

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### JOURNEY

*“These are the journeys of the Children of Israel” (33:1)*

**C**an you remember what you did on a certain Tuesday, five years ago? How about a particular day last year? How about last month?

When our lives follow a routine, it becomes very difficult to separate one day from the next. The past seems to spread back behind us like an almost endless gray carpet. Here and there, however, landmarks protrude above the humdrum scenery. A marriage, a birth, a death, a golden wedding. The same is true when we travel. We remember clearly the five minutes we spent at Niagara Falls as though it were yesterday, although it happened ten years ago. We still smell the rain of a tropical rainstorm on Fiji, the fumes of a childhood traffic-jam on the way to Bognor Regis. Travel makes time significant and memorable.

We talk of life being a journey. The essence of life is to journey, to move, to develop. When Hashem appeared to Avraham and told him that he would be the progenitor of a holy nation, it was with the command: *“Go to yourself.”* The essential journey is to the self, to develop the internal landscape of the soul. In order for Avraham to fulfill his potential and be the Father of the Jewish People, he had to go, to journey. Maybe it was for this reason that Hashem didn't tell him his destination. For the destination was not the essence of the journey, rather the journey itself.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah lists the 42 encampments of the Jewish People on their journey from Egypt to the Land of Israel. Every time they move camp the Torah repeats the phrase *“They journeyed from...”* Why

was it necessary to repeat this phrase with every encampment? Obviously, if they camped in different place they must have journeyed from the previous place.

The Jewish People's journey through the desert was a spiritual rite of passage between the decadence of Egypt and the land flowing with the milk and honey of holiness. It's easier to take the Jew out of Egypt than Egypt out of the Jew. It took 41 separate spiritual journeys to impact on the collective spiritual psyche of the Jewish People and ready them to enter the Promised Land.

*“...when Hashem redeems His people, there will be no human imperfection in the redemption, and thus it will be complete and eternal.”*

### SELF-MADE MAN

*“A thousand from a tribe, a thousand from a tribe” (31:4)*

**“P**eople don't know what it is to work these days. When I was a kid I used to get up every morning at 4:30, rain or shine. I'm a self-made man, all right.”

More elusive than the Loch Ness Monster or the Yeti is a species called the Self-Made Man. Reports of his existence are very frequent, but to date he has never been positively identified. All the thousands of reported sightings have turned out to be mistaken wishful thinking.

Let's take a look at a typical reported sighting:

Morris is one of the biggest corporate stock whizzes on Wall Street. He is president of Huge and Wealthy International Inc., a top Fortune 500 company. Morris gets up every morning at 4:30 and works non-stop until late at night.

But did Morris give himself this strength, this drive, or does it come from somewhere else?

The bankruptcy courts are littered with financial whizzes who had no way of knowing that the bottom would drop out of their market, despite all the genius of their planning. And even those who make it to the top like Morris, can, in a few seconds, succumb to a heart attack, and the president of Huge and Wealthy International Inc. can suddenly become a statistic in a study on heart disease.

When we're successful, it's all too easy to pat ourselves on the back and congratulate ourselves on how clever we are. In order to keep a true perspective as to where our success really comes from, we need constant reminders.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us that for every thousand soldiers that went out to fight for the Jewish People, another thousand stayed behind and prayed for them. For each soldier at the front, there was another “soldier” responsible to pray for his counterpart.

You might think that this was to

*continued on page three*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### MATOS

Moshe teaches the rules and restrictions governing oaths and vows — especially the role of a husband or father in either upholding or annulling a vow. *Bnei Yisrael* war against *Midian*. They kill the five Midianite kings, all the males, and *Bilaam*. Moshe is upset that women were taken captive, because they were catalysts for the immoral behavior of the Jewish People. He rebukes the officers. The spoils of war are counted and apportioned. The commanding officers report to Moshe that there was not one casualty among *Bnei Yisrael*. They bring an offering which is taken by Moshe and Elazar and placed in the *Ohel Mo'ed* (Tent of Meeting). The Tribes of Gad and Reuven, who own large quantities of livestock, petition Moshe to remain east of the Jordan and not enter the Land of Israel. They explain that the land east of the Jordan is quite suitable grazing land for their livestock. Moshe's initial response is that this request will discourage the rest of *Bnei Yisrael*, and that it is akin to the sin of the spies. They assure Moshe that they will first help conquer Israel, and only then will they go back to their homes on the

eastern side of the Jordan River. Moshe grants their request on condition that they uphold their part of the deal.

