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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Vayikra

Root and Branch

“And He called...” (1:1)

If you look at a tree and see healthy branches, you can be sure that its roots are strong.

When a young child takes his first steps in learning Torah, you would think that he starts by learning “*In the beginning of G-d’s creating the heavens and the earth,*” and from there he slowly works his way to the end of the Five Books.

However, many Torah education experts start not with the Book of Bereishet but with the volume that we start reading in synagogue this week, the third of the Torah’s volumes, Vayikra.

What is the reason to start with Vayikra?

Firstly, it’s easy to misunderstand the opening chapters of the Torah. They contain many deep mystical ideas which are understood only by the wisest and holiest people in each generation.

However, there is another reason. The Book of Vayikra is principally concerned with sacrifices. By teaching our children the book of Vayikra first we are inculcating the knowledge that Torah can only thrive in someone who is prepared to sacrifice his time, his ego, and his pursuit of worldly pleasure to achieve its crown.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin (the founder of the Daf Yomi cycle of Torah study) explains the saying of our Sages, “*Be watchful of the children of the poor, for from them the Torah will come forth.*” A Torah education does not come cheaply. For someone who has trouble making ends meet, the self-sacrifice

required to give one’s children a good Torah education is considerable. The Torah of these children comes through difficulty, from self-denial. Because the Torah of the “children of the poor” is earned through hardship and self-sacrifice, it has a staying power which lasts for generations.

If the branches look strong, the roots must be stronger.

• Sources: based on the *Avnei Ezel* in *Mayana shel Torah*

Tzav

The Everlasting Ember

“The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning; he shall prepare the olah offering upon it and shall cause the fats of the shelamim offering to go up in smoke upon it.

A permanent fire shall remain aflame on the altar; it shall not be extinguished.” (6:5-6)

In every Jewish heart there glows an ember. In every Jewish soul there is a spark of holiness that can never be extinguished.

Those of us whose lives are dedicated to reaching out to our brothers and sisters who seem so far away from the faith of our forefathers must pattern ourselves after the *kohen* in the Holy Temple.

Two offerings that the *kohen* brought are the *olah* offering and the *shelamim* offering. The *olah* offering represents the *mitzvot* between us and G-d. The *olah* was the only offering in which none of its meat was consumed by man. It all “went up” on the altar. *Olah*

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ADVICE FOR LIFE

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

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Chullin 93 - 106

A note to the reader: In the spirit of Purim, which is celebrated this week, this essay touches upon other occasions in our history when decisions were made by a “lottery system”.

A Passage for a Passage

Rabbi Yochanan said, “Tell me which verse you are studying.”

Rabbi Yochanan, the great Sage in Eretz Yisrael, was pondering whether to make the trip down to Bavel to see the great Sage Shmuel. As part of his deliberations he requested that a child tell him what verse in Tanach he was currently studying.

“Now Shmuel is dead,” the child quoted (from Sefer Shmuel I 28:3), which refers to the passing of the Prophet Shmuel. Rabbi Yochanan took this reply as a sign from Above that the Sage Shmuel was no longer in This World and decided not to make the trip. The *gemara* relates that the Sage Shmuel was in fact still alive, but that Rabbi Yochanan was given a sign from Heaven to discourage him from making a very difficult trek.

However, making a decision based on a “random” event would appear problematic. The Torah states in Vayikra 19:26: “Do not take part in the sorcery of *nichush*.” This means not to take action or refrain from action based on an omen.

This is a Torah prohibition against basing decisions on superstitions or omens as idolaters would do. Examples found in the *gemara* are making a decision not to go someplace because “bread fell from my mouth” or because “my cane fell from my hand”. Nowadays we might better relate to not going a certain way because of a black cat's crossing one's path. Not only accepted superstitions are included in this prohibition, writes the Rambam, but also any “omen” or “sign” that a person might select upon. (Laws of Idolatry 11:4)

So, how was the manner in which the Sage Shmuel decided not to go, based on a passage that the child told him, permitted, and not a form of *nichush*? The commentaries explain that the child's reading his passage was considered a minor prophetic event. It therefore derived from a pure and kosher source and could be seen as a sign or omen. (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 179:4, *Rema*, *Taz*, *Shach*)

This type of decision-making might sound similar to the “Goral HaGra” lottery, in which a certain procedure is followed in choosing a verse to help with a choice in difficult situations. Perhaps the most well-known was the one performed by the Chafetz Chaim in deciding what to do with the Yeshiva and community in Radin at the outset of World War I. There are many other examples that have been made public. Years ago a Rosh Yeshiva told me of a life-changing decision he made, involving the Goral HaGra, and how the verse was perfectly suited to the issue and provided a clear resolution. The commentaries explain, however, that this manner of decision-making based on verses is not the same as the mini-prophecy of a child's Torah study. It is rooted in the fact that the Torah is our life and the length of our days. As the verse states, “For they (the words of the Torah) shall add length of days and years of life and peace to you.” (Proverbs 3:2)

• *Chullin 95b*

When Meat is Not Meat (but also not Vegan)

Mar Ukva bar Chama said, “I, regarding this matter of waiting to eat dairy after eating meat, am like ‘vinegar that came from wine’ compared to my father. If he would eat meat today, he would wait until tomorrow before eating dairy, whereas I wait only from one meal to the next.”

