

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

TRAVELERS IN TIME

“In order that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in Sukkos when I brought them out from the land of Egypt....” (23:43)

Judaism treats women as second-class citizens, doesn't it? I mean, the reason women aren't allowed to do so many *mitzvos* is that they have to be free to do the cooking and nurse the babies, right?

If truth be told, women are *not* equal to men in Judaism. In some senses they are *superior*. And if you think that this is just patronizing chauvinist smooth-talk, have a look at the order of Creation: The more advanced was created after the less advanced. What was the last creation in the physical world? Woman. Woman was created after Man — and from Man. Man comes from the dirt and dust. Woman starts off much higher. She comes from flesh and blood.

So okay, if women are elevated, why don't they have to do those *mitzvos* which are time-related, like sitting in the *sukkah*?

Hashem gave the three festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos respectively to the fathers of the Jewish People, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Hashem also designated Rosh Chodesh, the first of day of each of the twelve months, as the Yom Tov of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The males of the tribes lost their festival of Rosh Chodesh when they transgressed in the incident of the golden calf. As a result, Rosh Chodesh remained only for the

women of Israel. But what is the deeper connection between Rosh Chodesh and the Jewish woman?

To make the golden calf, the men demanded jewelry from their wives, to which the women replied “You think a powerless idol can save us?” They refused to give over their jewels. Since the Jewish women had no part in the golden calf, Hashem rewarded them with Rosh Chodesh — a day when they would desist from the routine of the month.

What has this got to do with why

“A light burning on the menorah of the Jewish heart across the millennia. A light which can never be extinguished, which burns miraculously, even without replenishment of the oil or wicks of *mitzvah* observance.”

they don't have to sit in the *sukkah*?

The spiritual well-being of a person requires a constant connection to reality. This connection has to be constantly recharged — like a battery — or the reception will fade and he will drift off into a world of illusion. There is a reality of time and a reality of space. We connect to the reality of time through the time-related

mitzvos.

A man must pray three times a day at prescribed times. He must wear *tzitzis* and *tefillin*. He needs these and the other time-related *mitzvos* to connect him, to anchor him in Time. It's not that the Jewish woman doesn't *have* to sit in the *sukkah*. It's that she doesn't *need* to. She has her own built-in *sukkah*. She has built-in *tzitzis*. She has built-in *tefillin*. Hashem made Woman with a greater sensitivity to the reality of time and thus she needs less help to maintain her spiritual connection to the real world.

THE ETERNAL FLAME

“Command the Children of Israel ... to kindle a continual lamp.” (24:2)

Go into any Synagogue when it's dark and you will see a small lamp shining above the Holy Ark. It's called the *ner tamid* — the eternal flame.

That lamp is a memorial of the *ner ma'aravi* (western lamp) of the menorah which the *kohanim* lit in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The *ner ma'aravi* burned miraculously. It never went out. Every evening, when the *kohen* came to kindle the flames he would find the *ner ma'aravi* still alight from the previous evening. He would remove the still-burning wick and oil, clean out its receptacle and then put back the burning wick and the oil. Then he would kindle all the other lamps with the western lamp.

However, when the Romans destroyed the *Beis Hamikdash* it seemed that the little solitary flame had been put out forever.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The *kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: Father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral even of his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim*. The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*. The physical defects that invalidate a *kohen* from serving in the Temple are listed. *Terumah*, a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old

and is free from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of Hashem by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the *omer* of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* in the Temple. A man blasphemes Hashem and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 44

The literal meaning of the word *kohen* includes both the idea of basis and direction. Even when the masses are infatuated by heathen concepts, and immorality is rife amongst the powerful, the *kohen* must guard the sanctuary of the Torah, reaffirming both the basis and the direction of Jewish life. However, the *kohanim* did not always live up to their calling and their name,

and Hashem proclaimed that those who failed in that task were to be barred from the priestly functions of bringing the offerings. However in contrast to these people, the Haftorah depicts those *kohanim* who, revering their ancestor *Zadok*, showed a brilliant contrast and kept the true spirit of the tribe of Levi.

