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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

On the Way Home

“...please don’t bury me in Egypt.” (47:29)

Over the millennia, the constant hope of the Jew was to return to the Land of Israel, and if not while alive, then suffice it at least that our physical remains should be interred in its holy soil.

The source of this desire comes from this week’s Torah portion.

Why did Yaakov so desire to be buried in Eretz Yisrael? There were several reasons:

The mystical sources teach that those who are buried in Eretz Yisrael will be the first to arise at the time of the resurrection of the dead. For those who are buried in the Diaspora, G-d will create special tunnels. Through these tunnels a person’s body will roll until it reaches Eretz Yisrael. Yaakov wanted to spare himself the pain of rolling through these tunnels.

Another consideration was that the Egyptians might turn him into a god posthumously. If he were buried in Egypt the chance of their worshipping his remains was that much higher.

Also, Yaakov foresaw the Ten Plagues that would afflict Egypt, and he knew that the plague of lice would infest corpses as well as the living. He did not want G-d to perform a miracle for him to escape that fate.

However, the reason that speaks to us loudest across the millennia is that Yaakov did not want to be buried in Egypt because he was concerned that the generations that came after him might surmise that if Yaakov were buried in Egypt, the land of Egypt must also be a holy place.

We are the descendents of Yaakov. It was the wish of our great ancestor that however comfortable we may become in our exile, we should never forget that there is nothing holy about the soil of Sydney, Paris or Boro Park.

They are just temporary stops on our way home.

• Sources: *Midrash Bereshet Rabbah, Rabbeinu Bachya*

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אֲחֵינוּ בְּלִבֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

TALMUD TIPS

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Shavuot 23 - 29

No Sleeping and No Eating

Rabbi Yochanan said, "One who makes an oath to not sleep for three days receives lashes, and he is permitted to sleep immediately."

This person has made a *shevuat shav* — a vain oath — since his words state that he is committing himself to something that is known to be impossible. (Rashi) In the words of the *gemara* above (21a): "A vain oath is when a person makes an oath to change that which is known to man [to be true]. He has transgressed the Torah prohibition: "You shall not take the name of the L-rd, your G-d, in vain... (Shemot 20:7) And although he has transgressed a prohibition without an action, which normally does not lead to a punishment of lashes, the *gemara* explained above (21a) why this case is different.

The *gemara* asks a question on Rabbi Yochanan's statement from our *mishna* that teaches that the oath one makes "not to sleep" is a valid oath called a *shevuat bitui*. (Vayikra 5:4) The *gemara* answers that in Rabbi Yochanan's case he explicitly states that he won't sleep for "three days," which is impossible, whereas the *mishna's* case does not specify a time limit, and therefore his oath is to not sleep only as long as it is possible for him to stay awake. (Tiferet Yisrael)

It is evident, however, that the *gemara* first thought that an oath "not to sleep" would mean "forever." Based on this "first thought" Tosefot asks why the *gemara* didn't pose this exact same question on the *mishna* above (19b) that teaches that an oath "not to eat" is a valid *shevuat bitui*. It should be an invalid *shevuat shav* — vain oath — since the phrase "not to eat" seems to imply "not to eat forever." This is certainly impossible and not a valid oath.

Tosefot offers two answers. One is that the *gemara* did not ask this question above because it was clear to the *gemara* that an oath "not to eat" is not to be mistaken to mean "not to eat forever," unlike an oath "not to sleep" that could be understood as "not to sleep forever" — as the *gemara* first understood it on our *daf*. (Tosefot does not elaborate on why we would not mistakenly understand the case of not eating to mean "forever," as opposed to our *gemara* mistakenly understanding not sleeping to mean "forever.")

The second answer given by Tosefot is that it is possible to understand the above *mishna* as speaking about a case of an oath "not to eat forever," but is dealing with a very specific case of not eating a clearly designated loaf of bread that is in front of the person making the oath.

The Ran discusses the status of an oath "not to eat for thirty days." Is it similar to an oath "not to sleep for three days" — and therefore a vain oath — or not, and therefore a valid oath? He suggests that there is possibly a distinction between the two oaths, despite the fact that both scenarios are "impossible." Although an oath not to sleep for three days is clearly "in vain," perhaps an oath not to eat for thirty days is not "in vain." An oath to not sleep for three days is in vain since the person will certainly sleep within three days. However, an oath not to eat for thirty days might obligate the person to refrain from eating only until his life is endangered, at which time the concept of *pikuach nefesh* — saving life — obligates him to eat, at least as much as necessary to sustain his life.

