

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

RAIN ON MY PARADE

“You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge...” (19:18)

You wake up with a smile on your face. It's good to be alive. Another day. Another gift. As you leave your house, you bump into your neighbor. “Good morning, Fred!” you beam. “What's good about it?” comes the dour reply. He gets into his car and drives off. You try out your smile again, but you find that there's a little dent in it that wasn't there before.

The Torah prohibits a person from taking revenge: You ask your neighbor to lend you his lawn mower and he refuses. The next week he asks to borrow your drill. You're not allowed to refuse him because he refused you. That's called taking revenge. You're not even allowed to say “Of course, you can borrow my drill — I'm not like you; I lend my things.” The Torah categorically calls this bearing a grudge.

The question arises however: If I'm not allowed to take revenge by refusing to lend my drill, shouldn't the Torah also prohibit my “friend” from refusing to lend me his lawn mower? After all, it was he who started things. If it hadn't been for him not lending me his lawn mower, none of this would have happened in the first place.

Someone who refuses to lend his possessions has already proven

himself to be terminally mean. The Torah isn't addressing him. What the Torah is concerned about is that his meanness will become infectious, that his bad character will sour that of his neighbor, turning his generosity into stinginess.

When your neighbor returns your friendly greeting with a look that could freeze a fire, don't let him control your life. Go on and smile and smile. Don't let other people's behavior dictate who you are.

“Go on and smile and smile. Don't let other people's behavior dictate who you are.”

INSIDE OUT

“And he (Aharon) will place the incense on the fire in front of Hashem” (16:13)

The Mishneh Torah is undoubtedly Maimonides' masterwork. It details in

the greatest precision every aspect of Jewish Life. As it is a work of halacha, one would think that a story would be out of place. However, in the section that deals with the Yom Kippur service in the *Beis Hamikdash*, Maimonides seems to depart from the eternal exactness of halacha to describe a most moving scene:

Before the *Kohen Gadol* went out to perform the Yom Kippur service, the Elders of the Sanhedrin would make him swear to do the service exactly as instructed. Specifically, they would make him swear to burn the incense only *inside* the Holy of Holies as the Oral Torah mandates. The Sadducees, who denied the authority of the Oral Torah, claimed that the incense should first be placed on a burning fire-pan *outside* the Holy of Holies. The Elders made the *Kohen Gadol* swear not to perform the service in the manner of the Sadducees.

Then, both *Kohen Gadol* and the Elders would turn aside from each other and weep. The *Kohen Gadol* wept because they suspected him of being a Sadducee. The Elders wept because there was reason to suspect him.

But why did Maimonides choose to enshrine this tragically touching moment in a work designed to be a practical halacha manual?

Let us understand how this ceremony came into being. It happened that one year the Sadducees

PARSHA OVERVIEW

ACHAREI MOS

Hashem instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and in special clothing. He brings offerings that are unique for Yom Kippur, including the two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is "for Hashem" and is offered in the Temple, while the other is "for Azazel" in the desert. The Torah states the individual's obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a women's monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught: *Prohibitions*: Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; and tattooing.

Positive: Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating fruits from a tree's 4th year in Jerusalem; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf.

Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrus* and thereby maintain our unique and separate status.

HAFTORAH: AMOS 9, 7-15

THE WELLSPRING OF TOMATOES

"Behold — days are coming — the words of Hashem — when the plower will encounter the reaper..." (9:13)

If you grow up in a city it's easy to think that cucumbers grow in tin cans; that corn has no incarnation

other than flakes, and that ketchup is bottled as it wells up from deep tomato springs.

When it comes to the way Hashem runs the world, we are sometimes like a city kid who knows nothing of farming.

Someone who had never been out of the city once found himself in the country watching a farmer plowing up the earth and sowing seed in the furrows. He thought to himself: "Here is someone in need of urgent psychiatric help. How could this guy bury perfectly good grain in the earth where it will rot?"

Shortly afterward he went back to town. Had he stuck around, he would have witnessed the rotting

seeds burgeon into heavy sheaves of wheat; their grain gathered in sufficiency for the whole year.

When we see the wicked prosper and the righteous in dire adversity, we are like that city kid who went back to town before the harvest arrived. We only see the beginning of the process, not its purpose and completion.

In the future when Hashem will reveal His providential guidance of the world we will understand the purpose of every single event, however seemingly illogical or unfair.

