

# OHRNETH

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### A FREE RIDE

*“You have seen what I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples...” (19:4)*

When a person first becomes religious, he gets tremendous help from Upstairs. He finds himself excited about every new religious experience: He leaps out of bed to put on tefillin (even when it's Shabbos). He can't wait to eat *matza*, shake the *lulav*, sit in the *succah*, and even fast on Yom Kippur.

They say that every *ba'al teshuva* (newly observant person) eventually becomes an FFB (observant from birth). All of a sudden, he can't get up in the morning. He drags himself out of bed, shooting an angry glance at the alarm clock, and manages to make the last minyan in the synagogue. He finds himself mouthing blessings without thought. His mind wanders all over the place when he's praying. The luster seems to have worn off.

When a baby starts to walk, its parents stand over it making sure that it doesn't fall. However, eventually, the parents withdraw their protection. If they didn't, the child would never learn to walk. The same is true in the spiritual world. G-d is our Father. He gives us help in our first stumblings toward Him, as a parent does to a child. And just as a parent withdraws his help so a child may achieve independence, so G-d eventually withdraws His special assistance so that we may make spirituality our own.

On the surface, the above verse “You have seen what I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me” doesn't seem to have a lot to do with “And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples.” What's the connection?

When the Children of Israel first came out of Egypt they were on a spiritual free ride on the “wings of eagles.” But in order for them to attain the exalted level that G-d want-

“The Torah is emphasizing the yearning of the Jewish People to reach the appointed place for their union with Hashem.”

ed for them, G-d was ending that extra-special assistance. G-d was telling them “Now, if you will hearken well to Me and observe My covenant.” Now, they would have to hearken well and observe the covenant. Now the real work was starting. The Children of Israel would have to become the owners of their spiritual maturity.

### CHAPEL OF LOVE

*“In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai. And they journeyed from Refidim and they came to Sinai.” (19:1)*

One of the characteristic features of our society is impulsiveness. Everything has to be instant. Instant coffee. Instant success. Instant gratification. Instant spirituality. Marriage is also instant. In certain states in the United States, you can walk in (probably by now it's drive-thru) to a marriage chapel. You look up above the door and see:

*“If marriage is on your mind  
You've hit the spot*

*Come right in and tie the knot!”*

How different than the preeminent wedding, the union of G-d and the Jewish People under the *chupa* (wedding canopy) of Sinai!

*“In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai. And they journeyed from Refidim and they came to Sinai.”*

There's something unusual about these two verses. Why doesn't the Torah tell us where the Jewish People came from before it tells us where they arrived? The verse really should have said “In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, they journeyed from Refidim and arrived at the wilderness of Sinai.”

When we long for something, all our focus is on where it will happen. We picture in our mind's eye what the place will look like, what the weather be like. Will there be trees? Will birds be singing? Things that lead up to the main event are subordinate

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**H**earing of the miracles Hashem performed for *Bnei Yisrael*, Moshe's father-in-law Yisro arrives with Moshe's wife and sons, reuniting the family in the wilderness. Yisro is so impressed by Moshe's detailing of the Exodus from Egypt that he converts and joins the Jewish People. Seeing that the only judicial authority for the entire Jewish nation is Moshe himself, Yisro suggests that subsidiary judges be appointed to adjudicate the smaller matters, leaving Moshe free to attend to larger issues. Moshe accepts his advice. The *Bnei Yisrael* arrive at Mt. Sinai where the Torah is offered to them. After they accept, Hashem charges Moshe to instruct the people not to approach the mountain, and to prepare themselves for three days in order to receive the Torah. On the third day, amidst thunder and lightning, Hashem's voice emanates from the smoke-enshrouded mountain and He speaks to the Jewish People,

giving to them the Ten Commandments:

- Believe in Hashem
- Don't have other gods
- Don't use Hashem's name in vain
- Observe the Shabbos
- Honor your parents
- Don't murder
- Don't commit adultery
- Don't kidnap
- Don't testify falsely
- Don't covet

After receiving the first two commandments, the Jewish People, overwhelmed by this experience of the Divine, request that Moshe relay Hashem's word to them. Hashem instructs Moshe to caution the Jewish People regarding their responsibility to be faithful to the One who spoke to them.

