

# OHR TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

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### LABOR OF LOVE

*“And on the seventh day, a Shabbos of Shabbosos.” (31:15)*

There are two kinds of rest. The first kind of rest is a rest from weariness, a chance to recharge your batteries, to enable yourself to continue to work. For no-one can work indefinitely. Everyone needs a break. The second kind of rest comes at the end of a project. The last brushstroke of a painting. The final sentence of a novel. The last brick in a new home. Then you take a step back and look at your work. You feel the satisfaction of completion. It's finished. It's done. A time to rest and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

“You shall labor for six days and do all your work.” How can you do all your work in six days? Can you build an entire house in six days? The Torah teaches us that when Shabbos comes, even though you're only half-way through your project, you should think of it as though it was completely finished. In other words, on Shabbos, you should picture yourself as experiencing the sense of rest and satisfaction that comes after a good job well done, and not that you're just taking a break. In a sense, this is what Hashem did when the world was six days old. He looked at the Creation and saw that it was finished, the greatest building project ever, the Heavens and the earth were completed. Our rest on Shabbos is a commemoration of that rest.

This is the essential difference between our Shabbos and the secular idea of a 'day of rest'. The secular world understands the day of rest as a break so that you can return to the week revitalized and refreshed. It's a only a break. Shabbos, on the other hand, is not just pushing the pause button on life. It's the creation of a feeling that everything in one's life is complete. There's nothing left to do — except sit back and enjoy the fruits of one's labor.

• Based on Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin in *L'Torah UL'Moadim*

### INSIGHTS

#### A VALID VISA

*“Hew for yourself two tablets of stone.” (34:1)*

Once, there was a traveler who wanted to visit an exotic and remote country on the roof of the world. This country had the reputation of being almost impossible for tourists to enter. So, when our traveler was granted his tourist visa, it came to him as something of a surprise. However, in spite of this, he was convinced that he would be stopped at the border and refused entry to his destination. He had set his heart on the trip, so he enlisted the services of a 'special agent', a certain Mr. Shaker, who had contacts in high places in the government of the country. Shaker was able to magically open

*“...every Jew has his own passport to spirituality. It's called the Torah.”*

'locked doors'. All of this came at a price. Quite a tidy sum was deposited in a numbered bank account. And then the word came. All clear.

He would be met at the airport by an official who would usher him through the customs and immigration formalities. He needed to bring nothing with him. Not even his visa. He would be recognized immediately and whisked through the airport in a flash.

On arrival, our traveler bounded off the plane and presented himself at the immigration desk. “Visa please!” asked a uniformed official. “I'm sorry?” said the traveler. “I said — ‘Visa Please!’” repeated the official, somewhat irritated. “But — don't you recognize me?” “If you gave me your visa, maybe I'd be able to recognize you,” said the

official, sarcastically. “But, but, Mr. Shaker said...” “Look” said the official, “I've no idea who this Mr. Shaker is, but all you need to enter the country is a valid visa. However, without that, there's nothing I can do...”

With this story, perhaps we will understand why it was that the first tablets of the covenant were hewn by Hashem, whereas the second tablets were hewn by Moshe. The sin of the golden calf was not real idol worship, but was based on a mistake: that, since Hashem was the maker of the first tablets, it was impossible to fathom their depths without the assistance of lofty spiritual powers.

It was for this reason that the people had fashioned the likeness of the ox to worship, for this is one of the mystical creatures that surround the heavenly throne. The people thought that mystical powers of the ox would help them to transcend the boundaries of human reach and be close to Hashem and to understand His Torah. While Moshe was still with them, they relied on Moshe to bring them close to Hashem, and did not seek other means. However, when they thought that Moshe was dead, they turned to other ways of elevating themselves.

The truth is that every Jew has his own passport to spirituality. It's called the Torah. It contains all the visas we need to reach out of this world. We need no special agents or intermediaries. With our own human abilities we can achieve the sublime.

It was for this reason that Hashem commanded Moshe to hew the second tablets: to demonstrate that human hands were involved in their making; that through our own efforts, we can earn the help of Hashem to understand all of the words of the Holy Torah and to climb to great heights.

It is for that reason that the Torah is called *Toras Moshe* — the Torah of Moshe — the Torah belongs to man. It is possible to gain entry to its most esoteric and remote regions via the visa of human effort.

