

O H R N E T

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

“The kohen will look and behold — the blemish has not changed its color.” (Lit. “has not changed its eye”) (13:55)

Give me one word in English for the French word “chic.” Chic is something so quintessentially French that to translate it into English would require a truckload of adjectives.

The characteristics of a nation are evidenced in its language. In every language there are words which cannot be directly translated into any other tongue.

There’s a word in Yiddish — to *fargin*. To *fargin* means to feel pleasure at someone else’s success without the slightest twinge of jealousy.

Happiness depends on the way we look at life. We can see our glass as half empty or half full. It all depends on how you use your eyes.

In this week’s *Parsha*, there is a lengthy description of a spiritual disease called *tzara’as*. One of the shortcomings which brought on this affliction was the failure to *fargin*, a narrowness of the eye, a constriction of the vision.

When a person focuses on reality in the correct fashion, he realizes that there is nothing in this world which is mere coincidence, there is no slapdash extemporizing.

For example, let’s say my next door neighbor and I both buy lottery tickets. He buys ticket number

17756233/a/th/567 and I buy ticket number 17756233/a/th/568. Two weeks later, I wake up and hear him shouting at the top of his voice “I won ten million dollars! I won ten million dollars!”

If my eyes are focused on reality correctly, immediately I should feel tremendous happiness for him, because I had no chance of winning the lottery at all. Even though I had the next ticket, it could have been ticket number 00001 for all the dif-

“One word can do more than the biggest, brightest bunch of flowers in the world.”

ference it would have made.

Happiness is understanding that what Hashem decrees for someone is that person’s, and always was his. There’s no “coming close” to what is allotted for someone else. To think otherwise is self-delusion. Realizing this is one of the secrets of happiness in this world.

Interestingly, the word in

Hebrew for both the “affliction of *tzara’as*” and the word for “pleasure” are spelled with exactly the same letters: *nun, gimmel, ayin*. The affliction of *tzara’as* is called *nega*. Pleasure in Hebrew is *oneg*. The only difference between these two words is where you put the letter *ayin*. *Ayin* in Hebrew means “eye.” If you put the *ayin* in the wrong place, you end up with a spiritual disease — a *nega*. If you put the *ayin* in the right place — if you put your eye in the right place — you have pleasure — *oneg*. The pleasure that comes from *farginning*. The pleasure that comes from looking at the world through the lens of reality.

WAR OF THE WORDS

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: This shall be the law of the Metzora” (14:1)

Metzo-ra — ‘Motzi-(shem)-ra’ — to speak evil of someone

Lit. “to bring out a bad name”

On tortured steel wheels, the doors of the factory rolled back majestically. There in the steel gray light of dawn stood the machines. One behind the other in a long, long row whose vanishing point was somewhere in the middle of next week. They were dull blue and gray. Majestic and marvelous. All 248 of them. Machine after machine after machine.

The controller led his new employee down the central aisle.

continued on page three

PARSHA OVERVIEW

TAZRIA

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara'as* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken them to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara'as* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week. If the disease remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person's status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara'as*. One whose *tzara'as* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara'as* on clothing is described in detail.

METZORA

The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara'as*) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week, and involves *korbanos* and immersions in the *mikveh*. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals. Before a *kohen* diagnoses that a house has *tzara'as*, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The *tzara'as* is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house; if it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and how one regains a state of ritual purity.

HAFTORAH: SHMUEL 20:18-42

“Yonasan said (to David): Tomorrow is the New Moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty.”

We read this Haftorah when Shabbos falls on the day before Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon. The Jewish People are compared to the moon. Just as the

moon grows to fullness over a period of fifteen days and then wanes for fifteen days, similarly there were fifteen generations of physical and spiritual growth from Avraham to David's son Shlomo, and from Shlomo there was a descent of fifteen generations until the monarchy ended with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the Babylonian

Exile.

However, just as the heavens do not remain dark forever and the moon re-appears, so will the line of David re-appear with the *Mashiach* in the time of the redemption. For this reason in the monthly prayer of *Kiddush Levana* (Sanctification of the Moon) we include the verse “*David, King of Israel, lives and endures!*”

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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

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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

A DESIRABLE PORTION

“My eye gives you counsel,” Hashem says to us through King David (*Tehillim* 32:8), and our Sages in the Midrash interpret this as a Divine “wink of the eye” in regard to *Eretz Yisrael*.

