

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHEMINI · 20 ADAR II 5774 - MAR. 22, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 26

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE PROSE AND THE PASSION

“...a strange fire” (10:1)

Everything in this world is a physical parable of a spiritual reality. Take the computer for example. The entire “miracle” of the computer is based on the numbers ‘1’ and ‘0’ placed in ever more complicated and elaborate sequences. If there’s a ‘0’ where there should be a ‘1’ or vice versa, even the simplest program will just not run. It will probably send one of those delightful error messages like, “Would you like to debug now?” No thank you, I’d like to finish this article which is already late!

It’s not immediately apparent but serving G-d is somewhat like a computer program.

In this week’s Torah portion the joyous event of the dedication of the Mishkan (a joy that Chazal compare to the creation of Heaven and Earth) is marred by the tragic death of two of Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu.

Nadav and Avihu are consumed by fire when they enter unbidden into the sanctuary of G-d to offer incense. The Torah refers to this as a “strange fire”. “Strange” because they were not commanded to do so.

Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi in “Kuzari” explains that this fire represents their passion. They were passionate to come close to G-d, but they didn’t respect the boundaries that He had set for them.

The halacha is our boundary, and even when one has great passion to seek G-d, one must respect those boundaries. Rabbi Soleveitchik once said that if G-d had not given us explicit permission we would not even be able to pray to Him. What arrogance would it be for us to approach G-d? However, G-d not only allows, but even desires our prayers. Still, we must respect the distance that exists between us and G-d.

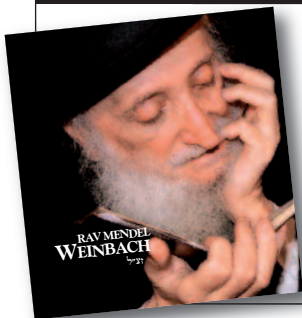
The desire for spirituality is often impatient with details, rules, regulations and procedures. In looking at the big picture one might feel that paying attention to the small details is just not very important and even distracting. What difference does it make if I recite “Shema” five minutes after the latest time? What is the problem if I flick a light switch on Shabbat?

Isn’t “passionate feeling” the most important element of spirituality?

The tragedy of Nadav and Avihu reminds us that wonderful as fiery passion is, when not grounded in submission to the Will of G-d, when it represents the exercise of ego instead of surrender, it cannot connect and ultimately will be destructive.

• Sources: thanks to Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

## A Memorial Tribute on the First Yahrzeit



THE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE BOOK FOR RAV WEINBACH ZT”L

is available in print at Ohr Somayach\* as well as in PDF format on [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)

\* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt”l.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

On the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. G-d allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the Mishkan. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by G-d. A fire comes from before G-d and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages

before serving in the Mishkan. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate and holy — like G-d.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## SUCCAH 48 - 54

*“Whoever is greater than another person has a greater yetzer hara than him.”*

This teaching on our *daf* is a statement made by an elderly Sage to Abaye, which helped Abaye understand a situation described in the *gemara* that puzzled him greatly. A great rabbi in Jerusalem explained this intriguing statement to me as follows: The greater a person is (the higher his spiritual level), the clearer is his realization of the importance of being close to G-d and also how distant he still is. And this is the “weak link” where the *yetzer hara* inclination “goes to work” and incites the person to stray by saying, “You have this feeling of *lacking* and I can make you feel compete if you do the following...” The greater a person is, the greater his feeling of lacking, and the greater his temptation.

The Rambam in “*Shmona Perakim*”, his introduction to *Pirkei Avot*, qualifies the statement in our *gemara*. He says that a great person will only feel tempted greatly to transgress “*chukim*” — commands that we do not see any logical reason for, such as *shatnez* or *kashrut*. However, laws which are logical and reasonable to us — such as not to steal or murder — are certainly not greater temptations for a great person.

• *Succah 52a*

*Hillel the Elder used to say, “If I am here, everyone is here; but if I am not here, who is here?”*

A *beraita* on our *daf* relates that this is what the great Sage would say when he rejoiced in the Beit Hamikdash during the “*Simchat beit hasho'eva*” celebrations during Succot.

