

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE BIG A

“And He called...” (1:1)

Michelangelo may have known a thing or two about sculpture, but when it came to Jewish anatomy he was a bit off. When he sculpted Moses he gave him little horns. Michelangelo's problem came from a mistranslation of the Hebrew word *keren*. It's true, *keren* does mean a “horn,” but it also means a “ray of light.” The English word “*corona*,” meaning a “glowing halo,” is probably a derivation of *keren*.

How did Moshe get his “horns?”

When Moshe had finished writing the Torah, he had some ink left on his quill. He passed the quill across his forehead and the drops of ink made beams of light shine.

Everything in Heaven and Earth is precise. If Moshe was given ink to write the Torah, he was given enough ink to write the Torah and not one drop more. We're not dealing here with end of season discounts and remnants. We're talking about the ink of eternity. Nothing can be too little or too much. How can there have been a little bit of ink left over?

If you look at a Sefer Torah, you will see that the first word in Vayikra (Leviticus) is written in an unusual fashion. The last letter of that word — the *aleph* of the word *Vayikra* — is written much smaller than the rest of the word.

Why is the *aleph* small?

When Hashem told Moshe to write the word *Vayikra* — “And He called” — Moshe didn't want to write that last *aleph*. It seemed to Moshe that it gave him too much impor-

tance. How could he write that Hashem called to him? Who was he, after all? A mere man. Moshe would have preferred to write “*Vayikar*” — “*And He happened (upon him)*” — as if Hashem just came across Moshe, as if He didn't “go out of His way” to appear to him.

In spite of Moshe's protestations, Hashem told him to write “*Vayikra*” — “*And He called.*” Moshe put the *aleph* at the end of the word as Hashem had commanded him — but he wrote it small.

“When we pour out our hearts in prayer, we bring both ourselves and the world close to our G-d.”

What's in a small *aleph*?

The *aleph* is the letter that represents the will, the ego. It is the first letter of the word “I” — “*Ani.*” When a person sees himself as the Big A, the Big *Aleph*, Number One, he usurps the crown of He who is One.

When a person sees himself as no more than a small *aleph*, then he makes room for the Divine Presence

to dwell in him. His head is not swollen with the cotton-candy of self-regard.

Moshe was the humblest of all people. Moshe made of himself so little that he was barely in this world at all. He didn't even want to be a small *aleph*. He, as no man before or since, saw that there is only one *Aleph* in all of Creation, only one Number One — Hashem.

Moshe made his own *aleph* — his ego — so small, that he merited that the Torah was given through him.

How did Moshe get his “horns”? That extra ink left on his pen was the ink that should have gone to write the big *aleph*. Instead it became a corona of shining light to adorn the humblest of men.

CLOSENESS

“When a man from among you will bring a ‘*korban*’ ” (1:2)

Closeness and distance are not necessarily measured in meters or miles, for people can be close even when they are on different sides of the world, and they can be distant even though they may be sitting next to each other on a bus, or living in the same house.

Closeness is spiritual. It is part of the internal life.

We have no word in the English language to express the meaning of the *korbanos* which were brought in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The word “sacrifice” implies giving up something of value so that another person will benefit. Obviously, Hashem cannot benefit from “sacrifices,” for He lacks nothing.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus) which we start reading this week, is also known as *Toras Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests. It deals largely with the *korbanos* (offerings) that are brought in the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the entrance of the *Mishkan*. Regarding cattle, the one who brought the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the

remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the “questionable guilt” offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 45:16-46:18

Shabbos HaChodesh

PARTNERS IN TIME

The last of the “Four Parshios” is *Parshas HaChodesh*. *Shabbos HaChodesh* usually falls on the Shabbos before the beginning of Nissan. This year, however, the first of Nissan coincides with Shabbos and so we read *Parshas HaChodesh* and its accompanying Haftorah on Rosh Chodesh itself.