This teaching is the basis for the halacha and widespread custom not to eat dairy immediately after meat, but rather to wait six hours in-between. (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 89:1) It should be noted that other waiting periods are practiced according to the customs of various communities.

There are two main reasons taught by the *Rishonim* to explain the need to wait. One is that meat, by its nature, exudes meaty fats inside the eater, and also that the taste is such that it lingers for this amount of time. (Rashi, Tur) A second reason is that there is concern that meat will remain in one's mouth between teeth for an extended time until digested. (Rambam)

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PARSHA Q&A?

Vayikra

1. Who does the word “*eilav*” in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week’s Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
4. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-*kohen* perform?
6. Besides the fire the *kohanim* bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bnei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is *melika*?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a “satisfying aroma”?
11. Why is the term “*nefesh*” used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will *mincha* offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *mincha*. What is meant by “honey”?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning *shelamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe’ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a *chatat*?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burned while in the wilderness? Where were they burned during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*?
19. What two things does a voluntary *mincha* have that a *minchat chatat* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Vayikra’s questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bnei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* Courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bnei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one’s fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal’s food is provided by its owner, so its innards are “kosher.” Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with “theft.”
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, G-d regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
12. 2:2 - The *kometz* (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb’s *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat’s is not.
16. 3:8 - The *chatat*.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the *karet* (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

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PARSHA Q&A?

Tzav

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they completely removed from the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this *Parsha*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tzav's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burned completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burned, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); a *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); an *onan* (a mourner on the day of death of a close relative).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; upon safe arrival from a desert journey; upon being freed from prison; upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - a) Until the morning. b) Until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *mincha* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Vayikra

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* – the Laws of the Priest –, deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen, are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the “questionable guilt” offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

Tzav

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burned on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

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LOVE of the LAND

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

Walled Cities on Purim

Purim is not celebrated on the same day everywhere. In walled cities, we are told in Megillat Esther, the celebration is on the 15th of Adar, while in cities without walls it is on the 14th.

The reason for this is that in the unwalled cities the Jews overcame their enemies on the 13th of Adar and celebrated on the 14th, while in the walled capital of Shushan the battle still raged on the 14th, and the Jews there could not celebrate their victory until the 15th. Therefore, all walled cities celebrate Purim on the 15th because of their similarity to Shushan.

The designation “walled city” does not depend on a city’s present situation, but rather on whether it had a wall at the time Joshua led the Jewish nation in the conquest of *Eretz Yisrael*. But why is Joshua’s time the criterion for the designation “walled city?” Wouldn’t it have been more logical to make this determination based on the time of the Purim miracle?

The answer is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, where Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi declares that this was

done in order to accord honor to *Eretz Yisrael* which lay desolate at the time of the Persian miracle.

Rabbi Nissan ben Reuven (Ran) explains this as follows: At the time of the Purim miracle there were hardly any cities in *Eretz Yisrael* with their walls still intact. Had the determination of “walled city” been made according to the situation at that time, almost all cities in *Eretz Yisrael* would have the status of unwalled cities. To avoid this disgrace it was decided to base the status of “walled city” on the situation of the city at the time of Joshua. This made many more cities in *Eretz Yisrael* eligible for this distinction.

Rabbi Yosef Karo (*Beit Yosef*) has a different approach. Our Sages wanted some memory of *Eretz Yisrael* in the celebration of this miracle which took place in a foreign land. In the spirit of “*zecher lemikdash*” — those laws and customs we follow to recall the Beit Hamikdash — the Sages linked the determination of “walled city” to *Eretz Yisrael* so that the Jews living abroad would not forget their Holy Land.

• Source: *Tractate Megillah 2a*



Parsha Insights...continued from page one

means to “arise.” The *olah* symbolizes man’s striving to connect to G-d, which is the purpose of *mitzvot* like prayer, *tefillin*, *brit milah* and Shabbat.

The *shelamim*, as its name suggests, represent the creation of *shalom*, peace, between man and his neighbor. These are represented by *mitzvot* such as charity, kindness and correct speech.

In the dark world of materialism in which we live we

should know that our daily job is to kindle the wood on the altar of the Jewish soul, to inspire and awaken the heart to connect to both G-d and man in deeper and more meaningful ways.

For “*an everlasting fire shall remain aflame on the altar; it shall not be extinguished.*” All we need to do is fan the embers, however small they may seem.

• Sources: based on *Toras Moshe in Mayana shel Torah*

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אֲחֵינוּ בְּלִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

ASK!

