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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE SIN OF THE CHEESE DANISH

"An Ammoni or Moavi may not enter the congregation of Hashem; even to their tenth generation they may not enter into the congregation of Hashem forever. The reason is that they did not come out to meet you with bread and water on the way, when you were leaving Egypt."

(23:4-5)

What was so terrible about Ammon and Moav not coming out to meet the *Bnei Yisrael* with bread and water on their way out of Egypt?

Just because they didn't rush out to meet the Jewish People with "cheese Danish and coffee?" Is that such a terrible sin?

Even an Egyptian may convert, and, after three generations, marry a Jew. And their ancestors used Jewish children for bricks in their palaces and mausoleums! Just because of a lack of hospitality, an Ammoni and a Moavi can *never* join the Jewish people?

The reason is that the Ammoni and the Moavi nations owe their very existence to the Jews. For it was Avraham Avinu — the father of the Jewish People — who rescued Lot from being killed when Sodom was destroyed. Lot was the father of Ammon and Moav. Were it not for Avraham, there would never have been an Ammoni or Moavi People. When the people of Ammon and Moav didn't come out to greet the Jewish People, the descendants of Avraham, they showed the essence of their character — lack of gratitude.

Ingratitude cannot be allowed to infiltrate the Jewish People, because to give thanks — to admit that one is beholden — is the essence of being Jewish. The word Yehudi is from the root to give thanks, to be grateful.

When looking for a spouse, this can be a yardstick for us: If chronic ingrati-

tude makes a person unfit as a marriage partner, then the greatest 'catch' is someone who is always grateful.

It is impossible to make an ingrate happy. But someone who is always grateful, who sees everything as a gift — that's the easiest person in the world to make happy.

That's the ideal spouse.

"Intellect that is devoid of emotional conviction leads to cynicism and hedonism."

ONLY CONNECT

"Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way when you were leaving Egypt, that he happened upon you upon the way, and he struck those of you who were hindmost...." (25:18)

The head and the heart are like two different people. A concept can be as clear as daylight to the mind, but if we don't send it down the 'information super-highway' to the heart, it's as though two different people are inhabiting the same body.

Amalek is the arch-enemy of the Jewish People. He is a master of ambush. He lies in wait along the highway between the head and the heart. His intent: To kidnap the idea on the way to its destination — to the place

where it will be crystallized into conviction — the heart.

Why does the Torah have to tell us here "that he happened upon you upon the way?" Upon which "way?"

The way from the head to the heart.

Intellect that is devoid of emotional conviction leads to cynicism and hedonism. Amalek's two great protégés.

As E.M. Forster once put it: "Only connect the prose and the passion..." Only connect the head and the heart, and Man will reach his true vocation, offering his mind on the altar of the heart to his Maker.

GMNG IT ALL AWAY

"When a camp goes out against your enemies" (23:10)

Look around. We have a genuine claim to the Land of Israel. And yet all our valid arguments sound like rhetoric and propaganda. And our enemies — with claims as tenuous as thread, steal the sympathy of the world — usurping the moral high-ground. And every day Jewish blood is spilled. Jewish blood is still cheap. Why is this all happening? Why, in spite of having perhaps the best armed forces in the world are we giving back land to people we defeated thirty years ago? Look around. Do you see unity amongst the Jewish People? Do you see love and tolerance?

It is only when we go out as "a camp" — united as one — "against your enemies" — that we succeed. But while sinas chinam — baseless hatred — rules in our camp, we will be forced to give and give and give...

Sources:

The Sin Of The Cheese Danish -Ramban, Rabbi Moshe Carlebach Only Connect - Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram in the name of Rabbi Yosef Tzeinvort

Giving It All Away - Sifri and Mayana shel Torah

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Parsha Overview

he Torah describes the only permissible way that a woman captured in battle may be married. In a case where a man is married to two wives, one of whom he hates, and she gives birth to the firstborn son, this son's right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father's desire to give this to the children of the favored wife. The penalty for a wayward and rebellious son who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous human being is death by stoning. The body of a hanged man must not be left on the gallows overnight — as it was the dwelling place of the soul which is holy, it too has become holy. A person finding lost property has a responsibility to track down the owner and return it. Men are forbidden from wearing women's clothing

