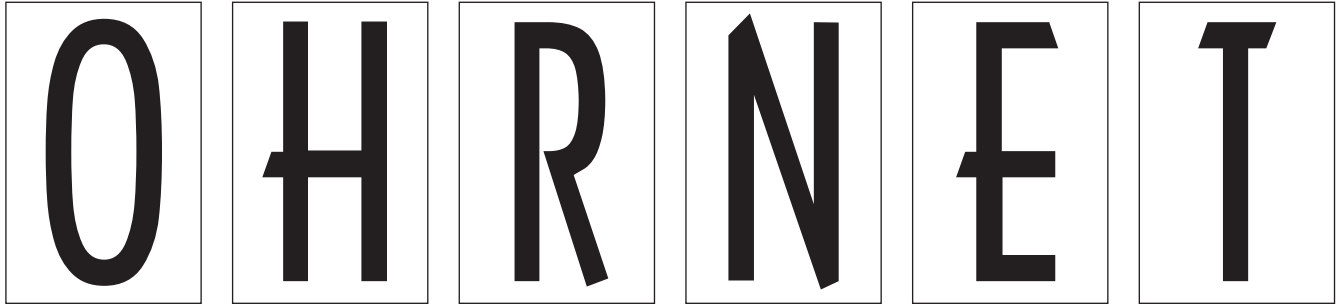


SPECIAL PURIM ISSUE

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SHABBAT PARSHIOT VAYIKRA-TZAV · 9-16 ADAR II 5776 - MAR. 19-26, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 25

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Vayikra

HAPPENSTANCE

“And He called...” (1:1)

If you look in a Sefer Torah you'll notice that the first word of the Book of Vayikra is written with a small letter *aleph*. The word *Vayikra* means “And He called...” The Ba'al HaTurim (Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher 1270 – 1340) explains that Moshe, the humblest of men, was reluctant to write that G-d had called to him. Rather, he wanted to write *Vayikar* — without the *aleph* at the end of the word — which means “And He happened...”, as if G-d had just “happened upon him,” for Moshe felt it sounded unbecoming that G-d should go “out of His Way” to speak to him. In the event, when G-d told Moshe to write the *aleph* at the end of the word, Moshe said he would write it smaller than the other letters — hence the small *aleph* in our *sifrei* Torah until today.

What's unusual about Moshe's reaction is the thought that anything could be considered happenstance in relation to G-d, Who is the Cause of Causes. What could it possibly mean that G-d just “happened” upon Moshe?

The story of Purim reveals much about happenstance. The Name of G-d appears nowhere in the Megillah; the story itself seems to be one happenstance after another. It seems just happenstance that Esther should find herself Queen of Persia and thus in a position to save her people from annihilation; just happenstance that Mordechai should

overhear a plot against the life of Achashverosh, and just happenstance that his loyalty to the king should go unrewarded until the fateful night that Achashverosh cannot sleep and calls for the scroll of the records of the kingdom to be read before him, precipitating the series of events that leads to the saving of the Jewish People.

Haman was from the nation of Amalek. Amalek is the agency of atheism in the world — that existence is just happenstance. The *gematria* of Amalek is the same as *safek*, which means “doubt”. The Talmud asks where you can find an allusion to Haman in the Torah; it replies that when G-d asked Adam if he had eaten from the forbidden tree, G-d said, “*Ha-min ha-etz...*” “*Did (you) from the tree...?*” The word “*Ha-min*” can be read as “Haman”. The word “*Ha-min*” is an interrogative pronoun; Haman's very name suggests question, existential doubt.

Atheism doubts the existence of G-d — but is sure about the existence of self. True humility doubts the possibility of my existence as something distinct from He Who is Existence. Moshe's response to G-d calling him was that — the feeling that he had no more independent validity than a chance meeting, a happenstance.

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

KIDDUSHIN 9 - 22

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Shmuel, “Anyone who is not an expert in the laws of divorce and marriage should not be involved in them.”

Doesn't marriage need to precede divorce chronologically? So why does this teaching mention divorce *prior* to marriage?

The laws of effecting a marriage are quite well-known compared to the great complexity of the laws of writing and giving a get to effect a divorce. In addition, in the event of error the potential consequences regarding the marriage of an unmarried woman are far less serious than those that could occur as a result of wrongly permitting a married woman to remarry. Therefore, although it is correct to only authorize rabbis who are familiar with the laws of *kiddushin* to perform marriage ceremonies, it is even more important to ensure that only the greatest halachic experts in the laws of *gittin* are allowed to deal with divorce matters.

In order to stress the greater caution required regarding divorce, the statement in our *gemara* mentions the laws of *gittin* before the laws of *kiddushin*. (Maharsha)

• Kiddushin 13a

“Death (of her husband) is ‘equated’ with divorce; just as divorce permits her to remarry, likewise the death of her husband permits her to remarry.”

Rav Ashi offers this as a definitive proof for the halacha in the first *mishna* of the Tractate which teaches that a woman is permitted to marry another man if she is divorced or if her husband dies. The *gemara* on our daf asks for the source in the Torah from which we learn that a widow is permitted to remarry. The *sugya* offers numerous possible sources but raises challenges to each attempted proof. This ‘equation’ between divorce and being widowed is unchallenged as a clear proof.

The verse where this equation, called a “*hekesheh*”, is found is: “If the latter husband hates her and writes her a bill of divorce, and places it into her hand and sends her away from his house, or if the latter husband who took her as a wife dies, her first husband, who had sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife...” (Deut. 24:3-4)

Rashi asks why the *gemara* doesn't prove that a widow may remarry from this same verse in a more direct manner. It states that if the second husband dies, her first husband may not remarry her, implying that she is, however, permitted to marry anyone else. Rashi answers that this proof could be rejected. Perhaps returning to her first husband would transgress a negative command, whereas marrying someone else would still violate a positive command. This is the same reasoning that the *gemara* used earlier to reject other suggested proofs to allow a widow to remarry.

