

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY

“...As Hashem commanded Moshe.”  
(39:1)

One guaranteed way to increase sales of a product is to put a flash on the box saying “New!!! Improved!!!”

Inevitably, the veracity of this claim is in inverse proportion to the number of exclamation marks which follow it.

We have an almost insatiable desire for “new.” Our society is founded on the self-evident premise that everything can and needs to be improved.

There’s an old American folk saying: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

In this week’s Parsha, the words “As Hashem commanded Moshe” appear over and over again. Twenty-two times. At the end of every single detail of the *Mishkan*, “As Hashem commanded ... as Hashem commanded Moshe ... as Hashem commanded Moshe.”

Why this seeming redundancy?

The purpose of the *Mishkan* was to atone for the making of the golden calf. And the underlying flaw evinced by the golden calf was the desire to be smarter than Hashem.

The Jewish People had seen that Moshe had acted as an intermediary between them and Hashem. When Moshe failed to come down from the mountain they saw in the clouds a vision of his dead body being carried on a bier. In their confusion, the Jews surmised they would need someone or something to replace Moshe; some

vehicle for the Divine Presence to rest amongst them.

In this assumption they were not far off the mark. But there’s another American folk saying: “Close only counts in horseshoes and hand-grenades.” Not being far from the mark can be as far as day is from night.

True, there would be a vehicle through which the Divine Presence would rest on the Jewish People, and its name was the *Mishkan*. However, the *Mishkan* could only be built

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“The word of Hashem is perfect. It restores the soul. It is like no man-made panacea.”

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according to the original Maker’s instructions. No improvements are possible on these instructions. And when we try to make improvements, we end up with a golden calf. When we try and modernize and pluralize we end up with a golden calf.

The word of Hashem is perfect. It restores the soul. It is like no man-made panacea. If we want Hashem’s

presence to dwell in our lives, the only way is through following the Maker’s instructions — to the letter. Otherwise we end up with a golden calf.

It is for this reason that after each detail of the *Mishkan* the Torah says “as Hashem commanded Moshe.”

The essence of the *Mishkan* was that it was “as Hashem commanded Moshe” and not through the mistaken good intentions of man.

### NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

“And each person whose heart motivated him came.” (35:21)

Take a look at the really wealthy people in the world. What is it that they all have in common? Tremendous initiative. Initiative means not focusing on what you have now, but having the confidence to project what might be, and to act on it.

“And each person whose heart motivated him came.”

The workers who made the *Mishkan* needed to be motivated by their hearts because none of them had any previous experience in the skills necessary for building it, and there were no teachers to train them! They were the true pioneers. They were successful because they had the inner courage to come forth and volunteer to do whatever was needed. They didn’t think about their shortcomings. They projected their dreams.

Just as it takes great initiative to become materially wealthy, so too it

# PARSHA OVERVIEW

## VAYAKHEL

Moshe exhorts the *Bnei Yisrael* to keep Shabbos, and requests donations for the materials for the construction of the *Mishkan* (tent of meeting). He collects gold, silver, precious stones, animal skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the *Menorah* and for anointing. The princes of each of the twelve tribes bring the precious stones for the *Kohen Gadol's* breastplate and *ephod*. Hashem appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen for the building of the *Mishkan* and its vessels. The *Bnei Yisrael* contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed to serve as the material for the *Mishkan's* roof and door. Gold-covered boards set in silver bases were connected and formed the walls of the *Mishkan*. Betzalel made the *Aron Hakodesh* (Ark), which contained the Tablets of the Covenant, from wood that was covered with gold on the inside and outside. On the cover of the Ark were two small figures facing each other with wings arching over the Ark. The *Menorah* and the *Shulchan*, the table with the showbreads, were also made of gold. Two altars were made: A smaller one for burning

incense, made of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for the purpose of sacrifices that was made of wood that was covered with copper.

## PEKUDEI

The Book of *Shemos* comes to its conclusion with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the *Mishkan*, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. The *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to Hashem's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the *Mishkan* should be set up on the first day of the first month, *Nissan*. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the *Mishkan* and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the *Mishkan* is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that Hashem's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the *Mishkan*, the *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

## HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 36:16-38

### Parshas Parah

### HEART OF STONE

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 Pesach sacrifice 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 Pesach sacrifice.