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and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs; rather the mother must be sent away first. A fence must be built around the roof of a house to prevent people from falling. It is forbidden to plant a field with a mixture of seeds: or to plow using an ox and a donkey together; or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads (tzitzis) on its corners. Laws and penalties in regard to sexual offenses are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. If as a result of the battle a slave escapes, he must be freed and not returned to his master. Promiscuity is prohibited to men and women alike. Taking any kind of interest for loaning money to a lew is forbidden. Bnei Yisrael are not to make vows even in a good cause. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting, but not take it home with him. Divorce and remarriage are legislated. A new husband is exempted from the army and stays at home the first year to make his wife happy until the relationship is cemented. Collateral on a loan may not include tools of labor for this may prevent the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease of Tzara'as is forbidden. Even if a loan is overdue, the creditor must return the debtor's collateral every day if the debtor needs it. Workers must be paid immediately. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, proselytes and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court has the right to impose the punishment of lashes. An ox must not be muzzled in its threshing, but be allowed to eat while it works. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother's widow if there were no children from that marriage. Weights and measures must be honest. The Parsha concludes with the mitzvah to wipe out the name of Amalek, for in spite of knowing all that happened in Egypt, they ambushed the Jewish People after the Exodus.

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FATHERLY ADVICE

Tidbits From the 'Ethics of the Fathers' Traditionally Studied on Summer Sabbaths

"How fortunate is she who gave birth to him."

• Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's praise of his disciple, Rabbi Yehoshua, Avos 2:8

abbi Yehoshua's mother was responsible for his becoming a great sage. When she was expecting, she visited all the houses of prayer and study in her city, imploring the rabbis to pray that the child to be born would become a scholar. From the day her son was born she did not remove his crib from the Beis Midrash so that no

sound but the words of Torah should enter his ears.

Rabbi Yehoshua's mother took extraordinary measures to achieve an extraordinary goal for her son. But all Jewish mothers throughout the centuries have followed her example in modified form, utilizing both prayer and environment to achieve the best for their children.

This issue is dedicated in the memory of Mr. Isadore Kaplan, obm לע"ג ר' ישראל אייזיק בן ר' שכנא הכהן ז"ל ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A?

- I. The captive woman must change out of her 'captivity garment.' Why?
- 2. How do a first-born and his brother split three equal portions of land inherited from their father?
- 3. What does a ben sorer u'moreh (wayward and rebellious son) do to incur the death penalty?
- 4. What will become of a ben sorer u'moreh if his parents don't bring him to court?
- 5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
- 6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
- 7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of 'sending away the mother-bird' with the mitzvah of making a railing?
- 8. When is it permitted to wear wool and linen?
- Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
- 10. Why is it worse to cause someone to sin than to kill him?
- II. If one charges interest from his fellow Jew, how many

- commandments has he transgressed?
- 12. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
- 13. What type of object may one not take as security for a loan?
- 14. When is a kidnapper guilty of a capital offense?
- 15. "Remember what Hashem did to Miriam (24:9)." To what event does the Torah refer?
- 16. "Fathers will not be put to death because of their sons...." What does this mean?
- 17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost the money receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
- 18. Two people in this week's Parsha are required to speak in Lashon Hakodesh. Who are they?
- 19. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?
- 20. Which of the Jewish People were subject to attack by Amalek?

BONUS QUESTION?

"When a person will have a wayward and rebellious son... he gorges himself with food and guzzles wine... he shall die... (21:18-21)" The wayward son has done nothing to incur the death penalty, yet the Torah commands that he be executed in order to avert his inevitable end: a life of addiction and, ultimately, murder. From the incident involving Yishmael, however, the Talmud derives that Hashem punishes solely for evil performed in the past, and does not take into account future bad deeds (Bereishis 21:18, Rosh Hashana 16b). Resolve this seeming contradiction.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"He must recognize the bechor (firstborn), to give him a double portion..." (21: 17) The word "firstborn" — bechor — is spelled "beis, chaf, reish." Each of these letters has a numerical value **double** that of the letter that precedes it in the Hebrew alphabet. This hints that the bechor (firstborn) receives a double portion of inheritance. *(beis, chaf, reish = 2, 20, 200. The preceding letters, alef, yud, koof = 1, 10, 100)

