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Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Ki Seitzei 5774

Rav Chaim Kanievesky in his Sefer Taima Dik'ra very often points out that when a word in the Torah is written Choseir, a word that is normally written with an Oy sound that has a Vav in the word and occasionally that Vav is left out there is always a Remez, always a hint. He mentions a few such hints in this week's Parsha. The 21:18 (בן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה) Ben Soreir Umoreh, the child who is misbehaving is called (בן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה) which is spelled Mem, Vav, Reish, Hei which is Malei. Later when parents come to Bais Din they say 21:20 (בְּנֵי זֶה סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה). There the word (וּמוֹרֵה) is spelled Choseir without the Vav. Whenever a word is spelled Choseir, Rav Chaim Kanievesky explains, it means that it is a little less. Since it is a tendency of parents to belittle the faults of their children, when they talk about the faults of their children they belittle the fault, so (בְּנֵי זֶה סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה). It is written Choseir. A beautiful understanding and consistent with the way Rav Chaim explains throughout. That when the Vav is missing, the Malei is missing, it means that there is a little less.

Similarly, when the Torah talks about the man who has two wives in 21:15 (וְהָיָה הַבֵּן הַבְּכֹר,), Rav Chaim Kanievesky points out (הַבְּכֹרִים וְהַבְּרִיָּה וְהַבְּרִיָּה שְׁנֵיהֶם). The word Bechor in the Torah is almost always written Malei with a Vav between the Chaf and the Reish. Here, by the (הַבֵּן הַבְּכֹר, לְשֵׁנֵיהֶם) there are four or five times that the word Bechor is written Choseir. Halo Davar Hu! Says Rav Chaim Kanievesky, the GRA already explained that this Parsha is talking about a man who marries (הַבְּרִיָּה וְהַשְּׂנֵיאוֹת) and the oldest child by conception is to the (אֵהָרָה) and the oldest child by birth is to the (שְׁנֵיאוֹת). The Torah is talking about such a Bechor who is a Bechor in birth but not at the time of conception. Since we are not talking about a full-fledged Bechor, (בְּכֹר) is written Choseir. That even a Bechor missing one aspect of Bechor still has a Din of Bechor. A beautiful way to look at the Pesukai Hatorah. I might add that on the Posuk in 22:5 (לֹא-יִהְיֶה כְּלִי-גִבּוֹר עַל-אִשָּׁה, וְלֹא-יִלְבַּשׁ גָּבֵר (שְׂמֵלַת אִשָּׁה) on the Issur of a man to wear a women's clothing or a woman to wear a man's clothing, Rav Chaim Kanievesky brings the Shaila as to whether

included in this is there a prohibition for a man to take a woman's name or a woman to take a man's name. He brings a Divrei Malkiel in a Teshuva who says that a man should not take a woman's name or the reverse. Rav Chaim Kanievesky in his incredible Bekius brings 79 instances in Chazal where we find a man and a woman with the same name. Incredible! In one example he brings Yonah Hanavi (a male) and the wife of Asher we find with the name Yonah. Indeed today, Yonah is found as a woman's name as well. So that he finds a whole list of such names with his incredible Bekius.

3. Turning to one final thought, we turn to the father of Rav Chaim Kanievesky Yibadeil L'chaim, the Steipler. In this week's Parsha we have marriage, the concept of marriage, the institution of marriage (כִּי-יִקַּח אִישׁ, אִשָּׁה) is introduced to us. In marrying a woman there are two steps required. One is called Kiddushin. Kiddushin is the giving of the ring (first Mishnah in Maseches Kiddushin) - (הַאִשָּׁה נִקְנִית בְּשֵׁלשׁ דְּרָכִים וְקוּנָה אֶת עֲצָמָהּ בְּשֵׁתֵי דְרָכִים) - (נִקְנִית בְּכֶסֶף בְּשֵׁטֶר וּבִבְיָאָה Today, we do Kiddushin the first step together with the second step. The second step is Chuppah or Nissuin. What we call Chuppah, the Yichud Room, Nisuin. In the time of Chazal it was the custom to do Kiddushin at one point and Chuppah (Nisuin) many months later. Today we do them both together. The issue is in the understanding of why it should be so. There are many Kinyanim in the Torah. One buys a field let us say, he does one Kinyan and he acquires the field. When one buys an object he does one Kinyan and buys an object. We don't find ever that we do two Kinyanim, two acts of acquisition to acquire anything. Why is it unique to marriage that we find this idea that there are two Kinyanim?

The Steiper in Siman 19 of the Kehillas Yaakov on Maseches Kiddushin (B'inyan Kiddushai Bi'a page # 71 – 72) explains a Halachik issue by explaining the difference between Kiddushin and Nissuin. He explains as follows. I will be Makdim with a Mashal. You buy a piece of land, you buy a pair of shoes, or you buy a car. When you buy it you acquire it. What happens after you acquire is not very important to us, it is not important to the Torah. You buy shoes take it on the bus and you forget and leave it on the bus. Your shoes are traveling all over New York City to the bus depot. Wherever they go they are yours. Eventually, you will be Meyaish. There is not much of importance in the eyes of Chazal except who owns it, who are the Bailim. When it comes to marriage it is not that way. In addition to the acquisition to acquiring a wife, there is also the ongoing relationship. The ongoing relationship is the fundamental part of marriage.

The Steipler explains. There is only one Maiseh Kinyan, one act of Kinyan in marriage and that is Kiddushin, putting on the ring. The second step we call Chuppah. Chuppah has many phases. Some understand it to be the Yichud Room, the Ran at the beginning of Kesubos understands it to be the man taking his wife to his home, and others understand it to be the canopy. Still others, the Minhag of many Jews is to spread a single Tallis over Chosson and Kallah. These are all part of Chuppah. They are not methods of acquisition. They are statements of Metzuius. They state that there is a certain fact. The fact is they are married. They are standing in a manner of husband and wife. Whether it is a single item of clothing spread over the two of them, or a canopy, or a Yichud Room, they are making a statement that they are sitting in the Metzuius of husband and wife. To be married you need a Kinyan but you also need the Metzuius of Ish V'ishto together.

With this he explains a Maaseh, a story that happened with Rashi as brought in the Mordechai. In the Maaseh, a couple got married as we have the custom of getting married today, Kiddushin and Yichud Room. Later after the wedding was long over and they were home, they realized that the Eidai Kiddushin, the witnesses at the time of Kiddushin were relatives and therefore, the Kiddushin was invalid. Rashi was consulted and he instructed them to do the Kiddushin again, to bring two Kosher witnesses and to perform the act of Kiddushin, the giving of the ring once again. They asked Rashi does that mean that we have to get a Chuppah, canopy, and a Yichud Room again. Rashi said no it is not necessary. The question is why not, Kiddushin always precedes Nissuin. Why here could Nissuin precede Kiddushin? The Steipler explains Rashi that Nissuin creates a Metzuius, a

Matzav, it is an announcement. It is an announcement to those watching that this is husband and wife. They are standing under a canopy as husband and wife. When you create a Metzuius it is not like a Kinyan. A Kinyan takes a second and it is over. When you create a Metzuius it lasts. By creating the Metzuius of Ish V'ishto that remains and later when they do the Kiddushin the Nissuin is automatic. That Metzuius, that fact, that Matzav continues. What a tremendous insight into the Kavanas Hatorah. Of course into a general insight in marriage, the Matzav of marriage, a Matzav of being together. That is what makes the marriage.

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date: Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 9:49 PM
subject: Kol Torah Parashat Ki Teitzei 2016

**Gain/Loss – It's not about the Money
by Rabbi Ezra Wiener**

The prohibition of taking interest is discussed in several locations throughout the Torah, including in Parashat Ki Teitzei. The Gemara (Bava Metzia 75b) relays the severity of this prohibition by stating Rabi Shimon's opinion that those who lend with interest are indirectly ridiculing Moshe Rabbeinu and saying: "Ilu Hayah Yodei'a Moshe Rabbeinu SheYihyeh Revach BaDavar, Lo Hayah Kotevo," "If Moshe Rabbeinu would have known that there is profit in the matter of lending interest, he never would have written that it is forbidden." Rabi Shimon makes another statement about those who lend with interest: "Malvei Ribbit, Yoteir MiMah SheMarvichim, Mafsidim," "Those who lend with interest lose more than they gain." Rashi explains what the word "Mafsidim" means based on the Gemara earlier (71a). The Gemara quotes a Pasuk from Tehillim (15:5) praising one who lends money without taking interest and stating that such a person shall not falter forever - "Kaspo Lo Natan BeNeshech... Oseih Eileh Lo Yimot LeOlam." The Gemara then infers: "Ha Lamadta SheKol HaMalveh BeRibbit Nechasav Mitmotetin," "Anyone who lends with interest will have his possessions eventually falter." Those who do not comply with this injunction will suffer a permanent downfall, and that, writes Rashi, is what "Mafsidim" means.

Ben Yehoyada questions Rashi's interpretation of "Yoteir MiMah SheMarvichin Mafsidim" - "They lose more than they gain." Such a prognostication implies not necessarily as Rashi writes, based on the Gemara on 71a, that he will lose the interest he has gained, but rather that he may profit in this endeavor but will surely lose in another business venture. "More than what they stand to gain here, they will lose elsewhere." Additionally, the language of the other Gemara of "Mitmotetin" connotes that gradually his profits will falter and be lost. This may happen throughout the generations, even if the original sinner profited. It is thus difficult to assume that our Gemara's statement that the one who lends with interest loses more than he gains refers to such a person. He indeed gains more than he loses, at least during his own lifetime. How could it be that such a person who takes interest can prosper, and only generations later have his family be punished for his actions?

