

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT · FOR THE WEEK ENDING 12 TAMMUZ 5759 · JUNE 26, 1999 · VOL. 6 NO. 36
 IN ISRAEL: FOR THE WEEK ENDING 5 TAMMUZ 5759 · JUNE 19, 1999

PARSHA INSIGHTS

HOCUS POCUS

“This is the decree of the Torah” (19:1)

It always amazes me that people who claim to be agnostics will open up a newspaper and start reading their horoscopes.

A non-Jew once quizzed Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai about the purification process of the *para aduma* (red heifer) in this week’s *Parsha*: “This stuff you do looks like a bunch of hocus-pocus to me. You get a cow and burn it. You pulverize it and make it into dust. If one of you is impure from touching a cadaver, you sprinkle a couple of drops over him and say “You’re pure!”

Rabbi Yochanan asked him, “Have you ever seen someone who was possessed?” The non-Jew answered “Yes.” “What did you do to him?” asked Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai. “Well, we put smoking roots underneath him, sprinkle him with water and the evil spirit runs away.” Rabbi Yochanan said to him “Why don’t you let your ears listen to what comes out of your mouth?”

After the non-Jew had left, the students said to Rabbi Yochanan, “You pushed this fellow off with a reed. But what do you say to us?” He answered them: “By your lives, the dead do not make impure. Neither does the cow purify, nor does the water. Rather the Holy One, Blessed be He says: A statute I have instituted. A decree I have decreed. Yours in not to transgress my decrees, as it states ‘This is

the decree of the Torah...’ ”

People often say, “Look Rabbi, what is all this mumbo-jumbo, putting funny black boxes on your head, not wearing a mixture of wool and linen, not cooking milk and meat together, putting little metal cases on your door-posts. It’s just a lot of hocus-pocus isn’t it? So I say to them: “Have you ever used a cellular telephone?” “Yes.” “Do you understand how it works.” “Well, not really. It picks up radio signals that travel through the air.” “How does it do that?” “Well, it’s got a receiver inside it.” “How does this receiver work?” “Well, it’s on a chip. And there are thousands of miniature circuits on this chip and...well it receives the signal...You know what Rabbi, you’re right, I don’t really understand exactly how a cellular phone works.” “Did that stop you using it?” “No.” “It’s the same thing with *mitzvot*. I don’t have to know how a mitzvah works in order to do it. As long as G-d knows how it works, that’s fine by me.”

PORKIE

“This is the decree of the Torah” (19:1)

It’s a well-known fact that Jews don’t eat pork. Why not? You might hear people saying that as the refrigerator companies hadn’t got off the ground in the land of Canaan some three thousand years ago, so the Torah forbade eating pork for health reasons. The corollary of that statement is that seeing as now we have wonderful refrigerators, we can all eat pork.

Alternatively, you might hear some people expressing their revulsion at our little porcine friends thus: “The pig is a disgusting animal. It grovels around in the dirt. Its diet is from the most disgusting things that lay on the ground. Even if pig was kosher, I’d never eat it.”

The Torah’s view is neither of the above. Our Sages says quite clearly that “A person shouldn’t say: I don’t want to eat pig meat or wear *shatnez* (a forbidden mixture of wool and linen). Rather he should say: I do want to do these things, but what can I do — my Father in Heaven ordered me not to do them.”

It is for this reason that the meal we eat on Shabbat afternoon is called colloquially *shalosh seudos*, which translates as “three meals.” More accurately, it should be called *seuda shlishit* — “the third meal.” So why is this meal called “three meals?” (The answer is not because you’re supposed to eat enough for three meals.)

