



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. A Mount of Names
2. A Verse to Death
3. Hungarian Bat-Mitzvah
4. Public Domain
5. Yiddle Riddle



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Parashat Vayera

Mr. Leo Garfinkel <CRNN58A@prodigy.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What are the seven names of Mount Sinai and what do they mean?

Dear Mr. Leo Garfinkel,

According to the Midrash, *Har Sinai* has seven other names. All together it has eight names, as follows:

1. *Har Sinai* — from the word *sneh* — “bush.” This refers to the burning bush *on Har Sinai*. Also, *Sinai* is related to the word *sinah* — “hatred” and “rejection.” By giving the Torah to human beings instead of to the angels, G-d thereby *rejected* the angels.
2. *Har Ha-Elokim* — “G-d’s Mountain,” because G-d revealed His Torah there to the Jewish people. Through the Torah, the Jews become a G-dly people.
3. *Beit Imi* — “My Mother’s House.” By accepting the Torah the Jews were born as a nation.
4. *Har Chorev*, from the word “*cherev*” — “sword.” The Torah invests special Torah courts, *sanhedrin*, with authority to try capital cases.
5. *Har Chemed* — “Desirable Mountain.” G-d desired Mount Sinai as the place from which to give the most desirable of treasures, the Torah.
6. *Har Bashan* from the word “*shen*” — “tooth.” Sustenance and blessing come to the world in the merit of Torah study and observance. Just as teeth prepare the food for digestion, so too the Torah brings nourishment to the world.
7. *Har Gavnonim*, from the word “*gevina*” — “cheese.” Cheese is a metaphor for purity, probably because it’s made from pure white milk.
8. *Har Moriah* — “Mountain of Teaching,” where G-d taught Moses the Torah.

Sources:

- Shmot Rabbah 2
- Bamidbar Rabbah 1
- Shir Hashirim Rabbah 8

Ricardo <jkcastro@sao.nutecnet.com.br> from Brazil wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I'd like to know if it is true that “Elo-kim” means Allah in Arabic (I saw this in a home page). Another question: How could Moshe have written the book of Deuteronomy if there's a chapter in it that tells about Moshe's death? Bye and Thanks!

Dear Ricardo,

Allah is Arabic for the Hebrew word “El.” “El” means the Almighty.

The Talmud (*Bava Batra 15b*) asks your second question: Who wrote the last eight verses of the Torah which describe Moses's death? The Talmud offers two answers. According to one opinion, Joshua wrote them. According to the other opinion, Moses himself wrote them using tears instead of ink. After Moses died, Joshua traced over the letters with ink.

Some explain the Talmud to mean that Moses wrote the last eight verses not with tears, but rather in a jumbled fashion. In Hebrew, the word for “tears” (*dima*) is spelled the same way as the word “jumbled” (*dema*). That is, Moses wrote the last eight verses with no spaces to differentiate between the end of one word and the beginning of the next. It was left to Joshua to split up the words.

Laszlo Hunyadi <hunyadi@l1ab2.arts.klte.hu> from Hungary wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We, from the Orthodox Congregation of Debrecen, Hungary, have a very urgent question. Nine of our girls are going to have their Bat Mitzvah celebration on Sunday, September 28. Since we have not had such a celebration in the past decade or so, we are not quite sure about the way this celebration is supposed to be carried out.

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to “Ask The Rabbi” and send it to ohr@virtual.co.il. Or use our form at <http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/page/ask.htm>. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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Some people suggest that the girls make an oath rather than a vow saying that they will be loyal to the Jewish People and the Torah. We do not yet know where this oath will take place, in front of the Torah or in a separate room. We have doubt about the halachic propriety of this oath. Since we have no acting rabbi at this moment, we hope to receive the proper answer from you. Thank you very much,

Laszlo Hunyadi, one of the parents and Nathan and Kati Asmoucha, shlichim from Jerusalem

Dear Laszlo Hunyadi and Nathan and Kati Asmoucha,

First, a heartfelt Mazel Tov on your daughter's Bat Mitzva! May she and her friends continue to be sources of pride for the entire Jewish People!

Having sought advice from distinguished Rabbis here in Jerusalem, I recommend that you hold the celebration in a hall, and that one of the community members say something appropriate on behalf of the congregation, and one, some or all the girls deliver a short speech about the Torah, its commandments and ideals.

In general we refrain from making any vow or oath, because making a vow or oath is considered an *extremely* serious matter. Therefore, I don't think either a vow or an oath is appropriate here.

Laszlo Hunyadi replied:

Dear Rabbi,

Thank you so much for your thorough investigation and the advice you have given. We will be pleased to consider it in our preparations for our girls' Bat Mitzva. Toda raba!

"Ask the Rabbi" receives and responds to about 500 questions each week. We respond to all queries personally and directly, usually within 48 hours. We edit and publish a select few of these responses in our weekly **"Ask the Rabbi"** column.

Yiddle Riddle:

How is water from the sea
like atonement like a cow?
(Say these clues in Hebrew
And then you'll know just how!)

How's an onion in the shade
like three that he kneaded?
(These clues, too, are much clearer,
When in Hebrew they're repeated.)

Riddle courtesy of:
Kol Simcha English Radio, 103.5 FM
Friday mornings 9:30am -1:00pm

Answer next week...

New Feature !

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

I am writing in response to the man who asked about shalom bayit versus Torah observance, since his wife didn't want to observe as much as he did. I don't know where he lives but there are several places that offer counseling with an orthodox counselor who would have more understanding about these issues. He said they went to counseling but it didn't help, perhaps counseling with an orthodox counselor who understands the issues might be more helpful. In New York there is a clinic called the Marpeh Clinic that has Orthodox counselors, on Long Island there is a clinic also, and in most major cities one may be able to find an orthodox counselor. I am an orthodox psychiatrist in Philadelphia, and I know that here if one were to call a rabbi they would be able to give the person my number or someone else's. Hope this is of some help to the person who wrote.

Deborah < Deb546750@aol.com >

Regarding the man who is evidently on a different path from his wife with respect to level of Jewish observance: I happen to be very sensitive to this and when I saw your response that seemed so general — "consult an authority that both spouses can respect" — I was very upset. On reflection, my real concern is that I hope that a more extensive response had been issued to them directly than that which was posted.

[Name and email withheld]

Ohrnet Responds: Due to editorial considerations the answers published in "Ask the Rabbi" differ somewhat from the answers that are sent directly to the people who asked the questions. The following is an excerpt from our reply to the question concerning shalom bayit, which was sent directly to the person before the column was published:

"...It is precisely because of the gravity and the far reaching consequences of Shalom Bayit, that for me to try and address your problem through the impersonal medium of email would be irresponsible. I have too much respect for both the sanctity of marriage in general and your particular relationship to try and offer you advice as to the correct approach for you to try and save your marriage, without being able to listen to both you and your wife in a personal setting. From your message, it is clear that you are very much in need of advice and direction; if I knew which area you lived in I would be able to recommend that you contact a specific person who would be able to offer you the kind of personal attention that you need...."