

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## GARDENING - JEWISH STYLE

*"May My teaching drop like rain, may My utterance flow like the dew" (32:1)*

A violent storm. Winds howling. The rain lashes the ground. It seems as though the earth is being torn apart by the weather. And yet without this heavy downpour, nothing will grow properly. For if only the dew waters the ground, the heat of the sun will burn and shrivel the seeds.

Only if heavy rains water the ground will the dew do its job of bringing forth the flowering blossoms.

This is the way of Torah. If a person labors in the study of *halacha*, filling himself with the methodology and torrent of Talmudic logic, even though it may seem that he is struggling against a deluge, he will eventually bring forth healthy and beautiful flowers.

He may feel storm-driven and pounded by the rains. Nevertheless, the fruits of his labors will also include the esoteric parts of Torah, the 'dew' of *Aggadita* - the homiletic teachings. They will flower in his hands.

However, if he concerns himself only with the 'dew' of the Torah, the *Aggadita*, then in the withering 'sun', the bright lights of secular cynicism, his acquisition of Torah will wither and die, lacking the deep rain to nourish its roots.

• Based on the *Netziv*, as heard from Rabbi Pinchas Kantrovitz

## INSIGHTS

### DIVORCE - JEWISH STYLE

In times to come, when Israel is redeemed from among the nations and Hashem gathers us to Him, Israel will say "Master of the Universe, it's written in Your Torah that when a man divorces his wife and banishes her from his life, should the woman marry again and then divorce this second husband, she may never again return to her first husband.

"You banished us to amongst the nations of the world. How is it possible for You to take us back?"

Hashem will say to them "It says in the laws of divorce: 'When a *man* will banish her from his house'. I am G-d, not man."

These words from the *Medrash* are most perplexing. The relationship between the Jewish People and Hashem is understood to be that of a marriage, of husband and wife. How can it possibly be that about this very subject Hashem would say "I am G-d, not man!"

Let us understand the *Medrash* thus: The Talmud teaches us that if a man throws a *get*, a bill of divorce, to his wife while she is in his yard, the divorce is not effective. For a *get* to work, it needs to be *given*. And since his wife is still in his yard, in his domain, there is a deficiency in the giving. It is as though the *get* never left the orbit of his influence.

Thus, with this principle in mind, we can understand what Hashem is saying: "I am G-d, not man. The universe is Mine.

The whole world is 'My yard.' Thus I never really gave you a bill of divorce. I never really divorced you at all..."

• Chanukas Hatorah

### MARRIAGE - JEWISH STYLE

One of the greatest figures in the history of Diaspora Jewry was Rabbeinu Gershom, who lived some one thousand years ago. He was given the title *Meor Hagolah* - the 'Illuminator of the Exile'. Why was this illustrious and august title given to him and not to Rashi, or Maimonides?

Rabbeinu Gershom instituted a number of bans, including one against divorcing a wife against her will, and one against having two wives at the same time. But why was that so special?

As we mentioned above, the relationship of the Jewish People to Hashem is that of a wife to a husband. Hashem 'married' the Jewish People at Sinai. Although we were exiled and it seemed He divorced us, these decrees of Rabbeinu Gershom also proclaim that *Hashem will not divorce us against our will, nor will He 'take another wife' from amongst the nations.*

It is for this reason that Rabbeinu Gershom is called the "Illuminator Of the Exile." Because of his decrees, however dark the Exile becomes, it has a silver lining in it. For eventually Hashem must take us back. We refuse to be divorced, and Hashem will 'marry' no other save His people Israel.