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Spiritual Slumber

From: Sandra

Dear Rabbi,

The Megillah mentions that the Jews were dispersed throughout the Persian Empire. And the commentaries note that this was a veiled criticism of their being disunited. However, the same verse refers to them as “one People”. Could you please help clarify this for me?

Dear Sandra,

The verse you refer to is part of the wicked Haman’s attempt to defame the Jews to King Achashverosh and bribe him to decree their destruction. And yes, commentaries point to their disunity as a source for the Divinely-directed decree. Accordingly, it is possible that the verse which states “*am echad*”, which you understand to mean “one people”, is rather to be understood as “a *certain* people”. In which case, the text would read as follows:

“And Haman said to King Achashverosh, ‘There is a certain people scattered and separate among the peoples throughout all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws differ from every people, and they do not keep the king’s laws. It is therefore of no use for the king to let them be. If it pleases the king, let it be written to destroy them, and I will weigh out ten thousand silver talents into the hands of those who perform the work, to bring into the king’s treasuries.’” (Esther 3:8-9)

That being said, even if the verse were to be understood as you suggest, literally as “one people”, implying their unity despite their physical dispersion, there is still a separate Talmudic explanation of the verse which accuses the Jews being in a state of spiritual slumber. This is based on the wording “*yeishno am echad*”, where the word “*yeishno*” which means “there is” can also be read as “*yeishnu*”, meaning “there sleeps”, such that the Sages commented (Megillah 13b) that the Jewish People were “asleep regarding the

mitzvot”. The explanation is as follows:

If the text had meant to tell the king nothing more than “there is one nation”, then the word for “there is” should have been simply “*yeish*”, and not “*yeishno*”. Now that the verse says “*yeishno*” it is clear that Haman was expressing something more — that “they are sleeping”. Thus, the verse reveals that the Jewish People had not only scattered themselves and were separate, but they had also lost their enthusiasm for the Holy Torah and were “asleep regarding the *mitzvot*”.

We find in the Talmud (Bava Metzia 16a), “The evil inclination descends and entices, rises and provokes, receives permission, and then takes the soul.” Rashi explains that this force of evil descends from Above and entices people to sin. Then it rises to the Heavenly Court and speaks as prosecutor against the very sinner it seduced in order to provoke the anger of the King. Thereby, it obtains permission to slay the sinners, and then it descends to slay them.

Regarding this teaching, the Sage Reish Lakish commented that this force of evil takes on several manifestations: “It is the evil inclination, it is the Satan, and it is also the Angel of Death”.

Based on this teaching, the author of Sefer Torah Ohr makes a fascinating observation, asserting that this multi-faceted evil being was actually incarnated in the person of Haman himself!

First, assuming the role of the evil inclination, he enticed the Jews to sin by convincing them to partake in the forbidden feasts of Achashverosh. Afterward he acted as Satan, for he accused them of being “asleep regarding the *mitzvot*”. This then precipitated the decree of death upon them. And finally, acting as the Angel of Death, he deftly designed to take their lives.

Thus, the wicked Haman was simultaneously the evil inclination, the Satan, and the Angel of Death, all in one!

• Source: *The Megillah Anthology*,
R’ Y.D. Rubin, p. 184

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WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Playing the Lottery

In the Story of Purim Haman cast lots to determine on which day of the year he intends to exterminate the Jews. As the Scroll of Esther relates, Haman “cast a *pur*, which is a *goral*” (Esther 3:7), and decided on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. Both *pur* and *goral* mean “lottery,” but what is the difference between these two seemingly synonymous words?

The Hebrew word *goral* is related to the Arabic word *jaral/jarwal* — “stones” or “pebbles” which were used for drawing lots. The *goral* comes up elsewhere in the Bible where it refers to the lottery used to determine which goat on Yom Kippur goes to G-d, and which to Azazel (Lev. 16:8). It also refers to the mechanism of lots by which the Holy Land was divided amongst the various tribes (Num. 26:55). A *goral* also refers to the portion allotted to somebody, oftentimes by way of a raffle or lottery. In fact, the English words *lot* and *plot*, which refer to sections of land, are probably derived from the word *lottery*.

Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon (1559-1638), also known as Maharitatz, explains that Haman presided over two lotteries: one was a *goral* to decide on which day he should speak to the Persian king about eliminating the Jews, and the other was a *pur* to decide on which day he should carry out his “final solution.” However, Rabbi Tzahalon does not explain why one of these is a *pur* and the other is a *goral*.

Rabbi Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832) explains that *goral* refers to a lottery held for beneficial purposes, while a *pur* refers to a lottery cast with maleficent intent. *Pur* is related to the phrase *por hitporehah ha'aretz* (Isa. 24:19), which refers to the “disintegration” and destruction of the land. *Goral*, on the other hand, has a positive connotation, and refers to receiving a portion, like a raffle. He further explains that the Scroll of Esther calls what Haman did a *pur* because of his malevolent intentions, but also emphasizes that it was a *goral* because from Haman’s perspective he had something to gain (i.e., the property of all the Jews he sought to kill).

