

OHRNET

SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI · FOR THE WEEK ENDING 22 IYAR 5759 · MAY 8, 1999 · VOL. 6 NO. 30

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

CLEAR AS A BELL

“Proclaim freedom throughout the land for all its inhabitants” (25:10)

On July 8, 1776, a chime that changed the world rang out from the tower of Independence Hall in Pennsylvania. The Liberty Bell summoned citizens to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.

Some twenty years earlier the Pennsylvania Assembly had ordered the making of the Bell to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of William Penn’s 1701 Charter of Privileges.

The bell was inscribed with a verse from this week’s parsha: *“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”* As the bell was to commemorate the “jubilee” (from the Hebrew *yovel*) of Penn’s Charter, this quotation from the Bible was considered apt, since the preceding line is *“And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year.”*

One of the most famous aspects of the Liberty Bell is its crack.

When the Bell was hung for its trial ringing on March 10, 1753, Isaac Norris wrote: *“I had the mortification to hear that it was cracked...by a stroke of the clapper.”*

The bell was melted down and

recast. An ounce and a half of copper per pound was added in an attempt to make the new bell less brittle.

On March 29, 1753, the new bell was raised into the belfry. Nobody was too happy with the way it sounded. *“It seems that they have added too much copper.”*

This second bell also cracked. This crack grew and grew until finally, on Washington’s Birthday in 1846, it rendered the Bell “un-ringable.” To this day, on the Fourth of July, the Liberty Bell is “rung” by being tapped symbolically.

If you think about it, it’s amazing that a famous symbol should be something so imperfect. More — its very imperfection is part of its fame.

Sometimes, when we look at our lives, it’s easy to become despondent. The clock seems to tick faster every minute. There is so much to achieve, and we have done so little. More and more what seemed minor imperfections in ourselves now appear to us as major character flaws. Will we ever dominate our negative drives? Will we ever free ourselves from the knee-jerk reactions of our lower selves and take the wheel of our lives in accordance with the wishes of the Creator? It’s easy to despair...

Maybe it’s not by chance that it

should be that a cracked bell “proclaim freedom throughout the land.” We’re not perfect. All of us have our cracks. But even the most flawed of us, even those whose merits do not ring out like a bell, have the potential to proclaim freedom — real freedom. For real freedom is when we control our impulses rather than them controlling us. We can only achieve that freedom, however, if we are prepared to engrave deeply the words of the Torah on our hearts. The Torah can make an impression even on the hardest heart of iron. Even the least sensitive and the most forlorn of us will find that, if we are prepared to engrave the Torah’s words of liberty on our iron hearts, we will hear freedom proclaimed like a bell throughout our lives.

DAY OF THE LAND

“I will make the Land desolate and your foes who dwell upon it will be desolate... Then will the land be appeased for its sabbaticals during all the years of desolation, while you are in the land of your foes; then the land will rest and it will appease for its sabbaticals...”
(26:32/35)

When the Jewish People fail to keep the laws of *shemita* and *yovel* — the Land of Israel’s years of rest — they are sent into exile. If they do not let the land rest during their presence, it will rest during their absence. Seventy violated

continued on page three

PARSHA OVERVIEW

BEHAR

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This “Shabbos” for the land is called *shemita*. (5754 was a *shemita* year in Israel.) 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. Hashem promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the *shemita* and *yovel* years to sustain the Jewish People. In the year of *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.

BECHUKOSAI

The Torah promises prosperity for the Jewish People if they follow Hashem’s commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of being the Chosen People, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process that will fall upon them when Divine protection is removed. These punishments, whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, concludes with the details of *erachin* – the process by which someone vows to give the *Beis Hamikdash* the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal, or property.

HAFTARAH

The weekly Torah portion describes the mishap to befall Israel if they do not heed the Torah; the Haftarah predicts the calamity shortly before it actually occurred. The reason for G-d’s wrath is basically

the worship of idols and the lack of trust in the G-d of Israel. The passage also contrasts the misfortune of one who does not have full belief and trust in G-d to the success and bliss of the one who does.