Nissan, the first month of the year, is

called the “king of the months.” On Rosh Chodesh Nissan the Jewish People received the first of all of the 613 *mitzvos* — the sanctification of the moon.

Through this mitzvah the Jewish People were given a partnership in the mastery of time: The world of Shabbos is fixed in time. We return to it every seven days. However, the mitzvah of *kiddush hachodesh* (sanctifying the moon) gave the Jewish People the ability to establish the length of the months and thus to determine the dates of *Pesach*, *Shavuos*, *Succos*, etc.

Thus Man becomes a partner with Hashem in sanctifying time. Hashem through the fixed holiness of Shabbos, and the Jewish People through *kiddush hachodesh*.

The Cesium and Rubidium atomic clocks at the U.S. Naval Observatory Time Center are accurate to one second in 300,000 years. But three thousand years ago, Moshe, had no such time-piece. However, somehow Moshe knew the exact length of the lunar month to be 29.53059 days, an accuracy which was literally out of this world.

In the reference work *Astronomy and Astrophysics* the precise length of the lunar month is listed as 29.530589

days. How did Moshe have a figure so accurate that it took science three thousand years to come to the same number?

Our sages tell us that this number was given to Moshe by Hashem at the beginning of *Parshas HaChodesh*. It was passed down through the ages, from Moshe to Hillel II, the last prince of the House of David. When Hillel II sanctified all the new moons from his day until the final redemption, he had to know the exact length of the lunar month to within a fraction of a second, for even a small error would, over millennia, amount to a visible error.

There have been approximately 41,000 new moons since the time of Moshe, but from Mount Sinai onward the secret of the exact length of the lunar month has always been known to the Jewish People, because Moshe had a clock that was literally “out of this world!”

The Haftorah of *Parshas HaChodesh* describes a month of Nissan yet to come. Mashiach has arrived and the Third *Beis Hamikdash* is to be consecrated in a ceremony which starts on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. As in *Parshas HaChodesh*, so too in the Haftorah, the laws and sacrifices of *Pesach* are detailed.

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DEDICATED BY DR. LARRY GREENBAUM AND FAMILY
in loving memory of my grandfather
MR. WILLIAM SPIELMAN
R' Velvel ben Avraham O.B.M.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

The word “sacrifice” also implies having to do without something of value. In point of fact, what we gain from the “sacrifice” is infinitely more valuable than the “sacrifice.”

The word “offering” is also inaccurate: The idea of an offering is that it appeases the one to whom it is brought. It’s like buying someone off. A kind of bribery.

The reason that we have a problem translating the word *korban* into English is that our ideas of “sacrifices” and “offerings” derive from pagan cultures. Indeed, in those cultures the word “sacrifice” and “offering” were apt and accurate.

The root of the word *korban* is the same as the word “closeness.” It is used exclusively in relation to Man’s relationship with Hashem. When a person brought a *korban*, he wanted to bring himself close to G-d, which is the only real good that exists. All other “goods” are pale imitations, worthless forgeries compared to the real good of being close to Hashem.

Today when we no longer have the closeness to Hashem that *korbanos* gave us, we still have its substitute — prayer. When we pour out our hearts in prayer, when we offer *ourselves* up to Hashem, we bring both ourselves and the world with us close to our G-d.

Our age is unique in the way we place importance on external appearance. Whether that appearance is the carefully groomed lines of a Lexus sedan, or the mandatory shape of the human anatomy painfully carved in the sweat and toil of so many man-hours of aerobics.

As a culture, we are obsessed by appearance.

Oliver Cromwell had a large wart on his nose. One hesitates to think whether he would have become the ruler of England had it been necessary for him to appear on “Entertainment Tonight.”

The medium has become the message. The outside has become the inside.

However, appearance is not unimportant. It all depends on the context. The Torah tells us that a *korban* in the *Mishkan* and the *Beis Hamikdash* had to be *tamim* — unblemished.