### MASEI

The Torah names all 42 encampments of *Bnei Yisrael* on their 40-year journey from the Exodus to the crossing of the Jordan river into *Eretz Yisrael*. Hashem commands *Bnei Yisrael* to drive out the Canaanites from *Eretz Yisrael* and to demolish every vestige of their idolatry. *Bnei Yisrael* are warned that if they fail to rid the land completely of the Canaanites, those who remain will be "pins in their eyes and thorns in their sides." The boundaries of the Land of Israel are defined, and the tribes are commanded to set aside 48 cities for the *levi'im*, who do not receive a regular portion in the division of the Land. Cities of refuge are to be established: Someone who murders unintentionally may flee there. The daughters of Tzafchad marry members of their tribe so that their inheritance will stay in their own tribe. Thus ends the Book of Bamidbar/Numbers, the fourth of the Books of The Torah.

## HAFTORAH: YIRMIYAHU 2:4-28 & 3:4

### MUDDY WATERS

**"For my people have perpetrated two evils: Me have they forsaken, the source of living waters; to dig themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." (2:13)**

In this, the second Haftorah of the "three (haftorahs) of affliction," the prophet speaks out, not only against Israel's disloyalty to Hashem who saved them from slavery, but also against the disloyalty to the Torah which has been exchanged for the empty vanities of foreign culture. Our Sages teach us that Hashem lamented: "If they had forsaken only Me, but had

kept the Torah, its spiritual light would have influenced them to return to the path of righteousness." However the Jewish People, seduced by the superficial glitter of the foreign ideologies, abandon the Torah, their only lifeline, and imbibe the brackish water of false ideas which constantly change and contradict themselves. From this, only tragedy and exile can ensue.

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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by  
**OHR SOMAYACH**  
TANENBAUM COLLEGE  
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

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Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications  
**Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director**

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PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529  
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## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### THE OTHER JERUSALEM

"A built up Jerusalem, like a city joined together" (*Tehillim* 122:3).

This description of Jerusalem led Rabbi Yochanan to conclude that there is a Jerusalem above just as there is a Jerusalem below. "Joined together," explains Rashi, implies that the devastated Jerusalem visible to us will eventually be built up like another city which is its twin. This suggests that there is another Jerusalem — and where can it be

located, if not in Heaven!

*Rashba* (Rabbi Shlomo Ben Aderes, 13th century Spanish commentator) adds that not only Jerusalem and the *Beis Hamikdash* are physical representations of lofty spiritual concepts, but all of *Eretz Yisrael* as well. This is why it is called "The Land of life" and why there are *mitzvos* which can be fulfilled only in this land where one has a full sense of having a G-d.

• *Mesechta Ta'anis 5a*



give those at the front added protection. *The real reason, however, was that those who were fighting shouldn't be under any illusion as to where their success came from.* Not by the strength and the might of their own hand were they victorious in battle; rather their success — like all success — came from Hashem, the maker of the “Self-Made” Man.

## I'M NOT ME

**“If a man takes a vow to Hashem or swears an oath to establish a prohibition on himself.” (30:3)**

**T**eshuva (return) is a miracle. How can someone who has transgressed, eradicate what has been? For *teshuvah* doesn't just gain forgiveness for our errors, it rewrites history. It removes all scars of sin.

How can this be? After all, what was done was done. It happened. How can *teshuvah* re-weave the very fabric of reality?

