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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE • WWW.OHR.EDU



SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHAR • 13 IYAR 5779 - MAY 18, 2019 • VOL. 26 NO. 34

PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAakov ASHER SINCLAIR

Partners in Time

“When you come to the Land which I am giving to you, the Land shall observe a Sabbath rest for G-d.” (25:2)

When you look at the letterhead of some law firms you might think you're reading the New York phone book. It seems like everyone is a junior partner.

In a way, we too want to be junior partners. Junior partners with G-d. We think: Okay G-d, you run the world. You're the Boss. I just want a little junior partnership over here to do what I want to do. I just want a little of my own space.

How can you have your own space when “His honor fills the world”? How can you have a junior partnership with the One to whom there is no ‘two’?

The religions of the world are based on the premise that you can be a junior partner with G-d. You can turn up once a week for an hour and that's that. The rest of your time is your own. A Jew is on duty 24/7, from the cradle to the grave. We are the people that G-d has chosen to serve Him.

But doesn't that sound terribly forbidding? Am I nothing more than a cipher? A mindless automaton, following instructions? Where is my space? Where is my individuality?

In reality, G-d *has* given us a junior partnership. But it's not a partnership so we can slink off and play golf in the afternoons. It's a partnership in the very creation of time itself.

Nothing can exist in this world without a spark of

holiness. Even a bathroom has a spark of holiness — the laws of how one should act there. Nothing can exist without holiness. Holiness is the air that the world breathes. Just like Man cannot exist without air, the world cannot exist without holiness.

When G-d created the world He created it with two kinds of holiness, which are expressed in Shabbat on the one hand, and in the Festivals on the other.

The holiness of Shabbat is fixed, immutable. Every seven days we enter a world called Shabbat. It requires no intervention on our part. Shabbat flows down from the upper worlds without our assistance and beyond our control.

The Festivals — Pesach, Shavuot and Succot — are another matter. G-d allows Man, as Beit Din, to establish the day on which the month begins. In giving to Man the power to adjust the day on which the month begins, G-d allows Man to determine on which days the Festivals occur.

In the mitzvah of *shemita*, (the Sabbatical year for the Land) it says, “*When you come to the Land which I am giving to you, the Land shall observe a Sabbath rest for G-d.*” The Land is to observe a Shabbat rest for G-d. Exactly the same expression — “*for G-d*” — is used in the account of the Creation of Shabbat — “*A Shabbat for G-d.*”

Just as there are two types of holiness in the days and

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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

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Bechorot 30 - 36

Speaking in Two Worlds

Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rav, “What is meant by the verse ‘May I dwell in Your tent in the worlds’? Is it really possible to live at the same time in both this world and in the World-to-Come? King David prays in this verse that his words of Torah will be repeated in his name after his death. This is because when the teachings of a departed Torah scholar are repeated in his name, his lips move in the grave.”

This statement taught on our *daf* explains the “curious” behavior of Rav Sheishes. Our *sugya* relates that Rav Sheishes posed a novel answer to a question raised in regard to the laws of *ma’aser beheima*. Afterwards, his “shamesh” named Rav Idi went and repeated this answer that he heard from Rav Sheishes in the Yeshiva — but failed to mention that he heard it from Rav Sheishes.

When Rav Sheishes learned that Rav Idi had said these words of Torah without attributing them to their source — Rav Sheishes — he expressed his displeasure. Rav Sheishes said, “Let the one who bit me be bitten by a scorpion (i.e. excommunicated – Rashi).”

The *gemara* asks why Rav Sheishes was so upset, and answers that he would be denied the benefit of his words of Torah being attributed to him. This benefit is taught by Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav, based on a verse in Tehillim 61:5: “When the teachings of a departed Torah scholar are repeated in his name, his lips move in the grave.”

There is a discussion in the writings of the commentaries regarding the meaning of “lips moving in the grave.” Is this a figurative statement or is it literal? Rashi writes in our *sugya* that the lips *move*, which indicates a literal interpretation. The *Ein Yaakov* and others find it difficult to accept this literal approach that the lips of a departed person would move in the grave, especially after passage of time which would allow for decomposition. Rather, they relate to it as a purely spiritual experience of the soul.