• Vilna Gaon - thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane

Haftorah: Yishayahu 54:1-10

TORAH AND KINDNESS

"...and My kindness shall not be removed from you..." (60:10)

he words "shall not be removed" appear twice in our tradition. Once here, and once in Yehoshua 1:5 — "This book of the Torah shall not be removed from your mouth." It is the merit of learning the Torah — its not being removed from our mouths — that gives us the merit that "My kindness shall not be removed from you."

REASONS TO SING

"Sing out O barren one, who has not given birth..." (54:1)

he Talmud asks a question about this verse: Because she hasn't given birth, she should sing? Rather (this is the meaning) — 'Sing, Congregation of Yisrael, who is like a barren woman, because she has not given birth to children (who will be sent) to Gehinom. (Berachos 11)

Why does the Talmud ask its question based on the phrase "because she hasn't given birth, she should sing?" Surely the question should have been asked on the first phrase — i.e., "Because she's barren, she should sing?"

The Mothers of the Jewish People, Sarah, Rivka and Rachel,

were 'barren' because "Hashem desires the prayers of the righteous." (Yevamos 64) and He withheld progeny from them.

However, they are called 'barren' because after all was said and done, it was as a result of their prayers that they eventually conceived and gave birth to children. At that point it was evident that they weren't barren at all, rather that Hashem had wanted their prayers and had therefore withheld children from them.

However, if they had not merited children even after they had prayed, one couldn't say that their 'infertility' was because Hashem desired their prayers.

Therefore the Talmud couldn't have asked its question on the phrase "because she's barren, she should sing?" For it could well be that her infertility is only a sign that Hashem desires her prayers. She herself has cause to sing, because her infertility is a sign that she is a very elevated and righteous soul.

However, if "she has not given birth" — and this, even after all her prayers — then the question becomes highly relevant — "because she hasn't given birth, she should sing?" What cause does she have for singing?

It is to this question that the Talmud answers "Rather, sing, Congregation of Yisrael, who is like a barren woman, who should sing because she has not given birth to children who will be sent to Gehinom."

• Rabbi Mahari Hakohen, zt"l, in Mayana shel Torah

WEEKLY DAF

NIDDAH 53 - 59

LOST AND FOUND

A dead rodent found in a courtyard not only contaminates whatever it comes into contact with, but also creates a problem concerning any items of purity which were handled in that area. Since we are not aware how long this contaminating agent has been there, we must assume the possibility that any items handled there since the area was last cleaned have contracted ritual impurity through contact with the rodent.

A question is raised by the Talmud in regard to this rule of the Mishna as to whether the cutoff point of last cleaning is based on the assessment that whoever cleaned the courtyard would have checked to see if there was any rodent there, or whether we assume that even if no conscious search was made, any rodent there would have been removed in the cleaning process. The ramifications of this question are: I) If the person cleaning the courtyard declares that he did not search for rodents; and 2) If the rodent is presently discovered in a hole which would not have been reached in a regular cleaning process. The conclusion of the Talmud is that we assume the cleaner inspected for rodents. If he declares that he did not search for rodents, then we consider the items handled there to be impure even beyond the date of the cleaning, but if he declares that he did inspect for rodents we assume he would have even discovered one in a hole.

Tosefos calls attention to a rule stated in Mesechta Pesachim (7a) that money found in the streets of Jerusalem during the seasons of the Festivals is assumed to be from sacred funds used to redeem the Ma'aser Sheini tithes which were brought by their owners to Jerusalem for purchasing sacrificial animals whose flesh would be

enjoyed during the holiday. But if this money was found during the rest of the year, when most of the money in the city has no sacred character, we assume that this lost money was not from Ma'aser Sheini redemption funds. Rabbi Zeira explains that we are not concerned that this money might have been lost during the Festival period when Ma'aser Sheini funds proliferate, because the streets of Jerusalem were cleaned daily and such funds would long have been removed in the cleaning process.

