

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Go For The Gold!

“Every man who raised up an offering of gold to Hashem” (35:22-24)

When speaking of the gifts of gold to the *Mishkan* Sanctuary, the Torah uses the expression “every man who raised up (lit. waved) an offering of gold to Hashem.” Whereas when speaking about the silver gifts to the *Mishkan*, it says “every man who separated a portion of silver.” The Ramban comments about the disparity between the description of the gifts of gold and the gifts of silver. Those people who brought gold were far fewer than those who brought silver. When someone brought gold, either he himself would wave it or the collectors of the *Mishkan’s* gifts would wave the gold in praise of his important donation.

When you use your gold card in order to support G-d’s dwelling place in this world you’ve got something to shout about.

No Previous Experience Required

“And every man came whose heart was lifted up” (35:21)

Imagine turning up at a spotless hi-tech computer plant and offering your services to build computer chips.

Each chip is no more than a few millimeters square and yet it contains a multitude of components and is capable of making millions of calcula-

tions in the time it takes you to say “I’m looking for a job.”

They say to you: “Fine. What experience do you have?”

You say “None. But I know in my heart that I can build all the chips you need.”

“Yeah, look there’s a food factory down the block. Why don’t you try over there? Maybe you’d be better off frying their chips than ours...”

When *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt, they had been slaves for so many years.

“When we want to serve Hashem, we should remember that no previous experience is required, just a heart that’s uplifted to serve.”

The only skills that they had developed in those years of apprenticeship were how to stir mortar and *shlep* stones. Not exactly an ideal training ground for the extremely high degree of artistry necessary for the building of the *Mishkan*.

Where was their training as carpenters, embroiderers, metal-smiths,

sculptors, weavers?

And yet they came to Moshe and said, “Whatever my lord commands, I will do it.” And they did it.

Even though the *Mishkan* performed the incredibly complex task of uniting Heaven and Earth, but because it was a spiritual building, all it needed was the desire of its builders to serve Hashem; then Hashem, as it were, filled in the rest of their resumes.

When we want to serve Hashem, to be good Jews and good people, we should remember that no previous experience is required, just a heart that’s uplifted to serve.

Room At The Bottom

“The keruvim (cherubim)...with their faces toward one another” (37:9)

The *Mishkan* and later the *Beis Hamikdash* represented the “marriage” of the Jewish People and Hashem. The *keruvim* (cherubim) that were carved from the top of the cover of the holy ark were like a barometer which showed the state of this marriage.

When there was *shalom bayis* — “marital harmony” — between the Creator and His people, the *keruvim* faced each other, but when the Jewish People strayed and were unfaithful, the faces of the *keruvim* turned in opposite directions.

The *mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* tells us that on Yom Kippur when everyone stood in the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it was jam-packed. You could hardly move an inch. But when

PARSHA OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW VAYAKHEL

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts *Bnei Yisrael* to keep Shabbos, and requests donations for the materials for the construction of the *Mishkan* (tent of meeting). He collects gold, silver, precious stones, animal skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the *menorah* and for anointing. The princes of each of the twelve tribes bring the precious stones for the *kohen gadol's* breastplate and *ephod*. Hashem appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen for the building of the *Mishkan* and its vessels. *Bnei Yisrael* contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed to serve as the material for the *Mishkan's* roof and door. Gold-covered boards set in silver bases were connected, and formed the walls of the *Mishkan*. Betzalel made the *aron hakodesh* (holy ark), which contained the Tablets, from wood covered with gold inside and out. On the ark's cover were two small figures facing each other, with wings arching over the ark. The *menorah* candelabra and the *shulchan*, the table with the showbreads, were also made of gold. Two altars were made: A small incense altar made of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for the purpose of sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

OVERVIEW PEKUDEI

The Book of Shemos concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the *Mishkan*, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to Hashem's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the *Mishkan* should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., the month of Nissan. He tells Moshe the order of assembly of the *Mishkan* and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the *Mishkan* is finally complete with every vessel in place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that Hashem's glory rests there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the *Mishkan*, *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

HAFTORAH: YECHEZKEL 45:16-46:18

This *haftorah*, the *haftorah* of *Parshas Hachodesh*, prophetically narrates the consecration of the third and everlasting *Beis Hamikdash*. As this will occur on the first of Nissan, we thus read this *haftorah* on the Shabbat preceding the

first of Nissan.

