

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

TOO JEWISH!

"In front of the kapores (top) that is upon the Ark" (16:2)

There's a famous New York Jewish comedian who has a well-known catch phrase — "Too Jewish!" On hearing this line, audiences, Jewish and Gentile alike, clutch their sides with hysterical laughter. It would be difficult to imagine someone eliciting the same response with the quip "Too Irish!" or "Too Native American!" or "Too Polish!"

For almost as long as there have been Jews, there have been Jews who would like to pretend they aren't Jews. During the Greek occupation of Israel in the times of the Second Temple, well-to-do Jews enamored of Greek culture underwent painful operations to reverse the outward signs of *bris mila* (circumcision) so they could compete in track events in the Greek coliseum. After Napoleon opened the doors of European culture to the ghetto, conversion to Christianity was, for so many brilliant Jewish minds, the ticket into Western Society. And in our own times, so many Dutch and German

Jews, who had almost forgotten they were Jews, found themselves being brutally dragged from their beds in the middle of the night by the Nazis. To those fiends, they looked identical to

"The Torah seeks from us a holiness where our greatest potential is realized through our interaction with others."

their *Ostjudisch* brethren with their beards and sidelocks.

Owning up to being Jewish, and being proud of it, is much more than being proud of your roots. Sometimes it's a lifeline. In Egypt, the Jews were on the precipice of total assimilation. The

Midrash tells us that they were saved because they didn't change their names, their clothes or their language.

In this week's parsha, the Torah uses the phrase "*in front of the kapores (top) that is upon the Ark.*" The Midrash tells us that the *kapores* was to be a lid on top of the holy Ark, not a cover to be countersunk and hidden. The *Aron*, the Holy Ark, symbolizes Torah and *mitzvos*. When a Jew performs the Will of G-d, he has nothing to be ashamed of. His actions should sit "proud" like the *kapores* on top of the *Aron*. He shouldn't cover up his observance of Torah. He should wear it proudly — "on top." Let the world see that he is a Jew.

For when a Jew sanctifies G-d by his actions, he can never be "too Jewish."

EAT, MY CHILD!

"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them 'You shall be holy — for Holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d.'" (19:2)

come from a generation of Jews who believed that synagogue worship consists of middle-aged ladies with

A Message to our Readers

The printed version of OHRNET has been serving you for close to four years. Each week 4,000 copies are printed and distributed to communities throughout Israel. The printing and distribution alone cost Ohr Somayach an average of \$1,000 per issue. Unfortunately, due to budgetary pressures we cannot continue to fund the printing and distribution of OHRNET without your help.

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

ACHAREI MOS

Hashem instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *kohen gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is “for Hashem” and is offered in the Temple, while the other is “for Azazel” in the desert. The Torah states the individual’s obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman’s monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught:

- *Prohibitions:* Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone’s property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one’s parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; and tattooing.
- *Positive:* Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree’s 4th year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf.

Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrus*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.

HAFTARAH: AMOS 9:7-9:15

OVERVIEW

This Haftarah is related to the Parsha of Acharei Mos where G-d warned the people of Israel not to imitate the immoral ways of the Canaanites for the land not to regurgitate them into exile (Vayikra 18:28). In

this Haftarah the prophet Amos warns them that they now resemble the sons of Cush — the Canaanites — and are about to be thrown out of the Land because of their immoral ways. The prophet then tells of the redemption when G-d will return the people of Israel from exile to the bountiful land of Israel, and rebuild the kingdom of the seed of King David. The desolate cities will be rebuilt and the populace prosperous and peaceful forever more.

man will be reached by the reaper” (9:13). This is explained by the Maggid of Dubno that in today’s world we see people who toil and others who enjoy; not always does a man have the pleasure of enjoying the fruit of his labor. Especially during the exile when the people of Israel are oppressed continuously, one can toil in anticipation for the future but someone else will steal the profits. In the future utopia, the plowman who toils will become the reaper who harvests the grain and enjoy the fruits of his hard work, as King David says “Those who tearfully sow will reap in glad song” (Psalms 126:5). Also, this will be the era when everyone who toiled and suffered as a Jew will merit the Divine reward and understand that nothing was in vain.

