

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A CANDLE IN HELL

“But despite all this, while they will be in the land of their enemies, I will not have been revolted by them nor will I have rejected them to obliterate them...” (26:44)

It was the first night of Chanukah. The single light of the menorah gleamed with a strange radiance. Its light came from neither wax nor oil. For this was a very special menorah; a very special Chanukah. This menorah was an old wooden clog. This candle was made from boot polish. This was Chanukah in Bergen-Belsen.

The Bluzhever Rebbe chanted the first two blessings in the customary festive tune, but the sound of his voice was dulled with pain. He was about to make the third blessing but then he stopped. He paused, and for what seemed like a long moment he looked around the room at each and every face. And then he made the blessing, his voice filled with strength: “Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, who has kept us alive, preserved us, and brought us to this time.” “Amen,” whispered the huddled throng.

Later, one of the men came over to the Bluzhever Rebbe and said “May I ask the Rebbe a question?” “What is your question?” said the Rebbe. “How can you possibly make a blessing thanking G-d for bringing us to this time. Should we thank Him for bringing us to

Bergen-Belsen? For bringing us to a time like this?”

“You know” said the Bluzhever Rebbe “I had exactly the same thought. That’s why I stopped in the middle. I was about to ask the Rabbi of Zaner and some of my other colleagues if I could really make that blessing. But then, I caught sight of all the faces looking so intently at that wooden clog filled with black camp shoe polish. I thought, here we are in the

“Take a walk through the streets of Jerusalem and hear the holy voices of little children learning Torah. That’s a sound that echoes down the ages...”

depths, in the blackest hole that this world can support. And here are some *Yidden* lighting Chanukah candles. In spite of all the evil that those murderers are doing, we are lighting candles. And I thought to myself: Master of the Universe! Who is like Your people Israel? Look how they stand, with death staring them in the face, and lov-

ingly hang on to every word of the blessing: *Who did miracles for our fathers, in those days at this season.*

“And I thought — if now is not the place to thank G-d for bringing us to this time — then I don’t know when is. It my holy duty to say that blessing now.”

In every generation they rise up to annihilate us, but The Holy One rescues us from their hands. A generation is not a long time. Maybe fifteen or twenty years. Our eyes have seen that in every generation they rise up to wipe us out.

Take a walk through the streets of Jerusalem and hear the holy voices of little children learning Torah. That’s a sound that echoes down the ages. That’s a sound that enemies of the Jewish People have tried to obliterate in every generation. But even in the lands of our enemies, G-d will not forget His people. In spite of our rejection of Him, He will not become revolted by us. He will not reject us. He will gather us from the four corners of the Earth to His land. And He will wipe the tears from our eyes.

Busy Body

“Your threshing will last until the vintage, and the vintage will last until the sowing; you will eat your bread to satiety and you will dwell securely in your land.” (26:5)

Such will be the fruitfulness of the land: You will still be busy threshing

continued on page three

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah promises prosperity for the Jewish People if they follow Hashem's commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of being the Chosen People, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process that will fall upon them when Divine protection is removed. These punishments,

whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, concludes with a detailed description of *Erachin* – the process by which someone can make a vow to give to the *Beis Hamikdash* the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal, or property.

HAFTORAH: JEREMIAH 16:19-17:14

TRUST

"Blessed is the man who places his trust in Hashem, and Hashem will become his trust." (17:7)

There was a wealthy trader who lived in Spain. During the Inquisition he was forced to leave his native Cordoba and flee to Morocco with his wife and two

daughters. They arrived there, penniless, after a nightmare journey. Very shortly after their arrival, his wife sickened and died. Then one of his daughters died. Then the other.

"Hashem!" He cried. "You have taken everything from me. You have taken my home. You have taken my livelihood. You have taken my wife. You have taken my beautiful children. But there is one

thing you can never take from me: **My faith in You.**"

When a person puts his faith in Hashem, even when it is very difficult for him to do so, he receives help from Heaven. He will find that he comes to a complete trust in Hashem. "Blessed is the man who places his trust in Hashem, and Hashem will become his trust." If a person trusts Hashem — Hashem will become his trust.

OHRNET

is now available
via email in PDF format

To subscribe, send the message:
sub ohrnet {your name}
to listproc@virtual.co.il

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

© 1998 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.

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.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.