However, the Maharsha suggests a logical explanation for a literal interpretation for the movement of the lips. The speech of a person is an expression of his *neshama* by means of his physical body. When a person speaks virtuous words, such as words of Torah, he creates a new spiritual energy. And when those words of Torah are repeated in the name of the person who originally spoke them, this spiritual energy “awakens” their source. This means that both the *neshama* and the physical body that expressed these words from the *neshama* are awarded a true and real “additional life.” Both in this world and in the World-to-Come.

The Maharsha notes that the *gemara* ignores a seemingly obvious reason for there being an issue in citing words of Torah without specifying who originally spoke them. We learn in Pirkei Avot 6:6: “One who says something in the name of its speaker brings redemption to the world, as is stated, ‘And Esther told the king *in the name of Mordechai*.’” (Megillat Esther 2:22) The Maharsha explains that our *gemara* understood that this concept was not the reason for Rav Sheishes’ disapproval since it would not explain why only he was upset but not the other Sages.

Nevertheless, this reason of “failing to bring redemption to the world” would indeed seem to be a cause worthy of evoking great displeasure amongst all of the Sages, including Rav Sheishes. Therefore, one might ask, why didn’t the *gemara* give this as the reason for Rav Sheishes (and the other Sages) being upset? One answer that is offered is that saying words of Torah in the name of their source is not a total and direct method for bringing the *geula* to the world. Rather, it is one factor that may combine with others to contribute to redemption. As we find in Megillat Esther when Esther told the king in the name of Mordechai about the plot on his life that she had heard from Mordechai, there was no immediate redemption based on her words. Rather, a series of events ensued, as we read in the Megillah, guided by Divine Providence, which led to the redemption of the Jewish People.

(The reader is warmly invited to offer thoughts and sources on this question, sent to the author at ohr@ohr.edu — with the words “Talmud Tips” in the subject line.)

• *Bechorot 31b*

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why does the Torah specify that the laws of shemita were taught on Har Sinai?
2. If one possesses shemita food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
3. The Torah commands, "You shall sanctify the fiftieth year." How is this done?
4. Which two "returns" are announced by the shofar during yovel?
5. From where does the yovel year get its name?
6. What prohibitions are derived from the verse "*v'lo tonu ish et amito* - a person shall not afflict his fellow"?
7. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?
8. If shemita is observed properly, how long is the crop of the sixth year guaranteed to last?
9. After selling an ancestral field, when can one redeem it?
10. Under what circumstance may one sell ancestral land?
11. If a home in a walled city is sold, when can it be redeemed?
12. What does the word "days" mean in this week's Parsha?
13. What is considered a walled city?
14. What is the definition of a "ger toshav"?
15. To what is one who leaves Eretz Yisrael compared?
16. Why does Rashi mention the plague of the first-born in this week's Parsha?
17. List three prohibitions which demonstrate the dignity with which one must treat a Jewish indentured servant.
18. Who supports the family of the Jewish indentured servant during his years of servitude?
19. If a Jew is sold as a servant to a non-Jew, does he go free after six years?
20. Where is it permitted to prostrate oneself on a stone floor?

PARSHA Q&A!

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

1. 25:1 - To teach us that just as shemita was taught in detail on Har Sinai, so too, all the mitzvot were taught in detail on Har Sinai.
2. 25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
3. 25:10 - At the beginning of the year the Beit Din declares, "This year is kadosh (sanctified)."
4. 25:10 - The return of the land to its original owner, and the "return" (freedom) of the slave from slavery.
5. 25:10 - From the sounding of the shofar. A ram's horn is called a yovel.
6. 25:17 - One may not intentionally hurt people's feelings, nor give bad advice while secretly intending to reap benefit.
7. 25:18 - Exile.
8. 25:21,22 - From Nissan of the sixth year until Sukkot of the ninth year.
9. 25:24 - After two years following the sale, until yovel. At the beginning of yovel it returns to the family automatically.
10. 25:25 - Only if one becomes impoverished.
11. 25:29 - Only within the first year after the sale.

- Afterwards, even in yovel, it does not return.
12. 25:29 - The days of an entire year.
 13. 25:29 - A city that has been surrounded by a wall since the time of Yehoshua.
 14. 25:35 - A non-Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael and accepts upon himself not to worship idols.
 15. 25:38 - To one who worships idols.
 16. 25:38 - The prohibition against taking interest is accompanied by the phrase, "I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt." Rashi explains that just as G-d discerned in Egypt between those who were firstborn and those who were not, so too will G-d discern and punish those who lend with interest, pretending they are acting on behalf of others.
 17. 25:30-43 - 1) Do not make him perform humiliating tasks. 2) Do not sell him publicly. 3) Do not make him perform unnecessary jobs.
 18. 25:41 - His master.
 19. 25:54 - No. If he is not redeemed with money, he must wait until the yovel to go free.
 20. 26:1 - In the Mikdash.

