

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON REEH - 5759

B'S'D'

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SHABBAT SHALOM: A simple choice By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(August 5) "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse, the blessing if you shall hearken unto the commandments... and the curse if you shall not hearken unto the commandments...." (Deut. 11:26-28) The wealth of commandments in the Torah is the most generous gift we could ever receive. And yet all too often we fail to apprehend the significance of these blessings because of their very abundance. Indeed, it often appears to us that the details seem more excruciating than exquisite, impede rather than impel. The Vilna Gaon, by commenting on a single cantillation above a specific word in this week's portion of Re'eh, provides a glimpse into the magnificent unity of the biblical message; his single commentary teaches us the importance of every detail, and reveals that any leaf on any branch of any tree will ultimately reveal the entire forest. In the context of the biblical command to erase all debts every seventh year, we find two statements regarding poverty which seem to be mutually exclusive. In the first we read: "There shall be no poor among you, for God will surely bless you in the land which the Lord God gives you for an inheritance" (Deut. 15:4). But several verses later we read: "You shall surely give [to the poor person], and your heart shall not be grieved when you give unto him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work... For the poor shall never cease to exist in the land..." (Deut. 15:10-11). Rashi ponders this problem. Commenting on the verse which promises that "There shall be no poor among you," he asks: "But further it states, 'For the poor shall never cease?' [The explanation is that]... as long as you fulfill the will of God, the poor will be [among others], but not among you. But if you do not fulfill the will of God, then there will be poor among you" (Rashi, Deut. 15:4). Rashi is teaching that insofar as the community of Israel or the international community is ready to accept the biblical ideals of fair labor laws, free enterprise, maximal work opportunities and periodic remission of debts, the eradication of poverty becomes an attainable goal. And clearly, magnanimity toward those who are suffering is one of the most important lessons the Torah attempts to convey. Indeed, the language in our portion is graphic: "Do not shut close your hand... to your brother in want" (Deut. 15:7). We are born with closed fists but die with our hands open. In effect, the Almighty is telling us that whereas we enter the world grasping whatever we have, we leave empty of all material possessions. Just as the journey from birth to death is a journey from the closed fist to the open hand, so the goal of the human being is to transform himself from a child who thinks only of himself into an adult whose commitment to the Torah has allowed him to live with an open hand. As suggested above, the verse "You shall surely open your hand [to the poor]" provides a fascinating confirmation of a passage in the Talmud, and a way for us to connect the most humble leaf with the grand forest. In B.T. Bava Batra (10a) we read how Rav Pappa was going up a ladder when one of the steps broke and he almost fell. Rav Papa speculated as to the reason for his near accident; after all, he obviously didn't transgress the Sabbath or commit idolatry - capital offenses which would warrant such punishment. The text goes on to tell us that Hiyah bar Rav explains that he may have turned away a person in need. The Vilna Gaon asks how Hiyah bar Rav came up with such an explanation, and answers that the cantillation on the words Ki pataoch tiftach - you shall surely open [your hand] - is called in Hebrew a darga tvir, which means a broken step. Thus the Gaon observes that the name of the cantillation

provides a hint that a broken step is the possible result of withholding one's hand from giving. The centrality of the commandment to give freely to the poor - and the relationship between falling from a ladder and stinginess - is also demonstrated in the life and death of King David. The sages of the Talmud record how King David beseeched God to reveal the day of his death, but was only told that it would be on a Sabbath. Hence every Sabbath he would study Torah every minute, so that the Angel of Death would not be able to prevail against him. The Angel of Death caused noise to emerge from the trees outside the king's chambers. When King David climbed a ladder to investigate the source of the sounds, his mind strayed from his Torah meditations, and he fell and died. But if the Vilna Gaon was correct, there must have been an incident wherein King David did not open his hand to the poor! In the Talmud we read of the wise men of Israel complaining to the king that the poor of Israel had nothing to eat. The regal scholar suggests that the nation fight a voluntary war, gaining more land with which the people will gain more produce [B.T. Brakhot 3b]. The late Rav Isaac Bernstein drew my attention to the midrashic compilation of the Yalkut Shimoni, commenting on the book of Ruth and based on a verse in Chronicles: "King David said: 'Behold in my poverty I prepared for the house of God with gold, hundreds of thousands of talents, and silver, thousands and thousands...'" (I Chronicles 22:14). Where did David receive such wealth? Apparently from Goliath. So why did the monarch not disperse such massive resources to alleviate his subjects' hunger? Apparently, he was saving the gold and silver to build the Temple, considering the construction to be more important than the immediate necessity of alleviating poverty. But our sages teach the very antithesis: "Charity to other human beings is more important than building the Holy Temple." Shabbat Shalom - 1995-1999, The Jerusalem Post - All rights reserved

From: Yated USA[SMTP:yated-usa@ttec.com]  
Peninim Ahl HaTorah: Parshas Re'ey  
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

