

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT · 10 TAMMUZ 5775 · JUNE 27, 2015 · VOL. 22 NO. 37

PARSHA INSIGHTS

I WISH I'D COME HERE BEFORE

*“Moshe stripped Aharon’s garments from him and dressed Elazar his (Aharon’s) son in them; then Aharon died there on Mount Hor...” (20:28)*

Once there was a secular Jewish family who sent their son to Israel for the summer to study hydroponic farming on a left-wing kibbutz.

At the end of his expected stay, the son phoned home to say that he wasn’t coming back; he had decided to become religious and go to Yeshiva. The parents were heart-broken, but what could they do?

The following year they sent their daughter to study Arabic at the Hebrew University. At the end of the semester, the parents received a long and very apologetic email from their daughter explaining that she had been spending Shabbat with a religious family and had decided to stay on in Israel and become religious.

The mother and father were beside themselves. They decided to seek the help of their local, and not Orthodox, rabbi.

After hearing their tale of woe, he thought for a while and said, “When was the last time you checked your *mezuzot*?”

It’s difficult to describe to someone who isn’t religious what keeping the Torah feels like. And why it is so compelling.

A friend of mine described waking up on Sunday morning after his first full-fledged Shabbat. “I thought it was Monday morning. It was a kind of out-of body-experience.”

The Midrash in this week’s Torah portion describes the passing of Aharon from this world:

*Moshe and Aharon and Elazar ascended Mount Hor. Then*

*G-d descended and took Aharon’s soul with a kiss, as it says that Aharon died, “according to the ‘Mouth’ of G-d.”*

*Moshe and Elazar both kissed Aharon, each on one cheek.*

*Moshe said to Aharon, “What do you see?”*

*He said, “I don’t see anything except for the Cloud of Glory clothing the limbs that you are disrobing.”*

*They undressed Aharon until his thighs, and the Cloud of Glory moved up and covered him.*

*Then they disrobed him until his neck.*

*Moshe said, “Aharon, my brother. What do you see? What is death?”*

*He replied, “Until now, nothing except that the Cloud of Glory is coming up to my neck.”*

*When they had completely removed his garments, the Cloud of Glory covered Aharon completely.*

*Moshe called to him, “Aharon, my brother, what is the death of the righteous? Where are you?” He replied, “I am not worthy to tell you, but I wish I had come here before.”*

When someone becomes religious, his non-religious friends are often curious to find out, “What’s it like to be *frum*?”

The only answer he can give is, “I can’t describe it you, but one thing I can tell you is that I wish I’d come here before.”

• Source: based on an idea by Rabbi Shimshon Pincus

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

Love of the Land, written by Rav Mendel Weinbach, zt”l • Parsha Insights written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

© 1992 - 2015 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

## NEDARIM 37 - 43

*“Just as I, Moshe Rabbeinu, taught you for free, likewise you (teachers of Torah) must likewise teach Torah for free.”*

Our *gemara* derives this from examining a verse in which Moshe tells the people, “And G-d commanded me at that time to teach you.” (Deut. 4:14), together with another verse with his saying, “See! I have taught you statutes and judgments as G-d commanded me.” (Deut. 4:5)

How do we see from this that Moshe was told to teach for free and that likewise all teachers of Torah should do so for free?

After Moshe told the people that he was commanded to teach them Torah, he added the words “as G-d commanded me.” What exactly was Moshe conveying to the people with this seemingly enigmatic phrase? Logical deduction shows that this can only mean that Moshe was commanded to teach Torah for free. The reasoning: Could it mean that G-d commanded him to take payment? Not logical, since why should he be forced to require payment? Or could it mean that Moshe was teaching Torah just as G-d taught it to him, and they should not doubt his teachings? Also not logical, since the Torah states that G-d guaranteed that the people would always trust Moshe as their prophet and teacher: “And they will also believe in you (Moshe) forever.” (Ex. 19:9) Therefore, the words “as G-d commanded me” can only mean to teach Torah for free. (Rabbeinu Nissim; for halachic sources and rulings regarding this topic see Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De’ah 246)

• *Nedarim 37a*

*“Abayei said, ‘We have a tradition from our Forefathers and Rabbis that there is no true poverty except for one who is lacking Torah knowledge.’”*

This is what was taught by the Sage in Bavel. Our *gemara* relates that a similar idea was taught in Eretz Yisrael in the following manner: “One who has knowledge has everything; without it what does he have?; whoever has acquired knowledge, what is he lacking?; one who has not acquired knowledge, what has he acquired?” (It’s quite a snappy-sounding statement in Aramaic!)

