

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHIOT BEREISHET - NOACH · 24 TISHREI - 1 CHESHVAN 5765 · OCT. 9 - 16, 2004 · VOL. 12 NO. 1

PARSHA INSIGHTS

BEREISHET

THE SUN AND THE MOON

“And Gd made two great luminaries...” (1:16)

You could hardly find two objects that are more different than the Sun and the Moon. The Sun is the most prominent feature of our solar system, containing approximately 98% of the solar system’s total mass. One hundred and nine Earths would be required to fit across the Sun’s disk, and its interior could hold over 1.3 million Earths. The Sun’s outer visible layer has a temperature of 11,000 F (6,000 C). This layer has a mottled appearance due to the turbulent eruptions of energy at the surface.

Solar energy is created deep within the core of the Sun. Here, the temperature (27,000,000 F; 15,000,000 C) and pressure (340 billion times Earth’s air pressure at sea level) are so intense that nuclear reactions take place. Every second, 700 million tons of hydrogen are converted into helium by nuclear fusion. In the process five million tons of energy are released.

The Moon is the sole satellite of the planet Earth. It is an inert body 238,857 miles from the Earth. Its diameter is

2,160 miles. Both the rotation of the Moon and its revolution around the Earth takes approximately 29 days, 12 hours, and 43 minutes. This synchronous rotation is caused by an asymmetrical distribution of mass in the Moon, which has allowed Earth’s gravity to keep one lunar hemisphere permanently turned toward Earth.

The Moon has a crust 37 miles thick at the center of the near side. If this crust were uniform over the Moon, it would constitute about 10% of the Moon’s volume. It has a maximum surface temperature of 123 C, and a minimum surface temperature of -233 C.

Almost the only thing that the Sun and the Moon have in common is that they are both roughly spherical celestial bodies belonging to our solar system.

However, there is another similarity that is rather strange. It’s everyday knowledge, but when you think about it, there’s no ostensible reason why it should be so.

Take a piece of cardboard and make it big enough that if you were to hold it up to the Sun, the Sun would be obscured. Now with that same piece of cardboard, hold it up to the full Moon. That same piece of cardboard will cover

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

BEREISHET

In the beginning, Hashem creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. This process of creation continues for six days. On the seventh day, Hashem rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbat, which returns to us every seven days. Adam and Chava — the human pair — are placed in the Garden of Eden. Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” and in turn gives the fruit to Adam. By absorbing “sin,” Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished. Death and hard work (both physical and spiritual) now enter the world, together with pain bearing and raising children. Now begins

the struggle to correct the sin of Adam and Chava, which will be the main subject of world history. Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava, bring offerings to Hashem. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives inferior produce and his offering is rejected. In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel and is condemned to wander the earth. The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of Noach. After the death of Sheith, Mankind descends into evil, and Hashem decides that He will blot out Man in a flood which will deluge the world. However, one man, Noach, finds favor with Hashem.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TUTORING

How important is it for someone who has reached even a moderate level in his knowledge of Torah to help another who is just a beginner?

Two of the great Talmudic Sages, Rabbi Chanina (*Mesechta Maccot 10a*) and Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi (*Ta'anit 7a*) were quoted as stating: "Much have I learned from my teachers; even more from my colleagues; and most from my students."

In Mishlei, King Solomon describes two scenarios of the response given by the above-mentioned individual with a measure of knowledge to the request of a novice for help.

"A poor man and one of moderate means meet; G-d brightens the eyes of both." (*Mishlei 29:13*)

"The man of means and the poor man meet; it is G-d Who created them both." (*ibid. 22:2*)

One of the explanations given by our Sages is that these passages deal with an encounter between a Jew poor in his Torah knowledge and one who has already reached a moderate level, with the former asking the latter to tutor him. If he responds positively the result is that G-d will brighten the eyes of both with an increase in their Torah knowledge. Should the potential tutor selfishly refuse, however, he is reminded by the wisest of men that the G-d Who created one knowledgeable and the other ignorant can easily reverse the roles by removing the wisdom of the reluctant tutor and enlightening the one who eagerly sought his help.

• *Temura 16a*

A SECOND STAGE FOR THE SECOND TITHE

During the time of the *Beit Hamikdash* a Jew took his *maiser sheini* – the second tithe of his crops which he had to separate during the first, second, fourth and fifth year of the seven-year cycle – up to Yerushalayim and consumed it there. Since the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* he can no longer do this and must instead

redeem these crops on a coin which must eventually be destroyed.

