

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### CUPS OF KINDNESS

**“Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say ‘Tilt your pitcher so I may drink,’ and who replies ‘Drink and I will even water your camels,’ her will You have designated for Your servant Yitzchak” (24:14)**

A poor man once asked the Brisker Rav whether he could fulfill his obligation to drink four cups of wine on Pesach by drinking four cups of milk instead. The Brisker Rav told him to stick to wine, and instructed his wife to give the poor man a large sum of money from the communal tzedaka fund so that he could buy both wine and meat for the festival.

After the poor man had gone, the *rebbe-tzin* asked her husband why he had given him money to buy meat as well as wine. After all, the question had only been about the wine.

The Brisker Rav replied that if this man was intending to drink four cups of milk on the Seder Night, he certainly wasn't planning to eat meat either for lack of funds.

What distinguished Rivka's kindness was that she was able to understand not just what Eliezer said to her, but what his real needs were.

True kindness lies in understanding the needs of others even when they don't express them.

### WHO'S SORRY NOW?

**“And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah” (23:2)**

Both parents were crying their eyes out. “Rabbi — it's our son. He wants to marry a non-Jewish girl. We've never been that religious, but I always thought that he would at least marry someone Jewish.”

More tears. Finally the rabbi said. “In Russia, during the reign of the Czar, it was forbidden to have alcohol without a license. To avoid the duty, some clever rogues decided to smuggle whisky from over the border. They came up with a ruse to fool the border guards.

The border ran through the middle of a particular Jewish *shtetl* (village). The graveyard happened to be on the Russian side of the border. Thus it was not uncommon for

funerals to cross the border. The smugglers borrowed a hearse and a coffin, and filled it with Scotch whisky. As they approached the border, they assumed long faces and the dark demeanor of those whose profession is escorting the dead to their rest. So convincing was their acting that the guards let them pass without a second look.

Emboldened by their easy success, they decided to try it again. Again, they succeeded without a hitch. But now, they started to get over-confident. On the next trip, the guards pounced and discovered their haul.

They were led away in chains. Facing a capital offense, they started to cry bitter tears. The chief smuggler asked the guard: *‘But how did you know that we weren't real?’* Said the guard *‘As you came towards the bor-*

“True kindness lies in understanding the needs of others even when they don't express them.”

*der post, you were all smiling and laughing. No one laughs at a funeral. If you'd cried then, you wouldn't be crying now!’*”

“That, unfortunately,” said the rabbi to the distraught parents, “is the present situation. *If you'd cried then, you wouldn't be crying now!* You're twenty years too late. What do you expect me to do now?”

When Avraham came to eulogize Sarah, he focused on *the Akeida* — the binding of Yitzchak — as exemplifying Sarah's qualities. For Sarah had educated a son who was prepared to give up his very life to serve Hashem, and there can be no greater testimony to the qualities of a parent than the qualities of the child.

This should serve as a powerful reminder

to parents that our children's spiritual aspirations are inevitably a reflection of our own. We cannot blame our children if they continue in the path that we have shown them.

### THE EYES OF TRUTH

**“And the servant (Eliezer) said to him (Avraham): ‘Perhaps the woman will not wish to follow me to this land, shall I take your son back to the land from which you departed?’” (24:5)**

“Why can't I see G-d? Why don't I feel He's there? I really envy you being religious, but I just don't feel it!”

What makes a person feel close to G-d?

The eyes are the windows of the soul. If you want to “see” G-d in your life, you have to have clean windows. All the character flaws that a person has are like grime on those windows. Anger, jealousy, lust, status seeking, all smear the windows of the soul so that it cannot see.