• Adapted from Rabbi Moshe Shapiro

## OVERVIEW

**A**lmost all of *Ha'azinu* is a song, written in the Torah in two parallel columns. Moshe summons the heavens and the earth to stand as eternal witnesses to what will happen if the Jewish People sin and do not obey the Torah. He reminds the people to examine the history of the world, and note how the Jewish People are rescued from obliteration in each generation - that Hashem "pulls the strings" of world events so that Bnei Yisrael can fulfill their destiny as His messengers in the world. Hashem's kindness is such that Israel should be eternally grateful, not just for sustaining them in the wilderness, but for bringing them to a land of amazing abundance, and for defeating their enemies. But, this physical bounty leads the people to become and over-indulged. Physical pleasures corrupt the morals of the people. They worship empty idols and powerless gods, and indulge in all

kinds of depravity. Hashem will then let nations with no moral worth subjugate Israel and scatter them across the world. However, their only purpose is as a rod to chastise the Jewish People. When these nations think that it is through their own power that they have dominated Israel, Hashem will remind them that they are no more than a tool to do His will. The purpose of the Jewish People is fundamental - that man should know his Creator. Neither exile nor suffering can sever the bond between Hashem and His people, and eventually in the final redemption this closeness will be restored. Hashem will then turn His anger against the enemies of Israel, as though they were *His* enemies, showing no mercy to the tormentors of His people. Hashem then gives His last commandment to Moshe: That he should ascend Mount Nevo and be gathered there to his people.

## ANONYMOUS KNEELING

Sarah Leah wrote via the InterNet:

Dear Rabbi,

I need a reference in Talmud. Is there a place where it says that one may kneel if one has a paper between the knee and the floor?

The issue of kneeling has become a source of conflict for some of us in the 12 Step Programs-AA, etc.). Kneeling is not required for any reason in the 12-Step Program, but it's sort of a tradition to kneel during the 3rd step which says "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand Him..." Thank you so much for this service.

Dear Sarah Leah,

The Torah forbids prostrating yourself flat out on a stone floor, as was the way of the ancient idol worshippers. Our Sages extended this prohibition to include kneeling.

The *Shulchan Aruch* says that if you put an intervening substance between your knees and the stone floor, then it's permitted to kneel.

On Yom Kippur, we get on our knees and bow down with our faces to the floor. Many synagogues, especially in Israel, have stone or tile floors, so people bring small towels to bow down upon. I was once in a

synagogue where they passed out used computer paper to kneel on!

Sources:

- *Leviticus 26:1*
- *Maimonides, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 6:6-8*
- *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 131:8*

Reprint from "Ask the Rabbi" Sept. '94 that appeared on the InterNet

## USHPIZIN - SUCCAH GUESTS

Mrs Alexis S. Berman wrote via the Internet:

Dear Rabbi,

I seem to be having a difficult time understanding the concept of inviting Abraham, Isaac, et al, to join as guests in the Succah. This is my first time observing Succot. I would appreciate it if you could explain it to me as easily as possible. Thank you,

Dear Mrs. Berman,

This concept that you mention is called the "Ushpizin" - "Guests" in Aramaic. According to tradition, the *Ushpizin* visit us in our *succah* every night of *Succot*.

The source for the concept of the *Ushpizin* is the Zohar:

"When a person sits in his *Succah* the *Shechina* (G-d's Divine Presence) spreads its wings (metaphor) over it from above and then Abraham together with the other five *Tzadikim* (Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe and Aharon) and King David dwell together with him."

One of the important experiences of *Succot* is that of leaving the protection of our permanent dwellings and basking in the shade and protection of G-d's presence. Each of the seven *Ushpizin* exemplified this idea during their lifetime. For instance, Abraham left the security of his home and the house of his father and went off on a journey protected by G-d's promise. Yitzchak had to leave his home and dwell

amongst the Philistines because of famine. Yaakov had to leave his home and live with Lavan.

The seven guests also correspond to attributes of G-d which we aspire to. For instance, Avraham represents *Chessed* (Loving Kindness), Yitzchak - *Gevurah* (Strength). These seven attributes also refer to much deeper concepts which are oft discussed in Chassidic texts as well as the *Kabbalah*, called the *Sefirot*. These are aspects of the way in which G-d interacts with his Creation.

There are two opinions as to the order of the arrival of the guests. According to one tradition the order is their order of birth; whereas according to the *Arizal* (Rabbi Isaac Luria) the order is that of the *Sefirot*, and thus Yosef comes after Aharon.