YIRMIYAHU 16:19 - 17:14

Omnipotence means He is the sole true existence and is constantly sustaining the existence of the creation. G-d has complete control; nothing happens without His will or power. Consequently, there is no place for worshipping elements of the creation as the pagans do, even though these icons symbolize certain powers through which G-d sustains the world.

This belief brings us to the second concept, the concept of trust, as this belief should bring us to have complete trust in G-d’s ability to help us in times of need.

ONE ORIGIN

As mentioned, the causes of the first exile were idol-worship and lack of trust in G-d. Both evolve from the same basis — failure to believe in G-d’s Unity and Omnipotence. The belief in G-d’s

I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

“And five of you will pursue a hundred [enemy soldiers].” (26:8)

This refers to our weakest soldiers; our weakest soldier will be able to defeat twenty enemies. Our strongest soldier will be able to defeat a thousand or more.

• *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh, based on Toras Kohanim*

לע"נ
אבי מורי דב אריה ב"ר שמואל הלוי ז"ל
ואמי מורתי מחלה זלאטה בת הרב משה יעקב ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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Sabbatical years before and during the First *Beis Hamikdash* era resulted in seventy years of Babylonian exile.

Prior to the Roman exile, Josephus Flavius testified to the abundance in *Eretz Yisrael*: “For it is an extremely fertile land, a land of pastures and many varieties of trees.... The entire land is planted by her inhabitants and not one stretch of earth is left uncared for. Because the Land is blessed with such goodness, the cities of the Galilee and numerous villages are densely populated. Even the smallest of villages boasts of at least 15,000 inhabitants.”

In 1260, the Ramban (Nachmanides), writing to his son from *Eretz Yisrael*, gave a very different picture: “What shall I tell you concerning the condition of the Land... She is greatly forsaken and her desolation is great... That of greater holiness is more desolate than that of lesser holiness. Jerusalem is most desolate and destroyed.”

Six centuries later, in 1867, Mark Twain found the Land in similar condition: “A desolate land whose soil, though more than sufficiently rich, produces only thorn bush and thistle — a silent mourning expanse. There exists here a state of neglect that even the imagination is incapable of granting the possibility of beauty of life and productivity. We arrived in peace to Mount Tabor...we did not see a soul during the entire journey...everywhere we went

there was no tree or shrub....” And Twain wrote: “*The Land of Israel dwells in sackcloth and ashes. The spell of a curse hovers over her, which has blighted her fields and imprisoned the might of her power with shackles.*” Twain saw the desolation as so great that he wrote: “*The Land of Israel is a wasteland...The Land of Israel is no longer to be considered part of the actual world...*”

Compare this quasi-post-nuclear scene with the Torah’s dire warning:

“*And the foreigner who will come from a distant land — when they see the plagues of the Land and the illnesses with which Hashem has inflicted it; sulfur and salt, a conflagration of the entire Land, it cannot be sown and it cannot sprout, and no grass shall rise up on it...And all the nations will say ‘For what reason did Hashem do so to this Land?’*” (Devarim 29:21)

For centuries, the Christian church tried to make mileage out of the above verse, claiming that the desolation of the Land of Israel was proof that G-d had rejected the Jewish People. However, the Ramban points out that the desolation of the Land is really a blessing in disguise. In this week’s parsha, the Torah says “*I will make the Land desolate, and your foes who dwell upon it will be desolate...*” During all our exiles, our Land will not accept our enemies. It will refuse to be fertile, so that no other nation may settle in it. An army may conquer territory,

but to establish a permanent settlement requires the co-operation of the Land.

Maharsha writes: “*As long as Israel does not dwell on its Land, the Land does not give her fruits as she is accustomed. When she will begin to flower again, however, and give of her fruits, this is a clear sign that the end — the time of the Redemption — is approaching, when all of Israel will return to its Land.*”

Eretz Yisrael is like a faithful wife told that her husband languishes in a foreign jail from which he will never return. Nevertheless, she waits for him, accepting no suitor in his place, convinced that one day, he will return.

