

BS"D



To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIKRA - Zachor - 5765

To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha> (hosted by [olymsichas.com](http://www.olymsichas.com)). It is also fully searchable. See also torah links at www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha

I am sending most of Efraim Goldstein's collection this week, but adding a few additional items in the beginning. Have a good shabbos. Chaim

From: Avi Lieberman <AteresHaShavua@aol.com>
Subject: ATERES HASHAVUA
Mesivta Ateres Yaakov 1170A William Street Hewlett NY, 11557 (516)-374-6465 AteresHaShavua@aol.com
EMES LIYAAKOV

Weekly Insights from MOREINU
HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l
[Translated by Ephraim Weiss]

"And on every korban mincha you should place salt, so that you do not destroy the salt of Hashem's covenant"

Rashi on this pasuk explains that at the time of creation, when Hashem created the sky, and separated the waters, the waters that were left underneath the sky on this world, came to Him with a grievance. They reasoned that the waters that were above the sky were close to Hashem, while they had to remain on this world, far away from Hashem. In order to appease the water, Hashem promised them that they too would merit to reach the world above, as on every korban that Bnai Yisroel would bring, they would pour salt, which comes from the sea. As such, we are warned that we must pour salt on the korbanos, in order not to break the treaty that Hashem had made with the water.

The miforshim ask a question on this Rashi. If Hashem was trying to placate the waters, why did He promise to have salt, which is merely a derivative of the water put on the korbanos, as opposed to having the water itself poured on the korbanos?

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l offers an answer to this question. Rashi in Masseches Kesubos [U"E] discusses the process of removing sea salt from water. Rashi writes that they used to dig ditches, into which the sea water would flow. When the sun came out, the water would evaporate, and the salt would be left behind. The salt remains even lower than the water, as the water can evaporate, and raise itself to the heavens, whereas the salt always stays behind on the bottom. In promising that the salt would always be placed on the korbanos, Hashem was explaining to the water that it is not necessary to be in the heavens, right next to the Kisei HaKavod in order to achieve great heights. Even the salt, which is doomed to remain on this Earth forever, can be placed on the korbanos, and thus achieve great heights. The purpose of putting the salt on the korbanos was not to mollify the water, but rather to show the water that it is not necessary to be in the heavens in order to attain greatness.

We are placed on a world that is diametrically opposed to the spirituality that the neshama seeks. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on us to raise ourselves to higher spiritual plateaus. May we be zocheh to actualize this goal, and through this may we be zocheh to the coming of Moshiach, bi'mihayra bi'yameinu, amen.

From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org]
Sent: March 04, 2005
Subject: Kol Torah Parshat Vayakhel The Role of Archaeology in Halachic Decision Making Part Three

KOL TORAH

A Student Publication of the Torah Academy of Bergen County Parshat Vayakhel This week's issue of Kol Torah has been sponsored in honor of Mr. George H. Friedman's completion of Daf Yomi.

THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN HALACHIC DECISION MAKING

Part Three

by RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

[Parts 1 & 2 are in last week's Parsha Sheet www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha/Shmos/Pekudei65.doc]

In the last two weeks we have explored the fascinating issue of the potential impact of archaeological finds upon Halacha. Last week we explored the dispute that currently rages regarding the use of the "new" Techeilet as well as other issues. In this essay, we shall discuss the impact of archaeological finds upon the iestablishment of the date of observing Purim in a variety of locations, the Halachic reaction to an archaeologist's claim that the human remains that he discovered are not of Jewish origin, and archaeological evidence supporting the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition regarding how to write the letter Tzadi in a Sefer Torah. If you have missed any of the articles in this series they are available on our website, www.koltorah.org

Purim

The question has arisen in quite a number of places in Eretz Yisrael whether archaeological evidence should be considered in deciding whether a city was surrounded by walls during the time of Yehoshua bin Nun and thus should observe Purim on the fifteenth of Adar. This question has arisen in two variations. One is that there are certain areas that have not maintained a tradition that they might have been surrounded by walls during the time of Yehoshua bin Nun but twentieth-century archaeological evidence indicates that they were surrounded by walls during that time period. A variation of this question arises when there exists an ancient tradition that a city might have been surrounded by walls in the time of Yehoshua bin Nun and archaeological evidence unearthed in the twentieth century indicates that it was certainly surrounded by walls in the time of Yehoshua bin Nun.

Purim in Beit El

The first variation arises in a number of places, such as the town currently called Beit El. The Tanach (Shoftim 1:22-25) clearly indicates that the town known in biblical times as Beit El was surrounded by a wall during the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun. In the first volume of Techumin (pp. 109-118) Yoel Elitzur (a noted Tanach expert) argues that archaeological evidence (and other evidence) reveals that the contemporary town of Beit El is located in the same place as the biblical site of Beit El which was certainly surrounded by walls during the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. He suggests in this essay that Poskim should consider ruling that Purim should be observed exclusively on the fifteenth of Adar in contemporary Beit El. The reaction of Poskim (recorded in the same volume of Techumin pp. 120-127) was mixed.