Then we will see the plowing from the perspective of the harvesting — "When the plower will encounter the reaper..."

• The Dubna Maggid

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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

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

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PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

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This issue is dedicated in memory of
חיה דבורה בת אברהם ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

proposed a compromise. They suggested that for the sake of peace and unity, the *Kohen Gadol* should light the incense outside and inside the Holy of Holies.

What could be better than this? Everyone would be happy! You observe Judaism your way, and I'll do it my way.

The Rabbis were in a no-win situation. To accept this offer would add a mitzvah to the Torah, which is expressly forbidden; to refuse would make them seem indifferent to Jewish Unity.

The Rabbis had no option but to demur. But at what great cost! And with what heavy hearts, for they knew they would seem inflexible and uncaring.

Sometimes, those who guard the Torah must make decisions which are a public relation's person's nightmare. But they have no choice. They are protecting the most precious treasure in the world — a treasure that must

never be corrupted or adulterated. But with what heavy hearts, and with what a price these decisions are made.

When the guardians of the Torah stand up and say no, they do so with tears in their eyes.

Maimonides included the incident of the Elders weeping as a halacha for all of time. In every generation the Jewish People have their "Sadducees." But in every generation the defenders of the Torah must weep at having to say "No."

CLIFFHANGER

"Do not imitate the practices of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled..." (18:3)

A group of people live on a mountain top which ends in a sheer cliff and a drop of several thousand feet. One civic-minded fellow, on his own initiative, builds a safety fence to prevent any-

one from venturing too close to the edge of the cliff and inadvertently falling off. Would anyone complain that the fence limited his freedom of movement by making it less likely that he plummet off the mountain to his death?

Those who do not understand the true nature of rabbinic legislation complain that the sages restricted our lives with unnecessary prohibitions. But one who appreciates the seriousness of transgressing a Torah law — the devastating effects such transgressions have on the *neshama*, one's eternal life, and the world in general — feels much more secure knowing there are safety fences to prevent him from plummeting into a spiritual oblivion.

Sources:

- *Rain On My Parade* - Chizkuni as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer
- *Inside Out* - Rabbi Aharon Soleveichik, Rabbi Yonason Rosenblum
- *Cliffhanger* - Rabbi Zev Leff in *Outlooks and Insights*

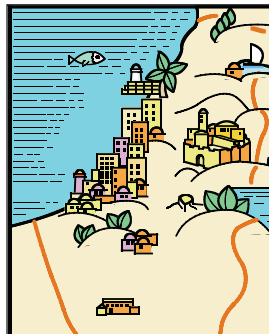
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

When the Prophet Chavakuk (3:6) spoke of Hashem "measuring the earth," this measuring, says Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, encompassed many things.

He measured all the nations and found only Israel worthy of receiving the Torah; all the generations and found only the generation which left Egypt worthy of receiving



the Torah; all the mountains and found only Sinai worthy as the site for giving the Torah; all the cities and found only Jerusalem worthy of building the *Beis Hamikdash* in it.

Similarly, Hashem measured all the lands, and found only *Eretz Yisrael* worthy of being given to the People of Israel.

• *Vayikra Rabbah 13*

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"You shall be holy ... A man shall fear his mother and his father." (19:2-3)

Whenever Jews preserve the sanctity of family life, the children honor and obey their parents. Whenever the sanctity of family life declines, the honor the children show their parents also declines.

• *Mayana shel Torah*

WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 149 - 155

THINKING AND TALKING

When is thinking considered the equivalent of talking and when not? One ramification of this question is what one may say on Shabbos. While it is forbidden by rabbinic law to hire workers on Shabbos to do work after Shabbos, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha rules that one may tell a fellow Jew that he would like him to come to see him when Shabbos is over. Although both people are completely aware that the purpose of that visit is hiring for work, it's permitted to think about work on Shabbos so long as no explicit mention is made of it. The rationale, says Rabbi Yochanan, is that the passage which is the basis for this rabbinical ban (*Yishayahu 58:13*) directs us to honor Shabbos by refraining from doing our weekday activities and "saying things." This implies that *speaking* of weekday matters is forbidden, but not *thinking* about them.

This raises the question of *thinking* as *talking* in other areas. It is forbidden to say or even think words of Torah or prayer in a bathroom or a bathhouse. But in the presence of undress, it is only forbidden to *say* such holy words while *thinking* them is permitted.

