

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

“You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aaron your brother, for glory and splendor.” (28:2)

“The body is the most natural thing in the world. If you’ve got a nice body, why not show it off? These religious prudes think the body is dirty. They’re ashamed of it. They’re always trying to make the world dreary and gray with their black uniforms.”

Why are religious people so scrupulous about covering their bodies?

Imagine you have a priceless diamond.

Would you take it out into the street in your hand? I don’t think so. You’d put in plush lined jewel case. Our body is a precious possession. It is the abode of the soul in this world. To honor it we keep it away from the eyes of the world, wrapping it in the plush lining of clothing.

The more holy something is, the more it requires covering.

The holiest place on earth was the *kodesh kadoshim*, the Holy-of-Holies in the *Beit HaMikdash* (Holy Temple). It was also the most covered place in the world. It was sequestered in the very center of the Temple. Only once a year, on Yom Kippur, would the *Kohen Gadol* enter there.

The body is not only a miraculous piece of work, but it is also one of the holiest things in this world.

Fine. So why didn’t Adam and Eve wear clothes?

One of the enduring icons of the last millennium is Neil Armstrong’s portrait of Buzz Aldrin standing on the Moon. You could tell it was Aldrin because he had his name neatly embroidered on his spacesuit. However, no one actually thought that this bulbous white bi-ped was Aldrin. It was perfectly clear to everyone that when the suit said ‘Aldrin’, it meant that Aldrin was *inside* the suit.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, it was perfectly clear that the function of the human body was to be a ‘spacesuit’ for the soul to exist in this world. For just as a human being can exist in the vacuum of space for but a few short moments before his blood boils from the lack of pressure, so too the

soul needs a body to perform its work in this lower world.

Before the first Man and Woman ate from the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil it was not possible to think that the body was the essence of the person. It was clear that the body was just a way to exist in this world. However, when Adam and Chava ate from the fruit, this changed.

The name of the tree of whose fruit they ate was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In the Torah, *knowledge* always connotes “connection”. When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they caused a *connection*, a mixing of good and evil.

Good is the essence and purpose of this world: “*And G-d saw that it was good.*” The possibility of Evil exists only as a space to allow freedom of choice. Evil is not the essence of this world. When Adam and Chava ate from the tree they caused a “knowledge”, a mixing, of Good and Evil. They made it possible to mistake Evil for Good — to mistake non-essence for essence. Thus it became possible for man to confuse, to mix up the essence of a person — his soul — with his ‘spacesuit’ — the body.

In order to de-emphasize the body and re-emphasize that the essence of the human being is his soul, G-d made garments for Man so that the body’s importance should not be over-emphasized.

However, there’s one place where the body needs no covering — the face. The Hebrew word for face is *panim*, which is spelled identically with another Hebrew word, “*p’nim*” — which means “inside”. The face is the one place in the body where you can see the soul bursting through skin and tissue. The face needs no covering, for the soul shines through it as it always did.

• Sources: Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, Rabbi Yaakov Hillel, Rabbi Zev Leff, Rabbi Mordechai Perelman

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the *menorah* in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *bigdei kehuna* (priestly garments): a breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes

offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the *Mishkan*. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

ISRAEL Forever

NOT ON BREAD ALONE

“The religious do not see themselves as socially weak. On the contrary, they do not think they are in a bad situation, perhaps because they have a strong and supportive social network in their community.”

This is how Prof. Ayal Kimchi, deputy director of the Taub Center, explained why a report recently published by the Center showed that the religious population in Israel was more satisfied with its social-economic situation than all other sectors. This was the conclusion of a public opinion

survey conducted by the Taub Index of Social Confidence that examined the attitudes of 1,000 Israeli citizens.

The revelation of the religious position came as a surprise to the media because it is consistently harping on the growing poverty and economic hardship of this sector.

It seems as if the secular public has forgotten that “man does not live on bread alone” and that there are spiritual values that strengthen Israel forever.

