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PARSHA INSIGHTS

A DIVINE COMEDY

“And I will speak with you...” (25:22)

Over the last six months and under the guise of “renovations”, the Waqf (the Moslem administration of the Temple Mount) has removed literally hundreds of tons of priceless Jewish historical artifacts and dumped them somewhere in the Judean desert.

Their purpose is to remove any archaeological evidence of a Jewish presence. To Holocaust denial, the Waqf has added a new phenomenon – *“Beit HaMikdash denial.”*

Things, however, haven’t quite gone their way.

An inscribed stone tablet from the time of Yehoash, King of Judah, has recently been discovered on the Temple Mount. The black stone tablet, containing ten lines of Phoenician script, describes activities carried out by King Yehoash in the First Temple some 2,700 years ago.

The inscription corresponds to the Biblical account as recorded in Melachim II 12, including King Yehoash’s call to the *kohanim* (priests) to collect money from the public for the purpose of renovating the Temple. The inscription details the purchase of wood and quarried stones and includes part of a Biblical passage recounting the event.

Archaeologist Dr. Gabi Barkai says that if the stone is authenticated, it is “perhaps the most important artifact ever uncovered in the annals of archeology in the Land of Israel and Jerusalem... It would be the earliest known tablet precisely recounting a Biblical event, constituting rare (archaeological) evidence of the existence of the

First Temple, which stood on the Temple Mount for over 400 years from the time of King Shlomo until its destruction by Babylonian King Nevuchadnetzar.”

How did this priceless artifact come to light?

It was uncovered during the illegal construction work by the Moslem Waqf on the Temple Mount.

No one has a better sense of humor than the Master of the World.

The self-same action that was supposed to eradicate all trace of Jewishness from the Temple Mount has produced the most conclusive documentary evidence of our historical claim to date. They want to obliterate, but they end up becoming the means of revelation.

The prophet Shmuel, who re-identified the correct site of Har HaMoriah (the Temple Mount) writes, *“However, the ‘Netzach Yisrael’ will not lie.” (Shmuel I 15:29)*

Netzach means eternity. *Netzach* is also a reference to Jerusalem. The *“Netzach Yisrael”* ‘will not lie. Jerusalem the Eternal cannot be made to lie. When you try and make Jerusalem an accomplice against the eternal nature of the Jewish People (another translation of *Netzach Yisrael*), she will not lie.

“And I will speak with you from above the Cover...”

In this week’s portion, the Torah teaches us about the Mishkan, the portable version of what was eventually to become the Holy Temple. G-d promised us thousands of years ago that He would speak to us from that place above the Holy Ark. Even though that Sanctuary was destroyed and plowed over nearly two thousand years ago, the Eternal One of Yisrael, the *Netzach Yisrael*, still “speaks” to us from that place, with His Divine sense of comedy.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This con-

tains the table of showbreads, the *menorah*, and the golden altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the *kohen gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

ISRAEL Forever

THE "HOLY SITES"

What is a "holy site"? In the media reporting on the Middle East we frequently hear references to "holy sites" in the region that underscore the conflicts between religions in this part of the world and elsewhere.

This week's Torah chapter is dedicated to the construction and furnishing of the holy site" of Judaism, the Mishkan. "They shall make for Me a sanctuary," G-d commanded Moshe to instruct the Israelites soon after their liberation from Egyptian bondage, "so that I shall dwell within *them*."

The use of the term *them* rather than *it* has been interpreted as a message that the purpose of the Mishkan sanctuary was to facilitate the dwelling of the Divine Presence within the heart of every Jew. The role of the Mishkan in the wilderness and during the first four cen-

turies of a Jewish presence in *Eretz Yisrael* was perpetuated by the first and second *Beit Hamikdash* Temples which spanned a period of nine centuries. All of this is today but a memory to which a visit to the *Kotel* (Western Wall) gives a special dimension. This does not mean, however, that a Jew cannot build a mini-sanctuary in his heart even today. The Divine Presence is waiting to dwell within the hearts of all Jews — if only they will let it enter!