The Midrash on this verse says “*And the servant said to him...*” — this refers to the phrase *‘A trader with scales of deceit in his hand, who loves to cheat.’* The ‘trader’ is Eliezer, who sat and weighed — *‘with scales of deceit in his hand’* — whether his own daughter was fitting to be Yitzchak's wife or not.” When Eliezer suggested the match, Avraham told him: *“You are cursed, my son is blessed. The cursed cannot connect with the blessed.”*

What was so wrong with Eliezer considering his daughter as a marriage partner for Yitzchak, that the Midrash calls him *“a trader with scales of deceit in his hand?”* Eliezer didn't lie to, or cheat Avraham. He was merely wondering whether his daughter might be suitable. Which father would not at least consider if his daughter would be a worthy spouse for the world's most eligible bachelor, the father-to-be of the Jewish people?

Also, when Avraham rejected Eliezer's proposal, Eliezer accepted Avraham's decision with total equanimity.

*It must be then that the mere fact that Eliezer had room to consider this possibility showed a minute trace of deceit.* For if it were not so, he would have known without a second thought the truth — that the blessed and the cursed cannot combine.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

The life of Sarah, mother of the Jewish People, comes to a close at the age of one hundred and twenty seven. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham buries her in the Cave of Machpela. As this is the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham is prepared to pay its owner Ephron the Hittite the exorbitant sum which he demands for the cave. Avraham places the responsibility for finding a suitable wife for his son Yitzchak on his faithful servant Eliezer, who takes an oath to choose a wife from amongst Avraham's family and not from the Canaanites. Eliezer travels to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nachor, and prays to Hashem to show him a sign so he will know whom to choose. At evening time, as he is about to water his camels, Rivka providentially appears and

Eliezer asks her for a drink of water. Not only does she give him to drink, but she draws water for all ten of his thirsty camels. (Some 140 gallons!) This extreme thoughtfulness and kindness is the sign that she is the right wife for Yitzchak, and a suitable mother of the Jewish People. Negotiations with Rivka's father and her brother Lavan finally result in her leaving with Eliezer. Yitzchak brings Rivka into the tent of his mother Sarah, marries her and loves her. He is then consoled for the loss of his mother. Avraham remarries Hagar who is renamed *Ketura* to indicate her improved ways. Six children are born to them. After giving them gifts, Avraham sends them to the East. Avraham passes away at the age of one hundred and seventy-five and is buried next to Sarah in the Cave of Machpela.

## HAFTORAH: MELACHIM I CH. I

The need to secure the succession of the Jewish People, which is the subject of this week's *Parsha*, is reflected in the Haftorah. King David is coming to the end of his days (like Avraham in the *Parsha*) and his senior son, the handsome and indulgent Adonijah, tries to wrest the succession from Shlomo, King David's appointed heir. But King David is alerted to Adonijah's scheme by his wife Basheva and Nassan the prophet, and

the plot is foiled.

### THE WILL TO DIVIDE

The Chafetz Chaim once wrote to a rich man that he was obliged to make a clear will dividing his property between his sons as we find in this week's Haftorah. If the prophet Nassan admonished King David to leave clear instructions regarding his succession, certainly this rich man was

obliged to do so. We do not find that David was annoyed at Nassan for reminding him of his mortality; rather he took steps to rectify a difficult situation. As the Chafetz Chaim wrote: "Children are known to disobey their parents and quarrel amongst themselves even during their parents' lifetime, how much more so after their death!"

• Adapted from *The Midrash Says*

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

---

Published by  
**OHR SOMAYACH**  
TANENBAUM COLLEGE  
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

---

General Editor:  
**Rabbi Moshe Newman**  
Editorial & Web Advisor:  
**Rabbi Reuven Lauffer**  
Associate Editors:  
**Rabbi Mordechai Becher,**  
**Rabbi Reuven Subar**  
Contributing Writers:  
*Weekly Daf, Love of the Land:*  
**Rav Mendel Weinbach**  
*Insights, Overview, Haftorah:*  
**Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair**

---

Web Production: **Lev Seltzer**  
Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications  
**Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director**

---

© 1997 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

---

\* THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

---

OhrNet is available from several sources:  
• E-MAIL VIA INTERNET: Write to [ohr@virtual.co.il](mailto:ohr@virtual.co.il) for information.  
• WORLD WIDE WEB: Our address is: [www.ohr.org.il](http://www.ohr.org.il)  
• FAX AND REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:  
To subscribe, mail us a letter, or fax a request with your name & fax number to 02-581-2890.  
• US-MAIL WITHIN NORTH AMERICA:  
Call 1-800-431-2272 for subscription information.

