

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

DÉJA VU

“And these are the ordinances...” (21:1)

Déja vu. We’ve all had the feeling. Someone’s talking and you know exactly what they’re going to say. Or you’re about to walk into a room and you visualize it exactly as it turns out to be. Nobody really understands déjà vu. One theory is that the brain experiences a kind of short-circuit. Information coming from the senses, the eyes, the ears, rather than being recognized by the brain as “live” information, is re-routed directly to the memory. The result is that even though you think you’ve seen it all before, in reality you are seeing something for the first time.

“And these are the statutes which you will place before them.” Rashi writes that the conjunction “and” tells us that just as the supra-logical commandments like *kashrus* and *shatnez* were given at Sinai, so too the “logical” commandments like the prohibitions against theft and murder, with which every civilized society concurs, are also from Sinai. One might think that the “logical” commandments were not of Divine origin, for we see that every society subscribes to them. For this reason, the Torah employs the conjunction “and” to tell us there is no difference. All the *mitzvos* are the word of G-d; the logical no less than the supra-logical.

There’s a kind of déjà vu at work here. Civilized cultures believe that it is our own native logic that teach-

es us the societal prohibitions against killing and theft. We deem these concepts self-evident. The truth is that we are re-living a sense-memory implanted in our psyche by the Creator of the psyche itself. G-d didn’t create this world to be a bleak and empty post-nuclear landscape with nothing but the sound of the wind whistling through a barren tundra. He created the world to be populous, to teem with life.

The reason that these command-

“He only becomes whole when he links himself to the body of the Jewish People.”

ments seem logical to us is because they are the fundamental basis of society. Without these fundamental principles, society descends instantly into barbarism and anarchy. G-d created within us an ability to recognize these laws as commonsense precisely because He wanted society to thrive.

How great is the mind of man

that, though housed in a merely mortal frame, it can aspire to G-d’s Torah! And how important is it to realize that everything to which the intellect can aspire is only because G-d created that power within us.

SURFACE TENSION

“We will do and we will obey.” (24:7)

The Midrash tells us that before the Jewish People accepted the Torah, G-d offered it to all the other nations one by one and they rejected it. He offered it to the nation of Esav. Esav asked what was in it. G-d said “You mustn’t kill.” “We live by our sword” was their reply. G-d offered it to Yishmael. They too asked G-d what was in it. “Don’t commit adultery.” So Yishmael also turned it down. It wasn’t congruent with their lifestyle. Finally G-d offered the Torah to the Jewish People and they said “We’ll do and we’ll hear.”

There’s something about this Midrash that is hard to understand: All those nations who then rejected the Torah now have laws against killing and adultery. If they themselves incorporated these laws into their legal systems, why was the Torah so difficult for them to accept? Seemingly, the Torah required no more of them than that to which they subsequently committed themselves.

The Talmud tells us that when we embarrass someone, it’s as though we killed him. This is evidenced by the blood draining from his face.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Jewish People receive a series of laws concerning social justice. Topics include: Proper treatment of Jewish servants; a husband's obligations to his wife; penalties for hitting people and cursing parents, judges, and leaders; financial responsibilities for damaging people or their property, either by oneself or by one's animate or inanimate property, or by pitfalls that one created; payments for theft; not returning an object that one accepted responsibility to guard; the right to self-defense for a person being robbed.

Other topics include: Prohibitions against seduction; practicing witchcraft, bestiality and sacrifice to idols. The Torah warns us to treat the convert, widow and orphan with dignity, and to avoid lying. Usury is forbidden and the rights over collateral are limited. Payment of obligations to the

Temple should not be delayed, and the Jewish People must be holy, even concerning food. The Torah teaches the proper conduct for judges in court proceedings. The commandments of Shabbos and the Sabbatical year are outlined. Three times a year — Pesach, Shavuot and Succos — we are told to come to the Temple. The Torah concludes this listing of laws with a law of kashrus — not to mix milk and meat.

Hashem promises that He will lead the Jewish People to the Land of Israel, helping them conquer the nations that live there, and tells them that by fulfilling His commandments they will bring blessings to their nation. The people promise to do and listen to everything that Hashem says. Moshe writes the Book of the Covenant, and reads it to the people. Moshe ascends the mountain for 40 days in order to receive the two Tablets of the Covenant.