The *haftorah* begins with the entire Jewish nation contributing towards the Temple's consecration, by raising the funds of the festive inaugural offerings conducted by the prince *mashiach*. This festivity will be celebrated on Passover. The *haftorah* ends with official regulations regarding the prince's authority in granting estates to his subjects, stating that he will not use his power to confiscate lands from their rightful owners, as some of the corrupt kings had done.

THE CHODESH FESTIVAL

The *haftorah* refers to Rosh Chodesh as a festival (46:1-3). This festive nature is evident also from the obligation to bring a *musaf* offering on Rosh Chodesh (*Num.* 28:11).

The Tur (*Orach Chaim* 417) states that Rosh Chodesh was in fact intended to be holy like a *Yom Tov*, with a prohibition of creative activity, but unfortunately we lost this opportunity subsequent to the sin of the Golden Calf. We were commanded to observe the three *regalim* festivals — Pesach, Shavuos and Succos — in the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and the twelve Rosh Chodesh festivals were to have been observed in the merit of the twelve tribes. However, when the twelve tribes sinned, Rosh Chodesh lost an element of its holiness and became a day when toil is permitted. The custom for women to abstain from unnecessary work on Rosh Chodesh is because they did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, for them it retains an air of its original grandeur.

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:
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Web Production: **Eli Ballon, Michael Treblow**

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

© 1999 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.

The OHR SOMAYACH WEB SITE is hosted by VIRTUAL JERUSALEM
www.virtualjerusalem.com

OhrNet is available from several sources:
• E-Mail via InterNet: Write to info@ohr.org.il for information.
• World Wide Web: Our address is: www.ohr.org.il
• REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:
To subscribe, mail or fax your name, address & phone to 02-581-2890.

• Submit your questions to ASK THE RABBI at www.asktherabbi.org
or E-Mail info@ohr.org.il — set subject to "ASK THE RABBI."

This issue is dedicated in memory of
ETTA WILLNER ה"ע
(Eta Bas Elias)
of Hallendale, Florida
on the occasion of her *yahrzeit* on 20 Adar

PARSHA INSIGHTS

time came to prostrate themselves before G-d, there was plenty of room for all.

The same can be said about marriage: If a person “stands,” if he stands on his dignity, if he stands only for himself, if he stands proud with his head high, then matrimony can be very crowding. You can’t move an inch.

But if a person lowers himself, prostrating his own interests beneath those of his spouse, then there is plenty of room for everyone.

HITTING THE MARK, OR MARKING THE HIT?

“Ten curtains of linen, twisted with turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool” (36:8)
 In this week’s Parsha, the Torah details the same description of the *Mishkan* and its furnishings as it did previously in *Parshas Terumah*. Why the need for this repetition?

The Dubner Magid was famous for his use of the *mashal* (parable). With a short story he could illuminate a Torah idea, lighting up the eyes and the minds of all who listened.

The Vilna Gaon once asked the Dubner Magid how it was that he was able to find such wonderfully telling parables that always seemed to hit the bull’s eye. The Dubner Magid, of course, replied with a *mashal*:

There once was a prince who desired greatly to become a master archer. One day while he was traveling he came to a small village. An archery contest was in progress. The prince noticed that one of the contestants’ accuracy was uncanny. Each of his targets was pierced exactly in the center.

The prince asked this fellow how he was able to achieve such striking results. This was his reply: “Well first I aim at a tree. Then, once I hit the tree, I run up to it and paint a circle around the arrow.”

Said the Dubner Magid to the Vilna Gaon: “I do the same. First I find an interesting story, then I look for a relevant verse or Torah thought which it explains.”

In much the same way, this is what Hashem did when He brought the universe into being. First of all He “wrote” the *mashal* — the Torah — and then He looked into it and created the world.

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. But more than an architect’s blueprint which is lifeless, the Torah is the dynamo, the source of the spiritual energy that keeps the world turning.

A fluorescent light may consume only a few watts whereas an air-conditioning unit will need several thousand.

In the same way, the “spiritual electricity” of one Torah verse alone was enough to sustain all the creatures of the sea: “*Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures...*” (*Bereishis 1:20*)

However, the *Mishkan* which was Hashem’s “dwelling place” in this world, required the “spiritual current” of a much higher order.

