

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

KVELLING

“And these are the names of the children of Yisrael” (1:1)

Imagine a grandmother sitting with a stack of photos of her grandchildren. She takes out the pictures after breakfast and leafs through them, reciting the names of each of her beloved treasures one by one.

After lunch she has a nap, and then she takes out her photos again and recites their names over again.

And last thing at night, out come the pictures for a last time, kissing them and calling each of them by name.

The name of the book of Exodus in Hebrew is *Shmos* — The Book of Names. It starts with a list of the names of the children of Yaakov.

Even though the Torah had already detailed the names of Yaakov's children in their lifetimes, the Torah lists their names again after their passing to show how dear they are to Hashem.

Something that is dear and highly-prized is repeated and re-examined many times.

Like the photos of a doting granny.

The children of Israel are likened to the stars: Just as Hashem counts the stars and calls them by name when they come out, and again when they pass from the world and are gathered in, so too he counts the Children of Israel both when they enter this world and when they are gathered in.

We should remember that since we are compared to the stars, we must emulate the stars. Just as the purpose of the stars is to radiate light to the darkest and most distant corners of the universe, so too it is the job of the Jewish People to radiate spiritual light to the most benighted and spiritually desolate corners of the world.

BEING IT

“Pharaoh said to his people: ‘Come, let us outsmart it lest it become numerous and if a war will occur, it too may join our enemies and wage war against us.’” (1:9-10)

“The Germans did not have DDT. Their general-purpose pesticide, which was used whether the pests were rats, lice, or whatever, was a commercial product named Zyklon B. Its active ingredient was hydrogen cyanide. Zyklon B consisted of solid disks that would give off hydrogen cyanide gas when exposed to air. Large amounts of Zyklon B were found in

“...the purpose of the stars is to radiate light to the darkest and most distant corners of the universe, so too it is the job of the Jewish People to radiate spiritual light to the most benighted and spiritually desolate corners of the world.”

the Nazi camps. But there is a non-criminal explanation for this that is well documented. In the camps there were outbreaks of typhus fever, which was carried by lice. Zyklon B was the agent supposedly used to kill Jews in mass in the alleged gas chambers.”

• from an anti-Semitic ‘revisionist’ version of the Holocaust

In the Pesach Haggadah we read: *“The Egyptians mistreated and afflicted us.” (Devarim 26:6)* If you examine the

Hebrew phrase closely, you will see that it actually says “The Egyptians made us bad.” How do you unite an entire nation in the persecution of a minority? You “make them bad.”

You conduct a smear campaign to demonize them. You turn them from people into a sub-species; into an affliction, a disease. You turn them from a “them” into an “it.”

The Torah gives us a chilling vision of the future in the above verse. Pharaoh refers to the Jewish people with a masculine singular pronoun — “hoo”. You can read “hoo” as “him.” But you can also read “hoo” as “it.”

When people become an “it,” when they become in your eyes no more than an alien organism, then you treat them as any sensible person behaves when faced with a germ. You kill it. You “disinfect” yourself. You carry out a medical program of bacteriological genocide.

It's all so chillingly logical...

BELIEVING YOUR OWN PRESS RELEASE

“And Moshe grew, and he went out to his brothers” (2:11)

There once was a Hollywood cowboy who had come from a very ‘uncowboyish’ background: He was an assistant in a men's clothing store in Detroit.

To beef up his image a bit, the studio publicity machine concocted a new identity for him. They did a quick face-lift on his life story, which now depicted him being discovered in a Wells Fargo telegraph office in a small cowboy town in Arizona.