HAFTORAH: MELACHIM II CH. 11

PARSHAS SHEKALIM

In the months of Shevat, Adar and Nissan, we read four special passages of the Torah. Each is accompanied by its own special Haftorah. The Torah portions are to help us prepare for Purim and ultimately for Pesach. The four passages are: *Parshas Shekalim* which deals with the collection of the compulsory half-shekel for offerings in the *Beis Hamikdash*; *Parshas Zachor*, to

remember the mitzvah of eradicating the memory of Amalek, who attacked the Jewish People after the Exodus from Egypt; *Parshas Parah*, which details the laws of how a person can cleanse himself from the spiritual impurity that results from contact with the dead; and finally, *Parshas HaChodesh*, the mitzvah of the sanctification of the new moon and the Pesach offering.

Hamikdash a thousand years before Haman's plot.

It was this half-shekel, given in the service of the Creator, which outweighed all of Haman's 10,000 *kikar* of silver, and led to the salvation of the Jewish People in the time of Purim.

HALFNESS AND WHOLENESS

Why was it that specifically a half-shekel was given, and not a whole shekel?

A Jew must understand that alone he is only half the picture. Without his attachment to the community, he can never reach a state of completeness.

For Hashem has established His relationship between Himself and His people. A Jew has to look at himself as a "half-shekel." He only becomes whole when he links himself to the body of the Jewish People.

LIGHT WEIGHTS

The Midrash (*Eliyahu Rabba*) tells us that Hashem knew that in the month of Adar, Haman would offer Achashverosh, king of Persia, 10,000 *kikar* of silver if he would agree to the genocide of the Jewish People.

Thus, in "anticipation" of Haman's plan, Hashem gave the Jewish People the merit of the mitzvah of the half-shekel donation to the *Beis*

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

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

General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman
Editorial & Web Advisor:
Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
Associate Editors:
Rabbi Mordechai Becher,
Rabbi Reuven Subar
Contributing Writers:
Weekly Daf, Love of the Land:
Rav Mendel Weinbach
Insights, Overview, Haftorah:
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Web Production: **Eli Ballon, Michael Treblow**

Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

© 1999 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529
* THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

The OHR SOMAYACH WEB SITE is Hosted by VIRTUAL JERUSALEM
www.virtualjerusalem.com

OhrNet is available from several sources:
• E-MAIL via InterNet: Write to info@ohr.org.il for information.
• WORLD WIDE WEB: Our address is: www.ohrnet.org
• REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:
To subscribe, mail or fax your name, address & phone to 02-581-2890.

• Submit your questions to ASK THE RABBI at www.asktherabbi.org
or E-Mail info@ohr.org.il — set subject to "ASK THE RABBI."

*This issue is dedicated
in loving memory of*

JACOB AND MINNA ANNIS, OBM

PARSHA INSIGHTS

We are also taught that gazing at the opposite gender is considered an act of indecency. Behind the surface of each commandment, there is a subtlety and depth which requires a great deal of a person. The Torah is not just a dry legal system, it's the handbook of holiness. That's what these nations couldn't accept. When they realized that the Torah connoted infinitely more than its surface appearance, they instantly demurred.

FEELINGS

"The appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire..." (24:17)

How do I know if G-d is pleased with me? How do I know if my service of the Creator is according to His wishes?

From the above verse, we can discern a powerful indicator of how G-d views our service to him. To test whether the "appearance of the glory of Hashem" exists in our service of

the Creator, we should check for a feeling of wanting to serve G-d "like a consuming fire," with powerful enthusiasm and a deep love. For this indicates that G-d accepts our service. Since these feelings are planted in our hearts from Heaven, they are a certain sign that our service is received with favor.

Sources:

Déja Vu - Ohr Gedaliyah

Surface Tension - Rabbi Reuven Buckler in the name of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman

Feelings - Kedushas Levi

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

PEKI'IN

Many legends surround this village in the north of Israel. New Peki'in was established as a Jewish community in 1955, a short distance from Old Peki'in, a village populated by Druze, Christians and a few Jews.

One tradition is that the Jewish community in Peki'in was never exiled from the Holy Land. Arab riots in 1936 forced the Jews of Peki'in to leave their homes for safer parts of the country and only a few of them later returned.