The Ran also cites the ruling of the Rambam, who equates not eating and not sleeping, and rules that if a person made an oath not to eat for seven days (Laws of Oaths 5:20), the oath is *in vain* and invalid. The Ran concludes that despite the distinction between the two cases which he proposed, the halachic ruling is indeed in accordance with the Rambam, that neither oath is valid. However, unlike the Rambam who reasons that "not to eat for seven days" is impossible and therefore "in vain," the Ran explains that this oath is invalid for a different reason. An oath to not eat for this time period is invalid, says the Ran, since these words constitute a commitment to starve himself to death, which is an "oath to transgress the words of the Torah" — to "guard yourselves very well..." (Dev. 4:15) — and is thereby an invalid oath.

• *Shavuot 25b*

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why is kindness towards the dead called “*chesed shel emet*” — kindness of truth?
2. Give three reasons Yaakov didn’t want to be buried in Egypt.
3. How do you treat a “fox in his time” (i.e., a commoner who rules)?
4. “When I was coming from Padan, Rachel died on me... I buried her there on the way to Efrat...” Why did Yaakov say all this to Yosef?
5. Initially, why was Yaakov unable to bless Efraim and Menashe?
6. What does *pillalti* mean?
7. What does “*Shechem*” mean as used in this week’s parsha? (two answers)
8. Which individual is called “the *Emori*”? Why? Give two reasons.
9. What did Yaakov want to tell his sons but was unable to?
10. What privileges did Reuven lose due to his rash actions?
11. What congregation from Yaakov’s offspring did Yaakov not want to be associated with?
12. What did Yehuda do after he heard Yaakov rebuke Reuven, Shimon and Levi? Why?
13. What does milk do to teeth?
14. Why is Yissachar like a “strong-boned donkey”?
15. With what resource did both Yaakov and Moshe bless Asher?
16. In Yosef’s blessing Yaakov said, “They embittered him...” Who are “they”?
17. Which descendants of Binyamin “will divide the spoils in the evening”?
18. From whom did Yaakov buy his burial place?
19. What oath did Yosef make to Pharaoh?
20. Which two sons of Yaakov did not carry his coffin? Why not?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week’s questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 47:29 - Because the giver expects no reward from the recipient.
2. 47:29 - a) Egypt’s ground was to be plagued with lice; b) At the time of the resurrection, those buried outside Israel will suffer; c) So the Egyptians wouldn’t make him into an idol.
3. 47:31 - Bow to him.
4. 48:7 - Yaakov thought Yosef harbored resentment since Yaakov had not buried Yosef’s mother, Rachel, in the *Ma’arat HaMachpela*.
5. 48:8 - The *Shechina* departed from him.
6. 48:11 - “I thought.”
7. 48:22 - a) The actual city of Shechem; b) A portion.
8. 48:22 - Esav. a) He acted like an Emorite; b) He trapped his father with words (*imrei pi*).
9. 49:1 - When *mashiach* will come.
10. 49:3 - Priesthood and Kingship.
11. 49:6 - Korach and his congregation.
12. 49:8 - He drew back. He was afraid that Yaakov would rebuke him for the incident with Tamar.
13. 49:12 - It makes them white.
14. 49:14 - Just as a donkey bears a heavy burden, so the tribe of Yissachar bears the yoke of Torah.
15. 49:20 - Oil-rich land.
16. 49:23 - Yosef’s brothers, Potifar and his wife.
17. 49:27 - Mordechai and Esther.
18. 50:5 - From Esav.
19. 50:6 - Yosef swore not to reveal Pharaoh’s ignorance of Hebrew.
20. 50:13 - Levi, because he would carry the *aron* (holy ark). Yosef, because he was a king.