Rabbi Tuviah ben Eliezer (*Midrash Lekach Tov* to Esther 3:7), Rashbam (to Ex. 16:15), Ibn Ezra (to Esther 3:7), and Nachmanides (to Ex. 12:2) all explain that the word *pur* is Persian (Akkadian?), and the

Scroll of Esther translated it into *goral*, which is Hebrew. Indeed, some linguists note that just as *goral* is related to “rocks” and “pebbles,” so too is *pur* derived from the Akkadian word *puru*, which means “stone”.

According to this understanding, both *pur* and *goral* mean the same thing, but one is Hebrew and one is Persian. Following this approach, Rabbi Yosef ben Yosef Ibn Nachmias (circa. early 14th century) notes that although the Scroll of Esther uses quite a few Persian words, it felt the need to translate the term *pur* into the Hebrew *goral* because the word *pur* is so central to the Purim story — after all, the holiday is named Purim after Haman’s *pur* (see Esther 10:26).

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) mentions and disagrees with the above-cited authorities who explain that the word *pur* is Persian, not Hebrew. He claims that *pur* is actually Hebrew, and is a derivative of the biliteral root *PEH-REISH*. That root, in Rabbi Pappenheim’s estimation, refers to the act of “breaking something down into smaller components.” Different words derived from this root include *perurim* (“crumbs”), *efer* (“ash”), *parur* (a special “pot” for cooking crumbs or other small grains), *pri* (a “fruit,” which is a microcosm of a tree that comes off the tree), *pe'er/tiferet* (a form of “all-encompassing beauty” which breaks down into multiple aspects), *hafarah* (the act of “disintegrating” or “nullifying” a vow), *primah* (the act of “tearing” clothing into multiple shreds), and *tefirah* (“sewing” i.e., the means of rectifying the damage done by *primah*).

In that spirit, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that *pur* (“lottery”) referred specifically to a box that resembled a *parur*, and into which one put little pieces of wood or stone for drawing lots. In Mishnaic Hebrew this sort of box is called a *kalpi* (*Yoma* 39a). The word *kalpi*, in turn, is derived from the Greek word *kalpe/kalpis*, which refers to an urn used for drawing lots. In Modern Hebrew the word *kalpi* refers to the “ballot box” used in governmental elections.

When the Mishna and Talmud refer to drawing lots the word commonly used is *payis*. Most prominently, a *payis* is held to determine which *kohanim* will actively partake in the Temple services (*Yoma* 2:2-4).

Some linguists argue that *payis* is derived from the

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Letter & Spirit

Insights based on the writings of Rav S. R. Hirsch

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Vayikra

Mincha — Gift of a Gift

The second chapter of Vayikra discusses the *mincha* offerings, the offerings comprised of flour and oil. When the word *mincha* appears in other contexts it generally refers to a gift, by which the giver recognizes the recipient as the master of his fate. Through the *mincha*, the giver expresses his dependence on the recipient of the gift and submits to his authority. For example, when Jacob sends a peace offering to Eisav in advance of his encounter, it is referred to as a *mincha*.

The laws of the *mincha* offering open: “A *nefesh* who would bring near a *mincha* offering to G-d.” When an animal is brought as an offering, the *nefesh* itself is the offering — the *nefesh* of the animal is given up to the altar, representing the mission of the offerer. In the *mincha*, however, instead of the *nefesh* being the offering, it is the offerer: “A *nefesh* who would bring near a *mincha* offering...” This offering *nefesh* — the soul that would express its desire for G-d’s closeness (*makriv*) — brings the *mincha*, its possessions, as an homage offering.

The *mincha* contained flour and oil in particular measurements, along with frankincense. Flour, the main ingredient, symbolizes sustenance. The meaning of flour offered at a *mincha* as a sign of homage is this: the condition for our existence is in the Hands of the One to Whom the *mincha* is offered.

The oil added to the flour created a rich oil bread. The pleasant and fragrant frankincense was added afterwards, as a separate ingredient to add an element of satisfaction. Just as satisfaction is its own blessing and does not necessarily follow from sustenance or even richness, the frankincense was an independent part of the offering.

The *mincha* is the single offering that could not be brought jointly — only one *nefesh*, a single soul, could offer a *mincha*. The animal offerings, which represent the *task* of man, could be brought jointly — many people can find joint expression in a single offering, in a common task. But the *mincha*, which represents sustenance, prosperity and satisfaction, is an individual offering.

In recognition of these gifts, we return a ‘gift’ and

express that the possessions are really the property of the Receiver. From His Hand were they extended to us, and by His Will do they remain on loan. With this acknowledgement we are prepared to use these possessions in His service.

• Sources: Commentary, Vayikra 2:1

Tzav

Life of Night

Chapter six opens with the supplemental laws of the offerings, addressed specifically to the *kohanim*, beginning with the laws applicable to the night. During the night the Sanctuary is entrusted exclusively to the *kohanim*, and is closed to the rest of the nation.

