

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE BOOK OF NAMES

"And they will say to me: What is His Name?" (3:13)

This week we start reading the Book of *Shmos*, the "Book of Names." Really, however, the entire Torah is a Book of Names.

The Torah existed before the creation of the universe. In its primordial form, the Torah's "letters" were black fire on a "parchment" of white fire. When G-d dictated the Torah to Moshe, Moshe wrote it like a scribe copying an ancient text of fire. Until this dictation, the Torah only existed as a series of letters in a sequence which could have been broken up into different words and different sentences, with an entirely different meaning. Thus, the primordial Torah was the "DNA of existence," containing every potential existential scenario. The Torah that Moshe wrote down was the scenario that was actualized.

Something else: The entire Torah from its beginning — "*In the beginning*" — until its final words — "*before the eyes of all Yisrael*" — is no more than names of G-d, one after the other after the other.

How can G-d have a name? A name defines. Definition limits. *This* cannot be *that*. Something with a name is by definition separate from everything else. Isn't saying that G-d has a name an impossible contradiction to His Oneness?

The Torah is the blueprint of creation. Really, however, it is more

than the blueprint. It is the *means* by which things exist. An architect's blueprint is inanimate. The Torah is dynamic. The source of all existence is rooted either explicitly or covertly in the Torah.

On the infinite level, G-d has no name. When we talk of G-d having names, we mean that His names are the way that He relates to His creation. The Torah is the life-source of everything that exists *because* it is the names of G-d. The Torah, the blueprint and the dynamo of creation, necessarily must consist of G-d's

"Moshe's essence was compassion. Thus, Moshe merited to be the shepherd of the Jewish People."

names, for nothing can exist unless He wills it to exist; and His connection to this world is through His names.

Nothing can have existence unless it is written in the Torah, which is no more than G-d's names, one after another...

A JEW BY ANY OTHER NAME...

"And these are the names of the Children of Israel that came to Egypt" (1:1)

There was once a Jew who wanted very much to join a certain golf club. The only problem was that this golf club didn't accept Jews. Undeterred, he took every conceivable precaution to conceal his Jewishness and even changed his name. A week after he submitted his application, he was very disappointed to receive a polite but firm rejection from the club. "I don't understand," he complained to a friend. "My name doesn't sound Jewish. And on the application form, under where it said *Religion*, I even wrote 'non-Jew!'"

One reason that the Jewish People deserved to be redeemed from Egypt was that they didn't change their names. Why was this so important?

The name of a thing defines its essence. When Adam gave names to every creature, he understood that creature's individual essence and was able to express this in a name.

Similarly, later in this week's Parsha, when G-d commands Moshe to lead the Jewish People out of Egypt, Moshe says to G-d "*They will say to me 'What is His (G-d's) Name? What shall I answer them?'*" In other words, if they ask me to define the essence of the Creator, what His name is, what do I answer?

G-d is above definition. Man can have no concept of the real essence of the Creator. We can only know that there is a Creator. And that is

PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the death of Yosef, the Book of *Bereishis* (Genesis) comes to an end. The Book of *Shmos* (Exodus) chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov. At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Jews, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate continues to increase, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all baby boys. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and places him in a basket in the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts the baby even though she realizes he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's older sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe. She arranges for his mother Yocheved to be his nursemaid and help raise him. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and Moshe kills the Egyptian. When Moshe realizes his life is in danger, he flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yisro approves of their subsequent marriage.

On Chorev (Mt. Sinai), Moshe witnesses the burning bush where Hashem commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to *Eretz Yisrael*, which Hashem has promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People in Egypt will doubt his being Hashem's agent, and so Hashem enables Moshe to perform three miraculous transformations to validate him in the eyes of the people: Changing his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood. When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker Hashem tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman. Aharon greets Moshe on his return to Egypt and they petition Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that the Jews must produce the same quota of bricks as before, but without being given supplies. The people become dispirited, but Hashem assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

HAFTORAH: YISHAYAHU 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

SUE ME / SUE YOU

"Has He struck at Israel as He struck those who struck him? Or has He slain him as He slew those who slew him? According to its measure (of sin), He contended..." (27:6, 8)

Damaging someone's reputation can be more expensive than damaging his Cadillac. Remuneration for the damage to someone's reputation is difficult for courts to

calculate, but one thing is sure, a person of great status who is insulted and loses status will be awarded much more damages than someone who is a street-bum.

