

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A PRESENT FROM THE QUEEN

“And you will rejoice in all the good which Hashem gives you” (26:11)

When you get a present from the Queen, what’s more important to you: The present itself or the inscription “Presented by Her Majesty to...”?

When we rejoice in all the good that Hashem gives us, what foremost makes us happy is not *what* we receive, rather from *Whom* we receive it.

GETTING TO THE TOP

“Since you did not serve Hashem, your G-d with joy and goodness of heart” (28:47)

It was common knowledge that anyone who got to the top of the skyscraper earned a prize of spectacular proportions. The only trouble was that to get there you had to walk. A hundred floors is a long way by elevator — but by foot...

They both started out together. The first ten floors were easy. The second twenty floors were harder. By the time they had reached the fiftieth floor, they were both gasping for breath. Sweat was pouring from them. 56, 57, 58.

On and on they climbed. Could this be easier than Hilary and Tenzing scaling Everest? 75, 76, 77... By the 80th floor, they had both stopped walking, now they were crawling on their hands and knees. As they reached the 89th floor, one of them fell back on the cool stone and gasped “That’s it! I can’t go on — I’m finished!”

“I can’t go on either,” said the other, “But I’m not giving up!”

With every bone in his body aching, he clawed his way up one more floor. He turned the corner and saw the sign in front of him: “90th Floor.” It was then that he saw what was written underneath: “If you get this far — you can take the elevator. Congratulations!”

There before him were the open doors of an elevator. With a weak tired smile, he crawled in and pushed the golden button. The doors closed and he sped to the top of the building and the grand prize.

To rise, you have to do a lot more than walk — you have to run.

Life is about getting to the top. Some people think that “getting to the top” means appearing on a TV talk show or owning a Fortune 500 company. But there’s only one “top” that’s really important — the top of the spiritual ladder. Climbing the spiritual ladder, however, is not so easy. Sometimes it seems that it’s just too much. Why exert yourself to climb and climb? Why not just stay

where you are and coast?

Life is like the down escalator. Just to stay where you are, you have to keep walking. If you stand still, you’ll go down. To rise, you have to do a lot more than walk — you have to run.

In this week’s Parsha, we read horrifying predictions of what will happen to the Jewish People if they fail to keep the Torah. But it’s not enough just to keep the Torah. The above verse teaches us that the full weight of punishment will result merely if the Jewish People fail to serve G-d with joy and goodness of heart.

This is very difficult to understand. Why should we be punished so severely merely for failing to do the *mitzvos* with joy?

Our negative inclination is no fool. He doesn’t tell us to go and steal. He doesn’t tell us to start worshipping idols. He starts us off on the “baby slopes.” He starts by suggesting that we do something that doesn’t seem to be a sin at all. He makes the *mitzvos* feel heavy when we do them. He suggests we do them without enthusiasm. And after a steady diet of this, there comes a day when we’re under some kind of pressure and he helps us to forget to do the *mitzvah* altogether. From then on, bit by bit, he encourages us to bigger and bigger things until we find ourselves looking in the face of an idol.

This was exactly what happened in the generation when Jerusalem was destroyed. They didn’t start off by worshipping idolatry. They started off by feeling that doing the *mitzvos* was a burden.

Fine. But what do you do if your negative drive has already got you on the “baby slopes?” What do you do if

PARSHA OVERVIEW

When *Bnei Yisrael* dwell in the Land of Israel, its first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the *Kohen* in a ceremony expressing recognition that it is Hashem who guides the history of the Jewish People throughout all ages. This passage forms one of the central parts of the Haggadah that we read at the Passover Seder. On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and the seventh years of the seven-year *shemitta* cycle of tithes, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner.

With this *mitzvah* Moshe concludes the commandments that Hashem has told him to give to the Jewish People. Moshe exhorts them to walk in Hashem's ways, because they are set aside as a treasured people to Hashem. When *Bnei*

Yisrael cross the Jordan River they are to make a new commitment to the Torah. Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them in the world's seventy primary languages, after which they are to be covered over with a thin layer of plaster. Half the tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim, and half on Mount Eval, and the *levi'im* will stand in a valley between the two mountains. There the *levi'im* will recite 12 commandments and all the people will answer "amen" to the blessings and the curses. Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon *Bnei Yisrael*. These blessings are both physical and spiritual. However if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

HAFTORAH: YESHAYAHU 60:1-22

In this, the sixth of the seven *Haftoras of Consolation*, the Prophet Yeshayahu calls on Jerusalem to arise from the pain of darkness and shadow, and to shine to the world in her full glory. The light of redemption, both physical and spiritual, is being radiated on her. Her long-banished children are returning, and in their wake are the nations of the world who have acknowledged Hashem and that the Jewish People are His emissaries.