• Kiddushin 13b

“The ear of a person that heard My voice at Mount Sinai declare that ‘the Jewish People are My servants’ (Vayikra 25:55) — and not the servants of servants — and went and sold himself as a slave to another — deserves to be pierced.”

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai explained that we can learn this “gem of a teaching” (“*k'min chomer*” — see Rashi) when we learn the verse “But if the Hebrew indentured servant says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go free...’ his master shall bore his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.” (Ex. 21:5-6)

In addition to this explanation for piercing his ear, Tosefot offers cites a Midrash that hints to the reason for using an awl — called “*martzea*” in the verse. The *gematria* of the word *martzea* is 400. Since the Jewish People were slaves in Egypt for 400 years and were redeemed by G-d, this Jewish person who went and “acquired” a master for himself deserves to be pierced with a “*martzea* of 400”.

• Kiddushin 22b

continued on page fourteen

PARSHA Q&A?

Vayikra

1. Who does the word “*eilav*” in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week’s Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
4. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-*kohen* perform?
6. Besides the fire the *kohanim* bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bnei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is *melika*?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a “satisfying aroma”?
11. Why is the term “*nefesh*” used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will *mincha* offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *mincha*. What is meant by “honey”?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning *shelamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe’ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a *chatat*?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burned while in the wilderness? Where were they burned during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*?
19. What two things does a voluntary *mincha* have that a *minchat chatat* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Vayikra’s Questions!

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

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bnei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* Courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bnei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one’s fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal’s food is provided by its owner, so its innards are “kosher.” Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with “theft.”
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, G-d regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
12. 2:2 - The *kometz* (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb’s *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat’s is not.
16. 3:8 - The *chatat*.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the *karet* (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

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Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Vayikra

Parshat Zachor

The last paragraph in Parshat Ki Teitzei describes Amalek's attack on the Jewish People in the desert. As a result we are commanded to never forget and to utterly wipe out the nation of Amalek. Abarbanel is bothered by the discrepancy between the description of the attack here and the original recounting of the battle in Parshat Beshalach. There it appears that the battle involved the Jewish nation as a whole, while in Ki Teitzei it appears that Amalek attacked only the weak stragglers who brought up the rear. Also, in Beshalach Moshe instructs Yehoshua to prepare an attack against Amalek, while in Ki Teitzei it appears that the battle was a sudden unprovoked attack by Amalek. Furthermore, in Ki Teitzei there is no mention of Yehoshua's attack and there is no mention of his victory.

Abarbanel answers that there were actually two separate incidents. Ki Teitzei records the initial unprovoked attack by Amalek against the weakened, vulnerable part of the nation. In Beshalach the Torah is telling us that after this cowardly attack and immediate withdrawal Moshe instructs Yehoshua to take a small group of chosen men and retaliate, the result being the defeat of the Amalekites. Ki Teitzei only mentions the initial cowardly attack, to awaken us to the necessity of never forgetting this perfidious action and to focus on their utter destruction.

Amalek's attack on Israel was unique in four different aspects. First of all, the Jews were not threatening Amalek's territory, nor was Amalek extending its own territory or seeking material booty. Secondly, Amalek attacked without warning without informing the Jews of their intentions, not in accord with the custom amongst warring nations at that time. Thirdly, the cowardly nature of their attack showed that there was no purpose to their actions. Finally, the nature of the attack clearly demonstrated they had no fear of G-d. Their action was essentially an attack on G-d.

In order to dispel the notion that only G-d would take revenge against Amalek, the nation is told that since it is goal of Amalek to destroy the Jewish nation, it is the Jewish nation's responsibility to destroy Amalek. Even when they have rested from the conquest of their enemies in the Land of Israel they cannot rest from their responsibility to destroy Amalek.

The admonition to never forget the nature of Amalek and our ultimate responsibility to destroy them extends to all times and all places, even when we are not in a position to challenge them. This is what is meant by "You shall wipe out the memory of Amalek *from under the heaven* — you shall never forget." The expression "under the heaven" is a reference to our situation in exile anywhere on the globe. Even

though we may not be in a position to literally wipe out Amalek we must never forget who they are and what they did.

Vayikra

The Purpose of the Sin and Guilt Offerings

“If the anointed *kohen* will sin, bringing guilt upon the people...he shall offer a young bull...the anointed *kohen* shall take from the blood of the bull...he shall sprinkle some of the blood...toward the curtain of the Holy...but the hide of the bull and all its flesh...he shall remove to the outside of the camp...and he shall burn it on wood in fire...” (Leviticus 4:3-12)

“If the entire assembly of Israel shall err...the congregation shall offer a young bull as a sin-offering...he shall sprinkle seven times...toward the curtain...he shall remove the bull to the outside of the camp and burn it...” (Leviticus 4:13-21)

“When a ruler sins...unintentionally...he shall bring...a male goat” (Leviticus 4:22)

“If an individual person from among the people of the land shall sin unintentionally...he shall bring as his offering a she-goat.” But if his means are insufficient...two turtledoves or two young doves to G-d, one for a sin-offering and one for an elevation offering” (Leviticus 4:27; Leviticus 5:7)

“...he shall bring his guilt-offering to G-d, an unblemished ram from the flock, with a value of silver shekels, according to the sacred shekel, for a guilt-offering.” (Leviticus 5:14)

The sin and guilt offerings are brought when an individual transgresses a negative commandment. The sin offering is brought when the transgression was accidental, whereas the guilt offering is brought when the individual is uncertain whether or not he actually transgressed a Torah prohibition in the first place.

