

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT TZAV - SHEMINI · 18-25 ADAR II 5760 · MAR. 25 - APR. 1, 2000 · VOL. 7 NO. 25

PARSHA INSIGHTS

LIONS OF THE SOUL

"He (the kohen) will separate the ash" (6:1)

July 1956. Saturday afternoon. A taxi leisurely turns off Dizengoff Street. Close up on the taxi driver's face. He is wearing a blue baseball cap.

Driver: "They went to their deaths like sheep. They asked their Rabbis, "Rabbis — should we run away to Israel or should we stay here in Europe? And you know what those great rabbis said? (Puts on fake Yiddish accent) "Don't leave! Don't go to Israel! Here, your life is in peril. But in Israel, your souls will be in peril. Jews there drive down Dizengoff on Shabbes afternoon! You're better off here in Poland."

The driver chuckles, pleased with his own joke. He thinks for a second.

"So I ran away in 1937. I came here. I got a job as a taxi driver. I used to be religious but I gave it up here. Those poor fools are now ashes and I'm alive and driving down Dizengoff on Shabbes.

The picture freezes on the face of the driver.

Dissolve. We hear Shostakovitch's String Quartet no. 8. A large hearse is seen leaving a graveyard. Cut to a freshly filled-in grave in the mid-distance. Hanging on the grave marker is a blue baseball cap. The camera tracks backward. All around are grave-stones. The camera keeps tracking back through what seems to be like hundreds and hundreds of identical grave-stones. Suddenly, the camera stops and slowly tracks in, lingering on one of thousands of identical stones. At the top of the gravestone there is a carving, six pieces of barbed wire arranged in a Star of David.

The camera moves downward. We read the inscription: "For one of the Six Million, a place in the earth for someone whose ashes are blown on the four winds."

No one gets out of here alive. We all make our exit one way or another. The question is what we do during our brief stay here. We can live like heroes and die like martyrs, with the name of G-d on our lips. We can live for our beliefs, for the sake of religion and our people. We can die like Jews and because we are Jews.

Or we can shorten our names, shorten our noses and vanish into the background. Either way, we all end up in that same room waiting before our cases come up in the "Supreme Court." There, we will reflect on what we did, and on what we didn't do.

The world sees our martyrs as lambs to the slaughter. We see them as gigantic heroes of the soul. Heroes who never allowed their fiendish enemies the pleasure of seeing them falter in their trust in G-d's ultimate justice. Heroes who, with the worst imaginable horrors staring them in the face, never slackened in the observance of their faith. They were quick to do the Will of their Father in Heaven. And in death they are not separated from Him.

Marching to the "showers," one great rabbi cautioned his students that no impure thought should enter their minds so that they might be a pure offering, an atonement for their brothers and sisters who would live on in Israel and in America.

"Who is like Your people Israel, one nation in all the world?"

If we live on today, it is because of them. Our lives are founded on the ashes of the millions. They gave their most precious gift to us. Even though they never met us. They were not sheep. They were lions of the soul.

"He will separate the ash..."

The first service of the day in the Holy Temple — that on which the service of the rest of the day was built — was the *terumat hadeshen*. The *kohen* took ashes from the innermost part of the altar and placed them on the floor next to the altar. These ashes came from the incinerated flesh of the previous day's offerings.

Every day the *kohen* would perform this service, placing the ashes at the base of the altar. And, miraculously, the ash would be swallowed by the ground around the base of the altar. In other words, the ashes, became part of the altar on which that service was performed.

Today's service of G-d is built on yesterday's service. A Jew serves G-d today with his life as willingly as ultimately he is prepared to serve Him with his ashes.

Sources:

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, Rabbi Zev Leff

FUEL UP

"Don't defile yourselves with any swarming thing that moves on the earth, because I am the L-rd who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (11:44-45).

An advanced machine requires highly refined fuel, while a simpler machine can use a less refined energy supply. So too, the dietary laws were only incumbent on the Jewish

continued on page three

TZAV

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar through the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after changing his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment. The *kohen* retains the hide. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* offered by the *kohen gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat-korban* brought after an accidental transgression is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and

shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony of Aharon, his sons, the *Mishkan* and all of its vessels is detailed.