Therefore, Ben Yehoyada offers a different interpretation of the phrase, "Malvei BeRibbit, Yoteir MiMah SheMarvichin, Mafsidin." It indeed refers to the lender himself, and it also refers to the specific endeavor, business transaction, loan, etc. in which the interest is taken. He explains his opinion by relating a story of an exchange between two Jews: Reuven tells Shimon how profitable his carpentry business has been: "It's due, by and large, to my ambitious, compulsive work ethic as I have a 'no rest for the weary' business philosophy. 'MiMizrach Shemesh Ad Mevo'o' I am working. I work through the night on various projects, not allowing myself to fall asleep, and I am even working with my hands as I chew my food during meals." His friend Shimon responds: "I am also unceasingly profiting from my business but I have plenty of leisure time to sleep and to relax for recreation. I even have extra time to pray and study Torah. You can't profit on Shabbat and

Yom Tov or when you are in the bathroom, but I profit even at these times. In fact, when we are all beating our chests on Yom Kippur and confessing 'Al Cheit SheChatanu Lefanecha BeNeshech UVeMarbit,' I am still making money. My business is more profitable and affords me plenty of leisure time since I lend money on interest. No time is ever lost."

The Midrash on the Pasuk in Tehilim (55:24), "Anshei Damim UMirmah, Lo Yechetzu Yemeihem," "Men of blood and deceit will not live out even half of their lives," remarks, "Eilu HaMalvim BeRibbit" - this Pasuk, which discusses the men who will live short lives, refers to those that lend with interest. How are we to understand this Midrash? After all, plenty of Jews who are charging interest from other Jews are living out their full life. Ben Yehoyada quotes the Gemara in Shabbat (89b) where Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmeiny, in the name of Rabi Yonatan, expounds upon a Pasuk in Yeshayahu (63:16). This Gemara tells us that in the future, Hashem will tell Avraham, "your children have sinned," to which Avraham will respond, "let them be wiped out for Your name." Unsatisfied with this reply, Hashem will say to Himself, "now I will ask Ya'akov, who had great Tza'ar Gidul Banim (pain raising children), the same question. But Ya'akov will respond the same way as Avraham. Once again, Hashem will be unhappy with this response, so He will say to Himself, "The older one lacks reasoning, and the younger one lacks good counsel; I will ask Yitzchak." Yitzchak will reply to Hashem, "Why do You refer to them as my children, when they're Your children as well. In fact, you call them 'Bnei Bechori Yisrael!' Besides, how much could they really have sinned? How many are a man's years? Seventy. Take away the first twenty since the Heavenly court does not punish one for sins committed before age twenty. So there are fifty years left. Take away half (twenty-five) of that during which the time is spent sleeping and resting. Take away half again (twelve and a half) for time Davening, eating, and being in the bathroom. Therefore, there a maximum of twelve and a half years in which there is potential to sin. If You will shoulder all of that time, good, and if not, we will split it, and at the very worst, I will bear it myself."

Ben Yehoyada now explains: All of the years that have been subtracted, which formed the basis of Yitzchak's vindication, resurface for the one who lends with interest. About him it cannot be said that his time in the bathroom, davening, and sleeping are not potential targets for the Satan to be used in his arsenal of evidence for prosecution of the Jew in the Heavenly court. The Malveh BeRibbit is proud of the fortune he has built with little effort on his part and unfortunately, his prohibited practices are accelerated and propagated by his success. The amenities afforded by his successful business, the affluence it brings, and the self-image buttressed by it create an allure for the youth who, when confronted with a conflict between Jewish law and the temporal bliss of material gratification, will fall prey to these formidable dangers, enticed by the materialism, reinforced by the acclaim afforded to the wealthy regardless of how it was earned and eviscerate Judaism from one of its fundamental precepts. This is what the Gemara in Bava Metzia is teaching: Those who lend with Ribbit lose more than they gain. They are under the impression that they profit more than others as they physically gain money even during down time eating, sleeping, etc. But it is precisely for this reason that they lose. This becomes the basis of the prosecution when one enters the Olam HaEmet, and this person who lends with interest is asked, "Nasata VeNatata BeEmuna," "Did you conduct your business faithfully and truthfully?" His exploitative efforts and determination will be his ultimate downfall.

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Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog KI TEITZEI

The brutality of war, which of course is unavoidable since the immediate purpose of war is to kill as many of one's adversaries as possible, transforms the moral compass and the logical judgment of soldiers. The Torah posits a case of a Jewish soldier taking and assaulting a non-Jewish woman captive. It then forces that soldier into a marriage with the woman that will undoubtedly have generational consequences. The Torah also recognizes the psychological damage that such a relationship will suffer because of the original act engendered by war. Divorce, family dysfunction and domestic discord are most likely to follow this couple in the near and far future. Yet, the Torah makes allowances for such an occurrence in the first place. Why should the Torah countenance such seemingly immoral behavior? Does this not legitimize immoral and violent behavior? The Torah not only opposes sin but it is very careful to emphasize that even the appearance of possible sin is to be avoided at all costs. Yet, here we see an entire section of the Torah that is devoted to somehow allowing and condoning what in all other circumstances would be considered a sinful and fairly negative pattern of behavior. So, why does not the Torah simply forbid the act initially, as it forbids many other acts of human desire and violent behavior? Why here is allowance made for human weakness and error when in so many of other cases of this type, the moral code of the Torah remains steady and inflexible?

This moral dilemma has vexed the scholars of Israel throughout the ages. Rashi here, quoting Talmud and Midrash, states that the Torah here recognizes and "speaks" to the base nature and animalistic desires of humans. It therefore accommodates itself to the situation and attempts to channel it into a more positive relationship with all of the laws that it then formulates for observance. But this really only begs the original question of why is this case allowed to be so exceptional and other instances of the same type of base human nature are explicitly forbidden under almost all circumstances. There is an instance of insight that does appear in the comments of the later rabbis to this matter. In essence, it states that war by its very nature changes the human nature of the soldiers who participate in its battles. The soldier is no longer a human being in the sense that he once was but rather he becomes a legitimate killer who is to become devoid of all ordinary human feelings, restrictions and inhibitions. As such, the soldier requires a special code of law that is not relevant to ordinary people and usual situations. It is to this state of being that the Torah addresses itself. Unfortunately, war has been a steady occurrence throughout human history. Peace is the rarity, not war. The Torah in recognizing this sad fact of human existence thus makes necessary adjustments, unpleasant and dangerous as they may be, to this ugly fact of life. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Contemporary Mechir Kelev Questions

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Practical applications of Mechir Kelev "Are there any practical applications of the mitzvos of esnan zonah and mechir kelev that apply before the Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt?"

Question #2: Unusual Rashi Stew Dent asked me the following question: "Someone told me that there is a comment of Rashi in this week's parshah that does not follow the accepted halachah. Is this true? Why would Rashi explain a pasuk not according to the accepted halachah?"

Question #3: Doug from the Outback Doug, originally from the Outback, asked one of the most unusual questions of my rabbinic career:

"Rabbi, I am a recent baal teshuvah, and I discovered that the Torah prohibits offering a korban of an animal that was once exchanged for a dog. Although this problem should not be germane when we have no Beis Hamikdash, I believe I created such a problem, and I want to rectify the situation. I grew up in a rural area, where my folks still live. They own sheep and other livestock. My folks, like all their neighbors, own watchdogs, sheep dogs, and a few pet dogs, one of which, Charlie, was always regarded as mine. A neighbor's child had taken a liking to Charlie, and, before I left home for yeshivah in Israel, I wanted to give Charlie to the neighbor, figuring that this child would provide

Charlie with a good, loving home, and plenty of attention. My neighbor insisted on giving us something in return for Charlie – a yearling lamb -- which I accepted.

"Although I understand that I did nothing wrong in exchanging Charlie for a lamb, I also understand that this lamb is no longer kosher for a korban. I am concerned that this lamb may get confused with the other lambs and sheep on Dad's ranch, and then none of them will be usable for korbanos. May I have them brand the lamb, so that it does not get confused with the other lambs on the ranch? After all, it would be nice to be a purveyor of animals for korbanos in the rebuilt Beis Hamikdash!"

Answer: I am quite certain that I have not been asked previously about the mitzvah of mechir kelev, which is mentioned in this week's parshah. To quote the Torah:

Lo savi esnan zonah umechir kelev beis Hashem Elokecha lechol neder, ki so'avas Hashem Elokecha gam sheneihem, "You shall not bring the gift of a harlot or something exchanged for a dog to the house of Hashem your G-d as a donation, for both of them are despicable to Hashem, your G-d (Devarim 23:19). The animal, or item, bartered for a dog is called mechir kelev, and this term is also used to describe the prohibition. Before answering the above questions, we need to discuss the basic laws of this mitzvah.

If someone exchanged a dog for a lamb, a calf, or some doves, none of these animals may be used any longer as korbanos; and the same is true if he exchanged a dog for flour, wine or oil: they may no longer be used for korbanos (Temurah 30b).