The Haftorah describes the time of Mashiach, when Hashem will "sprinkle purifying waters on the *Bnei Yisrael*" and remove from them 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 Hashem 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 beats in time to its Maker.

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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

### GIVING EXPRESSION TO LOVE

When Moshe Rabbeinu was refused entry into *Eretz Yisrael* he complained to Hashem:

"The bones of Yosef shall enter the land and I shall not enter?"

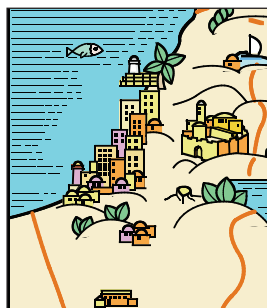
"He who proudly admitted that this was his land shall be buried in it," replied Hashem, "but he who did not admit that this was his land shall not be buried in it."

Yosef did not deny his Hebrew origin when Potifar's wife (*Bereishis*

39:14) derided him as a "Hebrew brought here to make fun of us." He even went further in describing himself to the chief butler (*Bereishis 40:15*) as one who "had been stolen from the land of the Hebrews."

But when the daughters of Yisro told their father that "an Egyptian man rescued us" (*Shemos 2:19*), Moshe made no effort to correct this false impression and stress his Hebrew origins.

• *Devarim Rabbah 2:8*



## PARSHA INSIGHTS

takes great initiative to become *spiritually* wealthy. Capitalize on those peak moments of inspiration to focus your spiritual goals higher and higher, and you will get help from above to lift you to the skies.

### MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

**“He should make the copper laver ... from the mirrors of the legions...” (38:8)**

**W**hen you look at someone else, what do you see? You notice all the character flaws that he himself tries so hard to conceal. When you look at someone else, think that you are looking in a mirror. Just as a mirror reveals to us our unsightly features, so too when we see character flaws in others, we should check for those same traits in ourselves. That’s what the saying means: “Who is wise? He who learns from every person (Avos).”

When the *kohanim* prepared for the service of Hashem in the *Mishkan*, they washed their hands and feet. On a mystical level, this cleansed them of

any spiritual blemish, from any defect, bias or partiality. The laver in which they washed was made entirely of mirrors. This reminded the *kohanim* that they should check themselves for those character faults that they perceived in others. Because were they only to look at themselves, they would find it very hard to identify their own faults.

### MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL II

**“He should make the copper laver...from the mirrors of the legions...” (38:8)**

**I**n the courtyard of the Tabernacle stood a very large copper laver from which the *kohanim* washed their hands and feet before performing the service of the *Mishkan*. It was made exclusively from brightly polished sheets of copper that had been used by the Jewish women as mirrors to adorn themselves.

At first, Moshe was loath to accept the mirrors. Since they had been used to incite desire, he considered them unsuitable for such an elevated

purpose. However Hashem instructed him to accept them. These mirrors were more beloved to Hashem than all the other gifts to the *Mishkan*, for through these mirrors the women of Israel had established multitudes — legions of Jewish souls in Egypt. When their husbands were exhausted from the back-breaking slave-labor, the women would go out to them, bring them food and drink, and feed them.

As they sat there, they would take out their mirrors and each one would look at herself, together with her husband, in the mirror. She would allure him with words, saying “Am I not more beautiful than you?”

This is what the Torah alludes to when it speaks of the “mirrors of the legions.”

Sources:

- **We Have The Technology** - Beis Halevi
- **No Previous Experience Required** - Ramban, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
- **Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall** - Toldos Yaakov Yosef
- **Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall II** - Rashi

## BONUS QUESTION?

Rashi never “just” comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi answers unspoken questions arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah text. Anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi’s classic Torah commentary must always ask: **“What’s Bothering Rashi?”**

“And Betzalel made the ark of acacia wood...” (37:1) Rashi: “Because he gave himself over to the work more wholeheartedly than the other wise people, it is called after his name.”

Why does Rashi draw such a conclusion? The Torah simply tells us that Betzalel made these objects.

answer on page five

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

**“Each person who waved a waving of gold ... and all who donated a silver or copper donation.... (35:22-24)”** Why were donations of gold called “wavings?” Because when people gave gold, they waved it due to its great value.