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

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LOVE of the LAND

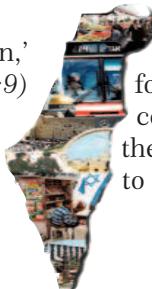
Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

Four Names for One Mountain

The Zidonim call Mount Hermon ‘Siryon,’ and the Emori call it ‘Senir.’” (Devarim 3:9)

“To Mount Sion which is Hermon.” (*Ibid.* 4:48)
Hermon, Siryon, Senir and Sion.

Why four names for one mountain?



“To teach you the praise of Eretz Yisrael that four different nations took pride in having some connection with it, each of them demanding that the mountain should bear the name which it gave to it.”

• Sources: *Sifri, quoted by Rashi*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This “Shabbat” for the Land is called “shemita”. After every seventh shemita, the fiftieth year, Yovel (jubilee), is announced with the sound of the shofar on Yom Kippur. This was also a year for the Land to lie fallow. G-d promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the shemita and yovel years. During Yovel, all land is returned to its original division from the time of Joshua, and all Jewish indentured servants are freed, even if they have not completed their six years of work. A Jewish indentured servant may not be given any demeaning, unnecessary or excessively difficult work,

and may not be sold in the public market. The price of his labor must be calculated according to the amount of time remaining until he will automatically become free. The price of land is similarly calculated. Should anyone sell his ancestral land, he has the right to redeem it after two years. If a house in a walled city is sold, the right of redemption is limited to the first year after the sale. The Levites’ cities belong to them forever. The Jewish People are forbidden to take advantage of one another by lending or borrowing with interest. Family members should redeem any relative who was sold as an indentured servant as a result of impoverishment.

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:

אָחִינוּ כָל בֵּית 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!

YOUR JEWISH INFORMATION RESOURCE - WWW.OHR.EDU

BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Hair Ye!

From Bernardo

Dear Rabbi,

What is the significance of hair? Why does Judaism seem so concerned with it? Women cover their hair, men have peyot (sidelocks), and boys have their first haircut at age three... Thank you!

Dear Bernardo,

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary on the Torah discusses the subject of hair and reveals some very powerful and insightful concepts. Take your face for a moment. There are parts of your face which we would consider more physical and parts which represent the more intellectual. Your mouth and your eyes would be examples of the more physical parts. Your forehead would be the part which represents the intellectual. We know that both of these categories are

important, but the physical requires special monitoring. If you allow yourself pursuit of the physical without some mechanism for control you could slide into a pattern of self destruction. Hence the hair. It is a marker that says: "Pay attention to this area! Monitor it so that it can be used for good. Don't allow it to run off unbridged!"

If you think about this for a while you will get a sense of why Judaism concerns itself with issues such as the covering of a woman's hair (sensuality), *peyot* for a man (dividing the part of the brain that controls the sensual from that which is involved in the intellectual); and even why we cut a young boy's hair for the first time at the age we begin his education (learning how to use his intellect to control his behavior).

In short, hair represents sensuality control.

- Sources: *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his Commentary on the Torah, Leviticus 19:27 and 21:5*

PARSHA INSIGHT

Continued from page one

the months, Shabbat and the Festivals, so too there are two types of holiness in the years themselves. The seventh year is a Shabbat of the Land. Its holiness is "fixed" like Shabbat. The holiness of *Yovel* (the Jubilee year) is like the holiness of the Festivals. Its holiness represents a partnership of G-d and Man. "For it is *Yovel; holy it will be to you.*"

If the shofar is not blown at the beginning of the *Yovel* year, the year is not a *Yovel*. If the slaves are not set free, the year is not a *Yovel*. If the fields do not return to their original owners, the year does not have the status of a *Yovel* and it is permitted to reap and sow like in an ordinary year.

The year of *shemita* is different. Even if Beit Din

fails to sanctify the year as a *shemita* year, it is nevertheless *shemita*. Its holiness is fixed. It is independent of Man. Even if the years have not been counted and there has been no cessation of sowing and reaping, the fields are considered ownerless and their produce exempt from tithes.

