

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TEITZEI · 14 ELUL 5775 · AUGUST 29, 2015 · VOL. 22 NO. 46

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE EVANESCENCE OF DESIRE

“And it will be that if he did not desire her...” (21:14)

Nothing is as transitory as desire. Really, there are two kinds of desire: There is the lust of the feelings for immediate gratification — a craving, doomed to the law of diminishing returns; and then there are the true deep-seated desires of the soul — the aspirations that express who we really are.

In this week’s Torah portion there is a grammatical anomaly that captures these two kinds of desires precisely.

The Torah permits a one-time relationship with a beautiful captive woman in the heat of battle. In order to marry her, however, the soldier must bring her into his house and make her unattractive. She shaves her head and lets her nails grow; she changes from the clothes that she wore in the battle to entice her captors; she sits in the house of her captor for a full month, weeping for her father and her mother.

After that the soldier may marry her.

But, the Torah says: “If you did not want her, then you shall send her out on her own.” From the context here the tense of the verb seems wrong. It should be *future*: “If you *will* not want her...” not “If you *did* not want her,” just as it is at the beginning of this section, “and you will see... a woman who is beautiful and you *will* desire her...”

The Torah uses two different verbs to describe two kinds of desire: “*cheshek*”, which is the momentary rush of physical desire, and “*chefetz*” — the true desire of the soul.

After a month of her dwelling in his house, the captor may well realize that he never had a true *chefetz* for his captive, just a momentary *cheshek* that has long since evaporated.

• Sources: based on *Ohel Mo’ed in Mayana Shel Torah*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son’s right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father’s desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women’s clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. *Bnei*

Yisrael are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara’at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers’ pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother’s widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for, in spite of knowing about the Exodus, he ambushed the Jewish People.

NAZIR 9 - 15

Ravina says, "He is making a condition that is contrary to what is written in the Torah, and any such condition that contradicts the Torah is null and void."

With this principle the Sage Ravina explains why Rabbi Shimon in the *mishna* would agree with the first Tana that a person who states that he is *nazir* on condition that he may drink wine and become ritually impure is indeed bound by the laws of being a *nazir*. His statement that he is a *nazir* is *effective*, but the condition is *invalid* since it contradicts what the Torah states about the laws of a *nazir*.

Tosefot asks why even address this condition's validity here, since it does not conform to a basic law of "conditions", in that it cannot be fulfilled by a *shaliach*, as taught in Tractate Ketuvot (74a) and explained by Tosefot on our *daf*. The *nezirut* cannot be fulfilled by a *shaliach*, and therefore the condition cannot be considered a "kosher" condition, contends Tosefot.

While Tosefot offers answers that the sacrifices of a *nazir* can indeed be brought by a *shaliach*, other answers are offered by the Rishonim and Achronim. One such answer is that a condition needs to follow a "special set of rules" (such as being able to be fulfilled by a *shaliach*) only regarding an *action*, such as marriage. But when it comes to the realm of "speech", such as *saying* that one is a *nazir*, the "speech" of the condition would be sufficient to nullify the "speech" of the declaration to be a *nazir* if it would not be contradictory to the laws written in the Torah.

• Nazir 11a

Rabbi Yochanan said, "If one says to his shaliach to go out and marry a woman for him without specifying which woman, and the shaliach dies before returning, he is forbidden to marry all of the women in the world."

The *gemara* offers the following explanation: Since we assume with certainty that the *shaliach* carried out his mission, but we don't know the wife's identity, any woman he now approaches may be the forbidden relative of his real wife.

Based on this reasoning, wonders Tosefot, every man should be forbidden to marry all women, since he may be approaching the woman whom the *shaliach* actually married in his role as an agent! However, another important factor comes into play here, explains Tosefot, which teaches us to rule leniently in all these cases of doubt, and not forbid any of these marriages. The principle of "majority", that the majority of women in the world are not really forbidden to him, only a very small minority. Therefore, only the man who appointed the *shaliach* without specifying the woman's identity is penalized for acting negligently and is forbidden to all women according to rabbinical law. Other men, however, are not forbidden in this way and are permitted to marry due to the law of "majority".

