

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### A VEGETARIAN WORLD

*"...G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." (6:12)*

If you're a vegetarian, you might be interested to know that at one time the whole world was vegetarian.

Until the Great Flood in the time of Noach, no one killed an animal to eat its flesh. It was only when G-d gave a "new deal" to the sons of Noach — the seven *mitzvos* of *Bnei Noach* — that Man was permitted to kill animals for their meat.

Why should this be? The answer to this question is intimately tied to the reasons for the flood itself: "G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth."

What started as private immorality and idolatry had degenerated into public licentiousness. The people of Noach's generation practiced bestiality.

Seeing this breach in the fundamental division between Man and the other species, G-d brought the flood.

When Noach emerged from the ark to reestablish civilization, G-d permitted eating meat to prevent a reoccurrence of the bestiality which occurred before the flood: By permitting the consumption of animal flesh, Man necessarily saw himself as different than, and separate from, the animals. Never again would Man see himself as just another animal.

### A VEGETARIAN WORLD II

If you don't like meat, or if you think it's unhealthy, you are perfectly entitled to abstain from it. Instead of chicken soup on Shabbat, you can feast on mango chutney.

However, Judaism and your vegetarianism come into conflict if your misgivings about eating meat are because you believe that you and the cow have equally important roles in Creation.

*"It is our purpose to proclaim not only that faith is not contradictory to intellect, but that Man can aspire to that which is beyond intellect."*

Everything in the universe is created to serve Mankind. All the myriad species and diversity of Nature are "scenery," elaborate stage props, so that we may play out our star role — to recognize the Creator. This is the reason for Creation, and we are responsible to use everything in the world to assist us to perfect our character and bring us close to G-d. For by doing this, we not only elevate ourselves, but the entire Creation as well.

In Nature's hierarchy, every crea-

ture and species has its role. The mineral world supports the vegetable world: By feeding from minerals, vegetation incorporates the minerals with the result that the mineral world is elevated to a higher level. Similarly, when animals eat grass they elevate the vegetable world to the animal world.

And likewise, when a human eats an animal, the animal also ascends Nature's ladder. When a chicken ends up on someone's Shabbos table, it becomes the means by which Man elevates the physical to the spiritual — which is the essence of the Shabbos experience.

So order another veggie-burger, but don't write off that poor cow from *someone else's* Shabbos table. One day, in another world, you might meet up with a very irate heifer!

### OF MEN AND MICE

*"Behold I am about to bring the flood waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which there is a breath of life under the heavens." (6:17)*

The prophet *Yeshayahu* (Isaiah) refers to the flood as the "waters of Noach," implying that Noach bears at least partial responsibility for the flood. For, if Noach had taught his generation to know G-d by instructing them to emulate G-d's *midos* (character traits), they surely would have repented.

The Rambam (Maimonides) once had a dispute with a philosopher as to whether instinct or behavioral training governs the behavior of an animal. The philosopher held that an animal can be trained so completely

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

It is now ten generations since the creation of the first man. Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and Hashem resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth. Hashem instructs Noach to build an ark in which to escape the flood. After forty days and nights, the flood covers the entire earth, even the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days, the water begins to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends forth a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later, Noach again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After seven more days, Noach once again sends forth the dove, which this time, does not return. Hashem tells Noach and his family to leave the ark. Noach brings offerings to Hashem from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose.

Hashem vows never again to flood the entire world and gives the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. Noach and his descendants are now permitted to eat meat, unlike Adam. Hashem commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibition against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder, eating the meat of a living animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system. The world's climate is established as we know it today. Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noach's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yafes, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended. The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in Hashem fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parsha concludes with the genealogy of Noach to Avram.

## HAFTORAH: ISAIAH 54:1-10

Just as in this week's Parsha, where G-d promises never to bring another flood to destroy the world, so too the Haftorah carries G-d's promise never to exile the Jewish People after the redemption from the current Exile of Edom.

