



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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Parshat Beshalach

WHO'S ON FIRST?

Deborah Ambrose from Toronto, Canada
< ambrosed@smh.toronto.on.ca > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How can the principle of believing in the Resurrection of the Dead be reconciled with the concept of transmigration of souls. Both are Jewish beliefs but I have a hard time understanding how, when a soul has so many bodies, we are all resurrected. Whose body gets the soul?

Dear Deborah Ambrose,

Kabbalistic sources teach us that the main reason for reincarnation is for the soul to fulfill its role in the creation and achieve the spiritual level for which it is destined. If a soul does not manage to do this in its first life, it is given another chance, and another. If the soul did not succeed in three times, it will have to settle for whatever it has gained in the everlasting afterlife. Another reason for reincarnation is to repay a soul for its deeds in a way parallel to its sins; for example, a rich miser might be reincarnated as a poor beggar and be disregarded by a rich man, who was himself one of the paupers disregarded by the rich miser in his previous life.

The question arises, if a soul can be reincarnated into several different bodies, which body 'gets' the soul in the time of the resurrection? The answer is that the soul will be in the body in which the soul achieved its nearest completion, the last body.

THE FIRST STEPS

Andrew Spencer from UK < white.star@lineone.net > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Although I was born a Jew, the circumstances of my childhood and schooling have left me all but ignorant of my religion. I have tried to study on my

own but to little avail. Can you suggest any study materials or correspondence course which will help? If this is not the kind of help you can give me here I will understand. With all my thanks, and G-d bless you.

Dear Andrew Spencer,

First, let me say how impressed I am with your dedication and determination to become a more informed Jew. I suggest that you look at the Ohr Somayach Interactive Web site at <http://www.ohr.org.il> —if you use the web. Also, if you get in touch with Rabbi Danny Kirsch of Ohr Somayach / JLE London at < jle@jle.org.uk >, I'm sure he will be of great assistance.

PRINCE OF ISRAEL

Martin Kleiner from Tampa, FL
< martin@insytec.com > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Shalom. The Tampa Tribune gave a very good review of the film "Prince of Egypt" and said that it was very biblically correct. After seeing the movie, I went back and reread the story in Exodus. The text is very short covering the time Moses was born until the Hebrews left Egypt. As far as I can tell, most of the story is not taken from the Scriptures. Question: Is this story referenced elsewhere; either in Scriptures or on the walls of the ancient ruins of Egypt?

Dear Martin Kleiner,

I've never seen the film "Prince of Egypt," so I can't vouch for its accuracy. However, the account of the Exodus is greatly expanded upon in the Talmud, in many Midrashic texts, and in the Haggada which we read on Passover Night. These texts supply tremendous amounts of description and detail which were left out of the Torah text.

For example, the Midrashim tell us that Pharaoh actually apprehended Moses and tried to kill him, but that

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Moses' neck miraculously became hard as rock upon which the executioner's sword could have no effect.

But even if some of the film's *details* are accurate, it's hard for me to imagine that a Hollywood cartoon would accurately portray the personality of G-d's holiest prophet.

Source:

- Devarim Rabba 2

DO CHICKENS HAVE LUNGS?

Daniele Kurzweil, NYC wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Why don't you have to check a chicken's lungs as you would a cow's to ensure that it's kosher?

Dear Daniele Kurzweil,

We check only for frequently existing problems. A lesion on the lungs of a cow is quite common, while in a chicken it is uncommon.

It's interesting to note that there is a Rabbi in Jerusalem who maintains that the percentage of problems in chicken lungs has grown lately, and he therefore supervises a special line of kosher chickens in which the lungs are checked.

NOONS

Mimi Katz from Chicago, IL <GeveretK@dls.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

If, in Hebrew, "good morning" is "boker tov," "good evening" is "erev tov," and good night is "lailah tov," then why is "good afternoon" said in the plural "tzohorayim tovim?"

Dear Mimi Katz,

The word for noon in Hebrew, *tzohorayim*, is plural. Why?

Nachmanides in his commentary on the Chumash addresses this question. He explains that the singular, *tzohar*, means "light" (compare the word *zohar* which means "shining"). Noon is called *tzohorayim*, "lights," in the plural for the following reason: In the morning when the sun is in the east, there is a shadow on the west side of objects. In the afternoon when the sun is in the west, there is a shadow on the east side of objects. Only at noon, when the sun is directly overhead, is there no shadow, neither to the east nor to the west of objects. Both sides are light, hence, noon is called "*tzohorayim*" in the plural to indicate a time of total light.