Imagine the following: It's Shabbos. A Jew turns on a light. One scenario. But three possible realities:

Reality number one: Man to second man “Don't turn the light on! It's Shabbos! You're transgressing a capital offense! Don't touch that switch!” Second man to first man. “I know it's Shabbos. I know it's a capital offense

and I'm still going to do it. Watch me!” Click.

Second reality: “Wow! I can't believe I just did that! I turned the light on. I completely forgot it was Shabbos!”

Third reality: “And the next thing I knew, I fell back and my arm hit the light switch and the light went on!”

Shabbos. A Jew turns on a light. One scenario. Three different realities.

When we do *teshuvah*, we are saying it wasn't really us who did the transgression. That person may have the same eyes, nose and hair as me. He may be my doppelgänger. He may even answer to my name. But that's not me! I'm a different person. I did *teshuvah*.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah teaches us about the binding nature of a *neder*, a vow. A *neder* is binding. It gives a person the ability to do something that heretofore only G-d could do: To create a new halachic status, a new reality.

If a *neder* alters the reality of the world, then how can there exist the ability to nullify a *neder*? That's like re-weaving the world? The answer is that if a person had known certain information at the time of making the *neder*, he would never have accepted the vow upon himself. He is saying: “The person who made that *neder* is not really me.”

## LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO DAY

**“These are the journeys of the Children of Israel, who went forth from the land of Egypt ... at the hand of Moshe and Aharon.” (33:1)**

**N**othing that the hand of man creates can endure for eternity. Statues crumble; poetry is forgotten. Nothing lasts forever.

For this reason, the redemption from Egypt was not final, for it came “at the hand of Moshe and Aharon.” For all their lofty spiritual height, they were no more than flesh and blood.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the Jewish People would be subject to other exiles, since their Exodus from Egypt was mortal and this-worldly, and thus incomplete.

“These are the journeys of the Children of Israel” — these are the journeys of exile that the Children of Israel will undergo throughout the long night of history because “they went forth from the land of Egypt ... at the hand of Moshe and Aharon.” In the future, however, when Hashem redeems His people, there will be no human imperfection in the redemption, and thus it will be complete and eternal.

Sources:

- **Journey** - The Malbim, heard from Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky
- **Self-Made Man** - based on Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein heard from Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram
- **I'm Not Me** - heard from Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky
- **Long Night's Journey into Day** - Kesones Ohr in *Mayana shel Torah*

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

When listing the name of the *nasi* (prince) of each tribe, three tribes — Yehudah, Binyamin and Shimon — do not have the word *nasi* mentioned. Rav Nissim Gaon explains that in the case of Yehudah, everybody knew that Calev deserved to be the *nasi* due to his actions during the episode of the spies. The tribe of Shimon did not deserve a *nasi*, due to the actions of Zimri (25:14). The *nasi* for Binyamin was Eldad, who had prophesied in the camp (*Bamidbar 11:26*), and being a prophet an even higher spiritual level than being a *nasi*.

• Sifsei Tzadikim

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### MATOS

#### Ramban

30:16	Responsibility
31:2,6	Vengeance
31:23	Cleansing Vessels
31:36	Miracle of the Spoils
31:49	Jewish Victory
32:33	Menashe's Inheritance
32:41	Yair's Ancestry

#### Sforno

31:15	The Meaning of Silence
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#### MASEI

#### Ramban

33:53	The Land
35:14	Cities of Refuge
35:29	The Sanhedrin

#### Kli Yakar

33:49	The Greater Loss
35:6	Temporary Dweller

#### Sefer Hachinuch

408	Cities of the Levi'im
409	Capital Punishment
410	Exile

#### Sforno

33:1	The Merit of the Journeys
36:4	The Inheritance of Daughters
36:12	The Husbands of the Daughters of Tzafchad

## WEEKLY DAF

ERUVIN 77 - 83

### THE WHOLE STORY

What is the connection between an *eruv* and a Shabbos meal? Aside from the fact that both of them are related to the laws of the Sabbath they share a particular law connected to the wholeness of a loaf of bread.

