

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation

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PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

TORAH AND HUMAN LOGIC

Novominsk on Chumash – from the Novominsker Rebbe zt"l written by Rabbi Yechezkel Ostreicher

את כסףך לא תתן לו בנשך... אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים
לתת לכם את ארץ כנען להיות לכם לאלקים.

Do not give your money to him for interest... I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be G-d unto you (25:37–28).

Someone who observes the *mitzvah* of *ribbis* (interest) has accepted upon himself the yoke of *Shamayim* and confirmed the truth of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, while someone who disregards the *mitzvah* of *ribbis* has thrown off the yoke of *Shamayim* from himself and denied *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (*Sifra*).

What is unique about *ribbis* that makes its observance or transgression equal to accepting or denying the yoke of *Shamayim* and the belief in *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

It is that the *issur* of *ribbis* challenges our logic. *Chazal* (*Bava Metzia* 61a) characterize *ribbis* as *gezeilah* (theft). But logically, taking interest on money should be no different than charging rent for one's house or item. Even more: The prohibition of *ribbis* applies even if the borrower gives the interest willingly. How can that be considered theft?

The rule of Torah can defy human logic. If the Torah says that *ribbis* is *gezeilah*, then it is *gezeilah*, whether we would have thought that way or not.

This is illustrated by the following: The *Sefer HaYashar* (by Rabbeinu Tam) proves that logic is worth relying on from the fact that many things the Torah says fit with our logic.

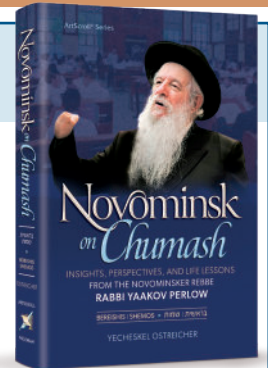
The *Chiddushei HaRim* extolled this approach

greatly. The world says that the Torah is true because many of the *mitzvos* make sense. But Rabbeinu Tam saw it the other way around: The ultimate criterion is the Torah, and only once the Torah says that logic is correct can we rely on it!

The purpose of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was to accept upon ourselves *ol Malchus Shamayim*, the definition of which is accepting even that which our mind does not understand “logically.” When we observe the *mitzvah* of *ribbis*, we demonstrate our belief in *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and accept

the yoke that comes with it.

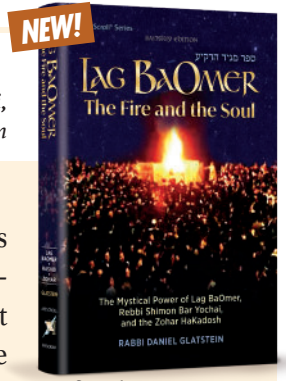
Perhaps that is why the *pasuk* concludes that Hashem gave us the land of Canaan. *Rashi* (*Bereishis* 1:1) says that the nations might declare that we stole Eretz Yisrael. The Torah therefore begins with Creation to show that the world belongs to Hashem, so He may distribute the lands as He pleases. Logically, the *Bnei Yisrael* could be accused of stealing Eretz Yisrael. But the world belongs to Hashem, and He decided to give the Land to us. Hashem's word can override “logic.” By observing the law of *ribbis*, we demonstrate our belief that the rules of *gezeilah*, just as the other rules, are formulated only by Hashem, and we merit ownership of the Land. 📖



The Novominsker Rebbe

THE REMA AND LAG BAOMER

Lag BaOmer: The Fire and the Soul – The Mystical Power of Lag BaOmer, Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai, and the Zohar HaKadosh by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein



The First Mention of Lag BaOmer Is in the Rema

There is no mention of *Lag BaOmer* in the *Gemara*, *Midrash*, or *Shulchan Aruch*. The first time we are taught that *Lag BaOmer* has any *halachic* status is when the *Rema* mentions it.

The *Rema* rules that we do not recite *Tachanun* on *Lag BaOmer*. He writes that *Lag BaOmer* is a day of *simchah*, and we do not practice the *aveilus* of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* on *Lag BaOmer*. Thus, it is permissible to shave and to have one's hair cut. The *Rema* concludes that we do not need to wait until the 34th day of the *Omer*, as the *Mechaber* maintains.