When a person sits down to eat the first meal of Shabbat on Friday night, he has an appetite built up from the day. Similarly, the second meal of Shabbat on Saturday morning comes at a time when most of us are ready to sit down and enjoy a meal. However, when just a couple of hours after this meal, we are obliged to sit down and eat yet another meal, it becomes clear retroactively that the other two meals were not for the sake of our own stomachs but to honor Shabbat with our eating and drinking. Eating on Shabbat and non-eating of pig are for

continued on page three

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The laws of the *para aduma* — the red heifer — are detailed. These laws are for the ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. The people complain about the loss of their water supply which until then has been provided miraculously in the merit of Miriam's righteousness. Aharon and Moshe pray for the people's welfare. Hashem commands them to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people's lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock instead of speaking to it. He thus fails to produce the intended public demonstration of Hashem's mastery over the world, which would have result-

ed had the rock produced water merely at Moshe's word. Therefore, Hashem tells Moshe and Aharon that they will not bring the people into the Land. *Bnei Yisrael* resume their travels, but because the King of Edom, a descendant of Esav, denies them passage through his country, they do not travel the most direct route to *Eretz Yisrael*. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities. Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him 30 days. Sichon the Amorite attacks *Bnei Yisrael* when they ask to pass through his land. As a result, *Bnei Yisrael* conquer the lands that Sichon had previously seized from the Amonites on the east bank of the Jordan River.

HAFTARAH

SHOFTIM 11:1 - 33

To the Amonite king's demand that Israel withdraw from the land east of the Jordan, Israel's new head, Yiftach, gives him a history lesson taken straight out of this week's Parsha. Yiftach relates how the Jews had captured that land purely in self-defense against a totally unprovoked attack, and that it had been won from the Ammorites, not from the Amonites. Ignoring this, the Amonites attack; and — echoing the vow made by the Jews in their battle for that same land three hundred years before — Yiftach vows to sacrifice whatever exits his house first to greet him on his victorious return. G-d gives him victory, and in a tragic twist Yiftach's daughter is the first to greet him upon his return.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

“Yiftach in his generation is like Shmuel in his generation,” says the Talmud. This refers to our obligation to honor a leader of the Torah community even if he doesn't quite measure up to the leaders of old. Compared to Shmuel, Yiftach had relatively small spiritual stature: Shmuel's greatness as prophet is likened to that of Moshe and Aharon; whereas regarding Yiftach the word “prophet” is never even used. Nevertheless, “Yiftach in his generation is like Shmuel in his generation.” Dreaming about the great leaders of “the good old days” is no excuse to ignore the direction of our present-day Torah leaders.

OHRNET

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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I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

When Miriam died, the people didn't properly eulogize and mourn for her, because they didn't realize the extent of her greatness. Thus, Hashem caused the water to cease when she died, showing the people that for 40 years in the dessert, the water flowed in the merit of Miriam.

• Adapted from *Kli Yakar*

לע"נ
הרב ברוך משה בן ר' חיים ז"ל
ת.צ.ב.ה.

continued from page one

the same reason — to fulfill the Will of the Creator.

DEAD TO THE WORLD - 1

“This is the Torah of a man who will die in a tent...” (19:14)

“The Torah does not stay with someone unless he kills himself over it.” (Talmud Berachot 63)

Most of us spend our lives in a kind of somnambulism. We all know that everything can stop in one second. We know that no one gets out of here alive. But we live our lives as though we were immortal.

There once was a businessman who woke up one day and thought to himself that he wasn't getting any younger. He ate his breakfast and said good-bye to his wife, but instead of driving to work, he drove to a *beit midrash* (Torah study hall). He walked in and asked a young bearded fellow sitting there if he would teach him the Torah. The young fellow asked him what he would like to learn. Without batting an eyelid, the businessman replied “Everything. Where do we start?”

The next day, the businessman ate breakfast, said good-bye to his wife, and drove back to the *beit midrash*. And the following day. And the day after that.