Rashi writes that although Hillel was speaking in the first person — “*ani*” which translates as “I” — he was actually speaking in the name of G-d. His message was that if the Jewish People are righteous then G-d's Divine Presence will dwell in the Beit Hamikdash and everyone will come there. But if they transgress, G-d will remove His Divine Presence from there and no one will come (Rashi).

Commentaries ask why Hillel referred to G-d as “I”. A great rabbi in Jerusalem taught me that on Succot the *simcha* of mitzvah that followed the days of judgment, purity and atonement of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur help a person truly recognize that a “piece of Divineness” is inside him. Succot is the only time of the year when we say in prayer “I” but are referring to “Him” — as we learned above in our *masechta* that we pray, “*Ani v'Hu hoshia na*”, which is a plea for G-d to save us (45a).

• *Succah 43a*

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What date was "yom hashemini"?
2. Which of Aharon's *korbanot* atoned for the Golden Calf?
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo'ed* with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three *chatat* goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.
11. Which he-goat *chatat* did Aharon burn completely and why?
12. Why did Moshe direct his harsh words at Aharon's sons?
13. Moshe was upset that Aharon and his sons did not eat the *chatat*. Why?
14. Why did G-d choose Moshe, Aharon, Elazar and Itamar as His messengers to tell the Jewish People the laws of *kashrut*?
15. What are the signs of a kosher land animal?
16. How many non-kosher animals display only *one* sign of *kashrut*? What are they?
17. If a fish sheds its fins and scales when out of the water, is it kosher?
18. Why is a stork called *chasida* in Hebrew?
19. The *chagav* is a kosher insect. Why don't we eat it?
20. What requirements must be met in order for water to maintain its status of purity?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 9:1 - First of *Nissan*.
2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. 9:11 - It's the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe'ach* that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe'ach*.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a *halachic* ruling. Also, a *kohen* is forbidden to enter the *Ohel Mo'ed*, approach the *mizbe'ach*, or perform the *avoda*.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of *Rosh Chodesh*, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.
11. 10:16 - The *Rosh Chodesh chatat*: Either because it became *tamei*, or because the *kohanim* were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of *aninut* (mourning).
12. 10:16 - Out of respect for Aharon, Moshe directed his anger at his sons and not directly at Aharon.
13. 10:17 - Because only when the *kohanim* eat the *chatat* are the sins of the owners atoned.
14. 11:2 - Because they accepted the deaths of Nadav and Avihu in silence.
15. 11:3 - An animal whose hooves are completely split and who chews its cud.
16. 11:4,5,6,7 - Four: Camel, *shafan*, hare and pig.
17. 11:12 - Yes.
18. 11:19 - Because it acts with *chesed* (kindness) toward other storks.
19. 11:21 - We have lost the tradition and are not able to identify the kosher *chagav*.
20. 11:36 - It must be connected to the ground (i.e., a spring or a cistern).

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# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT SHEMINI

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**T**his Parsha describes the basic laws of *kashrut*. Abarbanel attempts to unravel the mystery of why certain animals, birds and fish are permitted while others are prohibited. He also analyzes the different approaches that the Torah takes towards identifying what is permitted and what is not.

In regard to land-dwelling animals the Torah specifies that they must have a split hoof and be classified as a ruminant — meaning an animal with several stomachs that chews, swallows and regurgitates its food several times at the beginning of the digestive process. Abarbanel emphasizes that these physical characteristics are not the *reason* that they are permitted. Rather, they are the *characteristics* that enable us to identify them as permitted animals. These animals are purely vegetarian and lack the teeth and claws that characterize carnivorous species. Abarbanel invokes the concept of “you are what you eat” in that these animals are generally placid and gentle. Carnivores, on the other hand, by necessity have a violent, cruel and cunning nature. Eating such an animal would transfer that very nature to us. Even though this distinction is blurred in regard to the four prohibited species that the Torah identifies as having one of the two characteristics but not the other — i.e. the pig, camel, hare and hyrax — Abarbanel points out that G-d in His infinite wisdom is the ultimate arbiter of what is best to ingest in order to maintain the purity of our souls.