It is significant that the daily service, including all offerings, is to be accomplished by day. Judaism considers two overlapping cycles of time — one corresponding to the body, the other to the soul. The yearly cycle is a double one: the “world year” which begins with Tishrei (the seventh month by Torah reckoning), and the Jewish year which begins with Nissan, the month commemorating the birth of the Jewish nation. Thus, we have a year that begins in the fall, and though it also has a spring and a summer, it ends again in the fall; and we have a year that begins in the spring, and although it also has a fall and a winter, it ends again in the spring.

So too, we have a day that begins in the evening, and though it rises to morning and to noon, it ends again in the evening; and we have a day that begins in the morning, and though it sinks into evening and night it ends again in the morning. *Outside* the Sanctuary the day begins and ends with night, but inside the Sanctuary the day begins and ends with morning.

It is during the *day*, with a clear mind and full awareness, that a person should bring his offering to G-d. With clear thought, out of free choice, and with full creative capacity he should dedicate himself to fulfilling the Torah. This is why in the Sanctuary, the night and its stillness follows the day and its vitality.

There is only one form of service reserved for the night: the parts of an *olah* offering remain on the altar and are burned the entire night until daybreak. Similarly, the *mincha* offerings may be burned just before sunset and gradually consumed by the fire throughout the night. Atonement has already been

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BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

The Palace Doors of Achashverosh

Megillat Esther is replete with palace scenes: At the King's Gate, Mordechai refuses to bow down to Haman. Esther stands at the doorway facing the King's chamber waiting for Achashverosh to extend his scepter. One can only imagine that these palatial doorways were suitably palatial in their dramatically huge dimensions of height and width.

It may be a bit whimsical to wonder how high on such gigantic posts would Mordechai have placed a mezuzah on his palace office when he was appointed as the new prime minister. (Would he have been obligated to affix one?) Generally, the halacha states that a mezuzah must be placed within the top third of a doorway. But, on such posts, this would mean that the mezuzah could only be reached by ladder!

But, leaving ancient Persia for a moment, consider the following very real mezuzah conundrum I received regarding the tall doorways common in our homes:

Q: Our front door is not gigantic, but I measured it and

found that the beginning of the top third is above my shoulders. (I'm average height, if that makes a difference). Actually, if I stretch a bit, my shoulders reach the beginning of the top third. Should I put the mezuzah at the height of my shoulder even though it will be below the top third of the post?

A: Since your shoulders can reach the beginning of the top third with a bit of a stretch, you should still put it within the top third. If this is not so, it should be placed at shoulder height of a normal person. Practically speaking, if the top third of the doorway begins above 5'11" (1.8 meters), the mezuzah should be placed at a little above 4'6" (1.4 meters), which is average shoulder height.

• Sources: *Misgeres HaShulchan*, comments to *Lechem Hapanim*; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 11, cited by *Mezuzos Beisecha* 289:23; *Kuntres HaMezuzah* 289:20; *Agur B'ohalecha* 12:8

*Got a mezuzah question or story? Email rabbi@ohrsandton.com or submit on my website mymezuzahstory.com
Free "Mezuzah Maven" book for every question or story submitted (when published in the near future!)*

Talmud Tips...continued from page two

A practical difference is mentioned by the Turei Zahav (*Taz*) in the case where one is merely chewing meat for a child to eat. According to the first reason there is no reason to wait six hours before dairy, but according to the second reason there is. (The Siftei Kohen, the *Shach*, writes that the leniency suggested by the *Taz* in the case of chewing for a child seems difficult to accept.)

There is consensus among the great halachic authorities that we should accept the strict results of both opinions. This means that even when merely chewing the meat for a child one should wait before dairy, due to the concern for lingering taste and digestion of meat. And even if six hours have elapsed after eating meat, one would need to remove the meat before eating dairy.

It is interesting to note the Torah source for the opinion of the Rambam. When the Jewish nation was sustained by manna from Heaven, they adamantly demanded meat instead. In response, they were punished with provisions of quail, which they heartily ate from and then died while the "meat was still between their teeth." Although the timeline is not clear, and one may argue that they died only after six hours, there is a teaching by *Chazal* that shows that their death occurred immediately, before they satisfied their wrongful yearning, and not after six hours had elapsed. (*Sifrei* to Beha'alotcha, cited and explained by the Aruch Hashulchan, Yoreh Deah 89:2)

• *Chullin* 105a

Ohrnet PURIM SPECIAL

INSIGHTS INTO HALACHA

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

To Drink or Not to Drink?

A Halachic Analysis of Getting Drunk on Purim

Who doesn't love Purim? This annual Yom Tov extravaganza, featuring joyous dancing, *mishloach manot*, colorful costumes, and of course, the Megillah reading, is the favorite time of year for quite a few of us. However, for many it is the unique mitzvah to get drunk that they relish. Since Purim is described in the Megillah as "a day of *mishteh*" (referring to a wine feast), and the Purim turnabout miracle occurred at such wine feasts, there is a rare dispensation from the norm, and an apparent obligation to drink wine. Hopefully, the wine will enable one to experience a sublime, spiritual Purim. Yet, uninhibited drinking may also unfortunately result in catastrophic consequences. If so, what exactly is the mitzvah of drinking on Purim?