• Ramban

This issue is dedicated in memory of

**ETTA WILLNER** ה"ע

(Eta Bas Elias)

of Hallendale, Florida

on the occasion of her yahrzeit on 20 Adar

## WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 107 - 113

### A FISHY MYSTERY

May one write the Torah chapters for *tefillin* on the skin of a fish? This question was put to Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak by the Sage Mar, the son of the Sage Ravina. It appears in the *gemara*'s discussion of which living things are considered as having a layer of skin covering their flesh and the ramifications of this for one who wounds such a creature on Shabbos.

Rabbi Nachman's response was that while it is obvious that a fish has a skin, we will have to wait for the Prophet Eliyahu to reveal to us whether the inherent uncleanness of this skin is removed in processing it for parchment. Since we have not yet merited Eliyahu's arrival, Rambam rules that we may not use fish skin for *tefillin*.

A simple reading of the *gemara* suggests that the physical uncleanness is the putrid odor of fish skin. But it is difficult to understand why we need a prophet to reveal to us something which we can determine with our own sense of smell.

Rabbi Nissim (*RaN*), one of the early commentaries, offers another perspective. The *gemara* (*Shabbos 146a*) tells us that when the primeval serpent persuaded Chava to sin by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he instilled a spiritual uncleanness into the entire universe. The Jewish People, and the spirits of their future generations and converts, which stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, were purified of this uncleanness. All animal life, except for fish, was there as well, adds Rabbi Nissim, and was likewise purified. The question remaining for Eliyahu to solve is whether this spiritual uncleanness disappears during the processing of the skin.

A more recent commentary, Sfas Emes, suggests that only animal life requiring *shechita*, such as animals and fowl, were granted release from spiritual uncleanness, to the exclusion of fish which do not require *shechita*. Only Eliyahu will tell us whether processing achieves the same effect.

• *Shabbos 108a*

### WHEN WORD IS WORK

Shabbos is different! Since this day is holy, our Sages taught us that we must show our respect for this difference in a variety of ways. Not only must the clothes we wear on Shabbos be different than those we wear on the weekdays, and the manner in which we walk be different from how we move about on the weekdays, but even our talk on Shabbos must be different from our talk on the weekdays.

Rashi explains this ban on weekday talk as referring to discussion of weekday business and calculations, activities which are forbidden on Shabbos. Tosefos rejects this approach because discussion of business comes under another category of activity previously mentioned in the *gemara*. Rabbeinu Tam, one of the leading Tosefists, suggests that the aforementioned curb on speech relates not to the *subject* but rather to the *quantity* of talk, even about permissible things.

In support of this point he cites a *Midrash* which tells of the extremely talkative elderly mother of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. On Shabbos the Sage would remind her that it was Shabbos and she would become silent.

A further support is the Jerusalem Talmud which relates that the Sages stretched the law to its limit in order to permit us to say "Good Shabbos" to one another.

The reason for all of this caution in regard to talking on Shabbos, says Maharsha, is that in regard to Shabbos, word is equivalent to work: The Torah says "(Hashem) rested on the seventh day from all the *work* which He had done (*Bereishis 2:2*)," and King David explains that "with the *word* of Hashem" everything was created (*Tehillim 33:6*). Since word is work, on Shabbos we must be careful which words we speak and how many of them.

• *Shabbos 113b*

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# PARSHA Q&A ?

## VAYAKHEL

1. What three different words in this week's Parsha are spelled with the same four letters?
2. Why is the prohibition against doing work on Shabbos written prior to the instruction for building the *Mishkan*?
3. In verse 35:11, what is the *Mishkan*, the tent of the *Mishkan* and the covering of the *Mishkan*?
4. What function did the *bigdei hasrad* serve?
5. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat's hair?
6. Why were the Princes the last to contribute to the building of the *Mishkan*? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with their actions?
7. Who does the Torah identify as the primary builders of the *Mishkan*? From which tribes were they?
8. What image was woven into the *Paroches*?
9. Why does the Torah attribute the building of the *Aron* to Betzalel?