Similarly, kosher birds have two characteristics which parallel those of the land-dwelling animals. Just like kosher animals have a unique foot structure, the claws of kosher birds have a unique structure which allows them to walk on land in order to find food. Parallel to ruminants, these birds have a crop and a gizzard that grinds up their food. Additionally,

kosher birds are not predatory. Just as in the case of carnivorous animals, G-d is preventing us from absorbing a violent and cruel nature. However, the Torah does not mention these two characteristics. It only mentions a specific list of non-kosher birds. There are two reasons for this. First of all, there are a large number of kosher species. Secondly, the internal characteristics of crop and gizzard have no external manifestations, unlike land-based animals whose diet, dental and jaw structure is a clear indication of their status as ruminants.

Kosher fish also have two identifying characteristics — fins and scales. Although some other commentators point out that fish lacking fins and scales are prohibited because they are bottom-feeders, living not in clear water but in murky, dirty water, Abarbanel rejects this idea and instead points to fins and scales as being indicative of a purer, less grossly physical creature.

Finally, Abarbanel rejects the idea that the main reason for the various prohibitions is to protect our physical well-being. He points out that gentiles eat these animals without any detrimental effects whatsoever. Additionally, there are numerous plant species that are exceedingly harmful which the Torah does not mention at all. The only reason for these prohibitions is to enhance our spiritual well-being by limiting our physical desires and curbing our animalistic nature. Prohibited species are never referred to in the Torah as ‘dangerous’ or ‘unhealthy’. Rather, they are referred to as ‘impure’ or ‘abominable’. Both of these terms refer purely to spiritual rather than physical consequences. G-d is concerned about the effect of the foods that we eat on our true essence, our character and our behavior.

### LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## OHR AKIVA — ECHO OF MARTYRDOM

**N**ear the city of Caesarea, on the northern coastal plain between Tel Aviv and Haifa, is the city of Ohr Akiva. Named for the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Akiva who was martyred by the Romans in Caesarea, this is a community composed largely of immigrants to Israel.

The original settlers were North African Jews who were



transferred from an immigrant camp in nearby Hadera to the sand dunes of Caesarea. The massive immigration from the former Soviet Union brought many *olim* immigrants from the Caucasian region to Ohr Akiva and transformed the city into a Russian enclave.

## THE “MOUNTAIN FAMILY”

A recently published book by ArtScroll Mesorah called “The Mountain Family”, has touched the hearts of people all over the world. The Mountain Family chronicles the journey of Sheryl Massey and her family, from a small sect of Sabbath-observing Christians living in isolation in the Appalachian Mountains, to well-loved and well-respected members of the Jewish community here in Eretz Yisrael.

Yeshivat Ohr Somayach played a vital role in the lives of the Massey sons. Over the course of ten years all six Massey boys learned within the hallowed halls of Ohr Somayach. Nosson, the second son shares some of his reminiscences.

“It was my first Shavout in Ohr Somayach, and my brother Dovid, a friend and I stayed up all night learning, and then walked to the Kotel in the morning. It was an incredible experience. We felt so connected to G-d, the Jewish People and the Torah.

“Since we were still observing two days of Yom Tov at that time, we wanted to try it again the next night. Rabbi Geffen told us that if we really wanted to learn well, a good night’s sleep was crucial. He stressed that the custom was to stay up the first night only.

“As a ger (convert) I really appreciated the clarity and stability that the guidance of our Rebbeim gave us. Just a few short years earlier I was still living with my family back in the mountains, trying to find our own way to G-d. Now, here in Yerushalayim, it was no longer a mystery what G-d wanted from us. Thanks to His Torah Laws and the Torah scholars who put their hearts and souls into teaching His Word to newcomers like myself, I was finally being offered the direction that I had craved all along.