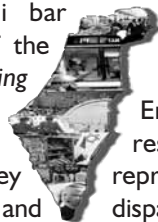
LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

THE SAGE RAMI BAR YEchezkel – MILK AND HONEY

We all know that Eretz Yisrael is the land of milk and honey. But the Talmudic Sage Rami bar Yechezkel realized the true meaning of the Torah passage describing this country as a land *flowing* with milk and honey during a visit to ancient Bnei Brak.

He saw goats beneath a very ripe fig tree. Honey oozed from the figs, milk dripped from the goats and the two combined into one flowing stream. Only then did he, through this visual experience, fully appreciate the



significance of the Torah using the single term *flowing* in regard to both milk and honey to indicate that the two flowed together.

The significance of his discovery may well be that Eretz Yisrael is blessed not only with the wholesome resources symbolized by milk, and the tasty ones represented by honey, but that these two seemingly disparate dimensions of food are naturally and perfectly blended for the health and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the land flowing with milk and honey.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the *menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen, ephod, me'il, ketonet, mitznefet, avnet, tzitz, and michnasayim*.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants, 2) The court's ruling, 3) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* — the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn. 2) The *Kohen Gadol* must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet, avnet, migba'at, and michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of *kehuna*.

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- Sacrificial blood which spills on to *kohen's* garment
- Which sort of garments must be washed from spilled blood
- Garments and vessels which left the precincts of the Sanctuary
- The cleansing of vessels in which sacrificial meat has been cooked
- Bread baked with milk and an oven rendered non-kosher
- The ban on large furnaces in Yerushalayim
- Using a vessel in which meat has been cooked for dairy cooking
- When vessels used for cooking sacrificial meat must be cleaned
- The need for a knife in slaughtering a sacrifice
- Which *kohanim* do not share in the division of sacrificial meat
- Which are forbidden to eat sacrificial meat

NEED FOR A KNIFE

The source for the rule that the slaughtering of a sacrifice must be done with a knife is this passage in the Torah regarding the instrument that the Patriarch Avraham prepared for the intended slaughter of his son Yitzchak:

“Avraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.” (*Bereishet* 22:10)

But how does this reference to a human sacrifice serve as a source for an animal sacrifice such as an *olah* in the *Beit Hamikdash*?

The answer lies in this subsequent passage, which describes the slaughter of the ram that was the Heavenly

replacement for Yitzchak:

“...Avraham went and took the ram and offered it up as an *olah* sacrifice instead of his son.” (*ibid.* 22:12)

Tosefot points out that even in regard to the slaughter of a non-sacrificial animal we learn from the first of the above-mentioned passages that the instrument – not necessarily a knife – must be something that is detached. This is deduced from the term “took the knife” which indicates that it had only to be taken and not removed from its source. For a sacrifice, however, the slaughtering must be done with a knife, since the term “knife” was used in regard to the intended slaughter of Yitzchak rather than referring to it as something that could cut.

• *Zevachim* 97b

What the SAGES Say

“Large furnaces were banned in Yerushalayim (because of the smoke pollution they cause).”

• *Rabbi Zeira - Zevachim* 96a

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BENEVOLENT ILLNESS

From: Vanessa

Dear Rabbi,

If G-d wants us to serve Him properly, why does he bring sickness upon people, which just hinders their ability to do His will?

Dear Vanessa,

According to Jewish belief, not only did Adam and Eve have all their needs taken care of in Eden before the sin, there was no sickness at all either. Their pure spiritual state precluded sickness of any type.

Even after the sin, their needs were greatly taken care of, and even the climate of the world was relatively moderate. This was in order to facilitate a physically easy lifestyle with the purpose of freeing humanity for the service of G-d.

One of the classical commentaries actually explains that this is the reason for the great longevity of the early generations of mankind: Because people were still on a relatively high spiritual level despite being banished from Eden, they were not plagued by sickness, disease and infirmity.

Therefore, only after mankind stopped serving G-d did people really start to suffer sickness. By departing from G-d, we forfeited the purpose of good health. Rather than G-d bringing sickness upon us, then, we brought it upon ourselves.

