



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EIKEV - 5774

In our 19th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoo.com Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net> It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored by **the Fiskus family**
in memory of

Reb Dovid ben Elimelech Zev Fiskus z"l on his
20th Yartzeit

Sponsored in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

To sponsor a parsha sheet (proceeds to tzedaka) contact
cshulman@parsha.net

from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>
to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org
date: Thu, Aug 14, 2014 at 10:14 PM
subject: Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger - Learning to Serve Hashem Naturally
Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger
Learning to Serve Hashem Naturally

Though most berachos as we know them were formulated in the days of the second Beis Hamikdash, the concept of reciting them with great daily frequency goes back to the time of Dovid Hamelech, according to one Talmudic tradition (Menachos 53b). In response to a deadly plague which took a large daily toll that Dovid Hamelech divined with ruach hakodesh that the recitation of one hundred berachos a day would raise the community's spirituality and make them worthy of healthy longevity (Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chayim 46). Which blessings are to be counted? What do we do on Shabbos when our amida is only seven berachos? Does it include responding to the blessing of another? Does one actually have to track the blessings during the day? These are some of the questions which have grown into a sizeable literature over the centuries.

However, most puzzling to me is that Dovid Hamelech promoted this ruling by appending it to a pasuk (10:12) in our parsha: ועתה ישראל מה' אלקיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלקיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולא הבה אתו ולעבד את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך - Now, Yisroel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you, only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to go in all His ways and to love Him and to serve Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and all your soul." The word "מה" in the text with the addition of an aleph becomes the word "מאה" - one hundred, and hence one hundred berachos a day. At first glance it isn't clear what Dovid Hamelech thought would be gained by developing this allusion - it seems so forced!

Indeed, the passuk itself was studied carefully by the earliest commentaries,

as the passuk seems to understate the entirety of the Torah mission and lifestyle. It seems to encompass the love and fear of Hashem and the entire service described by our mitzvos and belittle the ongoing demands and sacrifice which a counter-cultural life places upon us. It is interesting how the word "mah" which would seem to minimize its subject is understood by Dovid Hamelech to create a demanding daily regimen of berachos. The genius of the sixteenth century giant, Harav Yeshaya Horowitz, the Shelah Hakadosh, illuminates both the ruling as well as the seemingly stretched source, and also gives insight into the passuk itself. He suggests that Dovid Hamelech wanted us to read "mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach" not in its literal fashion - "what does Hashem request from you" - but rather playfully, Hashem requests the "what" from you. He placed us in a world in which we could endlessly express "what!!", and almost unceasingly be amazed He asks us to stop and remark, in the form of a beracha, "what" or "how" or maybe even "wow" as we move from food to food, from event to event, from mitzvah to mitzvah, and even throughout our berachos of requests.

It was not inconceivable to the sages of old that we could slow down one hundred times a day, just for the time it takes to say a beracha, and marvel and ponder. Dovid Hamelech understood that pensive and mindful people, as well as meaningful and transformative service of Hashem, can be shaped by a regimen of contemplative and appreciative moments. Perhaps the Shelah Hakadosh is giving us an insight into the passuk as well. Moshe had no intent to minimize our mission or diminish the demands of Hashem's lifestyle, rather he was suggesting that we can make great strides in it with simple and solitary behaviors.

This is not unlike the opening Medrash Tanchuma of the parsha, quoted by Rashi, which teaches us that the promises of plenty are conditional on the careful observance of the "mitzvos of the heel", i.e. the mitzvos that we step over and often dismiss as being easy and unchallenging. As we have pointed out in a previous article on this website, we not only improve through confrontation and distillation but we also mature through steady and gradual osmosis, naturally absorbing from our environs, and harmoniously incorporating life's lessons into the way we live.

Hashem in His kindness does not insist that we only raise ourselves through stubborn contrariness. Rather, by surrounding ourselves with continuous awareness of Hashem's presence and gifts, serving Him becomes natural. This is the pleasant way of Torah referred to by Dovid Hamelech - derocheho darchoi noam - and one who comes to realize it gives expression to the love Hashem has for His children and the beauty of His Torah. Copyright © 2014 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

from: Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald <ezbuchwald@njop.org>
reply-to: ezbuchwald@njop.org
date: Mon, Aug 11, 2014 at 3:42 PM
subject: Weekly Torah Message from Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald
In light of the precarious situation in Israel, we offer the following prayer on behalf of the well being of the citizens of Israel: "Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are in distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land-may the Omnipresent One have mercy on them and remove them from distress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, now, speedily, and soon-and let us say: Amen."
Eikev 5774-2014

"No Reason to Glory!"

by Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald

This week's parasha, parashat Eikev, is filled with common sense wisdom. The many insightful observations found in parashat Eikev underscore the pithy observation that, "Common sense is not very common."

The primary and very commonsensical message of parashat Eikev is that those who follow G-d's directives will be rewarded, and those who fail to follow His directives will be punished.

Among the important messages communicated in parashat Eikev is the warning against the lure of success and prosperity.

In Deuteronomy 8:11, the Torah warns the Jewish people to take heed, lest

they forget G-d by not observing His commandments. When everything seems to be going well, when food is plentiful, shelter is secure, cattle, sheep, silver and gold are increasing, a Jew must be constantly aware not to become haughty. G-d, who took the People of Israel out of the land of Egypt out of the House of Bondage must not be forgotten. After all, it was G-d who led the people through the great and awesome wilderness, who brought forth water from the rock, and fed the people manna from heaven. Beware, warns the Torah in Deuteronomy 8:17, lest you react arrogantly to your success, וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ, כִּי יָצָאָם יְיָ, עָשָׂה לִי אֵת הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה, and you say in your heart, "My strength, and the might of my hand, has brought me all this wealth."

Instead, says the Torah, you must remember that it was G-d who endowed you with the wisdom and strength that enabled you to produce the wealth in order to establish His covenant that He swore to your forefathers this day.

Rabbi Yaakov Filber, in his brilliant and insightful volume Chemdat Yamim, cites the responses of a number of the classical commentaries to the question of hubris and haughtiness. They ask: Is it haughty for a person to invest much effort in building up his business? Doesn't it indicate a lack of faith in G-d?

Rabbi Filber cites the Ran, who suggests that it is acceptable for a wealthy person to say that "My strength, and the might of my hand, has made me all this wealth," as long as the wealthy person realizes that it is the Al-mighty who provided the talents and resources to acquire this wealth.

Rabbi Filber also cites the Abarbanel, who notes that when Moses said in the name of the Al-mighty that a person should not say, "My strength, and the might of my hand, has made me all this wealth," does not mean that a person must deny any role in his/her own success, but rather that every person needs to acknowledge that their role was an intermediary, not primary, role. The primary role, of course, was played by G-d, who provided the land, the rain, the wind, and all the other necessary ingredients for the success. Can an ax glory over the woodchopper, claiming that the instrument did all the work, rather than the human being?

After the miraculous victory of the Six Day War, the people of Israel were justifiably euphoric. The military victory was spectacular. In fact, the battle was virtually over in the first six hours of the war, after the Israeli Air Force had completely demolished the Egyptian and Syrian air forces. Immediately following the war, there was a religious acknowledgment of the hand of G-d. But, after a while, many Israelis began to glory in their success.

When the Egyptians started to threaten, Yitzchak Rabin reputedly warned, "We will break their bones." IDF Chief of Staff General Haim Bar Lev, who built the defense line along the Suez, said "My line is impenetrable!," yet within a few hours after the start of the Yom Kippur War the Egyptians had washed the line away with fire hoses.

At this moment of great anguish for our people, while the State of Israel is confronted by the wily and the perfidious Hamas terrorists, we dare not glory. First of all, the evil enemy is very clever, having spent many years building concrete-lined tunnels that extend throughout the Northern Gaza and the Southern border of Israel. According to some reports, Hamas operatives were weeks away from staging a massive kidnapping, scheduled to take place on Rosh Hashanah 5775/2014. Such an attack could have crippled Israel, paralyzed its economy, and crushed the morale of the People of Israel.

There are those who suggest that had it not been for the kidnapping of the three Yeshiva students, which led to the massive assault on Hamas, the full extent of these tunnels would not have been discovered, and the future of the entire State of Israel would have been jeopardized.

The soldiers of Israel have fought a valiant battle in Gaza. The enemy is exacting a great price. The Al-mighty, through the instrument of the Iron Dome, is miraculously "catching" the missiles that are being fired onto the populated areas of Israel. The accomplishments of this battle should be a great source of pride, but we must always remember that it is G-d who orchestrates everything from behind the scenes.

Hopefully, the Almighty G-d will allow us soon to see the blossoming of peace quickly in our days, with no or few casualties.

May you be blessed.

from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com>

date: Thu, Aug 14, 2014 at 10:15 AM

Saying Shema in Gaza

by Rabbi Nechemia Coopersmith

I am rather skeptical when it comes to "miracle stories" – especially ones that emerge from war. So I did not believe the story about the female suicide bomber in Gaza who flinched upon hearing the Israeli soldier cry out "Shema Yisrael", allowing them to apprehend her. Turns out the terrorists mother was an Israeli Jew who married an Arab, and the would-be suicide bomber was in fact a Jew whose soul was rattled upon hearing Shema.

Well, apparently the story might be true. An unnamed Israeli military source spoke to Breitbart News, revealing details about the attack that killed Lt. Goldin and two other soldiers, and he also mentioned the incident with the Jewish suicide bomber. The article reports:

The officer explained how, after the suicide bombing that killed Lt. Goldin, a second kidnapping team of Hamas terrorists... ran back into the tunnel from which the terrorists emerged. The tunnel led back into a mosque. From the mosque, they escaped in a clearly marked UNRWA ambulance. The terrorists then made contact with high-ranking Hamas officials hiding in the Islamic University.

Israeli intelligence intercepted a conversation between the kidnapers and the Hamas officials at the Islamic University and thus got all the particulars regarding the hiding place of the kidnapers. Within minutes, the IAF attacked both the kidnapers' location and the Islamic University.