• You can submit your questions to **ASK THE RABBI** with your web browser at <http://www.asktherabbi.org> Or to use standard E-Mail address it to ["info@ohr.org.il"](mailto:info@ohr.org.il) To insure correct handling set the subject to "ASK THE RABBI".

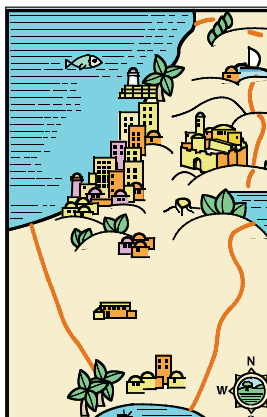
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

PRICE OF PROSPERITY

"Like your days will be your influx" (*Devarim* 33:25).

As long as your days are good ones in which you do the will of Hashem, you will enjoy an influx of prosperity; all lands will cause their



gold and silver to flow to Eretz Yisrael. That is, Eretz Yisrael will be blessed with a bounty of crops for which all the hungry nations will be anxious to pay gold and silver in order to sustain themselves.

• Rashi (*ibid.*)

לע"י
ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון הי"ד
ומרת לאה בת ר' שמואל הי"ד
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

when the time comes to harvest the grapes, and when the time comes to plant next year's grain, you will still be harvesting the grapes. (Rashi)

There's an old saying that goes "If you want something done, ask a busy person."

Constant activity is a blessing. When we are busy, we feel fulfilled and healthy. When we are idle, we look for ways of killing time. We seek amusement and entertainment to take our minds off the emptiness we feel. We become restless and bored. We want to travel, trying to make our life into a glamorous travelogue. This false sense of movement is but a poor substitute for the real voyage, which is spiritual. And that most fascinating and educational of journeys cannot take place in stagnation or boredom, but only in constant activity.

THE SPICE OF LIFE

**"And I will destroy your sun-idols."
(26:30)**

It's difficult for us to understand the desire that existed once for idol worship. Nowadays it seems unbelievable that someone

would want to worship a doll. But had we been living when the urge for idol worship was alive and well, we would have cheerfully hiked up our coattails and run to prostrate ourselves in front of some piece of wood.

At the beginning of the Second Temple, however, the Sages killed the desire for idols. We now live in a world where we do not know what the desire for idol worship is, and we *cannot* know. That desire no longer exists.

When the Sages destroyed the desire for idol worship, a figure like a lion of fire came out of the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The prophet said: "This is the same *yetzer hara* (desire for evil) which drew people to idol worship."

The question remains, however, what was this creature doing coming out of the holiest place on earth? Was that an appropriate home for such a beast?

The urge for idol worship had a holy purpose: that we should overcome it. Overcoming the urge for idol worship was a rung on the ladder to holiness. When the Sages destroyed the lust for idols, they knocked the gloss off

the desire for holiness as well; now we live in a world where we have no real idea of what holiness is. We know something is lacking in our lives, but we just can't put our finger on what it is.

After the the Sages killed the desire for idols, they attempted to end the desire for immorality as well. For three days no chicken laid an egg. Seeing that the world couldn't exist without physical desire, the Sages restored it to the world.

The Talmud tells us that Hashem said "I created the *yetzer hara* (negative urge) and I created the Torah, its antidote." The word used by the gemara is *tavlin* — which also means *spice*. Not only is the Torah the only way that a Jew can harness his physical desire so that it does not run riot with destruction, but it is also the spice that puts the zing into life, long after others have become jaded and spent.

Sources:

A Candle In Hell - Story heard from Ilan Grossman

Busy Body - Based on the Haemek Davar

The Spice of Life - Avnei Ezel

Trust - Shir Maon in Mayana Shel Torah

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"And five of you will pursue a hundred [enemy soldiers]." (26:8)

This refers to our weakest soldiers; our weakest soldier will be able to defeat twenty enemies. Our strongest soldier will be able to defeat a thousand or more.

• Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh, based on Toras Kohanim

Weekly Parsha newsletter, Monthly Seasons of the Moon, Weekly Daf, Ask the Rabbi, Holiday specials, Ohrnet magazine, Yossi & Co., Poetry, Essays on Jewish thought and contemporary issues, Excerpts of books by Ohr Somayach faculty, Audio catalog on-line, Jewish Educational Extensions - University on-line, Explore Jerusalem, Mark Twain's Concerning the Jews, JLE summer & winter programs in Israel, ChoppedLiver cartoons, Meet the children of Odessa, The Center for Torah Studies, A road map to Jewish learning, Top Ten lists, and much, much more...a billion and a half bytes of Torah literature and information. Join tens of thousands of other people from around the world and...get connected to Ohr Somayach on the Web at...