Another tradition is connected with the ancient synagogue which was restored in 1837. Two carved stones lying sideways were reportedly brought from Jerusalem and legend has it that they fell on their sides as a sign of mourning when the Temple was destroyed.

But certainly the most famous tradition regarding Peki'in is that it houses the cave in which the great Talmudic Sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son Elazar hid from the Romans for thirteen years, miraculously sustained by a spring of water and a carob tree while totally absorbed in the study of Torah.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Parshas Mishpatim, dealing largely with monetary laws, precedes *Parshas Terumah* which details the donations needed to build the Sanctuary. This teaches that even when donating to charity (*terumah*), a person must be sure that the money honestly belongs to him (*mishpatim*).

• Beis Halevi

OHRNET

MAGAZINE

"Thank you for your excellent publication. The gabbai of the Young Israel, Bruce Selznick, always supplies the shul with a copy, which makes it's way around the shul..."

• A Jew in Richmond <richseed@juno.com>

Please send in your gift today.

\$36 MEMBER

\$180 SUPPORTER

\$360 SPONSOR

\$720 BENEFACTOR

\$_____ OTHER

Contributions should be made payable to Ohr Somayach and mailed to P.O.Box 18103 Jerusalem 91180

WEEKLY DAF

YOMA 37 - 43

THE MIRACULOUS GATES

All of the gates in the *Beis Hamikdash* were made of gold except for the eastern gates of the courtyard. They were made of brass and they were called the “Gates of Nikanor.”

Why they were called “Gates of Nikanor” is dramatically explained in the *gemara*. Nikanor was the name of the man who traveled to the Egyptian city of Alexandria to bring specially made brass gates for the eastern entrance to the *Beis Hamikdash*. On the return trip a violent storm threatened to sink his ship and the crew lightened its load by throwing one of the heavy gates overboard. As the storm continued to threaten the ship the sailors decided to cast the second gate into the sea as well. At this point Nikanor, who was confident that no harm would befall him as befits one involved in a mission for a mitzvah, tied himself to the second gate and asked to be thrown overboard together with it. The sea miraculously become calm and both Nikanor and his gate were spared. His sorrow at losing the first one, concludes the *gemara*, was relieved when he arrived at the Port of Acco and the first gate surfaced. One version is that it had miraculously become attached to the bottom of the ship. Another is that a huge sea creature swallowed the gate and then vomited it out.

Why did Nikanor wait till the second gate was threatened before showing his heroic determination to save his sacred treasure? Iyun Yaakov explains that as long as he had one gate to bring back to Jerusalem there was the hope that craftsmen there could duplicate it.

But why, asks the *gemara* itself, were the Gates of Nikanor permitted to remain in their brazen form while all other gates were covered with gold? One answer given by our Sages is that this was done to commemorate the miracles which occurred in connection with these gates. Another is that they were made from a very special kind of brass which gave them a luster similar to that of gold.

But is “similar to gold” a sufficient reason for making an exception of them? The Jerusalem Talmud’s approach is

that the brass of Nikanor’s gates outshone the gold of the others. Our own *gemara*, points out Iyun Yaakov, implies that even if they were only as brilliant as gold, this made them stand out because they were able to achieve such a superior glow despite being made of an inferior metal.

• Yoma 37a

AIM AT THE NAME

“The memory of a righteous man is blessed and the name of the wicked shall rot.” (Mishlei 10:7)

This delineation of King Solomon is applied in the *mishna* to those who made important contributions to the dignity of the *Beis Hamikdash* in contrast to those whose selfishness detracted from it.

Maharsha calls attention to the fact that Solomon, in his divinely inspired words, did not contrast the blessing for the righteous with a curse for the wicked. This is because our attitude to sinners is to hope and pray for them to improve their ways. When Rabbi Meir considered praying for the destruction of some troublesome sinners in his neighborhood, his wife, Beruria, suggested that he pray instead for them to repent. “Let sin be eliminated from the earth,” is what King David meant (*Tehillim 104:35*), not that “sinners be eliminated.” To prove her point she cited the continuation of that passage, “and there will be no more wicked ones.” Once they have repented, their wickedness will cease to exist. Rabbi Meir followed her advice and they did indeed improve their ways (*Berachos 10a*).

