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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A FRIEND IN NEED

“Love your neighbor as yourself — I am Hashem.” (19:18)

Once, there were two friends.

Seldom was there a friendship such as this. Literally, there was nothing that one would not do for the other, so great was their love for each other.

It happened one day that one of them was falsely accused of a capital offense. He was arrested and incarcerated in the dungeons of the king. Following a summary trial, he was sentenced to death.

His friend spared no effort to have him released and pardoned. He sought audiences with those of power and influence in the land. All to no avail.

The date for the execution was set.

It was a gray, unforgiving morning that saw this innocent man walking sadly to the gallows. A sea of faces, some ghoulish with delight, some crying, thronged the route to the gallows.

And there too stood his friend, with a look of unspeakable sadness on his face.

The condemned man was already standing on the scaffold. The hangman, draped in a black hood, placed the noose around his neck and like some fiendish tailor, adjusted it to size.

Eighteen inches to the right of the condemned man there was a trap-door. The hangman threw the lever to make sure that the trap-door would open efficiently under the feet of this hapless Jew. The accused man gazed into the abyss where the trapdoor had opened. This was to be his portal to the next world.

Suddenly there was a disturbance in the crowd. A man was shouting “Stop the execution! Stop the execution!” It was his friend. Unable to bear it any longer, he ran up the steps of the gal-

lows and shouted “Stop the execution! Stop the execution! You’re hanging the wrong man! I am the one who’s guilty! Hang me — not him!”

The crowd murmured excitedly. This was much more than they had bargained for in this real-life medieval soap opera.

When the accused man saw that his friend was trying to save him by sacrificing himself he started to shout “Don’t listen to him! Don’t listen to him!”

“In essence, there becomes no difference between ‘me’ and ‘you’. As we are all expressions of the will of the Creator...”

I’m the one that’s guilty, not him! Hang me!”

To which the other shouted back “No! It’s not true! I did it! Hang me!”

Back and forth they shouted at the hangman “Hang me!” “No! Hang me!”

The hangman was standing between them. As each of them shouted, his head turned back and forth. As the shouting escalated in speed and volume, it seemed that if the hangman turned his head any quicker, **he** would be the first one to lose his head!

At any rate, it was clear that there would be no execution that day. A disappointed crowd slowly dispersed.

The affair reached the ears of the king and he commanded that the two should be brought in front of him.

“Now, what is the truth of this matter?” demanded the king. “Why are

you both so keen to ‘take the drop’ and hang from the gallows? If you tell me the truth, I will pardon you both.”

“The truth is that neither of us are guilty of the crime, your majesty. We are friends. I could not bear to see my friend go to his death. So I decided I would give my life so he would live.” “The same is true for me” said the other.

The king spent some moments looking from one to the other. He was obviously deeply touched by what he had heard. Then he spoke: “I will keep my word and pardon you both. But on one condition — **that you too make me your friend!**”

The Torah teaches us: “Love your neighbor as yourself — I am Hashem.”

When a person loves his friend as much as he loves himself, then “I am Hashem” — Hashem makes Himself a friend to them both.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

“You shall be holy...” (19:2)

In the Ten Commandments, The mitzvah of Shabbos is followed by “Honor your father and your mother...”

In this week’s Parsha, however, the order is reversed: First comes the mitzvah of fearing one’s parents, and only after that, the mitzvah of Shabbos.

Holiness has two realms: The realm of *action*, and the realm of the *mind*.

In the realm of *action*, the most exacting area of holiness is the mitzvah of honoring and fearing one’s parents.

Shabbos, on the other hand, is the ultimate fulfillment of the holiness of the *mind*.

On the road to holiness, which is the subject of this week’s Parsha, actions must come before thoughts. **For a person must first sanctify his actions, and only afterwards can he rise to the level of**

continued on page four

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah details how the Jewish People should observe the commandment to be holy. The following are prohibited: Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limits; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing someone; taking revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during

its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; and tattooing. Positive commands are: Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating, in Jerusalem, fruits from the fourth year of a tree; awe for the *Beis Hamikdash*; respect for Rabbis; respect for the the blind and the deaf. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate pagan behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe laws of *kashrus* and thereby maintain our unique and separate status.

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SING My SOUL INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBOS ZEMIRO

מה ידידות MAH YEDIDUS "HOW BELOVED..."

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We therefore run towards you; Come O, royal bride.