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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

Sha'ar Harachamim — The Sealed Gate

Why is the gate which is known as Sha'ar Harachamim (Mercy Gate) sealed? At one time this gate was the only direct entrance to the Temple Mount area from outside the city. When the Muslims became aware of an ancient tra-

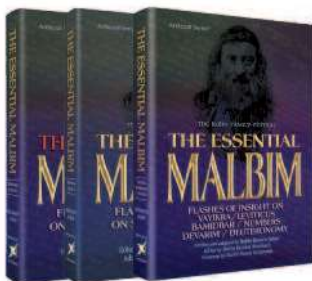


dition that Mashiach would come through this gate on his way to redeeming Israel, they sealed it in order to block his arrival. They made another move that they hoped would discourage the redeemer by burying their dead in front of the gate.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

After 17 years in Egypt, Yaakov senses his days drawing to a close and summons Yosef. He has Yosef swear to bury him in the Machpela Cave, the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivka. Yaakov falls ill and Yosef brings to him his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe. Yaakov elevates Ephraim and Menashe to the status of his own sons, thus giving Yosef a double portion that removes the status of firstborn from Reuven. As Yaakov is blind from old age, Yosef leads his sons close to their grandfather. Yaakov kisses and hugs them. He had not thought to see his son Yosef again, let alone Yosef's children. Yaakov begins to bless them, giving precedence to Ephraim, the younger, but Yosef interrupts him and indicates that Menashe is the elder. Yaakov explains that he intends to bless Ephraim with his strong hand because Yehoshua will descend from him, and Yehoshua will be both the conqueror of *Eretz Yisrael* and the teacher of Torah to the Jewish People. Yaakov

summons the rest of his sons in order to bless them as well. Yaakov's blessing reflects the unique character and ability of each tribe, directing each one in its unique mission in serving G-d. Yaakov passes from this world at age 147. A tremendous procession accompanies his funeral cortege up from Egypt to his resting place in the Cave of Machpela in Chevron. After Yaakov's passing, the brothers are concerned that Yosef will now take revenge on them. Yosef reassures them, even promising to support them and their families. Yosef lives out the rest of his years in Egypt, seeing Ephraim's great-grandchildren. Before his death, Yosef foretells to his brothers that G-d will redeem them from Egypt. He makes them swear to bring his bones out of Egypt with them at that time. Yosef passes away at the age of 110 and is embalmed. Thus ends Sefer Bereishet, the first of the five Books of the Torah. *Chazak!*



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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Spiritual Healing

From: Manny

*Dear Rabbi,
Is there anything in Judaism which would be akin to spiritual healing? By which I mean miraculous healing performed by oneself or another, like an expert healer, but through spiritual means as opposed to medical means. Thanks in advance.*

Dear Manny,

Judaism definitely ascribes underlying spiritual causes to health and well-being or maladies and sickness. The basic idea is that to the extent that one is in tune with G-d and His will, one will be healthy and protected from illness, while separating oneself from G-d results in spiritual imbalance, which is manifested as physical malady.

There are many examples of this throughout Tanach (Scriptures), but two verses found in the Torah are: “If you diligently heed the voice of the L-rd your G-d and do what is right in His eyes, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I, G-d, will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians — for I am the L-rd who heals you.” (Ex. 15:26)

Similarly: “So you shall serve the L-rd, your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I, G-d, will take sickness away from the midst of you.” (Ex. 23:25)

Since health and healing from sickness is viewed in Judaism as stemming from spiritual causes, there is actually a very involved and extensive discussion in the sources as to whether one is permitted to practice medicinal healing and enlist the help of doctors, medical treatments and medicine. Despite the many opinions on this subject, the final outcome is that G-d gives the doctor the ability to heal, and thus it is permitted to solicit common medical cures. (Bava Kama 85a) But even here, one is required to simultaneously operate on the underlying spiritual plane by identifying his spiritual imbalance and rectifying it with repentance.

One main form of spiritual healing in Judaism is through prayer. Prayer becomes the metaphysical medium through which Divine powers of healing

envelop and infuse a person in order to restore his spiritual balance and thereby cure its external manifestation. An example of this from the Torah is Miriam the prophetess who was plagued with *tzara'at* as a result of judging and speaking unfavorably about Moshe. When Aharon pleaded that Moshe intercede on her behalf, “Moshe cried out to the L-rd, saying, ‘I beseech you, G-d, please heal her,’” and she was eventually cured. (Num. 12) Similarly, the Talmud (Ketuvot 62b) describes how the wife of Rabbi Chananiya died as a result of being suddenly startled. Rabbi Chananiya prayed on her behalf, and she was restored to life.