The source for our inability to consume the crops in Yerushalayim today without redeeming them is the Torah passage which speaks of "eating before your G-d in the place which He has chosen... the tithe of your crops... and the first born of your herd and flock..." (*Devarim 14:23*). An equation is thus made between this tithe and the firstborn animal which must be offered as a sacrifice. Just as it is impossible to offer such a sacrifice when there is no *Beit Hamikdash*, so too can the second tithe crops not be consumed in Yerushalayim without redemption.

Although we can never assume to know exactly why this rule was established, we may speculate on the basis of what the *Sefer Hachinuch* writes as a possible reason for the Divine command to bring second tithe crops specifically to Yerushalayim. The conclusion of the above-mentioned passage states that the purpose of consuming these crops in the place chosen by G-d is "in order that you will learn to revere the L-d your G-d all your days." This was achieved by the fact that a family would probably have one of its sons settle in Yerushalayim in order to consume the large quantity of second tithe, which was almost ten percent of its produce, along with the fourth-year fruits and tithes of animals which could be consumed only there. Spending so much time in the holy city that was the seat of the Sanhedrin and the center of Torah study would produce a Torah scholar who would have a powerful impact on the entire family. With the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* this advantage was severely reduced if not totally eliminated and there was not that much to be gained by being compelled to bring the second tithe there anymore.

• *Temura 21a*

HOW THE KOHANIM ATE

After the *kometz* of the *mincha* meal offering had been placed on the altar, the remainder was consumed by the *kohanim*. "In the sacred place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Assembly *shall they eat it.*" (*Vayikra 6:9*)

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1. Why does the Torah start with the account of Creation?
2. What happened to the light that was created on the first day?
3. Why isn't the word "good" associated with the second day?
4. How were the trees supposed to taste?
5. On which day were the sun and moon created?
6. Hashem blessed the birds to be fruitful and to multiply. Why did He not do so with the beasts?
7. In whose likeness was man fashioned?
8. What kind of food did Adam eat?
9. Why is "the sixth day" written with the definite article?
10. At the end of the sixth day what was the world still lacking?
11. Why was man made from dust gathered from the entire earth?
12. How is man superior to the animals?
13. Why was it not good that man be alone?
14. Where do we learn that one must not add to a commandment from Hashem?
15. What does it mean that Adam and Chava "knew that they were naked?"
16. Why did Hevel choose to be a shepherd?
17. What was the marital practice of the generation who lived before the flood?
18. What did Tuval-Cain invent?
19. Why did Chanoch die at a young age?
20. What was the sign that Shem was born with great propensity for righteousness?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Bereishet's Questions!

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

1. 1:1 - So that when the nations accuse us of stealing *Eretz Canaan* from the Canaanites, we can respond that Hashem, as Creator, has the right to give the land to whomever He sees fit, and He gave *Eretz Canaan* to us.
2. 1:4 - Hashem saw that the wicked would be unworthy of it so He hid it for the righteous.
3. 1:7 - Because the work with the water wasn't completed until the third day. Anything that is incomplete is not "good."
4. 1:11 - The wood was to have the taste of the fruit.
5. 1:14 - They were created on the first day and suspended in the firmament on the fourth day.
6. 1:22 - He did not want the serpent, who was to be cursed, to receive a blessing.
7. 1:26 - In the likeness of the angels.
8. 1:30 - Vegetation.
9. 1:31 - "The" in Hebrew is the letter *hey*, which has a numerical value of five. Hashem created the world on the condition that it will endure only if the Jewish People accept the Five Books of the Torah.
10. 2:2 - Rest.
11. 2:7 - So that wherever he might die, the earth would receive his body.
12. 2:7 - He was given understanding and speech.
13. 2:18 - If he were alone, he would appear to be a god. The creation of woman emphasized man's dependence.
14. 3:3 - From Chava. Hashem commanded not to eat from the tree but she added not to touch it. Because she added to the command she eventually came to transgress it.
15. 3:7 - They had been given one commandment and they had stripped themselves of it.
16. 4:2 - Since the ground had been cursed he refrained from cultivating it.
17. 4:19 - They married two wives, one with whom to have children. The other one was given a potion which prevented her from bearing children.
18. 4:22 - Murder weapons.
19. 5:22 - Though he was righteous, he was easily influenced. Therefore Hashem took him before his time to protect him from sinning.
20. 5:32 - He was born already circumcised.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"And Kush begot Nimrod...He was a mighty hunter before G-d..." (10:8,9)

