

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON EMOR - 5765

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From: [sefira-owner@torah.org](mailto:sefira-owner@torah.org)  
Subject: [Sefira/Omer] Day 20 / 2 weeks and 6 days  
Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 13, will be day 20, which is 2 weeks and 6 days of the omer.

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From: Avi Lieberman <[AteresHaShavua@aol.com](mailto:AteresHaShavua@aol.com)>  
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EMES LIYAAKOV  
Weekly Insights from MOREINU  
HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l  
[Translated by Ephraim Weiss]  
Emor

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l  
Of all the mitzvos in the Torah, perhaps the one that spans the longest length of time is sefira. For forty nine days (nights) between the second day of Pesach and Shavuot, we count, out loud, with a bracha, "today is so many days which are so many weeks of the omer." Why do we do this? What is the reason for our counting?

It is brought in the medrash that the reason for this sefira is one of ahavas HaTorah. Following the Bnei Yisroel's mass exodus from Mitzrayim, they were ready and willing to accept the Torah. Yet, Moshe told them that instead of receiving the Torah right away, they would have to wait fifty days. The Bnei Yisroel then eagerly anticipated the giving of the Torah, to the point of counting aloud each of the days. It is in memory of this incredible display of ahavas HaTorah that we count our forty nine days of sefira.

It is with this understanding of the reason behind sefiras haomer that we can come to have at least partial insight into the reason for the mass death of nearly all of the talmidei Rabbi Akiva. It says in the gemara, "Rebbi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of talmidim, and all died in the span of days between Pesach and Shavuot". What heinous crime was committed that deserved such a terrible punishment? The gemara says that their sin was that the more learned of them did not have a proper level of respect for those who were less learned. While the dor hamidbar showed an incredible display of ahavas HaTorah, generations later the talmidei Rabbi Akiva died because of their lack of kavod HaTorah.

Yet how can this be true? The talmidim of Rabbi Akiva were the crème-de-la-crème, they were the giants of their generation. How could it be that they were so lacking in the most basic level of kavod HaTorah?

Reb Yaakov answers this perplexing question with a mashal. It is a well known fact that the best time for fishing is while it is raining. Why is this so? The reason is because when it rains, all the fish go to the surface, to catch the rain in their mouths. What drives the fish to do this? Surely they have enough water - they are swimming in it! The reason they do

this is because their whole life revolves around water; even the smallest drop of water is precious. The same thing held true for the talmidei Rabbi Akiva. Their whole lives revolved around the "sea" of Torah. While it is true that they did have kavod HaTorah, they didn't do as the fish did. Every little drop of Torah that they learned, even from those lesser than them, should have been treated with the highest level of respect. For this lack of respect to the Torah, they deserved such a severe punishment. Through our counting the moer we will hopefully instill into ourselves proper ahavas haTorah as we prepare for Shavuot and may we merit as proper kabalas HaTorah.

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From: Rabbi Goldwicht [<mailto:rgoldwicht@yutorah.org>] Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2005

THE WEEKLY SICHA FROM  
RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT

Emor: The Power of Speech

In parashat Emor, the Torah relates the incident of the mekalel. The mekalel was the son of an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother from the tribe of Dan, and as a result he wished to make his home in the camp of Dan, claiming that he was their fellow tribesman even though his father was Egyptian. The tribe of Dan responded that what determines one's tribe is one's father, as it says, "Ish al diglo l'veit avotam." When they came before Moshe Rabbeinu for a din torah, he ruled that the man had no connection to the tribe of Dan and therefore had no right to live there. Displeased with this ruling, the mekalel cursed Moshe Rabbeinu; unsure of the punishment for the mekalel, Moshe Rabbeinu had him imprisoned until Hashem would reveal to Moshe the proper punishment, skilah.

Immediately after Hashem reveals the proper punishment, the Torah teaches the laws of damages – ayin tachat ayin, shen tachat shen – essentially repeating laws we already know from parashat Mishpatim. At the conclusion of these laws, the Torah repeats, "And Moshe told B'nei Yisrael to remove the mekalel from the camp and to stone him." Why does the Torah interrupt the parasha of the mekalel with the laws of damages, especially considering the fact that we already know these laws from parashat Mishpatim? We never find anything like this – in the middle of discussing one topic, the Torah "takes a break," only to return several pesukim later to the original topic!

We must also question why the din of the mekalel appears in sefer VaYikra instead of in sefer BaMidbar, like all of the other incidents that took place over the forty years B'nei Yisrael traversed the desert. For example, the mekoshesh eitzim, which took place on the very first Shabbat after B'nei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, belongs in sefer Shemot, but because of the nature of sefer BaMidbar it was placed there instead. Why, then, does the mekalel appear at the end of VaYikra instead of BaMidbar?

To answer these questions, we must enter a very interesting sugya: the sugya of dibbur. Dibbur is not just movement of the lips that facilitates interpersonal communication. Dibbur is a reflection of one's thoughts. The Rambam rules in the third perek of Hilchot Terumot that if a person had intent to say terumah but said ma'aser instead, or olah but said shelamim instead, his words have no validity until his dibbur matches his thoughts.

Shlomo HaMelech, in Shir HaShirim, refers to the dibbur of Knesset Yisrael as "umidbarech naveh," comparing it to a midbar. Through proper speech you can turn a midbar into a yishuv; conversely, through improper speech you can turn a yishuv into a midbar. In Yechezkel (20:35), the galut is referred to as "midbar ha'amim," because this is where HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to bring us to the brit kerutah bisfatayim, to teach us to use our dibbur properly. The power of dibbur is illustrated further by Chazal, who tell us that it is forbidden to "open one's mouth to the Satan," as we learn from Avraham Avinu – even though as far as he knew, he would be returning from the Akeidah alone,

the Torah tells us that he said to his servants, "And we will bow and we will return," so as not to open his mouth to the Satan. The power of a tzaddik's speech is also demonstrated in the mishnah in Berachot 5:5: A tzaddik can tell who will live and who will die based on whether his tefillah for that person flowed smoothly. The Sefer HaChinuch writes that one who uses his speech improperly is worse than an animal, because it is the ability to speak and to express one's thoughts through speech that distinguishes us from the animals. The power of dibbur is tremendous in its ability to build and to save, but also to destroy.

Sefer VaYikra deals with all the different types of kedushah that exist: kedushat ha'adam (tumah and taharah); kedushat hazman (the yomim tovim); kedushat ha'aretz (shemittah and yovel). With the parasha of the mekalel, the Torah teaches us that the key to all kedushah is kedushat hapeh, proper dibbur. This is also the reason why the Torah reviews the laws of damages within the parasha of the mekalel, to teach us that the destruction we can wreak with our mouths is no less than that which we can cause with a gun or a rock. As clear as it is that you can murder someone with a gun, it must be just as clear that you can murder someone with your dibbur as well.

How amazing is it, then, that the Torah juxtaposes Moshe's punishment of not being able to enter Eretz Yisrael after hitting the rock instead of speaking to it to Moshe's request to pass through the land of Edom. The king of Edom refuses to let Moshe and B'nei Yisrael pass through his land, even threatening war. Why was he so opposed?

Essentially, Moshe Rabbeinu was telling the king of Edom that the two of them represented Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov promised to meet Eisav in Seir (see Bereishit 33:14). Moshe wanted to fulfill the promise of Yaakov to Eisav. The king of Edom's response was that if Moshe really represented Yaakov, he would have used the power of Yaakov, of "hakol kol Yaakov," in dealing with the rock. Instead, Moshe used the power of Eisav, of "hayadayim y'dei Eisav." If so, the king of Edom was prepared to confront them in battle, since his power through Eisav was stronger than their power through Eisav. This is the connection between Moshe's hitting of the rock and the king of Edom's refusal to let B'nei Yisrael pass through his land. During these special days in which we find ourselves, one of the ways we must improve ourselves is by working on developing proper speech. We must become more conscious of how we speak with our parents, our wives, our children, and our friends. Through proper speech we can create worlds. It is not for no reason that Shlomo HaMelech teaches us, "Mavet v'chayim b'yad lashon."

Shabbat Shalom! Meir Goldwicht

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From: TorahWeb.org [mailto:[torahweb@torahweb.org](mailto:torahweb@torahweb.org)] Sent: May 11, 2005 Subject: Rabbi Benjamin Yudin - When is every day a Mann-day? to subscribe, email [weekly@torahweb.org](mailto:weekly@torahweb.org) For anything else, email: [torahweb@torahweb.org](mailto:torahweb@torahweb.org) [www.torahweb.org](http://www.torahweb.org)

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

WHEN IS EVERY DAY A MANN-DAY?

What's in a name? The Torah (Shemos 16:36) tells us that an omer is a tenth of an ephah (a dry measure). Rashi on this verse makes a calculation and informs us that a tenth of an ephah is the minimum amount of dough needed for the requirements of taking challah and for the menachos. What is of special noteworthiness is that the Torah and the rabbis take note of this weight measurement of omer and refer both to the korban of barley that is brought on the second day of Pesach (the sixteenth of Nissan) not as the offering of barley but as the korban omer (Vayikra 23:10, 11, 12). Moreover, the mitzvah of counting and

connecting the yom tov of Pesach with that of Shavuot is called counting the omer (Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah 306). Why stress the omer in each case, when even regarding the korban tamid, brought twice daily, the Torah ordains (Bamidbar 28:5) that it be accompanied by a tenth ephah of fine flour as a meal offering, with no mention of the omer?