“During the years that my brothers and I learned in Ohr Somayach we were privileged to spend our days in the presence of some very special Torah personalities. Among them were Rabbi Dov Schwartzman *zt’l*, Rabbi Nachman Bulman *zt’l*, Rabbi Mendel Weinbach *zt’l*, Rabbi Nota Schiller *shlita*, Rabbi Isbee *shlita*, Rabbi Aharon Feldman *shlita*, and Rabbi Moshe Carlebach *shlita*. In Ohr Somayach we received a tremendous amount of personal guidance not just in *hashkafah* and learning but in the day-to-day behavior of a “ben Torah”. This personal guidance touched every area of our lives, an excellent example of which was the tape one of the rabbis made for me in which he recorded Shalom Alecheim, Kiddush and a number of the Shabbat Zemirot so that I would be able to conduct my own Shabbat meals in accordance with age-old customs and tunes.”

“Not only was Ohr Somayach instrumental in molding and guiding my brothers and me into true *bonei* Torah, but it was a letter written by Rabbi Samet *shlita* that eventually smoothed the way for my mother’s and younger siblings’ conversions, as she tells in her book:

*...I drove up to Baltimore with my youngest daughter in order to speak with Rabbi Mendel Feldman about my conversion. By this time I was beginning to feel desperately uncomfortable with my non-Jewish status. Neither Jew nor gentile, I lived alone in never-never land.*

*Rabbi Feldman’s shul was reached via a set of curved stone steps. As I waited outside I noticed a gaping hole where one of the stones should have been. When I spotted the forlorn stone, cast off to the side, I immediately identified with that missing piece. I belonged with the Jewish people, just as that stone belonged to the stairs. And yet, after so many years of searching for the truth I was still all alone, to find my way home.*

*I took the small hand of my four-year-old Debra firmly within my own and entered the old shul. Rabbi Feldman offered us seats across the table from him. I felt his eyes bore through me. “Well?”*

*He waited for me to begin speaking, but I didn’t know where to start or how to begin. As I desperately thought of what to say, I remembered a letter I’d received from Rabbi Samet of Ohr Somayach. It was in my U-Haul truck. I excused myself to retrieve the letter.*

*Upon my return I handed Rabbi Feldman the cherished piece of paper.*

*Dear Mrs. Massey,*

*You have just become the proud mother of the fifth Massey tzaddik! We know that the souls of all the geirim were at Har Sinai, but for one father and mother to be privileged to bring so many of these souls into the world is unusual.*

*How many tears have Jewish mothers shed throughout the ages to be worthy of sons like your boys. Each one of them is a jewel in his own right.*

*I have been very close with them since they came. They have found favor in the eyes of many, so that you as a concerned mother don’t have to worry about their spiritual and material welfare.*

*I am sure that with Hashem’s help they will all find good shidduchim. Nosson once pointed out to me that one of their virtues is that they were never exposed to the impurities of the modern world.*

*I hope that things will work out for you soon in Baltimore with your conversion, as well as the other children.*

*May the time soon come that your whole family as well as the entire Jewish people will be together here in Eretz Yisrael with the coming of the Mashiach, speedily in our times.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rabbi Yehuda Samet*

*Rabbi Feldman read the letter through and then looked up a time or two as he paced back and forth. “Did you solicit this letter?”*

*“No.”*

*Finally he said, “Okay, I’ll convert you.”*

*I continued to state my case.*

*“Did you hear what I said? I said I would convert you.”*

*Finally it started to sink in. I hardly heard much of what he continued to say. I was both elated and guarded, as we had thought we were so close a few times before.*

*All I had to do was move my family to Baltimore and then we would be allowed to convert...*

## SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

From: Adam

Dear Rabbi,

Why is science so harmful and unharmonious with G-d's Creation? Would a Torah approach to science be better for the world? If so, shouldn't Jews set an example by being a "Light unto the Nations" in this regard as well?

Dear Adam,

I don't agree that science, per se, is harmful and incongruous with G-d's Creation. On the contrary, I think science, which better enables us to understand and appreciate Creation, can be used as a powerful tool to reveal G-dliness in the Creation.

