

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

STREET HEATER

“Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe regarding the Cushite woman that he had married.” (12:1)

Imagine a Native American, who has spent all his life on the reservation in Canyon de Chelly, Arizona, finding himself on the East Side of New York City around 29th and Lex. He walks down the street and stops. His attention is riveted on a nearby window. Straddling the window is a rectangular metal box about three feet long by eighteen inches high. It blasts out hot air, chugging away in a relentless mechanical symphony. He lifts his eyes. Brownstone apartments rear upwards to the sky. And in each and every window he sees the same metal box. Hundreds of them, all belching hot air into the humid Manhattan sky.

He thinks to himself “These white men sure love the heat. It’s so hot today — and they still put these contraptions in their windows to heat the street!”

When Miriam found out that Moshe had separated from his wife, she thought that he had become conceited. She thought Moshe viewed himself as being so close to G-d that he had risen beyond a normal marital relationship, that his self-imposed monasticism was a product of an inflated ego. Of course, what would be considered conceit in Moshe, would to us appear humility beyond anything we have ever seen or experienced. We have no parameters to equate our concepts of conceit and humility to Moshe. But, on that exalted level, Miriam thought that Moshe

had succumbed to pride.

But how could Miriam have thought that Moshe was acting out of pride? The Torah calls Moshe the “humblest of all men.” Surely Miriam knew the Torah’s evaluation of Moshe. How could Miriam have even suspected his motives?

Moshe may have been the humblest of all men, but he wasn’t a *shlepper*. Being humble doesn’t mean walking around hunched over with a miserable look on your face. Moshe knew that he was the king. But he

“...one who loves Torah will not be satisfied with the Torah he has amassed, he will want more.”

also knew that compared to Hashem, he was nothing. His humility lay in understanding, like no man before or since, exactly how small he was compared to Hashem. It was because Moshe worked on himself to this point that Hashem concretized his awareness by speaking to him “face to face.” Then Moshe’s humility became visceral. He could “see” how

small he was.

Humility is not something you can judge from the outside. There are some people who seem very humble, but inside they are watching everyone watching them be humble. They are starring in their own mental movie called: “A Life of Total Humility.” On the other hand, a king may appear to behave in a rather grand fashion, whereas inside he genuinely sees himself as totally unworthy.

Sometimes things aren’t quite the way they seem. Sometimes a cool air-conditioner can look like a street heater blasting out its own hot air.

YOU CAN ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

“Why should we be made less by not offering Hashem’s offering in its appointed time among the Children of Israel.” (9:6)

You can always get what you want. It all depends on how much you want it. Our Rabbis teach us that according to the way we desire to go — so are we led. If we want to travel the spiritual path, we will find opportunities for spiritual growth opening up all around us. If, however, we want to go in the other direction, we will find a million Technicolor dreams to lose ourselves in. What you want is what you get.

In this week’s *Parsha* we learn of the mitzvah of *Pesach Sheni* — “Pesach Two.” “Pesach Two” was not a sequel to a “Pesach One.” It wasn’t that Pesach One was such a big hit that we were given another chance to relieve it all over again. No. It happened that, through no fault of

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Aharon is taught the method for kindling the *menorah*. Moshe sanctifies the *Levi'im* to work in the *Mishkan*. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning with the golden calf. The *Levi'im* are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the *Mishkan* from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, Hashem commands Moshe concerning the *Korban Pesach*. Those ineligible for the *Korban Pesach* request a remedy, and the *mitzvah* of *Pesach Sheini*, allowing a "second chance" to offer the *Korban Pesach* one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the *Mishkan* signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yisro, to join the Jewish People, but Yisro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the *Eruv Rav* — the mixed multitude of Egyptians

who joined the Jewish People in the Exodus — some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. Hashem tells him to select 70 elders, the first *Sanhedrin*, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. Hashem sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam makes a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. Hashem explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with *tzara'as* as if she had gossiped about her brother. Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

HAFTORAH: ZECHARIA 2:14-4:7

BIO-DEGRADATION

"For behold I will bring you My servant — the flourishing one" (3:8)

Why is the *Mashiach* referred to as the "flourishing one?" Even though today it seems that all remnant of the majesty of the Royal House of

David has been uprooted and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is still living, hidden and dormant.