## HAFTORAH: YISHAYAHU 6:1-13, 7:1-6, 9:5,6

**T**he revelation of the *Shechina* (the Divine Presence) at Sinai, the subject of this week's Parsha, is mirrored in the Haftorah by a revelation of the *Shechina* to the prophet Yishayahu.

### No, No, AFTER You...

**T**he nature of most people is to want to be first. To demonstrate their superiority over others. This is the driving force

behind the desire to have money and power. I'm better than you! *You go second!*

And even when we allow others to go first, when we put them in front of ourselves, it's usually to demonstrate what elevated character traits we have — in other words — *elevated over you!*

In the *kedusha* (holiness) that we say at least twice a day, we borrow a prayer from the angels to magnify the glory of the Almighty.

We say "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the L-rd of Hosts. The whole world is filled with His Glory."

Man is not an angel. When the angels say *kedusha*, they begin by calling to each other, as if to say "*You go first, because you are greater than me.*" To which comes the reply "*No, you are greater than me!*" Finally, they all praise Hashem together.

The angels repeat the word "holy" three times. Anything done three times is considered to have permanence and perpetuity. Thus the angels never cease saying "holy," for Hashem is infinitely Holy.

• Based on the Midrash



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# PARSHA INSIGHTS

in our minds. All our yearning is to be at the place where it will all happen.

The Torah is emphasizing here the yearning of the Jewish People to reach the appointed place for their union with G-d. Where they came from is almost irrelevant. Where they had arrived is essential.

The Torah is inevitable. The Torah is the only thing in this world that *has* to be. Just as the Torah has to be, its giving has to be in a way which was also inevitable. It could have no aspect of happenstance or casualness.

*“In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai.”* The first verse doesn’t mention where the Jewish People came from, so no one should say that Jewish People entered into a union with G-d by way of happenstance. No one should say that they were journeying from one place to another place and G-d just happened to put up the *chupa* and give them the Torah at Sinai; that Sinai was just another

stop on the route. No. The exact time and place of the giving of the Torah are as immutable and inevitable as its very giving.

## THE PRINCESS AND THE MERCEDES

*“You shall not covet.” (19:14)*

**H**ow is it possible to command people not to covet? Coveting is a knee-jerk reaction, isn’t it? You see someone driving along in Mercedes 500LS and before you can even think twice, your envy-glands go into overdrive. Covetousness is a reflex, isn’t it? It’s not in the domain of intellectual control, is it?

Once there was a peasant who stood in line all day to see the king pass by. At last, the royal procession drew close. He craned his neck to catch a glimpse of the royal countenance. Immediately behind the king stood the crown princess. The peasant was stunned. The princess was

the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She had delicate pale features. All the women he knew had coarse sun-browned skin and bad teeth. A peasant’s life is not conducive to physical beauty. However, despite the princess’s exquisite appearance, not for one moment did the peasant desire or covet her. She was someone so above his station in life, that it never entered his mind that he was even in the same world as her. She remained an ethereal unreality in another cosmos.

The root of all desire is the unconscious assumption we *could* have the object of our desire. If we feel that it’s possible for us to have that thing, if we feel that it’s within our orbit, the next step is to covet it. The mitzvah of not coveting tells us to look at someone else’s Mercedes as a peasant looks at a princess.

Sources:  
*A Free Ride* – Netziv, as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer  
*Chapel of Love* - Gur Aryeh  
*The Princess and the Mercedes* - Ibn Ezra, as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer

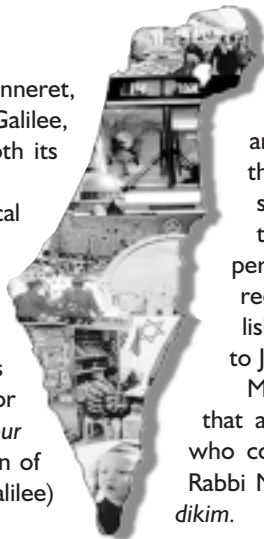
# LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## TIBERIAS (TEVERIYA)

**T**his famous city on the shores of Lake Kinneret, sometimes referred to as the Capital of Galilee, has an interesting history surrounding both its name and its destiny.