Rav Shaul Yisraeli felt that Purim should be observed only on the fourteenth of Adar. He felt (among other considerations) that the archaeological evidence was inadequate to determine that the contemporary Beit El was surrounded by walls during the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. Rav Ovadia Yosef, though, felt that the evidence was sufficient to rise to the level of Safek to the extent that he ruled that "it is worthwhile and proper" to read the Megillah in Beit El on the fifteenth of Adar without a Bracha. Rav Mordechai Eliyahu was even more inclined to rule that Purim should be observed in Beit El on the fifteenth of Adar based on the archaeological evidence. However, he felt that a rabbinic consensus should be reached, to avoid Halachic pandemonium ensuing on this matter (one who wishes to see an example of Halachic pandemonium should visit the various Minyanim convened at Yeshiva University on Yom HaAtzma'ut during Shacharit time). In practice my cousin Shmuel (Steve) Adler of Alon Shvut told me that he asked one of the original residents of Beit El about what is practiced in Beit El today. The Beit El veteran told Steve that Purim has always been observed in Beit El on the fourteenth of Adar and he never heard of the Megillah being read on the fifteenth. Another longtime Beit El resident told me that he has never heard of anyone reading the Megillah on the fifteenth in Beit El, especially since the longtime Rav of Beit El, Rav Zalman Melamed, authored a responsum (Techumin 1:130-134) arguing that it is sufficient to read the Megillah on the fourteenth in Beit El.

Rav Melamed emphasizes in his responsum that he believes that the archaeological evidence is "far from certain" and "in his opinion even a Halachic Safek (doubt) has not been created." In conversation with Rav Melamed this past summer he told me that no one actually reads the Megillah on the fifteenth in Beit El. He noted the practical difficulties associated with observing Purim on two days and that the Jerusalem Talmud and the majority of Poskim agree that if one who lives in a walled city (from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun) observes Purim on the fourteenth,

he fulfills his Purim obligations. Rav Ovadia Yosef notes this last point in his responsum as well.

Purim in Lod

A variation of the Beit El debate has emerged regarding the city of Lod. The Gemara (Megillah 4a) states unequivocally that Lod was surrounded by walls during the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. However, Rav Yechiel Michal Tukachinsky (in his famed *Luach Eretz Yisrael*) records the ruling of Rav Shmuel Salant (who served as the Rav of Jerusalem for many decades during the nineteenth century) that Purim today should be observed in Lod on both the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar because of the uncertainty whether the city we refer to today as Lod is located precisely where the ancient city of Lod stood. The question emerged in the 1980's, though, that perhaps Purim should be observed in Lod exclusively on the fifteenth, as archaeological evidence seemed to prove incontrovertibly that the current city of Lod lies on the ruins of the ancient city of Lod.

Yoel Elitzur (Techumin 9:367-380) suggests to Poskim that Purim should now be observed on the fifteenth of Adar. He presents what he deems to be overwhelming evidence that the city of Lod is built on the ancient city. He notes that in practically every change to the infrastructure of Lod, ancient relics are discovered. My cousin Liraz Roem of Ramat Yishai, who spent the year 5764 performing national service helping disadvantaged youth in Lod, confirmed that this information is accurate.

Once again, the reaction of Poskim was mixed (their rulings are recorded in Techumin 9:365-366). None of the Poskim ruled that Purim should now be observed exclusively on the fifteenth of Adar in Lod but one can discern subtle differences in their respective approaches. Rav Yosef Shalom Eliashiv seems not to be moved by the archaeological discoveries and writes that the practice recorded by Rav Tukachinsky should be maintained. On the other hand, Dayan Weisz (Teshuvot Minchat Yitzchak 8:61) writes that although Purim should still primarily be observed on the fourteenth of Adar in Lod as has been the custom, nevertheless, one should be especially careful to hear the Megillah again on the fifteenth of Adar without a Bracha especially in light of the newly unearthed archaeological evidence (the nature of which we will discuss later).

Liraz Rotem informed me that in Lod, generally speaking, Purim is observed on the fourteenth of Adar. Liraz put me in contact with Rav Ortner, the Rav of Lod who wrote a comprehensive essay on this topic that appears in Techumin volume 9. Rav Ortner told me that when asked, he advises that the Megillah be recited again on the fifteenth without reciting a Bracha, in accordance with the rulings of Dayan Weisz and Rav Eliashiv. He told me that indeed some of the Shuls in Lod conduct Megillah readings both in the evening and the morning on the fifteenth.

One can sense that two considerations fuel the reluctance of Poskim to establish "new" places to observe Purim exclusively on the fifteenth of Adar. First, they maintain a healthy degree of skepticism regarding archaeological finds. They do not want to change the date of Purim observance in a particular locale from time to time based on the vicissitudes of archaeological science. Second, Poskim seem to be seeking to preserve the unique status of Jerusalem in its observance of Purim. In many areas of Halacha Jerusalem has its own unique practices and Minhagim. For example, Jerusalem is renown for its unique practices regarding weddings, Gittin, Tefillah, time of Kabbalat Shabbat, Kevurah and Aveilut. Even Hebrew is spoken somewhat differently today in Jerusalem than in the rest of Israel.

Conclusion

Next week, IY"H and B"N, we will conclude our discussion of archaeology and Halacha with a discussion of the identification of bones and the writing of the letter Tzadi.