Chayav Inish Livesumei...

The *Gemara Megillah* (7b) famously rules that 'MeiChayav inish l'vesumeit b'Puraya ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai' — a person is obligated to drink and get intoxicated on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai'. The simple meaning is seemingly teaching us that we must get exceedingly drunk on Purim.

Yet, as we will soon see, this assertion is anything but simple.

The very next line in the Gemara tells a fascinating story of the Sages Rabba and Rabbi Zeira who got excessively drunk together on Purim. In his drunken stupor, Rabba proceeded to kill ('slaughter') Rabbi Zeira. When he sobered up and realized what he had done, he *davened* that Rabbi Zeira be brought back to life. His prayers were answered and Rabbi Zeira rejoined the world of the living. Yet, the next year, Rabbi Zeira refused to join Rabba for his Purim *seudah*, duly noting that a miracle is not a common occurrence and one may not rely on miracles.

Although there are different interpretations of this story, with several commentaries explaining that it is not to be understood literally, positing that Rabba *did not* actually kill Rabbi Zeira, nevertheless, many commentaries are bothered by the Gemara's choice of words. If the ruling is that one must get drunk on Purim, then why is this story, which showcases the potential for drastic and tragic consequences of such drinking, featured immediately following? What message is the Gemara trying to impart to us? Additionally, what exactly does it mean that one must drink until "*ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai*"? What does this enigmatic turn of phrase actually mean?

Ad D'ad D'lo Yada...

As with many other issues in halacha, the answers to these questions are not as simple as they seem. Several authorities, including the *Rif* and the *Tur*, when codifying this mitzvah, do indeed use the basic understanding of the Gemara's ruling, that one *is required* to get so drunk on Purim that he cannot tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai' — implying quite drunk.

Yet, *Rabbeinu Efraim*, cited as halacha by the *Ran* and *Ba'al HaMa'or*, rules in the exact opposite manner! He maintains that since the Gemara tells the story of Rabba and Rabbi Zeira *after* the ruling of getting drunk, it is not meant exclusively as a cautionary tale detailing the evils of excessive alcohol imbibing. Rather, it is coming to negate the ruling! According to this understanding, it is *forbidden* to get drunk on Purim!

V'lo Ad B'Chlal!

A different explanation of the Gemara is that drinking "*ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai*" does not actually mean getting stone cold drunk. In fact, most commentaries offer many different rationales as to the Gemara's intent with this phrase.

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BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Understanding the Purim Miracles

Year after year, on Purim we publicize the miracle that G-d wrought for the Jewish People by saving them from the hands of their enemy. But one may wonder exactly which miracle or miracles we are actually publicizing.

Miracles are normally divided into two categories: open miracles that break the rules of nature, and hidden miracles that are manifest within nature.

Open miracles are supernatural, such as the splitting of the Red Sea, the falling of the manna, and the like. These miracles demonstrate to us and instill in the hearts of all humanity that G-d, as the Creator, has the power to alter nature at will. He is omnipotent and controls every force in existence.

Hidden miracles are those events which occur and the *physical eye* sees no change to the normal course of events, yet the *intellectual eye* sees and discerns that G-d has altered the natural order that was instituted at the time of Creation. Beneath the surface of these events, the Hand of G-d is recognizable, sometimes to such a great extent that even these miracles have but few deniers.

An example of this is the battles fought during Chanukah. There was no essential change in nature. A war was fought, and wars typically result in victors and vanquished ones. Yet, a vast army, numbering many thousands of trained soldiers, fell to a very small band of untrained rebels, consisting of five Temple Priests and a few others aiding them. This was something entirely impossible in the reality as we normally experience it.

A Third Level of Miracle

It seems that we should add another level of miracle, more deeply concealed. These are the fully concealed miracles that are impossible to detect. So deep is the concealment of this form of Divine Providence that even the person for whom the miracle was wrought doesn't realize it, nor can he realize it. Regarding this, the verse states: "He does great wonders (miracles) *alone*," since due to the great concealment and deeply-hidden nature of this type of Providence, G-d *alone* knows its secret. This is for two reasons: 1) There is no change at all to the workings of nature. 2) There is no indication within the event that a miracle occurred. Rather, everything appears to have happened simply at

random.

One of the Purim miracles was this type. Over almost ten years, G-d's Hand was hidden from all, and yet His providence permeated each and every event that occurred throughout the Purim story. In the end, when Haman was hung on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordechai, everyone was able to see in retrospect that G-d's Hand was behind all of the scattered, random events that led up to Haman's demise. The connection of all these events, culminating with the hanging of Haman, is the main miracle we publicize on Purim.