Immediately prior to the coming of *Mashiach* there will be a tremendous confusion in the world. Everything will seem to have gone haywire. The natural order will be turned on its head: Age will bow to youth. Ugliness will be trumpeted as beauty, and what is beautiful will be disparaged as unattractive. Barbarism will be lauded as culture. And culture will be dismissed as worthless.

The hunger of consumerism and the lust for material wealth will grow

more and more, and it will find less and less to satisfy its voracity. Eventually Esav/Rome/Materialism will grow so rapacious that it will become its own angel of death. It will literally consume itself and regurgitate itself back out.

But from this decay, the line of David will sprout, like a plant that springs forth from no more than the dirt of the ground. After three wars of confusion, at the appropriate moment, the *Mashiach* will appear like a majestic tree flourishing from barren ground, laden with fruit, revealed to all.

• *Malbim, Ohr Yesharim in the Haggadah Migdal Eder Hachadash*

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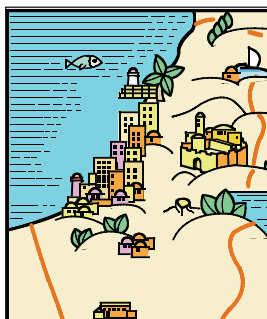
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LOVE OF THE LAND

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

MITZVAH MONOPOLY

Eretz Yisrael is sanctified above all lands. How is the sanctity expressed? The barley for the *omer* offering on Pesach, the wheat for the two-loaves offering on Shavuot, and the *bikkurim* brought to the *kohen* in the *Beis Hamikdash* from the



first produce of the seven species (mentioned in the Torah in connection with the blessing of the Land) must all be grown only in Eretz Yisrael.

• *Masechta Kelim 1:6*
Eretz Yisrael is pure and its *mikvaos* are pure.

• *Masechta Mikvaos 8:1*

their own, there was a group of people who weren't able to bring the Pesach offering on the 14th of Nissan. They didn't have time to ritually purify themselves before Pesach. They appealed to Moshe and Aharon that they be allowed to join in this great spiritual experience. Such was their overwhelming desire for spirituality that G-d made them the agents by which a whole passage in the Torah, a whole new mitzvah, was revealed. The mitzvah of *Pesach Sheni*.

The world is a reflection of the Torah. Hashem "re-wrote" the Torah just to allow these people the experience of bringing the Pesach offering. Hashem re-wove the very fabric of reality so that they could be involved in the Pesach experience. He turned the entire order of creation upside down just for them. Such is the power of one who seeks to elevate himself.

Hashem will turn over the world for us — if only we want it enough.

SYMPTOMS AND SYNDROMES

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Gather to Me seventy men from the elders of Israel.'" (11:16)

The waiting room was filled with people, most of them wheezing and coughing. It was that time of year again, and doctors'

waiting rooms across the country were filled with flu patients just like this one.

In the corner of the room sat a teenage boy. He was coughing a little, although a little less than most others in the room.

The surgery door swung open and a harassed looking man in his mid-fifties shouted from the doorway:

"Next!" An old lady was just getting to her feet when the doctor's eye alighted on the young boy. "You!" he shouted, "You! In here immediately!" The doctor brought the young boy into the room and sat him down. Behind the closed door there could clearly be heard the sound of an old lady remonstrating that she had lost her turn, and these young people had no respect for the old...

After a minute or two with his stethoscope, the doctor picked up the phone and ordered an ambulance. "Don't worry" he said to the boy, "you're going to be fine. We've caught it in time."

A good doctor is someone who can read the symptoms of his patient like a book.