10. Of what materials was the *Mizbach HaOlah* (Burnt-offering Altar) composed?

## PEKUDEI

1. Why is the word *Mishkan* stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the *Mishkan* in the *Midbar*?
3. What is the meaning of the name Betzalel?
4. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the *Mishkan*? Who contributed?
5. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
6. How were the gold threads made?
7. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
8. Which date was the first time that the *Mishkan* was erected and not dismantled?
9. Where was the *Menorah* placed in the *Mishkan*?
10. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

continued from page three

## BONUS ANSWER!

Betzalel certainly didn't make these things alone. Oholiav and all the wise men helped. (See 36:1). But because he took full responsibility and gave himself over completely, it is as if he made them alone.

• Concept based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers

# PARSHA Q&A!

## Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

### VAYAKHEL

1. 36:35, 37:6,19 - *Paroches*, *Kapores* and *Kaftor*.
2. 35:2 - To emphasize that the building of the *Mishkan* doesn't supersede the laws of Shabbos.
3. 35:11 - The lower curtains that were visible in the structure, the covering of goat skins, the coverings of ram and tachash skins, respectively.
4. 35:19 - They covered the *Aron*, *Shulchan*, *Menorah*, and the *Mizbechos* during transport.
5. 35:26 - It was spun directly from off of the backs of the goats.
6. 35:27 - The Princes reasoned that they would first let the people contribute materials needed for the *Mishkan* and then they would contribute what was lacking. The Torah shows its dissat-

isfaction by deleting a letter from their title.

7. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from the tribe of Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan.
8. 36:35 - *Charuvim*. (See Rashi 26:31).
9. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone else.
10. 38:1-2 - Wood overlaid with copper.

### PEKUDEI

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beis Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a "*mashkon*" (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
3. 38:22 - The name means "in the shadow of G-d."

4. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man that was counted from twenty years of age and up (excluding the *levi'im*).
5. 39:1 - Linen. (See Rashi 31:10).
6. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See Rashi 28:6).
7. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
8. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the *Midbar*. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the *Mishkan*. (Rashi 39:29)
9. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *Shulchan*.
10. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the *Mishkan*.

# ASK *the* RABBI

## NAME CHANGE

Name@Withheld wrote,

Dear Rabbi,  
Unfortunately, my wife is now seriously ill with cancer. With the guidance of our Rabbi we added a second name for her (from Pninah bat Leah to Pninah Tamar bat Leah). Would you be so kind to explain this “addition” to your readers and, if I am not imposing, offer a “Mishebarach” [prayer] for her. Thank you.

Dear Name@Withheld,

The Talmud states that four things have the power to change a person’s fortune: Giving charity, praying, changing your behavior (*teshuvah*), and changing your name. The Talmud explains that only after Sarah’s name was changed (from Sarai to Sarah) did she become pregnant and bear Yitzchak. The Talmud considers a fifth possibility, that of changing one’s location.

Changing one’s name symbolizes a powerful resolve to better one’s behavior. It’s like saying “I’m not the same person who used to be lax about mitzvah observance.” This earnest desire to improve one’s ways is then counted in the person’s merit.

May Hashem grant your wife, *Pninah Tamar bat Leah*, a complete and speedy recovery.

Source:

- Tractate Rosh Hashana 16b

## IF YOU KNEW SUSHI...

Chuped <Chuped@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
My friend insists that sushi made from kosher fish, although raw, is kosher, and that there is a glatt kosher restaurant in New York that serves sushi. I responded that sushi cannot be kosher because the fish in its raw state contains “blood.” I agree, of course, that if the fish is properly prepared and cooked that the fish would then be permissible to eat. Am I correct?

Dear Chuped,

Actually, your friend is correct. Jews have been eating raw fish ever since

herring was invented. Although the Torah forbids animal and fowl blood, kosher fish are permitted without removing their blood.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 13:1

## GOOD AND BETTER

Bob Glina from Birmingham, AL  
<Bob\_karen\_glina@msn.com>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Define and differentiate between *tzedakah* and *gemilut chassadim*.

Dear Bob Glina,

*Gemilut Chassadim* means bestowing kindness. *Tzedakah* means charity, referring to giving money or resources.

There are many types of *Gemilut Chassadim*. *Tzedakah* is one subcategory of *Gemilut Chassadim*. Lending money or items is an example of *Gemilut Chassadim* that is not *Tzedakah*.