There are numerous differences between the procedures followed for the elevation offering and the procedures for the sin offering. These differences can be explained by a deeper understanding of the purpose of the sin offering. Even though the individual who sins unintentionally is obviously not rebelling against G-d or denying the Torah, G-d still imposes a fine in the form of the sin offering to make people more vigilant in their observance, in order to avoid even accidental transgressions. The verse in Proverbs 12:21 states: “No mischief will befall the righteous.”

These transgressions include a wide range of accidental behaviors, such as various types of ritual impurity, eating forbidden foods, sexual transgressions, and more. When an individual occupies an important position in society, the vigilance required to avoid even accidental transgression becomes even more acute, so as not to lead others astray. This is illus-

continued on page eleven

PURIM — THORNY BUSINESS

From: Melissa

Dear Rabbi,
What is the significance of Haman being hanged on a tree?

Dear Melissa,

When Haman became infuriated with Mordechai for not bowing before him as everyone else did, his wicked wife Zeresh advised him to plot a death for Mordechai that none of his ancestors had ever escaped from. She argued, "If you cast him into a fiery furnace, Chananiya and his companions have already been saved from one. If you seize him to die in prison, Joseph has already emerged from one. If you exile him to perish in the wilderness, his forefathers have already been delivered from one. Rather, hang him on a tree, since we do not find that any of his people have ever escaped such a death."

"And the matter was good before Haman and he made the tree-scaffold." (Esther 5:14)

What type of tree was it? Our Sages taught that when Haman decided to prepare the scaffold, G-d asked all the trees which one would volunteer for the wicked Haman to

be hung upon it. The fig tree said, "I offer myself since the Jewish People offer my first-fruits for the mitzvah of *bikkurim*." The etrog said, "I offer myself since the Jews cherish me for a mitzvah." The willow said, "I offer myself since the Jews take me for the mitzvah of the four species." The vine, pomegranate and nut trees each said, "I offer myself since Israel is compared to me." Similarly, the myrtle, olive, apple, date, palm and cedar all said, "We offer ourselves since we are compared to Israel in righteousness."

Then the thorn came before G-d and said, "Master of the Universe, let me who has no merit, be the one upon whom hangs Haman who has no merit. Furthermore, I am a thorn and he is a thorn. It is fitting that a thorn be hung on a thorn." G-d complied, and the tree which Haman's servants found with the intention of hanging Mordechai was a thorn tree.

When his servants brought the tree before Haman, he delighted himself in posturing himself toward it to demonstrate to them how Mordechai would hang from it. At that moment, a voice from Heaven called and said, "As he gestures in jest, so this tree is in fact prepared for him. Let Haman hang from the tree he prepares for Mordechai!"

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

THE WALLED CITIES OF ERETZ YISRAEL

The megillah is read on the 14th of Adar in cities which were *not* walled at the time when Joshua led the Jewish nation in conquest of Eretz Yisrael. In cities which were surrounded by walls at that time, the megillah is read a day later, on the 15th of Adar.

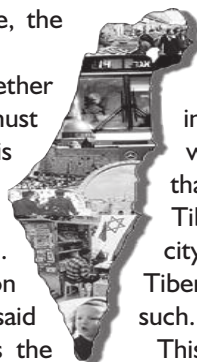
In a city about which there is uncertainty as to whether it was walled at that time or not, its inhabitants must read the megillah on both the 14th and 15th. This includes the ancient cities of Jaffa, Lod, Akko, Tsefat, Haifa, Beersheva, Hebron, Shechem and Gaza, according to the "*Luach Eretz Yisrael*" of Rabbi M. Tuchichinski. Feasting and gift giving are also done on both days. The blessing on the megillah reading is said only on the 14th when most of the world reads the megillah.

In Tiberias, too, the megillah must be read on both days. But this is not because there is any doubt that the city

had walls in the time of Joshua. A passage in Joshua 19 describes Reket as a walled city, and we know that Reket is another name for Tiberias. What then is the question that arises in regard to Tiberias?

Tiberias is located on the Sea of Galilee, also called the Kinneret. Thus, it was protected from invaders by a combination of walls and the sea. If we define a "walled city" literally, meaning one that is "completely surrounded by walls", then Tiberias does not qualify. But if we view "walled city" as one that is "protected from invasion", then Tiberias' combination of walls and sea qualifies it as such.

This is why the Sage Chizkiyahu instituted in Tiberias the megillah reading on both days, a ruling cited in the Shulchan Aruch as a precedent for all cities whose status is uncertain. (Orach Chaim 68 8:4, Mishna Berura 9)



PRAYING WHILE INTOXICATED?

