

Toras



fleish

The meaty torah newsletter that always keeps the steaks high, (pro)paneul as it might be.

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

Comparing two of the most famous events in the Torah, we face what seems like a glaring contradiction. In this week's parsha, Moses on the mountain is told by God to go down to the people. They have made a golden calf. Moses descends, holding in his hands the holiest object of all time, the two tablets carved and inscribed by God Himself.

As he reached the foot of the mountain, he saw the people dancing around the calf. In his anger, he threw down the tablets and broke them to pieces (Ex. 32:19). It was a public display of anger. Yet Moses was not criticised for this act, done entirely of his own accord.¹ Resh Lakish, commenting on the verse in which God commands Moses to carve a new set of tablets to replace the ones "which you broke" (Ex. 34:1), says that God was, in effect, giving His approval to Moses' deed.²

The sages went further. The concluding verses of the Torah state, "No other prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, who knew the Lord face to face ...or in any of the mighty hand and awesome wonders Moses displayed in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. 34:10-12). On the phrase "mighty hand," they said that it refers to the breaking of the tablets.³ In other words, it is seen as one of his greatest acts of courage and leadership.

Many years later Moses was faced with another crisis. The people had arrived at Kadesh. There was no water. The people complained. Once again, Moses displayed anger. Told by God to speak to the rock, he struck it twice, and water gushed out. This time, however, instead of being praised for what he did, God said to him, "Because you did not trust in Me to sanctify Me in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them" (Num. 20:12).

¹ Shabbat 87a.

² Shabbat ibid.

³ Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:5.

The difficulties in this passage are well-known. What was Moses' sin? And was not the punishment disproportionate? My concern here, though, is simply with the comparison between the two events. In both cases, the people were running out of control. In both cases, Moses performed a gesture of anger. Why was one commended, the other condemned? Why was a show of anger appropriate in one case but not in the other? Is anger always wrong when shown by a leader, or is it sometimes necessary?

The answer is provided by Maimonides in his law code, the Mishneh Torah. In his Laws of Character, he tells us that in general we should follow the middle way in the emotional life. But there are two emotions about which Maimonides says that we should not follow the middle way, but should instead strive to eliminate them entirely from our emotional life: pride and anger. About anger he says this:

Anger is an extremely bad attribute, and one should distance oneself from it by going to the other extreme. One should train oneself not to get angry, even about something to which anger might be the appropriate response... The ancient sages said, "One who yields to anger is as if he had worshipped idols." They also said, "Whoever yields to anger, if he is wise, his wisdom deserts him, and if he is a prophet, his prophecy leaves him."

And "The life of an irascible person is not a life." Therefore they have instructed us to keep far from anger, training ourselves to stay calm even in the face of provocation. This is the right way.⁴

However he adds an important qualification: If one wants to instill reverence in his children and family, or in public if he is the head of the community, and his desire is to show them his anger so as to bring them back to the good, he should appear to be angry with them so as to reprove them, but he must inwardly remain calm as if he were acting the part of an angry man, but in reality he is not angry at all.⁵

⁴ Hilkhos Deot, 2:3.

⁵ Ibid.



TORAS FLEISH IS A SE'IR-ING, MEATY PURIM PUBLICATION.
IT'S A GORE-GEIOUS PARSHA NEWSLETTER THAT'LL
GET YOU WONDERING: "HOOFINKS UP THIS DRIVEL?"
AS UNFASHIONA-BULL AS IT MAY SOUND, THIS ISSUE
WILL JUST KEEP PLOWING NEW GROUND & CHARGING AHEAD WITH THE
REDICULOUS YOKES. OR PUNS. OR PUN-ISH-A-BULL LINES.
I GUESS YOU CAN CALL US COW-MEDIANS



Have you heard about the cow that was dropped from outer space? It became an unstoppa-bull meatier meteor! HA! (oy that was a rare one)
Legal jargon: Under no circumstances do the editors of this publication condone the dropping of cows from outer space, tickling cows in order to make them laugh & have milk come out of their noses or tipping cows (unless they provide exceptional service). The use of the phrase "Cow-abunga dude!" by Michaelangelo is also expressly forbidden and denied.
Never said it. Nope. No way. Uh Uh. Nosireebob.

