

**LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5779,
PARSHAS KI SEITZEI**

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

Our Sedra is replete with many mitzvos, some of which can be performed often, some of which are quite rare. Others seem to be lost in the distant past, when most of our nation was farmers or ranchers. Yet, since the Torah is eternal, one sometimes wonders why the Torah spends so much time and space on matters which do not seem relevant in our times. One approach to this problem is that many of the mitzvos can be understood on the homiletic or metaphoric level and so are not limited to an agrarian society. However, there is a simpler explanation which can actually teach us an important life's lesson. The Sefer *Umasok Haohr* quotes the *Mordechai (Eruvin 528)* that the *Rashbam*, Rashi's grandson and one of the greatest Rishonim, was so absorbed in his Torah thoughts that he rarely noticed the world around him. One day he almost boarded a wagon which was being pulled by a horse and mule together, a prohibition mentioned in our Parshah (22:10). Miraculously, his brother, the equally famous *Rabbeinu Tam*, happened along and alerted him to the potential transgression. He gently chastised his brother with the words "*al tehi tzadik harbeh. Sa marom einecha vehinei sus upered likrasecha* -- don't be overly religious. Open your eyes and notice the mule and horse before us."

A similar incident happened to the Chasam Sofer when traveling with his rebbe, Rav Nosson Adler. The aged rebbe insisted on traveling through a snowstorm to perform an important mitzvah but the wagon got stuck in the deep snow and mud. The driver could not dislodge his sinking wagon so he rode his horse to town to bring more horses to do the job. Through the window the Chasam Sofer noticed the returning *baal agalah* but to his amazement, he also spotted his venerable rebbe dancing in the snow. Hurrying to discover what had possessed Rav Adler, he learned a beautiful lesson which he taught us for the ages. Rav Adler had noticed that the wagon driver was hitching up a pair of oxen to the beleaguered wagon. He explained to his *talmid muvhak* "we are not farmers so we have an extremely rare opportunity to perform the mitzvah of avoiding *klaei beheimah* -- mixing two breeds of animals -- so I was overcome with joy."

In his later years, the Chasam Sofer had the opportunity to loan money to a businessman who was experiencing financial troubles. When the man was able to repay the loan, he added the gift of a rare very expensive *becher* for the Rov. The Chasam Sofer uncharacteristically spent a long time examining and marveling at the beauty of the goblet, to the shock of his students who couldn't believe that their rebbe had forgotten the prohibition of *ribbis*-taking interest. A moment later when the Chasam Sofer returned the shining cup to the newly successful businessman, he explained his behavior. "I learned from my rebbe," he related, "that one should rejoice when he has the opportunity to do a mitzvah or avoid a sin which rarely comes his way. I do not usually have the ability to lend money, let alone am offered interest, but when this happened, I should savor the moment."

In my own small way, as the Rov of a camp in the Pennsylvania Amish country, I watched as our Amish neighbors brought a wagon being pulled by a horse and donkey to take the campers on a hay ride. After showing our Amish friend that the Bible actually prohibits this arrangement, he vowed never to let it happen again and I became the Posek for the Pennsylvania Dutch. Along with Rav Nosson Adler and the Chasam Sofer, I was overjoyed to perform a once-in-a-lifetime mitzvah.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

PARSHAS KI SEITZEI

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This week we will continue with questions and answers about Elul and Tishrei

Question: I have heard that it is forbidden to have borscht on Rosh Hashanah. Is this true?

Answer: Yes. The Mishnah Berurah (583:5) cites this minhag. Indeed the Mateh Ephraim (ibid, 3) forbids all bitter, sour and sharp foods (see Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Toras Hamoadim 4).

Question: I have seen some people who live far from a body of water recite Tashlich over a pit or large vessel filled with fish. Is this permissible?

Answer: Rav Elyashiv zt"l (Tel Talpiyos 62:12) holds that Tashlich may only be said at a body of water attached to the ground but Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita (Seder Tashlich page 43) holds that a vessel filled with live fish is sufficient.

Question: If one is makpid not to sleep on Rosh Hashanah day, may he fall asleep in a chair?

Answer: Rav Chaim Kanievsky allows it since the language of the Yerushalmi quoted by the Mishnah Berurah (583:9) implies that only lying down is forbidden.

Question: I know that we do not recite Hallel on Rosh Hashanah because we are too anxious over being judged to sing a joyous song, so why do we say Az Yashir and the Shir shel Yom?

Answer: The Brisker Rov quotes his father Rav Chaim Soloveitchik that all the other songs do not require absolute joy, but Hallel requires that we be perfectly happy, which is not possible on Rosh and Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He adds that Az Yashir is merely the repetition of a story rather than an actual song (Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Mikraei Kodesh 10).

Question: I usually stand for Chazoras Hashatz. Must I stand for all the piyutim – poems and songs – recited during the repetition of the Shemoneh esray?

Answer: No. Rav Elyashiv (*Ishei Yisrael* 24:68) holds that the takanah to stand for Chazoras Hashatz never included these poems and one may sit).

Question: Are we *meikel* (lenient) at all on the second day Tekiyos (blowing of the shofar)?

Answer: Yes. If someone is uncertain if he was yotzei the tekiyos on the second day, he need not hear them again since the second day is a d'rabbanan and in a rabbinic question we are lenient (Mishnah Berurah 585:5). Nevertheless, if it is not difficult to do so, the Mishnah Berurah has ruled elsewhere (160:51) that one should be strict even in a d'rabbanan (see Dirshu to above Halacha, number 18).

Question: How important is to actually blow from a ram's horn? Many people seem to blow the long shofros which don't come from a ram.

Answer: Most Poskim hold that one can be yotzi with the shofar of another kosher animal. However, there is a tremendous preference to blow only a ram's horn since it evokes the Akeidah where a ram was eventually substituted for Yitzchok Avinu. In fact, there is significant discussion in Poskim regarding the shofar of a female ram, since the ram at the Akeidah was a male and how old the ram has to be since at the Akeidah, the ram was at least 13 months old which makes it eligible for a korban. Therefore one should definitely use a ram's horn (Mishnah Berurah 586:4-8; See also Rambam beginning of Hilchos Shofar, Taz and Torah Lishmah 244).

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