This assumption that something in the street would have been removed seems to run counter to the conclusion of our Talmudic section which assumes this only if a conscious search is made. One of the resolutions offered by Tosefos is that our assumption is that when the streets of Jerusalem are being cleaned, the cleaners make sure to look for any money that might be lying around.

• Niddah 56b

Sages In The Vaults Of Rome

In regard to a law mentioned in the Mishna about the status of a blood spot found on a woman's dress which she had removed and used as a blanket, we find the following by Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Yossi: "I issued a ruling on this matter when I was in Rome, and when I returned to the Sages in the south of Eretz Yisrael they told me that I had ruled correctly."

But what was a Sage from Eretz Yisrael doing in Rome?

For the answer to this we must refer to the story told (Mesechta Me'ilah 17b) about a trip to Rome made by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Yossi as representatives of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael. The Roman rulers of the Holy Land had issued a

decree forbidding Jews to observe the laws of the Shabbos, circumcision and family purity. After an initial attempt by Rabbi Reuven ben Istroble, posing as a Roman nobleman, failed to persuade the Romans after they discovered his identity, it was decided to send these two outstanding Sages to Rome in an effort to abolish this decree.

On the way to Rome they were met by a demon named Ben Tamalion who offered to assist them in their mission. Rabbi Shimon's response was to weepingly reflect on the fact that his ancestor's maidservant, Hagar, was visited by three angels (Bereishis 16:7-11) while he did not merit even one angel, only a demon. "Let the miracle happen through any means," he decided and invited Ben Tamalion to come along.

When they reached the emperor's palace in Rome the demon entered into the body of the emperor's daughter, who began to hysterically cry out in her madness for Rabbi Shimon to be brought to her. When he came before her, he commanded "Exit, ben Tamalion, exit, Ben Tamalion!"

The demon departed and the grateful emperor invited the Sages to enter the treasure vaults of Rome and to take whatever they wished. There they found the document containing the repressive decree and they destroyed it.

It was in regard to this visit in the Roman vaults that Rabbi Elazar once reported that he had seen the paroches curtain which separated the heichal sanctuary from the kodshei kodeshim inner sanctum in the Beis Hamikdash before the Romans destroyed it. It had on it some drops of blood from the blood of the Yom Kippur sacrifices. It was apparently during this visit that he also issued the aforementioned ruling.

• Niddah 58a

ASK the RABBI

JEWISH MOURNING

Tom Toale <ttoale@aol.com>
Langhorne, Pennsylvania wrote:

The brother of two of my co-workers died yesterday. The funeral is at 1:30 Sunday. Is it appropriate for me (a Christian) to attend? Also, I'd like to send a basket of fruits and nuts. The sister (who we've worked with the longest) is married, while the brother still lives with the parents (whom I've never met). Can I send the basket to the sister? Where do I get such a basket? (they live in northern New Jersey). Also, is it appropriate for her Christian co-workers to visit during shiva?

Dear Tom Toale,

I think that it would be very appropriate for you to attend the funeral. Any gesture that shows you care for the mourners will help them through this traumatic time.

The same is true regarding the shiva — the seven day mourning period. However, it's generally accepted that only family and close friends visit during the first three days.

Many people bring food to the mourners, because mourners don't engage in activities, such as cooking, which detract from their sense of mourning. Obviously, the food should be kosher. I suggest you look in the Yellow Pages for the closest store that can put together a kosher basket of fruits and nuts.

Cain's Mark

Yaacov <jsolomon@intouch.bc.ca> from Abbotsford, BC, Canada wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is there any reference — Talmudic or otherwise — that tells us what

the mark was that Hashem placed upon Cain to protect him (Genesis 4:15)?

Dear Yaakov,

Here are a number of opinions from Midrashic sources:

- Cain became a leper so people would avoid him.
- G-d gave him a dog to guard him.
- A horn grew out of his forehead for protection.
- •G-d engraved a letter of His Name on Cain's forehead. This would remind people that G-d commanded not to kill him.

Sources:

- Bereishis Rabbah 22:28, Tifferet Tziyon
- Midrash Aggadah 4:15

Well, I'll be a Nazarite!

