

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE PLAY'S THE THING

*"And Yaakov sat..." (37:1)*

Once there was a woman sipping coffee in the lobby of a theater long after the movie had started. The usher was curious why she hadn't taken her seat, and asked if she knew that the movie had already started. "Oh yes," she replied, "I know, but I don't want to go in there now. It's much too crowded and noisy. Once they all come out, that's when I go in. Then I can have all the seats to myself!"

We tend to think that the purpose of life is those endless, sunny, summer days; days when you can't see a cloud and everything seems perfect. And when the rain falls into our lives — as it does to us all — well, that's something to be endured until the clouds clear. We put up with hardship, thinking that it's just a painful intermission, and when it ends we will get back to the "real purpose of life."

The reverse is really the case. Life is all about the rain and the storms and our striving to overcome them. For in this way, we elevate ourselves spiritually and fulfill the purpose for which we were sent down here. Those sunny days are so we can gather our strength, and thus derive the maximum benefit from facing life's challenges.

Yaakov wanted to live in peace and tranquility. Hashem said *"Is it not enough for the righteous that they have their reward in the World to Come? They also want to live in this world in serenity?"* Even though Yaakov desired serenity to devote himself to spiritual pursuits, nevertheless it was considered improper for him to place his *focus* on serenity. For in life "the play's the thing," not the intermission.

### MAKING HISTORY

*"A man discovered him (Yosef), and behold, he was blundering in the field; the man asked him, 'What do you seek?' And he said 'my brothers do I seek, tell me, please, where they are pasturing.' The man said 'They have journeyed from here, for I heard them saying 'Let us go to Dosan.' So Yosef went after his brothers and found them at Dosan." (37:15-17)*

Sometimes our lives seem filled with trivial events. We go to the store. We stand in the checkout line. We buy a packet of cereal.

*"The Divine Presence only settles on the Jewish People when there is unity amongst us."*

Someone asks us the way to the bus stop. Seldom do we have the feeling that we are connected to great events.

In this week's parsha, Yaakov sends Yosef to inquire after his brothers' welfare. When Yosef arrives in Shechem, he cannot find his brothers. He asks a man where they are. The man says they have gone to Dosan. Yosef goes to Dosan and finds them there.

Why did the Torah include this inter-

lude? Why do we need to know that Yosef went to Shechem, couldn't find his brothers, and then some anonymous stranger comes along and re-directs him? Why didn't the Torah just write: "Yosef eventually found his brothers in Dosan?"

In the morning we bless G-d "who prepares the steps of man." From our vantage point, many events in life seem to be without purpose. However, if we had eyes to see, we would realize how every little occurrence is part of a vast cosmic jigsaw.

If this man had not directed Yosef to Dosan, Yosef might not have found his brothers, in which case, they wouldn't have sold him into slavery. So then, Yosef would never have risen to power in Egypt. He would never have interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh would never have set up store houses in the years of plenty. There would have been no reason for Yaakov to send the brothers down to Egypt, because the famine in Egypt would have been as devastating as anywhere else in the world. There would have been no encounter between Yosef, the grand vizier of Egypt, and his brothers; no tearful reunion between father and son. The Jewish People would never have gone down to Egypt. There would have been no slavery. No Exodus. No matzos. No Passover seder. No afikomen. No splitting of the sea. And no giving the Torah at Mount Sinai.

The entire future of the Jewish People depended on an anonymous man telling Yosef that his brothers had left town and gone to Dosan.

Next time someone asks you to direct them to the bus-stop, remember — you're making history.