The Parsha depicts the terrible flood which destroys the earth and its

myriad creatures at the decree of the Merciful G-d. It looks like the end, but it is, in reality, the beginning. Out of the ashes of a degenerate world sprouts the seed of Noach.

Similarly, the destruction of the first *Beis Hamikdash* and the dispersal of the Jewish People were like a "flood" which superficially seemed a total disaster.

The Prophet tells that rather than being the ruin of the nation, in reality this was its preservation, and like a mother left lonely and grieving, Zion will be comforted when the exile has achieved its appointed task of purification, and her children return to her.

It is the merit of Torah study — it *not being removed* from our mouths — that gives us the merit that "My kindness *shall not be removed* from you."

### JEWISH DIETETICS

"Come all who are thirsty...go to the water...get wine and milk." (55:1)

Just as water, wine and milk keep best in plain inexpensive containers, so Torah, which satisfies the thirst of all who learn it, stays with one who is humble.

The revealed part of Torah is like water: Just as the human body cannot exist without water, so the Jewish People cannot survive spiritually without the revealed Torah.

The secrets of the Torah are like wine: They must be imbibed with care and are not equally tolerated by all.

The *midrashim* of the Torah are like milk and honey: They are sweet and nourishing, instilling love and fear of G-d.

• Tiferes Zion

### MOVED TO NOT REMOVE

"...And My kindness shall not be removed from you..." (60:10)

The words "shall not be removed" appear twice in our tradition. Once here, and once in *Yehoshua 1:5* — "This book of the Torah shall not be removed from your mouth."

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This issue is dedicated in memory of  
MRS. DORIS KRONISH, O.B.M.

לע"נ שרה פרעדל בת ר' יעקב הכהן ז"ל  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

that it can be made to do almost anything. To prove his point, he painstakingly trained a number of cats to stand upright, balance trays on their paws and serve as waiters. He dressed them for the part in white shirts with little black ties, and conducted a banquet with the cats as the waiters. As these feline waiters were serving the soup, the Rambam, who had been invited to the banquet, released a mouse. The banquet room was turned to pandemonium as the cats, forgetting all their hours of training, let their trays crash to the ground, rushing about on all fours after the mouse.

Without training, a person's baser instincts and desires will drag him onto all fours. However, a human being is different from the animals because he can perfect his character so that it controls his baser instincts. One who has not yet worked on perfecting his character will, like the trained cat, be able to put on a show of discipline for a time, but only so long as no "mice" are released in his

path.

Only after a person has anchored good character traits in himself will the Torah reside in him. Only the Torah can bring one's character to ultimate perfection, but where there is no foundation of proper *midos*, the acquisition of Torah is impossible.

### WORLDVIEW

*"Let Canaan be a slave to them" (9:25)*

**W**hy did *Canaan*, offspring of *Ham*, have to be a slave to the descendants of *both Shem and Yafes*?

The name *Yafes* connotes beauty and aesthetic appreciation. *Yafes* was the progenitor of *Yavan* — father of Greek civilization. Thus Greek civilization emphasizes beauty as an absolute value.

*Ham* means "hot." It implies wild unbridled animal energy.

The civilizing effects of aesthetics (*Yafes*) can raise us to dominate our physical desires (*Ham*) to a level

where we can make the leap from the sensual to the aesthetic; from "the world is what I can **feel**" to "the world is what I can **think**."

Only then can we ascend to the level of "the world is **beyond** what I can think." That's the level of *Shem*.

That's why it was necessary for *Canaan* to be yoked to both *Yafes* and *Shem*. For without an "apprenticeship" under *Yafes*, our baser natures find it hard to make the great leap from the physical to the spiritual.

The Jewish People are descended from *Shem*. It is our purpose to proclaim not only that faith is not contradictory to intellect, but that Man can aspire to that which is beyond intellect. As Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch put it: "An essential component of wisdom is the knowledge that man's failure to comprehend truth does not make it untrue."