This is the reason there are so many verses in the Torah which refer to the *Mishkan*. Every verse in its description is like another volt, another watt.

Sources:
Go For the Gold! - Ramban, Rabbi Moshe Zauderer
No Previous Experience Required - Ramban, Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram
Room At The Bottom - V.S.
Hitting The Mark, or Marking The Hit? - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman, Rabbi Reuven Subar

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

BEIT SHEMESH

This large development town has become, for many religious Jews, a virtual suburb of Jerusalem. Historically, it was tied to Israel’s capital in another way.

When the Philistines took the holy ark from the Israelites, they were so frightened by the havoc



which Heaven visited upon them that they sent the ark back to Israel on a wagon drawn by animals without a human driver. The wagon headed for Beit Shemesh where it was received with great rejoicing.

From Beit Shemesh the ark was eventually carried to Kiryat Yearim, and then to Jerusalem under the direction of King David.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

“Moshe gathered the entire community of Bnei Yisrael” (35:1)

At the time of the sin of the Golden Calf, dissent and disunity splintered the Jewish People. So much so that, according to the Talmud Yerushalmi, each tribe actually had its own golden calf, because they couldn’t agree on one!

Here, with the building of the *Mishkan*, Moshe seeks to rectify this; he gathers the entire community together, attempting to unite them as when they received the Torah “like one man, with one heart.”

• Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky in “*Emes L’Yaakov*”

WEEKLY DAF

YOMA 65 - 71

THE “MINUTE MAN” AND THE SCAPEGOAT

The “*ish itti*” — the man prepared for taking the scapegoat into the wilderness and pushing it off a cliff — did not have to be a *kohen*. This mishnaic ruling is derived from the word “*ish*” (man), which indicates that any Jewish man qualified.

Why, asks the *gemara*, did the Torah need to use a special term to teach this? Taking the scapegoat to its death is not a service in the *Beis Hamikdash*, so why would one have assumed that it required a *kohen*?

The *gemara* explains that since the Torah uses the term “atonement” regarding the scapegoat, which symbolically carries all the sins of Israel (*Vayikra 16:10,22*), we might have assumed that it has the status of a sacrifice and is therefore relegated only to *kohanim*. The Torah therefore uses the word “*ish*” to qualify a non-*kohen* as well.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayos raises an interesting question in his commentary. The *gemara* (*Yoma 64a*) equates pushing the scapegoat to its death to the act of slaughtering. And we know that, unlike all subsequent sacrificial procedures, slaughtering a sacrifice does not require a *kohen* (*Berachos 31b*). If a non-*kohen* can slaughter a sacrificial animal, why should I assume that pushing the scapegoat off the cliff — which is equivalent to slaughtering — should require a *kohen*?

To solve this problem, Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayos notes the *gemara’s* ruling (*Yoma 32b*) that all procedures of the Yom Kippur service in the *Beis Hamikdash* must be performed by the *kohen gadol*, including slaughtering. Without the word “*ish*” to teach us otherwise, we would have assumed that even the atonement achieved with the pushing of the scapegoat off the cliff must be done by the *kohen gadol*, not by a regular *kohen*, and certainly not by a non-*kohen*.

• *Yoma 67a*

RESTORERS OF THE CROWN’S GLORY

“**A**nshei Knesses Hagedolah — Men of the Great Assembly.” This is the title given to the extraordinary body of 120 Sages, including the last of the Prophets, who led the Jewish People at the beginning of the Second *Beis Hamikdash* era.

How did they gain the title “great?” asks Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. “By restoring,” he answers, “the crown to its former glory.”

This Sage cites four passages to explain this point.

- Moshe referred to Hashem as “Great, Mighty and Awesome.” (*Devarim 10:17*)
- Yirmiyahu described Hashem as “Great and Mighty”

(*Yirmiyahu 32:18*) but did not use the term “Awesome.”

- Daniel directed his prayer to the “Great and Awesome G-d” (*Daniel 9:4*) but did not mention “Mighty.”
- The *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* returned to Moshe’s full, original praise of Hashem, referring to Him as “Great, Mighty and Awesome.” (*Nechemia 9:32*)

Why did Yirmiyahu and Daniel, each in his own era, delete one of the praises mentioned by Moshe?