This is the true eternity of our eternal people. Sanctuaries have vanished, temples have been destroyed and those who worshipped in them have been exiled. But wherever Jews went they took with them the sanctuaries they established in their hearts with their loyalty to G-d and His Torah, which makes every Jew a "holy site". This sort of sanctuary is with us forever and provides the guarantee of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

The Sage Rami bar Yechezkel – Milk and Honey

We all know that Eretz Yisrael is the "land of milk and honey". But the Talmudic Sage Rami bar Yechezkel realized the true meaning of the Torah passage describing this country as a "land *flowing* with milk and honey" during a visit to ancient Bnei Brak.

He saw goats beneath a very ripe fig tree. Honey oozed from the figs, milk dripped from the goats and the two combined into one flowing stream. Only then did he, through this visual experience, fully appreciate the signifi-



cance of the Torah using the single term "flowing" in regard to both milk and honey to indicate that the two flowed together. The significance of his discovery may well be that Eretz Yisrael is blessed not only with the wholesome resources symbolized by milk, and the tasty ones represented by honey, but that these two seemingly disparate dimensions of food are naturally and perfectly blended for the health and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the land "flowing with milk and honey".

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A MINI-YOM KIPPUR

Rosh Chodesh is a “Yom Kippur Katan” — a “Mini-Yom Kippur”. This is the dramatic name given to the first day of the month in the Hebrew lunar calendar by the great Kabbalist scholar Rabbi Moshe of Cordevero. The background for this title begins in our *gemara*, carries on through the text of our *Mussaf Rosh Chodesh* service and culminates in the custom of fasting and offering special prayers on the day before *Rosh Chodesh*.

The Torah (*Bamidbar 28:11-15*) commanded us to offer additional (*Mussaf*) sacrifices on *Rosh Chodesh*. Two bullocks, one ram and seven sheep are offered as *olah* burnt sacrifices, while one goat serves as a *chatat* sin offering. Three Sages – Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Meir – have different opinions as to exactly which sins this goat addresses as atonement. They all agree, however, that they are sins dealing with a lack of caution in approaching the Sanctuary and sacrificial flesh with the proper regard for ritual purity.

In the writings of post-Talmudic scholars we find an expansion of the role of *Rosh Chodesh* sacrifices as atonement for sins. In the text of the *Mussaf* that we offer as “lip service” in place of the sacrifices we are incapable offering, we refer to *Rosh Chodesh* as “a time of atonement for all their offspring”. Although the simple understanding of this is that it is a reference to all the generations of Jews who are the biological offspring of those to whom the mitzvah of *Rosh Chodesh* was first commanded, a radically different explanation is provided by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi. “Their offspring,” he writes, refers to the actions born of the days of the month gone by, which are atoned for by the *olah* offerings on *Rosh Chodesh*. He goes on to explain the ensuing phrase about the sacrifices achieving “a salvation of their souls from the hand of their enemy” as a reference to the role of the *chatat* as a connection to Hashem that saves us from the corrupting influence of our enemy, the evil inclination.

What these sacrifices achieved in atonement when there was a *Beit Hamikdash* we achieve today with our prayers on *Rosh Chodesh*. To maximize the impact of this Yom Kippur Katan some Jews have the custom of fasting the day before (fasting on *Rosh Chodesh* itself is prohibited because it is considered a minor holiday), while others settle for saying special prayers at *Mincha* the day before in order to properly usher in this monthly day of atonement.

• *Shavuot 9b*

A TALE OF TWO TWINS

The two goats that play such a central role in the Yom Kippur service in the *Beit Hamikdash* were similar in many ways and so different in others. Both were purchased from communal funds, in contrast to two other ani-

mals that were the sacrifices of the *Kohen Gadol* and acquired from his own funds. An effort also had to be made to acquire goats that were similar in appearance, size and monetary value. They differed in that one of them was offered as a sacrifice in the *Beit Hamikdash* and the other served as the scapegoat.