---

\* If you have a question about Judaism, you can submit it to **ASK THE RABBI**. Just send your question using E-Mail to "[ohr@virtual.co.il](mailto:ohr@virtual.co.il)" and set the subject to "ASK THE RABBI". We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

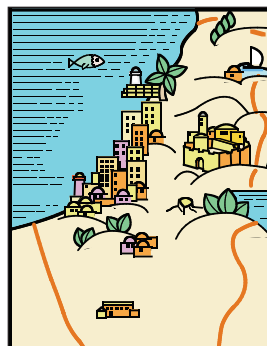
*Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael*

### OTHER WORLDLY EXPERIENCES

*"Whoever resides in Eretz Yisrael, recites the Shma in the morning and evening and speaks lashon hakodesh (the sacred Hebrew tongue) is considered a member of the World to Come."*

This statement by Rabbi Meir (Sifri *Parshas Ha'azinu* 32:43) does not relate to inheriting the World to Come, because we have already been taught (*Sanhedrin* 90a) that "All of Israel have a share in the World to Come;" not only those who perform these particular acts. It refers to how one can live a "World to Come" existence in this world. The

Jew who lives in the holy land blessed by Hashem, pledges his allegiance to Him morning and evening, and speaks in the language with which Hashem created His world and wrote His Torah, is experiencing something of the intimacy with Hashem which the World to Come is all about. He is like a citizen of that infinite world who is on a temporary visit in this finite one.



## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Name the four couples buried in *Kiryat Arba*.
2. What did Sarah hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the *B'nei Ches* bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand?"
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Besuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?"
15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?
16. Who was *Ketura*?
17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?
18. How old was Avraham when he died?
19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of *Ever*?
20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

## BONUS QUESTION?

Rashi states that the "gift" that Avraham gave his children from *Ketura* was the knowledge of sorcery and black magic (25:6). The Torah punishes one who engages in witchcraft with the death penalty. So why did Avraham teach them a practice forbidden by the Torah?

answer on page six

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

The first section of this week's *Parsha* describing the purchase of Sarah's burial site contains seven references to "burying a dead person." These refer prophetically to the seven people to be buried there — Avraham & Sarah, Yitzchak & Rivka, Yaakov & Leah — and the wicked Esau, whose head is buried there.

• Vilna Gaon

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered.
3. 23:6 - Prince of G-d.
4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.
5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn't graze in the fields of others.
6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter to marry him.
7. 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness.
8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached.
9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
10. 24:31 - Idols.
11. 24:39 - His own daughter.
12. 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer.
13. 24:50 - That he was wicked.
14. 24:58 - I will go even if you don't want me to go.
15. 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children.
16. 25:1 - Hagar.
17. 25:5 - The power of blessing.
18. 25:7 - One hundred and seventy five years old.
19. 25:17 - Fourteen years.
20. None!

## WEEKLY DAF

### BERACHOS 51 - 57

#### “LABRYMUT”

“Tzum Gezund!” “Labriyut!”

These are the traditional blessings given in Yiddish or Hebrew to one who sneezes. But in Talmudic times the term was “marpei,” which has the same connotation of wishing the sneezer good health.

What if someone sneezes in the *Beis Midrash* while you are learning Torah? Should you interrupt your study to wish him good health?

In the *Beis Midrash* of Rabbi Gamliel, we are told, they did not wish the sneezer “marpei,” in order not to interrupt their Torah study. On the basis of this, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 246:17) rules that we should not interrupt our study in order to offer the blessing of good health.