TOIL AND REWARD

One of the elements in the prophecy of Amos regarding the future golden age in the land of Israel is that “days will come, says Hashem, when the plow-

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לע"נ
הרה"ח ר' דוד בן ר' אהרן הי"ד
ומרת לאה בת ר' שמואל הי"ד
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

blue-hair standing outside the synagogue, almost kissing each other on the cheek, and saying “Lovely to see you too, dear!” Finding this particular mode of worship somewhat lacking, many of my generation have hi-tailed it to the Himalayas where they are now watching their navels and waiting for something to happen.

I have news for them. Nothing happens when you watch your navel — except for getting a stiff-neck. But then we always were a stiff-necked people...

About those blue-haired ladies, however, they made a mistake. They failed to notice that lying dormant behind those blue rinses was a kind of spirituality of which we could not even guess.

“Eat! He never eats!” How many Jewish jokes are there about eating! The caricature Jewish mother complains continually that her offspring are dying of hunger in spite of the fact that their daily calorie intake would support a thoroughbred racehorse.

Behind every joke lies a truth. It may be a distorted truth, but a truth nonetheless. Judaism is unique in that it views the body neither as an enemy nor as a bacchanalian banquet — but as a resource. The body is not only *capable* of spiritual elevation, but it is *created* for this purpose. The body’s deepest satisfaction comes from being correctly used in the service of the soul.

To the secular mindset, holiness is synonymous with abstinence. The

body is incapable of spiritual elevation and must be mortified or transcended.

This week’s parsha begins with G-d saying to Moshe: “*Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them ‘You shall be holy — for Holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d.’*” Since G-d instructed Moshe to speak to *the entire assembly*, we know that this commandment was to be spoken in public to all the Jewish People together. Why? What is it about the command to be holy that it needed to be communicated in this fashion?

The holiness that the Torah seeks from us is not a holiness of separation and denial, of monasticism and seclusion, rather it is a holiness which is to be lived in an *assembly*; a holiness where the body is elevated by the soul and where its greatest potential is only realized in our interaction with our fellow beings.

DYING TO HELP

“After the death of Aharon’s two sons”
(16:1)

This week’s Parsha is the source of the Yom Kippur service. The Torah introduces the description of this holiest of days with a reference to the death of two of Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu. What is the connection between Yom Kippur and these two tragic deaths?

Just as Yom Kippur brings atonement, so the death of the righteous brings atonement. When a righteous

person ascends to the world of souls, the other souls rejoice at his presence amongst them. This rejoicing can create a spirit of forgiveness and atonement in the higher realms toward those who are still on earth.

A great threat to Judaism has always been the attempt to take one mitzvah and make it the be-all and end-all of Judaism. The Torah prohibits adding to or subtracting from the *mitzvos*. Perhaps this injunction can also be understood as a prohibition to take one mitzvah and elevate its importance above the rest of the Torah.

For example, there’s a well-known faith that took one aspect of Judaism — that the death of the righteous atones — and made it into an entire religion. However, there is another enormous difference between their concept and ours. The Jewish idea of atonement, whether it comes from the death of the righteous or from Yom Kippur, is predicated on the genuine repentance of the transgressor in both thought and deed. Blind faith is no substitute for genuine regret, cessation of wrong-doing, and a whole-hearted acceptance never to repeat the error. The death of the righteous on Yom Kippur can do no more than to create a climate in which true repentance is possible. It can never be a substitute for doing *teshuva*.