When the Jewish People tired of the manna, they developed a craving for meat. They cried to Moshe. Moshe turned to Hashem and asked "Where shall I get meat to give to this entire people?"

Hashem's reply was that Moshe should gather together 70 men from

the elders of Israel, to take them to the Tent of Meeting and have them stand there together with Moshe.

Ostensibly, this was a strange reply. Hashem planned to give the Jewish People the meat they craved. So, wouldn't Moshe have been better served by gathering seventy *ritual slaughterers (shochtim)* rather than seventy elders?

The craving for meat, for the physical things of this world, is no more than a physical expression of a spiritual lacking. The desire for meat wasn't the disease — it was only the symptom. The Jewish People said that they craved meat, but in reality their souls craved spirituality.

Our Rabbis teach us that someone who loves money will not be satisfied with money, he will want more. They also say that someone who loves Torah will not be satisfied with the Torah he has amassed, he will want more. The desire for money is no more than the physical expression of a spiritual lacking — the desire for Torah.

It's a good doctor who can tell the difference between the symptom and the disease.

Sources:

Street Heater - The Malbim,
Rabbi C.Z. Senter

You Can Always Get What You Want -
Rabbi Yosef Tzeinivort

heard from Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram

Symptoms and Syndromes - Rabbi S.R. Hirsch
heard from Rabbi Mordechai Pitem

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Altogether, at least 21 trumpet sounds were blown in the *Beis Hamikdash* every day. Three in the morning, to signal that the gates were opened. Nine during the daily *tamid* offering of the morning. Nine during the daily *tamid* offering of the afternoon.

In addition: Another nine, on days when there was a *mussaf* sacrifice. On every *erev Shabbos*, three sounds were blown in the afternoon to remind people that it was time to stop working. As *Shabbos* was about to begin, another three sounds were blown.

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WEEKLY DAF

ERUVIN 35 - 41

A WARNING TO TEACHERS

A Jew is forbidden on Shabbos and Holidays to walk more than 2000 *amos* from his place of dwelling at the onset of the day. If he has a need to go somewhere beyond that *techum* he must make an *eruv techumin* — or *eruv* for short — before the onset of the day. By placing food at a location before Shabbos somewhere between his residence and the *techum*, he theoretically establishes his residence there and may walk 2000 *amos* from there on Shabbos.

He may sometimes find himself in a situation where he is not certain in which direction he wishes to have this freedom of movement. A report has come that a Torah scholar will be giving a lecture somewhere outside the city, but it is not certain whether it will be to the east or west. He may therefore place an *eruv* to the east and another to the west and declare, “If the scholar arrives in the east, I wish the eastern *eruv* to establish my residence; but if the scholar arrives in the west, then I wish the western *eruv* to establish my residence.”

What if two different scholars arrive, one in the east and one in the west, and one of them is his teacher? The majority view of the Sages is that he can choose either direction, because implicit in his declaration is that if scholars arrive in both places, he can choose which *eruv* should be in effect. Rabbi Yehuda, however, contends that since one of them is his teacher, he definitely intended to go in this direction. The Sages counter this argument by saying that sometimes a person prefers to hear the discourse of his colleague to that of his teacher.

This seems to echo what Rabbi Chanina declared (*Mesechta Taanis 7a*): “Much have I learned from my teachers; even more from my colleagues and most from my students.”

A note of caution, however, is sounded by *Iyun Yaakov* in regard to this progression. One must follow this order in exact fashion, first absorbing knowledge from his teachers and sharpening it in discussion with his colleagues before presuming to pass it on to students. He sharply criticized people in his generation (over 300 years ago!) who assumed the role of teacher before completing their own education, and who ended up confusing both themselves and their students.

• Eruvin 36b

THE OBSCURE HOLY DAY

Rosh Hashana is also Rosh Chodesh of the month Tishrei. Yet we make no specific mention of Rosh Chodesh in our *shemone esrei* prayers as we do on all the other days of the New Moon throughout the year.