Sources:

- *Of Men And Mice* - Rabbi Zev Leff in *Shiurei Binah*
- *WorldView* - Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### INDIRECT VANDALISM

**T**he elimination of idol worship in *Eretz Yisrael* was a responsibility delegated to the Jewish People upon their entry into the Land. They were commanded to destroy the idols, smash their altars and wipe out any trace of their name.

This command is followed by the warning "You shall not do thus to Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim 12:4*). The simple reading of this passage is that we are warned not to do to the sacred items connected with Hashem that which we are instructed to do to those of the idol worshippers. Our Sages conclude



from this that one who smashes even a stone from the Sanctuary or the altar, or one who erases even one letter of the Holy Name has violated this prohibition.

Rabbi Gamliel, however, sees another dimension in this warning: Of course Jews are not suspect of destroying their altars, says Rabbi Gamliel; rather, the Torah is warning us not to imitate the idolatrous ways of the heathens and cause our Sanctuary and altar to be destroyed as a result of our sins.

• *Sifri, Parshas Re'eh*

### I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

In Hebrew, "ark" and "word" are synonymous. Furthermore, the ark's dimensions were 30 x 300 x 50. These numbers correspond to the Hebrew letters "lamed shin nun" which spell "lashon" — "tongue." The true "ark" which saved Noah and family were the words of prayer they uttered with their tongues.

## WEEKLY DAF

### PESACHIM 65 -71

#### SONS OF PROPHETS

The Sage Hillel had made *aliya* from Babylon to Eretz Yisrael where an unusual event prepared him for leadership as the head of the Sanhedrin. His historical opportunity arrived when Erev Pesach (14 Nissan), the day on which the Pesach sacrifice was to be slaughtered and offered, was on Shabbos. The heads of the Sanhedrin were in doubt as to whether this sacrifice could be offered in violation of the Shabbos laws. Communal sacrifices, such as the regular daily ones and the additional ones on the festivals, are offered even on Shabbos, but they forgot whether the Pesach sacrifices, which are brought by individuals in a communal fashion, also have this special status.

When they turned to their colleagues for guidance it was suggested that Hillel, who had studied with the great Sages Shemaya and Avtalyon, might know the answer. Hillel was indeed equal to the challenge and cited proof from the Torah that the Pesach sacrifice must be offered "in its appointed time," even on Shabbos. The knife, on the other hand, could be prepared the day before, and there was therefore a doubt as to whether it could be brought on Shabbos. Even if a way were found to avoid violating Torah law, did the rabbinical ban on carrying in an irregular fashion prevent the carrying of the knife for the slaughter of the Pesach sacrifice?

Now it was Hillel's turn to be stumped. (The *gemara* explains that this was Heavenly punishment for the haughty manner in which he addressed his predecessors as heads of the Sanhedrin when they forgot a law.) He admitted that he had learned the law in such a case but had forgotten it. "But," he added, "things will work out, because even if Jews are not prophets themselves, they are the sons of prophets."

The next day, Shabbos Erev Pesach, these semi-prophetic Jews arrived at the *Beis Hamikdash* with their animals for the Pesach sacrifice. From the wool of the lamb protruded a knife, and between the horns of the goat a knife was to be found. Upon seeing this Hillel proclaimed: "Now I recall the law I learned from Shemaya and Avtalyon. This is the procedure which they taught me!"

The "sons of prophets," by placing the knives on the animals in such irregular fashion, had avoided violating Torah law by themselves carrying, or by having their animals carry for them in a regular fashion. They had properly anticipated that the rab-

binical ban on such irregular carrying by their animals would not stand in the way of offering the Pesach sacrifice.

