

# O H R N E T

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### SELFIE-SHTICK

*"...you shall afflict yourselves..." (16-29)*

On a recent visit to the Western Wall - Judaism's most sacred site - I noticed two people brandishing a small stick in front of them. Attached to the end of the stick was some small rectangular box. At the distance I was from them I couldn't quite make out what they were doing, but one of them was waving the stick around like some form of divining wand.

Now, apart from the many holy people who visit the Western Wall, it also attracts the weird and wonderful of this world, and I was concerned that maybe they were involved in some pagan ritual or other. So, full of righteous indignation I rushed over to them to find that one of them was pronouncing the magic incantation, "Say Cheese!"

A small iPhone was attached to the end of the stick, and the only divining that was going on was to record the fact that this couple had visited the most Divine place in the world.

With the advent of Bluetooth and built-in cameras that can photograph what's behind as well as what's in front of

the camera, the ubiquitous volunteer passing stranger has become redundant. Now all you need is a 'selfie-stick'.

The "Me Generation" has found its cultural talisman — the "selfie".

Now the world and its holiest places have become a mere stage set in front of which I can act out the movie of my life.

The selfie is just another symptom of the narcissism and the self-absorption of our age.

*"...you shall afflict yourselves..."*

In the laws of Yom Kippur — the holiest day in the Jewish calendar — the Rambam (Maimonides) mentions neither fasting nor affliction; rather one 'rests' from the physical activities of eating, drinking and other physical pleasures.

On Yom Kippur we transcend our physicality, our egos and the attachment to the "Me" world. We become like the angels, who understand with an overwhelming clarity who the real "Me" of the world is.

• Sources: Rambam in Hilchot Shevitat Asar 1:4,5

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Rav Bulman *zt"l*  
on the  
Torah Portion of the Week

## KETUVOT 86 - 92

“So that the door will not be locked in front of needy borrowers.”

This oft-quoted metaphor is the explanation Rashi offers to explain our *gemara*. The Sage Ameimar in the name of Rav Chama teaches what to do in a case where a man borrows money and gets married with a ketuva on the same day, and dies before paying the loan or the ketuva. The ruling is that if the deceased left behind enough wealth and property to pay both parties, then they both receive payment. However, if there is enough to pay only one party, then the lender has priority, even if this means that the lender is paid and the wife is not. This ruling is based on the importance of lenders being willing to offer loans, which requires a feeling of psychological security that the loan will be paid in full. Otherwise, potential lenders will hesitate or refrain from lending to people with financial need to borrow money. This consideration is of utmost concern to society as a whole.

• *Ketuvot 86a*

“It’s a mitzvah for the heirs to pay the debt of their father.”

This statement by the Sage Abaye is found on our *daf* as a ruling in a case where a person borrowed money and then died, leaving the lender to claim payment from the heirs.

What is the mitzvah? Paying the father’s debt is a manner of honoring the parent. Although Beit Din will rule that the heirs should fulfill the mitzvah and are obligated to pay, the Beit Din will not force them to do so if they have no land with a lien on it. Rashi explains that this mitzvah of honoring their father by paying his debt is not explicit in the Torah; rather it is a Rabbinical mitzvah. Therefore no special enforcement measures are taken, unlike compelling fulfillment of explicit Torah *mitzvot* such as lulav and succah. Tosefot, earlier on 86a, explains differently. Paying their father’s debt is in fact a Torah mitzvah according to Tosefot, but, since the reward for the mitzvah of honoring parents is written in the Torah the Beit Din does not enforce the fulfillment of this mitzvah. The Torah states that the reward for honoring parents is “your days will be lengthened on the Land that the L-rd, your G-d is giving you.” (Ex. 20:12)

• *Ketuvot 91b*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

## ACHAREI MOT

**G**-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is “for G-d” and is offered in the Temple, while the other is “for Azazel” in the desert. The Torah states the individual’s obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations. Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman’s monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

## KEDOSHIM

**T**he nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught. *Prohibitions*: Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone’s property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one’s parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing. *Positive*: Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree’s fourth year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrut*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

### ACHAREI MOT

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshat Acharei Mot* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beit Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *Kohen Gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *azazel*. What is *azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *karet*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

### KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshat Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?

2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shemot* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

### ACHAREI MOT

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die.
8. 17:13 - Non-domestic kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as G-d's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

### KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Karet*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

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# Abarbanel

## ON THE PARSHA

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

### Acharei Mot

#### Prohibition against Eating Blood

The prohibition against eating an animal's blood is explained by Abarbanel in the context of the subtle differences in the relevant verses in the Torah:

Parshat Noach 9:4: "But flesh, with its *nefesh* (soul or life essence) — its blood — you shall not eat."

Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "For the *nefesh* of the flesh is in the blood..."

Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "...for it is the blood in the *nefesh* that will atone."

Acharei Mot 17:14: "You shall not consume the blood of any creature, for the *nefesh* of any creature is its blood."

Parshat Re'eh 12:23: "For the blood, it is the *nefesh*, and you shall not eat the *nefesh* with the meat."

Abarbanel begins by explaining that this prohibition is based on the principle that we are enjoined to strive to maintain the spiritual purity of the *nefesh*, or life essence, of every individual. For this reason the Torah in this Parsha states (Acharei Mot 17:12) "Any *nefesh* among you may not consume blood". Normally the Torah would have stated, "Any person among you..." Clearly the Torah is telling us that blood has a direct negative effect on our very spiritual essence.

Beginning from the juxtaposition of the relationship between blood and *nefesh* in the above verses, the Torah is telling us that an animal's blood, although it is obviously technically a physical entity, is synonymous on a very real level with the non-physical life essence of the animal itself, unlike the other parts of the animal's body. Abarbanel explains that when someone ingests the other parts of an animal, those parts are broken down and completely transformed by the digestive process. Blood, on the other hand, is essentially already "digested" and retains its original nature when eaten. Thus, some aspect of animal nature is incorporated into the consumer of the blood. Even though the animals that are permitted for our consumption are not violent, cunning, or predatory, their spiritual essence is far below that of man, who is the unique pinnacle of G-d's creation. From the verses above we see that the blood is *in* the *nefesh*, the *nefesh* is *in* the blood and finally, the blood *is* the *nefesh*.

The significance of animal blood also explains its importance in the procedures of the sacrificial offerings. An offering expresses man's desire to give himself over completely

to G-d. The animal takes the place of the individual, since human sacrifice is obviously prohibited. Since we want to dedicate our very essence to the service of G-d, the blood of the animal, which is its very essence, becomes an essential component of the service.

Based on this analysis, Abarbanel offers a final unique perspective on the rationale for the prohibition. He compares eating an animal's blood to eating the limb of a live animal, a prohibition which applies not only to Jews, but to all of Mankind as well, as one of the seven Noachide Laws. Since blood retains the life force and essence of the animal at all times, it is no different than actually eating any other portion of the live animal itself.

### Kedoshim

Both Ramban and Ibn Ezra mention the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 24:5) in which Rabbi Levi states that this Parsha was addressed to the entire assembly since it is essentially a summary of the Ten Commandments. If this is so, Abarbanel is puzzled by the order and subject matter of the first several *mitzvot* mentioned in the Parsha. Two of the *mitzvot* are not part of the Ten Commandments at all while others are mentioned in a completely different order. Finally, each of these commandments is followed either by the expression "I am Hashem your G-d" or "I am Hashem", expressions not found in the original listing of the Ten Commandments in Shemot.

Abarbanel explains that the goal of the Torah here is to impress upon us that even when we find that the *mitzvot* are completely consistent with our logical understanding, we are to obey them only because they are commanded by G-d. Additionally, we are commanded to be holy, because G-d is holy. Just as G-d is completely divorced from the physical world, we, even though we are physical beings, must divorce ourselves from the purely self-serving satisfaction of our desires and attach ourselves to physicality only in the context of doing the will of G-d. This differs from the ascetic thinkers who withdraw from the physical world completely and mortify the body in order to show the preeminence of the intellect.

Unlike the first listing of the Ten Commandments, the first two *mitzvot* mentioned are honoring parents and observing the Shabbat. Both are completely accessible to the human intellect. All societies emphasize the requirement to honor

*continued on page eight*

## RETURN OF THE PRIESTLY BREAST PLATE

**From: Alan**

Dear Rabbi,

I am very intrigued by the breast plate of the High Priest and was wondering whether it could be fashioned nowadays or whether it was only something of the past, or otherwise relevant only if there is a Temple or priestly service?

Dear Alan,

I agree, the High Priest's breast plate was not merely ornamentally exquisite, it was fantastically oracular.

It was comprised of 12 different types of precious gem stones arranged in four rows, where each stone corresponded to a particular tribe whose name was engraved on it, together with the names of the patriarchs and the term "Tribes of G-d" – together including all of the letters of the Hebrew *alef-bet*.