The bread used for *eruvei chatzeros* to allow the residents of different houses in a courtyard to carry from their individual homes into the common courtyard must be a whole one. Each household must contribute a whole loaf of bread (or contribute flour to the baking of a common complete loaf according to some authorities) even if it is a small one, but not a partial loaf even if it is very large (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 366:6).

At each of the Shabbos meals we are required to “break bread” over two complete loaves (for which *challahs* are traditionally used). Even in the weekdays it is preferable to make the blessing of “*hamotzi*” over a complete loaf (*ibid.* 274:1 and 168:1-2).

What if a loaf designated for one of the aforementioned purposes is no longer whole because a part of it broke off?

Rabbi Chisda suggests an ingenious solution. Take a toothpick and stick it into both parts of the loaf and thus “sew” them together. If this succeeds in creating the appearance of a whole loaf because the “seam” is not readily recognizable, then the loaf is considered whole.

Why is *appearance* alone sufficient when in reality only a superficial wholeness exists?

Regarding *eruv*, the insistence on a whole loaf is based on the consideration our Sages give to neighborly relations. If one household could contribute a partial loaf, his neighbor might resent the fact that he did not give a whole loaf like himself and this might lead to discord within the community. Once the loaf has the appearance of a whole loaf this danger no longer exists.

Regarding the whole loaf for the Shabbos meal, the objective of honoring the holy day with two whole loaves (or the blessing of “*hamotzi*” on the single whole loaf in the weekdays) is also achieved if the loaf has the dignified appearance of wholeness.

• *Eruvin* 81a

### ROOM FOR MORE

How much food constitutes a meal? This question arises regarding the law of *eruvei techumin*. On Shabbos, a Jew may not walk more than two thousand *amos* (approximately a kilometer) beyond the physical limits of his community unless he makes an *eruv* within that distance. This enables him to walk two thousand *amos* from the location of the *eruv*.

The *eruv* is made by placing enough food for two meals at a designated location before Shabbos, thus establishing that spot as his virtual home for that Shabbos.

How much bread (or other food detailed in *Orach Chaim* 286:5-6) constitutes two meals is a subject of debate in our *mishna*. Rabbi Meir states that the criterion for an *eruv* meal is how much one eats in a weekday meal, not how much he consumes in a Shabbos meal. Rabbi Yehuda holds the opposite — how much he eats in a Shabbos meal is what counts.

Both approaches, explains the *mishna*, are based on the fact that the requirement of an *eruv* is a rabbinic one rather than a Torah law. The Sages were therefore more lenient in their requirement. Both Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehuda aimed to designate an amount of food which would be less demanding, but they approached their undertaking from opposite angles.

On Shabbos, contends Rabbi Meir, the food is tastier than in the weekdays and a person is therefore accustomed to eating more. In order to be lenient, we must therefore establish the amount he eats in the weekdays as the standard for the *eruv*. Rabbi Yehuda, on the other hand, points out that on Shabbos a Jew eats three sumptuous meals in contrast to the weekdays, and therefore he consumes less in each of those meals than he does in a single weekday meal.

The *gemara* relates that Rabbi Yosef acted in accordance with the view of Rabbi Meir because of the common wisdom that “the stomach expands to accept tasty food.”

• *Eruvin* 82b

### BONUS QUESTION?

“This text is most unusual,” said Watstein: “And G-d spoke to Moshe saying: Avenge the vengeance of Bnei Yisrael from the Midianites; afterward you shall be gathered unto your people (i.e., die). And Moshe said to the people saying: Detach from your midst men for the army, and they shall be against Midian, to bring about the revenge of G-d against Midian. (*Bamidbar* 31, 1-3)”

“G-d commanded, Moshe acted,” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes. “What’s unusual about that?”

“Nothing!” said Watstein. “That’s exactly my question! There’s absolutely nothing unusual about it!”

“So what’s bothering you, my dear Watstein?” asked Sherlock.