The Role of Archaeology in Halachic Decision Making – Part Four by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

In the last three weeks we have explored the fascinating issue of the potential impact of archaeological finds upon Halacha. We explored the dispute that currently rages regarding the use of the "new" Techeilet, the establishment of the proper day of Purim observance as well as other issues. In this essay, we shall conclude this series with discussions of the Halachic reaction to an archaeologist's claim that the human remains that he discovered are not of Jewish origin, as well as possible archaeological evidence supporting the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition regarding how to write the letter Tzadi in a Sefer Torah. If you have missed any of the articles in this series they are available on our website, www.koltorah.org

Identification of Bones

We now proceed to what is probably the most delicate issue that we will grapple with in this series – whether or not Poskim may accept an archaeologist's claim that human remains are not from a Jewish person,

based on currently accepted archaeological and archaeobiological techniques. We should note first that Halacha prefers when a Torah-observant archaeologist presents the claim. Although Halacha accords credibility to professionals because they do not wish to jeopardize their professional standing (see, for example, Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 20:1), nevertheless, the Halacha prefers the advice of a Torah-observant professional. For example, it is preferable to seek the judgment of an observant doctor to determine if a sick individual must fast on Yom Kippur (see Biur Halacha 618:1 s.v. Choleh).

The reason for this is straightforward. The Mishnah (Bechorot 30a) states the rule that "one who does not observe a particular Mitzvah cannot serve as a judge or witness regarding that Mitzvah." For example, one cannot trust the Kashrut of someone who does not abide by the laws of Kashrut. One who does not observe a Torah law sometimes cannot psychologically grasp the importance of meticulous observance of that law (see, though, Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Yoreh De'ah 1:54 for the possible exception of a family member that one knows can be trusted). An archaeologist who does not observe Torah law might not be sensitive to the importance of the great dignity that Halacha requires us to extend to the dead.

Incidentally, it seems that it is for this reason that Rav Kook (as we mentioned in our first essay in this series) ruled that we cannot rely on the traditional Arab names of a town to identify a particular locale with a location mentioned in either the Tanach or Gemara. We rely upon a Jewish tradition such as the identification of an Etrog as the Pri Etz Hadar mentioned in the Chumash because each generation is meticulous about passing on precisely the correct identification to the next generation. We cannot rely on the precision of an Arab tradition of the identification of a locale. It is entirely possible that the Arabs named the town after a town whose ruins are located in the general vicinity.

We should note that the scholarly Israeli journal *Azure* recently (winter 5764) printed an essay by Yoram Hazony who asserts that many Israeli archaeologists are downright hostile to basic Jewish values. Hazony writes that it appears that this attitude even impacts on their professional work. Hazony's essay explains the skepticism and distrust that some Rabbanim maintain towards some non-observant archaeologists.

However, it is not obvious that Halacha accepts the claims even of an observant archaeologist. Recall from our first essay that Poskim regard scientists' assertions with a healthy dose of skepticism. We noted that Rav Kook asserts that, in general, Halacha regards scientific claims merely as possibly correct (Safek), because a later generation of scientists might disprove and reject the claim, as has very often occurred. Thus, even if a Torah-observant archaeologist claims based on carbon-14 dating or other scientific methods that bones in an excavation cannot be of Jewish origin, we might only regard this claim as being possibly correct. We should be concerned with the possibility that later generations might reject the validity of the scientific methods used by the current generation of archaeologists.

Nonetheless, Rav Kook does write (Teshuvot Daat Kohen 79 and 191 and Teshuvot Ezrat Kohen 41) that Halacha can accept some scientific claims as being either certain or very likely to be certain. This occurs when ample empirical evidence exists to support their claims. Rav Kook cites numerous examples where Chazal accepted specific scientific claims as the basis for their Halachic rulings (see Tosefta Ohalot 4:2, Bava Kama 91a, and Sanhedrin 78a).

An example of this could be the Mishnah (Makkot 22a) where Halacha relies upon a doctor's evaluation of how many Malkot (lashes) someone can sustain. It seems from this Mishna that we will rely upon the doctor's evaluation and recommendation, if Poskim determine that it is based on a solid foundation of evidence. Rav Yonatan Adler (whom we cited in our first essay) thus concludes (Techumin 24:504) that each specific claim made by archaeologists should be evaluated by Poskim to determine whether it should be dismissed as conjecture, regarded as possibly correct, or accepted as certain or almost certain truth. It seems that the cooperation between Rabbanim and observant archaeologists would be most helpful in reaching an appropriate conclusion.

Interestingly, Rav Adler's conclusion seems to be supported by the Teshuva of Dayan Weisz in his *Minchat Yitzchak* regarding the proper date of Purim observance in Lod (that we discussed in the third part of this series). The archaeological evidence that Dayan Weisz seriously considers are the ancient graves that were discovered in the course of highway construction in Lod. Dayan Weisz notes that members of "Atra Kaddisha" (the Chareidi organization that vigorously advocates for the respect of ancient graves throughout Medinat Yisrael) "establish with certainty that these are graves of Jews from the time of the Mishnaic period based on their expertise from other places." Dayan Weisz appears to accept this assessment without any reservation and he takes it into account when

issuing his final ruling. It would appear that Poskim could accept other archaeological evidence that is verified by observant archaeologists in coordination with Rabbanim.