Yirmiyahu saw the Babylonian heathens noisily carousing in the Sanctuary and asked himself “Where is G-d’s Awesomeness?” He therefore deleted “Awesome” from his praise.

Daniel saw the Babylonians and Persians subjugating the Jews during the seventy years of exile and asked himself “Where is G-d’s Might?” He therefore deleted “Mighty” from his praise.

The *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* offered another perspective in their time. “On the contrary,” they said, “G-d’s might is expressed in the power to restrain Himself and allow the heathens to carry out their oppression (so that their victims will be moved to repentance). G-d’s Awesomeness is expressed in Jewish survival amongst the nations.” (“How great is the lamb which survives against seventy wolves!” said the Roman ruler Andrianus to Rabbi Yehoshua about Jewish survival. “How great is the Shepherd who saves them!” answered the Sage. — *Midrash Tanchuma*)

How could Yirmiyahu and Daniel, asks the *gemara*, divert from the praise instituted by Moshe? These sages, explains Rabbi Elazar, were aware how much Hashem values truth, and they would not be untruthful in any way.

Maharsha reconciles the divergences in the praises by pointing out that each of the aforementioned praised Hashem according to what he witnessed in his own time. All of them spoke of Hashem’s Greatness which is revealed at all times in His creation. Moshe, who witnessed Hashem’s power in the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt and forty years in the wilderness, added “Mighty and Awesome.” Yirmiyahu saw the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and could not truthfully testify to witnessing G-d’s “Awesomeness.” He therefore deleted this term from his praise. Daniel did not witness that destruction and was still able to experience Hashem’s “Awesomeness,” but he and his generation suffered what Yirmiyahu did not — enslavement in Babylonian captivity. He could therefore not truthfully testify to Hashem’s “Might.” Therefore he deleted that term.

The *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, however, arrived on the scene at the end of that seventy year exile. They witnessed the miraculous survival of their people in the face of so many troubles, such as the deliverance from Haman’s genocidal plot. In retrospect, they were capable of truthfully testifying, on the basis of their own experience, to Hashem’s Might, expressed in His restraint which allowed time for the lesson to be learned, and the Awesomeness evident in Jewish survival.

• *Yoma 69b*

PARSHA Q&A ?

VAYAKHEL

1. What three different words in this Parsha have the same four letters?
2. Why is the prohibition of work on Shabbos written prior to the instructions for building the *Mishkan*?
3. In verse 35:11, what is the *Mishkan*, the tent of the *Mishkan* and the covering of the *Mishkan*?
4. What were the *bigdei hasrad* for?
5. What was unique about the way the goat's hair was spun?
6. Why did the princes contribute last? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with this?
7. Who were the two primary builders of the *Mishkan*? What tribes were they from?
8. What image was woven into the *paroches*?
9. Why was the building of the *aron* attributed to Betzalel?
10. What was the *mizbach haolah* made of?

PEKUDEI

1. Why is the word *Mishkan* stated twice in 38:21?
2. Who was appointed to carry the *Mishkan*'s vessels?
3. What does "Betzalel" mean?
4. How many people gave a half-shekel?
5. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used for covering the sacred vessels?
6. How were the gold threads made?
7. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
8. On which day was the *Mishkan* first erected and not dismantled?
9. Where in the *Mishkan* was the *menorah* placed?
10. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

SHERLOX

SHERLOX AND THE MYSTERY LIST

Did you notice that Mr. Glenshire's account details his movements before and after the crime, but not during?" said world famous detextive Sherlock Holmes. "There's a conspicuous omission in the middle."

"I really didn't notice," said Watstein. "I was too busy being confused."

"About what?" asked Sherlock.

"This verse: *Everyone who had with him techeles, argaman, red silk, linen, goat's wool, dyed-red ram skins and tachash skins, brought them.*" (Shemos 35:23)

"What's confusing about that?" asked Sherlock.

"It's Rashi's commentary that has me stumped," said Watstein. "Rashi explains the verse by inserting the word 'or' several times. Rashi says: *Techeles or argaman or red silk or dyed-red ram skins or tachash skins.*"

"As you know, Dr. Watstein, a list of items in Hebrew is written with the letter *vav* joining each item. Sometimes *vav* means 'and.' Sometimes *vav* means 'or.'"