“Rashi’s comment bothers me,” said Watstein. “On the verse ‘and Moshe said to the people saying...’ Rashi comments: Even though Moshe heard that his death depended on the matter, he did it with joy and didn’t delay.”

“Such selflessness,” said Sherlock.

“Yes, but where does Rashi see in the verse that Moshe acted with joy? Rashi doesn’t simply make comments unless something in the text prompts him to do so. What’s bothering Rashi?”

answer on page eight



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## PARSHA Q&A ?

### MATOS

1. Who may annul a vow?
2. When may a father annul the *nedarim* of his widowed daughter?
3. The Jewish People were commanded to attack Midian. Why were they not commanded to attack Moav?
4. The people selected to fight Midian went unwillingly. Why?
5. What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle?
6. Those who killed in the war against Midian were required to remain outside the *machaneh* (camp). To which *machaneh* is the Torah referring?
7. In addition to proper cleansing to remove traces of forbidden food, what other preparation is needed to make metallic vessels obtained from a non-Jew fit for a Jewish owner?
8. *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* said, "We will build sheep-pens here for our livestock and cities for our little ones." What was improper about this statement?
9. During the conquest of the Land, where did *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* position themselves?
10. What promise did the *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* make beyond that which Moshe required of them?

### MASEI

1. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped?
2. Why did the King of Arad feel at liberty to attack the Jewish People?
3. What was the length of the camp in the *midbar*?
4. Why does the Torah need to specify the boundaries that are to be inherited by the Jewish People?
5. What was the role of the *nesi'im* (Princes) in the division of the Land?
6. When did the three cities on the east of the Jordan begin to function as places of refuge for murderers?
7. There were six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan. Yet, on the eastern side of the Jordan, there were only two and a half tribes. Why did they need three cities?
8. In order to be judged as an intentional murderer, what type of weapon must the murderer use?
9. Why does the murderer remain in the city of refuge until the death of the *Kohen Gadol*?
10. When an ancestral field moves through inheritance from one tribe to another, what happens to the field in *yovel* (Jubilee year)?

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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.

### MATOS

1. 30:2 - Preferably, an individual who is an expert in the laws of *nedarim*. If such a person is not available then three ordinary people.
2. 30:10 - If she is widowed before she is fully married, and is less than twelve and a half years old.
3. 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav.
4. 31:5 - They knew that the death of Moshe would follow the execution of vengeance upon Midian.
5. 31:6 - The *aron* and the *tzitz*.
6. 31:19 - The *Machaneh Shechina*.
7. 31:23 - Immersion in a *mikveh*.
8. 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children.
9. 32:17 - At the head of the

troops.

10. 32:24 - Moshe required them to remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised not to return home for an additional period after the conquest while the Land was being divided among the tribes.

### MASEI

1. 33:1 - To show Hashem's love of the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During the span of the 38 years they moved only 20 times.
2. 33:40 - When Aharon died, the *ananei kavod* (clouds of glory) which protected the Jewish People departed.
3. 33:49 - Twelve *mil*.
4. 34:2 - Because there are certain *mitzvos* that apply in the Land,

but not outside the Land.

5. 34:17 - Each *nasi* represented his tribe in the division among the Tribes. He also allocated the inheritance to each family in his Tribe.
6. 35:13 - After Yehoshua separated three cities on the western side of the Jordan.
7. 35:14 - Because murderers were more numerous on the eastern side of the Jordan.
8. 35:16 - One which is capable of inflicting a lethal injury.
9. 35:25 - Because the *Kohen Gadol* causes the *Shechina* to dwell in Israel and prolongs life, and the murderer causes the *Shechina* to depart from Israel and shortens life. The murderer is not worthy to stand in the vicinity of the *Kohen Gadol*.
10. 36:4 - It remains in the possession of the new tribe.