Writing The Letter Tzadi

A final interesting example of a Halachic evaluation of archaeological evidence is that of Rav Moshe Shternbach (Moadim Uzmanim 2:166 footnote 2), a major contemporary Posek who resides in Jerusalem. He discusses the celebrated dispute surrounding how to write the Hebrew letter Tzadi in Torah scrolls. He notes that ancient Tefillin which have been discovered and dated to the time of the Bar Kochva revolt support the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition regarding how to write this letter. Although Rav Shternbach expresses very serious reservations on relying on archaeological evidence regarding Halachic matters, nevertheless, he writes that the Tefillin demonstrate that the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition was practiced by many Jews in ancient times and thus the Vilna Gaon (and Chazon Ish, Orach Chaim 9:6) is correct in insisting that non-Chassidic Ashkenazim not deviate from their tradition on how to write the letter Tzadi. Rav Shternbach even urges non-Chassidic Ashkenazim to be certain to hear Parashat Zachor read from a Sefer Torah where the letter Tzadi is written in accordance with the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition. Rav Shternbach does not suggest, though, that Sephardic or Chassidic Jews alter their practice based on the archaeological evidence. He merely uses the archaeological evidence as support to those who follow the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition regarding this matter. Indeed, it is entirely possible that in the future Tefillin will be found supporting the Sephardic and Chassidic tradition regarding the letter Tzadi. Moreover, the mid-twentieth-century work Tzidkat HaTzaddik (written to defend the Chassidic and Sephardic tradition for how to write the letter Tzadi) includes (p.40) a picture of a Sefer Torah written by the Ran (one of the great figures of the era of the Rishonim) and the letter Tzadi is written in accordance with the Sephardic and Chassidic tradition (also see Teshuvot Yabia Omer 2:Yoreh Deah 20).

I wish to note that I was shown a picture of the Tefillin found in Kumran (which is what Rav Shternbach appears to be referring to) and it did not at all seem clear to me that the letter Tzadi was written in accordance with the non-Chassidic Ashkenazic tradition. However, I did not conduct a proper and thorough investigation of this matter.



Conclusion
 In our first essay, we saw that the Chazon Ish and Rav Kook might be interpreted as disagreeing as to whether Poskim should consider the findings of archaeology. We have seen this in the last three essays, that some of the late twentieth-century Poskim are open to the findings of archaeology, while others seem to disregard them. However, even those who consider the findings of archaeology to be of Halachic significance view the findings

critically and do not consider the findings of archaeologists in rendering Halachic rulings when it contradicts a Mesorah of Am Yisrael. Finally, an observant archaeologist potentially can contribute to Am Yisrael in this field, although one who is contemplating entering this field should understand that some in this field are not welcoming of Torah beliefs and Jewish values.

Postscript

We should note that the attitudes that we have outlined regarding the interface of Halacha and archaeology probably apply to Tanach studies as well. While many do not see any relevance in archaeological discoveries for the study of Tanach, some in the Orthodox community have found that a critical evaluation of the archaeological finds in Eretz Yisrael and elsewhere in the Middle East have greatly enriched their appreciation and understanding of Tanach. The Orthodox Daat Mikra series on Tanach, the Orthodox Tanach journal Megadim and the writings of Rav Yoel Bin Nun and Rav Elchanan Samet are excellent examples of how critical analyses of archaeological finds have significantly enhanced our understanding of and commitment to the Tanach (although this enterprise is not undertaken without risk, since there are many challenges posed by certain archaeological evidence and interpretation).

In addition, the same debate seems to rage in the context of Hashkafah (Torah world view) regarding archaeological evidence that the world is more than 5765 years old. Some Rabbanim simply dismiss these findings of archaeology and others embrace them enthusiastically. The Tiferet Yisrael (a major commentary to the Mishnah) writes (Drush Ohr HaChaim, printed in the Yachin Uboaz edition of Mishnayot after Masechet

Sanhedrin) with great enthusiasm that the discovery in Siberia of the woolly mammoth proves the Midrashic assertion (Bereshit Rabbah 3:7) that there existed worlds before the present world. The Maharsham (Techeilet Mordechai, Breishit 2) and Rav Kook (Igrot Re'iyah 91) subscribe to this approach. For a variety of Orthodox approaches to this issue, see the various essays in the classic work entitled "Challenge: Torah Views on Science and its Problems."

Staff: Editors-in-Chief: Willie Roth, Ely Winkler Executive Editor: Jerry M. Karp Publication Editor: Ariel Caplan, Jesse Dunietz Publication Managers: Etan Bluman, Moshe Zarnest Publishing Manager: Andy Feuerstein-Rudin, Chanan Strassman Business Manager: Josh Markovic Webmaster: Avi Wollman Staff: David Barth, Kevin Beckoff, David Gross, Roni Kaplan, Mitch Levine, Jesse Nowlin, Dov Rossman Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Chaim Jachter
 To request mail, fax, or email subscriptions, or to sponsor an issue, please contact us at: Kol Torah c/o Torah Academy of Bergen County 1600 Queen Anne Road Teaneck, NJ 07666 Phone: (201) 837-7696 koltorah@koltorah.org <http://www.koltorah.org>

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet
Vayikra 5765
[From Efraim Goldstein efraimg@aol.com]

Weekly Parsha VAYIKRA Mar 18 2005
by Rabbi Berel Wein

It is well known that the last letter in the Hebrew word "vayikra" – the aleph, that begins this week's parsha, is written in miniature. The small aleph is a matter of note and discussion amongst biblical commentators throughout the ages. It was always seen as a symbol of the intense modesty of Moshe. It also represented the fact that God's voice, so to speak, was only heard by Moshe within the confines of the mishkan/Tabernacle and not outside of it. God is able, so to speak, to "contain" His presence in the universe in order to allow room for nature and humans to operate. This power of tzimtzum – containment, withdrawal – is the basis of kabalistic thought and its view of life and the world. But there is another explanation of the small aleph that I wish to concentrate upon.