According to Maimonides, the emotion of anger is always the wrong response. We may not be able to help feeling it, but we should be aware that while it lasts we are in the grip of an emotion we cannot control. That is what makes anger so dangerous. It is, to use Daniel Kahneman's terminology, thinking fast when we ought to be thinking slow.

What then are we to do? Maimonides, here and elsewhere, adopts a position that has been strikingly vindicated by neuroscientists' discovery of the plasticity of the brain. Intensive training over a prolonged period rewires our neural circuitry. We can develop new patterns of response, initially through intense self-control, but eventually through habit. This is particularly hard to do in the case of anger, which is why we have to work so hard to eliminate it from our emotional repertoire.

But, says Maimonides, there is a fundamental difference between feeling anger and showing it. Sometimes it is necessary for a parent, teacher or leader to demonstrate anger – to look angry even if you aren't. It has a shock effect. When someone in authority displays anger, the person or group it is directed against is in danger, and knows it. It is almost like administering an electric shock, and it is often effective in bringing a person or group to order. It is, though, a very high-risk strategy. There is a danger it will provoke an angry response, making the situation worse not better.¹ It is a weapon to be used only rarely, but sometimes it is the only way.

¹ For one example of this see Mishneh Torah, Hilkhos Mamrim, 6:9.

The key question then becomes: is this a moment when anger is called for or not? That calls for careful judgement. When people are dancing around an idol, anger is the right response. But when there is no water and the people are crying out in thirst, it is the wrong one.² Their need is real, even if they do not express it in the right way.

So, to summarise: we should never feel anger. But there are times when we should show it. These are few and far between, but they exist. I say this because of one of my own most life-changing experiences.

There was a time when I smoked a pipe. It was the wrong thing to do and I knew it. There is a mitzvah to take care of your health, and smoking harms you badly in multiple ways. Yet there is such a thing as addiction, and it can be very hard to cure even when you are fully aware of how badly you are injuring yourself and others. For years I tried to give it up, and repeatedly failed. Then someone I respected greatly became angry with me. It was a cool anger, but it felt like a slap in the face.

It cured me. The shock was so great that I stopped and never smoked again. The experience of being on the receiving end of someone's anger changed my life. It may even have saved my life.

This was a difficult discovery. When you are a leader, you are often at the receiving end of people's anger. You learn to live with it and not let it depress or deflect you. However when someone who clearly cares for you, gets angry with you, not because he or she disagrees with you, but simply because they see you doing yourself harm, it can change your life in a way few other things can.

You come to see the point of Maimonides' distinction as well. Therapeutic anger, if we can call it that, is done not out of emotion but out of careful, deliberate judgment that this is what the situation calls for right now. The person who delivers the shock is not so much feeling anger as showing it. That is what makes it all the more shocking.

There are families and cultures where anger is used all too often. This is abusive and harmful. Anger is bad for the person who feels it and often for the one who receives it. But sometimes there are situations that demand it, where putting up with someone's bad behaviour is damaging, and where making excuses for it can become a form of co-dependency. Friends and family, intending no more than to be tolerant and kind, in effect make it easy for the person to stay addicted to bad habits, at a cost to his and others' happiness.

Maimonides on Moses teaches us that we should try to conquer our feelings of anger. But when we see someone or a group acting wrongly, we may have to show anger even if we don't feel it. People sometimes need

² See Rambam, Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 4.

that shock to help them change their lives. *Covenant and Conversation 5778 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l ©2018 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org*

What do cows most like to read?
Cattle-logs!



RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

In this week's Torah reading we learn of the ingredients and mixture that created the incense offering in the Holy Temple. The list of ingredients and its formula are transmitted to us through the words of the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud. The ingredients and measurements were to be exact and any deviation from the established formula rendered the offering unacceptable.