Rav Yosef Salant zt"l in his Be'er Yosef suggests a fascinating answer. He notes that the first time the term omer is used in the Torah is in conjunction with the mann that miraculously sustained the Jewish nation in the desert for forty years. Moshe directs them to (Shemos 16:16) "gather from it an omer per person." Moreover, when Moshe is told to hide and preserve some mann so that future generations will be able to actually witness the miracle food, he places an omer's worth of mann for safekeeping in the aron (Yuma 52b). The gemarah (Kiddushin 38a) teaches that the mann stopped falling on the seventh of Adar - the day of Moshe's death - as the mann fell in his honor. Unlike the other times that the Torah teaches (Shemos 16:20) that that which was left overnight became worm infested and putrid, here it lasted until they crossed the Jordan, until the sixteenth of Nissan. From then on they ate of the produce of the land.

It is thus no coincidence that the Torah ordained that the korban omer whose purpose is to thank Hashem for His kindness in renewing the harvest (and we thus present Him with this produce prior to our benefiting from it - Sefer HaChinuch mitzvah 306) was to be brought on the day the mann stopped nourishing us. Thus, the sixteenth of Nissan, the second day of Pesach, is the day the korban omer was brought.

Our bringing the korban omer results in our remembering the omer of the mann. As the mann was hamotzi lechem min hashomayim - the produce of Eretz Yisroel is hamotzi lechem min haaretz. The motzi is the same. The produce of the Land of Israel represented by the omer of barley is no less a divine blessing than the omer of mann.

Rav Menachem Mendel of Riminov suggests a novel interpretation to the name mann. When the mann descended the Jewish nation did not know what it was (Shemos 16:15), referring to the new found object they said to one another "mann hu". Rav Menachem Mendel learns "mann hu" as referring not only to the object of the mann, but additionally to the persons who ate the mann as they were constantly being elevated and spiritually uplifted by this divine nourishment. "Mann hu" - they didn't recognize each other and the positive transformation it had on the people.

Our counting the omer from Pesach to Shavuot is likewise to remind us of the special nourishing food for thought the mann provided. There is no room for jealousy or envy if one believes their sustenance is being provided by Hashem. Ben Azzai taught (Yuma 38a) "by your name shall they call you, and in your place shall the seat you, and from your own position shall they provide you." Rashi explains that each person's livelihood (parnasah) is not a gift of others good will, rather it is the personalized parnasah that Hashem has allotted to him.

We count the omer until Shavuot, out time of reaccepting the Torah and our commitment towards renewed Torah study, as the omer itself served in that capacity. The omer of mann that Moshe hid was removed from its case many hundreds of years later by Yirmiyahu Hanavi. In response to the excuse of the Jewish people for not studying Torah - that they needed to earn a livelihood - Yirmiyahu said learn from the omer of mann -as He sustained them with a minimum effort and exertion so will he provide for you.

The omer teaches: you make time for Him, He'll make time for you.

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From: RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM PARSHA COLUMN [mailto:Shabbat\_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2005 To: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Emor by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin  
Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Emor (Leviticus: 21:1-24:23) By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - "And I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 22:32).

The biblical portion of Emor opens with a very strange commandment to the Kohanim - priests of Israel: "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to the Kohanim - priests children of Aaron and tell them: Do not defile yourself by contact with the dead of the nation'" (Leviticus 21:1). And the bible goes on to delineate the only dead with whom the Kohen - priest may have contact: his wife, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother and his unmarried sister. In previous commentaries, I have explained the fundamental prohibition against Kohen - priestly involvement with death and cemeteries as a ringing declaration that Judaism - unlike all other religions from the dawn of history to present day - is not chiefly concerned with the other world but rather is concerned with this world, is not interested primarily in death and the hereafter but is rather principally engaged with life and the here - and - now. Our major religious question is not how to ease the transition from this world to the next but in rather how to improve and repair the society in which we are now living.

What does seem strange, however, is that our same Biblical portion goes on to command: "You shall not desecrate the name of my holiness; I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel." (Leviticus 22:32) Our Talmudic sages derive from this verse the necessity of sacrificing one's life - sanctifying the name of G-d (Kiddush Hashem) - for the sake of the commandments of the Bible: under all circumstances an individual Jew must give up his life rather than transgress any of the three major prohibitions of murder, sexual immorality or adultery, and, in times of Gentile persecution of the Jews, a Jew must die rather than publicly transgress even the simplest or most "minor" of Jewish Laws, even a Jewish custom referring to our shoe-laces (B.T. Sanhedrin 74a,b). If indeed the preservation of life in this world is deemed to be important, that our Kohen - priest may have virtually no contact with the dead - and the Talmudic Sages even insist that when the Jews are not being persecuted, it is actually forbidden for a Jew to forfeit his life in order not to desecrate the Sabbath, for better he desecrate one Sabbath and remain alive to keep many Sabbaths (B.T. ibid, Maimonides, Laws of Torah Fundamentals 5) - then why command martyrdom in any situation at all? And the truth is that our history is tear - drenched and blood - stained by the many sacred martyrs of our faith who have given up their lives in sanctification of the Divine Name!

I believe that the answer to our question lies in the very juxtaposition of the law of priestly defilement emphasizing the importance of life to the law of martyrdom enjoining death within the very same Biblical portion. Yes, preservation of life is crucial and this world is the focus of the Jewish concern - but not life merely for the sake of breathing and not the world as it is, with all of its imperfections, after all, anyone who lives only to keep on living is doomed to failure, for no one has gotten out of this world alive. Living, and not merely existing, means devoting one's life to external ideas, ideals, and values which are more important than any individual life; one enables one's life to participate in eternity by dedicating it to the eternal values which will eventually repair the world and establish a more perfect society. Hence we must value and elevate life, improve and enable this world, but always within the perspective of those principles which will lead us to redemption, those beliefs and actions which are more important than any individual life. Yes, "live by these (My laws)," but external life can only be achieved by a dedication

which includes the willingness to sanctify G-d's name with martyrdom, albeit only under very extreme circumstances.

But then how can we justify martyrdom - even if only during periods of persecution - for the sake of a Jewish custom referring to our shoe-laces? What can there possibly be about a shoe-lace which strikes at the heart and essence of our Jewish mission? The Talmudic commentary of the Ashkenazik (France - Germany) Sages of the eleventh - twelfth centuries, when many Jews were martyred by the Crusaders, suggest that the general custom in Rome and its numerous colonies during the second century was to wear white shoelaces; the Jews, however, wore black shoelaces, as a memorial to the loss of our Holy Temple and the disappearance of the Jewish National Sovereignty in Jerusalem. When Gentiles in times of persecution attempted to force Jews to wear white shoe-laces - and thereby force the Jewish Community to cease their mourning for the loss of our national homeland - the Jew must respond with Martyrdom (B.T. Sanhedrin 74b, Tosafot ad/oc).

My revered teacher Rav Joseph B Solovetchik added one crucial point. Among the many Jewish laws, decrees and customs which have developed from Biblical times to the present, the Jews themselves do not always realize which are truly vital for our national and religious preservation; the Gentiles who are persecuting us always do, because they - wishing to destroy us - strike at the jugular. Hence whatever they insist we abandon, we must maintain even at the price of our lives!

From this perspective, it becomes easier to understand why the current claws of anti - semitism - especially throughout Europe - is expressing itself in acts of persecution specifically focused against the state of Israel and her policies. The double standard of condemning us for fighting back against terrorists without so much as censoring those responsible for the terror, the disenfranchisement of our right to a State while championing the cause of our non-democratic (as yet) enemies to a State and the de-humanization and demonization of our political leadership in the enemy press and media might only emphasize to us how crucial and vital the State of Israel is for Jewish survival today.

The memorials of Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron quickly followed by Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim must remind us that Israel is not merely a destination but is truly destiny; Israel is not only the means to our survival, but it is also our mission for world salvation, from whence the word of G-d, a G-d of life, love and peace - will spread to all of humanity.

Shabbat Shalom.

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From: Halacha [mailto:halacha@yutorah.org] Sent: May 09, 2005  
Subject: Weekly Halacha Overview - Reciting a Beracha on a Borrowed Talit

RABBI JOSH FLUG  
RECITING A BERACHA ON A BORROWED TALIT

The Borrowed Talit

The Torah (Devarim 22:12), in a verse referring to the mitzvah of tzitzit, uses the word kesutcha, your garment. The Gemara, Chullin 136a, derives from the word kesutcha, that one who borrows a four-cornered garment is exempt from placing tzitzit on it for thirty days. Tosafot, Chullin 110b s.v. Talit, explain that in principle the borrower is totally exempt from placing tzitzit on the borrowed garment. However, once thirty days pass, the garment is perceived as if it is owned by the borrower, and therefore the rabbis required the borrower to place tzitzit on that garment.

What is the law regarding one who borrows a garment that already has tzitzit on it? Tosafot write that since one is exempt from placing tzitzit on a borrowed garment that does not already have tzitzit on it, so too one may not recite a beracha on a borrowed talit. Tosafot explain that since they are already deemed exempt from the obligation to place tzitzit on that garment, one may not recite a beracha on them. However, Rabbeinu

Asher suggests two reasons why one would recite a beracha on a borrowed talit. In his commentary to Chullin 8:26, he states that although in principle, one would not recite a beracha on a borrowed garment, nevertheless, the lender will always have the intent to give the garment to the borrower as a gift (on condition that he return it - matana al m'nat l'hachzir) in order to enable the borrower to recite a beracha. In Hilchot Tzitzit no.2, Rabbeinu Asher states that one cannot avoid reciting a beracha by borrowing someone else's talit because the exemption of a borrowed garment applies only to garments that do not already have tzitzit attached to them. This implies that in principle one can fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit with a borrowed garment that already has tzitzit attached to it, even if there was no acquisition of the garment.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 14:3, rules in accordance with Rabbeinu Asher that if one borrows a garment that already has tzitzit, he may recite a beracha. However, Shulchan Aruch does not indicate whether this is due to the fact that the lender has intent to give the garment as a gift, or whether in principle one may recite a beracha on a borrowed garment. Taz, Orach Chaim 14:4, states that the reason is because the lender has intent to give the garment as a gift. Taz adds that according to this reasoning, one would only recite a beracha if the garment is normally used to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit. If the garment is normally worn as part of one's wardrobe, and because it is a four-cornered garment, tzitzit were placed on it, one would not recite a beracha as it cannot be assured that the garment was given to the borrower for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah. Eliah Rabbah 14:6, argues that primary reason for reciting a beracha on a borrowed garment is because in principle one recites a beracha on a garment that has tzitzit already attached. The Mishna Berurah 14:11, adopts the opinion of Taz.