One of the major changes that took place after the Flood was that G-d permitted man to eat meat. Previously, all mankind was vegetarian. The first person to make use of this permission was Nimrod. Nimrod became a great hunter. The fame of his prowess spread far and wide. It was said that he never missed his target. The true key to his success, however, had nothing to do with a sharp eye or a steady hand. Nimrod possessed a secret that made his success unassailable.

When Noach left the Ark, one of the heirlooms he brought out with him were the garments that G-d made for Adam. Cham, the second of Noach's three sons, stole those garments. Cham bequeathed them in secrecy to his son Kush. Kush, in turn, passed them on to his favorite son, Nimrod. It was these garments that gave

Nimrod the power to slay any animal of his choosing. Whenever Nimrod wore the Adam's garments, Nimrod's targeted prey would fall to the ground when he merely drew his bow back.

What is the connection between Adam's clothes and the ability to subdue animals?

When G-d created the animals, He brought them before Adam and asked him to give each one of them a name. Adam was able to look into the essence of each animal and give it a name. In the Holy Language of Hebrew, the name defines the essence. A name is not conventional, it is essential. The name is the clothing of the essence. The name is the connection to the spiritual root in the upper worlds.

When Nimrod wore the garments of Adam, he was able to subdue the animals because he had access to the garments of their essence, to their names.

• Source: Based on the Midrash, Bereishet Rabba 37:3

PARSHA OVERVIEW

NOACH

It is ten generations since the creation of the first human. Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and Hashem resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth. Hashem instructs Noach to build an ark. After forty days and nights, the flood covers even the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days the water starts to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends out a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later Noach again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After another seven days Noach sends the dove once more; the dove does not return. Hashem tells Noach and his family to leave the ark. Noach brings offerings to Hashem from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose. Hashem vows never again to flood the entire world and des-

ignates the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. Noach and his descendants are now permitted to slaughter and eat meat, unlike Adam. Hashem commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibition against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder, eating meat torn from a live animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system. The world's climate is established as we know it today. Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Cham, one of Noach's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yefet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended. The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Bavel, which results in Hashem fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parsha concludes with the genealogy of Noach to Avram.

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1. Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
2. Why did Hashem tell Noach to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
3. The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
4. What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
5. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the flood for seven days?
6. Why did the first water of the flood come down as light rain?
7. What did people say that threatened Noach, and what did Hashem do to protect him?
8. What grouping of creatures escaped the punishment of the flood?
9. How deeply was the ark submerged in the water?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
14. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
15. Why does the command to “be fruitful and multiply” directly follow the prohibition of murder?
16. Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
17. Why did Noach curse Canaan specifically? Give two reasons.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called Yiscah?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Noach's Questions!

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

1. 6:13 - Robbery.
2. 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, “Hashem is bringing a flood,” it might encourage some people to repent.
3. 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse.
4. 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. “Kosher” and “non-kosher” are Torah concepts.
5. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.
6. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
7. 7:13,15 - People said, “If we see him going into the ark, we’ll smash it!” Hashem surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:4 - Eleven amot.
10. 8:11 - Nothing. It was a leaf, not a branch. (The olive leaf symbolized that it’s better to eat food “bitter like an olive” but which comes directly from Hashem, rather than sweet food provided by humans.)
11. 8:14 - A full solar year.
12. 8:14 - Eleven days.
13. 9:3 - After the flood.
14. 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
15. 9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
16. 9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
17. 9:22,24 - Because Canaan is the one who revealed Noach’s disgrace to Ham. And because Ham stopped Noach from fathering a fourth son. Thus, Noach cursed Ham’s fourth son, Canaan.
18. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, persuading them to rebel against Hashem.
19. 11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
20. 11:29 - The word “Yiscah” is related to the Hebrew word “to see.” Sarah was called Yiscah because she could “see” the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.