When a person brought a *korban* it had to be completely healthy. When a Jew seeks to come close to G-d, he must do so with all his faculties. Nothing can be omitted or abbreviated. His service must also be unblemished. The perfection of the *korban* was the physical expression of the perfection of the heart seeking to be close to its Maker.

Sources:

- **The Big A** - *Ba'al Haturim, Midrash Tanchuma Ki Sisa 37, MiTa'amim in Iturei Torah*
- **Closeness** - *Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin*

PERFECT

“...Unblemished...” (1:3)

Peter Finch, the famous Australian film actor, once remarked “When you move an eyebrow in Cinemascope it travels three feet...”

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

“He shall bring his offering from ... young doves (1:14).”

Only young doves are fit as offerings, whereas adult doves are not. Why? Because grown doves are overprotective and jealous of their mates and stir up needless strife and contention among other birds.

Rabbeinu B'chaya

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

GATEWAY TO HEAVEN

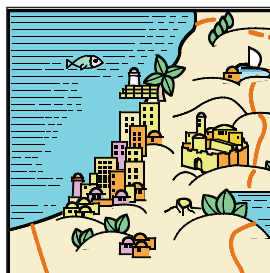
One who prays outside of *Eretz Yisrael* should face in the direction of *Eretz Yisrael*, and one who prays in *Eretz Yisrael* faces in the direction of *Yerushalayim*.

Both of these directives are deduced from the prayer of King Solomon at the inauguration of the *Beis Hamikdash*, in which he appealed to Hashem to accept the prayers of His people in all places and all circumstances. Should they be taken away from their land into foreign captivity because of their sins, he asked that their repentful “prayers directed to Hashem through

their land” be accepted (*Melachim I 8:48*). Should they be engaged in war in their own land, he asked that their prayer for heavenly help “directed to Hashem through the city You have chosen” be accepted (*Melachim I 8:44*).

Although King Solomon was referring to particular circumstances placing Jews outside their land and their city, he set the guidelines for how Jews in all times must direct their prayers to Heaven through the holy land and the holy city where the holy house of Hashem stood.

• *Berachos 30a*



WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 114 - 120

MYSTERY OF THE STRANGER ON THE PLATFORM

“I never went against the wishes of my colleagues,” Rabbi Yossi prided himself. “Although I know that I am not a *kohen*, if they would ask me to go up to the platform to offer the blessings of the *kohanim* I would go up.”

Tosefos raises the question as to whether there is any halachic problem in a non-*kohen* going up to the platform, and therefore finds it difficult to comprehend what was so courageous about Rabbi Yossi’s action.

This position of Tosefos that there is nothing wrong with a non-*kohen* participating in *birkas kohanim* is challenged by a wide range of commentaries from a *gemara* (*Kesuvos 24b*) which clearly states that a non-*kohen* who blesses the congregation is guilty of violating Torah law because the Torah gave this mandate to *kohanim* only. A number of resolutions have been offered and we present a sampling of them:

- Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rema) suggests that the ban on a non-*kohen* giving a blessing applies only when he does it by himself and not when he does so together with *kohanim* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 128:1*).

- Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (Bach - Bayis Chadash) writes that the ban applies only when the non-*kohen* lifts his hands in the manner which *kohanim* do when saying the blessing.

- Maharsha explains that Rabbi Yossi only went up to the platform but did not actually say the blessing. Therefore, Tosefos, assuming that the Sage certainly did not say the blessing which he is not permitted to say, finds nothing special in his mere ascent to the platform.

- A fourth approach, cited by *Mishna Berura* (128:3), has very practical halachic implications. In order for one to fulfill a mitzvah he must have *kavanah* — a positive intention to fulfill it. Since Rabbi Yossi as a non-*kohen* had no intention of fulfilling a mitzvah for which he was not eligible, his action is not considered a valid one and he was therefore not guilty of performing a mitzvah reserved for *kohanim* only.