Once, there was a rich man who was angered by a certain pauper. The altercation came to a head when the rich man slapped the poor man in the face in public. Shortly afterward, the poor man got a job. It turned out that he was extremely adept at his task and rose through the ranks to be second-in-command of the business. Encouraged by his success, he started a business on his own. The business grew and grew as the years passed and he became fabulously wealthy.

Ironically, the rich man's fortunes waned in almost direct proportion to the waxing of the fortunes of the poor man.

When the "poor" man reached the pinnacle of his success, he sued the "rich" man for the insulting slap that he had been forced to endure all those years previously. The court deliberated the cause and fined the "rich" man a

sum which would take him many years to pay, if at all. The "rich" man complained, saying "This is a ridiculous amount of money. When I hit him he was no more than a pauper." "True," said the judge. "However, the law only recognizes the present status of the litigants, and not what they may have been yesterday or will be tomorrow. The man that you insulted may have once been a pauper but today he is someone of great stature in the community. The penalty that has been levied on you represents his current status, and the concomitant insult to it."

In the future, when G-d calls to account the nations of the world who have oppressed the Jewish People, he will not view their behavior based on the lowly level of the Jewish People in exile. Rather, He will base his adjudication on the status of the Jewish People in the past, the holy children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and on the future, regal people exalted by G-d.

• *The Dubner Maggid*

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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by
OHR SOMAYACH
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

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Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
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PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529
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Dedicated In Honor of
the Bar Mitzvah of
BENJAMIN SCHOEN
by the Schoen Family
Jerusalem, Israel

PARSHA INSIGHTS

precisely what G-d answered Moshe: "I will be that which I will be." My essence is the fact that I exist, I have always existed and I will always exist. That is My essence. That is My Name.

That's what "not changing their names" means. The Jewish People didn't change their essence. They didn't lose their identity. Even in the depths of exile they never stopped feeling that their essence was Jewish. Right at the beginning of the Book of Shmos, the Torah tells us "These are the names of the Children of Israel..." With these names they came, and with these names they left, their essence and their identity unaltered in any way.

THE SINGER NOT THE SONG

"He kissed him" (4:27)

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, one of the great Torah leaders of the previous generation, disliked eulogies which contained stories about the deceased. "It's the

man that makes the story, not the story that makes the man" he said. Even the simplest actions of the great bespeak volumes.

In this week's Parsha, G-d tells Aharon to go out and meet his brother Moshe. The Torah reports "He kissed him" without telling us who kissed whom. Nachmanides tells us that it was Aharon who kissed Moshe. Although Moshe hadn't seen Aharon for many years and wanted to embrace his brother, yet Moshe, the humblest of all men, did not want to be so presumptuous as to initiate the embrace. Moshe was 80 years old, yet when it came to Aharon, he still saw himself as nothing more than Aharon's younger brother.

The S'forno agrees with Nachmanides that it was Aharon who kissed Moshe, but for a different reason. He says Aharon kissed Moshe because Moshe was holy, just as one would kiss a Torah Scroll.

A simple story of a simple kiss. An event that happens every day. It's the man that makes the story, not the story that makes the man.

LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

"Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro." (3:1)

There's no such thing as a small action by a great person. The smallest action of someone great reveals his greatness.

Moshe was a shepherd. One day, a lamb from his flock was weak from lack of water. Moshe picked up the lamb and carried it on his shoulders until he reached the spring. He placed the lamb down and gave it water from the spring. Moses was alone in the wilderness. No one was watching. No one to applaud his kindness to the lamb.

The way a person acts when no one is watching shows his essence. Moshe's essence was compassion. If Moshe showed such compassion for an animal, how much more would be his compassion for the Jewish People! Thus, Moshe merited to be the shepherd of the Jewish People.

Sources:

The Book Of Names - Ramban, Sefer Bereishis 1:1
A Jew By Any Other Name - Rabbi S.Y. Zevin

The Singer - Not The Song - Rabbi Mordechai

Perlman

Little Things That Count -

Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

BEIT SHEAN

"If the Garden of Eden is in Eretz Yisrael then its gate is at Beit Shean."

This is the Talmudic tribute to the special sweetness of the fruits of this area which lies about 120 meters below sea level.