This redemption, unlike those that have preceded it, will be the final and complete one. "Never again will your sun set, nor your moon be withdrawn, for Hashem shall be unto you an eternal light,

and ended will be your days of mourning."

ANNUALS & PERENNIALS

"And your people, they are all righteous, forever shall they inherit the Land, a branch of My planting..." (60:21)

People think that re-incarnation is an Eastern concept. It is. A Middle-Eastern concept. One of Judaism's gift to Eastern thought is re-incarnation.

If a person doesn't follow the path that G-d indicates in this world, his soul will return until he corrects his character flaws.

The above verse alludes to this process: "And your people are all righteous..." The unspoken question arises: "They're all righteous?! I see many people who are a long way from being righteous!" To which the next phrase answers — "a branch of My planting" — those who fail to achieve righteousness will be "re-planted" many times until their good deeds finally come to fruition. Even the least righteous person returns and returns to this world until he eventually becomes virtuous and noble.

• Mahram Mizrachi in *Mayana shel Torah*

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LOVE OF THE LAND

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

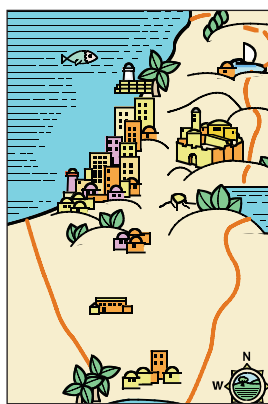
THE CRITICAL CONDITION

Bnei Yisrael were commanded that, upon arrival in Eretz Yisrael after 40 years in the wilderness, they must assemble at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eval to hear the blessings and curses spelled out in the Torah (*Devarim 27:15-26*) for those who fulfill the laws of Hashem and the contrary. In explaining why this was necessary so soon upon their entry, the Torah tells us: "For you are crossing the Jordan to come and inherit the land which Hashem, your G-d, is giving you, and you shall inherit it and dwell in it. And you will observe all of the statutes and laws which I place before

you today." (*Devarim 11:31-32*)

Here is clearly spelled out the formula for successful conquest and possession of Eretz Yisrael. In order that we should succeed in inheriting and dwelling in the Land, the Torah tells us we must observe all of Hashem's laws. It was therefore necessary to dramatically communicate a public declaration of blessings and curses upon entry into the Land, to drive home the message that possession of the Land was conditional on observance of the commandments.

• Malbim, *Parshas Re'eh*



PARSHA INSIGHTS

you have already lost the feeling of joy when you do a *mitzvah*? What if you already feel apathetic?

You can't argue with an emotion. You can't fight feelings with logic. If you feel apathetic, trotting out a list of logical reasons why you should improve isn't going to help. The only way you can fight feeling is with feeling.

Psychology posits a syndrome called "cognitive dissonance." Cognitive dissonance is when we buy a watch at a store for \$200 and later that day we see an advertisement for an almost identical watch for \$130. We think to ourselves: "My watch must be better." Even though some-

one could prove to us that the watches are practically identical, we still feel that our watch is better. Why? Because, we invested in it. "It's my watch which belongs to me and I own it."

When we invest in something, we feel it must be good. After all, I invested in it, didn't I?

When we invest tremendous energy into a project, you can't tell me it's valueless. This is the key to dealing with apathy. When we invest our time, our energy, our love, our very selves into something — we value it.

With this principle, we can understand how to generate a love of the *mitzvos* in our hearts. To love the

mitzvos we must invest in them. When we do them with all our heart, the cynical voice that tries to knock the gloss off our service of the Creator will find no receptive ear in our psyche. Subconsciously, we will say to it: "You can't tell me these *mitzvos* are a drag. I put my guts into them. I have invested my love and my life." You can't fight emotion with logic. Only emotion can wield an effective sword against an opposing emotion.

Sources:

A Present From The Queen - Tiferes
Shlomo in *Mayana shel Torah*
Getting To The Top - Ksav Sofer

BONUS QUESTION?