• Pesachim 66a

#### LOST ANGRY MAN

After Hashem informed the Prophet Shmuel that Saul would not continue to be King of Israel, He directed him to secretly proceed to the Bethlehem home of Yishai where he would find a candidate for the Crown amongst Yishai's children. Upon his arrival he was greatly impressed by the oldest son, Eliav, and assumed that he was the chosen one. Hashem cautioned him, however, "to not look upon his appearance and his height, for I have rejected him." The reason for Shmuel's error is explained as "a man sees only what is visible to they eyes, while Hashem sees what is in his heart." (*Shmuel I* 16:7)

What did Hashem see in the heart of Eliav which disqualified him?

In the very next chapter we find the answer. David, already anointed by Shmuel as the future king unbeknownst to his father and brothers, was told by his father to leave his sheep tending in order to bring provisions to his brothers serving in Saul's army in a war with the Philistines. Eliav became angry with David, unjustly scolding him for abandoning the sheep in his charge and accusing him of misbehaving in order to watch the war. (*ibid.* 17:28)

It was Eliav's characteristic of anger, says the Sage Reish Lakish, which disqualified him from being king even though he was otherwise suited for this role. The problem with this explanation is that chronologically the rejection of Eliav took place before the incident of his display of anger. Rashi points out that we find no other reason for his rejection and must therefore conclude that it was Hashem's omniscient awareness of his tendency to anger which caused the rejection which, concludes Reish Lakish, is the fate of angry men otherwise destined for greatness.

Maharsha points out that this message is implied in the words "Hashem sees what is in his heart," for Hashem saw the character of the man which would later become visible with his outburst against David.

• Pesachim 66b

#### BONUS QUESTION?

##### SHERLOX HOLMES AND

##### THE FLOOD MYSTERY

"I'm puzzled," said Watstein as he peered into the text and read: "And G-d said to Noach: ...Behold, I shall destroy them from the earth....Make yourself an ark....And I, behold, I am going to bring a flood...." (*Bereishis* 6:17)

"What puzzles you?" asked world

famous detective Sherlock Holmes.

"Rashi's comment puzzles me," said Watstein. Rashi says: *G-d had many ways in which to save Noach, so why trouble him to build an ark? So that the people would see Noach building the ark and ask what he was doing; when Noach would answer that G-d is bringing a flood to destroy them, perhaps they would repent.*"

"Rashi is simply explaining why G-d saved Noach via an ark, and not via some other method," said Sherlock.

"Look here, Mr. Holmes. Whatever method G-d chooses to do something, we can always ask: *Why not some other method?* For example, when G-d made leather garments for Adam and Chava, we could ask: *Why leather? Why not some other material?* This line of questioning, although interesting, is endless. And it is not Rashi's style. Rashi never comments unless something in the text impels him to do so. So why here does Rashi comment?"

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
2. Why did Hashem tell Noach to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
3. The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
4. What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
5. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the flood for seven days?
6. Why did the first water of the flood come down as light rain?
7. What did people say that threatened Noach, and what did Hashem do to protect him?
8. What grouping of creatures escaped the punishment of the flood?
9. How deeply was the ark submerged in the water?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
14. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
15. Why does the command to “be fruitful and multiply” directly follow the prohibition of murder?
16. Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
17. Why did Noach curse Canaan specifically? Give two reasons.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called *Yiscah*?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 6:13 - Robbery.
2. 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, “Hashem is bringing a flood,” it might encourage some people to repent.
3. 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse.
4. 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. “Kosher” and “non-kosher” are Torah concepts.
5. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.
6. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
7. 7:13,15 - People said, “If we see him going into the ark, we’ll smash it!” Hashem surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:4 - Eleven *amos*.
10. 8:11 - Nothing. It was a leaf, not a branch. (The olive leaf symbolized that it’s better to eat food “bitter like an olive” but which comes directly from Hashem, rather than sweet food provided by humans.)
11. 8:14 - A full solar year.
12. 8:14 - Eleven days.
13. 9:3 - After the flood.
14. 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
15. 9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
16. 9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
17. 9:22,24 - Because Canaan is the one who revealed Noach’s disgrace to Ham. And because Ham stopped Noach from fathering a fourth son. Thus, Noach cursed Ham’s fourth son, Canaan.
18. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, persuading them to rebel against Hashem.
19. 11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
20. 11:29 - The word “*Yiscah*” is related to the Hebrew word “to see.” Sarah was called *Yiscah* because she could “see” the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.