If there's something that's potentially harmful associated with science, it's not the knowledge of it, but rather the application of it — for example, in the form of technology and industry.

That's certainly not to say that technology and industry are inherently harmful. But since the impetus for advancement in these fields is mainly material gain and efforts devoid of any spiritual, G-dly considerations, the result may likely be harmful to the world in some way.

If spiritual and Torah ideas were guiding the application of scientific knowledge, it's possible that its effect would be more wholly beneficial for the world. The Torah Laws and teachings regarding Shabbat, the Sabbatical year, agricultural practices, the treatment of animals, the preservation of natural resources, the relationship between industry and the environment and many other areas, all aim at finding a proper balance and fusion between spiritual and material interests.

Since these values are from the Torah, they would, as you suggest, also be included in our mandate to be a "Light among the Nations". Torah-observant individuals and communities certainly have room for improvement in these areas, but insofar as the Torah commands us to interact with the world in a way that is harmonious with G-d's will, we should set a good example.

One might argue that the potential impact of "spiritual science" on the world would be negligible and therefore unrealistic. But it is interesting to consider how much environmental concern groups, over decades of consistent and persistent effort, have affected environmental policy, legislation and compliance.

If the Torah world is not in a position to lead these efforts, we should at least sympathize with their efforts while simultaneously interacting with the Creation according to the will of the Creator — sparingly, sensitively and with the aim of preservation and elevation, not depletion and destruction.

## PRAYER Essentials

by Rabbi Yitzchak Botton

## PRAYER FUNDAMENTALS - PART 7

***"I believe with complete faith that everything the Holy One blessed be He does is for the good."***

### No Prayer Goes Unanswered

A discussion about prayer would not be complete without addressing the fact that at times it seems as though our prayers go unanswered. If G-d truly loves and cares for us, then why does He hold back the good things we request of Him?

### Hidden Kindness

One time, Rabbi Akiva was traveling with a donkey, a rooster, and a candle for light. When he arrived at a particular town he searched for lodging but was unsuccessful in finding any. He said to himself, "All that the Holy One, blessed be He, does is for the good." Thus, he spent the night in the field. A lion came and ate the donkey. Next came a cat and ate the rooster. Finally, a strong wind came and extinguished the candle.

In the face of all of these hardships, Rabbi Akiva persisted in his belief that all that G-d does is for the good. On that very same night, soldiers attacked the city and captured all of its inhabitants. Had the candle remained lit, the soldiers would have noticed its light. Had the donkey and rooster remained

alive, they would have made noise and attracted the soldiers' attention. Rabbi Akiva proclaimed, "Did I not say that all that the Holy One, blessed be He, does is for the good?"

Since man's vision can sometimes be short-term and limited mostly to the immediate physical benefits of this world, he sometimes fails to sense the inherent good in that which G-d does for him. As a result of this lack of enlightenment, people interpret a lack of overt good as their being overlooked or punished by G-d. The truth, however, is that even the less positive experiences of life are from G-d, and therefore in essence good. This good, although sometimes hidden today, will be revealed in the future.

The above principle can be applied to prayer. G-d not only listens to all our prayers, He, in fact, answers them as well. However, this doesn't mean that we will get everything we ask for. Would an expert doctor listen to his patient's plan for treatment when deciding on a method of remedy? Ultimately, G-d knows what is best for us, and that is what He will give us.

So what do we get in return for our prayers?

When we pray to G-d, we draw closer to Him, gaining favor in His eyes. Although sometimes we may still need to take our "medicine", with the merit of our prayer G-d will make it sweeter. That is G-d's answer to our prayers.