"Certainly I know that!" said Watstein. "That's my question! I know that *vav* means 'or.' Why do I need Rashi to tell it to me here? Would I think that a person had to have *all* these things in order to donate any one?"

"There's a conspicuous omission in the middle," said Sherlock.

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.

VAYAKHEL

1. 36:35, 37:6,19 - *Paroches, kapores* and *kaftor*.
2. 35:2 - To teach that building the *Mishkan* does not supersede Shabbos.
3. 35:11 - The lower curtains visible from within, the goat-skins, and the ram and *tachash* skins, respectively.
4. 35:19 - They covered the *aron*, *shulchan*, *menorah*, and the *mizbechos* during transport.
5. 35:26 - It was spun directly from the goats' backs.
6. 35:27 - The princes wanted the people to contribute first, and only then they would contribute whatever was lacking. Hence, the Torah omits a letter from their title.
7. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from Dan.
8. 36:35 - *Keruvim*. (See Rashi 26:31).
9. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone.
10. 38:1-2 - Wood covered with copper.

PEKUDEI

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beis Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a "*mashkon*" (pledge) for Jewish People's sins.
2. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
3. 38:22 - "In the shadow of G-d."
4. 38:26 - 603,550.
5. 39:1 - Linen. (See Rashi 31:10)
6. 39:3 - Gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See Rashi 28:6)
7. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and gold bells.
8. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year. For seven days before this, Moshe erected and dismantled the *Mishkan*. (Rashi 39:29)
9. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
10. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the *Mishkan*'s consecration.

SKIP THE TEMPLE, PASS THE BAR

B. Apple from the U. of Baltimore
<bapple@ubmail.ubalt.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I am in the middle of studying for the bar examination and am very nervous about it. I am a practicing Jew, but do not go to temple very often. I feel guilty for asking for G-d's blessing to pass the bar because of my failure to go to temple. Should I feel this way, or does the fact the L-rd is in my heart make my prayers OK?

Dear B. Apple,

I'll let King David answer your question! King David wrote: "G-d is close to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth." (Psalms 146)

G-d is close to you when you are close to Him. You don't necessarily need to go to synagogue in order to be close to G-d, because G-d is everywhere.

It's extremely meaningful to attend synagogue and pray with a "minyan" of ten. But even if you don't do this, there's nothing wrong or hypocritical about praying to G-d in whatever situation you find yourself.

So meditate on G-d's Unity and Omnipotence, and pray. This can be done in your own language, in your own individual way of expression known only to you and G-d.

GOING BACK

Email@Withheld from Montreal, CA
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I am currently a student at McGill University in Montreal, Canada and spent the past year at a yeshiva in Jerusalem. The contrast of a religious environment and a completely secular one has proved quite difficult for me. My Torah study has faltered along with many other aspects of Jewish observance. I am wondering if you can suggest a way for me to remain religious while striving socially and academically in this secular environment.

Dear Email@Withheld,

Ever heard the old expression that "no Jew is an island," or something like that?

An essential "survival technique" for any religious Jew is to be part of an observant community. If you live in the dorms, this presents a problem. It would be much better if you could board with an observant family. It's very likely that such opportunities exist in Montreal; if at all possible, this should be your first step.

Secondly, you need steady Torah study as part of your daily life. It's essential to set aside some time every day and night to study Torah, preferably with a *chavruta* study-partner. Contact Rabbi Eliyahu Finkelstein or Rabbi Nossan Kulefsky, and they will help you find a study program that fits your college schedule. I've included their address below. Wishing you success!

Ohr Somayach of Montreal
6772 deVimy, Montreal, PQ H3S 2R9
Tel: 514-341-6712 / 731-8348

BAD SAMARITANS

Janet from Dallas, Texas
<vanheyst@usa.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Could you please tell me the ways in which Samaritans differed from other Jews? I am preparing a talk and would like to be able to enumerate why the Samaritans were considered different from other Jews. Thank you for your help.

Dear Janet,

The Samaritans were non-Jews brought to Israel by the Assyrians to populate the North after the exile of the Ten Tribes. They ostensibly converted to Judaism, but in reality they continued worshipping idols, save for a period when they were mistakenly considered genuine converts; hence the Samaritans were not considered Jews, neither by Jewish law nor by the Jewish people.

