



Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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Light Insight

Witnesses

*“And Yehuda approached him...”
(Genesis 44:18)*

Picture a tramp standing by a traffic light. Suddenly, a big Rolls Royce limousine about half a block long, pulls up right next to him. The tramp stands immobile and somewhat alarmed. One of the tinted windows in the back of the limo rolls down with an expensive electronic purr. From inside the car emerges a hand wearing a white silk glove. The hand is waving a crisp \$100 bill. Silently the gloved hand with the money beckons to the tramp. Like a silent Charlie Chaplin comedy, the tramp does a double take, looks behind him, convinced that the hand must be beckoning to someone standing behind him. Then he realizes the \$100 bill is for him. The tramp cannot believe his luck. He beams from ear to ear, walks up to the hand, and takes the money. Just as quietly and mysteriously as it arrived, the Rolls Royce glides away from the sidewalk and is soon lost in traffic. He stands there gazing after it for a long time.

The next day, the Rolls Royce again draws up next to him. This time, the tramp is somewhat less

surprised but no less grateful. Overjoyed, he again takes the money.

The next day the same thing happens, and the next and the next and the next...

This goes on for a month.

One day, the Rolls Royce draws up at the traffic light, but the window doesn't go down. After a few seconds the tramp knocks on the glass, but it doesn't go down. So he knocks harder and then starts to shout, “Where's my hundred dollars! Where's my hundred dollars!”

Gratitude is proportionate to the extent that we understand that we received something that wasn't our due. If we think that something is due us why should we be grateful?

“And Yehuda approached him.”

The name Jew comes from the name Yehuda. We are *Yehudim* or Jews. We are not called Jews by coincidence. In Hebrew, a name defines the very essence of a thing. If the name Yehuda means to thank, that is the essence of being Jewish, that's our name. We are the “thankers.” The Hebrew for “to thank” is *l'hodot*. However, there is another meaning to the word *l'hodot*. It can also mean “to admit.” What's the connection between giving thanks and admitting?

To the extent that we admit we received something, and we really didn't deserve it — to that extent will be our gratitude, to that degree we will give thanks.

“And Yehuda approached him.”

We are Jews because we thank G-d for everything we have, however big or small. A Jew admits that everything comes from G-d. That is how Yehuda — the Jewish People — are able to approach, to come close to G-d.

“And Yehuda approached Him.”

The job of the Jewish people in this world is quite literally to be “G-d's witnesses.” (Not to be confused with Brand X who would also like to claim this job as their own). The job of the Jewish People is to testify by the way we live our lives that there is a G-d in the world. As it states in the prophetic writings: “*You are My witnesses.*”

So if our job is to be the Witnesses, why are we called the Thankers, or the Admitters?

The foundation of all belief in G-d is to admit that life is one gigantic gift. If a person doesn't feel that he was given anything, he will never look for G-d, he will never look further than his own nose.

If I sensitize myself to the gift, I will sensitize myself to the Giver.

ETHICS of the FATHERS

“A wise man does not speak before one who is wiser than he, and does not interrupt the words of another.”

When involved in a debate with someone, a wise man waits until the other person has completed all that he has to say, and only

then does he respond. He never interrupts the other's words, which would make him become confused and prevent him from properly expressing himself. A wise man, after all, is prepared to concede to the truth no matter who it comes from.

It is also wrongful behavior to insult a study partner or student by interrupting him, as if to say that there is no value to his words. Nothing but arrogance can explain such behavior.

Response Line

Immunity in the Jewish Community

Jeff Levin wrote:

Are we required to immunize our children? Since the scientific knowledge is not 100% accurate and there is ample proof that vaccines can in fact damage children permanently and sometimes even cause death ... are we allowed to vaccinate children?

Dear Jeff,

Our Sages teach that in medical matters we should rely on the experts in each generation. Today, there are differences of opinion among doctors concerning which immunizations are helpful, safe or advisable to receive. Therefore, as with any medical issue, you are required to find a doctor with sufficient expertise in the subject such that his opinion may be relied upon.

There's no blanket answer concerning all vaccines, but certainly many childhood diseases have been practically eliminated or reduced since their

introduction. Smallpox, for example, once a great killer of children, is today extremely rare. On the other hand, some vaccinations are of highly questionable value. Find a doctor whom you trust to help select the proper immunizations for your children, and pray that G-d should only grant health and long life to you and your family.

Yahoo!

Email@Withheld wrote:

Could you please explain the “yahu” ending on many names. In our English Scripture we have the name Elijah but I see it spelled Eliyahu in Jewish texts. Many other names have the same ending. I understand the “Jah” refers to the name of G-d. But please explain the “yahu” spelling.

Dear Email@Withheld,

“Yahu” is the original Hebrew ending of many Hebrew names. For instance, Elijah is Eliyahu, Isaiah is Yeshayahu (my son's name). Yahu is a short term used as the name of G-d, as it is spelled with the first three letters of the Holy Name. For example, Eliyahu means My G-d (Eli) is called Yahu; the name Shemaryahu means “my guard” is Yahu.