Mishna Berura (in the *Biyyur Halacha* 128:3) raises the question about the blessings which one Jew gives to another using the text of the *birkas kohanim* even though the blesser is not himself a *kohen*. One resolution is based in the position of the Bach (see above), that the ban is only when one raises his hands in the manner of the *kohanim*. Another resolution is based on the fourth approach, which limits the ban to a situation in which the blesser has the intention of doing the mitzvah reserved for *kohanim*, not when he is simply wishing a friend or child well.

The only problem with this second resolution is that there is an opinion cited in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim*

60:4 that one can indeed fulfill a mitzvah even if his action was not accompanied by direct intention. This problem too is solved by introducing the concept that even if one is considered to have fulfilled a mitzvah without intention, he has not fulfilled it if he had express intention *not* to fulfill it. Since the blessings of the *kohanim* are done only during the prayer service, anyone saying them not in the context of prayer is considered as expressly declaring that he does not wish to do the mitzvah which is reserved for *kohanim*, and it is therefore permitted to do so.

• *Shabbos 118b*

THE SECRET INGREDIENT

“Why does your Shabbos food have such a special fragrance?” the emperor asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania.

“We put in a special ingredient,” he replied, “and it’s called Shabbos.”

“Give me some of that ingredient,” asked the emperor.

“It works for someone who observes Shabbos,” explained the Sage, “but it will have no effect for one who does not.”

The climax of this famous dialogue is certainly appreciated by every Jew who finds a special delight in his Shabbos meal which cannot be duplicated during the weekdays. But a little analysis is required of the details of this exchange.

Why did the emperor, who assumed that Shabbos was the name of a spice, not ask the obvious question: “Why don’t the Jews use this spice in their recipes throughout the week?”

This question did not bother the emperor, explains *Iyun Yaakov*, because he was aware that Jews did special things in regard to clothes and food in honor of their holy day of rest. He therefore suggested that since such a wonderful spice was set aside for honoring Shabbos it should also be presented to him as an expression of honor for the throne. Sensitive to his Jewish subjects’ respect for Shabbos he was even willing to reserve use of this special spice to Shabbos alone, so that it would be used in honor of both the holy day and the august emperor.

At this point Rabbi Yehoshua was compelled to explain that Shabbos was not a natural spice but a supernatural ingredient which worked only for those who were commanded to observe Shabbos. As the Zohar, quoted by Eitz Yosef, puts it, the very essence of intangible Shabbos holiness takes on a tangible form in the special taste and fragrance of Shabbos food.

• *Shabbos 119a*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
2. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
3. What procedure of an animal-offering can be performed by a non-*kohen*?
4. Besides the fire brought on the *mizbe'ach* by the *kohanim*, where else did the fire come from?
5. At what stage of their development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bnei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
6. What is *melika*?
7. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
8. What is the significance of the Torah describing both the animal and bird offerings as a "satisfying aroma"?
9. Why does the Torah use the term "*nefesh*" concerning the flour offering?
10. Which part of the free-will *minchah* offering is burned on the altar?
11. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *minchah*. What is meant by "honey"?
12. When does the Torah permit the bringing of leavened bread as an offering?
13. Why is the peace offering called a *shlamim*? (Give two reasons.)
14. Concerning *shlamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
15. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe'ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
16. Who is obligated to bring a *chatas*?
17. Where were the remains of the bull burnt while in the wilderness? Where were they burnt after the *Beis Hamikdash* was built?
18. For which sins must one bring a *korban oleh v'yored*?
19. What two things does a voluntary *minchah* have that a *minchas chatas* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

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?"

"If a person (adam) amongst you offer an offering... (Vayikra 1:2). Rashi: "Just like Adam, the first man, never offered offerings from stolen property, since everything belonged to him, so too you shall not bring offerings from stolen property." Why does Rashi need this midrashic explanation? Why not take the verse simply as referring to any man?

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.

1. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
2. 1:5 - In the Tabernacle Courtyard (*azarah*).
3. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
4. 1:7 - It descended from heaven.
5. 1:14 - When their plumage becomes a golden color. At that stage the *bnei yona* are too old and the *torim* are still too young.
6. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird offering from the back of the neck using one's fingernail.
7. 1:16 - An animal's food is provided by its owner, so its innards are "kosher." Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with "theft."
8. 1:17 - The size of the offering is irrelevant as long as your heart is honestly directed toward G-d.
9. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, Hashem regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
10. 2:1 - The *kometz* (fistful).
11. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
12. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
13. 3:1 - It brings *shalom* to the world. Also it creates "peace" between the altar, the *kohen*, and the owner, since each gets a share.
14. 3:7 - Because they differ with regard to the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb's *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat's *alya* is not.
15. 3:8 - The *chatas*.
16. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries with it the penalty of *kares* (excision).
17. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
18. 5:1-4 - One who refrains from giving evidence when adjured by oath; one who enters the *Beis Hamikdash* or eats *kodesh* food after unknowingly contracting *tuma* (uncleanliness) by touching certain *tamei* (unclean) things; one who unknowingly violates his oath.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

ASK *the* RABBI

THE WRITING IN THE WALL

Jeffrey J. Samoska
<samoska.tea.time@snet.net>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I submit prayer requests to the Kotel (Western Wall) through Virtual Jerusalem's e-mail. I suppose there are hundreds of thousands of people bringing requests to the Wall every year. What happens to the requests that do not stay tucked into the Wall? If they fall onto the ground, are they swept up and disposed of in a religious ceremony? I don't imagine that all the requests would stay put for an indefinite period of time.

Dear Jeffrey J. Samoska,

Officially, the attendants at the Wall are supposed to make sure that all the papers that fall on the ground are replaced. About three years ago there was no more room for people to put their prayers into the cracks and crevices, so the Chief Rabbinate together with the Jerusalem municipality organized a team of volunteers to clean out all papers to make room for new prayers to be inserted. The papers that were removed were buried in accordance with Jewish Law.

PHIL & THROPIC

Name@ Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I recently gave money to a non-profit organization. When I heard that they publicly post the names of those who give to their organization, I asked (pursuant to Maimonides' principles of charity, as well as general modesty provisions) to have my contribution posted as an anonymous donor. When I suggested this however, the fund-raiser suggested that, for a variety of reasons, it was likely that

having my name posted would result in some people giving who would not do so otherwise. For the time being I am listed as anonymous, what do you (and halacha) suggest?

Dear Name@Withheld,

As you wrote, a very lofty way of fulfilling the mitzvah of charity is to give anonymously. Of the eight levels listed in the Code of Jewish Law, this is the third highest level.

However, if a specific person's donation will serve as a source of motivation for others to donate, then it would be correct for the donor to allow the institution to advertise his donation.

If publicizing the donation will cause difficulty, then it shouldn't be done. For example, if advertising the donor's name will inundate him with appeals from charities that are beyond his means or interest, he shouldn't allow his name to be published.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 249:8, 13
- Ibid 248:7

BABY TREES

Les Galler from Auckland, New Zealand <lesgall@xtra.co.nz>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Could you please tell me about the ancient practices regarding tree-planting and the birth of a son and a daughter?

Dear Les Galler,

In Talmudic times, when a boy was born they planted a cedar tree; when a girl was born they planted a pine tree. The poles of the wedding canopy were made out of the wood of the trees that were planted at the birth of the bride and groom.

Sources:

- Talmud Tractate Gittin 57a

NIGHT VISION

Moshe Mayor from Brooklyn, NY
<110605.2310@Compuserve.com>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

The Gemara (Berachot 55b) states: Rabbi Zeirah said "Whoever sleeps seven days without having a dream is called a bad person." Do you have any suggestions? What does the Maharsha say on this?