Our Sages teach that the word “*zaken*” does not necessarily refer to an elderly person, but is an acronym for a Torah scholar — “*zeh kana chochma*”, “this person has acquired knowledge”. One might recognize that the words “*zeh kana*” (this one acquired) can be seen in the word “*zaken*”, but how do we see that he has specifically acquired “*chochma*” — Torah wisdom — and that the word *zaken* therefore refers to a Torah scholar? The answer: The only real acquisition a person has is Torah. Material assets come and go and are external to the person; Torah is eternally part of the person who ‘acquires’ it. Torah knowledge and wisdom is our only true acquisition. (Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, “The Steipler Rav”)

• *Nedarim 41a*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

The laws of the *Para Aduma* — the red heifer — are detailed. These laws are for the ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. The people complain about the loss of their water supply that until now has been provided miraculously in the merit of Miriam’s righteousness. Aharon and Moshe pray for the people’s welfare. G-d commands them to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people’s lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock instead of speaking to it. He thus fails to produce the intended public demonstration of G-d’s mastery over the world, which would have resulted had the rock produced water merely at

Moshe’s word. Therefore, G-d tells Moshe and Aharon that they will not bring the people into the Land. *Bnei Yisrael* resume their travels, but because the King of Edom, a descendant of Esav, denies them passage through his country, they do not travel the most direct route to Eretz Yisrael. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities. Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him for 30 days. Sichon the Amorite attacks *Bnei Yisrael* when they ask to pass through his land. As a result, *Bnei Yisrael* conquer the lands that Sichon had previously seized from the Amonites on the east bank of the Jordan River.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. "Take a perfect *Para Aduma* (red heifer)." What does the word "perfect" — *temima* — mean in this context?
2. How many non-red hairs disqualify a cow as a *Para Aduma*?
3. A man dies in a tent. What happens to the sealed metal and earthenware utensils in the tent?
4. What happens to the one who: a) sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the *Para Aduma*; b) touches the water; c) carries the water?
5. Why was the *mitzvah* of the *Para Aduma* entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aharon?
6. Why does the Torah stress that *all* of the congregation came to *Midbar Tzin*?
7. Why is Miriam's death taught after the law of *Para Aduma*?
8. During their journey in the *midbar*, in whose merit did the Jewish People receive water?
9. Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time?
10. When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this?
11. The cloud that led the Jewish People leveled all mountains in their path except three. Which three and why?
12. Why did the *entire* congregation mourn Aharon's death?
13. What disappeared when Aharon died?
14. Which "inhabitant of the South" (21:1) attacked the Jews?
15. For what two reasons did G-d punish the people with snakes specifically?
16. Why did the Jewish People camp in Arnon, rather than pass through Moav to enter *Eretz Canaan*?
17. What miracle took place at the valley of Arnon?
18. What was the "strength" of Amon that prevented the Jewish People from entering into their Land?
19. Why was Moshe afraid of Og?
20. Who killed Og?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 19:2 - Perfectly red.
2. 19:2 - Two.
3. 19:14,15 - The metal utensils are impure for seven days, even if they are sealed. The sealed earthenware vessels are unaffected.
4. 19:21 - a) Remains *tahor*; b) He, but not his clothing, contracts *tumah*; c) He and his clothing contract *tumah*.
5. 19:22 - Because Aharon was involved in the sin of the golden calf.
6. 20:1 - To teach that they were *all* fit to enter the Land; everyone involved in the sin of the spies already died.
7. 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous.
8. 20:2 - Miriam's.
9. 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to *speak* to the rock.
10. 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the *midbar*. This teaches that one who has adequate provisions should nevertheless purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host.
11. 20:22 - *Har Sinai* for receiving the Torah, *Har Nevo* for Moshe's burial, and *Hor Hahar* for Aharon's burial.
12. 20:29 - Aharon made peace between contending parties and between spouses. Thus, everybody mourned him.
13. 20:29 - The clouds of glory disappeared, since they sheltered the Jews in Aharon's merit.
14. 21:1 - Amalek.
15. 21:6 - The original snake, who was punished for speaking evil, is fitting to punish those who spoke evil about G-d and about Moshe. And the snake, for whom everything tastes like dust, is fitting to punish those who complained about the manna which changed to any desired taste.
16. 21:13 - Moav refused them passage.
17. 21:15 - The Amorites hid in caves in the mountain on the Moabite side of the valley in order to ambush the Jews. When the Jews approached, the mountain on the *Eretz Canaan* side of the valley moved close to the other mountain and the Amorites were crushed.
18. 21:24 - G-d's command, "Do not harass them" (*Devarim* 2:19).
19. 21:34 - Og had once been of service to Avraham. Moshe was afraid that this merit would assist Og in battle.
20. 21:35 - Moshe.