When we read of Mark Twain’s description of the Land of Israel, it’s difficult for us to believe that he could be speaking of the *Eretz Yisrael* that we know today, a land blooming and blossoming. Exported Israeli fruit, vegetables and flowers grace tables around the world. Israeli agricultural experts are sent to developing countries. The desert which “*is no longer to be considered part of the actual world*” has become a most beautiful garden.

Sources:

Day Of The Land - Talmud Shabbos 33a,
Josephus Flavius - “The Jewish Wars”;

Ramban “Letter to his Son” 1260;

Mark Twain “The Innocents Abroad or the New Pilgrim’s Progress” 1867

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

ASHDOD

One of the five major Philistine cities, Ashdod was the site of the temple of the idol Dagan, where the Holy Ark was brought after its capture from the vanquished Israelites. In Shmuel I (5:1-8) there is a description of the disgrace visited upon the idol, and the suffering of the city’s inhabitants, as punishment for their treatment of the Ark.

This perennial thorn in the side of Israel was the



object of many prophetic curses, and was finally conquered by King Uzzia of Judea (*Divrei Hayamim II 26:6*).

Modern Ashdod, established in 1957, has one of the country’s major ports and is a growing city with a large immigrant population, religious communities and *yeshivot*, alongside some large industries.

THE MISSING PIECE

Rabbi Chanina bit off a piece from his *esrog*, dipped it and ate it. He used the remaining *esrog* to fulfill the mitzvah of taking the four species on Succos.

Three questions are raised in regard to this incident:

- The *gemara* asks: How could he use an *esrog* which is missing any part of it when the *mishna* (*Succah 34b*) explicitly disqualifies such an *esrog*?
- Tosefos asks: How could he eat from an *esrog* set aside for fulfilling the mitzvah when the *gemara* (*Succah 46b*) explicitly prohibits doing so?
- Tosefos further asks: How could he eat before fulfilling the mitzvah when the *mishna* (*Succah 38a*) even requires him to interrupt his meal if he started eating before taking the species?

In regard to the first question, the *gemara* answers that the *mishna*'s disqualification of an incomplete *esrog* is limited to the first day when there is a Torah obligation to take the four species. Rabbi Chanina used this incomplete *esrog* on one of the other days when taking the four species is only of rabbinic origin; the Sages who extended this mitzvah to the other days of Succos did not insist upon all the Torah requirements on those days. Just as they did not disqualify a borrowed *esrog* on those days, so too they did not rule out an incomplete one.

Two solutions are offered for the second problem. Tosefos answers that Rabbi Chanina set aside for the mitzvah only as much *esrog* as was necessary for fulfilling the mitzvah, so that the part he ate was not included. This approach is problematic, because on the first day he needed the entire *esrog*. Tosefos solves this problem as well by proposing that Rabbi Chanina set the entire *esrog* aside for the mitzvah on Day One, but only as much as he needed for the mitzvah for the remaining days. *Ritva* suggests a much simpler approach, that Rabbi Chanina ate from an *esrog* which had been designated for eating and only later decided to use it for the mitzvah.

The third question and the answer provided by Tosefos form the basis for an interesting discussion on the issue of eating before taking the four species. Tosefos writes that Rabbi Chanina did not eat from the *esrog* and then fulfill the mitzvah on the same day; rather, he ate from the *esrog* on the previous day (after having fulfilled the mitzvah) and he used this incomplete *esrog* for the mitzvah the next day.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim 652:2*) rules that it is forbidden to eat before taking the four species. *Magen Avraham* (Footnote 4) explains that this refers to eating a meal, but not to eating some fruit or light refreshment. This would be permitted, just as it is permitted before saying the *Ma'ariv* prayer at night (*Orach Chaim 235:2*) or before searching for *chametz* the night before Pesach (*421:2*), even though a meal is prohibited in these cases. The aforementioned answer given by Tosefos seems to challenge this position, because he could simply have answered that Rabbi Chanina was not indulging in a meal, only eating a piece of *esrog* fruit.

Magen Avraham responds to this challenge by citing the *gemara*'s language in describing the incident: Tosefos understood that the report of Rabbi Chanina "dipping" the *esrog* suggests that he was eating a regular meal in which it was customary to dip the components into something before eating them.

