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WAR AND PEACE

“...a covenant of peace.” (25:12)

It may seem ironic that the reward for a violent killing should be “a covenant of peace.”

The word in Hebrew “*Shalom*” not only means peace, but also connotes completeness and perfection — any peace which lacks completeness and perfection is not really peace. And just as there can only be One Completeness and One Perfection, so too there can only be one real peace — Hashem’s peace, for only “He who makes peace in His exalted realms, He will make peace for us and for all of Israel...”

If something is immoral, then appeasement is not peace and doesn’t lead to peace. On the other hand, an act of zealotry divorced of pure intentions can be a crime in itself. For this reason the Torah points out that Pinchas acted “for his G-d” — i.e., he had no motivation whatsoever other than to do the will of the Almighty. Only when intentions are *entirely* pure can zealotry lead to “a covenant of peace.”

• Based on the *Ohr Yoel*

HELPING DADDY

“By avenging My vengeance...” (25:11)

‘He expressed the anger that was Mine to show.’ • Rashi

When you ask your three-year old son to help you set the table for Shabbos, and he manfully steers the kiddush cup up onto the Shabbos table, you get a tremendous feeling of *nachas*. You certainly don’t gain anything from his help, except of course, enormous pleasure. You could have just as easily done what he did at the same

INSIGHTS

time as you brought in the rest of the plates and the cutlery. But you gave him a job all of his own!

Rashi explains the meaning of the expression “*he avenged My vengeance*” to mean: “*He expressed the anger that was Mine to show.*” It was specifically because Pinchas did something that was really Hashem’s to do that he merited such a great reward.

The same idea applies to *tzedaka*, charity. Turnus Rufus once asked Rabbi Akiva how it was that “If Hashem loves the poor why doesn’t He feed them?” Rabbi Akiva answered that the poor give us more than we give them — for through giving them *tzedaka*, they save us from *gehinnom* (purgatory).

Rabbi Akiva was saying that, of course, it’s Hashem’s ‘job’ to feed the poor, but He allows us to feed them instead. And by doing ‘Hashem’s job for Him,’ we earn a far greater reward. We are like the little boy setting the table for Shabbos. Of course, Hashem can feed the poor Himself, but He gives us the job to do, even though, we’re really not ‘helping’ Him at all.

• Rabbi Moshe Feinstein *zt”l*

CURTAIN CALL

“By avenging My Vengeance” (25:11)

When Zimri, prince of the tribe of Shimon, committed an act of gross indecency with Cozbi, princess of Moav, everyone including Moshe was frozen in disbelief. Everyone, that is, except Pinchas. Pinchas didn’t hesitate to avenge Hashem’s honor and execute the pair.

The Midrash tells “that because of Moshe’s hesitation, no man knows the place of his burial.”

What can one thing possibly have to do with the other? Why did Moshe’s hesitation mean that his burial place is unknown?

The reason is as follows: Skeptics claim that Moshe couldn’t have been as great as the Torah’s description of him. For if had he been so great, if he had really gone up to Heaven and spoken face-to-face with the Divine Presence, he should have merited eternal life. Instead of dying a human death, he should have ascended alive to Heaven like *Chanoch* and *Eliyahu*. So, claim the skeptics, the Torah of Moshe must be nothing more than a panegyric of self-glorification.

This claim, however, is laughable. For if Moshe had wanted to write himself a fictitious final scene, he could certainly have written something like “And Moshe ascended to Heaven alive in a fiery chariot.” That would have been a real curtain-closer!

But what does it say in the Torah? “And Moshe died...”

Can there be a stronger proof of the Torah’s truth than those few prosaic words: “And Moshe died...”? How *easy* it would have been for Moshe to write himself a glorious supernatural exit to rival the biggest Hollywood blockbuster — and add immeasurably to the luster of his memory!

However, the strength of this proof relies on one other factor — no-one knows Moshe’s burial place! Because, if it were known, then Moshe could never have claimed that he ascended to Heaven alive — his grave would be there for all to see.

Now we can understand the words of the Midrash: “Because of Moshe’s hesitation, no man knows his burial place.” If Moshe had stepped in and executed Zimri, had he “*avenged the vengeance of Hashem,*” *necessarily he would have merited the reward that Pinchas in fact received — an eternal life without death.*

But if Moshe had lived forever, he would never have been able to confound the skeptics and prove the truth of the Torah by those few words “And Moshe died...”