It was to the walls of Beit Shean that the Philistines fastened the corpses of King Saul and his sons after vanquishing the Israelite army. Saul once



saved the honor of the men of Yavesh Gilead, when the Ammonites had surrounded the city and demanded the right to blind the right eye of every one of its citizens as the price of peace. When the men of Yavesh Gilead heard of this, they marched all night in order to remove the bodies and bury them.

Modern Beit Shean was founded soon after the establishment of the State of Israel near a small Arab town called Bissan, a corruption of the city's Biblical name, and rapidly expanded to become a major development town which absorbed many olim from North Africa.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"Remove your shoes from upon your feet" (Shmos 3:5) Why does the verse say: "Remove your shoes from upon your feet?" Wouldn't "Remove your shoes" be enough? Certainly Moshe's shoes were on his feet!

Rather, the word for shoe, *na'al*, can also mean glove (in Biblical Hebrew), as in the glove that Boaz gave when purchasing a field (*Ruth 4:7*). Therefore, the verse needs to specify "from upon your feet."

• *Da'as Zekeinim M'Ba'alei HaTosefos*
Submitted by Avraham Yitzchak Elbaz, Jerusalem

WEEKLY DAF

YOMA 2 - 8

EVIL ON THE ROPES

Seven days before Yom Kippur the *kohen gadol* is removed from his home and quartered in a special office in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Another *kohen* is prepared as a replacement in case he becomes impure.

Thus begins *Mesechta Yoma*, which is dedicated to the laws of Yom Kippur and the service which the *kohen gadol* performs on this day in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Rashi explains that preparing a replacement was a precaution taken in case the *kohen gadol* had a nocturnal emission or contracted another type of spiritual impurity that would prevent him from entering the sacred precincts of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

One might think that this concern was unwarranted, because one of the ten miracles which our ancestors enjoyed in the *Beis Hamikdash* was that no *kohen gadol* ever became impure from a nocturnal emission on Yom Kippur (*Avos* 5:5). But this is incorrect for two reasons. First of all, the miracle related only to impurity caused by a nocturnal emission, because this was a bodily dysfunction and therefore more embarrassingly distasteful than other external causes of impurity. The replacement still had to be ready in case one of the causes not covered by the miracle arose. And even if the miracle would have covered all sources of impurity, our rule is “one does not rely on miracles.” Therefore, natural precautions had to be taken, as the Jerusalem Talmud points out in regard to the pre-Yom Kippur diet of the *kohen gadol* to prevent such emissions. (1:4)

In his commentary on the *mishna* in *Avos*, Tosefos Yom Tov raises another question: Why was a miracle necessary to prevent the nocturnal emission caused by impure thoughts, when the *kohen gadol* was so well-insulated against such danger by being separated from home and family for seven days and being kept awake all night before he began his service?

His solution is to compare the constant battle between man’s *yetzer tov* and *yetzer hara* (good and evil inclinations) to a battle between two opponents. When the losing combatant feels he is “on the ropes” he suddenly musters all his remaining strength in order to bounce back. An example of this is the rallying of a dying man who surprises his onlookers with a monetary appearance of good health. On the holy day of Yom Kippur, the *yetzer hara* is “on the ropes” and rallies his remaining energy to contaminate the *kohen gadol* with impure thoughts which would lead to nocturnal emission if not for the miracle preventing this.

• Yoma 2a

TWO LESSONS IN SPEECH

“And He called to Moshe and Hashem spoke to him from the Tent of the Assembly for him to say to others.” (*Vayikra* 1:1)

Our Sages derive two important lessons in human rela-

tions from this very first passage of the Book of *Vayikra*.

The fact that Hashem first called to Moshe before speaking to him is support for Rabbi Chanina’s counsel that one should not address his fellow man before first calling him to attention. Maharsha notes that this means he should call his intended listener by his name just as Hashem called Moshe by name before addressing him.

Another lesson deals with the issue of confidentiality. Our Sages warn us that anything heard from someone may not be repeated to any other party without the permission of the person who is the source. The proof for this would seem to be, as Maharsha notes, from the fact that Hashem had to give Moshe instructions to say to others what he had heard from Him.

Rashi, however, has another interpretation based on the makeup of the Hebrew word “*leimor*” which translates as “say unto others.” This word can be broken into two shorter Hebrew words “*lo emor*” which translates as “do not say unto others,” an implied ban on revealing anything heard until permission is granted.