In the midst of this attack, a second force of IDF soldiers--which had gone into a mosque looking for weapons, explosives, and rockets-- encountered a female suicide bomber who was about to detonate the belt she wore, which would have resulted in the deaths of the soldiers. One of the soldiers instinctively recited the opening words of the holiest Jewish prayer "Shema Yisrael". The female suicide bomber hesitated and began trembling, giving the soldiers a chance to grab her and disable the device.

The soldiers then took her prisoner and turned her over to a counter-intelligence unit. Their investigation uncovered that the female suicide bomber's mother was a Jew who had married a Palestinian in Israel and, after the wedding, was smuggled against her will into Gaza. There she lived a life filled with abuse and humiliation, and was basically a captive. In addition to the female suicide bomber, there were two smaller children as well. An armored force went in and rescued the two small children.

The story is reminiscent of Rabbi Eliezer Silver who rescued Jewish children in Europe who had been hidden during the Holocaust in Christian orphanages and monasteries. The children themselves, raised as Christians for years, no longer knew they were Jewish. And there were times the local priest denied harboring any Jewish children. So how did Rabbi Silver discover the Jewish children? Dressed as a high ranking U.S. army officer, he would visit the children during bedtime and loudly proclaim "Shema Yisrael" – "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!"

Many children burst into tears and cried out "mommy" in the various languages they spoke. The Shema which their mothers had said to them each night was so deeply ingrained in their minds they had not forgotten it. And that is how the chaplains were able to identify the Jewish children.

Get Aish.com's Free Email Updates and Be Inspired.

The Shema saved those Israeli soldiers and rescued three Jewish souls – the suicide bomber and her two children -- from the bowels of Gaza. Something she heard startled her. Her Jewish soul, buried by years of indoctrination, hate and abuse, was stirred.

My teacher, Rabbi Noah Weinberg, of blessed memory, would tell the story of Rabbi Silver as a lesson that the Jewish soul always has a pulse. It is our responsibility to find the words that will penetrate. If this story is true, then through his tragic death Lt. Goldin enabled three bewildered Jewish souls to be brought back to their people.

With thanks to Rabbi Stephen Baars

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Blog :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Confusing Roles

All people are duty bound to try and help other people in need of such help. Rabbis are especially called upon to be available to help others in their times of distress and difficulties. Nevertheless, it is essential for one to be able to recognize one's limitations and true role. Many a rabbi has gotten himself into deep trouble by acting as a psychologist, therapist, financial advisor, marriage counselor or business consultant when that rabbi had no particular training or real talent in that field or profession.

One does not consult one's stockbroker regarding medical issues just as one does not consult one's physician regarding which stocks to purchase. This seemingly logical and axiomatic lesson is nevertheless violated on a daily basis, often with sad and tragic results for all concerned. Especially in our very specialized world, it should be apparent that one should not undertake being seen as an expert in a certain specialty for which one has no training or education.

In biblical times Jews turned to prophets for advice and succor. But prophets disappeared from our world millennia ago. With the rise of the Chasidic movement in the eighteenth century, the figure of an all-knowing, almost omniscient, spiritual leader was recreated. That person was consulted on all issues of life because it was felt that somehow he had a special connection to Heaven and to all that this entailed.

This concept, really rooted in certain kabalistic thought, soon spilled over into the general rabbinat. Though no matter how many rabbis attempted to avoid such an image and such practices, the idea of the rabbi as being an expert in all fields of life and available for constant consultation on all matters has taken current hold in the Jewish world. It has made life very uncomfortable for the ordinary communal/congregational rabbi - if there is such an "ordinary" creature.

A rabbi must, of necessity, possess wisdom and compassion. But that is true of every Jew, if not of every human being. There are many areas of life that a rabbi should abstain from ever giving advice about. One should avoid those issues that one is not well qualified professionally to render advice. Many of the difficult situations that have occurred over the past decade regarding rabbis and educators and their congregants and students are simply a product of the person in authority or the one being consulted. They confuse their role and play the professional or prophet when not really qualified.

It is easy to become sucked into the morass of other's problems and attempt to help. But oftentimes such help turns into harm and exacerbates problems instead of solving them. It is very difficult to say no to people who ask for one's help. But simple logic and clear honesty demands that one should never overstep one's boundaries or confuse one's role in society.

This does not mean that one should never be attentive to someone else's narrative of problems. But it does mean that one should be cautious and careful in one's response and to keep in mind that in most cases the wrong answer is far worse than getting no answer at all.

I come from a generation where rabbis were very reticent to advance solutions to people's personal issues and problems. The world has changed greatly since I observed my father's rabbinic behavior. But I still think that one should not expect one's rabbi, physician, financial advisor or even good friend to become one's psychological therapist. It just will not turn out well. In a truly democratic society, the leaders and politicians are subject to public opinion. Nevertheless, they possess knowledge of facts that the public is never privy to. That being the case, these leaders will often make decisions, which appear to be completely contrary to those of the constituencies that they were elected to represent. But that is pretty much what we pay them to do since political, diplomatic and military matters require experience, professionalism and wisdom.

Many times our leaders have made grievous mistakes, but certainly those who do not possess the requisite credentials for making such decisions

should not be empowered to make those decisions. This is really the thin line dividing democratic governments from autocracy. All of the "divine" kings and dictators were at one and the same time all-knowing, great military strategists, economic geniuses and omniscient in every way. All of them led their countries into eventual ruin and suffered personal downfalls.

Confusing one's role is a sign of arrogance and indicative of a personality of hubris. The greatest of the teachers of Israel, from Moses till today, were and are people who can say "I don't know. Consult someone who perhaps does." Shabat shalom

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha Blog:: Rabbi Berel Wein

Eikev

Rashi, in commenting on the first word of this week's parsha, employs an interpretation of the word eikev, which in the context of the verse itself means "since" or "because." It usually denotes a cause and effect relationship – because you will observe God's commandments, then blessings and physical rewards will descend upon you. Rashi, however, based on midrash, expands the meaning of the word eikev and uses an alternative meaning of the word, meaning "foot" or "heel."

He comments that there are commandments and values in Jewish Torah life that the Jews somehow take lightly. They grind them into the dust of everyday life by stepping upon them with their foot and/or heel. It is these, so to speak, neglected commandments and values that are the true key for spiritual success and a good life. Rashi emphasizes to us that the choice of the word eikev, in the beginning verse of the parsha, is not merely a literary issue of vocabulary. Rather, in the choice of that word, the Torah is teaching us the valuable lesson of life that there really are no small things or inconsequential acts.

The rabbis in Avot taught us to be careful with "light" commandments just as we are justly careful with more stringent and weighty commandments. The rabbis emphasize that one does not know the true effect of the observance of these "light" commandments in the reward and punishment scheme of the judgment of Heaven. So the Torah in effect teaches us to watch our step and actions lest our heel unintentionally treads upon a holy commandment and/or value.

It is difficult for us to measure differing values and the weight and worth of any of the commandments of the Torah. In cases of conflicting values and contradictory instructions, the halachic process resolves for us what our behavior and action should be. Yet, on an intellectual and spiritual plane, we are always faced with decisions regarding our priorities of behavior and action.

I am attempting to muster some semblance of intent and devotion in my recitation of the prayers when a poor man shoves his hands in front of my face demanding that I give him some money. What shall I do? Shall I ignore the poor man and attempt somehow to regain my devotional intent in prayer or shall I abandon the prayer and grant a coin to the beggar? Which value shall I tread upon with my heel?

We are faced with such a type of dilemma on a regular daily basis. Somehow if we can balance our priorities and not subject any of them to be ground under our heels, great things can be accomplished. And even if we are unable to actualize such a balance, the recognition of the potentially conflicting values and actions – the realization that one is not ever to judge God's commandments as being light and heavy, important and less important – is itself a great step toward true spirituality and an understanding of Judaism. In the American Revolutionary War there was a famous colonial flag that proclaimed: "Don't Tread On Me!" In effect, this is the message of the Torah regarding observance of commandments and our attitude towards Torah and tradition.

Shabat shalom

from: Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>

to: weekly@ohr.edu
subject: Torah Weekly

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Ekev
For the week ending 16 August 2014 / 20 Av 5774
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights
Fire

The carved images of their gods you shall burn in the fire for it is an abomination of the L-rd, your G-d. (7:25)

Our Sages teach us that extreme anger is like worshipping idols. What is the connection?

Imagine you're a courtier in the palace of the king. While walking past you, one of the other courtiers treads on your toe, and rather than apologize he turns around and pokes his tongue out at you.

Do you curse and shout at him? I doubt it. Not, that is, unless you are unconcerned about your head staying in nodding contact with the rest of your body. Your awe of the king, not to mention the fear of his punishment, makes it easy for you to swallow your pride and smile a wan and insincere smile at your fellow courtier.

When a person becomes angry it's as though he's saying that he's not in the courtroom of the king. Or worse, there is no courtroom, no king.

Everything in this physical world has a spiritual cause. Anger is always compared to fire. Anger consumes like a fire the person who feels the anger. Anger turns the face flame-red. Anger burns you up.

Sometimes, we may even get a glimpse of the connection of the spiritual to the physical:

The Hayman fire, the largest fire in the history of Colorado consumed tens of thousands of beautiful forestland. The fire was caused by a 38-year old Forest Service technician who took a letter from her estranged husband and burned it in anger. Apparently, she thought she had extinguished the fire and left, only to find later it was spreading out of control.

When we ignite the flames of wrath, it's very difficult to put them out. If one act of anger can burn half a state, one shudders to think what happens in the spiritual forest-lands above when a person's anger flames.