R. Shlomo Luria, Yam Shel Shlomo, Chullin 8:53, suggest that we only assume that the lender intends to give the talit as a gift when the borrower requests to use it for the morning prayers. If the borrower requests to use it on order to lead the congregation in prayer or when he is called to the Torah, there is no acquisition, as the borrower is not borrowing the talit for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah. R. Ya'akov of Lisa, Derech HaChaim, Dinei Tzitzit, Din Im Noda Lo no. 3, states that if one wants to rely on the opinion of R. Luria, it is preferable that the borrower should have specific intent not to acquire the talit. It should be noted that according to the opinion of Eliah Rabbah, one would be required to recite a beracha as neither of these leniencies are applicable.

#### The Congregation's Talit

The Gemara, Chullin 136a, states that one is obligated to place tzitzit on a garment owned in partnership. Mordechai, Menachot no. 950, notes that therefore, one recites a beracha on the talit of a congregation as this is tantamount to a garment owned in partnership.

R. Ya'akov of Lisa, op. cit., suggests that the reason why one recites a beracha on the talit of the congregation is because it was purchased with the intent that whoever uses it acquires it. Mishna Berurah, Bi'ur Halacha 14:3 s.v She'ala, questions the need for such a reason after Mordechai already compared this to a garment owned in partnership. Mishna Berurah posits that R. Ya'akov of Lisa's reasons would apply in a case where there are so many people in the congregation that each person's share in the talit is worth less than a perutah (approximately half of a penny and the smallest halachically significant amount of money). In such a situation, one can no longer consider one's share in the talit as something significant, and the only reason to require one to recite a beracha is because it was purchased with intent that whoever uses it acquires it. Perhaps one can suggest that R. Ya'akov of Lisa's reason is necessary in order that a guest of the congregation may recite a beracha. A guest is not considered a legal partner in the congregation and therefore the only reason to require one to recite a beracha is because it was purchased with intent that whoever uses it acquires it.

Mishna Berurah cites some Acharonim who rule that if one does not want to recite a beracha on the congregation's talit, he should have specific intent not to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit, and he should not cover his head with the talit. Although Mishna Berurah questions the rationale of these Acharonim, he does not offer a conclusive opinion as to whether one may rely on the opinion of these Acharonim. Nevertheless, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (opinion cited in Halichot Shlomo 3:12) maintains that one is not required to recite a beracha on the congregation's talit, even if one covers his head with it.

#### Should a Shaliach Tzibbur Don a Talit at Night?

An interesting question arises from this discussion regarding whether a shaliach tzibbur (the leader of the congregation) should don a talit for the evening services. Rama, Orach Chaim 18:1, writes that one who dons a garment with tzitzit at night does not recite a beracha as there is a dispute whether there is a fulfillment of the mitzvah of tzitzit at night. Taz, Orach Chaim 581:2, points to the following conundrum regarding the nighttime selichot services. On the one hand, it is important for the shaliach tzibbur to don a talit during the selichot services. However, on the other hand, Taz claims that it is inappropriate to don a talit at night as there is dispute whether one should recite a beracha upon donning a talit at night, and one should not enter into a situation of doubt unnecessarily.

Taz therefore suggests that the proper course of action is to borrow a talit from a friend, and in this manner there is definitely no requirement to recite a beracha as the talit is not being borrowed for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah.

It should be noted that Taz is following his own opinion that the reason why one recites a beracha on a borrowed garment is because it is assumed that the lender has the intention to give the garment to the borrower as a gift. Therefore, if either the borrower or the lender do not have intent of acquisition, no beracha is recited. However, according to Eliah Rabbah who rules that in principle one recites a beracha on a borrowed garment that already has tzitzit attached, one would recite a beracha on this borrowed garment, regardless of whether there was intent of acquisition or not. In fact, the comments of Rabbeinu Asher which serve as the basis for Eliah Rabbah's ruling address this very question. Rabbeinu Asher notes the practice that some have that the shaliach tzibbur borrows a talit from someone else when selichot are recited at night in order to avoid the question of whether to recite a beracha. Rabbeinu Asher's response is that borrowing a garment with tzitzit already attached does not solve this problem, as one would be required to recite a beracha in such an instance were it to be daytime.

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From: office@etzion.org.il Sent: May 11, 2005 5:30 AM To: yhesichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT65 -31: Yom Ha'atzmaut  
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH  
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GUARDIAN OF ISRAEL - WATCH OVER THE STATE OF ISRAEL  
BASED ON A SICHA BY  
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The prophet Yishayahu says (51:16):

"I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant the heavens and establish the earth and to say to Zion, You are My nation."

"To say to Zion" - Targum Yonatan translates: "to those who dwell in Zion."

Many midrashim elaborate the connection between the nation of Israel and the land of Israel. This connection goes back to the very beginning of the nation and of the land, to the root and essence of these two great entities. Judaism and the Jewish people are born when Avram is commanded to go to the land of Israel (Bereishit 12):

"And G-d said to Avram: Go out from your land, from your birth-place and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, and you will be a blessing."

A nation is generally not a deliberate creation. It is always post-facto: when there is a common language, blood relation, a common territory, and common historical experiences, then, over the course of the years, a "nation" comes into being. Opinions differ as to the process itself and as to whether all of the above elements are necessary for the creation of a nation. But the decision to establish a nation was a one-time phenomenon in the history of mankind.

The Rambam explains that the aim of the forefathers throughout their lives was to establish a monotheistic nation (Hilkhot Avodat Kohavim, end of chapter 1). Avraham understood that after the great flood, the debacle of the tower of Babel and the downfall of the city of Sedom, there was no longer any room for optimism as to the direction that humanity would take. Preaching was useless. It was necessary to establish a nation that would realize the values and ideals of justice and righteousness in its own behavior. Avraham knew that the process would take thousands of years, but it had to begin somewhere. If there is anything unique about the Jewish people, it is its beginning: its deliberate creation as a nation, rather than its evolution and development into such an entity.

The same applies to the land of Israel. We read in Tehillim (105:9-12):

"[The covenant] which He made with Avraham, and His oath to Yitzchak; and He set it for Ya'akov as a law, as an eternal covenant for Israel, saying, To you I will give the land of Canaan, the tract of your inheritance,' when they were few in number, barely living there."

The land of Israel was given to the Jews because the nation of Israel was created. Usually, a nation comes to possess its land through prolonged habitation there, over hundreds of years. The nation of Israel acquired the land of Israel even before dwelling there. Likewise, the nation of Israel maintained its connection with the land of Israel throughout thousands of years of exile, although Jews lived in Yemen and in Spain for more years than the nation dwelled in the land of Israel during the First and Second Temple periods combined.

Since the Second World War, many new states have been created - they number nearly one hundred, if not more. Each celebrates its own Independence Day. Is our Yom Ha-Atzma'ut (Independence Day) like that of any other country, aside from the fact that we attribute the event to Divine Providence?

There is a great difference between the establishment of the State of Israel and the establishment of any other country in the world. In each of the relatively newly independent countries, the population previously lived there under colonial rule, until the time came for their freedom from that yoke. And in each instance, the new country was established for the inhabitants who had lived there until then. The only country that was established not for its inhabitants, but rather for those who did not yet inhabit it, was the State of Israel. This remarkable phenomenon was noted not only by us, but also by the nations of the world that assisted us in realizing it.

Only 650,000 Jews lived in Israel at the time of our independence - a small fraction of the millions who live here now. These 650,000 could have become the sole citizens of the new country, but the State of Israel was established for the sake of those who did not live here. This was a continuation of the original nature of the connection between the land and the nation, dating back to a time before the nation of Israel numbered millions. All of this lends a metaphysical dimension to the State of Israel and defines its purpose: the State of Israel was founded for the nation of Israel in exile.

Various movements attempted to create a State that was severed from the Jewish diaspora, to create an "Israeli" identity as opposed to a "Jewish" one, to regard "Sabras" as a separate nation. All failed completely. There is nothing more symbolic of the fact that the State of Israel was created for the nation of Israel than the very first expression of Israeli sovereignty on the 5th of Iyar 5708, when the country's gates were opened wide and thousands of Jews who had been held in detention camps in Cyprus were gathered in. This is the primary and most fundamental significance of the State of Israel: it is a land that is given to each and every Jew. The Holy One gave a gift to every Jew - a part of the land of Israel, and its acceptance depends only on the choice of the individual himself.

The land of Israel is a destination for every Jew in the world, without exception. Sometimes it is the land of his eternal rest - "This is my rest forever; here I shall dwell, for I have desired it" (Tehillim 132:14) - as a dream and vision that he attains after overcoming all the obstacles on the way. Sometimes it is a land of refuge: when all hope is lost, a Jew knows that he has a place in the land of Israel. This knowledge accompanies every Jew in the world - even those who oppose Zionism. They know that in the event of disaster, if they are ever forced to leave the place where they live, they can come to the land of Israel.