In the same spirit, explains Maharsha, we actively bless the deeds and memory of the righteous so that others will learn from their example. But in regard to the wicked we do not pray that they be cursed, but rather that the name “sinner” which they have earned decay and disintegrate as a result of their repentance. It is not the sinner’s elimination that we hope for but for the elimination of sin, not his disappearance but the disintegration of the name he has acquired.

• Yoma 39b

www.ifyouarelookingforinterestinginformativeanddownrightgood
literatureandinformationonthousandsofJewishandcontemporary
topicsthatwillmakeyouponderandsometimesmakeyoulaughand
sometimesevencrythenyoushouldvisitourwebsite.org

THE OHR SOMAYACH WEB SITE

www.ohrnet.org • www.ohrsomayach.org • www.ohr.org.il

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. In what context is a *mezuzah* mentioned in this week's *Parsha*? (tricky question)
2. What special mitzvah does the Torah give to the master of a Hebrew maidservant?
3. What is the penalty for wounding one's father or mother?
4. 'A' intentionally hits 'B'. As a result, B is close to death. Besides any monetary payments, what happens to A?
5. What is the penalty for someone who tries to murder a particular person, but accidentally kills another person instead? Give two opinions.
6. A slave goes free if his master knocks out one of the slave's teeth. What teeth do not qualify for this rule and why?
7. An ox gores another ox. What is the maximum the owner of the damaging ox must pay, provided his animal had gored no more than twice previously?
8. From where in this week's *Parsha* can the importance of work be demonstrated?
9. What is meant by the words "If the sun shone on him"?
10. A person is given an object for safe-keeping. Later, he swears it was stolen. Witnesses come and say that in fact he is the one who stole it. How much must he pay?
11. A person borrows his employee's car. The car is struck by lightning. How much must he pay?
12. Why is lending money at interest called "biting"?
13. Non-kosher meat "*treifa*" is preferentially fed to dogs. Why?
14. Which verse forbids listening to slander?
15. What constitutes a majority-ruling in a capital case?
16. How is *Shavuot* referred to in this week's *Parsha*?
17. How many prohibitions are transgressed when cooking meat and milk together?
18. What was written in the *Sefer HaBris* which Moshe wrote prior to the giving of the Torah?
19. What was the *livnas hasapir* a reminder of?
20. Who was Efras? Who was her husband? Who was her son?

SHERLOX

SHERLOX AND THE STOLEN FLOCKS

“**B**inghamton claims he's barely acquainted with his co-worker, Hanes; yet, during questioning, he referred to him by his first name, Jonas, more than once,” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes. “The repetition of the name raised difficulties in my mind.”

“Speaking of difficulties,” said Watstein, “I'm having difficulty understanding the following text: 'If a person steals an ox or a sheep, and he slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen (*chamisha bakar*) for the ox, or four sheep (*chamisha tzon*) for the sheep.' (Exodus 22:37) Rashi explains why the sheep-thief incurs a lesser payment: Because he degraded himself when he

flung the sheep over his shoulder and carried it away, this degradation is considered part of his penalty. Or, because the ox theft caused the owner to lose the work of his plow animal.”

“Ah! Only a Divine system could be at once so just and so sensitive to human needs!” said Sherlock.

“True, but why does Rashi make this comment?”

“Well, isn't it curious that a thief pays five times the ox but only four times the sheep?” asked Sherlock.

“Many things are curious; Rashi doesn't explain them all. Why is quadruple payment only for a sheep and not for, say, chickens? Why only for selling or slaughtering? And why only for slaughtering and not for killing some other way? These are all very curious, yet Rashi addresses none of them!”

“The repetition of a name arouses suspicion,” said Sherlock.