© 2014 Ohr Somayach International - all rights reserved

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>

to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>

subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum
Parshas Eikev

This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances. (7:12)

In this instance, the word mishpatim, statutes, is a general term to describe the various divisions of the mitzvos - eidus, chukim and Mishpatim - under one title. All mitzvos, whether they commemorate an historic religious event, a legal obligation to a fellow Jew, a form of Heavenly service, or a mitzvah which defies human comprehension, are all included in the category of mishpatim, legal maxims. As such, it is our duty to execute them simply because it is Hashem's command; it is our duty - with no thanks or reward to be claimed. Yet, by doing all of these, we establish a harmonious condition in which our nation will receive the richest blessings. As the eikev, heel, comes along naturally with the forward movement of the foot, so, too, do these blessings follow our total obedience.

We are neither to weigh mitzvos, nor are we to attempt to determine and establish the value of each individual mitzvah, to consider which mitzvah engenders greater promise, larger reward. Each mitzvah in the Torah interlocks with one another, with the smallest, and seemingly most insignificant, "holding hands" with the weightiest, most critical mitzvah. We are not the ones who determine the importance of a mitzvah. Our function is to carry out the word of Hashem without raising questions, without deciding for ourselves in which areas of Jewish life and observance we would like to express greater obedience. This is why all mitzvos, without distinction, should be carried out with equal conscience, faithfulness; all are to be of equal importance to us; all are to be performed without the thought of greater or lesser reward hanging in the back of our minds.

This is what the Torah means when it uses the word eikav, which is often translated as heel, something which is often not considered, as it moves along with the rest of the body. When we turn our attention to the seemingly insignificant and do not capriciously distinguish between mitzvos, between what should be important and what in our small minds might not carry the same relevance, we undermine Hashem's Torah. If, however,

we are eikav tishme'un, listen, pay attention to the eikav, we will garner the reward that is so richly deserved by those who are Torah observant.

When one takes such a non-questioning attitude towards the Torah, he ascribes to the obedience expected of a Torah Jew. We have questions, but we do not ask. Clearly, traumatic events occur which would challenge a non-believer, raising penetrating questions which weigh heavily on their faith in G-d. The believing Jew, however, understands and accepts that this is Hashem's decree. While there certainly is a rationale for everything, it is beyond his human grasp of understanding.

A noted Rav and educator had a meeting in one of the Israeli Ministry buildings. As is common throughout Eretz Yisrael, he had to pass through security in order to be cleared to enter the building. The security guard was a nice, friendly fellow, non-observant, but that had no bearing on his position. He was in charge of making sure that no suspicious person or package entered the ministry building. This is a country which takes its security seriously.

"Kavod Horav," the guard began, "do you know the story concerning the bas melech, princess?" For a moment, the Rav was taken aback. This was not the conversation he had expected to have with a non-observant security guard. "No, I do not recall a specific story. Perhaps you can jar my memory and remind me of the story."

"I am surprised that such a distinguished Rav is unaware of the story of the princess. Nonetheless, I will be happy to share the story with you." Obviously, the guard had a specific point that he wanted to make.

"This story is from the Ramak" (acronym for the name of the noted Kabbalist, Horav Moshe Cordovero, zl, author of Tomar Devorah and many other seminal volumes of chochmas ha'nistar, mysticism). Once the holy mystic's name was attached to the story, it took on renewed significance.

"There was once a princess whose father provided for her every need. There was nothing this girl could not access. The king arranged for her to have the finest teachers who instructed her in every educational subject and every sport. Her clothes came from the finest shops, designed and constructed by the best and most sought-after designers and seamstresses. All that was necessary was for the princess's servants to say to the king that the princess requires 'this or that' and, immediately, it was delivered.

"One day, the princess herself approached the king with a request. 'My master, the king, can I have 'something'? The king was shocked by her request and replied, 'My dear daughter, it is not necessary for you to address me as, My master, the king. I am your father. All you have to say is, Daddy, can I have something?'

"Sadly, the child did not pick up on the meaning of the king's request. Being raised by nannies and servants, with very little access to the king as a 'father,' all that she ever heard was, 'my lord, the king, or your royal highness.' Never did she have the opportunity to interact with him as 'Daddy.' While she might not have realized this, the king was brokenhearted, yearning for that sweet sound of 'Daddy' to emanate from his daughter's mouth.

"Another few times, the princess made requests of the king, but it was always either, 'Your royal highness,' or, 'My lord, the king,' never 'Daddy.' One day, the young princess took a walk outside of the palace compound, and the king had set upon her two large, trained dogs who were told to frighten her, but not to hurt her. The princess immediately began to scream hysterically, 'Daddy! Daddy! Help me! Help me!'

"When the king heard his daughter calling out 'Daddy,' it was music to his ears. When his daughter was in a frightening situation, she remembered her father."

The security guard turned to the Rav, and said, "We are similar to the princess. When our Father in Heaven wants us to call out to Him, Avinu Malkeinu, He sends dogs to frighten us. Dogs come in all shapes and forms; terrorists, bombs, disasters. All of these are our Holy Father's way of saying to us: 'You have not called out to your Father lately.'"

Things take place around us and throughout the world, events which defy our ability to rationalize. We accept them because we believe in Hashem. When we think about it, however, do we ever ask ourselves: "When was the last time we cried out to our Father in Heaven?"

There will be no infertile male or infertile female among you. (7:14)

We, as human beings, will not be plagued with infertility. The pasuk continues on with a similar blessing for our sheep and cattle. The Baal HaTurim makes note of an incredible gimatria, numerical equivalent, that corresponds with the pasuk. Lo yiheyeh becha akar va'akara, which amounts to 834. Likewise, the words b'divrei haTorah, "in the words of the Torah," also amount to 834. This implies a connection between Torah study and fertility, which is explained by Horav Shlomo Levenstein, Shlita, as a demand for a person to be mechadesh chiddushim, innovate original commentary and elucidation, to apply creativity to one's learning. The Torah is hereby guaranteeing us that there will not be a paucity in creative learning. There will always be those who will be mechadesh chiddushei Torah, whose creative insights will bear fruit to the Torah. The Reishis Chochmah (Shaar HaKedushah 4) writes that, just as a Jew has a mitzvah to be fruitful and multiply in the physical sense, so, too, should he be innovative in his Torah learning, by intuiting and being mechadesh chiddushim.

In discussing the last mitzvah of the Torah, the mitzvah of Kesivas, writing (a) Sefer Torah, the McGaleh Amukos (Parashas Vayishlach) observes that the first mitzvah in the Torah is Peru U'revu, be fruitful and multiply, and the last mitzvah is that of writing a Sefer Torah. This teaches us that it is similarly important to be "fruitful and multiply" in divrei Torah.

The Torah in Vayikra 18:5 states: U'shemartem es mitzvosai, v'es mishpatai asher yaaseh osam ha'adam v'chai behem, "You shall observe My decrees and My laws, which man shall carry out and by which he shall live." The Netziv, zl, understands this azharah, warning, not as a general exhortation concerning mitzvah observance, but as a specific command to be an oseh, a doer, to create and innovate in Torah. We ask Hashem daily to grant us the ability lilmod u'lelamed, lishmor, v'laasos, u'lekayeim, " to study and teach, to guard and to do and to fulfill the mitzvos." Laasos applies to the mitzvah of limud haTorah, the process of studying Torah. It must eventually lead to laasos, creative, intuitive, insight and chiddush, original novellae.

We make the mistake of thinking that it to be mechadesh is directly connected to one's acumen. This cannot be further from the truth. One creates; one works at something which is his. When one's attitude toward a given subject or item is dispassionate, "It's not mine, so why bother?" he will not be able to innovate. Ki heim chayeinu v'orech yameinu, "For they (the words of the Torah) are our life, and the length of our days." When one views Torah as life - his life, when it is his source of longevity, he learns as if his life depends on it. He will then have no problem being mechadesh chiddushim. They will flow like a natural spring.

In speaking with my Rav, Rabbi Aharon Dovid Lebovich, regarding this idea, he shared with me what he had heard in the name of Horav Leib Mallin, zl. David Hamelech says, V'ruach kodshecha, al tikach mi'meni, "And Your Holy Spirit, do not take from me" (Tehillim 51:12). Ruach Kodshecha, Your Holy Spirit, is a reference to the ability to be mechadesh chiddushei Torah. Apparently, David HaMelech felt that the power of innovation, of creativity, is derived from the Creator of the Universe.

You shall cut away the barrier of your heart. (10:16)

Metaphorically, the heart represents the seat of a human being's passion and emotion. When one loses his moral compass and begins to fall prey to his base desires, this moral weakness is described figuratively as a dulled heart, ensconced in a layer of dross which prevents it from connecting spiritually. In other words, the person's ability to perceive and be inspired spiritually is hampered by this encumbrance. The only way to resuscitate the heart spiritually is to "cut away" the layer that dulls the person's spiritual impulses, preventing him from growing in the manner of becoming a Torah Jew. What is the source of his spiritual obtuseness? What grants it the power to sway a person, to so distort his spiritual perceptions that he requires a "surgical procedure" to remove the ingredient?

Horav Nosson Breslover, zl, writes: "The tremendous tzaros, troubles, pain and adversity which plague a person in this world weigh down heavily upon a person, making it very difficult for him to come close to Hashem, to express his pain, to entreat Him concerning his troubles. It is also difficult to come forward, due to the many impediments and pain that dull his heart to the point that he is unable to open his mouth and articulate his feelings." Apparently, he feels that the otem ha'lev, obtuseness of the heart, is due to the many adversities through which we suffer. So, what does one do? We all have adversities. No one leads a charmed life. The wealthy and the poor, the high and the mighty and the downtrodden - each has his own unique peckel, package of tzaros, troubles. Some are run of the mill; some are exotic; some are self-imposed, some are victims, but everyone has something. Some just have greater proficiency in covering up their personal adversity, but it is still

present. What does one do? Hashem says u'maltem - "You shall cut away" - Now that we have some idea concerning the meaning of orlas levavchem, the barrier of your heart, we better understand why it is so difficult to remove, because we are all affected by this restrictive dead weight.