The Sages say that *Gemilut Chassadim* is greater than *Tzedaka* because:

- *Tzedaka* is only performed with money, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* can be performed either with money or with one’s body.
- *Tzedaka* only helps poor people, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* helps both rich and poor. Example: Even a wealthy bride and groom need friends to participate in their wedding (it’s just not the same to hire a bunch of people to do it).
- *Tzedaka* is given only to the living, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* is for both the living and the dead. For example: Burying the dead is an act of *Gemilut Chassadim* to the departed.

Sources:

- Tractate Sukka 49b
- Talmud Yerushalmi, Peah 1

## PAREVE ANSWER

Elly Goldberg from South Africa  
<Goldberg <goldberg@icon.co.za>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

“Pareve” is a very common term. Has it always been this way, and when did it originate? Also, what is the source of the word? Thank You.

Melissa Taylor from Raleigh, North Carolina <foodsafety@ncsu.edu>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have a company who has a labeling issue. They need to know whether the spelling for a Kosher food is *parve*, *pareve* or *parave*. Could you please tell me the difference if there is one?

Dear Elly Goldberg and Melissa Taylor,

*Pareve* comes from a Yiddish word meaning something that is neither meat nor milk. It’s not clear exactly when it was introduced into the lexicon, and which from which language it originated (Yiddish is compilation of many languages). It does not appear in Shulchan Aruch. There are similar words in the Talmud, but they seem to have no connection.

Webster’s Dictionary spells it “pareve.” “Parve” also looks OK, and it’s one letter shorter so you’ll save on printing costs! I suggest that you ask the rabbi supervising the *kashrut* of your product.

## PAGING A NATION

Dr. Eric Chevlen from Youngstown, Ohio  
<Eric\_Chevlen@hmis.org>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Where can I learn about the history of the *Daf Yomi* (the worldwide coordinated study of a page of Talmud per day). My recollection is that the “uncoordinated coordination” began about 70 years ago, but I don’t know that for sure, and I don’t remember the name of the Rabbi who promoted or proposed it. I assume there were scholars and laymen who were studying a page of Talmud a day before that. Were they all studying different pages then? What prompted the promoter to make his proposal? How was it first coordinated or promulgated?

## ASK the RABBI

Dear Dr. Eric Chevlen,

The idea of having a universal Daf Yomi was first proposed by Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin. It was accepted in 1922 by the Council of Torah Sages in Eastern Europe and thus began what is today an international study scheme by which tens of thousands of Jews worldwide study the same folio page of Talmud every day.

When Rabbi Shapiro raised the idea, one of his most prominent backers was Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, known as the Chafetz Chaim. He supported the idea because certain portions of the Talmud were not commonly studied, “neglected” in favor of more “popular” portions. The methodical study of a page of Talmud a day ensured that the entire Talmud would be studied in the course of seven and a half years.

The first completion of the Daf Yomi cycle took place on Tu B'Shvat 1930. In honor of Rabbi Shapiro, it was celebrated in his town, Lublin. The second completion in 1938 attracted 20,000 celebrants to Lublin, indicating just how popular Daf Yomi had become over such a short period.

The third completion was in 1945. Because of the Holocaust, the largest celebrations were in Israel. The fourth

completion was in 1953. The fifth celebration in 1960 was the first one attracting mass attendance in America. Amongst others, it was attended by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky and Rabbi Aharon Kotler.

The sixth completion in 1968 came shortly after the reunification of Jerusalem and the return of the Western Wall. At that time, celebrations were held in the USA, England, Belgium, Argentina, Mexico, Holland and France. The eighth completion in 1982 was the first to cater to large crowds in America, filling New York's Felt Forum to capacity (5,000 seats) with thousands of people standing outside. In Israel there were 20,000 participants.

In 1990, 20,000 people crowded into Madison Square Gardens to celebrate the ninth completion. The tenth and most recent completion was in 1997. In America alone there were over 70,000 participants! And tens of thousands more through out the world.

Virtually any place Jews are, there are people studying Daf Yomi. It's wonderful that a person can go almost anywhere in the world and participate in a class on the exact same section of Talmud he is currently studying. It draws Jews together in a unique way.

### PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ask-the-Rabbi” features

#### Re: “Current Candles” (Ohrnet Miketz):

I wouldn't think it permitted to use an electric menorah, since one should commemorate an event by using a setup as similar as possible to the authentic case in history, and one should have the right feeling when doing so. Otherwise the next step would be to watch videos of people lighting real menorahs. Either you practice and you do it the traditional way, or you do it as you like, but if so you should realize that it is not the same practice. It is like feeding a virtual pet instead of a live pet!