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## KADDISH WITHOUT A MINYAN

**Gary from NYC**  
<garyl@uninet.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
My mother died three months ago. I am not affiliated with a synagogue. I go to synagogue on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. My children were bar-mitzvahed and I have a deep feeling of Jewish identity. I have been saying kaddish for my mother in the morning and evening alone in my house. Recently, some Torah-observant colleagues have attempted to explain to me that kaddish should be said in the presence of a minyan (ten Jewish men) and I understand the reason for that. However, I am not able to make the commitment to go to synagogue every day for a year, and generally feel awkward and uncomfortable walking into a synagogue as a stranger. Therefore I intend to continue to say kaddish for my mother in my house. My question is this: Is saying kaddish in the house, not in the presence of a minyan, meaningless? Thank you.

Dear Gary,

Kaddish is the public sanctification of G-d's Name. If kaddish is said in private, then by definition it is not kaddish.

You say you are unable to attend synagogue every day for a year. Can you go every other day? There is tremendous value to kaddish even if it is not said every day. You also mentioned that you have Torah-observant colleagues. Can you gather ten such people at your home or work-place? If so, then you can say kaddish for your mother without going to synagogue.

On the days that you can't say kaddish with a minyan, you should ask someone who attends a minyan to say it instead of you. You should tell him your mother's Hebrew name. If you can't find someone locally, *Ohr Somayach* offers such a service. Write to [info@ohr.org.il](mailto:info@ohr.org.il) for more information.

Saying kaddish for a parent is a fulfillment of the commandment "Honor your father and your mother." The soul

of the parent is rewarded for having reared a son or daughter who continues in the proper path. Other commandments, too, are a merit for the departed parent. So rather than recite kaddish in private, do a mitzvah; for example, say the daily *Shema*, give charity or do acts of kindness in her name. These will serve as a merit for your departed mother's soul. May the Almighty One comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

## THE BIBLE'S CODE

**Aaron Hock**  
<millyhock@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
What are the similarities and differences between the Code of Hammurabi and Jewish Law expressed in the Torah? Thank you for any help you might offer.

Dear Aaron Hock,

Hashem taught the Torah to Moshe on Mount Sinai; therefore, the Torah can't be compared to any legal code of human origin, even to legal codes which "predate" it as Hammurabi's does.

That having been said, there are a number of differences between Judaism's legal system and the Sumerian Code of Hammurabi (18th century BCE). For example:

- Hammurabi's Code is only consequential law; i.e., if you do X then Y will happen to you. The Torah on the other hand gives moral pronouncements; i.e., "You shall not..." — as well as consequences.
- Hammurabi's Code contains no positive obligations toward others. The Torah on the other hand is replete with directives of love, kindness, lending, charity, etc.
- Hammurabi's Code protects the nobility and land-owners as privileged classes. The class of people "protected and favored" in the Torah are the widows, the orphans, the poor and the strangers.

Whatever similarity Hammurabi's

Code bears to the Torah may be attributed to the following: Before the Torah was given at Sinai, Mankind already had seven categories of laws in the "Noachide Laws" which G-d had commanded to Noach. These laws were passed down from generation to generation, and these laws were the subject of study in the ancient Academy of Shem and Ever. I once heard from Rabbi Simcha Wasserman, *zatzal*, that Hammurabi most likely absorbed some ideas from this academy.

## SHABBAT HOSPITALITY

**Noam from Columbus, Ohio**  
<noam@primenet.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
If everyone in Israel did teshuva [became Torah observant], then how would hospitals be run on Shabbat?