The incense offering differs from all other Temple offerings because of the fact that it is ephemeral and physically nonexistent. It literally goes up in smoke. However, it leaves a fragrance that is so powerful that, as the Talmud explains, the animal kingdom as far away as Jericho was affected by this fragrance.

There are those who say that the miracle attributed to the Temple in the book of Avot, that no flies appeared on the temple grounds even though it was basically a meat slaughterhouse, was due to the wafting of the smoke that emanated from the incense offering on a daily basis. Be that as it may be, there is no doubt that the incense offering was meant to be a protective measure for the Jewish people.

We find later in the Bible that it was used to diffuse plagues that were brought upon the people because of their intransigence and sins. It nevertheless was a lethal offering, which if done improperly and/or without authorization, brought death upon those who practiced it. We see this from the story of the sons of Aaron and from the even greater tragedy of the destruction of Korach and his followers.

The incense offering was a purely spiritual event. It was smoke and air. It left a powerful fragrance, but though it could be appreciated and even internalized it could not be touched or felt by human hands. The service of God is often purely spiritual, characterized by love, devotion and faith. These are not traits that can be held in one's hands or subject to storage. The very vagueness of these necessary spiritual traits makes them



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difficult to define, let alone observe. And these spiritual traits need to be handled carefully and with proper judgment.

Too much faith can lead to poor decisions and a naïve view of life and religion. Not enough faith will only lead to pessimism and permanent disappointment. The same is true for all other spiritual traits – they are necessary for the correct service of God but they can be easily mishandled and misinterpreted. The Torah purposely defined its physical commandments. These definitions apply even to the spiritual commandments as well. The Torah gives forth a fragrance – a fragrance of goodness, kindness and a whiff of eternity.

Though we no longer have the ability to offer incense on a daily basis, we do have the ability to serve our Creator, in a spiritual sense, with our minds and hearts and souls. Though these may not be physically reflective to others, Heaven recognizes them clearly. It is our incense offering. ©2018 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

How did Darth Vader know what Luke got him for Chanukah?
He could feel his presents!



RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"And God spoke unto Moses: Take sweet spices – nataf, shelet and helbena – these sweet spices with pure frankincense [levona], all of an equal

weight" [Ex. 30:34]. Suddenly, I felt myself awakened during a flight by a rather startling question. Someone wanted to see my tzitzit (ritual fringes). Still half asleep, I partially unbuttoned my shirt, showing the aggressive inquisitor the tzitzit. I thought that perhaps he needed to borrow them. "Good," he said, "come join us for the Shacharis (morning) minyan." Somewhat confused, I asked him what my wearing or not wearing tzitzit had to do with my joining the minyan. "You know," he said, "you can't pray with just any Jew."

I was quite taken aback, to say the least. I reminded the zealot that the source for the requirement of ten people for a minyan was derived from God's statement to Moses, "How long must I suffer this evil congregation...?" [Num. 14:27]. And the evil congregation to which God is

referring is the ten out of twelve scouts who did not want to conquer the Land of Israel.

Since the word "edah" (congregation) refers to ten scouts, we know that ten comprise a minyan. Now these ten scouts are considered to have committed one of the most grievous sins in the Torah in their refusal to leave the desert and inhabit the Land of Israel. If such individuals are the very source for a congregational quorum, how could someone be excluded simply if he doesn't wear tzitzit?

This issue finds a parallel in our weekly reading of Ki Tissa. One of the most unique aspects of the Sanctuary was the sweet-smelling spices of the incense burned on a special altar, whose inspiring fragrance permeated the House of God. In Parshat Ki Tissa, the Torah lists the different spices, and their names are strange to our modern ears. But stranger still is the Rabbinic commentary that one of those spices – specifically helbena – is hardly sweet smelling.

On the contrary, as Rashi writes, helbena "...is a malodorous spice which is known (to us as) gelbanah (galbanum). Scripture enumerates it among the spices of the incense to teach us that we should not look upon the inclusion of Jewish transgressors in our fasts and prayers as something insignificant in our eyes; indeed, they [the transgressors of Israel] must also be included amongst us" [Ex. 30:34].