The basis for requiring similarity is the passage (*Vayikra 16:7*) that commanded Aaron to “take the two goats”, a phrase that indicates a comparison. Rabbi Shimon applies this comparison to the nature of the atonement which each of the goats achieves for the general community and the *kohanim*. Rabbi Yehuda, however, limits the comparison to the physical features.

An interesting question is raised by the commentaries in regard to the physical comparison derived from the aforementioned passage. When the Prophet Eliyahu challenged the idolatrous prophets at their confrontation on Mount Carmel, he asked the assembled crowd to provide two bullocks, each of which would be offered as a sacrifice on an altar that had wood but no fire. Both he and the false prophets would in turn call to their deity to send fire from heaven and thus conclusively prove who was the true G-d. In order to eliminate any skepticism that might arise from a difference between the two animals, Eliyahu insisted that they be exactly the same and that the idolatrous prophets have the privilege of choosing the one they want. The *Midrash Rabbah* (23:9) deduces from the phrase “two bullocks” used by Eliyahu, that he insisted that the two animals not only be twins in physical appearance but they also be born of one mother. Why is this last requirement not mentioned in regard to the two goats of Yom Kippur?

Rabbi Shmuel Strashun (RaSHaSH) points out that the Hebrew word for two used in regard to the goats is *shnei*, which means “two” but not necessarily a pair. The term used by Eliyahu was *shnayim*, which means “a pair”. The similarity required by the former term can therefore be satisfied with less than the pairing suggested by Eliyahu that insisted on twinning.

• *Shavuot 13b*

The Weekly Daf

by RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

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PARSHA Q&A?

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do *techelet* and *argaman* share that *orot eilim m'adamim* do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that *shesh* and *orot techashim* do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "*tachash*" as "*sasgona*." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of: 1)oil 2) spices 3) jewels
8. The *aron* was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the *keruvim* resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the *lechem hapanim* baked?
12. What does *miksha* mean?
13. What was the purpose of the *menorah's gevi'im* (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the *menorah*?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the *Mishkan*?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the *Mishkan*?
18. How wide was the interior of the *Mishkan*?
19. Why was the altar coated with *nechoshet*?
20. Which function did the copper *yeteidot* serve?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: A half shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool, *orot eilim* are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; *shesh* and *orot techashim* are not.
5. 25:5 - The *tachash* delights (*sas*) in its multi-colors (*g'vanim*).
6. 25:5 - *Arazim* — cedars.
7. 25:6-7: 1)The oil was lit in the *menorah* and used for anointing. 2) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. 3) The precious stones were for the *ephod* and the *choshen*.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half *amot* plus a *tefach* plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the *kaporet*. (The *kaporet* was a *tefach* thick — see 25:17).
9. 25:16 - It testifies that Hashem commanded us to keep the *mitzvot*.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a *menorah* of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 *amot*.
18. 26:23 - 10 *amot*.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

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CLONE # 1

From: Many readers in many places

Dear Rabbi,
What is the Jewish perspective on cloning people? Thanks.

Dear Readers,

Before discussing the Jewish perspective, I'd like to briefly explain what cloning is and how it is done. Cloning is the reproduction of an organism whereby all the genes of the clone are identical to the original organism, unlike normal male/female reproduction where the genes are a fusion of both parents. Cloning is not necessarily unnatural — bacteria, algae and some yeasts, as well as dandelions and aspen trees reproduce by cloning. In fact, human identical twins originate from the division of a single fertilized egg are genetically identical and are another example of cloning in nature.

A recent breakthrough in the area of artificial or induced cloning occurred in 1996 with the introduction of "Dolly", the first animal cloned from an adult mammal. A skin cell from one sheep, containing a nucleus with a full set of genes, was fused with an unfertilized egg of another sheep whose nucleus was removed (somewhat like a donut). The result, an egg from sheep #2 with the genes entirely from sheep #1, began dividing and was placed in sheep #3. The embryo developed normally, and Dolly, an exact replica of sheep #1 was "born".