Yet, even at this point the Jews were not totally saved. They still faced one more threat. On the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, nearly a year after Haman was hung, the Jews were privileged to witness yet another miracle as they battled against their enemies on the day chosen to annihilate all Jews — man, woman and child.

This part of the Purim miracle was similar to Chanukah, when the Jews fought a battle against their enemies. The Purim battle even includes within it an advantage over the Chanukah battle, when there were casualties on both sides as is the case in all wars. During the Purim battle, however, not a single Jew was killed, something impossible in the type of fighting that took place in those times, not to mention that the Jewish fighters were weaker, outnumbered and untrained for combat. This clearly indicates a miracle of G-d's intervention. But this miracle is considered a hidden one because the laws of nature were technically not broken.

We can now understand why this victory is followed by such joy and celebration till this day. In it we witness G-d's unbounding love, not allowing even one Jew to be harmed. G-d's providence reached each individual Jew as he fought against the enemy. Each sword was controlled — the enemy's to miss its target and ours to hit.

Within the two levels of hidden miracles we celebrate and publicize on Purim, we see the great power of G-d's miraculous Hand displaying total control over all actions, big and small. These miracles may technically be classified as hidden, but they are perhaps an even greater testimony of G-d's unbounding might, greater than the greatest of open miracles.

What's in a Word...continued from page eight

Persian word *pisa* or the Greek word *psefos*, which mean “small rock” (such that it means the same thing as *goral* and *pur*). However, Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (1578-1654) in *Tosefot Yom Tov* (to *Shabbat* 23:2) explains that the etymology of *payis* is Hebrew. He argues that it is related to the concept of *piyus* (“appeasement”), and explains the connection by noting that the randomness of a lottery serves to “appease” all parties involved because everyone has an equal chance of winning. A similar understanding was proposed by Rabbi Menachem Meiri (*Beit HaBechirah* to *Yoma* 22a), and even earlier by Rabbi Nossion of Rome in *Sefer HaAruch*, who wrote that *payis* is a type of lottery whose purpose is to “appease” all entrants. In Modern Hebrew the word *payis* refers to the nationwide lotto whose name adorns many a buildings in Israel.

A lesser-known word for lottery is *cholesh*. The prophet Isaiah said that Nebuchadnezzar was *cholesh* the different nations (Isa. 14:12). The Talmud (*Shabbat* 149b) explains that *cholesh* means “he drew lots,” as every day Nebuchadnezzar would use lots to determine which nation’s royalty he would victimize. Rabbi Shlomo HaAdani (a 16th century commentator to the Mishna) writes in *Melech Shlomo* (*Shabbat* 23:2) that *cholesh* is related to *lachash* (“whisper”)

because, he claims, lotteries are generally cast in the quiet. Alternatively, Rabbi Yosef Yishai Rain suggests that *cholesh* in the sense of “lottery” is related to its Hebrew homonym *chalash* (“weak”), because winning something in a raffle or lottery is considered a “weak” proof that he really deserves it.

I would like to conclude with a fascinating Midrash which summarizes some of what we have discussed. The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni*, Ex. §265 and *Pesikta d’Rav Kahane* §3:1) teaches that there are four terms in the Bible for “lots”: *cholesh*, *pur*, *goral*, and *chevel*. The Midrash asserts that all four of these terms will be used against the Sons of Eisav. The word *cholesh* is used when describing Yehoshua “weakening” (*vay-achalosh*) the Amalekites, which brought the Jewish People to military victory (Ex. 17:13). The words *pur* and *goral* appear in the story of Purim in the Jews’ victory then. And in the future, the descendants of Eisav will be afflicted by a *chevel* (“portion” a synonym for *goral*), as the birthpangs of the Messianic arrival are called *chevlei leidah* (Hoshea 13:13).

For questions, comments, or to propose ideas for a future article, please contact the author at rcklein@ohr.edu

Letter & Spirit...continued from page nine

achieved by the offerings. All that remains is to draw the proper conclusions from them. When by day the independent man has found G-d and sought His nearness, then he can also serve G-d by night. When he has waged his struggle during the day, his aims and aspirations, symbolized by the animal parts on the altar, can fuel G-d’s fire within him at night. The sun never sets for the earthly man who remains close to G-d in the deep of the night. The day’s sphere of influence — the active service of the offering — extends to the night.

Day to day utters speech, and night to night speaks knowledge (Psalms 19:3). Every day’s life carries on the work which was begun on the previous day and interrupted by the night. The scepter of daytime is characterized by speech, action and accomplishment — and all those cease at night. But even at night, knowledge never slumbers or sleeps. It watches over all things and lets them reawaken from sleep to the renewed independence of life.

Thus, the daily cycle and the monthly cycle reveal a dual nature: The world year and the non-Sanctuary day begin in the autumn and in the evening, respectively. This teaches that everything earthly is born out of the night and winter, and though it rises to the brightness of midday blooming and fruitful, it will sink again to the blossomless night. The Jewish year and the Sanctuary day begin in the spring and in the morning, respectively. Everything holy and Jewish has its origin in light and life — in spring and in morning — and though when it has run its course and must contend with the night and with earth, it will emerge from this struggle into renewed light and life. When the night follows the day, the night is the necessary supplement, providing the contemplation represented by the slow-burning embers on the altar to rejuvenate the next day.