# It's Not Quite That Simple

## Self-Defense

*Danny breaks into Jack's house. Can Jack kill Danny?*

Taking the life of another human is one of the most serious crimes which can be committed. It is one of Judaism's "Big Three" - the three cardinal sins so abhorrent that a Jew must give up his life rather than commit (along with idolatry and certain intimate immorality). If someone places a gun to Jack's head (G-d forbid) and tells him to kill someone or be killed, he has no right to kill to save his own life. As the Talmud puts it, "How do you know that your blood is redder than his?" That is, who are you to decide which of you should live and which should die? *Be killed and do not kill.*

Back to the case of the burglar. It would seem that even if he fears for his life, Homeowner Jack has no right to kill Burglar Danny. After all, *be killed and do not kill.*

Well, as with everything in Judaism, it's not quite that simple! Let's examine what the Torah has to say about killing in self-defense.

Let us begin with two verses from *Shemot*:

1) If a thief is found sneaking in and is beaten to death, there is no charge of manslaughter.

2) (But) if it the sun shone upon him, there is a charge of manslaughter.

The Talmud explains the first verse:

Rava asked, "What is the reason for the law regarding a sneak thief? It is widely known that a person will not stand idly by while his property is taken. The thief must have thought to himself, 'If I break in, the owner will confront me and prevent me from stealing. If he does, I will kill him.' The Torah therefore teaches, 'If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first'."

In other words, the Torah's intention in framing the laws regarding a thief as it does is to illustrate the principle of preemptive killing in self-defense in a case where there is a presumption that the other party has murderous intent. Danny the Burglar, it is assumed, would kill if necessary, and therefore Jack the Innocent Homeowner is permitted to kill him if necessary. Danny is halachically termed a *rodef* - a pursuer - and his life is forfeit.

Rashi, the indispensable 11th-century commentator, brings up an interesting issue. According to the reasoning our Sages give, in a case where it cannot be assumed that Danny would kill Jack, for example, where Danny is Jack's father, there is no provision for Jack the Son to kill Danny the Father, even if Daddy Danny steals all of Little Boy Jack's possessions. Indeed, Rashi, quoting a midrashic source, explains that this is the real meaning of the curious expression 'the sun shone upon him' in the

second verse. It is not literal, but rather a metaphor for the relationship between Danny and Jack. If, says Rashi, it is as 'clear as the sun' that Danny has no murderous intent, Jack would be liable for killing him.

The Rambam, the first codifier of the entirety of Jewish Law, writes:

A sneak thief, whether by day or at night, does not warrant a charge of manslaughter... If it is clear that the thief would not kill him he is forbidden to kill the thief, as the Torah states, 'If the sun shone upon him', (meaning) if it is as clear to you as the sun that the thief is peaceable to you, you may not kill him. Therefore a sneak thief stealing from his son may not be killed by him, for it is certain that he (i.e. the father) would not kill him. But a sneak thief stealing from his father may be killed.

Clearly, the Rambam, in line with the Talmud and with Rashi, understood the Torah to be referring to Jack and Danny's relationship and not to the actual sunshine! Rabbi Vidal of Toulouse in his *Maggid Mishneh*, one of the classic commentaries on the Rambam, remarks that the exemplary case of father and a son was given only because it is so unlikely that any father would kill his son. But of course, if it is obvious that Pappa Danny is insane enough to kill his own son (say, for instance, he has killed other sons), then Jack may kill him. Likewise, if there is another watertight reason to presume that Danny would certainly not kill Jack, Jack may not kill him.

It is interesting that an underlying assumption of all this is that fathers (at least, normal ones) *never* kill sons, whereas there is no such automatic presumption that sons *never* kill fathers (or at least, according to the *Maggid Mishneh*, the probability of a son killing a father is much higher than the probability of a father killing a son). This is a reflection of the fact that parents, again probabilistically speaking, love their children more than vice versa. Why should that be so?

Rabbi Dessler, in his classic work *Kuntres Hachessed*, explains that real love does not simply come into being. Rather, it is created by acts of giving - difficult, selfless giving. Of course, there is a certain element of love which just exists, but it must be fostered and nurtured. The more you give to someone, the more you love him. Real 'love at first sight' is an oxymoron. Real love requires work. You were born a helpless infant. Your parents brought you into this world, raised and educated you, ceaselessly giving. It is no wonder they love you more than you could ever love them. And one day (if not already) you will love your children more than they can ever love you.