You shall harden your heart or close your hand against your destitute brother for in return for this matter, Hashem your G-d, will bless you in all your deeds and in all your undertaking. (15:7,10) The Torah tells us clearly that one who gives tzedakah should not concern himself with his momentary financial loss, for Hashem will bless him in return. Moreover, the contribution that he gives will be the source of his blessing. The Chofetz Chaim commented on this pasuk with a story that serves as an analogy, giving greater meaning to the pasuk. Once an illiterate farmer from a small village came to the market with his usual sacks of grain. Due to the farmer's limited scope of education, his mathematical acumen was, at best, poor. For every sack that he emptied into the silo, he made a mark on the wall noting the size and number of the sack. The farmer heard that recently the businessmen in the city had been maintaining a code of ethics that was far from scrupulous. They were constantly taking advantage of the hapless farmers. Our farmer came upon what he thought was a very astute plan which would protect his interests. He appeared before the buyer and placed his cap upon the table. He told the buyer that for every sack which he poured into silo, the buyer should place a gold coin into the hat. When they completed pouring the sacks they would count the coins and know the number of sacks that had been purchased. The buyer left the room for a few moments to check on the quality of the grain. During this time our farmer, whose principles paralleled his literacy, decided to put his hands into the till and steal half of the coins before the buyer realized what had occurred. The fool did not realize that for every coin that he stole, he was losing the value of a sack of grain. The Chofetz Chaim quipped, "The same things happens to those who think that a penurious attitude towards their money will increase their fortune. On the contrary, for every coin that they save, they ultimately lose material and spiritual assets. In his inimitable manner the Dubno Maggid explains this with a parable. A man once came into the city with a wallet filled with one hundred dollars which he unfortunately lost. The next

day, as he was walking down the street, he found a wallet containing two hundred dollars. While he was certainly happy with his newly found money, the consolation for his prior loss was limited. He reasoned, that had he not lost his original wallet, he would now possess three hundred dollars. If, however, the bags of one who was transporting grain from place to place were to tear open and spill out all over the place, he surely would go home an unhappy man. If later on, when he happens by the area in which his seeds had dispersed, he were to see a field filled with full grown grain which had grown from the seeds that blew away, he would attribute his good fortune to his prior loss. Certainly, now he would be completely consoled over his loss. Likewise, we should realize that what we "spread out" for tzedakah will bear fruit only as a result of our sensitivity towards those less fortunate than we are.

Kortz Un Sharf-Short and Sweet Parsha Vertlach by Shaya Gottlieb  
 "Re'eh Onochi Nosein Lifneichem Hayom Brocho U'klolo" See, I have placed before you a blessing and a curse 11:26 See that you should not treat the mitzvos like compromises, fulfilling only those commandments that suit your convenience. Hashem is offering us a brocho and a klolo, two complete contrasts. The brocho is very good, and the klolo is very bad. Both are available to you, middo k'neged middo, according to the path you will choose.-Sforno

The possuk begins with a loshon yochid, "Re'eh," and continues with a loshon rabim, "Nosein Lifneichem." The Ribono Shel Olam gives everyone what they deserve with complete equality. However, on this world everyone only sees what they are capable of seeing, according to their madreiga. -The Kotzker Rebbe

When one wants to motivate a small child to learn, one places a stick and a penny in front of him and says, "If you learn, you get the penny. Otherwise, you'll get petch. It's your choice." This motivational tool is used because the child's sechel is not developed enough for him to enjoy learning for its own sake. When he will grow up he hopefully will realize that there is intrinsic value in his learning Torah, without which he will be an ignoramus. This is what Moshe Rabenu said to Klal Yisroel: "Re'eh, look at your madreiga after forty years of being in the desert, 'Onochi nosein lifneichem brocho u'klolo'-you still need to be motivated with a penny and a stick. 'Es habrocho asher tishmaun', you should have been on the madreiga to realize that listening to Hashem's word is the greatest brocho." -The Lelover Rebbe

Chazal: "Every person is obligated to see the world as half righteous and half evil, and his mitzva or aveira can tilt the world's balance either way." This is what the possuk is telling us: "Re'eh, see! With every action, 'Onochi nosein lifneichem brocho u'klolo'-you have the opportunity to bring a blessing or curse to the world." -Toras Moshe

"Hayom Brocho," the brocho you are given on this world, a propensity for doing good deeds, are only the fruits of the mitzva, but the 'keren' remains for Olom Habo. The word 'klolo' is roshei teivos 'keren kayemes lo l'olam habo'. -Niflaos Chadoshos

"Re'eh" is loshon yochid. When one wants to choose the 'derech hayoshor', the proper path, one must obey one's own conscience and not blindly follow the rabim, because the multitudes are usually wrong. -The Vilna Gaon

Parashat Re'eh - 5759 - OU Torah Insights Project OU Torah Insights Project Parashat Re'Eeh August 7, 1999 Rabbi Moshe Stern