## MOTHERS AND FATHERS

**Nathan Silberstein**  
from Los Angeles, CA  
<nsilberstein@ibm.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
What is the halachic source of matrilineal descent? Why are we set against patrilineal descent when all of our ancestors in the Torah are referred to as so and so son of so and so, referring only to the father's name?

Dear Nathan Silberstein,

In the time of the Patriarchs it appears that descent followed the father. However, the period of the Patriarchs was before the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. It was only with the revelation on Sinai that the Jewish people received their legal system. Therefore it is impossible to bring Halachic, legal proofs from the Patriarchs. Our source for Halacha is the Written and Oral Torah.

The Mishna in Tractate Kiddushin 66b states that if a child's mother is not Jewish, then the child is not Jewish.

The Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 68b, derives this Halacha from a verse in Deuteronomy 7:1-5, which also contains the prohibition against intermarriage. "When the L-rd your G-d brings you to the land that you will inherit, many nations will fall away before you; the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Prizites, the Hivites and the Jebusites... And you shall not marry with them; do not give your daughters to his sons and do not take his daughters for your sons. For he will turn your son away from me and they will worship other gods..." The Talmud points out that the verse only seems to be concerned with the son of the *Israelite woman* being turned away, "for he (the gentile)" will turn your son away. It does not seem to be concerned that "she (the gentile) will turn your son away." The implication is that the son of the Jewish woman and gentile man is still considered "your (the Jewish grandfather in this case) son,"

but in the case of a gentile woman married to a Jewish man, the child is not considered "your son" and therefore there is no concern about his turning away. This follows Rashi and Tosfot Ri Hazaken in their explanation of the Gemara.

Tosfot (ad loc. "Amar krah") offers a number of different methods of derivation from the verse, but agrees with the conclusion. This law is also found in the Mishna in Yevamot (ch. 2, 21a): "He counts as a brother in every respect unless he was the son of a maidservant or of a gentile woman."

This halacha is codified in the Code of Jewish Law, Even HaEzer 8:5, and in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Laws of Forbidden Relationships, 15:4. Maimonides states: "This is the general rule: The status of an offspring from a gentile man or from a gentile woman is the same as his mother's; we disregard the father."

Another source in the Torah is the verse in Leviticus 24:10: "the son of an Israelite woman went out — and he was the son of an Egyptian man." This person is described as being "in the midst of the community of Israel" — in other words, Jewish.

Probably the most explicit verse against patrilineal descent is in the book of Ezra 10:2-3: Some of the Jews who had returned from the exile declare, "We have trespassed against our G-d and have taken foreign wives of the people of the land. Yet, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Therefore, let us make a covenant with our G-d to put away all the wives and such as are born to them, according to the counsel of the L-rd and of those who assemble at the commandment of G-d; let it be done according to the law."

Sources are also in Midrash Rabbah, Numbers, 19, and Jerusalem Talmud, Kiddushin 3:12.

Do we ignore the father completely? Certainly not. The father is the one who determines what tribe the child is from. That is: Kohen, Levi, Yisrael. Also, in determining royalty and other leadership roles among the Jewish people we go from father to son.

## PEACE IN TRIPPLICATE - SHABBAT

**Moshe Pripas from Jerusalem**  
<pripas@netvision.net.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Three years ago my mother-in-law asked why we say "Shalom Aleichem" (Peace unto You) on Friday night three times. I gave the reason for being a "chazaka" (emphasis) but that itself wasn't satisfying. Since then I have asked lots of people and nobody ever gave me a different answer.

Dear Moshe Pripas,

The *Likutei Maharich* asks your question. He explains as you did, that repeating something three times adds emphasis. We do the same in other parts of our liturgy, such as in *kiddush levana* and the bedtime *shema*.

But I've heard another answer: The Talmud states that two angels accompany a person as he walks home from synagogue Friday night. These angels are in addition to the usual angel who accompanies him at all times. Hence, we have three angels in all. Thus we recite "Shalom Aleichem" one time for each angel.

