

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT KI TEITZE-KI TAVO-NITZAVIM-VAYELECH · 11-25 ELUL 5764 /AUG 28-SEP 11, 2004 · VOL. 11 NO. 48

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

**Ki Teitze**

### SKIN DEEP

*“And you will take her as a wife...” (21:11)*

In recent years, our society has seen an enormous increase in anorexia and other food related diseases – diseases that were almost unheard of thirty years ago. Plastic surgery now accounts for a sizeable percent of all operations. More and more, we live in a world that stresses the importance of appearance. The way things look is more important than what they are. Appearance is more important than essence.

Interestingly, this shift of focus from essence to appearance has been paralleled by a large increase in juvenile crime and teenage social dysfunction.

This should not surprise us, for the Torah taught us this connection some three thousand years ago.

In this week’s portion, we learn that a Jewish soldier may marry a foreign woman captive taken in battle. The Torah then goes on to speak about the rebellious and wayward son. Rashi tells us that these two subjects are juxtaposed to teach us that even though it is permitted to marry a captive, the result of this union will be a rebellious and wayward son.

Ostensibly, a delinquent son would seem to be a punishment for taking this woman as a wife; however, we can also understand Rashi as a prediction rather than a punishment.

Someone who is so preoccupied with the external look of things that he is prepared to bring into his home a woman who is totally foreign to his culture and beliefs will be passing on to his son the message that the way things look is more important than the way things are; such a value system leads inevitably to producing offspring with a warped sense of what life is all about.

• Sources: *Avnei Nezel in Mayana shel Torah; thanks to Rabbi C. Z. Senter*

**Ki Tavo**

### HANDS UP!

*“And the kohen shall take the basket from your hands....” (26:4)*

The hands are different from all the other limbs. All the other limbs of the body are fixed and static, whereas the hands may be lowered below the feet or raised higher than the head.

The same is true on an allegorical/ethical level. Man can “lower” his hands; he can perform all the greatest sins possible. He can murder, steal. Everything can be done with the hands. We talk of having blood *on our hands* and *dirty hands*.

On the other hand, the hands, when raised up, can perform the holiest acts. When the *kohen* blesses the people he raises his hands. The hand gives *tzedaka* (charity). The hand puts on tefillin. We extend the hand of friendship and assistance.

The handiwork of a person is symbolized by the acquisitions that the labor of his hands have brought him. For this reason, the first of his fruits must be made holy as *bikkurim*.

Because the beginning always influences what follows it. Thus, every beginning needs to be made holy, because when the beginning is holy, everything that follows it will also be holy.

When the hands are raised above the head, when their direction is Heavenwards, then the head and the body will inevitably follow after them.

• Adapted from Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

**Netzavim/Vayelech**

### THE SPEED OF THOUGHT

*“For this commandment that I command you today, it is not hidden from you... it is not in Heaven... nor is it over the sea... for it is very near to you, in your mouth and your heart to do it.” (30:11-14)*

The Torah tells us that this commandment is not over the sea; it is in your mouth and your heart to do it. In other words, one might have thought that it is over the sea. How is it possible that something as close as the mouth and the heart could ever be confused with being as distant as the Heavens or over the sea?

Man consists of two opposing elements, body and soul. If we put our *neshama*, our soul, in charge of our body, we can reach a level greater than the angels. If, on the other hand, we allow our body to dominate our spiritual side we become like animals. For just as an animal has no taste for wisdom and intellectual discernment, preferring hay, straw and the like, so too a person who centers himself on physicality finds things of the spirit without taste. Thus, man is an amalgam of two elements as disparate as Heaven and Earth.

*continued on page three*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Ki Tetzei

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son's right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father's desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women's clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. *Bnei Yisrael* are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara'at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers' pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother's widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for in spite of knowing about the Exodus, they ambushed the Jewish People.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS

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

### Ki Tetzei

## OLD-FASHIONED DIPLOMACY

“Why is there no dome atop your synagogue as there are on the synagogues in my empire?” This was the question put to his Jewish escorts back in 1870 by Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austro-Hungary during a visit to Jerusalem. This European ruler, respected for his benevolent policy towards his Jewish subjects, was being shown the yet unfinished Nissan Beck Shul by some of those subjects now living in Jerusalem.

“Your highness,” one of them diplomatically explained, “even the synagogue wishes to pay tribute to you by removing its hat!”

The compliment and hint succeeded in eliciting from the Emperor a generous sum for completing the dome which served as a Jerusalem landmark until it was destroyed by the Jordanians in the War of Independence.



### Ki Tavo

## POINT OF NO RETURN

“Don't dare let them pause for a moment on their way to Babylon!” This was the strange order which the Babylonian king, Nevuchadenetzer, gave to his general, Nevuzradan.