Rav Nosson offers illuminating advice, which, when applied, changes the playing field, allowing one to transcend his tzaros and come close to Hashem. "Therefore an eitzah gedolah, great recommendation, is that a person should always recall the good things that have occurred to him, to our ancestors, our People. (It is not only about us. We are part of a larger collective; we must learn to think out of the box.) Most of all, one should thank Hashem that he has been included among the Jewish People, that he is a part of the nation which accepted the Torah, that he is among those who have been distinguished from among those who wander aimlessly, with no direction in life." According to Rav Nosson, orlas ha'lev is defined as ribui ha'tzaros, the detrimental effect of increased troubles and pain to which we, as human beings, are subjected for various reasons. These obstacles can have a deleterious effect on one's ability to come close to Hashem. They take up one's time, his life, his mind, thereby causing his heart to be surrounded with a covering that has a dulling effect on his spiritual impulses. The cure for this disease is to look at the good and delve into all of the good fortune of which one has been the beneficiary since birth. If we get in the habit of acknowledging and

appreciating the good, we will be able to cut away the covering of pain and adversity surrounding our heart, so that we can reach out to Hashem.

In the often-quoted perek, chapter, of Tehillim, 23, David Hamelech begins, Hashem ro'ee lo echsar, "Hashem is my Shepherd, I shall not lack." After describing the many gifts of good he has received from Hashem, he says, kosi revaya, "my cup runneth over." Simply, this means that David acknowledges that his life is one long series of gifts from Hashem. The statement, "my cup runneth over," has become a metaphor for expressing one's gratitude to Hashem for all the good things that He does for us. Horav Avigdor Miller, zl, comments on the pasuk: "A cup can only run over if it is first full. If there is a hole at the bottom of the cup, it will never become full; thus, it will never run over. This is a lesson for us constantly to remember the good things that Hashem does for us. Never forget them. Then the good things will add up, and your happiness will follow."

As human beings, we tend to focus on the present - our momentary needs. We focus on that which we have already received and enjoyed, while that for which we need to be forever grateful remains in the back of our minds: "Been there, done that." It is no longer a priority. Thus, we most often feel that our cup is far from running over, since we are always focusing on what we still (think) we need. As soon as our request is filled, our happiness is short-lived, because there is always another "need" waiting in the background. Rav Nosson teaches us always to focus on the good that we have received. Otherwise, we have no chance of getting over that insurmountable hump of dissatisfaction, layered with adversity, and hinged with pain.

When we focus on something, it becomes reinforced in our minds. Therefore, when one attempts to ferret out the positive of each day, each situation, it will become habit-forming, and, suddenly, his "bad" days will no longer be considered bad. Furthermore, he will generally be a happier person.

There is another aspect to orlas halev, whereby one realizes the therapeutic effect of the ribui ha'tzaros, adversity and pain. I came across the following analogy attributed to Horav Yisrael Gustman, zl. A young, talented artist drew a beautiful painting on an outdoor easel. He was quite proud of his work. After all, he was still young and had labored long hours to produce this wondrous graphic. Days were spent perfecting every nuance, every aspect of the shades, colors, and contrasts of the painting. He was now ready to show it off, to receive the acclaim that he so deserved for a job well done. He called for his father, hoping to receive his compliment concerning the painting.

The father came and could not stop marveling at his son's brilliance. He was effusive in his praise, hoping to encourage his son's continued commitment to painting. As his father continued with his praise, the young artist stepped back to behold the beauty of his creation. As he moved further and further back and then to the side, he was left standing one step from the edge of the cliff. One more move would be his last. The father suddenly realized that his son was moving precariously to the edge. He might fall backward into an abyss. Yelling "Stop!" would only shock him and cause him to move backward. He quickly grabbed a can of paint and threw it at the painting, completely ruining the beautiful work of art! Seeing this, his son came running, screaming hysterically, "How could you have done that? You destroyed my painting. All of that hard work was for nothing." The father waited patiently while his son vented and blew off steam. Then he spoke softly, "My son, I saved your life. You were so close to the edge that one more step would have proven fatal. You were so engrossed in your beautiful creation that you did not realize that you were endangering your life. Your priority should be your life - not your painting."

The lesson is obvious. At times we become so involved in our daily pursuits that we lose sight of the priorities in life which should serve as our lodestar. We are on this world to serve Hashem, to be good Jews, to glorify His Name in the world. Everything else is second place. When we appear to forget our true objective, Hashem must throw a monkey wrench into the engine, spill some paint on the painting, in order to get our attention. This how He helps us remove our orlas ha'lev.

To love Hashem your G-d, to walk in all His ways and to cleave to Him. (11:22)

To follow in Hashem's ways, to walk in His path, means to display the same loving compassion for all Jews, regardless of background, personality and religious attitude. Hashem is our Father, and, as such, turns away no one. On the contrary, it is we who turn away from Him. Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, relates the following episode. Horav Mordechai Rabinowitz is the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ohev Yisrael in Petach Tikvah. It is a school that caters to a high caliber of highly motivated students. Like so many good schools, it is very difficult to gain entrance to this yeshivah. One day Rav Mordechai received a call from Horav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, zl. The Rosh Yeshivah began, "Rav Mordechai, would you want to sit together with me in Gan Eden?"

"Of course! What is the question?" the Rav said. "There is a young student in one of the yeshivos who refuses to attend any school but yours. Will you accept him?" Rav Michel Yehudah asked.

"Yes, yes, Rebbe. I will accept him - no questions asked."

A few weeks elapsed, and Rav Michel Yehudah called again - this time to inquire concerning the boy's scholastic achievement. To the menahel's chagrin, he informed Rav Michel Yehudah that, although the boy had been accepted, he never showed up. When Rav Michel Yehudah heard this, he broke down in bitter weeping: "Woe, we lost a child to Torah! Woe are we that this boy will not attend yeshiva!"

Rav Mordechai felt terrible about the boy. After all, he had done all that he could do. A Yiddishe neshamah, Jewish soul, regardless of the reason, and notwithstanding upon whom blame is placed, is still a lost soul. Rav Mordechai nonetheless asked Rav Michel Yehudah if the boy's non-attendance at the yeshiva would affect their pact. Could the menahel "look forward" to "sitting together" with the Torah giant in Olam Habba? "Absolutely!" answered the Rosh Yeshiva.

Hearing the story, Rav Eliyahu Mann approached Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, with a simple, but compelling, question: "Who gave Rav Michel Yehudah permission to welcome 'guests' to Gan Eden? Is it his place that he can do as he pleases?" Rav Chaim removed a Midrash Aggadah on Sefer Bereishis from his bookcase and pointed out the following Chazal (84:1): "Rabbi Avahu said, 'In the future, people (neshamos) will wonder at the seating arrangement in Gan Eden. Individuals who had never studied Torah are sitting in close proximity to the Avos, holy Patriarchs. Hashem will explain His choice (for including these seemingly simple people together with the nation's spiritual elite). They listened to Me (whatever I asked of them, they immediately carried out).'"

Someone who listens to Hashem's call to save a Jewish child from spiritual infamy will surely have a special place reserved for him in the world to come. After all, this person is following in the darkei Hashem, ways of G-d, emulating the Almighty.

Ponevez Yeshiva in Bnei Brak is one of the Torah world's most distinguished yeshivos. Gaining entrance to the yeshiva is no simple feat. A yeshiva student must be scholastically worthy and profoundly dedicated to achieving excellence. It was, therefore, quite surprising when a young teenage boy from Switzerland, whose level of proficiency was lacking, insisted on meeting the Rebbetzin, the widow of the yeshiva's founder, Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl, Ponevezer Rav. The Rebbetzin did not have an active role in the Yeshiva's admission process. The Rav had been gone for a few years. The entire meeting did not make sense. The boy, however, demanded to meet with the Rebbetzin. He was guided to the Rebbetzin's apartment, met with her for a few moments, and then emerged with a big smile across his face. The Rebbetzin asked to speak with the present Rosh Yeshiva. A few minutes went by as the elderly widow met with the Rosh Yeshiva. A few minutes later, the Rosh Yeshiva motioned for the young student to come over. "Welcome to the Ponevezer Yeshiva."

Clearly everyone, especially the other students who had observed the entire incident, was clueless to what had taken place. The young boy explained to them that he had a "history" with the Ponevezer Rav: "When I was seven years old, one summer I vacationed with my mother in Switzerland. Coincidentally, the Ponevezer Rav was also staying at the hotel (it was the only kosher establishment in the area). The problem was that the only available room was on the top floor, which made it very difficult for the Rav to walk up and down. Upon hearing of the problem, my mother immediately offered to switch rooms with the Rav. The Rav graciously accepted our offer, and afterwards invited my mother and me to his room: 'I want to express my gratitude to you and to your son for your kindness. I know that when one is on vacation everyone wants everything to go as planned. I would like to buy your son a toy as a token of my appreciation.'

"I immediately interjected and said, 'I do not want a toy. I do not even want a few coins. I want only one thing: one day to be a student at the Ponevezer Yeshiva.' The Rav smiled and took out his pen and wrote a note on the hotel stationery that I was accepted as a student in the Ponevezer Yeshiva."

The boy had a vision. The Rav had a mission to teach Torah to every Jewish child. He was following in Hashem's ways.

u'ksavtam al mezuzos beisecha.

l'maayan yirbu yimeichem vimeinei bneichem.

And write them on the doorposts of your house.

In order to prolong your days and the days of your children.

The commentators offer various reasons for establishing a connection between the mitzvah of affixing a kosher mezuzah to one's house and longevity for a person and his offspring. While the following episode does not necessarily offer a reason, its lesson is inspiring. There was a non-observant couple living in a religious neighborhood in Petach Tikvah. They blatantly did not observe Shabbos. It was not spiteful; it was simply a situation in which each one had grown up in a non-observant environment and had no reason for changing his or her lifestyle. Sadly, the couple had not yet been blessed with children. The woman had been pregnant seven times, with each pregnancy ending in miscarriage.