Thus, Rav Chaim Kreiswirth writes, it became customary to visit the grave of the *Rema* on *Lag BaOmer* because he is the first to mention that *Lag BaOmer* is a day of celebration.

The *sefer Bircas Shmuel*, a biography of Rav Shlomo Leib of Tichin, also records the custom to visit the *Rema's kever* on *Lag BaOmer*. The *sefer* recommends sending *tzedakah* to *aniyei Eretz Yisrael*. Doing so will provide the donor with the same *zechus* as if he had spent *Lag BaOmer* in Meron, at the *kever* of Rav Shimon.

Since learning the Torah taught by an individual pays tribute to his memory and can be considered as if his *kever* has been visited, by extension, then, learning the Torah of the *Rema* on *Lag BaOmer*, coupled with

giving *tzedakah* to the needy of Eretz Yisrael, can allow a person to be transported virtually to Meron, to the *kever* of the *Tanna Rav Shimon*.

Honoring the Rema on His Yahrzeit

The *Shem HaGedolim*, authored by the *Chida*, is an extremely important work that records all the *gedolim* who preceded the *Chida*, as well as all the *sefarim* that had been previously written. In a footnote to *Shem HaGedolim*, Rav Menachem Mendel Krenigil writes that, annually, on *Lag BaOmer*,



The matzeivah at the kever of the Rema.

thousands would travel to the *Rema's* resting place, where they would *daven* and recite *Tehillim*. They would learn Torah and work to reconcile any unanswered questions that *Acharonim* may have raised on the teachings of the *Rema*. They would also give *tzedakah* in his memory.

Historically, Krakow was graced with numerous great *rabbanim*. The custom in Krakow was for the *rav* to give a *derashah*, citing the *Rema's* teachings, in the *Rema's shul* on *Lag BaOmer* and to incorporate a new explanation for a difficult teaching of the *Rema*.

Rav Shimon Sofer delivered numerous *derashos* on the *yahrzeit* of the *Rema*. Rav Sofer records that it is appropriately inscribed on the *kever* of the *Rema*, "From Moshe to Moshe, no one has arisen in stature like Moshe," referring to the *Rema* as "he illuminated the eyes of the Jewish people with his glosses on the *Shulchan Aruch*. "The city of Krakow should rightfully take pride that it conceived, bore, and raised the shepherd of *Klal Yisrael*. Krakow should rightfully be considered an *ihr v'eim b'Yisrael*, a mother city in Israel, with the diaspora of *Ashkenaz* and France reckoned as suckling from her Torah."

Connecting the Rema and Rav Shimon bar Yochai

Among numerous other works, the *Rema* wrote a classic commentary on the *Zohar* that has remained unpublished. Rav Shimon bar Yochai and the *Rema* sharing a *yahrzeit* is not mere coincidence. Their *neshamos* are deeply connected.

Rav Shimon Sofer writes that the *Rema* did not develop continued on page 3

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

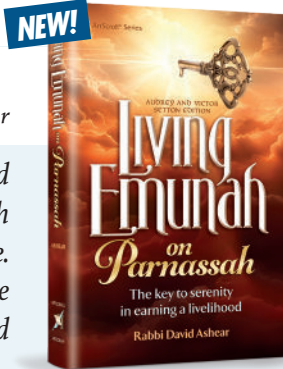
MAY / אייר

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
25 יז	26 יח	27 יט	28 כ	29 כא	30 כב	31 כג
Bava Metzia 87	Bava Metzia 88	Bava Metzia 89	Bava Metzia 90	Bava Metzia 91	Bava Metzia 92	Bava Metzia 93

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

MAY / אייר

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
25 יז	26 יח	27 יט	28 כ	29 כא	30 כב	31 כג
Sotah 7:3-4	Sotah 7:5-6	Sotah 7:7-8	Sotah 8:1-2	Sotah 8:3-4	Sotah 8:5-6	Sotah 8:7-9:1



There are times when a person is in distress — over *parnassah*, *shidduchim*, or some other issue — and places his hopes in a certain individual for assistance. He spends time forging a connection with this individual — who may be a wealthy man, a *shadchan*, a prominent businessman, or a public figure — but after finally pleading his case, he is hurt and disappointed when this individual informs him that he is unable or unwilling to help. *He is able to help me*, he may think. *He's just choosing not to*. The rejection is especially painful since he spent so much time building the connection and hoping that this individual would help him in his time of need.