• Nazir 11b-12a

NOW AVAILABLE ON WWW.OHR.EDU - AUDIO LIBRARY



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

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor's house?
2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
3. What will become of a *ben sorer u'moreh* if his parents don't bring him to court?
4. Why is it a degradation to G-d to hang a criminal's body on the gallows overnight?
5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
13. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
16. "Remember what G-d did to Miriam." To what event does the Torah refer?
17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
19. Which two people in this week's *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in G-d's image, and because the Jewish People are G-d's children.
5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
16. 24:9 - G-d punishing Miriam with *tzara'at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the "forgotten bundle" for the poor.
18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother's widow).
20. 25:16 - "An abomination (*to'evah*) to G-d."

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.

Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

The mitzvah of *chalitza*, the ritual which is performed when a man refuses to marry the widow of his childless brother, is laden with numerous layers of symbolic meaning. They state:

Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him, and he shall stand and say, "I do not wish to marry her." Then his sister-in-law shall approach him before the eyes of the elders; she shall remove his shoe from upon his foot and spit before him; she shall speak up and say, "So is done to the man who will not build the house of his brother." Then his name shall be proclaimed in Israel, "The House of the one whose shoe was removed." (Devarim 25:8-10)

Abarbanel offers four explanations for this unusual ritual. First of all, the sister-in-law is showing her contempt for this man who has refused to continue his brother's lineage by marrying her and having children with her. It would be unacceptable to actually spit on him directly to produce the embarrassment and humiliation that he deserves. Rather, she removes his shoe, the article of clothing which symbolizes the man, as it "contains" the individual, and spits in front of it.

Secondly, the man became connected to his sister-in-law immediately with the death of his brother. He must either marry her or disconnect from her with the ritual of *chalitza*. When a man and woman are connected in marriage, she follows her husband. Similarly, when the shoe is tied onto the foot it "follows" the foot. By removing the shoe she severs the connection between them. Furthermore, by proclaiming "So is done to the man who will not build the house of his brother", she is declaring that she is not to be punished for such a brazen act; rather *he*, in fact, deserves such a public humiliation.

Thirdly, Abarbanel offers a Kabbalistic interpretation. The

body is the container for the soul and it is the soul that directs the actions of the body. Similarly, the shoe is the container for the foot which directs its movement. Just like a shoe can be removed from one foot and placed on a different one, so too the soul is removed from the body at death and can be "placed" in another body (reincarnation). If this man had produced a child with his sister-in-law, it would be as if the soul of his brother in some measure would reappear in the body of the child due to the closeness of their fraternal bond. By choosing not to marry her he has permanently severed the possibility of reuniting the soul of his brother with his wife's child. The nature and gravity of his act is symbolized by the removal of the shoe and the contemptuous act of spitting.

Fourthly, her entire focus is not on herself, but rather on the honor of her deceased husband. By bending down and removing her brother-in-law's shoe, she demonstrates that she is willing to make herself subservient to him in order to preserve her husband's legacy. When he refuses to marry her, she spits at the shoe; her act of subservience is transformed into the act of contempt which he deserves. However, her words never refer to her own personal humiliation, but only to the honor of her husband. She does not say that her brother-in-law's name should be proclaimed as "the house of the one who did not want to marry a certain woman." Rather, she refers specifically to "the house of the removal of the shoe", a clear reference to the specific case of the dead and childless brother. Finally, the entire ritual has to take place in front of the elders. It is hoped that the public humiliation will discourage the brother from refusing to marry his sister-in-law.



Highlights from the 43rd Anniversary Gala Dinner

Available at ohr.edu

VALUABLE LESSON

From: Ryan

Dear Rabbi,

How important is it to clean up after oneself, particularly when someone else is paid to clean up after others, like in a restaurant or park?

Dear Ryan,

The Torah places great emphasis on both spiritual and material cleanliness. Material cleanliness includes preserving the environment and ensuring it remains as clean and pristine as when it was created.

This is a personal, individual responsibility of a person to G-d and to his fellow man. Therefore, it is very important that a person refrain from making a mess, or at least take responsibility for cleaning up whatever mess he's made.

So, even if one can rely on someone else to clean up after him, doing so is shirking his own responsibility, imposing his burden on others, and causing harm or even damage until the other person comes to clean up. This is irresponsible, indulgent and inconsiderate.