However, the prohibition applies only to the actual item that was exchanged for a dog. If someone sold a dog, and then used the cash to purchase a lamb, this lamb may see service as a korban (see Temurah 30b; Aruch Hashulchan He'asid 56:18).

Shinuy – the item changed What if the original exchanged item has undergone major modification? Is there still a prohibition of mechir kelev?

The Gemara (Temurah 30b) records a dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel whether an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev that underwent a permanent physical change is still prohibited to be used as a korban. According to Beis Hillel, only an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev that appears as it originally did, or could be converted back to its original appearance, is prohibited, but not if it has been processed into a different form (see Minchas Chinuch 571; Aruch Hashulchan He'asid 56:23). Thus, for example, if grain, grapes or olives were used either as an esnan zonah or as a mechir kelev, and then the grain was ground into flour, the grapes were pressed into wine or the olives were crushed into oil, the resultant flour, wine and oil may be used for korbanos, since they have undergone a permanent transformation. This change is called a shinuy.

Beis Shammai disagrees, contending that a transformation, even a permanent one, does not remove the stigma of the item being an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev. This approach contends that grain, grapes or olives used as an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev remain prohibited forever as korbanos, even after they have been processed into flour, wine or oil.

What is the basis of the dispute between Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai? It is based on a dispute regarding how one understands the end of our verse: Lo savi esnan zonah umechir kelev beis Hashem Elokecha lechol neder, ki so'avas Hashem Elokecha gam sheneihem. The Gemara (Temurah 30b) notes that the words gam sheneihem, literally, "for both of them," appear to be redundant, which provides basis for deriving halachos from the seemingly extra words of the Torah. Both Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel interpret the word them in the verse to mean that the offspring of a ewe or cow that became an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev may be offered as a korban – the stigma of esnan zonah or mechir kelev is restricted to the animal that was, itself, presented as a gift or exchanged, not to its offspring. The offspring is permitted, unless the original "business deal" of esnan zonah or mechir kelev specified that the unborn offspring was included in the transaction of the esnan zonah or the mechir kelev (Minchas Chinuch 571; Aruch Hashulchan He'asid 56:23).

Beis Shammai explains that the additional word gam, "for," expands the items included in the prohibition of esnan zonah and mechir kelev to teach that even if the original esnan zonah or mechir kelev became transformed permanently, it remains prohibited. Thus, Beis Shammai derives from the word gam that the grain, grapes or olives used as an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev remain prohibited as korbanos, even after they have been processed into flour, wine or oil.

Beis Hillel, on the other hand, holds that the word them in the verse teaches both that the offspring of an esnan zonah or mechir kelev mother may be used as a korban and that an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev that underwent a change become permitted as a korban. Thus, Beis Hillel derives two laws from one extra word of the verse, and no law from the other extra word, which is unusual. The Gemara notes this difficulty with Beis Hillel's approach, but does not resolve it. Nevertheless, the authorities assume that the halachah is in accordance with the opinion of Beis Hillel, as it usually is (Rambam, Hilchos Issurei Mizbeich 4:18).

An obscure Rashi At this point, I would like to examine Stew Dent's question, quoted at the beginning of our article:

“Someone told me that there is a passage of Rashi in this week’s parshah that does not follow the accepted halachah. Is this true? Why would Rashi explain a pasuk not according to the accepted halachah?”

Rashi explains that the word gam teaches that if someone gave wheat as an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev and it was then processed into flour, the prohibition remains intact, and the flour cannot be offered as a korban. Thus, Rashi explains the verse in a way that follows Beis Shammai’s opinion. The Ramban questions how Rashi can explain the verse in accordance with Beis Shammai, when the halachic conclusion follows Beis Hillel.

One of the answers provided to explain Rashi’s opinion allows much food for thought. The Mizrachi contends that Rashi follows Beis Shammai’s opinion since the Gemara raises a question on Beis Hillel’s opinion that it does not resolve. Thus, Beis Shammai’s ruling is the approach that fits the verse with more clarity. According to the Mizrachi, this means that, in this instance, Rashi disputed the halachic conclusion of the other authorities and ruled according to Beis Shammai. Alternatively, Rashi felt it more important to explain the Chumash in a clearer way, regardless of the halachic ramifications (Sifsei Chachamim).

Thus, indeed, Stew’s question is very much in order.

Which of the nineteen? The Gemara discusses the following case: Reuven owned ten lambs, whereas Shimon owned a dog and nine lambs that were smaller or otherwise less valuable than Reuven’s ten lambs. The two of them agreed to trade Reuven’s ten lambs in exchange for Shimon’s dog and nine scrawny lambs. The Gemara asks whether any or all of these lambs are now prohibited as mechir kelev.

The Gemara concludes as follows: The nine scrawny lambs that were swapped along with the dog may be used for korbanos, whereas the ten lambs that were received in exchange all qualify now as mechir kelev and are therefore prohibited as korbanos.

Why is this so? The answer is that, since the dog is clearly worth more than any of the lambs, part of the value of the dog was included in the exchange differential when ten more expensive lambs were traded for nine of lesser value. Therefore, each of the ten is considered to have been exchanged, albeit only partially, for a dog, and this is sufficient to confer on them the status of mechir kelev (Temurah 30a). However, the nine scrawnier lambs were never exchanged for a dog – they were on the same side of the deal as the dog.

Similarly, in a case where two brothers divided an estate in such a way that one received a lamb while his brother received a dog, the lamb is now considered a mechir kelev, prohibited for a korban (Temurah 30a).

What is prohibited? Someone who shechted (slaughtered) either an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev as a korban, or performed zerikah or hakarah, putting parts of these animals on the mizbeiach, the altar, is subject to the punishment of malkus for violating the Torah’s prohibition (Minchas Chinuch 571).

It is curious to note that, although one may not offer an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev as a korban, someone who declares them to be a korban does not violate any technical prohibition of the Torah. Furthermore, it is permitted to declare these animals as property of the Beis Hamikdash (bedek habayis), in which case, the treasurers of the Beis Hamikdash sell the esnan zonah or the mechir kelev and use the money for repairs in the Beis Hamikdash. This is permitted, since the esnan zonah or the mechir kelev will not be used for a korban.

One prohibition or two? Are esnan zonah and mechir kelev two different prohibitions, lo saaseh commandments, of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah, or are they counted together as one lo saaseh commandment?

This matter is the subject of a dispute between rishonim. The Rambam contends that esnan zonah and mechir kelev are counted together as one of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah, whereas the Ramban contends that they are counted as two different mitzvos. The practical dispute between them is whether someone who offered both an esnan zonah and a mechir kelev at the same time receives punishment for violating two different offenses of the Torah, which means that he incurs two sets of malkus, or whether he is punished with malkus only once.

Mitzvos other than korbanos The opening question of our article was: “Are there any practical applications of the mitzvos of esnan zonah and mechir kelev that apply before the Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt?” I would like to first expand this question a bit. Do the mitzvos of esnan zonah and mechir kelev apply to any laws other than korbanos?

The answer is that the prohibitions of esnan zonah and mechir kelev are not restricted to the korbanos offered on the mizbeiach in the Beis Hamikdash, but extend to several other mitzvos of the Torah. For example, one may not bring bikkurim, brought of the seven types of produce for which Eretz Yisroel is celebrated, from produce that has the status of esnan zonah (Yerushalmi, Bikkurim 1:6; Aruch Hashulchan He’asid 56:22). This is because bikkurim are also brought to the Beis Hamikdash, and the Torah states: “You shall not bring the gift of a harlot or something exchanged for a dog to the house of Hashem, your G-d.”

The mitzvos of esnan zonah and mechir kelev apply also to items used to decorate the Beis Hamikdash itself, such as the gold plate applied to its walls (Temurah 30b). Some authorities contend that a parah adumah may also not be from either an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev, since the Torah calls parah adumah a chatas, a sin offering (Minchas Chinuch 571). There is also discussion about whether an eglah arufah may be from either an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev, since the Torah says that its purpose is to atone, similar to a korban. However, the halachic conclusion is that an esnan zonah or a mechir kelev calf may be used for the mitzvah of eglah arufah (Minchas Chinuch #571).

A shul donation Do the mitzvos of esnan zonah and mechir kelev have any practical application today? In actuality, there is a halachic ramification of these two mitzvos that is applicable today. The halachah is that the prohibitions of esnan zonah and mechir kelev both apply to an item donated for use in a shul (Rema, Orach Chayim 153:21). This is understood to mean that the Torah’s prohibition “You shall not bring the gift of a harlot or something exchanged for a dog to the house of Hashem, your G-d, as a donation” should be applied to any house of G-d, even a shul or a Beis Medrash. Therefore, a candelabrum or other item that was once exchanged for a dog, cannot be used in a shul or as building material for a shul (Minchas Chinuch 571:2). However, if someone sold a dog for money, the money received may be donated to the shul, since the money itself is not being used.

We are now ready to analyze Doug’s question. Doug correctly noted one of the interesting aspects of mechir kelev: It is permitted to trade something for a dog, yet the item received in exchange becomes prohibited as a korban. This juxtaposes to esnan zonah, which is banned only when the gift was in exchange for an illicit relationship (Temurah 30a).

Korbanos from outside Eretz Yisroel Doug is also correct that korbanos may be brought from animals from outside of Eretz Yisroel (Parah 2:1; Temurah 21a; Rambam, Hilchos Maasei Hakorbanos 18:1). Therefore, any sheep in Dad’s flock that are unblemished are all valid for korbanos, at least until the introduction of a mechir kelev into their midst.