Therefore, the land of Israel has significance for every Jew. The matter depends entirely on one's own choice: one may choose it as a goal and destination, as a final station of his own volition, or as a last refuge - "bread in his basket." Let us not underestimate this last fact. Owing to our many sins, there are Jews in the world - mainly in Russia - who have no connection to Judaism at all. They know nothing of their religion, other than one single fact: that if there is no choice, they can come to Israel. This is the last vestige of Jewish identity that burns within them, and it gives them a certain measure of comfort.

Once I asked the director of the College for Jewish Studies in Leningrad (St. Petersburg today), "How many Jews live here?" He answered, "About eighty thousand." I asked, "How many of them have some connection to Judaism - how many ever go to a Jewish play, to a synagogue, to your college?" He replied, "I would be optimistic to the point of exaggeration if I said that about two thousand maintain such a connection." I asked, "And what about the other 78 thousand?" He said, "They know that they are Jews, and that if they're in trouble they can go to Israel. That is the sum total of their Judaism."

Therefore, every Jew in the world is a citizen of the State of Israel. There are those who dream of coming to Israel but face obstacles relating to family, finances, etc., and there are others who will come to Israel as a last resort, when no other alternative is open to them.

In the Book of Ezra (3:11-12), we read about the celebration when the foundation was laid for the Second Temple:

"They sang praise and gave thanks to G-d, for He is good, for His mercy to Israel endures forever. All the people shouted a great shout in their praise of G-d because of the foundation of the house of G-d. But many of the Kohanim and Leviim and the elders who were heads of households, who had seen the First Temple - when they witnessed the foundation of this Temple, they wept with a great voice, while many others shouted and raised their voices in joy. And the people could not distinguish the voices shouting with joy from the voice of the crying among the nation, for the people shouted with a great shout and the sound was heard from far off."

When the Second Temple was built, following the return from the Babylonian exile, there was both bitter weeping and a great shout of joy. The weeping came from the elders who remembered the glory of the First Temple. The joy came from the younger generation, who had been raised in exile and had never seen the First Temple.

Sometimes I feel like one of those elders from Babylonia, but in the opposite sense: I know how to celebrate freedom because I experienced something of the bitterness of a Jew persecuted like a dog. In the Holocaust, I knew Jews who never tasted freedom, who dreamed of walking freely in the streets of a city, who ran from one cellar to another, never daring to venture out into the open.

For me, Yom Ha-Atzma'ut is a day of experiencing freedom. For those of you who have grown up in the State of Israel or in other free countries, it is more difficult to give thanks to G-d. "What's the big deal? In America we were free too." You were born into that atmosphere. The problem is that it is not only the sense of freedom that is lacking in the younger generation. Unfortunately, Jewish sovereignty is also sometimes undervalued.

The Rambam writes (Hilkhot Chanuka 3:1) that the crux of the achievement of the Hasmoneans was to bring back Jewish sovereignty "for more than two hundred years, until the destruction of the Second Temple." What kind of sovereignty does he mean? The reign of Herod and his sons. Nevertheless, the Rambam emphasizes that this was a historical achievement. Therefore, we light candles and recite Hallel - for the return of Jewish sovereignty "for more than two hundred years."

I do not feel that Israeli youth appreciate Israeli independence to the proper degree. Each year, I try to convey to my students the sense of ">From the straits I called to G-d; G-d answered me with the open expanse" (Tehillim 118:5). I try to make them feel the sense of expanse, as opposed to the sense of constriction. But to my sorrow, as the founding of the State recedes into historical memory, the significance of Yom Ha-Atzma'ut is gradually becoming blurred. Among Jews who are not observant, the fifth of Iyar has become the "festival of nature," celebrated by going out on hikes and picnics. Observant Jews regard it as the

festival of the land of Israel. To my mind, we have not yet perceived the depth of the importance of this day.

In the past, there were Jews who did not know what blessing to recite over independence or freedom. There were some who perceived the greatness of the day specifically in the military victory over the Arab states. This idea began to find its way into religious Zionist circles too. Those who gave praise said, "What's a state, after all? They wanted to kill us, we were saved - that's something." They based the argument that one should recite Hallel on Yom Ha-Atzma'ut on a comparison to the exodus from Egypt: If we recite a blessing and give praise for coming out of slavery to freedom, then how much more appropriate is the praise for coming out of death to life!

The other aspect of the day, that of freedom, receded from view. A new generation arose, a generation born into freedom, a generation that never knew restrictions on Jews. This generation sought to imbue the fifth of Iyar with meaning - and so this day became the festival of the land of Israel. Diaspora Jews were happy with this, because the question they must ask themselves is, "Where are we?" This question is applicable only if the rebirth of the Jewish State represents the beginning of the flowering of our redemption. But if this day is "Eretz Yisrael's festival" - the festival of the nation that has returned to the land - then the Jews of New York also have their portion in it, and what need is there to immigrate there?

Another point should be kept in mind. In the wake of the severing of Jewish continuity following the Holocaust, the new generation lacks the rootedness that nourished its forefathers. It must examine everything anew, with a wretched sense of insecurity. Anything that isn't included explicitly in the Shulchan Arukh cannot be assimilated into one's inner world. Concerning Eretz Yisrael, in contrast, there is a famous comment by the Ramban emphasizing the relevance of the mitzva of settling Eretz Yisrael in every generation. "Freedom? What section is that in the Shulchan Arukh? Jewish sovereignty - Ramban mentions it in passing, but there's no such heading in the Shulchan Arukh." They are trying to understand what Yom Ha-Atzma'ut is. In this way, the day assumed a character related to the land, a trend which only became stronger following the Six-Day War.

My Zionist belief is not related to the question of whether the Halakha follows those who say that there is a mitzva to settle Eretz Yisrael in our times or whether the mitzva does not apply today. Once a learned Torah scholar asked me whether Zionism is possible according to the school of Rabbeinu Chaim, one of the Tosafists, who rules (Ketubot 110b) that in our times the mitzva of settling Eretz Yisrael does not apply. What has the one thing to do with the other? The question is one of faith: if a person sees the Holy One leading the nation of Israel back to the land of Israel, is he obligated to recite Hallel?

I was once witness to a conversation between two great Torah scholars. One asked the other, whose heart and soul are bound to the Gush Etzion area, "If you had been given the opportunity, on the fifth of Iyar 5708, to remain in Kfar Etzion, but not under Jewish rule, what would you have done?" The man wrestled with this question for some time and then admitted ashamedly that he would not have had the strength to remain as a Jew in Kfar Etzion and not to enter the Jewish state. I stood watching this and thought to myself, "Master of the Universe! After two thousand years the Holy One bestows a gift of unparalleled preciousness - freedom - and there are Jews who even contemplate whether it would be better to refrain from accepting that freedom, so long as we may fulfill the mitzva of settling Eretz Yisrael specifically here?"

The same problem exists in relation to Jewish sovereignty. To see the importance of Jewish sovereignty is difficult. There is no section of the Shulchan Arukh devoted to it, nor any teaching by the Ramban.

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 30b) teaches that "Jerusalem was destroyed only because ... they based their rulings on strict Torah law and did not go beyond the letter of the law." Every mitzva that we perform has two aspects. There is the halakhic aspect and there is the ethical aspect. Concerning mitzvot that relate to one's relationship with G-d, we are commanded "You shall be holy" (Vayikra 19:2). When it comes to mitzvot that pertain to interpersonal relationships, we are commanded "You shall do what is upright and good" (Devarim 6:18). The Ramban, in his famous commentary (Vayikra 19:2), notes that it is possible for a person to be a "scoundrel within the bounds of Torah" - he may fulfill the letter of the law in every halakha, but forget their moral message. He may carefully avoid transgressing the commandment not to steal, while at the same time losing the ethical aspect of loving his fellow man, of pursuing justice and uprightness. A person may likewise guard himself from speaking "lashon ha-ra" about someone else but allow himself to feel jealous of him, to hate him and to rejoice in his failures.

Destruction comes when we turn the Torah into "law" and lose its ethical aspect, the dimension that is beyond the letter of the law. It is possible to treat Eretz Yisrael, too, as a halakhic issue, while simultaneously losing our relationship with it as our homeland. We must regard our homeland in the same way as the gentiles, on their part, regard their respective homelands. What is Jewish sovereignty? Is it the natural feeling that we have sovereignty, that Israel is respected? There is no such discussion in the Shulchan Arukh, but it is a most fundamental value in our lives. What is the universal significance of Jewish sovereignty?

In the past, the Vatican would refuse to recognize the State of Israel. This lack of recognition had its foundations in Christian faith; when Jewish sovereignty was established, it created a great shock wave throughout the Christian world. Who can estimate the historical and meta-historical significance of the fact that the Prime Minister of Israel arrived in Poland fifty years after the Holocaust, and the Polish army saluted him and welcomed him like royalty? Could any single Jew among the millions who perished in the Holocaust dream of such a possibility?

Someone who pays attention only to the halakhic aspect and not to the greater ethical, historical and meta-historical picture, is like one who insists on adhering only to the "letter of the law" in Torah while rejecting anything that is "beyond the letter of the law," and his way brings destruction.

After decades of the existence of the State of Israel, we still face great dangers, but I have complete faith and confidence that we shall prevail. We carry with us the words of Rav Herzog, of blessed memory, who declared - while the Germans were advancing on Eretz Yisrael - "We have a tradition that there will not be a third destruction."