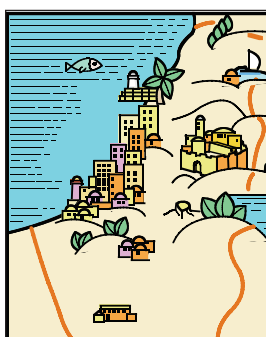
A king once made a feast for everyone in his palace. When the serving plate was brought before them, the king winked a hint to his favorite guest to take a particularly good portion. When he realized that the hint was not understood, the king took the portion with his own hands and presented it to his beloved.

In similar fashion, when Hashem

divided His world amongst the nations, each of them selected a land double the size of *Eretz Yisrael*. Hashem winked to the Jewish People to choose *Eretz Yisrael* but they were reluctant to do so because it was so much smaller than all the other lands. What did Hashem do? He took *Eretz Yisrael* into His hand and presented it to His favorite people.

This is what the Prophet Yirmiyahu alludes to when he says in Hashem's Name (*Yirmiyahu* 3:19) “I presented you with a desirable land.”

• *Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim* 32



They passed them all in reverent silence. After what seemed like an eon, they arrived at the end. They stood together, right at the end of this vast array of industrial power — looking at it.

There it was. As different from the rest of the machines as Moby Dick from other whales. It was huge, awesome, alone and forbidding.

“This is it,” said the controller. “This is the one. Without this machine, all the others are worth exactly ... nothing. Nothing at all. On this machine hangs life and death itself.”

The tongue is the most powerful machine in the world.

In that vast factory called Man, there are two hundred and forty eight machines — each part corresponding to a mitzvah. But the tongue has a power which is greater than them all.

One word can kill at distances beyond the range of the most powerful rocket. One word can cause a plague more noxious than anthrax. And yet, one word can heal with more power than open-heart surgery. One word can do more than the biggest, brightest bunch of

flowers in the world.

The world was created with words: “In the beginning G-d created the Heavens and the Earth....” He created the whole of existence with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And He gave over to man this incredibly powerful machine — the tongue. There is no animal in the world that can speak. They can make noises, it’s true. But to date, no whale has published a book of poems.

Man alone in all of existence is the Speaker. He has been entrusted with a machine more powerful than the atom, and more dangerous. For with one word he can destroy worlds and with one word he can create them.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DADDY!

*“A woman, when she will give birth...”
(12:2)*

When a firstborn child comes into this world, two creations take place: The child, and the parents. The three-way team of Hashem and the parents create the child, but the

child also “creates” the parents. Up till now they were merely people. Now they are parents.

The Midrash says if man is worthy “he precedes all of creation.” How can man precede all creation if he was created last — on the sixth day?

In Jewish law, the father bequeaths to his firstborn a double portion. Why? Because it is this child who made his father into a father.

The Jewish People are called “*my son, my first born, Israel*” because it was the Jewish People who made Hashem, so to speak, into the Father of the world. For it is they who testify to His existence.

All Israel are Hashem’s first born. If, by our actions, we make the name of Heaven dear in this world, if people look at us and see that there is a G-d who rules, then we are considered worthy. And then we “precede all Creation.” When we make Hashem the Father of the world, we become worthy of being the “firstborn.”

Sources:

*A Rose By Any Other Name - Mesilas Yesharim, Chidushei HaRim
War Of The Words - Chafetz Chaim
Happy Birthday, Daddy! - Meshech Chochma*

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

“If he is poor and his means are not sufficient... (14:21)

Regarding other sacrifices, there is a dispute among the Sages whether a rich man who brings a sacrifice prescribed for a poor man has, post-facto, fulfilled his obligation. All agree, however, regarding the sacrifice of a person afflicted with *tzara'as* that his obligation has not been fulfilled under such circumstances. The affliction of *tzara'as* comes as a punishment for miserliness. If a rich person brings the sacrifice that a poor man should bring, it shows that he is not yet cured of his affliction. He is still a miser! Therefore he has not fulfilled his obligation.

• Rabbi Yaakov Landau, son of the Noda b'Yehudah

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WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 142 - 148

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

A child is sitting in an enclosed yard demanding the attention of his father, to whom he is very attached. He obviously wishes to be carried. The problem is that in his hand is a stone, which is considered *muktzeh* and forbidden by rabbinic law to move even in the private domain. If the father carries his sensitive child, he will be considered indirectly carrying the *muktzeh* stone. If he does not carry him, the child is likely to become so upset that he will become ill.