Went along with the herd Doug is also correct that if one animal that is a mechir kelev was in a large herd of cattle, and one does not know which one is the mechir kelev, none of the animals in that herd may be offered as korbanos (Mishnah, Temurah 28a). Thus, there is a basis for his concern that the introduction of one mechir kelev could invalidate his father’s entire flock from use for korbanos.

Conclusion The Sefer Hachinuch explains that although we never know why Hashem commanded us to observe specific mitzvos of the Torah, we can, nevertheless, derive a moral lesson, a taste, of what the mitzvah teaches. The Ramban presents a very nice explanation why the animals acquired by way of esnan zonah and mechir kelev may not be used as korbanos. Often, it happens that a person performs activities that are unacceptable, but feels that he can redeem himself by donating a percentage of his profits to a good, charitable cause. In his mind, he has now justified his misdeeds, because of the mitzvah he performed afterwards. By prohibiting esnan zonah, the Torah demonstrates that this is completely unacceptable. A person must face the sinful nature of his actions and not try to create an excuse with which to cover them up. Similarly, says the Ramban, those who use dogs for hunting and for other ill-advised activities may want to donate their exchanged value as atonement for their own misdeeds. The Torah wants it to be clearly understood that such donations are, themselves, misdeeds and are unacceptable; the perpetrator cannot attempt to hide his sins behind his charitable activities.

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The Limits of Love – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Ki Teitve - Covenant & Conversation 5776 / 2016 on Spirituality

In a parsha laden with laws, one in particular is full of fascination. Here it is: If a man has two wives, one loved, the other unloved [senuah, literally “hated”], and both the loved and the unloved bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the unloved wife, then when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the beloved wife in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the unloved wife. He must recognise [the legal rights of] the firstborn of his unloved wife so as to give him a double share of all he has, for he is the first of his father’s strength. The birthright is legally his. (Deut. 21:15-17).

The law makes eminent sense. In biblical Israel the firstborn was entitled to a double share in his father’s inheritance.¹ What the law tells us is that this is not at the father’s discretion. He cannot choose to transfer this privilege from

one son to another, in particular he cannot do this by favouring the son of the wife he loves most if in fact the firstborn came from another wife.

The opening three laws – a captive woman taken in the course of war, the above law about the rights of the firstborn, and the “stubborn and rebellious son” – are all about dysfunctions within the family. The sages said that they were given in this order to hint that someone who takes a captive woman will suffer from strife at home, and the result will be a delinquent son.² In Judaism marriage is seen as the foundation of society. Disorder there leads to disorder elsewhere. So far, so clear.

What is extraordinary about it is that it seems to be in the sharpest possible conflict with a major narrative in the Torah, namely Jacob and his two wives, Leah and Rachel. Indeed the Torah, by its use of language, makes unmistakable verbal linkages between the two passages. One is the pair of opposites, *ahuvah/senuah*, “loved” and “unloved/hated”. This is precisely the way the Torah describes Rachel and Leah.

Recall the context. Fleeing from his home to his uncle Laban, Jacob fell in love at first sight with Rachel and worked seven years for her hand in marriage. On the night of the wedding, however, Laban substituted his elder daughter Leah. When Jacob complained, “Why have you deceived me?” Laban replied, with intentional irony, “It is not done in our place to give the younger before the elder.³ Jacob then agreed to work another seven years for Rachel. The second wedding took place a mere week after the first. We then read:

And [Jacob] went in also to Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah ... God saw that Leah was unloved [*senuah*] and He opened her womb, but Rachel remained barren. (Gen. 29:30-31).

Leah called her firstborn Reuben, but her hurt at being less loved remained, and we read this about the birth of her second son: She became pregnant again and had a son. 'God has heard that I was unloved [*senuah*],' she said, 'and He also gave me this son.' She named the child Simeon. (Gen. 29:33). The word *senuah* appears only six times in the Torah, twice in the passage above about Leah, four times in our parsha in connection with the law of the rights of the firstborn.

There is an even stronger connection. The unusual phrase “first of [his father’s] strength” appears only twice in the Torah, here (“for he is the first of his father’s strength”) and in relation to Reuben, Leah’s firstborn: “Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first of my strength, first in rank and first in power” (Gen. 49:3).

Because of these substantive and linguistic parallels, the attentive reader cannot but hear in the law in our parsha a retrospective commentary on Jacob’s conduct vis-a-vis his own sons. Yet that conduct seems to have been precisely the opposite of what is legislated here. Jacob did transfer the right of the firstborn from Reuben, his actual firstborn, son of the less-loved Leah, to Joseph, the firstborn of his beloved Rachel. This is what he told Joseph:

“Now, the two sons who were born to you in Egypt before I came here shall be considered as mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be just like Reuben and Simeon to me.” (Gen. 48:5)

Reuben should have received a double portion, but instead this went to Joseph. Jacob recognised each of Joseph’s two sons as entitled to a full portion in the inheritance. So Ephraim and Menasseh each became a tribe in its own right. In other words, we seem to have a clear contradiction between Deuteronomy and Genesis.

How are we to resolve this? It may be that, despite the rabbinic principle that the patriarchs observed the whole Torah before it was given, this is only an approximation. Not every law was precisely the same before and after the covenant at Sinai. For instance Ramban notes that the story of Judah and Tamar seems to describe a slightly different form of levirate marriage from the one set out in Deuteronomy.⁴

In any case, this is not the only apparent contradiction between Genesis and later law. There are others, not least the very fact that Jacob married two sisters, something categorically forbidden in Leviticus 18:18. Ramban’s solution – an elegant one, flowing from his radical view about the

connection between Jewish law and the land of Israel – is that the patriarchs observed the Torah only while they were living in Israel itself.⁵ Jacob married Leah and Rachel outside Israel, in the house of Lavan in Haran (situated in today’s Turkey).

Abarbanel gives a quite different explanation. The reason Jacob transferred the double portion from Reuben to Joseph was that God told him to do so. The law in Devarim is therefore stated to make clear that the case of Joseph was an exception, not a precedent.

Ovadia Sforno suggests that the Deuteronomy prohibition applies only when the transfer of the firstborn’s rights happens because of the father favours one wife over another. It does not apply when the firstborn has been guilty of a sin that would warrant forfeiting his legal privilege. That is what Jacob meant when, on his deathbed, he said to Reuben: “Unstable as water, you will no longer be first, for you went up onto your father’s bed, onto my couch and defiled it.” (Gen. 49:4). This is stated explicitly in the book of Chronicles which says that “Reuben ... was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father’s marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel.” (1 Chron.5:1).

It is not impossible, though, that there is a different kind of explanation altogether. What makes the Torah unique is that it is a book about both law (the primary meaning of “Torah”) and history. Elsewhere these are quite different genres. There is law, an answer to the question, “What may we or may not do?” And there is history, an answer to the question, “What happened?” There is no obvious relationship between these two at all.

Not so in Judaism. In many cases, especially in *mishpat*, civil law, there is a connection between law and history, between what happened and what we should or should not do.⁶ Much of biblical law, for example, emerges directly from the Israelites’ experience of slavery in Egypt, as if to say: This is what our ancestors suffered in Egypt, therefore do not do likewise. Don’t oppress your workers. Don’t turn an Israelite into a lifelong slave. Don’t leave your servants or employees without a weekly day of rest. And so on.

Not all biblical law is like this, but some is. It represents truth learned through experience, justice as it takes shape through the lessons of history. The Torah takes the past as a guide to the future: often positive but sometimes also negative. Genesis tells us, among other things, that Jacob’s favouritism toward Rachel over Leah, and Rachel’s firstborn Joseph over Leah’s firstborn, Reuben, was a cause of lingering strife within the family. It also led the brothers to kill Joseph, and it did lead to their selling him as a slave. According to Ibn Ezra, the resentment felt by the descendants of Reuben endured for several generations, and was the reason why Datan and Aviram, both Reubenites, became key figures in the Korach rebellion.⁷ Jacob did what he did as an expression of love. His feeling for Rachel was overwhelming, as it was for Joseph, her elder son. Love is central to Judaism: not just love between husband and wife, parent and child, but also love for God, for neighbour and stranger. But love is not enough. There must also be justice and the impartial application of the law. People must feel that law is on the side of fairness. You cannot build a society on love alone. Love unites but it also divides. It leaves the less-loved feeling abandoned, neglected, disregarded, “hated.” It can leave in its wake strife, envy and a vortex of violence and revenge.