It is for this reason that *shemita* is called "*a Shabbat of rest for G-d*". *Shemita*, like Shabbat, allows for no junior partnerships.

- Sources: *Torat Kohanim, Rosh Hashana 9, Rambam Hilchot Shemita and Yovel, Ch. 26, Meshech Chochma in Iturei Torah*

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WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

The Poor and Unfortunate

The Midrashim (*Midrash Tanchuma, Behar* §3; *Midrash Mishlei*, Ch. 22; and *Vayikra Rabbah* §34:6) list up to nine different words in Hebrew which refer to the “poor”: *ani*, *evyon*, *misken*, *rash*, *dal*, *dach*, *mach*, *ish-techachim* and *heilech*. In this essay we will discover the nuances of each of these apparent synonyms and demonstrate how the Hebrew language is sensitive to different types of poverty and hardship.

The Talmud teaches (*Bava Metzia* 111b) that if one has the choice of hiring an *ani* or an *evyon* he should preferably hire the *ani*. The Talmud explains that an *evyon* is financially worse off than an *ani*, but an *evyon* is used to his situation and is not embarrassed to ask for hand-outs. The *ani*, on the other hand, is not in such an unfortunate position, and so he is too embarrassed to ask others to help him out. Because of this, the Talmud prefers hiring an *ani* to hiring an *evyon*. Thus, the Talmud seems to imply that *ani* and *evyon* describe degrees of poverty: An *ani* is poor but still has his pride, and attempts to maintain a normal façade. An *evyon* is so thoroughly impoverished that he has abandoned all pretense of self-sufficiency.

These definitions have ramifications in a halachic discussion surrounding the commandment of *matanot la'evyonim* — giving “presents to the *evyonim*” on the holiday of Purim. Some authorities, like Rabbi Yair Chaim Bachrach (1639-1702) and Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, maintain that one should optimally give these alms to an *evyon* as opposed to an ordinary *ani*.

However, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829-1907) and Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky explain that the original intent was not that alms should be given to an *evyon* as opposed to an *ani*; but rather to say that alms may even be given to an *evyon* — and certainly to an *ani*. This needed to be taught explicitly because an *ani* is the type of poor person who is still embarrassed to ask for charity. One might have thought that the commandment to give charity on Purim would focus on the *ani* in order to alleviate his poverty, while the *evyon* — who is so poor that he is not embarrassed to ask for charity — could be left to fend for himself. To counter that impression the Scroll of Esther says that the obligatory charity can even be given to an *evyon* — but optimally

should be given to an *ani* whose needs are more pressing and are otherwise less likely to be met.

Along these lines, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) mentions an idea that he saw in an unpublished commentary by Rabbi Avraham ben Yitzchak HaLevi Tamach (d. 1393) to *Eshet Chayil* (Ode to the Woman of Valor). The verse writes that she “stretched her palm to an *ani*, and sent forth her hands to an *evyon*” (Prov. 31:20). Rabbi Tamach writes that an *evyon*'s needs are greater than an *ani*'s, so the Woman of Valor just gave the *ani* a hand, while she gave two to the *evyon*. (Although Rabbi Wertheimer only saw this commentary in manuscript form, it was later published by Dr. Leon Aryeh Feldman of Rutgers University in a 1971 *Sefer Zikaron* honoring Dr. Shmuel Mirsky.)

Thus, as reflected in the Talmud and halacha, an *ani* is just poor, while an *evyon* is impoverished. The *ani* attempts to hide his poverty, while the *evyon* is too desperate, and is even willing to ask for charity.

Rabbi Avraham Bedersi HaPenini (1230-1300) notes that the word *ani* (spelled with an *ayin*) is derived from the word *inui* (“affliction”). He understands that an *ani* is a person suffering from any affliction — not just financial hardship. Nonetheless, in almost all contexts an *ani* is somebody suffering from fiscal problems.

The word *evyon* is related to the word *taav* (“desire”) because the poor man is full of desires but cannot fulfill them. Rabbi Bedersi notes that according to this even a rich man can be called an *evyon* if he desires more than he has and cannot realize those desires. Rabbi Bedersi notes that most wealthy people want more than they have, so in certain ways they can aptly be called *evyonim*. The fact that an objectively wealthy person can be termed “poor” because he feels that he is lacking gives us a better appreciation of a famous Mishna: “Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot” (Avot 4:1).