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. 21:6 - If a Hebrew slave desires to remain enslaved his owner brings him “to the door post *mezuzah*” to pierce his ear.
2. 21:8,9 - To marry her.
3. 21:15 - Death by strangulation.
4. 21:19 - He is put in jail until 'B' recovers or dies.
5. 21:23 - A) The murderer deserves the death penalty. B) The murderer is exempt from death but must compensate the heirs of his victim.
6. 21:26 - Baby teeth, which grow back.
7. 21:35 - The full value of his own animal.
8. 21:37 - From the “five-times” penalty for stealing an ox and slaughtering it. This fine is seen as punishment for preventing the owner from plowing with his ox.
9. 22:2 - If it's as clear as the sun that the thief has no intent to kill.
10. 22:8 - Double value of the object.
11. 22:14 - Nothing.
12. 22:24 - Interest is like a snake bite. Just as the poison is not noticed at first but soon overwhelms the person, so too interest is barely noticeable until it accumulates to an overwhelming sum.
13. 22:30 - As “reward” for their silence during the plague of the first born.
14. 23:1 - Targum Onkelos translates “Don't bear a false report” as “Don't receive a false report.”
15. 23:2 - A simple majority is needed for an acquittal. A majority of two is needed for a ruling of guilty.
16. 23:16 - *Chag HaKatzir* — Festival of Reaping.
17. 23:19 - One.
18. 24:4,7 - The Torah, starting from *Bereshis* until the giving of the Torah, and the *mitzvos* given at *Mara*.
19. 24:10 - That the Jews in Egypt were forced to toil by making bricks.
20. 24:14 - Miriam, wife of Calev, mother of Chur.

WHO AM I?

Shimon (Peter) from Donetsk, Ukraine <pat@ksk-market.com.ua> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
My mum — Jew. My father — Russian...Who am I?

Dear Shimon,

You are 100% Jewish. According to universal Jewish tradition, Jewishness is based on the mother and only the mother. So you are Jewish and do not need conversion.

ELUL

B. Ungar <Triumph613@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
We find that several acronyms are quoted from verses in reference to the month of Elul. For example, the first letters of the words “**A**ni **L**’dodi **V**’dodi **L**i — I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine” (Song of Songs 6:3) — spell “Elul” and are seen as a reference to the G-d’s closeness to us during the month of Elul. But isn’t “Elul” a Babylonian word? Is it authentic that verses in the Torah would be alluding to words that aren’t Hebrew?

Dear B. Ungar,

A good point. The names of the Jewish months came into use when the exiled Jews of Babylon, who spoke Aramaic, returned to the Land of Israel in the time of Ezra. Previously the months had no names, but were referred to by number.

Nachmanides says these names are of Persian origin, but that doesn’t preclude their also having Aramaic roots, as the Persian Empire succeeded the Babylonian Empire, and the language of Babylon was Aramaic.

So, how can the verses in the Hebrew Torah hint to Aramaic words? Actually, Aramaic is a sister language of Hebrew. According to the Kabbala it is actually a dialect of Hebrew. That is why most of the Oral Law is written in Aramaic, or in Mishnaic Hebrew which is a mixture of Aramaic and Biblical Hebrew.

The word Elul means “search,” because during the month of Elul we search our hearts for evil and repent in preparation for Rosh Hashana.

Sources:

- Nachmanides Commentary to the Torah Exodus 12:2
- Targum Onkelos Bamidbar 13:2

THE WORLD’S HUMBLEST MAN

Robert Samuels from Hamilton, Ontario <bobsam@fishnet.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
How could Moses write that he himself was “the most humble person on the face of the earth?” (Numbers 12:3) Isn’t that itself a contradiction to being truly humble?

Dear Robert Samuels,

Your question reminds me of a story: When the practice of ritual slaughter was under attack in Great Britain, the famed Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky was called to court in its defense. The judge read from the deposition which lay before him: “Rabbi Abramsky,” said the judge, “it says here that you are the foremost authority of Jewish Law in the British Empire. Is that true?”

“That is true, your honor.”

“And that you are the most eloquent spokesman for Jewish Law in the British Empire?”

“That is also true, your honor.”

“It also says here that you are the most senior rabbi in the British Empire. Is that correct?”

“That is correct, your Honor.”

Taken aback by the Rabbi’s straightforward responses, the judge said, “Rabbi Abramsky, how do you resolve your answers with the Talmudic teachings of humility?”

“It is indeed a problem, your honor,” said the Rabbi. “But I’m under oath.”

Moses was commanded by G-d to write that he was the most humble person, so he had no choice but to write it.

Knowing your own greatness is no contradiction to humility. On the contrary, ultimate humility is achieved by a person who excels in good attributes but takes no credit for his greatness. He

realizes that all his achievements come from G-d, and therefore he isn’t conceited or self-congratulatory.

G DASH D IN THE WC

Sarede Switzer from Montreal, Canada <glazzies@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
If a secular book has the word G-d (with an o) can it be taken into a bathroom? Thank you!

