



Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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Light Insight

Silent Broadcast

Advertising is the touchstone of contemporary society. The art of advertising is not to sell a product, it is to sell to people a perception of themselves which will result from buying the product. Maybe the little blue stripes will keep your teeth looking brighter. Maybe they won't. What sells the product however, is not the promise of brighter teeth, it is the lifestyle of people who have brighter teeth. As we all know, people with brighter teeth are never unhappy. They never feel tired. They flit effortlessly from one party to another. They jet-set across the world without a bank manager or a mortgage in sight. And all for

the price of a tube of toothpaste. Now that's what I call value for money!

In an age where illusion has become reality, where people send wreaths to TV stations when soap-operas stars "die" and are written out of the script, selling the Brooklyn Bridge has never been easier. All you need is a lot of money. And airtime.

The truth, however, sells itself. It doesn't need to be trumpeted to the skies. Nothing is more infectious than the truth.

There is a Jew who sits in a most frugal apartment in Jerusalem. He has never made any television appearances. He has never been interviewed on any chat show. No-one has ever advertised him. And yet the

Jewish world beats a path to his door when it needs a decision in a matter of Jewish law. His status and fame come entirely from his piety, plus the fact that, in most areas of Judaism, he knows the law better than anyone else. And everyone else knows it.

In the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the *ketoret* — the service of burning the incense — was performed away from public eyes, in private. Yet its scent could be detected as far away as Jericho, over twenty miles away.

When a person puts all his effort into living correctly, in accordance with the truth of the Torah, then, even though he may not broadcast his virtues, the nation will seek him out. His life may be a quiet understatement, but his actions will radiate inner purity and holiness like a beacon.

LOVE of the LAND

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

Ein Charod

When Gideon rallied an army of 32,000 men to fend off a Midian-led invasion, he was commanded by G-d to greatly reduce the number of his soldiers. With a small army

there would be no possibility of thinking mistakenly that the Divinely orchestrated Israelite victory was due to their military might. The selection process described in Judges (7:1-7) took place at the spring called Ein Charod, and Gideon's tiny remaining force of 300 won a miraculous victory.

It was at this very spring that the Mongol invasion of the Middle East was stopped in 1260 by the Mamluk army of Egypt.

In 1927 Kibbutz Ein Charod established its home near this historical site. The kibbutz prospered until ideological differences that swept the Israeli socialist kibbutzim split the kibbutz into two communities in 1953.

Response Line

Who is a Goof?

Ed Radonsky wrote:

What is the “guff,” or is there such a term in Jewish history or tradition? I saw a video entitled “The Seventh Sign” and it mentioned the “guff” in relation to the Hall of Souls. I want to know if it is purely fiction or not. Thank you.

Dear Ed,

The “guff” is a term the Talmud uses to refer to the repository of all unborn souls. Literally, the word “guff” means “body.”

The Talmud says, “The Son of David (Mashiach) will not arrive until there’s no more ‘soul’ in the ‘body.’ ” This means that there are a certain number of souls in heaven waiting to be born. Until they are born, they wait in a heavenly repository called “the body.” The Mashiach won’t arrive until every single one of these souls has been born into the physical world.

This teaches us that each and every person is important and has a unique role which only they, with their unique soul, can fulfill. Even a newborn baby brings the Mashiach closer simply by being born.

Keeping Kosher in Kosherland

David Waxman wrote:

I was on Malchei Yisrael street in Jerusalem last Friday shopping for kugel and salads for Shabbos.

I found two deli’s that had what I wanted. Neither of these places had a certificate of kashrut. In one place, the clerk told me that all of the ingredients had the kosher certification of the Rabbinical court. Both of these places were filled with customers who looked quite observant. Thus, it seems that people are relying on strength of reputation for the kashrut of these establishments. Put another way, “everyone eats there.” Is that enough? Does it make a difference how religious the neighborhood is? Does it matter if you are a local resident and know the proprietors?

Dear David Waxman,

Certainly if you know the proprietor personally as a knowledgeable, G-d-fearing Jew, you may eat there. Furthermore, if you don’t know the owner personally, but the owner has a reputation of reliability among knowledgeable, observant Jews, then you may rely on that (provided you have no evidence to the contrary).

The simple fact that a store is in a religious neighborhood, however, is not an indication that its kashrut can be relied upon.

Which reminds me of a story: A woman once entered a deli and asked to see the kashrut certificate.

“Don’t worry about it!” said the man behind the counter.

“But how do I know if it’s kosher?” she asked.

The man pointed to a black-and-white photo hanging on the wall. “You see that?” he said, gesturing to the angelic face of an old man engrossed in Talmud study. “That was my father!”

“Look,” said the woman, “If *he* was behind the counter and *your* picture was on the wall — I wouldn’t ask for the kashrut certificate.”