• Adapted from Rabbi Mendel Hirsch

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LOVE OF THE LAND

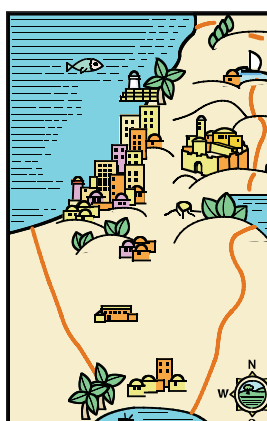
Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

THE MERIT SYSTEM

Why will Hashem not abandon His people Israel?

"For Hashem will not abandon His people," states one passage (*Shmuel I 12:22*), "because of His great Name."

But another passage (*Tehillim 94:14*) declares "Hashem will not abandon His people nor forsake His heritage."



When Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* are in trouble, Hashem promises not to abandon them because of their merits and the merit of their land which is called Hashem's heritage. But when Jews are outside of *Eretz Yisrael* Hashem has mercy on them so that His great Name, which is identified with them, will not be desecrated.

• *Ruth Rabbah 2*

This issue is dedicated in loving memory of
RABBI MORRIS AND JESSIE MAX ז"ל
and
MOSES L. ISAACS ז"ל

In Rome, there stands a triumphal arch built by the Emperor Titus. One of its *bas-reliefs* depicts the menorah being carried through the streets of Rome as part of the booty pillaged from the *Beis Hamikdash*. All its lamps are dark. It looks like some expensive antique, soon to languish under the dust of ages in some Vatican vault.

But did Titus really extinguish that eternal flame?

The *Beis Hamikdash* is a macrocosm of the human body. If you look at a plan of the sanctuary in the *Beis Hamikdash*, you will notice that the placement of the various vessels — the altar, the table, the menorah — corresponds to the location of the vital organs in the human body. Each of the Temple's vessels represents a human organ.

The menorah is the vessel that corresponds to the heart.

Why is it that so many young people today are choosing to return to the beliefs and practices that their parents had forgotten, and their grandparents despaired of seeing continued? It is as though some mystical force is transmitted in the spiritual genes of every Jew. A light burning on the menorah of the Jewish heart across the millennia. A light which can never be extinguished, which burns miraculously, even without replenishment of the oil or wicks of mitzvah observance.

So, in a mystical sense, the light Titus tried to put out continues to burn in the menorah of the Jewish heart. But there's more.

It would come as a great disappointment to Titus, but the menorah that is collecting dust in the Vatican is not the original Menorah. It is a copy. The original menorah was hidden away (together with the other vessels) in the caves and tunnels under the Temple Mount.

If while the Temple was standing the western lamp of the menorah burned miraculously without human assistance, so why shouldn't it go on burning even after it was buried?

That western lamp continues to "burn" under the Temple Mount

throughout the long dark night of exile. It continues to "burn" to this day. And it will continue to "burn" until *Mashiach* comes. Then, the light of the menorah of the Jewish heart will be revealed as identical to the light of the menorah in the Holy *Beis Hamikdash*.

DOING TIME

"You shall not desecrate My holy Name; rather I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel. I am Hashem Who sanctifies you." (22:32)

Two Jews traveling by train to work. One religious; the other — much less so.

"Look at this!" exclaims the less religious of the two, tossing the newspaper to his religious companion.

There, on the front page, is a picture of a very religious-looking man complete with a long flowing black beard. Underneath the picture the caption reads: **ARRESTED FOR TAX EVASION!** "So much for a long black beard!" sneers the secular Jew.

The religious Jew looks at the picture for a while and then says, "Trouble was ... under the beard, he was clean-shaven...."

When a Jew puts on a *kippah*, he becomes an ambassador for Hashem. His actions are scrutinized by all who see him: If he is crooked in business, no one will call him a crook; they will call him a crooked Jew! However if he's straight, Hashem takes the credit: Our Sages tell us of an Arab who sold a donkey to Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach. Shortly after the purchase, Rabbi Shimon discovered a valuable stone under the donkey's saddle. "I paid for a donkey, not a gem," he said. He promptly returned the jewel to the Arab, whereupon the Arab exclaimed "Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Shimon ben Shetach."

CONCRETE TIME

"And you shall count from the day after the Shabbos (i.e., the day after Pesach), from the day of your bringing the Omer offering which is waved, seven weeks — complete and perfect they must be." (23:15)

"When are they (the weeks) perfect? When they do the will of the Omnipresent." (Midrash)

Nothing in this world lasts forever. Everything has its time and then passes. Even the heavens and the earth will pass into nothingness. Nevertheless, everything that comes into the world has a certain life-span, however short or long.