One of the more striking examples of the type of spiritual healing you're asking about is the following story from the Talmud (Berachot 5b):

Rabbi Eliezer became ill. Rabbi Yochanon went to visit him and saw that he was secluded in a darkened room. Rabbi Yochanon uncovered his arm, and the light radiating from his body illuminated the darkness. He saw that Rabbi Eliezer was crying and declared, “If you're upset on account of the Torah that you aren't able to learn in your illness, it was taught, ‘Whether one is able to learn much or little, the main thing is his Heavenly intention’; if it's because of your poverty, not every person has an abundant table in both this world and the next; if it's because of a son that has passed away, here is a bone from the tenth son I've buried.”

Rabbi Eliezer explained, “I'm crying on account of this beautiful, Divinely-created body which decays in the earth.” Rabbi Yochanon replied, “That is certainly worth crying over,” and the two of them cried together. Eventually, Rabbi Yochanon asked him, “Do you desire the spiritual benefit of continued suffering?” Rabbi Eliezer replied, “I don't want the suffering, or its reward.” At that point, Rabbi Yochanon gave him his hand, Rabbi Eliezer took hold of it, and he was miraculously cured.

So, since the source of health is spiritual, Judaism recognizes spiritual healing. This takes the form of repentance, prayer, and even what appears like miraculous faith-healing.

It is important to note that despite the above considerations, our Rabbis nowadays teach that one should certainly go to qualified medical experts when necessary.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Shouldering the Burden

Yosef brought his two sons to his father Yaakov so that Yaakov could bless them before he dies. After blessing Yosef's two sons, Yaakov then turns to Yosef and says, "Behold, I will die and G-d will be with you and return you to the Land of your Forefathers. And I give to you one *shechem* over your brothers, which I had taken from the Emorites with my sword and my bow" (Gen. 48:21-22). The commentators (e.g., Targum, Rashi, and Ibn Ezra) "scramble" to explain what Yaakov means when he bequeaths to Yosef an extra *shechem* over his brothers. Some explain that *shechem* in this context refers to the Canaanite city of Shechem, which Yaakov's sons had already conquered from the Emorites who lived there. Indeed, the Book of Joshua ends with the Jewish People burying the bones of Yosef in the City of Shechem. (Joshua 24:32) However, others explain that *shechem* here refers not to the city Shechem, but to an extra "allotment". The word *shechem* can mean "parcel" or "package," and in his parting words Yaakov meant to give Yosef an extra portion of the Holy Land (each of Yaakov's sons received one lot of territory, while Yosef received two, one for each of his sons).

Truth be told, the word *shechem* in this sense is actually a borrowed meaning. As we shall see below, the word *shechem* literally refers to a body part upon which packages were generally carried. *Shechem* as a "parcel" or "package" is only a secondary, or even tertiary, meaning of the word. In fact, on Yaakov's deathbed, he blesses his son Yissachar by saying, "Yissachar is [like] a boney donkey, crouching between the borders. And he saw rest that is good, and the land that it is pleasant. And he lowered his *shechem* to carry the burden...." (Gen. 49:14-15) In this context, the word *shechem* refers to the donkey's *shoulder* — the part of his body upon which he carries his yoke.

But doesn't the word *katef* mean "shoulder"? So how can *shechem* also mean "shoulder"?

Rabbi Shlomo of Urbino (a 16th century Italian scholar) writes in *Ohel Moed* (a lexicon of Hebrew

synonyms) that some explain that both words mean the exact same thing. Then, he cites others who explain that the part of the shoulder which is directly opposite the neck is called *shechem*, while the entire shoulder is called *katef*. Indeed, Rabbi Dovid Kimchi (1160-1235), also known as Radak, writes that *shechem* does not simply mean "shoulder," but rather it is the part of the shoulder which lies closest to the neck. When Job tries to assert his innocence and question why he deserves such horrible calamities to befall him, he says, *inter alia*, "If my hand tricked an orphan... my *katef* shall fall from my *shechem*." (Job 31:21-22) Job was so sure that he never cheated anybody that he was even willing to accept a curse upon himself on condition that he had cheated another. In his proclamation, Job clearly uses the word *katef* to refer to a body part which sits atop the *shechem*. From this passage, it seems that the *katef* is the upper shoulder and the *shechem* is actually the back. According to this understanding, it makes sense that Job would curse himself that should he have swindled an orphan his shoulder should become dislocated from his back and fall down. However, the commentators point out that this is at odds with Radak's explanation that the *shechem* is the higher part of the shoulder.