Sources:

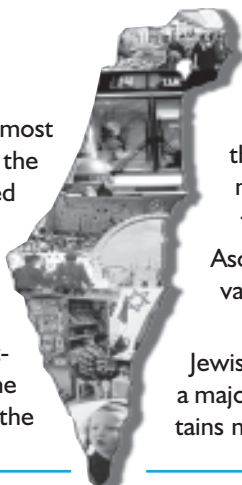
Too Jewish! - Hadrash V’Ha’iyun in Iturei Torah
Eat, My Child! - Chasam Sofer in Iturei Torah
Dying To Help - Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1; Meshech Chochma; Artscroll Chumash

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

ASHKELON

In Biblical times Ashkelon was one of the five most important Philistine cities. Here is where the mighty Samson slew 30 Philistines and used their outfits to pay off the wager which he lost to their countrymen through their trickery. (*Shoftim 14:19*) The city’s prominence as a stronghold of anti-Israel feeling is evident from King David’s eulogy on Saul who was slain in battle by the Philistines: “Publicize it not in the streets of Ashkelon lest the daughters of the



Philistines rejoice.” (*Shmuel II 1:20*) The Prophets Yirmiyahu (47:6), Amos (1:8) and Tzefania (2:4) all prophesied the destruction of this perpetual thorn in the side of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael.

The word scallion is derived from the Latin name Ascalonia given to a kind of onion extensively cultivated at Ashkelon.

Modern Ashkelon, established in 1953 by the Jewish South African development company Afridar, is a major development town in the South which still contains many relics of its colorful past.

WEEKLY DAF

SUCCAH 20 - 26

THE LEAVES THAT DO NOT WITHER

“EVEN the casual remarks of Torah scholars should be studied.” This counsel of the Sage Rav is based on King David’s comparison of the Torah scholar to a “tree planted by a stream, which produces fruit in its season and whose leaves do not wither.” (*Tehillim 1:3*) Even the least substantial part of this tree — the leaves, which symbolize the casual remarks of the Torah scholar — will not go to waste.

Two different dimensions of what can be learned from the conversation of the Torah scholar appear in Rashi’s explanations here and elsewhere. In our *gemara*, the above counsel is cited in reference to a statement made by Rabbi Shimon regarding his experience in the succah of Rabbi Gamliel. Tevi, the non-Jewish slave of Rabbi Gamliel, slept under a bed in that succah. Rabbi Gamliel called this to the attention of his colleagues by exclaiming: “Did you see what sort of Torah scholar my slave Tevi is? He is aware that slaves are exempt from the mitzvah of succah and he therefore sleeps under the bed.”

Rabbi Shimon’s report on this incident concludes that “from the casual remark of Rabbi Gamliel we learned two things: 1) Slaves are not obligated in the mitzvah of succah; 2) One who sleeps under a bed has not fulfilled the mitzvah of sleeping in the succah (because the covered area created by the bed serves as a barrier between him and the succah).”

Rabbi Shimon intentionally used the term “casual conversation” rather than “words” in order to show that even though Rabbi Gamliel was not consciously teaching words of Torah to his audience, but was only priding himself on the wisdom of his slave, there was still so much to learn in halachic matters from this casual remark.

In *Mesechta Avodah Zarah (19b)* Rashi offers a different perspective of Rav’s counsel. Even the casual remarks of Torah scholars should be studied in order to learn from them how to express oneself in their style of speech which is pure, rich and healing.

The two explanations are complementary rather than contradictory. When one listens carefully to even the casual remarks of a Torah scholar he is bound to learn something he did not know before, and how to express himself in better fashion.

• *Succah 21b*

RAINPROOF SUCCAH

THE *schach* covering a succah cannot be either too sparse or too thick. In regard to the minimum, the *mishna* tells us that there must be more space on top covered than left open, so that there will be more shade than sun. As regards the maximum, the same *mish-*

na seems to set no limit, for it states that “If it is thickly covered like a house, even if the stars are not visible inside, it is kosher.”

In the Jerusalem Talmud, however, the inference is drawn from the *mishna* that a succah in which the stars are not visible is indeed kosher, but it is not the preferred way of making one. This is why the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 631:3)* writes: “It is customary for the *schach* to be sparse enough for the stars to be seen through it, but if it was thick as a house and the stars are not visible it is still kosher.”

Rabbeinu Tam, however, introduces another limitation. If the *schach* is so thick that rain cannot penetrate the succah it is not kosher. He offers two proofs. One is from a later *mishna (28b)* which states that a man may leave the succah if enough rain is falling to spoil his food. If one can make the *schach* thick enough to keep rain out, why should he not be required to make the *schach* rainproof rather than be exempt when rain enters?