However, by the same token, sickness becomes a tool through which one comes close to G-d. It is to be viewed as

a reminder that we have somehow strayed off the right path, should repent and pray to G-d to heal us and protect us. Seeking remedies without this ingredient in the prescription is considered brazen and ungrateful.

The Talmud (Berachot 9b) discusses how the righteous King Hezekiah eliminated the famous "Book of Remedies of Solomon". On the surface this seems like a bad move – the remedies in that book were able to heal any possible sickness man might have. In removing the book, he was effectively perpetuating the maladies of mankind. Yet the Talmud says the wise men of Hezekiah agreed. Why? Because people came to rely on the remedies alone and no longer used the maladies as an opportunity to repent, pray to and come close to G-d.

Once a certain Jew with a serious illness came before Rebbe Mordechai of Nishchiz complaining that he had been to all the best doctors but none could find a cure. The Rebbe asked if had gone to seek the help of the Professor in Anipoli. The Jew was surprised to hear of a specialist that he had not yet been referred to, but the Rebbe assured him that the inhabitants enjoy unusually good health there thanks to the Professor. The Jew set out for Anipoli, but when he arrived, not only was he told there was no Professor, but there was not even a simple doctor in such a small town. Perturbed, the Jew asked his coreligionists, "So what do you do when you're sick?" "We pray to G-d for a cure", they replied.

Disappointed with the Rebbe's mistaken information, he returned to the Rebbe with a report of what happened. The Rebbe asked, "So what do they do when they get sick?" When the Jew relayed their answer, the Rebbe replied, "They must be doing something right – and now you know the meaning of the verse, "I am G-d your Healer" (Ex. 15:26).

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TO LEND OR NOT TO LEND?

Question: The manager of a Free Loan Fund (“gemach”) requires of those who borrow money to give him personal checks that are dated for a later date as guarantees of payment. The depositing of such checks enables the Fund to lend money to other needy borrowers. Some borrowers have proved delinquent in their responsibilities and their checks have bounced, causing difficulties in managing the Fund and restricting its ability to serve others.

Is it proper for the fund manager to refuse lending to these delinquent repayers in the future or must he overlook their behavior in light of their need?

Answer: If the failure to pay debts causes trouble for the Fund and infringes on the ability to serve other borrowers, it is certainly the prerogative of the Fund manager to penalize such delinquent payers by refusing to offer them further loans.

An interesting source for the right to refuse loans to such people despite the Torah command to lend money to the needy is to be found in the words of one of the early commentaries, Rabbi Yehuda Hachasid.

He notes that in its command to lend money the Torah states, “If you shall lend money to My people, the needy that are with you” (*Shmot* 22:24). Our Sages explain that although the term “if” generally means that something is optional, in the case of lending money it is obligatory. Why then, he asks, does the Torah use a term that can be misconstrued as being non-obligatory? The answer is that in certain situations there is indeed no obligation, such as in the case of a borrower with a bad record of repayment. In regard to such a person it is up to the lender to decide whether it will be better to lend or refuse.

• Based on the response of Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, Rabbi of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE GUN THAT JAMMED

Miracles still happen! Take the case of the Mori Family. A terrorist infiltrated a home in Moshav Maor, east of Hadera but was killed before he could carry out his murderous designs. He managed to enter the home of Roland and Larissa Mori, and even to fire one bullet. At that point, however, his gun jammed, and Roland yelled for his wife to escape while he began throwing dishes and other objects at the terrorist. After Roland also escaped, two neighbors arrived on the scene and made sure that the terrorist did not leave the house.

They later recounted that they saw his gun and heard him attempting to operate it, and even called to him to leave, but

he closed the door of the room and did not come out. Their efforts were critical in ensuring that the incident did not become a community-wide alarm, but was rather restricted to one house. Large army forces then arrived and surrounded the house, and after three hours, when the terrorist approached the front door, they let out a burst of gunfire and killed him. A Kalachnikov rifle, of the kind distributed to the Palestinian police several years ago, was found on his person, together with four full magazines. Police and army officials praised the quick response of the local residents.

Quick response is important but it took a miracle to save the Moris.

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