Rabbi Yonah ibn Janach (990-1050) writes in his *Sefer HaShorashim* that the word *shechem* primarily means "corner" or "side" and, as a borrowed meaning, also refers to the "shoulder" that is on the corner/side of one's body. Radak cites the same explanation in his work with the same name (*Sefer HaShorashim*). According to this view, the meaning of the word *shechem* evolved in three stages: it primarily means "side," secondarily means "shoulder," and its tertiary meaning is "package" or "portion". This understanding does not account for the difference between *shechem* and *katef*, both of which mean "shoulder" and "side."

Rabbi Ezra Reuven Dangoor (1848-1930), the Chief Rabbi of Baghdad, argues that *shechem* is the *backside* of the shoulder, while *katef* is the *front-side*

Continued on page seven

PRAYER Essentials

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Joining Redemption & Prayer — Part 2

There is an opinion that the requirement to join the blessing of Geulah (Redemption) to the Tefillah (Shemoneh Esrei prayer) applies only on weekdays and holidays (because they are days of judgment), but not on Shabbat... however, it is good to be stringent unless it is necessary. (Rema 111:1)

The above ruling is based on the Hagahot Ashri's comments on the Yerushalmi, which deduces the requirement to join *geulah* and *tefillah* from the juxtaposition of two verses in Tehillim (19:15 and 20:1) that speak about redemption and praying in a time of distress. He writes that since the verse speaks about a time of distress, Shabbat is not included.

The Beit Yosef disagrees with Hagahot Ashri, explaining that the *drasha* (method of Biblical interpretation) in the Yerushalmi is only an *asmachta* (Rabbinical method of connecting a ruling to a verse), but does not mean to exclude the day of

Shabbat from the requirement.

The Mishneh Berurah explains that the Rema's phrase "unless it is necessary" means that one may answer "*amen yehei shemei rabba*", *Kedusha*, and *Barchu* on Shabbat, while during the week one would not.

The Kaf Hachaim explains that in addition to the many *poskim* who agree with the Beit Yosef (Teferet Shmuel, Pri Chadash, Sha'agat Aryei and others), according to the Kabbalistic reason found in the writings of the Arizal one is required to join *Ge'ulah* to *Tefillah* every day, including Shabbat.

What's In a Word...continued from page six

of the shoulder. The Munkatcher Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapiro (1871-1937), writes that the word *shechem* is a more inclusive term than *katef* because *shechem* includes *both* shoulders, while the word *katef* refers to a *single* shoulder.

Interestingly, the verb *le'hashkim* means "to wake up early," and its root is comprised of the same letters as the word *shechem*. Rabbi Dovid Zvi Hoffmann (1843-1921) explains the connection between the two by noting that waking up involves raising one's *shoulder* as one switches from a horizontal position to a vertical position. Similarly, some linguists argue that

the connection between rising early and shoulders is that loading parcels on the back of one's animal was usually done early in the morning, immediately before starting one's journey for the day. From that, the term *shechem* came to refer to doing anything early in the morning, and even waking up early. And remember the words of the inimitable Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790): "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Ellyu Nishmat my mother Bracha bat R' Dovid and my grandmother Shprintza bat R' Meir

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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Jewish Monarchy

As Yaakov nears his death, he calls his children together to “tell them what will happen to them at the end of days.” However, such information is never imparted. Instead, Yaakov blesses each one in accordance with his characteristic diversity. But in the blessing of Yehuda, the tribe from which King David and Mashiach will descend, a vision of the end of days is alluded to.

He ties his foal to the grapevine, his she-donkey’s colt to the choice vine-branch. (Bereishet 49:11) Yaakov envisions the redeemer of mankind riding, not on a horse, but on a young donkey. Whereas a horse represents military might, the donkey, the beast of burden, represents peaceful prosperity. The donkey carries man and property calmly and peacefully.

The purpose and pride of a Jewish king is not his military prowess. This is why the Torah forbids him from acquiring too many horses. In fact, the commandment to appoint a king applied only after complete conquest and settlement of the Land, underscoring that his purpose is not primarily military. Thus, the people at the time of Shmuel were faulted for requesting a king to lead them in defense of the country — this, warned Shmuel, is the province of the Almighty King.