Dear Noam,

Better than they are now. You see, the Torah views the saving of a life as a mitzvah of paramount importance. This is seen reflected in emergency health care services run by Orthodox Jews, which have a faster average response time than others. In fact, there are already hospitals in Israel that are run according to Jewish law — for example, Shaarei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem and Laniado Hospital in Netanya.

The Torah commands us to break Shabbat in order to save a life. Therefore, there is no contradiction between working in a hospital on Shabbat and observing Jewish law. Actions that do not pertain to saving life are done after Shabbat. (For example, filling out forms.)

## WHO KNOWS TWELVE?

**Joyce Belford**  
<joyce@sbetc.des.state.mn.us>  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
I am wondering if you could tell me what the meaning of the different numbers are, such as five, twelve,

eight, nine...etc. Actually, I am wondering about the numbers from 1-12.

Dear Joyce Belford,

The answer to your question is found at the end of the Passover Haggada in the song "Echad Mi Yodea." There, each number is related to a concept; each concept is the main principle symbolized by its co-related number. In short:

- 1 • The Unity of G-d
- 2 • The covenant between G-d and the Jewish People.
- 3 • The merit of our Patriarchs: Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
- 4 • The merit of our Matriarchs: Sara, Rivka, Rachel and Leah.
- 5 • The Written Torah, expressed in the Five Books of Moses.
- 6 • The Oral Torah, expressed in the Six Orders of the Mishna.
- 7 • The Creation of the physical existence in seven days.
- 8 • The spiritual sphere — symbolized by circumcision.
- 9 • Reproduction and fruitfulness — expressed by the nine months of pregnancy.
- 10 • The Ten Commandments — an elaboration on the covenant between us and Hashem. Ten generally symbolizes completeness, the unification of disparate parts.
- 11 • The heavenly bodies. As 10 represents completeness, 11 represents infinity, expressed by the seeming-

ly infinite universe. Eleven is also associated with the number of planets in our solar system, including the sun and moon.

- 12 • The Jewish People as expressed by the 12 tribes; the 12 tribes also parallel the 12 months and the 12 signs of the zodiac.
- 13 • The 13 Divine Attributes of Divine Mercy.

## SWAN VS. GIRAFFE

Harvey Margolin <ponytail3@juno.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Here's two "wildlife" kashrut questions: Is the swan a kosher bird (if properly slaughtered)? And what about the giraffe? A chef whom I know, and who was born in Morocco but raised in Israel, has told me that the giraffe is a kosher animal but could never be eaten because the shochet (ritual slaughterer) would not know where to make the cut. Does this make any sense at all?

Dear Harvey Margolin,

The swan is kosher, provided it is kosher-slaughtered. The giraffe is also kosher, in theory. The reason we don't eat it is *not* because we don't know where on its neck to slaughter it; rather, we don't eat giraffe because there is no continuous tradition that giraffes have been eaten by Jews throughout the generations.

Source:

- Mazon Kasher Min Hachai, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Levinger pp.19,22

**PUBLIC DOMAIN**  
Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

**Re: Which Way to Pray at the Wall (Ohrnet Devarim):**

Regarding whether one should face the golden dome when praying at the Western Wall, I refer you to the illustrated *Beit Hamikdash Hashlisli* (The Third Temple) by Shalom Dov Steinberg. The author brings very convincing evidence that the *Beit Hamikdash* did not stand on the present site of the golden dome, but rather was situated between the golden dome and the silver dome. This area lies directly behind the Western Wall, so that by facing the Wall one is praying straight towards the Temple site. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, *shlita*, in his responsa (3:39) agrees with this conclusion, and relates that the Belzer Rebbe, Reb Aharon, *zatzal*, when visiting the Wall would search for a

certain protruding stone. He would pray at that spot, explaining that his father, Reb Yissachar Dov, *zatzal*, had told him that this stone was directly opposite the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (Holy of Holies).