Rashi is conveying a most significant insight. The community of Israel – Hebrew: tzibur – must consist of all types of Jews: righteous (the letter tzadi, for "tzaddikim"), intermediate (the letter bet for "beinonim"), and wicked (the letter reish for "resha'im"), just as the incense of the Sanctuary included spices of diverse fragrances.

Perhaps because we must learn to take responsibility for every member of the "family" no matter what their behavior; perhaps because what appears to us as wicked may in reality be more genuine spirituality; perhaps because no evil is without its redeeming feature or perhaps merely in order to remind us not to be judgmental towards other human beings, the message of the incense could not be clearer.

No Jew, even the most egregious sinner, dare be dismissed with mockery and derision from the congregation of Israel. Every Jew must be allowed to contribute, and only when every Jew is included does the sweet fragrance properly emerge.

In just under a month, as we sit at the Seder, we are instructed during the course of the proceedings to open the door for Elijah the prophet, forerunner of the Messiah.



Certainly, opening the door for Elijah seems superfluous given Elijah's uncanny ability to visit every single Seder in the world. Anyone capable of accomplishing such a remarkable feat certainly would not be stopped by a closed door.

Rather, what message does this symbolic gesture convey? I believe that the opening of the door symbolizing the opening of our door to the fifth child, the child who has moved so far from the Jewish People that he is not even at the Seder! We must go out to find him – whether is at a nightclub or a Far East ashram – and invite him to come back in.

No one, not the "wicked" child, and not the "invisible" child, is to be excluded from the seder, the commemoration of our first redemption. Parents and children must all join together in a loving and accepting reunion.

Permit me to conclude with the story on the plane with which I began. When it came time to pray, I choose to do so not with the self-selecting group of the righteous, but rather with those who had been rejected by the tzitzit-checking minyan gatherer, confident that they would be far more acceptable to the God of compassion and unconditional love to whom we pray! ©2018 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

*Why do cows have hooves instead of feet?
Because they lactose!*



RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

One of the most extraordinary images in the Torah appears in this week's portion. Moshe (Moses) asks God "Show me your glory." God responds that He cannot be seen by any human being. But, God tells Moshe, "Stand in the cleft of the rock" and "you will see My back, but My face must not be seen." (Exodus 33: 17-23) What does this mean?

The Midrash maintains that Moshe was asking God for an understanding of why there is evil in the world. An especially relevant question coming as it does after the Jews experienced so much upheaval after leaving Egypt. God's response was that as events unfold, they cannot be easily understood. Only after an event, often as long as many years later can one gain a glimpse and comprehend what had occurred. When God tells Moshe, you can see me from behind, but not from the front, He may be saying that events can only be understood in hindsight.

Another possibility comes to mind. Perhaps Moshe was asking God for proof of His existence. Moshe may have felt that such a proof was needed by Am Yisrael after they rejected God by building the Golden Calf. But such a proof does not exist. After all, if God is God, proof would limit Him. And so, God tells Moshe, "You cannot see me from the front." There

is no proof of My existence. Rather, one should concentrate on understanding the characteristics of God, the benevolence of God, the kindness of God. It's these characteristics that are symbolized by God telling Moshe He can be seen from the back.

Still another approach is that Moshe was asking God, especially after the Jews were punished for having built the Golden Calf, how Divine judgment works. God's response is that decisions are not based on strict law, rather on a law that tempers justice with mercy. "You cannot see me from the front" may mean that the world could not exist if God judged us with pure judgment alone. Only from the back, only with law mingled with kindness can the world endure. Indeed, only with this mixture did God allow the Jews as a people to survive after the sin of the Golden Calf. Not coincidentally, God's thirteen attributes of mercy soon follow in the text. (Exodus 34:6-7)

One final thought. Could it be that when Moshe tells God, let me see you from the front, God responds that built into his essence is deep humility? This may be the meaning of our text. God is saying "I don't want the honor of being seen from the front, but rather modestly from the back." As God displays the trait of humility, so too should we attempt to learn the lesson of walking humbly in the world. ©2018 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

*How do you count cows?
With a cow-culator!*



RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ

Shabbat Shalom Weekly

The Torah states: "Six days you shall work and on the seventh day, it should be a complete rest sacred to the Almighty" (Exodus 31:15) What does it mean "a complete rest"?

