

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

FLYING SOLO

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing” (15:1)

Have you ever been inside a music recording studio? The first time you walk into the control room you might think you were on the bridge of the Starship Enterprise. Surely this myriad of lights and buttons must be so we can “boldly tread” where no one has trod boldly before.

The control room is dominated by what is referred to as the “desk” — the fifteen-foot long recording console. Even though it looks very impressive, the console basically consists of multiples of one channel. Out in the studio where the band plays, every instrument has its own microphone, and the sound from each microphone comes up separately on its own channel in the desk. Sometimes an instrument may have several channels. A set of drums, for example, may have eight separate microphones, each giving a slightly different part of the sound picture.

Having all the instruments divided into different channels affords the maximum control over the sound. If you want to have more bass drum — more “thud” — you turn up the bass drum. More strings? Bring up the faders marked “strings.”

When the sound is properly balanced, when all the channels are at their correct levels and tone settings, each sound coalesces into one cohesive whole. When this happens, the parts themselves become difficult to discern. They seem to have

been replaced by just one new overall sound.

There’s another button on each of those channels in the console. It’s called the solo button. And it does just that. It solos any one of the channels, isolating that particular instrument from the context of the overall sound picture.

If you isolate the bass guitar you’ll hear “*Boom p’doom. Boom p’doom...*” When you solo any instrument by itself you’ll hear

“Song in Jewish thought represents the ability to harmonize all the disparate events in our world and plug them back into the One — Hashem Echad.”

something that might make no musical sense at all.

Art reflects Life.

Sometimes, it’s very difficult to see sense in world events. It’s difficult to believe that the world is being run by Someone. Everything sounds like a mad cacophony. You hear about suffering and evil, and you wonder how this can be the handi-

work of a Merciful G-d.

Don’t think you’re alone if you feel like that. You’re in good company. One of history’s greatest people shared your feelings.

Moshe, our greatest teacher, had difficulty understanding how the Jews’ suffering in Egypt fit into Hashem’s overall plan.

In last week’s Parsha, Moshe went to Pharaoh to ask him to let the Jewish People go. Pharaoh was not the easiest negotiating partner. In reply to Moshe’s request Pharaoh told the taskmasters to stop giving the Jews straw. However, the Jews were still required to produce the same quantity of bricks as before.

The Jews complained bitterly to Moshe. So Moshe went to Hashem and said “My L-rd, why have You done evil to this people, why have You sent me? *From the time* I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he did evil to this People, but You did not rescue Your people.”

Moshe wasn’t just complaining about the problems he was having now with Pharaoh, rather he was saying that “*from the time*” — *from its very beginning* — the whole plan to take the Jews out of Egypt was fatally flawed. Moshe didn’t see the order in it.

When you take one event out of context, when you isolate one instrument from the orchestra, you can’t hear the symphony of world events and its inevitable climax. You don’t hear how all the instruments combine into a cogent, coherent, harmonious whole. All you hear is “*Boom, p’doom. Boom, p’doom!*” It

continued on page three

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Pharaoh finally sends the *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt. Hashem leads the Jewish People towards *Eretz Yisrael* with pillars of cloud and fire on a circuitous route which avoids the *Pelishtim* (Philistines). Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The *Bnei Yisrael* are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but Hashem protects them. Moshe raises his staff, and Hashem splits the sea, enabling the Jews to cross safely. Pharaoh, his heart hardened by Hashem, commands his army to pursue them, whereupon the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in a song thanking Hashem. After traveling for three days only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people complain. Moshe

miraculously produces potable water for them. In Marah they receive certain *mitzvos*. The people complain to Moshe and Aharon that they ate better food in Egypt. Hashem sends quails so they can have meat and provides them with manna. It is a miraculous bread that falls from the heavens every day except Shabbos. However, on Friday a double portion descends to supply the Sabbath needs. Nobody is able to obtain more than his daily portion, but manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbos. Some of the manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations. After the Jews complain again about the lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Amalek then attacks the Jews. Joshua leads the Jews in battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

HAFTORAH: SHOFTIM 4:4-5:31

EL PACIFICADOR

Just as the subject of this week's Parsha is the *Song at the Sea*, so the subject of the *Haftorah* is the *Song of Devorah the Prophetess*. Both the Parsha and the *Haftorah* depict the holiness of the Jewish Woman.

In Egypt, Yocheved and Miriam were instrumental in saving Moshe who was the agent of the redemp-

tion. After crossing the sea, the Jewish women, led by Miriam, wanted to voice their total trust in Hashem with their own song of praise.