When the High Priest would direct queries of great import to G-d, the letters on these stones would illuminate in succession in order to convey to the High Priest prophetic messages from G-d, which he deciphered and then communicated to the people.

This breast plate is not just a relic of the past, nor is its fashioning dependent on the existence of the Temple or the priestly service. Rather, theoretically, if the necessary materials could be acquired and it could be constructed according to specification, which our sources amply describe, it could be fashioned even in the absence of the Temple and its service.

Interestingly, the main impediment to making the breast-plate would seem to be the lack of a special worm called the "*shamir*".

Based on a precise reading of the verses (Ex. 28:11; 39:13) in the Torah describing the preparation of these precious stones for the breast plate, the Talmud (Sota 48b) states that the wording on them be not merely written but rather engraved, and not with an implement that would cause wasteful shavings but rather in a way that would preserve the integrity of the stones.

This was accomplished through this unique worm, which the Talmud says was created specifically for this purpose, as it was able to cut through stone in a non-chisel like fashion. The relevant letters were thus stenciled onto the stones, and the *shamir* would follow the lines and thereby carve the words into the gems of the breast plate.

The problem is that the same teaching tells us that since the Temple was destroyed, the *shamir* was lost. The result of this is that if the *shamir* is the only way to cut and engrave the stones, its absence would preclude the fashioning of the breast plate.

However, if this is so, it raises the following question: Since the *shamir* was lost after the destruction of the First Temple, how did they prepare the stones of the breast plate in the Second Temple where there certainly was a High Priest with all the priestly garments, including the breast plate?

One might suggest that the breast plate from the First Temple remained until the Second, as in fact we find that the Talmud (Megilla 12a) says that King Achashverosh wore it during his great banquet, in which he also used and displayed other plundered vessels from the First Temple. But even though it apparently survived the Babylon destruction and exile and was later sequestered by the Persians, it is very unlikely that it made its way back to Israel under the auspices

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## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## TOMB OF SHIMON HATZADIK

The world-renowned Yeshivat Ohr Somayach is the dominating structure on Shimon Hatzadik Street that takes its name from its proximity to the Tomb of Shimon Hatzadik a short distance away.

Simon Hatzadik was the last of the members of the *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah* (Men of the Great

Assembly) and succeeded Ezra as the *Kohen Gadol* of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Many Jews visit this tomb on the *Yahrzeit* of Shimon Hatzadik and also on Lag B'Omer when they find it difficult to travel to Meron to be at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.



## SHEMONEH ESREI — TWELFTH BLESSING: PART 2

**“And may all Your enemies be cut down speedily”**

In this blessing one should offer his prayer for the eradication of idol worship from the entire world. Although nowadays idol worship is no longer prevalent amongst the Jewish People after our Sages of more than two thousand years received permission from G-d to eliminate the evil inclination for idolatry, unfortunately it still continues around the world amongst the other nations. This most grave transgression is an affront to G-d’s honor. Therefore, anyone who truly cares about G-d should feel distressed in his heart over this matter. (Rabbi Yaakov Emden)

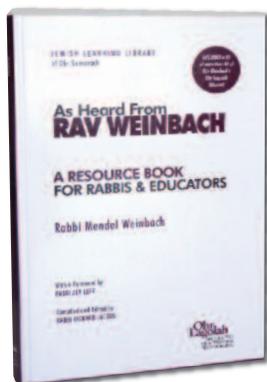
### **Then and Now**

In ancient times wicked men like Nimrod and Pharaoh rose to power, becoming world rulers. They accomplished this by manipulating the powers of idol worship, eventually proclaiming themselves as “gods”. Instead of leading their followers towards G-d, they rebelliously stood between G-d and the people, separating the world from its Maker. Avraham our Father was chosen to stand up to the wicked Nimrod and his false beliefs. After conquering him, Avraham began to spread the name of G-d in the then dark world. His descendents continued this holy mission when they chal-

lenged the mighty Egyptian empire. Through Moshe our leader G-d showed the world that only He rules in the heavens above and on the earth below. Today as well, we as G-d’s chosen people have been charged with a Divine mission. It is our role to act in a way that proclaims a G-d Who is great and beloved in the world. By example we light up the darkness and dispel the doubt in today’s world, proclaiming G-d’s presence, and that He watches over and protects His people.