One day, the man visited the Rav of the shul and poured his heart out to him. What could he do? The Rav told him that in Bnei Brak lived a great Torah leader called the Chazon Ish. Perhaps he should visit him and relate his pain. The man went to the

Chazon Ish and shared his sad story with him. The Chazon Ish instructed him to return home and check his mezuzos. The man returned home and immediately checked his mezuzos. Lo and behold, the shock when he discovered the words, *l'maan yirbu yimeichem vimeinei bneichem*, were declared unkosher. The man immediately purchased new mezuzos and was blessed with a child. After some time, the Rav had occasion to meet with the Chazon Ish, and he posed to him the same question which is probably on the minds of everyone who reads this story: Why not impress upon him to observe Shabbos? The Chazon Ish replied, "We are not businessmen." In other words, the man had come for advice, and he had given it. We are not in the business of brokering religion.

In loving memory of our dear Mother & Bubby Mrs. Chana Silberberg Chana bas Moshe Zev a"h niftar 20 Av 5760 t.n.tz.v.h. - Zev & Miriam Solomon & Family

http://www.ou.org/torah/author/Rabbi_Dr_Tzvi_Hersh_Weinreb
from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>

reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

Rabbi Weinreb's Parsha Column

Eikev: Discipline and Suffering

As a parent, grandparent, and psychologist, I am often considered to be something of an expert on parenting and child-rearing. In that capacity, I have frequently been asked to review or give an opinion about any of the plethora of books on the subject of raising one's children.

Like in any genre, there are better books and worse books in this category. What I have noticed is that many of them fail to include a chapter on one of the most important components of child rearing: discipline. With few exceptions, the most that these books contain on the subject of discipline is a chapter on "setting limits."

In my opinion, and certainly in my experience, discipline is an essential component of all parenting and teaching relationships. And discipline is not just about "setting limits." It is also about "setting goals."

My reading on the subject of dealing with children, whether as a parent or as a teacher, has taught me of the importance of setting clear and achievable goals and objectives for children to reach, and then to show recognition of the achievement of those goals.

My experience as a parent myself, as a teacher for many years, and as a psychotherapist for much of my adult life, has borne out the wisdom of these two steps: Firstly, lay out the expectations that you have of the child and clearly define the nature of the task at hand. Secondly, when the child has accomplished the task, even if not totally successfully, give him or her feedback and recognition, whether in the form of a verbal compliment or a nonverbal gesture.

Discipline does not just involve "setting limits." Indeed, saying "no" and issuing restrictive commands may not at all be what discipline is about. Rather, it involves "setting goals." It is about extending a challenge, with the implicit confidence that sends that child the message, "You can do it!"

This, to me, is the essence of discipline. It is not synonymous with punishment. It is synonymous with learning and personal growth.

And this is what I think is meant by the passage in this week's Torah reading, Eikev, "Bear in mind that the Lord your God disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son." (Deuteronomy 8:5)

The Torah has much to say, even if the parenting books don't, about discipline. It takes for granted that parents will discipline their children, and that teachers will discipline their students. After all, that is why students are called disciples.

The Torah insists, moreover, that the Almighty, too, disciplines us. And He does so in much the same way as successful parents do. He sets clear expectations for us, and He shows us His favor when we meet those expectations and His disfavor when we fail to do so. The Lord really is a Father in this sense.

It is no wonder then, that the book of Proverbs cautions us to "heed the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the instruction of your mother." Notice: first discipline, and then instruction. First "mussar," and Torah only afterwards.

As usual, there is an even deeper message in the word that the Torah uses for discipline. The root "YSR" is the root of both "discipline" and "suffering."

Judaism teaches us that there is a meaning to our suffering. Sometimes that meaning is obvious to us; more typically though, the meaning eludes us, and we desperately search for it.

But one thing is clear. We learn through discipline, and we also learn through suffering. The words of Victor Frankl, the psychologist and Auschwitz survivor, who certainly knew a thing or two about suffering, are very instructive here:

"... On the biological plane, as we know, pain is a meaningful watcher and warder. In the psycho-spiritual realm it has a similar function. Suffering is intended to guard man from apathy, from psychic rigor mortis. As long as we suffer we remain psychically

alive. In fact, we mature in suffering, grow because of it – it makes us richer and stronger.”

It is through the processes of discipline and suffering that we develop and are transformed. Both processes are painful, sometimes profoundly so. But through both, we widen our horizons, enhance our spirits, and attain a deeper understanding of our life’s purpose.

Discipline and suffering: important to us all as individuals, as part of the Jewish people, and as mortal humans, struggling to cope and, ultimately, to grow.

from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

subject: Parsha - Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

To Lead is to Listen

“If only you would listen to these laws ...” (Deut. 7: 12). These words with which our parsha begins contain a verb that is a fundamental motif of the book of Devarim. The verb is sh-m-a. It occurred in last week’s parsha in the most famous line of the whole of Judaism, Shema Yisrael. It occurs later in this week’s parsha in the second paragraph of the Shema, “It shall be if you surely listen [shamo’a tishme’u] ... (Deut. 11: 13). It appears no less than 92 times in Devarim as a whole.

We often miss the significance of this word because of what I call the fallacy of translatability: the assumption that one language is fully translatable into another. We hear a word translated from one language to another and assume that it means the same in both. But often it doesn’t. Languages are only partially translatable into one another.[1] The key terms of one civilization are often not fully reproducible in another. The Greek word megalopsychos, for example, Aristotle’s “great-souled man” who is great and knows he is, and carries himself with aristocratic pride, is untranslatable into a moral system like Judaism in which humility is a virtue. The English word “tact” has no precise equivalent in Hebrew. And so on.

This is particularly so in the case of the Hebrew verb sh-m-a. Listen, for example, to the way the opening words of this week’s parsha have been translated into English:

If you hearken to these precepts ...

If you completely obey these laws ...

If you pay attention to these laws ...

If you heed these ordinances ...

Because ye hear these judgments ...

There is no single English word that means to hear, to listen, to heed, to pay attention to, and to obey. Sh-m-a also means “to understand,” as in the story of the tower of Babel, when God says, Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand [yishme’u] each other” (Gen. 11: 7).

As I have argued elsewhere, one of the most striking facts about the Torah is that, although it contains 613 commands, it does not contain a word that means “to obey.” When such a word was needed in modern Hebrew, the verb le-tzayet was borrowed from Aramaic. The verb used by the Torah in place of “to obey” is sh-m-a. This is of the highest possible significance. It means that blind obedience is not a virtue in Judaism. God wants us to understand the laws He has commanded us. He wants us to reflect on why this law, not that. He wants us to listen, to reflect, to seek to understand, to internalise and to respond. He wants us to become a listening people.

Ancient Greece was a visual culture, a culture of art, architecture, theatre and spectacle. For the Greeks generally, and Plato specifically, knowing was a form of seeing. Judaism, as Freud pointed out in *Moses and Monotheism*, is a non-visual culture. We worship a God who cannot be seen; and making sacred images, icons, is absolutely forbidden. In Judaism we do not see God; we hear God. Knowing is a form of listening. Ironically, Freud himself, deeply ambivalent though he was about Judaism, in psycho-analysis invented the listening cure: listening as therapy.[2]

It follows that in Judaism listening is a deeply spiritual act. To listen to God is to be open to God. That is what Moses is saying throughout Devarim: “If only you would listen.” So it is with leadership – indeed with all forms of

interpersonal relationship. Often the greatest gift we can give someone is to listen to them.

Viktor Frankl, who survived Auschwitz and went on to create a new form of psychotherapy based on “man’s search for meaning,” once told the story of a patient of his who phoned him in the middle of the night to tell him, calmly, that she was about to commit suicide. He kept her on the phone for two hours, giving her every conceivable reason to live. Eventually she said that she had changed her mind and would not end her life. When he next saw the woman he asked her which of his many reasons had persuaded her to change her mind. “None,” she replied. “Why then did you decide not to commit suicide?” She replied that the fact that someone was prepared to listen to her for two hours in the middle of the night convinced her that life was worth living after all.[3]

As Chief Rabbi I was involved in resolving a number of highly intractable agunah cases: situations in which a husband was unwilling to give his wife a get so that she could remarry. We resolved all these cases not by legal devices but by the simple act of listening: deep listening, in which we were able to convince both sides that we had heard their pain and their sense of injustice. This took many hours of total concentration and a principled absence of judgment and direction. Eventually our listening absorbed the acrimony and the couple were able to resolve their differences together. Listening is intensely therapeutic.

Before I became Chief Rabbi I was head of our rabbinical training seminary, Jews’ College. There in the 1980s we ran one of the most advanced practical rabbinics programmes ever devised. It included a three-year programme in counselling. The professionals we recruited to run the course told us that they had one precondition. We had to agree to take all the participants away to an enclosed location for two days. Only those who were willing to do this would be admitted to the course.

We did not know in advance what the counsellors were planning to do, but we soon discovered. They planned to teach us the method pioneered by Carl Rogers known as non-directive or person-centred therapy. This involves active listening and reflective questioning, but no guidance on the part of the therapist.

As the nature of the method became clear, the rabbis began to object. It seemed to oppose everything they stood for. To be a rabbi is to teach, to direct, to tell people what to do. The tension between the counsellors and the rabbis grew almost to the point of crisis, so much so that we had to stop the course for an hour while we sought some way of reconciling what the counsellors were doing and what the Torah seemed to be saying. That is when we began to reflect, for the first time as a group, on the spiritual dimension of listening, of sh-m-a Yisrael.

The deep truth behind person-centred therapy is that listening is the key virtue of the religious life. That is what Moses was saying throughout Devarim. If we want God to listen to us we have to be prepared to listen to Him. And if we learn to listen to Him, then we eventually learn to listen to our fellow humans: the silent cry of the lonely, the poor, the weak, the vulnerable, the people in existential pain.