There are different versions in our classical sources regarding the source of the name Tiberias. The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah 23:1*) attributes it to the Roman Emperor Tiberius who named it in his honor. In the Talmud (*Megilah 6a*), however, the city’s original name is given as Rakkat and the explanations offered for the Hebrew name Teveriya are that it is in the *tabur* — navel — of the land (for after the destruction of Jerusalem the main Jewish community was in Galilee)



or that it is *tovah riyasah* — a beautiful sight. Teveriya was the seat of great *yeshivos* and was the last station in the ten wanderings of the Sanhedrin. Our Sages (*Rosh Hashana 31a*) state that this represented the lowest point in the history of this august body (corresponding perhaps to its below sea-level depth) and that the redemption of Jewry will begin with the reestablishment of the Sanhedrin there before it returns to Jerusalem.

Modern Teveriya is a thriving Jewish community that attracts many local and foreign Jewish tourists who come to the Kinneret or to visit the tombs of Rabbi Meir, Maimonides and other distinguished *tzadikim*.

# I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

**“Zachor es Yom HaShabbos L’kadsho — Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.”**

This verse, which commands us to honor the 7th day, is the 7th verse of the Ten Commandments. It begins with the letter *zayin*, the 7th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the following verses, 7 entities are commanded to rest: “You, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your animal, and the sojourner within your city gates.” Corresponding to these 7 are the 7 expressions of *menucha*, tranquillity, in the “*atah echad*” paragraph of the Shabbos afternoon prayer.

## WEEKLY DAF

YOMI 30 - 36

### THE LONG KNIFE

To enter the *azarah* — the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash* — one had to first immerse in a *mikveh*. The Sage Ben Zoma saw this as a Torah requirement derived from the fact that the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur had to do such an immersion when he switched from the service done in the inner sanctum to the service outside it. If immersion was necessary for moving from one level of sanctity to another, he concludes, then it is certainly necessary when one wishes to come from a totally secular state to a sacred one.

Rabbi Yehuda contends that this immersion is a rabbinical decree. Its purpose, he says, was to stimulate the *kohen* to recall whether he had contracted any ritual impurity that would prevent his entering the *Beis Hamikdash* until immersing and waiting for dark.

Even according to the stricter view of Ben Zoma, the question arises: May a *kohen* avoid this immersion if he stands outside the *Beis Hamikdash* and, with a long knife, slaughters the animal inside?

The only reason not to allow this is the concern that during the *shechita*, he may forget and actually enter the sacred area.

Tosefos notes an apparent conflict between this *gemara* and another in *Mesechta Chullin (2b)*. There the *gemara* rules that a ritually impure person may not slaughter a sacrificial animal, even with a long knife that enables him stand outside the sanctuary. The reason given is that he may inadvertently touch the animal's flesh and thus disqualify it as a sacrifice. Why, asks Tosefos, does the *gemara* there not cite the same concern mentioned in our *gemara* — that he may inadvertently enter the sanctuary?

His resolution is to focus on the difference between a ritually impure person and one who is pure. The ritually impure person, aware of the serious prohibition against entering the sanctuary, will be very careful to avoid such entry. Therefore, the only concern is the possible contact with the *animal*. The pure person, however, does not have this sense of seriousness of distancing himself from the *sanctuary* — because even if he enters without immersion, the most he is guilty of is a failure to fulfill the positive command of immersion, but he has not violated any prohibition — and is likely to be less cautious.

• Yoma 31a

### THE MYSTERIOUS GUARD

One of the most famous stories of the Talmudic Sages is the one in our *gemara* about Hillel. This great sage used to work each day to earn a bit of money, half of which he spent to support his family, and

with the other half he paid the guard at the *beis midrash* to allow him to enter and learn from the great teachers inside. One Friday he failed to earn the money necessary for this admission fee and he was barred from entering. Undaunted, Hillel climbed up to the roof of the *beis midrash* just before Shabbos and listened through the skylight to the Torah lectures given inside by the great Sages Shemaya and Avtalyon.

It was an extremely cold winter night and snow fell on him throughout the night. In the morning he was discovered virtually frozen beneath three cubits of snow, and the people in the *beis midrash* put aside the laws of Shabbos to save his life.

Hillel's perseverance in Torah study despite abject poverty is cited by the Heavenly Court as a refutation to any poor man who claims that his failure to study Torah was due to his preoccupation with eking out a livelihood.

The story speaks for itself but one detail remains a mystery. Why was it necessary to have a guard at the door of a house of Torah study?