The problem with this answer is that people are usually accompanied by two angels at all times, making four in all. This can be answered according to the Zohar, which states that not two angels but rather two *groups* of angels accompany a man on Friday night. These, in addition to the usual group of two angels which accompany the person at all times, give us three groups in all. We recite one "Shalom Aleichem" for each group. This also explains the use of the plural "aleichem" — "unto You (plural)" — as well.

Sources:

- See Tractate Menachot 65a and Rashi *ibid*.
- Tractate Shabbat 119b
- Tractate Berachot 60b, Rashi *ibid*.

## PEACE IN TRIPPLICATE - FAMILY

Name@Withheld from Mexico wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Hi! Well, I have two questions: I'm a ba'alat teshuva for almost two years and my parents are not very happy now. Because I just finished high school in a Jewish secular school here in Mexico and I think it's time to study Torah full time. I'm sure that the best place is Israel, in Jerusalem. But my parents don't want me to go there. But I want to go! What can I do? How can I get their permission? Because I don't want to go without their permission; it will be very difficult for me and also for them. And the other question is: Where can I go? Do you have a school for girls? If you do, please, I beg you to send me all the information as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Dear Name@Withheld,

It is wonderful that you want to study Torah, and to do so in Israel. Israel may definitely be the best place for you to study.

You asked: "How can I get my parents' permission?" I guess this is going to sound pretty obvious, but the only way to "get" your parents permission is for them to "give" it to you. And the only way you can possibly hope for them to give their permission is

through clear and mature communication. You need to understand clearly why they object to your going to Israel.

Are they afraid that it's not safe in Israel? Are they worried that you will not be in a supervised environment? Or are they afraid that you will like Israel and decide to live here, far away from them? Perhaps they are afraid that in Israel you will become "more religious" and therefore you won't love them as much because they are "less religious"?

Try to find out the real underlying reason they don't want you to come. If their main fear is that their "little girl" is growing up and becoming her own woman, you need to reassure them that wherever you go and whatever path you take, you will continue to love and respect them.

Is there is a Rabbi who you know and whom your parents respect? If so, perhaps your parents would be willing to get together with him and talk things over.

Do research and find out which school or schools you might wish to attend. If you have brochures and information about a school in Israel, perhaps your parents will feel better about it.

Do you want a Spanish-speaking program or an English-speaking program? I suggest the following two schools: Spanish-speaking — *Ayelet Hashachar*, Mrs. Rivka Trop -972-2-582-5036; English-speaking — *Neve Yerushalayim*, Rabbi Chalkovsky - 972-2-651-9276. If you want brochures from these schools, send me your mailing address and I will mail them to you.

**PUBLIC  
DOMAIN**  
Comments, quibbles and reactions  
concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

### Re: "An Open Book Test" (Ohrnet Shlach):

It was brought to our attention that the Rabbi in the story "An Open Book Test" (Ohrnet Shlach) was Rabbi Noach Weinberg, *shlita*.

### Re: Carrying out in a Holiday Inn (Ohrnet Shlach):

Thank you very much for your terrific publications. In Ask the Rabbi Parshas Shlach you ruled in the name of

Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, *shlita*, that it is permissible to carry inside a hotel. I want to point out that Rabbi Weiss, author of the "*Minchas Yitzchak*," forbids to carry in hotels in most cases (unless the owner lives in the hotel or that all the guests eat together). *Chazak V'amatz*.

• Eliezer Y. Glick-Cooper, *Bayit Vegan Jerusalem*

**Ohrnet Responds:** At the time of his ruling, Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg informed us that others disagree with his ruling.

### Re: Yiddle Riddle (Ohrnet Tzav):

In Yiddle Riddle for Parshas Tzav, you asked "Which four people's names in the Chumash also appear as names in the Megilla?" I found one that you missed: Tarshish (*Bereishis 10:4, Esther 1:14*).