That is what the Torah is telling us when it uses verbal association to link the law in our parsha with the story of Jacob and his sons in Genesis. It is teaching us that law is not arbitrary. It is rooted in the experience of history. Law is itself a *tikkun*, a way of putting right what went wrong in the past. We must learn to love; but we must also know the limits of love, and the importance of justice-as-fairness in families as in society.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand A Resolution To The Conflict Between The Ben Sorer's Execution And Yishmael's Salvation

This week's parsha contains one of Torah's most perplexing set of laws – the wayward and rebellious son. The ben sorer u'moreh is a young man who has begun on a path of life that Chazal say will eventually lead to destruction and bloodshed. The Talmud says, "Let him die 'while innocent' rather than die after having committed a capital offense." The Gemara [Sanhedrin 68b] categorizes the situation with the famous words "ben sorer u'moreh needon al shem sofo": The wayward and rebellious son is judged based on what would be his end." Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi asks that this implementation of justice based on projection of future evil deeds appears to contradict a principle the Torah introduces in Parshas Vayera. When the young Yishmael was dying of thirst in the desert and crying out in the throes of death, an Angel appeared before his mother, Hagar, and told her "Do not fear, for Elokim has heard the voice of the lad b'asher hu sham [in his present state]." [Bereshis 21:17]. Our Sages say that the Ministering Angels came before the Almighty at that time and protested, "Master of the Universe, this person, whose descendants are destined to kill your children by forcing them to die of thirst – for him you miraculously provide a well to save his life?" Imagine if Yishmael had not survived this episode – imagine what this world would be like. Imagine the absence of the suffering that not only Klal Yisrael currently suffers but the absence of the suffering the entire world currently suffers because of the descendants of Yishmael! We would have all been spared from so many tzores if the well in the desert had not miraculously appeared to save Hagar's young son! The world endures so much suffering because of the descendants of Yishmael. This is the complaint of the Ministering Angels to the Almighty: The one whose children are going to kill your children – you miraculously save with a well? The Sages then record the Almighty's response to the angels: "Currently, is he guilty or innocent?" The angels conceded that at this point in his life the young Yishmael was innocent. The Almighty told them "I judge people only based on their current status" (Einee dan es ha'adaom elah b'sha'ato). Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi thus presents a glaring contradiction: On the one hand, by the wayward son, we kill him based on future actions and, on the other hand, by Yishmael, G-d only judges a person based on present status! The sefer Bei Chiyah suggests an answer to the Mizrachi's question. The Gemara [Rosh Hashana 18a] speaks of two people who had the same disease and also of two people who are accused of the same crime and sentenced to the same capital punishment. Despite these pairs of individuals facing virtually identical situations, it often turns out that one of the sick people is cured and one dies; one of those sentenced to death is executed and one escapes punishment. The Talmud asks: how is it that one lives and one dies in such a situation? The answer is "This one prayed and was answered; this one prayed and was not answered. This one prayed a 'complete prayer' (Tefilla shleima) and the other one prayed 'a prayer that was not complete.'" This answer should resonate with us as we enter the weeks leading up to Rosh HaShannah. The answer is that one davened with complete kavanah, with his whole heart and soul and therefore he was saved. The man who had the same illness or the same sentence but did not recover or escape his punishment did not pray 'a complete prayer'. We might ask – how does the Gemara know this? How does the Gemara know that the dichotomy of outcomes was due to a qualitative difference in their respective prayers? Maybe one person lived because he had many merits and maybe the other person died because he had many debits in his Heavenly ledger. How can the Gemara so confidently attribute this dichotomy of fates to Tefilla [prayer]? The Bei Chiyah says we see from this Gemara that if a person prays a 'complete prayer,' he has the capacity to survive no matter what "credits" or "debits" he may or may not have based on past actions. A person's fate is entirely dependent on the power of prayer. Everything else is irrelevant. The person who lived may have had terrible sins on his record, but the power of prayer trumped any of those negatives. On the other hand, a person who may have had merits, but did not invoke his power of prayer at the time of crises may not survive. This

can help us resolve the contradiction. The reason Yishmael was saved was not only because he was judged based on his current status. The rule of thumb is – as we see from ben sorer u'moreh – that a person may be executed based on future actions. However, by Yishmael another factor came into play: That factor was vaYishma es kol ha'naar [and He heard the voice of the lad]. Yishmael davened. Therefore, in spite of the fact that he was destined to kill Klal Yisrael and should have been "judged based on his end," his power of prayer trumped everything else. As we have mentioned in the past, this is something that the Bnei Yishmael do in fact have going for them. They are not idol worshippers and they are very serious about their tefilos. They pray five times a day. That is what saved them then and that – I guess – is what gives them the power to endure now as well. The only way we can trump them is also through the power of our prayers. May the Almighty hear our cries and finally bring this exile of Yishmael and Edom to an end.

A Bird Created B'Tzelem Elokim? The parsha also contains the mitzvah of sheeluach ha'ken. The Torah says that if a person finds a mother bird sitting on her eggs, "you shall surely send away the mother and the offspring you shall take for yourself." [Devorim 22:7] We may not remove the eggs or the chicks in the presence of the mother bird. There is a famous interpretation offered by the Netziv and others: Why is it that the Torah gave us this mitzvah forbidding us to take the young birds and the mother simultaneously? Think about it. Have you ever tried to catch a bird? It is virtually impossible. When I was a little boy, they used to tell me that the way to catch a bird is to put salt on its tail. Of course, being a small innocent child – it never worked. Why did it never work? Because you can never put salt on the tail of a bird! So why are we ever confronted with the situation where it is necessary to send away the mother bird? Why isn't the mother bird flying away like every other bird naturally does when approached by a human being? The answer is, says the Netziv, that because of the motherly instincts of compassion that the bird has for its brood, it sticks around. The mother bird defies her natural instinct to flee because of her stronger natural instinct to protect her offspring! Taking the mother would be taking unfair advantage of her maternal instincts to sacrifice her own well-being for the sake of her brood. The Torah does not want to allow this. The mother is doing what mothers should do. She is exhibiting compassion and we are not allowed to take advantage of this. The Avnei Nezer presents a similar idea to that of the Netziv, but with one difference, which is a tremendous insight. Until the time of Noach, mankind was forbidden to eat meat. Only after the Flood did meat become permitted to human beings [Bereshis 9:3]. The Flood triggered a tremendous change in man's diet – animals were now permitted for consumption. The Torah sums up the newly decreed permission to consume meat with the explanation: "...for in the image of G-d He made man" [Bereshis 9:6]. The simple reading of the pesukim [verses] is that these last words come to explain the first part of pasuk 9 ("Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed..."). In other words, the Torah is explaining why we may not kill another human being. However, the sefer Agra v'Kallah says it is saying more than that. He interprets: Do you know why we are allowed to kill animals for our benefit? It is because we (mankind) are the apex of creation. "For man was created in the image of G-d" does not only explain why homicide is prohibited; it also explains why we are allowed to kill animals for our food. It is because man is on top of the pyramid creation and animals are inferior to him. Until the Flood (when "all flesh corrupted their ways upon the earth" [Bereshis 6:12]) animals were on a higher spiritual level and therefore they could not be killed for consumption. After the sins that triggered the Flood, animals descended from their elevated spiritual status. What does it mean that a person is created "in the image of G-d" (b'tzelem Elokim)? The Abarbanel writes that the word tzelem [image] comes from the word tsel [shadow]. We all know the nature of a shadow: When a person raises his arm, his shadow also raises its arm; when a person turns his head; his shadow turns its head. B'tzelem Elokim asa es ha'adam means that we were created with the capacity to mimic the

Master of the Universe. How does one mimic the Master of the Universe? Just as He is compassionate, so too we need to be compassionate; just as He is generous, so too we need to be generous; just as He buries the dead, so too we need to bury the dead; just as He clothes the naked, so too we need to clothe the naked. We who are created b'Tselem Elokim have the capacity to imitate the Attributes of the Almighty. The Avnei Nezer says the following beautiful idea: When the mother bird does not fly away, she is not merely exhibiting compassion for her brood by protecting them. At that very moment that the bird exhibits the attribute of compassion, the bird is not just a bird any more – it is a higher form of creature. The bird is being a me'rachem [exhibiting compassion]. In a miniscule sense, it is now imitating and mimicking the Master of the Universe. The Avnei Nezer concludes: We are forbidden to take such a bird; we are forbidden to kill it. At that moment, it is not the same type of bird as we find in the market place. The whole heter [dispensation] to take birds, slaughter them, and eat them is because MAN was created in the "image of G-d" (but not animals or birds!). However, at this particular moment in time, when the bird is in fact acting with compassion, that bird becomes elevated. Therefore, "Thou shalt not take the mother; send away first the mother and then take the offspring." [Devorim 22:7]

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Parshas Ki Seitzei

Elul 5776 Rav Yochanan Zweig DOUBLE VISION

Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, when you came forth out of Egypt; how he attacked you on the way and struck at your rear those who were feeble... (25:17-18) This week's parsha ends with a short retelling of the story of Amalek attacking Bnei Yisroel after leaving Mitzrayim, and the exhortation that we never forget what they did to us. Rashi (ad loc) explains that the word "korchah - attacked you" has its roots in the Hebrew word "kor" which means cool. In other words, they cooled off the Jewish people. Meaning, until now the other nations were afraid of the Jewish people and wouldn't fight them, but when Amalek came and attacked them it "cooled them off" and showed the other nations that it was possible to fight Bnei Yisroel. Rashi continues with the following analogy: There was a bath that was scalding hot, to the point that it was unusable. One fellow came along, jumped in to the bath, and got severely burned. However, since he had bathed in it, he succeeded in cooling it sufficiently to be usable for others. So too, Amalek attacked us and cooled us to the point where other nations were now able to conceive of the idea that they too could fight us. Superficially, this sounds like an acceptable way of looking at what Amalek achieved. But if we probe just a bit deeper we begin to see how perplexing the logic behind this analogy really is. Amalek came and fought with Bnei Yisroel and Amalek was decimated. Wouldn't their epic failure serve as an incredible statement and proof of the power of Bnei Yisroel? In fact, logically this story seems to convey quite the opposite - that the Jewish people are absolutely not to be messed with. Amalek's defeat literally showcased the power and might of the Jewish people! What can Rashi possibly mean that "they cooled us off?" When Bnei Yisroel left Mitzrayim they were supposed to get the Torah and go right into Eretz Yisroel and begin the era of messianic times with Moshe as King Moshiach. The splitting of the Red Sea, according to Chazal, reverberated across the world to the point that everyone was aware of it. The Jewish people were supposed to lead a revolution against idol worship and fulfill Avraham's vision of monotheism for the world. We were supposed to bring everyone back to Hashem. When we left Mitzrayim, we were on an unstoppable mission of bringing the world to its final resolution. Then Amalek came and made an incredible statement. They attacked knowing that they would be annihilated - which was EXACTLY their point. Their startling statement was: This world is not worth living in if it is to be