In the time of Devorah, the Jewish People had forgotten their mission. They had intermarried with the Canaanites among whom they lived and had served their gods.

Hashem decreed that they should undergo suffering as a result of this. Part of this suffering came in the form of an immensely cruel Canaanite general named Sisera, literally "The Pacifier" or "The Silencer."

However, in this extremity the Jewish People turned their hearts to Hashem.

In the *Song of Devorah* we see this change in heart brought about by the awakening and purifying power of suffering.

All was due to the unforgettable merit of a glorious woman borne up by the Spirit of Hashem, fired through and through with enthusiasm, who with her "flaming words" inflamed the courage and steeled the Jewish People's power.

Not the sword of Barak, but the spirit of Devorah won the victory.

• adapted from Rabbi Mendel Hirsch

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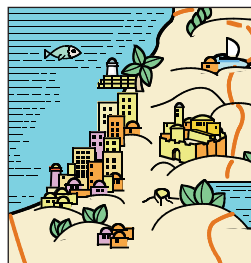
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

THE LAND OF RETURN

When the Babylonian king Nevuchadnetzar sent his general, Nevuzradan, to take the Jews out of *Eretz Yisrael*, he instructed him to prevent them from praying so that they would not be able to repent and be re-accepted by Hashem. Only when they reached the Babylonian border did the general tell his soldiers that they could stop driving

their Jewish captives, because it was less likely that their repentance would be so readily accepted outside their land. This Midrash on Eicha is cited as an explanation of the statement by Rabbi Elazar that one who resides in *Eretz Yisrael* lives without sin. There certainly have been sinners in *Eretz Yisrael*, but their repentance there is more readily accepted than anywhere else.



sounds like madness!

Moses was pushing the solo button on the concerto called the “Exodus from Egypt.”

FLYING SOLO, TAKE TWO

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing” (15:1)

The Midrash says that just as Moshe erred (see above) with the expression “mei-az” — “from the time” — so too, with that same word “az” Moshe rectified his mistake.

After they emerged from the splitting of the sea, the Jewish People stood on the shore. Before them lay the mighty Egyptian army, strewn across the beach like so many broken toy soldiers. Every last man and woman, from the greatest to the most humble, reached a level of insight into the workings of the world that has never been repeated.

That perception moved Moses and the Jewish people to song. Song in Jewish thought represents the ability to harmonize all the disparate events in our world and plug them back into the One — Hashem Echad.

“Then (az) Moshe and the Children of Israel sang a song.”

That song is part of the prayers we say every day of the year, to remind ourselves that even when it seems that chaos is conducting the orchestra and life sounds like the First National Cacophony, it is Hashem Who wields the baton of world events as no maestro can.

If we listen carefully, we will hear how everything in Creation sings together in one sublime concerto.

FLASHBACK

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing” (15:1)

Film is a language. It has its own vocabulary and syntax. One of the most remarkable film devices is the flashback. A character will be speaking, and suddenly the music becomes dreamy. His voice starts to echo. The picture seems to shimmer as though we were looking into a pond with ripples coursing across it. “Yes! It only seems like yesterday, but it’s over twenty years ago since I was walking down this same road...”

The film ellipsis takes us back to the character as he was twenty years ago. Essentially, we have changed tense from past to present.

A flashback is usually employed by filmmakers when they want to impart a sense of importance to an event. They want us to be right there. On the spot. Not just listening to a reported event.

Could there be an event more important than the splitting of the Red Sea?

With this analogy, maybe we can understand why the Divine “script-writer” seemingly makes a grammatical error in this week’s Parsha.

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing.” Surely the Torah should have written “Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang?”

The Torah imparts a special importance to the splitting of the sea and the song that followed. It wants us to feel as if we are actually standing on the beach with Moshe and the Jewish People. It wants us to experience the excitement, that in a few seconds Moshe and the Jewish People will raise their voices in a

song uniting Heaven and Earth.

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing!”

It’s happening now!

JUST ONE HEART

“And behold Egypt was journeying after them...” (14:10)

Rashi says that the Egyptians were united “with one heart, like one person” in their desire to overtake and subdue Israel.

A phrase almost identical to this — “like one person with one heart” — is used to describe the Jewish People as they are about to receive the Torah at Sinai. An almost identical expression, but in reverse order. Why are the words reversed when describing the Jewish People?

The Jewish People are in essence a unity — like one person — because they are all offshoots of the same spiritual root. When they are divided, their schisms are superficial, and what they lack is only unity of purpose, one heart. Fundamentally, however, they are “like one person.” An indivisible unit.