It happened one day that at the peak of his fame the Hollywood cowboy came to that small town. As befit-

PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the death of Yosef, the era of the Avos and the Book of *Bereishis* (Genesis) come to an end. The Book of *Shmos* (Exodus) now chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov. At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Jews in Egypt, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate continues to increase, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all baby boys. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and places him in a basket in the Nile before anyone can kill him. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts the baby even though she realizes he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's older sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe. She arranges for his mother Yocheved to be his nursemaid and help raise him. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and Moshe kills the Egyptian. When Moshe realizes his life is in danger, he flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yisro

approves their subsequent marriage. On Chorev (Mt. Sinai), Moshe witnesses the "burning bush" where Hashem commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to *Eretz Yisrael*, which Hashem has promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People in Egypt will doubt him being Hashem's agent, and so Hashem helps Moshe perform three miraculous transformations to validate him in the eyes of the people: Changing his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood. When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker Hashem tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman. Aharon greets Moshe on his return to Egypt and they petition Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that the Jews must produce the same quota of bricks as before, but without being given supplies. The people become dispirited, but Hashem assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

HAFTORAH: YISHAYAHU 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

Yaakov had two names: "Yaakov" and "Yisrael." The Jewish People are called by both of these names.

The name Yaakov depicts the experience of the Jewish People in times of degradation and hardship. Yisrael connotes the Jewish People realizing its potential.

The Prophet Yishayahu lived in a time of spiritual decay. He begins the Haftorah with the prophecy that the "root" of Yaakov, like all roots, though unseen and trampled by all, will once again bring forth its luxuriant produce.

THE REVOLUTION THAT WENT WRONG

"To whom shall one teach knowledge, who can be made to understand a message? Those weaned from (mother's) milk, removed from the breasts!" (28:10)

Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, we have witnessed an ever-accelerating development of science and technology.

As the Zohar predicted, from the year 5600 the gates of wisdom were opened. If the Jewish People had been worthy, this tremendous outpouring of knowledge would have found its proper home in the wisdom of Torah and holiness.

Now, since we were not worthy, this diffusion of higher energy has found its

way to the realm of superficial wisdom and precipitated the invention of weapons of mass destruction to humanity's profound loss.

From the day that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, "prophecy was given to fools and infants." Meaning, that when the Jews dwelled in the Holy Land, celestial energy, both spiritual and material, descended to its correct landing place.

However, since the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, this spiritual radiance has gone astray — descending on desolate lands and unsuitable people — "fools and infants."

This is what the prophet means when he asks whether "those weaned from (mother's) milk" can be "made to understand a message."

• Adapted from *Ahavas Yonason* and Rabbi Simcha Bunem M'Pshische

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

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

General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman
Editorial & Web Advisor:
Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
Associate Editors:
Rabbi Mordechai Becher,
Rabbi Reuven Subar
Contributing Writers:
Weekly Daf, Love of the Land:
Rav Mendel Weinbach
Insights, Overview, Haftorah:
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Web Production: **Lev Seltzer**
Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

© 1997 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

* THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

OhrNet is available from several sources:
• E-MAIL VIA INTERNET: Write to ohr@virtual.co.il for information.
• WORLD WIDE WEB: Our address is: www.ohr.org.il
• FAX AND REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:
To subscribe, mail us a letter, or fax a request with your name & fax number to 02-581-2890.
• US-MAIL WITHIN NORTH AMERICA:
Call 1-800-431-2272 for subscription information.

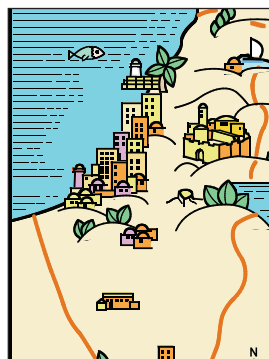
* You can submit your questions to Ask The Rabbi with your web browser at <http://www.ohr.org.il/askpage/ask.htm>. Or to use standard E-Mail address it to "ohr@virtual.co.il" To insure correct handling set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi".

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

THE WATERPROOF LAND

Noach knew that the waters of the Deluge had begun to recede when the dove he had released from the ark returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. (*Bereishis* 8:11) Where did the dove manage to find a leaf in a world so completely devastated by flood waters? From the branches in *Eretz Yisrael*,



says Rabbi Levi. This is in accordance with the opinion of the Sages who say that *Eretz Yisrael* was not affected by the Deluge. This view finds expression in what Hashem told the Prophet Yechezkel about this Land that "it was not rained upon in the day of fury." (*Yechezkel* 22:23)