In regard to the cleanliness of a place where Torah may be studied, our source is the Torah command in *Devarim (23:14-15)*. There it states that a Jewish soldier must have a shovel included in his military pack so that he will be able to cover his waste with earth. This is necessary because Hashem is present in the Jewish camp and it must therefore be holy. No indication is made here that this is limited to the actual vocalization of Torah, explains Rashi, and the need for maintaining a clean camp is created by the fact that Jews are always thinking Torah thoughts.

When it comes to undress, however, the command is to avoid Hashem seeing any unseemly *davar*, which means both "thing" and "statement." The ban on Torah in the presence of undress is therefore limited to speech, while thinking Torah is permissible.

What about thinking the *Shema* or blessings instead of vocalizing them? In *Mesechta Berachos (20b)* there is a dispute between the Sages Ravina and Rabbi Chisda as to whether thinking is equivalent to talking. The ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 62:3)* is that one does not fulfill any of these obligations by merely thinking the words. The *Mishnah Berurah* explains that this is the consensus of virtually all of the authorities except for Rambam, and one should therefore not rely on thinking his prayers without verbalizing them.

• *Shabbos 150*

FOR THE BIRDS

On Shabbos Parshas Beshalach we read in the Torah about the song the Jews sang at the splitting of the sea and about the manna which fell from heaven. In many Jewish homes, there is a custom on that Shabbos to place wheat kernels or bread crumbs where the birds will be able to eat them.

This custom has many explanations, the most popular of

which is credited by *Taamei HaMinhagim* to the great early leader of the Chassidic movement, the *Chozeh* of Lublin. It focuses on the plot of the wicked Dasan and Aviram to discredit Moshe, who had informed his people that no manna would fall on Shabbos. On Friday night, Dasan and Aviram placed some of their own Friday double portion of manna on the area where it usually fell and incited the people to go out and see that Moshe was wrong. But their plot was foiled by the birds, who devoured the manna before anyone arrived. In appreciation of their action in upholding Moshe's credibility, we supply them with food on the Shabbos in which we read about the manna.

This custom is challenged by one of the leading halachic authorities, *Magen Avraham (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 324:7)*, on the basis of our *gemara*. Our *gemara* rules that one may not go to the bother of supplying food or water on Shabbos to birds whose support is not his responsibility. His objection is based on the approach of Rambam and *Beis Yosef (ibid. 324:11)* who understand the conclusion of our *gemara* as establishing the sole criterion as whether one has responsibility for supporting the birds. According to this criterion there is no difference between supplying the birds with water or with grain.

Other commentaries (*Rabbeinu Nissim* and *Olas Shabbos*) understand the *gemara's* conclusion as establishing a different criterion — whether the birds have an alternative source for their sustenance. This would distinguish between water — which they can easily find in the river — and food, which is not always available. This approach would justify offering crumbs to birds on a winter Shabbos when the fields are bare.

Even though we abide by the stricter approach, that it is forbidden to supply birds with our food even when no other food is available to them, there is room for justifying the aforementioned custom. *Aruch Hashulchan (324:3)* writes that the custom stems from the tradition that the birds joined our ancestors in singing their song of praise to Hashem for splitting the sea, an act for which we show our appreciation by putting out food for them on the Shabbos that we read about this singing. If so, he argues, we are not supplying them food only for their sake, but for our sake as well, in order to better relive the experience of our ancestors, and it is therefore permitted and proper to follow this custom.

Chasam Sofer offers yet another approach for appreciating the birds. Moshe instructed his people (*Shmos 16:32*) to put a vial of manna away as a safekeeping for future generations. When the Prophet Yirmiyahu reproved his generation for not spending enough time in Torah study, the response was that the need to earn a livelihood made it impossible to do so. He entered the *Beis Hamikdash*, took out the vial of manna which was stored in the Holy of Holies, and told them that this was the food which miraculously sustained their ancestors and should remind them that Hashem has many ways to provide a livelihood to those who fear Him. Now that we no longer have the manna to teach us this lesson, we learn it from the birds who are sustained by Hashem with little effort on their part.

• *Shabbos 154b*

PARSHA Q&A ?

ACHAREI MOS

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshas Acharei Mos* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beis Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *Kohen Gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *Azazel*. What is *Azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *kares*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshas Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?
2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's

father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?

3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbos?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shemos* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11, "Do not steal?"
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not do wrong to your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

BONUS QUESTION?