There is one thing in the world which has no span of existence at all. It is no sooner present than it has already changed, passed and is no longer.

That thing is Time itself.

As soon as Time emerges into Creation, it is gone. Time passed is no longer, and every second becomes, immediately and at once, the past.

Man, however, can give Time itself a substance that makes it eternal. When a person performs an action, it gives the time in which that action is done, the substance and the character of the action itself. So if the time is used to do a mitzvah, to do a kindness, or to study Torah, then because these things are eternal in themselves, they in turn, eternalize Man's time. This is what the Midrash means when it says "When are they (the weeks) perfect? When they do the will of the Omnipresent."

The Counting of the Omer is a paradigm for the years of a person's life — the "seven weeks" allude to "The days of our years have in them 70 years" (*Tehillim*). The mitzvah of Counting the Omer demands that "complete and perfect they must be." When those hours do the will of Hashem, then Time itself stays eternally concrete and substantial.

Sources: *Travelers in Time* - Tur, Rabbi Nota Schiller; *The Eternal Flame* - Sfas Emes, Rabbi Akiva Tatz; *Doing Time* - Rabbi Nota Schiller; *Concrete Time* - Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin in *L'Torah ul'Moadim*

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"The son of an Israelite woman went out — and he was the son of an Egyptian man ... and pronounced the Name of Hashem and cursed...."(24:10) The "Egyptian man" above is the one Moshe struck dead by uttering Hashem's Name. Therefore, many years later, that Egyptian man's ill-begotten son blasphemed the Name of Hashem through which his father was killed.

• Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin in *Oznaim Latorah*

WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 156 - ERUVIN 6

WHAT LUCK?

Do Jews have *mazal*? *Mazal*, loosely translated as luck, literally means the events in a person's life that are predetermined according to the hour or day of his birth. Whether or not a Jew is prey to the determination of the "stars" which dominate the time of his birth, we seem to receive conflicting signals from our Sages.

"Children, life and livelihood," says the Sage Rava in *Mesechta Moed Katan (28a)* "are not the result of merit but of *mazal*."

This position is echoed in our own *gemara* by Rabbi Chanina. But Rabbi Yochanan seems to categorically reject the idea that Jews are subject to *mazal*, in apparent conflict with Rava's statement. Tosefos, however, reconciles the two opinions. For Jews, as for everyone else, "children, life and livelihood" are predetermined as Rava states. But Jews, unlike others, have the ability to overcome this predetermination through an extraordinary merit. (The motto of a famous contemporary astrologist that "the stars impel but do not compel" certainly fits the Jews!)

Two examples of extraordinary merit beating the stars are offered in our *gemara*.

The non-Jewish astrologer Avlat pointed out a man, headed for the meadow with his comrades to chop some reeds, as a predetermined victim of a deadly snake. The Sage Shmuel told Avlat that if the man was Jewish, he was capable of surviving. The man was indeed a Jew and returned safely. A surprised Avlat examined his pack of reeds and found a deadly snake, which the man had unknowingly cut in two. To Shmuel, this survivor related that it was his group's custom that each day, every member placed some food in a communal basket whose contents would then be shared by all. On this particular day, one of them had no food to contribute. To save him from embarrassment, our hero undertook the job of collection, and when he came to his poor comrade he pretended that he received food from him, while actually contributing some of his own.

The other incident involved Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva was told by the stargazers that his daughter would be killed by a snake on the day of her wedding. On that fateful day, she unknowingly pierced the eye of a snake with an ornament she put into the wall. When the dead snake was discovered the next morning, she explained to her father that a poor man called at the door on the wedding day, and since everyone was too preoccupied with preparations to even notice him, she gave him a precious item she had received from Rabbi Akiva. In both cases the sages publicly proclaimed that the miracle they had observed was a demonstration that "charity rescues from death" (*Mishlei 10:1*).

• *Shabbos 156b*

SOME LIKE IT HOT, SOME LIKE IT COLD

"The pot of partners is neither hot nor cold." This commonly quoted saying is usually understood as a comment on the futility of trying to achieve communal consensus. Since there will always be some who want the food hot while others want it cold, the result will be that the pot will end up neither hot nor cold.