*continued on page three*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**Y**aakov settles in the land of Canaan. His favorite son, Yosef, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Yaakov makes for Yosef a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen strips. Yosef exacerbates his brothers' hatred by recounting prophetic dreams — of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him — signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Yosef and resolve to execute him. When Yosef comes to Shechem, the brothers relent and decide, at Reuven's instigation, to throw him into a pit instead. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Yosef out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Yishmaelim. When Reuven returns to find the pit empty, he rends his clothes in anguish. The brothers soak Yosef's tunic in goat's blood and show it to their father Yaakov, who assumes that Yosef has been devoured by a wild animal. Yaakov is inconsolable. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Yosef has been sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the

Butchers. In the Parsha's sub-plot, Yehuda's son Er dies as punishment for preventing his wife Tamar from becoming pregnant because he feared that she would lose her beauty. Onan, Yehuda's second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in circumstances similar to those of his brother. When Yehuda's wife dies, Tamar resolves to have children through Yehuda, as this union will found the Davidic line culminating in the *mashiach*. Meanwhile, Yosef rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His extreme beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his master's wife. Enraged by his rejection of her, she slanders Yosef, accusing him of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In jail, Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who is re-instated; and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Yosef after he is released, and Yosef languishes in jail.

## HAFTORAH: AMOS 2:6-3:8

### LEATHER SOUL

**"For their having sold a righteous man for silver and a destitute one for the sake of a pair of shoes." (2:6)**

**T**he Haftorah alludes in this verse to the sin of Yosef's brothers. With the money they received from selling Yosef to

the Ishmaelites, they bought shoes. This is very strange. Why did they buy shoes? Didn't they already have shoes?

When Moshe encountered the Divine Presence at the burning bush, G-d instructed him to remove his shoes. Whenever the Divine Presence rests, man is elevated above his natural physical state.

The body is to the soul as the shoe is to the body. The shoe covers the lowest part of the body, the part of the body which is in direct contact with this earth. The body clothes the soul in its lowest habitation, this world. This is one of the reasons that on Yom Kippur, when we try to emulate the purely spiritual creations, we doff our shoes.

The Divine Presence only settles on the Jewish People when there is unity amongst us. For the Torah to

enter this world, the Jewish People needed to be like one man with one heart.

Until the brothers sold Yosef, the Children of Israel dwelled together. But as soon as Yosef was separated from the rest of his family, necessarily there was a split, a division. In other words, while the brothers were together, they had no need of shoes because they were living in unity on an elevated level, under the wings of the Divine Presence. This level was symbolized by their not wearing shoes. However, as soon as they had sold Yosef, the Divine Presence departed from their midst and their feet needed covering, for they had descended to the mere physical.

• *The Ostrovzer Gaon as heard from Rabbi C.Z. Senter*

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Dedicated in honor of  
**MEIR YISRAEL (SRULIE) MEYERS**

on the occasion of his bar mitzvah  
BY HIS FAMILY

לע"נ  
מרת ברינדל ריזל בת ר' נחמן ע"ה  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE HOLY

**“His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved the most... so they hated him.” (37:4)**

One of the more satisfying aspects of early cowboy-films is that you can always tell the goodies from the baddies. As every schoolboy knows, the goodies wear white hats and the baddies wear black hats. This is an immutable law of cowboy-film reality, no less than water always flowing downhill and the sun always rising in the east.

Life, however, is usually stranger than fiction, and always more complex. In life, it's not always so simple to work out who are the goodies and who are the baddies.

Around two hundred years ago, the great Yeshiva of Volozhin was embroiled in a dispute between two giants of the Torah, the Netziv and the

Beis Halevi. On Shabbat morning of Parshat Vayeshev, the Maggid of Vilna arose to address the Yeshiva.

The Maggid pointed out that from the beginning of the Torah until this week's Parsha, good and evil are as clearly defined as black and white. Adam and Chava are good, the serpent is evil. Hevel is good, Cain is evil. Sarah is good, Hagar is evil. Yitzchak is good, Yishmael is evil, etc. However, in this week's Parsha, for the first time in the Torah's narrative, it's not so simple to discern who is good and who is evil.

On the one hand, Yosef behaved immaturely, dressing his hair and adorning his eyes to make himself look beautiful. He held himself aloof from Leah's sons, preferring to associate with the children of Bilha and Zilpa, the handmaidens. Yosef “informed” on his brothers to his father. He judged them harshly, failing to give them the benefit of the doubt. In a sense, the brothers could be forgiven for thinking that Yosef was evil. For in the previous two gen-

erations, there had been a son who had turned to an evil usurper (Yishmael and Esav), so they understood that one of their number might also turn aside and become evil. When Yosef started telling them his dreams, they understandably thought that Yosef was setting the stage to grab the mantle of kingship for himself. And thus they tried him and sentenced him to death.

