

# Family TORAH JOURNAL

ST. LOUIS  
**KOLLEL**

## PARSHA PERCEPTIONS

RABBI YEHUDA BARUCH KAMENETZKY



The Torah does not usually leave room for official questions of faith. It tells us, in no uncertain terms, what our responsibilities are and the commitment we must make to be observant Jews. Every mitzvah entails sacrifice. Sometimes it requires a monetary commitment, sometimes a commitment of time and morals. Not often does it consider the human trials one encounters in mitzvah performance. They are our problem and we must deal with them as human beings and as Jews. Yet this week the Torah uncharacteristically provides leeway for those who may waver in their commitment. In Parshas Behar the Torah charges the Jewish people with the laws of shmittah. Every seventh year, we are told that the land of Israel is to lie fallow. No work is to be done with the earth. There is not to be a harvest, nor may the ground be sown or reaped.

Observing shmittah is a true test of faith. Imagine! One must not harvest his grain but instead rely on pure faith for his daily fare. Yet the Torah does not leave us with the austere command. The Torah deals directly with the human emotion related to the issue. In Leviticus 25:20 the Torah foretells a human side. "And if you will say in your heart, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, behold the land has not been sown nor has it been reaped?'" Hashem reassures the people that His bounty will abound in the sixth year and they will live the seventh year in comfort.

This is not the only time the Torah realizes human wariness. In reference to the command of conquering the land of Canaan, the Torah states in Deuteronomy 7:17: "Perhaps you shall say in your heart, 'These nations are more numerous than me. How will I drive them out?'" Once again Hashem reassures His nation that He will not forsake them.

The question is glaring. Why does the Torah answer to human psyche? Why doesn't the Torah just command us to let the land lie fallow, or conquer the land of Canaan? If there are problems or fears in our hearts, they are our problems. It seems as if our natural worries are incorporated as part of the command. *Isadore would meet his friend Irving every other week while doing business. "How are you Irving?" Isadore would always ask. "How's the wife and kids?" Irving would always grunt back the perfunctory replies. "Fine." "A little under the weather." "My son Jack got a job."* (continued on next page)

## MOMENTS OF GREATNESS

RABBI SHLOMO EISENBERG



Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986), one of the greatest Torah leaders in recent history, was once getting into the passenger seat of a car in front of his New York City Yeshiva. It was quite common for a large entourage of students to escort the Rosh Yeshiva outside until he reached the car. Finally, R' Moshe was seated and the driver drove away. They only drove a few blocks before R' Moshe asked the driver to pull over to the side of the road. The driver watched as R' Moshe calmly opened the car door, freeing R' Moshe's fingers which had been slammed upon. The driver was shocked and horrified, and barely believed what he was seeing. How didn't R' Moshe scream out in pain? Why didn't he open the door immediately instead of waiting a few minutes while suffering with terrible throbbing pain? R' Moshe Feinstein explained that he didn't want to embarrass the student that closed the door on his fingers. The student would have been mortified to know that he caused the great Rabbi such terrible suffering. R' Moshe explained that it was worth remaining silent while holding back on his natural instinctive pain, so as not to embarrass a fellow Jew in front of so many students. This story shows the incredible righteousness and compassion of Rabbi Feinstein. We should merit to emulate his ways and not embarrass others even at the expense of our own feelings.



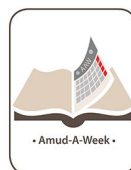
### UPCOMING WEEK'S SCHEDULE: YEAR 3, WEEK 6—BRACHOS 50B

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Rabbi Yaakov Silverman

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SHABBOS ENDS: 8:49PM (RABBEINU TAM: 9:16 PM)

## ALEF TO TAV: INSIGHTS INTO THE ALEF-BEIS



Letter: Beis

Numerical value: 2

Spelling: Beis, yud, saf

RABBI YAAKOV BERKOWITZ



*Beis*, with the numerical value of 2, was chosen to be the first letter in the Torah (*Bereishis*). The *Midrash* explains that this is to symbolize the duality of our world where everything, other than Hashem, is in pairs: The Torah - Written & Oral (and two tablets); *mitzvos* - positive & negative; the world - heaven & earth; luminaries - sun & moon; man - male & female; “hearts” - *yetzer tov* (good inclination) & *yetzer hara* (evil inclination). The *Vilna Gaon* (R’ Eliyahu of Vilna 1720-1797) says that *beis* also signifies *bitachon*, trust in Hashem. Indeed if you scramble all the letters from *alef* until *hei*, but leave out the *beis* you get *da’agah* (דאגה), worry; telling us that one who has *beis*, (*bitachon*) has no *da’agah* (worry).