### **One G-d, One People**

Not only must the Jewish Nation pray only to G-d, but in the coming era all nations will also pray to G-d. They will abandon their false beliefs, as we see in the verse, “All the nations will serve You as one; then they will proclaim among the nations that G-d reigns.” (I Chron. 16:31) In connection with the above we find in Pirkei d’Rebbi Eliezer, “There will be ten kings that will rule the world. The first was G-d, Who ruled in the heavens and on earth... and G-d will be the last King when His Divine Kingship will be fully restored here below.” In conclusion, Avraham began a process of restoring the world back to G-d that will ultimately conclude with the arrival of our righteous Mashiach.



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## MONTH OF IYAR AND SEFIRAT HA'OMER

**T**he Sefer Yetzira, a book attributed to Avraham Avinu, is the classic source that sheds light on the spiritual energies associated with the different months of the year. Describing the month of Iyar, the Sefer Yetzira says that it corresponds to the letter “vav” in the Hebrew alphabet. Even though there are layers of depth behind everything that is written in the Sefer Yetzira, we will nevertheless attempt to understand the Sefer Yetzira’s cryptic statement through the eyes of the commentaries. Since most of the days of Sefirat Ha’Omer fall out during the month of Iyar, it is incumbent upon us to first delve into the ideas behind the mitzvah of Sefirat Ha’Omer.

The Sefer Hachinuch says that the mitzvah of counting the Omer is essentially a counting down to the long-awaited day of receiving the Torah. Similar to a person who is counting down to the day when he will be reunited with his beloved, so too we count down to the glorious day of the giving of the Torah. While this idea is certainly true, it does not fully account for the method we use to count the Omer. According to the above it would be ideal to start the count with the number fifty and count down to Shavuot. However, the system through which we count starts with the number one and counts up to the day of Shavuot. What additional lesson does this method of counting teach us about the mitzvah of Sefirat Ha’Omer?<sup>1</sup>

### **Inspiration and Disappointment**

Rabbi Tzadok Hakohen explains that a person’s life consists of two primary stages: inspiration and disappointment. In the beginning of a spiritual journey, G-d gives us an extra boost of inspiration. From the excitement that fills the beginning of a relationship to the enthusiasm that one experiences upon starting a new project, everyone experiences moments of inspiration in life. However this stimulation is only given to us to show us what we are capable of achieving. Therefore, immediately following this stage, the flash of inspiration is taken away, leaving us with the difficult task of trying to get back to that level through our own hard work. Having been earned through self-effort, it is only then that the level that we attain becomes permanent.

It is brought down in the name of the Arizal that during the Exodus the Jewish People went through this cycle of

inspiration and letdown. Initially, despite the fact that the Jewish People had spiritually sunk to the 49th level of impurity, G-d nevertheless revealed Himself in ways He had never done before. G-d’s mastery over all parts of creation was made apparent through the ten plagues, while His providence was manifest in the destruction of Egypt, the epitome of evil. When it came to the glorious exodus from Egypt, the Jewish People were passively lifted up from their downtrodden spiritual state.

However, since the Jewish People did not earn the spiritual heights that they were given, it didn’t last. Consequently, immediately following the Exodus, the Jewish People were bombarded with a series of tests. From lack of food to lack of water there was a sudden halt to the outpouring of kindness they received when they were leaving Egypt. They now had to fulfill their task of creating their own spiritual level and finding G-d in the midst of darkness.

Perhaps now we can understand the lesson behind why we count up to Shavuot (1, 2, 3 etc.) instead of counting down to it (49, 48, 47 etc.). The B’nei Yisaschar says that by starting the count from the number one we emphasize the beginning of a new process of earning step-by-step that which was given to us for free, in one instant, on the first day of Pesach. Each of the 49 days was meant to be an opportunity for the Jewish People to raise themselves out of another one of the 49 levels of impurity through their own effort; thus earning their spiritual level.

### **Key to Success**

The commentaries explain that the way to conquer the second stage of letdown is by remembering and reflecting on the first stage of inspiration. Through vividly reliving the spiritual ecstasy of the first stage one is able to overcome the difficulties of the second stage. The Avodat Yisrael finds a hint to this idea in the verse in Kohelet (7:14) that says, “On a good day be pleased and on a bad day reflect...” In other words, when the stage of inspiration seems to have faded, reflect back on the good days for the motivation to work hard and get back to that level. This is perhaps one idea behind the mitzvah of remembering the Exodus from Egypt everyday. The Exodus from Egypt was the epitome of the first stage where G-d’s hand was revealed and His kindness

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## SEASONS - *Then and Now*

*Continued from page seven*

was apparent. Through remembering and carrying over the message from the Exodus we can tackle the hard battles that lie ahead when G-d's presence is not clearly manifest.