• Based on Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

**M**oshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men, age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the *Mishkan* — the women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and Hashem instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the *Mishkan*, its vessels, and Aaron and his sons. Hashem selects Betzalel and Oholiav to be the master craftsmen for the *Mishkan* and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that Hashem made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude that left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aaron stalls and tries to delay them. Hashem tells Moshe to return to the people immediately,

threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the orgy of idol-worship he smashes the Tablets, and destroys the golden calf. The Sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and Hashem accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the *Mishkan*, and Hashem's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks Hashem to show him the rules by which He conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. Hashem tells Moshe to hew new Tablets, and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke His mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage, and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of *Pesach*, the First-born, the First-fruits, Shabbos, *Shavuot* and *Succos* are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of Tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

### OVERVIEW



יום שבתון אין לשבח...

“Shabbos is a day of rest...”  
“The dove found in it a place to rest and there will the weary ones rest.”

Three different interpretations have been suggested for the symbolism of the dove in this song.

• The dove which Noah sent from the Ark to see if the flood waters had subsided found a place to land in Gan Eden on Shabbos. In similar fashion those who are weary from studying Torah with all their might will also find their rest in Gan Eden.

• The Shechinah - the Divine presence - is, as it were, homeless during the exile of Israel and finds a place to rest only on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

• The Jewish Nation is compared to the dove. All other birds rest on a tree or a cliff when they tire but the dove merely folds one weary wing to its body and continues flying with the other. It is the restorative quality of the Shabbos which allows the Jewish dove to keep on going despite all of its wearying hardships.



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We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

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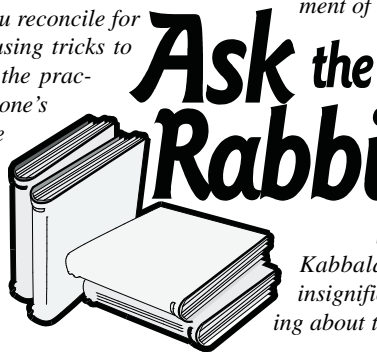
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PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

GANZ <75671.3605@compuserve.com>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

As usual I enjoyed another one of your responses, this time to Philip Americus about 'Scalping Tickets.' [Ask the Rabbi #96] Your logic is commendable. However, could you reconcile for me your advice of not using tricks to get around a law, with the practice at Pesach of selling one's chametz - or even more astute - locking them up in a cupboard and selling "futures" to someone who will never pick them up.

Confused in California



Dear Confused,

Selling your chametz before Pesach is not a trick, but a legally binding sale. When you sell your chametz it belongs to the buyer who has every right to use it.

In a certain community, all the chametz — including the kosher pizza shop — was sold to a police officer. During Pesach, a burglar broke in to the pizza shop. The policeman, who happened to be on duty at the time, entered the pizza shop, arrested the robber and exclaimed, "You're robbing *my* business!"

And it's told of a whiskey producer in Europe who sold his entire business for Pesach. The buyer exercised his 'option' and took permanent control of the business.

If the buyer decides not to exercise his option after Pesach, that's his decision. During Pesach, however, the chametz belongs to him.

But you're right. Both buyer and seller should take the sale seriously and realize that it's not a 'trick.' I know of a Rabbi who, in order to show his congregants that the sale is

Sources: Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 448:3

## KABBALA

Binyomin Altman

<bsalt1@penfold.cc.monash.edu.au> wrote:

I recently read the following statement of the Vilna Gaon: "The ultimate redemption of the Jewish People (Geula) will come about only through learning Torah; And *primarily* through learning Kabbala [Torah's deep secrets]. Since I don't learn Kabbala, is my Torah study insignificant with respect to bringing about the final redemption?"

Dear Binyomin,

Kabbala certainly has 'redeeming' qualities. But it has dangers as well. On his death-bed, the Arizal (preeminent Kabbalist, 16th century Safed, Israel) told Rabbi Yitzchak Hakohen: "Tell the disciples in my name that from today they are to stop studying Kabbala." He warned that they might misunderstand it and thus come to harm.

I spoke to Rabbi Shlomo Fisher, *shlita*, about this statement of the Vilna Gaon. He explained it as follows: Learning Kabbala requires an exceptionally high spiritual level. The *Geula* will come when the *people at that high level* learn Kabbala.

As far as the 'significance' of your studies in bringing the *Geula*, the Talmud says that Torah study helps us survive the exile. And were the *whole* Jewish people to learn Torah, the *Geula* would come immediately!

Sources:

• *Even Shleima* 11:3

• *Shivchei Rabbi Chaim Vital* pp. 25b-26a

## Yiddle Riddle

Based on a riddle sent in by Shlomo Steinhart

Triplets and their cousin are born within a 2 hour period, yet the *brit milah* for each of the four takes place on four consecutive days. They are all healthy — i.e., no jaundice or other health problems. How can this be?