God, so to speak, is to be seen and heard in the small things in life and not only in the large, great events. The Lord tells the prophet Eliyahu that He is not to be found in the wind, the noise of a quake, the brightness of a burning fire but rather in the still, small voice, in the sound of a whisper and not of a shout. The first luchot – the tablets of stone that Moshe brought down from Sinai were given with great noise – thunder, lightning, volcanic explosions – and they ended up being smashed to bits. The second luchot, given quietly and privately to Moshe, and from him to all of Israel, endured and were the centerpiece of the mishkan and the Temple. The still, small voice is most representative of God and his omnipotence. Science has shown us in our time that our physical appearance, if not even our longevity and health, lie in small almost invisible strands that make up our DNA. God calls out with a small aleph to his creatures – to see Him in every aspect of life, no matter how small and insignificant it may appear on its surface.

The believing Jew feels God in every step that one takes, in every smile and tear, in all of the events of life. There are many who wait to see God only in great events, in wars and diplomacy, in natural disasters and mighty natural wonders. There is no doubt that God is to be found there but His true abode is in the still, small voice that is with us at all times and in all places. People often attempt to improve themselves, physically and spiritually, in gigantic leaps and with superhuman efforts. The surer way is to take small steps and to deal with one's self with increments of improvement and commitment. The small and modest way in life leads to the great achievement. The book of Vayikra that we begin to read this week contains hundreds of mitzvot and details of halacha. It concentrates on "small" things in order to raise us to the level of great things and Jewish eternity. May we hear the small aleph in our lives, loud and clear. Shabat shalom.

Jerusalem Post JEWISH MAIL Mar 18 2005 by Rabbi Berel Wein

In the ancient world and through the period of the Middle Ages there were couriers who risked their lives to deliver letters and messages to far-flung outposts. Diplomatic pouches and their carriers date back at least a millennium and the beginnings of a modern postal system existed in England in the seventeenth century with the advent of postage stamps, and official postal authorities arose in the next century.

There was always a Jewish postal system, though never officially established and authorized. Important legal and scholarly documents had to be transported from one place to the other in the Jewish world. The delivery of "mail" was usually entrusted to two types of travelers: the merchants who traveled for commercial reasons and the representatives of yeshivot and other Jewish institutions who traveled to gather funds to help support their Torah or charitable endeavors. There were also official agents or bailiffs of Jewish courts who traveled between communities to deliver legal documents – such as bills of divorce. And then there were special couriers who delivered books and Torah writings throughout the Jewish world. Amazingly enough, this ad hoc, seat-of-the-pants type of delivery system was efficient and, under the circumstances, timely and honest. Jews trusted each other with the delivery of important personal and commercial documents and this trust was backed up with an official ruling. In the tenth century, Rabbi Gershom, the Light of the Exile, the head of the yeshiva in Mainz (France-Germany) promulgated a number of ordinances that greatly affected Jewish life. The most famous one was the ban on polygamy in Jewish domestic life. However, one of his other "lesser" ordinances prohibited opening, reading or using any information that was in a letter or document entrusted to one person for delivery to another person. Till today, a Jew is not allowed to open a letter addressed to someone else. This ban strengthened the Jewish mail system greatly, for Rabbi Gershom buttressed his ordinances with the power of a *cherem* – the punishment of exclusion from the Jewish community for anyone who deigned to disobey the ordinance. I have personally known Jews who were completely unobservant of many important mitzvot of Torah but who remained scrupulously observant of Rabbi Gershom's ordinance because of the *cherem* attached to it. In any event, the flow of Jewish letters and documents continued unabated in the Middle Ages and until modern times independent of any official postal or document delivery system.

Maimonides sent special couriers to France and Morocco as well as Yemen and Iraq to bring his great works to the attention of those Jewish communities and their scholars. It is truly amazing how his works were so rapidly disseminated in the Jewish world. His communications and letters to and from the rabbis of Provence and Iraq have been preserved as testimony to the impact of his writings on the Jewish world of the twelfth century. Rashi's great commentaries, written in eleventh century Troyes in the Isle de France, were also soon known throughout the Jewish world. The famous Cairo genizah – the storehouse of discarded documents, of mostly holy writings, contains copies of letters sent to the Jewish community of Cairo from great rabbinic figures from throughout the Middle East and Europe. Since Jews were always active in mercantile trade and traveled extensively, there always seemed to be couriers available to deliver Jewish mail around the world. This habit of private mail service is so ingrained in the Jewish psyche that it continues today in spite of governmental and private postal services. Who amongst us has not been asked to take some mail for someone when embarking on a trip to another country or city that contains a Jewish community? Thus, the Jewish mail system, like most Jewish habits and traditions, remains strong and operative even today.

TORAH WEEKLY - Parshat Vayikra

For the week ending 19 March 2005 / 8 Adar II 5765

Ohr Somayach (ohr.edu) - Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

OVERVIEW

The Book of Vayikra (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* - the Laws of the Priests - deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban*

olah, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the "questionable guilt" offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

INSIGHTS

Root And Branch

"And he called..." (1:1)

If you look at a tree and see healthy branches, you can be sure that its roots are strong.

When a young child takes his first steps in learning Torah, you would think that he starts by learning "In the beginning of G-d's creating the heaven's and the earth..." and from there he slowly works his way to the end of the Five Books.

However, many Torah education experts start not with the Book of Bereshet but with the volume that we start reading in synagogue this week, the third of the Torah's volumes, Vayikra.

What is the reason to start with Vayikra?

Firstly, it's easy to misunderstand the opening chapters of the Torah. They contain many deep mystical ideas which are understood only by the wisest and holiest people in each generation.