A second proof is from the *mishna in Mesechta Ta’anis (2a)* which states that rain on Succos is a bad sign, because it prevents fulfillment of the mitzvah. If a succah can be made rainproof, the falling of rain should hardly be considered a bad sign.

Tosefos (*Succah 2a*) also mentioned a similar approach in explaining a statement by Rabbi Zeira. Rabbi Zeira who bases the disqualification of *schach* more than twenty cubits high on a passage (*Yishayahu 4*) describing the function of a succah, does not, however, require a succah to be rainproof based on that very same passage which mentions this as one of a succah’s functions. His conclusion is that since a succah must be a temporary structure rather than a permanent one, it would be wrong for it to be rainproof.

Even though the *Shulchan Aruch* does not cite Rabbeinu Tam’s opinion, the *Mishna Berura (631:6)* does cite later authorities who rule that if no rain can enter the succah, it is too much like a regular house and therefore not kosher. If, however, it is impossible to remove some of the *schach* to make it vulnerable to rain, one can rely on the more lenient opinions that it is still kosher.

• *Succah 22a*

derech

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PARSHA Q&A ?

ACHAREI MOS

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshas Acharei Mos* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beis Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *kohen gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *kohen gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *Azazel*. What is *Azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *kohen gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *kares*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshas Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?

2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbos?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shmos* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11, "Do not steal"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

ACHAREI MOS

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die .
8. 17:13 - Non-domesticated kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.

9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as Hashem's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not

- violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shmos* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Kares*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

The Torah forbids eating the blood of domestic animals "because the soul is in the blood." (*Vayikra* 17:11) The blood of wild animals is also forbidden, but with opposite phrasing: Because "its blood is in its soul." (*Vayikra* 17:14). Why does the Torah reverse the wording?

A domestic animal "sells its soul" to its human master. In exchange for food and shelter, it is milked, shorn, worked and...slaughtered. But a wild animal runs from such security. It prefers to face freezing winters, burning summers and prowling predators as the price of independence.

Thus, a domestic animal's "soul is in its blood;" i.e., its spirit of independence is prisoner within its "blood-desires" for safety and ease. By contrast, the wild animal's "blood is in its soul;" its "blood-desires" are engulfed by its overwhelming independent spirit.

• Based on *Moznaim L'Torah*

LOOKING DOWN OUR NOSES AT MOSES

David Levine
<dlevine@inter.net.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
G-d willing, I hope to buy my son his bar-mitzvah tefillin. The price for a “good” pair is \$500-\$800. I noticed that one can get numerous stringencies and “hidurim” in the tefillin, with each extra “hidur” adding to the price. I hope to get him the best, but I was wondering if in the past they kept all these stringencies? It seems that some “extras” are only available today with our technology and manufacturing methods, and that it wasn’t possible to produce this quality of tefillin in the past. If so, then do we have to be more *machmir* (strict) than Moshe Rabeinu?

Dear David Levine,

I once heard a story about a renowned Rabbi. One year in preparation for Succot, he bought three *etrogim*, even though the mitzvah requires only one. He did this in order to fulfill all of the different opinions regarding exactly what constitutes a valid *etrog*. Seeing this, his wife commented, “My father didn’t have three *etrogim*.” Answered the Rabbi, “Your father also didn’t own three suits. If I can afford three suits, I can also afford three *etrogim*.”

This doesn’t put us on a higher spiritual level; previous generations did the best that they could with their available resources, and we do the best that we can with ours. The point is not to compare yourself with others, but to do your best with whatever G-d has given you.

INTERFERENCE

Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
A person who is dear to me says he became an atheist. He still loves Jewish humor, a good Jewish joke, but refuses to come to a synagogue — even to meet his old friends there! My question is: May I pray that Hashem turn his heart to Judaism? Maybe, if he is nudged a little, he will make the rest of the road on his own feet. But isn’t Hashem expecting that a person turn to Him of his own volition? He gave us freedom of will so that we could discern good from evil and make the right choice, and my concern is that I may be asking for something self-contradictory. Is it ethical to pray that another person become more Torah observant?

Dear Name@Withheld,

I’m touched by your question. From a logical point of view, your question is very sound. Doesn’t G-d want us to observe the Torah through our own free choice?

Clearly, it is a mitzvah to pray that our fellow Jews should return to the Torah path, just as we pray for ourselves in the daily prayers, “Return us, our Father, to your Torah.”

But does it make sense to pray for someone to become Torah observant? Doesn’t this contradict free will? Not really. You see, every person, Torah observant or not, has free choice. So, when you pray for someone to become Torah observant, you are praying that his free choice be changed from one level to another.

For example, right now let’s say that his free choice level is “Should I eat one ham sandwich today or two?” We pray that he become a Torah observant Jew, and then his choices will be on a higher level: “Should I study Talmud for one hour today or two?” We pray that his free choice level be elevated to that of a Torah Jew.

Another answer to this question is that we pray that G-d put the person in a situation where it will be easier for him to choose to keep the Torah. For example, let’s say a person doesn’t keep the Torah because he never had a good Torah education. Through your prayers, G-d can open an opportunity for him to learn about Judaism; for example, he “bumps into” an observant Jew who invites him for Shabbat.

Sources:

- Responsa Iggrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:40:13
- Avotot Ahavah, by Rabbi Mordechai Becher and Rabbi Moshe Newman

IT AIN’T KOSHER!

Mark Spice, Sheffield, UK
<mark.spice@uk.hboc.com>
wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I know kosher means foods etc. that are allowed. But what is the term for foods, etc., that are not kosher?

Dear Mark Spice,

In common jargon, non-kosher food is called “*treif*.”

Actually, the Torah doesn’t use the word kosher to refer to kosher food! Regarding animals, the Torah speaks about the animals that are *tahor* (pure or kosher) and *tamei* (impure or non-kosher). Otherwise, we refer to non-kosher food as “*asur*,” which means “forbidden.”

Regarding mitzvah-objects — like a Torah scroll or a *succah* — we refer to them as either “kosher” (valid) or “*pasul*” (invalid).

BETH JACOB

Moshe Lowenberg
<Cars118@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Why are Orthodox girls’ schools throughout the United States called

“Beis Yaakov?” What was the relationship between Yaakov and girls’ education? Thank you for your attention to this. We were not able to come up with an answer in our study group.

Dear Moshe Lowenberg,

Before giving us the Torah, G-d said to Moses: “Thus shall you say to the *Beis Yaakov*, and tell the *B’nei Yisrael*.” Our Sages explain that *Beis Yaakov* refers to the women, while *B’nei Yisrael* refers to the men.

Hence, women’s Torah institutions — whose aim is to transmit the teachings of Sinai — are fittingly called *Beis Yaakov* in honor of the very first link in that chain of transmission, the women who stood at Mount Sinai.

Sources:

- *Shmot 19:3 and Rashi*

SWEET LAND OF LACTOSE BEE

Miriam from Montreal, Canada

<docusys@colba.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have known for some time that in the phrase “*erezt zavat chalav u’dvash* — a land flowing with milk and honey” the “*dvash*” refers to date honey (not bee honey). What is the *chalav*? Certainly it was not cow’s milk. Was it goat’s milk or could it be some other type of milk? Does this have some inference that honey and milk should be

our main food sources?

Dear Miriam,

The milk referred to is cow’s or goat’s milk. The honey is fruit honey, such as from figs or dates.

This doesn’t mean that milk and honey should be our main food sources, but rather that the Land of Israel is overflowing with everything good.

The Talmud relates that our Sages saw goats eating from fig trees. The figs were so luscious that they were dripping with juice; the goats udders were so full that milk flowed out. These two liquids mingled into a sweet stream, and the land was literally “flowing with milk and honey.”

Ramban notes that regions with good air, good pasture and good water, such as mountainous regions, produce the healthiest animals which give the best milk (witness Swiss cheese and Swiss chocolate). But these types of climates don’t usually produce top quality fruits (ever heard of Swiss plums?). The Torah stresses that the Land of Israel has both.

“Milk and honey” also allude to mother’s milk and bee honey. These are the only two kosher substances which are derived from a non-kosher source (bees and people are not kosher). The implication is that the Land of Israel has the spiritual energy to purify even the impure.

Sources

- *Ketubot 111b, Megilla 6a*
- *Ramban, Shmot 3:8*

PUBLIC DOMAIN
Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ohrnet” features

Re: To Pay the Truth:

A while ago, I asked you whether I have to tell my supplier that they delivered more expensive goods than they had invoiced. Reluctantly, I followed your advice to tell them their mistake and pay the extra money. It was the best thing I could have done! My relationship with them has improved immensely, they are much more willing to deliver to me and treat me much better. I followed the halachic advice, and thank G-d I have already seen the benefits, and G-d willing I will continue to see more.

- *Name@Withheld*

Re: “Give and Take”(Ohrnet Teruma):

You wrote about a body without limbs as a metaphor for

Torah without *mitzvos*. Regarding the body itself you wrote: “Without limbs there can be no body.”

May I presume to heighten your sensitivity regarding handicaps that are of a purely physical nature? It is truly unfortunate when a person becomes a double or even a quadruple amputee. However, I learned as a volunteer at a long-term care hospital-home that such a handicapped person appears to have a “bigger” personality. (Dare I say “soul”?) Oft times more prominent than the personality in normally equipped four-limbed persons. The personality truly seems to shine forth perhaps in a “kind of proportion” to the amount of physical body that is missing. I still remember the vibrant sense of humor that shone from the “bodies” of these injured, limbless soldiers. They taught me an unforgettable lesson about just how big a soul can seem to be. How often do we see in our lifetimes that when old age and illness strips us of our physical capabilities, Hashem grants us the gift of heightened spirituality?

Finally, let us look to the story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, Germany about one thousand years ago: He composed *Unetaneh Tokef* in his last days of life, after having been brutally mutilated by the Christian bishop for refusing to convert to Christianity. Rabbi Amnon’s soul did not lack power; on the contrary, it spilled forth soul-powers that prompt us to greater spirituality to this very day when we recite *Unetaneh Tokef* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

- *Chani Kreisel, Jerusalem*

Judging favorably doesn't really require such fancy footwork. As the saying goes: Don't judge a man till you've walked a mile in...

THE WRONG MOCCASINS

The other day I was at a wedding in which I didn't dance. People thought I was rude but they didn't know the other side of the story. What really hap-

pened was that since I was in such a rush to get to the wedding, I accidentally put on two different shoes that didn't match! If I would have danced I would have made a complete fool of myself. Unfortunately, I wasn't given the benefit of the doubt. I was the laugh of the neighborhood for a whole week. People should have thought twice before talking about me.

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

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

What name is mentioned three times in the Torah, once as a non-Jew, once as a convert, and once as a Jew.

Answer:

Re'u'el. The first Re'u'el mentioned is one of Esav's sons, who was not Jewish (*Bereishet 36:4*). The second refers to Yisro, a convert to Judaism (*Shemot 2:18*, see *Rashi 4:18*). The third Re'u'el is the father of the *nasi* (prince) Elyasaf, prince of the Tribe of Gad. His name is spelled three times as De'u'el, and once as Re'u'el (*Bamidbar 2:14*).

• Riddle courtesy of Yitzy Kimmel from Brooklyn, NY <yitzy@sprynet.com>

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

ACHAREI MOS

Ramban

16:21 The Scapegoat
17:2 Meat in the *Midbar*
17:7 Demons
17:11 Prohibition Against Eating Blood

Sefer HaChinuch

184 The Sanctity of the *Mishkan*
185 Yom Kippur
187 Covering the Blood

Sforno

16:30 Repentance
17:7 Demons

KEDOSHIM

Ramban

19:2 Be Holy
19:14 Who May Not Be Cursed
19:17 Love and Rebuke
19:18 Love Your Neighbor
19:30 Shabbos
19:32 Honoring the Elderly

Sefer Hachinuch

227 Swearing Falsely
236 Tale Bearing
237 Standing Idly
238 Hatred
239 Rebuke

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