Every year when Adar approaches we anxiously await the Purim celebration. Unlike the rest of the Jewish calendar, on this special holiday there is a unusual halacha requiring one to drink wine (Rashi on Megillah 7b) until he does not know the difference between “*Arur Haman u’baruch Mordechai*” — “Cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai”. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 695:2)

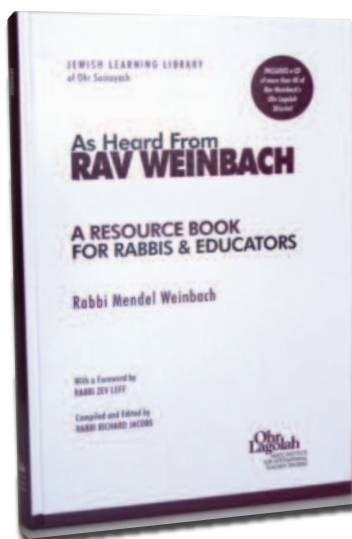
Many Rabbis follow a conservative approach to this ruling, advising to drink (a little) more than one is accustomed to, and then to take a nap. Since while sleeping one is not in control of the mind, it is considered as though one reaches the point of not knowing the difference between “cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai”. (Rambam Laws of Megillah 2:16; Rema and Mishna Berura Orach Chaim 695:2; Yalkut Yosef, Laws of the Purim Meal 14)

Others take a more literal approach to this law. As a result, many have the custom to become quite intoxicated on Purim (Shulchan Aruch, Kaf Ha’Chaim in the name of Eliya Rabbah). However, the Chayei Adam (155:30) advises that one should refrain from becoming intoxicated if it prevents him from performing mitzvot, such as making blessings and birkat ha’mazon properly, or if he will not be able to pray mincha or ma’ariv, or he will act improperly. Whichever approach one chooses, the question whether one can pray while intoxicated is likely to arise, since even according to the first opinion one drinks more than usual.

According to the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 99:1) ideally one should not pray if he drank enough alcohol so that he is affected by it. Instead, he should wait until the effects have worn off. If, however, he will miss out on praying by waiting, he can pray as long as he is not intoxicated to the point that he cannot speak before a king or someone of similar stature without stuttering or slurring his speech (Rashal; Rema; Taz; Mishna Berura). Rabbi David Yosef explains that Rabbi Yosef Karo also agrees to this ruling. (Halacha Berura *sif katan* 3)

One who cannot speak before a king is not permitted to pray even if he will miss out on prayer. However, he can make it up at the next prayer, since he is considered as one that accidentally missed prayer. If one prays in such an intoxicated state, his prayer is considered an abomination and he needs to pray again when he sobers up. (Tur; Shulchan Aruch)

Some explain based on the Rema (halacha 3 and in the Darchei Moshe) that if one is able to pray from a Siddur without “messaging up”, he is considered as one who is able to speak before a king even if he is (a little) intoxicated (See Piskei Teshuva). However, the Mishna Berura is stringent regarding this point, explaining that it is not proper. (Pri Megadim)



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JOHN GIBSON

Age: 29 - Chicago, Illinois

University of Northern Illinois, BS in Biochemistry and Applied Mathematics

University of Chicago, MA in Applied Mathematics - Mechina Program

During WWII, the Nazis, *yemach shemam*, sent their encrypted military messages through a German invention called “The Enigma Machine”. It was a diabolically clever device that changed the encryption and the code on a daily basis. It had so many permutations that cracking its code could be done only through a computer. But computers hadn’t been invented yet. Alan Turing, a Cambridge-educated mathematician, invented a card-reading computational machine that eventually broke the Enigma Code. With their new major advantage over the Nazis, the war was shortened.

Many of our students have interesting backgrounds, but few, if any, have been cryptographers. John Gibson was. Born in New Jersey, the family moved to Illinois when he was a boy. His father, Dr. J. Murray Gibson, who had been a scientist at Bell Labs in New Jersey, took a professorship in Physics at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. In addition, he was appointed the Director of the Advanced Photon Source (APS) at Argonne National Laboratory, a global leader in many scientific areas.

John had a secular Jewish upbringing, and religion was not really very much a part of his life. Academics were important in the family. Not only was his father an academic, his mother had been an assistant professor at Bernard Baruch College at the City University of New York. John went to University of Northern Illinois where he earned a BS degree in Biochemistry and Applied Mathematics. After college he decided to fulfill a lifelong dream, which would also pay off his large student loan debt, and joined the US Army. After taking a battery of tests, the Army saw that he had a talent for learning languages, and after basic training he was sent to language school in Monterrey, California to become a cryptographic linguist. While they don’t have to invent computers, like Alan Turing did, they do intercept enemy communications and try to decipher them. He was taught Pashto, the language of the Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan and the neighboring provinces of Pakistan, and was tasked with deciphering Taliban communications. After a nine-month tour of duty in Afghanistan he was sent to various locations in the Middle East and the US, where he continued his highly classified work. After three and a half years in the Army he was given an honorable discharge and entered the



University of Chicago, where he received a Master’s degree in Applied Mathematics.

John worked for a few years as a silicon chip designer and a computer coder. He then decided to switch fields. After moving to Chicago, his mother had joined Merrill Lynch, eventually becoming First Vice President, Wealth Management Advisor and Senior Portfolio Manager. She asked John if he would like to come into the business. Using

his skills as a mathematician, he built mathematical models for trading securities and also began to manage portfolios, which he is doing today.

Two of the senior managers in his trading unit are Kirill Vorobeychik and Or Gera. They are both Orthodox Jews. John was impressed with their ethical behavior. The world of high finance is not known for its high level of ethical behavior, but these men were outstanding in their honesty and integrity. John felt honored to learn from them.

When Kirill invited John to participate in the Shabbat Project that JET (Jewish Educational Team – a *kiruv* group) was organizing in Chicago, he accepted. The two main rabbis at JET are Zev Kahn and Shalom Garfinkel, both Ohr Somayach and Ohr LaGolah graduates. In addition to learning with Kirill and Or, John also started learning with the JET rabbis, and when JET organized a learning trip to Israel in the summer of 2015 John signed up. The venue for the learning was Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. John was smitten. He recently managed to schedule an extended vacation and he’s spending it here in the Mechina Program.