There is a custom attributed to the *Arizal* to invite seven poor people to eat in the *Succah*, corresponding to the seven *Ushpizin*. You then have seven exalted guests from above, with seven earthly guests and G-d's Divine Presence hovering over it all.

Some Sephardic Jews have the custom of setting aside a chair in the *Succah* for the guest of the day. The chair is decorated and an announcement is made each day that this is the chair of the *Ushpizin*.

In my neighborhood (Neve Yaakov) here in Israel the children have a beautiful custom of gathering together and then visiting every *Succah* that has a child with the same name as that day's *Ushpizin*. They dance and sing in the *Succah* - and they get some treats for their effort. My children wait each year with such excitement for the night when the boys will come and dance in our *Succah*. I strongly suggest it for communities everywhere.

Sources:

- *Zohar - Parshat Emor*
- *Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov - The Book of our Heritage vol. 1, pp. 155-161*
- *Otzar Yisrael Encyclopedia - Ushpizin*

## OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by  
**OHR SOMAYACH**  
TANENBAUM COLLEGE  
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**  
Editorial & Web Advisor: **Rabbi Reuven Lauffer**  
Web Production Consultants:  
**Lev Seltzer - Michael Treblow**  
Contributing Editors:  
Weekly Daf, Sing My Soul:  
**Rav Mendel Weinbach**  
Ask the Rabbi:  
**Rabbi Moshe Lazerus,**  
**Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz,**  
**Rabbi Reuven Subar**  
Insights, Overview, Haftorah:  
**Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair**

Produced by the Office of  
Information and Communication  
**Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director**

• THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH.  
PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

© 1996 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS • 02-651-1529

OHRNET is available from several sources:

- **E-MAIL VIA INTERNET:** Write to ohr@virtual.co.il for information.
- **WORLD WIDE WEB:** Our address is: [www.ohr.org.il](http://www.ohr.org.il)
- **FAX AND REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:** To subscribe, mail us a letter, or fax a request with your name & fax number to 02-581-2890.
- **US-MAIL WITHIN NORTH AMERICA:** Call 1-800-431-2272 for subscription information.

• If you have a question about Judaism, you can submit it to **ASK THE RABBI**. Just send your question using E-Mail to "ohr@virtual.co.il" and set the subject to "ASK THE RABBI". We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

## SING My SOUL

### RIBON KOL HAOLAMIM

*I shall implore Your glowing countenance  
... to find favor and understanding in  
your eyes and in the eyes of all men ...*

In reference to the Torah's account that "G-d blessed the seventh day" (Bereishis 2:3) the *medrash* explains that He blessed it with a glowing countenance - a man's countenance glows on Shabbos in a way that it does not during the week.

This has been suggested as the reason

why we are able to say *sheva brachos* at the Shabbos meals even if no new guest is present as is required for the weekday meals honoring newlyweds in the week following their wedding. On the Shabbos everyone is considered to be "a new face", justifying the repetition of these blessings.

We therefore implore Hashem to bestow some of His glowing countenance upon us so that our new, shining personalities will find favor in His eyes and everyone who sees us.

לע"נ ר' שמואל זאב בן ר' שלמה ז"ל  
ג' חוה"מ סוכות תשל"ה  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

• CHULLIN 26 - 32

## Weekly Daf

### HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY?

Half full or half empty?

This is more than an issue of optimism versus pessimism. The law requires that the majority of both the trachea and esophagus be severed in order that a *shechita* be valid. Does this mean that more than half of each must be cut, or is it sufficient to ensure that no more than half is left unsevered — in other words, is exactly half enough?

The conclusion of the Talmud is that there is a consensus amongst the Sages that half is not enough in regard to *shechita*. But if the entire Jewish community on *Erev Pesach* was evenly split between ritually pure and impure people there is a difference of opinion as to whether the Torah's requirement for impure individuals to postpone their offering of the Korban Pesach till a month later applies here. Rabbi Kahana contends that half of the community is still considered a group of individuals and not a majority, so that the impure ones must wait a month. The Sage Rav, based on his interpretation of a Torah passage on this subject, argues that the half in this case is like an entire community which may offer the sacrifice on

*Erev Pesach* even in an impure state.

Tosefos calls attention to the fact that in regard to the laws of carrying on the Sabbath from private to public domain, the rule is that an area which is exactly half enclosed is considered as being enclosed (*Mesechta Eiruv* 16b), and no mention is made in that Gemara of the discussion in ours. The conclusion reached by Tosefos is that a distinction must be drawn between what is considered a boundary and what action is sufficient to render the meat of an animal kosher. If only half an area remains not enclosed we do not consider it an open area, but if only half of a *shechita* has been done we consider it incomplete.

• Chullin 28b-29a

### THE WHOLE AND ITS PARTS

Is every part of the *shechita* process considered an act of *shechita* or is it considered *shechita* only with the climax of the process?

This is a dispute between Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan.

Both agree that if a gentile did half the *shechita* and it was completed by a

Jew that the *shechita* is invalid. This is so because by severing either the trachea or esophagus the ineligible slaughterer has created a situation in which the animal is considered a *treifa* (one that is terminally ill because of an organic defect and therefore forbidden to be eaten), we cannot ignore the status he has created, even if his incomplete action is not considered *shechita*.

Where we see the difference of their opinion find expression is in regard to a situation in which a Jew severs a minor part of the trachea and esophagus of a sacrificial animal outside of the *Beis Hamikdash*, in violation of the Torah prohibition against doing the *shechita* of a *korban* outside of the Sanctuary. He then completes the *shechita* inside the *Beis Hamikdash* as required by law.

According to the view of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, the *shochet* in this case will not be guilty of violating the prohibition because the part of the slaughtering he did is not considered *shechita*, since *shechita* becomes a reality only when completed. In the view of Rabbi Yochanan, however, every part of the *shechita* process is considered *shechita*, and he will therefore be considered guilty of violating this prohibition.

• Chullin 29b

## Parsha Q&A ?

1. What is so special about the heavens and the earth that Moshe chooses them as witnesses?
2. Why is the Torah compared to rain?
3. In what way is Hashem "faithful without injustice?" (32:4)
4. Why is Hashem called a "Tzaddik"?
5. How many floods did Hashem bring upon the world?
6. Which group of people does the Torah call "fathers"? Cite an example.
7. Why did Hashem separate the peoples of the world into exactly 70 nations?
8. Why is the merit of the Jewish People's ancestry called a "rope"?
9. How is Hashem's behavior toward the Jewish People similar to an eagle's behavior toward its offspring?
10. Hashem says regarding punishment of the Jewish People "I will spend my arrows on them" (32:23). What is the *positive* aspect of this punishment?
11. How does the idea of "*chillul Hashem*" not allow the nations to destroy the Jewish People?
12. What will happen to the nations that conquer the Jewish People?
13. When Hashem overturns a nation that persecutes the Jewish People, His attribute of Mercy is "replaced" by which attribute?
14. When Hashem punishes the heathen nations, for whose sins does He exact punishment?
15. How will Hashem's punishment change the way the nations view the Jewish People?
16. On what day was *Ha'azinu* taught to the Jewish People?
17. In verse 32:44 Yehoshua is called *Hoshea*. Why?
18. In verse 32:47 what does "it is not empty from you" mean?
19. Why did Hashem tell Moshe that he would die a similar death to that of his brother Aaron?
20. If Moshe had spoken to the rock rather than striking it, what would the Jewish People have learned?

### I Didn't Know That!

The Torah is often compared to "water." In 32:2, the Torah is likened to rain, dew, light rain, and showers, corresponding to the four types of students in the fifth chapter of *Pirkei Avos*. One who is quick to learn and quick to forget, one who is slow to learn and slow to forget, one who is slow to learn but quick to forget, and one who is quick to learn but slow to forget.

• Ba'al HaTurim

### Bonus Question?

Rashi states that Hashem "pays" the righteous for their *mitzvos* in the World to Come, whereas he "pays" the wicked for their *mitzvos* in this world (32:4). But since Hashem is just, why is it that an evil person is rewarded only in this world, even if he did a perfect *mitzvah*?

# Parsha Q&A

## Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

- 32:1 - They endure forever.
- 32:2 - Just as rain gives life and promotes growth, so too does the Torah.
- 32:4 - He is "faithful" and rewards the righteous, and He is "without injustice" and rewards even the wicked for any good deeds.
- 32:4 - Everyone will agree that his judgments are righteous.
- 32:7 - Two. The first was in the generation of Enosh the grandson of Adam, and the second was in the time of Noah.
- 32:7 - The Prophets are called "fathers". When Eliyahu was leaving this world, his student Elisha called after him, "My father, my father" (*Melachim II 2:12*).
- 32:8 - Corresponding to the 70 Bnei Yisrael who entered Egypt.
- 32:9 - Their merit is "woven from" the merits of the *Avos*.
- 32:12 - He is merciful by waking them gently, hovering over them, and carrying them on His wings.
- 32:23 - "The arrows will be spent" implies that the supply of arrows will come to an end, but the Jewish People will not.
- 32:27 - The nations would attribute their success to their own might and to the might of their own gods. Hashem would not allow His name to be desecrated through the complete annihilation of His people.
- 32:35 - They will eventually be punished.
- 32:41 - His attribute of Justice.
- 32:42 - For their own sins, and the sins of their ancestors.
- 32:43 - They will view the Jewish People as praiseworthy for cleaving to Hashem.
- 32:44 - The Shabbos on which Moshe died, and Yehoshua took over as leader.
- 32:44 - To indicate that although he was the leader of the Jewish People, he still maintained a humble bearing.
- 32:47 - That you will receive reward for studying Torah, and that there is nothing meaningless in the Torah.
- 32:50 - Because Moshe wanted this.
- 32:51 - If the rock had produced water without being struck, then the Jewish People would have reasoned that if a rock, which receives no reward or punishment, obeys Hashem's commands, all the more so they should too.

### Recommended Reading List

#### Ramban

- 32:1 Biblical Witnesses  
32:16 The Rebuke of *Ha'azinu*  
32:40 The Testimony of *Ha'azinu*

#### Sforno

- 32:2 Waters of the Torah  
32:13 Purpose of *Eretz Yisrael*  
32:19 Purpose of *Galus*  
32:27 Salvation of Dispersion

### Bonus Answer!

The mitzvos performed by a righteous person reflect his essence, while his sins are secondary. The sins of a wicked person reflect his essence, while his good deeds are secondary. Hashem rewards or punishes a person for his essence in the World to Come, and for what is secondary, He rewards or punishes in this world.

• Gur Aryeh

### HAFTORAH: Hoshea 14:2-10, Yoel 2:11-27, Micha 7:18-20

## A BURNING SENSATION

An unbelievable sight. A young fellow with all the visible signs of an Orthodox Jew walks into MacTreife's Burger Bar and orders a cheese-burger! He then proceeds to eat it in full view of everyone.

Later he suffers tremendous heart-burn from the indigestible fast-food. Much later however, he suffers an even greater 'burn' in the spiritual department...

The Shabbos between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is called *Shabbos Shuva - The Shabbos of Return*. The name is taken from the first verse of the Haftorah "*Return O Israel to Hashem for you have stumbled in your iniquity...*"

The *Meshech Chochma* asks the question, what does it mean to 'stumble' in 'iniquity'. If a person is already doing something wrong, how can he make it worse by stumbling in it?

There are two aspects to wrong-doing. The offense in itself, and the desecration of Hashem's name that may result from it.

It's one thing for a Jew to slink into MacTreife's wearing jeans, in "plain-clothes". It's quite another to waltz in wearing full uniform. It's one thing to commit *iniquity* - to give in to one's desires, but it's quite another to *stumble* and desecrate Hashem's name in public.

• Heard from Rabbi Calev Gestetner

THIS WINTER  
**PLUG INTO  
YOUR HERITAGE...**  
IN JERUSALEM

THE JEWISH LEARNING EXCHANGE WINTER PROGRAM IN ISRAEL 1996-97  
Contact Rabbi Zalman Corlin for Information at 212-213-3100 or 800-431-2272 Email: rzcorlin@aol.com