The nations of the world, on the other hand, are essentially separate. All that can bind them is pragmatism — one heart — and then, temporarily, they become like one person. However, their unity is based only on expediency. It dissolves as soon as the common purpose is no longer.

The Jewish People are in essence one person. When they are also of one heart, the world stops and Heaven meets Earth.

Sources:

- Flashback - Ramban
- Just One Heart - Gaon of Vilna - Kol Eliyahu, Avnei Nezer

לע"נ
 ר' פנחס יקותיאל בן נפתלי ז"ל
 נלב"ע י"א שבט תשנ"ה
 ת.ג.צ.ב.ה.

WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 65 - 71

IS IGNORANCE OF THE LAW AN EXCUSE?

If a person violates the Sabbath because he is unaware of the law in the Torah prohibiting creative labor on that day, is he considered completely free from sin because of his ignorance? Or is he placed in the same category as one who merely forgot that today is the Sabbath, or forgot that this particular type of activity is prohibited on the Sabbath, and is therefore obligated to bring a sin offering as atonement?

This issue is debated by the greatest of the Talmudic Sages. The halachic authorities rule that even one who is ignorant of the law because he was taken into heathen captivity as a child and never heard of the laws of Shabbos is obligated to bring a sin offering as atonement. This rule is also applied later in this *perek* (72b) to one who commits idolatry or eats forbidden animal fat on the assumption that it is permissible to do so. (The only exception to the rule, points out Tosefos, is the case of manslaughter, where ignorance of the law is considered different than an act of involuntary murder, and therefore does not obligate the perpetrator to be exiled to one of the cities of refuge.)

How can we understand the need for atonement in such a case? An understanding can be gained from the explanation provided by Ramban (*Vayikra* 4:2) for the need of sacrificial atonement for *any* involuntary sin. The very experience of sin, he writes, even if it is not a willful act, contaminates man's soul and renders him incapable of approaching his Creator until he achieves rehabilitation through the sacrifice.

Beyond the question of sacrificial obligation, the issue of ignorance of the law crops up in other areas of halacha. We shall cite two issues which seem to take this concept in opposite directions because of the radically different circumstances.

Torah law forbids a man to remain married to a wife who has willingly been unfaithful to him, but condones perpetuation of the marriage (unless the husband is a *kohen*) if she was forced into adultery against her will or through error. What if she willingly committed adultery because she thought it was permissible? In *Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer* 178:3 the Rema rules, on the basis of a landmark decision of the Maharik (*Shoresh* 168), that she is forbidden to her husband. His reasoning is that the Torah explains the termination of the marriage on

the grounds that she was unfaithful, and not on the basis of how severe her sin was.

In regard to the halachic ramifications of a Jew publicly violating the Sabbath, we find an interesting point made a little over a century ago by Rabbi Yaakov Ettinger in his *Responsa Binyan Zion* (Vol. II, Resp. 23), about considering a Jew brought up in a non-observant environment as a "*tinok shenishba*" and not to be regarded as one who willingly violates the Sabbath.

• *Shabbos* 68b

AN APPEAL FOR PRAYER

A Jew whose improper behavior has brought upon him the leprosy-like condition of being a "*metzora*" is obligated not only to rend his garments, let his hair grow and isolate himself from his family and community, but also to call out to those who pass near him that he is *tamei* (ritually impure).

What is the reason for requiring him to make his condition public knowledge?

One approach (*Toras Kohanim* quoted by *Rashi* on *Vayikra* 13:45) is that his announcement serves as a warning to people to stay away from him and thus avoid contaminating themselves through contact with him.

In our *gemara*, however, we are told that the purpose of his declaration is to make others aware of his plight and thus inspire them to pray for his recovery.

This concept is extended to painting a tree which prematurely sheds its fruit. Painting a tree calls public attention to its condition and inspires prayer for its recovery.

While it is readily understood that the ailing tree must have humans praying for it, there is a definite difficulty in understanding why the *metzora* cannot pray for himself. Why must he be so dependent on the prayers of others?

Iyun Yaakov cites the Zohar in *Parshas Metzora*, which states that the anti-social behavior of the *metzora* has disqualified him from having his own prayer accepted. He is therefore totally dependent on the prayer of others. In support of this approach he cites the example of Miriam who needed her brother Moshe to pray for her when she was afflicted with this *metzora* condition, and was not capable of praying for herself.