In his work *Sefer HaMussar*, Rabbi Yehuda Kalatz (a late 15th century scholar exiled from Spain to North Africa) concurs with the definition of an *evyon* as one who has many desires but no way to practically fulfill them. However, he adds that the *evyon* is the one who created this situation by refusing to even try to help

Continued on page nine

Yovel: Diversity and Equality

In this *parsha* we are introduced to the 7-year *shemita* cycle and the 50-year Yovel cycle, which would recur every seven *shemita* cycles. Both cycles were of profound importance in the spiritual, social and political life on the nation. Here we focus on the Yovel, which is characterized by three unique *mitzvot*: sounding the shofar, freeing of all Jewish servants, and the reversion of all land to its original landowner.

Yovel is a conjugate of the word *yaval*, which in the active form means “to bring.” Another conjugate is *yevul*, which is the yield that the land “brings home” to its owner. Yovel literally means “that which brings,” or more precisely, “that which brings home.” The Yovel restores people and property to their proper place and order.

Similar to Yom Kippur’s effect of moral rebirth of the *individual* each year, Yovel effects the moral rebirth of the *nation* once in fifty years. This rebirth has a healing and restorative effect on the nation’s internal and external affairs.

Many societal ills are the product of social class differences and unequal distribution of property. The sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty, independence and dependence are muted during the Yovel year by the restitution of property and release of servants.

Interestingly, a prerequisite for Yovel to be in force is that the whole nation must dwell in the Land of Israel. The Land was originally divided into twelve provinces, and each tribe took residence in its allotted portion. There is a deep relationship between Israel’s mission in the world and the diversity of the twelve tribes. The diverse characteristics are first given expression in the separate farewell blessings of Yaakov to each of his sons. Throughout their sojourn in Egypt, they retained their tribal identities and camped separately in the desert. In the individual farewell blessings of Moshe, the tribal characteristics are given further definition, in many instances relat-

ing specifically to the tribe’s destined portion in the Land of Israel.

The settling of Israel in the Land intended for it is referred to in many places as “planting.” The original “planting” of each tribe in its portion was deliberate, and the attainment of the national aim — which the mitzvah of Yovel promotes — depends on the settlement of the whole nation on its land and of each tribe in that part of the land best suited for the development of the tribe’s unique characteristics. Thus, during Yovel, property that had been sold reverted back to its original owner, preserving the tribal population placement.

Another striking purpose was served by the restoration of property. The automatic reversion of landed property to their original owners or their heirs prevented class disparity. It precluded the rise of an economic system whereby some families must live in perpetual poverty, while huge tracts of land remain in the hands of a privileged few. A class of wealthy landowners living in the midst of landless and dependent poor — the caste system that dominated Europe for centuries — could never come to be in the Land of Israel. Every one returned home in the Yovel year.

The Yovel year also functioned as an additional Sabbatical year, during which all work on the field was prohibited. Everyone was to consider himself as though he had received his field anew from G-d’s Hand. By laying down his hoe and sickle, every landowner proclaimed that the land belongs to G-d; and that prosperity and independence will flow from Him alone.

In this way, the national ‘Yom Kippur’ brought about a spiritual and political renewal of the people. May we experience it again speedily in our days.

• Sources: *Commentary*, Vayikra 25:10-12; 34



MEZUZAH maven

BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Knock-Out Blow!

Q: My children look forward all year to searching for the Afikomen on Seder night. This year they and their cousins made a mad dash through a door and knocked the mezuzah out of its case. I immediately reached down to pick it up, but my brother-in-law asked the *fifth* question: "Isn't it *muktzeh*?"

I hesitated for a moment, but before I could figure out what to do my ten-year-old son picked it up and put it in my hand. Now I had a second dilemma: Should I put it back in its case or carry it to a safe place? There was no one to ask, so I simply laid it on a side table and sat down to resume the Seder. But then my brother-in-law asked the *sixth* question: "Are we allowed to sit in a room that has no mezuzah?"

Now, I'm the one who is asking: Was the mezuzah *muktzeh*? Would I have been able to replace it into its case? And should we have vacated the room?