We cannot interpret the revival of the State of Israel in terms of any biblical verse other than those that speak of the return to Zion. "The beginning of the redemption" is not a promise that "everything will be okay." The students of the Vilna Gaon spoke of the "beginning of the redemption," R. Elyahu Guttmacher of Graidetz spoke of the "beginning of the redemption," and Rav Kook also spoke of the "beginning of the redemption." Yet after all of these came the Holocaust. But the return to Zion continues. We have no guarantee that all will go smoothly. But the process in its entirety will lead to the complete redemption. So we are promised.

Concerning one thing we cannot be certain, and I must say this openly. We are promised that the nations of the world will not succeed in destroying the State of Israel. But we cannot be certain that, heaven forbid, it will not be Jews who bring about its destruction. The possibility exists. Not from the direction of the likes of Neturei Karta, who pray for the destruction of the State, but rather from other elements.

Some years ago, during the Lebanon War, there appeared on the left side of the political map movements such as "Yesh Gevul" ("There is a border"), who published articles in praise of refusing to obey decisions of the State and of the government. They called for rebellion, and we were all shocked. Today, in our many sins, the right wing is repeating and quoting the same messages, encouraging the disobeying of orders and denying the need to accept the decisions of the majority and of the government.

Let this be clear: if we are not careful, this can bring about, G-d forbid, the destruction of the State. Everyone has the right to criticize the government - any government. Everyone is entitled to protest and to hold demonstrations. But the decisions of a government elected by a democratic majority must be respected. Someone who regards such decisions as illegitimate nullifies, heaven forbid, Jewish sovereignty. It is unimportant whether the decisions are correct or not. That is the power of sovereignty, and we have to remember that. I pray that whatever situation may arise, responsibility and common sense will prevail. The nation of Israel needs Jewish sovereignty; G-d forbid that we should undermine the legitimacy and the functioning of the government of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces. Every Jew in the world needs to know that the State of Israel is there for him, and we must all guard it with the greatest care.

We have to know that the blessing and praise that we offer G-d for the State of Israel is, first and foremost, a blessing over Jewish sovereignty. At the time the State was established, there were Jews in the world who had nothing. Holocaust refugees, thousands who were left in Germany after the Holocaust, languished in camps. The countries of the world refused to open their gates. Each had established its own quota and would not budge. What would have happened to those Jews had the State of Israel not arisen? Imagine the hopelessness that would have been their lot.

The State of Israel arose as a sanctification of G-d's name, following the terrible desecration of G-d's name in the Holocaust. We must ensure that the State of Israel continues to be a symbol of kiddush Hashem, that Israeli society will

be one characterized by sanctification of the G-d's name - a society where justice and righteousness prevail.

I pray to G-d that we shall know no more war and bereavement, that we will guard the State of Israel as our most precious possession. All that has been said here is nothing compared to the ethical and historical power and significance of the State of Israel.

Elsewhere, the conclusion might be, "Long live the State of Israel!" Instead, we beseech G-d: "Guardian of Israel - watch over the remnant of Israel; watch over the State of Israel."

[This sicha was delivered on Yom Ha-Atzma'ut 5753 (1993).]

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From: Peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com Shema Yisrael Torah Network Sent: May 12, 2005 To: Peninim Parsha

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

PARSHAS EMOR Say to the Kohanim... and tell them. (21:1)

It seems that the Torah is twice instructing Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to the Kohanim. Chazal explain the apparent redundancy to imply that the Kohanim were to convey this teaching to others who would otherwise not be enjoined in this command. This is a reference to young children. The adults are not permitted to cause their children to become tamei, spiritually contaminated, from exposure to the dead. This is a noteworthy response which begs elucidation. The pasuk implies that the adults were commanded twice. There is no mention, however, of any communication to the children. From where do Chazal derive that this is a message for adults concerning their children?

Horav Moshe Shapiro, Shlita, explains that the way to influence the children is by strengthening the resolve and commitment of the adults. A direct reprimand to the children will not be as effective as one that the parents teach by example. Ask any educator: the best and most effective way to reach the students is by working with - and on - the parents.

In his commentary to Parashas Tazria, the Maggid, zl, m'Dubno writes that he queried his great rebbe, the Gaon, zl, m'Vilna concerning the most effective approach towards inspiring and influencing others. The Gaon replied with an analogy. One should take a large cup and surround it with a number of smaller cups. He should pour the liquid into the large cup, and it will overflow into the smaller cups. That is how one is mashpia, influences, others. The more he refines his own character traits, the more he enhances and embellishes his own knowledge, the greater will be his impact on others. It influences those he seeks to inspire.

Horav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zl, says that this idea is especially focused on parents. In fact, he suggests that the term chinuch habanim, education of children, which is applied to the process of parents guiding their children, is actually a misnomer. Parents are primarily not mechanchim, educators. They are mashpiim, individuals who influence. The word mashpia, explains Rav Yaakov, is related to the word shipua, something inclined or on a slant. Parents are like a slanted roof with regard to their children. What they do, what they think, what they profess, all trickles down to their children, leaving a lasting effect. We must see to it that the effect is a positive one.

Our children learn to appreciate and value what we, as parents, seem to appreciate and value. The pasuk in Mishlei 27:21 reads, "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace is for gold. And a man is tested by his praise." Simply, this phrase means that we can judge a person by his reputation, by the praises (or lack thereof) with which others describe him. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that Shlomo Hamelech is teaching us that a man is judged by that which he praises. Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, cited by Rabbi Issachar Frand, gives a compelling example of the meaning of this pasuk.

Rav Hutner contends that a businessman who spends only two hours a night studying Torah can be on a higher spiritual plane than a kollel fellow who studies Torah all day. For instance, if the kollel fellow spends his time at home talking about the business successes of his neighbor or about someone's incredible success in the stock market, he indicates that he is a businessman at heart. He praises money. He worships money. He envies and extols those who have money. He conveys a profound message to his children: money counts; money is everything.

The lay person, on the other hand, whose greatest pleasure is to give honor to a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, and who makes it clear that the most important part of his day is the hour or two that he spends at a shiur or learning b'chavrusa, with a study partner, is teaching his children that the most important business is Torah

business. It is the most important thing in his life. What we say trickles down to our children, leaving a lasting effect.

Say to the Kohanim... and tell them. (21:1)

Chazal expound on the apparent redundancy in our pasuk of, "Say (to the Kohanim) and tell (them)." This implies that they were to convey this teaching to others who would otherwise not be commanded in this mitzvah. This is a reference to the children about whom the parents are cautioned to make sure that they do not become contaminated by being in the presence of the dead. Emor v'amarta has become the catchphrase which alludes to parents' responsibility to arrange the education of their children. There is no dearth of stories which demonstrate parents' responsibility and commitment to their children's educational development. Veritably, children learn best by example. Who can better convey the values and goals of a Torah Jew than parents!

In order for parents to inculcate their children with an appreciation for Torah and a sense of yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven, it is crucial that they imbue them with ahavas Torah, a love of Torah. Ahavas Torah breeds yiraas Shomayim, an enthusiasm for proficiency in Torah knowledge and a longing for success in mitzvah performance. The following inspiring story, related by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, portrays this idea.

Two kollel fellows in Eretz Yisrael, both young talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, had decided among themselves to have a chavrusa, be study partners, in the limud, study, of Mishnayos. Seven days each week, without fail, these two young men would spend half an hour together learning Mishnayos. This went on for quite some time. After two years, one of the young men was asked, at the behest of a number of distinguished Torah leaders, to relocate and assume a rabbinic position in France. He accepted the position, but refused to end his chavrusa relationship for the study of Mishnayos, planning to continue by telephone. Every night they would learn together by long distance, making use of the gift of technology. In order to capitalize on the most economical long distance rates and the difference in times between Eretz Yisrael and France, they would speak every night between eleven-thirty and midnight.

One day, while sitting with her three-year old son, the wife of the kollel fellow in Eretz Yisrael, asked him to draw a picture of the first thing that came to his mind. "I would like to see how well you draw," she said.

The young lad drew an interesting picture, which he explained was his father studying Mishnayos. In the corner of the paper was a clock with both hands pointing to the twelve. Outside, through the window, they saw darkness. This is the first thing that came to his mind! This is what he saw at home, and this is what he was growing up to value, to appreciate and to love. A child learns to appreciate what his father values. How awesome is our responsibility to convey the correct values by virtue of our example.

If the daughter of a Kohen will be desecrated through adultery, she desecrates her father. (21:9)

Rashi explains that this rebellious young lady besmirches her father's name, because people will say, "Accursed is the one who gave birth to her; accursed is the one who raised her." Perhaps we can offer another explanation for this term. We are taught that the sin of chillul Hashem, profaning the Name of Hashem, is the most serious offense a Jew can commit. Regarding the pasuk in Shemos 31:14, Mechallelelah mos yumas, "Its desecrator shall be put to death," the Zohar Hakadosh explains the word, mechallelelah, its desecrator, as a derivative of the word, challal, which means a vacuum, a hole, an open space. The Nefesh Hachaim explains the pasuk in Vayikra 22:32, V'lo sechallelu es shem kodshi, "You shall not desecrate My Holy Name," that one who profanes Hashem's Name is intimating that the place where he stands is void of Hashem. Thus, the individual can do whatever he desires, because Hashem is not there.

This is also the meaning of "she desecrates her father." A girl who acts in such an immoral manner indicates by her actions that there was a parental void in her home. She is mechallel her father; she makes it appear as if there had been no father to raise her. For otherwise, how could she have acted this way?

I must add that this indication is not necessarily true. We observe that some of the finest homes have regrettably produced children that are a great challenge, children who need that extra dose of love and care, children who are at risk. There definitely are both a father and a mother who work overtime to provide for all of their children's needs, but, at times, they are simply not successful. This does not mean that they were not present. It is a nisayon, a challenge from Hashem, that they have to surmount and over which they must triumph. Hashem Yerachem.