• *Bircas Hashiv*

Hashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem’s “covenant of peace” as reward for his bold action — executing *Zimri* and the Midianite princess *Kozbi*. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the *Midianim* because they allured the Jewish People to sin.

Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each of the Tribes. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to the *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the families of the Levites is recorded. The daughters of *Tzlofchad* file a claim with Moshe:

In the absence of a brother, they request their late father’s portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem what the ruling is in this case, and Hashem tells

him that the daughters’ claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of an inheritance. Hashem tells Moshe to ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter,

although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks Hashem to designate the subsequent leader of the people, and Hashem selects *Yehoshua bin Nun*. Moshe ordains *Yehoshua* as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

OVERVIEW



SING MY SOUL

Insights into the Shabbos Zemiros

מה ידיוות "HOW BELOVED..."

**"We shall inherit the estate of Yaakov,
An estate without limits"**

One who honors the Sabbath by properly enjoying it, says Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Yossi (Shabbos 118) will be granted an estate without limits like the one which Hashem promised to Yaakov Avinu. Rabbi Yehuda in the name of the Sage Rav says that his reward will be the fulfillment of all his desires.

At first glance these two rewards may seem to differ. But they are actually complementary. A man who has a hundred dollars, says the Talmud, wants two hundred. Fulfillment of one's desire only gives birth to another. In order for the Sabbath celebrator to be rewarded with the fulfillment of *all* his desires, he must be given an estate with no limits at all.



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BABY-SITTER'S JITTERS

Baruch Liberman

<76001.1643@compuserve.com wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My 14 year old daughter, Batsheva, does quite a bit of baby-sitting and occasionally sits for non-Jewish neighbors. What should she do if she is asked to warm up dinner or a pizza for the children? Would she be violating the laws of kashrut?

Thanks,

Dear Baruch,

She might be violating the Torah command "Don't cook a kid in its mother's milk."

With one exception, it's permitted to cook non-kosher food. That exception is milk and meat. "Don't cook a kid in its mother's milk" means the very act of **cooking** milk and meat is prohibited, even if you don't plan to eat it.

This prohibition can apply even to milk and meat **absorbed** into cooking utensils. A pot owned by someone who doesn't keep kosher probably has milk and meat absorbed into the substance of the pot. So even if the food itself contains no milk and meat, your daughter is forbidden to heat it up using the family's cook-wear.

One solution (which should only be done with the parents' permission) is that your daughter put the pot on the stove and supervise while one of the children lights the fire; or that she first light the fire and supervise while the child places the pot.

By the way, the prohibition of cooking milk and meat applies to meat from kosher-type animals only. So, for example, if the pizza has ham on it, your daughter may heat it in a clean microwave on a paper plate. Bon Appetite!

This brings to mind a story told of Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, *zatzal*. The Talmud says that a person shouldn't say, "I don't want non-kosher food." Rather he should say, "I want it, but what can I do...the Torah prohibits it!" Near Rabbi Kaminetzky's yeshiva stood a pizza shop. When passing by, Rabbi Kaminetzky would sometimes whiff the enticing aroma of non-kosher pizza, smile, and say "Ahh, smells delicious!"

Sources:

- Exodus 34:26, Chullin 155b
- Rema in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 87:1
- Gilyon Maharsha 87:6
- Pri Megadim Yoreh Deah 105:2 in Mishbetzot Zahav

HIDE! IT'S THE BRIDE!

Alan Goldman

<goldman@taveng.enet.dec.com>

wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We live in Jerusalem and will be, G-d willing, marrying off two sons in the states this summer. Needless to say there are numerous challenges with this, one of which is schedules.

Ask the Rabbi



Regarding the bride & groom not seeing each other the week prior to the wedding: Potentially one of my sons will be getting married on Monday, August 26, and his brother will be married on Sunday, Sept. 1. Can the second bride attend the first wedding, seeing as this would fall within the seven day 'black-out' period?

Dear Alan Goldman,

Bride and groom not seeing one another a week before the wedding is a custom which should be honored if possible.