When asked about his experience here John says, “At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, Ohr Somayach is unique, amazing, and intensely familiar — all at one time. You truly feel like you belong here while learning continuously, listening and participating in fascinating *shirum* all throughout the day, alongside people your age and your skill level. There are many types of people here, but the common factor uniting all of us is the desire to learn. And here learning is no function of solitude: there is a wonderful (almost subconscious) push from your colleagues to together embrace as much Torah as we can — even while helping each other out in stumbles along the way. This is a beautiful place, and it is home in many ways.”

PURIM — ITS LAWS AND LESSONS FOR LIFE

Megillat Esther is the classic work that teaches us how to see the guiding hand of G-d — even in seemingly natural events. Just as through analyzing the intricate details of the megillah every “coincidence” is revealed to be another piece of a puzzle leading to the ultimate salvation, the same is true in our own lives. Through careful analysis, every event is shown to be a part of a greater and unifying purpose. The commentaries take this idea further and suggest that even the intricate details of the laws of just *reading the megillah* teach us life lessons about revealing G-d’s providence in our daily lives.

Not Missing a Word

With regard to the mitzvah of hearing the megillah, the halacha states that if a person fails to hear even one word of the megillah he has not fulfilled his obligation. This halacha holds true even if the word that he missed does not appear to make the story any less clear (see Mishna Berura 690:3 and 690:50 and Bi’ur Halacha there). This somewhat confusing halacha compels us to study it and glean the life lessons contained therein.

The second verse in Megillat Esther says: *In those days when the King Achashverosh was sitting on his throne that was in Shushan.* At first glance it seems as though the megillah is providing a historical fact. However, this is not so, as Chazal explain how such a small, “insignificant” statement is replete with *hashgacha pratit* (Divine providence). The Midrash explains that Achashverosh longed to have Shlomo Hamelech’s magnificent throne. He therefore hired artisans in Shushan to build a throne identical to the original. However, after the throne’s completion, they realized that it was too heavy to be brought to Bavel, which was the true capital of Achashverosh’s empire. Achashverosh desired this royal throne so much that he decided to change his capital from Bavel to Shushan so that he would be able to rule while seated on it (Esther Rabbah 1:12).

The Vilna Gaon points out that only by closely following the storyline we realize that G-d caused all this to happen because Mordechai and Esther lived in the city of Shushan. This seemingly minor detail of the location of Achashverosh’s throne actually set the stage for the entire story of Purim!

The Vilna Gaon further explains that this is the reason behind the halachah mentioned earlier. Missing even one tiny point in the megillah takes away from the ultimate goal of seeing G-d’s providence in every part of the Jewish People’s salvation (Vilna Gaon’s commentary on Megillat Esther 1:2). The life lesson learned from this halacha is that every event from our own personal lives is invaluable. Even trivial things

that at the time seem to be meaningless and unintentional contribute to a grander and larger picture of how our lives turn out.

Reading in Order

Another halacha regarding the reading of the megillah states that one who reads the megillah out of order has not fulfilled his obligation. Similar to the above, this halacha also applies even if the change in order has no apparent bearing on the outcome of the story. What can we learn from this halacha?

The megillah says: *After these events, the King Achashverosh promoted Haman, the son of Hamdata the Agagi, and lifted him, and put his seat above all the other officers that were with him (Esther 3:1).*

The *gemara* comments: *“After these events” — Rava said: “after Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the remedy before the affliction, like Reish Lakish said: Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn’t afflict Israel until He creates the remedy for it first.”* (Tractate Megillah 13b)

How did G-d create the remedy before the affliction? Before Haman was promoted, Esther was already chosen as queen and Mordechai had already saved the king’s life by foiling Bigtan and Teresh’s assassination plot. As we know, both of these events led to the downfall of Haman and to the Jewish People’s victory over Amalek. The Vilna Gaon explains that this is one reason why one who reads the megillah out of order has not fulfilled his obligation. By reading the events of the story of Purim out of order, one is missing a crucial aspect of seeing how G-d planned things precisely to happen at the right time. No event, no matter how small, took place unless it was the absolute perfect time for it to take place. It is only through reading the megillah in order that one can fully appreciate the master plan that G-d orchestrated in bringing about the salvation of the Jewish People. (Vilna Gaon’s commentary on Megillat Esther 1:2)

The lesson learned from this is clear. In our everyday lives we may often question why certain events had to happen at times when we were seemingly least equipped to deal with them. We say things like, “If only this would have happened a week ago or in a month from now, then everything would have worked out better.” Through careful analysis of the chain of events in the megillah we learn the important lesson that everything happens only at the most opportune time with absolute precision and planning. Though at times things may seem to be anything but timely, we must remember that in G-d’s master plan, everything happens at the right time.

LIONS OF THE SOUL

“...he (the kohen) will separate the ash” (6:1)

Tzav

July 1956. Saturday afternoon. A taxi leisurely turns off Dizengoff Street into a side turning. A close-up on the taxi driver’s face. He is wearing a blue baseball cap.

Driver: They went to their deaths like sheep. They asked their rabbis: “Rabbis, should we run away to Israel or should we stay here in Europe? And you know what all those great rabbis said (*puts on fake Yiddish accent*)? “Don’t leave! Don’t go to Israel! In Israel your souls will be in mortal peril. Jews there drive down Dizengoff on a Shabbes afternoon! You’re better off here in Lodz.”

The driver chuckles, pleased with his own joke. He thinks for a second.

“So I ran away in 1937. I came here. I got a job as a taxi driver. I used to be religious but I gave it up here. Those poor fools are now ashes and I’m alive and driving down Dizengoff on Shabbes.

The picture slowly zeros in on the laugh of the driver.