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The repetition of the command to eat these remainders after already mentioning such a directive in the first part of the passage led our Sages to the conclusion that there was a subtle message here about how they were to be eaten. Since sacred food such as sacrificial flesh and *mincha* remainders were supposed to be eaten in a dignified fashion, they could not be consumed while one was ravenously hungry, rather only after one had eaten enough so that the eating of these items would achieve satiety. If the remainders of the *mincha* were too meager in quantity to achieve this purpose, the repetition of “shall they eat it” directed them to eat along with this sacred food other foods of a non-sacred nature.

The problem with this, however, is that a non-sacred item may not be brought into the Sanctuary where the *mincha* remainders must be eaten. Even the *bikkurim* first fruits which were brought by Jews to the *Beit Hamikdash* could not have their ritual waving done within those sacred precincts. How then could the *kohanim* complete their meal of *mincha* remainders with non-sacred food?

Two approaches are offered by Tosefot. One is that they ate the non-sacred food outside the sacred area and then entered it to eat the sacred *mincha* remainders. Another approach (which Tosefot repeats in a number of other sections of the Talmud) is that the prohibition against bringing non-sacred items into the Sanctuary is limited to those things connected with some form of service, such as offering a sacrifice or performing the waving ritual with the *bikkurim*. When the item has no connection to any service there is nothing wrong with bringing it into this area. The proof of this, points out Tosefot, is that one may enter the sacred area wearing non-sacred clothes. (The sacred garments of the *kohanim* were required only while performing the service and not while they ate their sacred foods.)

• *Temura 23a*

SOMETHING WHICH CAN'T BE REPLACED

When a man uses the word “*tachat*” in transferring the sanctity of one animal to another, it can have two different meanings. Should the animal whose status he wishes to change be of sacrificial sanctity which cannot be redeemed, we interpret his use of the term as an

attempt to transfer the sanctity of that animal to another, and the result is that both are considered sacred. This is in accordance with the Torah law of *temura* which is the central subject of this *mesechta*.

If the animal whose status he wishes to change has not been sanctified for sacrificial purposes but is only sacred as Sanctuary property which can be redeemed, we interpret his use of the term *tachat* as an expression of his desire to redeem that animal by offering another as an exchange. This is so because the law of *temura* does not apply to such animals.

As an example of this term being used to indicate exchange, the Sage Abaye quotes a passage in which G-d promises His people that in the end of days “I shall bring gold – *tachat* – in place of – brass..” (*Yeshayahu 60:17*). This was a prophecy that all the materials which the heathen nations took from Israel – brass, iron, wood and stone – will be replaced by them with more precious materials.

This same passage is quoted by Rabbi Yochanan (*Mesechta Rosh Hashanah 23a*) along with a comment that there is something for which there is no replacement. “Woe to those heathen nations,” he declared, “for whom there is no atonement.” While they are capable of replacing the materials they stole, as the Prophet points out, they can never replace the lives of Rabbi Akiva and his fellow martyrs. This is the meaning of the passage we quote in the *Av Harachamim* prayer we say before the Mussaf Service on Shabbat. “And though I have acquitted them, for shedding My people’s blood I have not acquitted them.” (*Yoel 4:21*)

• *Temura 27a*

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THE LOST TRIBES WILL THEY RETURN?

Dear Christopher,

In the first installment <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1788> we saw that according to our sources, the Lost Tribes were exiled south to Ethiopia, and East through Syria, Iraq, Iran, India and China. In the second installment <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1817> we located peoples that may be remnants of the Lost Tribes living in those places and explored whether they or their customs are Jewish. In this final installment, we'll explore the possibility of the Lost Tribes reaching Japan and conclude with a discussion of whether the Lost Tribes will ever be re-united with the Jewish people.

While there is no explicit mention in our sources of the Tribes reaching Japan, the Japanese/Shinto tradition seems to have some remarkable similarities with Judaism.