Describing, in Parshas Re'Eeh, the mitzvah of giving charity to the poor, the Torah tells us, "You shall surely give him, and your heart should not feel bad when you give him." Why would the Torah suspect that one would feel bad upon helping a poor person? How can doing a mitzvah leave a bad taste in one's mouth? What causes such a reaction? More important, how can we avoid having such feelings ourselves? In the mishnah in Avos, Rabbi Shimon said, "If three have eaten at the same table and have not spoken words of Torah, it is as if they have eaten of offerings to the dead

idols." Obviously, such a gathering mandates that words of Torah be exchanged. If a person eats alone or even with someone else, the Chasam Sofer,zt"l, explains, it is possible that neither one has any Torah knowledge. But with three people at the table, surely one is capable of explaining some point in the Torah to the others. How then is it possible that no one speak words of Torah at such a gathering? In answering, the Chasam Sofer points to a Gemara that discusses the composition of the Birkas Hamazon, which these three will say at the conclusion of their meal. The first blessing was instituted by Moshe Rabeinu, the second blessing was instituted by Yehoshua, the third blessing was instituted by Kings David and Shlomo, and the fourth and final blessing was instituted by the Men of the Great Assembly at Yavneh. We do indeed presume, says the Chasam Sofer, that one of these three at the table is familiar with this Gemara. Thus, he reasons, inasmuch as the Birkas Hamazon contains all elements of Torah--Moshe's blessing representing Chumash; Yehoshua's blessing representing Neviim; David and Shlomo's blessing representing Kesuvim; and the final blessing representing the Oral Tradition--what need is there to add other words of Torah? It is due to this laxity that their meal is so poorly judged. This laxity is what can cause one to dislike the mitzvos. Those who seek to circumvent any aspect of observance will ultimately find their observance trivialized. People who seek to avoid doing mitzvot or look for loopholes are the same people who, when they actually do the mitzvah, do so half-heartedly, feeling bad in the process. Even when it comes to something as natural as giving to the poor, a person who has not properly trained himself in the proper performance of mitzvos may find that he resents helping out. We must encourage and educate ourselves to do more, not less, which will result in our enhanced enjoyment of the mitzvos. Rabbi Moshe Stern Rabbi Stern is rabbi of the Shaarei Tefillah Congregation in Toronto, Canada. Torah Insights is brought to you every week as a service of the Department of Jewish Education of the Orthodox Union. Show Your Support For This OU.ORG Project OU.ORG - Your Gateway to the Jewish Internet \_ 1999 - 5759 All Rights Reserved. Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

From: Shlomo Katz[SMTP:skatz@torah.org]  
 Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz Contributing Editor:  
 Daniel Dadusc Re'eh 25 Menachem Av 5759 August 7, 1999

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... "If there shall be a destitute person among you . . . you shall not harden your heart or close your hand to your destitute brother. Rather, you shall surely open your hand . . ." (15:7-8) R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (died 1535; uncle of R' Yosef Karo z"l) derives several lessons from these verses regarding how to give charity. First, why does the verse mention the heart? Doesn't the poor person need your hand, rather than your heart? He explains: When one is unable to give, he is often tempted to shut the door in the beggar's face. This is not proper. Even if your wallet is empty, open your heart and speak comforting words to the pauper. This, too, is charity. More generally, these words teach us to dispense charity with a smile. Why does the Torah use the seemingly redundant language: "[Y]ou shall not close your hand to your destitute brother. Rather, you shall surely open your hand"? R' Karo explains: Sometimes you may reach into your pocket and remove a larger coin (or bill) than you intended. Even in such a case, the Torah emphasizes through its double language, do not close your hand. If the pauper has seen the large coin that was in your hand, give it to him. (Toldot Yitzchak)

"Shiv'ah D'nechemta" The haftarat of the seven weeks following Tishah B'Av are known as the "Shiv'ah D'nechemta"/"The Seven of Consolation" This name derives from the fact that each of these haftarat promises that Hashem will console us after the terrible suffering that we have experienced in exile. R' Azaryah Figo z"l (Italy; 1579-1647) writes that the number seven is not random. He explains: Before Tishah B'Av, we read the

haftarot known as the "Gimel D'puranuta"/"Three of Calamity." (The number three parallels the number of weeks between the Fasts of the 17th of Tammuz and Tishah B'Av.) Because we are taught that the measure of Hashem's good exceeds the measure of His retribution, therefore we double the number associated with calamity (i.e., three) when we read the haftarot of consolation. This results in six haftarot of consolation. As for the seventh haftarah, it is different in that it speaks of Bnei Yisrael's acceptance of the promised consolation. In addition, R' Figo writes, each of the "Gimel D'puranuta" contains two calamities, and each of the six haftarot of consolation "undoes" one of them. The first haftarah after the 17th of Tammuz begins: "Divrei Yirmiyahu"/"The words of Jeremiah." Chazal teach that the verb "le'daber" (in contrast to "laimor") connotes harsh speech. Paralleling this is the haftarah of Va'etchanan, in which the prophet speaks gently, "Nachamu, nachamu"/"Be comforted! Be comforted!" Also, the first haftarah of calamity states: "See, I have appointed you [i.e., Yirmiyahu] this day . . . to uproot and to smash and to destroy and to raze." The haftarah for Eikev responds with verses such as: "Your spoilers and destroyers must depart from you" and "Hashem shall comfort Zion; He shall comfort all her ruins." The second haftarah of calamity rebukes Bnei Yisrael for distancing themselves from the Torah: "[E]ven those charged with teaching Torah did not know Me." The haftarah for Re'eh counters: "All your children will be students of Hashem." And, in response to the calamitous verse (from the second haftarah), "Is Israel a slave? . . . Why has he become prey?" the haftarah for Shoftim responds, "Wake up! Wake up! Don your strength . . . for no longer shall there enter into you any uncircumcised or contaminated person." While the haftarah of calamity speaks of Israel as a victim of oppressors, the haftarah of consolation speaks of Israel's strength and glory.