When God appeared to King Solomon in a dream and asked him what he would like to be given, Solomon replied: lev shome’a, literally “a listening heart” to judge the people (1 Kings 3: 9). The choice of words is significant. Solomon’s wisdom lay, at least in part, in his ability to listen, to hear the emotion behind the words, to sense what was being left unsaid as well as what was said. It is common to find leaders who speak, very rare to find leaders who listen. But listening often makes the difference.

Listening matters in a moral environment as insistent on human dignity as is Judaism. The very act of listening is a form of respect. The royal family in Britain is known always to arrive on time and depart on time. I will never forget the occasion — her aides told me that they had never witnessed it before — when the Queen stayed for two hours longer than her scheduled departure time. The day was 27 January 2005, the occasion, the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The Queen had invited survivors to a reception at St James’ Palace. Each had a story to tell, and the Queen took the time to listen to every one of them. One after another came up to me

and said, "Sixty years ago I did not know whether tomorrow I would be alive, and here I am talking to the Queen." That act of listening was one of the most royal acts of graciousness I have ever witnessed. Listening is a profound affirmation of the humanity of the other.

In the encounter at the burning bush, when God summoned Moses to be a leader, Moses replied, "I am not a man of words, not yesterday, not the day before, not from the first time You spoke to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue" (Ex. 4: 10). Why would God choose to lead the Jewish people a man who found it hard to speak? Perhaps because one who cannot speak learns how to listen. A leader is one who knows how to listen: to the unspoken cry of others and to the still, small voice of God.

[1] Robert Frost said: "Poetry is what gets lost in translation." Cervantes compared translation to the other side of a tapestry. At best we see a rough outline of the pattern we know exists on the other side, but it lacks definition and is full of loose threads.

[2] Anna O. (Bertha Pappenheim) famously described Freudian psychoanalysis as "the talking cure," but it is in fact a listening cure. Only through the active listening of the analyst can there be the therapeutic or cathartic talking of the patient.

[3] Anna Redsand, Viktor Frankl, a life worth living, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006, 113-14.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks or to subscribe to his mailing list, please visit www.rabbisacks.org.

<http://www.torah.org/learning/parsha-insights/5760/eikev.html>

Parsha Insights

Eikev

By Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week we read the parsha of Eikev. "V'ha'yah aikev tishm'une ais hamishpatim... {And it will be 'eikev' you will accept the judgments...}.[7:12]" The word 'eikev' has many different meanings which the different commentators incorporate into their explanation of the passuk {verse}.

The Targum explains 'eikev' to mean 'in exchange.' In exchange for your accepting the laws, the passuk continues and says that Hashem will maintain the covenant and kindness of which He swore to the Patriarchs.

Rashi explains the word 'eikev' to mean 'heel.' If you will accept those 'light' mitzvos which a person (often) tramples on with his heel...

Eikev can also mean the end, as the heel is the 'end' of the body. The Baal HaTurim often explains the connection between the last words of one parsha and the first words of the following parsha. Here he points out that the previous parsha, after commanding us to keep the commandments, concluded with the words: "Today to do them [7:11]." Our parsha begins: "V'hayah eikev--And it will be in the end." Today, this world, is the place to fulfill the commandments but the reward will only be in the end, in the world to come.

Last night my wife and I visited an old neighbor of ours who had lost her husband while we were away in the States. I had mentioned them in parsha-insights a while ago but I feel it deserves to be repeated.

They were both survivors of the Holocaust. He had been married with children when the atrocities began. By the end of the war he was alone in a way that I don't think any of us could even imagine. She was single when she was sent to Auschwitz.

My wife and I learned to be sensitive to her sensitivities. My wife once 'snapped' the gum she was chewing while our neighbor was visiting. She jumped and suddenly had a look of terror on her face. She, blushing, explained that the sound reminded her of the whips she had been subjected to. Another young couple in the building once brought home a dog. She took refuge in our apartment which was the closest door available. She explained that 'Dr.' Mengele Y"SH had wanted to know what happens when a human is bit by a dog and nothing is done to treat the wound. She was chosen as the 'patient' and since then had a tremendous fear of dogs.

They met after the war and married. Wanting to start a more hopeful life than Europe could offer, they were part of the 'illegal immigration' to Palestine.

When the State was declared, life didn't become all that much easier for them. She would often laugh, hearing about the aliyah {immigration to Israel} rights that the government granted immigrants and comparing it to what they had been faced with on their 'aliyah' about thirty five years earlier.

We received rent subsidies on our apartment--they lived in tents. We had three years during which we could buy a car and all major appliances tax-free--they were draining swamps. The list went on and on.

Two children were born to them, a son and a daughter. The son fought in the Six Day War but died as a very young man. I never got clear if he died in the war or from an illness afterwards.

When my wife and I moved to Israel they were already older people. He worked hard in the kitchen of one of the local institutions. She would deliver the mail. Until they became too old and feeble, they were there daily, earning their honest living.

They were people who had borne so much pain and suffering and yet carried on with their lives with happiness and a sincere devotion to Hashem. I often thought that any one of the things which they had endured probably would have knocked me right out of the batter's box. But they endured.

As we were sitting and talking last night, reminiscing about her husband, a"n, my gaze fell onto the numbers still etched on her arm. I thought to myself that we really don't have too many people like this left. People who suffered so much only because they were Jews--and yet didn't budge.

We are accustomed to such comforts and luxuries. One of my Rabbeim once said that when we want to describe to our children how hard it was when we were kids, we'll have to tell them that when we wanted to change the channel of the television, we had to actually get out of our chair, walk to the television and turn the dial...

I also thought about the Rashi that I quoted above. Rashi spoke about the commandments which get trampled on--I was thinking about the people who get trampled on.

She said to us a number of times that this world doesn't seem to have any room for her. Money, money, money. That's all that seems to matter. That is the idolatry of today. That's all people want--that's all people respect.

Everyone wants it but don't want to work for it. (And that was her assessment without her ever having heard about IPO's and internet stocks...) Her husband of blessed memory worked hard and simply in order to earn his living. He never expected anything from anyone else and never wanted anything from anyone else. Amongst the Sages of the Talmud we find Rabi Yochanan the sandal-maker. That is how he is referred to throughout the Talmud. Productive, honest, proud. My neighbor was a potato peeler--those were the only 'chips' he worked with. Productive, honest, proud. Very often, those are the people who get trampled on.

Our parsha warns: "Be careful not to forget Hashem your G-d... You'll build beautiful houses, have much livestock, amass large amounts of silver and gold... and forget Hashem.[8:11-14]"

Every person is created in the 'form' of Hashem. Last night I was thinking that perhaps forgetting the poor, 'insignificant' people is included in this warning not to forget Hashem. The truth is that we are the ones who stand to lose the most by not getting to know and learn from such incredibly stalwart people. As I was looking at the numbers on her arm I was thinking that the window of opportunity is slowly closing. May Hashem grant us the wisdom to open our eyes and our hearts.

Good Shabbos,

Yisroel Ciner

from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org

subject: TorahWeb

Copyright © 2014 by The TorahWeb Foundation.

The TorahWeb Foundation

Rabbi Mayer Twersky

Miracles and Mourning

I

Introduction

The juxtaposition of miracles and mourning R"l in the war against Hamas is, primo facie, religiously confusing. The benevolent yad Hashem has been evident in all quarters - on the battlefield, by those operating the Iron Dome, and, indeed, throughout the country. Eyewitness accounts of miraculous stories abound. On the one hand, "חסדי ה' כי לא תמנו כי לא כלו רחמינו". The kindnesses of Hashem are limitless; His mercy is never exhausted"[1]. And yet sixty four soldiers and three citizens have lost their lives. Klal Yisrael mourns sixty seven incalculable, tragic losses. והשביעני במרורים. He has filled me with bitterness[2]. Religiously, the juxtaposition of miracles and mourning does not seem to paint a coherent picture.

HKBS's ways are hidden. This dvar Torah does not aim to explain. Instead it seeks to provide a coherent, meta-historical, conceptual framework for experiencing miracles and mourning simultaneously.

II

The Gift of Eretz Yisrael

At the dawn of our history, HKBH appeared to Avraham Avinu and gave him and his descendants Eretz Yisrael. At the beginning of that prophetic vision, dread and intense darkness enveloped Avraham Avinu.

והנה אימה חשכה גדלה נפלת עליו

And behold, a dread, great darkness fell upon him[3]

Ramban[4], quoting Chazal, explains the prefigurative significance of the dread and darkness.

The Sages expound on this, saying that it is an allusion to the subjugation of Israel by the Four Kingdoms.

For the prophet [Abraham] experienced a dread in his soul; after this he entered into a sensation of darkness; then that darkness became greater; and after this he felt as if [the darkness] was falling upon him like a heavy load that was too weighty for him to bear

The Sages said: a dread - this refers to Babylonia. Darkness - this refers to Media, who caused the eyes of Israel to be darkened from fasting and self-affliction in prayer as a response to their oppression. Great - this refers to Greece. Fell upon him - this refers to Edom.

The relevance of all this to Avraham was that when the Holy One, Blessed is He forged the covenant with him to give the land to his offspring as an everlasting inheritance, He said to him, as one who retains certain rights for himself when giving a gift that the four kingdoms would subjugate his descendants and rule over their land. The stipulated subjugations would occur only if [Avraham's descendants] would sin before him.

Eretz Yisrael is eternally ours. When, however, Rachmana litzlan, we sin, we suffer at the hand of the world's "kingdoms." The dread and darkness which enveloped Avraham Avinu foretold that suffering.

III

Punishment and Compassion

"His left hand is under my head, while His right hand embraces me"[5]

In the Torah and words of Chazal, left often represents strict justice, while right represents kindness[6]. With this symbolism in mind, Alshich HaKadosh interprets the above verse:

וזהו שמאלו תחת לראשי שמאל דוחה ואעפ"כ ימינו תחבקני כי בכמה דברים הוא ית' משיב אותנו בתוך הצרות

"His left hand is under my head" refers to the left hand that pushes aside [i.e. punishes], and nevertheless, his right hand hugs me because in many respects He, may He be blessed, bestows goodness upon us in the midst of suffering[7].