Even in the case of a restaurant which one has patronized and which has a vested interest in keeping clean for other clients, one must nevertheless try to keep clean and not burden the clean-up staff with unnecessary mess. All the more so regarding parks, which one uses for free and which provide the community-service of cleaning. In either case, it would be wrong to take advantage of the cleaners by making and leaving a mess, relying on them "to do their job".

I was once in a park with a large group of extended family. Since there was a lot of food, lots of folks, and lots of kids, we ended up making a mess. Once we were ready to leave, it was late at night and everybody was tired from the outing.

So despite my father's long-standing injunction to "leave a place cleaner than you found it", we were tempted to leave the park as many other visitors had – full of litter. But in the end, my father's voice prevailed and we left "our" part of the park not only cleaner than we found it, but cleaner than any other part of the park.

The next morning, one of my daughters noticed that she was missing her precious diamond wedding ring which she last recalled having put in her pocket for safe-keeping while sitting in a small chair we found and left in the grass of the park. Of course we were distraught, and my first thoughts were that since the cleaning crew had certainly scoured the park first thing in the morning, in all probability a cleaner found the ring and it was as good as gone.

I pessimistically returned to the park around noon in a seemingly futile search for the ring, where my suspicions were confirmed when I saw the park had been thoroughly and completely cleaned. Yet when I approached "our" section of the grass, I was surprised to see that the little chair was exactly as we left it the night before. It suddenly occurred to me that there was a chance that when the cleaning crew arrived in the morning and saw garbage strewn everywhere but in "our" part, they were naturally deflected from approaching the clean enclave we left in order to work on the rest of the park.

With a new spark of hope, I excitedly approached the small chair, under which I immediately spied the scintillating luster of the diamond!

In my opinion, the merit of heeding my father, caring about the environment, and being considerate to others literally guarded the ring so it could be returned to the right hand!

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

ALMA —TOMB OF THE RABBI ELAZAR BEN AZARIYA

When a replacement was sought for the role of head of the Sanhedrin by the Talmudic Sages for the temporarily deposed Rabban Gamaliel, the choice was Rabbi Elazar ben



Azariya because of his extraordinary qualifications, despite the fact that he was only eighteen years old at the time.

His tomb is reported to be in the village of Alma about 5.6 miles north of the city of Tzefat.

SHEMONEH ESREI: SIXTEENTH BLESSING

Acceptance of Our Prayers

Although one may add a request in his own words to the standard text of each of the blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei, this addition must be similar in theme to the blessing he is reciting. For example, in the “blessing for healing” one may add a request for a loved one to be healed from their sickness; or in the “blessing for prosperity” one may request his business or someone else’s business to improve. However, one should not ask for healing in the blessing for prosperity, or the reverse. (*Levush, Anaf Yosef*)

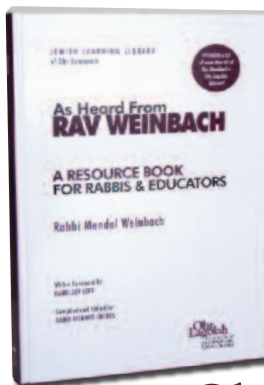
One may wonder what is wrong with asking for a variety of matters in one blessing. After all, our requests have one “address”. Are all our prayers not directed to G-d, “Who listens to the prayers of all”?

The reason for the above restriction can be better understood with an example. If a poor man was granted entry to plead with the king for help, and the king decided to grant him a sum of money, would he send him to the royal doctor to collect his money or to the minister of royal funds? Or, for example, if someone was pleading with the king that he was

falsely accused of a crime, he would not be sent to the treasurer for help but to the minister that oversees court proceedings.

The same is true regarding prayer. Each blessing was constructed with a precise formula that corresponds to a specific Divine channel above that matches one’s request. A request for prosperity, which is rooted in the Divine attribute of benevolence, is “opposite” in nature from a request for God to fight one’s enemies, which is rooted in the Divine attribute of might. According to the above we can appreciate the deeper reasoning why one should not mix together in one blessing requests that are different in nature.