• *Succah 36b*

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

The relationship of each of the four species with one another is fascinating. It is impossible to fulfill the mitzvah of taking them on Succos unless you have all of them. This indicates unity. Yet each of the species has its own individual character.

The *gemara* (*Menachos 27a*) breaks them down into categories — the *lulav* and *esrog* from trees which produce fruit and the *hadas* and *arava* from trees which do not. The Midrash makes an even finer distinction in assigning to the *esrog* the qualities of taste and fragrance, the *lulav* taste (dates) with no fragrance, the *hadas* fragrance without taste, and the *arava* devoid of both.

Taste and smell symbolize Torah knowledge and good deeds. There are four kinds of Jews corresponding to these species — those with both Torah and good deeds, those with Torah but lacking good deeds, those with good deeds but lacking Torah, and those who lack both. The message in both the *gemara* and Midrash is that Hashem commanded us to take all four species to symbolize the need for all the different components of the Jewish People to unite when crying out to Him in a time of trouble and when celebrating in a Festival time of joy.

Such a need for unity might lead us to think that all four species should actually be bound together into one unit. Rabbi Eliezer points out that an analysis of the passage (*Vayikra 22:40*) indicates that the *esrog* must be separate from the other three. The Torah connects the *lulav*, *hadas* and *arava* with a connecting prefix which translates as "and," but does not connect the *esrog* with this group. This is why we bind together those three and take them in the right hand, because they are three in number and deserving of being taken by the more important hand, while we take the *esrog* alone with our left hand.

If unity is so crucial, it may be asked, why did the Torah order us to keep the *esrog*, symbolizing the righteous Torah scholar with both taste and fragrance, separate from the three other species which are so dependent on his influence?

It has been suggested that in this balance between unity and separation lies the formula for successful interaction between the religious leader and those whom he wishes to teach and inspire. The *esrog* must be careful to maintain his standards and not lower them out of a desire to achieve greater social acceptability. Maintaining this distance must not, however, lead him to abandon his responsibility to enrich the other species with his own taste and fragrance. All four species must therefore be taken together, three in one hand and one in the other, to achieve this perfect blend.

• *Succah 34b*

PARSHA Q&A?

BEHAR

1. If one possesses *shemita* food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
2. From where does the *yovel* year get its name?
3. What prohibitions are derived from the verse “*v’lo sonu ish es amiso* — a person shall not afflict his fellow”?
4. If a home in a walled city is sold, when can it be redeemed?
5. What does the word “days” mean in this week’s Parsha?
6. What is considered a walled city?
7. To what is one who leaves *Eretz Yisrael* compared?
8. Why does Rashi mention the plague of the firstborn in this week’s Parsha?
9. List three prohibitions which demonstrate the dignity with which one must treat a Jewish indentured servant.
10. Where is it permitted to prostrate oneself on a stone floor?

BECHUKOSAI

1. To what do the words “*bechukosai telechu*” refer?
2. When is rain “in its season?”
3. What is meant by “you shall eat your bread to satisfaction”?
4. What is meant by “and a sword will not pass through your land?”
5. Which progression of seven transgressions are taught in Chapter 26, and why in that particular order?
6. What is one benefit which the Jewish People derive from the Land of Israel’s state of ruin?
7. What positive element is implied by the words “and I will bring them into the land of their enemies?”
8. In verse 26:42, why is the word “remember” not used in connection with the name of Yitzchak?
9. What happens when a poor person dedicates the value of a person to the *Beis Hamikdash* and doesn’t have sufficient funds to fulfill his vow?
10. Where must “*ma’aser sheini*” be eaten?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

BEHAR

1. 25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
2. 25:10 - From the sounding of the *shofar*. A ram’s horn is called a *yovel*.
3. 25:17 - One may not intentionally hurt people’s feelings, nor give bad advice while secretly intending to reap benefit.
4. 25:29 - Only within the first year after the sale.
5. 25:29 - The days of an entire year.
6. 25:29 - A city surrounded by a wall since the time of Yehoshua.
7. 25:38 - To one who worships idols.
8. 25:38 - The prohibition against taking interest is accompanied by the phrase, “I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of Egypt.” Rashi explains that just as Hashem discerned in Egypt between those who were firstborn and those who were not, so too will Hashem discern and punish those who

- lend with interest, pretending they are acting on behalf of others.
9. 25:39-43 - a) Do not make him perform humiliating tasks; b) Do not sell him publicly; c) Do not make him perform unnecessary jobs.
 10. 26:1 - In the *Mikdash*.