Finally, the third haftarah of calamity informs us that Hashem will not accept our prayers because of our sins: "When you spread your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even if you were to increase prayer, I do not hear." The haftarah for Ki Tetze promises, however: "For but a slight moment I have forsaken you . . . With a slight wrath I have concealed My countenance." Also, while the third haftarah of calamity speaks of the punishment for misusing our wealth, the haftarah for Ki Tavo tells of the great riches that await us: "In place of copper I will bring gold; and in place of iron I will bring silver . . ." In the last haftarah, Bnei Yisrael accept these six consolations: "I will rejoice intensely with Hashem." (Binah La'ittim: Drush Aleph L'Shabbat Nachamu)

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From: Aish HaTorah[SMTP:aishlist@mail.netvision.net.il] Aish HaTorah's BRAINSTORMING WITH BAARS PARSHAT RE'EH

by Rabbi Stephen Baars Aish HaTorah Washington DC  
 "REAL NEW AGE RELIGION"

"Whatever has been, it is what will be. And whatever has been done, it is what will be done. There is nothing new under the sun! Sometimes a person will say: 'Look, this is new.' But really it has previously existed." - King Solomon, Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

If you study Western advertisements, you will see that the most common word is "new." The newest car, the newest fashion, the newest computer, and the newest laundry soap! "New" does not mean better or more effective. So why does "new" appeal to so many people - even more than "tested," "reliable" or "improved?"

NEW VALUES? This week's Torah portion begins as follows: "Behold! I have placed before you today, a blessing and a curse. The blessing is if you follow the mitzvahs of G-d your L-rd, which I am prescribing to you this

day." - Deuteronomy 11:26-27 The Chasam Sofer (19th century Hungarian rabbi), questions the need for the term, "this day." He explains that whenever the Torah uses the term "this day" it requires us to consider the mitzvahs as though they were new and fresh - as if you heard of them for the very first time "this day." Therefore, the verse implies that "blessing" comes only when we observe the mitzvahs with the appreciation of their freshness and newness. But why are we required to add this ingredient of newness? Isn't adherence to G-d's mitzvahs high enough to warrant a blessing on its own? The drive for newness, says the Chasam Sofer, is part of human nature. That's why auto manufacturers will change the shape of a car even though it has exactly the same engine and interior. These external, cosmetic changes justify the use of the word "new." The Torah is telling us that the same is true with morality and values: They will not have lasting appeal unless they can retain a degree of newness. It's not enough for a parent to say: "That's the way we've always done it." Modernity reigns, and what the previous generation has to say is innately old, and lacking the excitement of "new." Parents are therefore faced with a formidable paradox. They want to give their children wisdom to use as they grow, yet that very wisdom will be undermined as soon as it becomes old! It is thus reasonable to assume that your children will very likely reject your values for something more "modern." If you don't provide and relate to life as real and new, and teach your children to behave this way, then you and your progeny will look to other areas to find the newness in life. That may be in anything from astrology to Zen Buddhism...

WHAT'S NEW? When you really think about it, nothing is really new. It is all really an "improvement" on something old. For example, people have always had the need to communicate over long distances. At one time, the Pony Express was "new." Then came the telegraph, the telephone, the fax machine, and now email. It's all essentially an improvement on the same concept - the need to communicate. In physics, the theory of entropy states: "Energy (or matter) is neither destroyed nor created, but only changed into another form." This is true for "metaphysics" as well. There are really no new ideas, no new religions, no new movements. They are just a rephrasing or repetition of something said long ago. Human drives and desires don't change. What Shakespeare said was said by someone before him, perhaps not as eloquently, but it was said nonetheless. Were this not so, no one would have been able to understand Shakespeare - he would have been saying something no one could relate to. Shakespeare was talking to people about the things they were already aware of. He only rephrased those themes in a unique, witty manner. "New Age" religions and movements are only old-time religions with a different label. It's last years engine, chassis and interior - with this years body. It basically feels the same and it won't get you anywhere different. It just looks different on the surface. If there is one lesson to be learned from the civil rights, new age and environmental movements, it is that each generation is searching for a new movement!

THE DILEMMA How then can the Torah impart freshness and newness to ideas that are thousands of years old? How can we be expected to treat the Torah as if it was new - when it is not? Do we have to deceive ourselves in order to receive the blessing mentioned above? The Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto - 18th century Italy), in the introduction to his classic ethical work, "The Path Of The Just," explains that the concept of "new" is not describing something which never existed before, but is rather an enabling way to use pre-existing ideas. All of life is here now. Nothing "new" will happen or be thought of. The trouble is, we lack the skill and expertise to apply what we have. The only things that are truly "new" are the techniques that enable us to get the fullest out of the "old life" we already have. We have to take life, which can easily get "old," and make it fresh again. To find the original feeling of aliveness that is always inherent in life itself. That's what NEW is all about. The sign proclaiming "New" that's hung outside a restaurant or amusement park is saying: "If you didn't discover how to use life more fully in the other restaurants or amusement parks, then try us - perhaps we can make your life 'new' again!" But really, all the menus and all the rides in the world won't improve your quality of life. They are only

avoidance mechanisms and distractions. When life becomes dry and old it's much easier to buy a new dress or a new car than to really rejuvenate life permanently. The above verse is saying, if you truly look at the commandments of the Torah, you will see they embody the concept of "new." They help us focus on life's freshness and meaningfulness. In other words, it's our responsibilities in life that make life new. We sometimes get a sense of this when we put new effort into our marriage, friendships, etc.