The *baal emunah*, however, never goes through this type of pain. He knows that people have no say about whether they will help him. He knows that Hashem is the Only One in charge, and if he is meant to be helped, his help will come through the channel Hashem selects. He will never berate people for denying his requests, he will never have hard feelings towards them, and he is even able to maintain the same relationship with them as in the past.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman once traveled to America to raise funds for his yeshivah. At one of the shuls there, he gave a passionate speech about the value of supporting Torah, and the entire congregation was visibly moved. The rabbi of that shul, however, was from a different school of thought, and after the speech, he got up and told the congregation that even if they gave just a few dollars, that would be a great *zechus*. With those words, the crowd went from potentially giving thousands of dollars to not even donating a hundred dollars.

Afterwards, the rabbi was worried that Rav Elchanan was angry with him and approached him to apologize. However, Rav Elchanan told him he wasn't the least bit upset and shared with him a pertinent *dvar Torah*:

"When Hashem commanded Moshe to build the Mishkan, He told him that the actual builder should be a man by the name of Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur from the tribe of Yehudah. Moshe then went to search for this person. He must have gone to the tribe of Yehudah and asked the first person he saw, 'Are you by any chance Betzalel ben Uri?' If the man said no, Moshe would have gone to another person and asked him if he was Betzalel ben Uri. And if that man said no, Moshe would have continued until he found the person he was looking for.

"If those people replied that they are not Betzalel, did Moshe get angry at them for not being the person he was looking for? Of course not! Those people were not *zocheh* to be Betzalel. The same applies here.

"I came to America looking for Betzalel ben Uri to help support my yeshivah. There are certain people who will be *zocheh* to be Betzalels and support the yeshivah, and others who won't. It is clear that the members of your congregation are not from those people who are going to be Betzalel ben Uri. Should I be angry at that?"

This is a difficult level to attain, but if we work on ourselves, we, too, can reach this level of understanding and fully believe it. That will enable us to love everyone, no matter what it seems they have done to harm us. 📖

THE REMA AND LAG BAOMER

continued from page 2

original and novel *halachic* rulings. Rather, he gathered the ancient customs of *Ashkenaz* and codified them in his *sefer*. He sought to convey an accurate and precise representation of the *minhagim* that were practiced in *Ashkenaz*, thereby preserving the ancient traditions. His goal was to ensure the perpetuity of the *mesorah*.

Similarly, when Rav Shimon transmitted the teachings of *Kabbalah*, he did not develop original ideas and

concepts. He did not invent *Kabbalah*; rather, he focused on relaying the mystical portions of the Torah that were gifted to *Klal Yisrael* on Har Sinai.

The *Rema's* name, Isserles, is a reference to his father — Reb Yisrael ben Yosef, known as Isser'l. Like Rav Shimon bar Yochai, whose father's name is part and parcel of his name, the *Rema*, too, has his father's name incorporated into his. The *Rema* and Rav Shimon bar Yochai are the only two *tzaddikim* in our history who are not known by their

own independent names. Their fathers' names are seared onto theirs.

Rav Shimon Sofer explains that this is no coincidence. These two Torah giants strove to transmit the *mesorah*, and their names, which connect them to their lineage, reflect their lofty mission. Their names reflect the fact that they did not veer one iota from the *mesorah* they received.

