

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT TERUMAH · 3 ADAR I 5768 · FEB. 9, 2008 · VOL. 15 NO. 19

PARSHA INSIGHTS

ESCAPE FROM THE BLACK HOLE

"They shall make a Sanctuary for Me – so I may dwell among them..." (25:8)

Despair — or if you prefer its more contemporary name depression — affects approximately 18.8 million American adults or about 9.5% of the U.S. population age 18 and older. According to Australian Government statistics, everyone will at some time in their life be affected by depression, whether their own or someone else's.

At least four percent of preschoolers in the United States — over a million — are clinically depressed, and the rate of increase of depression among children is an astounding 23% per year.

By 2020, depression is expected to be the second largest killer after heart disease, and studies show that depression is already a significant contributory factor to fatal coronary disease. And now for the good news...

The Torah is called *light*. "A mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light." The whole essence of light is to reveal; that's its job in the world. The whole job of the Torah is to reveal existence as it really is; to sweep away the cobwebs of uncertainty and gloom from our minds, to reveal things as they really are. And when that happens, a person cannot help but be happy. As the saintly Chazon Ish is reported to have said some sixty years ago, "there is no sadness in the world for someone who knows the truth."

The Torah is there for us wherever we are. It speaks to us in our greatest flights of joy and it comforts us in the depths of mourning. G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. There is no situation therefore that is outside the Torah's grasp; no misery, no uncertainty, no despair. The Torah is always with us, a friend faithful to the end.

This understanding solves a paradox.

With the giving of the Torah, the Jewish People returned to the level of the first man before he sinned; meaning that G-d's presence in the world was revealed and obvious. After the disaster of the Golden Calf G-d gave us the Mishkan

(Tabernacle) and we were prohibited to eat certain foods; both were to re-connect us to the spirituality we had lost.

Similarly, after the debacle of the spies' negative report about the Land of Israel, G-d supplemented our *mitzvot* by commanding us to bring flour and libation offerings together with our *korbanot* (sacrifices). Because we had distanced ourselves through transgression, we were given an additional conduit to feel G-d's closeness once again.

There's an anomaly here. When the Jewish People sin, G-d gives us more *mitzvot*. Instinctively we would assume the reverse to be true; and to be sure, our neglect of G-d invokes a reciprocal reaction on His part. However, when we reject Him, G-d never just "goes off in a huff"; He always leaves us a way back. On whatever level we are, however low we sink, the Torah is there for us. The Torah goes with us into that withdrawal from reality.

When Yaakov was about to go down to Egypt, into the bleakness of exile, and the threat of assimilation and impurity — everything that Egypt represented — G-d promised He would go down with him; and so it has been in all the long dark night of exile. G-d is with us; the Torah is with us.

And so too in that exile of the soul, the black hole of depression, the Torah steps down to us, re-energizing our lives and bringing us home again.

Sources:

- Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, *Shiurei Chumash: Sforno, Vayikra 11:2, Bamidbar 15:3,20;*
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). "The Numbers Count: Mental Illness in America," *Science on Our Minds Fact Sheet Series.*
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1998. "National Health Priority Areas Mental Health: A Report Focusing on Depression." *Depression statistics in Australia are comparable to those of the US and UK.*
- Study published in *Psychiatric Services*, April 2004. Reported in our health news archive: *Pill-Popping Pre-Schoolers, Even Toddlers Get the Blues*
- Harvard University study reported in *Harvard Mental Health Newsletter*, February 2002.
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA) study reported in *MSNBC Health Today*, March 10, 2004.
- NMHA Survey, 1996. *NMHA fact sheet on women and depression.*
- WHO report on mental illness released October 4, 2001. Health news stories: *Depression Link to Heart Disease, Hostility, Depression May Boost Heart Disease*

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

© 2008 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the table of

showbreads, the *menorah*, and the golden altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the *kohen gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

ISRAEL Forever

PREYING ON PRAYER

A sanctuary in which Jews can serve their G-d with sacrifices and prayer is a central concept in Jewish life. While our ancestors were still in the wilderness on their way to Eretz Yisrael, this week's Torah portion tells us, they were commanded to establish a sanctuary "so that I shall dwell among them".

This temporary sanctuary gave way hundreds of years later to the *Beit Hamikdash* in Jerusalem. With the destruction of that Temple and its successor all that was left of sanctuary service was the prayer of Jews in the mini-sanctuary of a synagogue.

It therefore came as a shock to learn that the secular Ohel Shem High School in Ramat Gan has denied its students permission to pray on school premises. An average

of 15 students participate in the mincha service but when the principal stopped them more students who were not even interested in praying joined them in protest against the school's anti-religious policy.

As discouraging as it is to see Jews in the Jewish state prevented from praying, there is an encouraging sign in the fact that in the prestigious secular Bleich High School in the same city as Ohel Shem, there is a mincha prayer group averaging 20 students and sometimes with as many as 60 which has been meeting regularly since last year.