That night, his wife was standing at the door when he came home. “They called from the office today.” she said “Oh yes,” he murmured non-committally. “Apparently, you haven't been there for four days.” “That's right.” “Where have you been?” “I've been studying the Torah.” “Are you crazy? Who's going to support us if you don't go to work anymore?” “My dear wife, if I had passed away four days ago, would you be asking me now who was going to support you? My whole life I spent working for this world. Before I take my leave here, I would like to have something put away for our ‘retirement.’ I'm taking out some bonds in the First National Bank of the Next World. If I were dead, you wouldn't be asking me why I didn't go to the office today.”

Most of the time, we don't study Torah because we're “too busy.”

However, unless we can picture ourselves as “dead to the world,” we will never have the impetus to study until we are really dead to the world.

DEAD TO THE WORLD - 2

“This is the Torah of a man who will die in a tent...” (19:14)

“The Torah does not stay with someone unless he kills himself over it.” (Talmud Berachot 63)

The Torah is like water, it always finds the lowest point. G-d gave the Torah through Moshe because he was the humblest of people. When a person makes of himself nothing, he can make G-d everything. Thus the Torah does not stay with someone unless he “kills himself” over it, unless he is prepared to nullify his own ego for it.

Sources:

Hocus Pocus - Midrash Tanchuma, Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

Porkie - Devash V'Chalav in Iturei Torah Dead To The World - 1 - Chafetz Chaim

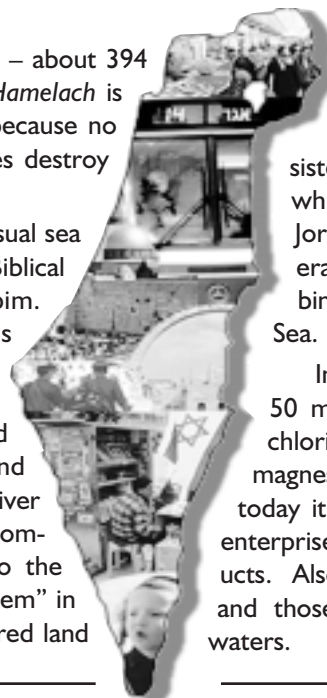
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

YAM HAMELACH (DEAD SEA)

The lowest spot on the earth's surface – about 394 meters below sea level — the *Yam Hamelach* is commonly known as the Dead Sea because no fish can live in it, and its mineral substances destroy almost all organic life.

A fascinating explanation of how this unusual sea came into being is offered by the great Biblical commentator Rabbi Meir Leibush Malbim. When Avraham parted company with his nephew Lot, the latter is reported to have lifted his eyes and looked at “the entire Jordan plain, which was entirely irrigated before Hashem destroyed Sodom and Amorrhah.” (*Bereishet 13:10*) The Jordan River once created a fertile delta at this plain, compared at the conclusion of this passage to the famous Nile Delta and the “Garden of Hashem” in Eden. It was the richness of this well-watered land



that attracted Lot to settle in its principal city, the wicked Sodom.

When Hashem destroyed Sodom and its sister cities, this plain turned into a giant crater which became filled with the water of the Jordan running into it. The salt and other minerals contained in the depths of the earth combined with the Jordan waters to form the Dead Sea.

In the early 1930s exploitation of the close to 50 million tons of magnesium chloride, sodium chloride, calcium chloride, potassium chloride and magnesium bromide in this sea was initiated, and today it has become the site of major commercial enterprises farming it for minerals and health products. Also, it is a considerable attraction for tourists and those seeking health cures in its mineral-rich waters.

MYSTERY OF THE MISSING SAGE

One holiday, the Sage Shimon of Timnah failed to appear in the *beit midrash* where he regularly studied with his colleagues. When Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava asked why he was absent, he explained that a band of heathen marauders had descended upon his community, and they were busy appeasing these invaders so that they would not steal from them. They achieved this, he added, by slaughtering a calf, cooking it for them and serving them a satisfying meal.

This explanation did not find favor in the eyes of Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava, who suggested that this saving of money was offset by the blame they incurred for violating the holiday. The Torah's permission to cook on a holiday, he reminded him, was limited to cooking for Jews and not for others.