Even when Hakadosh Baruch Hu is "forced" by our shortcomings to allow suffering (שמאלו תחת לראשי), he simultaneously bestows kindness (ימינו תחבקני).

IV

Suffering and Providence

Klal Yisrael's suffering should never be dismissively, solely attributed to geopolitics and vicious anti-Semitism. These are real factors. But there is always a metaphysical reason as well which allows these evil forces to surface[8].

Rambam articulates this philosophy of Jewish history in his comments on the mitzvah of sounding the trumpets and crying out in prayer in times of trouble.

שבזמן שתבוא צרה ויזעקו עליה ויריעו וידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן ככתוב (ירמיהו ה) 'עונותיכם הטו וגו' וזה הוא שיגרום להם להסיר הצרה מעליהם. אבל אם לא יזעקו ולא יריעו אלא יאמרו דבר זה ממנהג העולם אירע לנו וצרה זו נקרה נקריה, הרי זו דרך אכזריות וגורמת להם להדבק במעשיהם הרעים, ותוסיף הצרה צרות אחרות

...for when the community cries out in prayer and sounds the trumpets when overtaken by trouble, everyone will realize that evil has come upon them as a consequence of their own evil deeds, as it is written "Your iniquities have turned away. This realization [and consequent repentance] will cause the trouble to be removed.

If, on the other hand, the people do not cry out in prayer and do not blow the trumpets, but merely say that it is the way of the world for such a thing to happen to them, and their trouble is a matter of pure chance, this is a path of cruelty and will cause them to persevere in their evil deeds, thus bringing additional troubles upon them[9]

It is understandably difficult for us to admit that we have sinned. It is, however, intolerably cruel for us not to do so. Collectively, we have sinned; collectively, we suffer. I am not Rachmana litzlan suggesting any individual correlation between sin and the death of the sixty seven Kedoshim hy"d. Hakadosh Baruch Hu's ways are hidden; we do not know why these sixty seven were chosen to die al kiddush Hashem.

Avraham Avinu's prophecy has once again materialized. Yishmael (Islam), part of the fourth Kingdom[10], launches missiles and has inflicted the tragic casualties of war. We mourn sixty seven priceless, precious neshamos. These past few weeks have been a time of relative darkness and left-handed treatment. Nevertheless remarkably b'chasdei Hashem, even, now, we unambiguously HaKadosh Baruch Hu's loving right-handed embrace in the form of numerous miracles.

[1] Eichah 3:22

[2] Ibid 3:16. Artscroll translation.

[3] Breishis 15:12. Artscroll translation.

[4] בני עה"ת . Artscroll translation.

[5] Shir HaShirim 2:6

[6] For example, see Rashi Shemos 15:6 (based on the Mechilta) and Sotah 47a.

[7] See Alshich's commentary to Shir HaShirim, ibid. See also Meshech Chochmo, parshas Eikev, regarding the beracha of Hatov V'hameitiv.

[8] Regarding the symbiosis of natural and providential causes, see Free Will and Divine Providence, TorahWeb.org, 1999.

[9] Rambam Hil. Ta'anios 1:2-3. Translation adapted from my father's zt"l A Maimonides Reader, P. 114

[10] This represents the view of Rav Sadiah Gaon (see, e.g., his commentary to Sefer Daniel 7:7-8), Rambam (see Igeres Teiman), and others. In the opinion of Ibn Ezra (see his commentary, ibid 2:39), contra Chazal, Yishmael is the fourth kingdom. Ramban (see, e.g., Sefer Hageulah, Shaar 2, chapter 3) and other opine that Yishmael is not included in the scheme of the four kingdoms. Daniel's vision includes only those kingdoms which successively conquered Eretz Yisrael, propelling us into and prolonging our exile. Yishmael has not played that historical role. Nonetheless the principle of the four kingdoms applies to Yishmael. When we sin, R"l, they do not allow us to dwell peacefully in Eretz Yisrael. According to Pirkei D'rabi Eliezer, chapter 27, bris bein habesarim with its foretelling of suffering alludes to the four kingdoms and, separately, Yishmael.

Rav M.M. Pomerantz shlit"a discusses these and many other relevant, fascinating sources in his book, Achishena

Copyright © 2014 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>

to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>

subject: [Rav Kook List]

mailing list: rav-kook-list.googlegroups.com

Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Eikev: Animals Served First!

The Torah promises that if we observe the mitzvot and sincerely love God, we will enjoy timely rain and bountiful crops:

"I will give plants in your field for your animals; and you will eat and be satiated."
(Deut. 11:15)

Rav Abba Aricha, the celebrated third-century scholar, called attention to the order of the verse: first the animals eat, and only then the people. He learned from here that one should not eat before first placing food before one's animals.

Why is this? Should not people eat first, since they are more important? Are not humans "the crown of creation"?

Rav Kook explained that this Talmudic rule of etiquette contains several moral lessons: Given our central place in the universe, we have a responsibility to look after all creatures.

Our food (and in the case of the farmer, also his livelihood) is supplied by cows, chickens, and so on. We should feed these animals first as an expression of the fundamental gratitude we should feel toward these creatures which provide us with our basic needs.

If we lack food for a short time, we may comfort ourselves with spiritual or intellectual pursuits. This is an integral aspect of the human soul, which is not sustained "by bread alone." Animals, however, have no such alternate outlets when they are pained by hunger. Therefore, it is logical to deal with the animal's hunger first.

In purely physical aspects, animals are superior to humans. Is there a human being who is stronger than a bear, faster than a horse, more agile than a cat? Our superiority over animals lies exclusively in the spiritual realms: in our intelligence and our higher aspirations. Therefore, when it comes to physical sustenance, animals take precedence to humans, and by right are served first.

(Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 180)

Comments and inquiries may be sent to: mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com

from: Yeshiva.org.il <subscribe@yeshiva.org.il>

reply-to: subscribe@yeshiva.org.il

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

You Can't Take It with You -- Moving and Removing Mezuzos

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

My new book, which includes more fascinating expositions of contemporary halachic issues, is available! Details Next Week

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!

Question #1: "We are moving residences, and I understand that I must leave the *mezuzos* in my old home. However, they are beautiful, *mehudar mezuzos* that I would like to use in my new dwelling. Is there any way that I can take these *mezuzos* with me?"

Question #2: "My landlord is not Jewish, but this is a neighborhood where only *frum* Jews are moving in. Do I remove my *mezuzos* when I leave?"

Question #3: As I was preparing this article, someone called me with the following actual *shaylah*:

"We will be spending a few days with my ailing father who lives in Israel in an assisted living facility. We can stay in an apartment in his building, but there are no *mezuzos* on the doors. I know that in Israel one must place a *mezuzah* on one's residence, even if one stays only overnight. I can borrow *mezuzos* for our stay; however, may I remove them when we depart?"

Answer: The obligation of placing *mezuzos* is incumbent on the person living in the house; nevertheless, when vacating the premises, one is usually required to leave the *mezuzos* in place. If one wants money for the *mezuzos* that are being left behind, the new resident is required to pay for them (*Rama, Yoreh Deah 291:2*).

In explaining these laws, the *Gemara* teaches:

When a Jew rents a house to a fellow Jew, the tenant is responsible to affix the *mezuzos*. However, when the tenant vacates, he may not remove them. On the other hand, a Jew who rents a residence from a gentile removes the *mezuzos* when he leaves (*Bava Metzia 102a*).

The *Gemara* subsequently describes a horrible calamity that befell someone who removed his *mezuzos* when he was prohibited from doing so. (If you are anxious to know what happened, I refer you to the *Gemara*.) Thus, removing *mezuzos* involves not only a *halachic* violation, but also a significant safety concern (*Tzavaas Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid, addendum #7*).

BUT WHY NOT?

It is difficult to understand why *halachah* requires one to leave the *mezuzah* behind: When a resident vacates a dwelling, he has no obligation to guarantee that *mezuzos* remain on its doorways. So why can't he take his *mezuzos* with him?

There are actually two reasons, each requiring its own introduction, why one may not remove the *mezuzos*.

APPROACH #1: DISDAIN OF MITZVOS – BIZUY MITZVAH

The first approach derives from the concept of *bizuy mitzvah*, treating a mitzvah object inappropriately: Removing the *mezuzah* is considered improper abandonment of a mitzvah object.

But if this is so, shouldn't it apply to other mitzvos as well? For example, may I remove *tzitzis* from a garment without due cause?

REMOVING TZITZIS FROM A GARMENT

The *Gemara* debates whether one may remove the *tzitzis* of one garment to tie them onto another four-cornered garment. The *Amora* Rav prohibits moving *tzitzis* from one garment to another, contending that this is *bizuy mitzvah*. His contemporary, Shmuel, permits moving the *tzitzis* from one garment to another, since they are still utilized for a

mitzvah (*Shabbos 22a*). Both Rav and Shmuel prohibit removing the *tzitzis* when he will not use them on another garment as an act of *bizuy mitzvah* (*She'iltos, Shlach; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 15:1*). That is, removing *tzitzis* from a garment without placing them onto another garment is considered disrespectful. We follow Shmuel's ruling, and therefore one may remove *tzitzis* from one garment to place them on another. One may also replace *tzitzis* with more *mehudar* ones, even if he will not use the removed *tzitzis*, since upgrading to a higher standard demonstrates increased respect for the mitzvah, the exact opposite of *bizuy mitzvah* (*Taz, Orach Chayim 15:2*).

REMOVING THE MEZUZAH

Just as Shmuel ruled that one may remove *tzitzis* from one garment to place them on another, but one may not remove them if one is not planning to place them now onto another garment, we can now appreciate why one may not remove a *mezuzah* upon vacating a residence, since this demonstrates disrespect for the *mezuzah* that is being forcibly retired from its role (*She'iltos, Parshas Shlach; Tosafos, Shabbos 22a, s.v. Rav; Ritva, Bava Metzia 102a*). (It would seem that one can derive from this that it is prohibited to forcibly retire someone from a position, or that one should strongly reconsider laying off employees, but we will leave this topic for a different time.) We will soon discuss whether the prohibition applies, even when one intends to use the *mezuzah* elsewhere.