Dear Sarede Switzer,

It is permitted to take such a book into the bathroom, although it is best not to have it open to the page which has “G-d” printed on it. Read a different page while in the bathroom.

MISTER MUSSAR

Gary Mussar

<Gary.Mussar.mussar@nortelnetworks.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I have an interest in discovering the origins of our family name. I have found that a Rabbi Yisrael Salanter established the Mussar Movement which emphasizes the study and practice of Jewish values and ethics. It seems that the Mussar Movement originated in Eastern Europe. My father’s parents emigrated from the Hungarian/Yugoslavian border area back in the early 1900s. I was wondering if you had any idea of what the name “Mussar” means and why it was associated with the Mussar Movement. I have found references in Arabic to “mussar” which is a type of turban. There appear to be references in Portuguese and Swedish as well. I don’t know if these references stem from the Latin mus (mouse). Any insight you could provide into the origin of the name would be most appreciated.

Dear Gary Mussar,

The Hebrew word “mussar” means “rebuke.” It appears first in Deuteronomy 11:2 and is used many times throughout the Bible to mean “rebuke.” The Mussar Movement

encouraged people to study ethics and morals every day and thus “rebuke” themselves and achieve elevation and character improvement.

I don’t know the origin of your family name, as it may be from other languages. If it is from Hebrew, then perhaps your family was called this because they demonstrated elevated character traits.

TWO’S A CROWD

Yael from Montreal, Quebec
<ymaman@po-box.mcgill.ca> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Why are even numbers said to come from unholy spheres?

Sam Miller <millerr@mail.biu.ac.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
On behalf of myself and my fellow students at two Talmud classes in Jerusalem, I submit the following: The Talmud states that a second cup of wine is dangerous. Rashi explains that this second cup constitutes “zugot” (pairs) which cause damage by demons. Please clarify the concept of “zugot” and

explain why, if pairs are considered a bad omen, we use two loaves of challa on Shabbat?

Dear Sam Miller and Yael,

There is a concept that *zugot*, pairs, can cause spiritual damage. The basic idea behind this is that even numbers are based on the number two while odd numbers are based on the number one. The number one represents the omnipotence of G-d, while the number two represents heresy, the disbelief in the omnipotence of G-d. Impure forces have no power against a person meditating on the omnipotence of G-d, so while someone does an activity based on the number one, the “demons” can’t do anything to him, as his soul (or sub-conscience, if you will) is aware of G-d’s Omnipotence.

Therefore, the danger of *zugot* doesn’t apply when doing a mitzvah, such as eating *challa* Friday night. When a person performs a mitzvah, he does so because of his belief in G-d and is thus protected from these negative influences.

Furthermore, the Talmud implies that *zugot* only harm someone who is concerned with them. The Shulchan Aruch does not even mention *zugot* as a prohibition.

Sources:

- Tractate Berachot, 51b
- Tractate Pesachim 110a
- Rabbeinu Bechaye in “Shulchan Shel Arbah” citing Midrash Talpiot

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ohrnet” features

Re: Rav Milevsky, zatzal, and Ohrnet:

I just wanted to write you a short note to let you know how much I appreciated this week’s Ohrnet. As a former student of Rav Milevsky, zatzal, while I lived in Toronto, I enjoyed his weekly *divrei Torah*. Seeing his insights on your web page was very gratifying. Could we out here in cyberspace see more of his thoughts? Thanks and job well done.

- Gerry Rubinstein <grubinstein@worldsites.net>

Ohrnet Replies: Thanks for the words of appreciation, and we will try to make more Torah insights from Rav Milevsky, zatzal, available on our web site and via other channels.

Re: Shaky Salute (Ohrnet Vaera):