Rashi, the great commentator, tells us that rest on Shabbat should be a permanent rest and not merely a temporary rest. Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, the former Rosh Hayeshiva (Dean) of the Mir Yeshiva, clarifies that a temporary rest means that a person has not really changed his inner traits, but he merely controls them on Shabbat. He still has a bad temper and has a tendency to engage in quarrels, but because of the elevation of Shabbat, he has the self-discipline not to manifest these traits. The ultimate in Shabbat observance is that a person should uproot those negative traits which are contradictory to peace of mind on Shabbat. One needs to uproot such traits as anger and



the tendency to quarrel with others. Only then is your rest on Shabbat a complete rest.

It is not sufficient for a person just to refrain from the formal categories of creative acts on Shabbat. Shabbat is the gift of peace of mind. This is not considered righteousness, but an essential aspect of Shabbat. Only by being a master over your negative emotions can you have true peace of mind. *Dvar Torah based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin ©2018 Rabbi K. Packouz and aish.com*

*Where did the cow take his date?
The MOOVies!*



ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

Golden Calf

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

In this week's portion we read of the sin of the Golden Calf. The Torah later (Devarim 9: 6) recalls this by stating "remember (Zachor); Do not forget how you angered Almighty G-d in the Desert". It would seem that just as we can fulfill the Mitzva of Zachor (with relation to Amalek and the story of Purim) by listening intently to the reading of the Torah that week, so also we can fulfill the Mitzva of "Zachor" in relation to the Golden Calf, by simply listening intently to the reading of the Torah of that week. Yet many of our Rabbis do not include this Mitzva in the list of the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvot. The Ramban (Nachmanides) queries whether this Mitzva should be counted at all, since it was a one-time occurrence and is not applicable for generations.

Even if we state that it is a Mitzvah for future generations, no Rabbi believes that by listening to the story of the Golden Calf in this week's portion, one fulfills the Mitzvah of "Zachor" (to remember). Perhaps it is because here, we are telling a story which humiliates and embarrasses the Jewish people.

The author of the "Sefer Charedim" states that perhaps the Mitzva here for generations is that just as we must remember the sin of our forefathers, individually we should look introspectively at our own lives and repent if we are not worthy. The Magen Avraham on the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law) strengthens this point by stating that we should concentrate on the word b'ahavah" (with love) that appears before the reciting of the Shema in our daily prayers, to stress that we must strive to love G-d even in trying times. Perhaps this is why the portions that are in one's Tifillin are wrapped with the hair of a calf; to remind us of the sin of the "Golden Calf".

**The Accuser cannot become the Advocate
(Ein kategor Naaseh Sanegor)**

The definition of the term "Ein kategor Naaseh Sanegor" (The accuser cannot become the advocate) applies in cases of utensils or animals that became a source of guilt and sin against the Jews (causing them to stumble), which as a result cannot be used to fulfill a Mitzva. Thus a Shofar that is used on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) cannot be made from the horn of an ox since the ox was integral in the sin of the "golden calf". However according to the Talmud this only applies to articles that were used, or were similar to what was used in the Temple (as in a Shofar). Thus the mitzvah of the "Para Adumah" (Red Heifer) could be used as atonement for the sin of the "Golden Calf" since its service was completed outside the Temple.

If all this is valid, then why can't a Kohen who committed murder perform "Nesiat Kapayim" (the priestly blessings)? For if the reason is "Ein kategor Naaseh Sanegor" (the Kohen who killed cannot give a blessing), as it appears to be the reason given by Tosafot in Tractate Yevomot 6a, "Nesiat kapayim" is performed outside the Temple and should be permitted!

One might answer that outside the Temple we may use gold or an ox which reminds us of the sin, but in the case of the Kohen who committed murder, he was the actual perpetrator of this crime and therefore it would be improper for him to bless the Jewish people with the priestly benediction.