Dissolve. We hear Shostakovitch’s String Quartet no. 8. A large hearse is seen leaving a graveyard. Cut to a freshly filled-in grave in the mid-distance. Hanging on the grave marker is a blue baseball cap. The camera tracks backward. All around it are grave-stones. The camera keeps tracking back through what seems to be like hundreds and hundreds of identical gravestones. They are all identical. Suddenly, the camera stops and slowly tracks in, lingering on one of thousands of identical stones. At the top of the gravestone there is a carving — six pieces of barbed wire arranged in a Star of David. The camera moves downward. We read the inscription: “For one of the Six Million — a place in the earth for someone whose ashes are blown on the four winds.”

No one gets out of here alive. We all make our exit one way or another. The question is: What we do in this brief walk between two darknesses? We can live like heroes and die like martyrs, with the name of G-d on our lips. We can die for the sake of our beliefs, for the sake of religion and our people. We can die like Jews and because we are Jews.

Or we can shorten our names, shorten our noses and vanish into the background. Either way, we all end up sitting in that same “waiting room” before our cases come up in the true Supreme Court. There, we will reflect on what we did and what we didn’t do. What we could have done

and what we did.

The world sees our martyrs as passive — lambs to the slaughter. We see them as gigantic heroes of the soul. Heroes who never allowed their fiendish enemies the pleasure of seeing them falter in their trust in G-d’s ultimate justice. Heroes, who, with the worst imaginable horrors staring them in the face, never slackened in the observance of their faith. They were quick to do the Will of their Father in Heaven. And in death they are not separated from Him. Shortly before Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (*H”y*) and his talmidim were slaughtered by Latvian thugs, he cautioned his young flock that no impure thought should enter their minds, so that they might be a pure offering, an atonement for their brothers and sisters who would live on, in Israel, in America...

“Who is like Your people Israel, one nation in all the world?”

If we live on today, it is because of them. Our lives are founded on the ashes of the millions. They gave their most precious gift to us. Even though they never met us. They were not sheep. They were lions of the soul.

“...he (the kohen) will separate the ash.”

The first service of the day in the Holy Temple — the basis for the service of the rest of the day — was the *terumat hadeshen*. The *kohen* took ashes from the innermost part of the part of the Altar and placed them on the floor of the courtyard to the east of the ramp that led to the Altar’s top. These ashes had to come from the incinerated flesh of the previous day’s offerings.

Every day the *kohen* would remove the ash and place it at the base of the Altar. Miraculously, the ash would be *swallowed* by the ground around the base of the Altar. In other words, the ashes became part of the Altar on which that service was performed.

Today’s service of G-d is always built on yesterday’s service. A Jew serves G-d today with his life as willingly — as ultimately he is prepared to serve Him with his ashes.

- Sources: Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch and a story heard from Rabbi Zev Leff

PARSHA Q&A ?

Tzav

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they completely removed from the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this *Parsha*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tzav's Questions!

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

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burned completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burned, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); a *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); an *onan* (a mourner on the day of death of a close relative).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; upon safe arrival from a desert journey; upon being freed from prison; upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - a) Until the morning. b) Until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *mincha* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

Continued from page four

trated by the fact that the Torah deals first with an accidental transgression committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, as his behavior will make the most profound impression on the people.

Because of the severe nature of his transgression, only a small portion of his animal offering is burned on the altar; the majority is burned outside the camp. The animal's inner organs are burned on the altar, the place of highest sanctity, to show that his offense was unintentional. However, due to the gravity of his lack of vigilance, the rest of the body of the animal is burned outside the camp, a place lacking in holiness, as if it were nothing more than a carcass. Thus it represents the body of the *Kohen Gadol* that had transgressed. The *Kohen Gadol* also had to sprinkle some of the animal's blood in the inner sanctuary to serve as an atonement. Such an act was not required for the elevation offering since it was not an act of atonement; rather the elevation offering represented our total connection with G-d.

The same procedures applied if the entire congregation or if the Sanhedrin transgressed accidentally. In each case, the damage resulting from that accidental transgression could be widespread, and the required atonement was therefore symbolized by sprinkling the blood and burning the majority of the animal outside the camp.

However, the sin offering of the *Nasi*, a leader of lower status than the *Kohen Gadol* or members of the Sanhedrin, was basically the same as that of a common citizen. He brings a goat instead of a bull, and the blood is not sprinkled in the inner sanctuary since his transgression does not have the same serious repercussions as the others'. Furthermore, if an ordinary citizen cannot afford a goat, he can bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons instead. Curiously, the Torah says that one is for the sin offering and the other is for an elevation offering. The sin offering refers to the act itself, which was a transgression. The elevation offering refers to the fact that the individual's motives, however, were faultless. Since the repercussions of an accidental transgression by the *Kohen Gadol*, Sanhedrin member or *Nasi* were potentially so much greater, the positive implication of the elevation offering was entirely absent from their offering.

The guilt offering differed slightly from the sin offering, as for the common citizen it consisted of a ram, not a goat. It is necessary to understand the difference between the two types of transgression. The word for sin is *chata* which means, literally, "to miss the mark", meaning to stray from what is proper by accidentally violating a Torah commandment. The offender in this case is fully aware that he violated a command; albeit through an accident. The guilt offering, however, is brought by an individual who wasn't even sure that he violated anything at all. Thus, he wants to atone for his lack of knowledge, for his failure to know what was permissible and what was not. The guilt offering is referred to as *taloy*, or "suspended", since it is not known whether there was any violation at all. Even though there is a strong element of doubt in this situation, he is still required to bring a ram, which is a

very expensive animal, to prevent people from misleading themselves into thinking that they were basically innocent of doing anything wrong. Not only that, but the animal had to be evaluated in silver *shekelim* worth at least two *selas*, a not insignificant sum.