Attempting to understand Shimon of Timnah's rationale, the *gemara* first suggests that this cooking was permitted because the marauders would certainly not have objected to their Jewish cooks helping themselves to a little of the meat. The cooking was therefore done for the benefit of Jews as well.

This approach is rejected, however, because if Jews had been able to partake of that calf's meat, Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava would not have challenged his colleague's action. We must therefore conclude that the animal in question was *treifah* and forbidden for Jewish consumption. This leaves but one justification for the holiday cooking of Shimon of Timnah — that a part of that *treifah* animal could be fed to animals which belonged to Jews.

The conflict between these two sages thus boils down to whether a Jew may cook on a holiday to feed his animals. This issue is actually debated by Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yossi the Galilite, with the former contending that the Torah permitted cooking to feed one's animal and the latter arguing that it is forbidden.

What is the logic, asks the *gemara*, for the view which permits cooking for your animal while prohibiting it for serving to a non-Jew? The answer is that feeding your animal is your responsibility, while another human can fend for himself.

The halachic ruling, however, is that cooking for an animal on a holiday is forbidden (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 512:3) though it is permitted to trouble yourself to feed your animals on Shabbat and holidays.

• *Beitza* 21

A BOLD PEOPLE

“**C**chutzpah” is a Hebrew word that has already become a part of the English language. Is boldness, however, a truly Jewish characteristic?

Jews are the boldest of peoples, said Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish; and Rabbi Meir saw a connection between this characteristic and being chosen from amongst the nations to receive the Torah.

Maharsha explains that there are two sides to the coin of boldness. A bashful person, says the Sage Hillel (*Pirkei Avot* 2:6) cannot succeed in Torah study. Only if one is bold enough to ask, to challenge and to debate can he truly learn Torah. On the other hand, however, if boldness is not tempered, it can prevent one from having a true respect for Divine authority. Their natural boldness, therefore, qualified the Jews to receive the Torah, to whose profound wisdom they would do justice with their capacity to search for truth without reservations. This Torah would then channel their boldness into a positive drive for intellectual and spiritual perfection and instill in them humility in their relationship to Heaven.

This controlling effect of Torah on Jewish boldness was once cited by a leading European rabbi to a ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire who looked with favor upon Jews abandoning their Torah and assimilating. “Torah is what controls the boldness of my people,” he told the emperor. “As long as we abide by our Torah and express our boldness in search of its wisdom, we are the most loyal of citizens to your majesty. But if we abandon this control, who knows if our grandchildren will not someday be involved in a bold challenge to your grandchildren!”