SHMINI

On the eighth day of the dedication of the *Mishkan*, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. Hashem allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the *Mishkan*. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by Hashem. A fire comes from before Hashem and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the *Mishkan*. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate, and holy — like Hashem.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

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NEBI SAMUIL (TOMB OF THE PROPHET SHMUEL)

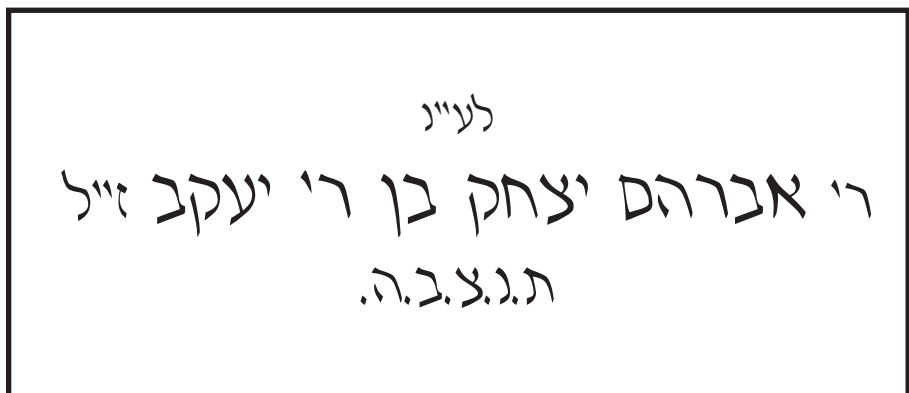
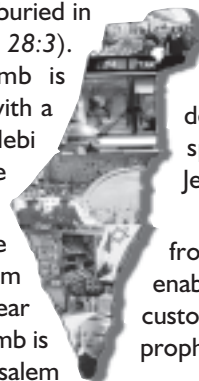
When the prophet Shmuel passed away he was buried in Ramah (*Shmuel I 28:3*). Tradition has it that his tomb is marked by the large building with a spire which the Arabs called Nebi Samuil, Arabic for Shmuel the Prophet.

During the Six-Day War the Jordanians shelled Jerusalem from a military installation near this tomb. Not far from the tomb is the large Ramot section of Jerusalem

which was built after the war.

The Crusaders had another name for the area — Mount of Joy — which expressed their delight in catching from this high spot their first glimpse of Jerusalem.

The recovery of this sacred site from the hands of the Arabs has enabled Jews to resume their age-old custom of visiting the tomb of this great prophet and praying there.



PARSHA INSIGHTS

continued from page one

People *after* they were transformed from abject slavery in Egypt to the elevated position of a kingdom of religious leaders and Hashem's holy nation.

The Torah normally refers to the Exodus with the expression "to take out of Egypt." Yet here, the expression is "to bring up."

This emphasizes that only the elevated state of the Jewish People — after freedom from slavery and idol worship in Egypt — made them sensitive to the spiritual damage from un-kosher food.

Sources:
Fuel Up - Rabbi Simcha Zissel m'Kelm

HAFTARAH

Parshat Parah - Yechzkel 36:16-38

This year, accompanying Parshat Tzav is the haftarah of Parshat Parah, the third of the four special *Parshiot*.

Just as Parshat Parah concerns the laws of spiritual purity, so too its haftarah contains the words "and I will sprinkle upon you the waters of purity." Its prophecy consoles the exiled Jewish people, relating to the reasons of the exile and to the future restoration and establishment in the Land of Israel. In the future, spiritual purity, together with a "new heart and new spirit," will be bestowed from above upon those who return to the Torah.

A NEW HEART

"And I will remove the heart of stone from within you and give you a heart of flesh."

When a person transgresses against the Torah, he actually harms himself; his suffering soul introverts within his conscience, his feelings become numb and his emotions phlegmatic. This state not only hinders spiritual elevation but lures him to deepen his depression with additional sin. This is the meaning of the statement "a sin motivates a sin," (*Pirkei Avot 4:2*) as the spiritual harm caused by the first decision to sin strengthens his desire for future sin.

Our Sages compared this situation to a thirsty sailor drinking salt water; the more he drinks the more he thirsts.

Nevertheless, when a person is determined to return to the Torah path, Hashem removes his heart of stone and furnishes him with a new, sensitive heart of supple flesh, enabling him to embark on a new beginning.

Parshat Hachodesh - Yechezkel 45:16-46:18

This haftarah, the haftarah of *Parshat Hachodesh*, prophetically narrates the consecration of the third and everlasting *Beit Hamikdash*. As this will occur on the first of Nissan, we thus read this haftarah on the Shabbat preceding the first of Nissan.