• *Midrash Rabba Vayikra* 110

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why does the verse say “And Yosef was in Egypt?” Don’t we already know this from previous verses in the Torah?
2. Why did the Egyptians specifically choose water as the means of killing the Jewish children? Give two reasons.
3. “She saw that he was good.” What did she see that was “good” about Moshe that distinguished him from other babies?
4. Who were the two Hebrew men fighting with each other?
5. Why did the Midianites drive Yisro’s daughters away from the well?
6. How did Yisro know that Moshe was a descendant of Yaakov?
7. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed?
8. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted Hashem’s promise to take them out of Egypt?
9. Which expression of redemption was Moshe told to use to assure the people he was the true redeemer?
10. What did the staff turning into a snake symbolize?
11. How many days did Moshe spend refusing to be the redeemer of the Jewish People?
12. Why was Moshe reluctant to assume leadership of the Jewish people?
13. “And Hashem was angry with Moshe...” What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
14. How many names did Moshe’s father-in-law have?
15. What was special about the donkey that Moshe used to go to Egypt?
16. Concerning which plague was Pharaoh warned first?
17. Why did Moshe and Aharon go to Pharaoh alone? Why didn’t the elders accompany them? What was the result of the elders’ actions?
18. Which tribe did not work as slaves?
19. Who were the: a) *nogsim* b) *shotrim*?
20. How were the *shotrim* rewarded for accepting the beatings on behalf of their fellow Jews?

BONUS QUESTION?

Rashi never “just” comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi answers unspoken questions arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah text. Anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi’s classic Torah commentary must always ask: “What’s Bothering Rashi?”

“And the woman was pregnant and had a son, and she saw that he was good and she concealed him for three months.” (2:2) Rashi: “When he was born the whole house was filled with light.”

Why didn’t Rashi accept the simple meaning: That the mother saw that her son, Moshe, was good and decided to hide him? Why did Rashi need the midrashic explanation? **What’s bothering Rashi?**

answer on page six

I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

“I am the G-d of your father, G-d of Avraham, G-d of Yitzchak and G-d of Yaakov.” Hashem doesn’t connect His Name to people while they are alive (because they still have free will to sin). So when Hashem said “I am the G-d of your father,” Moshe realized that his father, Amram, had died. To assuage Moshe’s grief at this news, Hashem added “G-d of Avraham....” Hearing Hashem mention Amram alongside the righteous forefathers gladdened Moshe’s heart.

• *Toras Tzion*

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 1:5 - This verse adds that despite being in Egypt as a ruler, Yosef maintained his righteousness.
2. 1:10,22 - Since Hashem promised Noah never to flood the entire world, the Egyptians chose water hoping to thereby escape Divine retribution. Also, Pharaoh’s astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer’s downfall would be through water.
3. 2:2 - When he was born the house was filled with light.
4. 2:13 - Dasan and Aviram.
5. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed on Yisro for abandoning idol worship.
6. 2:20 - Because the water of the well rose up towards Moshe.
7. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so Moshe would be protected by Hashem.
8. 3:12 - The merit that they were destined to receive the Torah.
9. 3:16,18 - “I have surely remembered... (*pakod pakadeti*).”
10. 4:3 - It symbolized that Moshe spoke ill of the Jewish people by saying that they would not listen to him, just as the original snake sinned through speech.
11. 4:10 - Seven days.
12. 4:10 - He didn’t want to take a position above that of his older brother, Aharon.
13. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a *Kohen*. This privilege was transferred to Aharon.
14. 4:18 - Seven.
15. 4:20 - It was used by Avraham for *akeidas* Yitzchak and will be used in the future by Mashiach.
16. 4:23 - Death of the firstborn.
17. 5:1 - The elders were accompanying Moshe and Aharon, but they were afraid and one by one they slipped away. When Moshe received the Torah, the elders were prohibited from ascending the mountain with him.
18. 5:5 - The tribe of Levi.
19. 5:6 - a) The Egyptian taskmasters; b) The Jewish officers.
20. 5:14 - They were chosen to be part of the Sanhedrin.

WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 44 - 50

A TALE OF TWO FIRES

What is the psychological condition of a person who sees something precious to him threatened by a fire on Shabbos?