However, if a person does not feel that life's responsibilities are a source of newness, then he will surely look to other places for his need for the "new."

THE "OLD-NEW" TECHNIQUE "Honor your parents" is new. Shabbat is new. Charity is new. Kashrut is new. All the instructions of the Torah are, if you take the time to investigate them, tools for opening up vast treasure troves of pleasures. The mitzvahs are newer than any car or menu, and they can truly revive our hidden recesses of untapped joy. The Torah is our instruction book for living. It does not come from man, it was not invented here on earth. Rather, it is infinitely deep insights from G-d Who is above the earth and above the sun. The drive for the new and the desire to enhance our lives, causes us to seek in many places. We waste much time, and often cause much harm. To make life "new" again, don't buy a new wardrobe or a new car. Find a new way to make an old relationship meaningful. We are all ready to try a new ski slope, a new restaurant, or even a new fashion, in the hope some new opening will appear in our lives. But how about something really new. Our 3500 year old Torah is the newest thing around! Try a new mitzvah and live a little!

**BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS TO PONDER** Question 1: Look at your five most cherished possessions. Do they produce the same level of excitement now as when they were new? Question 2: It is possible to have your car working like "new again" - if you are willing to pay the mechanic's price. If you could, what three things in your life would you like to inject that feeling of newness back into? Question 3: Think about what method you are currently using to inject "newness" into your mundane activities. Is your technique genuinely effective, or is it merely "masking" a greater underlying need?

...Rabbi Stephen Baars was born and bred in London. He is the only rabbi to perform at the Improv Comedy Club in Los Angeles, and is now the Educational Director of Aish HaTorah in Washington DC. Check out the new "Brainstorming with Baars" web page at:

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From: Rabbi Lipman Podolsky [SMTP:podolsky@hakotel.org.il]  
Teaching an Old Dog

Prior to the sin of the golden calf, the idea of building a Mishkan was superfluous. Hashem's Divine Presence saturated all of existence. "Wherever I permit My name to be mentioned I shall come to you and bless you (Shmos 20:21)." But due to that Luchos-shattering sin, reality changed. Hashem's Shechina became limited to a finite locality -- the Mishkan/Bais HaMikdash. Now, the Jew who wished to bask in the splendor of Hashem's Presence and soak up His Kedusha, would have to do so in a special place, under specific conditions (See Sforno, Shmos 25:9). Thus our parsha declares: "Beware for yourself lest you bring up your burnt-offerings in any place that you see. Rather, only in the place that Hashem will choose... there shall you bring up your burnt-offerings, and there shall you do all that I command you (Devarim 12:13-14)."

From here, Reb Yeruchom Leibowitz zt"l derives a beautiful lesson (Daas Chochma u'Mussar vol.2 p. 230). After the sin, the Jew's mission is to establish a place in which to house the Divine presence. In the days of yore, Jews would frequently visit the Bais HaMikdash to recharge their spiritual batteries. "Three times a year all your males should appear before Hashem, your G-d, in the place that He will choose... (Devarim 17:17)." Chazal describe their experience in terms that could easily depict a trip to a health spa (See Breishis Rabba 70:8). A short visit left a lasting effect. By

participating in "Aliya l'Regel", a Jew would actually become imbued with Ruach HaKodesh -- an air of purity and sanctity -- that would sustain him even when he was far from Yerushalayim, involved in far more mundane pursuits. Indeed, the prophet Yonah first attained prophecy during the annual Simchas Bais HaShoeva celebration (Yalkut Shimoni, Yonah, 550). In the Bais HaMikdash, one's most sublime spiritual dreams were within reach.

But now the Bais HaMikdash is gone. Where can we go to attain spiritual heights? Can it be that Hashem has left us with no avenue to Him? Reb Yerucham responds with a resounding NO. In our days, the Yeshivos house the Divine Presence. A short, qualitative visit to a Yeshiva has the capacity to elevate a Jew higher than he ever imagined possible. And contrary to popular opinion, you can always "teach an old dog new tricks."

Time and again I meet people in more advanced stages of life -- both couples and singles -- who have taken a time-out from their daily grind and checked into a Yeshiva program specifically designed for them. Invariably, these people appear happy. In these cases, I don't believe that the appearance is deceiving. At this very moment, in the Ponevezh Yeshiva (the alma mater of HaRav Aharon Bina shlit"a), the annual "Yarchei Kalla" program is being held. For several weeks, hundreds of working people take a much-earned vacation to fill up their tanks with Torah. Many of these are "loyal customers" who faithfully return year after year to an experience they know to be worthwhile. In America as well, this trend is slowly catching on. Even those who for whatever reason cannot take time off from work, find part-time solutions. In many large cities, Baalei Batim avail themselves of the local "mini kolel" to learn previously untouched tomes. Evenings, Shabbosos, Sundays, four day weekends, Martin Luther King Day, etc., all combine to allow the Jew to pursue his national past-time, the ever-present obligation to delve in Torah-study. Like oxygen for the soul. I therefore extend my personal invitation to you, whoever you are, to come join hundreds of thousands of your fellow Jews in Yeshiva. What? You have misgivings because of your age or background? Just keep this ironclad principle in your pocket, and you will overcome all obstacles. "You CAN teach an old dog new tricks!!"