This second lesson is mentioned as a matter of *halacha* by Magen Avraham in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 156). He adds that if the person divulging the information explicitly demands the listener’s confidentiality, the listener may not repeat that information to others even if the statement was made before others, giving the impression that it was not classified.

• Yoma 4b

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why does the verse say “And Yosef was in Egypt?”
2. Why did Pharaoh specifically choose water as the means of killing the Jewish boys? (Two reasons.)
3. “She saw that he was good.” What did she see “good” about Moshe that was unique?
4. Which Hebrew men were fighting each other?
5. Why did the Midianites drive Yisro’s daughters away from the well?
6. How did Yisro know that Moshe was Yaakov’s descendant?
7. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed?
8. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted Hashem’s promise to redeem them?
9. Which expression of redemption would assure the people that Moshe was the true redeemer?
10. What did the staff turning into a snake symbolize?
11. For how long did Moshe refuse to be the redeemer of the Jewish People?
12. Why didn’t Moshe want to be the leader?
13. “And Hashem was angry with Moshe...” What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
14. How many names did Moshe’s father-in-law have?
15. What was special about Moshe’s donkey?
16. About which plague was Pharaoh warned first?
17. Why didn’t the elders accompany Moshe and Aharon to Pharaoh? How were they punished?
18. Which tribe did not work as slaves?
19. Who were the: a) *nogsim* b) *shotrim*?
20. How were the *shotrim* rewarded for accepting the beatings on behalf of their fellow Jews?

SHERLOX

SHERLOX HOLMES AND THE MIDWIFE MYSTERY

“Scotland Yard, at my suggestion, investigated Mr. Lexington’s new ‘home.’ Indeed, they discovered it was ‘home’ to his illegal activities,” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes.

“How did you know?” asked Watstein.

“He had claimed he was building it for his son. But it wasn’t nearly the structure you would expect from a man of such means to build for his only son. The key was to carefully examine for whom the house was built.”

“Speaking of building houses,” said Watstein, “this text has me stumped: The verse says that because the midwives feared G-d, therefore ‘*vaya’as lahem batim — He made houses for them.*’” (*Shmos 1:21*)

“Those midwives risked their lives defying Pharaoh’s wicked decree,” said Sherlock. “Pharaoh told them to kill the baby boys, but they ignored him. Do they not deserve reward?”

“It’s Rashi that’s stumped me. Rashi says that the ‘houses’ G-d made for them were the ‘houses of Priesthood and Royalty.’ These women were to become the mothers of the Aharonic and Davidic dynasties.”

“Imagine!” said Sherlock. “Thousands

of years of Royalty and Priesthood descending from two midwives, due to their love and self-sacrifice on behalf of little Jewish babies.”

“I’m truly moved,” said Watstein. “But is that the simple meaning of the word ‘houses?’ What’s wrong with saying that G-d rewarded these women with actual houses, beautiful mansions to live in? We find many instances where G-d rewards people, at least partially, with material success in this world. So, why can’t these houses be just houses?”

“The key,” said Sherlock, “is to carefully examine for whom the houses were built.”

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. 1:5 - This verse adds that despite being in Egypt as a ruler, Yosef maintained his righteousness.
2. 1:10,22 - He hoped to escape Divine retribution, as Hashem promised never to flood the entire world. Also, his astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer’s downfall would be through water.
3. 2:2 - When he was born the house was filled with light.
4. 2:13 - Dasan and Aviram.
5. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed on Yisro for abandoning idol worship.
6. 2:20 - The well water rose towards Moshe.
7. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so too Moshe would be protected by Hashem.
8. 3:12 - The merit that they were destined to receive the Torah.
9. 3:16,18 - “I surely remembered (*pakod pakadeti*).”
10. 4:3 - It symbolized that Moshe spoke ill of the Jews by saying that they wouldn’t listen to him, just as the original snake sinned through speech.
11. 4:10 - Seven days.
12. 4:10 - He didn’t want to take a position above that of his older brother, Aharon.
13. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a *kohen*.
14. 4:18 - Seven.
15. 4:20 - It was used by Avraham for *akeidas* Yitzchak and will be used in the future by *mashiach*.
16. 4:23 - Death of the firstborn.
17. 5:1 - The elders were accompanying Moshe and Aharon, but they were afraid and one by one they slipped away. Hence, at the giving of the Torah, the elders weren’t allowed to ascend with Moshe.
18. 5:5 - The tribe of Levi.
19. 5:6 - a) Egyptian taskmasters; b) Jewish officers.
20. 5:14 - They were chosen to be on the Sanhedrin.