In contrast to the other blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei, the sixteenth blessing — the blessing for “the acceptance of our prayers” — is special. It is considered to be an all-inclusive blessing, representing a general channel. One can therefore ask for whatever he needs in this particular blessing, even when mentioning two “opposites”. The reason for this unique status is because it is the last of the thirteen blessings of requests, and is therefore the blessing in which all of the requests made prior to this are gathered together. (*Levush*)



**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

LASTING TESHUVA — PART I

During the month of Elul there is extra help from Above to connect to G-d. As a result, many feel a unique burst of inspiration during this time to change for the better. Many people make various resolutions for the following year to bring their desire for change into the realm of action. However, despite one's real desire for change, the resolutions last for only a short time more often than not. It could be a week, a month, or even two month before the person returns to his old ways. Why is this so?

Usually the decision to make resolutions stems from the spiritual uplift one feels on these days. When one experiences this spiritual high he feels as though he is a different person who could never perform the immoral actions he performed prior. He feels as though he was sick and is now cured. However, these feelings are not necessarily true. Once Yom Kippur concludes and the spiritual high wanes, one generally returns to experiencing those very same desires again.

This is perhaps one reason why we read the portion of the Torah that deals with forbidden relationships on Yom Kippur afternoon. At first glance we would think that Yom Kippur, a day entirely filled with prayer and fasting, is the one day that doesn't need the warning against such base desires. However, based on the above we can suggest that precisely on Yom Kippur when we are so spiritual that we are disgusted at the mere thought of giving in to such desires, is the best time to remind ourselves that once the spiritual high of this day wears off we are faced with those very desires once again. It is therefore the perfect time for a warning to prepare now for the struggle that awaits us later.

The truth is that change can take a long time. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter used to say that to change one character trait is harder than learning the entire *Shas*. Therefore, a person can't realistically expect himself to suddenly transform into a new person with new desires by only experiencing the time period between Elul and Yom Kippur. However, by systematically approaching the mitzvah of teshuvah we may perhaps put an end to the ever-so-familiar let-down that follows Yom Kippur. The following is a list of tips that can, with the help of G-d, make our resolutions last.

The Siftei Chaim suggests that one reason why many resolutions don't last is because no concrete physical action was taken to change one's ways at that moment of creating the resolution. As a result, when the spiritual high wears off, it is easy to return to doing those very things one so sincerely regretted doing on Yom Kippur. The way to make our resolutions last is to do something that will get us out of our habit. This is analogous to a person who has lived in the same house for many years and then moved to a new place. Often he might end up driving to his previous home out of mere habit. In the beginning he needs

a constant reminder to prevent him from going back to his previous home. The same is true regarding a person who is making changes in his lifestyle; he needs a constant reminder to prevent him from going back to his old ways. How can one do this?

When making a resolution it is not enough to say, "I will not do this anymore." This is too vague and will not directly lead to practical change. Rather, one needs to be very detailed and precise when making an appropriate resolution. For example, if one wants to add time to his learning schedule, he needs to specify exactly how much time, during which time of day, on which days of the week he plans on increasing his learning period, etc.

The second step is having a practical, concrete plan on how he is going to make this change. For example, if a person has trouble waking up on time for the morning prayers he could arrange to learn with someone for a few minutes before prayers start. His commitment to the learning partner may be an extra push to wake him up and serve as prevention from returning to his old ways. This way, even when the spiritual high of Yom Kippur wears off, he has a system in place that will help him stick to his new resolution.

The third step is to keep a spiritual accounting of one's actions. Just like any businessman keeps accounts of his losses and gains, and searches for ways to make his business more effective, so too every person must set aside time to take an accounting of his spiritual growth. The most effective way of doing this is to have a specific notebook in which he writes his goals, successes, and fallbacks. He should then analyze why he succeeded and why he failed. This way he can attain an even higher level of teshuvah through fixing the underlying causes of his sins.

Keeping this account book has another advantage as well. There are many sources that say an effective method for someone who is constantly struggling in a specific area is for him to go to the opposite extreme. He should stay away from any situation that may lead him near temptation. Just like an alcoholic is advised to distance himself from places that serve any alcohol, a person must distance himself from his previous inappropriate ways as much as possible. As a result of keeping a written account of his failures and successes, one can pinpoint situations in which he is more likely to sin. One may thus minimize his failures by not putting himself in situations that usually cause him to fall. In doing so, one also abides by the Gemara's edict of not testing oneself. It is worth mentioning that the book *Cheshbon Hanefesh* by Rabbi Mendel M'satanov masterfully guides a person through perfecting the art of keeping a spiritual accounting of one's actions.