

# A FACE LIT UP

by Shlomo Katz

## Parshas Vayakhel

### A Face Lit Up

**Volume 22, No. 22**  
**24 Adar I 5768**  
**March 1, 2008**

Sponsored by  
the Katz family  
in memory of aunt, Chana bat Yaakov Shalom a"h

Today's Learning:  
Avot 1:11-12  
O.C. 92:9-93:1  
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Nedarim 71  
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Yevamot 9

Last week's parashah ends: *"When Bnei Yisrael saw Moshe's face, that the "ohr" / skin of Moshe's face had become radiant, Moshe put the mask back on his face until he came to speak with Him."* This week's parashah then opens with the laws of Shabbat. R' Shlomo Halberstam z"l (1907-2000; the Bobover Rav) explains the connection between these two sections as follows:

Following Adam's sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the Torah states (Bereishit 3:21): *"Hashem G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of "ohr" (with the letter "ayin") / skin."* Our Sages say that in the Sefer Torah of the sage Rabbi Meir, this verse said -- instead of "garments of `ohr" / skin" -- "garments of `ohr" (with the letter "aleph") / light." Commentaries explain that this midrash refers to Rabbi Meir's ability to look beneath the coarse "garments" that hide the spirituality inherent in the world and to extract the "light." Thus, for example, the Gemara (Chagigah 15a) relates that Rabbi Meir continued to study Torah from the sage Elisha ben Avuyah after the latter became a heretic. The Gemara says of Rabbi Meir's relationship with his teacher: "He (Rabbi Meir) found a pomegranate - he ate the fruit and discarded the rind."

When Bnei Yisrael committed the sin of the Golden Calf, they fell from their lofty spiritual level, exactly as Adam had through his sin. All of the "light" that Bnei Yisrael forfeited thereby was given to Moshe, and it was that light that created the radiance seen on the  $9\frac{2}{3}$  / skin of Moshe's face. However, we say in the Shabbat morning prayers: "Moshe rejoices in the gift of his portion, that You have called him a faithful servant." The gift in which Moshe rejoices is that radiance, but like a faithful servant, Moshe shares that radiance with his people. When? On Shabbat. This is alluded to in the opening verse of our parashah: *"Moshe assembled the entire 'edah' / assembly of Bnei Yisrael."* The word "edah" reminds us of the "ed" / "jewelry" of which Bnei Yisrael were stripped after the sin of the Golden Calf (see Shmot 33:6). For Shabbat, Moshe gave that "jewelry" ("light") back to the people. (Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot)

---

*"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and said to them: 'These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them: On six days work shall be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death. You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day'."* (Shmot 35:1-2)

R' Yosef Eliyahu Henkin z"l (1891-1973) asks: Considering what follows, should not the Torah have said, *"These are the things that Hashem commanded not to do them"*? Also, why does the Torah use a phrase - *"On six days work shall be done"* - which implies that one is obligated to work?

He explains: Shabbat represents two competing concepts that man is charged with balancing: bitachon / the recognition that everything that happens is in G-d's control, and hishtadlut / man's obligation to help himself. In the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Yitro (20:11) we read that Shabbat commemorates Creation. This alludes to man's obligation of hishtadlut, for we read at the end of the Creation section (Bereishit 2:3), *"G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He abstained from all His work, which G-d had created to do."* This verse teaches that the first Shabbat was the end of G-d's regular overt involvement with the world. From that point on, man would appear to be in charge. And, this verse conveys G-d's blessing that man will succeed when he uses G-d's creation "to do" for himself.

However, man can be led astray if he thinks that he alone is in control. Man must temper his hishtadlut with bitachon. Therefore, the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Va'etchanan (5:15) remind us that Shabbat also commemorates the Exodus. We were helpless slaves in Egypt, and only because G-d redeemed us did we become free. (This, explains R' Henkin, is why Shabbat is not one of the universal Noachide laws. Creation was an event that affected all of mankind, not only the Jews. However, without the Exodus, the message of Shabbat would be incomplete and even misleading.)

In this light, we can understand our verses. The Torah uses a phrase - *"On six days work shall be done"* - that implies that one is obligated to work because man is obligated to engage in some form of hishtadlut. *"These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them,"* for if man relied on miracles

alone, he would not even perform mitzvot. Instead, he would believe mistakenly that G-d's Will will be done whether he (man) lifts a finger or not.

Chazal teach that just as Shabbat is a sign of our covenant with Hashem, so are tefilin. [This is why we do not wear tefilin on Shabbat.] R' Henkin observes: The tefilin on the arm alludes to hishtadlut, for the arm is the instrument of action. The tefilin on the head alludes to bitachon, for the head is the seat of the mind, where trust in G-d develops. (Perushei Ivra, Part II, Ma'amar No. 1)

---

*"You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day." (Shmot 35:3)*

We learn in the mishnah (Shabbat 44a), "One may move a new [oil] lamp on Shabbat but not an old one [because it is sullied and therefore disgusts a person]. The sage Rabbi Shimon says, 'All lamps may be moved except one that was alight during Shabbat'."

R' Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov z"l (1698-1760; founder of the chassidic movement) observes: The halachic dispute in the mishnah may be interpreted allegorically in light of the verse (Mishlei 20:27), "A man's soul is the lamp of Hashem." We are taught that all souls are permitted to leave Gehinnom on Shabbat except those souls that are the most sullied with sin. Paraphrasing the mishnah: those lamps (souls) that are like new may be moved (from Gehinnom) while those lamps (souls) that have become habituated ("nityashnu" - the same root as "old") with sin, may not be moved.

However, the Zohar, which was authored by the same Rabbi Shimon who is quoted in the mishnah, teaches that all souls may leave Gehinnom on Shabbat except those who transgressed Shabbat. Again, paraphrasing the mishnah: All lamps (souls) may be moved (from Gehinnom) except those that were alight on Shabbat, i.e., which transgressed the laws of Shabbat. (Ba'al Shem Tov Al Ha'Torah)

---

*"He made all the utensils of the Altar -- the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire-pans -- he made all its utensils of copper." (Shmot 38:3)*

R' Shalom Schwadron z"l (1912-1997; the "Maggid of Yerushalayim") asks: Our Sages teach that it was inappropriate to act in a stingy manner in the Temple ("Ain aniyut b'makom ashirut"). Why, then, were these utensils made of copper and not of silver or gold?

In a similar vein, we learn in the Mishnah (Tamid 5:5) that the daily removal of the ashes from the altar was done with a silver utensil, not gold. The Gemara explains that a gold utensil might be ruined, and G-d has pity on the property of the Jewish People. Therefore He commanded that silver be used.

But why, asks R' Schwadron, didn't Hashem command that a gold utensil be used and simply cause a miracle to occur such that the gold would not be ruined? He answers that Hashem specifically designed this halachah to teach us the lesson that the Gemara imparts, i.e., that He has pity on the

property of the Jewish People.

Perhaps, concludes R' Schwadron, the use of copper utensils on the busy altar, where utensils undoubtedly wore out quickly, is a manifestation of this same pity that G-d demonstrates for the property of the Jewish People. (Lev Shalom)

---

### About "Today's Learning"

Periodically, we remind readers about the various Torah study programs which are "advertised" in the "Today's Learning" in the header of each issue of Hamaayan.

The first listing in "Today's Learning" is the Mishnah Yomit, a program of daily mishnah study. Every day, participants study two mishnayot. A complete cycle through the Six Orders of the Mishnah lasts about six years. The program was founded in 1947 by R' Yonah Shtenzel z"l as a commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust. Today's listing, "Avot 1:11-12," means: Tractate Avot (Ethics of our Fathers), chapter 1, mishnah 11 and mishnah 12.

The second listing is the Halachah Yomit, a program for the daily study of those halachot which a Jew is most likely to need in his lifetime. The Halachah Yomit cycle consists of two parts. By way of background, the 16th century work Shulchan Aruch, the universally accepted code of Jewish law, consists of four divisions. These are: Orach Chaim (including laws of prayer, Shabbat and Yom Tov), Yoreh Deah (including laws of kashrut, niddah, mikvah, Torah study, honoring parents, charity, vows, and mourning), Choshen Mishpat (civil laws), and Even Ha'ezer (marriage and divorce). The well-known work Mishnah Berurah is a commentary on the Orach Chaim section.

The first part of the Halachah Yomit cycle involves the daily study of three paragraphs of Orach Chaim. However, because there are many laws that every Jew must know that are not found in Orach Chaim, time is devoted to studying those subjects from the 19th century work Kitzur Shulchan Aruch / the "Abridged Code of Law." This study progresses at the rate of five paragraphs a day, although not always consecutive paragraphs. The selection of which paragraphs of Kitzur to study was made by R' Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz z"l (the Chazon Ish; died 1953).

The listing, "O.C. 92:9-93:1," means Orach Chaim, chapter 92, paragraphs 9- 10 and chapter 93, paragraph 1. (These particular paragraphs deal with decorum during prayer.) A complete cycle lasts slightly more than three years.

The third listing in "Today's Learning" is the Daf Yomi, the daily study of a page of the Bavli / Babylonian Talmud. This program was initiated in 1923, and a cycle lasts 2711 days - approximately 7 1/2 years. The current cycle began in March 2005.

Talmud Yerushalmi Daf Yomi, the fourth listing in "Today's Learning," is the daily study of a page of the Jerusalem Talmud (as opposed to the more widely-studied Talmud Bavli). There is a page for

every day except Tishah B'Av and Yom Kippur. This program was founded by R' Simcha Bunim Alter z"l (Gerrer Rebbe; died 1992).

---

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

*Hamaayan needs your support! Please consider sponsoring Hamaayan in honor of a happy occasion or in memory of a loved one. Did you know that the low cost of sponsorship - only \$18 - has not changed in seventeen years? Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.*