• *Beitza* 25b

derech

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. “Take a perfect *para aduma* (red heifer).” What does the word “perfect” — *temima* — mean in this context?
2. How many non-red hairs disqualify a cow as a *para aduma*?
3. A man dies in a tent. What happens to the sealed metal and earthenware utensils in the tent?
4. What happens to the one who: a) sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the *para aduma*; b) touches the water; c) carries the water?
5. Why was the *mitzvah* of the *para aduma* entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aharon?
6. Why does the Torah stress that *all* of the congregation came to *Midbar Tzin*?
7. Why is Miriam’s death taught after the law of *para aduma*?
8. During their journey in the *midbar*, in whose merit did the Jewish People receive water?
9. Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time?
10. When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this?
11. The cloud that led the Jewish People leveled all mountains in their path except three. Which three and why?
12. Why did the *entire* congregation mourn Aharon’s death?
13. What disappeared when Aharon died?
14. Which “inhabitant of the South” (21:1) attacked the Jews?
15. For what two reasons did Hashem punish the people with snakes specifically?
16. Why did the Jewish People camp in Arnon, rather than pass through Moav to enter *Eretz Canaan*?
17. What miracle took place at the valley of Arnon?
18. What was the “strength” of Amon that prevented the Jewish People from entering into their land?
19. Why was Moshe afraid of Og?
20. Who killed Og?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 19:2 - Perfectly red.
2. 19:2 - Two.
3. 19:14,15 - The metal utensils are impure for seven days, even if they are sealed. The sealed earthenware vessels are unaffected.
4. 19:21 - a) Remains *tahor*; b) He, but not his clothing, contracts *tumah*; c) He and his clothing contract *tumah*.
5. 19:22 - Because Aharon was involved in the sin of the golden calf.
6. 20:1 - To teach that they were *all* fit to enter the Land; everyone involved in the sin of the spies already died.
7. 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous.
8. 20:2 - Miriam’s.
9. 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to *speak* to the rock
10. 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the *midbar*. This teaches that even if one has adequate provisions he should purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host.
11. 20:22 - *Har Sinai* for receiving the Torah, *Har Nevo* for Moshe’s burial, and *Hor Hahar* for Aharon’s burial.
12. 20:29 - Aharon made peace between contending parties and between spouses. Thus, everybody mourned him.
13. 20:29 - The clouds of glory disappeared, since they sheltered the Jews in Aharon’s merit.
14. 21:1 - Amalek.
15. 21:6 - The original snake, who was punished for speaking evil, is fitting to punish those who spoke evil about Hashem and about Moshe. And the snake, for whom everything tastes like dust, is fitting to punish those who complained about the manna which changed to any desired taste.
16. 21:13 - Moav refused them passage.
17. 21:15 - The Amorites hid in caves in the mountain on the Moabite side of the valley in order to ambush the Jews. When the Jews approached, the mountain on the *Eretz Canaan* side of the valley moved close to the other mountain and the Amorites were crushed.
18. 21:24 - Hashem’s command, “Do not harass them” (*Devarim* 2:19).
19. 21:34 - Og had once been of service to Avraham. Moshe was afraid that this merit would assist Og in battle.
20. 21:35 - Moshe.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS “QUESTION”)

Lloyd Quinnstein from Leeds wrote:

Why was Aharon punished for the incident of the water from the rock? According to the text, it seems Aharon played no role there. If Moshe was punished for hitting the rock instead of speaking to it, what did Aharon do wrong?

Dear Lloyd Quinnstein,

According to the commentary of the Abarbanel, you’re right: Aharon was not being punished for the incident of the water from the rock; rather, he was denied entry into the Land of Israel because of his role in the Golden Calf. But

because his intentions had been pure (he agreed to make the calf only in order to stall the people until Moshe’s return, hoping thus to minimize their guilt) the Torah downplays the “golden calf” aspect of his punishment, and instead faults him here in the relatively minor sin of the incident of the water from the rock.

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.org.il with your questions on any Parsha!

NASDAQ KOSHER SNACK

Rafi Goldmeier
<gldmeier@actcom.co.il> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Is a Jew allowed to buy shares in a company like McDonalds? They serve milk cooked with meat, and it is prohibited for Jews to derive any benefit from milk and meat cooked together!*

Dear Rafi Goldmeier,

Many major corporations have investments in restaurants, hotels and food businesses that use mixtures of meat and milk. And as you said, the Torah forbids deriving benefit from meat cooked with milk.

However, many halachic authorities maintain that since you have no rights of ownership in the actual products, rather you only have dividends from the company's investments, it is permitted to own such stocks.

Rabbi S. Z. Braun addresses a similar question about owning stocks during Passover in a company that makes *chametz*. He writes that "since the stockholder has no right to do anything at the plant on his own accord, and certainly he has no right to destroy the *chametz*, he is not in violation of owning *chametz*." The same would apply to your question, and therefore you can own McDonalds stock.

Disclaimer: Under no circumstances does the above information represent a recommendation to buy or sell stocks!

And speaking of stocks:

An American financier was vacationing at the pier of a small coastal village when a small boat with a native fisherman docked. Inside were several large fish. The American asked the fisherman how long it took to catch them. "Only a little while," he replied. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish? The fisherman replied, "I have enough to support my family for today."