When one man runs in a public thoroughfare and collides with another who is walking, the runner is held accountable for the damage he causes, because it is not the norm to run in a public place. If the running took place just before the advent of the Shabbos, however, the runner is acquitted because he is permitted to run in order to properly wel-

come the holy day as one would welcome a royal visitor. It was the custom of Rabbi Chanina to call out before Shabbos: "Let us go out towards the royal Shabbos bride." Rabbi Yannai would dress in his best and proclaim: "Come, O bride; come O bride." This is the vision of going forth to welcome the Shabbos which we express in our about-face during the last stanza of "*Lecha Dodi*." It is this scene that we sing about with the words "We run towards you; come O royal bride."

לע"נ
ר' שלמה בן ר' אברהם הלוי ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why was *Parshas Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?
2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbos?
4. Why does Shabbos observance supersede honoring parents?
5. What is "leket?"
6. In *Shemos* 20:13, the Torah commands "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal?"
7. "Do not do wrong to your neighbor" (19:13). To what 'wrong' is the Torah referring?
8. By when must you pay someone who worked for you during the day?
9. How does Rashi explain the prohibition "Don't put a stumbling block before a sightless person?"
10. In a monetary case involving a poor person and a rich person, a judge is likely to wrongly favor the poor person. What rationale does Rashi give for this?
11. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
12. It's forbidden to bear a grudge. What example does Rashi give of this?
13. The Torah forbids tattooing. How is a tattoo made?
14. How does one fulfill the mitzvah of "*hadarta p'nei zaken?*"
15. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
16. What penalty does the Torah state for cursing one's parents?
17. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which penalty is it referring?
18. What will result if the Jewish People ignore the laws of forbidden relationships?
19. Which of the forbidden relationships listed in this week's *Parsha* were practiced by the Canaanites?
20. Is it proper for a Jew to say "I would enjoy eating ham?"

BONUS QUESTION?

"Keep my Shabboses..." (19:30) Why is the word 'Shabboses' in the plural?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"...You shall surely rebuke your fellow Jew." (19:17) Any love not accompanied by rebuke is not true love.

• *Bereishis Rabbah*

HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 22:1-16

STICKS AND STONES

"...therefore have I made you a shame to the nations, and a mockery for all the lands. Those who are near and those who are far will mock you 'Contaminated of name!'..." (22:4-5)

The prophet tells us that because of our sins, the word 'Jew' will become an insult and a slur in the mouths of the nations of the world.

When someone wants to curse or disgrace someone, he will hurl at him the insult, 'Jew!'

In *Midrash Eicha* there is a depiction of two non-

Jewish women fighting. One of them sneers at the other: 'Jewess!' The other stops in her tracks and hisses: "Call me anything you like. Call me the biggest insult in the world, but don't you ever call me a Jew!"

This is what the prophet means "*Therefore have I made you a shame to the nations*" — your name will be a watchword for ignominy among the nations until "*Those who are near and those who are far will mock you*" — they will mock each other with the name "Jew!", because you have become '*Contaminated of name!*'

• *Kochav MiYaakov in Mayana shel Torah*

WEEKLY DAF

TEMURAH 23-29

THE BLEMISHED BECHOR

Rabbi Yehuda stated in the name of the Sage Rav that it is permissible to inflict a blemish on a *bechor* (first born male animal) before it departs its mother's womb. The sanctity of the *bechor* as a sacrificial animal which prevents its being used in regular fashion until it develops a blemish, and forbids a blemish being inflicted, only takes effect when a majority of its head has left the womb.

This ruling is challenged from the Mishna's statement that a man can evade the responsibility of giving away a *bechor* to the *kohen* by declaring before birth that if the first born will be a male it will be consecrated for an *olah* sacrifice. The status of *bechor* which only comes with departure from the womb can thus never take effect and the owner may use the first born male to fulfill his own obligation of offering an *olah*.

The implication is, that he may effect this change from *bechor* only because he is upgrading its sanctity to that of an *olah* which is completely consumed on the altar. But if he were to consecrate it for a *shlamim* sacrifice which is not a higher sanctity it would be forbidden to make this change in status. It may therefore be concluded that it is certainly wrong to inflict a blemish before birth which strips the animal of any sacrificial sanctity.