Dear Moshe Mayor,

As you may have noticed, Maharsha doesn't expound on this statement. He cross-references the two places in Tractate Berachot where this statement appears.

Rashi explains the basic idea as follows: Dreams are sometimes Divine messages. Seven days without such a vision indicates that the person is unworthy of Heavenly communication.

The Vilna Gaon has a different explanation: Life is like a dream, ephemeral and fleeting. If a person senses this, he will focus on the eternal purpose of life — studying Torah and doing mitzvot. Someone who goes seven days without sensing that this world is like a temporary dream has lost sight of the real purpose of life.

Why seven? Because for six days a person is busy pursuing a livelihood. He can therefore be forgiven for losing sight of life's temporary nature. But if he goes seven days — including Shabbat — without focusing on spiritual pursuits, he has abandoned life's real purpose.

Sources:

- Berachot 14a, 55b
- Thanks to Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld

SNOOPY SNOOZE

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We are a Jewish couple with a two and a half year old "chewish" dog

ASK *the* RABBI

that is our only “child.” She is very clean, very lovable and pretty well-behaved. My wife wants her to sleep in our room every night with us. I don’t think it’s appropriate. I think the bedroom should be private. What do you think?

Dear Name@Withheld,

It’s difficult to give a definitive answer to a question about someone else’s private affairs, especially since it doesn’t only concern you, but it concerns a very important and significant other (No! I don’t mean your dog!) But I can offer my opinion.

I agree with you very strongly that your room should be

a private place for husband and wife, and your “child” shouldn’t be there (especially if above the age of Bark Mitzvah).

I suggest that, without causing any marital strife, you try to get your wife to agree to other arrangements for your “child.” Perhaps you could make some kind of trade-off, like agreeing to spend some extra special time each day with the dog, e.g., reading to it, or helping it with its homework.

In dog terms, your child is over 17 years old, old enough to sleep by himself. Make him a really comfortable little spot he can call his own, and he’ll be happy as a hound.

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

Re: Yiddle Riddle (Ohrnet Vaera):

My name is Avi Rosner and I learn in the Mir Yeshiva here in Jerusalem. I’d seen Ohrnet around before, but just this week actually read it. It proved extremely insightful and informative. Your “Recommended Reading” list proved very helpful. I enjoyed the entire magazine greatly.

Regarding the Yiddle Riddle that Haran must have been the first to die after the Mabul: I enjoyed the proof but there may be one more possibility. The *Rosh* (Bereshet 7:23) says Og also saved his mother from the flood, who later gave birth to Sichon. Although Og and Sichon both outlived Haran, its quite possible their mother died before him. Thank you very much and *tizku lemitzvos*.

• *Avi Rosner, Jerusalem*

I quite enjoyed your Yiddle Riddle about Haran. I am not sure, though, that I agree with the conclusion.

According to the solution offered, the Zohar would be saying that after the Mabul, until Haran nobody died before his father, when in fact until Haran nobody died AT ALL. This is like saying “Until Shaul, nobody from Shevet Binyamin was King of Israel,” or “Until Bill Clinton, no US president named Clinton was elected to two terms.” This does not seem to be a smooth reading of the Zohar.

In fact, the Vilna Gaon (cited as the basis of this read-

ing) seems to hold that the events at Ur Kasdim occurred when Avraham was 70, 12 years after Noach died. This would make Noach, not Haran, the first to die after the Mabul (unless Noach’s wife died first, which is possible even according to your answer).

The Nitzotzai Oros suggests that the Zohar means that Haran was the first to die *in front of* his father. Then it would be totally unclear who died first after the Mabul.

• *Menachem Diamond <73132.766@compuserve.com>*

Re: Hoo Flung Chow? (Ohrnet Vaera) :

In “Public Domain,” it was pointed out that the Chicago Rabbinical Council gives kashrus certification to non Jewish owned restaurants which are open on Shabbos.