There seem to be two conflicting perspectives. Here Rabbi Yehuda ben Lakish rules that although it is forbidden by rabbinic law to move a corpse on Shabbos in regular fashion because it is considered *muktzeh*, it may be removed from a burning building to the safety of an adjacent courtyard. The reason given is that the Sages feared that a person's anxiety over the likelihood of his dear departed being consumed by fire might motivate him to violate the Shabbos and extinguish the fire. They therefore relaxed their restriction on *muktzeh* in this case.

In a later *gemara* (*Shabbos 117b*), however, we learn that a person whose home is on fire may not rescue from the flames more than the food required for the remaining Shabbos meals. The reason given is that if he is given a free hand to save everything possible he may become so anxious in his rescue effort that he will forget that it is Shabbos and will extinguish the fire.

How is it, asks Tosefos, that in one case our concern for his anxiety causes the Sages to take a lenient position in rescuing the corpse from the flames and in the other case our concern for his anxiety

moves us to restrict his rescue efforts?

The solution, explains Tosefos, lies in the degree of anxiety one has over something threatened by fire. One is not so anxious over the loss of his possessions that he will extinguish a fire on Shabbos to save them. But if he is let loose to save them, his preoccupation with their rescue may cause him to forget the Shabbos and involuntarily violate it by extinguishing the fire. In regard to a dear departed one there is concern that he may become so overcome with panic over the danger of the corpse being burned that he will commit the serious sin of willingly extinguishing the fire to save it.

• *Shabbos 44a*

THE MITZVAH OF WASHING

When a certain fragrant, non-soap cleansing agent was brought before a group of Sages gathered at a Shabbos meal, the Sage Ameimar and Rabbi Ashi availed themselves of it to wash their hands and faces. When their colleague, the Sage Mar Zutra, refused to do so they assumed that it was because he was concerned that it might pull some hairs from his face in violation of Shabbos. Only when they challenged his reluctance, on the basis of a ruling by Rabbi Sheshes that there was no problem as regards Shabbos, did Rabbi Mordechai explain

Mar Zutra's behavior in a different manner. This sage would not use such stuff even on the weekdays because he considered such attention to cleanliness effeminate behavior which is improper for a man.

The position of the other sages is based on two passages in *Mishlei*. The one quoted in our *gemara* is "Hashem has made everything for His own purpose" (*Mishlei 16:4*), which Rashi explains as meaning that since man was created in Hashem's image, he has a responsibility to care for his body. The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba 34:3*) cites another passage: "The merciful man shows kindness to his own being" (*Mishlei 11:17*) and tells the story of the Sage Hillel who personified this ideal.

When Hillel took leave of his disciples and headed for the bathhouse he told them he was about to fulfill a mitzvah. In response to their curiosity about what sort of mitzvah there was in bathing himself, he called their attention to the compensation and honor awarded to the man responsible for regularly washing the statues of the king standing in the theaters and stadiums. If this is how they honor the likeness of an earthly king, he concluded, how much more so must I, who was created in the image of the King of kings, be careful to wash myself!

• *Shabbos 50b*

continued from page one

PARSHA INSIGHTS

ting his fame, he was given a ticker-tape parade down Main Street.

As he was riding on the back of his open limousine, his car passed the Wells Fargo office. He leaned across to his press agent — the very same press agent who had re-written his past — and said to him without batting an eyelid:

"You see that Wells Fargo station? That's where I was discovered..."

One of the dangers of fame is that you can start to believe your own press release.

The Midrash tells us that when Moshe "grew", he grew "*not like the way of the world*". The way of the world is that when a person grows and becomes celebrated and famous, he forgets his roots, his background and his brothers. He seems to have a kind of insidious amnesia when it comes to

their problems and difficulties.

Moshe grew up in the palace of Pharaoh with an Egyptian gold spoon in his mouth. Nevertheless, he grew up "*not like way of the world*," he never forgot the plight of his people. Moshe "*went out to his brothers*." He went out to discover their problems and the ways he could rescue them from oppression.

THE PRINCE OF PROPHETS

"And a man from the House of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi" (2:1)

When writing about the union of Moshe parents, why didn't the Torah just say "*And Amram went and married Yocheved*"?