However, how ten was Aharon commanded as part of the seven days of the inauguration of the Kohanim, ("Shivat yemei Miluim") to take a calf ("Kach Lecha Egel" -Vayikra 9; 2) which according to Rashi indicates that G-d forgave the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf?

In that case however we are asking for forgiveness for the actual sin, and quite the contrary we would have a better chance at securing forgiveness because we use the animal that caused the sin, just as we accept gold that was donated to the Temple which atones for the actual gold that the Jewish people contributed for the construction of the Golden calf.

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*If you're American when you walk into the bathroom
and American when you leave the bathroom, what
are you when you're in the bathroom?
European!*



REBBETZIN HOLLY PAVLOV

From Sadness to Joy

"Just as when the month of Av begins, we curtail joy, so, when the month of Adar begins, we increase joy" (Ta'anit 29a). On the surface, it would seem that there is no inherent connection between

the two months of Av and Adar. Each reflects a different historical event: During the month of Av, the Temple was destroyed; during the month of Adar, the miracle of Purim occurred. And yet, the Rabbis of the Talmud see a clear conceptual link between them. How could such disparate events and commemorations be linked?

The ninth of Av is a time of deep mourning for the Jewish people. The roots of this mourning are found in the episode of the twelve spies sent by Moshe to check out the promised land. They came back with a report that discouraged the nation from entering the land of Israel, causing the nation to weep over their seeming inability to conquer the land of their fathers. Upon seeing the nation cry, Hashem declared, "Since you wept for no reason, I will give you cause to weep for generations to come." Thus, a process in Jewish history was set in motion which culminated with the exile after the destruction of both Temples on the ninth of Av.

Was Hashem so angry that He meted out a punishment as a form of vengeance? Surely not! Indeed, this punishment was meant to correct a flaw in the understanding of Clal Yisrael, the people of Israel. According to the Sefat Emet, the sin of the spies was the desire to remain in the world of the desert, a world of revealed miracles, of a spiritual life so powerful that they need not worry about material needs. They yearned to maintain this lifestyle, and did not want to enter Israel, a land where the natural and miraculous are so closely intertwined, that spirituality is only attained through a physical connection with the land.

This flaw in Israel's understanding eventually led to their exile from the land. Rav Chaim Ya'akov Goldvicht, of blessed memory, explains: To teach Clal Yisrael how to live in the land of Israel, Hashem exiled them to foreign lands where He is hidden within nature, where they would have to seek spirituality in places where it did not obviously exist. In exile, life was exactly the opposite of life in the desert. Only when they discovered how to use the physical world to reach out to Hashem, would they return to their own land and use their knowledge to serve Him.

So they were sent into exile, to a place of hester panim, where Hashem's face is hidden from view, where His presence is not readily felt. Megilat Esther tells us how the Jews fared in exile. In Shushan, a city of overabundant material wealth, the Jews reconfirmed their deep connection with Hashem. When confronted with the lack of clarity that exile brings, Esther asked, "What this was and why this was?" (Esther 4:5) She wants to understand how a Jew confirms his connection with our Father in Heaven when He cannot be seen. Mordeci's response, "Who knows if for this reason you have attended royalty," (Esther 4:6), is meant to indicate to Esther that while nothing in the physical world is clear, especially in exile, we believe that Hashem is the guiding force responding to our needs and

even anticipating them. During the month of Adar, in Shushan, the nation reaffirmed their commitment to Torah, to a spiritual life; they reasserted their acceptance of Torah and Mitzvot. They were no longer in the desert, a place of total spirituality, nor were they in Israel, a land where the material and the spiritual work in tandem. They were deep in exile, in darkness, banished from the throne of G-d, yet it is here that they find Him. Therefore, the process of rebuilding the Temple began. For only when the Jews learn to understand and use the physical world to achieve spirituality will they fully appreciate and understand the land of Israel and be ready to return.