• *Shabbos* 67a

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why did Hashem direct the Jewish People away from the land of the Philistines?
2. What percentage of the Jewish people died during the plague of darkness?
3. When, besides the week of *Parshas Beshalach*, do we read from *Parshas Beshalach*?
4. Why did the Egyptians want to pursue the Jewish People?
5. From where did the Egyptians obtain animals to pull their chariots?
6. What does it mean that the Jewish people “took hold of their fathers’ profession” (*tafsu umnus avosam*)?
7. How did Hashem cause the wheels of the Egyptian chariots to fall off?
8. Why were the dead Egyptians cast out of the sea?
9. To what future time is the verse hinting when it uses the future tense of “Then Moshe and the *Bnei Yisrael* will sing”?
10. Why did the *Bnei Yisrael* wait until the 15th of Iyar (a month after they left Egypt) before complaining about a lack of food?
11. Why are the Egyptians compared to stone, lead and straw?
12. How did Hashem show mercy on the dead Egyptians?
13. Why did “fear seize the inhabitants of *Pelashes*”?
14. Why is Miriam referred to as “Aharon’s sister” and not as “Moshe’s sister”?
15. Which sections of the Torah did the Jewish People receive at Marah?
16. What is a “*chok*” (statute)?
17. What lesson in *derech erez* concerning the eating of meat is taught in this week’s *Parsha*?
18. How did non-Jews experience the taste of the *manna*?
19. Which prophet rebuked the Jewish People by showing them a jar of *manna* that was prepared by Moshe?
20. Why did Moshe’s hands become heavy during the war against Amalek?

BONUS QUESTION?

Rashi never “just” comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi answers unspoken questions arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah text. Anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi’s classic Torah commentary must always ask: “**What’s Bothering Rashi?**”

“And Moshe stretched his hand over the sea; and the Eternal moved the sea with a powerful east wind all that night and He turned the sea into dry land, and the waters split.” (14:21) Rashi, commenting on the phrase “*And the waters split,*” says “*All the waters in the world.*” Some statement! Why does Rashi make this claim? Why not just the waters of the Red Sea? **What’s bothering Rashi?**

answer on page eight

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

1. 13:17 - So that it would be more difficult for the Jewish People to return to Egypt.
2. 13:18 - Eighty percent (four-fifths).
3. 14:5 - On the seventh day of Pesach and also on Purim.
4. 14:5 - To regain their wealth.
5. 14:7 - From those Egyptians who feared the word of Hashem and kept their animals inside during the plagues.
6. 14:10 - They cried out to Hashem.
7. 14:25 - He melted them with fire.
8. 14:30 - So that the Jewish People would see the destruction of the Egyptians and be assured of no further pursuit.
9. 15:1 - Resurrection of the dead during the time of Mashiach.
10. 15:2 - Until that time they lived on the leftovers of the dough and matza that they took out of Egypt.
11. 15:5 - The wickedest Egyptians floated around the water like straw, taking a long time to die. The average ones suffered less, sinking like stone. Those who were still more righteous sunk like lead, dying immediately.
12. 15:12 - Hashem allowed them to be buried (the earth swallowed them).
13. 15:14 - Because they slew the members of the Tribe of Ephraim who had escaped from Egypt at an earlier time. They feared vengeance for this act.
14. 15:20 - Aharon put himself at risk for her when she was struck with *tzara’as*. (See *Bamidbar 12:12*.)
15. 15:25 - Shabbos, Red Heifer, Judicial Laws.
16. 15:26 - A law whose reason we don’t understand.
17. 16:8 - One should not eat meat to the point of satiation.
18. 16:21 - The sun melted whatever *manna* remained in the fields. This flowed into the streams from which animals drank. Whoever ate these animals experienced the taste of the *manna*.
19. 16:32 - Yirmiyahu (chapter 2, verse 31).
20. 17:12 - Because he was remiss in his duty, since he, not Yehoshua, should have led the battle.

IS SIGN LANGUAGE?

<Drc@flash.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I recently ate a Shabbat meal at a home with a deaf child. After washing our hands but before the “hamotzie” blessing, the child began “talking” to his mother in sign language. Is this violating the prohibition of “speaking?”

Dear Drc,

Sign language is not considered actual speech in this context. However, it is not encouraged between washing and saying *hamotzie*.

As you know, it’s a mitzvah to wash your hands before eating bread. After washing, you shouldn’t speak until eating. But if you do, no new washing is required.

Sources:

- Mishna Berura 166:1:5

COOKBOOK OF CREATION

Ofer Gamliel <ofer647@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What do you know about Sefer Yetzira? Can this book be at home? Thank you.