• Yitzchak Morel <ajmorel@aol.com>

## GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

It was three in the afternoon and I was putting my baby to sleep when the phone rang. It was a little girl asking for the Goldstein family. "Sorry," I said, "you've got the wrong number." But the phone didn't stop ringing. Each time it was the voice of a little girl. She was making one call after another, each time asking for the Goldstein family. My baby wouldn't stop crying. I started to lose my temper. I left the phone off the hook for about an hour, certain that this would discourage her. But as soon as I put the phone back on the hook, she called! I started to cry. After about the tenth call I told her that if she called one more time I would call the

police. 6:30 p.m. The phone rang for about the 25th time. I picked it up, but remained silent. I could hear the same voice of a girl. What kind of parents would allow her to do this all afternoon! I demanded to speak to her mother. To my surprise, she called her mother to the phone. I told the mother what her little girl had been doing to me all afternoon. The mother assured me that this was the first phone call her daughter had made that day. "My daughter's teacher gave all the girls in the class the phone number of their new teaching assistant. The entire class of 30 girls was told to call the new assistant to find what time their class

would be. The teacher must have given them the wrong number by mistake!"

Until about 9:00 p.m. the phone still rang from time to time: Each time, it was a little girl wanting to know what time class was! Some girls, even after hearing they had the wrong number, would anyway ask if I knew what time the class was! I would just laugh. It had turned into a joke now! I never would have thought that an entire class of girls, all with the same voice, was calling me!

• Contributed by an Ohrnet reader,  
Concept based on  
"The Other Side of the Story"  
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

### Last week we asked:

Please fill in the missing 5 numbers in the following sequence: 15, 16, 115, 116, 215, 216, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, 315, 316.

**Answer:** 270, 272, 275, 304 and 309. Why:

Numbers in Hebrew are written by combining the letters. For example *aleph*=1, *bet*=2, *yud*=10, *kuf*=100, etc. So, 11 would be *yud-aleph*. However, some numbers are not written in the normal form. 15 would normally be written *yud* and *hey*, but because this spells a name of Hashem, it is customarily written *tet-vav* (as in *Tu B'Shvat*). The same is true of *tet-zayin*, 16, instead of *yud* and *vav*. All the given numbers in the question are writ-

ten in reverse order.

The numbers 270, 272, 275, 304 and 309 are also numbers which are not written in the normal pattern, because the normal pattern would spell a word with negative connotations. 270 and 275 would normally be spelled *raysh ayin* and *raysh ayin hey*. These spell *ra* and *ra'ah*, both of which mean "bad". 272 would normally be spelled *resh ayin bet* which spells *ra'av* meaning "famine." 304 would normally be spelled *shin dalet* which spells *shaid* meaning "demon." 309 would normally be spelled *shin tet* which spells *shat* meaning "to go astray." Since the normal way to write these numbers spells words with negative connotations, these numbers are written in reverse order.

• Riddle Submitted by Lev Seltzer <levella@csi.com>

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## BONUS ANSWER!

"Notice," said Sherlock, "that Moshe didn't use the exact words that G-d used." "How so?" asked Watstein.

"G-d said to exact the vengeance of *Bnei Yisrael*, the Jewish People. Moshe, however, told the people to bring about the vengeance of *G-d*."

"Is there a difference?" asked Watstein.

"Yes and no," replied Sherlock. "On the one hand, the vengeance of the Jewish People is synonymous with the vengeance of *G-d*, for an enemy of the Jewish People is automatically *G-d*'s enemy, as Rashi says in verse 3. On the other hand, however, one must ask oneself: Why indeed did Moshe choose to shift the

focus from 'the vengeance of *Bnei Yisrael*' to 'the vengeance of *G-d*?' "

"Why?" asked Watstein.

"Moshe wanted to infuse the nation with zeal for their mission. They might be willing to forgive their own vengeance, perhaps. But the vengeance of *G-d*? That is something that would fire them with enthusiasm, and is something which they would not be permitted to forgive. By his subtle change in phraseology, Moshe reveals his enthusiasm and verve to perform the will of *G-d*, even though his death depended upon it."

• Based on *Devek Tov*