When the month of Av begins, we decrease our joy for at this time we were forced out of Zion. The beginning of the month of Adar brings us great joy because this is when we begin the process of our return to Zion. Just as Av ushers in sadness as we mourn the destruction we brought upon ourselves, so Adar ushers in happiness as we rejoice the commencement of the rebuilding of the Temple and the return to the land of miracles. ©2002 Rebbetzin H. Pavlov, Director of She'arim

Why are pirates called pirates?
Because they arrr!



RABBI PINCHAS WINSTON

Meat Your Maker

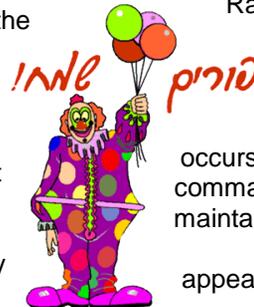
Doctors are a central part of everyday life. The first thing that most people do when they get sick, at least in the West, is go to a doctor. People believe in doctors so much these days that they assume visiting one will certainly result in a cure, and are surprised when it doesn't.

This is difficult to reconcile with the Mishnah's perspective on the medical profession: The best of doctors are destined for Gehinom. (Kiddushin 82a)

If it said the worst of doctors are headed for Gehinom we might not have a problem. The medical profession and the position in which it puts itself easily leads to abuse. Any profession on which the public greatly depends is one that often leads to corruption on some level.

Another reason is that, Western medicine can easily distract a person away from the true Source of illness and recovery, as the Talmud explains: A Jew named Zunin asked Rebi Akiva, "Both of us know that idols have no power. So how do we explain the fact that sometimes their worshippers come to them crippled from illness and walk away with their limbs healed?"

He replied with a parable: "There was once a very honest person in a town, whom people trusted to the point that they would leave their precious belongings in his safekeeping, even without witnesses. One man however refused to rely on the man's honesty



and would insist upon witnesses being on hand when he left something in his safekeeping. However on one occasion he left something with him but forgot to bring witnesses. The guardian's wife insulted by the man's lack of trust in her husband, suggested to him that they deny that they ever received the deposit, since this time the deposit had been made without witnesses. 'Because this fool acted improperly,' said her husband, 'we should abandon our faithfulness?' Likewise," concluded Rebi Akiva, "when pains are sent from Heaven to afflict a person they are sworn to a strict schedule exactly when they must come and when they must depart, at precisely which hour they must leave, as well as to which healer and medicine will be the agents of remedy. When the appointed time comes for them to leave and the sufferer visits the idol's temple these pains say, 'It is only right that we should not leave.' Then they say, 'Because this fool acted improperly we should abandon our faithfulness about which we took an oath?'" (Avodah Zarah 55a)

How many doctors keep this in mind when practicing medicine? How many help their patients keep it in mind as well? This is why some people make a special declaration about God being their Healer before taking their medicine. They want to be clear that God is the One Who heals.

What the Mishnah says about butchers however is less clear: The worthiest of butchers is a partner of Amalek. (Kiddushin 82a)

Again, if the Mishnah was talking about the least worthy of butchers, we might understand the harsh language. We have seen scandals in recent years in which treif chickens were sold as kosher. Even the Talmud discusses what to do about a butcher who is caught cheating, resulting in the consumption of treif food by trusting customers.

But the Mishnah is not talking about such people. It is talking the trustworthy butchers. Yet they are being called "partners with Amalek"? What is this supposed to mean?

Rashi on the Mishnah, provides direction when he explains as follows: Doubtful treif comes to their hands, and concerned about their money, they feed it to people. (Rashi)

Does this not sound again like the worst of butchers? No, says Rashi. The worst of the butchers will sell meat that they KNOW is treif. The best of the butchers would never do that, but concerned about financial loss, they might sell doubtful treif. Even still, how does this put them in partnership with Amalek?

To answer this, we need to recall where Parashas Zachor occurs in the Torah. It is in Parashas Ki Seitzei, right after the commandment to keep proper weights and measures, a law for maintaining fair and just business practices.