## PARSHA PERCEPTIONS (CONT.)

*This one sided interrogation went on for years until one day Isadore exploded. “Irv,” he said abruptly. “I don’t understand. For six years I ask you about your wife, your kids, and your business. Not once mind you, not once, did you ever ask me about my wife, my kids, or my business! Irv shrugged. “Sorry, Izzie. I was really selfish. So tell me,” he continued, “how is your wife? How are your kids? How is your business?” Izzie let out a sigh of anguish and began to krechts. He put his hand gently on Irv’s shoulder, tightened his lips, and shook his head slowly. “Don’t even ask!”*

Reb Leible Eiger explains that there are many questions of faith that we may have. The faithful may in fact fear the fact that there is fear. “Is it a flaw in faith to worry?” “Am I committing heresy by fearing the enemy?” “Am I allowed to ask?” The Torah tells us in two places, “You will have these questions. You will ask, ‘How am I going to sustain myself and family?’ “You will worry,” ‘How will I conquer my enemies?’ ‘Will I be destroyed?’” The Torah reassures us that there is no lack of trust by asking those questions. We mustn’t get down on ourselves and consider questions a breach of faith. Life and sustenance are mortal attributes. They warrant fear.

Adam, the first man was originally blessed with eternal life without having to worry for his livelihood. After sinning, he was cursed with death and was told that he would eat by the sweat of his brow. The Torah assures us that it is not only human but also acceptable to worry about these two issues — one’s livelihood and survival, as long as we believe in the reassurances about those worries.

*Rabbi Kamenetzky was a member of the St. Louis Kollel from 2008 through 2011. He and his family currently reside in New York where he is the Director of Student Activities for Yeshiva of South Shore.*

## KOLLEL KASHA KORNER

RABBI YAAKOV SILVERMAN

**Which tefilla is never recited in shul?**

*Last weeks question: Which Parsha in the Torah is also one of the 24 books of Tanach? (Shoftim)*

Send in your answer to [ysilverman@stlkollel.com](mailto:ysilverman@stlkollel.com)

I DIDN'T  
KNOW THAT!

RABBI YITZCHAK KOWALSKY



**Q.** If someone has a job interview, is he allowed to shave during *sefira*?

**A.** Although one is typically not allowed to take a haircut or shave during *sefira*, in a situation of a potential monetary loss one is allowed (IG”M OC 4:102 *Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l* (KH 10:4:ft 5)). The definition of what constitutes a financial loss to permit shaving is not well defined in the *poskim*. *Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurebach zt”l* (HS 14:7) was of the opinion that only in a case of great financial loss. *Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlit”a* (KH 10:4: ft 10) says that each situation would require Rabbinic guidance to qualify for this dispensation.

**Q.** I bought some new suits before *Pesach* but I didn’t get a chance to have them checked for *Shaatznez* before the beginning of *sefira*. Can I use them now or do I have to wait until *Shavuot*?

**A.** There is a common misnomer that the laws of *Sefira* mimic the *halachos* of “The Three Weeks”. Although the *Mishneh Brurah* (493:2) writes that it is not appropriate to be involved in excessive matters which increase *simcha* during the period of *Sefira*, he nonetheless concludes that reciting a *brachah* of *shechayanu* is permitted. In the *sefer Kovetz Halachos* (8:5:ft 8) he expounds on this idea and explains that purchasing clothing, utensils, and even a house are all permissible during the *Sefira* period.

*Please consult your Rav for a final ruling.*



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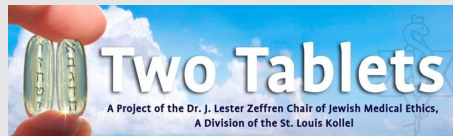
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