I AM WHAT I AM

Joseph Slotkowski
<22slotkowski@cua.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Why does G-d call Himself, "I am who I am?" I know that's a horribly complex question, but I am a horribly complex person.

Dear Joseph Slotkowski,

Rashi explains this name to mean "I am and I will be — I am their rescue now and will be in the future." Others explain this name to mean that G-d's true existence can't be comprehended by human logic. G-d is above time, as He created time. Therefore, He always was, He is now, and He always will be in the future, and all this He is in the present. The word "ehyeh" (I will be), spelled *alef*, *heh*, *yud* and *heh*, hints at this idea, as all the numbers mount towards 10: The numerical value of *alef* is one, symbolizing the past, *heh* is five, symbolizing the middle or present, *yud* is 10, symbolizing the end or the future, and the last *heh* five comes to say that all this is in the present.

Sources:

- Exodus 3:14
- Rashi Ibid.

MEMORY CANDLE

Kim Hornbeck from Belpre, Ohio
<hornbecks@speednet1.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
This is the first time I'm lighting a *yahrzeit* (anniversary of passing) candle for my late father, and I don't know what prayer to say. Thank you for your help.

Dear Kim Hornbeck,

There is no specific prayer to recite on lighting the *yahrzeit* candle. I think that it is fitting to stop for a few moments to remember the deceased and to spend some time in introspection. The *yahrzeit* candle is lit at sundown on the eve of the anniversary of the passing and the candle should remain alight for twenty-four hours. It is a beautiful custom to light a candle on the *yahrzeit*, as the flame of a candle is compared to a soul. Just as a flame is never still, so too does the soul continuously strive to "reach up" to G-d.

COVER-UP

Gabor Borbely from Las Vegas, Nevada <borbeli@lj.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Can you please tell me shortly about the *minhag* (custom) of covering our heads. I mean rulings, sources, etc?

Tamar Tessler from Johannesburg SA <tamtov@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Where in any *sefer* (book) are there *halachot* (laws) about *kippot/yarmulkes*? How do we know which size is considered kosher? Material? Are there any *halachot* regarding the positioning of the *yarmulke* on the head? I know this could be a touchy question (political correctness!) Thank you for answering.

Dear Gabor Borbely and Tamar Tessler,

The Talmud says "cover [the child's] head so that he will have the fear of heaven." The Talmud also associates a covered head with humility.

In "Guide for the Perplexed," Maimonides states that the early Sages were repelled by a bare head. The custom to wear a head covering is legislated in *Shulchan Aruch*.

The color and material depend on custom. Some prefer multi-colored versions, some prefer black. The Chatam Sofer in his responsa says *kippot* may be crocheted or woven even if hair sticks through. Regarding size, there are differing views. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, *shlita*, requires that the *kippa* be big enough to be seen from all sides, but other authorities, including Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, disagree and say that there is no size specification. I am not familiar with any source regarding where exactly to position the *kippa*.

Which reminds me of a story: Once on a very windy day, a rabbi was walking along, when a strong gust of wind blew his hat off his head. The rabbi ran after his hat, but the wind was too strong and it kept blowing his hat further and further away. A non-Jewish young man, seeing what had happened ran after the hat, caught it and gave it back to the rabbi. The rabbi was so grateful that he

gave the young man twenty dollars and blessed him.

The young man was so excited that he decided to go the race track and with the rabbi's blessing fresh in his mind decided to check the program and place the entire twenty dollars on a horse. After the races he went home and recounted his very exciting day to his father. "I arrived at the fifth race and looked at the program. I saw this horse named 'Top Hat' was running. The odds on this horse were 100 to 1 but since I received the rabbi's blessing I bet the entire twenty dollars on 'Top Hat' and guess what? He won! In the next race, there was a horse named 'Stetson' at 30 to 1 so I bet the entire amount of my winnings on him, and guess what ... I won again!"

"So did you bring the money home?" asked his father.