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Medrash  
Subject: PARSHA -42: Parashat Re'eh Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel  
Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua Parashat Re'eh

Seeing God or Being Seen by God  
by Rav Elyakim Krumbein

Our parasha concludes with the mitzva of "aliya le-regel," the obligatory pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year. This mitzva is repeated several times throughout Chumash, each time with a similar expression - "Three times a year all your males shall be seen before the Lord your God." As in our parasha, this verse closes the discussion of the festivals in both Parashat Mishpatim and Parashat Ki-Tisa.

However, one view in Chazal points to yet another instance in Chumash where this mitzva is introduced, in a context seemingly unrelated to the festivals. Towards the end of Parashat Mishpatim, Moshe conducts the ceremony of the covenant between God and Benei Yisrael at Mount Sinai. As part of this ceremony, we are told, "He [Moshe] designated some young men among the Israelites, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as offerings of well-being to God" (Shemot 24:5). The Gemara (Chagiga 6a) presents two views as to the identity of these burnt-offerings: one opinion associates this sacrifice with the korban tamid, the daily offering brought each morning and afternoon, while the other view identifies this burnt-offering as an olat re'iya. The olat re'iya is the sacrifice required of every pilgrim to the Temple on the festivals, in accordance with the dictum, "They shall not appear before the Lord

empty-handed" (Devarim 16:16). The obvious question to be asked of this latter view is: how could one bring a pilgrimage offering during a time other than a festival?

Rashi, in his comments to that Gemara in Chagiga, explains the second opinion. Although this occasion was not one of the required pilgrimages to the Temple, the offering of an olat re'iyah was nevertheless warranted, since this experience, too, involved re'iyah (beholding):

"And they saw the God of Israel: under His feet there was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire... they beheld God, and they ate and drank." (Shemot 24:10-11)

Rashi's interpretation, however, seems quite difficult. A clear distinction exists between the "beholding" during the festivals - which involves the people's being seen by the Almighty - and that of Mount Sinai, where the people beheld God, as it were. The question, then, remains: why do Chazal relate these two sacrifices with one another?

This enigmatic passage in the Gemara calls our attention to the unusual wording of this mitzva. The verse literally reads, "... all your males shall be seen the face of God ..." - "yera'eh kol zekhurkha et penei Hashem." "Yera'eh" is in the "nifal" construction, which does not jibe with the "et" following it. Seeing the face of God would read "YIREH et penei Hashem," and being seen before God would read "yera'eh LIFNEI Hashem;" but what is meant by "yera'eh ... et penei Hashem" - "shall be seen the face of God?"

Similar to the events at Mount Sinai, there are other instances in Chumash when God's "face" is said to have been seen. In Parashat Vayishlach, Yaakov proclaims after his wrestling with the angel, "I have seen God face to face" (Bereishit 32:31), and later tells Esav, "For to see your face is like seeing the face of God" (33:10). This concept appears in one other context in Chumash, namely, akeidat Yitzchak: "Avraham named that site Hashem Yireh [literally, 'God will see'], whence the present saying, 'On the Mount of the Lord He/he will be seen'" (Bereishit 22:14). Here, for the first time, we find the concept of "seeing" in the context of the Temple site and, furthermore, the relationship - or perhaps play on words - between the object and subject: the one who sees and the one who is seen.

The "seeing" in the beginning of the verse - Avraham's name for the mountain, "God will see" - is clearly a reference to his earlier remark to his son, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt-offering" (22:8). Most likely, as Rav Yoel Bin-Nun posits, the verb "re'iyah" in the story of the akeida denotes choosing and selecting, rather than seeing. God chooses a sacrifice - Yitzchak - and now God chooses that spot as the location for sacrifices. Thus, "Hashem Yireh" constitutes both a parallel and precedent to the term, "the place that God will choose," which appears numerous times in our parasha.

However, what is meant by the end of the verse - "whence the present saying, 'On the Mount of the Lord He/he will be seen?'" At first glance, this verse seems to prophesy about a later period, when the people will ascend the "Mount of the Lord" in order to "be seen" thereupon. (And thus the pronoun is "he," with a lower-case, referring to man.) The problem is that nowhere in this verse is the subject - the person - mentioned. Thus, it seems that the One "being seen" in this verse is none other than the Almighty Himself [= He, with a capital H, will be seen]. Indeed, this is how Rashi, as well as many other commentators, interpret the verse: "[The mountain] about which the people of all generations will say, 'On this mountain God appears to His nation.'"

This verse, then, sheds light on the grammatical enigma of our phrase, "all your males shall be seen the face of God..." This phrase implies both seeing as well as being seen. God does not only see man, but He is seen by man, as well. He reveals Himself to man, and is thus seen, here on this mountain.

If we continue along the lines of Rav Yoel Bin-Nun's approach cited above, then we may conclude that the Temple is the place for the renewal of God's choosing of His nation (we are "seen," i.e. chosen, by Him) and for our choosing of God. As such, the end of the parasha directly relates

to its opening: "See, this day I set before you blessing and curse" (11:26), which seems to allude to a later verse in Sefer Devarim: "I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life" (30:15). The triennial pilgrimage to the Temple constitutes a renewal of the bond between, and mutual selection of, Am Yisrael and their Father in Heaven.

Another basis may be suggested, as well, for the peculiar expression, "be seen the face of God." The very concept of "seeing God" poses a serious theological problem, as God possesses no visible form. The expression "shall be seen the face of God" may very well express the hesitation of the Torah, as well as the student, with regard to the institution of pilgrimage, the sacrifices offered and the festive celebrations associated therewith. Such festivities in the "presence" of God may result in a certain irreverence towards God. Unquestionably, the experience of "They beheld God, and they ate and drank" poses great danger. The Torah therefore substitutes "yireh" - shall see God - with "yera'eh" - will be seen. Similarly, elsewhere in our parasha the Torah makes a point of entrenching within us the concept of "yir'a," fear of God, within the context of pilgrimage to the Temple: "You shall consume there in the presence of the Lord your God, in the place where He will choose to establish His Name... so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God forever" (14:23).

(Translated by David Silverberg)

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From Kenneth Block[SMTP:[kenblock@worldnet.att.net](mailto:kenblock@worldnet.att.net)]

Subject: NCYI Weekly Divrei Torah - Parshat Re'eh

Parshat Re'eh By: Rabbi Herschel Berger Young Israel of Northbrook, IL  
Shabbat Mevorchim 25 Menachem Av 5759 Daf Yomi Rosh Hashanah  
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The great Gaon and Tzaddik, Rav Yosef Kahaneman, the Ponovezer Rav, was once visiting a well known philanthropist on behalf of his great institutions in Bnai Brak. After some personal discussion, the Rav asked the philanthropist if he could share a few words of Torah with him. The philanthropist agreed, but informed the Ponovezer Rav that he was not the only great talmid chacham that came to tell him divrei Torah. In fact, many Roshei Yeshiva came to relate their chiddushei Torah to him and he then proceeded to list the names of all the leading Roshei Yeshiva in America. "If that is the case", said the Ponovezer Rav, "then after hearing the Torah of so many great talmidei chachomim, you must be a talmid chacham yourself. "No", answered the philanthropist, "because they all lecture me on the same pasuk of the Torah, "Surely you shall open your hands to your needy, destitute brother. (Devarim 15:11)"

Lessons in fundraising efforts notwithstanding, the philanthropist might have taken his visitors explanations of this pasuk in a more universal and broader context.

The Parshah today outlines for us the numerous complex concepts within the framework of the mitzvot of tzedaka and chessed, enumerating no less than ten specific mitzvot.

"Asser teaser..." the Torah proceeds to explain the mitzvot of taking maaser (tithing) for giving the obligatory gifts to the poor, maaser sheini to be enjoyed in Jerusalem, giving tzedaka benevolently, being generous to a slave one sets free, etc. While these mitzvot of tzedaka and chessed are deeds which are manifest between man and man, their actions are reflective of our emunah and bitachon (belief and trust) in HaShem. The Torah is teaching us here that the concepts behind these mitzvot permeate every aspect of both, between man and man and between man and HaShem.

This principle, that the mitzvot of tzedaka and chessed while performed

as actions between man and man are also a manifestation of emunah and bitachon in HaShem, first appears at the time of the dawn of our people with our forefather.

Avraham Avinu gave maaser from his own personal assets to MalkeiTzedek the Kohain of Jerusalem and yet he himself refused to accept the gifts of the King of Sodom. Avraham states as his reason that accepting gifts from the King of Sodom might suggest that his wealth came from a source other than HaShem. What was the difference between the two situations?

Hagoan Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that MalkeiTzedek and Avraham Avinu both understood that Avraham's wealth was a gift of HaShem, bestowed so that Avraham could do mitzvot. As the Kohain of that era, MalkeiTzedek accepted Avraham's maaser with the understanding on both their parts that HaShem gives man wealth conditional on man's donation of maaser to the appropriate recipient. MalkeiTzedek was the appropriate recipient for maaser. However the King of Sodom thought that his wealth was really his own to do with as he pleases. His belief did not include recognition of HaShem as the source of his wealth, therefore receiving gifts from the King of Sodom was not acceptable to Avraham because taking those gifts might be misconstrued to give the impression that the gifts of the King of Sodom enriched Avraham, rather than Avraham's wealth being a gift of HaShem Himself.

We see from Hagaon Rav Moshe Feinstein's explanation that these mitzvot of tzedaka and chessed are in fact expressions of emunah and bitachon in HaShem. Giving maaser to HaShem's Kohain in Jerusalem showed a recognition that HaShem is the source of human assets. Refusing to accept anything from the King of Sodom displayed Avraham's belief that HaShem and not the King of Sodom is the source of his wealth.

Hagoan Rav Moshe Feinstein further deduces that nowhere in the Torah do we find that HaShem directs and requires an attitude in the performance of mitzvot. The exception is the mitzvah of tzedaka. The mitzvah of tzedaka demands that it be given willingly and happily.

