

# OHRNET

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## TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

### Shlach Lecha: Yoma 44-50

#### The Heirs to the Hair

*We learned in a beraita: “Kimchis had seven sons, and each one of them served as Kohen Gadol. The Chachamim asked her, ‘What did you do to merit this great honor?’ She replied, ‘I never allowed the beams of my house see my uncovered hair.’”*

Clearly, Kimchis was an important and remarkable person. To have merited receiving this unique and superlative spiritual reward from Above for her modesty, she undoubtedly went beyond the letter of the law in her observance of the halacha requiring a married woman to cover her hair.

We similarly find that our great Torah scholars were renowned for their extraordinary modesty, as we see where Rabbi Yossi said, “The beams of my house have never seen the seams of my shirt.” (Shabbat 118b) In practical terms, this means that he did not turn his shirt inside out whenever he changed clothing, but pulled it over his head while sitting up in bed so that he remained covered as much as possible – out of modesty.

In the case of Kimchis and her sons on our *daf*, one might wonder how the reward of *Kehuna Gedola* was measure-for-measure an appropriate honor for her modesty in covering her hair. To explain this connection, Rashi (here) cites the Jerusalem Talmud as follows: King David says in Tehillim 45:14, “The dignity of a princess (which can also be translated as “a daughter of the King”) is in her modesty – and her garment is made of gold embroidery.” A woman with the essence of such outstanding modesty

deserves children who will wear the golden garments of the *Kohen Gadol*.

However, how was this honor technically possible, since there should be only one *Kohen Gadol* at a time? If the seven sons served consecutively, it would seem to imply the death of the previous son. What type of honor would it have been for this pious woman to have buried six of her sons?

A key to the answer is in the *gemara’s* account of her son named Yishmael. He became *tamei* (spiritually impure) just before Yom Kippur one year, and Yashaivov his brother served as a temporary substitute that year. This same temporary disqualification occurred to Yishmael in a different year, and his brother Yosef served instead that year. Despite these incidents being mentioned only in regard to three of her sons, we can infer that this happened more than twice, which eventually led to all seven brothers having an opportunity to serve as *Kohen Gadol* – while all the brothers were alive and together. (Tosefot Yeshanim) In this manner, the service of all her seven sons was certainly an honor for their mother, and certainly brought great *nachat* (Torah joy) to their righteous mother. (See the Maharsha’s *Chiddushei Aggadot* on our *sugya*, where

he poses a fascinating question and advances a brilliant answer regarding the timings and identities of the events that transpired.)

I found a specific detail in the *beraita* particularly intriguing. Why does Kimchis say the *beams* of her house never saw her hair, instead of saying that the *walls* of her house never saw her hair? “Beams” generally refer to the *roof* beams above, whereas walls would be the usual eye-level sides of her abode. Did she perhaps say “beams” to indicate that she took special care to never expose the hair on the very top of her head to the (unlikely) possibility that a person on a ladder was looking at her from near the roof beams, or that someone was flying a drone with a camera above her head? I do not think this is the explanation. Rather, Kimchis was not just a *person who acted ‘modestly’*, she was, in her very essence, a

*modest person*. Since her modesty was inherent and intrinsic, it was only *natural* that she would not expose her royal hair toward any direction of the compass.

(For a detailed treatment and understanding of the halacha of hair-covering for a married woman, see Shuchan Aruch *Even H'Ezer* 75. The sources in *Shas*, explanations from the Rishonim and rulings by our great Poskim are many, and may depend on numerous factors, such as place – both geographical and its precise “public nature”, time, and communal customs and norms. The topic is renowned to be complex and certainly well beyond the scope of a Daf Yomi column titled “Talmud Tips.”)

● *Yoma 47a*

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

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by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### Mutilation or Dedication

“...and (do not) seek after your heart and after your eyes which will lead you astray” [Rashi: *The heart and the eyes are like the body's spies, brokering for it the sins sought by its animal nature*] (15:39)

Hermann Rauschnig in his book “Gespräche mit Hitler” (published in English as *Hitler Speaks*) writes that Hitler said to him; “The tablets of Mount Sinai have lost their validity. Conscience is a Jewish invention. Like circumcision it mutilates man.”

It's interesting that Hitler linked conscience with circumcision. Conscience requires us to think about the consequences of our actions, to focus on the future and not the present. The body wants to ignore consequences. The body's agenda is instant gratification – a gratification that evaporates immediately with its satisfaction. Circumcision dedicates that part of a man's body from which flows his future, his tomorrow. So too, with a woman, the Hebrew name for womb is *rechem*. You can rearrange the letters of *rechem* to spell *machar*, which means “tomorrow.” The body is not interested in the future. Its entire agenda is the present. Both conscience and

circumcision harness our instincts and direct them to build a future world.

Conscience comes from Sinai. The Torah mandated a revolution in human behavior: Education for all. The sanctity of human life, equality before the law, a vision of world peace where nations would beat their swords into ploughshares, the moral imperative to care for the sick, the aged, the orphan, the widow.

What the arch anti-Semite called mutilation, we call dedication.

Avraham Avinu made a *brit* – a pact with G-d. Avraham dedicated his future, his progeny, and their progeny throughout the generations, to G-d. And G-d, so to speak, dedicated everything that He would be in this world to come about through the children of Avraham Avinu. The covenant was the mutual dedication of everything each would ever be to the other.

## Questions – Shlach

1. Why is the portion about the *meraglim* written immediately after the portion about Miriam's *tzara'at*?
2. To what was Moshe referring when he asked the *meraglim* "Are there trees in the land"?
3. Who built Hebron?
4. Which fruits did the *meraglim* bring back?
5. How many people carried the grape cluster?
6. Why did G-d shorten the *meraglim's* journey?
7. Why did the *meraglim* begin by saying the land is "flowing with milk and honey"?
8. Why did the *meraglim* list Amalek first among the hostile nations they encountered?
9. How did Calev quiet the people?
10. Why did the Land appear to "eat its inhabitants"?
11. Besides the incident of the *meraglim*, what other sin led to the decree of 40 years in the desert?
12. On what day did *Bnei Yisrael* cry due to the *meraglim's* report? How did this affect future generations?
13. "Don't fear the people of the Land...their defense is departed." (14:9) Who was their chief "defender"?
14. Calev and Yehoshua praised Eretz Canaan and tried to assure the people that they could be victorious. How did the people respond?
15. "How long shall I bear this evil congregation?" G-d is referring to the 10 *meraglim* who slandered the Land. What halacha do we learn from this verse?
16. How is the *mitzvah* of *challa* different from other *mitzvot* associated with Eretz Yisrael?
17. What is the minimum amount of *challa* to be given to a *kohen* according to Torah Law? Rabbinic Law?
18. Verse 15:22 refers to what sin? How does the text indicate this?
19. Moshe's doubt regarding the punishment of the *mekoshesh etzim* (wood-gatherer) was different than his doubt regarding the punishment of the blasphemer. How did it differ?
20. How do the *tzitzit* remind us of the 613 commandments?

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

## Answers

1. 13:2 - To show the evil of the *meraglim* (spies), that they saw Miriam punished for *lashon hara* (negative speech) yet failed to take a lesson from it.
2. 13:20 - Were there any righteous people in the land whose merit would "shade" the Canaanites from attack?
3. 13:22 - Cham.
4. 13:23 - A cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig.
5. 13:23 - Eight.
6. 13:25 - G-d knew the Jews would sin and be punished with a year's wandering for each day of the spies' mission. So He shortened the journey to soften the decree.
7. 13:27 - Any lie which doesn't start with an element of truth won't be believed. Therefore, they began their false report with a true statement.
8. 13:29 - To frighten the Jews. The Jewish People were afraid of Amalek because Amalek had once attacked them.
9. 13:30 - He fooled them by shouting, "Is this all that the son of Amram did to us?" The people quieted themselves to hear what disparaging thing Calev wished to say about the "son of Amram" (Moshe).
10. 13:32 - G-d caused many deaths among the Canaanites so they would be preoccupied with burying their dead and not notice the *meraglim*.
11. 13:33 - The golden calf.
12. 14:1 - The 9th of Av (Tisha B'av). This date therefore became a day of crying for all future generations: Both Temples were destroyed on this date.
13. 14:9 - Iyov.
14. 14:10 - They wanted to stone them.
15. 14:27 - That ten men are considered a congregation.
16. 15:18 - The obligation to observe other *mitzvot* associated with *Eretz Yisrael* began only after the possession and division of the Land. The *mitzvah* of *challa* was obligatory immediately upon entering the Land.
17. 15:20 - No fixed amount is stated by the Torah. Rabbinic Law requires a household to give 1/24 and a baker to give 1/48.
18. 15:22 - Idolatry. "*All these commandments*" means one transgression which is equal to transgressing all the commandments - i.e. idolatry.
19. 15:34 - Moshe knew that the *mekoshesh etzim* was liable for the death penalty, but not which specific means of death. Regarding the blasphemer, Moshe didn't know if he was liable for the death penalty.
20. 15:39 - The numerical value of the word *tzitzit* is 600. *Tzitzit* have eight threads and five knots. Add these numbers and you get 613.

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# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

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## Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

### Fun with Fish (Part 2/2)

When Moses sent spies to scout out the Holy Land ahead of the Jews' conquest, only two spies remained loyal to the cause: Caleb and Joshua. Throughout the Bible, Joshua is always described as *Yehoshua/Hoshea bin Nun* ("Joshua son of Nun") because his father's name was Nun (I Chron. 7:27). Now, the word *nun* actually means "fish," which leads a certain apocryphal Midrash made famous by Rabbi Avraham Vilner (1765-1808) to claim that Joshua was put into the river as a little child and swallowed up by a fish. According to this fanciful tale, the fish was caught and brought to the Pharaoh, whereupon they cut it open and discovered the child inside. That child – Joshua – ended up being raised in Pharaoh's house and rose to the position of Chief Executioner. Although Rabbi Yitzchak Yishaya Weiss of Neve Achiezer in Bnei Brak already debunked the provenance of this Midrash, other traditions claim that Joshua was called "bin Nun" because he was destined to swallow up the thirty-one Canaanite Kings like a "fish" (*Midrash HaBiur to Haftarat Shlach*), or because G-d was ready to hear Joshua's supplications (*tachaNUNim*) once he would enter the Holy Land (*Megaleh Amukot* 27). Either way, the fact remains that the word *nun* means "fish." In this essay we will continue discussing different Hebrew words for "fish" – starting with *nun*.

The Hebrew word *nun* in the sense of "fish" never appears in the Bible. As you may have realized, the common word for fish in Biblical Hebrew is *dag/dagah*. Why does the word *nun* not appear in the Bible?

Rabbi Aharon Marcus (1843-1916) theorizes that the word *nun* has been excised from Biblical Hebrew because Canaanites and other nations deified the "fish" or "sea-creature" that this word denotes, turning Nun into the name of a god. In order to downplay this development, Biblical Hebrew purposely left out the word *nun* from all books of the Bible, which is why *dag* became the standard word for "fish."

Nonetheless, the word *nun* remains the standard word for "fish" in Hebrew's Semitic sister languages like Aramaic and Ugaritic. In fact, *nun/nuna/nuni* are the standard words used by the Targumim in translating the Hebrew *dag*, and they appear numerous times in the Talmud. For example, the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 25a) relates that the people of a certain town mocked Rav Hamnuna, whose name sounds like *cham nuna* ("hot fish"), by calling him *kar nuna* ("cold fish"). Plus, the letter NUN in the ancient paleo-Hebrew script (*Ktav Ivri*) looks like a fish.

When the Torah describes G-d creating sea-monsters known as a *taninim* (Gen. 1:21), Rabbi Marcus argues that at the core of *taninim* is the word *nun*, as the letter TAV is not part of the root. In offering this explanation, Rabbi Marcus explicitly rejects scholarly speculation that the word *taninim* is a Sanskrit loanword.

Interestingly, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 1:21) also suggests that the word *tannin* is derived from the word *nun*, but adds that *nun* itself is derived from the Hebrew word *nin* ("offspring," or in Modern Hebrew "great-grandchild"). He compares this to the word *dag*, which primarily denotes fecundity (as we saw last week), but also carries the additional meaning of "fish."

Rabbi Ron Yosef Chaim Masoud Abuchatzaira takes the exact opposite approach from Rabbi Hirsch's. Whereas Rabbi Hirsch suggested that the word *nun* comes from *nin*, Rabbi Abuchatzaira submits that *nin* actually comes from *nun*. The Talmud (*Brachot* 20a) relates that fish are fruitful and multiple in large quantities because they are not susceptible to the Evil Eye. Accordingly, explains Rabbi Abuchatzaira, the common word "offspring" (*nun*) is derived from the word "fish" (*nun*) in an effort to deflect the Evil Eye from upon one's descendants.

Rabbi Abuchatzera fascinatingly compares this to a well-known custom among Tunisian Jews (especially those from Djerba) who give their children names related to “fish” in order to help immunize them from the Evil Eye. Examples include masculine names like Hayuta/Hauita (“fish” in some North African dialects of Arabic, although in Aramaic it means “snake”), Manani (“merou” or “grouper” fish, possibly also related to *nun*), Bugid (“striped red mullet”), Hadir (“torpedo fish”), Karutz (“bass”), Uzifa, Wurgana, and feminine names like Shelbia (“Salema porgy”), Svirsa, Murgana, Manana (feminized form of Manani), and Baharia (“mermaid”).

Another possible derivative of *nun* is the place-name Ninveh. Rabbi Avraham (b. Hillel) Rivlin explains that the word Ninveh is a portmanteau of *nun* (“fish”) and *naveh* (“home”), and indeed the cuneiform symbol for that city is a fish inside a house. When Jonah refused to go to the city of Ninveh, G-d punished him by making him experience the meaning of that city's name in that he was swallowed by a fish, such that a fish became his home. Rabbi Nissim Paniri adds that the name Jonah (*Yonah*) is spelled with the same letters as Ninveh, except that Jonah's name is missing a second NUN. In order to give Jonah that extra NUN so that he would identify with Ninveh and agree to be G-d's emissary to that place, G-d placed him inside a fish (*nun*).

Rabbi Aryeh Moshe Teicholtz suggests that the name Ninveh relates to the Aramaic word *nun* and recalls the fish-god that they worshipped there. In order to stress the urgency of Jonah's mission to Ninveh, G-d had the prophet swallowed up by a fish (*nun*) so that Jonah would remember about their idolatrous fish-cult and agree to help them repent.

There are several other words for “fish” in the Talmud that we have not yet discussed:

1. Besides the word *nun*, another common word for fish in Judeo-Aramaic is *kavra*. It remains unclear whether the term *kavra* refers to all fish in general or to a specific type of fish (see *Tosafot* to *Moed Katan* 11a). Dr. Marcus Jastrow (1829-1903) notes that the Mishnaic word *kaveret* means “beehive” or “basket” (*Sheviit* 10:7, *Bava Batra* 5:3, *Keilim* 8:1, 15:1, 22:10, *Ohalot* 5:6, 8:1, 8:3, 9:1), leading him to explain that *kavra* in the sense of “fish” refers specifically to “live fish” that are kept in

a *cauf* (i.e., basket). According to this, it would seem that *kavra* can refer to any type of fish housed in such a portable fish tank. On the other hand, the Talmud (*Chullin* 109b) relates that *kavra* is a type of fish that tastes like the *girutha* bird (which Jastrow identifies as the “moor hen”), which suggests that *kavra* refers to a specific species of fish, not to all fish in general.

2. The Mishna (*Bechorot* 8:1, *Karitot* 1:3, *Niddah* 3:4) discusses the Halachic status of a miscarriage that results in a fetus in the shape of a *sandal*. The Babylonian Talmud (*Niddah* 25b) explains that the shape of a *sandal* resembles the shape of a fish in the sea. Rashi (there and to *Ketuvot* 39a) and his son-in-law Rivan (to *Yevamot* 12b) further note that this refers to a specific fish named *sandal* (such is also implied by the Jerusalem Talmud, *Niddah* 3:4). Meiri (to *Yevamot* 12b) adds that this *sandal* resembles a free-floating piece of meat that does not have clear limbs (perhaps a jellyfish?).

3. The Talmud (*Chullin* 109b) relates that the brain of a *shibuta* fish tastes like pork and is a *kosher* substitute for that porcine foodstuff. Moreover, the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 41a) relates that Rava would personally engage in preparations for the Sabbath by salting the *shibuta* fish for consumption. Jastrow identifies *shibuta* as probably referring to the “mullet”(or, *Mugil cephalus*) fish, while others identify the *shibuta* as the sturgeon or porpoise fish. The most definitive approach is that of Drs. Zohar Amar and Ari Zivotofsky, who identify *shibuta* as the fish known as shirbot/shabout (or *Arabibarbus grypus*) in English. Indeed, this type of fish fits the Jerusalem Talmud's description that the *shibuta* can be found in Babylonia, but not in the Holy Land (*Taanit* 4:5). (See also *Minchat Chinuch* 550:2, who suggests that the term *shibuta* can refer to both kosher and non-kosher types of fish.)

Remarkably, an ancient tradition claims that there is a certain type of fish that does not swim on the Sabbath (Radak to Gen. 2:3, *Yalkut Reuven* to Gen. 2:2, *Shevet Mussat* ch. 11). Based on this, some sources connect the word *shibuta* (spelled with a TET) with *Shabbat* (spelled with a TAV), thus identifying the *shibuta* fish as that fish which refuses to swim on the Sabbath (see *Megadim Chadashim* to *Shabbat* 119a).

\*Special thanks to Rabbi Degani Kohen from Beitav/Baka for bringing the Jerbi custom to my attention.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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**A**t the insistence of the *Bnei Yisrael*, and with G-d's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that G-d will not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When 10 of the 12 scouts state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the people are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try bolstering the people's spirit. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead demands a return to Egypt. Moshe's fervent prayers save the nation from Heavenly annihilation. However, G-d declares that they must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the scouts' false report pass away. A remorseful group rashly begins an invasion of the Land, based on G-d's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they ignore this and are massacred by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

G-d instructs Moshe concerning the offerings to be made when the *Bnei Yisrael* will finally enter the Land. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, a gift for the *kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against G-d and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people. One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbat and is executed. The laws of *tzitzit* are taught. We recite the section about the *tzitzit* twice a day to remind ourselves of the Exodus.

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# COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

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by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

## TO BELIEVE IS TO BEHAVE (PART 8)

(LAILAH GIFTY AKITA)

*“These are the precepts whose fruits a person enjoys in this world, but whose principal remains intact in the World to Come. They are: honoring one’s parents; acts of kindness; early arrival at the study hall in the morning and the evening; hosting guests; visiting the sick; providing the wherewithal for a bride to marry; escorting the dead; praying with concentration; making peace between two people; and Torah study is the equivalent of them all.” (Tractate Shabbat 127a)*

The seventh mitzvah is escorting the deceased on their final journey. As with the previous mitzvah, this does not refer only to participation in the funeral service. Rather, it also includes all arrangements and preparations that must be taken care of before the actual burial. These acts are described by the Rabbis as being *chessed shel emet* – true kindness. The expression *chessed shel emet* is a slight variation of the words that Yaakov used when speaking with Yosef: *chessed v’emet* – kindness and truth (Ber. 47:29). The Torah says that at the end of his earthly life, Yaakov makes a few last requests regarding his passing and his burial. When Yaakov asked his son Yosef to promise not to bury him in Egypt, Yaakov says, “If I have found favor in your eyes... and do kindness and truth with me.” In the Midrashic texts, the phrase *chessed v’emet* is called *chessed shel emet*.

What was Yaakov alluding to when he asked Yosef to treat him with “kindness and truth”? Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch clarifies that Yaakov did not doubt that Yosef would bury him with appropriate pomp and ceremony. This was something that Yaakov regarded as *chessed*, kindness. But, of greater concern to Yaakov was the *emet* – the truth. Yaakov wanted to be buried in the Land of Israel. Why was it so important to Yaakov to be buried in the Land of Israel and not in Egypt? Where was the urgency for him to have Yosef swear to him that he would do as he asked? Rabbi Hirsch explains that Yaakov wanted to impress on his descendants that Egypt was not *their* place, that they did not belong there. With his passing, Yaakov wished to convey to them a final

message: they were merely sojourners in a land not theirs. The Land of Israel was their natural homeland, and it was to the Land of Israel that they should aspire to want to live.

The Midrashic texts define *chessed shel emet* as being kindness that cannot be repaid in this world. For this reason, anything involved in the burying of a dead person is described as *chessed shel emet* – because the deceased is no longer able to give anything in this world to compensate for the kindness that was done to him by bringing him to a Jewish burial. In effect, being involved with part of the burial process is a completely altruistic act.

The altruism of being involved in burying the dead is clear. However, there is one group of Jews who are nearly excluded from being a part of this mitzvah – *kohanim* (“priests”). Due to their elevated spiritual status, they are forbidden to come into direct contact with a dead body or to enter a cemetery. This severely curtails their ability to be involved in this exalted mitzvah. However, not all that long ago, in Amsterdam, an enterprising *kohen* actually managed to perform the mitzvah without transgressing the various potential prohibitions. The Jewish community there had purchased a piece of land to create a new cemetery. They held a ceremony that was attended by the entire community, during which the land for the cemetery was consecrated. It was a hauntingly memorable event.

Soon after its consecration, someone from the community passed away. He was the first person scheduled to be buried in the new cemetery. The

accepted local custom was that the final preparations for the grave were normally done by the burial society as the deceased arrived at the gravesite. But, this time everyone was surprised to find that the grave was completely ready for the burial. The local burial society in charge of the cemetery had no idea how the grave came to be prepared for the deceased, and after the funeral was over they began to make inquiries. They discovered that a member of the community wanted very much to be able to partake in the mitzvah of burying the dead, but, because he was a *kohen*, he had never been able to do so. When that *kohen* had heard that the very first burial was

going to take place in the new cemetery, he was filled with an urgent sense of spiritual anticipation. In his mind, he was being presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah, one that a *kohen* cannot normally perform. However, since this cemetery did not yet have any corpses in it, it was not considered to be a place of spiritual impurity. Therefore, the *kohen* was permitted to enter it. And this is exactly what he did! The night before the funeral, he had entered the completely empty cemetery and had prepared the grave to be ready for the next day. In that way, despite his being a *kohen*, he was able to accrue a unique mitzvah.

*To be continued.....*

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## LETTER AND SPIRIT

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*Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Herschman*

### Separating Challah

**I**n addition to the portion of produce that is to be gifted to the Kohen, we are commanded to take a part off of every batch of dough that we prepare in our homes.

Just as the threshing floor shows us the abundance with which G-d has blessed the field, our dough represents the prosperity with which G-d has blessed our homes. In both cases, the Torah instructs that an owner may not partake of his goods until he performs the symbolic act of separating a portion for the Kohen. In the case of produce, it is called *terumah*, while in the case of dough it is called *challah*. (This is the origin of the name of traditional loaves served on Shabbat).

By separating this *terumah* or *challah*, the owner gives homage to G-d, in recognition of His blessing of his field and home. The gift goes to the Kohen, who represents the Sanctuary of Torah. This awareness begins in the field and is renewed when he prepares the daily bread for himself and his family. While the crops that ripen in the field are a blessing to all people, the bread baked in one's home symbolizes his individual blessing.

There is no minimum quantity stated for the portion separated. The obligation may be satisfied (according to the Torah) with even the tiniest piece of dough or a single kernel from the whole pile. (There is, however, a rabbinic minimum requirement.) On the other hand, there is a maximum limit for both. Both are termed *reishit*, meaning *the beginning of*, or *the first portion of*. This would not remain a true description unless a considerable amount remains. Hence, our Rabbis taught that if one declares his whole barn to be *terumah*, or the whole of his dough to be *challah*, his declaration is invalid and has no effect.

This teaches an important lesson: No one may consider the Kohen's relation to the Torah to be a substitute for his own. He should not view the Kohen's existence as worthy and his own existence as insignificant. Instead, he is to understand that blessing preserves his own existence – and that existence is dedicated to G-d and His Torah.

- Source: Commentary, Bamidbar 15:20



The students, alumni, staff and events of Ohr Somayach  
by Rabbi Shlomo Simon

Moshe Males (24)  
Telz Stone, Israel  
Michlalah L'Minhal Degree in  
Structural Engineering, 2020  
Mechina – Since 2019

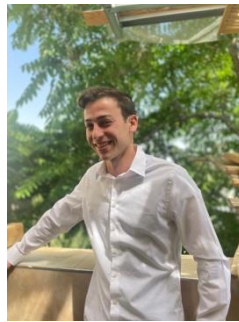
Many years ago, my wife and I moved to Cleveland, Ohio from New York. We were newly married. While the Jewish community in New York was friendly, it was not overly welcoming. By contrast, the Midwesterners were openly friendly and welcoming. The contrast between the two regions was brought home to me when I first entered an elevator in a downtown Cleveland office building. The other people in the elevator, total strangers, and probably non-Jews, took the twenty seconds that we were together to introduce themselves and inquired after my welfare. I was almost too shocked to answer. That would never happen in a midtown New York elevator. In our first three years of living in the religious neighborhood of Cleveland Heights, we literally had invitations for every Shabbos and Yom Tov meal.

I mention this because Moshe Males' father is from Cleveland, and, upon meeting Moshe for the first time, I immediately recognized that warmth, openness, friendliness and optimism that are characteristic of the denizens of that place. Although Moshe was born in Israel, he was brought up in Telz Stone – a community established by the philanthropist and Clevelander Irving Stone, and which was for a number of years the site of the Israeli branch of the Telshe Yeshiva of Cleveland. Although Telz Stone may be filled with Jews from all over the world, a touch of the Midwest is still felt there.

Moshe is the third of nine children and had a typical *charedi* education. He went to *Tiferet Yehuda* in Telz Stone for *cheder* and *Netzach Yisroel* in Har Nof for *yeshiva katana*.

He chose not to continue on to *yeshiva gedola* right away but to spend some gap years working. He was good with his hands and had a fascination with building. For the next few years, he learned the trades necessary for renovations and construction, and worked in that field.

At eighteen Moshe decided to get an advanced degree in Structural Engineering so that he could be licensed to build multistory buildings in Israel. He did all the coursework to complete his *bagrut* (an advanced academic high school diploma) and then was accepted to *Hamichlalah L'Minhal* – an Engineering school in Jerusalem.



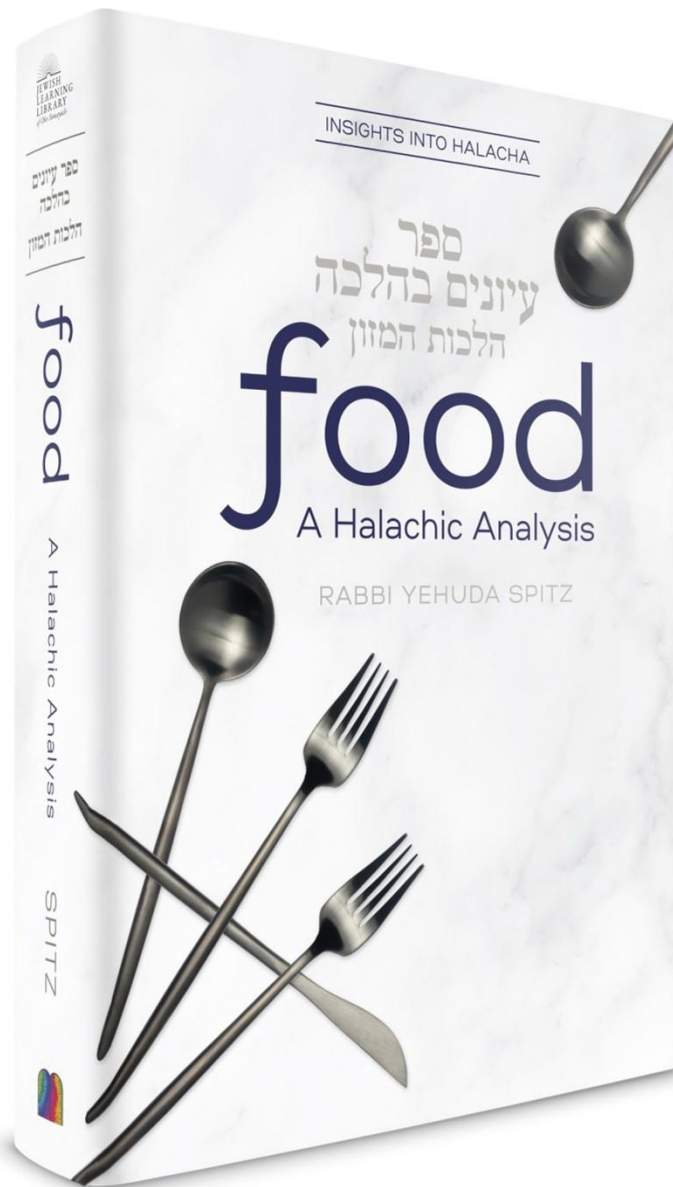
In his third year of college, he decided to reconnect with his learning, and was encouraged by his parents and friends to check out Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. Rabbi Guy Matalon, the head of the Mechina Program, convinced him to come to us. He started at the Yeshiva in the mornings, attending college in the evenings. A little over a year ago, during the Covid-19 crisis when the Yeshiva was in lockdown, Moshe moved into the dorm so that he could continue learning Torah. He graduated with his degree in Structural Engineering, and in June 2021 will defend his thesis and project in front of a panel of engineers for his license. In the meantime, he has been honing his building skills by renovating the Lauffer Building on our campus.

When asked about his future plans, he answered that before he starts working as an engineer he needs to spend more time learning in Ohr Somayach. He will soon sit for another exam – the entrance *farher* to the Beis Midrash program. We wish him all the best.

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