For one, a certain Japanese mythology closely resembles the Biblical chronology: The Patriarch of the Japanese nation comes down from heaven, in place of "the other" while he is preparing. [*Jacob received the birthright instead of Esau, and the blessing while Esau was preparing.*] The Patriarch falls in love with a beautiful woman but her father refuses unless he marries her older, less desirable sister. [*Lavan prevented Jacob from marrying Rachel until he married Leah first.*] The Patriarch and his desired wife have a son who is bullied by his older brother and forced to the country of a sea god. [*Jacob and Rachel had Joseph who is sold by his older brothers to Egypt on the Nile.*] There, he attains power with which he troubles his older brother concerning famine, but eventually forgives him. [*Joseph rose to power and tried his brothers regarding the famine until he forgave them.*] In the meantime, the Patriarch marries the daughter of the sea god, having a son whose 4th son conquers Japan. [*Joseph married Osnat, daughter of Potifar, and had Ephraim, whose 4th son Joshua conquered Israel.*]

Also, the Shinto festival of *Ontohsai* resembles the Sacrifice of Isaac. In the Biblical event, Abraham leads his son up Mount Moria and binds him as a sacrifice on a wooden altar. While the knife is in Abraham's hand, an angel intervenes and instructs him to offer a ram in Isaac's stead. Similarly, in the Shinto festival, a boy is led to the top of a mountain called "Moriya-san". He is tied to a wooden beam on a bamboo carpet as a priest symbolically approaches with a knife. Then a messenger appears, the boy is released and a sacrifice provided by the "god of moriya" is offered in his stead.

Furthermore, a Shinto shrine resembles the ancient Jewish Temple. The entrance to the shrine is in the East

while the shrine is in the West. There is a laver near the entrance for washing hands and feet. The shrine is comprised of a courtyard, an inner holy section, and an innermost holy of holies. The holy of holies is elevated above the holy section by stairs. Worshipers pray in front of the inner holy section, but only the priest can enter the holy of holies, and only at special times.

A Japanese *Omikoshi* resembles the Ark of Covenant. It is similar in size, overlain with gold, with gold winged figures on top. It is carried on the shoulders with poles, while accompanied with song and dance. The carriers must immerse themselves beforehand, and a special ceremony whereby the bearers carry the ark through a river is reminiscent of the Biblical description of the Jews carrying the ark through the Jordan river on their way into Israel.

There are other similarities as well. The Japanese Shinto priest's robe often has cords hanging from its corners, resembling Jewish *tzitzit*. Also, a certain type of Shinto priest called a *yamabushi* wears what's called a *token*, a small black box on the forehead between the eyes, tied with a black cord behind the head. This closely resembles Jewish *tefillin*. Interestingly, a Shinto legend tells of a ninja who sought a certain *yamabushi* named Tengu in order to receive supernatural powers. Tengu gave him a "*tora-no-maki*", a scroll of the torah, which gave him special powers. Also, *mizura*, an old Samurai hairstyle resembles Jewish side locks. A statue of a Japanese Samurai dating from the 5th century shows long, curly locks of hair in front of the ears.

After we've observed all these disparate peoples, most of whom don't even consider themselves to be Jewish, it's natural to ask whether the Lost Tribes will ever be re-united with the Jewish people. Consider the words of three of the greatest prophets:

Isaiah 11: "And it shall come to pass...that G-d...will recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea." Jeremiah 23: "The day comes...that they shall no longer say: 'As G-d lives, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt'; but...that brought up...the House of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries where I had driven them'; and they shall dwell in their own land." Ezekiel 37: "Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph...and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them together with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick...I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land...and they shall be no longer two nations, nor shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more."

That the Lost Tribes will be redeemed is echoed in Talmudic sources as well: "To those who were exiled to the

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THE DANGER OF A DOUBLE STANDARD

The Torah begins with the basic information that G-d created the world rather than with the first command given to the Jewish People as we would expect from a book of laws. The reason for this, explains Rashi in the Torah portion we will be reading this Shabbat, is to provide a response to the charge which the nations of the world will make that we are “aggressors” who “occupied” Eretz Yisrael after taking it away from its inhabitants. The message is a simple one – G-d created the world and He gave the land which belongs to Him to the people that He chose to inherit it.

In our own generation Israel has come under attack from many elements outside the Arab world for “occupying” territory belonging to the Palestinians. These same bleeding hearts who so vociferously champion a Palestinian state are

never heard clamoring for the establishment of an independent state for the millions of other peoples whose lands have been occupied. This is how their double standard was recently described by Prof. Alan Dershowitz of Harvard in a Jerusalem Post column:

“They pretend to care about the Palestinians only because it is Israel that is accused of oppressing them. They don’t give a collective darn about the Kurds because they are being oppressed by Arab and Muslim nations, just as they don’t seem to care about the Tibetans, who are being occupied and oppressed by China, and the Chechens, who are being abused by the Russians.”