WWW.OHR.ORG.IL

WEEKLY DAF

ERUVIN 14 - 20

“PI” IN THE SKY

An interesting mathematical problem arises in regard to a formula put forth in our *mishna*. A *korah* cross-beam placed across the entrance to a *mavoi* must be a *tefach* wide. If this beam is circular, we view it as if it were rectangular and all of it the width of its diameter. In order to have a diameter of a *tefach*, concludes the *mishna*, a circle must have a circumference of three *tefachim*.

Tosefos raises the question that the three to one ratio for circumference to diameter is not exact according to the mathematicians, and offers no resolution. The mathematics to which Tosefos refers is discussed by Rambam in his commentary on the *mishna*. He states that there is no whole number or even whole fraction to express the ratio of circumference to diameter, but that mathematicians rely on an approximation of $3 \frac{1}{7}:1$ (what we commonly refer to as *pi*). He concludes with the explanation that since there is no whole number to use (as students of math will recall in regard to the infinite fractioning that goes on beyond 3.14), the Sages instructed us to use the nearest whole number which results in a ratio of 3:1.

Although this means that a circle with a circumference of three *tefachim* will in reality have a diameter of only about 0.95 and not the full one *tefach* required in a rectangular situation, the commentaries on Rambam point out that since the *korah* and its dimensions are of rabbinic origin, the Sages allowed for this slight discrepancy in the case of a round *korah*.

Aruch Hashulchan (*Orach Chaim* 363:22) goes even farther. He reads this mathematical mystery into the words of our *gemara*. Our *gemara* asks what the source is for the 3:1 ratio mentioned in the *mishna*, and answers by citing a passage (*Melachim I* 7:23) which describes the dimensions of the pool built by King Solomon for the *Beis Hamikdash* as a diameter of ten *amos* and a circumference of thirty. Why does the *gemara* need to ask for the source of a mathematical formula when we can simply ascertain it through our own measurement? This question, suggests the *Aruch Hashulchan*, was not regarding the source, but rather constituted a challenge to the correctness of the ratio which should really be $3 \frac{1}{7}:1$. The *gemara*'s answer is that since the passage insists on describing Solomon's circular pool with a ratio of 3:1 although this was not the reality, it is a signal for us to employ this ratio in regard to all halachic matters where the diameter must be calculated from the circumference. Even though the diameter is actually smaller, this is the measurement which the halacha requires in cases of circles.

(As a final footnote we refer both the curious novice and the serious scholar to examine the words of *Tiferes Yisrael* (footnote 27) in his commentary on the ratio stated

in the *mishna*. Through some apparent printing error the ratio there described is $3:1 \frac{1}{7}$ rather than $3 \frac{1}{7}:1$ and the conclusion of the discrepancy resulting in a more stringent requirement leaves the reader baffled!)

• *Eruvin* 14a

THE PERIMETERS OF PRAISE

When one praises another not in his presence, says Rabbi Yirmiyahu ben Elazar, he may praise him in full. But in his presence, he should express only a portion of the praise due him.

The source for this rule is the difference between two of Hashem's descriptions of Noach's righteousness. In *Bereishis* 6:9 Noach is described as a "perfect *tzadik*" while in 7:1 he is described as only "a *tzadik*." In the first instance the praise of Noach was expressed in his absence and was therefore complete, while in the second case it was addressed to him and therefore had to be limited.

Rashi explains that exuberant praise in the presence of even a deserving person gives the impression of being flattery for the purpose of finding favor, a behavior which is severely criticized in Scripture and in Talmud when it is applied to an undeserving person.

Maharsha suggests that the problem with full praise in the presence of the subject is that it may lead to an inflation of his ego. This approach is indeed proposed by one of the commentaries on *Midrash Rabbah*. The shortcoming of this approach, he points out, is that it cannot be applied to an extension of our *gemara* which appears in the *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 32:3), as follows:

The *Midrash* states that even in praising Hashem we find a difference in the extent of our praise whether we are addressing Him directly or speaking of Him in third person. King David tells us (*Tehillim* 66:3) "Song to the L-rd: How awesome are Your deeds" which prescribes a partial praise of Divine power which fails to include a tribute to His kindness. But when we speak of Hashem in third person, which in human terms is equivalent to not being in the presence of the subject, we are told (*Tehillim* 136:1) "Praise Hashem for He is good and His kindness is eternal."

