

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### That's Life!

ALTER RAUBVOGEL  
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

“Observe My laws and My judgments, through which, if a man does them, he will live...” (18:5)

This verse is the source of a well-known concept: The preservation of human life is supreme. In most situations where a person's life is in danger, Jewish law can be violated to save his or her life. (There are three exceptions to this: the inviolate prohibitions against idolatry, murder, and incest or adultery.)

But Rashi and Onkelos seem to understand this verse otherwise.

“He will live through them”—in the World to Come. Should you think this refers to life in [the physical] world, doesn't man die?” (Rashi)

“...He will live through them in the Eternal Life.” (Targum Onkelos)

How can that be? How can we learn a practical lesson about the value of physical, earthly life from a verse that's talking about the afterlife?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab, says this question is based on an understanding that temporal, physical life and eternal, spiritual life are distinct and divergent.

However, this assumption is a mistake. Life, both in this world and the next, is really (or at least it should be) all about being connected with Hashem. When a person lives a life of Torah and *mitzvos*, he attaches himself to Hashem—and the only difference between life and afterlife will be the presence (and subsequent absence) of his physical body! Both now and forever, he will bask in the glory of the Divine Presence.

If life isn't what we've always understood it to be, then we also need to redefine the concept of death.

When Hashem placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He warned him:

“...Don't eat from the Tree of Knowledge, for the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.” (Bereishis 2:17)

But Adam didn't die after he ate from the tree! Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that Adam was banished from Eden, and exile is, in a way, like death. When a person dies, he doesn't stop living. He is removed from his physical body; his spirit moves from one plane of existence to another.

The same logic applies to the exile the Torah imposes on someone who kills a person by mistake.

In early 1931, Rabbi Schwab spent a Shabbos with the Chofetz Chaim. It left a deep impression on him. At some point, presumably over the course of that weekend, the Chofetz Chaim asked him: “When you are called to the Torah, what do you have in mind when you say [in the blessing recited afterward] ‘...And You have planted within us eternal life?’”

The young Reb Shimon was too intimidated to answer.

The Chofetz Chaim then posed another question: “Where will you be in five hundred years?”

The Chofetz Chaim answered this question himself. “Mitt'n Ribbono shel Olam—with the Master of the Universe!”

Then he continued, “And in another five thousand years? And in another five million years? Mitt'n Ribbono shel Olam—with the Master of the Universe!”

The Chofetz Chaim explained that this is what we mean when we say “You have planted eternal life”—literally!—“within us.” Right now, inside of us, is everlasting, unlimited life: The ability to connect to Hashem.

When the Torah commands us to follow

## A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

### Purchasing Chometz After Pesach

We are all familiar with the Torah prohibition of owning *chometz* on Pesach. What is less well-known is the rabbinic injunction against eating or even benefiting from *chometz* which belonged to a Jew who failed to properly get rid of the *chometz* before or on Pesach (e.g. destroy, sell to a non-Jew). The reason behind this rabbinic prohibition is to discourage people from holding onto their *chometz* for use after Pesach. This is referred to as *chometz she'avar alav haPesach* and it remains forbidden permanently (M.B. 448:25).

Therefore, one would not be allowed to purchase *chometz* from a Jewish-owned store immediately after Pesach, unless the owner 1) sold all *chometz* that he owned to a non-Jew for the duration of Pesach and 2) did not acquire any further *chometz* during Pesach.

The *halacha* surrounding a non-observant Jewish owner who sold his *chometz* prior to Pesach yet keeps his store open throughout the holiday is subject to a massive disagreement amongst the *Poskim*. Though R' Moshe Feinstein permits purchasing such *chometz*, it would not help any new *chometz* that came into the store during Pesach (see *Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:149 2:91, 4:95*).

Even if the store is owned by non-Jews, if the distributor is Jewish and he owned the *chometz* during Pesach, the food would be forbidden.


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## A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Which *parasha* does not have a *passuk* count or the usual corresponding *siman*?



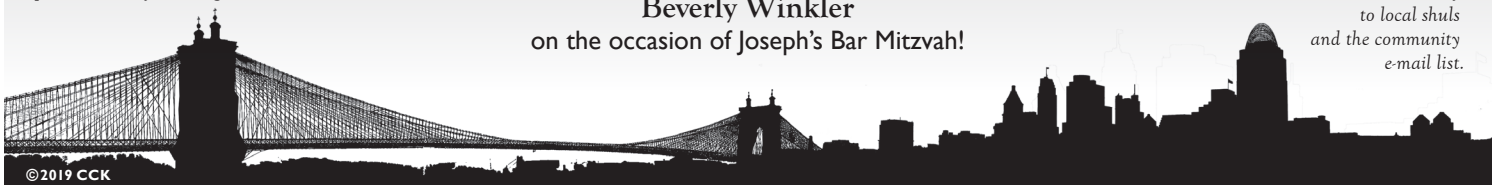
See reverse side for the answer

Hashem's commandments so that we will live, it means the full scope of life, both worldly and otherworldly, with its potential for holiness and attachment to the Divine. Even the part of our existence that we think of as “mortal life” is sacred, and its value supreme. 