However, there is another reason. The Book of Vayikra is principally concerned with sacrifices. By teaching our children the book of Vayikra first, we are inculcating the knowledge that Torah can only thrive in someone who is prepared to sacrifice his time, his ego, and his pursuit of worldly pleasure to achieve its crown.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin (the founder of the Daf Yomi cycle of Torah study that recently completed its 11th seven-year cycle on March 1st) explains the saying of our Sages "Be watchful of the children of the poor, for from them the Torah will come forth." A Torah education does not come cheaply. For someone who has trouble making ends meet, the self-sacrifice required to give one's children a good Torah education is considerable. The Torah of these children comes through difficulty, from self-denial. Because the Torah of the "children of the poor" is earned through hardship and self-sacrifice, it has a staying power which lasts for generations.

If the branches look strong, the roots must be stronger.

Based on the *Avnei Ezel* in *Mayana shel Torah*

Ohr Torah Stone - Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Parshat Vayikra 8 Adar II 5765, 19 March 2005

Efrat, Israel – "And He called to Moses and the Lord spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting" (Leviticus 1:1).

The formulation of this first verse of the third book of the Bible seems rather strange. Why does the Bible have G-d (as it were) call – or call out – to Moses and then "speak" to him? Why did the Bible merely not open with the words "And the Lord spoke to Moses" without having called him beforehand? The most classical commentary of Rashi notes that whenever a (Divine) speaking or saying or commanding is preceded by a Divine "calling" it is a sign of special love, since "calling" is the verb used by the angels who obviously had a special relationship of love with G-d. The

Midrash Sifra goes one step further, suggesting that whenever the verb of calling (Hebrew Kara) is used, it means that G-d called the individual by name twice and that the individual responded with the word hineni, which means total acceptance and acquiescence to carry out the bidding of the One who is summoning him. This midrash specifically defines G-d's calling as implying special love and encouragement of a quick response. The proof text is the Divine call to Moses at the burning bush: "...And G-d called to Him from the midst of the bush and He said, 'Moses, Moses' and he said, 'hineni' (here am I, ready to do Your bidding with alacrity)". What I find difficult about this exclamation is the assumption that calling one's name twice is a signal of special affection. When I think back to my childhood, when my mother of blessed memory (who was the disciplinary in the family) would call out my name once, I responded in a relaxed fashion; however, when I heard her call, "Steven, Steven" (and the second time was usually louder and even with a bit of a threatening voice), I knew I was in trouble. So what is the Midrash teaching when it insists that the calling of a name twice is a sign of special love? I believe the meaning of the Midrash will become clear when we take note of a time honored mystical concept – which even finds expression in our Selichot prayers during the ten days of Penitence – that there are two images for every individual: the image of the person as he/she is – and the image of the person as it appears in the Divine throne of glory as part of the ethereal chariot (merkava). As Rav J.B. Soloveitchik once explained, there are in reality two yous: you as you are in this world at present, and you who you have the potential to become; this second potential image is engraved on G-d's throne of glory. Ultimately (after 120 years) we are judged in terms of how great a distance there is between those two yous, between who we are in reality and who we could have been in potential.

In the seven nuptial blessings recited under the marriage canopy and repeated at the conclusion of every festive meal during the first marital week (Sheva Berakhot), there are two blessings which seem to have the same subject, although one is short and to the point and the other is much more descriptive. The first of the two is, "Blessed are You ... who forms the human being". The one immediately following reads, "Blessed are You Who has formed the human being in His image, and in the image of the form of his mold has He prepared for him from it an eternal building". The first of these blessings refers to the individual as he is, who is in love and who loves his/her marriage partner; the next blessing refers to the individual as he/she can potentially become, in accordance with each of their Divine images imprinted on the throne of G-d's glory. It is this potential image that links the individual with eternity that gives the individual the potential to contribute towards the eternal building of Israel. It is also this potential image which can truly come to be realized now that each of the two individuals comprising the couple is completing his/her own being with having chosen a life's partner. I believe that when the Almighty calls out to an individual referring to him or to her by name twice, the first name refers to the individual as he/she is and the second name refers to the individual's image imprinted on G-d's heavenly throne; the very fact that G-d mentions the names together means that the Almighty believes that the image of the individual on earth is approaching – and certainly has the possibility of becoming identical with – his potential image of an eternal building. This is certainly a sign of Divine love, of a special relationship which must of necessity exist between such an individual and his/her Parent in Heaven.

In no instance is this more evident than in the case of Moses, who developed himself to such spiritual and intellectual heights that he was able to communicate the Divine will and even the Divine words. For an individual such as Moses, the Divine call is really a vocation, a calling which will always bring the response of hineni, immediate and total fealty. Shabbat Shalom.

Yeshivat Hamivtar - Orot Lev - Parshat Vayikra
Rabbi Chaim Brovender
Let us learn a posuk with Rashi

The Laws of the Sacrifices are addressed in this parsha where the Torah reviews them systematically. In the discussion of laws relating to the meal offering, we might notice an interesting detail:

"You shall salt your every meal offering with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of G-d's covenant from your meal offering; on all your offerings you shall offer salt..." (3:13).

The use of salt is stressed. It is designated specially: "the salt of G-d's covenant." Other mitzvot too are mitzvot connected to a covenant: circumcision is called a covenant. Shabbat is a covenant. Both of these mitzvot testify to or mark our commitment in a certain way—that our covenant with G-d receives mention along with them does not surprise. Not so with salt. The notion of a covenant of salt is not familiar to us. The term "salt of G-d's covenant" remains mysterious. Rashi has a somewhat surprising explanation: "A covenant has been made with salt since the six days of creation. The earthly waters were promised to be offered on the altar in the form of salt; also the pouring of the water on the altar on the holiday of Succot."