Rabbi Yehuda's response to this challenge is to distinguish between when there was a *Beis Hamikdash* where sacrifices could be offered and when there is none. The Mishna refers to the *Beis Hamikdash* era when it was wrong to reduce the sanctity of a sacrifice. Rabbi

Yehuda refers to our own times when there is no loss of sacrifice in any event. If not for his ruling, however, we might have assumed that the Sages decreed not to inflict a prenatal blemish for fear that the owner might slip and inflict this blemish after a majority of the *bechor*'s head has protruded, when it is already forbidden. Rabbi Yehuda, therefore, rules that it is still preferable to take this risk in order to avoid a situation in which the owner would have to wait for a blemish to develop on its own before using it and thus expose himself to the danger of illegally shearing or working with a *bechor*.

Our custom, as we pointed out in the Weekly Daf on *Bechoros* 3b, is based on Tosefos' conclusion that the preferable method for avoiding the ban on *bechor* is to sell a part of the mother to a non-Jew, thus exempting the offspring from the status of *bechor*.

• Temurah 24b

SEVEN YEARS & EIGHT EXCEPTIONS

When the Children of Israel sinned against Hashem and He delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years they cried out to Hashem. He chose Gideon as the leader who would deliver them from Midian. An angel was sent to charge Gideon with this mission and to give him a heavenly sign that he had been chosen.

"That very night Hashem said to him: Take your father's young bullock, and the second bullock of seven years old,

and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the *Ashera* that is by it. And build an altar to Hashem upon the top of this strong point, on the level place, and take the second bullock and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the *Ashera* which you have cut down." (*Shoftim* 6:25-36)

Eight forbidden practices, points out the Sage Abba bar Cahana, were permitted that night: 1) Slaughter and offering of a sacrifice outside the Sanctuary; 2) sacrificial service at night; 3) service performed by a non-*kohen*; 4) service without sanctified vessels; 5) use of vessels employed for idolatrous *Ashera*; 6) use of wood from the *Ashera* that served as an idol; 7) use of an animal set aside as a sacrifice for an idol; 8) use of an animal worshipped as an idol.

Malbim, in his commentary on *Shoftim*, points out that the second bullock belonged to the townspeople rather than his father and it had been fattening for seven years. When the Midianite oppression began seven years earlier these people vowed to offer this special animal to the idol when they would be saved. Gideon was therefore commanded to take this very animal and offer it to Hashem on an altar built for Hashem atop the idolatrous altar and use the wood of the idol as fuel — all this to demonstrate that it is Hashem who will rescue Israel and not the idol. This also provided Gideon with an opportunity to launch his career as a leader by risking his life and defying the townspeople in order to sanctify the Name of Hashem.

• Temurah 28b

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

sanctity of thought.

Thus the mitzvah of fearing one's parents — the holiness of *action* — comes here before the mitzvah of Shabbos — the holiness of *thought*.

CENTER STAGE

"Love your neighbor as yourself — I am Hashem." (19:18)

Rabbi Akiva states that this is the fundamental principle of all the Torah. But, in truth, how is it possible to love another person as one loves oneself?

A person's view of the world tends to be egocentric, and even when he behaves altruistically, his actions usually

emanate from the desire to feel good about *himself*.

That's not loving your neighbor *as* yourself. That's **loving yourself!**

So, how can a person love someone else as much as himself?

The answer is the end of this verse: "*I am Hashem.*"

When a person puts himself at the center of the universe instead of Hashem, then necessarily every other creation is light-years away from him. Because he feels himself to be the center of all things he necessarily feels removed from his neighbor. There can only be one center. And he has grabbed the cen-

ter stage for himself.

But when he acknowledges that he is not G-d, but "*I am Hashem*" — Hashem is G-d — then as a creation of Hashem he sees himself linked to his fellow man. For both he and his fellow are but equidistant points from the Center of all.

In a sense there becomes no difference between 'me' and 'you.' As we are all expressions of the will of the Creator, as much as I can love myself I can love my neighbor.

Sources:

- **A Friend In Need** - Mayana shel Torah
- **First Things First** - Shem MiShmuel
- **Center Stage** - Rabbi Mordechai Perلمان

MOTION SENSORED

Jeffrey B. Sidney,
Faculty of Administration
University of Ottawa, Ontario
<SIDNEY@admin.uottawa.ca>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
More and more homeowners in North America are using front lights for their houses which are motion-activated. In other words, if you walk in front of the house, the light automatically goes on. And this may even apply in the daytime. It would therefore be possible to be in the situation in which all access routes to one's house would be "blocked" on Shabbat, because of the number and positioning of such lights.
Does that leave you in the position of having to either stay at home all Shabbat, or alternatively, to leave before the start of Shabbat and not return until after Shabbat?