BECHUKOSAI

1. 26:3 - Laboring in the study of Torah.
2. 26:4 - At times when people are not outside (e.g., Shabbos nights).
3. 26:5 - You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
4. 26:6 - No foreign army will travel through your land even on their way to a different country.
5. 26:14,15 - Not studying Torah, not observing *mitzvos*, rejecting those who observe *mitzvos*, hating Sages, preventing others from observing *mitzvos*, denying that Hashem gave the *mitzvos*, denying the existence of Hashem.

- They are listed in this order because each transgression leads to the next.
6. 26:32 - No enemy nation will be able to settle in the Land of Israel.
 7. 26:41 - Hashem Himself, so to speak, will bring them into their enemies’ land. This means that even when the Jews are in exile, Hashem will supply them with leaders who inspire them to keep the Torah. This guards the Jews from assimilating into the host culture.
 8. 26:42 - Because the image of Yitzchak’s ashes (who was prepared to be brought as an offering) upon the altar is always before Hashem.
 9. 27:8 - The person whose value was donated goes before the *kohen*, who sets the obligation according to the poor person’s ability to pay.
 10. 27:30 - In Jerusalem.

PAR-PLEXED! How do you answer this perplexing Parsha question?

Parshas Bechukosai starts with ten verses describing blessings that result from Torah study and observance. Then, more than thirty verses describes the curses brought about by laxity in Torah study and observance. Why do there seem to be more curses than blessings? Doesn’t this contradict the principle that G-d always rewards in greater measure than He punishes?

Answer:

The blessings are written in general terms; each one is really an entire category and includes many blessings. Each curse, on the other hand, is spelled out in detail (in order to inspire fear and alarm). In reality, though, there are more blessings than curses.

• Ibn Ezra

FOOD FIGHT

Name@Withheld from France
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I would like your own point of view about this "anecdote." It's Friday, early in the afternoon, a son talks to his mother over the phone, telling her he won't be able to come to her place for Shabbat dinner, and asks her if he can come to pick up one challah (bread) for his Shabbat at his place where he lives with his wife and baby. The mother had baked two challahs, and the son only asks for one. She replies: "No, because I need two challahs in order to say the blessing (according to the rules)." So she won't give her son one because of this, and of course the son has no challahs at all for his Shabbat.

Question: Was she right? Would not it have been better in this situation to skip the "do it by the book" aspect, and to show her love to the son by giving him one challah? Thank you very much for your reply.

Dear Name@Withheld,

It's a mitzvah on Shabbat to say the blessing over two whole loaves of bread. Many use braided challah loaves, but any whole loaves (kosher, of course) will do. In our home, we sometimes use *matzah*. (Did you ever see braided *matzah*?)

Now, assuming the son had other food, it wasn't a question of his going hungry. Rather, he wanted the mitzvah of enjoying a proper Shabbat meal, and to say the blessing over one whole challah loaf, at least.

Should the mother give away her mitzvah of having two whole loaves in order that the son be able to have the mitzvah of having at least one whole loaf?

Strictly speaking, one doesn't have to give up one's own mitzvah in order

to allow the other person to do a mitzvah. But bringing peace and harmony among people, especially among family members, is a very great mitzvah, so there's a strong case to be made against the mother.

But are there any other relevant details? For example, is this the first time the son canceled out on his mother at the last minute? Does she get the feeling that he takes advantage of her goodness and love? Without hearing, first-hand, both sides of the story, it's difficult to give a definitive answer to your question.

Relationships flourish when each person focuses on his obligations to the other person. But when each person focuses on the other person's obligations to him, relationships falter.