The reason for this is that the Torah refers to both Rosh Hashana (*Vayikra 23:24*) and Rosh Chodesh (*Bamidbar 10:10*) as days of Divine Remembrance, and therefore one mention of remembrance is sufficient for both of these special dates.

There is a difference of opinion regarding mentioning in our *mussaf* prayer the Rosh Hashana and Rosh Chodesh sacrifices offered in the *Beis Hamikdash*. One approach cited by the *Beis Yosef* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 591:2*) as the custom of Sephardic Jews is that no mention is made of any of those sacrifices (or those of any other holiday) beyond stating that sacrifices were brought as the Torah commanded. The reason is that explicit mention of the sacrifices is made only on Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh which are frequent enough for us to be familiar with the text of the sacrifices, and not run the risk of becoming confused. (Since Rosh Hashana sacrifices are not mentioned for this reason, the Rosh Chodesh ones are also deleted to avoid creating the impression that the Rosh Chodesh dimension of the day is more important.)

Ashkenazic Jews, however, follow the ruling of *Rama* and cite the specific sacrifices on every holiday, and do so also in regard to the Rosh Hashana *mussaf* sacrifices. In regard to the Rosh Chodesh sacrifices, however, the approach of *Tosefos* prevails, which is that no mention is made of their specific nature beyond the mention that there were sacrifices offered in honor of Rosh Chodesh.

Another reason for obscuring Rosh Chodesh is to avoid the danger of people assuming that the second day of Rosh Hashana is the real holiday just as the second day of Rosh Chodesh throughout the year is the real first of the month. Another is to highlight the Rosh Hashana component of the day. Finally there is a reference in *Tehillim* (81:4) to Rosh Hashana as an “obscured holiday” which hints that the Rosh Chodesh component be obscured in our prayers.

• Eruvin 40a

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF
MENASHE BEN SHMUEL, SARA RIVKA BAT YECHESKEL, NAHUM BEN YONA,
MALKA BAT MENASHE, AVRAHAM BEN MENASHE, RACHEL SALENGER,
SHLOMO BEN MENASHE, CHAYKA SALENGER, ESTHER BAT MENASHE, CHANA LEAH BAT MENASHE — ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the menorah burn, and why?
2. From what material and in what manner was the menorah made?
3. Moshe was commanded to cleanse the *levi'im* by sprinkling on them "*mei chatas*." What is "*mei chatas*"?
4. Which three "*tnufos*" (wavings) are in the Parsha?
5. Why did Hashem claim the firstborn of the Jewish People as His possession?
6. Why are the words "*Bnei Yisrael*" repeated five times in verse 8:19?
7. When a *levi* reaches the age of 50, which functions may he still perform?
8. Why was the mitzvah of *Pesach Sheni* not commanded directly to Moshe?
9. What similarity is there between the menorah and the trumpets?
10. What three purposes did trumpet signals serve?
11. How many tribes marched between the Gershon-Merari detachment and that of Kehas? How was the time differential used?
12. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called "the gatherer of all the camps." What did they gather?
13. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?
14. Which *aron* is referred to in verse 10:33?
15. Which two topics are not in their chronological order in the Parsha?
16. Which tastes did the manna not offer, and why not?
17. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?
18. What was Moshe's guideline for choosing the seventy elders?
19. What was the prophecy of Eldad and Medad?
20. Why did Miriam deserve to have all the people wait for her to recover?

BONUS QUESTION?

SHERLOX HOLMES AND THE MYSTERY OF THE ESTRANGED WIFE

"I see you've been to the post office, Dr. Watstein," said world famous detextive Sherlock Holmes.

"How on earth did you know?" asked Watstein.

"There's a tiny fleck of mud on your trousers just above your left knee. Only a vehicle moving at top speed would spatter mud to such a height. But it rained only two hours ago — before that, the roads were completely mud-free. The only scheduled arrival during the last two hours was the postal coach. Besides," said Sherlock, "you're clutching a packet of letters."