Rashi never just comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi's comments are answers to unspoken questions and difficulties arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah. Therefore, anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi's classic Torah commentary must always ask: "What's Bothering Rashi?"

"With this (b'zos) shall Aharon enter the Holy place: With a bull of the herd as a *chatas* offering and a ram as an *olah* offering." (*Vayikrah* 16:3)

Rashi: "**With this (b'zos)**": This word *b'zos* has the numerical value of 410, hinting to the first Temple (which stood for 410 years).

With this insight, Rashi gives us a glimpse into the Torah's fathomless depth and infinite layers of hidden and prophetic meaning. But why does Rashi suddenly choose to do so here? What's wrong with the simple meaning of the verse that forces Rashi to offer a Midrashic insight? What's bothering Rashi?

answer on page eight

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

ACHAREI MOS

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's offspring die and the person's own life is shortened.
8. 17:13 - Non-domesticated species of kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.

9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as Hashem's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during the lifetime of his wife.

KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because the fundamental teachings of the Torah are contained in this Parsha.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the

command of one's parents.

4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemos* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting their statements.
9. 20:3 - "*Kares*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - Death by "*chenek*" (strangulation).

PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I am a firm believer in Judaism, the Torah and of course in G-d. But the other day someone asked me a question that I had trouble answering. Can G-d make a rock so heavy that He Himself cannot lift?

Badbones <lordevil@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Can G-d create a rock he cannot lift? I know this is an "apikoris" [heretical] question but please answer!

Dear Name@Withheld & Badbones,
My 5 year old son asked me a similar question: "Daddy," he said with a devilish grin, "can G-d make this fork to be that it never was?"

The answer to his question, and to yours, is: No. G-d can't do something that is a contradiction.

G-d can't divide 5 evenly by 2, can't win at chess if He starts with only a king, and can't spell "table" correctly using only 4 letters.

The reason G-d "can't" do these things, is because we have not specified a thing to do; we have contradicted ourselves in the description. "A rock too heavy for the Almighty" is a self-contradiction, because the Almighty is...All Mighty! Therefore, by definition, such a rock can't exist. So your question boils down to: "Can G-d create something which cannot exist?" Of course not; that's a self contradiction. G-d's "inability" to do such a thing does not indicate a lack in G-d; rather, it indicates our failure to define what it is we are asking.

• Thanks to Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

GOTTA LIGHT?

Bud <buddli@niven.imsweb.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Can a widower light candles Friday nights?

Dear Bud,
A man without a wife — whether he is

single, widowed, or simply if his wife is away — should light candles Friday afternoon before sunset.

If his name is Bud, it would be called a Bud Light!

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 263:2

TATTOO YOU

Joshua from Passaic, NJ <josh6086@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I know it is forbidden for a Jew to get a tattoo. My question to you is this: Is getting the name of Hashem as a tattoo even worse; will I be "hexing" myself by getting it? The 4 letters won't be together; the "yud" and "hey" would be on one side of a heart with a crack down the middle and the "vav" and "hey" would be on the other side.

Dear Joshua,

You've answered your own question. Getting a tattoo is explicitly prohibited in the Torah. Getting a tattoo with the four letters that spell G-d's Name is a double disgrace, because you're doing the prohibition with the letters of the Name of G-d who commanded you not to get a tattoo. Whether the letters are in pairs or all together, it is nonetheless the Name of G-d.

Sources:

- Leviticus 19:29

FORE ARE THE MOTHERS

Cheryl Steinberg
New York Presbyterian Hospital <steinbc@cpmail-nz.cis.columbia.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
A co-worker asked me the following question and I didn't have an answer: What is the significance of the name Rivka (Rebecca)? I pointed out that in the Bible only names that are given or changed are explained. Such that the names Moshe (Moses) and Israel (Jacob) are explained, but Abram and others are not.

Rob Brickner from Brooklyn, NY <robraham@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
What do the foremothers' names mean? Why are the forefathers' names explained right in the Chumash and the foremothers' names are not described in detail? Rivka — I have no idea what that name means. The others I have a one or two word translation. But is there a tradition as to what each of the mothers' names stood for?

Dear Cheryl Steinberg and Rob Brickner,

True, the Torah usually explains a name only at the time of birth or when the name is being changed. But Sarai is changed to Sarah and Hoshea is changed to Yehoshua (Joshua), yet the Torah doesn't explicitly explain these names. Yitzchak's naming is narrated in the Torah but his name is not explained. The same is true of Judah's sons. Moses' son's name, Eliezer, is explained in the Torah not at the time of his naming.