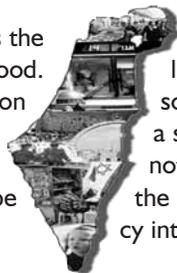
This groundswell of interest in prayer on the part of secular youth will hopefully grow into a guarantee of security for Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

THE WINDLESS WINDMILL

One of Jerusalem's most famous historical sites is the large windmill in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood. This windmill was sent to Jerusalem from London by Sir Moses Montefiore to enable the Jews of Batei Yehuda Touro to grind their own wheat and to earn a livelihood by serving other Jews who would no longer be dependent on the Arab monopoly on wheat grinding.



Despite the good intentions behind its establishment, the windmill had a very short lifespan. It soon became evident that there was not enough of a steady wind where it stood and it could therefore not live up to the expectations of those who saw it as the first attempt to introduce economic self-sufficiency into a Jerusalem neighborhood.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do *techelet* and *argaman* share that *orot eilim m'adamim* do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that *shesh* and *orot techashim* do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "*tachash*" as "*sasgona*." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of: 1) oil 2) spices 3) jewels.
8. The *aron* was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the *keruvim* resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the *lechem hapanim* baked?
12. What does *miksha* mean?
13. What was the purpose of the *menorah's gevi'im* (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the *menorah*?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with *nechoshet*?
20. Which function did the copper *yeteidot* serve?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; *orot eilim* are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; *shesh* and *orot techashim* are not.
5. 25:5 - The *tachash* delights (*sas*) in its multi-colors (*g'vanim*).
6. 25:5 - *Arazim* — cedars.
7. 25:6-7: 1) The oil was lit in the *menorah* and used for anointing. 2) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. 3) The precious stones were for the *ephod* and the *choshen*.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half *amot* plus a *tefach* plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the *kaporet*. (The *kaporet* was a *tefach* thick — see 25:17).
9. 25:16 - It testifies that Hashem commanded us to keep the *mitzvot*.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a *menorah* of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 *amot*.
18. 26:23 - 10 *amot*.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

לע"נ

מרת לאה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

- Bar Kepera's antics to make Rebbi laugh
 - Ben Alasha's expensive haircut
 - How far a vow to abstain from cooked, pickled or broiled food extends
 - Big fish and little fish
 - Vows of abstention from dairy foods
 - If vows on grapes or olives extend to wine and oil
 - Variations of dates, wines, oils, honeys, vinegars and certain vegetables
- When the sender is responsible for the sinful error of his agent
 - Definition of "meat" in regard to vows and some health advice regarding bloodletting
 - Vows regarding grain and all-inclusive vows
 - How one merits greatness through Torah and loses it through pride
 - Vows regarding clothes, houses, beds and cities

THE EXPENSIVE HAIRCUT

Ben Alasha, the son-in-law of Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi (Rebbi), is described in our *gemara* as a very wealthy man who invited the Sage Bar Kepera to the wedding of his brother-in-law Shimon.

Several lines later the *gemara* asks "What is this about Ben Alasha?" Rashi's understanding is that the question is how do we know that he was a wealthy man, an explanation that Maharsha finds difficult to fit into the flow of the *gemara*.

Maharsha's own approach is that the *gemara*, after establishing the fact that Ben Alasha was such a wealthy man, wonders why he is only identified by his father's name and not his own. This indicates that he had not

amassed his wealth on his own but had inherited from his father. Since it is common for heirs to squander the wealth they have inherited – and Maharsha cites several Talmudic sources for this behavior – it is pointed out in a *beraita* that Ben Alasha was an exception to the rule.

On what did Ben Alasha spend a fortune?

The *kohen gadol* in the time of the *Beit Hamikdash* had to have his hair cut in a most unique fashion, something vaguely described by the Prophet Yechezkel (44:20) as "cropping the head". Since there was no *kohen gadol* around in the post-Temple time of Ben Alasha, he spent a fortune on the worthwhile cause of hiring an expert barber who could give him that one-of-a-kind haircut so that people would appreciate the tonsorial glory of the *kohen gadol*.

• *Nedarim 51a*

What the SAGES Say

"One who relates to himself like a desert which is available to all will merit to receive Torah knowledge as a gift from Heaven... and will achieve greatness."

• *The Sage Rava - Nedarim 55a*

AVAILABLE AT JEWISH BOOKSTORES & WWW.TARGUM.COM

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS
THE WASSERMAN
TALMUDIGEST
VOLUME ONE - THE COGUT EDITION SERIES

A tantalizing gateway to the incomparable wealth of intellect and guidance contained in the Talmud

VALENTINE'S DAY

From: Shira in Chicago

*Dear Rabbi,
I was wondering if it's OK to do Valentine's Day or if there's anything about the day that is against Judaism?*

Dear Shira,

First of all, formally the day is called Saint Valentine's Day, which clearly shows the Christian, non-Jewish character of the day. Furthermore, like other Christian holidays, the day may have roots in pagan rituals observed by pre-Christian Europeans. Finally, the themes of the day, namely public expression of "love" with erotic under/overtone, centered around indulgent consumption, are antithetical to Judaism.