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# SERVING AND EATING IN THE MASTER'S PRESENCE

## The Rule:

Whereas the higher level of *korban* (*kodshei kodashim* - *olah*, *chatas*, *asham*) must be slaughtered in the northern part of the Sanctuary courtyard (*azarah*) the *shlamim* may be slaughtered in any part of this area, as the Torah states (*Vayikra* 3:2) "He shall slaughter it at the entrance to the **Ohel Moed**." (The *Ohel Moed* or Tent of Assembly refers to the Sanctuary itself — the *heichal* in which the menorah, table and golden altar stood.)

## Questions and Answers:

What if the *shlamim* was slaughtered in the *heichal* itself? Since the Torah declares that the "entrance to the *Ohel Moed*" qualifies as a site for the slaughter of the *shlamim*, it implies that the *Ohel Moed* — or *heichal* — is the more qualified site. It is therefore logical to assume that if the secondary site qualifies, then the primary one — the *heichal* — certainly does.

May *kohanim* eat the flesh of the *kodshei kodashim*, which cannot be eaten outside of the *azarah*, in the *heichal*?

Rabbi Yehuda ben Besaira ruled that if the *Beis Hamikdash* was under siege and the enemy was firing arrows and boulders into the *azarah* the *kohanim* could take shelter in the

*heichal* and there eat the flesh of *kodshei kodashim*. He bases this on the passage (*Bamidbar* 18:10) which designates "the holy of holies" as the area in which the *kohanim* may eat this sacrificial flesh, a designation which certainly includes the *heichal* as well!

## The Problem:

Why must this sage seek support from this passage when he could presumably have implemented the aforementioned logical extension that if the secondary site of the *azarah* qualifies for eating the sacred

flesh then the primary site should certainly qualify?

## The Resolution:

It is proper for a servant to perform service for his master in the master's presence. It is therefore logical to assume that if he can perform such a service — the slaughtering of *shlamim* — in a secondary site, farther removed from his Master, he can certainly do so in the primary site. It is not proper, however, for a servant to eat in his master's presence. Without the support of a specific passage we would therefore have assumed that such permission to eat was granted only in the secondary site and not in the primary site which is tantamount to eating in the Master's presence.

• Zevachim 63a

• Zevachim 58a

# FIG LEAVES AND FIRES

For fueling the fire upon the altar from which coals would be taken for the offering of the incense (and for all the fires upon the altar) it was customary to take wood which came from a fig tree.

The fig tree referred to here must be one that grows wild and bears no edible fruit. Otherwise, it would be disqualified for use in the same way that the *Mishnah* in the second perek of *Mesechta Tamid* disqualifies the wood of all fruit-bearing trees, by citing the examples of grape and olive trees. The reason given for this by Rabbi Acha bar Yaakov is to preserve the settlement of *Eretz*

Insights, explanations and comments for the seven pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

*Yisrael*, for if there will be no wine or oil or figs to enjoy, the land may become desolate. But why did they insist on the fig tree?

Rashi explains that the leaves of the fig tree were the first items of plant life to be used in human effort for self improvement. When Adam became conscious of his nakedness following his sinful eating from the Tree of Knowledge he fashioned some garments for himself and his wife from fig leaves (*Bereishis* 3:7). It is therefore fitting that the wood from this tree be given priority in the effort of Adam's descendants to achieve self-improvement through the service of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

1. How was the census taken?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
4. List two times when the Jewish People were counted.
5. How did the olive oil for anointing acquire its fragrance?
6. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'as* (knowledge)?
8. Shabbos is "a sign" (31:13). What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
10. Why did Aaron build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
11. Who were the "mixed multitude"?
12. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
13. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
14. Rather than wipe out the Jewish People for the sin of the golden calf, Hashem agreed to punish them gradually. How did this affect the Jewish People throughout history?
15. What is a textual source for referring to "travel to Israel" as "*Aliyah*"?
16. In verse 33:2, Hashem says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
17. Which events took place on these dates: a) 17 *Tamuz*; b) 18 *Tamuz*; c) 19 *Tamuz*; d) 1 *Elul*; e) 10 *Tishrei*; f) 1 *Nissan*?
18. How did Hashem show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. Why is Hashem "slow to anger"?
20. How many times is the ban on meat and milk mentioned, and why?