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE MISLEADING MYSTERY

“Inspiration,” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes, “is like lightning on a dark road. It comes from above, it strikes unexpectedly, and when it does, we must capture it in our memory; then, even when it’s faded, it can guide us along life’s dark way.”

“Speaking of lighting up the way,” said Watstein, “I’m in the dark about this verse. The verse says: *Cursed is one who misleads a blind person on the way (Devarim 27:18)*. Rashi explains that ‘misleading a blind person’ is not literal, but rather that it refers to giving bad advice to a person who is ‘blind’ regarding a certain matter.”

“What don’t you understand?” asked Sherlock.

“What prompts Rashi to give a figurative explanation of ‘misleading a blind person?’ Why can’t the verse

be taken literally: *Cursed is someone who misdirects a blind person*, that is, someone whose vision is physically impaired?”

“Wouldn’t that limit the verse to a very specific case?” asked Sherlock.

“What of it? The surrounding verses (*ibid. 17,19*) are also limited to specific cases: *Cursed is one who moves back his neighbor’s boundary marker... Cursed is one who distorts the judgment of a stranger, orphan or widow...* These verses refer to very specific sins, yet Rashi doesn’t feel compelled to offer figurative explanations, such as: ‘Moving a boundary marker’ means any type of theft; or, ‘a stranger’ means one who is a stranger to the judicial system. Rashi offers no such interpretations. So why here does Rashi do so?”

“To answer that,” said Sherlock, “we need a little inspiration on the way.”

answer on page eight

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WEEKLY DAF

PESACHIM 23 - 29

WHOSE BLOOD IS REDDER?

If non-Jews demand of a group of surrounded Jews that they deliver one of the group for execution or else they will put the entire group to death, the Jews must all sacrifice their lives rather than deliver a single Jew to death. Even if the non-Jews designate a particular victim and threaten to kill all of them if he is not delivered, the Jews may do so only if the designated person is guilty of a capital crime. If, however, the designated person is not guilty of a death penalty, then all the members of the group must be ready to give up their lives rather than deliver him to death. (Such was the case with Sheva ben Bichri. He was a rebel against King David who sought refuge from his pursuing forces in the city of Aveil and was slain by the residents of the besieged city in order to save themselves from being put to death as conspirators (see *Shmuel II chapter 20*).

This is the ruling of Rambam (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 5:5*) based on the view of the Sage Reish Lakish in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Terumos 47a*). This ruling is challenged, however, on the basis of an exchange found in our own *gemara*:

A Jew came before the Sage Rava and asked him the following question: “The ruler of my town ordered me to kill a fellow Jew, or else this ruler will kill me. What should I do?”

“Allow yourself to be killed,” answered Rava. “Who says your blood is redder than that of the other Jew? Perhaps his blood is redder than yours?”

Rashi explains that Rava understood that the question put to him was based on the knowledge that the commandments can be put aside in order to save a life, and the assumption was that this should include even the ban on murder. To this, Rava countered that a commandment is suspended only for the purpose of preserving a life, which is so precious to the Creator. But regarding murder, a life will be lost in any case. One therefore cannot take the initiative of taking the other person’s life on the assumption that one’s own life is more precious.

If this is the only rationale for murder to be prohibited even for saving a life, it is difficult to see how it applies to the ruling of Reish Lakish codified as law by Rambam. Since the designated victim is anyway doomed to die together with his comrades if he is not delivered by them, it would seem to make sense that they should be permitted to sacrifice him in order to save themselves. The argument of “whose blood is redder” seems irrelevant here!

Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, writes in his *Kesef Mishneh* commentary on Rambam that the rule that murder is forbidden even for saving a life — or many lives — is something we know from an oral tradition dating back to Sinai. Our Sages merely tried to provide a tangible perception of its basic logic by presenting the “red blood” explanation. They never intended, however, to limit the ban only to situations where that criterion applied. Handing over someone to be executed, even if he is destined to be killed in any case, is still considered an act of murder and is therefore forbidden, even for the purpose of saving the life of the entire group.

• Pesachim 25a

WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

A Jew faced with the choice between idol worship and death is required to choose death. The basis is the Torah command (*Devarim 6:5*) “love Hashem with all your heart, all your soul and all your might.”