A: A mezuzah is a "miniature Torah scroll" containing the first two paragraphs of *Shema Yisrael*, and thus is not *muktzeh*. However, this particular scroll should be treated as *muktzeh* if its case was affixed to the doorpost in a manner that would require dismantling (forbidden on Shabbat and Yom Tov). This is because the word "*muktzeh*" means "set aside from use," and this mezuzah was inaccessible when Shabbat came in.

Nevertheless, since a holy scroll is lying in disgrace on the ground, the authorities agree that one may pick

it up. Preferably one should pick it up in an unusual manner in deference to those who maintain that it should still be treated as *muktzeh*.

Once the mezuzah enters one's hand, he may walk with it until he finds a safe place to deposit it. Logically, one would then proceed to slip it into the case that it fell from, with a *beracha*, in order to resume the mitzvah. Many authorities hold that merely slipping the scroll back into its case is not problematic even though on Shabbat and Yom Tov one is not allowed to "build or construct." Snapping a case onto the doorpost or onto the part of the case still affixed to the doorpost would not be allowed.

If putting up the mezuzah involves a possible Shabbat violation, one would be exempt from the mitzvah due to circumstances beyond his control. Because of this exemption one would not be required to leave the room, as this would entail effort. Certainly, there is no requirement to leave your house. When there is little effort necessary, some suggest that one should move to another room.

- Sources: *Shalmei Yehuda* 1:12, citing Rav Eliashiv; *Shevet Halevi* 4:143; *Agur B'Ohalecha* 41:2-5; *Bi'ur Halacha* and *Mishna Berurah* 518:45; *Magen Avraham* 19:1; *Pischei Teshuvah* and *Aruch HaShulchan* Y.D. 285:1. Cf. *Minchas Shabbos* 88:122 and *Mezuzos Beisecha* 186:22

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

himself. The *ani* works hard his whole life trying to make a living, but only manages to eke out a very limited livelihood. The *evyon*, on the other hand, is lazy. He wants money but he has no skills, learns no trade and does not involve himself in business. He does not even know how to effectively appeal for charity.

The word *misken* (commonly translated as “unfortunate”) is related to the word *sakana* (“danger”) because the poor man’s forced austerity puts his life in danger. Rabbi Yehuda Kalatz explains that *misken* refers to any person who expects others to support him but is instead met with mockery and derision. Similarly, Rabbi Wertheimer explains that a *misken* is so poor and downtrodden that people mistake him for a crazed lunatic and pay no attention to him.

The word *rash* is related to the word *yerusha* (“inheritance”) and refers to the dispossession of property. It is a synonym for “poor” because the poor person’s property has been “dispossessed” by others, causing him to lose everything. Alternatively, Rabbi Wertheimer suggests that the word *rash* is related to *yerusha* because *rash* denotes a poor person, the son of a poor person. Such a person grew up poor and has never experienced prosperity in his entire life, but “inherited” his poverty as his lot from the cradle.

The term *dal* literally means “minus” or “subtracted.” The Malbim explains that *dal* refers to any person who lost money, even if he is not poor enough to receive charity. This is why the word *dal* never appears in conjunction with charity. Rabbi Kalatz writes that *dal* specifically refers to a person who was once rich but then lost his affluence. In fact, Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) writes that the root *dalet-lammed* primarily refers to drawing water from a well (hence the word *d’li*, which means “pail”), but was borrowed to mean “poor” because a person bereft of his fortune is like a well emptied of its water.

The word *dach* means “smashed” and shares a root with the Hebrew word *medocha* (“pestle”). A *dach* refers to a poor man because his inability to procure food leaves him undernourished and emaciated — giving him a “skinny” or “smushed” appearance. Rabbi

Bedersi writes that even a rich person can be called *dach* if he has contracted some sickness which makes him skinny.

The word *mach* also means “smashed,” but in a more abstract rather than in a physical way. The poor man is “smashed” because he is at the mercy of others. Because he has to subjugate or subordinate himself to others he feels “squashed” by them. Alternatively, Rabbi Bedersi explains that a *mach* does not necessarily have a low income but is still “pressed” to meet certain financial obligations that are beyond him. Rabbi Pappenheim writes that the root of the word *mach* is the letter *kaf*, which refers to “hitting” or “smiting.” This describes a poor person who has been “stricken” with bad *mazal* (luck).