Nothing occurs in the Torah where it does randomly, even if it appears that way at first. Therefore, the commentators ask about the

connection between the two matters, that of conducting honest business and the attack of Amalek after leaving Egypt.

They answer is that cheating in business actually leads to confrontation with Amalek. Simply, when a person cheats in business he states, whether he realizes or not, that either God does not provide him with parnessah, or that if He does, He does not do so fairly. He doubts Hashgochah Pratis—Divine Providence, the kind of doubt that Amalek lives to promote. As mentioned numerous times before, the gematria of "Amalek" is "suffek," the Hebrew word for "doubt."

We learned about the connection between doubt in God and the onslaught of Amalek from their first attack, as Rashi explains:

The Torah places this section [about Amalek's attack] immediately after this verse [when they asked, "Is God among us or not?"] to imply [t[that God says]"I am always among you and ready at hand for everything you need, and yet you say, 'Is God among us or not?' By your lives, that dog shall come and bite you, and you will cry for Me and then you will know where I am!" (Rashi, Shemos 17:8:)

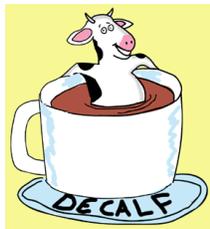
When a person doubts Divine Providence, that's when Amalek attacks. It can be an actual physical attack, as it was in the desert, later in the time of Haman, and according to many, during the Holocaust. Or it can be a conceptual attack, like today, as so many people turn to atheism in light of advanced scientific understanding.

Why though are butchers the symbol of something that potentially occurs in every profession? The answer may have to do with the actual meat they sell. Most other professions have the potential to damage a person physically, through the loss of money. Treif meat, as the Talmud says, actually reduces a person's level of spirituality, and his or her ability to sense the Presence of God and His Providence. This certainly makes a seller of such meat a partner with Amalek.

When a person doubts God's involvement in their financial livelihood, they are losing the battle against Amalek. When a person trusts in God for their parnessah, they win it. Thus, it was the half-shekel that spearheaded the defense against Haman. The giving of the half-shekel was also a symbolic

statement of our trust in God for financial survival.
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"I just bought a decaffeinated coffee table.
But it looks like the real thing."
- Steven Wright



MEISH GOLDISH

The World Famous Story of Purim

The story of Purim is an international tale.

King Achashverosh was Finnish with his disobedient wife Vashti. "You Congo now!" he ordered her. After she had Ghana way, the king's messengers went Roman the land to find a new queen. And India end, the beautiful Esther won the crown.

Meanwhile, Mordechai sat outside the palace, where the Chile Haman would Czech up on him daily. "I Haiti you because you refuse to bow to me!" Haman scolded Mordechai. "You're a very stubborn man. You Jews are such Bahamas! If you don't keep my words I will have all your people killed! Just Kuwait and see, you Turkey!"

Mordechai went into mourning and tore his clothes - a custom known as Korea. He urged Esther to plead with the king.

The Jews fasted for three days and grew very Hungary. Esther approached the king and asked, 'Kenya Belize come to a banquet I've prepared for you and Haman?'

At the feast, she invited her guests to a second banquet to eat Samoa. The king asked, "Esther, why Jamaica big meal like this? Just tell me what you want. Unto half my United Kingdom will I give you."

Esther replied, "Spain full for me to say this, but Haman is Russian to kill my people."

Haman's loud Wales could be heard as he carried Honduran this scene. Haman cried bitterly. "Iraq my brains in an effort to destroy the Jews. But that sneaky Mordechai - Egypt me! "

Haman and his ten sons were hanged and went immediately to the Netherlands. And to Sweden the deal, the Jews were allowed to kill their foes as well.

"You lost your enemies and Uganda friend," the king smiled.

And that is why the Purim story Israeli a miracle. G-d decided to China light on His chosen people.

So now, let's celebrate! Forget all your Syria's business and just Serb up some wine and Taiwan on! Happy Purim!!!

Have an unbelieva-BULL Purim!

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Most poems rhyme
But this one doesn't!

**Poor-Rhyme
Samayach! ☺**