Allow me to elaborate.

Christianity, in what's known as The Calendar of Saints, commemorates the martyrdom of its holy ones by declaring a feast on the day the saint was killed. First decreed in 496 by Pope Gelasius I, the feast of Saint Valentine was celebrated on February 14 by the Roman Catholic Church in commemoration of one (or all) of three men named Valentinus, who lived in the late third century and were martyred during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Accordingly, the day is named and celebrated after either a priest in Rome, a bishop of Interamna (modern Terni) or a martyr in the Roman province of Africa who were all named Valentine, a popular name in those times derived from "valens" (meaning worthy) in approximately 270 C.E. However, in addition to the day being a Christian holiday, it may have pagan origins.

In Ancient Rome, February 14 marked the festival of Lupercalia (lupa meaning wolf) in honor of the she-wolf who legendarily suckled the infant orphans, Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome. Priests of the Roman god Faunus sacrificed two male goats and a dog whose blood was wiped off the knife and smeared on the foreheads of two young men. After a feast, the skins of the

sacrificed goats were cut into straps to be used in a ceremony that was an omen for marriage and fertility. The nominally Christian Roman populace still observed Lupercalia as late as the end of the fifth century when, after a long contest, it was finally abolished by Pope Gelasius. Interestingly, this is the same Gelasius who first proclaimed February 14 as Valentine's Day.

How did the day come to be associated with love and romance? If viewed as an originally Christian holiday, legend says that when Claudius II purportedly outlawed marriage for young men hoping to groom better soldiers, Valentine continued to perform marriages in secret. When he was discovered, he was put to death. A feast was proclaimed to commemorate his death. If viewed as an originally pagan holiday, the source of the feast is the meal after the goat sacrifice, while the ceremony that served as an omen for marriage and fertility is the origin of the day's sentimental nature. Accordingly, these themes may have been "Christainized" by the church to wean the early Europeans away from paganism by supplanting Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day. Others posit that the day's romantic character was introduced much later in the Middle Ages' lore and literature of "courtly love".

Either way, the public demonstration connecting indulgence and romance is antithetical to Jewish values. In fact, the icon of Valentine's Day, Cupid, in Roman mythology is the god of love and intimate relations, which in turn is based on the Greek god Eros. This means that the cupid-love of Valentine's Day is essentially a modern form of ancient eros. In Judaism, true love and its expression not only on a physical level, but also on an emotional, intellectual and spiritual level as well, is very important and central. However, it is something that is shared privately and intimately between two people in the nurturing and elevating context of marriage. To cheapen it through public, commercialized and hollow expressions of infatuation is indeed against Judaism's notion of true love and its proper demonstration.

So whether Valentine's Day is Christian, pagan or immoral, one thing it's not is Jewish.

FRIDAY NIGHT TOGETHERNESS

“**W**hat do you say to kids these days?” This is what former Israeli basketball champion Tal Brody asked at a news conference launching a campaign to bring Israelis back to traditional family values.

He was referring to an incident involving a friend of his who drove Brody’s son from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Not a single word passed between the two, an indication that a generation gap has resulted from an absence of family togetherness.

Working with seed money of five million *shekalim* from an anonymous group of American Jews, a “Family Friday”

advertising campaign has been initiated to create awareness of the importance of Friday gatherings, which presumably will center around a Shabbat eve meal.

Among the different people in the group of both religious and secular Jews is former Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman and former Israel Airports Authority head Gabi Ophir. The latter told the press that although it was not possible for him to be at home on Friday nights during his 33-year stint as an army officer, once he became a civilian he made sure that he was home for candle-lighting and kiddush with his grandchildren.

WHAT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Question: When members of my family or friends have a birthday and I sincerely wish to take note of the occasion, I find it rather prosaic to just wish them “Happy Birthday” or even worse joining in singing “For he’s a jolly good fellow”. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: You are certainly correct both in your appreciation of the need to offer some expression and in your dis-

taste for the prosaic manner in which most people do so.

When someone has a birthday it inevitably raises his consciousness to the fact that he is year closer to the end of his life. It is therefore customary to wish him a long life (“until 120 years”) filled with success and happiness. The prosaic “Happy Birthday” which is at best a good wish for a single day is thus replaced with an important blessing for a lifetime.

NOW AVAILABLE AT YOUR JEWISH BOOKSTORE OR WWW.TARGUM.COM

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS

LOVE of the LAND

VOLUME ONE - THE GLADSTONE EDITION

A compendium of selections from Torah and historical sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel.