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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Coca-Cola Loses \$4 Billion

“Hashem said to Moshe, 'Take to yourself Yehoshua bin Nun, a man in whom there is spirit...'” (27:18)

In his work *Nefesh HaChaim*, Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner reveals that the stature of man reaches from this the lowest of worlds to the very heights of Heaven. Man's actions ascend through all the spiritual worlds above and reach the highest place in creation. There, his actions generate an energy that flows back down to this world. So what starts off as a small kindness in this world travels up to highest reaches of existence and rebounds down into this world as, let's say, bountiful rain in the heart of Africa or sunshine on a cloudy day in Cornwall. And, of course, the more “spirit” there is in a man, the more his actions impact.

It's difficult for us to imagine these abstract spiritual energies. But something happened a few days ago which offers a parable.

Product placement is a form of advertising in which branded goods and services are featured in a production that targets a large audience. Also known as “embedded marketing” or “embedded advertising,” product placements are typically found in movies, television shows, personal videos, radio, and – less commonly – live performances. In exchange for product placement rights, companies may pay a production company or studio in cash, goods, or services.

On Monday, June 14, Cristiano Ronaldo removed two Coca Cola bottles during a press conference at the European Championship, and the Coca Cola company “tasted the feeling” of its share price falling some 4 billion dollars.

The Portugal captain is a renowned health fanatic and made it clear what he thinks of the carbonated soft drink. The 36 year-old shifted the bottles of Coca Cola away from him during a press conference in Budapest in the prelude to his country's Group F game against Hungary.

Ronaldo followed it by holding up a bottle of water, before declaring in Portuguese: “Água!” as he appeared to be encouraging people to choose that drink instead.

Coca Cola is one of the official sponsors of Euro 2020. The company's share price dropped from \$56.10 to \$55.22 almost immediately after Ronaldo's gesture, a 1.6 percent dip. The market value of Coca Cola went from \$242 billion to \$238 billion – a drop of \$4 billion.

If moving two bottles of Coke can eradicate four billion dollars, how much more can a smile to someone who needs it cause the sun to shine on a damp day in Cornwall!

- Source: Heard in the name of Rabbi Nosson Conick from Rabbi Shmuel Nochum Conick.

Questions – Chukat

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the *yud* and *hey* added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a "sign." What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach's children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov's only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How many to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na'aman have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad's daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad's daughters' names?
14. Tzlofchad died for what transgression?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase "G-d of the spirits of all flesh"?
16. Moshe "put some of his glory" upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called *Yom Habikkurim*?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

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

Answers

1. 25:13 - *Kehuna* (priesthood) was given to Aharon and his sons (not grandsons), and to any of their descendants born *after* they were anointed. Pinchas, Aharon's grandson, was born *prior* to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
3. 26:5 - That the families were truly children of their tribe.
4. 26:10 - That *kehuna* was given forever to Aharon and his sons, and that no one should ever dispute this.
5. 26:11 - Because they repented.
6. 26:13,16,24,38,39,42 - Zerach, Ozni, Yashuv, Achiram, Shfufam, Shucham.
7. 26:46 - Serach bat Asher
8. 26:53 - Seven years. Seven years.
9. 26:55 - Two portions. That is, the four cousins merit four portions among them. These four portions are then split among them as if their fathers were inheriting them; i.e. two portions to one father and two portions to the other father.
10. 26:24,56 - They came down to Mitzrayim in their mothers' wombs.
11. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim*, only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. 27:1 - Love for *Eretz Yisrael*.
13. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
14. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva says that Tzlofchad gathered sticks on Shabbat. Rabbi Shimon says that Tzlofchad was one who tried to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
15. 27:16 - He was asking G-d, who knows the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person on that person's level.
16. 27:20 - That Yehoshua's face beamed like the moon.
17. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the west side of the slaughtering area and the afternoon offering on the east side.
18. 28:15 - For unnoticed ritual impurity of the Sanctuary or its vessels.
19. 28:26 - The Shavuot double-bread offering was the first wheat-offering made from the new crop.
20. 29:18 - The seventy nations.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Flour Power

Of the 52 times that the word *solet* appears in the Bible, more than half of those are in the Book of Numbers, mostly clustered in Nasso and Pinchas. Whenever the Torah discusses meal-offerings, it always refers to the cereal grains used in those offerings as *solet* – except for when discussing the *Omer* offering (Lev. 23:10-11) and the *Sotah* offering (Num. 5:15). In the latter case, instead of the word *solet*, the Torah uses the word *kemach*. This essay seeks to explore the difference between the terms *solet* and *kemach* in an attempt to better understand how they are not actual synonyms.

What the *Omer* and *Sotah* offerings have in common is that both are brought from barley, while all other meal-offerings are brought from wheat. Grounded in this fact, Rashi (to Lev. 2:1) and Rashbam (to Gen. 18:6) assert that the word *solet* always implies “wheat flour,” thus accounting for this word’s absence from the *Omer* and *Sotah* offerings, which are not brought of wheat. Nevertheless, Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814) points out that the Bible (Ex. 29:2) once uses the term *solet-chitim* (“*solet* of wheat”), which implies that the word *solet* on its own does not necessarily imply a wheat product. Either way, when the *Sotah* offering is explicitly said to come from *kemach*, this implies a different type or grade of “flour” than *solet* does, as opposed to a different species of grain. But what exactly does *kemach* actually mean?

Donash Ibn Labrat (920-990) writes in one of his diatribes against Menachem Ibn Saruk (920-970) that one can look to Arabic to understand the meaning of words in Hebrew. He cites several examples where Arabic can be helpful for understanding the meanings of Hebrew words, one of which is the Hebrew word *kemach*, which appears fourteen times in the Bible. The ostensible Arabic cognate to the Hebrew *kemach* means “wheat.” However, an anonymous student of Menachem defends his

teacher by noting that *kemach* in Arabic means “wheat” in general, while *kemach* in Hebrew specifically refers to wheat that has been ground (i.e. “flour”), but not *all* wheat. That said, Donash’s student Ibn Sheshet concedes that in the case of the *Sotah*’s meal-offering, where the Torah uses the phrase *kemach-seorim* (“*kemach* of barley”), the word *kemach* cannot possibly mean “wheat” like it does in Arabic.

The Mishna (*Menachot* 6:7) teaches that the sifting process to yield the finest *solet* for various meal-offerings involved sifting the flour multiple times (see Rashi to *Menachot* 76b). However, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 18:6) clarifies that the difference between *kemach* and *solet* is not in how fine or coarse the flour is per se. Rather, the core difference between *kemach* and *solet* is the same thing as the difference between “whole wheat flour” and “white flour.” White flour consists of only the endosperm of the wheat kernel, making sure that the bran and wheat germ are separated from the wheat berry. Thus, *kemach* refers to whole wheat flour, which includes the husks and fibers, while *solet* refers to flour made exclusively from the endosperm. Depending on how well it is ground up, *kemach* could mean “fine flour,” even if within its granules are such impurities as the husks/bran and other fibers (see Rashi to *Ketuvot* 112b). Like Rashi (to *Sotah* 14a) points out, “everything” is mixed into *kemach*.

Accordingly, *solet* refers to white flour, which is typically lighter and less coarse than *kemach* because it is free from heavier particles such as bran. Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) similarly writes that *kemach* denotes adulterated “flour” that includes all sorts of subpar materials, while *solet* refers to a purer “flour.” The latter type of flour was often sifted time and again, such that only the finest flour was left. Rashi (to *Taanit* 9b) explains that first the

finer white flour would pass through the sifter, and only afterwards would the coarser whole-wheat flour pass through (see also *Tosafot* there). The Mishna (*Avot* 5:15) alludes to this process by saying, "A sifter filters out the *kemach* and keeps only the *solet*."

Rashi (to *Bava Metzia* 87a) writes that *solet* is "better" than *kemach*. Similarly, the Talmud uses the expression "He doesn't care about his *kemach*" (*Yevamot* 42b, *Pesachim* 84a, *Sukkah* 54a) to criticize a person who is not careful to speak precisely. As Rashi explains, such a person disregards the quality of his speech, as if he is grinding *kemach* (as opposed to *solet*). The Talmud (*Kiddushin* 69b) says that before Ezra left Babylonia for the Holy Land, he ensured that the Jews who remained in Babylonia were of impeccable lineage, such that the Jewish community there was considered like "pure *solet*" vis-à-vis the "mixed dough" that was the Jewish community in the Holy Land.

Even though *kemach* and *solet* mean two very different types of "flour," there is one instance in the Bible where both words are used together: When Abraham greeted the three angels who came to visit him, he told his wife Sarah to make *kemach-solet* into cakes for them (*Gen.* 18:6). Given the different connotations of these two words, the Talmud (*Bava Metzia* 87a) is bothered by this verse using both words together. To resolve this difficulty, the Talmud posits that Abraham was more generous than his wife Sarah and offered the guests higher quality cake (made from *solet*), while Sarah was stingier than him and instead wanted to serve a *kemach*-product. (However, Radak to *Gen.* 18:6 explains *kemach-solet* as *kemach* in order to make *solet*.)

Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh of Carpentras writes in *Ohalei Yehuda* that the word *kemach* is derived from a combination of the roots KUF-MEM-HEY ("standing," "erect") and MEM-CHET-HEY ("erasure," "destruction"), as the grinding process takes the once-proud stalk of wheat that stood erect in the field and cuts it down to size to produce flour. Indeed, the word *kamah* (*Ex.* 22:5, *Peah* 2:7, 4:7, 5:2, *Menachot* 10:9) denotes uncut grain that "stands" in the field. Alternatively, he explains the word *kemach* as derived directly from the root YOD-MEM-CHET ("erasure," "destruction"), based on the interchangeability of the letters KUF and YOD.

Interestingly, the word *kemach* seems to lend itself to two well known names: First, the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma* 47a) tells of a pious woman named Kimchit who merited that each of her seven sons would function as a Kohen Gadol because she was careful to always cover her hair – even inside her house. In lauding the high quality of Kimchit's offspring, the Rabbis said: "All *kemach* yields [naught but] *kemach*, but Kimchit's *kemach* is *solet*" (Jerusalem Talmud *Yoma* 1:1 and *Bamidbar Rabbah* 2:26). Just as wheat yields flour, likewise, people yield offspring. In this sense, *kemach* serves as a metaphor for one's subpar descendants, while *solet* refers to the cream of the crop.

Second, the name of the illustrious Kimchi family, famous for producing such great Hebrew grammarians as Rabbi Yosef Kimchi (1105-1170) and his two sons Rabbi David Kimchi (1160-1235) and Rabbi Moshe Kimchi (1120-1190), seems to be derived from the word *kemach*. Some have suggested pronouncing the surname of this famed family as Kamchi instead of Kimchi. However, the more popular pronunciation is certainly Kimchi, and Rabbi Immanuel Frances (1618-1703) even rhymes this family name with the Hebrew word *simchi* ("my happiness"), thus ostensibly attesting to the accuracy of the Kimchi pronunciation.

Rabbi Pappenheim traces the word *solet* to the biliteral root SAMECH-LAMMED, which refers to "repeated actions." For example, *mesilah* ("road") refers to a well-travelled path, upon which many have trodden. Similarly, one who constantly twists and twirls one's hair is said to be *misalsel* (*Rosh Hashanah* 26b), because he repeatedly does the same action. In that spirit, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that *sal* refers specifically to a "bread basket" (see *Gen.* 40:16, *Lev.* 8:2), because it is an item constantly in use every single day. Accordingly, he proposes that *solet* refers to flour that is considered so valuable and treasured that it is not dumped into a sack or a bag like the less precious *kemach*, but is instead stored in a more dignified *sal*. Alternatively, he explains that the word *solet* invokes the repeated pressing, grinding and crushing necessary to produce high-quality flour.

Rashi (to *Menachot* 27a) notes that the term *geres* (*Lev.* 2:14) said about "barley flour" means the same thing as the term *solet* in the context of "wheat flour." The same is implied by Ibn Janach, who actually uses

the word *solet* to define *geres*. All the early lexicographers like Menachem, Ibn Janach, and Radak understand that the roots GIMMEL-REISH-SIN and GIMMEL-REISH-SAMECH are one and the same, with the shared meaning of “breaking/grinding.”

Interestingly, Rashi (to *Shabbat* 110b, *Pesachim* 74b, *Taanit* 24b, *Gittin* 56a) defines the Aramaic word

semida as *solet* (although, see the Targum, often attributed to Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel, to Gen. 18:6, which renders *kemach* as *semida*, and *solet* as *solta*). Similarly, Ibn Ezra (to Lev. 2:1) writes that *solet* refers to “white flour,” which is known in Arabic and Aramaic as *semida*. This Aramaic/Arabic word is the etymological ancestor of the English word *semolina* (via the Greek word *semidalis*, and the interchangeability of DALET and LAMMED).

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem’s “covenant of peace” in reward for his bold action – executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. Hashem commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites, who lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to the *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the Levites' families is recorded.

Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with Moshe. In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem for the ruling, and Hashem tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance.

Hashem tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter it. Moshe asks Hashem to designate the subsequent leader, and Hashem selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation.

This Torah portion concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

BLESSINGS OVER TEFILLIN: INTRODUCTION (PART 1)

"I am not emotional about being the oldest man in the world; but it does mean something to me that I have donned tefillin for longer than anyone else."

Yisrael Kristal, 1903-2017, was officially recognized as the oldest living Holocaust survivor in 2014. In January 2016 he was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world's oldest man.

Each morning we are presented with the most extraordinary opportunity to connect to G-d in a way that only *tefillin* can accomplish. The Kabbalistic texts are replete with descriptions of the awesomeness of *tefillin* and the how they open up channels to the Spiritual Realms in a way that other actions we do throughout our day cannot.

As opposed to many of our morning obligations, which are rabbinically ordained, the obligation to put on *tefillin* is a Torah commandment. As the Torah states, "Bind them as a sign upon your arm and let them be *totafot* between your eyes." (Bamidbar 15:38) This means that the mitzvah of putting on *tefillin* – and the blessings that are recited when doing so – are of additional significance since they are sourced in the Torah.

Accordingly, wearing *tefillin* is something that should be approached with the utmost gravity. The mitzvah of *tefillin* is so precious that we find that in Talmudic times *tefillin* were worn throughout the entire daylight hours. That was actually quite an undertaking, as wearing *tefillin* all day requires a person to remain in a state of ritual and physical purity the entire time. This includes being very careful about what one thinks about and what one says, to ensure that the *tefillin* are not tainted with any kind of impurity. Over the generations it became increasingly difficult to remain in such an exalted state of purity for such an extended length of time, and it became the accepted custom to wear *tefillin* only for the Morning Services. And yet,

there are still some truly pious and righteous people nowadays who remain in their *tefillin* all day, even after finishing their prayers, while immersed in the study of Torah.

Every single aspect in the creation of a pair of *tefillin* is enormously significant. The Rabbis delve into each individual detail and reveal to us their symbolism. For example, inserted into the arm *tefillin* is one piece of parchment with four paragraphs from the Torah written on it. The paragraphs are: Exodus 13: 1-10, Exodus 13:11-16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Deuteronomy 11:13-21. The head *tefillin*, however, are slightly different. Even though the paragraphs from the Torah that are inserted in it are exactly the same as the arm *tefillin*, the way they are put inside is different. Four smaller pieces of parchment are prepared, each one with one of the above paragraphs written on it. Each individual parchment is then placed into its own separate partition within the head *tefillin*. When looking carefully at the head *tefillin*, the four different compartments are actually easy to distinguish.

What is the significance of having only one compartment for the arm *tefillin* and four for the head *tefillin*? Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher (1255-1340), one of the most brilliant and distinguished early authorities in Spain, addresses this in his fundamental philosophical treatise entitled *Kad Hakemach*. He writes that the four compartments of the head *tefillin* and the single compartment of the arm *tefillin* correspond to the five senses. The

five senses are comprised of touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. The sense of touch comes from the arm, whereas the other four senses – sight, hearing, smell and taste – are all centered at the head. Therefore, there is one compartment for the arm *tefillin* and four for the head *tefillin*. Rabbeinu Bachya explains that when we put on *tefillin*, we are binding together our five senses and dedicating them to the service of G-d. In the same way, all other details of *tefillin* are equally imbued with beautiful and thought-provoking concepts, which can enrich the physical dimension of putting on *tefillin* each morning and turn it into a spiritually uplifting and inspirational experience. Ultimately, the connection to G-d that the *tefillin* achieve is indescribable.

In Communist Russia there was a Rabbi who was arrested and sent to Siberia for the “heinous crime” of teaching Torah to Jewish children. One Shabbat afternoon, the Rabbi heard someone singing “Yedid Nefesh” – one of the most poignant poems sung on Shabbat. He followed the voice and found a Jew in a state of spiritual ecstasy, eyes closed, singing the poem with heart-wrenching emotion. The person singing did not realize that the Rabbi was watching him, and he continued to

sing until the end of the poem. When he opened his eyes, the two people hugged each other. The man told him, “Twenty years I have been here and you are the first Jew I have seen!” The Rabbi asked him if he had any Jewish articles with him, such as a holy book, a shofar or *tefillin*.

“Nothing at all,” the man replied. “I tried to smuggle things in, but each time they took them away from me. All I have left is my belief in G-d and the songs that we sing on Shabbat. What about you? Do you have anything?”

The Rabbi answered, “I have arm *tefillin*. They confiscated my head *tefillin* because they saw me wearing it, but they did not know that I was also wearing *tefillin* under my sleeve.”

The man burst out crying. “Tomorrow I will be able to put on *tefillin*! Tomorrow morning will be the first time in twenty years that I will wear *tefillin*!” Throughout that night he prepared himself for the glorious moment. And, the next morning, in the spiritually and physically frozen wastes of Siberia, he put on the *tefillin* for the first time. He recited the blessing and then, with an indescribable intensity, said every word of the *Shema*.

To be continued...

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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Pinchas: Yoma 72 - 78

No Half Measures

Rabbi Yochanan said, “A partial measure is forbidden by the Torah.” Reish Lakish said, “A partial measure is permitted by the Torah.”

Everyone agrees that a transgression with a “full measure” is forbidden by the Torah and is liable to result in punishment. Examples of full measure are the size of a *k'zayit* for eating most forbidden foods, and the size of a *k'kotvet hagasah* (a type of dried date) for eating on Yom Kippur, as taught in our *mishna*. But, what does the Torah say about a person who eats less than a full measure?

Rabbi Yochanan said, “A *chatzi shiur* (literally, “half a measure,” meaning transgressing with less than the full measure the Torah requires for punishment) is nevertheless prohibited by the Torah.” Reish Lakish said, “A *chatzi shiur* is permitted by the Torah.”

The *gemara* cites this debate between these Sages since the *mishna* says, “On Yom Hakippurim it is *assur* (forbidden) to eat and drink... (or to do certain other specific activities).” The *gemara* immediately follows the *mishna* with a question: “Why does the *mishna* state that it is “merely” *assur* and not state that a person who eats or drinks on Yom Kippur is punished with *karet* (expiation, literally, ‘being cut off’)?” The *gemara* answers that the *mishna* is speaking about eating a *chatzi shiur*, which is *assur* according to Torah law, and is in accordance with Rabbi Yochanan’s position that “*chatzi shiur* is forbidden by Torah law.”

The *gemara* points out that if the case addressed in the *mishna* is one of eating a *chatzi shiur*, it would appear to contradict the position of Reish Lakish. This would require him to justify his position

since, according to the rules of the Oral Law, any *Amora*, such as Reish Lakish, does not have the standing to disagree with anything taught in a *mishna* unless he is supported by the position of a *Tana* (such as Rabbi Akiva or Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai). The *gemara* answers that Reish Lakish, despite saying that *chatzi shiur* is permitted by Torah law, agrees that it is nevertheless forbidden according to rabbinical law – and the word *assur* in the *mishna* means “forbidden by rabbinical law.”

Why is *chatzi shiur* forbidden by the Torah according to Rabbi Yochanan? One reason stated in the *gemara* is that a *chatzi shiur* is “*chazi l'itztarufei*,” which literally translates as “is fit to combine.” This means that less than a complete measure could potentially lead to the offender being liable for lashes or *karet* – or whatever punishment is specified by the Torah as applicable to any particular transgression.

Another possible reason for Rabbi Yochanan’s ruling is based on the interpretation of a seemingly unnecessary word in the Torah ban against eating *cheilev* (forbidden animal fats). The verse states “*kol cheilev*” – i.e. any amount of *cheilev*, even less than a *k'zait* “olive” measure required for receiving lashes or *karet*, is forbidden by the Torah to eat. The *gemara* concludes that although the word *kol* seems to be teaching a Torah prohibition of *chatzi shiur*, as is Rabbi Yochanan’s view, it is “merely” an *asmachta* that lends support to a rabbinical prohibition against eating a *chatzi shiur* according to Reish Lakish.

Perhaps surprisingly, and perhaps not, the various Torah commentaries explain Rabbi Yochanan’s logical reason of *chazi l'itztarufei* in a number of ways. Here we will, G-d-willing, address two of these explanations, and allow the reader to explore additional possibilities.

One understanding of *chazi l'itztarufei* is what would seem to be the most basic one – the literal translation of the words. *Chazi l'itztarufei* translates as “is fit to combine.” One who eats only “half of a measure” is eating less than the measure that “qualifies” the eater for the relevant Torah punishment. However, eating a partial measure of forbidden food – such as a small amount of non-kosher meat – could be viewed as “just the beginning.” In other words, if the same person eats more non-kosher meat within a certain time (a subject for another time), eating the two pieces of non-kosher meat can “combine,” adding up to the measure of a *k'zayit*, which is the minimum measure for which one could be punished by the Beit Din. Therefore, although eating the first small piece would not be enough for the person to deserve the Torah's punishment, it is “fit to combine” with one or more pieces of non-kosher meat to add up to a *k'zayit*, which could then result in the Torah's punishment of lashes.

Hence, since each individual act of eating could potentially combine with another act of eating and result in the Torah's punishment, each individual act of eating less than a *k'zayit* of non-kosher meat is considered as a violation of Torah law. One might look at this as a type of “fence” that the Torah established in order to protect a person from getting into more serious trouble. Eating even a small amount of non-kosher meat is prohibited by the Torah since if the person would continue to eat the non-kosher meat, a serious Torah penalty would be the result.

According to this understanding, some commentaries suggest that if a person eats a *chatzi shiur* at the very end of Yom Kippur, the person would not be considered as transgressing a Torah prohibition according to Rabbi Yochanan's reason of *chazi l'itztarufei*. Since there is not enough time left to eat an additional amount that would add up

to the complete measure that is forbidden on Yom Kippur, the concept of *chazi l'itztarufei* is not applicable. (Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky of Vilna, 1863-1940, in his work *Achiezer*, and also other halachic authorities.)

Another, very different and novel explanation is offered by Rabbi Meir Simcha Hakohen of Dvinsk (1843-1926), whose *sefer* on the Rambam is titled “Ohr Somayach” and is the great Rabbi in honor of whom our Yeshiva is named. In his commentary on the Chumash, known as *Meshech Chochma*, he offers the following explanation for *chazi l'itztarufei* as being a reason for *chatzi shiur* being forbidden by the Torah. When the Torah forbids something, such as the eating of non-kosher meat, and that a person is liable to receive punishment of lashes if the minimum measure of a *k'zayit* is eaten intentionally in front of witnesses and after a warning, it is clearly illogical to say that one who eats less than this minimum measure is eating food that is *permitted* by the Torah.

If the Torah bans and punishes eating a *k'zayit* of non-kosher meat, the Torah would never in a million years allow a person to eat an iota *less* than a *k'zayit*. It is simply unimaginable that the Torah would permit eating a number of small bites that constitute less than a *k'zayit*, and then “Bam!” – everything would change with the eating of the last tiny morsel that completes the forbidden *k'zayit*! Why in the world would the last bit be forbidden according to Torah law while all of the non-kosher meat leading up to a *k'zayit* be permitted to eat according to the Torah? According to this explanation, *chazi l'itztarufei* means that since if the first bite would combine with the last bite to add up to a full measure punishable by the Torah, it only stands to reason that each and every bite and small measure that a person eats of the non-kosher meat is perforce a violation of Torah law.

- *Yoma 74a*

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

Chaim (Kenneth) Fink
Minneapolis, Minnesota
University of Pennsylvania: BA in Liberal Arts
Ohr Somayach, Beis Midrash
CEO, Tamar Fink, Inc.



I was in Minnesota in early November a number of years ago visiting with my close friend and former *talmid* Chaim Fink. To those, like me, who had never been in Minnesota, it was an introduction to a world that I had never imagined. I was a Midwestern transplant from New York, so I was used to the flat vowel accents; the use of the word “pop” for soda; the friendliness and openness of Midwesterners; and the love of the outdoors and camping. But I was not prepared for the headline that greeted me that morning at the breakfast table in the Fink house in St. Louis Park, a Jewish suburb of Minneapolis. The front page of the local newspaper, the Star Tribune, screamed:

**ORANGE BLAZE
STARTS
TOMORROW !!!!!!!**

“*Vos iz dos??*” I asked Chaim.

“Oh,” he answered, “it’s announcing the beginning of the deer hunting season.”

“And this is front page news?”

“Yep! Deer hunting is a very big deal in Minnesota.”

“What does ‘orange blaze’ mean?”

“It’s the color of the clothing that hunters must wear so that other hunters don’t shoot them.”

As I drove downtown to appointments in my quest for funds for Ohr Somayach, I listened to the car radio. The topic of every talk show was deer hunting.

I would have thought that some of the callers would be opposed to deer hunting. I mean, the thought of killing Bambi?! But no, even the callers who personally chose not to shoot deer valued the experience (almost a rite of passage for these denizens of the North) of their first deer hunt. When they were old enough to properly hold and shoot a gun, they would go out to the country with their families and shoot. And these were not just men callers. Women also expressed their fond memories. Deer hunting appeared to be an equal opportunity sport.

One of my appointments was at the business offices of a wealthy religious family. They, of course, wouldn’t hunt deer, because of *tzaar baalei chaim*, but they were “avid,” or maybe more correctly, “obsessive” fisherman. Pictures of them in their many boats or in their icehouse hooking a giant Bass, a Walleye, Bigmouth Buffalo or a Lake Sturgeon, plastered the walls of the office.

So how did a non-religious, ice-fishing, homegrown Minnesotan named Chaim Fink get involved with Ohr Somayach? Read on.

Chaim was raised in a secular Jewish home with knowledge of his family history and heritage but little in the way of observance. He was a bright student and went to the University of Pennsylvania’s

Wharton School for an undergraduate degree in Finance and Business, but after his first semester he started asking: “Who am I and why am I on this planet?” To look for answers, he decided to study a broad array of subjects: anthropology, astronomy, Afro-American literature, and, finally, Professor Arthur Green’s Introduction to Judaism 101. Professor Green’s area of academic interest is Jewish Mysticism, and he has written a number of books on the subject. Chaim was enthralled. Professor Green became his mentor. A *Shabbaton* at Chabad on campus spurred his growing attraction to traditional Judaism. After graduating *cum laude* from Penn with a Liberal Arts degree, he traveled to Israel with a backpack and an open mind.

His first stop was the *Livnot U’Lehibanot* program in Safed, where participants restore old buildings and learn about Judaism. From there he went on to sample multiple yeshivot in Jerusalem, including a stint in Ohr Somayach. After a year, his mother begged Chaim to come home and start his professional life in Minneapolis. He reluctantly agreed, but by now he had changed. He had found himself and his true home in Torah, mitzvot, Shabbat and an unbreakable connection to the Land of Israel and the Jewish People.

His father founded and built one of the largest compensation and insurance benefits consulting firms in the United States. One could say, if such a thing is possible, that insurance was in Chaim’s blood.

He worked for a short while for his father, but was determined to make his own way in the world and started an independent financial planning/insurance company.

To many of his Jewish friends and acquaintances, the challenges he faced seemed insurmountable. Chaim insisted on keeping Shabbos and *kashrut* and on wearing his *yarmulke* and *tzitzit*, both in his office and in meetings with potential clients. According to them, below the surface (or under the lake ice) of “Minnesota nice,” the state was the “anti-Semitic capital of the USA.” They asked him: “Do you have to be so Jewish?” “Why flaunt your Judaism; you’ll never make a living here if you can’t eat and party

with clients.” “You should move to NY or LA if you want to succeed as a religious Jew.” And so on...

But Chaim was undaunted. To his surprise, he discovered that 50-80-year-old non-religious Jewish business owners were generally extremely receptive to him. “They saw that I stood up as a proud Jew. They trusted me almost immediately in a way that I could not have imagined and my career took off, *Baruch Hashem!*”

After ten years in the business, Chaim had developed more than a thousand clients. But that wasn’t enough for him. He felt a need for more focus and growth in *ruchnius*. He joined the *Beis Yisroel shul*, the main Orthodox *shul* in his neighborhood of St. Louis Park. Chaim forged a close bond with its Rabbi, Moshe Tuvia Lieff, resulting in his rededication to scrupulous mitzvah observance and Torah study. Rabbi Lieff also suggested that Chaim take a Sabbatical and go to Israel to learn in Yeshivat Ohr Somayach.

Rabbi Moshe Tuvia, who was the author’s neighbor and friend in Cleveland prior to his move to Minneapolis, accompanied Chaim on his trip to Israel and asked me to learn with Chaim.

Chaim is a serious learner, and his thirst for Torah is unquenchable. He spent a number of weeks with us in Ohr Somayach, and drank deeply from the wells of Torah. Business was never far from his mind, but now it too had a different direction.

As he describes it: “Sitting with you in the Beis Midrash at Ohr Somayach, I had a flash of inspiration. If I can help families transform tax dollars into *tzedaka*, we could raise billions for the Jewish People. I returned to Minneapolis with this renewed vision for my life and business, which has grown to the point where after 20 years we have helped hundreds of families leave a meaningful legacy and have raised over \$1.4 billion for *tzedaka*.”

I kept in touch with Chaim afterwards and we developed a close friendship. That’s how I ended up in Minnesota during deer hunting season on one of my fundraising trips to the States.

Over the years, Chaim has become an expert in Estate and Gift Planning for high net-worth individuals and families. As a former Estate and Trust lawyer, I could only admire the sophistication of his plans. But more impressive to me was the comment of a close friend of mine, Calvin Kirchick, ז"ל, a *ben Torah* and nationally recognized expert in Estates and Trust law, who told me that Chaim's Estate Planning was more sophisticated than any he had ever seen.

The Tamar Fink Agency in Minneapolis is a national powerhouse in Estate and Gift planning. Chaim travels all over the country, speaking at professional conferences and visiting clients and potential clients. His success can be measured in terms of the *tzedaka* he has given over the years to many Torah institutions. Included in his giving are his donations to our Yeshiva, which qualifies him for a seat at the Ohr Somayach's Million Dollar Roundtable.

As much as we value Chaim's financial contributions, we equally value his involvement in the Ohr Somayach's Mentors Missions. In this

program, *baalei batim*, mainly from the US and Canada, come to Israel concurrently with our two week JLE summer and winter program. They learn one-on-one and bond with the young men, most of whom are experiencing their first exposure to yeshiva learning. As that relationship solidifies, contact with the Mentee continues throughout the year, with the eventual goal of encouraging further learning in yeshiva for a year or a multi-year program. Chaim's intelligence and salesmanship is a major contribution to that effort.

On one of his many trips to Israel, Chaim met and eventually married Nicole Benjamin, an Australian-Israeli whose family roots were in India. She is now Dr. Nicole Benjamin, having recently earned her PhD in Conservation Biology. She has been offered teaching positions in a number of universities, including the Ivy Leagues. But with a growing family of three young children and their massive involvement in the Minneapolis Jewish community, the Finks are now firmly anchored in Minneapolis, awaiting both the next fishing opener and *Mashiach* – who he hopes will come first!

LETTER AND SPIRIT

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

Rosh Chodesh: Atonement for G-d?

This week's Torah portion lists the various obligatory communal offerings – beginning with the daily offerings, continuing on to the Mussaf offerings of Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh, and then the Mussaf offerings of each of the holidays. Although the Mussaf offering of Rosh Chodesh and the rest of the holidays share the same components – an ascent offering of one or two bulls, a ram and seven sheep, and a he-goat for a sin offering – the language the Torah uses to describe the he-goat sin offering of Rosh Chodesh is different. Only for the sin offering of Rosh Chodesh does the verse describe it as “sin-offering to G-d.” Surely, all offerings are directed to G-d! Our Sages understand the emphasis to imply that the sin offering is brought, so to speak, *on behalf of G-d*.

What does this mean? How could G-d need atonement? And how could *we* effect that atonement? And why on Rosh Chodesh?

The Sages' comments become even more confounding. *Why is the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh different in that it says “for G-d?”* The Holy One, Blessed be He said, “May this he-goat be atonement for Me for diminishing the moon.” (Shavuos 9a)

G-d is the G-d of love, Who educates man and mankind. Through the changing phases of the moon, He has shown us a model for ourselves. With each recurring new moon, Rosh Chodesh teaches that, like the moon, we are capable of renewing ourselves and of attaining light after any darkness. On Rosh Chodesh we are taught that the sinner can still be for G-d, can yet renew himself and his commitments. Moreover, the sin-offering is for G-d. The *ability* to sin, the *need* for atonement, and the *possibility* of cleansing oneself and of elevating oneself out of the depths of sin – these are all “for G-d.” For without the ability to sin – the supreme gift of free will granted only to G-d’s most noble creation – man would be no different from an animal or an angel. He would not be a human being who serves G-d *in freedom*. Instead, when man is free to sin, is enticed with sensual allurements but resists it with the determination of his free will, only then does man attain closeness with G-d through moral purity.

Viewed in this perspective, man’s *self-elevation* from sin – the message of the renewed moon – effects an atonement for the *ability to sin* that is ingrained in his nature. The self-elevation is possible only because of the ability to sin. In terms of the moon analogy, G-d endowed the moon with the capacity for temporary darkening – diminishment – so that on Rosh Chodesh we would perceive its light again.

People ask, *Why did G-d give man the ability to sin and introduce evil into the world?* The answer to their question is given by the sinner who turns in freedom to moral purity, for he never would have reached this lofty level had he not been given the ability to sin. Thus, the sinner’s repentance justifies, as it were, the Creator’s decision to endow man with the ability to sin. Every victory over sin is an atonement for the ability to sin. Thus, on Rosh Chodesh, when we are inspired to renew ourselves and our commitments to separate and elevate ourselves from sin, reflecting the new light that the moon shines, we atone, so to speak for the Creator who “dimmed” man temporarily so that he may shine more brightly.

- Sources: Commentary, Bamidbar 28:11, 15

**THIS TISHA B’AV THERE WILL BE
AN ALL DAY LIVE-STREAM
PRESENTATION**

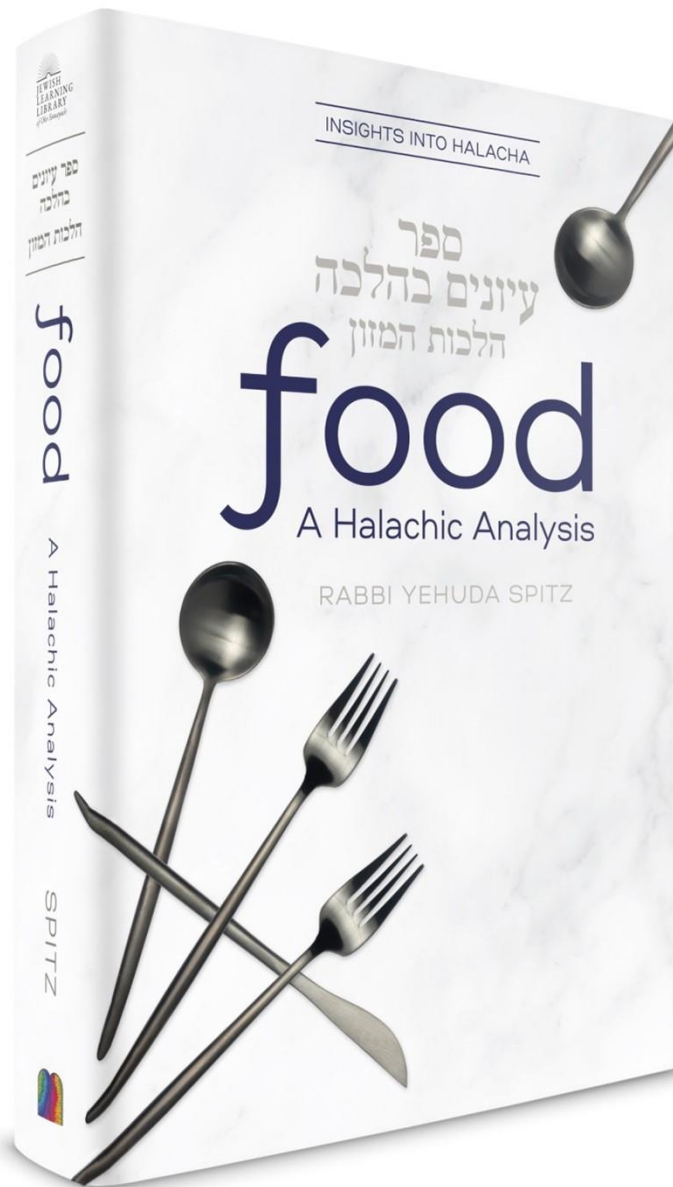
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