On the other hand, the brothers did not act out of total altruism. They were jealous of Yosef. He was the favorite of their father Yaakov. They resented the embroidered tunic of fine colored woolen stripes that Yaakov had given Yosef.

Sometimes in life it's not so clear who's the goodie and who's the baddie. Sometimes it's the goodies who wear the black hats.

**Sources:**

*Making History* - Rabbi Reuven Subar  
*The Good, The Bad, and the Holy* - Rabbi Berel Wein,  
 as heard from Rabbi C.Z. Senter  
*The Play's The Thing* - Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### TEL AVIV-JAFFA

The harbor on which this city was built was the famous gateway to *Eretz Yisrael*. The cedars of Lebanon which Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to King Solomon for building the *Beis Hamikdash* and his palace were floated down the sea till they reached Jaffa. (*Divrei Hayamim II 2:15*)

The Sea of Jaffa, say our Sages (*Sifra Devarim 33:19*), is the repository of all the treasures of ships wrecked at sea, and in the hereafter it will yield these treasures to the righteous. The port of Jaffa was the departure point for the Prophet Jonah, whose futile flight from a Divine mission we read about at the Mincha service of Yom Kippur.

Jews began returning to Jaffa (“*Yafe*” in Hebrew



means beautiful, and this may be the source of the city's name) in 1840. Subsequent immigration led to the development of colonies in the area, climaxing with the establishment in 1908 of Tel Aviv, which eventually became the major urban center of modern Israel.

Tel Aviv is mentioned (*Yechezkel 3:15*) as a Babylonian city where exiles from *Eretz Yisrael* had gathered, but its Zionist founders gave this name to the city because it was the title of the Hebrew translation of Herzl's “*Altneuland*.” The emblem of Tel Aviv-Jaffa is a lighthouse and a gate, symbols of the city's historic role as the gateway to *Eretz Yisrael*.

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

**“Reuven said: ‘Cast him (Yosef) into this pit in the dessert; do not actually kill him;’ (Reuven said this) in order to save him from them and bring him back to his father (Yaakov).” (37:21-2)**

When a person does a mitzvah, he should do it with a full heart and with joy; for had Reuven known that his good intentions would be eternally inscribed in the Torah, Reuven would have hoisted Yosef upon his shoulders and carried him home to his father.

• *Rus Rabba 5, Tanchuma Vayikra 25:665*

## WEEKLY DAF

PESACHIM 114 - 121

### THE FAST BAKE

“Why do we eat this *matza*?” This is the rhetorical question we ask at the Pesach Seder while saying the Haggada.

We answer by recalling the hurried departure of our ancestors from Egypt: “They baked the dough which they took out of Egypt into *matzos*, for it did not leaven into *chametz*, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not tarry.” (*Shmos* 12:39)

What would our ancestors have done had they been given more time?

There are two radically different approaches to this question.

Rabbeinu Nissim (*RaN*) writes in his commentary on our *gemara* that they would have allowed it to become *chametz* and would have baked it into bread. Although at Sinai we were forbidden to eat or own *chametz* the entire seven days of Pesach, this first Pesach took place before receiving the Torah at Sinai and had different rules. The ban on eating *chametz* was limited to the first day alone, and there was no ban on possessing *chametz* even on that day. Had time allowed, they would have baked their dough into loaves of bread which they could begin eating the day after their Exodus.

Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (*Ramban*), in his commentary on Chumash, dismisses such an approach, because he contends that even on that first Pesach it was forbidden for Jews to have *chametz* in their possession. Had they been given more time, he concludes, they would have baked *matzos* in the comfort of their homes, and transported the finished product, rather than be compelled to carry out dough which they could only bake in an improvised manner at their first stop.

This approach raises the question of how they were able to avoid the dough automatically becoming *chametz* when left unattended for so long. Natural and miraculous explanations can be found in the Midrash, the Targum of Yonasan ben Uziel and the commentaries of Ohr Hachayim and Malbim.