"No," said the son, "I lost it all on the next race. There was a horse named 'Chateau' that was a heavy favorite so I bet everything on him, and since that meant 'hat' in French I figured he was a sure thing."

"You fool!" said the father. "Hat in French is 'chapeau' not 'chateau!' But who won the race?"

"A real long shot," said the son. "A Japanese horse named *Yamaka*..."

Sources:

- Tractate Shabbat 196b
- Tractate Kiddushin 31a
- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 2:6

DAVID'S MOTHER

Marilyn Rubin from Scottsdale, AZ & Jerusalem
<I_rubin@netvision.net.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I would like to know the name of King David's mother. Where is this written in the Torah? I believe that his father's name was Jesse (*Yishai*).

Dear Marilyn Rubin,

David's mother's was Nitzevet daughter of Adael. This is not written in the Torah, but rather is recorded in the Talmud, Tractate Bava Batra 91a. The Talmud there also gives the name of Avraham's mother, and of Haman's mother!

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Email@Withheld from South Africa wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

There is a saying that we must not “judge a book by its cover,” meaning that we must look beyond the physical appearance. This is shown to us by the mitzvah of “dan lechafzechus” (judging favorably) and in Ohr Somayach’s regular feature “The Other Side of the Story.” However, I believe that this is not entirely true because otherwise what is the purpose of the physical world? I believe we must consider our outside performance. If we must not judge a book by its cover then G-d could

have made us all angels. Many times in the Torah the beauty is mentioned. For example a person could say “I am not going to keep the laws of tznius (modesty in dress and deportment) because people must look beyond the outside.” I do not mean to say that our inside is not important but what is the importance of the physical appearance and where do we draw the line?

Dear Email@Withheld,

Proverbs (31:30) states “False is grace and vain is beauty, a G-d fearing woman, she should be praised.” The Gaon of Vilna explains this verse as saying that beauty is vain only when it is not accompanied by fear of G-d. But if beauty is accompanied by fear of G-d, then it is indeed something to be valued and praised.

PUBLIC DOMAIN
Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ohrnet” features

While Ohrnet welcomes feedback by post or fax, we respond personally to email only.

Re: Red Thread (Ohrnet Bechukosai):

Regarding the Ask the Rabbi in which a subscriber asked about the source of wearing red thread to ward off the evil eye: Your answer was somewhat complicated and involved a red worm, and that by looking at the string one is reminded that he is as lowly as a red worm. I think the following is a much simpler and more satisfactory answer: There is a verse in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, which is King Solomon’s famous tribute to womanhood: “Lo tirah l’vaitah mishaleg” — Why is the woman of valor not afraid that the snowstorm will harm her family? “Ki chol baitah lavush shanim” — Because her entire household is clad in red!

• Arthur Elfenbein, Woodmere, NY

Re: Reunion:

I merely wish to express my utmost gratitude to you for the part you played in a long awaited reunion on my part. In a recent “Ask the Rabbi” I noticed a name and email that seemed like it might be that of a friend from Israel whom I had not had contact with in two years. I’ve been trying to find this person, but even enlisting the help of my brother and friends in Yerushalayim proved fruitless. When I saw the email in your issue, I was skeptical, as my friend had not really been a computer person. I took the leap and sent a short note, and sure enough he and his wife had gotten a computer recently and had been subscribing to Ohr Somayach’s internet lists. This was an amazing and pleasant surprise to both of us and with the help of Hashem we will now be able to renew our friendship.

• Dovid Gelerinter, Chicago, IL <dgelerin@mcs.kent.edu>

Re: Chanuka Wishes (Ohrnet Micketz):

I found the Chanuka edition most enlightening! I was quite surprised to see the greeting “Chag Urim Somayach — Happy Festival of Lights” as Chanuka is a moed and not a chag, being that melacha (work) is permitted (see Sefer Chanuka: Halachot 1:5, Rabbi Tzvi Cohen).

Regarding “Simcha’s Torah Stories” — what a wonderful message of mesirus nefesh (self sacrifice) for adults as well!

• Avraham Zuroff, Kiryat Sefer, Israel

Re: Very Funny! (Ohrnet Micketz):

Loved Rabbi Orlofsky’s Chanuka article. I am on the floor as I type! Don’t eat too many latkes.