He explained that there was a danger that if these Jews on their way to Babylon had any respite for prayer and repentance their G-d was likely to accept their return to Him and thwart the Babylonian effort to exile them. Once they reached Babylon, however, the general told his soldiers to

stop driving these Jewish captives and to allow them to rest. This is what is meant by the opening words of Psalm 137 in *Tehillim* which it is customary to say before Grace After Meals on weekdays: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat....”

The reason he gave for allowing this rest at that point was his feeling that their repentance was less likely to be accepted by G-d outside of their holy land.

### Nitzavim-Vayelech

## SING A SONG?

When the exiled Jews finally rested by the rivers of Babylon they “hung their lyres on the willows growing there”. The psalm (137) in *Tehillim* recounting their dramatic scene goes on to relate that “There our captors requested words of song from us with our lyres playing joyous music: ‘Sing for us from Zion's song.’”

“How can we sign the songs of G-d upon the aliens' soil?” was the response of the Levites who had taken with them the instruments which they had used for providing musical accompaniment.

Our Sages point out that they did not say “We shall not sing” but “How can we sing?” To avoid playing sacred music on their lyres for their heathen captors on foreign soil, they had cut off their thumbs in order to make it impossible for them to play those instruments.

These courageous Levites were the ones who eventually accompanied Ezra on the return to Eretz Yisrael despite the difficulties involved, while those who had not removed their thumbs remained behind to enjoy the comfort and security of Babylon.

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continued from page one

This is what the Torah is teaching us here. When a person turns his back on the great worth of the spiritual world, that world is indeed extremely distant from him — literally “in the Heavens.” However the Torah tells him that really “it is very near to you.” If you just give the spiritual dominion over the physical, then “it is in your mouth and your heart to do it.”

These words illustrate the enormous potential of man. In one second, he can rise to the heights by bringing Torah into his mouth and his heart, by bringing the furthest thing in the world close to him. In a split second, a thought can transport him from languishing in shadow to basking in great light; to being elevated to the loftiest heights. Surely, “it is not hidden from you.”

## PARSHA Q&A ?

KI TETZEI

1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor’s house?
2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
3. What will become of a *ben sorer u’moreh* if his parents don’t bring him to court?
4. Why is it a degradation to Hashem to hang a criminal’s body on the gallows overnight?
5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
13. What is the groom’s special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
16. “Remember what Hashem did to Miriam.” To what event does the Torah refer?
17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
19. Which two people in this week’s *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to Ki Tetzei’s Questions!

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

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in Hashem’s image, and because the Jewish People are Hashem’s children.
5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
16. 24:9 - Hashem punishing Miriam with *tzara’at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the “forgotten bundle” for the poor.
18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother’s widow).
20. 25:16 - “An abomination (*to’evah*) to Hashem.”

## TOO MANY TRUMPETS?

When King Solomon completed the construction of the *Beit Hamikdash* and brought into it the Holy Ark and the sacred vessels which had hitherto been in the *Mishkan* Sanctuary, there was musical accompaniment to this historic move. In addition to the Levites playing a number of instruments there were “with them 120 *kohanim* blowing trumpets.” (*Divrei Hayamim II 5:12*)

This passage is the source for a statement of Rabbi Huna concerning the rule laid down in the *mishna* that there must never be less than two trumpets in the music of the Levites in the *Beit Hamikdash* but that there is no upper limit on how many may be used. However, based on the number mentioned in regard to the ceremony of King Solomon he indeed deduces that there is an upward limit of 120.

Do we interpret this limit as an indication that there is no need to supply more than that number, or is it to be understood that more than 120 trumpets in the *Beit Hamikdash* orchestra can be counter-productive?

In his commentary on the *mishna*, Tosefot raises both approaches. The first is that there is no need to try for more. There is definitely an enhancing of the mitzvah of Levite music through the addition of more trumpets. But since we find that King Solomon did not make an effort to secure more than 120 trumpeters, Rabbi Huna concluded that this is the maximum for which an effort should be made for such an enhancement.

The second approach is that until 120 there is no danger of the trumpets drowning out the sound of the instruments which produce a more delicate sound. Beyond that there is the danger of this happening as we see that King Solomon limited their number to 120.

• *Erachin 13b*

## THE SUBTLE SLANDER

“And the men whom Moshe sent to spy out the land who returned and made all the congregation complain against him, by slandering the land; these men who slandered the land with an evil report died in a plague before the L-rd.” (*Bamidbar 14:36-37*)

The awful death suffered by the spies as a punishment for slandering Eretz Yisrael serves as a warning for all slanderers. If this is what happens to those who slander mere trees and stones, says Rabbi Elazar ben Parta, what will happen to

one who slanders his fellow man!