This double standard is as old as time and so is the Torah response to it that Israel is ours forever.

ANYONE HUNGRY?

When G-d decided that the world He had created had become so filled with corruption that it had to be destroyed by a great flood, He ordered the family of Noach chosen for survival to spend a year in an ark. They were given the responsibility of feeding all animal life that shared the ark with them in order to form the beginning of a new post-deluge world.

Even though G-d, with His infinite wisdom and power, could have devised any number of ways to guarantee the survival of the designated men and animals, He chose this way for a special purpose. The pre-deluge world was characterized by the callous indifference of man towards his fellow man, breeding the selfishness and violence which invited destruction. To prepare a new world in which consider-

ation of others would be the *raison d’etre* it was necessary for Noach and his family to be occupied for an entire year catering to the needs of their animal charges. This was a powerful lesson in caring because there was hardly an hour in the day when some animal was not hungry.

When we read this Shabbat the Torah portion describing Noach’s experience we appreciate the cynical absurdity of the statement made the other week by the Minister of Interior that there is no one suffering from hunger in Israel. Poraz, who represents the elitist party opposed to both the religious and the poor, was sharply criticized by everyone, from religious to secular, and from Right to Left, for failing to learn the lesson of the ark.

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THE MUFFED HAFTARAH

Yossie's parents looked forward to the Shabbat of his Bar Mitzvah when he would read in their synagogue the Haftara. Blessed with a beautiful voice and musical talent he was certain to do a great job on the Haftara he had so diligently prepared and to thus bring great *nachat* to his proud parents.

But something went wrong. The reading of the Haftara was marred by several off-tune moments and some bouts with hoarseness. As they left the synagogue Yossie's father noticed that his son suffered no hoarseness at all and asked him why his reading was so characterized by loss of voice and tune.

"A friend of mine read the Haftara last week for his Bar Mitzvah," explained the boy, "and he did a rather poor job

because he has a hard time carrying a tune. Next week another friend with little musical ability will be reading the Haftara for his Bar Mitzvah. If I would have read the way I was capable of doing because of my musical ability, people would have made the comparison between my beautiful rendition and the poor showing of the others. How could I thus embarrass my friends? I therefore decided to mess up my own reading a bit so that no comparisons would be in order."

It was Yossie's father who revealed this incident when he spoke at a *Sheva Brachot* celebration for his son almost a decade later. Yossie had met with great success in his learning and in his *shiduch*, and it was his father's conviction that his nobility as a Bar Mitzvah boy earned him these blessings from Heaven.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE NAMES

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

THE CAVE AND THE STONES

There are many legends connected with the village of Peki'in in northern Israel. Some say that the Jews who once lived in this village, not far from the new Pek'in established as a Jewish community in 1955, were not exiled from the Holy Land along with their brothers. The Arab riots in 1936, however, forced them to leave for safer parts of the country and only a few of them returned to live alongside Druze and Christian neighbors.

The most popular tradition is that Peki'in is the site of



the cave in which the great Talmudic Sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son Elazar hid from the Romans for many years, miraculously sustained by a spring of water and a carob tree while totally absorbed in Torah study.

But there is also a fascinating legend attached to the ancient synagogue which stood in Peki'in. Two carved stones were reportedly brought from Jerusalem and laid sideways in the building. When the Temple was destroyed they fell as a sign of mourning.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

GIVING A LIFT

Question: As I drive to shul or work in the morning I pass people waiting for a bus who may be going in my direction. Offering them a lift causes me to lose precious moments in my tight schedule and irritate the drivers in the cars behind me. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: One of the *mitzvot* which guarantees a Heavenly reward in this world and the next is *hachnasat orchim* – hospitality to guests. The late Torah giant, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, once noted that in our modern society one usually has guests for meals because he wants their company and this can barely qualify as benevolent hospitality. The greatest opportunity for fulfilling this mitzvah today, he said, is offering someone a ride in your

car.

A recent visitor from the States told us about a eulogy which he heard last month for a Jew who, until he died at the age of 97, never missed going to shul in the morning to pray with a minyan despite his frail condition. One day he was standing on the sidewalk futilely trying to hail a cab. As a last resort he waved to a passing garbage truck. When the Brooklyn Sanitation Department worker heard his problem he invited him into the cab of his truck and went out of his way to drive him to shul.