# Abarbanel

## ON THE PARSHA

### Chukat

The detailed procedures surrounding the sacrificial offering of the *para aduma* (Red Heifer) were intended to purify the congregation of Israel from the spiritual impurity that resulted from contact with the deceased. This was to prevent them from spiritually contaminating the Tabernacle and its vessels. The Torah emphasizes at the beginning of the Parsha that the procedures of the *para aduma* are a decree of the Torah. This is to teach us that the details of the commandment of the *para aduma* are similar to the ways we are expected to approach G-d's Torah. This does not mean that the procedures of the *para aduma* should only be understood as a metaphor for the nature, study and practice of the Torah; the mitzvah of *para aduma* stands alone according to its literal understanding. Rather, its procedures serve as examples of how to approach the Torah, which is the basis of all the commandments.

The parallels are numerous. Just as the Torah is perfect, without any defect, the *para aduma* must be unblemished. Just as the individual enjoys the fruits of his Torah study in both this world and the next — “My fruits are better than fine gold, even choice gold.” (Proverbs 8:19), the sacrifice of the *para aduma* offers atonement, which is the choicest fruit, or benefit. Just as one who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah is freed from the yoke of the governmental authorities and the yoke of struggling to earn a livelihood, so too it is forbidden to place a yoke upon this animal's neck. Just as the highest level of Torah is found among the *kohanim*, as it says, “For the lips of the *kohen* should safeguard knowledge and people should seek teaching from his mouth, for he is an agent of G-d.” (Malachi 2:7), so too the mitzvah of *para aduma* was given specifically to Eliezer the Kohen. Just as the most intense study of Torah requires the individual to sit alone in isolation,

so too the *para aduma* is taken outside the encampment of the people. Just as we must delve into the Torah to extract its inner secrets, we also slaughter the animal to extract the blood, the life force that lies hidden inside. Sprinkling that blood opposite the Ark which contains the Tablets of the Law reminds us that our analysis of those inner secrets must not take us away from the accepted truths of the Torah which have been handed down for generations. Just as the highest ‘spiritual intelligences’ are referred to as ‘Serafim’, from the Hebrew word which means ‘to burn’, so too the *para aduma* is burned on the Altar. All parts of the animal are burned, from the dung, which is least valuable, to the hide, which is most valuable. Added to the resulting ashes are cedar-wood, the most valuable of woods, and hyssop, the least valuable. This reminds us that every word and letter of the Torah is valuable, no matter how insignificant or repetitive it may appear. Just as the teachers of Torah, the students of Torah, and those who serve them must be of exemplary character, so too the *kohanim* who were involved with the *para aduma* were required to immerse their clothing and their entire bodies, an act which symbolizes perfection of character. Just as the Torah is called “spring water” which purifies the spiritually impure, so too the ashes of the animal are mixed with spring water in order to purify the spiritually impure.