What then is the purpose of a Jewish king? The Torah instructs us to appoint a king “over us.” (Devarim 17:15) But if his role is not military, and the judicial and executive infrastructure already function without a king, what does it mean for a king to be “over” his subjects? Unlike the ruling bodies of other nations, the Jewish crown does not represent the sum total of the national will. Instead, the king is to ensure that the will of the nation bends to the law of Torah. His task is to be a Jew *par excellence*. In this way, he will be “over” the people — by leading the nation to constant awareness of and steadfast commitment to Torah.

An examination of the root letters of the Hebrew word for king — “*melech*” (*mem-lamed-chaf*) — as compared to the Hebrew word for ruler — “*moshel*” (*mem-shin-lamed*) — leads to a fascinating distinction. Many of the Hebrew letters have a clear meaning by themselves. Thus, the letter *mem* means “derived from” — and when it is added to the beginning of a word it means “from ____.” The letter *lamed* means “to” and the letter *chaf* denotes “example” or “model.” Thus, the Jewish vision of a king is this: everything comes from him; everything reverts to him, and he is an example and ideal for all. By contrast, *moshel* lacks the letter *chaf* — he is not a personal or moral example. If we were to survey the ruling personalities of the past century, would we put a *chaf* in their title? The very word politician has a derogatory connotation and conjures up memories of schemes and corruption.

We find the final earthly king riding on a young donkey. He arrives as the emissary of peace. Where does he tie his young animal? To a vine! That vine must be at least as strong as a tree to bear the weight and sway of a frisky young foal. This sturdy vine is a sign of great prosperity and abundance. The two symbols of the end of days are the donkey — world peace — and the vine — great abundance.

The prophet Zechariah describes Masiach not as a warrior, conqueror or politician. This king is a *tzaddik*, a righteous man, and he is a *poor man riding on a donkey, on a foal of a she-donkey.* (Zechariah 9:9) His is not the gallop of the mighty horse, but the soft steps of the foal, carrying peace and prosperity on the back of his righteousness.

• Sources: *Commentary Bereishet*, 49:11; 10:10; *Collected Writings IV*, pp. 275-77

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BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Dorm Norm

Q: *I am a freshman at a State University. When I moved into my dorm room I realized that I had never thought to bring a mezuzah. I would feel funny living in a room without one, but I would also feel funny putting one up since the room belongs to the university. (My non-Jewish roommate said he wouldn't mind if I put it up,). What is the right thing to do?*

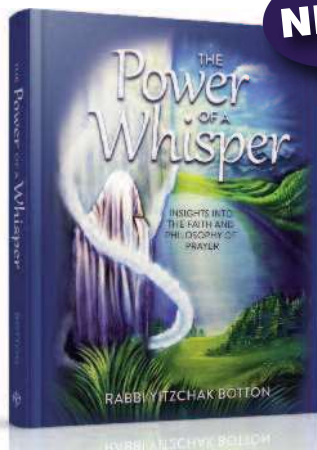
A: Indeed, many authorities exempt dorm rooms from mezuzah. They reason that a student is not considered the “renter” of his particular room since he is paying only for accommodation in general. In fact, the university could move students from room to room if necessary. Thus, his use of the room is essentially no different than his use of the public rooms or the library. Moreover, even after thirty days, no one would suspect that the student has bought the room from the university!

According to some authorities the fact that you share this dwelling with a non-Jew is an additional factor to excuse you from affixing a mezuzah.

However, I would suggest that, with the university's permission, you follow those authorities who *do* require a mezuzah in dormitory situations, and those who require one on residences shared with non-Jews. You are probably in a highly challenging environment at the university and need all the spiritual protection you can get! Also, if there are other Jewish students in your dorm, you will be encouraging them to assert their Jewish identity! No *beracha* is recited on this placement.

- Sources: *Avnei Nezer* Y.D. 380; *Shevet HaLevi* 2:156; *Rema* Y.D. 286:1; *Agur B'Ohalecha* 29:7; *Chovas HaDar* 2:2:6; *Bedek HaBayis* 286; *Aruch HaShulchan* 286:2

Got a mezuzah question or story?
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