Tzav

The Purpose of the Peace-Offerings

“**T**his is the law of the feast peace-offering...If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering, he shall offer with the feast thanksgiving offering unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil. With loaves of leavened bread he shall bring his offering, with his feast thanksgiving peace-offering. From it he shall offer one from each kind of offering, a portion to G-d; it shall belong to the *kohen* who throws the blood of the peace-offering. And the meat...must be eaten on the day of its offering...If his feast-offering is for a vow or a donation, it must be eaten on the day he offered his feast-offering; and on the next day, what is left over may be eaten...(Leviticus 7:11-16)

There are two types of peace-offerings. The first is referred to as the thanksgiving offering. Here, individuals are thanking G-d for what He has done for the Jewish nation, such as giving us the Land of Israel and intervening miraculously throughout our history. The other is referred to as a vow, or a donation. Here, G-d is being asked to intervene on one's behalf for his benefit. The first type refers to gratitude for the past while the second refers to asking G-d for His assistance and blessings in the future.

To express gratitude, the individual prepares a festive meal along with the offering. The animal's innards are burnt on the altar and are considered symbolic of the individual's thoughts. A portion is then given to the *kohanim*, who also thank G-d for the blessings that they have received as well. If it is an offering as a prayer for future blessings, the *kohanim* also participate in asking for future blessings. Once the *kohanim* have received their share, those who brought the offering have a right to their share.

The peace-offerings are comprised of cattle, sheep or goats, as well as the finest wheat flour, olive oil and wine, which are the finest of the liquids. All of these are connected to the special bounty of the Land of Israel which is dependent on G-d's blessing.

The priests receive the meat from the chest and legs, which are considered the choicest parts of the animal. The joyous nature of these offerings is also indicated by the other foods that accompany them, such as the loaves of leavened bread. These additional items are not mentioned in regard to the vow or donation offerings, which were intended to beseech G-d for future blessings, as rejoicing over past blessings is very different from requesting the continuation of these blessings in the future.

Q

1. How many countries did Achashverosh rule over?
2. How many days did the first feast last?
3. What are the names of Achashverosh's two servants who plotted to kill him?
4. How did Haman choose the date that he did for killing the Jews?
5. How many people did Esther invite to her parties?
6. What did Mordechai receive with the hanging of Haman?
7. Why is this holiday called "Purim"?
8. How many different mitzvot do we fulfill on Purim?
9. Which two tribes are mentioned in relation to Mordechai?
10. What do we add to our regular *Shmone Esrai* and *birkat hamazon*?
11. What portion of the Torah is read on Purim morning?
12. Why is Haman referred to as "Ha'agagi"?
13. How many wine banquets are mentioned in the Megillah?
14. How much should one drink in celebration of Purim?
15. In which city did all the Megillah events take place?
16. What was the proclamation made by Haman as he led Mordechai on parade?
17. Who informed the king about the gallows which Haman had prepared for Mordechai?
18. Which cities celebrate Purim on 14 Adar and which on 15 Adar?
19. What is the name of the fast day preceding Purim?
20. How many days did Esther and the Jews of Shushan fast in order to deserve a miracle?

A

1. 127 (*Esther* 1:1)
2. 180 (*Esther* 1:4)
3. Bigtan and Teresh (*Esther* 2:21)
4. With a lottery (*Esther* 3:7)
5. Two: Achashverosh and Haman (*Esther* 5:4 and 5:8)
6. Haman's house (*Esther* 8:3)
7. Because of the "Pur" (lots) cast by Haman (*Esther* 9:26)
8. Four: 1) Reading of the Megillah, 2) Sending gifts to friends, 3) Giving gifts to the poor, 4) Feasting with food and drink (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 690, 695, 696)
9. Binyamin and Yehuda (*Esther* 2:5)
10. *Al Hanissim* (*Orach Chaim* 693, 695)
11. Parshat Amalek – *Shmot* 17:1-9 (*Orach Chaim* 693)
12. He was descended from the Amalekite King Agag who was slain by the Prophet Shmuel (Book of Shmuel I 15:32-33)
13. Four (*Esther* 1:3, 1:5, 5:5, 7:1), two thrown by the king and two by Esther.
14. More than he is accustomed to drinking and, if he can maintain his sobriety, to the point where he cannot distinguish between "Cursed by Haman, blessed be Mordechai." (*Orach Chaim* 695)
15. Shushan (*Esther* 1:2 and repeated throughout the Megillah)
16. "This is what is done for the man whom the king honors." (*Esther* 7:11)
17. Charvona (*Esther* 7:9)
18. Cities that were walled from the days of Yehoshua (Yerushalayim as an example) read on the 15 Adar, others on 14 Adar. (*Orach Chaim* 685)
19. Taanit Esther (*Orach Chaim* 686)
20. Three days and nights (*Esther* 5:15)

Laws & Customs of Purim

TIMES

- Purim is preceded by the Fast of Esther, which begins at dawn on the 13th of Adar and continues until nightfall. When the 13th is on Shabbat (like this year), the Fast of Esther is observed on the preceding Thursday. It is forbidden to eat and drink on this day (one may, however, wash, and wear leather shoes).
- In unwalled cities, Purim is celebrated on the 14th of Adar, from night to night.
- In cities with walls dating from the days of Joshua, Purim is celebrated on the 15th of Adar, as it was in Shushan, the capital of Persia; hence the name, Shushan Purim. Jerusalem is a walled city and most of its suburbs are also considered part of Jerusalem regarding this law.