• Albert Sarda From Izmir, Turkey  
<asarda@service.raksnet.com.tr>

#### Re: Calvin Klein vs. Label Klein (Ohrnet Bo):

“Ask the Rabbi” wrote:

“Something that's normally removed, like a price tag, is not considered part of your clothing. So it's forbidden to “wear” a price tag outside on Shabbat.”

I recently had the same question, and looked it up in the English *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchosa* (18:44). But there it says you may walk into a *reshuth harabim* (public domain) with labels; i.e., laundry labels, price tags, identification labels, etc.

• Yossie Abramson <yossie@juno.com>

**The Rabbi Responds:** The source from *Shemirat Shabbat* to which you refer does not relate to tags which can be seen on the outside of the garment, but rather to hidden tags. (See chapter 18:30 and footnote 131, and 18:33. See also *Mishnah Berurah* 301:150.) Accepted practice is to be strict even regarding hidden price tags.

#### Re: Keeping Kosher in Kosherland (Ohrnet Bo):

While halachically a person might be believed for his own kashrus verification, unfortunately there have been horror stories where whole communities had to throw out their dishes because of establishments “where everyone bought.” While these cases, where exposed, might be rare, there are still a lot of other problems which only a trained *mashgiach* can detect. It is definitely worth the proprietor the extra expense for reliable certification, as I know there are countless people who will not patronize a place without a “*teudat kashrut*” no matter how religious the owner might be. Keep up the great work of spreading Torah across the board.

• Naftali Baum, Maalot Dafna, Jerusalem

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

## GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

New Feature!

In a mystery, we're always looking for the culprit. Sometimes, we don't have far to go. Let's examine the case of the woman who was...

### DRESSED TO KILL

I was at a wedding, standing with a group of friends. We were discussing clothing, shoes, bags and dressing for fancy occasions.

R. admitted, "It took me two hours to get ready for this wedding."

I piped up, "Two hours! I could never spend two hours to get ready."

"Well," commented R., "that's why I look like this and you look like that."

I turned and walked away, not knowing where to put myself or what to think. Why would she have said something like that? After replaying the conversation endless times in my mind, it suddenly dawned on me that R. must have felt insulted and lashed back at me for what she felt was an insensitive comment directed at her. Seeing her comment in the context of a response put it in an entirely different light.

A hurtful statement may have been a defensive response to what was perceived as a verbal push. In judging favorably it is helpful to recognize the part we play in triggering other people's responses. When people feel verbally attacked, they often strike back. We often don't see our comments as provocative until someone lets us know — in no uncertain terms — that they felt provoked. Others may perceive our words, tone of voice, or facial expressions as hostile or derisive, even though we didn't mean them as such.

The above is an example of finding a merit for a person which, although it does not completely clear the person, does make the person look better. To completely exonerate the woman in the story, let's examine her words again, but this time let's interpret her words to mean the exact opposite: "That's why I look (bad) like this, and you look (good) like that (because you don't need to spend so much time getting ready, while I do)!"

Does this seem like a far-fetched interpretation of her words? Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky was once asked by his students: Everything Hashem created has a purpose. What is the purpose of creating "crooked" reasoning? His answer: "So we can use it to judge others favorably."

• Based on "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi?

answer next week...

• Submitted by Alan Frank from Jerusalem

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### VAYAKHEL

#### Ramban

- 35:1 Date of the Assembly
- 35:21 Generosity and Inspiration
- 35:22 Female Leadership
- 38:8 Mirrors of Virtue

#### Ibn Ezra

- 35:27 Gifts of the Princes
- 35:34 Learning and Teaching
- 38:8 Mirrors of Devotion

#### Sefer Hachinuch

- 114 Recess from Judgment

### PEKUDEI

#### Ramban

- 38:22 Betzalel's Genius
- 40:2 Timetable of the Yemei Miluim

#### Ibn Ezra

- 38:11 Sunshine and Rain
- 40:35 Covering the Aron

#### Sforno

- 40:18 Essence of the Mishkan

#### Ba'al HaTurim

- 39:27 Storage of the Garments

#### Aderes Eliyahu

- 39:33 The World of the Mishkan

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