They did not accept the Oral Tradition, which forms the overwhelming bulk of Jewish law. They also did not accept any books of the Bible except for the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua. Today, the Samaritan version of the Torah manuscript differs from ours by about 800 letters.

The Samaritans often acted as enemies of the Jewish people. They tried to destroy the Temple and to inform against the Jews to Roman authorities. The parable of the "Good Samaritan" was actually an anti-Semitic story intended to discredit the Jews.

IF I WERE A RICH MAN

Daniel Rabchinsky from Mexico City, Mexico
<derej@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
We are taught, "Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has." Correct me if I'm wrong, but this phrase does not apply to every aspect of our lives, or how does it work? Let's say that in the material aspect it works, be happy with your house, car, food, etc. But what about the spiritual side? I don't think that it applies there, because if we are happy with our present knowledge, we wouldn't be looking for more and I wouldn't be asking this question! So, how do we apply the principle? Thank you so much for your time and effort. Shalom.

Dear Daniel Rabchinsky,

Should a person be content spiritually? Yes and no. Different people have different spiritual capabilities, and a person should be thankful for whatever spiritual capabilities Hashem has given him.

However, a person should never be content with his spiritual achievements. The Talmud states that "jealousy of Sages increases wisdom." Our Sages teach us that a person should always say, "When will my actions reach the level of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?"

Sources:

- Tractate Bava Batra 22a
- Tanna D'vey Eliyahu, 23:1

MILK-SOP

Name@Withheld from Teaneck, New Jersey
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is there some halacha about bread not allowed to be dairy? I was reading an advertisement in a store in Brooklyn and it was written on the paper something about bread not being allowed to be dairy. Is this a halacha? I have never heard of this before, but I looked around and all the bread I saw was "pareve." Maybe this halacha just never came my way.

Dear Name@Withheld,

Yes, it's prohibited to bake bread either with milk or with meat. That is,

bread must be *pareve*. This is stated in Shulchan Aruch as follows: "It is forbidden to knead dough for bread with milk, in case a person should (accidentally) eat it with meat...It is similarly forbidden to bake bread in the oven with meat fat..."

But if you mark the bread with some identifying symbol *before* baking, or if you bake it in an identifying shape so that it's clear that this bread is not *pareve*, then it is permitted to make it dairy or meaty. Since it's marked, you won't mistake it as *pareve*. (Marking it after baking doesn't help, and such bread may not be eaten.)

For example, I have heard that the *Badatz Eida Charedit* kashrut supervisory board in Jerusalem requires all dairy pastries to be either triangle or moon-shaped for this reason.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 97
- Pitchei Teshuvah 97:3

SNAKE SPEAK

Gene <HYKAEH@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I recall having read that in the Talmud there is a comparison between the fangs of a snake and lashon hara, slander. It states that a snake will bite with his poisonous fangs to harm someone with no benefit to itself. This analogy is likened to the person who commits the sin of evil speech. Will you be kind enough to tell me where this teaching can be found? Many thanks.

Dear Gene,

This statement can be found in the Talmud in *Arachin 15b* and *Ta'anit 8a*.

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

increase the more I study, the more observant I become.

- P.I. Danzig <PIDanzig@aol.com>

Re: **Archived Yiddle Riddle:**

In connection to your Yiddle Riddle there, I'd like to point out that the Dutch *minhag* (custom) is to only say the *shehecheyanu* blessing on the Megillah in the evening.

- Y. Katz, Amsterdam <sskatz@hetnet.nl>

Re: **How Big is a Yarmulke? (Ohrnet Shemos):**

Regarding the question that appeared in "Ask the Rabbi": How big must a head-covering be? My friend Rav Yacov Rappaport quoted his father (Dayan Rappaport of London) as saying that a *kippah* should be big enough to cover your *seichel* (intellect)!

- David Olesker <olesker@IsraelMail.com>

My Favorite Rabbi:

Just a few words to let you know that this is my favorite page in the whole World Wide Web. This is my Rabbi! I love you people! My family is learning a lot too. Shalom and keep up the good work.

