to

save you from the need to pay a parking fine, it would be proper for you to spend that little amount in order to save him a great deal of money.

This rule of thumb applies, however, to a situation in which you can assume that the car owner initially put a coin in the meter but was prevented by circumstances from returning to it before his time expired. Should it be clear that this was an irresponsible driver who didn't even bother to put a coin in the meter when he parked, there is no moral obligation to bail him out at your expense.

• Based on a ruling by Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, rav of the Ramat Elchanan Community in Bnei Brak

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wife, perhaps he is to be considered my child.

This question of whether my clone is my twin or my child has halachic ramifications regarding inheritance. If my clone is my twin, he will not inherit together with my other children, his "siblings". However, if he is my son he will inherit. This will also apply to the mitzvah of *yibum*. There is a mitzvah that when one's brother dies without children he marries the widow (if they both agree) in order to perpetuate his brother's line, or do the mitzvah of *chalitza* and doesn't marry her (which is what is done today). If his clone is a twin, the clone will have to perform *yibum or chalitza* (after waiting for his bar mitzvah!). If the clone is a son, he exempts his mother from the mitzvah altogether, even if his father had other brothers, since his father had a child.

This also raises the question of who is the clone's mother. For example, in a case where a woman is cloned, having her genes inserted in another woman's egg which is then gestated and birthed by a third woman (similar to the case of "Dolly"), there are four possible mothers: woman #1, the mother of the cloned woman (who is the original source of the genes); woman #2, the gene donor; woman #3, the egg donor; and woman #4, the gestation donor.

Since Judaism follows matrilineal descent, the question of who is the clone's mother will have bearing (sorry) on whether the clone is Jewish. Whether genetic or physical birth factors (or both) are what determine if the child is Jewish is a discussion for another forum, and please do not draw any conclusions from this article.