"True genius! Here's a letter for you from your sister."

Sherlock took the letter and read it. "Ah, how good it is

when siblings maintain brotherly communication," he said.

"Speaking of which," said Watstein, "can you explain the following brotherly dialogue between Miriam and her brother Aharon? '*Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe regarding the matter of the Cushite woman whom he had married...*' (Numbers 12:1). Rashi comments: 'Regarding the matter of her divorce.' What possible textual justification is there to bring in the idea of divorce? The text speaks only of marriage, not of divorce!"

"Watstein, you're asking an excellent question," Sherlock said. Sherlock fell silent and fixed his gaze in the distance, his eyes twitching from side to side as if scanning an imaginary text. Suddenly, his face lit up. "I've got the answer!" he said.

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.

1. 8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so that people would not say that the *kohen* lit the menorah for its light.
2. 8:4 - It was made from one solid piece of gold.
3. 8:7 - Water containing ashes of the *parah aduma*.
4. 8:11 - The wavings of Kehas, Gershon and Merari.
5. 8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makas bechoros*.
6. 8:19 - To show Hashem's love for them.
7. 8:25 - He may close the gates of the courtyard of the *Mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash*, may sing during the *avoda*, and may load the wagons when the *Mishkan* is to be transported.
8. 9:7 - The people who asked about it were rewarded and merited being the catalyst for the teaching of this *mitzvah*.
9. 8:4, 10:2 - They were each made from a single, solid block.
10. 10:2-7 - Announcement of the gathering of *Bnei Yisrael*, the gathering of the *nesi'im*, and the beginning of a move of the encampment.
11. 10:17-21 - Three tribes: Reuven, Shimon and Gad. In the time it took Kehas to reach the destination, Gershon and Merari set up the *Mishkan*.
12. 10:25 - They gathered and returned anything lost by people from the other tribes.
13. 10:32 - The children of Yisro.
14. 10:33 - The *aron* which held the broken pieces of the first tablets, which was taken to the battlefield.
15. 9:1, 10:35,36 - The *Pesach* sacrifice, and the traveling of the *aron*.
16. 11:5 - Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic — these are harmful to nursing women.
17. 11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at *Taverah* (11:3).
18. 11:16 - People who were supervisors in Egypt and had pity on *Bnei Yisrael* at risk to themselves.
19. 11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."
20. 12:15 - Because she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the river.

ALMOST TRUE

Carson Hughes
<carsonmh@telapex.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is a "white lie" a sin? This question was raised in our Sunday School class by a 7th grade student.

Dear Carson Hughes,

A "white lie" — a falsehood which does not cause any harm — is not as serious as cheating or being dishonest in business, but it is still prohibited. Rabbi Yona Girundi in his classic "The Gates of Repentance" enumerates nine different levels of falsifying, beginning with dishonesty in crime and monetary matters and ending with a few types of "white lie." I very highly recommend the study of this passage.

In limited cases, lying is permitted; for instance where it will bring peace between people. Moshe's brother Aharon is praised for the way he made peace between quarreling parties: Aharon would approach one of the people and say "The other person sent me to tell you that he apologizes and is truly sorry for the way he acted towards you." Then he would go to the other person and say the same thing. The next time the two people met on the street, they would ask each other for forgiveness.

Even when it is permitted to lie, one should avoid it if possible, as illustrated by the following incident in the Talmud. The wife of the great Talmudic sage Rav always did the opposite of what he requested. If Rav asked for lentils she made beans, if he asked for beans she made lentils. When Rav's son, Chiya, grew up, he tried to correct the situation. Chiya told his mother the opposite of what his father wanted, thereby tricking her into making the correct food. Rav, realizing what Chiya had done, chastised him by quoting the verse: "They have taught their tongues to speak falsehood." Rav meant that a person should avoid lying even where it is permitted, lest he become accustomed to lying and lose his integrity.