The haftarah begins with the entire Jewish nation contributing towards the Temple's consecration, by raising the funds of the festive inaugural offerings conducted by the prince *mashiach*. This festivity will be celebrated on Passover. The haftarah ends with official regulations regarding the prince's authority in granting estates to his subjects, stating that he will not use his power to confiscate lands from their rightful owners as some of the corrupt kings had done.

THE CHODESH FESTIVAL

The haftarah refers to Rosh Chodesh as a festival (*46:1-3*). This festive nature is evident also from the obligation to bring a *musaf* offering on Rosh Chodesh (*Num. 28:11*).

The Tur (*Orach Chaim 417*) states that Rosh Chodesh was in fact intended to be holy day like a Yom Tov, with a prohibition of creative activity, but unfortunately we lost this opportunity subsequent to the sin of the Golden Calf. We were commanded to observe the three *regalim* festivals — Pesach, Shavout and Succot — in the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and the twelve Rosh Chodesh festivals were to have been observed in the merit of the twelve tribes. However, when the twelve tribes sinned, Rosh Chodesh lost an element of its holiness and became a day when toil is permitted. The custom for women to abstain from unnecessary work on Rosh Chodesh is because they did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, for them it retains an air of its original grandeur.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

TZAV

"Their portion shall not be baked as *chametz*..." (*6:10*) By eating the flour offering, the *kohen* brings atonement to the owner of the offering. Therefore, the *kohen's* portion requires the same restrictions as the portion brought upon the altar itself; i.e., it may not be *chametz*.

• Abarbanel

SHEMINI

"Moshe asked: 'Why didn't you eat the sin offering?' Aharon answered: 'Were I to have eaten this day's sin offering, would Hashem approve?' Moshe heard and approved." (*10:17-20*)

Our Sages explain that the above exchange between Moshe and Aharon was actually a halachic dialogue regarding the question: Was Aharon, while mourning for his yet unburied sons, allowed to eat from the special inaugural offerings?

This is the first place in the Torah text where we find the classic exercise of *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, the Oral Law, in which reasoning is used to ascertain the halacha.

• Rabbi Tzaddok Hakohen

HOLD BACK THAT CHILD!

The synagogue was locked on Shabbat and the keys had been lost somewhere in the street. This was the problem facing Rabbi Yitzchak bar Bisna whose responsibility it was to open the synagogue for the worshippers. Even if he could find the keys he would be unable to carry them on Shabbat through the public thoroughfare. When he presented his dilemma to Rabbi Pedos he was advised to lead a group of children on a stroll to the area where the keys were lost, in the hope that they would find the keys and bring them to him at the synagogue.

The halachic conclusion drawn by some authorities from this advice is that if a child is seen eating forbidden food or committing another transgression there is no obligation to prevent him from doing so. Only the father is obligated to reprove him and prevent him from committing the sin, because he has the responsibility of *chinuch* — training his minor children in preparation for their responsibilities when they come of age.

Tosefot (*Mesechta Shabbat 121a*) contends that our *gemara's* ruling about not preventing a child from committing a sin is limited to a child who has not yet reached the age of *chinuch*. Once he reaches that stage, however, there is an obligation on every Jew, not only the father, to prevent him from committing any sin.

The Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim 243:1*) rules according to the first opinion that *chinuch* is the responsibility of the father alone (and the mother as well according to some authorities), and not of others. Rema, however, cites the view of Tosefot that *all* are obligated. The compromise suggested by the Chayei Adam and quoted by the Mishna Berura (*ibid.*) is to take the more stringent approach in regard to violations which are of Torah origin but to rely on the more lenient view in regard to bans of a rabbinic nature.

• *Yevamot 114*

THE FEELING IS MUTUAL

“Like the reflection one sees when he looks into the water, so is the heart of man to man.” (*Mishlei 27:19*) This observation of the wisest of men, King Solomon, has various applications. In our *gemara* we find two of them.

The Sages who dispute Rabbi Yehuda apply it to human relations. Although the testimony of an individual witness about the death of a husband is sufficient to allow his widow to marry another, certain female relatives are disqualified. This is because they are suspect of perhaps hating her enough to want to embarrass her by testifying falsely about the death, thus ruining her marriage when her mate returns after she has married another. Among these is a mother-in-law, because we suspect her of perhaps resenting the fact that her daughter-in-law may end up consuming the resources which she brought into the marriage and which will revert to her household through inheritance.