One reason offered for this custom is to ensure that no petty argument erupt during what is potentially a stressful period.

Another reason: The seven-day separation enhances the bride and groom's endearment towards one another.

I asked two of Jerusalem's noted *Poskim* about your situation. Under the circumstances, your son's fiancée may attend the wedding, but she and her groom should avoid socializing with each other. Mazel Tov!

Sources:

- Rema Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer 55:1
- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 192:1

Yiddle Riddle

As the sun moves from east to west, Shabbat and Yom Tov occur first in Israel, and then in America. Which *mitzva* is observed first in New York, and then in Jerusalem?

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WHEN MORE IS LESS

When the Sixteenth of Iyar, the day on which the *Omer* meal offering was made in the Temple, fell on *Shabbos*, the barley required for producing the flour was cut on that holy day because the Torah ordered that the *Shabbos* prohibition against reaping be set aside in order to enable the offering. In deference to the *Shabbos*, ruled Rabbi Yishmael, only three *seah* measures of barley were cut to produce the flour instead of the five cut on a weekday in order to have more raw material to produce a more refined flour.

What will Rabbi Yishmael rule in the following case? A man is deathly ill and two figs can save his life. The *Shabbos* prohibition against picking fruit from a tree is certainly put aside for saving a life. But the only figs available are: 1) two separate figs each on its own stem, requiring two acts of removing fruit from the tree; and b) three figs growing from one stem and requiring only one act of picking from the tree.

Will Rabbi Yishmael's rule of minimizing the amount of grain to be cut compel us here also opting for picking the two figs

required so as not to pick an extra one?

The Talmud's resolution is that you certainly will pick the one stem with the three figs, for in that fashion you minimize the acts of removing fruit. Picking the two separate stems only increase the number of normally prohibited acts, unlike the *Omer* situation in which less barley harvested results in less acts of creative work.

• *Menochos 63-64*

Shavuot the Sages issued a call to the general community for help in locating some fields whose produce was still intact.

In both cases a mute answered the call and communicated, in sign language, the location of a surviving field. Mordechai, of Purim fame, was still alive and it was he who deciphered their cryptic messages with his great wisdom and directed the sages to the distant sites.

The reason for the destruction of the crops, explains Maharsha was to prevent those inside the city from performing the Temple service, just as they also prevented them

from offering a lamb as the daily sacrifice by substituting a pig for the animal customarily provided. Loyalists therefore concealed the crops from the enemy in two remote fields whose very names indicated the element of concealment. The only ones in the city whom they could trust with this secret were individuals incapable of speech. It was these mutes who eventually revealed the hiding places known only to them and enabled the sacred service to continue in the Temple.

Menochos 64b



Insights, explanations and comments for the seven pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

SIGN LANGUAGE

During the Hasmonean dynasty in the Second Temple Era a civil war raged between two brothers, Hierkonys and Aristobalus, over who should rule the nation. The forces of Hierkonys which laid siege to Jerusalem where Aristobalus was entrenched destroyed all the grain fields around the city. When barley was needed for the *Omer* meal offering on Pesach and wheat for the two loaves offering on

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *Kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. Why did Hashem attach two letters of His name to the name of each family?
4. The Torah states that Korach and his congregation became a sign. What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach's children survive?
6. When the Torah enumerated the families of Asher, why was Serach bas Asher mentioned?
7. How long did it take to conquer and divide the Land?
8. How was the Land divided?
9. Where was Yocheved, the mother of Moshe, born?
10. Why did the decree to die in the *midbar* not apply to the women?
11. Why does the Torah change the order of the names of the daughters

12. Tzlofchad died because of his own sin. What was it?
13. Why didn't Moshe know what to answer the daughters of Tzlofchad?

14. Moshe "put some of his glory" upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?

15. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?

16. When the Jewish People offer the daily *tamid* offering, what 'satisfaction' does Hashem receive?

17. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?

18. Why is Shavuot called *Yom HaBikkurim* (the day of the first fruits)?

19. What is the symbolic meaning of the 70 bullocks offered on Succos?

20. To whom did the lambs offered on Succos allude?



I Didn't Know That!