Rashi does not quote a source for this interpretation. [A similar idea is found in a medrash quoted by Tosfot HaRosh (Bresheit, 1: 7). See also, Ramban and Rabenu Behaye on our verse.]

The medrash says [referring to the division of the waters during creation]: "When the lower and upper waters were split the lower waters were consumed with grief. They would have to spend their existence in an unclean place. G-d said to them: 'Stay quiet and I will instruct the people of the Torah to give a water libation on the altar.' The waters were not placated because this only took place once a year. G-d then said that there would be a covenant and the sacrifices would be always given with salt..."

The medrash clarifies Rashi: the covenant is between the water and G-d! According to the logic of the medrash, the waters deserved some kind of compensation. The water libation was some compensation but apparently not enough. The use of salt, which comes from the sea, speaks of some kind of further privilege for water. The water received its compensation through its involvement in the salt of the sacrifices.

It is clear to Rashi that sacrifices, burnt or baked, are given to Heaven. From a certain point of view, the sacrifices represent a return to Heaven of items from the disconnected world. In order to create the world Hashem had to split things up; this resulted in the creation of tuma (a defiled or disconnected state) which enables us to aspire toward reunification with the Celestial or Divine realm. The medrash that we have quoted and which Rashi seems to presuppose speaks of this aspiration occurring even in the inanimate world.

The use of salt in offering the sacrifices shows the great potential in existence itself. The Heavenly waters and the terrestrial ones separated. That separation seems to us a kind of imperfection. The sacrifices teach us that this state is not final and that we must continue to aspire to a unified and a sanctified world. That is the covenant.

Gut shabbos, Chaim Brovender

YatedUSA Parshas Vayikra March 18, 2005

Parshas Zochor: The Correct Way

By Harav Chaim Charlap, Rosh Yeshivas Bais Zvul, Adapted from his sefer, Ohr Chaim On Moadim

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 685:2) states:

The Shabbos before Purim we read Parshas Zochor to remember the story of Amalek and the mitzvah to destroy them. The Mishnah Berurah (ibid.18) states: "Some are of the opinion that one reads the word "zeicher" with a tzeirei underneath the letter zayin, and some are of the opinion to read with a segol. Therefore, it is right to read it both ways in order to accommodate both opinions.

WHAT IS THE MAIN VERSION?

The sefer, Maaseh Rav states that the Vilna Gaon read with a segol. However, the Peulas Sachir states that the Vilna Gaon's talmid, Rav Chaim of Volozhin, testified that he heard the Vilna Gaon read with a tzeirei. The Peulas Sachir concludes that we must say that the Vilna Gaon changed his mind in his later years. Halachically, the poskim are in dispute as to the main version. The Ketzos Hashulchan (84) maintains that the correct version is with a segol, as stated in Maaseh Rav.

However, the Moadim Uzmanim maintains that the correct version in Klal Yisroel is to read with a tzeirei.

TWO CUSTOMS HOW TO RECITE BOTH VERSIONS

There are two customs how to recite both versions. Some have the custom to read the entire posuk "Timche Es Zeicher Amalek etc." initially, and then repeat the entire posuk with the second version. However, there are those who read only the words "Timche Es Zeicher Amalek", without concluding the entire posuk, and immediately repeat these words with the second version. The Ktzos Hashulchan is of the opinion not to conclude the entire posuk.

However, some poskim maintain that it is incorrect to repeat the entire posuk. They reason that lichatchila one is yotzeh with either version. Repeating a second version is merely a stringency. Therefore, once one has completed the entire posuk, he has already fulfilled the mitzvah, hence repeating the posuk has no value.

They base their reasoning on the famous question of Rav Chaim Brisker zt"l, regarding one who has two esrogim - one of which is definitely kosher but not mehudar, and the other is mehudar but its kashrus is questionable. Which one should he take first? Rav Chaim maintains that he should first take the esrog with the questionable kashrus. For if he first takes the one that is definitely kosher, he has already performed the mitzvah, hence taking the esrog again has no value. Similarly, with regard to Parshas Zochor, if one first completes the entire posuk, he has already performed the mitzvah, and repeating the posuk has no value. However, some question this reasoning from the reading of the Megillah. The minhag is that the tzibur reads the last posuk aloud, and the chazan then repeats it from the megillah scroll (Ramah 690:17). The reason the chazan repeats it, is because lichatchila it is a mitzvah to hear the entire megillah from a valid written scroll. Hence, we see that although after reading the last posuk aloud, one has already completed the mitzvah of reading the megillah. Nevertheless, repeating the posuk from a valid scroll has value.

WHICH WAY SHOULD BE RECITED FIRST?

As mentioned above, the Mishnah Berurah rules that it is best to read both versions in order to accommodate both opinions. Which version should be read first? It would seem that this depends on which is the main version. Seemingly, the main version should be read first. However, the Ktzos Hashulchan rules that the tzeirei should be read first, even though he rules that the main version is with a segol. The Moadim Uzmanim states that this depends on the two customs stated above. According to the custom to conclude the entire posuk, and then repeat the entire posuk with the second version, one should recite the main version (tzeirei) first. However, according to the custom to read just the words Timche Es Zeicher Amalek, and immediately repeat these words with the second version, one should recite the main version last. He explains that the general rule is that when one immediately corrects himself, the correction is the right way.