• Sources: *Commentary*, *Vayikra* 6:2, *Shemot* 12:1-2, *Psalms* 19:3

Some say it means drinking until one can no longer perform the mental acrobatics necessary to be able to add up the *Gematria* of *Arur Haman* and *Baruch Mordechai* (Hint: they both equal 502!). Accordingly, this is a much lesser degree of drunkenness. Others explain it means drinking until one can no longer decide which one was a greater miracle: the downfall of Haman or Mordechai's meteoric rise in prominence. Another interpretation is to drink enough to no longer be able to recite a lengthy Purim themed *Alef-Beit* acrostic poem in the proper order.

An additional understanding is that one must get inebriated just enough to no longer be able to properly thank G-d for the many miracles of our salvation at Purim time. It is clear that many authorities throughout the generations felt uncomfortable with the literal interpretation of the Gemara's teaching to get drunk on Purim, and each one interprets the instruction as such that it does not imply one's getting fully drunk.

Rav Manoach Hendel of Prague, a contemporary of the Maharshal (mid 1500s), cites many of these explanations to elucidate the Gemara's intent. Interestingly, what they all have in common is that not a single one of them understands the Gemara to mean actually getting drunk! Utilizing any of these aforementioned opinions would mean that one should definitely not be 'getting plastered'. Rather, one should only drink a bit, somewhat more than he usually would, until he fulfills one of these understandings of the dictum of *ad d'lo yada*.

In fact, although the *Shulchan Aruch* seems to imply that he agrees with the *Tur*'s interpretation that one must get drunk, it must be noted that in his *Beit Yosef* commentary he completely rejects this approach, exclusively citing *Rabbeinu Efraim* and the *Orchos Chaim*, who refers to getting drunk on Purim as '*ain lecha aveirah gedolah mi'zu*' — the worst of transgressions — and concludes that one should merely drink a tad more than he is accustomed to. This apparently means that when he codified the halacha in the *Shulchan Aruch* as drinking until "*ad d'lo yada*," this should be understood in the light of his writing in the *Beit Yosef*, and as not 'getting wasted.'

Just Sleep It Off

The *Rambam* offers an alternate approach. He maintains that one must drink until he falls asleep from his drunkenness. This means that if one drinks and then falls asleep he has fulfilled his mitzvah of drinking on Purim "*ad d'lo yada*". When asleep, one certainly cannot distinguish between *arur Haman* and *baruch Mordechai*! This approach also fits well with his famous ruling in *Hilchot Dei'ot* about one who gets drunk being

a 'sinner and a disgrace'.

The *Rema*, when codifying the proper amount to drink on Purim, combines both of the latter approaches: drinking somewhat more than one is accustomed to regularly, and then going to sleep, adding that this applies even without actually getting drunk.

So...What's the Halacha?

It should be noted that several prominent authorities who do rule that one should actually get drunk, including the *Ya'avetz*, *Sha'arei Teshuva*, *Chayei Adam*, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, and *Kaf Hachaim*, add an important caveat. If one might come to be lax in the performance of even one other mitzvah, such as *netilat yadayim*, *bentching* or *davening* while drunk, they all maintain that it is preferable not to drink at all, to ensure that all of one's actions remain for the sake of Heaven.

The *Pri Chadash* cites several opinions regarding drinking on Purim, and concludes that already in his time, several hundred years ago (late 1600s), with society's decline over the generations, it is proper to follow the opinion of *Rabbeinu Efraim* and drink only a small amount more than usual. In this way one will be certain to not unwittingly transgress any prohibitions, but, rather, result in receiving blessings from Above. This is not a singular opinion, as many major *Acharonim*, including the *Pri Megadim*, *Aruch Hashulchan*, and *Mishnah Berurah*, ruled like the *Rema* and/or the *Pri Chadash*, saying "and so it is fitting to do".

In fact, many contemporary *Gedolim*, including the *Chofetz Chaim*, the *Steipler Gaon*, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer, personally followed the *Rema*'s ruling of drinking more than usual and going to sleep.

If already several centuries ago the *Pri Chadash* complained about the deterioration of social mores, how much more relevant are his prophetic words nowadays, with teen alcoholism on the rise and not a year going by without our hearing horror stories about the tragic results of excessive drinking on Purim? Several decades ago, the *Gadol Hador* Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach decried the *leitzanut* and *zilzul* that unfortunately has replaced *simcha shel mitzva* and became the norm among many, due to extreme intoxication. And, more recently, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky has publicly stated that "it is an *aveira* to get drunk on Purim".

In the final analysis, whichever opinion one follows, it seems that *Hatzolah* has it right with their annual Purim message: "Don't get carried away this Purim!"