While this reason explains why the mother-in-law may possibly harbor antagonism to her son's wife, it does not explain why the reverse is also true — that a daughter-in-law cannot testify regarding her husband's mother. This is so, say these Sages, because feelings are reciprocal. If one smiles into the water he

will see his reflection smile, and if he frowns, the frown is returned. If one feels love for another, it is reciprocated. The same is true of hatred.

Rabbi Yehuda's interpretation of Solomon's model of reciprocity is that it applies to the study of Torah. Rashi offers two different explanations of how this applies. One is that your success in mastering Torah knowledge will reflect how much heart and effort you invest in its study. A second explanation deals with the relationship of teacher and student. If the teacher shows a pleasant face to his student, displaying a genuine interest in his development, the student will become wise; otherwise he will not gain from his teacher.

Tosefot, in *Mesechta Yevamot (113b)*, applies this concept of reciprocal feelings to the situation in which legitimate hatred of a wanton sinner arouses a reciprocal hatred, which may ricochet into the *improper* hating of a Jew “because he hates me,” rather than based on the original catalyst.

• *Yevamot 117a*

THE “DAF” OF SURVIVAL

“I was once traveling on a ship,” recounted Rabban Gamliel, “when I saw another ship that had been wrecked. My heart grieved especially for one of its passengers, the Torah Sage Rabbi Akiva. When I reached land and resumed my studies I suddenly saw him sitting before me and discussing halachic matters with me.”

When Rabban Gamliel inquired as to who had rescued him from the sea, Rabbi Akiva replied:

“A *daf* (plank) from the ship came my way and I clung to it. When each wave came surging towards me I bowed my head and let it pass over me.”

From this our Sages concluded, notes the *gemara*, that when wicked men come against a person he should bow his head until the danger passes.

Maharsha (*Bava Batra 73a*) explains the connection between the story of Rabbi Akiva and the conclusion of the Sages. The enemies of the Jewish People are compared to the waves of the sea which futilely attempt to overcome the sand of the seashore to which the Children of Israel are compared. Just as each successive wave fails to learn from the failure of its predecessor to go beyond the boundary set for the sea by Heaven, so does each of Jewry's enemies fail to learn from the failures of their predecessors in trying to destroy a people whose eternity is Divinely guaranteed, and who need only bow their heads in submission until Heaven rescues them.

In presenting his concept of Daf Hayomi upon which this column is based, Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin some 80 years ago alluded to the miraculous survival of Rabbi Akiva which is symbolic of the survival of the Jewish People. “*Daf*” means a plank and also means a page of *gemara*. It is the “*daf*” of the *gemara* studied every day by Jews throughout the world, he declared, which will serve as the life-raft of survival against all the waves of oppression we face in our exile and which will, like in the case of Rabbi Akiva, enable us to safely reach the shore.

• *Yevamot 121a*

PARSHA Q&A ?

TZAV

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they removed from next to the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this Parsha?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

TZAV

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 - A) Every day. B) Whenever there were a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban minchah* – A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burnt completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burnt, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); A *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); An *onan* (a mourner prior to the burial of the deceased).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; Upon safe arrival from a desert journey; Upon being freed from prison; Upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - A) Until the next morning. B) Only until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (and not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *minchah* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

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PARSHA Q&A ?

SHEMINI

1. What date was “*yom hashmini*”?
2. Which of Aharon’s *korbanot* atoned for the golden calf?
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo’ed* with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons’ death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three *chatat* goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.
11. Which he-goat *chatat* did Aharon burn completely and why?
12. Why did Moshe direct his harsh words at Aharon’s sons?
13. Moshe was upset that Aharon and his sons did not eat the *chatat*. Why?
14. Why did Hashem choose Moshe, Aharon, Elazar, and Itamar as His messengers to tell the Jewish People the laws of *kashrut*?
15. What are the signs of a kosher land animal?
16. How many non-kosher animals display only one sign of *kashrut*? What are they?
17. If a fish sheds its fins and scales when out of the water, is it kosher?
18. Why is a stork called *chasida* in Hebrew?
19. The *chagav* is a kosher insect. Why don’t we eat it?
20. What requirements must be met in order for water to maintain its status of purity?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