Rashi's approach, concludes Maharsha, applies even to praise of Hashem, because of the impression it can create of flattery. The alternative approach of concern for the ego of the praised one is inapplicable to Hashem and must therefore be abandoned in favor of Rashi's explanation.

• *Eruvin* 18b

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. To what do the words “*bechukosai telechu*” (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. When is rain “in its season?”
3. What is the blessing of “*v’achaltem lachmechem l’sova*” (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
4. What is meant by the verse “and a sword will not pass through your land?”
5. Mathematically, if five Jewish soldiers can defeat 100 enemy soldiers, how many enemy soldiers should 100 Jewish soldiers be able to defeat?
6. How much is ‘*revava*’?
7. Which “progression” of seven transgressions are taught in Chapter 26, and why in that particular order?
8. What is one benefit which the Jewish People derive from the Land of Israel’s state of ruin?
9. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
10. How many years after entering the Land were the northern tribes exiled?
11. In verse 26:42, the name Yaakov is written with an extra “*vav*”. From whom did Yaakov receive this extra letter and why?
12. What positive element is implied by the words “and I will bring them into the land of their enemies?”
13. In verse 26:42, why is the word “remember” not used in connection with the name of Yitzchak?
14. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 “*Toros*” (plural) and not “*Torah*” (singular)?
15. What happens when a poor person dedicates the value of a man to the *Beis Hamikdash* and doesn’t have sufficient funds to fulfill his vow?
16. If a person says “The leg of this animal shall be an *olah* offering” the animal is sold and sacrificed as an *olah* offering. What is the status of the money received for the animal?
17. If a person dedicates his ancestral field to the *Beis Hamikdash* and fails to redeem it before *Yovel* what happens to the field?
18. Where must “*Ma’aser Sheini*” be eaten?
19. When a person redeems “*Ma’aser Sheini*” what happens to the food? What happens to the redemption money?
20. How does a person tithe his animals?

BONUS QUESTION?

World famous detective Sherlock Holmes looked up at the clear blue sky. “Walk a bit faster, won’t you, Dr. Watstein?” he said. “It’s about to rain and I’ve no umbrella. My new hat will be ruined!”

“How do you know it’s going to rain?” asked Watstein.

“Simple observation,” said Sherlock. “Notice the smoke rising flat from that chimney there. That indicates low pressure and impending precipitation. Furthermore, I’m wearing my new hat and I’ve forgotten my umbrella. It always rains under those circumstances.”

“Speaking of rain,” said Watstein, “perhaps you could explain the following: The verse says ‘*I will provide your rains in*

their time’ (*Vayikra 26:4*). Rashi explains ‘In their time’ to mean ‘In the time when people usually don’t go out, such as Shabbos night’.”

“Sounds like a good time to me,” said Sherlock.

“But every farmer knows that late rain can be as bad as no rain. Based on the context, a description of agricultural bounty, the simplest explanation would be “in the time when the crops need the rain, not too early and not too late!”

“Tell me, Watstein, who owns the rain?”

“No one, I suppose. What a strange question!”

“Let’s hurry inside and I’ll explain it to you. I feel drops.”

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. 26:3 - Laboring in Torah learning.
2. 26:4 - At times when people are not outside (e.g., Shabbos nights).
3. 26:5 - You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
4. 26:6 - No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
5. 26:8 - Two Thousand.
6. 26:8 - Ten Thousand.
7. 26:14,15 - Not studying Torah, not observing *mitzvos*, rejecting those who observe *mitzvos*, hating Sages, preventing others from observing *mitzvos*, denying that Hashem gave the *mitzvos*, denying the existence of Hashem. They are listed in this order because each transgression leads to the next.
8. 26:32 - No enemy nation will be able to settle in the Land of Israel.
9. 26:35 - 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *Shemita* and *Yovel* years.
10. 26:35 - 390 years.
11. 26:42 - In five places in the Torah Yaakov’s name is written with an extra “*vav*” and in five places the name Eliyahu is missing a “*vav*.” Yaakov took these *vavs* as a pledge that Eliyahu will one day come and announce the redemption of Yaakov’s children.
12. 26:41 - Hashem Himself, so to speak, will bring them into their enemies’ land. This means that even when the Jews are in exile, Hashem will supply them with leaders who inspire them to keep the Torah. This guards the Jews from assimilating into the host culture.
13. 26:42 - Because the image of Yitzchak’s ashes (who was prepared to be brought as an offering) upon the altar is always before Hashem.
14. 26:46 - To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on *Har Sinai*.
15. 27:8 - The person whose value was donated goes before the *kohen*, who sets the obligation according to the poor person’s ability to pay.
16. 27:9 - The money is ‘*chullin*,’ meaning it does not have ‘holy’ status, except for the value of the animal’s leg which does have ‘holy’ status.
17. 27:16 - It becomes the property of the *kohanim* who are on rotation at the beginning of *Yovel*.
18. 27:30 - In Jerusalem.
19. 27:31 - The food becomes permissible to him outside of Jerusalem. The redemption money must be brought to Jerusalem and used to purchase food to be eaten there.
20. 27:32 - He passes them through a door individually and every tenth animal he marks with a rod smeared with red dye.