It is understandable why the Torah had to write “all your soul” to instruct that loyalty to Hashem takes precedence over life. It is difficult, however, to understand why it was also necessary to stress the need to sacrifice “all your might,” which means all your possessions, to maintain that loyalty. If life itself must be sacrificed, is it not obvious that one must sacrifice his money as well?

To this Rabbi Eliezer replies that there are some people for whom their money is more precious than their lives, and they too are instructed to sacrifice what is most precious to them in order to remain faithful.

The above cited passage appears in the first chapter of the *Shema* we recite each morning and evening. In the second chapter we recite we are again instructed in regard to loving and serving Hashem, but this time only “all your heart and all your soul” are mentioned (*Devarim 11:13*). There is no mention of “all your might.” Why is the concept of sacrificing money for faithfulness deleted in this chapter?

Ohr Hachayim points out that the first chapter of *Shema* appears in the singular form while the second chapter appears in the plural. Amongst individuals, explains the Ohr Hachayim, it is possible to find some with such an exaggerated love of money that they must be reminded to sacrifice even that for their faith. But when the Torah addresses a community, it is inconceivable that any society should be so perverted in its priority of values. Once they have been told to sacrifice their lives, they will arrive at the natural conclusion that their possessions are also expendable.

Maharsha (*Mesechta Berachos 35b*) offers a different approach, based on the view of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, that a person who dedicates himself totally to the study of Torah need not be concerned about earning a livelihood, for his needs will be provided by Heaven. The passage (*Devarim 11:14*) about “gathering in your grain” which implies the need for human effort is interpreted by him as applying to situations in which Jews are not fulfilling the will of Hashem and therefore not deserving of such Divine assistance. But how can we limit this to when they are not behaving righteously, when that chapter begins with the words “And it shall be if you hearken to My commands?”

The answer, as already partially suggested by Tosefos, is that the first part of the chapter relates to Jews who indeed obey the Divine commands, but who are not completely righteous and therefore forfeit extraordinary Heavenly assistance. This characterization, points out Maharsha, is evident from the deletion of “all your might” in that chapter. Jews who love and worship Hashem with all their hearts and souls but fail to do so with all their money are condemned, measure for measure, to earn their livelihood through their own efforts.

• Pesachim 25a

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. When did the obligation to bring *bikkurim* (first fruits) begin?
2. From which crops must one bring *bikkurim*?
3. How does one designate *bikkurim*?
4. Who shakes the basket containing the *bikkurim*?
5. What does “*v’anisa v’amarta*” mean (verse 26:5)?
6. “An Arami tried to destroy my father....” Who was that Arami?
7. During what period of the year may *bikkurim* be brought? Until when are the special verses recited?
8. Someone declaring that he separated *terumah* and *maaser* says: “And I didn’t forget.” What didn’t he forget?
9. What were the Jewish People to do with the 12 stones on Mount Eval?
10. Six tribes were to stand on Mount Eval, and six on Mount Gerizim. Who and what were in the middle?
11. Who “causes the blind to go astray?”
12. How does one “strike another secretly?”
13. Eleven curses were spoken on Mount Eval. What is the significance of this number?
14. Why is the word “*ashteros*” used in reference to sheep?
15. How is the manner of expressing the curses in *Parshas Bechukosai* more severe than in this week’s Parsha?
16. What is meant by “the Jewish People will become a proverb?”
17. “And there you will serve other gods....” What does this mean?
18. “In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were (last) evening’ and in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were (this) morning.’ (28:67)” Why?
19. To which tribe did Moshe give the Torah first?
20. How long does it take to understand the depth of wisdom of one’s Torah-teacher?

I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

“And you shall take from the first of every fruit of the earth...and place (them) in the basket.” (Devarim 26:2)

By Torah law, *bikkurim* (first fruits) have no minimum amount which one must give. The Sages, however, required that one give a sixtieth of his crop as *bikkurim* (Rambam *Hilchos Bikkurim* 2:17). This amount, one out of sixty, is hinted in the above verse “and place in the basket.” The Hebrew word for basket — *teneh* — has the numerical value of 60.