True, the Written Torah doesn't explain every name, even the names of some of our greatest people. However, the Oral Torah explains these names.

Sarah comes from the word *sar* meaning "noble" and "ruler." Rivka means a young calf, which is a symbol of innocence. Rachel means a sheep, also associated with innocence. Leah mean tiredness; Leah cried to G-d so much that her eyes looked tired.

Sources:

- Genesis 17:15, 38:3-5
- Exodus 18:4
- Numbers 13:16,
- Tractate Eiruvim 17b
- Sefer Halikutim 17:4

EULOGY OF A FARMER

<TheBergs@delanet.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
My uncle was a farmer. He dedicated his whole life to making things grow. I need to say something about this in his eulogy. Is there something you can recommend from the Torah, Talmud, or a nice Midrash? I need this soon. Todah.

Dear <TheBergs@delanet.com> ,

The Talmud sees a farmer as the model man of faith. The farmer, who depends directly on rain, sunshine and climate, must be a person of faith. He has faith in the Creator every time he plants a seed. He believes that G-d will bless his efforts, and all his efforts are based on that faith.

Sources:

- Talmud Tractate Shabbat 31a

PLEASE PASS THE PLASTIC

Itamar from Thornhill, Ont. <itamar@kosher.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Are the following items *muktzeh* [forbidden to move on

Shabbat]? Passport? Driver's license? Credit card? Birth certificate? I figured a credit card might not be *muktzeh*, because you are not actually carrying money. Thanks a lot.

Dear Itamar,

Muktzeh refers to different types of items which are forbidden to be moved on Shabbat, or which can only be moved under limited circumstances.

A credit card is like money in this regard. It has no use on Shabbat and is therefore *muktzeh*. Important papers, too, are reserved for safekeeping by their owners and therefore they are *muktzeh*.

Sources:

- Magen Avraham 307:20, Mishnah Berurah (ad loc.) 56

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Continuing the Tradition

I was just reading about the *yeshivot* of Pumbedisa and Sura. Seems like your responsa are the continuation of a long tradition, albeit in a somewhat different medium.

- Haiim <chevyI@idt.net> Brooklyn, NY

Re: Source for saying: "May you live to be 120" (Ohrnet Terumah):

A lawyer, Lawrence Glick, told me that the source for the blessing "may you live to be 120" is a verse in Bereishis. He's referring to where, according to Rashi, the Torah says the flood will be in 120 more years, i.e., that mankind will exist for only 120 more years until the flood. But according to other commentaries, the verse means that that human lifespans will begin to decrease until they will be limited to approximately 120.

- Rabbi Yehuda Albin <orsomayach@aol.com>
Director of Ohr Somayach Chicago

Re: Moshe's Punishment for Not Admitting his "Hebrew" Origins (Love of the Land: Ohrnet Vayakhel/Pekudei):

You quoted the *midrash* to the effect that Moshe was punished for the following reason: "When the daughters of Yisro told their father that "an Egyptian man rescued us" (*Shemos*

2:19), Moshe made no effort to correct the false impression of his being Egyptian and to stress his Hebrew origins." Therefore, Moshe was unable to enter the land of Israel.

I heard the following from my father z"l, an Ostrovtsker *Chasid*: The Ostrovtsker Rov asked in relation to this *midrash*: "Surely Moshe did no more than tell the truth, for he was indeed born in Egypt?" He answered that we see from the *midrash* that where a Jew is born is an "accident" of birth — it doesn't make him an Englishman or American or whatever. Every Jew belongs to *Eretz Yisrael*.

- Perets Mett from London, England <p.mett@open.ac.uk>

Re: What's Bothering Rashi?:

I enjoy your feature "What's Bothering Rashi?" A large portion of the commentary of the *Sifsei Chachamim* is dedicated to just this question. I find it unfortunate that this is not a focal point when teaching *Chumash* and Rashi in the *cheder/Beis Yaakov* school systems. It adds a new dimension to both *Chumash* and Rashi, and it teaches children analytic reasoning (i.e., how to think). Keep up the good work.