The final comparison sheds light on the seemingly contradictory idea that even though this mixture purifies the impure, it actually imparts impurity to the *kohen* who administers it. This can be understood through the admonition in Pirkei Avot (4:16), “Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘Be meticulous in study, for a careless misinterpretation is considered tantamount to willful transgression.’”

NOW AVAILABLE ON WWW.OHR.EDU - AUDIO LIBRARY



Rav Bulman *zt"l*  
on the  
Torah Portion of the Week

## VALUE OF TORAH

**From: Eric**

*Dear Rabbi,  
We are taught that the value of Torah exceeds everything. In general, I feel that I do value Torah. But it's hard for me to gauge what that means practically and how I might actually express that. Does it mean that I should be willing to live in poverty, or suffer sickness or even give up my life for Torah? How can I come to grips with this for myself?*

Dear Eric,

There are many, many teachings which all extol the great value of Torah, and dedicating ourselves to its study. It is valued above any worldly riches, and we are to pursue its wealth day and night for our entire lives.

And yes, countless Jews over time have sacrificed worldly health, wealth and even their lives out of love and commitment to the Torah. Their burning passion for the Torah and G-d is truly inspiring and worthy of emulation.

Yet, the truth is, for many complicated reasons, most people nowadays are not infused with the same consuming dedication that would impel them to make the same sacrifices as would be made by most Jews in most places for most of Jewish history.

That being said, the reasons why we are much less impassioned are the same reasons which make believing and living according to the Torah much more difficult nowadays than it has been for most of Jewish history. This means that our maintaining even a lower standard of commitment might involve a relatively equal degree of sacrifice on our part as was demonstrated in earlier times.

Therefore, it is not constructive to gauge your commitment based on the degree of suffering you would be willing

to endure on behalf of the Torah. Rather, most people should be trying to attain and preserve wealth, health and life in order to ensure the continuity of Torah and its transmission to future generations.

Within the context of normal, modern life there are plenty of opportunities to demonstrate our commitment by refraining from transgressing despite rampant enticements to the contrary – and just keeping kosher, observing Shabbat, maintaining modesty, making consistent effort to learn Torah and many of the other basic observances is challenging enough, even in the context of prosperity and health.

I was recently told a true story which might be indicative of how we may express our value for Torah even though we are not called upon to make the same sacrifices as in previous generations:

A young man at our yeshiva went on an outing with a friend, taking with him a pack with his belongings. Despite having considered taking his notebooks with his Torah notes which he thought he'd review with his friend on the trip, at the last moment he decided not to. Ultimately, his pack was stolen, together with his wallet, money, credit cards, expensive camera equipment and other valuables, which all totaled several thousand dollars.

He relayed to me in all sincerity and completely wholeheartedly that the first thing he thought when he realized his pack had been stolen was, "Thank G-d my Torah notes were not in the pack. Everything else is only of monetary value and can be replaced. But my Torah notes are priceless and irreplaceable!"

This means that on the spot, immediately and intuitively, with unshaken conviction and clarity, he valued his Torah to be undoubtedly worth more than thousands of dollars – indeed invaluable!

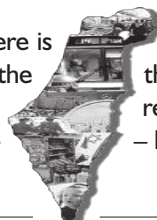
## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### CHATZOR HA'GELILIT — THE TOMB OF THE "CIRCLE-MARKER"

**N**ear the northern community of Chatzor there is the tomb of one of the most colorful of the Talmudic Sages.

Choni Ha-Me'agel was famed for his ability to suc-



cessfully pray for rain in a time of drought. It is related in the Talmud that he drew a circle and stood in its center, refusing to leave that spot until his prayers were answered – hence the surname Ha-Me'agel (the circle-marker).