THREADS ARE RED

Moshe from Silver Spring, MD
<hdi@radix.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I have seen some people wearing red threads or strings around their wrist and even necks. Is there any source for this, or is it "superstition?"
Thanks.

Aytan Ben-Pelech from Australia
<gcn@wantree.com.au> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Recently I was in Jerusalem and when I visited the Kotel I was approached by a woman who tied a red string around my hand and said a blessing. I have asked numerous people for an explanation and I have received just as many different answers. Perhaps you can help.

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Could you please explain to me the history of the red bendel. I received one recently from a friend that had traveled to the Wall. What does it mean when the bendel falls off your wrist?

Dear Moshe, Aytan Ben-Pelech and Name@Withheld,

One of the items necessary for the building of the Holy Sanctuary was red thread. The dye for the red thread came from a type of worm. Rabbi S. R. Hirsch points out that the worm was the lowliest form of life, and yet it was intrinsic to the building of the Sanctuary.

The red string is thought by some to ward off the "evil eye." Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler explains the "evil eye" as follows: If a person is blessed with good fortune and he becomes haughty as a result, this might arouse jealousy in others. In this sense, his good fortune is negative. This calls his good fortune into question and may cause him to be re-judged in Heaven.

The red thread, reminiscent of the lowly worm, can be seen as protection against this. Each time a person looks at the string he is reminded that a person is really as lowly as a worm. This humility

is the ultimate weapon against the "evil eye."

Having said that, many great Rabbis frowned upon it.

What does it mean when it falls off the wrist? It is an extremely significant sign: It signifies that it was not tied on properly.

Sources:

- Michtav M'Eliyahu V.4 pp. 5-6

DIABETES ON YOM KIPPUR

Mom@<Address_Withheld>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
My 15 year old daughter was just diagnosed with diabetes. One of her first thoughts was, "Now I won't be able to fast on Yom Kippur." I assured her she would find other ways of fulfilling that spiritual purpose. I would appreciate suggestions for her. Thank you.

Dear Mom,

Even though some people with diabetes don't fast on Yom Kippur some do. Before Yom Kippur you and your daughter should consult with a competent doctor and with an Orthodox Rabbi.

The Rambam writes that the major purpose of fasting is repentance, returning to a more spiritual life. Not being able to fast, however, does not preclude the possibility of repentance. According to the Rambam, repentance involves three stages: Regret, verbal admission of the sin in prayer, and commitment not to repeat the sin in future. Just as it is a mitzvah for a healthy person to fast, it is a mitzvah for your daughter to preserve her health.

Sources:

- Mishneh Torah Hilchot Ta'anit 5:1

OLIVE BRANCH OF PEACE

Barry Pogrud from Cape Town, South Africa <bgw@iafrica.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
We often talk about the dove and the olive branch as symbols of peace. Is there any Talmudic source for such a

notion, and if not from where do we arrive at the contention that the dove and the olive branch are symbols of peace? Many thanks for your wonderful and elucidating series.

Dear Barry Pogrud,

There's no reference in the Talmud identifying the dove or olive branch as symbols of peace.

However, Noah's flood is compared to a "war" between G-d and Mankind. This idea is seen in the symbol of the rainbow. After the flood, G-d showed Noah a rainbow as a sign that there would never again be a world-wide flood. The rainbow looks like an archer's bow pointing up towards heaven. The Ramban explains that the "upside-down bow" symbolizes that G-d will no longer "shoot arrows" at the earth in the form of a flood, just as a warrior turns his bow towards himself as a gesture of peace.