Bob Lee <TorahLuver@aol.com> from Jacksonville, Florida wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Can a man or woman take a Nazarite vow in these days? There is no Temple, but that hasn't stopped the Hebrew people from being Hebrew. So is there a way to take the vow of the Nazarite for a short period of time, or, because there is no Temple, could a man or woman take the vow and then keep it until the Temple is rebuilt? And may there be a Temple soon! Your opinions would be a blessing! Thanks!

Dear Bob Lee,

If a person vows to become a Nazarite, he or she would indeed be obligated in all the commandments pertaining to a Nazarite. For example, a Nazarite may not drink wine or eat any grape products, cut his hair, or come in contact with a dead body.

The Nazarite vow terminates by bringing offerings to the Temple. Since today there is no Temple, a Nazarite would remain a Nazarite forever. Rabbi Dovid Cohen, zatzal (father of the current Chief Rabbi of Haifa) took a Nazarite vow, and hence remained one his whole life. He was exceptional in this regard, and became known as the 'The Nazir.'

However, Rabbi Cohen was a renowned tzaddik — a very righteous person — in all areas of Jewish conduct, and he was a great Torah scholar. A person shouldn't even consider becoming a Nazarite unless he is of similar ilk. Taking a Nazarite vow smacks of haughtiness. Furthermore, it's virtually impossible to avoid all the transgressions involved. I've never heard of anybody in this generation becoming a Nazarite.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

Once upon a time, a young man came to a rabbi and asked, "Rabbi, please tell me while I stand on one foot: What is the foundation upon which the entire Torah is based?"

The Rabbi answered "Whistle till the fish comes backwards."

What did he mean?

Answer:

'Whistle' in Hebrew is "Tishrok." It is spelled "tav shin reish koof." These are the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, backwards. "The fish comes" in Hebrew is "hadag ba," spelled "hey dalet gimmel bet aleph." These are the first letters of the Hebrew alphabet, backwards. Hence, 'Whistle' till 'the fish comes,' backwards, refers to the entire Hebrew alphabet, which is the foundation of the entire Torah.

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PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

- 21:13 Because it is a beautiful garment which she wears for immoral purposes.
- 2. 21:17 The firstborn gets two portions and his brother gets one.
- 3. 21:18 Stealing, and eating meat and wine gluttonously.
- 21:22 He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
- 5. 22:2 Sell it, and save the money until you find the owner.
- 6. 22:5 It leads to immorality.
- 7. 22:8 To teach that one mitzvah leads to another.
- 8. 22:12 Wool tzitzis on a linen

- garment.
- 9. 23:8 Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
- 23:9 Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
- 23:21 Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
- 12. 24:5 To make her happy.
- 13. 24:6 Utensils used to prepare food.
- 14. 24:7 If he works the victim as a slave and sells him.
- 15. 24:9 Hashem punishing Miriam with *Tzara'as* for

- speaking Lashon Harah.
- 16. 24:15 Fathers will not be put to death based on the testimony of their sons. That is, relatives are invalid as witnesses.
- 17. 24:19 From the mitzvah to leave the 'forgotten bundle' for poor people.
- 18. 25:8 The yavam (brother-inlaw) and the yavamah (his childless brother's widow).
- 19. 25:16 "An abomination (to'e-vah) to Hashem"
- 20. 25:18 Those who lost the protection of the *ananei* hakayod due to their sins.

BONUS ANSWER!

The heavenly court does not take future bad deeds into account, but the earthly court is commanded to do so.

• Sifsei Chachamim.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

	RAMBAN		SFORNO	533	Avoiding Exploitation
21:18	Gluttony and Rebellion	21:16	The Birthright	545	Compassion
21:22	Hanging	21:23	Hanging	550	Unnatural Combinations
22:6	Reason for Mitzvos	22:7	Torah Ecology	552	Marriage
23:10	Wartime Morality	23:20	Kindliness	561	Ingratitude
23:20	Usury		SEFER HACHINUCH	579	Divorce
24:9	Lashon Harah		(In this Parsha there are	599	Filial Responsibility
25:17	Remembering Amalek	27 Positive Commandments and			. ,
	· ·	4	17 Negative Commandments)		

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