the world of the Jewish people - we would prefer to die than live in a world where G-d is revealed and relevant. This is a powerful statement (and the obvious precursor to suicide murderers), and resembles those who perform self-immolation to bring attention to their cause; suicides which are powerful arguments against the status quo. Amalek succeeded in saying that there is an alternative to living in this world according to the vision of the Jewish people. What Rashi means that "they cooled us off" is that other nations will now contemplate whether or not our vision is right for them. Once Amalek attacked, we no longer had the overwhelming singular truth of our world vision because Amalek succeeded in placing doubt in other people's minds. Even though they lost terribly, they succeeded in raising the question as to whether or not this world is worth living in if it is a world according to the Jewish vision. They gave credence to other nations; allowing them to consider fighting us and our vision for the world. This was a devastating loss of credibility - something we can never forgive.

FAMILY INTEREST You shall not lend upon interest to your brother...to a stranger you may lend upon interest; but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest (23:20-21). This week's parsha contains the prohibition of lending money with interest to another Jew. It is prohibited to charge interest or pay interest to another Jew. Yet at the same time, the Torah makes it very clear that it is permissible to lend money to non-Jews and charge them interest. In fact, Maimonides (Yad - Malveh Veloveh 5:1) rules that it is a positive commandment to charge non-Jews interest. This dichotomy in lending practices has often been used as a pretext to attack Jews all over the world during the last two millennia. In truth, the laws against charging interest and paying interest require a deeper understanding. As an example: Reuven needs money to pay for his daughter's wedding, and he happens to know that his friend Shimon has a lot of money sitting in the bank earning 2% interest. Reuven wants to borrow some of that money but he feels very uncomfortable asking Shimon, especially knowing that Shimon would be losing that two percent interest that the bank is paying him. Reuven also realizes that he is already asking for a big favor because he knows that Shimon is taking a bigger risk by withdrawing it from the bank and lending it to him. Moreover, by Shimon lending Reuven the money and thereby losing his two percent earned interest, Reuven now feels like a charity case. In reality, Reuven would MUCH prefer to pay interest so that he isn't uncomfortable asking Shimon for the loan and isn't made to feel like he is receiving charity; so why should Reuven not be allowed to pay interest? The answer is that the Torah is teaching us that paying interest between two Jews isn't appropriate. Why not? Let's say that a person's mother needed money; would a healthy person charge their own mother interest? Or their son, or a brother? Of course not. Functional families are devoted to each other even at a cost. Moreover, a son asking his parents for a loan doesn't feel like he is receiving charity by not paying interest. The Torah is teaching us that the reason you aren't allowed to charge interest isn't because one should take advantage of another; the reason is because one Jew is obligated to treat another as family. This is why the Torah characterizes the borrower as family (23:20-21), "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother; ...to a stranger you may lend upon interest; but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest..." This also explains why it is not only okay to charge non-Jews interest but actually a mitzvah to do so. We need to internalize that they aren't our family. Obviously, we shouldn't charge exorbitant interest, just something reasonable that they are happy to accept. Non-Jews understand that they aren't family and they, in fact, are more comfortable asking for a loan and paying interest because otherwise it would be like receiving charity.

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OU Torah Ki Teitzei: The Rich Fruits of Forgiveness Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

The spirit of forgiveness is in the air.

Since the beginning of this month, the month of Elul, Sephardic communities have been reciting selichot, prayers petitioning the Almighty for his forgiveness. They have been doing so each and every day, rising before dawn in order to get to the synagogue on time. Ashkenazic communities, following their custom, will delay the recitation of these petitionary prayers until the week before Rosh Hashanah.

No matter one's liturgical custom, the theme of forgiveness is uppermost in the consciousness of every Jew. For some, beseeching the Almighty for His forgiveness is their primary concern. Others focus upon obtaining forgiveness from those whom they have offended during the course of the past year. Still others struggle with that most difficult task: begging forgiveness from those whom they have offended. One way or the other, forgiveness is our dominant concern for at this time of year.

When we turn to the Torah portions during these weeks it is only natural to search the text for references to this important theme. Sometimes those references are readily apparent. For example, last week we read this moving prayer: "Our hands did not shed this blood... Absolve, O Lord, Your people Israel... And do not let guilt for the blood of the innocent remain among Your people Israel... And they will be absolved of bloodguilt."

(Deuteronomy 21:7-8).

But this week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei (Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19), presents us with a challenge. Don't get me wrong. This week's parsha contains numerous laws about some very important topics, such as moral warfare, returning lost objects, proper treatment of runaway slaves, divorce, honesty in business affairs, and the concluding cautionary paragraph, urging us not to forget that vilest of our enemies, Amalek. But explicit references to forgiveness are absent.

Several years ago, I decided to meet the challenge and to burrow beneath the surface and find such references. The Talmud teaches us, "If you toil, you will find." Following this Talmudic advice, I toiled indeed. And I did not toil in vain, for I found quite a few hidden references to our central theme, one of which I hereby share with you.

There is a passage in this week's Torah portion which, far from exuding a spirit of forgiveness, reflects almost inexplicable harshness. Near the very beginning of our parsha, is the passage that deals with the ben sorer u'moreh, the wayward and defiant son. It reads:

"If a man has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town... They shall say to the elders of his town, 'This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' Thereupon the men of his town shall stone him to death. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst..." (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

There is no trace of forgiveness in these verses. Our Sages questioned the fairness of such a harsh punishment for such a young lad. Rashi, following Talmudic sources, reasons that this boy is not being punished for his current behavior. Rather, this behavior is indicative that he is headed for a life of great criminality, in which he will eventually steal and even murder in order to satisfy his gluttony and desire for drink. But those of us who read the text, especially if we are or have been parents ourselves, understandably search for some ray of hope for this wayward teenager.

One such ray of hope is found in this passage in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 88b: "This wayward and defiant son, this ben sorer u'moreh, if his parents wish to forgive him, he is forgiven."

At first blush, we wonder about this leniency. After all, if we are to follow Rashi's explanation of why he is so harshly condemned, we should be concerned that by forgiving him his parents have let loose a dangerous murderer upon society. The Torah seems convinced that this young lad is inevitably destined for a severely antisocial career. A strict reading of the

text demands that we eliminate this potential murderous hazard from our midst. Why should parental mercy of a father and mother be allowed to endanger the welfare of society?

One approach to understanding the power of parental forgiveness is provided by Rabbi Chaim Zaitchik, in a collection of masterful essays, entitled Maayanei HaChaim (Wellsprings of Life). He argues that whereas it can generally be assumed that a young man so wayward and so defiant can never overcome his perverse tendencies, such an assumption must be abandoned if experts can testify that he can be rehabilitated. Asks Rabbi Chaim, "What greater experts can there be than this boy's own parents?" They know him better than anyone else and if they forgive him, it must be that they have detected in him the capacity to shed the passions of youth which have heretofore led him astray.

This is one lesson of forgiveness. If you know a person well, you know that he can change his ways, and hence merit our forgiveness.

I would like to suggest another approach to understanding this passage in the Talmud. My approach rests upon my own observations during the course of my career as a psychotherapist. It was during those years of psychotherapeutic practice that I learned that forgiveness changes the behavior of the person who is forgiven. People who have offended others are often so moved by the fact that those others have forgiven them that they commit to a future of exemplary behavior. The experience of having been forgiven by the others signals them that those others trust them. They are so inspired by that new experience of being trusted that their behavior improves radically.

In the words of a preacher that I overheard on the radio long ago, "We don't forgive people because they deserve it. We forgive them because they need it."

Sometimes we think that there is a risk to forgiving those who have offended us. After all, we ask ourselves, "Are we not letting him 'off the hook'? Are we not absolving him from his responsibilities? Does he not consider us 'suckers' for having forgiven him?"

But I have found that the opposite is often true. Forgiving the offender ennobles him, and sends him a message which enables him to correct his past habits. In the words of none other than Abraham Lincoln: "I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice."

I must conclude by citing a "higher authority" than the greatest of American presidents. I present you with a verse from Psalms, as explicated by the great medieval commentator, Abraham ibn Ezra. The verse is Psalm 130:4, recited in many communities during the period from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur.

The verse reads: 'But with You there is forgiveness; therefore, You are feared.'

As some of you know, I authored a volume of essays on the Book of Psalms. Here is how I phrased the difficulty of this verse: "How does God's forgiveness lead to our fear of Him? Quite the contrary; one would think that we would be less fearful of a forgiving God, knowing that he would not punish us, but would readily forgive us?"

And here is how I presented ibn Ezra's response: "He points out that if sinners were convinced that there was no forgiveness for their iniquities, they would persuade themselves that repentance is hopeless. Why reform one's ways if one was damned to punishment anyway? Precisely the fact that God does forgive removes that hopelessness from them. They realize that if, out of fear of God, they approach Him and beg His forgiveness, they can be hopeful of attaining it. The fact that God forgives... motivates repentance and personal change."

As we approach the High Holidays, Days of Awe, but also Days of Mercy and Forgiveness, let us be moved by the Almighty's power of forgiveness to forgive others, to forgive ourselves, and to improve our ways so that we deserve His blessings for a blessed New Year. © 2016 Orthodox Union / All Rights Reserved

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Torahweb.org Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky Attaining Holiness

"Your camp shall be holy"- With these words the Torah sets the standards to which the Jewish camp must adhere as it engages in battle against its enemies. It is only by maintaining this sanctity that it can merit victory. This rallying call to holiness is what enables Hashem's presence to accompany the Jewish camp as it wages war. The Torah Shebal Peh explains that this standard of holiness is also mandated at any time we are accompanied by the Divine Presence. When mentioning Hashem's Name, either via the study of Torah or during davening or reciting brachos, the laws that govern the sanctity of the camp apply as well.

There are two halachic categories that comprise the standards of sanctity that must be met both in battle and during recitation of Torah and tefilla. The pesukim in Parshas Ki Teitsei delineate both of these requirements. Care must be taken after one physically relieves oneself that that surrounding area be treated appropriately. The Torah specifies requirements that there be a place outside the actual camp designated for this purpose lest the camp itself become defiled.

Additionally, every soldier must carry equipment with him to dig and properly cover human waste. The halachos that govern speaking words of Torah and tefilla in a bathroom are patterned after the sanctity required for the Jewish camp going out to battle.

There is a second aspect of holiness that must be maintained. Proper standards of physical modesty must be upheld at all times, but especially when Hashem's presence accompanies us. The Torah warns us that laxity in this area can cause Hashem's presence to depart. Similarly, there are halachos that prohibit the saying of words of Torah and tefilla in the presence of someone not dressed appropriately.

Is there a connection between these two areas of sanctity? The Rambam in Sefer Kedusha - The Book of Sanctity - includes two areas of halacha: the laws that govern prohibited marriages and the laws of kashrus. These laws are incorporated together to comprise the standards of holiness a Jew must attain. What is the essence of holiness that specifically includes these halachos?

The source of all holiness is Hashem, whom we refer to as Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We are commanded to emulate Hashem by being holy ourselves. Hashem is completely spiritual, therefore He is holy. We are both physical and spiritual and therefore find being holy to be a challenge. It is only by emphasizing our spiritual dimension instead of our physical side can we attain sanctity. There are two human endeavors that challenge us to focus on our spiritual side notwithstanding the physical nature of these activities. Both marital relations and eating can potentially become mere ways to pursue physical pleasure. In these two areas we can elevate ourselves by focusing on the spiritual dimensions of these otherwise physical acts. Hashem has given us the opportunity to bring children into the world and provide ourselves with physical sustenance. The laws of marriage and kashrus ensure that our perspective in these areas remains focused on spiritual goals. In this way we can become holy, thereby emulating the holiness of Hashem.

The halachic antithesis of holiness is impurity. It is for this reason that one who is impure cannot enter the Beis Hamikdash or partake of korbanos. A human body transmits impurity upon death. Devoid of the spiritual soul, the physical corpse is a source of impurity. The Torah refers to violations in the realm of prohibited relationships and kashrus as acts of impurity.

After the intricacies of kashrus are elaborated upon in Parshas Shmini, the Torah concludes by warning us not to become impure by eating non-kosher food. Similarly, in Parshas Acharei Mos the laws governing prohibited marriages are followed by a warning not to defile ourselves by the impurity of these relationships.

Eating for our physical sustenance to advance our spiritual growth is an act of kedusha. After we have used the properties of food for our nourishment, the waste product which is devoid of any spiritual content is a source of impurity and, as such, it has no place in the Jewish camp which is accompanied by the Holy Presence of Hashem. Inappropriate activity that abuses the spiritual dimensions of marital relations is a source of impurity that is not compatible with the presence of Hashem's sanctity.

These lessons of sanctity speak to us not only in times of war and when we are mentioning Hashem's name. Throughout our lives, we must be careful in these realms that can be detrimental to our quest for holiness. May Hashem who is the Source of all kedusha assist us to overcome any challenges to our sanctity. May we merit to attain a state of kedusha and tahara, thereby meriting the presence of Hashem to accompany us in all of our endeavors.
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***Peninim On The Torah By Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Parshas Ki Setzei
If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son. they shall say to the
elders of the city, "This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not
listen to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard." (21:18,20)***

The ben sorer u'moreh, wayward and rebellious son, has to be one of Jewish society's greatest tragedies. A child so evil that his parents bring him to bais din, rabbinical court, where, upon confirmation of his nefarious acts of gluttony and derogation of his parents, he will be executed, is unusual and tragic. His actions indicate a complete lack of restraint necessary to lead an observant and holy life. While this concept is quite difficult for anyone not steeped in Torah to understand, let alone accept, it is primarily due to their not being steeped in Torah that grasping the true egregiousness of this evil and - yes - the positive aspect of the punishment is so difficult. Yamus zakai v'al yamus chayav, "Let him die while he is still innocent, and let him not die when he is guilty (of capital crimes)." The world that concerns us as believing Jews is that of the spirit, Olam Habba. This way, as a result of his teshuvah, repentance, and accompanying punishment, he is still able to enter into the eternal world. Furthermore, based upon the halachic criteria required to establish one as a ben sorer u'moreh, it is virtually impossible for such a case to ever occur. Thus, Chazal posit that the Torah wrote the case for the purpose of serving as an educational guide for parents, a sort of parenting primer, on how to imbue their children with Torah values.

Is there anything worse than a ben sorer u'moreh? Could there be a worse situation than a child who demonstrates such disrespect that his parents are no longer sure that society is safe from him? Can one even begin to imagine the torment and agony of parents who must take their son to a bais din, knowing fully well the consequences of a guilty verdict issued against their son?

I think that the answer is: yes. There is a worse scenario than the one that the Torah presents. When the parents present their child before bais din, they declare: B'neinu zeh, "This son of ours is wayward and rebellious." The word b'neinu, our son, makes a powerful point. They still identify with the child as b'neinu, "our son." There is no question that what they are going through is beyond tragic, and no parent should ever have to suffer so, but, at least they still consider him to be their son. Yes, there is worse than ben sorer u'moreh: when the parents refuse to say b'neinu zeh, "our son"; when they no longer identify with their child; when he is an aberration who just happens to share their last name. "He is not ours. We wrote him off a long time ago": that tragedy is worse.

I know that I am treading on sacred ground, and perhaps, years ago, I would have shied away from writing on this subject, but.

Sadly, some people may not feel the sense of instinctual unconditional love that a parent should have for a child. They simply do not have the nurturing

instinct that is part and parcel of the parenting institution. Parenting is not a part-time vocation. It is a lifelong responsibility which some people simply cannot handle. Others may be great parents when they have a perfect child. When they are challenged by: a discipline problem; feelings of envy for everything they did not have and their child has; an inability to cope; negated personal tenets; their own lack of success in life underscored by spoiled children - some parents sadly lose their ability to love.

For the most part, the parent that neglects a child is a person who was never taught to love. A child who was not loved does not know how to love. This is a reality that we must accept. People who have suffered abuse, lack of love, resentment, denigration as a child are unable to show love as an adult. Rather than focus on the negatives, which I will leave to the professionals who, lamentably, are very busy, I will cite instances of positive parenting.

A child remembers his parents' love. A child never forgets his parents' lack of love. Yes, we have excuses: "I am busy"; "I have to work two jobs to make ends meet"; "I am exhausted"; "I go to shul to daven - not to be a policeman". "My father was no different with me." The list goes on, but children remember everything. Even the ben sorer u'moreh is acutely aware that his parents said, "Bneinu zeh." Some children remember on their own; others require a subtle reminder. No one wants to have their parents' sacrifices and love thrown in to their faces on a constant basis. When sincere love is instinctually administered, it is remembered. When it is thrown in one's face, it is resented.

There is a well-known story concerning the life of Horav Yaakov David Willowsky, zl, who lived in Tzfas, after first being Rav in Slutzk, Poland. One year, on his father's yahrtzeit, Rav Willowsky came to shul early, walked over to his shtender, lectern, stood there for a few moments and began to weep. While a parent's yahrtzeit is an emotional time, his father had passed away over a half a century earlier at the age of eighty (which at that time was considered quite old). A close friend pointed this out to him, somewhat surprised by this public display of emotion.

The Ridbaz (as he was popularly known) explained with the following story. "When I was young, my father arranged for me to be availed the services of the finest private tutor. A solid Torah education was the most important thing to my parents. It was not cheap; in fact, at the rate of one ruble per month, it was quite expensive, especially given the fact that my parents were poor.

"My father earned a living by making brick furnaces. One winter, there was a shortage of bricks, thereby impeding my father's ability to pay the tutor. After three months passed without payment, the tutor sent home a note: 'Unless payment is received on Sunday, Yaakov David should not bother coming.' My parents were, of course, devastated. My learning meant the world to them. When my father heard that a wealthy man sought a brick furnace for his soon-to-be-married son, and money was no object, my father jumped at the opportunity. Since he had no bricks, he sat down with my mother to discuss the options and, after some discussion, they decided to take apart our furnace and deliver it brick by brick to the wealthy man. My father received six rubles for his troubles - and I returned to the tutor, my learning uninterrupted!