Dear Jeffrey B. Sidney,
The angle at which the motion-sensors are set determines whether or not a given action will activate them. The halacha varies accordingly.
Sometimes the sensors are set at such an angle that you can pass by without activating them — they only activate if you actually approach the house. In such a situation, it's permitted to walk by. This is based on the following rule: If a permitted action

might or might not cause a prohibited result, the action is nonetheless permitted. This is provided that you're not purposely trying to cause the prohibited result.

However, many motion-sensitive lights are set at such an angle that you can't walk past the house without activating them (unless you crawl past on your belly — something not recommended on Shabbat or any non-combat situation). In such a situation, the halacha generally forbids walking past. This is true even though you don't intend turn the light on, and you derive no real benefit from the light — for example, there's adequate street lighting.

However, some authorities rule that if you don't intend the prohibited result to occur, and you don't benefit from it, the act is permitted even though the result is sure to occur. Based on this and other factors, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashev, *shlita*, ruled that if you're on the way to do a mitzvah — for example, going to and from Synagogue or the Shabbat meal — it's permitted to walk past these lights if there's no other way to go.

Sources:

- Rabbi Natan Ba'al Har'auch, 13th Century Rome
- Code of Jewish Law, Orach Chaim 320
- Rav Elyashev's ruling is based in part on the fact that the lights are activated *ke'lachar yad* — in an unusual way.

Jeffrey B. Sidney
<SIDNEY@admin.uottawa.ca>
replied:

Dear Rabbi,
Thank you very much for deal-

ing with my question. I'm amazed at the speed with which the reply arrived.

By the way, I tested some of the neighbors' lights, and it seems that while they usually go on, this is not always the case. Therefore, it seems we are in the best possible situation based on your response.

Bonnie Horwitz
<mlcf@bellatlantic.net> wrote:

I am a vegetarian and it is abhorrent to me to have an animal leg on my table at Pesach. I have been told that somewhere in the Talmud it says that a roasted beet can take the place of a roasted shank bone. Can you help me find the source?

Dear Bonnie Horwitz,
The source is the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 114b.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

There is a person mentioned in Tanach who the last part of his name is the English translation of the first part of his name. Who is this person? Answer next week.

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PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 19:2 - Because the fundamental teachings of the Torah are contained in this Parsha.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:3 - Because the parents are also commanded by Hashem to observe Shabbos. Parents deserve great honor, but not at the 'expense' of Hashem's honor.
5. 19:9 - "Leket" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting. They must be left for the poor.
6. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemos* it prohibits kidnapping.
7. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
8. 19:13 - Before the following dawn.
9. 19:13 - Don't give improper advice to a person who is unaware in a matter. For example, don't advise someone to sell his field, when in reality you yourself wish to buy it and the sale is not beneficial to him.
10. 19:15 - The judge might think: "This rich person is obligated to give charity to this poor person regardless of the outcome of this court case. Therefore, I'll rule in favor of the poor person. That way, he'll receive the financial support he needs without feeling bad about taking charity.
11. 19:17 - Causing public embarrassment.
12. 19:18 - Person A asks person B: "Can I borrow your shovel?" Person B says: "No." The next day, B says to A: "Can I borrow your scythe?" A replies: "Sure, I'm not stingy like you are."
13. 19:28 - Ink is injected into the skin with a needle.
14. 19:32 - By not sitting in the designated seat of an elderly person, and by not contradicting his statement.
15. 20:3 - "Kares" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
16. 20:9 - Death by stoning.
17. 20:10 - *Chenek* (strangulation).
18. 20:22 - The land of Israel will 'spit them out.'
19. 20:23 - All of them.
20. 20:26 - Yes.

BONUS ANSWER!

The festivals, such as Pesach and Shavuot are also called 'Shabbos,' because they are days when we refrain from creative actions. "Shabboses" is plural because it refers to both the seventh day and to the festivals.

• *Tractate Shavuot*

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN		SEFER HACHINUCH	
19:2	Be Holy	227	Swearing Falsely
19:14	Who May Not Be Cursed	236	Tale Bearing
19:17	Love and Rebuke	237	Standing Idly
19:18	Love Your Neighbor	238	Hatred
19:30	Shabbos	239	Rebuke
19:32	Honoring the Elderly		

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