Is this standard relevant only to previous generations who never lifted their heads out of their holy books to say anything unrelated to Torah, or is it also applicable in our times when we interrupt our learning for other matters as well? The position of the *Prisha* is that since today we interrupt our studies for other matters we may also do so to wish the sneezer well.

The *Turei Zahav*, however, takes issue with this approach. He cites what he assumes is the basis for this distinction between eras. Back in the second *perek* (16a) we learned that a *chassan* is exempt from the recital of the *Shma* on his wedding

night because his mental preoccupation with the consummation of his marriage prevents him from maintaining the proper concentration required for this mitzvah. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 70:3), however, rules that this exemption for the *chassan* no longer applies, since no one really concentrates so intently when reciting the *Shma* in our times.

If this halachic precedent is indeed the basis for the approach of the *Prisha*, it is a highly questionable extension, argues the *Turei Zahav*. By reflecting on the low level of concentration which is universal in our day we arrive at the positive result of a *chassan* also reciting the *Shma*. But what right, he asks, do we have to utilize our lower level of Torah study to sanction an interruption for blessing the sneezer, which will have the negative effect of encouraging people in the *Beis Midrash* to interrupt their study for all sorts of idle discussion?

Despite this challenge the *Aruch Hashulchan* (246:33) cites only the lenient opinion of the *Prisha*.

• *Berachos* 53a

#### THANKS AND PRAISE

One who was exposed to a situation of peril — the four prototypes cited in the Gemara are travel over oceans or deserts, illness and imprisonment — must make the blessing of “Hagome!” when he survives that

threat to his life. The blessing must be made in the presence of a *minyan* of Jews (the custom is to do so in the synagogue after the reading of the Torah) and there should preferably be at least two Torah scholars among them.

This is all derived from the passage in *Tehillim* (107:32) which directs those who have survived danger to “exalt Him in a gathering of the people and praise Him in the council of sages.”

The blessing of exaltation before a *minyan* is an expression of thanks to Heaven for being saved. But when a survivor of any threat to his life expresses gratitude his initial attitude to the experience he has just endured is that he would have preferred to have been spared both the danger and the deliverance.

This, however, is an improper perspective. Every experience in life is an education in appreciating the ways of Divine Providence. When a survivor reflects more profoundly on his experience he is not only grateful to Hashem for the deliverance but also sings the praises of Hashem for lifting him to a higher spiritual level through this experience.

This more mature approach is certainly fostered by the presence of a pair of Torah scholars whose deeper understanding of Hashem’s ways inspires praise in addition to thanks.

• *Berachos* 54b

continued from page one

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

This is the nature of deceit: A deceitful person deceives not only others, but himself as well.

The doubting heart, its inability to recognize the truth, comes from our own defects. They deceive us and lie about the truth of existence.

If we will only clear the windows of our soul, our eyes will see the truth shining like a beacon.

#### A GOOD HEART

“Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say ‘Tilt your pitcher so I may drink,’ and who replies ‘Drink and I will even water your camels,’ her will You have designated for Your servant Yitzchak.” (24:14)

In his prayer that he should select the correct wife for Yitzchak, Eliezer chose to rely on the prospective spouse showing only one character trait — *kindness*.

How could Eliezer rely on kindness alone? Surely a wife to be fit for Yitzchak would also need to be outstanding in other areas of character perfection. For example, purity of heart, faith and fear of Hashem.

In the Ethics of the Fathers, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai says to his disciples, “Go out and see which is the good way to which a man should cling.”

Rabbi Eliezer says “A good eye.” Rabbi Yehoshua says “A good friend.” Rabbi Yossi says “A good neighbor.” Rabbi Shimon says “One who foresees the results of an action.” Rabbi Elazar says “A good heart.”

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai then says to them, “I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach to your words, because your words are included in his words.” **A good heart includes all other good characteristics.**

Avraham Avinu was the first of the Avos. As he was the father of Yitzchak and the grandfather of Yaakov, he “contained” the other two patriarchs. Avraham’s most outstanding quality was *chesed*, *kindness*. Kindness contains the other qualities.