• Bob Davidson, San Diego <bobwar@san.rr.com>

Rabbi Orlofsky’s Chanukah message left me with a smile on my lips and in my heart! Keep up the great work you are doing!

• Judith Amrani, Houston, Texas <AMRJU@gardere.com>

I forwarded your special Chanuka article by Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky to a friend. The following is her response:

Hi Reuven,

I was just thinking of you, and lo and behold, a missive from you this morning. All I can say is: Kol Hakavod!! It comes at a time when I am seeing so many of my friends’ children and my children’s friends intermarrying; three in the coming months. I know it might seem foolish, but each time I feel as if it is a personal loss and it really hurts. They seem to know all of the “thou shalt nots” of Judaism, but none of the beauty and truth. Anyway, this is not a new story and you are as aware of it as we are. I just wanted to let you know that I am going to forward that Ohr Somayach article to all those on my e-mail list. Maybe the message will get through to at least one person. B. and I send you and your family our warmest wishes for the holiday. May the lights of the Chanuka candles bring joy to all, happiness and pride in who and what we are. Best Always, M.E.

• Reuven <millerr@mail.biu.ac.il>

Judge everyone favorably, and remember: Even a pizza has two sides.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PIZZA

Hi to all the staff of the Ohrnet and thanks for a great job. I have been wanting to write to you about a story that happened in our neighborhood here in our small city in Israel. This is a classic "Other Side of the Story" story. There has been a pizza shop in our town for many years. Even their name, "Dominoes," gives the impression of

true non-kosherness. (They are not affiliated with the famous Dominoes pizza, they have been in our town for 19 years, and recently won a law suit against Dominoes for name infringement.) They have a delivery service and, being the only food delivery service in our little town, their motor-bikes are easily recognizable.

One day their delivery motor bike came to deliver a pizza. People looked out their windows in disbelief. My wife and I also went to the window as we heard the distinct sound of the mo-ped in our all-religious cul-de-sac. The children were running after the mo-ped to see who had ordered from the non-kosher pizza

shop. I said to my wife, as a child of a prominent rabbi from the community paid for the pizza, "they must be newly under *hashgacha* (kashrut supervision)." When I went downstairs, I saw, sitting in a bundle, a large stack of flyers announcing that the pizza shop was now *kosher l'mehadrin* (strictly kosher). They never got handed out and were just left there sitting. I guess one person did get the flyer.

• Submitted by Michael Glixman
<goixman@netvision.net.il>
Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story"
by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Which verse in the Torah has all the letters of the *Aleph-Beis*? Answer next week...

Submitted by Yair Guttman <YDgutt@aol.com>

continued from page five

SHERLOX ANSWER!

"Who were these houses built for?" asked Sherlock.

"For the midwives, of course," said Watstein.

"Read the verse again, carefully."

"And it was when the midwives feared G-d," read Watstein, "He made for them... *vaya'as lahem*..." Suddenly, Watstein gasped.

"Shall I call a Doctor, Dr. Watstein?"

"The verse say '*lahem*!' *Lahem* means 'for them,' but it is the masculine form! For women, the proper word is '*lahen*' with the letter 'nun' at the end! If the houses were made for the midwives, the verse should have said '*lahen*.'"

"Exactly," said Sherlock. "Therefore, to find out who the houses were made for, we must go back to the previous verse. The previous verse says '*the nation increased*' (*Shmos 1:20*). As a reward for the midwives fearing G-d, G-d made for them, for the nation, that is, houses."

"National houses, or national institutions, rather. The institutions of Priesthood and Royalty. And the midwives were rewarded by becoming the founding mothers of these national dynasties."

"Nobly said, dear Watstein."

• Based on Rabbi S. R. Hirsch - *Sherlox* is by Reuven Subar
Inspired by "What's Bothering Rashi" by Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

1:10	RAMBAN Politics of Genocide	3:18	The Code Word for Redemption	2:11,13,17	Reactions to Injustice
2:2	Certainty of Moshe's Rescue	4:10	Moshe's Speech Impediment		
3:5	The Burning Bush	4:13	Moshe's Humility		
3:8	Qualities of <i>Eretz Yisrael</i>	4:19	Moshe's Family as Proof	2:2	CLI YAKAR Light and Three Months
3:12	Moshe's Concerns		SFORNO	2:7	Prophecy of Miriam
		2:10	Moshe's Name	2:13	Striking Words