He shall not leave the sanctuary. (21:12)

The Kohen Gadol is forbidden even to follow the funeral procession of a relative. Homiletically, we may derive from here that the Kohen Gadol and, for that matter, anyone who makes the Sanctuary/bais ha'medrash his home, his place of study,



should see to it that when he leaves it should be only for a matter of great urgency or necessity. His spiritual sustenance is provided in the Sanctuary, and every interruption diminishes the spiritual flow. Hence, the Kohen Gadol, as well as the ben Torah who dedicates himself to the Sanctuary, should enshrine himself in this holy environment and let its kedushah, holiness, permeate him.

Horav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, Shlita, was once asked if he ever had the privilege of meeting the Chofetz Chaim. He responded, to everyone's surprise, in the negative. He then looked at the questioner, "You seem surprised. It is true that I studied in a yeshivah which was certainly in the proximity of the Chafetz Chaim, and once the Chafetz Chaim even visited the town where I studied. Indeed, all of the yeshivah students, together with the town's citizens, went out to greet the gadol ha'dor, preeminent Torah leader of the generation. Unfortunately, I was lazy."

When the questioner heard these words from the venerable gaon, he was doubly surprised. He wondered how someone could be so lazy. Sensing the man's quandary, Rav Michel Yehudah said, "It is not that I did not want to see the Chafetz Chaim. It was just that I had a greater desire to learn another blatt, folio, of Gemara." We now have an idea how he became such a distinguished gaon.

Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl, once met a yeshivah student, a relative, on the street. This took place during the zman, yeshivah session, when the young man should have been studying in the yeshivah. "What brings you here?" Rav Shlomo Zalman asked. "Why are you not in the yeshivah?" The young man replied, "I have to attend the wedding of a close friend."

Rav Shlomo Zalman countered, "I also studied in yeshivah, and my friends also invited me to their weddings. I benefited much more, however, from the extra time that I spent studying and reviewing the Gemara. I had priorities, and Torah study was highest on my list. Now, some sixty years later, there is a difference between those who attended every wedding and me. When they go to a wedding, they must remain there for a few hours for anyone to notice that they had been there. I, however, walk in to a wedding for a few minutes, and everyone knows that I attended."

You shall not desecrate My holy Name; rather I should be sanctified among Bnei Yisrael. (22:22)

Giving up one's life in sanctification of Hashem's Name is a primary responsibility and obligation for every Jew. Throughout the millennia, our brethren have sacrificed their lives Al Kiddush Hashem, under the most cruel and inhumane conditions. Just over sixty years ago, millions of our people were killed in the European Holocaust, just because they were Jews. There are also those who are prepared and willing to sacrifice themselves without fanfare, because of their complete devotion to Hashem and His mitzvos. I recently heard a powerful story concerning the Manchester Rosh Hayeshivah, Horav Yehudah Zev Segal, zl, that portrays Kiddush Hashem at its zenith. The story was related by Reb Boruch Leib Sassoon, a talmid of the Mir in Poland and contemporary of Rav Segal.

As a student in the Mirrer Yeshivah, Rav Segal exemplified diligence in Torah study and commitment to mitzvah observance. He cared not only about himself; he also saw to it that there would not be any incursion into the nature of the holy fabric of the yeshivah's spiritual environment. Europe was regrettably infested with a dangerous spiritual "disease" called the Enlightenment. It consisted of apostate Jews whose sole objective was to impugn the integrity of Torah and mitzvos. These self-loathing heretics seized every opportunity to undermine Torah Judaism. To further their nefarious goals, they would plant their cohorts in various Torah centers in order to spread their ideology subtly to unsuspecting students. One day, Rav Segal noticed a book of secular philosophy on the chair of one of the students who was suspected of being a free-thinker. He grabbed the book and hid it. When the owner of the book returned and noticed that his book was gone, he investigated and discovered that Rav Segal had taken it. He accosted Rav Segal and demanded that he return his book. Rav Segal, of course, did not acquiesce to his demands. This incurred a fit of rage from the young man, who was not used to getting "no" for an answer. He began to threaten Rav Segal with bodily harm. "If you do not return my book immediately, I will kill you!" he screamed.

"I will not return a book filled with heresy to you," countered Rav Segal.

Suddenly, the apostate placed his hands on Rav Segal's throat and began to squeeze. "I am serious," he said, "if you do not give me the book, I will kill you."

He began to choke Rav Segal who, in a loud voice filled with emotion, recited the brachah, blessing, one makes as he is about to die Al Kiddush Hashem. Just as Rav Segal was about to pass out, he was saved by someone.

When Reb Baruch Leib was queried regarding his knowledge of the incident, his reply was, "I was there. I was the one who saved the Manchester Rosh Hayeshivah."

This is an incident in which a person was prepared to give up his life, so that others would not be exposed to spiritual filth. How far are we from such a plateau in avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty?

Va'ani Tefillah How fortunate are we that we lovingly begin and end each and every day by proclaiming: Shema Yisrael.

As mentioned above, Kiddush Hashem means that if a person sacrifices his life, he affirms his absolute belief in Hashem. If there had been any vestige of doubt concerning his conviction, he would have reneged at the very last moment. To act in such a manner in the presence of ten Jews, to sacrifice one's life b'rabim, is referred to as Kiddush Hashem b'rabim. Thus, when we recite this blessing, we do so with great pride and dignity in being part of the nation that has "lived" with this supreme sacrifice, with our ancestors who truly demonstrated this conviction as they were led to their deaths with the words of Shema Yisrael on their lips. Now, as Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, observes, if we live like this, if we can recite this blessing daily with meaning and feeling, then all of the excuses we conjure up not to come to davening, not to study Torah, not to give tzedakah - vanish. All of these mitzvos pale by comparison to our willingness and readiness to offer up the supreme sacrifice - ourselves.

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<http://www.torah.org/> Halacha Yomi A concise daily portion of Jewish law.

BY RABBI ARI LOBEL

Halacha-Yomi is a translation of the "Kitzur Shulchan Aruch", Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried's classic compendium of Jewish Law ... Rabbi Ari Lobel has added footnotes which attempt to briefly explain the principles and reasoning behind the rulings, and which, in many instances, note differing opinions which have been accepted as the practical halacha (especially from the Mishna Berura).

CONTENTS Halachos of Prayer Halachos of Personal Behavior Halachos of Miscellaneous Mitzvos Halachos of Food and Their Blessings Halachos of Various Blessings Halachos of Business Halachos Pertaining to the Evening Halachos of Shabbos ...

[See last week]

<http://www.torah.org/learning/halacha/chapter14.html>

Chapter 14: 1-3 P'sukei D'zimroh 1. P'sukei D'zimroh (the "verses of praise") refer to [the portion of the prayer service extending] from Hodu to the conclusion of the song [sang at the Red Sea]. Boruch She'omar is the blessing recited beforehand, and Yishtabach is the blessing recited afterwards.

A person is forbidden to interrupt his prayers by speaking from the time begins Boruch she'omar until the end of his prayers. This applies even if he speaks in Hebrew. (Whenever it is forbidden to make an interruption, this prohibition applies even to speaking in Hebrew.)

Regarding an interruption for the sake of a mitzvah, different laws apply, depending on whether one is in the midst of P'sukei D'zimroh and its blessings or the Shema and its blessings. In P'sukei D'zimroh, even in the midst of Boruch she'omar to Yishtabach, it is permitted to answer "Amen." Similarly, if one hears the congregation reciting the Shema, one may recite the Shema together with them. Surely, one may interrupt one's prayers to respond to Kaddish, Kedushoh, and Borchu with the congregation.\* Nevertheless, if possible, one should plan to make the interruption in a place where it is natural to stop, between one psalm and another, or at least between one verse and another.

\* { One may interrupt P'sukei D'zimroh to recite the prayer Modim, recited by the congregation in response to the chazon (Shulchon Oruch Horav 66:5). }

Boruch Hu uvoruch shemo (is not mentioned in the Talmud and) should not be recited within P'sukei D'zimroh, even at a place where it is natural to stop. Similarly, the prayer Yisborach v'yishtabach, which is recited while the chazon chants Borchu, should not be recited at this stage of prayer, since it is only a custom.

Also, it appears to me that a person who relieved himself and washed his hands should not recite the blessing asher yotzar, since he can recite it afterwards. (See also Law 8. The laws governing interruptions in the midst of Shema and its blessings will be explained in Chapter 16.)

2. A person should hold the two tzitzis that are in the front of the tallis and recite Boruch she'omar while standing. When he concludes reciting mehulol batishbochos, he should kiss them and release them.

He should recite the entire P'sukei D'zimroh patiently and pleasantly, without hurrying. He should be careful with each of the words, as if he were counting money, and should concentrate on the meanings of the words.



In particular, the verse *Pose'ach es yodecho...* ("You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing") should be recited with great concentration, focusing on the meaning of the words and, in one's thought, praying for one's own sustenance and the sustenance of the entire Jewish people. If one had no awareness whatsoever when reciting that verse, one must recite it again with the proper attention.

[In the prayer *Hodu*,] one should pause between the word, *elilim* (falsehood) and the phrase *V'ado-noi Shomayim osoh* (G-d made the heavens), lest the latter phrase be misinterpreted as referring to what was stated previously.

3. During *P'sukei D'zimroh* and surely in the portions of the service that follow until its conclusion, a person should take care not to touch portions of his body or head which are usually covered. Similarly, it is forbidden to touch the waste produced by the nose or ears unless one uses a handkerchief.

A person who touches any of the above with his hands must wash them with water. If he is in the midst of the *Shemoneh Esreh* and it is impossible for him to move *na search* for water, it is sufficient for him to clean [his hands by wiping them on] a shard or rubbing them on the wall or the like.