Maharsha offers two possible solutions to this mystery. One is that the houses of worship and study in those days were located in unpopulated areas and therefore required the hiring of guards to prevent theft and vandalism. Another possibility is based on the policy, in effect at one stage of Jewish history, of restricting admission to the house of study. Rabbi Gamliel (*Mesechta Berachos 28a*) made it a rule that only a student "whose interior was like his exterior" — who has been certified as a sincere student of Torah — could be admitted to the *beis midrash*. It was therefore necessary to hire a guard to prevent the less sincere ones from entering, and his services were financed by people like Hillel who had this qualification.

• Yoma 35b

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Yisro had 7 names. Why was one of his names *Yeser*?
2. News of which two events motivated Yisro to come join the Jewish People?
3. What name of Yisro indicates his love for Torah?
4. Why was Tzipora with her father, Yisro, and not with Moshe when the *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt?
5. Why does verse 18:5 say that Yisro came to the desert — don't we already know that the *Bnei Yisrael* were in the desert?
6. Why did Moshe tell Yisro all that Hashem had done for the Jewish People?
7. According to the *Midrash* quoted by Rashi, how did Yisro respond when he was told about the destruction of Egypt?
8. Who is considered as if he enjoys the splendor of the *Shechina*?
9. On what day did Moshe sit to judge the Jewish People?
10. Who is considered a co-partner in Creation?
11. "Moshe sat to judge the people, and the people stood before Moshe...." What bothered Yisro about this arrangement?
12. Why did Yisro return to his own land?
13. How did the encampment at Sinai differ from the other encampments?
14. To whom does the Torah refer when it uses the term "*Beis Yaakov*"?
15. How is Hashem's protection of the Jewish People similar to an eagle's protection of its young?
16. What was Hashem's original plan for *Matan Torah*? What was the response of the Jewish People?
17. How many times greater is the "measure of reward" than the "measure of punishment"?
18. How is it derived that "Don't steal" refers to kidnapping?
19. In response to hearing the Torah given at Sinai, how far backwards did the Jewish people retreat in fear?
20. Why does the use of iron tools profane the altar?

## SHERLOX

### SHERLOX AND THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH

Watstein peered into the text and said, "G-d warns that if the Jews approach Mount Sinai that '*many of them would fall dead.*' (*Shmos 19:21*) Rashi comments that even if one of them were to die, G-d considers it as if many died."

"Numbers seem to lose meaning when lives are lost," said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes.

"True. But still, many deaths are surely worse than one death. The verse warns that *many* will die if the nation trespasses upon the mountain. Why can't Rashi leave the verse as is, a warning stated in the strongest terms?"

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. 18:1 - Because he caused a Parsha to be added to the Torah. *Yeser* means addition.
2. 18:1 - The splitting of the sea and the war against Amalek.
3. 18:1 - Chovav.
4. 18:3 - When Aharon met Moshe with his family on their way down to Egypt, Aharon said to Moshe: "We're pained over the Jews already in Egypt, and you're bringing more Jews to Egypt?" Moshe, hearing this, sent his wife and children back to Midian.
5. 18:5 - To show Yisro's greatness. He was living in a luxurious place, yet he went to the desert in order to study the Torah.
6. 18:8 - To draw Yisro closer to the Torah way of life.
7. 18:9 - He grieved.
8. 18:12 - One who dines with Torah scholars.
9. 18:13 - The day after *Yom Kippur*.
10. 18:13 - A judge who renders a correct decision.
11. 18:14 - Yisro felt that the people weren't being treated with the proper respect.
12. 18:27 - To convert the members of his family to Judaism.
13. 19:2 - The Jewish People were united.
14. 19:3 - The Jewish women.
15. 19:4 - An eagle carries its young on top of its wings to protect them from human arrows. So too, Hashem's cloud of glory separated between the Egyptians and the Jewish camp in order to absorb Egyptian missiles and arrows fired at the Jewish People.
16. 19:9 - Hashem offered to appear to Moshe and to give the Torah through him. The Jewish People responded that they wished to hear the Torah directly from Hashem.
17. 20:6 - Five hundred times.
18. 20:13 - Because it is written immediately after "Don't murder" and "Don't commit adultery," it is derived that "Don't steal" refers to a crime carrying the same penalty as the first two, namely, the death penalty.
19. 20:15 - They backed away from the mountain twelve *mil* (one *mil* is 2000 cubits).
20. 20:22 - The altar was created to extend life; iron is sometimes used to make weapons which shorten life.

Dear Readers: Among the many questions that "Ask the Rabbi" receives daily, a number of them inevitably concern the laws and philosophy of keeping kosher. We therefore dedicate this week's "Ask the Rabbi" to the topic of *kashrut*.

## SOUL FOOD THE JEWISH DIETARY LAWS

Few activities are as instinctive as eating, and few activities have such a profound impact on us physiologically, psychologically and spiritually. Many people do not give much thought to when, what and how they eat until their cardiologist tells them to lower their cholesterol or their friends begin to ask if they are pregnant (for men this question is especially disturbing). Jews who observe the dietary laws (*kashrut*) however, must make regular decisions about what they eat, when they eat it and how they prepare their food; so that for the observant Jew eating ceases to be a totally instinctive activity. The dietary laws force us to stop and think about daily activities and deter us from going through life in autopilot. In order to understand what the Torah wants us focus on, and to understand the philosophy of *kashrut*, it is necessary to be superficially familiar with the *kashrut* laws themselves. Following is a brief overview:

1. A kosher animal must be a ruminant and have split hooves — cows, sheep, goats and deer are all kosher, whereas camels and pigs (having each only one sign of *kashrut*) are not kosher. Most common fowl are kosher, like chickens, ducks and geese, but the birds of prey (hawks, eagles etc.) are not kosher. A sea creature is only kosher if it has fins and scales. So most species of fish are kosher (tuna, salmon, flounder, etc.) but all shellfish are not kosher; dolphins, whales and squids are also not kosher. Any food product of a non-kosher animal is also non-kosher. The exception to this rule is bee's honey.

2. An animal or bird must be slaughtered according to Jewish law (*shechi-*

*ta*). This involves cutting the animal's trachea and oesophagus (the carotid and jugular are also severed) with a surgically sharp knife. The cut must be swift, continuous and performed by an expert. This method of slaughter reduces the blood pressure in the brain to zero immediately, so that the animal loses consciousness in a few seconds and dies in minutes.

3. The animal or bird must be free of *treifot*, which are 70 different categories of injuries, diseases or abnormalities whose presence renders the animal non-kosher.

4. Certain fats, known as *chelev*, may not be eaten. Blood must be removed from the meat, either by soaking, salting and rinsing or by broiling. The sciatic nerve in each leg and the surrounding fat must be removed.

5. It is forbidden to cook, eat, or benefit from milk and meat mixtures. It is also forbidden to cook or eat dairy products together with poultry.

6. In Israel, tithes must be taken from all crops. If these tithes are not separated then the produce may not be eaten; the wheat, barley or fruit is actually not kosher until the commandments of tithing have been fulfilled.

7. Milk products (including the rennet in cheese) must only come from kosher animals.

• The most obvious idea behind *kashrut* is self-control and discipline. Let me illustrate this with a real-life example. Most parents are familiar with the horrors of going to the supermarket with young children. The worst part of this ordeal is waiting in line at the checkout counter. You have only five items, so you wait in the "Eight-items-or-less" express line. The lady in front of you has 25 items at least, she is trying to pay with a third-party check from Paraguay in Thai baht, and is negotiating with the clerk over her expired coupons (and her mortgage). You are waiting with two children under the age of six, surrounded on both sides by four foot high walls of sugar based products. The children are becoming increasingly impatient and begging for candies, and you are becoming more and more angry and frustrated as time goes on. Of course, most children will scream, beg and embarrass their parents into buying

the candy. Now for the true story. I moved with my family from Israel to Toronto for a four-year stay, and in the first week was waiting in line at the supermarket with one of my children. He asked me for a chocolate bar. I looked at the bar and told him that it was not kosher and he was silent, accepting the decision without tantrums, threats, tears or hysteria. It struck me then that my five-year-old, who has been brought up with the laws of *kashrut*, had more self-control than millions of adults in the Western world. How many people accept "no" as an answer in denial of a pleasure that they want now? Dangerous? I will take precautions. Unhealthy? I will stop after a few. Addictive? Not to me. Not to indulge is simply not an option.

• I once read an interview with a famous politician whose motto was "A kinder, gentler America." The interview was conducted while he was engaged in hunting grouse. No one seemed to notice the contradiction between his recreational activity and his motto. How can one derive entertainment from pursuing and killing an animal and at the same time espouse a "kinder, gentler America?" In the words of a great Rabbi "I am amazed by this activity [hunting]; we have not found hunters in the Torah except for Nimrod and Esau. This is not the way of the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ... it is written 'His [G-d's] mercy is upon all His creatures' ... if so how can an Israelite kill living beings, without any other need than in order to pass his time by hunting! This matter contributes to cruelty, and is forbidden...." In Jewish tradition we are allowed to use animals as food and clothing; however, we are not supposed to rejoice in this, and we are certainly not supposed to make a sport of it. Some of the laws of *kashrut* are designed to prevent us from becoming callous and cruel and to discourage hunting as a form of recreation or sustenance. The requirements of *shechita* and *treifot* virtually preclude the possibility of hunting.

• The prohibition against meat and milk also serves to remind us where our food comes from. The meat is from a dead animal, the milk from a living animal. Be aware that obtaining meat

necessitates death, obtaining milk requires life. These are foods that have their origin in living creatures and keeping them separate makes us aware of their source. This is similar to the law that allows us to wear clothing of leather, but suggests that we do not wish our friend to “Wear it out,” because getting a new one involves the death of an animal.

- The Hebrew word for “charity” — “*tzedaka*” — is correctly translated as “justice.” We do not look at giving to the poor as something beyond the call of duty, we perceive it as simple justice. Hence we can understand why the Torah prohibits a Jewish farmer from eating the produce of his own field until he has given tithes to those without land of their own. He is not being asked to be extra nice, he is being commanded to be just.

- The types of animals we eat are chosen in part for their symbolism. The ruminants that have split hooves tend to be tranquil, domesticated animals that have no natural weapons. These are animals whose characteristics we may absorb through eating. We may not eat scavengers, carnivores or birds of prey; these are not characteristics that we want to absorb at all.

- There is no question that *kashrut* has contributed to our survival as a distinct nation as well. Jews all over the world have common dietary patterns. I can be confident that the curried *hamin* of the Calcutta Jews has no milk with meat in its ingredients. When I eat kosher, French cuisine, I know that the meat is not pork and that the animals have been slaughtered according to law. Jews meet each other at the local kosher bakery, they shop at the same stores and have their own butchers. These laws are a major force in maintaining unity, act as a social barrier against assimilation, and create a feeling of community amongst the Jewish People.

- Another aspect of *kashrut* is the encouragement of aesthetic sensitivity. Judaism prohibits the consumption of animals that have died of natural causes or that are deformed

and diseased; it also prohibits the consumption of insects and loathsome foods. It is possible that one idea behind this is to encourage us to view ourselves with dignity and to act with dignity. One of the best defences against immorality is a strong sense of self-esteem and dignity. Evil should be looked at as beneath our dignity, stealing is stooping too low, gossip is petty and small-minded. In order to help us achieve and maintain this level of dignity the Torah prohibits foods like carcasses and diseased animals.

- Some religions seek the path to spirituality through withdrawal from the physical world. A monastic life is glorified, celibacy and asceticism are seen as ideals. Some view the human as essentially an animal that is incapable of elevating itself beyond the struggle for survival, hence they encourage a life of hedonism and materialism. Judaism sees the human as an essentially spiritual being, clothed in a physical body. Judaism maintains that the physical is not evil, it is just not the complete view of reality. Judaism seeks to elevate the physical world, not to deny it, nor to glorify it. The laws of *kashrut* allow us to enjoy the pleasures of the physical world, but in such a way that we sanctify and elevate the pleasure through consciousness and sensitivity. *Kashrut* recognises that the essential human need is not food, drink or comfort, but meaning. Judaism, through the dietary laws, injects meaning even into something as commonplace and instinctive as eating.