A closer look at the application of this folk wisdom in our *gemara*, however, indicates a different understanding.

In two cases we find the limitation of 20 cubits height. A *korah* beam placed across the entrance to a *mavoi* (an alleyway into which courtyard traffic empties) in order to permit carrying within its precincts on Shabbos cannot be more than 20 cubits above street level. The *schach* covering a *sukkah* that is more than twenty cubits above the floor of the *sukkah* is not considered kosher.

What if the *korah* and the *schach* are partially within the 20 cubit limit and partially above it?

There is a difference of opinion amongst the Sages on this point. We shall focus here only on the point of view put forth by Rabbi Ada bar Masneh in the name of the Sage Rabbah. In the case of the *sukkah*, he contends, the *schach* which is thus situated will be kosher, but in the case of the *korah* beam it will be considered invalid.

The central consideration in both cases, explains the Sage Rava of Parzeka, is whether we must be concerned lest the lower half of the *schach* or *korah* become detached or eroded, leaving only the part which is higher than the legal limit. In the case of the *sukkah* the responsibility for maintaining a kosher *sukkah* is that of the individual. We can therefore rely on him to keep his eye on his *schach*, take notice if the lower portion of it became detached and take the proper steps to amend the situation. In the case of the *korah*, however, responsibility is shared by all the residents of the homes and courtyards leading into the *mavoi*. There is, therefore, a concern that each one will rely on the other to watch what happens with the *korah*, and no one will notice that the lower part eroded and left only the part above twenty cubits intact.

As an illustration of this point the *gemara* cites the above mentioned adage about the communal kettle. This compels us, points out Maharsha, to reexamine this folksy bit of counsel. When partners or a community are involved in the management of a kettle, even if there is a consensus that it should be hot or a consensus that it should be cold, there is reason to suspect that the agreed upon result will not be achieved, because each member of the collective group will rely on someone else watching the kettle, with the result that no one will do so.

• *Eruvin 3a*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
4. How does the Torah restrict the *Kohen Gadol* with regard to mourning?
5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who “approaches holy objects” while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by “approaches”?
6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a “zar” she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a *zar*?
9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
11. How does the Torah define “profaning” the Name of Hashem?
12. Apart from Shabbos, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
13. How big is an *omer*?
14. On what day do we begin to “count the *omer*”?
15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
17. The blowing of the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah is called a “*zichron teruah*” (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
18. What is unusual about the wood of the *esrog* tree?
19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one’s parent?

BONUS QUESTION?

Sherlock Holmes & the Mystery of the Missing Father

Sherlock frowned. “Why should the father be killed along with its child?” he said.

“We’ve been breaking our heads for an hour and still no clue!” said Watson. “Let’s have tea.”

“Please,” said Sherlock, “Read the verse again. Just once more.”

Vatson sighed and peered into the text: “**A cow or sheep, it and its child you shall not slaughter on the same day** (*Vayikra* 22:28).”

“Go on,” said Sherlock.

“Rashi says this refers only to the mother, but that one may slaughter the father and the child on the same day.”

Sherlock took a long puff on his meerschaum pipe.

“I give up,” said Watson. “I see nothing in the verse itself which excludes one of the parents! It’s an ‘equal opportunity’ verse, referring to both mother and father. If there’s a magic word which excludes the father, Rashi sees it; but I don’t!”

Sherlock jumped. “Watson, repeat that!”

“Rashi sees it, but I...”

“That’s it! Rashi sees it! Watson, you’re a genius!”

“Now,” said Watson, “I really need a tea...”

What does Sherlock see that Watson doesn’t?

[Note: The Hebrew word “*shor*,” usually translated as “ox,” includes both male and female; we therefore translate it “cow” which includes both male or female.

answer on page eight

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

1. 21:1 - *Challalim* — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a *kohen*.
2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a *kohen* reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
5. 22:3 - Eats.
6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
8. 22:12 - A non-*kohen*.
9. 22:18 - A *neder* is an obligation upon a person; a *nedavah* is an obligation placed upon an object.
10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
13. 23:10 - One tenth of an *eipha*.
14. 23:15 - On the 16th of *Nissan*.
15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
17. 23:24 - The *akeidas* (binding of) *Yitzchak*.
18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (*Shemos* 2:12).
20. 24:21 - Death.