Dear Ofer Gamliel,

Sefer Yetzira — “The Book of Creation” — is a work of deep Kabbalah. As its name implies, it deals with the secrets of Creation, including powerful Hebrew letter combinations of mystical creative energy. By studying *Sefer Yetzira*, the Talmudic Sages learned letter combinations which enabled them to create humanoids and animals.

Sefer Yetzira is attributed to Avraham. According to a Midrash, it was written by G-d and given to Avraham who studied it with Shem and Ever.

Yes, you can have this book at home. But don’t keep it with your cookbooks. It can only be studied by someone versed in Kabbalah.

Sources:

- Tractate Sanhedrin 65b

“NAAR-ISH”

Peter Persoff <Peter_Persoff@macmail.lbl.gov> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

You wrote that Isaac was 37 at the time of the akeida

(binding of Isaac). I have heard that, but I always imagined Isaac to be age 13 at the akeida. I think the angel said “Do not lay a hand on the lad (*na’ar*).” How do we know Isaac’s age, and why did the angel refer to him as a *na’ar*? Thank you for your email.

Michael Zidile from New York, NY

<zidile@ymail.yu.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Hi. My name is Michael, and I am researching a topic: In *Bereshet*, the word *na’ar* (youth) and *ish* (man) are interchanged a lot, and I was wondering the possible reasons behind this. One example is when the Torah discusses Yaakov and Esav and uses the terms *na’ar* and *ish*.

Dear Peter Persoff and Michael Zidile,

Literally, *na’ar* means “a youth.” It can also mean a servant or attendant.

The commentaries explain that *na’ar* generally indicates behavior rather than age. A *na’ar* is a person who shows youth in his actions. This is sometimes negative, as with Joseph, who was described as acting like an immature youth. Sometimes it is positive, as when describing Joshua who — at age 42 — is called a *na’ar* in reference to his serving and learning from Moses like a young student.

The Torah says that Yitzchak was born when Sarah was 90. Sarah died at age 127 when she heard about the akeida. Yitzchak was therefore 37 at that time.

Nachmanides points out that a child may be called *na’ar* from the moment he is born. He also points out that when *na’ar* is used in contrast to *ish*, the meaning is a subordinate (*na’ar*) in contrast to a superior (*ish*).

Sources:

- Genesis 17:25, Exodus 33
- Rashi, Genesis 23:2, 22:3 & Exodus 2:6, Chronicles I 22:5
- Nachmanides, Genesis 21:9, 37:2, Exodus 2:6, 33:11
- Ibn Ezra, Genesis 37:21

A LITTLE NOSY

Rebner from Mainz, Germany

<rebnerch@dit.de> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How come that people have two ears but only one nose?

Dear Rebner,

Excellent question! Every aspect of Creation contains Divine wisdom. It’s our job to discover the wisdom in

ASK the RABBI

everything.

The two ears are designed to give a person directional and stereo hearing, hence they are placed on each side of the head. The nose also has a similar design with two nostrils, but they are close together as there is no real need for “stereo smell.”

Just as the army places a guard at the gate of a munitions factory, so too G-d has strategically positioned a 24 hour guard at the “gate” of the human body: No food can enter your mouth without passing under your nose’s scrutinizing security scan. Food dangerously spoiled is automatically identified and denied admission.

PRAYER FOR THE PAYER

<email@withheld> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Hi. I am an observant student living in a dorm. I have a question regarding my situation. In the section in *bircat hamazon* (grace after meals) when we ask for a blessing on the head of the household (or for ourselves, or for the place where we are eating), do I say it for myself or for my parents — since they are paying for my tuition (though it is not their table really)? I thank you in advance, and I think your Ask the Rabbi service is a great idea.

Dear <email@withheld>,

The blessing for the “head of this house” included in

the *bircat hamazon* can refer to the one who provides the meal, even though that person is not the “owner of the house” where the meal is taking place. Therefore, in the appropriate place during the *bircat hamazon* you can bless your parents as the “heads of the house” because they paid for the meal.

Sources:

- *Mishnah Berurah* 193:27

SON OF THE SHORT SWORDS

Eli Zeldovich <elileela@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My question is genealogical. In tracing my family name Zeldovich, son of Zel, I have come to Josephus’ coining of the word Zealot to describe the defenders of Masada. What is the root of this word zealot? Were the women and children survivors of Masada taken to Rome as “zealots?” Thank you for your time. Shalom.