• Heard in the name of the Vilna Gaon

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 26:1 - After the Land was conquered and divided.
2. 26:2 - The seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised.
3. 26:2 - When he sees the first fruit ripen on a tree, he binds a piece of straw around it to mark it as *bikkurim*.
4. 26:4 - The *kohen* places his hands under the hands of the one bringing it, and they wave the basket together.
5. 26:5 - Speak loudly.
6. 26:5 - Lavan.
7. 26:11 - *Bikkurim* are brought from Shavuot until Channuka. The verses are recited only until Succos.
8. 26:13 - To bless Hashem.
9. 10. 27:2 - Build an altar.
10. 27:12 - *Kohanim, levi'im* and the Holy Ark.
11. 27:18 - Any person who intentionally gives bad advice.
12. 27:24 - By slandering him.
13. 27:24 - Each curse corresponds to one of the tribes, except for the tribe of Shimon. Since Moshe didn’t intend to bless the tribe of Shimon before his death, he did not want to curse them either.
14. 28:4 - Because they “enrich” (*m’ashiros*) their owners.
15. 28:23 - In *Bechukosai*, the Torah speaks in the plural, whereas in this week’s Parsha the curses are mentioned in the singular.
16. 28:37 - Whenever someone wants to express the idea of extraordinary suffering they will use the Jewish People as an example.
17. 28:64 - You will pay taxes to the idol-worshipping priests.
18. 28:67 - Because the curse of each hour will be greater than that of the previous hour.
19. 29:3 - To the tribe of Levi.
20. 29:8 - 40 years.

SHABBAT ON THE COAST

Rabbikolbo@aol.com wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
If Hashem was resting in New York, He was still creating in California. If we would travel around the world wouldn't it make it that Hashem never did rest (stop creating) in totality? He only rested in individual places?

Dear Rabbikolbo@aol.com,

You are suggesting that Hashem was in a particular place and/or time. In fact, space/time were creations of G-d, but He is outside of those creations. When the Torah says that G-d "rested" on the seventh day, it means that He ceased the creation of new categories, but He continues to will the already existent world into existence. The term "He rested" is not a real description of what G-d did, it is anthropomorphic. It is using a human term inapplicable to G-d to describe something G-d wants to teach us, but not to describe G-d. The seventh day here is something that G-d knows and can see, even though He does not experience seven days, or time, and hence it is possible to talk of Hashem ceasing new creation on the seventh day.

ABOUT FACE

Michael Brose from Lena, Illinois
<mebrosee@micro.honeywell.com>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Earlier this year we were in Jerusalem on a tour. We visited the Jewish Institute, and during our visit there we noticed that there were several depictions of the Ark of the Covenant. One had the figures on the Ark facing each other and the wings extended toward the center. The other had the figures facing away from each other, and the wings unfurled to their backs toward the center of the Ark. My question is, which is correct? This may be impossible to answer, but any enlightenment is most welcome.

Dear Michael Brose,

The Talmud says that when the Jews fulfilled the will of G-d, the winged images on the ark (*keruvim*) faced each other, but when the Jews did not fulfill the will of G-d they faced away from each other.

Sources:

- Bava Batra 99a

BARE HEAD

Sidney Davis
<Sidavis53@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How is one to understand the wearing of the kippa (*skullcap-yarmulke*) in light of the following from the Targum? The Targum on Judges 5:2 suggests: "The wise men sit in the synagogues...with the head uncovered to teach the people the words of the law;" and Judges 5:9 has these words: "Deborah in prophecy said, I am sent to praise the Scribes of Israel, who when they were in tribulation did not cease from expounding the law; and so it was beautiful for them to sit in the synagogues with the head uncovered and teach the people the words of the law, and bless and thank before the L-rd."

Dear Sidney Davis,

The Targum says that Devorah praised the Sages for teaching Torah with "reish g'lai." Taken literally, this means "with a revealed head."

This is wrong for two reasons: First of all, it makes no sense. Is there something praiseworthy about teaching Torah while bare-headed? Why would Devorah praise them for that?

Second of all, we find the exact same expression regarding a verse in Exodus: "The Children of Israel went out of Egypt with a high hand." The Targum translates "high hand" as "reish g'lai" — "a revealed head."

Obviously, this can't be literal. What does a revealed head have to do with a high hand? When they picked up their high hands, did they knock off their *yarmulkes*?

Rather the Targum is taking the Hebrew idiom "high hand" and translating into the Aramaic idiom "revealed

head." It means, as Rashi comments — a bold, public show of strength. It's like saying: "The Jews left Egypt with their head held high."

So too, in the verses you quoted "reish g'lai" means "a bold, public display of strength" meaning that the Sages taught Torah unabashedly, with their head held high.