INTERMARRIAGE

Names@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am in love with a Catholic woman. I want to marry her. She loves me as much but religious beliefs are getting in the way. Please tell me what I should do, my parents say "no way." Help.

Dear Rabbi,

I'm getting married in October to a girl who is not Jewish (she is Hindu, born in India) and we're having a difficult time finding a Rabbi who will marry us. Why is this? And do you have any recommendations for Rabbis that would consider performing the ceremony. It's important to me and my family that we are married by a Rabbi. Thanks.

Dear Rabbi,

I will be married (very soon) to a Jewish woman. I am not Jewish, but would very much like to include several of the Jewish traditions in our wedding, to embrace her heritage as well.

Dear Names@Withheld,

For Jews, "marrying within the faith" isn't a cultural preference or prejudice. Rather, it is one of the commandments G-d gave us at Mount Sinai. A Jew who marries a non-Jew transgresses a Torah prohibition.

The practice of not "intermarrying" is in fact one of the oldest features of Judaism. It dates back to Abraham telling Eliezer, his servant, not to find a wife for his son from the Canaanites. It continues with Isaac's command to his son Jacob not to marry the "daughters of the land." The practice is mentioned in the Bible as a legal prohibition, and is also part of the covenant that Ezra the Scribe had the Jews make, when they rebuilt the Temple after the Babylonian Exile.

In all the above cases the underlying idea of the prohibition seems to be ideological. As Jews we have a unique identity that is connected to our purpose in the world. We are the "chosen people." We were chosen to propagate the ethical monotheism of Judaism. In the words

of Leo Tolstoy:

"The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire, and has illumined with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religious. The Jew is the pioneer of liberty. The Jew is the pioneer of civilisation. The Jew is the emblem of eternity."

We were chosen as a permanent protest group against idolatry and immorality. Intermarriage is therefore antithetical to the Jewish purpose and to the Jewish identity.

Can we prove that we are chosen? Do we have evidence? Yes. In a brief look at history we can see the antiquity, survival and impact of the Jewish people as unique and remarkable. I don't think that I can put it better than Mark Twain, in his famous description of Jewish history, "An Essay Concerning the Jews":

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent 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 to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also 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, filled the planet with sound and splendour, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other nations pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Intermarriage is a betrayal of our task

and of our "chosenness." It is also a guarantee against Jewish continuity.

Let me illustrate with a conversation heard on the Dr. Laura Schlessinger show in the US:

A woman calls Dr. Laura: "I'm Jewish," she says. "My husband is not Jewish, but he is very active in the Jewish community. We are trying our best to raise our children as Jews and give them a Jewish education. Now my son is almost thirteen, and he tells us he doesn't want a bar mitzvah (celebration of the acceptance of one's Judaism). What can we do?"

"Let me get this straight," Dr. Laura says. "You say your husband is not Jewish?"

"That's right," the woman answers.

"How do you expect your son to follow Judaism when you don't?"

Being Jewish isn't a cultural affiliation or a tradition. It's being part of the Chosen People. That means a commitment to the responsibility given to us by Hashem at Sinai. Someone who understands this will obviously choose a partner who is likewise committed. Otherwise, it's like a runner entering a relay race, but who chooses a partner who's running towards a different finish line.

Who you marry affects every single aspect of your life. It affects your community. It affects your children. It affects all future generations. The Jewish home is the single most important establishment in Jewish life. It outweighs any synagogue or temple, even the Holy Temple built by King Solomon. By marrying a non-Jew one thereby ends over 3,000 years of Jewish continuity, effectively cutting oneself and one's offspring off from what it means to be Jewish.

There have been many other arguments offered against intermarriage, below is a summary of some of the most famous.

1. Six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, 12 million were left afterwards. Today there are only 13 million Jews in the world. Where are the rest that by natural increase should number close to 20 million? The answer is that the silent holocaust of assimilation has caused them to disappear as Jews.

2. Intermarriages are twice as likely to end in divorce as same-faith mar-

riages. (75% divorce rate!) Some reasons for this are the different identities of the spouses and the differences in culture and family. For example a Jew will naturally turn their head at the mention of "Israel" and "Jew". A gentile who converts in superficial and insincere conversion only for the sake of marriage does not create a new identity that is now Jewish.