- Yehuda Zimmerman, Ashdod <zimmery@mail.biu.ac.il>

What I do with Ohrnet

I live in Chile and I have been resending the Spanish version of Ohrnet to more than 40 people by fax for the past year and a half. I even installed a second phone line so as not to tie up the phone — it takes a couple of hours for my computer to send so many faxes! Plus, I know that some of the recipients reread the *Divrei Torah* out loud every week in their *shuls*. Keep up the good work — everyone here loves it!

- Uri Portal <uri@iactiva.cl>

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Comparing is unfair. Every person has his own way of doing things. Families have their own way of doing things, too. One family deems it proper to arrive at an event punctually; in another family, it's accepted to walk in "fashionably late." Your family remembers every birthday and anniversary; your spouse's family lets them slip by. It's only fair to compare people who are exactly alike, with the exact same abilities and circumstances. Of course, no such people exist. For instance, consider the case of the...

VISITATION RITES

We live in Eretz Yisrael, and both my parents and my husband's parents live outside of Israel. My husband's parents visit at least once a year. When they come, they stay for at least a week, and they try to spend every possible minute with us and the kids. They rent an apartment nearby, and my mother-in-law comes over every morning to take the

little kids to the park. They're back in the early afternoon so they can be there when the bigger kids come home from school. Or else they call and have the kids come to their apartment for the afternoon, or take them all out shopping, or to the zoo or whatever. And they love it when the kids sleep over at their place, which they do as often as we will allow. And of course, the entire Shabbos we spend together.

My parents visit, but less frequently; and never for more than four or five days. They insist on staying in a hotel downtown, 20 minutes away (if there's no traffic). They like their leisurely mornings, so they show up around noon and they want to take us all out for lunch. It seems that the whole time at the restaurant is spent in the Sisyphean task of getting the little ones to sit still and be quiet, as is proper restaurant etiquette. Afterwards, my parents just want to go back to their hotel alone and relax. They might stop over later, after the kids are asleep. Instead of a restaurant, they may sug-

gest we all go on some tour or take a drive to another city. Again, it's usually something difficult for the kids, especially the little ones. As for Shabbos, my parents stay in their hotel Friday night. We only see them when they walk over for the daytime meal, if it doesn't rain.

One day, my husband said to me, "Don't your parents like their grandchildren? They never really seem to want just to spend time together with them."

Perhaps the less doting parents are older or have weaker health, which causes them to tire more easily, or to have less stamina for spending time with company. Maybe they are by nature nervous people and don't have the patience to sit around the house and play with the children. Or perhaps there is a hidden issue weighing on their hearts which makes it hard for them to enjoy the simple things in life. Instead of comparing, looking askance at unfamiliar ways and mannerisms, try to understand that people are different.

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked: What is the explanation of the following? "Shmini B'Shmini Shmini Shmini."

Answer: Outside of the Land of Israel, when Parshat **Shmini** is read **B'Shmini**, i.e., on the eighth day of Passover at *mincha* time (due to the eighth day of Passover occurring on Shabbat), then Parshat **Shmini** is read **Shmini**, i.e., eight times altogether.

The eight times are: 1) *Mincha* time on Shabbat before Passover 2) Monday before Passover 3) Thursday before Passover 4) First day of Passover (which is also Shabbat) at *mincha* time 5) Eighth day of Passover (which is also Shabbat) at *mincha* time 6) Monday after Passover 7) Thursday after Passover 8) Morning of Shabbat Parshat *Shmini*.

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BONUS ANSWER!

Aharon was commanded to bring two separate offerings when entering the Holy Place, a bull and a ram. Therefore, one would expect the verse to say "with these" (*b'ayleh*), rather than "with this" (*b'zos*). This subtle departure from what would seem proper grammar prompts Rashi to search for a meaning beyond the simple one.

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

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

ACHAREI MOS

Ramban

16:21	The Scapegoat
17:2	Meat in the Midbar
17:7	Demons
17:11	Prohibition Against Eating Blood
Sefer HaChinuch	
184	The Sanctity of the Mishkan
185	Yom Kippur

187 Covering the Blood

Sforno

16:30	Repentance
17:7	Demons

KEDOSHIM

Ramban

19:2	Be Holy
19:14	Who May Not Be Cursed
19:17	Love and Rebuke

19:18	Love Your Neighbor
19:30	Shabbos
19:32	Honoring the Elderly

Sefer Hachinuch

227	Swearing Falsely
236	Tale Bearing
237	Standing Idly
238	Hatred
239	Rebuke