

# OHRNET

## THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

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### THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

**“The land of Israel is very good.” (14:7)**

‘I don’t know how you *live* in this country! You’re living in the Third World! It’s dirty and dangerous! It’s beyond my comprehension why someone with a decent standard of living would uproot himself and live in a Levantine slum!’

Why is it that to some people the Land of Israel seems so beautiful while others struggle to see its beauty and leave disappointed?

There once was a beautiful princess who had many suitors for her hand in marriage. Obviously she could not marry all of her suitors, and so she devised a plan to select the more promising candidates: When a young man would come to woo her, her servants would usher him into an ante-chamber. On the table in front of him were some fruit and some books of Torah scholarship. The servants told him that the princess would be with him shortly. They bade him to make himself comfortable and to help himself to some fruit. What the suitor did not know was that there was a spy-hole in the wall of the room. Through this, the princess would observe the aspiring husband.

If he took a piece of fruit and made a *bracha* with the proper concentration, or if he took up a book and began to learn intently, then she would emerge in her finest apparel and appeared as a rare beauty.

If, however, the suitor took some fruit and failed to make a *bracha*, or idled his time away and didn’t use the opportunity to learn Torah, then she would put on torn rags, blacken her face and teeth and emerge looking like a hag.

Eretz Yisrael is like that princess. If a person

### INSIGHTS

comes to the Land looking for spirituality, he will be enchanted even by the *physical* beauty of Eretz Yisrael. On the other hand, if a person is not worthy, everything will seem dirty and dingy.

However, Eretz Yisrael will never embarrass a person. So rather than suffering the embarrassment of being rejected by the Land, Eretz Yisrael allows the person to think that *he* had rejected *her*...

• Based on *The Ramban in a letter to his students*

### EAR-LENDING OR BENDING?

**“And Calev stilled the people towards Moshe and said ‘We should certainly go up and possess the Land for we are well able to take it.’ (13:30)**

*“Friends, Romans and Countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar not to praise him...”*

Mark Anthony must have learned a thing or two from (*l’havdil*) Calev in this week’s Parsha!

Calev knew that after hearing the negative words of the spies, the people were in no mood to hear anything good about Moshe Rabbeinu. And thus, his first words gave the people the impression that he was going to speak against Moshe. It was only once he had gained their attentio, that he started to praise Moshe.

If you want someone to listen to you, the worst thing you can do is to start of by saying “You’re wrong!” That’s a real ear-closer. If you want to get your point across, you must first make sure that the other person *is listening to you*. The nature of a person is that he is more ready to listen to approba-

tion than criticism. To get your point across, start off by agreeing, truthfully, with some aspect of the other person’s point of view. After all, not everything he said could have been wrong!

Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov once saw a nobleman riding in a carriage with his wife and children. The carriage was drawn, not by horses, but by an entire Jewish family. To increase their speed, this fiendish nobleman kept lashing them.

Reb Moshe Leib, who had a very distinguished bearing, held up his hand and halted the carriage. He looked inside and saw the nobleman’s son. Suddenly, Reb Moshe Leib gathered the child into his arms and began to kiss him, exclaiming what a beautiful child he was! How delicate and sensitive he was! He put the child down and then confided to the nobleman that the cries of the family who were harnessed to his carriage were harming the child’s emotional well-being. Reb Moshe Leib advised the nobleman to send the family away. Upon hearing this, the nobleman immediately freed the family...

If you want someone to ‘lend me your ears,’ you must first find something that their ears will want to ‘borrow’!

• Based on *Eser Tzitzzachus in Rabbi Zelig Pliskin’s Growth through Torah*

### PIPES IN TIME

**“And also it as land flowing with milk and honey.” (12:27)**

*Eretz Yisrael* is the channel through which flows the spiritual current that supports the entire universe. It’s a pumping station, funneling spiritual energy to the cosmos. This spiritual pipeline comes down to this world through *Har Habayis*, the Temple Mount, and then radiates out through

*continued on back page*

**A**t the insistence of the Bnei Yisrael, and with Hashem’s permission, Moshe sends twelve scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea’s name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that Hashem should not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When ten of the twelve scouts state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the spirit of the people. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead they demand a return to Egypt! Hashem is ‘angered’ by this attitude, but is eventually ‘placated’ by Moshe’s fervent prayers. However, He declares that the nation must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the false

### OVERVIEW

report of the scouts pass away. A remorseful group, regretting its previous mistake, rashly begins an invasion of the Land based on Hashem’s original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they fail to heed this warning, and are massacred. Hashem instructs Moshe concerning the offerings that will be made when the Bnei Yisrael will finally enter the Land of Israel. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, a donation for the

*Kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual person or a group, are explained. Should someone blaspheme against Hashem and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritu-

ally from his people. One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbos, and is put to death. The laws of *tzitzis* are taught, and twice a day we recite this section of the Parsha because it reminds us of our Exodus.