"What do you do the rest of the time?" asked the American.

"I sleep late, play with my children, take a siesta, and stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds buy a bigger boat on which you could catch even more fish. Then, you could buy several boats and eventually have a fleet. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you could sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to the big city to run your expanding enterprise."

"How long will all this take?" asked the fisherman. "About 15 years."

"Then what?"

"Ha!" laughed the American, "Then you would announce an IPO and sell stock in your company to the public! You'd make millions!"

"Then what?" asked the fisherman.

"Then," said the American, "you could retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you could sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta, and stroll to the village in the evenings to sip wine and play your guitar."

Sources:

- *She'arim Metzuyanim Behalacha* 64:4, from *Respona Mahari Halevy* 2:124

FETAL OINKER

Meir Balofsky
<meir_balofsky@edu.Yorku.ca>
wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
You recently wrote about the hypothetical case of a kosher animal genetically engineered to give birth to a non-kosher animal. I have a different question. What if a fetal pig was*

placed into the uterus of a cow?

Dear Meir Balofsky

Even if such a fetus came to full gestation and was born, it would be forbidden because it originated as a pig before being put into the cow. The rule that "anything originating from a kosher animal is kosher" means anything *produced* by a kosher animal. In this case, the fetus was not originally produced by a cow.

COLORED EGGS

Tamar Tessler <tamt@hotmail.com>
wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
We have a custom in our family to color eggs for Lag B'omer, and we know of others around the world that have this custom too. Yet nobody seems to know the origin or source of it. Some people I have asked suggested it is taken from a pagan custom, G-d forbid. Can anyone shed light on this please?*

Dear Tamar Tessler,

I asked your question to Rabbi Eliezer Demari of Jerusalem. (His parents came to Israel from Yemen in 1949.) Rabbi Demari said that in Yemen, the Jews painted eggs in honor of Purim. They sent these eggs to friends as *mishloach manot* gifts and ate them at the festive Purim meal.

The Jewish community in Yemen was isolated for centuries, and they can trace many of their customs back to the time of the First Temple, so it's clear that they didn't adopt this practice from any other culture.

Rabbi Demari also noted that it's conceivable that egg-painting was a custom among European Jews, and that they stopped doing so when it was adopted by other religions.

We see the same concept regarding a stone altar: Although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob made stone altars, the Torah later forbade making them because the

pagans had begun making stone altars for idol worship. Thus, we see that a “kosher” custom gets spoiled when it becomes a pagan custom.

FREEZING FROSTY FEBRUARY FLOWERS

Sue Remes from Grand Rapids MI
<abubbe@aol.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
How can I get my flowers to grow in the winter months in Grand Rapids Michigan in the winter snow? I have tried to warm them with a large blanket but that didn't work. I asked G-d to help but nothing worked. So maybe you could give me some ideas.*

Dear Sue Remes,

Thanks for your confidence in my horticultural acumen. Your confidence in me in this area is misplaced, however. All wisdom is contained in the Torah, either explicitly or in hidden format, but the answer to your question I have yet to discover.

I suggest you ask an expert in the field (pun intended).

Check with a local flower store or nursery. If after all your outdoor efforts and prayers G-d still says “No,” perhaps that means winter is your time to grow inside.

BURIAL RITE DIRECTION

Jonathan Lyons from Edgware, Middlesex, UK
<jldolly@hotmail.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Is it true that, in countries other than Israel, graves in a cemetery should be arranged in a certain way — i.e., heads facing Jerusalem?*

Dear Jonathan Lyons,

There are two main customs:

- Burial with feet facing the gate of the cemetery, to indicate belief in resurrection
 - Burial with feet facing Israel, indicating belief in resurrection and also the primacy of the Land of Israel.
- Ideally, both customs can be fulfilled by having the entrance to the cemetery in the direction of the Land of Israel.