Sources:

- **The Eyes Of Truth** - Chidushei Halev;
- **Who’s Sorry Now?** - HaDrash V’Halyun, Rabbi Shalom Schwadron, Rabbi Pesach Krohn;
- **A Good Heart** - Avos 2:9, Rabbi M. Robman in *Zichron Meir, Lekach Tov*

# Yossi & Co.™

A fascinating adventure into the weekly parsha!

To enjoy Yossi, get connected to Ohr Somayach on the Web

## www.ohr.org.il

OVER A BILLION BYTES OF TORAH LITERATURE AND INFORMATION



## HUNGRY FOR TORAH

David <haneve@hotmail.com> wrote:

*I'm 37 with no real Jewish education. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed with the idea of studying Torah, yet at this time of life I have a real hunger for it. I haven't started a family yet; I don't want them to inherit the spiritual void that I did. Any ideas?*

Dear David,

A friend of mine from Yeshiva, when his wife was expecting their first, broke the news to me by saying: "I've got eight years now to study *Bava Metzia!*" (*Bava Metzia* is traditionally the first tractate boys begin when they start studying Talmud at age eight.) We all feel a bit lacking when it comes to our children's Torah education.

I support your desire to start studying. It is basically the only real cure for assimilation and intermarriage in the Jewish community at large, and in our own future generations in particular. There's no time like now to begin.

The best thing is if you can give a block of time — it doesn't have to be too long — but enough so that you can make a real foundation which you can build upon. A year of study would be great, but even a few weeks would make a big difference.

Where do you live? Exactly how much Jewish education do you have? Where you are with respect to job or career? Any info you give can help me suggest where you should study and for how long. If you can't take out a block of time, I can also probably help you arrange a study partner or Torah classes where you are.

I don't think you have to worry about your children "inheriting a spiritual void." Regardless of your own level of actual knowledge, you can raise your children in a solid Jewish community and send them to a good Jewish school. Then, all they need to inherit from you is your "hunger" for spirituality! (By the way, who did you

inherit your spiritual hunger from? Could it be that your parents deserve a little credit?)

## DAD OF DAVID

Rachel Fyman  
<DaleFyman@easyinternet.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*What did Yishai do that gave him the merit to be mentioned always as the father of David, as opposed to, for example, Amram who is rarely mentioned as the father of Moses? Thanks.*

Dear Rachel Fyman,

Often the *Tanach* refers to David as "David son of Yishai" whereas the Torah never refers to Moses as "Moses son of Amram." I think the reason is that David's lineage is of paramount importance. Since David is the founder of the monarchy and the messianic dynasty, the Torah emphasizes that he is a descendant of Yishai who was from the royal tribe of Judah.

Moses, on the other hand, founded the "Torah Dynasty." Through diligence and determination, anyone in the world regardless of lineage can become a Torah scholar. Therefore the Torah de-emphasizes Moses's lineage.

Interestingly, the Torah always refers to Elazar and Ithamar as "the sons of Aharon." Here too, their lineage is emphasized because they owe their positions to their father, Aharon, who was the High Priest.

## A KISS IS JUST A KISS

Eric Posnack  
<eposna@sapient.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*I always enjoy reading your email and have been passing it on to some of my friends. I think it's*

*great that you are taking advantage of the Internet to reach out to so many people. Here's my question: One thing has always bothered me in services. It's the touching of the Torah with the prayer-book and kissing the prayer-book afterwards. This strikes me as a form of idolatry. It appears to be worshipping the Torah as an idol and we're instructed by the Torah not to do that. How is this act not idolatry? Thanks again for your many emails, and I look forward to your response.*

Dear Eric Posnack,

A kiss is a way of expressing love and affection, not only a means of worship. When a father kisses his child it does not mean he worships him. We love the Torah, as it is our way of maintaining closeness to Hashem, Therefore we express our love in the earthly manner we are used to, such as kissing, in order to encourage our feeling of love towards Hashem and the Torah.