"That winter was bitterly cold, and we all froze and shivered. This was their way of teaching me the importance of Torah learning and how much one must be willing to sacrifice for it.

"I can never forget that cold frigid winter. I can also never forget my parents' boundless love for me and for Torah. They did everything, so that their precious child could grow up to be a talmid chacham, Torah scholar. Today, on my father's yahrtzeit, I stopped for a moment to pause and reflect on their love. How can I not weep?"

Children remember. So does a talmid, student.

Horav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Ner Israel, was a close talmid of the Alter of Slabodka, Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl. The rosh yeshivah took special interest in the young illui, who was tender in years, but brilliant in mind. He saw in him the future Torah leader that he

would become. Rav Ruderman would often recall the extreme fatherly love exhibited to him as a young student by the venerable mussar and Torah personality, who was responsible for molding the lives of many of the of the twentieth century Torah giants. The following incident played over in Rav Ruderman's mind as a testament to his revered rebbe's love.

"I was explaining a chiddush, novel, innovative Talmudic interpretation, to the rosh yeshivah. He was peppering me with questions in an attempt to establish the integrity of my chiddush. I defended my position. (It was an elevated moment of rischa d'Oraisa, passion/heat of studying Torah.) In the midst of our exchange, Rav Leizer Yudel (Horav Eliezer Yehudah Finkel, zl, son of the Alter and future Mirrer Rosh Yeshivah) entered the bais medrash doorway. The Alter had not seen his son in seven years, yet he hardly looked at him, as we continued our spirited conversation. Once we concluded, the Alter greeted his son warmly and lovingly.

"I followed them out the door, as the Rebbetzin approached the Alter and asked, 'Why did you ignore our Yudel?'

"I was in the midst of speaking in learning with Yaakov Yitzchak,' he replied.

"But Leizer Yudel is your son!' she protested.

"So, too, is Yaakov Yitzchak my son,' he replied.

"He said this to the Rebbetzin, not far from my ears. I knew that he meant what he said. He was such a teacher, such a rebbe. With such a rebbe, could there have been any question with regard to accepting his authority?"

Remember what Hashem, your G-d, did to Miriam on the way, when you were leaving Egypt. (24:9)

Rashi comments: Remember what was done to Miriam who spoke against her brother, Moshe (Rabbeinu) and (as a result) was stricken with tzaraas (spiritual leprosy). Targum Yonasan ben Uziel comments: Take care not to be suspicious of your friend (not to suspect him of wrongdoing). Remember what Hashem, your G-d, did to Miriam because she suspected Moshe of something which was unfounded: she was stricken with tzaraas. Rashi attributes Miriam HaNeviyah's illness/punishment to speaking ill of Moshe Rabbeinu. Targum Yonasan seems to feel that her shortcoming was in incorrectly suspecting Moshe of a wrongdoing. Horav Kalmen Pinsky, zl, observes (from the commentary of Targum Yonasan) that the primary sin of (speaking) lashon hora, slanderous speech, lies not in the speaking, but rather, in the negative outlook that the speaker has, which serves as the precursor of his slanderous comments.

Negative outlook, a jaundiced view of others, catalyzes negative speech. When one views the actions (or inactions) of his fellow through the tainted perspective of a malignant viewpoint, he will inevitably see evil, which will ultimately lead him to speaking evil. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, (Shaar HaTenuvah) writes: "One should accustom himself not to speak about people regardless of the nature of his comments - whether they be negative or even positive. Horav Rephael Hamburg, zl, relinquished his position as Rav four years prior to his passing in order not to be compelled to speak with - or about - people. He asked anyone who visited not to speak about another person. He feared that one thing would lead to another. He very much feared the "another," which meant (inadvertently) speaking lashon hora.

A distinguished member of the Yerushalayim community; an individual who zealously upheld the Torah and mitzvos - and made a "point" to see to it that others did so also - once came to Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, with a complaint concerning two yeshivah students. Apparently, this man's apartment was opposite Yeshivas Mir, allowing him to have an unobstructed view of what was going on in the area. He claimed that he saw two students perusing a secular newspaper in a store that was in the proximity of the yeshivah. He felt that a yeshivah bachur had no business reading such a paper, and one who did should be excoriated. "How," he declared, "could someone commit such a dastardly act within the immediate locality of the yeshivah? The holy yeshivah is a place of refuge for elevating one's yiraas Shomayim, Fear of Heaven. How can such bachurim be accepted in the yeshivah? What are they being taught here?"

The man continued ranting and raving as if these two boys had committed the most reprehensible act of moral turpitude (truthfully, to some, reading a secular newspaper is a moral failing).

The Rosh Yeshivah replied, "You are definitely correct. We must address the situation and see to it that it does not occur again. However, let me ask you a question. You have been living in this area for quite some time. Have you ever taken the time to issue a compliment concerning the extraordinary hasmadah, diligence, of our students, who can be found learning until very late at night? Do you ever laud the study of mussar, ethical character refinement, that exemplifies our yeshivah? What about the dignity and yiraas Shomayim displayed by our students? Are you quick to recognize that? No! It is only when you see something negative that you come running, quick to condemn and assail. Perhaps, if you will accustom yourself to seeing the good and positive and accentuating it - your criticism will be viewed as constructive - not disparaging."

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ravkooktorah.org **Rav Kook Torah Ki Tetzei: Avoid All Evil**

What is modesty? Why is it an important trait?

A principal source for modesty in the Torah are a set of laws pertaining to the army camp. The Torah teaches that even in the camp, we must maintain standards of cleanliness and modesty. "When you go out in a military camp against your enemies, avoid everything evil." Impure soldiers must bathe. Lavatories are set up outside the camp. Soldiers must carry a shovel to cover their feces.

"Because God is present in the midst of your camp... therefore your camp must be holy" (Deut. 23:10-15).

Rav Kook explains his views on modesty when discussing a peculiar case mentioned in the Talmud:

"It once happened that a man married a woman with a stumped arm, yet he did not notice this until the day of her death. Rabbi [Yehudah] observed, 'How modest this woman must have been, that even her husband did not discover this!' Rabbi Hiyya responded, 'For her, it was natural [to wish to hide this defect]. But how modest was this man, that he did not scrutinize his wife!'" (Shabbat 53b)

Everything is Beautiful

When we see beauty, our faculty of imagination is refined and elevated. This is a basis for our intellectual powers, enabling the soul to absorb that which is intellectually and morally beautiful.

Images of ugliness, on the other hand, disturb the soul's natural qualities. Such images unsettle the imagination and obscure our awareness of God's Presence.

In truth, all of God's works are noble and beautiful. In the complete reality, nothing is ugly. All comes from the source of Tiferet, Netzach, and Hod. If we were able to grasp all of reality, all of God's creation, from the beginning of time to the end — we would see everything in its proper place. Everything would project majesty and nobility.

But we only perceive a thin sliver of reality. Therefore we see a vast difference between beauty and ugliness. Not everything that we perceive awakens feelings of nobility. On the contrary, many images generate horror and disgust.

We need to nurture our souls with 'food' which is good for it and extend its grasp of goodness and happiness. We must be careful when relating to our surroundings so that we will only see those images which will have a positive influence, while avoiding base and lowly images which darken the soul.

This principle is true for both sensory phenomena and intellectual matters.¹ The ugliness is not intrinsic, but due to our fragmented perception of reality.

This is the function of modesty — to absorb that which is revealed to us as beautiful and proper, and avoid that which appears to be ugly and chaotic.

Since nothing is truly ugly and repulsive, we are instructed to cover and hide — but not that it should be completely absent. Covering leads us to the desired goal, allowing us to perceive the beauty in what we see and what we contemplate.

Two Types of Modesty

There are two aspects of modesty. The first is the attempt to hide that which is ugly and disturbs our sense of beauty. In the Talmudic tale, this is the modesty of the wife.

The second form of modesty relates to our control over our sight — allowing the eye to see only that which agrees with the quality of beauty and nobility. This, in the story, is the modesty of the husband.

When one avoids the display of ugliness due to personal motives, such modesty could bring about disappointment. It may be successful in providing protection from such images, but it is not the deeper quality of modesty which comes from an inner trait in the soul. The highest level is rooted in the essence of nobility and majesty, when one naturally avoids ugliness, whether in what one perceives or in what one contemplates.

When modesty is not an integral part of nature, it usually cannot maintain its effectiveness over time. Rabbi Yehudah was thus amazed at the modesty of the woman, whose husband never discovered her disability.

But the depth of modesty, the inner trait which sees only that which is elevated and beneficial, not due to some external motivation, rises above all evil and imperfection. This is the innately modest individual who cleaves to the very source of modesty out of a love of nobility and goodness. He will not sense that which is odious or repulsive. It will not cross his vision, even if physically close. His soul assesses those in his immediate surroundings according to their complete and true reality, according to a comprehensive awareness which embraces infinite realms and transcends physical limitations. This was Rabbi Hiyya's amazement, "How modest is this man who never saw a defect in his wife." (*Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, pp. 18-19 on Shabbat 53b*) Copyright © 2006 by Chanan Morrison

לרפואת

אביבה ברכה בת דבורה נחמה

לעילוי נשמת שרה משא

בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ז"ל