Sources:

- Ramban's commentary to Chumash Shmot 12:5

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked:

One Friday evening recently, I said the first paragraph of *shema* five times, and each time it was for a different reason. How did this occur?

Answer:

We accepted Shabbos early, praying the evening service before three stars appeared in the sky. We read all three paragraphs of *shema* as a preface to the silent prayer. Even though one does not fulfill the obligation of saying the evening *shema* before the stars appear, it is customary to read *shema* with its blessings in order to say the "redemption" blessing immediately before the silent prayer (*somech geula l'tefilla*) and to pray amidst words of Torah study.

When the three stars came out, we repeated all three paragraphs of *shema*, this time in order to fulfill the mitzvah to recite the evening *shema* in its proper time, night time.

When I put my son to sleep, I said the first paragraph of *shema* with him. This time I was fulfilling the obligation of teaching Torah to my son, as it says in the *shema* itself, "you shall teach them to your children."

That week's Parsha was *Parshat Vaetchanan*. As part of the custom of completing the Parsha before reading it in *shul*, I read the entire Parsha, which includes the first paragraph of *shema*.

Before going to sleep, I said the first paragraph of *shema* a fifth time during the bedtime — *kriat shema al ha'mita* — as protection for my soul during sleep.

Riddle submitted by Benjie Gerstman <gerstbpg@netvision.net.il>

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: Many Thanks!:

Your publications are so useful for me! They really help me a great deal to widen my Jewish knowledge and to answer more accurately to very interesting questions. I also help to write a weekly *choveret* newsletter for our *kehila* congregation Sucat David and I find that your material gives me a better understanding of the weekly *Parsha*, as well as of all the different Jewish matters that are so clearly explained in your "Ask the Rabbi" column. Thank you and *tizku lemitzvot* for your precious material that I receive every week via e-mail (I do not have internet).

Malka Armoza, Buenos Aires <shseider@criba.edu.ar>

Re: Kashrut for Sefardim (Ohrnet Vayeshev):

In a recent Ask the Rabbi column you said: "Pareve food — i.e., food that is neither dairy nor meat — cooked in dairy equipment may not be eaten together with meat, but it may be eaten immediately after eating meat." Please note that the source is *Yoreh Deah* 95:2 Rema which dictates the Halacha only for non-Sefardim. The Sefardim follow the halacha that it is indeed permitted.

Samuel Cohen <SamuelC@ackerstein.co.il>

Re: Circumcision with Anesthesia (Public Domain Vayechi):

As a physician who has done circumcisions and witnessed many a *bris*, two points: First, an average circumcision done on a baby in the hospital from the time the doctor begins to end is only a couple of minutes. Second, some Rabbis maintain that you must use local anesthetic, such as one of the anesthetic creams on the market today, because it is

a violation of Torah law to cause pain when there is an alternative; in fact, some will not allow a *bris* in their *shul* if the *mohel* doesn't use anesthetic.

Steven Luger, M.D. <Swluger@aol.com>

Re: Ohrnet Insights:

I publish **Ohrnet's** "Parsha Insights" along with community notices, along with "Yossi & Co." Parsha cartoon that you post on the Web (for the *kinderlach*), for two synagogues in Cape Town. The pages are so well accepted that there are various members who pay for the photo-copying. *B'virchas haTorah*.

Dovid Jubiler, Cape Town, S. A. <d-jubiler@usa.net>

Re: I'm My Own Grandpa (Parshat Miketz):

Another response to Dovid Solomon's Riddle, "who in *Tanach* has a name which makes him sound as though he's his own uncle:" David (as in *David Hamelech*), spelled *daled-vav-daled*, can also be pronounced *dod* which means "uncle."

Along the same lines, there is also a person named *Savta*, which means grandmother. (*Bereishet* 10:7).

In a different approach, *Dishon* (*Bereishet* 36:27) is the uncle of *Dishon* (*Ibid.* 36:25). Regarding your question "whose name makes him sound like his own grandpa," Nachor's grandfather is Nachor (*Bereishet* 11:24-26).

JJ and Livia Levine <jjlr@erols.com>

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