## Insights into the Shabbos Zemiros

# יום שבת קדוש הוא

"THE SABBATH DAY IS HOLY..."

"Women light the Shabbos candles, observe the laws of Niddah (family purity) and properly bake Challos (by tithing a portion of them). Their merit will protect them when the day comes for them to give birth. If they were not negligent in observing these laws the birth will be a quick one."

This is based on a Mishnah (*Shabbos 31b*) familiar to those who recite the chapter of *Bameh Madlikin* in the Sabbath Eve prayer service. It states that women are prone to danger during childbirth for being negligent in the observance of family purity, tithing the *challah* they bake and lighting Shabbos candles. In this Mishnah the candle-lighting is listed last, but in this song of tribute to the Sabbath we mention it first as a merit for a woman to have a safe and swift delivery.



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We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

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## MAD COWS & ENGLISHMEN

**Rene Leermakers**

[<leermake@natlab.research.philips.com>](mailto:leermake@natlab.research.philips.com)

wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am wondering whether Jewish law would have prevented the mad-cow-disease problems in the UK. Kosher animals are largely herbivorous and I have always thought that this is not accidental. Is it forbidden to eat cows that eat meat? Shalom

Dear Rene Leermakers,

No, it's not forbidden to eat cows that eat meat. In this sense, *Kashrut* laws wouldn't necessarily protect people from eating 'mad-cows.'

But you're right: It's not accidental that kosher animals are largely herbivorous:

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch writes that vegetables — in **some** respects — are the preferred food for a person's spirituality. In the animal world, herbivores are the most desirable for food: Since they eat only plants, they are *nearer* to the plant world than the carnivores.

Rabbi Hirsch draws a second parallel between kosher animals and plants:

Kosher animals have four stomachs: The food passes through two stomachs, goes up to the mouth and is chewed again, and then sent down to the other two stomachs. "Thus," writes Rabbi Hirsch, "these animals spend a great deal of time in the absorption of food, which may be termed the vegetative activity of animals." In this respect, kosher animals are more 'planty' than carnivores, which have short intestines and spend little time in the passive, plant-like digestive activity.

Speaking of mad cows:

Two cows are having a chat-shmoozing in the English countryside:

One cow says to the other: "Bert, aren't you worried about this terrible new disease that everyone's talking about?"

"Not at all," answers Bert.

"Why not?"

"Because I'm a squirrel."

## FATHER'S WEDDING

**David Bitton**

[<davidbi@microsoft.com>](mailto:davidbi@microsoft.com) wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is one halachically allowed to attend the marriage of a parent?

For example my mother passed away many years ago, and my father is now remarrying. I've heard that it is not permissible for the children to attend the wedding, is there any

basis for this?

PS If you could reply ASAP I would appreciate it, the wedding is next Sunday.

Dear David Bitton,

Yes, there is a basis for this. According to widespread custom, children do not attend a parent's second marriage. One logical explanation is that the children's presence is a reminder of the first spouse, and could thus mar the joy of the occasion.

I asked Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, *shlita*, about this custom. He gave the following explanation: Children have an obligation to respect their parents even after the parents have passed away. Attending the marriage of a surviving parent would be disrespectful to the deceased parent.

Sources:

• *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 240:9*  
& *Rema*

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

At the end of Moshe's life, Hashem shows Moshe the entire land of Israel. But where does the Torah indicate that Moshe saw Chevron long before that?

Answer next week!

This issue is dedicated in memory of  
**ELLIOTT BERNSTEIN O.B.M.**  
by his family

## STATE OF THE EIGHT

The last eight passages in the Torah present a mystery for they begin with the words “And there Moshe died.” How, ask our Sages, could Moshe truthfully write that he died while he was alive and writing?

The explanation proposed by Rabbi Yehuda that these last passages were written by Moshe’s disciple Yehoshua after his death is rejected by his colleague Rabbi Shimon on the grounds that Moshe refers to the Sefer he wrote in his lifetime as “this Sefer Torah” (Devarim 31) which he would not do if this scroll was missing even a single letter, let alone eight whole passages.