In this sense, the dove returning to the ark could be seen as peace symbols, indicating that the "war" between G-d and Man had ended.

By the way, the "olive branch" is a misconception. The dove returned to Noah with an olive leaf in its mouth, not a branch.

Sources:

- Ramban, Genesis 9:12

SABBATH IN THE SUN

Asher Breatross
<ash@interlog.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is it permissible to spread sun screen lotion on oneself and on a child on Shabbat? Take care and have a nice day.

Dear Asher Breatross,

Memare'ach — smoothing — is prohibited on Shabbat. This applies only to creams or lotions which have the consistency of thick oil. If your lotion has this consistency, then it's forbidden to use it on Shabbat. But if your lotion is very "liquidy" then it is permitted. (Since it's not clear exactly what the proper consistency is, one should only use a very liquid lotion.)

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch 314:11

YIDDLE RIDDLE

When is the only time one would say “*Av Harachamim*” two days in a row? (*Av Harachamim* is the prayer which, according to the Askenazic custom, is generally said on Shabbat before *musaf*).

• Riddle submitted by Dr. Joel Lubner, Bayit Vegan, Jerusalem

Answer next week...



Re: Intermarriage (Ohrnet Emor):

After reading your article on intermarriage, I thought it was excellent! This, in my opinion, should be circulated throughout the Jewish community.

• Sandra Block, Scottsdale, Arizona
<rancher@phnx.uswest.net>

Re: Psalms Author? (Ohrnet Tazria/Metzora):

I very much enjoyed the Parasha Insights for *Tazria/Metzora*. But I was unhappy with the reply about how King David could write “*Shir Hama’alot*” recited before *Birkat Hamazon*. Firstly, Chazal say there were 10 authors of the Book of Psalms so it did not have to be King David.

The suggestion that King David wrote Psalms 126, 137 with prophetic insight raises difficulties. The prophets of *Tanach* who foresee the possible destruction of the Temple always qualify their prophecy with the clause “If the children of Israel do not mend their ways.” In the time of King David, the situation was much more open, and to suggest that Israel would go astray would conflict with their free will.

There is, however, a really simple solution, suggested by the late Rabbi Samuel Mirsky, *zatzal*. In *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on the verse “*kemigdal David*,” the 10 authors listed include Ezra. If we assume Ezra is the author, we have no problem.

• Professor Cyril Domb, Jerusalem, via E-mail

Ohrnet Responds:

Interesting answer. However, it is implied by Rashi and explicit in *Tosefot (Bava Batra 14)* that King David wrote all 15 of the *Shir Hama’alot*.

Re: Yiddle Riddle explaining “Shemini B’Shemini Shemini Shemini” (Ohrnet Acharei Mos/Kedoshim):

“*Shemini B’Shemini*” refers to the 1/8 of an 1/8 of *ga’avah* — pride — that a *talmid chacham* may have (*Sotah 5a*). “*Shemini Shemini*” refers to the events in *Parshas Shemini*, wherein Aharon felt unworthy to bring the *chatas* offering. Moshe told Aharon that he was indeed worthy, and that Hashem had chosen Aharon specifically. In the *eighth* verse, we are told that Aharon heeded Moshe and brought the offering. This illus-

trates the pride required of a *talmid chacham*; he must appreciate his own merit and not think himself unworthy of proper *avodas Hashem* (see *Maharsha*). Hence, “*Shemini B’Shemini*,” an 1/8 of an 1/8, “*Shemini Shemini*,” in the eighth verse of *Parshas Shemini*.

• Elimelech Meisels, Jerusalem <tamike@netvision.net.il>

You answer that *Shemini B’Shemini* refers to reading *Parshat Shemini* on the 8th day of *Pesach*. Couldn’t it refer to the first reading, the afternoon of the 8th of *Nissan*, *Shabbat HaGadol* in such a year?

• Lawrence Myers, London
<lawrence@lawrm.globalnet.co.uk>

Re: Who first studied Chumash with Rashi (Ohrnet Yayikra):

The reason Rashi needed to write his commentary which concentrates on *peshat* (basic meaning), and such a work was not needed before him, is that these things were already known but were in danger of being forgotten. That’s why there is a *Talmud* and much of Jewish literature. So, the Torah was always studied with the commentary of Rashi, only not in his name.