## SHEMONEH ESREI: THE FOURTEENTH BLESSING - PART 3

One morning, as Moish exits the shul building he sees Dave, a young member, with a tzedaka box. He stops and asks him what he's collecting for. "It is for my wedding." "Mazel Tov!" Moish says as he looks at the change in the box — a collection of pennies and nickels with an occasional quarter. "When is the big day?" he asks as he reaches into his pocket for some change. "When I collect enough money for the wedding," Dave's replies. Moish then reconsiders and hands Dave a five dollar bill, adding, "I'm sure she's a great young woman. Good luck!"

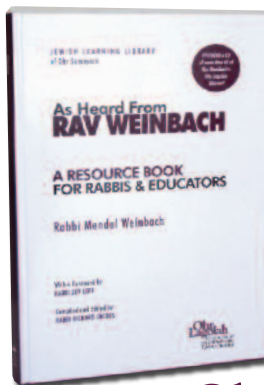
Every request for the redemption is like a penny in our story. When we beseech G-d to bring the final redemption, it is not a personal request for the benefit of one person or a small group of people; rather it is for the entire Jewish People throughout every generation. Accordingly, one should realize that it will not be the prayers of one generation that will merit the redemption, but rather the prayers of every generation will be collected together, as in the story, and when there will be enough merit — G-d will answer us.

A question remains. The Jewish People have been praying together three times a day for millennia for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash. How is it that we have

not yet merited to see our prayers answered?

Answer: Even if a prayer seems to go unanswered, it does not mean that the prayer was in vain, Heaven forbid. Besides adding to the collection of prayers, the person will also be rewarded for fulfilling a positive commandment, as well as for expressing his faith in G-d, the only One Who can grant his requests. This is true regarding all prayer; how much more so will one be rewarded for the selfless prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, when the glory of G-d will fill the world, as it is said about the end of days, "It will be on that day that G-d will be One and His name will be One." (Beit Elokim)

In fact, every letter and word said in prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the final redemption is precious to G-d. He receives much joy and pleasure when His children, although suffering in exile, place the suffering of the Divine Presence which has also been exiled, first. Even though G-d has not rebuilt Jerusalem because the appointed time has not arrived yet, we have done our part in continuing to pray each day for the final redemption. (The Path of the Just).



**Ohr  
Lagolah**

HERTZ INSTITUTE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL  
TEACHER TRAINING

## As Heard From **RAV WEINBACH**

### A RESOURCE BOOK FOR RABBIS & EDUCATORS

INCLUDES a CD of more  
than 40 of Rav Weinbach's  
Ohr Lagolah Shiurim!



**JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY**  
of Ohr Somayach - Tanenbaum College

**Now Available in Jewish Bookstores!**  
**Order online at [www.menuchapublishers.com](http://www.menuchapublishers.com)**

# KIRUV SEMINAR

for Bnei Torah

בס"ד  
**Ohr  
Lagolah**  
HERTZ INSTITUTE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL  
TEACHER TRAINING

צום הרביעי תשע"ה

Fast of Tammuz: Sunday Afternoon July 5, 2015

AT YESHIVA OHR SOMAYACH - TANENBAUM COLLEGE

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Ma'alot Daphna, Jerusalem

- 1:00pm **Rav Nota Schiller**, Rosh Yeshiva, Ohr Somayach
- 1:45pm **Mincha**
- 2:30pm **Rav Moshe Shapiro** (עברית)
- 3:15pm **Rav Moshe Lazerus**
- 3:55pm **Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz**, Rav, Kehillos Ohr Somayach
- 4:35pm **Rav Yisroel Reisman**, Rosh Yeshiva, Torah Vodaath
- 5:15pm **Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb**
- 5:55pm **Rabbi Danny Kirsch**, Director, JLE London
- 6:35pm **Rabbi Dovid Kaplan**
- 7:15pm **Rav Zev Leff**
- 7:55pm **Rabbi Richard Jacobs**
- 8:11pm **Ma'ariv** (Followed by Refreshments)

Registration: 20nis at the door from 12:30pm