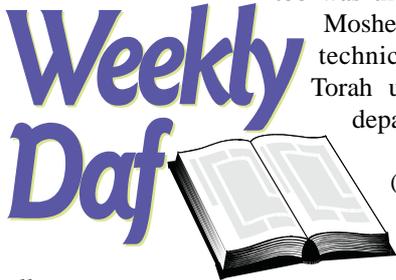
Rabbi Shimon’s own explanation is that these last eight passage were written in a different fashion than the rest of the Torah — “*badema*.” Various interpretations of this phrase are offered by the commentaries. One of them is that it is aligned to the word “*meduma*” which means mixed together. All the letters of these eight passages were dictated to Moshe by Hashem to be written in an unbroken sequence with no formation of words. It was in a similar fashion that the Torah was written before it was given to Israel when the letters did not form the words we know but served as var-

ious formulations of the Divine Names. Only when Moshe brought us the Torah was it revealed to him how to break up those letters in a manner which would communicate Hashem’s *mitzvos* and messages to us. So too was the meaning of the letters

Moshe wrote at the end of his technically complete Sefer Torah unknown until after his departure.

• *Menachos 30a*

(This commentary is taken from a collection of extremely helpful material in Hebrew on *Daf*



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## FOREIGN FOR FOUR

How do we know that four Torah chapters are to be placed in four compartments for the Tefillin we place on our head?

Rabbi Yishmael identifies the sources as the number of times the word “*totafos*” appears in the Torah. Rabbi Akiva, however, deduces the number four from the word

itself which is a subtle combination of two words in addition to its simple, literal meaning. “*Tot*” is two in the language of Kaffi while “*Fos*” is two in the language of Africa, and the combination of the two equals four.

But how are we to understand defining a word in the Torah on the basis of its similarity to one in a foreign language?

(The same question arises in regard to the deduction made by the Sage Shimon ben Azai (Succah 35a) that the mysterious word “*hadar*” used in regard to a fruit to be taken for performing a *mitzvah* on Succos means an *esrog*, which requires watering in addition to rain. His basis is the fact that “*hadar*” is similar to the Greek word “*hydra*” for water.)

The explanation offered by the commentaries is that up until the attempted rebellion against Heaven of the generation of the Tower of Bavel all mankind spoke *Lashon Kodesh*, the holy tongue in which our Torah is written. Even after Hashem dispersed the tower builders by introducing the disunity of separate languages, some elements of the original tongue lingered in the new ones. So when we find a word in the Torah which is unfamiliar to us and locate a parallel to it in another language there is a basis for assuming that it is a remnant of Hebrew and can be used by our Sages as a clue to solving the mystery of the unfamiliar word.

• *Menachos 34b*

1. Why is the portion about the spies written immediately after the portion about Miriam’s having *tzara’as*?
2. Which Tribe did not send a spy?
3. Which fruit did the *meraglim* bring back from *Eretz Yisrael*?
4. How many men were needed to carry the cluster of grapes?
5. Which of the *meraglim* returned empty handed?
6. Why did Hashem shorten the journey of the *meraglim*?
7. With which true statement did the *meraglim* begin their evil report?
8. How did Calev quiet the people?
9. Why did the Land appear like a “land that eats its inhabitants” (13:32)?
10. On which date did the Bnei Yisrael cry because of the report of the *meraglim*? How did this affect the future of the Jewish Nation?
11. “Don’t fear the people of the land... their defense is departed” (14:9). Who was one of their “defenders”?
12. Calev and Yehoshua praised *Eretz Canaan* and tried to reassure the

Jewish People that they could be victorious. How did the Jewish People respond?

13. Which portion of *Eretz Canaan* did Calev receive?
14. “How long shall I bear this evil congregation (14:27)?” Hashem is

referring to the ten *meraglim* who slandered the Land. What important concept do we learn from this verse?

15. Which two locations were named for events which occurred in *Parshas Shlach*?

16. How is the *mitzvah* of *Challah* different from other *mitzvos* that are associated with *Eretz Yisrael*?

17. What is the minimum measurement of *Challah* that must be given to a *Kohen* according to Torah Law? Rabbinical Law?
18. How does the prohibition against worshipping idols differ from all other prohibitions in the Torah?
19. How many times did the Jewish People keep Shabbos before someone violated it by gathering wood?
20. From what is “*techeles*” derived?



## I Didn't Know That!

The *mitzvah* of *Challah*, taking the first portion of the dough, acts as a reminder that everything man has is a gift from Hashem.

• *Avnei Ezel*

## Bonus Question ?

Since Hashem knew that the Jewish People would sin through sending the *meraglim*, why did He allow the Jewish People to send them?

## Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

- 13:2 - To show the evil of the *meraglim* (spies), that they saw Miriam punished for speaking *lashon hara* (slander) and didn't learn a lesson from that.
- 13:4-15 - Levi.
- 13:23 - A cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig.
- 13:23 - Eight.
- 13:23 - Yehoshua and Calev.
- 13:25 - Hashem knew that the Jewish People would sin on account of the *meraglim* and would spend a year in the *midbar* for every day of the mission. Therefore, Hashem shortened the journey to soften the decree against the Jewish People.
- 13:27 - That *Eretz Canaan* is a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 13:30 - He fooled them by shouting, "Is

this all that Moshe did to us?" The people quieted themselves to hear what further disparagement Calev wished to add.

- 13:32 - Hashem caused many deaths among the Canaanites so that they



- would be preoccupied with burying their dead and not notice the *meraglim*.
- 14:1 - On Tisha B'Av. Therefore, the Temples were destroyed on this date.
  - 14:9 - Iyov.
  - 14:10 - The Jewish People wanted to

stone them.

- 14:24 - Hebron.
- 14:27 - That ten men are considered a congregation.
- 13:24, 14:45 - *Nachal Eshkol*, because of the cluster of grapes taken there. *Chormah*, because of the destruction that occurred there.
- 15:18 - The obligation to observe other *mitzvos* associated with *Eretz Yisrael* begins only after the possession and division of the Land. The obligation to observe the *mitzvah* of *Challah* starts immediately upon entering the Land.
- 15:20 - No fixed amount is stated in the Torah. Rabbinical Law requires a household to give 1/24, and a baker to give 1/48.
- 15:31 - Hashem gave this commandment directly to the Jewish People.
- 15:32 - Just once.
- 15:39 - From the blood of the *chilazon*.

## Recommended Reading List

### RAMBAN

13:4 Order of the *Meraglim*  
 13:27,32 &  
 14:1,3 Tactics of the *Meraglim*  
 14:17 Moshe Rabbeinu's Prayer  
 15:2 Order of the Chapters

### SEFER HACHINUCH

385 *Challah*  
 386 *Tzitzis*  
 387 Avoiding Intellectual and Physical Temptations

## Bonus Answer!

Rebuke is only appropriate when it will be accepted. If the individual will not understand from the reproof the error that he is making, rebuke will cause more harm than good. Hashem understood that the Jewish People could not be dissuaded from sending the *meraglim*, and that to prevent the mission would have had consequences far more devastating than allowing it.

• *Be'er Mechokek*

## HAFTORAH: Yehoshua 2:1-24

### STREETS OF GOLD

Can you imagine what it must be like to look for a new job almost every single week of the year? It's bad enough trying to find and hold down one job, but to have to start again every Monday morning, pounding the tarmac to find yet another way to put bread on the table...

But that is exactly what Jews did in America at the turn of the Century. To escape the pogroms of Czarist Russia, Jews fled to America having heard stories of a *goldeneh medina* — a land where the streets were paved with gold. In a sense that may have been true, but to mine that gold meant working on Shabbos...and that was unthinkable. So, these Jews would get hired on Monday, work until Friday afternoon, not turn up

on Shabbos and get fired again on Monday. This happened week after week. It was through this tremendous self-sacrifice that Torah was established in America.

What kept those spiritual heroes, and thus their descendants, connected to *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism) was they never for one moment thought of breaking Shabbos. It never entered their minds for a second. You *had* to keep Shabbos! That was as self-evident as saying you had to breathe!

There is an interesting puzzle in this week's Parsha: Why was it that the Spies that Moshe sent came back with a negative report, while those which Yehoshua sent in this week's Haftorah, came back pos-

itive and enthusiastic?

The difference was their attitudes to the mission in the first place: The spies that Moshe sent went with the attitude of *whether* to enter the land, whereas those of Yehoshua had no question as to whether to enter the land. That was Hashem's will. Not to enter the land was unthinkable. ***It never entered their minds for a second.*** The only question was *how* enter the land.

When a person starts off with the mind-set that is exclusively positive, his focus will be locked on achieving his objective, because the thought of not doing never enters his mind.

• *Based on Rabbi Abraham Twerski*

INSIGHTS...continued from page one

Eretz Yisrael to the whole cosmos.

*Shlomo Hamelech* (King Solomon), the wisest of all men, had the ability to discern the exact location of these spiritual pipelines as they traversed Eretz Yisrael: He grew flowers in Jerusalem that would normally grow only in Africa, because he knew the exact path of the African flowers' life-force as it made its way to Africa.

Just as Eretz Yisrael is a pipeline in space, so too Shabbos is a spiritual pipeline in time, flowing and distributing spiritual energy to the week. This is hinted to in the words "...flowing with milk and honey" — the ubiquitous description of the Land of Israel. Because if you take the last letters of the words "...flowing with milk and honey" in Hebrew and reverse them, they spell ***Shabbos!***

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