The opening *mishnah* of our 21st *perak* provides the resolution of this dilemma. The danger to the child's health, albeit not a mortal threat, was sufficient reason for the Sages to suspend their ban on this indirect form of handling *muktzeh*, and the father may therefore carry his stone-bearing child.

An interesting question is raised by Tosefos regarding this ruling. If someone wishes to carry a basket of fruit with a stone in it, he is permitted to do so only if he has no option of removing the stone by pouring out the contents of the basket, because the fruit involved is grapes or figs which will become spoiled upon being spilled. In the case of hard fruits such as citrus which will not be spoiled by a fall, he must empty the basket to get rid of the stone and then return the fruit to the basket. Why, then, shouldn't the father be required to shake the stone out of his child's hand before carrying him?

The answer offered by Tosefos is another exercise in child psychology. Causing the child to thus part with the stone will result in the sort of tantrum we are trying to avoid, so we are left with no other option for safeguarding his health than to carry him with stone in hand.

What if it is a coin in the child's hand rather than a stone? The Sage Rava points out that in such a case the Sages did not permit the father to carry him. Unlike a stone, the father will be tempted to pick up the coin if it falls from the child's grasp and thus violate the more serious ban on direct handling of *muktzeh*.

May the father take his child for a walk in the yard when one hand is in his father's grasp and the other is clutching a coin?

Rashi contends that this is forbidden because the coin may fall from the child's hand and the father will be tempted to pick it up. Ramban, however, differentiates between carrying a coin-bearing child and leading one by the hand. In the former case, the father, under the influence of the coin's value, is likely to reason that if it was permissible to indirectly carry the coin when he carried his child, then it is also permissible for him to directly pick up the fallen coin and return it to his child's hand. This reasoning will not apply in the case where he only led the coin-carrying child by the hand.

Both views are cited in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 209:1.

• Shabbos 142a

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING TOGETHER

The priceless value of colleagues for the Torah scholar finds dramatic expression in the story of Rabbi Elazar ben Aroch. This great sage once traveled to that part of *Eretz Yisrael* whose rich wine and soothing mineral baths had been the undoing of the ten tribes, who were exiled from their land because they abandoned Torah study in order to indulge in these luxuries. He too was so attracted to these pleasures that he forgot his Torah knowledge. His colleagues prayed on his behalf and succeeded in having his wisdom restored to him.

This is cited as one dimension of the counsel offered by Rabbi Nehorai in *Pirkei Avos* (4:14): "Exile yourself to a place of Torah study, and do not say that it will come to you, for your colleagues shall preserve it for you, and you must not rely on your understanding alone."

Other dimensions of this advice are provided by the commentaries.

Rashi sees these words as directed towards the Torah scholar who fails to appreciate the value of studying together with others and insists on remaining alone in his own community in the hope that others will join him. Travel to them, advises Rabbi Nehorai, because you will be enriched by their study, even if it is another *mesechta*. You will inevitably listen in on their study and refresh your memory in that area. This will be more effective than relying on your own review and good memory alone.

Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura offers two other approaches. One is that the sage is warning the scholar against relying on his own intelligence, no matter how sharp he is, for a true understanding of Torah. Only through the give-and-take of studying with others will he achieve success in his learning.

His other approach is that Rabbi Nehorai is addressing the scholar who hesitates to join his colleagues in traveling to the master to learn from him, and relies on hearing the master's lessons from his colleagues upon their return. Say not that it will come to you, warns the sage, by entertaining the illusion that your colleagues will preserve it for you, because hearing it second hand is not comparable to learning it from the source.

Yet another insight is offered by Eitz Yosef who focuses on the use of the term "exile" rather than "travel" to a place of Torah study. Exile implies the sacrifice of the prosperity and comfort of home. One must be prepared to give up such well being and endure the discomfort of exile for the sake of Torah study, always bearing in mind that if people are prepared to travel great distances and endure great hardships in order to achieve material wealth one should certainly be prepared to do the same in order to gain the crown of Torah which is superior to all other rewards.

• Shabbos 147b

PARSHA Q&A ?

TAZRIA

1. "Any holy thing she shall not touch." (12:4) In this context, what does "touch" mean?
2. After a woman gives birth she is required to offer two types of *korbanos*. What are they?
3. Who determines whether an affliction of *tzara'as* is impure or pure?
4. How many hairs in a suspected area must turn white before the *kohen* can declare a person *tamei*?
5. What disqualifies a *kohen* from being able to give a ruling in a case of *tzara'as*?
6. In areas of the body where collections of hair grow (e.g., the head or beard), what color hair indicates *tumah*?
7. What is the name for *tzara'as* of the scalp or beard area?
8. What signs of mourning must a *metzora* display?
9. Why must a *metzora* call out, "Tamei! Tamei!"?
10. Why is a *metzora* commanded to dwell in isolation?