ABOUT FACE

Jonathan from Silver Spring, MD
<tetriziz@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We recently received a wedding invitation and it said: "Two O'clock in the afternoon, *Kabalat Panim*." What is "*Kabalat Panim*?"

Dear Jonathan,

Kabalat Panim literally means "receiving of the faces." In plain English it means "reception." It refers to the reception before the actual *chupa* (wedding ceremony), when the bride and groom and families receive the guests.

Have a good time at the wedding!

KADDISH: ELEVEN OR TWELVE?

Gerdy Trachtman
<gerdyt@erols.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is there any halachic basis for the kaddish (mourners' prayer) to be said 11 months for a deceased par-

ent? Some people say it for 12 months. Please give me the textual sources for this difference. Thank you very much.

Dear Gerdy Trachtman,

The Talmudic Sages teach that the maximum that a very wicked person is punished in the afterlife in *gehinom* is 12 months. The public recitation of *kaddish* shields the departed soul from this punishment. Hence, *kaddish* is recited during the first year after a parent's passing.

However, the custom is to recite *kaddish* for 11 months only. Saying *kaddish* the entire 12 months would give the impression that the deceased was a very wicked person who needs protection the entire 12 months.

So, unless the parent specifically requested it, or unless it's known that the parent was a willful transgressor, *kaddish* is said for only 11 months.

Sources:

- *Gesher HaChaim*
- *P'nei Baruch*

JUDGING OTHERS

Beth from New Jersey wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have been working on my observance of *lashon hara* (negative speech) and judging others favorably, with limited results. Do you have any suggestions?

Of course the ideal would be to become spiritually wonderful (and the aversion to gossip would come by itself). But, I know that, sometimes, the action has to be forced, and the feelings come later. I just need some tips on the forcing! I have found that, sometimes, the best way to get rid of a bad habit is to sneak up on it. If anyone has anything that they found worked, I would love to hear it! Thanks for your time!

Dear Beth,

Let's let Rabbi Akiva answer your question. Yes, it's the old "drip on the rock" theory. Rabbi Akiva realized at age forty that just as a sustained trickle of water can carve rock, so too sustained Torah study can change our heart. Solid change can be achieved with constant, daily, study. So, study works about negative speech and judging favorably every day (Examples: "The Other Side of the Story," "Courtrooms of the Mind" and "A Lesson a Day"). Even a few minutes a day will, over the course of time, create a change in you.

And don't forget to judge yourself favorably too. Be

happy with any change, no matter how incremental.

If you find yourself speaking negatively with certain friends, you may need to get different friends. Avoiding people, places and situations that trigger forbidden activity is great way to change one's behavior.

Here's a stratagem to help you feel positive even towards people who annoy you: When you see someone doing something that bothers you, and you think to yourself "What an obnoxious boor," imagine the person as a little baby. Picture his mother's unqualified love for him and her joy as she holds him in her arms. Now try to feel a little bit of that love.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Re: Thank You Ohrnet:

Yours is one of the best e-mails that I get. Look forward to it each week.

David Fihrer <fihrer@interlog.com>

I have no questions for you at this time; only a word of thanks. I stumbled upon your web site while looking for the words to a specific prayer and have now book-marked the site. I am greatly enjoying and learning from my perusal of the questions and answers provided, and look forward to receiving your newsletter. Many thanks for this wonderful service!

Jodi Fox, Chicago, Ill <jodi@get-shrunk.com>

Re: Anorexia (Ohrnet Tazria-Metzora):

This is in response to your letter to the parents whose daughter has anorexia. I had a daughter who had anorexia but thank G-d she is fully recovered. Anorexia is an adolescent's response to gain control over a situation where she feels out of control. While an anorexic feels hopeless to control most things in her life, the one thing she can control is the amount of food she eats and this, in a sense, gives her a sense of empowerment. Anorexics are perfectionists. The only way to end this cycle of inappropriate empowerment is with intensive psychotherapy where the anorexic can regain a sense of self worth. The other thing I want to say is that the last thing these parents should talk to their daughter about is food. Parents find it very difficult to just sit there while their child starves themselves. Yet, discussions about food just get anorexics very upset, and give them an excuse to eat less. Parents, who have daughters with this condition, must learn to give up some

parental control and let the experts deal with this condition. If you wish, you can give these parents my e-mail address. For the sake of my daughter's privacy, please do not use my name.