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

Large food stores, which have a number of partners who have stock in the company, are of no concern providing that non-Jews own a majority of the business (R' Moshe Heinemann).

Often it is difficult to ascertain the status of the owner or the food on the shelves. Since we are dealing with a rabbinic restriction, one can be lenient when a reasonable doubt exists (*Igros Moshe*, O.C. 496).

Even though liquor stores generally maintain inventory for six or seven weeks, supermarkets typically have only a few weeks' turnaround time. After that, one can assume that the *chometz* on the shelves were not in the (Jewish owned) store over Pesach.

In the Cincinnati area, there are several stores from which *chometz* should not be purchased immediately after Pesach. One should refer to the list of local stores which pose no issues that is distributed by Cincinnati Kosher.

Being in such close proximity to Kentucky forces me to share an interesting finding regarding bourbon. The Sazerac Company is the largest distilling company in the US and focuses on bourbon. The Star-K claims that the Chairman of Directors of Sazerac Company is Jewish. Although the Sazerac Company recently began selling some of its *chometz* for Pesach, because of the aging process, it will be 8-10 years before that bourbon comes to market. Therefore, according to the Star-K, all their bourbons are considered problematic and are not recommended year-round. One of the ways of learning which bourbons are to be avoided is to contact your local *Vaad haKashrus* or visit the Star-K website bourbons listing. 🥂

## GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL

## YESHIVAS BEIN HAZ'MANIM

The Kollel was abuzz with energetic Torah study of local boys and visiting yeshiva students on each of the days leading up to and following Pesach. The morning and evening learning program which were arranged by Rabbis Epstein and Fishman included engaging shiurim presented by Rabbis Spetner, Alt, and Weinrib, and Meisels.



## IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

RABBI FALK WAS THE RABBI OF A COMMUNITY IN Israel and was a celebrated and inspirational speaker. One day a woman came to see him because she wanted a blessing to have another child. Her only child was now eight years old. Rabbi Falk demurred. "Blessings are in the realm of truly holy people, not plain people like me." The woman told him that she did not have any connections to any of the Jewish leaders whom people went to for blessings and therefore just wanted a blessing from him. Thinking, Rabbi Falk then told her, "I have a daughter in America that has been married for ten years and has not had children. Our sages tell us that if one prays for another,

their own prayers are answered. You pray for my daughter and I'll pray for you." The woman accepted and left. Five years passed and Rabbi Falk was still praying for this woman when he was informed that his daughter was expecting a child! After his grandchild was born, he heard from the woman who had asked him for his blessing. She called to inform him that she too had given birth to a child. Upon inquiring when the child was born, they were surprised to learn that both children had been born on the same day! 🥂

## RIDDLE ANSWER

Parshas Pikudei. 🥂

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

### THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

During a run of sheep at a kosher slaughterhouse in Paterson, New Jersey, in the early 1900s, a problematic sheep was found amongst those that were slaughtered. This sheep did not have the trachea and esophagus severed, which would be necessary for a valid *shechita*. The *shochet* was blamed for neglecting his duties, and the slaughterhouse owners wanted to fire him based on Talmudic law that a *shochet* who tries to pass improperly slaughtered meat as kosher should be removed from his position. The *shochet* claimed that it was accidental, as he had been slaughtering by lamp light and could not see clearly when his assistant had stepped away. He said that he had felt the neck in the dark and thought he had cut what he was supposed to. Rabbi Avraham Aron Yudelevitz, Chief Rabbi of Boston, was asked whether the *shochet* was to be believed. Rabbi Yudelevitz ruled that the Talmudic law of firing a *shochet* who improperly passes something as kosher is only if done purposefully; in this situation, if the *shochet* had wanted to deceive others, he could have cut the neck later to cover himself. The fact that he did not was significant enough reason to believe his story. However, he did say that the *shochet* should accept upon himself before a court of Jewish law to be more scrupulous in the future. 🥂

SOURCE: Schwartz, Rabbi Gedalia. "Shaarei Gedulah." PP 124-126. Chicago Rabbinical Council. 2007.

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