Sources:

- Exodus 14:8 and Rashi

CURLY, MOE & LARRY

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

A few months ago I started growing payos (*sidelocks*). Unfortunately, instead of growing in tight curls, they tend to stick out at strange angles, making my head look something like a wrecked airplane. Is there something I should be doing differently to make them grow neatly? I thought of using curlers, but wasn't sure if that was allowed for a man. Please advise.

Dear Name@Withheld,

A man shouldn't use curlers. Rather, if you want to curl your payos, use your finger.

For the proper method to do this, we asked a Rabbi with long payos. He wrote us the following:

"Wet the payos and comb them out horizontally across the forehead. Then, take the forefinger of the hand of whichever side you are doing, stick the forefinger from above in between the hair and the forehead, and push it towards the roots of the payos as far as you can comfortably get it. Then, with the other hand, curl the rest of the hair around your forefinger in the down direction, trying to keep it as in order as possible. Hold it that way just for a moment, and then gently try to remove the forefinger without messing up the curl. Once it's out, don't touch the curl; let it dry that way. Do this once each weekday morning, and maybe once again later in the day if you want (optional), and hopefully it will start curling naturally by itself.

"If you ever cut your payos one time

too short, then about five months later you will have a growth of hair coming from the top that will not go together with the rest of the *payos*, at least for a couple of years. Many have this problem. I don't have a clear solution for it."

WOMEN AND PRAYER

Irina from Chicago, Illinois <itrilis@orion.it.luc.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Hello. I am kind of (or very) confused about the laws of Jewish women and prayers. What are the obligations for every day? Are women obligated to say the "shema" (all three paragraphs? Twice a day)? And how many times are they obligated to say *shmoneh esreh*? And what are the time limits? Thank you very much.

Dear Irina,

Most halachic authorities maintain that a woman is obligated to recite the morning (*shacharit*) and afternoon (*minchah*) *shmoneh esreh* (silent *amidah* prayer) every day. If she has additional time she should recite the following, listed in order of priority: (Note that they are always said in the order printed in the *siddur*.)

- First verse of *shema*, together with *baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

- *Emet veyatziv* (the blessing after *shema* leading into *shmoneh esreh*)
- *Baruch she'amar, ashrei, yishtabach*
- *Birkot hashachar* (morning blessings starting from "ha'notain la'sechvi..." and ending with "hagomel chasadim tovim l'amo Yisrael")
- *Birkot haTorah* (blessings on Torah study)
- The two blessings preceding *shema*
- The entire *shema*
- The entire *p'sukei d'zimrah*

A woman who has very minimal time because of child care or other obligations and can't spare even the short time for *shmoneh esreh*, must nonetheless fulfill the obligation to offer some form of prayer every day. This prayer must include the following three elements: Praise to G-d followed by a personal request, and then words of thanks to G-d. Since *birkot hashachar* and *birkot haTorah* contain these elements, a woman in the above situation should therefore recite *birkot hashachar* and *birkot haTorah*.

The time limits for a woman are the same as for a man. So for example, the morning *shmoneh esreh* should ideally be prayed within the first third of the daylight hours, or at the very latest before midday.

Sources:

- *Halichos Bas Yisrael* by Rabbi Yitzchok Yaakov Fuchs, ch. 2

PUBLIC DOMAIN
Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Re: The Broken Glass after the Wedding (Ohrnet Parshas Balak):

When I married, the *shammash* at our shul suggested rather strongly that we use a light bulb instead of a wine-glass for my groom to crush "because it made a louder noise." I refused, and insisted on a wine-glass, on the grounds that the reason for using a wine-glass is that it is something used in celebration, and it is being shattered to remind us of the sorrow that comes with the joys in life. Thank you for a wonderfully informative weekly email!

- Jenny Stosser, Australia <jenerate@ozramp.net.au>

I have a suggestion for those artistically inclined: Take the broken glass and glue it together on glass or other

background, frame it and present it as a original wedding gift. You can "write" anything you like. My sister and I both received a gift like this with the words "*Im Eshkachech Yerushalayim Tishkach Yemini*" — "If I forget you, O Jerusalem..." written in glass from a cousin. It's beautiful and has a place of honor among other wedding and family pictures.