In his lifetime, Moshe achieved a closeness to Hashem unequaled by any other human being. He alone

ascended to heaven and received the Torah for Israel. He alone spoke to Hashem face to face, with crystal clarity, unlike all the other prophets.

There was a concern that in the course of time someone might say that Moshe came from heaven, and make Moshe into a god. For this reason, the Torah stresses, that his origin was as normal and earthly as anyone, "**A man** from the House of Levi married a **daughter** of Levi."

Although Moshe was the prince of prophets, his parents were regular flesh and blood.

Sources:

Kvelling - Rashi, Gur Arieh, Sfas Emes
Believing Your Own Press Release - Yalkut HaDrush in Iturei Torah
The Prince of Prophets - Kehillas Yitzchak in Iturei Torah

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Don Thompson from Medicine Hat, Alberta <godlvs@telusplanet.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is the Ark of the Covenant buried under the Dome of the Rock? Will the Temple have to be built on the location of the Dome of the Rock, or can it be located some where else? How can one best pray for Israel? Are these too many questions?

Dear Don Thompson,

There are two traditions regarding the place of the Ark. One opinion is that it is indeed buried and hidden under the Temple Mount. Another opinion maintains that it was taken by the Babylonians at the time of the destruction of the first Temple and from there to Carthage, and from there no one knows. The Third Temple can only be on the Temple Mount and nowhere else. Pray sincerely to the One G-d, Creator of heaven and earth, that He bring the redemption speedily. No, these are not too many questions!

STARRY STARRY NIGHT

Ian Pamensky <IanP@awi.com.au> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Why does Shabbat end plus or minus 1 hour after sunset? Can you rely on the 3 stars? Many thanks in advance.

Dear Ian Pamensky,

The Talmud says that three medium-sized stars together in the sky signify nightfall. Halachic opinions about when this is range from 20 minutes to 72 minutes after sunset.

Ideally, you shouldn't rely on "three stars." Cloudy skies can make it hard to know exactly when this is. And even on a clear night, it's difficult to determine exactly which stars are considered "medium" and which are considered "large." Furthermore, the *Chafetz Chaim* writes that "three medium stars" was a reference for people in Babylon (Middle East). But people who live far to the north (Europe and America) where the sky takes much longer to darken should wait for three small stars.

Ideally, you should go by the clock and a reliable Jewish calendar.

Did you hear about the ship's captain who, one foggy night, perceived a glowing light out in the distance? He watched it intently, but couldn't figure out why it grew no closer to his advancing ship. Finally, after staring at it for 20 minutes, he realized that the light was coming from the bowl of his pipe!

Sources:

- *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 261*
- *Mishna Berura 23*

NEW TWIST ON LICORICE

[Name & email withheld] wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
What is the correct blessing for licorice? Since it contains flour we always said "mezonot." However I saw recently in the *Artscroll* book on brachot that it is "shehakol" because the flour is only to give it body. So what? It certainly adds to the flavor!

Dear [Name & email withheld],

As you know, the blessing over a food is determined by the type of the food it is. In a mixture, the "main" ingredient determines the blessing. What is the main ingredient in licorice?

Flour, because of its importance as a dietary staple, is usually considered the main ingredient in any mixture, even if there is only a little bit of flour in the mixture. However, if the purpose of the flour is only to bind the other ingredients, then the flour is considered secondary and doesn't determine the blessing. So regarding licorice, if it's eaten mainly for the sugar content and the flour acts mainly as a binder, the blessing would be *shehakol*.

Sources:

- *Biur Halacha 168:8*

WAS MARK TWAIN JEWISH?

Naranda Davina from Ontario <dfllett@sympatico.ca> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is Mark Twain Jewish?

Dear Naranda Davina,

Mark Twain, whose real name was Samuel Clemens, was not Jewish.

However he had this to say about the Jews:

"The Jews constitute but 1% of the human race ... It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of... His contributions to the world's list of great names are away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose... the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone...The Jew saw them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no dulling of his alert mind. All things are mortal but the Jew... What is the secret of his immortality?"