- Felix from South America <felixvelez@hotmail.com>

Re: **Not by Chance:**

I read the letter in "Public Domain" submitted by Judith Amrani of Houston in which a "chance" reading of a name on your site led to a reunion with a long-absent friend. Many of us believe, many of us know, that these "chance" happenings are not by chance, but are guided from above, if we choose to notice. I note many, many such "coincidences" occurring in my own life, and they seem to

www.ifyouarelookingfor
interestinginformativeand
downrightgoodliterature
andinformationonthousands
ofJewishandcontemporary
topicsvisitourwebsite.org

THE
OHR SOMAYACH
WEB SITE

www.ohrnet.org • www.ohr.org.il
www.ohrsomayach.org

Exercise your ability to judge favorably; otherwise, you may end up with...

A PUFF AND A HUFF

I got into a cab the other day in Jerusalem. “Do you mind not smoking?” I asked the cab driver.

“No, I don’t mind,” he said. But he made no motion to extinguish the cigarette which dangled from his lips.

“Well then,” I said, “is it possible to put out your cigarette?”

“It’s possible,” he said, but again he took no action.

“Look,” I said, “I can’t ride with you if you’re smoking.”

“Okay,” he said.

“Fine!” I said. “I’m taking another cab!” I opened the door and got out in a huff.

“Look,” said the driver, holding up his *unstarted* cigarette. “It wasn’t even lit!”

Sheepishly, I got back into the cab.

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

What letter from the *Aleph Beis* is missing from the *Bircat Hamazon* and why?

Answer:

“*Peh sophit*” — final *peh*. The reason being that who ever says the blessing after bread properly will be saved from “*aph*, *shetseph* and *ketseph*,” all of these words are expressions of Hashem’s anger and they all end with the letter “*peh sophit*.”

• Source: *Tashbetz Katan* 366

Riddle and answer submitted by Rabbi R.Y. Eisenman, Passaic, NJ <RYE613@aol.com>

continued from page five

SHERLOX ANSWER!

“Notice the conspicuous omission in Rashi’s comment?” asked Sherlock.

“Hmm, now that you mention it, yes. Rashi repeats every item except for the middle two. The verse lists seven items: ‘*techeles, argaman, red silk, linen, goat’s wool, dyed-red ram skins and tachash skins.*’ Yet Rashi mentions only the first three — ‘*techeles or argaman or red silk*’ — and the last two — ‘*dyed-red ram skins or tachash skins.*’”

“Exactly,” said Sherlock. Rashi omits ‘*linen and goat’s wool.*’ Why do you suppose that is? How do these two items differ from the others on the list?”

“Give me a clue,” said Watstein.

“Take note,” said Sherlock, “that the items Rashi mentions are generally combined. That is, they are used *together* in the work of the *Mishkan*. The items Rashi omits, on the other hand, are used separately. Each one is used by itself in some capacity.”

“Yes! Brilliant observation!” said Watstein. “*Techeles, arga-*

man, and red silk were used in combination; for example, they were together in the High Priest’s clothing. Similarly, the dyed-red ram skins and *tachash* skins were combined, joining together to form one of the *Mishkan*’s coverings. The linen and goat’s wool, on the other hand, were used *separately*. The linen was the lone material of the priestly garb, while the goat’s wool was the single ingredient in one of the *Mishkan*’s coverings.”

“Continue,” said Sherlock.

“Therefore,” said Watstein, “I might have thought that the items which are used in combination must be donated in combination. That is, if you don’t have them all, don’t donate any. Thus Rashi needs to negate this fallacy by inserting the word ‘or’ as he does. But regarding the items which are used separately, it’s obvious that they can be donated separately. Thus, Rashi need not mention those.”

• Based on *Sifsei Chachamim*; Sherlock is by Reuven Subar
Inspired by “What’s Bothering Rashi?” by Rabbi Dr. Avigdor Bonchek

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

VAYAKHEL

Ramban

35:1 Date of the Assembly
35:21 Generosity and Inspiration
35:22 Female Leadership
38:8 Mirrors of Virtue

Sefer Hachinuch

114 Recess from Judgment

Ibn Ezra

35:27 Gifts of the Princes
35:34 Learning and Teaching
38:8 Mirrors of Devotion

PEKUDEI

Ramban

38:22 Betzalel’s Genius
40:2 Timetable of the *Yemei Miluim*

Ibn Ezra

38:11 Sunshine and Rain
40:35 Covering the Aron

Sforno

40:18 Essence of the *Mishkan*

Ba’al HaTurim

39:27 Storage of the Garments

Aderes Eliyahu

39:33 The World of the *Mishkan*