- Aaron Friedman, Israel <aaron@sela.co.il>

Nowadays many people have the broken glass mounted in a lucite box or even made into a *mezuzah* cover. Doesn't this defeat the purpose of breaking it? The custom to break a glass at a wedding derives from the Talmud: Guests were getting so carried away by their joy at the *simcha* that one of the Sages thought it unseemly, so he sobered everyone up by breaking a valuable vessel. If people now take the fragments and turn it into something of even greater value, aren't they undoing the significance of the destruction of the vessel?

- Michael Katz <M613K@aol.com>

At least one company I know of will take the glass and embed it in lucite, after reassembling it into an approximation of its original shape. It's hard to describe but the effect is stunning.

- Moish Trencher, West Hartford, CT <MarkTr@aol.com>

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

THE FUNERAL

About five years ago my grandfather, Reb Dovid *zatzal*, passed away. Although I missed the funeral, as I was studying Torah in *Eretz Yisrael*, I was told the following story at the *shiva* (7 day mourning period): At the funeral, my grandfather's brother-in-law, a tremendously pious man, announced that the deceased specifically requested in his will that there should be short eulogies. He therefore urged all those delivering eulogies to make them as short as possible. Everyone adhered to the request and made their respective eulogies brief; everyone, that is, except for the brother-in-law himself!

Between every eulogy, he spoke at

length, ignoring his own plea to keep things short. The funeral ended up taking much longer than a normal funeral, and many people left murmuring against the brother-in-law for the *chutzpah* he had displayed: Not only did he *not* practice what he preached, but he also blatantly ignored the wishes of the deceased!

At the *shiva*, my father and uncle asked him to explain his behavior, knowing he must have had a good reason. His answer was astonishing: While the first eulogy was being delivered — this was after he had made the announcement to keep things short — he, the brother-in-law, was told by the *chevra kaddisha* (burial society) that the caretakers of the cemetery take a lunch break between one o'clock and three o'clock in the

afternoon. Being that the funeral had started close to noon, plus the fact that the cemetery was a 40 minute drive, it would have been impossible to make it there before one o'clock! The body would be waiting at the cemetery to be buried for an hour and a half. So, because of *kavod hamait* — respect due the deceased — he decided to lengthen the funeral as much as possible in order that the body not be in a state of disgrace! He felt that the *kavod hamait* was more important than what people would say about him!

(PS - They arrived at the cemetery just as the caretakers came back from their lunch break!)

• Submitted by Anonymous
Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story"
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

YIDDLE RIDDLE

The following riddle is based on a question asked by the Ben Ish Chai, *zatzal*, who left hundreds of *heiche timtzes* (riddles) for the teachers in his *kehillah* (community). Question: At the time when the *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple) stood, there was a town near the Euphrates River in which the first day of Pesach was always observed for one day. The first day of Succos, on the other hand, was sometimes observed 1 day and sometimes 2 days. How come?

• Riddle idea: Eli Rothschild, Bayit Vegan, Jerusalem <eliro@internet-zahav.net>

Answer next week...

continued from page three

BONUS ANSWER!

“Had the verse been literal,” said Sherlock, “it would merely have said: *Cursed is one who misleads a blind person*. Why does the verse add: *Cursed is one who misleads a blind person 'baderech' — on the way?* Misleading, by definition, means to mislead someone *on the way*.”

“Agreed. The phrase seems superfluous,” said Watstein. “But what, then, does *baderech — on the way — signify?*”

“It signifies,” said Sherlock, “that the person is not *blind* in the literal sense, but rather that he is blind *on the way*;

that is, he is blind regarding a certain path of action he wishes to follow.”

“Subtle,” said Watstein. “But I think I understand: To justify the seemingly extra phrase ‘*on the way*,’ Rashi says that it refers not to *where* the blind person is, but rather it refers to the *type* of blind person he is: i.e., he is *blind on the way*, blind regarding the path of endeavor upon which he wishes to embark. Have I seen the light, Mr. Holmes?”

“You’re on the way,” said Sherlock.

• Based on *Maskil L'David*; “Sherlox” concept by Reuven Subar

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

SEFER HACHINUCH
606-7 Power of Speech
611 Emulating Hashem

27:15 The Curses
28:2 The Blessings
28:14 Punishment

27:26 Upholding the Torah
28:42 The Fourth Exile

SFORNO
26:17 Exalting Hashem
26:18 The Exalted Jewish People

RAMBAN
26:3 The *Kohen* of Your Day
27:3 The Stones

OHR HACHAIM HAKADOSH
226:11 Rejoicing with Hashem and the Torah