METZORA

1. When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?
2. In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?
3. Why does a *metzora* require birds in the purification process?
4. In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?
5. When the *metzora* was presented "before Hashem" (14:11) in the *Beis Hamikdash*, where did he stand?
6. Toward what direction does the *kohen* sprinkle the oil from the *metzora's korban*?
7. How was having *tzara'as* in one's house sometimes advantageous?
8. When a person enters a house that has *tzara'as*, when do his clothes become *tamei*?
9. A *zav* sat or slept on the following: a) a bed; b) a plank; c) a chair; d) a rock. If a *tahor* person touches these things, what is his status?
10. What does the Torah mean when it refers to a *zav* who "has not washed his hands" (15:11)?

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?"

"And the garment which was washed and from which the affliction departed, it shall be washed again

and will be pure." (Vayikra 13:58)

Rashi: **"It shall be washed again"**: This expression refers to immersion in a *mikveh* (ritual purification pool).

The word "washed" appears twice in this verse. Why does Rashi insist that the second "washing" refers to immersion in a *mikveh*? What's wrong with explaining the second "washing" the same as the first one; simply that the garment is washed? 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.

TAZRIA

1. 12:4 - Eat.
2. 12:6 - An *olah* and a *chatas*.
3. 13:2 - A *kohen*.
4. 13:3 - At least two.
5. 13:12 - Poor vision.
6. 13:29 - Golden.
7. 13:30 - *Nesek*.
8. 13:45 - He must tear his garments, let his hair grow and enshroud his face.
9. 13:45 - So people will know to keep away from him.
10. 13:46 - Since *tzara'as* is a punishment for *lashon harah* (evil speech) which creates a rift between people, the Torah punishes *mida k'neged mida* (measure for measure) by placing a division between

him and others.

METZORA

1. 14:2 - At night.
2. 14:3 - Outside the three camps.
3. 14:4 - *Tzara'as* comes as a punishment for *lashon harah*. Therefore, the Torah requires the *metzora* to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.
4. 14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that *tzara'as* comes as a punishment for haughtiness.
5. 14:11 - At the gate of Nikanor.
6. 14:16 - Westward, toward the Holy of Holies.
7. 14:34 - The Amorites concealed treasures in the walls of their houses. After the conquest of the

Land, *tzara'as* would afflict these houses. The Jewish owner would tear down the walls and find the treasures.

8. 14:46 - When he remains in the house long enough to eat a small meal.
9. 15:4,5 - Only a type of object that one usually lies or sits upon becomes a transmitter of *tumah* when a *zav* sits or lies upon it. A *tahor* person who subsequently touches the object becomes *tamei* and the garment he is wearing also becomes *tamei*. Therefore:
a) *tamei*; b) *tahor*; c) *tamei*;
d) *tahor*.
10. 15:11 - One who has not immersed in a *mikveh*.

SIR NAME

Leif Manson from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada
<leif.manson@nt.sympatico.ca>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
My mother is Jewish, my father is Scottish from a clan that protected the Jews during the crusades. He disappeared when I was quite young. Years later he reappeared after he had inherited a Scottish title of nobility, "the Laird of Leckie," and converted to reform Judaism. Do I have any responsibility towards this position or should I abdicate on the grounds that I am Jewish?

Dear Leif Manson,

There's no reason in Jewish law why you shouldn't accept the title of "Laird of Leckie." Righteous Jews throughout history have held titles of honor in non-Jewish society. Joseph was the titled viceroy of Egypt, and Mordechai was the viceroy of Persia. Others include the Count of Coucie, Shmuel Hanagid and Don Yitzchak Abarbanel. In fact, England's Chief Rabbi Emeritus, Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jacobovitz, is today a member of England's House of Lords.

But keep in mind that inheriting a title often obligates the inheritor to pay large taxes on the estate. So carefully weigh the pros and the cons before accepting it, and perhaps consult with a lawyer.

WISHING WELL

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I seem to remember that if you meet or find out that someone is pregnant, you're not supposed to wish them "mazal tov" and there is another phrase that you use instead. Could you tell me what that phrase is? PS Love the column!