This is evident in Parshat Terumah where we find that the materials for the construction of the Mishkan can only be accepted from a donor whose heart truly desires to give them. Similarly, in today's Parsha of Re'eh there is a separate mitzvah of requiring that the poor person not need to convince us of his requirements for help. "...you shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your brother." (Devarim 15;7) Rav Moshe explains that we learn from here that one should prepare oneself to be willing to donate without any convincing or coercion.

Clearly, the underlying idea is that if we have true belief that HaShem gave us what we have, then we will be prepared to part with it easily, willingly and joyfully. Thus we see a further example of the concept that tzedaka and chessed between man and man are an expression of our emunah and bitachon in HaShem.

To carry this idea one step further, we should examine the teachings of the Alter of Slobodka.

He gave an example: A wealthy man gives generously to a poor man. He does not stint money or time to help the poor, sick or unfortunate. The poor man is happy. Common sense says he is a good man. Yet the donor - according to the Torah - has not fulfilled his obligation. For by the standard of the poor man, benighted and vulgar, the gift was charitable. But measured against a higher standard and more sensitive taste it was inadequate. If a man helps the poor and unfortunate, that itself is not proof of love for man. The poor man, however vulgar and common, is HaShem's creation and you know that he was created in the image of HaShem.

Support of the poor is no proof of love for man. It can indicate mere pain and sorrow for the unfortunate. The Torah requires more. The poor man, gross and discomfiting as he might be, was created in HaShem's image, just as the wealthy man. And we are commanded "V'ahavta l'rayacha kamocho," (to love our friend as ourselves) which requires of us to do chessed not only for the "have nots", but for those who "have" as well. The Alter concluded: The Torah therefore demands chessed and love for man

because man is HaShem's creation, made in His image, because man's origin is HaShem.

Once again, we see that tzedaka and chessed are actions between man and man which are reflective of our emunah and bitachon in HaShem.

We learn from all the above that it is our obligation to strive for a level of doing chessed and giving tzedaka which is not evaluated by our society or even by ourselves, but rather tzedaka and chessed are to be measured by our belief and faith in HaShem. This true emunah and bitachon will then generate in us a love for our fellow man who was created in HaShem's image, thereby placing tzedaka and chessed on the level of avodat HaShem (serving the Al-Mighty).

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il]  
Simcha's Torah Stories Parshat Re'eh 5759

REPETITION Did you figure out the answer to the teacher's question yet Chaim? Which question are you referring to, Avi? The one about charity. Hmm. I don't remember the question so clearly Avi. Could you remind me what he said? Sure. Imagine that you had one hundred dollars to give to charity. Is it better to give the entire sum to one poor person, or give one dollar each to one hundred poor people? Now I remember the question. Let's think about this a minute. If you give to one hundred poor people, you are helping one hundred people. That's a lot better than helping just one person. That's true, Chaim, but how much are you really helping each person? One dollar isn't very much. On the other hand, if you give the whole one hundred dollars to one poor person, you are really giving him a big helping hand. You have a good point, Avi. So do I. Each answer has its advantage and disadvantage. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, the premier Jewish scholar of his generation, who is known to us as the Chofetz Chaim, has a different angle on this question. He focuses on what is better for the giver of the charity, not the receiver. If you look in this week's Torah portion (Devarim 15:10) you will see that the verse repeats the word "give" twice when instructing us to give charity to the poor. Rashi comments that the Torah repeats the word to teach us that as long as the poor remain needy we must give to them. Even one hundred times. I'm not following you, Avi. What difference does it make to the giver how many times he gives? It's the same amount of money in either case. That's true, Chaim. However, imagine yourself as the giver. A man comes to you to ask for charity. You give to him. He returns the next day. You give again. This continues for a week. Then another week. And another week. After a while you begin to think, "Can't this man get a job? Why does he keep coming back to me?" However, the Torah instructs you to give. Therefore, you keep giving. Each time that you give, it gets a little easier. You take one more step towards overcoming your inclination to ignore the poor person. After one hundred times, the giving becomes second nature to you. You have become a generous person. You would never accomplish this by writing one check for one hundred dollars. One hundred acts of giving make a much bigger impression upon a person than a single moment of generosity. I see Avi. It's like exercise in a way. Daily training is much more beneficial to you than one massive workout. Now you're getting the hang of it Chaim. The Torah wants you to develop your "giving" muscles. Therefore, you have to exercise them regularly. You've changed my whole attitude towards charity, Avi. Each person that comes asking for charity is another opportunity for me to get some exercise. Chaim, you're really getting into shape. Keep up the repetitions!

.... Answer to last week's quiz question: You are ill and travelling down a road to the hospital. You reach a fork in the road and find a pair of identical twin boys standing there. One of the twins always tells the truth and the other twin always lies. You are allowed to direct only one question to one of the twins, and as such you will be assured of the correct road to the hospital.

What is your question and to whom? The Answer! You ask either of the twins "If I asked your twin which path to take to get to the hospital, which way would he tell me to go?" Then take the opposite path of the one you are told. Because: 1) If you are talking to the truth telling twin, then he will tell me what his twin would say, which would be a lie. So the direction indicated would be wrong. 2) If you are talking to the lying twin, then he would lie about what his twin would say, which would be the truth. So the lying twin would still indicate the wrong path.

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