Name@Withheld

Please forward this message to the family who wrote about their anorexic daughter. They (and their daughter) will find the works of Rav Avraham Twersky, *shlita*, to be of enormous help. I especially suggest "Living Each Day." This is a *yoman* (daily calendar) with inspirational quotations from various Jewish works.

I am personally recovering from this debilitating disease and its closely related cousins: Compulsive overeating and bulimia.

You all do very important work. May Hashem grant you all continued success in your outreach and educational efforts.

Name@Withheld

The family responds:

Dear Rabbi,

My heart is full of "thank-yous" for your kindness in attempting to help me with my daughter's problem of anorexia. It was so nice to hear from the many kind people who wrote to you to respond to my pleas. Thank you for forwarding to me all their messages. I am in the process of answering every person who e-mailed me, and if you get any more responses it is with my permission that you give them my e-mail address so they can contact me directly. Again, Rabbi, many thanks!

Giving People the Benefit of the Doubt

“Don’t judge a person till you’ve reached his place,” say our Sages in *Pirkei Avos*. And even when you’ve reached his place, do you know fast he had to go to get there? Take the case of the...

INTENSIVE CAR

In the U. S. these days, it is not uncommon for police cars to have video cameras mounted on their dashboards. I recently had the opportunity to see one of these videos in which the police were in a very high speed pursuit of a car that did not pull over when they signaled for it to do so. The police chased the car for miles at speeds approaching 100 mph. The car was weaving in and out of lanes. It side-swiped several cars and trucks, but it would not stop. The

police radioed for help. More speeding. More hair-raising weaving through traffic. Finally the driver of the car lost control and crashed into a guardrail.

The police car pulled up behind him. The cop jumped out with his gun drawn. Cautiously he approached the driver, yelling for him to put his hands on his head. What crime could this person have committed to risk his life (and the lives of so many others) in such a dangerous escape attempt? Bank robbery? Murder? Well, it turned out that the driver was an elderly man with Alzheimer’s disease who had no idea who or where he was, or how he’d gotten there. If not for Hashem watching over the situation, he could have easily been killed in the chase or by the policeman.

• Pinny <Pinny151@aol.com>
 Concept based on “The Other Side of the Story”
 by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

“My son is beginning to learn Hebrew, and he knows all the letters. But he makes mistakes with the vowels, and with knowing where the words begin and end. For example, the other day he was reading from the *Chumash*, and he came across a phrase that he translated into English as ‘Who? Who? Who? Who? What?’ What verse was he reading?”

Answer:

Exodus 13:10 states: “You shall observe this statute in its designated time ‘*mi’yamim yamima*’ — from year to year.” “*Mi’yamim yamima*,” is spelled with the Hebrew letters “*mem yud mem yud mem*” and “*yud mem yud mem hey*.” Breaking up this phrase incorrectly, and reading every two letters as a separate word, you get “*mem yud*” spelling “*mi*” (who) four times, followed by “*mem hey*” spelling “*mah*” (what).

• Riddle courtesy of Kol Simcha 103.5 FM, Friday mornings in English from 9:30am - 1:00pm

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

BEHAR

Ramban

25:3	First Six Years
25:9	Two Kinds of “Shofar”
25:10	The Word “Yovel”
25:20	Three Year Blessing
25:23	Ban on Perpetual Sale
25:36	Two Kinds of Usury
26:1	Commitment in Hostile Environment

Sefer Hachinuch

330	Counting until Yovel
331	Call of the Shofar
337	Unfair Profit
342	National Land
343	Usury

Sforno

25:4	“A Shabbos to Hashem”
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BECHUKOSAI

Ramban

26:6	Taming of Wild Animals
26:11	Theology of Medicine
26:12	Promise for the Future
26:16	Analysis of Jewish History

Sefer Hachinuch

350	Dedicating One’s Value
352	Switching <i>Korbanos</i>
360	Animal Tithes