READING OF THE SCROLL OF ESTHER

Kriat Hamegillah

- The Scroll of Esther is read publicly in the evening and on the morning of Purim.
- It must be read from a scroll written in accordance with halachah.
- The reader and the audience must have intent to fulfill the mitzvah of reading and to fulfill the obligation of the blessings before and after.
- It is customary to make noise when the name of Haman is mentioned.
- It is forbidden to speak from the time of the blessings before the reading, until the end of the blessings after the reading.
- Ideally the scroll should be read in the presence of a minyan.

PRAYER *Tefillah*

- The prayer '*Al Hanissim*' is added in the Silent Prayer (*Shmoneh Esrei*) and in Grace after Meals.
- If one forgot '*Al Hanissim*' one does not repeat the prayer or blessing.
- During the morning service (*Shacharit*), the Torah is read.
- The prayer of repentance, *Tachanun*, is not recited, nor is the prayer *Lamenatzeach*.

GIFTS TO FRIENDS *Mishloach Manot*

- One is obligated to give at least one gift to one fellow

Jew. The more the better.

- The gift must consist of at least two items of food, ready to eat.
- It is preferable to send the gift via a third party.

GIFTS TO THE POOR *Matanot L'evyonim*

- One is obligated to give a gift of money, sufficient for one meal, to at least two poor people. The more the better.
- Funds must be available on the day of Purim. (No post-dated checks.)
- It is preferable to take care of this obligation early in the day.
- The gift may be given to a third party in order to distribute on the day of Purim.
- More should be spent on gifts to the poor than on gifts to friends (unless they are also poor).

THE FESTIVE MEAL *Seudat Purim*

- It is obligatory to partake of a festive meal on the day of Purim.
- It is customary to eat food with seeds - e.g., *Hamentashen* with poppy seed filling.
- One should drink more wine than one is accustomed to.
- It is correct to invite guests, especially the needy.
- The conversation should be focused on words of Torah.

CUSTOMS *Minhagim*

- Many have a custom to dress up in costumes.
- It is customary to give charity to all who ask.
- Some produce amusing Purim plays.
- Some also present amusing *divrei Torah*.
- It is customary to visit the homes of one's Rabbis and teachers.
- One should start studying the laws of Passover on Purim.
- It is correct not to engage in business or work on Purim.
- At the afternoon service before Purim it is customary to give three coins (preferable with the number ½ on them) to charity in memory of the three "half-shekels" given to the Temple.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Vayikra

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests — deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the “questionable guilt” offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

Tzav

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burned on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

Continued from page two

KIDDUSHIN 9 - 22

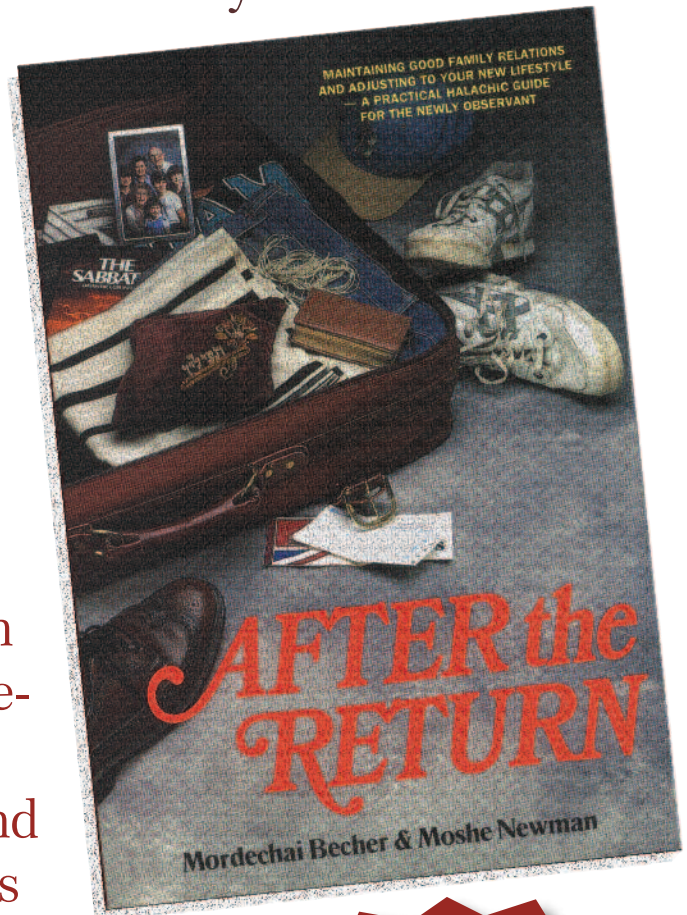
“The door and doorpost that were witnesses in Egypt when I passed over the lintel and doorposts and I said, ‘the Jewish People are My servants’ (*Vayikra* 25:55) — and not the servants of servants — and I took them out from slavery to freedom, and this person who went and ‘acquired’ a master for himself deserves to be pierced in their presence.”

Rabbi Shimon the son of Rebbi taught this additional “gem” to give deeper insight into why “delet” and “mezuzot” are mentioned in the verse that deals with a Hebrew indentured servant remaining with his master: “His master shall bring him to the judges, and he shall also bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.” (Ex. 21:6)

• Kiddushin 22b

An old friend's wedding, an uncle's funeral, Passover at the family homestead — these are but a few of the challenging real-life events that are fraught with conflict and anxiety for the newly observant.

After returning to the faith of their ancestors, many re-enter the secular world without the tools to respond to the inevitable challenges to their newly adopted set of beliefs.



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After the Return

BY RABBI MORDECHAI BECHER AND RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN
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