Dear Name@Withheld,

The phrase is "B'sha'a tova u'mut-

zlachat" which means "It should be at a good and propitious time." "Mazal Tov" is usually said upon hearing something joyous which has taken place. "B'sha'a tova u'mutzlachat" is usually said for an impending good, one which one hopes will happen, but which hasn't happened yet.

BIRDS VS. BILLY RUBIN

Carol Brown

<Paulbro@pathcom.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
We use Echinacea (pronounced eckinaysha), a natural extract of flowers, in liquid form, to prevent or reduce effects of colds and flu. It has become a very popular remedy and preventative, and we find it to be very helpful. We don't take it on a regular basis, only when we feel the onset of a cold (e.g., raw or dry throat, sniffles, etc.) or when someone else in the family has a cold or flu. Echinacea boosts the immune system so the body can naturally fight off the infection. Is one allowed to use this on Shabbos?

Also, we are told that there is a mystical kind of treatment for hepatitis in Israel involving placing pigeons on the abdomen of the patient. The pigeons somehow absorb the toxins from the patient's body and die. I would like to know the origin and validity of this treatment.

Dear Carol Brown,

Any substance that is eaten only for medicinal purposes, either as a preventative or therapeutic medicine, may not be taken on Shabbat unless the sickness is one of the following: a) Life threatening; b) Affecting the entire body; c) Severe pain; d) Affecting the eyes.

There is a Jerusalem tradition for the treatment of hepatitis in which a pigeon is placed on the patient's navel and the pigeon dies. Generally, this has been known to be a successful method of reducing bilirubin count in

patients. As far as I know, this method has never been subjected to double-blind studies under controlled conditions, so it has no significant statistical basis. However, it has very strong hearsay evidence.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 328

TOGETHER ALONE

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I am a college girl and I work for an Orthodox health care professional. I was wondering if the laws of yichud [the prohibition of a man and woman being together in private] apply in the workplace. I am asking because all day long the front door to the office is open and patients come through; however, as soon as the last patient leaves, my employer locks the office door. Is it halachically wrong? If it is wrong, and I suspect it is, is there a respectful way to tell him about this? Any advice that you could pass along would be greatly appreciated.

Dear Name@Withheld,

You're right. If the door is locked, then there is a prohibition of yichud, even if both people are religious Jews. Yichud is not so much a matter of suspicion, but rather it is an independent prohibition. The intimacy of being alone together in a private place is reserved only for husband and wife. In fact, part of the marriage ceremony is the cheder yichud, the privacy room, where the bride and groom go to be alone together for the first time.

As for telling him without hurting his feelings, I suggest that you not tell him, but rather ask him about it. For example, you could mention that you were reading a book about the subject and it appeared that your situation is prohibited. You could ask, "Do you know about this issue? It seems pretty easy to avoid, we just leave the door open a little, right?" For sources on the subject I suggest the book *Halichos Bas Yisrael*.

WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF PSALMS?

Julie Lupas from Toronto, Ontario
<Lupas@ecf.utoronto.ca> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
How could King David have written "Shir Hama'alot" if it describes the Jewish return to Israel which happened long after his time?

Dear Julie Lupas,

Excellent question. The Psalms, written by King David, describe events that happened long after David lived. Here's another example: In Psalm 137, King David

describes the destruction of the Second Temple. He even names the nation, Edom (Rome), which is to destroy it. How can this be?

The answer is really very simple. Starting with Moshe and ending around the beginning of the Second Temple, the Jewish Nation enjoyed a period of prophecy. King David was one of the many prophets among the Jewish Nation during that period. We find the phrase "As G-d said to David" several times in the written Torah. King David wrote Psalms using his prophetic abilities.

Sources:

- Kings 1 8:19
- Talmud Tractate Gittin 57b

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

Re: What is the origin of the word pareve (Ohrnet Vayakhel/Pekudei):

I, too, struggled for a long time to find the actual meaning and source for the word "pareve;" until, in desperation, I turned to my neighbor in shul with whom I converse in Yiddish (only when appropriate, of course). He suggested that the Yiddish word for a "pair" and for the verb "to pair" or "combine" is "porr" — in its Germanic pronunciation: "parr." The Yiddish suffix "evch" means something like "belonging to" or "part of" a concept or population (as in "Rabbisteveh," which means "the rabbinat"). "Pareve" then would refer to the group of items which can be "paired with anything — both meaty and dairy items. My family and I join the thousands around the world in appreciation of your efforts and your excellent publication.

• Name@Withheld

Parve is a Czech word meaning neutral.

• Peter Wein <p.wein@obsgyn-mercy.unimelb.EDU.AU>
Senior Lecturer Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
University of Melbourne, Mercy Hospital for Women

Re: Yiddle Riddle "Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi?" (Ohrnet Vaykhel/Pekudei):

My guess would be Rashi himself. I imagine he was "beside himself" with joy about his *chiddushim* (insights)! Regarding your answer that it was Rashi's father, there was actually someone who studied Chumash with Rashi before his father: The *Malach*, the angel, who taught Rashi before he was born!

• Avi Smith <prowrite@netvision.net.il>

Just got "Ask the Rabbi" for the first time, and it was fantastic! We came up with another answer to the Yiddle Riddle: Moshe Rabbeinu, because Hashem showed Moshe the entire Torah, and everything that would be learned out from it throughout the generations by the great *Rabbanim* of Israel (which would include Rashi's commentary). That one is from my sister Gitty Schnall.

• Chana E. Schnall <emuna@juno.com>

My answer: Rashi's mother (or his father)!

• Chaya Rochel Schwartz

Re: A person lost in the desert who forgets which day is Shabbos (Ohrnet Tetzaveh):

I once read an interesting (true) story about a person in this situation. When he gained consciousness, he had 2 concerns: He didn't know what day Shabbos was, and he had an intense craving for a cigarette (as he was a habitual smoker). A few days later, his first problem was solved: At sundown, his craving to smoke suddenly disappeared, and he realized it must be Shabbos; his observance of Shabbos was so ingrained in him that he never had the desire to smoke on Shabbos, and that pattern had apparently become part of his biological "clock!" Thank you for your newsletter — I really enjoy it!

• Alisa Avruch <aandpsgang@juno.com>

Ohrnet Responds:

Fascinating! Although questionable from a halachic perspective.

CLARIFICATION

We excerpted a response from N. Slifkin regarding the identification of the *arneves* and *shafan*, without printing his comment in its entirety. By our removing part of his message from the context, many people seriously misunderstood the intention of the message. We apologize for any embarrassment that this may have caused.

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Judging favorably means finding excuses for questionable behavior, excuses which make sense to us and leave us with a positive feeling towards the person in question. When we find ourselves suspecting others, we must ask ourselves: Are there any redeeming factors? Did I miss something? Did I jump to the wrong conclusion? For instance, take the case of...

THE BRINKS JOB

It was a rainy winter night and my friend and I were stranded in town. We had missed the

last bus. Here we were getting drenched and didn't know what to do. All of a sudden we see a car coming towards us. It's nothing less than a miracle. It's my next-door neighbor's car! Then I thought maybe it's someone else with a car just like his. As he gets closer, I see it really is him. I said to my friend, we will soon be out of the cold rain and in my neighbor's nice heated car.

But to my surprise and dismay, he passed us right by. Maybe he didn't see us. But I was waving my hand. If his eyesight is that bad, he shouldn't be driving a car. Both my friend and I wondered how someone could be so thoughtless and cruel.

A few days later I met my neighbor, the driver. I didn't know what to say. He approached me and said that he *had* seen me, but he had been carrying a large sum of money uncovered for someone in the front seat of the car, and it would have been irresponsible to take in passengers or even to stop to explain.

People can't always wear a sign to explain what they are doing. It's up to us to assume that others have acted properly. It's really quite easy to do so when you realize the myriad of possibilities for excusing questionable behavior.

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

What is the explanation of the following? "*Shmini B'Shmini Shmini Shmini*"

Answer next week...

continued from page five

BONUS ANSWER!

The verse has already stated that the garment was washed and the affliction has departed. What purpose could there be for a second washing? If laundering is part of the purification process, this has already been achieved by the first washing. Therefore, the second "washing" — if it is to make sense as part of the purification process — must refer to something other than mere laundering. Hence, it must refer to immersion in a *mikveh*, a ritual purification pool.

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

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

TAZRIA

RAMBAN

12:2 Procreation
12:7 The "Sin" of Childbirth
13:47 The Greatness of Tzara'as

SEFER HACHINUCH

167 Respect for *Kedusha*
168 A Gift of Thanks

SFORNO

12:8 Self Involvement
13:47 Garments

METZORA

RAMBAN

14:2 Compulsive Cleanliness
15:11 The *Zav*

SEFER HACHINUCH

174 Purification and Rebirth
175 Cleansing Waters

SFORNO

14:12 The *Asham* of the *Metzora*
14:36 The Reason for Waiting
15:2 The *Zav*