- Elozor Barclay, Neve Yaakov, Jerusalem

Rav Moshe Sternbuch, *shlita*, proves that the site of the *Kodesh Hakodashim* was not, as is widely believed, under the Dome of the Rock. One proof is from electro-magnetic scans under the Temple mount that reveal very deep hollows consistent with those described as having been under the Temple — these hollows however are not under the Dome of the Rock, rather they are under the clear unbuilt section of the Temple Mount, directly behind where the *Kotel* now stands. This was foreseen by the Zohar, which says that there will never be a building built on the site of the Sanctuary except for the Temple! Rav Sternbuch concludes that the correct direction to face is forwards, directly towards the wall when standing in the open-air *Kotel*-plaza. By Divine Providence, this is the part of the *Kotel* that has been revealed to Jews, where Jews have prayed for centuries!

- Yitzchok Jaeger, Jerusalem

## GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

If someone does something that gets you hot under the collar, remember that it's a mitzvah to judge favorably. You too can be...

### A FAN OF THE JEWS

Those of you who have the privilege to study Torah in Jerusalem know that in the summer months it can get really hot. I study in a yeshiva in Jerusalem which until a few years ago had no air conditioning. They had two fans, one at each end of the beis midrash (study hall) and one ceiling fan in the center of the room. I sat with

my *chavrusa* (study partner) right under the ceiling fan. This fan was old and hardly worked, but right under it you felt some breeze. Every morning in our *beis midrash* there sat an elderly man who always wore his hat and jacket, even on the hottest of days. One day he walks in, of course with his hat and jacket, sits down next to my table and starts to study. One minute later he gets up, goes to the switch of the ceiling fan and shuts it off. I began to fume inside and said to myself "What *chutzpa!* He's not even part of our yeshiva and on such a hot day he shuts off the fan?" One minute later he gets up and

turns it on again, and only then was it clear to me what had happened:

Like I said before, it was an old and slow working fan. He mistakenly thought that it was on the lowest setting and thought that he was turning it higher. One minute later, when he realized that he had turned it off, he went and turned it on again. I learned from this story that either be *dan le'kaf zchus* (judge favorably) or stay quiet and wait to see what will happen. But *chas v'shalom*, don't blow a fit and embarrass another person.

• Avromi M. from Jerusalem  
Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story"  
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

**Last week we asked:** What is the shortest word in the Torah?

**Answer:** The word is "ha." It is one letter, and appears in the book of *Devarim* 32:6. In most texts of the *Chumash* the masoretic note in the margin reads "Hey rabasi, v'hee teiva l'atzma" — "large hey, and it is a word unto itself."

• Riddle submitted by Shmuel Bendel <sybendel@hotmail.com>

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## BONUS ANSWER!

“Look at the verses, Watstein,” said Sherlock. “First, G-d tells Noach that the world will be destroyed. But G-d doesn't say *how* it will be destroyed. Then, G-d tells Noach to build an ark. Finally, G-d declares that there will be a flood.”

“Hmm. It is a bit peculiar,” said Watstein. “The command to build the ark is surrounded by two statements about the destruction.”

“Therefore,” said Sherlock, “Rashi understands that the first statement is G-d's decision to destroy the world, but only if the people don't repent. Then, Noach is commanded to build an ark, whose purpose is to get the people to repent. Then, if that fails, 'Behold, I am going to bring a flood...'”

• Maskil L'David; Sherlock by Reuven Subar,  
inspired by Dr. A. Bonchek's "What's Bothering Rashi"

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**RAMBAN**  
6:19 Miracle of the Ark  
7:1 Preserving the World  
8:11 The Olive Leaf  
9:12 The Rainbow  
9:18 Ham and Canaan

10:9 Nimrod  
10:15 The Land of Canaan  
11:32 The Death of Terach

**SFORNO**  
8:21 The New World

8:22 The Pre-Flood World  
9:6 The Crime of Murder  
9:9 The Conditions of the Covenant  
9:13 Meaning of the Rainbow