With *bracha* from Liverpool (home of the Beatles, B”H)

• Ben Granat
<ben_granat_at_wmc__brli@wmcmail.wmc.ac.uk>

Rashi’s father wasn’t the first person to learn Chumash with “*Ra”shi*” — he was the first person to learn Chumash with “*Shi*.”

• Raphael Harris <atwood@netvision.net.il>

Re: Rain on Parade (Ohrnet Acharei Mos/Kedoshim):

I hate to rain on your Parade, but I’m afraid the *Parsha Insight Rain On My Parade* was a distortion of the *Chizkuni* whom you cite as a source. You write that one who doesn’t lend his possessions is “terminally mean,” thus the Torah doesn’t bother to address him. This is not so. There are many reasonable explanations for not lending an object which preclude the designation “mean.” And who said the Torah doesn’t talk to evil people?

What the *Chizkuni* says is that the first person was not commanded to lend, and refused only because of *stinginess*, not because of hatred. (*Stinginess* may not be so nice, but it is not forbidden.) The second person, however, is not stingy, and would lend his object, but his hatred prevents him from doing so. This is evil, for we are allowing hatred to overcome our love. The Torah thus commands us to lend the object, and have our love overcome our hatred. Thus we spread love in ourselves and the world.

• Name@Withheld

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

The best way to be convinced of the importance of judging favorably is to be the one suspected. Being in a position where onlookers assume we are doing one thing, while we know we are doing something quite different, teaches us how easy it is to draw wrong conclusions. We learn, hands on, what it means to be...

IN THE UN-EASY CHAIR

As co-chairperson of our annual sisterhood luncheon, I worked with a committee of dedicated women who worked far beyond the call of duty. I felt they deserved public recognition, and therefore I cited each one of them when writing my

speech for the luncheon.

The big day arrived, and we worked until the last minute to ensure that everything would run smoothly. But a problem with the sound system took almost an hour to fix, throwing us off schedule. To make matters worse, the first speaker spoke 15 minutes over time. I was next. As I gathered my notes, the president approached me saying that the keynote speaker needed to catch a plane. Since we were behind schedule, I could speak for 5 minutes and not more. I became nervous and flustered. Everything I had prepared was important. What could I delete at the last minute? With no time to think, I simply began at the beginning. After 5 minutes I got a wave from the president to finish. I sat down.

At the end of the evening my co-chairperson walked over to me. "I'm surprised at you," she said. "You of

all people should know how important it is to thank those who helped. You saw more than anyone how they came through day and night, whenever needed, and at a moment's notice. They turned this evening into a success." When she finally gave me a chance, I explained what had happened. But what I really wanted to say — but didn't — was: "While we're on the topic of 'should have known,' you should have known that I do know the importance of appreciation. I know these people should have been thanked. How could you think I would be so neglectful and unappreciative not to give credit where due? Why didn't you credit me with that understanding?"

When we are misjudged, that's when we begin to really appreciate the value of judging others favorably.

• Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

BONUS ANSWER!

continued from page five

"The verse uses the term 'your rains.' Does anybody own the rains?" asked Sherlock.

"Well, I suppose 'your rains' means, 'the rains that are necessary for you,' the rain that you need."

"Exactly," said Sherlock. "And what rain do we need? The proper amount of rain in the proper season. That's what we need."

"I see, so the phrase 'in its time' is really redundant. It must refer to some other positive aspect of the rain's timing. Hence, at a time when people are inside."

"The fog is lifting, dear Watstein."

• Based on Mizrahi

Recommended reading Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers

WHAT I DO WITH OHRNET

I use the OhrNet for three purposes:

1. Torah study with my son, who reached Bar Mitzvah last year, so we can stay in touch with Torah and Yiddishkeit.
2. I prepare my Shabbos morning Torah discussion from OhrNet. I lead two sessions: ages 4 to 9; and 10 to 15.
3. To enable me to participate in the rabbi's class on Shabbos afternoons. OhrNet helps me come across like a real "chochem"!

Thank you!

• Brian Serle, Milwaukee, WI, chazzan@aol.com

What do YOU do with OhrNet?

Let's hear your feedback!
Write to: whatido@ohr.israel.net

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Ramban

- 26:6 Taming of Wild Animals
- 26:11 Theology of Medicine
- 26:12 Promise for the Future
- 26:16 Analysis of Jewish History

Sefer Hachinuch

- 350 Dedicating One's Value
- 352 Switching Korbanos
- 360 Animal Tithes