In *verse 28:11*, the Torah refers to "Your New Moons." *Rosh Chodesh* is the only holiday that has the appellation "Your" because the Jewish People took it upon themselves to celebrate *Rosh Chodesh* as a festive time.

• *Sforno*

Bonus Question ?

The daughters of Tzlofchad told Moshe, "Our father... was not among the congregation that murmured against Hashem [the *meraglim*, or] the congregation of Korach (27:3)." Why did they point out that their father was not part of these groups before requesting his inheritance?

Answers on back page

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.

Answers to this Week's Questions!

- 25:13 - The *Kehuna* was given to Aaron and his sons, and to their descendants who were born after they were anointed. Pinchas was born prior to the anointing.
- 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendent of Moav.
- 26:5 - To testify that they were of pure descent.
- 26:10 - They are a reminder that the *Kehuna* was given forever to Aaron and his descendants and that no non-Kohen should ever dispute this right.
- 26:11 - Although they originally participated in the plot against Moshe, they repented and were spared.
- 26:46 - Because she was still living.
- 26:53 - Seven years to conquer and seven years to divide.
- 26:54 - By lot and by the *Urim* and *Tummim*.
- 26:59 - Between the walls at the entrance into Egypt.

- 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim* only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
- 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
- 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva said that he was the one who gathered sticks on Shabbos. Rabbi



Shimon said that he was among those who attempted to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.

- 27:5 - Moshe was being punished for speaking haughtily and saying to the judges, "A case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me" (*Devarim* 1:17). Also,

because the daughters of Tzlofchad merited that a portion of the Torah should be written because of them.

- 27:20 - That Yehoshua's skin also shone. Moshe's face beamed like the sun, Yehoshua's face beamed like the moon.
- 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the western side of the slaughtering area, and the evening offering on the eastern side.
- 28:8 - The satisfaction that the Jewish People obey His command.
- 28:15 - For ritual defilement of the Sanctuary or its vessels, of which no one is cognizant.
- 28:26 - Two loaves of bread were brought as an offering on Shavuot. They were the first of the wheat-offerings brought from the new grain.
- 29:18 - They allude to the 70 nations of the world.
- 29:18 - To the Jewish People.

Recommended Reading List

RAMBAN

- 26:57 Counting the *Levi'im*
27:9 Inheritance
28:2 The Daily Offerings
7:13 Gifts of the *Nesi'im*

SEFER HACHINUCH

- 400 Inheritance
401 The Daily Sacrifices
405 *Shofar*

Bonus Answer!

They knew that neither the *meraglim* nor the congregation of Korach had a portion in the Land. The share of the *meraglim* was divided between Yehoshua and Kalev. The portion of the congregation of Korach was divided among all the tribes. Therefore, they told Moshe that their father wasn't part of either of these groups, and thus was deserving to inherit the Land.

• *Rashbam - Bava Basra 117b*

HAFTORAH: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3

"Thus says Hashem: 'I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown. Israel is sacred to Hashem, the first of His grain; all who devour him shall bear his guilt, evil shall come upon them' — the word of Hashem." (2:2-3)

Once there was a sensitive lad, who spent all his days in study and refining his character. While still at a tender age, he was captured by bandits and forced to live amongst them. At first, he was repulsed by their coarseness, and clung to his original demeanor. However, as the weeks

lengthened into years and no sign of rescue came, slowly but surely he began to degenerate to the level of his captors, and eventually he was indistinguishable from them.

When the Jewish People are finally redeemed from exile, the nations that have oppressed them will be held to account, not just for their own misdeeds against Israel, **but also for Israel's transgressions**, for had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert.

That is the meaning of these verses: *'I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown.'* I remember,

says Hashem, how you were when you followed after Me through the wilderness, before you were exiled amongst the nations. At your root you are holy, and if you have sinned it is because of the atmosphere you have imbibed during the long night of exile.

The three Haftorahs which are read in the Three Weeks (between 17th Tammuz and 9th Av) are called the "three of affliction." They detail the dire consequences that will befall Israel if they do not return to Hashem. Nevertheless, each of these three Haftorahs end on a note of optimism, expressing the confidence that Hashem never forgets His people even in the deepest and darkest exile.

• *Adapted from Kochav M'Yaakov in Mayana shel Torah*

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