## I Didn't Know That!

"I have called Betzalel... to devise clever work... and Oholiav... to make all that I have commanded." (31:2-6)

The work of the *Mishkan* required a knowledge of design and of construction. Betzalel was in charge of the design of the *Mishkan* and Oholiav was in charge of its actual construction.

• Sifsei Kohen

## Bonus Question ?

In the list of the "13 Attributes of Hashem," the Name "Hashem" appears twice. Rashi explains that the Name "Hashem" refers to the attribute of Mercy, and is repeated to teach that Hashem is merciful not only before a person sins but also after he repents. Why does a person need mercy *before* he sins?

Answers on back page

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

- 30:12 - Through the donation of a half-shekel per person.
- 30:14 - Twenty.
- 30:15 - For the *Adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the *Mishkan*.
- 30:16 - After *Yom Kippur* of the first year, and in *Iyar* of the second year.
- 30:24 - It was mixed with spices.
- 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
- 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'as* is holy inspiration.
- 31:13 - It is a sign between Hashem and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
- 31:17 - The 11th of *Tishrei*.
- 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by

himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.

- 32:7 - The non-Jews who came out of Egypt, who Moshe accepted and converted.
- 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah did not permit those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in



even a single commandment (*Pesach* sacrifice), surely the *entire* Torah cannot be given to a whole nation who has estranged itself from Hashem!

- 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
- 32:34 - Whenever Hashem punished the

Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.

- 33:1 - The words "*lech aleh*" (depart and go up).
- 33:2 - The seventh nation, the *Girgashites*, voluntarily emigrated.
- 33:11 - a) Moshe came down from *Har Sinai* and broke the Tablets. b) Moshe burned the golden calf and punished the offenders. c) Moshe went up a second time to *Har Sinai*. d) Moshe went up a third time to *Har Sinai*. e) Hashem forgave the Jewish people and gave Moshe the Second Tablets. f) The *Mishkan* was completed.
- 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
- 34:6 - To give the sinner a chance to repent.
- 34:26 - Three times to prohibit eating, deriving benefit and cooking.

### Recommended Reading List

<b>Ramban</b>	34:28 The Second Tablets	29:9 Donning of the Kohen's Garments
30:13 " <i>Lashon HaKodesh</i> "	<b>Sefer Hachinuch</b>	30:1 The Incense-Altar
30:19 Washing Hands	105 Equality in Sacrifices	30:12 The Concept of Counting People
31:2 Betzalel	107-8 Anointing	31:2 The Name Betzalel
32:1-4 The Golden Calf	<b>Malbim</b>	31:13 A Taste of the World-to-Come
32:18 Sounds	28:5 Trustworthy Treasurers	
33:11 Yehoshua's Age	28:30 The " <i>Urim V'Tumim</i> "	
34:27 A Renewed Covenant		

### Bonus Answer!

Hashem is merciful and good to all His creations, and although He knows in advance that a person will sin, He still is merciful to that person.

• *Sifsei Chachamim*

Hashem is Hashem whether a person sins or not, and this proves that Hashem is unchanging and not affected by human choice or action.

• *Maharal*

## HAFTORAH: Yechezkel 36:16-36

### PARSHAS PARAH

One who aspires to purify himself spiritually, is given help from Above. The period before *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* is especially favorable for purification. This is one of the reasons that we read *Parshas Parah* at this time of the year. But there is a more basic reason: In the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it was on the 14th of *Nissan* that the *korban Pesach* was brought by all the Jewish People. *Parshas Parah* deals with the laws of purification that were needed to purify the Jewish People from contact with a dead body — a necessary preliminary to entering the *Beis Hamikdash* and bringing the *korban Pesach*. The

*Haftorah* describes the time of *Mashiach*, when Hashem will 'sprinkle purifying waters on the *Bnei*

**"Hashem's mitzvos are our life blood. When we neglect them, our hearts freeze over..."**

*Yisrael*' and remove all the impurities that have encrusted their souls.

**"I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh instead."** (46:26)

Hashem's mitzvos are our life blood. When we neglect them, our hearts freeze over, severed from their lifeline. We become spiritually rigid. Our hearts atrophy, coarsen and eventually become as rigid as stone. And because we then have made ourselves a heart of stone, we don't realize that this is why we have so little faith. How can a heart of stone have faith? We don't realize that our complaints against the Almighty come from a rock chamber entombed in our chests. Eventually it will be too late for a 'bypass'. Hashem will come and give us a heart that is soft, that cries — that wants to hear the word of Hashem and beat in time to its Maker.

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