For more, see "*Lag BaOmer: The Fire and the Soul – The Mystical Power of Lag BaOmer, Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai, and the Zohar HaKadosh.*" 📖

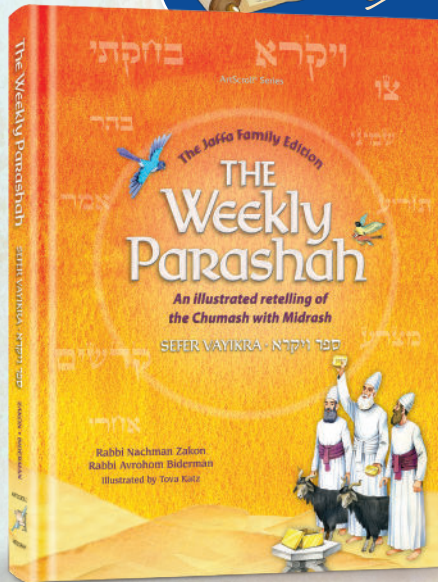
This week's
Yerushalmi Yomi
schedule:

MAY / אייר

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
25 יז Maasros 37	26 יח Maasros 38	27 יט Maasros 39	28 כ Maasros 40	29 כא Maasros 41	30 כב Maasros 42	31 כג Maasros 43



Parashah for Children



פרשת בהר

Seven – A Special Number

After six days comes ... the SEVENTH day: Shabbos, the sweet and holy day of rest.

After Pesach we count ... SEVEN weeks. Then we celebrate Shavuot, when Hashem gave us the Torah.

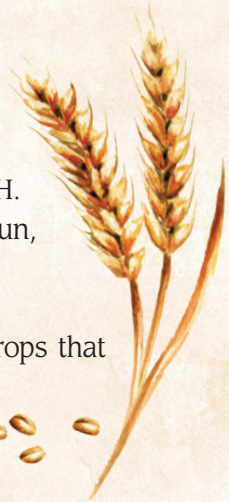
And what happens after six years?

In Eretz Yisrael, the SEVENTH year is an entire year when we let our holy land rest. This year is called Shemittah.

After Shemittah, we count SEVEN times SEVEN years. When seven Shemittah years have passed, the next year is

called Yovel. And it is another year of rest for the land of Eretz Yisrael.

Seven is certainly a special number! Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the SEVENTH. Seven reminds us that everything we see in the universe, the endless oceans and mountains, the sun, moon, and twinkling stars, the gorgeous flowers and tall trees — all of them were made by Hashem.



Rest

How does the land “rest” in the Shemittah year? For six years, farmers work the land. They plow it, they put seeds in the ground. They work hard so their trees will produce all kinds of luscious fruits and their fields will be full of wheat and corn and vegetables.

Then comes Shemittah — and everything stops! No plowing. No planting. No pruning (that’s when farmers cut branches off a tree so it will grow better).

Shemittah is like Shabbos ... for trees and fields!

On Shabbos, our food has a special Shabbos taste. (What’s more “geshmak” than cholent on Shabbos? Eat

it on a weekday, it’s not the same!) The crops that grow on the ground and the fruit that grows on the trees during Shemittah are also different from the crops and fruit of the other six years. They are holy with what the Torah calls “kedushas shevi’is” (the holiness of the seventh year).

This means the farmer can’t harvest and sell the produce of his land. The fruit can be used only for eating. We have to be careful not to waste the food. We are not allowed to throw a half-eaten apple into the garbage if it has kedushas shevi’is.

WIN A \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

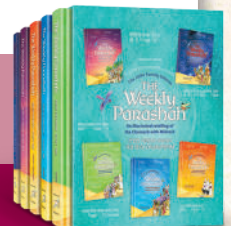
Question for Behar:

Why is the ona’ah of hurting someone’s feelings worse than the ona’ah of cheating someone in business?

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

The winner of the Acharei Mos question is: YISRAEL MEIR SHAJNFELD, Brooklyn, NY

The question was: On Yom Kippur, why did the Kohen Gadol say some of the pesukim by heart? Why not read it from the Sefer Torah? The answer is: Because it would take a few minutes to roll the Torah from Parashas Emor to Parashas Pinchas. They didn’t want to make all the people wait while they rolled the Torah. We can learn from this that we should not keep people waiting for us. We should always try to be on time.



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