Some sources list the term *ish-techachim* (Prov. 29:13) as another synonym for a poor person, while others do not include this term. Rabbi Wertheimer explains that the root of the dispute lies in the word *techachim*’s root. If its root is the letter *kaf*, then (like *mach*) it refers to somebody who has been “stricken” with poverty. However, if it is *tav-vav-kaf*, then *techachim* is related to the word *toch* (“inside” or “middle”) and refers not to somebody poor, but to somebody with means (i.e. he has something “inside”), or to a person with a “middle”-of-the-road economic condition.

The word *heilech* as “poor” appears once in the Bible (I Sam. 12:4). The root of *heilech* literally means “going” and refers either to the poor person who “goes” around from door-to-door trying to raise money, or to the fact that all his assets “went” away. However, *heilech* can also refer to any sort of panhandler or itinerant merchant/salesman, regardless of his financial situation. Perhaps because it does not exclusively refer to somebody “poor”, *heilech* too appears only in some of the Midrashic sources above, but not in all of them.

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

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Profiles of Ohr Somayach Students, Alumni and Staff

By Rabbi Shlomo Simon

Yosef Shumulinskiy

**Age 50 - Born and Raised: Zhytomyr, Ukraine
Technological University St. Petersburg, USSR: BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering
Center Program since March 2019**

In 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yosef and his entire family – his brothers, sister, parents, in-laws and their children — all moved from the Ukraine to Detroit, Michigan. They were a close Jewish family, who, although aware of their Jewish roots (their neighbors in the USSR wouldn't let them forget), had neither Jewish education nor tradition. They were totally secularized.

Upon arrival in the USA, with virtually no knowledge of English and needing to support his wife and two small children, Yosef took the first job he could find — as a cleaner in a warehouse during the day. In the evenings he worked as a massage therapist. His wife found a job behind the counter of a local bakery. Until they could learn English it was unfeasible for them to find employment matching their educational and professional levels. They both attended The Technological University in St. Petersburg and both had Masters Degrees in Mechanical Engineering.

Among the novelties he saw in his new country and new neighborhood were men in black suits and black hats. When he asked a Russian friend about them, the answer was: "Religious fanatics. Don't go near those guys." That piqued Yosef's curiosity, which led him to drop into a shul in his neighborhood on Shabbos, "just to see what they do there." As *hashgacha* would have it, on that visit he met Rabbi Avraham Abba Friedman, a local rabbi who had dedicated his life to advancing Torah education in Detroit, and, when immigrants from the USSR arrived, to *kiruv* with that community.

Rabbi Friedman brought him home after shul for a wonderful meal and invited him to come to a *shiur* he gave to Russians on Sunday. After attending the *shiur* for a few months Rabbi Friedman asked him if he'd like to come with him to New York for a weekend in the Borough Park Jewish community and to attend a *bris* — his, Yosef's *bris*. The trip to Borough Park was an

eye-opener. He bonded with the family he was staying with and enjoyed a "*heimish*" Shabbos experience. On his return to Detroit, Yosef started going to shul every Shabbos, and, eventually, every day. After a while he and his wife decided to put their two boys in a religious day school in Detroit. After a couple of years the family was fully observant.

In the meantime his brother-in-law had found work in Detroit as an engineer and helped find a job for his sister, Yosef's wife, as an engineer in the same company. She, in turn, recommended her husband for a job as an engineer in the same concern. Today, Yosef's wife works for General Motors as a Quality Assurance Engineer. Yosef has also risen in his profession, eventually establishing and running a manufacturing company in Detroit for a wealthy Russian businessman, and, most recently, working as a principal engineer in a large automotive corporation. His two sons are married. They both spent years learning in yeshiva and Kollel in the US and in Israel. One son earned a degree in engineering while in Kollel at Ner Yisroel in Baltimore and is today an engineer in Detroit. His other son, after learning for many years in *yeshivot* in Israel and in Lakewood, New Jersey, now works for Beth Medrash Govoha as a fundraiser. Yosef and his wife had a daughter after moving to the States. She is now a student at Beis Yaakov High School in Detroit.

On a Friday a few weeks ago, Yosef left his employment, and on the following Monday landed in Israel to come to Ohr Somayach to learn until Pesach, before he plans to start a new job. He's in the Center Program. In response to a question about his experience here, Yosef answered: "Excellent! It was worthwhile to leave a job just to come and learn here." We wish him the best and are confident that with the *emunah* he expresses and the positive attitude he has he will continue to succeed in both worlds.