This story is not only a lesson in what King David tells us about G-d "fulfilling the wishes of those who revere Him" but also a challenge to those who indifferently pass up the opportunity for inviting a guest into their car.

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the Moon and the Sun.

In other words, from our perspective the Moon and the Sun are almost identical in size.

Isn't that strange? That of all the places our planet could be located in space, we happen to be exactly where the Moon and the Sun look the same size to us.

In the Talmud (Chullin 60b), Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi poses a contradiction in a verse in this week's Torah portion: It says both that "...G-d made two great orbs of light," and "the great orb of light and the small orb. (1:16)" How can it be that first there are two great orbs of light and then only one?

At the dawn of Creation, G-d created the Sun and the Moon of equal size and brightness. Said the Moon before the Holy One Blessed be He: "Master of the World, is it possible for two kings to use one crown?" G-d said, "Go and diminish yourself."

Those who seek honor, like the Moon, are brought low, while those who bear insult in silence, like the Sun, will be rewarded. However, because the Moon accepted the ver-

dict without complaint, G-d added the stars to the nightscape to give the Moon a retinue of light.

When we look up to the sky, the Moon and the Sun look the same size to us. We know that one is millions of times the size of the other. But they look the same size. Isn't that strange that we, the dwellers on this planet, are standing in a place in space where these two totally dissimilar orbs appear the same size?

When we look up at this celestial anomaly, we are looking at a cosmic hint. A hint to a time that was. A hint to a time to come when the lacking and the blemish of the Moon will be filled; when it will be restored to its former glory and the radiance of the Almighty will fill the world as it did in the six days of Creation.

Sources:

Talmud Chullin 60b; Midrash Rabba; Rabbi Reuven Subar; Calvin J. Hamilton

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Sambatyon, G-d will say, "Return!" To those exiled beyond the Sambatyon, He will say, "Become revealed!" Regarding those who were exiled to Rivlata, G-d will make underground passageways through which they will come to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (Midrash Yalkut Shimoni, Isaiah 49). The Mishna in Sanhedrin brings differing opinions, though: "Rabbi Akiva says, the Ten Tribes will *not* return as it states, 'and He threw them into foreign lands like this day' [meaning] just as the day goes and does not return, they will also go and not return. Rabbi Eliezer argues, 'and He threw them into foreign lands like this day' [means] just as the day first becomes dark and then becomes light, so too the Ten Tribes who are now in darkness will in the future come to light."

The opinion of Rabbi Akiva is difficult to understand. How can he contradict the Prophets? And how is it possible that the Tribes, so integral to the Jewish people, will not be part of the redemption? The answer is based on the statement of the Sages that individuals of each of the Lost Tribes later joined the Jews who were exiled to Babylon (Megilla 14a). Accordingly, these prophecies reveal that the Tribes will be reconstituted from within the Jews who later returned to Israel. However, those who remained among the non-Jews will not return. Rabbi Eliezer, however, is of the opinion that even those who remained in exile will ultimately convert back to Judaism and rejoin the Jewish people.

So explains Tiferet Israel (Sanhedrin 10:3), "It seems to me that Jeremiah returned many of them [to Judah] as we see in Megilla and Erechin, only that many remained mixed among the Gentiles. We know that many of them are in India, China and Ethiopia. They know only that they are Jews and they circumcise themselves and keep a few commandments. However, their worship of G-d is mixed with idol worship. On this point Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer disagree: whether in the future those who remained intermixed will return in strength under the wings of the Divine Presence. Because some of them are absolute idol worshippers, and have forgotten the name of Israel, yet some Jewish customs remain from their ancestors, as in the case of the people in Afghan, who some wise geographers see as forgotten Jews. [Rabbi Akiva is of the opinion that such people will not return to Israel, while Rabbi Eliezer argues that] also in Egypt all were idol-worshippers (Sanhedrin 103b); nevertheless G-d in his mercy opened their eyes by force and redeemed them [so here, such peoples will be returned to Israel]."

May we merit seeing the Final Redemption speedily in our days!

Sources:

- *Arimasa Kubo, The Israelites Came To Ancient Japan*
- *Marvin Tokayer, The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel*