



# Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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## Light Insight

### *Rolls-Royce*

**G**iven the choice between renting a Rolls Royce for a day and owning one, I think most people would go for the latter.

If you think about it though, on the day when you actually rent the Rolls Royce, what's the difference? You experience the same silky ride as someone who owns a Rolls Royce. You enjoy the same people gazing through the window to make sure you're not someone they ought to recognize. The smell of the leather, the quiet air of refined luxury — everything is the same. With one small difference...

In life, things make us happy to

the degree that we feel we own them. Renting a

“Rolls” is never going to feel the same as owning one.

In Parshat Matot, the Torah goes to great lengths to itemize all the spoils of the war against Midian. It describes exactly how they were divided amongst the *kohanim*, the *levi'im*, the warriors and the general population. What is the significance of such exactitude?

Everything in this world has a limit. The spoils captured by the Jewish People may have been very large — but since they were physical objects, there was an end to them. This is the lesson the Torah's long list teaches us: The physical world is finite, limited. It's this much — and no more.

Even when we have that elegant automobile sitting in the drive, it

will never bring us the sort of happiness that a spiritual achievement can bring. Because in the back of our mind, we know that tomorrow someone else could quite easily be driving it. We may have paid a “Rolls Royce” price for it, but it's not really ours, because it can be taken away from us in a second. It can be stolen. A tree can fall on it.

Everything in this world is finite; thus the pleasure we can get from this world is finite. It can be taken away from us in a second. However, our spiritual acquisitions can never be taken away from us. They become part of who we are. It is for that reason we get more joy out of spiritual accomplishments than out of material possessions, because no one can take them away from us. We truly possess them. And thus we are truly happy with them.

## LOVE of the LAND

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

### *Yam Kinneret*

**A**lso referred to in various cultures as the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias, this beautiful harp-shaped lake is one of the most beautiful sites of the Land of

Israel, and one of its most important sources of fresh water and fish.

Some say that its very name comes from its similarity to the *kinor* (Hebrew for harp), either because of its shape or the musical sound of its waves.

Lying 212 meters below the level of the Mediterranean, this

lake is 13 miles long and 8 miles at its greatest width, with a circumference of 33 miles.

The beauty of the area and the swimming and boating that the lake affords have made the Kinneret region a popular resort area for Israeli residents as well as visitors from abroad.

The city of Teveria (Tiberias) is the most important of the cities in the area and the site of several very well known tombs.

## The Other SIDE of the Story

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

*It is indeed "bad luck" when others misjudge you; if they do, perhaps you deserve a...*

### *Shlamazel Tov*

**W**e had the privilege of throwing a bar mitzvah celebration for our son last summer.

My brother came from New York to participate in the celebration. My brother and I, although he is 6

years my junior, have similar facial features and are both approximately 5' 10" tall.

At the bar mitzvah, a certain relative said "Mazel Tov" to my brother twice. He apparently ignored her; he either did not hear her or thought she was talking to someone else. (He never met her before because she is actually my wife's relative, not mine.)

Several weeks after the event, we heard from the family grapevine that our relative was very upset at me and never wanted to talk to me again because I ignored her at the bar mitzvah. It took some convincing that I have a brother, that he came in from New York, and that we look alike. We are again on speaking terms.

The moral of the story: Never assume it's really him even if he looks like him, or, always respond to "Mazel Tov" even if you do not recognize the person greeting you!

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## Response Line

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**Baruch Greenbaum wrote:**

*Why does wine have such a significant role in Judaism?*

Dear Baruch,

To answer your question, I have to tell you a joke:

A leader of a house of worship was giving a fiery sermon: "If I had all the beer in the world," he said, "I'd take it and throw it in the river; and if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it in the river! And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down. The choir leader then

Hymn 258: 'We Shall Gather at the River.' "

The above story illustrates two ways to look at wine: The sermonizer believes that wine is intrinsically evil and must be totally avoided, while the choir leader implies that hedonistic immersion in wine is not so bad. The Jewish view is far from both of these views. We believe that the enjoyment of wine, like other physical pleasures, can and should be used in the service of G-d.

Wine is mentioned in Psalms as something that "gladdens the

heart of man," and hence it is used to gladden and inspire us at various times — like *kiddush* on Shabbat (sanctification of Shabbat), at a circumcision or at a wedding.

Wine symbolizes a completed and perfected human life. It starts off as an inferior product (grape juice = childhood, immaturity) but must go through fermentation (struggle = challenge of evil) and only then does it become the superior product, wine. We drink it on occasions where we have passed a certain fermentation process (marriage) or at times, like Shabbat, which represent the final product of human life, the World to Come.