Chapter 14: 4-6

4. *Mizmor l'sodah* [Psalm 100, "A Psalm of thanksgiving"] is recited while standing. It should be recited with happiness, for it was instituted in place of a thanksgiving offering.

Similarly, the verses from *Vayivorech Dovid* until *Attoh hu Adon-noi hoElohim*, should be said while standing. Also, the song [sung at the Red Sea] should be recited while standing, with concentration and with happiness. Similarly, the blessing *Yishtabach* should be recited while standing.

5. *Mizmor l'sodoh* is not recited on Sabbaths and festivals, because the thanksgiving offering was categorized as a "voluntary offering," and such offerings were not sacrificed on Sabbaths and festivals. Similarly, it is not recited on the *Chol Hamo'ed* days of *Pesach*, since a thanksgiving offering was not sacrificed then, because, together with the offering, one was required to bring ten breads, which were *chometz*.

This psalm is also not recited on *Pesach* eve, [for such sacrifices were not offered then] out of fear that [the breads which were *chometz*] would not be eaten until *chometz* became forbidden, and it would be necessary to burn them. Similarly, it is omitted on *Yom Kippur* eve. [These sacrifices were also not offered then,] for doing so minimizes the time in which the sacrifice could be eaten and thus causes sacred meat to be disqualified for consumption.

6. The following rules apply to a person who delayed coming to the synagogue until after the *minyan* had begun to pray, to the extent that were he to follow the regular order of prayers, he would not be able to recite the *Shemoneh Esreh* with the *minyan*. Since what is most essential is that he recite the *Shemoneh Esreh* with a *minyan*, he is allowed to skip certain prayers, as will be explained:

The blessing *al netilas yodoyim*, *Elo-hai neshomaoh*, and the blessing for *Torah* study must be recited before prayer (as explained in Chapter 7).

Therefore, if a person did not recite them at home, he must recite them in the synagogue, even though doing so will prevent him from reciting the *Shemoneh Esreh* with the *minyan*.

Similarly, in the morning service, the *Shema* and its blessings must be recited before the *Shemoneh Esreh*; i.e. one must recite the prayers in order, beginning from the blessing *yotzer* or until after the *Shemoneh Esreh* with out interruption (in order to recite the blessing for redemption, *go'al Yisroel*, directly before the *Shemoneh Esreh*). However, the other blessings and the entire order of *P'sukei D'zimroh* (with the exception of the blessings *Boruch she'omar* and *Yishtabach*) can also be recited after the *Shemoneh Esreh*. \* \* { The *Mishnah Berurah* 52:5,6 states that it is preferable to pray without a *minyan* than to skip *Boruch she'omar*, *Ashrei*, and *Yishtabach*. On *Shabbos*, the additional prayers beginning *Nishamas* should also be recited.)

Chapter 14: 7-8

7. Therefore, if after reciting the three blessings mentioned above and putting on the *tallis* and *tefillin*, a person sees he does not have enough time left to be able to recite the *Shemoneh Esreh* with the *minyan* unless he skips and begins with the blessing *yotzer* or, he should begin there.

If he has time to recite *Boruch she'omar*, *Tehilloh l' Dovid* until its conclusion *Shem kodsho l'olom vo'ed* [i.e. *Ashrei*], and *Yishtabach*, he should recite them. Should he have further time, he should recite *Halleluyah*, *hallelu El b'kodsho* until *Kol haneshomoh t'hallel Yoh*, *Halleluyah*.

If he has further time, he should recite *Halleluyah*, *hallelu El min hashomayim...* Should he have still more time, he should also recite the other *Psalms* that begin "*Halleluyah*."

If he has additional time, he should also recite from *Vayivorech Dovid* until *l'shem tifartecho*. If he has still additional time, he should begin reciting *Hodu* and

continue until *V'hu rachum*, and then skip from there until the repetition of the latter verses before *Ashrei*.

Should a similar situation occur on Sabbaths and festivals, and a person lacks the time to recite the *psalms* which are added to the service, then priority should be given to those *psalms* and verses which are recited every day. If there is additional time, one should also recite some of those *psalms* that are added.

It appears to me that on the Sabbath and on *Yom Kippur*, precedence should be given to *Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbos* and the great *Hallel* (i.e. *Hodu L'Ado-nai ki tov* [Psalm 136]). On other festivals, precedence should be given to the great *Hallel* alone. Afterwards, precedence should be given to the *psalm Lam'natzeach l'Dovid b'shanoso* and *Tefilloh l'Mosheh*.

All these verses and *Psalms* should be said before *Yishtabach*. At the entire service, one should complete those prayers which were skipped. However, *Boruch she'omar* and *Yishtabach* should not be recited after the service.

If a person sees that even if he begins at the blessing *yotzer* or, he will not be able to recite the *Shemoneh Esreh* together with the *minyan* unless he hurries his prayers, it is preferable that he pray alone, reciting the entire service slowly, and with proper concentration. (See Chapter 20, *Laws* 11 and 12.)

8. A person who comes to the synagogue after the congregation has already begun to recite the *P'sukei D'zimroh* and is lacking a *tallis* and *tefillin*, but expects that they will be brought to him shortly, may recite *P'sukei D'zimroh* in the interim. When they are brought to him, he should put them on between the blessings *Yishtabach* and *yotzer* or, and recite the blessings for them.

If he fears that taking the time to put them on will prevent him from reciting the *Shemoneh Esreh* with the *minyan*, he should skip from the *V'hu rachum* in *Hodu* until *teh V'hu Rachum* before *Ashrei*; alternatively, skip from *Vayosh'* [before the song of the Red Sea] until *Yishtabach* and recite only the essential *psalms*, as explained above, so that will have the opportunity to put them on after he says *Yishtabach*, before the *chazon* recited *Kaddish*.

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National Council of Young Israel Sent: May 12, 2005 Subject: NCYI Dvar Torah: Parshat Emor

Parshat Emor

5 Iyar 5765 May 14, 2005 Daf Yomi: Shabbos 12

Guest Rabbi:

RABBI BARRY KORNBLAU

Young Israel of Hollis Hills - Windsor Park, NY

Observers have long noted that contemporary America is a this-worldly, youth-oriented culture that struggles mightily to deny and defy the death that eventually awaits us all. From anti-wrinkle creams to liposuction, from 'tummy tucks' to Botox treatments to hair dyeing and more - the middle aged and even the young sustain entire industries to fend off the inevitable signs of aging. In a secular culture increasingly divorced from the Biblical values that once provided its essential outlook, this makes philosophical sense. Like taxes, death and all that pertains to it are intellectually undeniable facets of the human condition. Yet without belief in a world beyond the grave, human existence is transient, as is its significance. Given such an outlook, life is meaningful in proportion to the youthful vigor with which it is lived in this world, aging is disguised, and death is denied emotionally as long as possible.

One can also see this in how a society chooses to dispose of its dead. Reflecting its belief in bodily resurrection after death, burial was always the norm in Western, Christian lands, with cremation a rarity. Since the 1960s, however, traditional values have receded in favor of secular ones in the United States. As a result, cremation is on the rise: after holding steady at 3-4% throughout the 20th century until the mid-1960s, cremation rates have risen unceasingly since then, reaching 28% in 2003 (47% in more secular Canada), and plausibly projected to continue to rise into the foreseeable future. Not surprisingly, this varies by societal subgroup, with cremation rates inversely proportional to religious adherence.

Mourning and eulogies are affected by these attitudes, as well. It is increasingly common, for example, for Americans to transform these activities away from grief, loss, tears, and sadness, and into a 'celebration of life.' This is true among some assimilated Jews, as well. A few years ago, for example, I attended a post-funeral gathering - a 'shiva,' if you will - at which the mourners 'hosted' their 'guests' for a catered meal at a local restaurant, complete with cocktails. On another occasion, I was at a funeral where family members invoked the idea of the 'celebration of life,' and sang an upbeat ode to their beloved, complete with musical accompaniment.

Someone tempted to criticize these trends, however, would do well to consider how *Rambam* analyzes this week's *parasha*. The *parasha* opens with the law prohibiting a *kohein* from defiling himself via contact with the dead: "*HaShem* spoke to *Moshe*: Speak to *Aharon's* sons, the priests and tell them: Each of you shall not

defile himself for a [dead] person among people; except for the relative who is closest to him [i.e., his wife], his mother and his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother. Regarding his virgin sister who is close to him, who has not been wed to a man - lah yitamah."

The translation of that last phrase is debated in the Talmud (Zevachim 100a). R. Yishmael translates it as "he may defile himself for her" and his other relatives, if he wants. The halachah, however, follows the opinion of R. Akiva: "he shall defile himself for her" and his other relatives, even if does not want to do so. Here is how Rambam codifies R. Akiva's opinion as one of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah in his Sefer haMitzvot:

The 37th Positive Commandment is that the kohanim must defile themselves for the relatives mentioned in the Torah. Since Scripture prevented them from defiling themselves due to their honor, and permitted them to defile themselves for relatives, they might think that the choice is theirs, that if they want to defile themselves, they may, but if they do not want to do so, they need not.

Therefore, He decreed that this is obligatory as it says in Sifra, "la yitamah - mitzvah." If he doesn't want to defile himself, they defile him against his will. It happened once that the wife of Yosef the kohein died on erev Pesach and he did not want to defile himself for her, so the Sages defiled him against his will. In its essence, this is the commandment to mourn - every Jew must mourn his six close relatives. To strengthen this commandment, the Torah presented it regarding a kohein who is generally prohibited from defiling himself but who is nonetheless commanded to defile himself [for his dead relatives] like other Jews in order that the law of mourning should not be weakened.