SHEMINI

1. 9:1 - First of *Nissan*.
2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. 9:11 - It’s the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe’ach* that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe’ach*.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe’s presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a *halachic* ruling. Also, a *kohen* is forbidden to enter the *Ohel Mo’ed*, approach the *mizbe’ach*, or perform the *avoda*.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of *Rosh Chodesh*, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.
11. 10:16 - The *Rosh Chodesh chatat*: Either because it became *tamei*, or because the *kohanim* were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of *aninut* (mourning).
12. 10:16 - Out of respect for Aharon, Moshe directed his anger at his sons and not directly at Aharon.
13. 10:17 - Because only when the *kohanim* eat the *chatat* are the sins of the owners atoned.
14. 11:2 - Because they accepted the deaths of Nadav and Avihu in silence.
15. 11:3 - An animal whose hooves are completely split and who chews its cud.
16. 11:4,5,6,7 - Four: Camel, shafan, hare, and pig.
17. 11:12 - Yes.
18. 11:19 - Because it acts with *chesed* (kindness) toward other storks regarding food.
19. 11:21 - We have lost the tradition and are not able to identify the kosher *chagav*.
20. 11:36 - It must be connected to the ground (i.e., a spring or a cistern).

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COPING WITH THE POPE

From: Karen in Miami, FL
Email@Withheld

Dear Rabbi,

With the Pope visiting Israel and all the fanfare, it brings to mind a question I've often pondered: Why did Hashem allow Christianity to become such a major religion?

Dear Karen,

Jewish ideas such as "brotherhood of humanity," "love your neighbor," and "age of peace" are taken for granted today by much of mankind. But when Judaism first introduced these ideas to the world, they were revolutionary.

These Jewish concepts have been spread largely by Christianity (and by Islam). Christianity came to a world in which people were slaughtering to Zeus, Apollo, and a host of other idols, and taught some basic ideas of Judaism, albeit in a distorted form.

The great 11th century scholar Maimonides writes: "Even J... of Nazareth, who thought he was *mashiach* (messiah), was the subject of a prophecy in the Book of Daniel: "Also the renegades of your people will exalt themselves to fulfil the vision, but will stumble." Is there a greater stumbling block than this? For all the prophets spoke of the *mashiach* who will redeem and save Israel, who will ingather all its exiles, and who will strengthen them in the observance of the Torah's commands, while he caused Israel to be

killed by the sword, their remnant to be dispersed and humiliated, the Torah to be swapped for something else, and most of the world to worship a god other than the G-d of Israel!

"All these activities," continues Maimonides, "are all for the purpose of paving the way for the true king *mashiach*, to prepare the whole world to worship G-d together, as it is written: 'For then I will convert the nations to a pure language, that they may all call in the name of G-d and serve Him together.' "

"By then," continues Maimonides, "the world will already be filled with the idea of *mashiach*, Torah, and commandments, even in far-flung islands and in closed-minded nations, where they engage in discussions on the Torah's commandments...When the true king *mashiach* arrives...all people will immediately realize that they had been taught lies by their forefathers, and that their ancestors and prophets had misled them."

Sources:

- Maimonides: *Hilchot Melachim* 11,4 [Frankel Edition]
- Book of Daniel 11, 14

MORE SMOKING

From: Name@Withheld in Boston University, Boston MA

Dear Rabbi,

I receive your "Ask the Rabbi" and I truly enjoy it. Though I don't have that many questions, it is always interesting to see others' questions, and the answers. I truly learn a lot from this

weekly email.

Recently, there was a question about smoking, and that many rabbis have taken the step to forbid it. I think that this is good, but the part that I don't understand is where certain rabbis have said that one should not smoke, but if one finds it difficult to not smoke, one should at least not do so around others. This makes no sense to me. If one's rabbi has said something is forbidden, then it should not be done. By saying that it is OK if you find it difficult to avoid makes no sense. What if someone finds it difficult to avoid smoking on Shabbat. It is then okay?

Dear Name@Withheld

There's a subtle difference between smoking during the week and smoking on Shabbat: All rabbis unanimously rule that smoking on Shabbat is forbidden. It's an explicit verse in the Torah, "Don't kindle fire on the day of Shabbat." (*Shemot* 35:3).

A prohibition against smoking, however, is not as clear cut, and not all Rabbis subscribe to it, at least not yet.

Furthermore, the rabbis who signed the ban are aware of the current reality, which is that significant numbers might ignore such a ban, and will justify themselves in doing so (see "Public Domain - Re: Down in Smoke" on page 8).

Since this bears on the health of others, the rabbis urged those who will ignore the ban at least to refrain from smoking around others.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

SHEMINI

RAMBAN

- 9:17 Relation of *Miluim* and *Shemini Korbanot* to *Tamid*
10:15 Heaving and Waving

SEFER HACHINUCH

- 149 Dignity in the House of Hashem
150 Respect for the Service

Re: Down in Smoke: (Ohrnet Vayakhel):

Regarding the recent rabbinic ban on smoking: Why stop at a ban on smoking? Why not have our rabbis put a ban on becoming fat? Medicine has documented the health risks of increased weight (*New England Journal of Medicine*, Oct '99).

Air fresheners need a rabbinic ban (*Arch Environ Health*, Nov '97). How about a ban on living in coastal areas? Hurricanes can kill. Should Jews leave Florida? Earthquakes — a ban on living in California! Let's make salami, hot dogs, pastrami, and corned beef illegal, as nitrates cause cancer. How about a ban on living in areas where radon is found?

Our rabbis know the limits of science and they choose not to make hasty proclamations. They also know that the risks of smoking vary with the number of cigarettes smoked. Shouldn't one be allowed to choose to smoke a little, just as one chooses to have an occasional salami sandwich?

• *Plony Almoni, MD* <plony@m-net.arbornet.org>

Re: You is a Jew (Ohrnet Pekudei):

Regarding your advice to the instructor who asks whether using the word "Jew" is racist or impolite. I disagree with the mentality that says that because it had a pejorative connotation over the centuries, maybe it shouldn't be used. This is absurd and a ghetto mentality, a "lets not make trouble" idea. I hope you were kidding.

• *Norman Abramowitz* <normlois@global2000.net>

I read "Ask the Rabbi" to learn about Judaism. Your answers are witty, entertaining, and filled with insight.

I was a bit surprised at your answer to "You is a Jew." I have heard ignorant people use "Jew" as an insult. But that is all the more reason to use the word Jew in a factual and positive light. Don't those wrong forces win when it is considered bad to call someone a Jew?

• *Steve Hoffman, Virginia* <pfinfo@policefoundation.org>

Re: Throwing in the Tallit (Ohrnet Ki Tisa):

Thank you very much for this publication. As a Jew away from home, you've been my unique link to Judaism.

Concerning your recent article about *chuppahs* (wedding canopies), I wanted to share with you the custom of the Sepharadic Jewish community in Turkey. Here, we don't have *chuppahs*, we use a *tallith* (prayer shawl). Parents standing beside the young couple hold the corners of the *tallith*. I'm not fluent in Judeo-espanol but I don't think we have a word for *chuppah* here. Instead we say, "to throw the *tallith*" (*echar talled*), a well-describing term for this action, since the newer generation is taller than their parents!

By the way, I once saw a photo taken in the mid 50's in Israel. A young couple standing in the middle of four comrades-in-arms holding their rifles upright, and the *chuppah* is made of an Israeli flag!

• *Henri Ciprut, Istanbul Turkey*
<henrithesoldier@vjmail.com>

[Is that what's called a shotgun wedding?]

Re: Mask Ask (Ohrnet Pekudei):

Regarding the reason for masks on Purim, I heard a wonderful answer: There is a special command to give charity on Purim. If people go around in masks, the receiver won't know who he's receiving from, and won't feel embarrassed.

• *Zvi from Kew Gardens, NY*

Re: Esther's Age (Ohrnet Pekudei):

Regarding Esther's age of 80 mentioned in a recent "Ask the Rabbi," the Maharal of Prague (*Ohr Chadash p. 115*) brings proof that this refers to her wisdom and maturity, not her biological age.

• *Mordechai Cohen, Toronto, Ontario*
<telesave@ionsys.com>

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

Giving People the Benefit of the Doubt

Before delivering judgement upon others, we need to make sure we are delivering it to the right address. Otherwise, we might end up saying...

OOPS! UPS!

This one was sent to me by my Mom: A business owner decides to take a tour around his business and see how things are going. In one department he is very annoyed to see a young man leaning against the wall, doing nothing.

The owner walks up to the young man and says, "Son, how much do you make a day?"

The guy replies, "\$150." The owner pulls out his wallet, gives him \$150 and tells him to get out and never come back.

A few minutes later the shipping clerk appears. He looks around and then says to the boss, "Excuse me, did you see a young man waiting here? The UPS delivery man? I left him standing here a few minutes ago..."

• *Submitted by Bernard William Schubach* <schubach.1@osu.edu>