WHICH VERSION IS RECITED WHEN READING PARSHAS HASHAVUAH

The custom is to read both versions only when reading Parshas Zochor. However, when reading Parshas Hashavuah during Parshas Beshalach and Parshas Ki Setzei, only one version is recited. As mentioned above, there is a dispute among the poskim regarding the correct version. Most poskim maintain that the correct version is with a tzeirei. Therefore, when reading Parshas Hashavuah one should read with a tzeirei. (The Ktzos Hashulchan states that one should read the seventh aliyah with a tzeirei, and recite the maftir with a segol).

RECITING ASHREI

A famous gadol once asked his talmidim how they recite Ashrei three times a day, with a tzeirei or a segol. Most of the talmidim couldn't recall which way they recite it. Some quickly looked in the siddur, but discovered that every time it is written differently. (In the newly printed siddurim this has been corrected and they are all consistent.) The message is that after all the stringencies in reading Parshas Zochor the correct way, one should know how he reads Ashrei three times a day.

When a brother makes a simcha, you attend

by Jonathan Rosenblum

Mishpacha Magazine March 17, 2005

As soon as tickets went on sale for the 11th Siyum HaShas sponsored by Agudath Israel of America, I arranged to be there. I traveled to New York to be at Madison Square Garden. Having seen videos of the last Siyum HaShas, I didn't want to miss a chance to recite Kriyas Shema with 25,000 Jews at Madison Square Garden and to join together with over 100,000 Jews by satellite hookup.

Nevertheless I had more than a little ambivalence about attending, which struck me as appropriating a crown to which I am not entitled: lomeid hadaf. Tens of thousands of Jews successfully completed the just concluded cycle, and they along were their spouses and children are the true celebrants. The rest of us are mere hangers on and pretenders, I thought to myself.

Even worse, I knew I had no intention of joining the next cycle either. Thus I could not even pretend that I was in Madison Square Garden to jump start my participation in the next cycle. As Rabbi Yissochar Frand put it in his speech from Chicago, learning Daf Yomi is like touring through Shas. And I, at least, find the tour to be of the "If this is Tuesday, it must be Belgium" variety.

Once upon a time, I enjoyed learning a daf a day at Mirrer Yeshiva, but that was with periodic chazaros and tests. Every stab at Daf Yomi learning, however, has quickly ended in frustration at my inability to gain even a superficial mastery of the material.

Apparently I was not unique in my ambivalence. Rabbi Chaskel Besser, the first chairman of Agudath Israel of America's Daf Yomi Commission, began his opening remarks by addressing those who do not learn Daf Yomi. If your brother makes a simchah, he said, you go. Tonight we all have many, many brothers making a simchah.

But our attendance was something more than simply participating in another's simchah. It was a form of paying homage to the achievement of those who completed the cycle of Daf Yomi. The completion of the Daf Yomi cycle requires tremendous discipline and dedication. Most of us have a hard time keeping up with much smaller undertakings for even a few weeks, much less 2711 days in a row.

Daf Yomi requires minimally an hour a day for a shiur or chavrusah, and normally at least twice that amount of time to provide any feeling of satisfaction. The pace is relentless. Even missing one or two nights can leave one struggling to catch up.

Unless one makes the time for shiur or chavrusah study virtually sacrosanct, there is little chance of success. And even then, there are the inevitable illnesses, family simchos, and times when one is traveling. If one did not possess strong skills in time management at the outset of learning Daf Hayomi, he would surely have acquired them by the end.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells the story of the rav who is known as one of the world's greatest experts on Mishnah Berurah. Someone once asked him how he had acquired his phenomenal knowledge of Mishnah Berurah. He replied that since a young age he had always learned Mishnah Berurah for a half an hour after Shachris. His interlocutor replied, "But I could have done that."

"Yes, but I did," answered the talmid chacham.

For those who did not complete the Daf Yomi cycle, the Siyum HaShas was our way of honoring those who did. And in saluting them, we also obligated ourselves.

Indeed that is one of the most important by-products of the proliferation in Daf Yomi shiurim in recent years: they obligate the rest of us. As Rabbi Frand put it, "You arrive for davening at 6:30 a.m., and realize that there is a large group that has already been in shul since 5:30 a.m." Last week, I saw posted in a medium-sized shul in Riverdale the schedule of five daily Daf Yomi shiurim, each one of them taught by someone who works full time.

Walking into shul and seeing the look of satisfaction on the faces of those who have just finished an hour of early morning learning while the rest of us are still rubbing the sand from our eyes helps us recognize the centrality of fixed Torah learning in any fulfilled Jewish life. The pre-Siyum issue of the Jewish Observer (published by Agudath Israel of America) was filled with moving testimonials to the transformative impact of learning or teaching Daf Yomi. Many participants commented on the fact that their wives gladly made the sacrifices necessary for them to maintain their learning schedule because they recognized the positive changes in the family as a result of the father's learning.

One businessman who teaches three Daf Yomi shiurim every day cheerfully admitted that few who knew him in his yeshiva days would believe that he learns the Daf Yomi, much less is a maggid shiur. But that's just the point: He is no longer the same person he was in yeshiva. Rather by virtue of the huge commitment he has made to Daf Yomi, he has become someone quite different.

Daf Yomi learning is not for all of us. But by honoring the lomdei haDaf, we also acknowledge our own need to create a similar island in time, completely removed from anything else happening in our lives, to immerse ourselves in the sea of Talmud.

Please address all comments and requests to
HAMELAKET@hotmail.com