In this passage, the Rambam opens by focusing on the Kohen unwilling to defile himself. After his transition from defilement to mourning, he goes on to assert that even non-kohanim would neglect their duty to mourn if kohanim were exempt from it. Rather strikingly, he even seems to suggest, if only the tendency of His creatures to avoid aveilus was less strong, then G-d would have left in place His prohibition for kohanim to defile themselves even for their own dead relatives! The Rambam asserts that human nature flees from mourning unless instructed to do otherwise: "the Sages defiled him against his will. In its essence, this is the commandment to mourn."

According to Rambam, then, the Creator long ago understood the depth of the personality of His creation but commanded His people to walk on a different path. Indeed, without the Torah to force us to reap the positive spiritual benefits of aveilus, we too could easily slip in this area, and many do.

Chazal saw many positives in the awareness of death. Pirkei Avot (3:1), for example, directs us to focus on death to distance ourselves from sin: "Consider these things and you will not come into the grip of sinwhither you go to a place of dust, worms, and maggots". Other sources see the constant awareness of death as a prompt for repentance, a check on frivolity, and more. In our tefillot, we constantly remind ourselves of the centrality of The World to Come and the eventual Resurrection of the Dead, central pillars of Jewish faith which give meaning, hope, and ultimate purpose and reward to the lives of the living, the dying, and the dead alike. Summing it all up, the great tanna R. Meir even said that death itself - the ultimate source of defilement in the eyes of Torah law! - is nonetheless unique among G-d's creations for it is "tov me'od" (Bereishit 1:31), very good.

May we, then, shake ourselves out of the state of death denial which is naturally part of the human condition, and respond instead to the Torah's requirement to see death as a positive impetus for living lives of ultimate meaning - in this World and in the Next.

Join the National Council of Young Israel at their 93rd Anniversary Dinner, Sunday May 22nd, 2005 at the Marriott New York at the Brooklyn Bridge!

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Bar-Ilan University 's Parashat Hashavua Study Center Parashat Emor 5765/ May 14 2005

THE BLASPHEMER AND GOLIATH: A Comparative Analysis

DR. AMICHAI NACHSHON, Department of Basic Jewish Studies and Ashkelon College

Parashat Emor concludes with the story of the man who cursed the Almighty and what punishment was meted out for such a person (Lev. 24:10-14, 23). The incident began with a quarrel that took place within the Israelite camp between a half-Israelite [1] and another Israelite. In the course of the quarrel the half-Israelite spoke unbecomingly towards G-d: "The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name [Heb. va-yikkov] [2] in blasphemy" (Lev. 24:11). From the reaction of the

Torah in the course of the story, we learn that offending G-d's honor is a sin that bears the death penalty: "Anyone who blasphemes his G-d shall bear his guilt; if he also pronounces the name Lord, he shall be put to death" (Lev. 24:15-16). This law applies to all of Israel, "stranger or citizen" alike (loc. cit.).

Now this prohibition, which in our case is addressed to Israelite society, was perceived in biblical narratives and prophetic works to be a universal law, also to be enforced on Israel's non-Jewish enemies. For example, "Thus said the Lord: Because the Arameans have said, 'The Lord is a G-d of mountains, but He is not a G-d of lowlands,' I will deliver that great host into your hands" (I Kings 20:28); "Through your envoys you have blasphemed my Lord, ... I will place My hook in your nose" (II Kings 19:23, 28; Isa. 37:24, 29). In these instances the kings of Aram and Ashur held the Lord in contempt, and He condemned them for this, causing them to be defeated in a humiliating manner. [3] Halakhic literature also extends the prohibition against holding the Lord in contempt to a broader audience. A halakhic homily on the story of the blasphemer that appears in the Babylonian Talmud (Hagigah 11b) interprets the repetition of the word ish (Lev. 24:15; rendered in the English simply as "anyone") "to include non-Jews." This prohibition against "blessing the Lord" (a euphemism) is included in the seven commandments required of the descendants of Noah and applies to all human beings (Maimonides, Hilkhos Melakhim, 9.1). This idea is emphasized most strongly in the story of David's battle with Goliath (I Sam. 17:45-47). David said to Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the G-d of the ranks of Israel, whom you have defied". [4] These words express a world outlook in which a contest is waged not only between two individuals but between the Lord and those of His enemies who defy Him. According to the story, David fought in order to defeat Goliath because Goliath was guilty of defying the Lord, "that dares defy the ranks of the living G-d" (17:26, 36).

Beyond this basic similarity between the two narratives, there are four other parallels, literary and substantive, between the story of the blasphemer (Lev. 24:10-14, 23) and parts of the story of the struggle between David and Goliath the Philistine (I Sam. 17:1-11, 43-49).

In both narratives, the action of the blasphemer is preceded by the Hebrew verb ytz-a, to come out or step forward (Lev. 24:10; I Sam. 17:4). This initial focus in the narrative exposition on the character who steps forward at the beginning of the story makes it clear to the reader that this is the main character.

In both stories, the act of defying G-d happens in the course of a struggle. In our Parasha, the blasphemer was having a fight with an Israelite - "a fight broke out in the camp" (Lev. 24:10); in the story of David and Goliath, the Philistine sought to take on one of Israel's heroes in personal combat - "Choose one of your men and let him come down against me. If he bests me in combat..." (I Sam. 17:8-9). During the fight, the act of defying G-d took place.

Both narratives use the expression k-l-l E-lohav (cursed his G-d). In the law concerning the blasphemer it says, "anyone who blasphemes his G-d" (Lev. 24:15, and in the story of David's battle with Goliath it says, "the Philistine cursed David by his gods" [5] (I Sam. 17:43).

Both blasphemers were killed by stones (Lev. 24:14, 23; I Sam. 17:49-50). In telling of Goliath's slaying, the narrative emphasizes that he was killed with a stone: "he took out a stone and slung it. It struck the Philistine in the forehead; the stone sank into his forehead... Thus David bested the Philistine with sling and stone; he struck him down and killed him. David had no sword" (I Sam. 17:49-50).

In view of the similarities between the two stories one could say that in the eyes of the author of the David and Goliath narrative, David meted out to his enemy the appropriate punishment as dictated in Leviticus: he treated him as one should treat a person who has cursed the Name of G-d. The didactic message of the story is that anyone who dares curse the G-d of Israel will not be exonerated; the law for him is identical to the law for the Israelite blasphemer, and this comparison was already made by Midrash Tanhuma, Va-Yigash 8: "One finds that whoever blasphemes is liable to death, as it is said, 'if he has thus pronounced the Name, he shall be put to death' (Lev. 24:16), and that wicked man [Goliath] had been cursing for forty days (I Sam. 17:16)."

Another way of looking at the two stories is that the story of David's battle with Goliath gives a new interpretation to the incident of the blasphemer, extending the law which is found in Leviticus and enforcing it also on Israel's enemies. [6]

[1] "One whose mother was Israelite and whose father was Egyptian" (Lev. 24:10). There is a tendency in Scripture to be welcoming to non-Jews (gerim, or resident strangers). They are to be treated "as one of your citizens" (Lev. 19:34), it is one's duty to befriend them (Deut. 10:19), one is forbidden to exploit or oppress them (Ex. 22:10, 23:9, Deut. 24:17, 27:19, Jer. 7:6, Ezek. 22:7, Zech. 7:10, Mal. 3:5),

they are to be helped out in time of need (Lev. 19:10, Deut. 14:28-29, and elsewhere), they are to share in our day of rest (Ex. 20:10, 23:12, Deut. 5:14), and in our rejoicing (Deut. 16:11, 26:11). Part of this attitude toward them is the emphasis placed on their participating in observing the laws of the Torah. For example, the laws of Passover (Ex. 12:49, Num. 9:14), the laws concerning libations and burnt offerings (Num. 15:15-16), and the laws of sin-offerings (Num. 15:29). There are two passages in Scripture (Num. 15:26, Josh. 8:35) that ascribe to the resident stranger an obligation to uphold all the commandments of the Torah.

[2] The root n-k-b [related to k-b-b] means to curse or hold in contempt, as in “Come, curse me Jacob, come, tell Israel’s doom! How can I damn [Heb. ekov] whom G-d has not damned, how doom when the Lord has not doomed?” (Num. 23:7-8). [The root n-k-b also occurs in the sense of stating explicitly. This seems to be the meaning taken by the translators in the New JPS Bible (translator’s note).]

[3] This subject is treated at great length in my doctoral dissertation, “G- d’s Demands of the Gentiles in the Historiographic and Prophetic Literature”, Bar Ilan University, 2003, pp. 140-155. [4] The Hebrew heruf means voicing words of defiance and contempt. According to the biblical narrative, Goliath boasted, “I herewith defy [Heb. herafti] the ranks of Israel” (I Sam. 17:10). [5] In the name of the gods of the Philistine Goliath. This is how the phrase is interpreted by M. Z. Segal, *Sifre Shemuel*, Jerusalem 1956, p. 145, and S. Bar-Ephrat, *Shemuel Alef (Mikra le-Yisrael)*, Jerusalem 1996, p. 232. Even though the word Elohav (his G-d) in the story of the blasphemer refers to the Lord and in the David and Goliath story it refers to the gods of the Philistines, nevertheless the use of the same word indicates literary similarity. [6] For more material on explaining one biblical text by another, termed inner-biblical interpretation, see Y. Zakovitz, *Parshanut Pnim Mikra’it*, Jerusalem 1992. He relates to legal interpretations in other biblical legal codes (pp. 97-102), but he does not relate specifically to this law of the blasphemer. Last Update: May 11, 2005