Now we can begin to get some insight into the Sefer Yetzira's statement. The letter "vav" is used in Hebrew to connect words, paragraphs, chapters and even different books together by functioning as the symbol for the word "and". The shape of the letter "vav" looks like a hook, which is also used for connecting. It is of course no accident that the word for hook in Hebrew is also "vav". We see from here that the essence of the letter "vav" is to function as a bridge between two things. Based on this, Rabbi Tzadok Hakohen explains that the month of Iyar represents the mid-

dle stage between the initial, temporary inspiration given on Pesach (in Nissan) and the permanent acquiring of it on Shavuot (in Sivan). It is during this month that the bulk of the days of the Omer fall out and it is specifically on this month that we earn our spiritual level through our own effort and hard work. How is this done? It is only through using the special energy of the letter "vav" that manifests itself in Iyar to hook on to some of the inspiration that was given to us on Pesach. We must then use this inspiration as a bridge to get to the holiday of Shavuot. This is the essence of the letter "vav" and this is the work that is expected of us during the month of Iyar.

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*Continued from page five*

of Cyrus. The first chapter of the Book of Ezra enumerates in great detail the type and number of even minor vessels that were returned, but there is no mention of the breast plate.

So the question remains: How were the stones of the breast plate fashioned in the Second Temple?

It is quite intriguing that Rambam (Klei HaMikdash 9:6) writes in great detail the halachic specifications of the breast plate, its stones, their positioning and setting in the breast plate etc., but makes no mention of the requirement of the *shamir*. The Mishna l'Melech commentary on Rambam notes this curious omission and wonders why Rambam would

leave out what would seem to be such an important point regarding the preparation of the stones.

However, later commentaries (Chatan Sofer ch. 1 sec. 6 and Hitorerut Teshuva 1:282) conclude from these several considerations that the use of the *shamir* must be only an "ideal" requirement, but in its absence, regular engraving is permitted, which would explain why Rambam left it out and this must be how the stones of the breast plate were fashioned in the Second Temple.

Accordingly, these commentaries posit that it would be permitted and possible to prepare the breast plate even today without the Temple or its service.

## *Abarbanel* ON THE PARSHA *Continued from page four*

parents, as all children from a very early age honor and respect their parents. Additionally, unlike in the first listing, the Torah mentions respect for the mother first since the child has much more contact with his mother in his early years. All societies also recognize the need for a day of rest every seven days. In spite of this the statement "I am Hashem your G-d" tells us that our sole motivation for performing even these 'obvious' *mitzvot* is our desire to do the will of our Creator.

These two *mitzvot* are followed by the commandment not to turn to idolatry. Again, even though we can understand intellectually that there is no substance or efficacy to idolatry, we refrain from the practice solely because of G-d's command.

Next the Torah mentions the peace-offering. Even though this sacrificial offering is entirely voluntary, the exact order and details of the procedure cannot be voluntary. We cannot apply human logic and say that since I am bringing this offering voluntarily I can follow whatever procedures I choose. Rather, the Torah is teaching that failure to follow the Torah's exact

directive will result in a severe punishment. This section is followed immediately by the commandment to set aside part of one's field for the poor. Here, the expression "I am Hashem your G-d" takes on a dual meaning. As before, as amenable as this *mitzvah* is to human logic, we perform it because it is a Divine commandment. Secondly, we are reminded that it is our duty to emulate our Creator. Just as He provides for our needs, we are commanded to provide for the needs of the indigent.

This commandment is followed by the proscriptions against theft, lying and swearing falsely. Here the Torah adds that to do so would desecrate the name of G-d. Again, even though there is universal agreement that we should recoil from these behaviors, failure to do results in a desecration of the name of G-d, as He is their only true source. Finally, the Torah goes on to list several other logical commandments governing interpersonal behavior. Abarbanel again emphasizes that G-d, not human logic, is the ultimate reason for their observance.

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## *2015 National Yom Iyun*

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Sunday  
April 26

Monday  
April 27

Tuesday  
April 28

Wednesday  
April 29

Thursday  
April 30

Sunday  
May 3

Tuesday  
May 5

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