## SHABBAT IN THE FAST LANE

Rabbi Mordechai J. Gold from Indianapolis, Indiana  
<mjgold1@juno.com> wrote:

*I am a Mashgiach in a mid-western city. I am involved with very secular Jews. I would like to have guests for Shabbat, but the problem is that there is the definite chance that there will be chillul Shabbos [desecration of Shabbat] like driving their car to my home! Am I allowed to have them over to my home for the Shabbat meal?*

Dear Rabbi Gold,

As you know, it's forbidden to cause a fellow Jew to transgress the Torah. This is true regardless of that person's level of observance or affiliation. But what if your intention is to show the other person the beauty of Torah observance?

Your question was asked to a

renowned halachic authority in Jerusalem. He said that if you have a proven talent for reaching out to non-observant people then you can invite them for Shabbat, but the invitation must include the option to stay within walking

distance for the entire Shabbat. Even if you're sure they'll chose to drive, you've done your part by sincerely offering to accommodate them.

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

### Last week we asked:

How is water from the sea like atonement like a cow?  
(Say these clues in Hebrew And then you'll know just how!)  
How's an onion in the shade like three that he kneaded?  
(These clues, too, are much clearer,  
When in Hebrew they're repeated.)

### Answer:

In Hebrew, these are all homographs — that is, they

are pairs of words that are spelled the same but pronounced differently.

Water / From the sea = **Mayim / Miyam**

Atonement / Like a cow = **Kapara / K'para**

An onion / In the shade = **Batzal / Batzel**

Three / That he kneaded = **Shalosh / Shelash**

In Hebrew, these pairs of words are all spelled exactly the same!

• Riddle thanks to *Kol Simcha Friday Morning English Radio*

New Feature!

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ask-the-Rabbi" features.

This is a problem I've faced more than once! Is something "parev" or "REALLY parev" (i.e., not cooked in a fleishig or milchig pot). I think that the response should have made clear that the potatoes cooked in a fleishig pot can't be eaten at the same time as something milchig (or vice versa). It's implied from the second sentence in your answer, but not really clear to someone who didn't know about the issue. Kol Tuv.

• *Jeremy Rose, Albans, UK <jeremy@comsys.co.uk>*

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but when you wrote "If you eat food that is parve — neither milk nor meat — which was cooked using clean "meat" utensils, you don't need to wait six hours before eating milk foods." Shouldn't it be made clear that although this is permitted, they may

NOT be eaten together (in the same meal) with dairy foods?

• *Rachi & Devorah Messing, Baltimore, MD <rachim@juno.com>*

The Rabbi replies: Food cooked in a clean *milchig* or *fleishig* pot that had not been used for 24 hours may be eaten together with either milk or meat. (Initially, one shouldn't cook food in such a pot *intending* to eat it with the opposite kind of food.) If, on the other hand, the food was cooked in a pot that *had* been used within 24 hours for milk or meat, the *Beit Yosef* permits eating the food together with the opposite kind of food whereas the *Remah* forbids this. The Sephardic custom generally follows the *Beit Yosef* while the Ashkenazic custom generally follows the *Remah*.

Some other suggestions to answer your riddle about the people in the Torah whose names spelled backwards describe them:

- *Puah / Ha'of* — Puah cooed to the babies and took care of them like birds and B'nei Yisrael are compared to birds.
- *Lavan / Naval* — Lavan was a low person, a "naval."

• *Mamaleh@aol.com*

## BONUS ANSWER!

continued from page three

Avraham didn't teach them sorcery with the intention that they practice it. He wanted to give them expertise in such matters so that they could overcome others who tried to use wizardry against them.

• *Gur Aryeh*

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### RAMBAN

- 22:9 The Cave of *Machpela*
- 24:1 Blessed in all Things
- 24:64 Rivka's Modesty
- 25:8 Full of Years

### SFORNO

- 24:14 Prayer or Divination
- 24:65 The Awe of Yitzchak
- 25:8 Avraham's Death