• *Pesachim* 116b

### A REWARD FOR THE REWARD

“Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, for His loving-kindness is forever.” (*Tehillim* 136:1) This is probably the most familiar passage of the Hallel, which we say at the Seder table and throughout Pesach and other Festivals. Rabbi Chisda offers a fascinating perspective of Hashem’s extraordinary graciousness based on this passage.

When a Jew is loyal to Hashem, he is promised Divine protection for his possessions. As the Torah says “No one will covet your property when you go up to be seen before Hashem your G-d three times a year (*Shmos* 34:24).” The Sage Issi ben Yehuda explains this to mean that even though you are not at home, your cow will safely graze with no wild beast attacking it, and your chicken will rummage for its food with no cat threatening it. (*Pesachim* 8b)

But when a Jew abandons his responsibility to observe the Torah and has to be reminded of his duty, Hashem does not immediately strike at his body or life. He sends his warning instead in the form of withdrawing those material blessings which He has granted. The rich man loses his ox, the poor man his sheep, the orphan his egg and the widow her chicken. It is with the good that He has given man that He enables man to achieve atonement for his sins, and this is indeed an expression of magnificent lovingkindness.

Since it is obvious that it is Hashem’s preference to bless man with prosperity, we may gain a new insight, as Tiferes Yisrael suggests, into the statement of the Sage Shimon ben Azai that “the reward for a mitzvah is a mitzvah” (*Avos* 4:2). Since it is the Divine will to increase human prosperity as a reward for obedience, the one who fulfills a mitzvah gets credit not only for obedience but also for generating prosperity. The converse is true of the sinner. “Retribution for a sin is a sin” means that the sinner is held responsible for the destruction of possessions necessitated by his sinful ways. In this sense, the sinners are called “destroyers of the world” (*Avos* 5:1) while the righteous are called “preservers of the world” (*Ibid*).”

• *Pesachim* 118a

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. "These are the offspring of Yaakov: Yosef...." Give three reasons why Yosef is considered Yaakov's main offspring.
2. What was praiseworthy about the fact that Yosef's brothers did not speak to him in a friendly manner?
3. How do we see from Yosef's dream about the sun, moon and stars that all dreams contain some untrue element?
4. Who brought Yosef down to Egypt?
5. Where was Reuven when Yosef was sold?
6. In addition to the brothers, who else knew that Yosef was alive?
7. Why didn't Hashem reveal prophetically to Yaakov that Yosef was alive?
8. For how long did Yaakov mourn the loss of Yosef?
9. Verse 37:35 states "his father wept." To whom does this refer?
10. Who was Tamar's father?
11. In what merit did Tamar deserve to have kings as her descendants?
12. Why is the word "hand" mentioned four times in connection to the birth of Zerach?
13. Why does the Torah relate the incident with Potiphar's wife immediately after the incident of Yehuda and Tamar?
14. How did Potiphar "see" that Hashem was with Yosef?
15. Who in this week's Parsha pretended to be sick?
16. Why were the butler and the baker imprisoned?
17. For how long were the butler and the baker in prison?
18. How did the baker know that Yosef had correctly interpreted the butler's dream?
19. What promoted the butler and baker to tell Yosef their dreams?
20. How was Yosef punished for asking the butler for help?

## SHERLOX

### SHERLOX HOLMES AND THE LOST AND FOUND MYSTERY

“People ask how I always seem to find the clues to solve a mystery,” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes. “The truth is, you don’t find clues. You simply observe, and the clues find you.”

“Speaking of finding,” said Watstein, “perhaps you can explain this text about the mysterious stranger who finds Yosef. When Yosef couldn’t find his brothers in Shechem, the verse tells us that ‘a man found him...’ (Bereishis 37:15)

and told him that his brothers had moved on to a city called Dosan. Thus, Yosef was able to find his brothers, leading to the fateful incident in which they sold him as a slave.”

“What luck! Or, rather, what un-luck!” said Sherlock.

“Rashi says that this ‘man’ who found Yosef was in fact an angel, the angel Gabriel!”

“Ah,” said Sherlock, “So it wasn’t ‘luck’ after all.”

“But what’s wrong with the verse as it stands: ‘A man found him?’ Why can’t this ‘man’ be just a man, an everyday, ordinary man? Why does Rashi insist that it was a supernatural agent?”

“Merely observe, dear Watstein, and the clues find you.”

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. 37:2 - (a) Yosef was the son of Rachel, Yaakov's primary wife. (b) Yosef looked like Yaakov. (c) All that befell Yaakov befell Yosef.
2. 37:4 - They did not act hypocritically.
3. 37:10 - The moon represented Rachel. Since she had already died, it was impossible for that element of the dream to come true.
4. 37:28 - A caravan of Midianites.
5. 37:29 - He was attending to Yaakov.
6. 37:33 - Yitzchak.
7. 37:33 - Because the brothers had issued a ban against revealing the truth to Yaakov, and Hashem, so to speak, abided by their ban.
8. 37:34 - Twenty-two years.
9. 37:35 - Yitzchak, who wept because of Yaakov's suffering.
10. 38:24 - Shem.
11. 38:26 - In the merit of her modesty.
12. 38:30 - To allude to his descendant, Achan, who sinned with his hand by taking four things from the spoils of Jericho.
13. 39:1 - To teach us that just as Tamar acted with pure motives, so did Potiphar's wife.
14. 39:3 - Yosef mentioned Hashem's name frequently in his speech.
15. 39:11 - Potiphar's wife.
16. 40:1 - The butler was imprisoned because a fly was found in the king's goblet, and the baker was imprisoned because a pebble was found in the king's bread.
17. 40:4 - Twelve months.
18. 40:5 - The baker dreamed the interpretation of the butler's dream.
19. 40:6 - Yosef asked them why they looked troubled.
20. 40:23 - He remained in prison an additional two years.

## LOCAL OPERATION

**Mark from Chuckey, Tennessee**  
<solomon@usit.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
My first son is expected to be born during the 9th week of 1999. I live in a remote area of Tennessee and we do not have a synagogue nearby. We are making plans to have him circumcised by a doctor. Can you please give me specific instructions so that all is done properly? Shalom

Dear Mark,

First of all, may Hashem bless you with much joy and happiness! Circumcision is, as you know, an extremely central milestone in the life of a Jew. Aside from the fact that it is a commandment (the first given to a Jew!) it is also the entry of the child into the covenant of Abraham and into the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. There are many legal and medical requirements in Jewish law for a correct circumcision, and it would be impossible to explain them all over the email. I suggest you contact Rabbi Nutta Greenblatt (see below). Rabbi Greenblatt has years of experience as a *mohel* (circumciser), and he travels all over Tennessee to perform circumcisions. If you have trouble contacting him, then contact Mr. Bart Ehrenkranz of the Jewish Renaissance Center whom I spoke with today on the phone. He said he would be happy to help you with the arrangements.

(We supplied Mark with phone numbers and addresses. If anyone is in a similar situation, please contact us.)

## DOES THE END JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

**Bernard Berkeley from Glenview, IL**  
<berlen@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Machievelli believed, "The end jus-

tifies the means." What does the Torah offer as a counter-argument?

Dear Bernard Berkeley,

In life, nothing is as simple as a mere five word statement. Let us analyze the statement. Supposing you could save the life of an innocent child ("the end") and you could do it by lying ("the means") about his whereabouts to the murderer. In such a case Judaism would definitely say that the end justifies the means. However, supposing I could convince someone of the truth of the Torah ("the end") by lying ("the means") about what Torah is, then the Torah would say that it is *not* justified. Because here the means are a direct contradiction to the end, which is truth. We believe that one should examine each case separately, and indeed Judaism has legal guidelines to teach us how to act in cases of end versus means.

## ONE SMALL STEP

**Daniel**  
<plaatjer@netvision.net.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Just recently, I started learning with a friend of mine. While learning we came up with the following problem. He claims that if you live in Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) you do a mitzvah with every step you take. I learned it once before but do not recall where. Maybe you could help us find where this is and explain this important issue.

Dear Daniel,

What the Talmud actually says is: "One who walks a distance of four cubits (approximately 6 - 8 feet) in the Land of Israel is assured of being a *ben olam haba* — heir to the World to Come." Because of the *intrinsic* Holiness of the Land of Israel, a person gains spiritual merit by merely walking here.

So, each step is a step towards

"walking four cubits" in the Land of Israel, but unless you have a really big stride, you can't do it all in one step.

Sources:

- Ketuvot 111a
- Maharah Chidushei Aggadot 1:168

## R.I.P.

**Jeremy Schulman, University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa**  
<schul003@bama.ua.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Could somebody please tell me what the Hebrew letters "peh nun" mean on a tombstone?  
Peace, Jeremy Schulman (JLE 98)

Dear Jeremy Schulman,

The letters *peh nun* are the first two letters of "*poh nitman*" (or "*poh nikbar*") which means "here is the grave site of..." It is normally found at the top of the tombstone.

**Michael <Ferenstein@aol.com>**  
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
In America there is a kashrut symbol "D-E" which stands for "dairy equipment." What is the purpose of this? Can you eat something made on dairy equipment after meat? If not, why bother with the symbol? In other words, how does it differ from the regular "D" symbol which stands for dairy?

Dear Michael,

"Pareve" food — i.e., food that is neither dairy nor meat — cooked in dairy equipment may not be eaten together with meat, but it may be eaten immediately *after* eating meat. Hence, some kashrut supervisory organizations use the D-E designation.

Sources:

- See Yoreh Deah 95:2 Rema

# PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

## Re: Hebron (Ohrnet Chayei Sara):

The article "Hebron" in "Love of the Land" (Chayei Sara) states "Hebron is today under Palestinian rule, but there is a Jewish settlement in the city and in adjoining Kiryat Arba."

This statement is misleading. While 80% of Hebron is indeed under Palestinian rule, 20% is under Israeli rule. The area under Israeli rule includes all the Jewish neighborhoods, the Cave of the Patriarchs, the grave sites of Avner, Yishai and Rut and the ancient Jewish cemetery (in which are buried Torah giants including the Baal Reishit Chochma, the Baal S'de Chemed, the victims of the pogrom of 1929 as well as recent victims of Palestinian terrorism). From the wording of the sentence quoted above, readers might receive the impression that in order to visit the Cave of the Patriarchs, other Jewish holy sites or the Jewish neighborhoods in Hebron, one must pass into Palestinian-ruled areas. Fortunately, this is not so. The only Jewish holy site in Hebron located under the jurisdiction of the PA is the tomb of Otniel Ben Kenaz (situated a few hundred meters down the road from Beit Hadassah). It can be visited but usually only by prior arrangement with the security forces.

Our compliments to Ohrnet. We look forward to reading it each week. It is a regular part of our Shabbat table *divrei Torah*, especially the Parsha Q&A! With Torah greetings,

• Name withheld by request

## Re: Forward, Forward:

I have been trying to get my cousin interested in Judaism for years, and nothing ever worked! She always had an excuse for not coming to lectures with me, not spending Shabbos in my home (she does let her kids stay over for Shabbos often), and not reading any good books on Yiddishkeit that I bought for her.

She and I grew up together so close (like sisters) in Russia, and when my (immediate) family had discovered Yiddishkeit and started observing many Torah laws, whose existence we

never even suspected for years, it became very important to me that my cousin discover the same beauty and joy that we have found.

The best I have gotten to so far is that after a three-year long effort, she finally agreed to send her now 11-year old daughter to a Jewish day school. Our whole family, including my cousin's mom (my aunt) and our grandma can't say enough wonderful things about the magical changes they see in my little cousin since she has started going to this school.

A few weeks ago my cousin got a computer and access to the Internet, and she started forwarding to me all kinds of mail, jokes you find on the net, chain letters, etc. That's when I thought to myself, if she can forward me these messages, then I can forward her all the Jewish mail I get via the Internet. I had sent her various very good letters on the weekly Torah Portion, discussions on Jewish topics, etc. I never got any reaction for any of those, not even a reply. Last week however I forwarded her your "Ask The Rabbi" for Chayei Sarah, and a miracle happened! Here's her exact reply:

"I really enjoyed this particular page 'Ask The Rabbi.' If you subscribe it, forward it to me, please. Email me tomorrow regarding my kids visiting you guys this Shabbos..."

This is fantastic!

PS Her kids just spent last Shabbos with me. I took her daughter to a friend's Bas Mitzvah nearby, her five-year old son wore tzitzis for the first time. It's so exciting! The kids really like Yiddishkeit! I just wanted to thank you and tell you that with your great insight and kind words you have touched someone in a way that no one has been able to before.

• <E-Mail@Withheld>

## Re: Origins of Chopped Liver (Ohrnet Chayei Sara):

William Safire of the NY Times recently wrote on this very question, the origins of the phrase, "What am I, chopped liver?" Here's an excerpt:

"According to the Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang, the earliest use of this phrase was by Jimmy Durante on his 1954 CBS-TV show: "Now that ain't chopped liver."

"In a 1980 monologue about the Reagan-Carter presidential debate, Johnny Carson noted Ronald Reagan's statement that if all the unemployed were lined up, they would stretch from New York to Los Angeles. 'He came up with another one today,' said Carson. 'If everyone on welfare were chopped liver, you could spread them on a line of Ritz crackers from here to Bulgaria.'"

• David Brotsky, Elizabeth, NJ <DaveTrek@aol.com>

**derech**  
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Besides being a Torah command, judging favorably helps us strengthen our...

## BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

A very good friend of my wife promised a few times to attend the kiddush we were making in honor of our newborn daughter. However, on the day of the kiddush she simply didn't turn up. My wife and I were both very surprised, knowing she hadn't gone away for Shabbos and certainly hadn't for-

gotten. "I'm sure we'll find out sooner or later" we prophesied.

Sure enough, shortly after Shabbos her friend called to apologize. "I'm sorry I didn't come" she explained. "When we locked the door for the night, the key broke in the lock and I had no way of leaving the house all day!"

What a good thing that we didn't say anything we might have regretted!

• M. R. from Kiryat Sefer, Israel  
Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story"  
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

## DO YOU HAVE A STORY ABOUT JUDGING FAVORABLY?

Share your stories with us for inclusion in future columns of *The Other Side of the Story*.

To submit your story, send it to <info@ohr.org.il> or write to  
Ohrnet POB 18103 Jerusalem or Fax 02-581-2890.

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

Dovid Solomon <dsolomon@actcom.co.il> wrote:

This riddle is attributed to the Ibn Ezra. Two characters in Tanach: One's name makes him sound as though he's his own uncle, and the other's name would have him appear to be his own grandfather. Who are they?

Answer Next week...

continued from page five

## SHERLOX ANSWER!

"Was Yosef the finder, or the found?" asked Sherlock.

"What do you mean?" asked Watstein.

"Yosef was seeking his brothers when he 'chanced' upon an anonymous stranger. Yet the text says that the stranger found Yosef. Was the stranger looking for Yosef?"

"Hmm, that is odd," said Watstein. "Since Yosef was the seeker, it should have said that Yosef found a man, not that a man found Yosef."

"Exactly," said Sherlock. "By saying that a total stranger found Yosef, the verse implies that the

stranger was *looking* for Yosef. This makes no sense, for the stranger had no dealings with Yosef, so why should he look for him?"

"So it couldn't have been a human!" said Watstein. "What human would seek out someone in order to give him directions, not even knowing what that person's mission was, or where that person was going? Rather, it must have been a supernatural being, on a Divine mission to ensure that Yosef reached his intended destination!"

"You are quite a find, Dr. Watstein."

• Based on *Maskil L'David - Sherlock* is by Reuven Subar  
Inspired by "What's Bothering Rashi" by Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### RAMBAN

37:2 The Evil Report  
37:10 The Moon  
38:24 Tamar's Punishment

### SFORNO

37:2 The Evil Report  
37:3 Yosef's Coat  
37:18 The Brothers' Concern  
38:1 Yehuda's Punishment  
39:19 Why Yosef was Imprisoned