The proof was from Dunkin Donuts. True, the Dunkin Donuts is open on Shabbos and a *meshgiach* does not “pop” in during Shabbos (only on *motzei Shabbos*) even though it is located in the center of the religious neighborhood. The CRC policy is NOT to give a *hechsher* to a restaurant owned by a non-Jew which is open on Shabbos.

But, since Dunkin Donut is a franchise, which has very strict restrictions about only using franchise accepted ingredients/products, and since franchise rules require they open on Shabbos, and since it’s more like a bakery whose ingredients do not require full time supervision, the CRC allows them to remain open on Shabbos without supervision.

• *Yerachmiel Askotzky <stamnet@netmedia.net.il>*

Strike One for Ohrnet:

I just want to tell you how much I enjoy **Ohrnet**. It really adds to Shabbos. A few weeks ago when the post office was on strike in Israel I was unable to receive it, and I really missed it. Keep up the good work.

• *Mrs C. Zelasko*

“**A**bracadabra! Hocus Pocus! Now you see it! Now it’s out of focus!” This incantation is fit for a magician to utter when he transforms his walking stick into a multi-colored handkerchief.

At a magic show we expect to be fooled; we’re not surprised when a pigeon emerges from an empty hat. But optical illusions are limited to magic shows. In real life, our perceptions present us with a true picture of reality. Or do they...

A man and his wife were out jogging not far from Jerusalem’s central bus station. As they neared an incline the

husband took his wife’s handbag in order to make it easier for her. Then he sped ahead.

At that moment, a Jerusalem police officer happened along. What sight met his eyes? A woman running after a man who had just “snatched” her handbag from her shoulder. The alert officer grabbed the alleged purse-snatcher and put him in a vice-like arm lock. “Lady! Is this your handbag?” he called.

The woman was too out of breath to answer; she could only watch in horror as the policeman proceeded to arrest her husband. She finally caught her breath and explained to the officer what really

happened, but not before their son’s best friend Benny wandered past and witnessed the embarrassing “arrest.”

The Creator wants us to use our perceptions; in the above incident, the policeman acted dutifully. Yet, our senses trick us over and over again, and we nevertheless continue making superficial assessments to judge negatively. How might Benny report what he saw? How might others react to his report? Less than favorably, unless they’ve been trained in the art of looking at the Other Side of the Story.

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked: Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi?

• Submitted by Alan Frank from Jerusalem

Answer: Rashi’s father!

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BONUS ANSWER!

The Torah usually uses the Hebrew word *Ish* to refer to a man, not *Adam*. This conspicuous change is what calls for a midrashic explanation.

• Concept based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s new book “What’s Bothering Rashi?” Feldheim Publishers

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN	2:14	Why “If”	119	Salt
1:9 Reason for <i>Korbanos</i>			123	<i>Korban Oleh V’yored</i>
1:10 Bulls and Goats			125	A Sinner’s Offering
1:14 Birds	95	SEFER HACHINUCH	127	The Sin of Carelessness
2:2 Role of the <i>Kohen</i>	117	Concept of <i>Korbanos</i>		
2:11 The Problem of Leaven		Symbolism of Leaven and Honey		

Weekly Parsha newsletter, Monthly Seasons of the Moon, Weekly Daf, Ask the Rabbi, Holiday specials, Ohrnet magazine, Yossi & Co., Poetry, Essays on Jewish thought and contemporary issues, Excerpts of books by Ohr Somayach faculty, Audio catalog on-line, Jewish Educational Extensions - University on-line, Explore Jerusalem, Mark Twain’s Concerning the Jews, JLE summer & winter programs in Israel, ChoppedLiver cartoons, Meet the children of Odessa, The Center for Torah Studies, A road map to Jewish learning, Top Ten lists, and much, much more...a billion and a half bytes of Torah literature and information. Join tens of thousands of other people from around the world and...get connected to Ohr Somayach on the Web at...

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