Sources:

- *The Gates of Repentance* (c. 1100 A. D.), Gate 3 notes 178-186
- *Tractate Yevamot* 63a, 65b
- *Yirmiyahu* 9
- *Tractate Kalla Rabbati* 3:5

NO SOAP

Sandra Block from Scottsdale, AZ
<rancher@phnx.uswest.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I was wondering if there is any mention in the Torah or Talmud about "cleansers" that may have been used in cleaning "holy" garments such as those that may have been worn by Aharon or the kohanim? These garments had to be "clean and pure" when worn in the Temple.

Someone once mentioned that the word "fuller" comes up in the Torah. I was a bit skeptical of that remark! I can't help but think of the Fuller Brush Co. Are you aware of any mention anywhere of what they used in those days? It's probably a very strange question, but I have a curiosity about it. Rav Todot.

Dear Sandra Block,

Maimonides writes: "It is a commandment that the priestly clothing be new, beautiful, and long like the clothing of dignitaries. If they are soiled or ripped, the service carried out in them is invalid. A priestly garment which is stained should neither be whitened nor cleaned; rather it is to be used for the wicks (of the menorah), and new clothing is worn."

The source for the above is the Talmud which says that one may clean the priestly garment only if the stain will come out with water alone. One may not clean a priestly garment if it requires *neter* or *ohel* to clean it. This is because "There is no poverty in a place of riches."

Neter was a type of white earth called in Old French *nitra*, which in English is called saltpeter. *Ohel* was derived from the root of an herb by that name.

The Talmud list other types of cleansers used in those days. Some seem to have been quite caustic and effective. They used plant roots, sulfur, and even urine and dog manure to clean garments.

A "fuller" or "foller" was a type of coin, and is mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud. Despite rumors, neither "Amway" nor "Tupperware" appear anywhere in the Talmud.

Sources:

- *Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Klei Hamikdash* 8:4,5
- *Zevachim*, 88a, 89a
- *Rashi Tractate Shabbos* 15, 50b & 89b *Hametargem*
- *Tractate Shabbat* 89b, 90a
- *Talmud Yerushalmi Peah* 1:1

JEWS & JUBILEE

Larry Heiberger from St. Louis, MO
<L6462@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
When is the 50th year (Jubilee Year) to commence, and is it celebrated the same way as it was in the Biblical days?

J. Woody from Paterson, NJ
<TwoWoody@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Please tell me (so far as can be known) when the true Jewish Year of Jubilee is, according to our present calendar. Some say 2000, but I think that it might have been picked for it's attractiveness.

Tore Lende from Norway
<tolende@online.no> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Do the Jews in Israel — or any Jews — keep the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25) by not sowing or reaping, etc.? If not, why not? Sincerely, a friend of the Jews.

Dear Larry, J. Woody and Tore,

The Torah commands us to allow the land of Israel to lie fallow every seventh year. This is known as the *shemita* year. After seven *shemita* years is the fiftieth "jubilee" year, in Hebrew called *yovel*. The Torah commands that the land lie fallow during *yovel* as well.

Today, we are not required by the Torah to observe *yovel*. The Torah says that *yovel* only applies when the Jewish people dwell in the Land of Israel according to their tribes. Ever since the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe were exiled (c. 600 B.C.E.), *yovel* has no longer been applicable. Therefore, even Torah observant Jews do not observe *yovel*.

When is the next *Yovel*? Maimonides, based on historical calculations, writes: "According to this calculation, this year — which is the 1107th year from the destruction of the Temple...and the year 4936 from Creation — is the 21st year in the

Yovel cycle.” Since today is 5758 from Creation, the next yovel would be seven years from now. But the Rambam himself writes that his calculations are not conclusive.