Dear Eli Zeldovich,

According to Josephus, the only survivors of Masada were a woman and two children.

It’s unlikely that there’s any connection between your name and the zealots. Zeldovich is a Russian name. Josephus refers to the zealots by the Greek word “*sicarii*” which means “the short swords,” because they carried with them short swords.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

Shira Phillips <philfam@erols.com> wrote with the following riddle:

Dear Yiddle Riddle people:

The following is a story I read about Rashi in a child’s Hebrew biography in perhaps fourth grade. Nobody I know has been able to solve the question without help. Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak) once went on a journey to a foreign city. On his trip, he wanted to visit a wealthy man to collect money for poor people. When he visited, the man was not at home, but his servant was. The servant said that he recognized the great Rashi as a thief who had previously run off with a set of his master’s clothing and forced Rashi to pay for the clothing! Rashi wrote the following Hebrew word on the door five times in a row: The word was spelled “*Shin Lamed Mem Hey*.” What did the message mean?

P.S. Rashi definitely got the hoped-for reaction from the home owner: He contributed charity and was from then on always a follower of Rashi.

Answer:

Why (*She’lama*) did Shlomo pay for (*shilmah Shlomo*) an entire suit of clothing (*salma sheleima*)? (Note: *Salma* in modern Hebrew means a dress but in the Chumash it means a garment. *Shilmah* is a contraction of *shilaim otah* — “paid (for) it.”)

New Feature!

PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: Greeks vs. Torah (Ohrnet Parshat Mikeitz):

I enjoy Ohrnet every week when my husband or son brings it home from shul. However, this week I noticed a sentence that might be interpreted by some in the wrong way. As you know, all kinds of people read your publication. You wrote: "If you face an evil opponent, a Stalin or a Hitler, you shoot him in the back." There may be those among us who will take it upon himself to decide, "Hmm, so-and-so falls into that category" and decide he is justified in "shooting him in the back." I think it might be advisable to print some kind of clarification in your next issue.

• Eta Kushner <etawrite@netmedia.net.il>

Re: "Watching the Detectives" (Ohrnet Parshat Vayeitzei) concerning the New York police detective who feels guilty about extracting confessions from violent criminals by feigning friendship:

It would seem from the brothers deceiving Chamor,

Shechem and the rest of the city in order to punish them for their crimes that the officer has nothing to feel guilty about. Not exactly parallel, but possibly one can say that by Avraham and Yitzchak representing themselves to Pharaoh and Avimelech to avoid being killed and their wives enslaved, that deception is allowed if it will prevent crimes from being committed. Keep up the good work!

• Daneal Weiner <daneal@actcom.co.il>

Re: Verse beginning and ending with same three words (Ohrnet Parshat Vayeshev):

I forwarded your last riddle to a friend of mine, Avinoam Friendman, who told me that there were other verses like "U'vnei Dan Chushim" that also begin and end with the same three words. I don't know if this counts or not. Have a good Shabbos.

• Aron M. Mandl, North Miami Beach, FL <Aronio@aol.com>

Rabbi's Response:

Clever! But we don't say this verse twice a day, as stated in the riddle. How about "I'yeshuascha kivisi Hashem" which some people repeat three times in the bedtime *shema*?

Correction:

Current Candles (Ohrnet Parshat Miketz) should read "A Chanukah menorah must contain enough fuel at the time of lighting to burn for at least half an hour after *nightfall*" and not "half an hour after sunset."

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Pharaoh was living proof of the power of repentance. When he was suffering in the midst of the Red Sea, Pharaoh admitted the truth of Hashem's power, which he had formerly denied. Consequently, Hashem spared him and he fled to Ninveh where he became king. He was the ruler to whom the Prophet Yona was sent, and this time Pharaoh listened to Yona's message.

• Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer

continued from page five

BONUS ANSWER!

First the verse says: "The sea turned to dry land" and then **afterwards** it says "and the waters split!" Which happened first? Didn't the water split before the sea turned to dry land? Therefore, "the waters split" must refer to **other** waters.

• Based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" - Feldheim Publishers

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN

14:4 The Miracle of Egyptian Pursuit
14:13 Promise or Command?
14:15 No Need to Cry
14:21 Nature or Miracle?
15:19 When the *Shira* was Sung
16:4 (second part) The Purpose of Trial
17:9 The War Against Amalek

MALBIM

14:11-2 Red or Dead
14:16 The Ten Miracles of the Crossing of the Sea

IBN EZRA

14:13 Slave Mentality
14:29-30 Drowning and Dry Land