Sources:

- *Pitchei Teshuva 262:2 and Gesher Hachaim*

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ohrnet” features

Re: How Not to Talk (Ohrnet Behar/Bechukotai):

Somebody once suggested setting aside an hour every day in which you are especially careful about not speaking *lashon harah* (forbidden negative speech). Once you have that down pat, go for two hours every day, etc. *Hatzlachah Rabbah!*

- JJ and Livia Levine
<jjlr@erols.com>

Re: Judge Knot (Ohrnet Shlach):

You wrote that the Talmud forbids crying too long for a loved one. You then said, “Eventually a person must get over his losses and move forward.” In discussing this with my roommate, she suggested that “get over it” was not the right term. I whole-heartedly agree. I will never “get over” my mother’s (a”h) death, but the intensity of the

pain and sadness decreases with time, and the experiences are hopefully used to move forward.

What you do is fantastic, and a big *kiddush Hashem* (not that you need me to tell you). Thank you so much for all your research, insight and wisdom. May Hashem bless you to continue educating others.

- Shoshana Greenberg
<greenr06@doc.mssm.edu>

Re: Nursing in Public Domain (Ohrnet Shlach):

I have a suggestion for the young mother regarding nursing in public. Dressing rooms in stores and malls are often large and comfortable enough to nurse privately. As a previous nursing mom I’ve discovered that the larger, more upscale stores have wonderful dressing rooms. Ask permission first.

- Robin Margolin <robinmargo@att.net>

Marital harmony is one of Judaism's highest ideals. Therefore, the mitzvah to judge favorably extends to the way we view a married couple. When a husband leaves the house, for example, we should assume that his wife says something pleasant like, "See you later, alligator!" and not...

HIKE A MILE, REPTILE!

Here's a great "Other Side" story that I hope you'll enjoy, and everyone will learn something from reading it.

We live in a mid-size town in Israel, and one evening while

I was out, my wife discovered that a small lizard (a gecko) had gotten into the apartment. It was on the ceiling in the salon, and she desperately wanted to get it out the door.

She got a broom and started trying to chase it and yell at it. She was unaware that one of our neighbors was coming up the stairs in the hallway outside, as she chased the lizard, screaming, "Get out of here, I'm not going to sleep in this house with you here tonight, get out!"

Although my wife and I both had a good laugh about it later, imagine what my neighbor must have thought, as he sheepishly turned around and headed back down the stairs.

• M.J., Israel

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

I have before me two identical pots of milk. The pots contain identical amounts of pure, unadulterated milk from one animal. Yet, if two exactly identical pieces of meat from one animal fall, one into each pot, and accidentally get cooked, one mixture becomes forbidden to eat and to sell, while the other mixture becomes forbidden only to eat, but it remains permitted to sell. Why is this?

Answer:

A cow was milked and slaughtered, and after it was slaughtered, more milk was found in its udder. One pot contains the milk milked before the slaughter, and one pot contains the milk found in the udder after slaughter.

It is forbidden by the Torah to cook milk and meat together. And it is forbidden by the Torah to derive any benefit from milk and meat cooked together. However, milk found in the udder of a slaughtered animal is different; it does not come under the Torah prohibition of meat and milk. Rather, it is forbidden to cook it with meat by rabbinic decree only. And when the Sages made this decree, they decreed only regarding cooking, or eating that which was cooked, but they did not forbid selling or otherwise deriving benefit from such a mixture once it was cooked.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 87:6
- Rema, ibid. 87:1 (see Shach and Taz, ibid; see also Badei Hashulchan 87:75 who cites a dispute among the authorities, citing Tiferet Lemoshe and Rabbi Akiva Eiger who forbid even benefit; he concludes, however, that it appears one may be lenient.)

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN

20:1 The Whole Congregation
21:9 The Serpent
21:21 Imperative for Peace
21:34 Fear of Og

OHR HACHAIM

20:8 The Sin of Moshe

SFORNO

19:2 Para Aduma
20:26 Aharon's Special Shroud

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