Sources:

- Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shemita Veyovel, 10:4.8

THE NATURE OF THE EVIL NATURE

Arie Benzaken from France

<benzaken@planetepc.fr> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

First of all, thanks a lot for all the previous answers you made, which really helped and guided me! Second of all, thanks for your time and for the forthcoming answers! I'd like to know how come that Moshe in Shmot argued so many times (revealing his doubt concerning what Hashem was telling him) with Hashem, when Hashem asked him to go and tell the Jewish People that they will soon be delivered from slavery! He already was a great tzaddik and should have an entire faith and trust in what Hashem was saying! I'm not judging, I just didn't get all the thing that is written in my book: "Le Midrash Raconte" (The Midrash Says).

Also, I've heard from two different Rabbis two different ver-

sions of the notion of the yetzer hara (evil inclination) and yetzer hatov (good inclination). One told me that at the time of creation, G-d in His infinite kindness created Adam without the yetzer hara, and by eating the forbidden fruit Adam absorbed the notion of Good and Bad! The other Rabbi told me that in the Mishna it is said that at the time of Creation of Adam, G-d created him with Good and Bad in him!? Toda Raba.

Dear Arie Benzaken,

Whenever Moshe seems to question Hashem's behavior, he is not questioning the justice or the reality of what Hashem is saying. Rather, Moshe is questioning whether the Jewish People and the other nations of the world are on the spiritual level that they can understand why Hashem wishes to act in the way that He wants to.

Regarding good and evil: Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler teaches that Adam was created with a yetzer hara. However, it was not the same kind of yetzer hara that we would recognize today. Adam's yetzer hara was purely spiritual in nature and its drive was to convince Adam that he needed to become a partner with Hashem rather than be a "passenger," allowing Hashem to do everything for him. It was only after Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge and internalized the sin that the yetzer hara "evolved" into something that was physical in nature.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Re: Blood Pressure & Shabbat (Ohrnet Behar):

I was very concerned about the possible dangers to your readers of a certain comment in a recent Public Domain, in which a reader commented: "What is less clear to me is the rule regarding pills for control of blood pressure which should be taken every day but present no obvious danger due to skipping a dose." Unfortunately, skipping a dose of medication for high blood pressure can be very dangerous for two reasons. First, medicine for high blood pressure is also used for coronary artery disease, e.g., to prevent heart attacks. It may not be obvious to patients that a medicine is being used for more than one purpose. Second, skipping a dose of medicine for high blood pressure can lead to "rebound hypertension" where a patient's blood pressure can rise to a dangerously high level. Thus, I would strongly recommend that a patient never skip a dose of medication without consulting with their physician. It could be life-threatening.

• Mark Taragin, M.D., M.P.H.
<MarkTaragin@compuserve.com>

Re: "Pi" in the Sky (Ohrnet Bechukosai):

Regarding Solomon's circular pool, described in the verse as having a ratio of 3:1 as a signal for us to employ this ratio in regard to all halachic matters: I heard in the name of the Vilna Gaon that this too is hinted at in the verse. In the verse, the word kav (circumference) is written kuf vav heh. These letters have a total numerical value of 111. The kri, the way the word is pronounced, however, is kuf vav which equals 106. Divide 111 by 106, multiply your answer by the ratio of 3 and you get ... pi!

• Gershon <gershon.dubin@juno.com>

WHAT I DO WITH OHRNET

I receive Ohr Somayach's OHRNET in text form via the Internet. I use Pagemaker 5.0 to reformat the text graphically. Your insights are then inserted into a Shabbos insert for those attending Beth El Jacob Synagogue in Des Moines, Iowa. Our Rabbi often reads the "Parsha Overview" and the text often serves as a basis for an interesting discussion. The majority of our congregation is not Orthodox, so OHRNET may be the best opportunity to study that many of us get.

• Mike Blank, Des Moines, Iowa

What do YOU do with OHRNET? Let's hear your feedback!

Write to: whatido@ohr.israel.net

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

It's easy to judge others favorably, once you learn how. Until then, you may need a little...

"HELP!"

"I can't believe it — this guy is elbowing his way through *shul*. Bad enough on a regular day, but on Rosh Hashanah! Look, he's actually pushing people out of his way to get to his seat. Okay, it is jammed and he's late — but he should have gotten here on time if *davening* with everyone is so important to him. It's a per-

fect example of "*mitzva haba'a beaveira*" (a mitzvah done by means of a wrongdoing). It's amazing how the people he's shoved out of the way just ignore him and continue praying — what concentration they have! At last he's at his place. I see him reaching into his book-and-tallis compartment and taking out ... an EMT box! He's an emergency medical technician, a *Hatzalah* volunteer, and he's rushing to his seat to get his box of medical equipment!"

Judaism teaches that people are innocent until proven guilty. If you

assume that others are acting with the best of intentions, you will often find that you are absolutely right.

• Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series [The above story is original and does not appear in the book "The Other Side of the Story."]

GOT A STORY TO SHARE?

Do you have story about a situation with potential to judge negatively, but there really was a valid explanation? Share your stories with **Ohrnet** for inclusion in future columns of "The Other Side of the Story." Send your story by E-mail to info@ohr.org.il, regular mail to OHRNET POB 18103 Jerusalem or by fax to 02-581-2890.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

Two exactly identical people in the exact same place on the exact same day do the exact same act with the exact same intentions. However, the first one is fulfilling a *mitzvah d'oraita*, a Torah commandment, and the second one is transgressing an *issur d'oraita*, a Torah prohibition.

Answer:

The first person ritually slaughters a female animal. The second one ritually slaughters the offspring of that animal. The second one has done a mitzvah, and the second one has done a sin, as the Torah says, "A cow or sheep, it and its child you shall not slaughter on the same day." (*Leviticus 22:28*)

Riddle idea: Rabbi Yaakov Bradpiece

continued from page five

BONUS ANSWER!

"As I'm sure you've noticed, Watstein, the text makes clear that Miriam spoke regarding Moshe's wife; but we are left in the dark regarding the nature of her remarks."

"Yes, the verse doesn't tell us what Miriam said."

"And in the next verse," said Sherlox, "Miriam and Aharon compare their prophetic abilities to that of Moshe: 'And they said: Did the L-rd speak only through Moshe? Did He not also speak through us?' This seems an absolute non sequitur. What does this verse have to do with the previous one?"

"I was puzzled by that as well!" said Watstein. "What does their prophetic ability have to do with Moshe's marriage?"

"Indeed, Watstein, what is the connection between prophecy and marriage? To answer this, I scoured my memory until I found the only place in the entire Torah text where a connection is made between prophecy and marriage: At

the prophetic Sinai experience. There the text says, 'Be ready after a three-day period; one shall not approach one's spouse.' And what is the reason? The reason is: 'For on the third day the L-rd shall descend in the sight of the entire people (*Exodus 19 11, 15*).'"

"Go on," said Watstein.

"From those verses we see a clear connection between marriage — or rather the suspension of marriage — and prophecy. That is, the (temporary) separation of spouses is a prerequisite to the experience of prophecy. Hence, Miriam's complaint against Moshe must have been regarding his separation from his wife. Miriam, by pointing to her own prophetic abilities meant to show that one need not be divorced in order to experience prophecy."

"Genius, Mr. Holmes. Sheer genius."

• Based on Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

8:2	RAMBAN Preview of <i>Chanukah</i>	11:1	Sin of Complainers	384	Significance of Trumpets
9:1	<i>Korban Pesach</i> in the <i>Midbar</i>	11:5	Fish and Vegetables in Egypt		
9:10	<i>Pesach Sheini</i>	11:6	Complaints about Manna		
9:14	<i>Pesach</i> of the <i>Ger</i>	11:16	Significance of Number 70	9:1	SFORNO The Four Merits
10:29	Yisro's Choice			11:22	Never Satisfied
10:35	Flight from Sinai	380	SEFER HACHINUCH <i>Pesach Sheini</i>		