References:

- *The Jewish Dietary Laws*, Isidore Grunfeld, Soncino Press, London.
- *Shechita: Religious, Historical and Scientific Perspectives*, Munk, Feldheim Publishers, New York, 1976
- *Responsa Nodah BiyeHUDah*, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, Yoreh Deah 10
- *Code of Jewish Law*, Orach Chaim 223:6 Rema ad loc.
- *The Royal Table*, Jacob Cohn



**Re: Yarmulke (Ohrnet Shmot):**

When we covered this topic in Yeshiva, my Rosh Kollel, Rav N. Sauer, *shlita*, concluded, based on Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, Rav Ovadiah Yosef, *shlita*; and Rav Shlomo Kluger *zatzal* that the position of the kippa should be in a place that it could be seen on all sides.

- Rabbi Aryeh Blaut <rebbib@juno.com>

We cover our heads to show respect and awe for G-d, the King of kings. Interestingly, a popular name for the *kippa*, is *yarmulke* a word which is made up of the two words “*yere*

*malka*,” Aramaic for “fear of the King [Hashem].”

- Ravi Shahar <ravis@writemail.com>

From your sources, I see where you quoted the statements from Talmud about wearing *yarmulkas*. I am left with but one question: Where do you get your jokes?

- Yaakov Dovid Hakohen, Brooklyn <ytd@juno.com>

**Re: Simple as Aleph-Beis (Ohrnet Vaera):**

Regarding which verse has all the letters of the *aleph-beis*: I found two such *pesukim*, but I found it by writing a program to search for me. Was I supposed to do it by hand? I will certainly tip my hat to anyone who found it by hand! I also found one that you didn’t mention, *Devarim* 4:34.

- Eli Reidler <eli@pds.lhca.com>

**Ohrnet replies:** Your punishment is to write 100 times “I will not cheat on the Yiddle Riddle” (you may write a computer program to do this).

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

# GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

If you see or hear of something that sounds quite foreign, don't make a snap judgment, because maybe the "cow jumped over the moon" as in the case of the...

## COW'S CRUISE

Earlier this year, the dazed crew of a Japanese trawler was plucked out of the Sea of Japan clinging to the wreckage of their sunken ship. Their rescue, however, was followed by immediate imprisonment once authorities questioned the sailors on their ship's loss. To a man they claimed that a cow, falling out of a clear blue sky,

had struck the trawler amidships, shattering its hull and sinking the vessel within minutes.

They remained in prison for several weeks, until the Russian Air Force reluctantly informed Japanese authorities that the crew of one of its cargo planes had apparently stolen a cow wandering at the edge of a Siberian airfield, forced the cow into the plane's hold and hastily taken off for home. Unprepared for live cargo, the Russian crew was ill equipped to manage a now rampaging cow within its hold. To save the aircraft and themselves, they shoved the animal out of the cargo hold as they crossed the Sea of Japan at an altitude of 30,000 feet.

• Submitted by Alan Silver <colboaln@isracom.net.il>

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

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

• Yochi Schnall <yochii@juno.com>

Answer next week...

continued from page five

## SHERLOX ANSWER!

"Look at the word 'fall' in the verse," said Sherlock.

"Hmm ... it's the singular, *nafal*," said Watstein.

"You would have expected the plural form, *naflu*, wouldn't you?"

"Yes. In Hebrew, plural nouns have plural verbs," said Watstein. "In order to agree with the word 'many' in the

phrase '*many of them would fall dead*,' you would have expected the plural form, *naflu*. Rashi addresses this anomaly with the explanation that when it comes to loss of life, one Jew is considered as many."

Based on *Sifsei Chachamim*, Sherlock is by Reuven Subar  
Inspired by "What's Bothering Rashi?" by Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**RAMBAN**  
18:6,10 Yisro's Communication and Conversion  
18:11 Why Egyptians were Punished  
18:15 The Role of Moshe  
18:22 Availability of Justice  
20:2 Belief Based on Experience  
20:6 The Beloved of Hashem

20:8 Remembering Shabbos  
20:17 The "Test" of *Matan Torah*  
19:3, 8:9, 20:15, 24:1 The Chronology of *Matan Torah*  
**SEFER HACHINUCH**  
25 Faith  
30 Respect for Divine Name  
31 *Kiddush* on Wine

32 Shabbos Rest  
33 Gratitude to Parents  
35 Promiscuity  
**MALBIM**  
20:2 The Essence of Belief in Hashem  
**IBN EZRA**  
20:14 Discipline of Desire



Check out....

# ChoppedLiver®

<http://www.ohr.org.il/judaism/cartoons/cartoon.htm>