Source:

- Mark Twain (1835-1910) excerpt from *An Essay Concerning the Jews*

ATONEMENT W/O THE TEMPLE

Iva Petrickova from Prague, Czech Republic <xpeti03@st.vse.cz> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Since there is no more the Temple in Jerusalem to make sacrifices in, how can a person be purified from his/her sin? Is there any way for a person to make sure his/her sins were forgiven and are not counted to him/her any more?

Dear Iva Petrickova,

Sacrifices are not necessary to gain atonement. First, the person must repent properly. That includes discontinuing the sin, regretting having done it and confessing the sin before G-d. Then the person should pray for forgiveness and purification, and trust in Hashem's mercy. If a repentant person finds himself in the same scenario in which he previously sinned, but this time he withstands the test, that's an indication that his repentance is complete and his sin has been forgiven. (But you shouldn't put yourself in a "sin situation" in order to test yourself.)

New Feature!

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ask-the-Rabbi" features.

Re: *Lulav* after Succot (Ohrnet Parshat Toldot):

My son's father-in-law showed me that he saves the *lulav* each year to be used for *schach* [*succah* roofing] on the next Succah. It's also possible to grind the dried out *hadass* [myrtle] leaves and use for a Havdalah spice.

• Zev Kossin <koss1950@green.co.il>

Re: That's What Western Walls Are Made Of (Ohrnet Parshat Vayeshev):

You wrote that "The Western Wall is made of sandstone..." Your answer is incorrect. I worked as a geologist at the Geological Survey of Israel, and later, Negev Phosphates Ltd. in the early 1980s. I seem to recall that the "Jerusalem Stone," was made of limestone or dolomite. I posed the question to a geologist friend at the

GSI, and another geologist friend who used to work there but now works for the Geological Survey of Victoria in Australia, and received confirmation for my answer from both. Here is the text of what my friend at the GSI sent me:

Shalom Yaakov. The Wall is made mainly of "Meleke" (means royal in Arabic, the term was coined and used by the Arab masons in Jerusalem) limestone. This is a pure white limestone, thickly bedded and coarsely crystalline. It is of upper Turonian age belonging to the Bina (Baana) formation. It retains its white color for years, or may be insolated to a light golden yellow. When quarried it is remarkably soft and workable, but upon exposure it hardens, with clear surface. It takes a high, resplendent polish, and it provides a high-quality building stone, as well as commercial marble.

• Jacob Pinsky, University Hospital
Dept. of Radiation Oncology, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY
<jpinsky@radonc.som.sunysb.edu>

Re "Forty Something" (Ohrnet Parshat Vayeitzei):

If I remember correctly, the soul does not enter the body of the new born until the 40th day.

• Nathan Frenkel <frenkel@multicom.net>

YIDDLE RIDDLE

I've been carrying this Yiddle Riddle around with me for years. I've discussed it with Rabbanim and scholars and have yet to find the flaw in it. It's not a simple riddle to explain. But that's what you do so well. If you find a hole in my logic I'd really love to hear it. Here goes. "Who was the first person to die after the Great Flood (*mabul*)?"

• Eli & Zahava Gross <ezgross@netvision.net.il>

Answer next week.

continued from page three

BONUS ANSWER!

The context is Pharaoh's decree to kill all the Jewish male sons. We are told that Yocheved hid her son because he was "good." Wouldn't any mother consider her son "good" enough to be saved from certain death? The fact that he was "good" therefore isn't sufficient reason to make Yocheved's act unusual. Therefore, Rashi need to resort to the Midrashic explanation of the word "good," i.e., the house was illuminated by Moshe's very presence.

• Based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN
1:10 Politics of Genocide
2:2 Certainty of Moshe's Rescue
3:5 The Burning Bush
3:8 Qualities of Eretz Yisrael
3:12 Moshe's Concerns
3:18 The Code Word for Redemption

4:10 Moshe's Speech Impediment
4:13 Moshe's Humility
4:19 Moshe's Family as Proof
SFORNO
2:10 Moshe's Name
2:11,13,17 Reactions to Injustice

KLI YAKAR
2:2 Light and Three Months
2:7 Prophecy of Miriam
2:13 Striking Words

This publication is now available via email in PDF format

To subscribe, send the message "sub ohrnet {your name}" to "listproc@virtual.co.il"