By the way, the authorities dispute whether the new tenant, entering a house with *mezuzos* already on the door, recites a *bracha*, *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech haolam asher kideshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu ladur babayis sheyesh bo mezuzah* (*Magen Avraham 19:1; Shu"t Rabbi Akiva Eiger, end of #9*). The reason why this *bracha* sounds so unfamiliar is that it refers not to placement of a *mezuzah* on the doorpost, but to entering a new dwelling where the *mezuzah* is already present. In practice, most late authorities follow the ruling of the Chida that one does not recite a *bracha* on a mitzvah if one is not actively performing the mitzvah (*Birkei Yosef, Orach Chayim 19:2*).

MOVING THE MEZUZAH FROM ONE HOUSE TO ANOTHER

At this point, we should note an important factor. If the only reason that one may not remove the *mezuzah* is due to *bizuy mitzvah*, is one permitted to remove a *mezuzah* from the "old" building to install it in one's new residence? Indeed, those authorities who prohibit removing the *mezuzah* only because of *bizuy mitzvah* explain that one may remove a *mezuzah* from one building to install it in a new place (*She'iltos, Shlach; Ritva, Bava Metzia 102a*).

APPROACH #2: DIVINE PROTECTION

Most authorities explain that there is an additional reason, unique to *mezuzah*, why one must leave the *mezuzah* behind even if one wants to use it elsewhere. Although the primary reason a Jew observes any mitzvah is to fulfill *Hashem's* commandment, the mitzvah of *mezuzah* has an additional benefit because it protects our homes and our families from mishap. Removing the *mezuzah* eliminates this Divine shield, exposing one to tragedy and misfortune (*Tosafos, Bava Metzia 101b s.v. lo; Shi'ah Mekubetzes, Menachos 41b, note 24; Tosafos, Shabbos 22a s.v. Rav* in his second answer). Because of this, there is a widespread practice to check one's *mezuzos* if, G-d forbid, one is experiencing difficulties in one's home, since these problems might indicate that the *mezuzos* are not providing the adequate protection that they should.

This approach understands that even though someone vacating a house is no longer responsible for there being *mezuzos* on the doors, removing them reduces the Divine protection on the domicile for the next Jewish person moving in. We now comprehend why removing the *mezuzah* may expose someone to danger, as the *Gemara* records. If the property belongs to a gentile, however, one may, and according to many authorities must, remove the *mezuzah*, since removing the *mezuzah* is not depriving it of fulfilling a mitzvah, and the protection provided is only for Jews. Similarly, one may remove *tzitzis* from a garment that will no longer be used to fulfill a mitzvah (*Rama, Orach Chayim 15:1 and Magen Avraham ad loc.*).

HOW DO WE RULE?

The accepted *halachic* practice recognizes both concerns, forbidding one from removing the *mezuzah* to a new location. However, in an extenuating circumstance where someone is moving to a new residence and has no access to a kosher *mezuzah*, one may rely on the first opinion and take the *mezuzah* with him (*Birkei Yosef, Yoreh Deah 291:2*).

YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

Despite our conclusion that one should generally not remove the *mezuzos* when vacating a house, there are instances when one is required to do so. As I mentioned above, the *Gemara* notes that one who rents from a gentile should remove the *mezuzos* upon leaving (*Bava Metzia 102a*). The authorities dispute whether this is simply permission to remove the *mezuzah*, or whether one is required to do so. Rav Yaakov Emden (*Shaylas Yaavetz 2:121*) rules that one must remove the *mezuzah*, out of concern that the gentile will treat it inappropriately, whereas the *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Yoreh Deah 291:3*) implies that it is permitted, but not actually required, to remove the *mezuzah* under such circumstances.

CHANGING OWNERSHIP

What is the *halachah* if a Jew vacates a residence that he was renting from a gentile, but a different Jew is moving in? May/should the first Jew remove the *mezuzah* when he leaves, since the owner of the building is non-Jewish, or must he leave the *mezuzah* for the new Jewish resident?

Rav Yaakov Emden discusses a similar case: A Jew was renting a house from a gentile who then sold the house to a different Jew. The tenant will be moving out before the change of ownership takes effect. Should he remove the *mezuzah* before he leaves, since the house is still owned by a gentile, or is this forbidden, since a Jew will soon be acquiring the house and moving in? On the one hand, we do not want to leave the house *mezuzah*-less, yet there is a concern that the gentile owner may deface or steal the *mezuzah* before the Jew moves in.

Rav Emden rules that the tenant should remove the *mezuzah* before he vacates, out of concern that the gentile may treat the *mezuzah* inappropriately. He also quotes the Maharil, who requires removing the *mezuzah* because one may not give a *mezuzah* to a gentile. However, if the gentile's sales contract with the purchasing Jew specifies that the *mezuzah* is included, the tenant should leave the *mezuzah* (*Shaylas Yaavetz* 2:121).
GENTILE LANDLORD, JEWISH TENANT

Rav Emden's case is when the gentile has sold the property to a new Jewish owner. What is the *halachah* if the property remains the gentile's, but he usually rents to Jews? Should one leave the *mezuzah* for the next Jewish occupant or not?

Beis Lechem Yehudah (*Yoreh Deah* 291:1) rules that one should remove the *mezuzos*, even if the gentile landlord usually rents to Jews, as long as the next Jewish tenant is not moving in immediately.

We can now answer one of our opening questions: "My landlord is not Jewish, but this is a neighborhood where only *frum* Jews are moving in. Do I remove my *mezuzos* when I leave?"

This depends. If a new tenant is moving in immediately, one should leave the *mezuzos* for him. However, if there will be a time lag before he moves in, one should remove the *mezuzos* -- out of concern that, in the interim, they may be abused.

There are other instances when one is required to remove the *mezuzah* and, accordingly, no calamity will result from doing so. If there is concern that someone may damage or deface a *mezuzah* that is left behind, one must remove the *mezuzah*. For example, if the residence will be painted, the *mezuzos* must be removed to prevent their becoming invalidated. Even if the landlord is Jewish and the new tenant is also Jewish, if the apartment will be painted between residents, the vacating tenant should remove the *mezuzos* to save them from damage, which is certainly *bizuy mitzvah*, and no harm will befall him for doing so. Once he has removed the *mezuzos* for a legitimate reason, he is not required to return them. The new tenant is now responsible to affix new *mezuzos*. Similarly, if there is concern that the *mezuzah* will be stolen or otherwise abused, one should remove it.

NEW RESIDENT HAS HIS OWN MEZUZOS

As I mentioned earlier, although the first resident is required to leave his *mezuzos* behind, he is technically permitted to charge the new tenant for them. What is the *halachah* if the new tenant wants to install his own *mezuzos* rather than purchase or receive gratis those of the previous tenant? Does this present any *halachic* problem, and is there any basis for a safety concern in this instance?

The contemporary authorities assume that if the new resident wants to install his own *mezuzos*, he may remove the "old" *mezuzos* owned by the previous tenant and put up his own. In this instance, one is not leaving the house unprotected, since new *mezuzos* are immediately placed on the doorposts. Based on this ruling, there is a common practice of having the new tenant, or his agent, remove the old *mezuzos* and install the new ones.

One should be careful to remove the "old" *mezuzah* before installing the new one, since having two *mezuzos* on one's door violates the prohibition of adding to the Torah's mitzvos, *bal tosif* (*Pischei Teshuvah* 291:2). Just as one may not add a fifth *parsha* to one's *tefillin* when the Torah requires four, and just as a *kohen* may not add a fourth *bracha* to the three *brachos* of *duchening*, so may one not add a second *mezuzah* to the doorpost when the Torah requires only one. For the same reason, one who moves to a house that has an old, painted over *mezuzah* on the door must remove that *mezuzah*, even if it is probably invalid, and not just affix a kosher *mezuzah* alongside it.

MEZUZAH SWITCH

At this point, we can now address our first question:

"We are moving residences, and I understand that I must leave the *mezuzos* in my old home. However, they are beautiful, *mehudar mezuzos* that I would like to use in my new dwelling. Is there any way that I can take these *mezuzos* with me?"

The answer: One may remove the nice *mezuzos* one has on his door and replace them with kosher, non-*mehudar mezuzos*. Since one is leaving the house with a kosher *mezuzah*, this suffices to protect the house (*Da'as Kedoshim*, *Yoreh Deah* 291:1).

At this point, we can discuss our third question, concerning someone using a house in *Eretz Yisrael* who borrowed a *mezuzah*. It is indeed true that *Chazal* required a person to place a *mezuzah* on his doorpost in Israel, even if he stays only overnight. However, may he remove the *mezuzah* when he vacates?

In this case, there is an interesting complication, since the person borrowed a *mezuzah* and must return it. Assuming that the landlord and/or future residents are/will be Jewish, he cannot leave the house without a *mezuzah*. He can, of course, resolve the problem by putting up replacement *mezuzos* for the borrowed ones, but this is a solution that he wants to avoid.

The problem was resolved by contacting the management of the building. The management was interested in having a *mezuzah* on the door of the residence and took care of the matter.

MEZUZAH REWARDS

Aside from fulfilling a mitzvah commanded by *Hashem*, the mitzvah of *mezuzah* serves to remind us constantly of His presence, every time we enter and exit our houses. In addition, the *Gemara* teaches that someone who is meticulous in his observance of the laws of *mezuzah* will merit acquiring a nice home (*Shabbos* 23b). We thus see that care in observing this mitzvah not only protects one's family against any calamity, but also rewards one with a beautiful domicile. May we all be *zocheh* to be careful, always, in our observance of the laws of *mezuzah* and the other mitzvos, and reap all the rewards, both material and spiritual, for doing so!