Amazing! (Who says counting sheep makes one sleep?)

The fact that Dolly, a large mammal, was cloned from a fully-grown adult animal raises probing and interesting ethical and legal questions from a Jewish perspective about the prospect of cloning. Is it right to play G-d? Does a clone have a soul? Is my clone me, my child or my twin? (The latter question has halachic ramifications such as regarding the laws of inheritance, and the *yibum* levirate marriage and more.)

Regarding the question of whether man has the right to play G-d, as in many instances of genetic engineering, some claim that it is wrong to play G-d. The Jewish perspective, however, is that since man was created in the image of G-d regarding intelligence, morality and free will, he is intended to be G-d's partner in creation. To that end, G-d intentionally left the world incomplete in order to involve man in its betterment and refinement. Therefore sickness, poverty and other suffering need not be accepted passively. On the contrary, it is G-d's will that man intervene to improve the world.

From the Jewish perspective then, not only is it not wrong to play G-d, but we are actually supposed to play G-d to the extent that doing so will benefit and improve the world and humanity. Given man's license as partner with G-d to create and innovate, if and when human cloning occurs, the highest Rabbinical authorities will have to examine the benefits and detriments of cloning to determine whether it would be acceptable ethically and according to Jewish Law.

Next installment: Does a clone have a soul? (Until then, all "Copy-rights" reserved for Ask the Rabbi.)

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

IS ALL FAIR IN BUSINESS?

Question: I am in the process of establishing a new business. My research has shown me that despite the existence of similar businesses I have a fair chance of succeeding if I apply my energy and talents. My only concern is that by competing with those already in the field I may be depriving them of their livelihood. Is there an obligation for me to consider limits on competition?

Answer: In our capitalistic economy we have become accustomed to the slogan that "All's fair in war and in business." This is certainly not the ethical approach from a Torah viewpoint. A great deal of discussion of the halachic aspects of *hasagat gevul* — trespassing on another's livelihood — is to be found both in the Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch*, and one who wishes to avoid transgressing in this area should consult a competent halachic authority about what is permitted.

Just to offer a perspective of the seriousness that our Sages

attached to this issue, we offer two selections from the Talmud.

When the Prophet Yechezkel praised the righteous man who avoided adultery (*18:15*) this is interpreted by our Sages (*Sanhedrin 81a*) as an allegory to the ethical standard of a man who did not infringe upon another's occupation. What a powerful message about the inviolable sanctity of a man's livelihood!

The concern for unfair competition finds expression in the position of Rabbi Yehuda (*Bava Metzia 60a*) that it is forbidden for a storekeeper to distribute sweets and nuts to children in order to draw them to him to do their family's shopping. The only reason that this practice is permitted according to the majority view of the Sages is because the other storekeepers have the option of doing the same. This gives us at least a glimpse at the restrictions which can govern competition and which should signal to us that all is *not* fair in business.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

CHARITY SAVES FROM DEFEAT

“Charity”, said the wisest of men, King Solomon, “saves from death.” A soccer team in Israel recently turned this advice into a strategy for avoiding defeat, a fate comparable to death for sports competitors.

Beitar Yerushalayim was scheduled to play against the national champions, Maccabi Haifa, and an extra measure of motivation was needed to overcome superior opponents. Team sponsor Eddie Mor hit on the idea of saving his players from defeat through charity. He set up a part-

nership between the team and “Aleh”, an organization serving children with disabilities with centers in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak and Gedera, and kicked it off with a donation of \$10,000. His players responded with their most inspired play of the year and scored a 4-0 upset.

“It’s one of the secrets of team sports,” said Mor after also organizing regular visits to the centers by team players. “They play better when they look beyond themselves and focus on the team.”

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

... the beautiful, booming campus of Neve Yerushalayim in Jerusalem was initiated with a grant from the U.S. government to Ohr Somayach for its own outreach seminary which eventually merged with Neve.

... Ohr Somayach is first among Torah institutions in Israel in the number of students with regular and postgraduate degrees from top universities throughout the world.



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