3. One is granting a victory to anti-Semites who seek to destroy the Jewish people. Think of what has been sacrificed in the past, by our own ancestors to keep their Judaism. And think of the heritage that is being sacrificed for the sake of personal reasons.

Ultimately, however, every Jew must have a sense of pride in their own identity. We cannot define ourselves by foreign ideologies, nationalities or religions. As Isak Denisen once wrote:

"Pride is faith in the idea that G-d had, when he made us. A proud man is conscious of the idea, and aspires to realise it. He does not strive towards a happiness, or comfort, which may be irrelevant to G-d's idea of him. His success is the idea of G-d, successfully carried through, and he is in love with his destiny... People who have no pride are not aware of any idea of G-d in the making of them, and sometimes they make you doubt that there has ever been much of an idea, or else it has been lost, and who shall

find it again? They have got to accept as success what others warrant to be so, and to take their happiness, and even their own selves, at the quotation of the day. They tremble with reason before their fate."

Let us not live by the "quotation of the day" but rather by our own heritage, the Torah. When Jews study Torah, and identify as Jews they are really just returning to their true selves.

In the words of the Rebbe of Kotzk:

"If I am I, because he is he, and he is he, because I am I; then I am not I, and he is not he. However, if I am I, because I am I, and he is he, because he is he; then I am I and he is he."

Sources:

- Genesis 24:3-4 & 28:1
- Deuteronomy 7:1-5
- Nechemiah 10:30-31
- Exodus 19:3, 6; Deuteronomy 4:20, 26:17-19; Isaiah 61:6.
- Leviticus 22:32; Maimonides, Book of the Commandments 9
- A Book of Jewish Thoughts, compiled by Rabbi J. H. Hertz
- Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer 16:1
- Maimonides Hilchot Issurei Biyah 12:1
- Isak Denisen, Out of Africa
- Siach Sarphei Kodesh

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Re: To stand or lean during the silent prayer (Ohrnet Tetzaveh):

You wrote that the *Mishnah Berurah* (94:22) allows leaning during *shemona esrai* "only in cases of emergency." With great respect, I believe the needs of the elderly and physically disabled could have been included in your discussion of leaning. I have a *psak* (ruling) from a *Dayan* (Rabbinical Judge) in London to lean whenever necessary during *davening* and an *aliyah* to the Torah, due to chronic osteoarthritis of the spine. By mentioning the word "emergency" you might have inadvertently put more psychological pressure on the disabled to exceed their abilities in this regard. Please consider whether an addendum should be issued.

• Yaakov Wise <yaakovwise@classic.msn.com>

Ohrnet responds: The *Mishnah Berurah's* ruling regarding an "emergency" was certainly meant to include special situations such as those of the elderly and physically disabled.

Re: Moshe's birth certificate; Regarding why the Torah chose the name "Moshe," being that it is not the name given him by his mother (Ohrnet Tetzaveh):

Moshe was drawn from the water and in turn draws all the world from the water. The Talmud asks, "From where do we see Moshe in the Torah?" meaning "What is the source of Moshe in creation, where is his essence defined?" The Talmud quotes the verse (*Bereishis* 3): "*Lo yodun ruchi ba'adam l'olam beshagam hu basar,*" describing G-d's patience before bringing the Great Flood. Moshe has the numerical value of the word in this verse, "*beshagam*" (see *Daas Zekanim ad. Loc.*). Moshe — and the Torah that he brings down to earth — is the force that holds back the waters that threaten to flood the world. It is he who splits the sea and brings the People of Israel across. It is he who hits the rock and draws forth the water that sustains all life. What name could possibly fit better?

• Heshy Grossman <grossman@actcom.co.il>

Weekly Parsha newsletter, Monthly Seasons of the Moon, Weekly Daf, Ask the Rabbi, Holiday specials, Ohrnet magazine, Yossi & Co., Poetry, Essays on Jewish thought and contemporary issues, Excerpts of books by Ohr Somayach faculty, Audio catalog on-line, Jewish Educational Extensions - University on-line, Explore Jerusalem, Mark Twain's Concerning the Jews, JLE summer & winter programs in Israel, ChoppedLiver cartoons, Meet the children of Odessa, The Center for Torah Studies, A road map to Jewish learning, Top Ten lists, and much, much more...a billion and a half bytes of Torah literature and information. Join tens of thousands of other people from around the world and...get connected to Ohr Somayach on the Web at...

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

We sometimes rely on preconceived notions and prejudice when we look at a situation. When the evidence weighs heavily against a person, judging favorably require us to drop old outlooks and open up to fresh ways of thinking. You never know when there might be...

SOMETHING NEW COOKING

The setting: The fully staffed, kosher kitchen of an educational institution. A staff member, Mr. Lewis, in the kitchen on an errand, noticed something wrong. Such a big, efficient kitchen, with only one stove? Surely the kashruth standards would be enhanced with separate stoves for meat and dairy. Mr. Lewis approached the chef, "Uncle Ben," with his idea. "I've run this kitchen since you were in

knickers, and we don't need any advice!" replied Uncle Ben. Not a little taken aback, Mr. Lewis persisted. "Nope," said Uncle Ben. "No need for it." So, Mr. Lewis presented his idea to the principal. "We've got no budget for it," said the principal. "But if you feel it's important and would like to donate one, I have no objection." The next day Mr. Lewis bought a stove top and a table to put it on. He set it up in the kitchen. "I've got the principal's approval," he told Uncle Ben. "I hope the stove will prove helpful." When Mr. Lewis later popped in to check on the new arrangement, he couldn't believe his eyes: The table was knocked over and the stove lay on the floor. "The nerve of that Uncle Ben! Knocking over the new stove like that," he thought. Mr. Lewis picked

up the table, set it off to the side and put the stove on it. Later he returned, looking for Uncle Ben. Again, the table was knocked over and the stove lay on the floor! "He's wild! Out of control," he thought. "I'd better not approach him. Who knows what he'll do to me?" Mr. Lewis bent to pick up the table, and noticed that the stove top was banged up. "From two good pushes!" said Mr. Lewis with clenched teeth.

Just then, a kitchen worker walked in. "Thanks for the new stove, Mr Lewis. It was a really great idea. Even Uncle Ben liked it when he saw it. We'll need to replace that table, though; it only stands for a short while, and then it buckles under. Must be a defective leg..."

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Women customarily light two Shabbat candles every Friday afternoon before sunset. The *Mishnah Berurah* (263:7) says that if a women forgets to light Shabbat candles one week, she needs to light an extra Shabbat candle each week for the rest of her life. So, if she forgot to light candles the first week, she would have to light three candles the next week. If she forgot the next week as well, then she would need to light four candles the third week. If this continues over a period of 10 weeks, what is the total number of candles she will have used during this 10 week period? **Answer next week...**

• Riddle submitted by Lev Seltzer <levs@virtual.co.il>

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BONUS ANSWER!

"Listen carefully," said Sherlock. "The verse could have said: 'A cow or sheep and its child.' Why, then, does it say: 'A cow or a sheep, **it** and its child?' The extra 'it' must exclude something. 'It' implies there's another category, a category that's 'not it.'"

"I don't follow," said Watson.

"Let's say there's a crime. What's the difference between saying "Gertrude did it," and "Gertrude, **she** did it."

"Ah! I understand," said Watson. "The word 'she' means 'as opposed to someone else.' It implies there's another suspect, someone who's now off the hook."

"Exactly. Here too, the word 'it' means we had another candidate, whom we are now excluding."

"Brilliant! Our mystery solved, from one tiny word!"

"Now, Watson, I'll let you tell me why we exclude the father, and not the mother."

"That shouldn't be hard," said Watson. "This verse teaches us to be sensitive. Since slaughtering mother and child is crueler than slaughtering father and child, how can we exclude her? Furthermore, this verse strongly parallels the verse: 'Do not take the mother (bird) with her young.' It's a related idea, and it refers to the mother. There's no such parallel regarding a father animal; in fact, there's no verse anywhere which refers to a father animal and its young."

"Precisely, dear Watson. Precisely."

• Chullin 78b, Malbim

Recommended Reading: "What's Bothering Rashi?" by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek, Feldheim Publishers

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

21:6	RAMBAN Holiness	23:40	The Esrog	306	Counting the Omer
22:32	Sanctifying G-d	291	SEFER HACHINUCH Perfection of Creation	313	Yom Kippur
23:17	Leavened Bread	294	Divine Providence	324	The Lulav
23:27	Judgment and Repentance	296	Purpose of Creation	325	The Succah