Your reader Z.G. wrote about her problem regarding handshaking in the business world. I think your answer was very tactful and pretty much exhaustive, as there are only that number of ways to say “I can’t shake your

hand.” I have very similar problems, as I am also an observant female who deals with the non-religious world a lot. I go to College in NYC and work for a non-Jewish company. This topic was one of my biggest concerns as I was faced with my surroundings. I am a very outgoing, personable and friendly person, and the issue of shaking hands or getting patted on the shoulder is very much a problem for me. Until very recently, I was very uncomfortable about the idea of telling someone that I can’t shake hands with him, and I relied mostly on Hashem not bringing me into such situations. It didn’t work. I had to gather all my courage and start telling people that “I am sorry, but I don’t shake hands with men because of a religious reason. It’s nothing personal. I’d very much like to, but, ‘gotta do what you gotta do.’” The first subject of my experiment was my psychology professor, who after looking at me with huge eyes, said “Well, I respect that. Hold onto your beliefs and do not let anyone persuade you to change them.” Wow, it was easier than I thought. The next couple of times were still difficult, but no one fainted or refused to speak to me after my announcement. Now, it comes out of my mouth just as easily as “Hi, how are you.” I think the concept itself, while certainly not easy, is very beautiful and meaningful. But the bottom line is, you have to do it because it is the right thing to do in Hashem’s eyes. So to all the Z.G.’s out there (including myself): *Chazak V’ematz!* Be strong!

- Julia Gomberg <JGomberg@collegeboard.org>

TWO TALES
OF TWO SISTERS

I once had a shirt that I really loved. One day, I was walking out of my room and I saw my sister wearing the same one. I got upset, and ran to my room. My shirt was missing. I

decided not to say anything to my sister, because maybe she had just bought the same shirt, and I didn't know. Later that day my sister came to me with the shirt and said, "Mommy put this in my room by mistake, and I thought it was mine. Sorry."

One day I had a really big test to study for. My sister was listening in the next room to really loud music. I

usually go in and scream at her to turn it down, and she gets mad that I yell at her so she purposely doesn't turn it down. This time I realized that maybe if I go in and ask very nicely, she will turn it down. I went in, said "Please," and surely enough, she turned it down for me.

• Submitted by a Young Ohrnet Reader
Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story"
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

I have a new Yiddle Riddle for you, which I heard from my friend Avrohom Moshe Rosenwasser. When would I have to make at least 20 berachot because I drank one cup of orange juice?

• Yochi Schnall <yochii@juno.com>

Answer:

On motzei Shabbat, Saturday night after Shabbat, if one forgets to say the added "ata chonantanu" paragraph in the silent prayer (shemone esrei), he need not repeat the silent prayer unless he eats or drinks before saying havdalah. However, if he forgets ata chonantanu and then eats or drinks before havdalah, then he must repeat the entire shemone esrei (19 blessings plus the blessing after the orange juice).

• Source: Shulchan Aruch 294:1, Mishna Berurah 4

continued from page five

SHERLOX ANSWER!

"Why does the verse say that the thief pays 'five oxen' (chamisha bakar) or 'four sheep' (chamisha tzon)?" asked Sherlock.

"Well, if he paid five teacups and four pin-cushions, it wouldn't do, would it?"

"No, it wouldn't," said Sherlock. "That is exactly my point: Don't the words bakar and tzon (oxen and sheep) seem redundant?"

"Ah yes, I see," said Watstein. "It could simply have said that he pays 'five for the ox' and 'four for the sheep.' It's obvious that he pays oxen for oxen and sheep for sheep."

"Yes," said Sherlock, "just as we see regarding double

payment: There, the verse says 'he pays two.' (Exodus 22:1) It doesn't need to say two of what."

"Therefore," said Watstein, "Rashi explains that the seemingly extra words bakar and tzon hint at the reason for the differing payments. The differing payments are due to the differing natures of the bakar and the tzon, either regarding the way they are stolen, or their use as plow animals."

"No need to feel sheepish about that explanation," said Sherlock.

• Sherlock is by Reuven Subar
Inspired by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's 'What's Bothering Rashi?'

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

	RAMBAN	22:20-22	Prosecutor of the Helpless	52	Despising Destruction
21:1-2	Parallel with Ten Commandments	22:30	Holiness of Kashrus	62	The Danger of Sorcery
21:6	(first part) Divine Role in Human Justice	23:25	Blessings and Destruction	66	Why Hashem Creates the Poor
21:15	The Severity of Cursing One's Parents	24:1	Matan Torah Chronology	70	Blasphemy
21:29-30	Death Penalty and Ransom	42	SEFER HACHINUCH	71	Respect for Authority
22:6	(first part) Two kinds of Shomrim	43	Human Kindness	73	Kashrus
		47	Divine Kindness	78	Antidote to Anarchy
		47	Capital Punishment	84	Shemita
		50	Penalty for Anger	93	Relations with Heathens