What exactly was the slander which the spies spoke?

The obvious slander was the report that “it is a land which devours its inhabitants” (*ibid. 13:32*). The funerals they observed during their tour of the land were Divinely arranged in order to divert the attention of the mourning natives from them and were misrepresented by the spies as an indication of the harsh nature of the land.

Maharsha, however, saw in the choice of the fruits they brought back with them an intentional slandering of the land. When Moshe sent them he asked for a report not only on the military capacity of the natives but also in regard to the ability of the land to provide nourishment. Eretz Yisrael is described elsewhere in the Torah as a land of wheat, barley and olives, which are the staples of nourishment, in addition to the grapes, dates, figs and pomegranates which are less so. But the spies, in their desire to discourage the people from going to Eretz Yisrael, brought back only the three less nourishing fruits and described the land as “flowing with milk and honey” to include dates as well. Their report that “these are the fruits” (*ibid. 13:27*) was intended to convey the impression that the land had nothing to offer in the way of solid nourishment, only these luxury items, and they paid dearly for this slander.

• *Erachin 15a*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Ki Tavo

When *Bnei Yisrael* dwell in the Land of Israel, the first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the *kohen* in a ceremony expressing recognition that it is Hashem who guides Jewish history throughout all ages. (This passage forms one of the central parts of the Haggadah that we read at the Passover Seder.) On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and seventh years of the seven-year *shemita* cycle, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner. With this *mitzvah*, Moshe concludes the commandments that Hashem has told him to give to the Jewish People. Moshe exhorts them to walk in Hashem's ways because they are set aside as a treasured people to

Hashem. When *Bnei Yisrael* cross the Jordan River they are to make a new commitment to the Torah. Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them in the world's seventy primary languages, and they are to be covered with a thin layer of plaster. Half the tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim and half on Mount Eval, and the *levi'im* will stand in a valley between the two mountains. There the *levi'im* will recite 12 commandments and all the people will say "amen" to the blessings and the curses. Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon *Bnei Yisrael*. These blessings are both physical and spiritual. But if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

## PARSHA Q&A?

## KI TAVO

1. When historically did the obligation to bring *bikkurim* begin?
2. *Bikkurim* are from which crops?
3. How does one designate *bikkurim*?
4. Who shakes the basket containing the *bikkurim*?
5. What does "v'anita v'amarta" mean?
6. Which Arami "tried to destroy my father"?
7. When during the year may *bikkurim* be brought? Until when are the special verses recited?
8. Someone declaring that he separated *terumah* and *ma'aser* says: "And I didn't forget." What didn't he forget?
9. What were the Jewish People to do with the 12 stones on Mt. Eval?
10. Six tribes stood on Mt. Eval and six on Mt. Gerizim. Who and what were in the middle?
11. Who "causes the blind to go astray"?
12. How does one "strike another secretly"?
13. Eleven curses were spoken on Mt. Eval. What is the significance of this number?
14. Why are sheep called "*ashterot*"?
15. How is the manner of expressing the curses in *Parshat Bechukotai* more severe than in this week's *parsha*?
16. What is meant by "the Jewish People will become a proverb"?
17. Why did all the curses expressed in 48:16-44 befall the Jewish People?
18. "In the morning you shall say, 'If only it were (last) evening' and in the evening you will say, 'If only it were (this) morning.'" Why?
19. To which tribe did Moshe give the Torah first?
20. How long does it take to understand the depth of one's teacher's wisdom?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to Ki Tavo's Questions!

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

1. 26:1 - After the Land was conquered and divided.
2. 26:2 - The seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised: Wheat, barley, grapes, olives, figs, dates, and pomegranates.
3. 26:2 - When he sees the first fruit ripen on a tree, he binds a piece of straw around it to mark it as *bikkurim*.
4. 26:4 - The *kohen* places his hands under the hands of the one bringing it, and they wave the basket together.
5. 26:5 - Speak loudly.
6. 26:5 - Lavan.
7. 26:11 - *Bikkurim* are brought from Shavuot until Channuka. The verses are recited only until Succot.
8. 26:13 - To bless Hashem.
9. 10. 27:2 - Build an altar.
10. 27:12 - *Kohanim*, *levi'im* and the Holy Ark.
11. 27:18 - Any person who intentionally gives bad advice.
12. 27:24 - By slandering him.
13. 27:24 - Each curse corresponds to one of the tribes, except for the tribe of Shimon. Since Moshe didn't intend to bless the tribe of Shimon before his death, he did not want to curse them either.
14. 28:4 - Because they "enrich" (*m'ashiro*) their owners.
15. 28:23 - In *Bechukotai* the Torah speaks in the plural, whereas in this week's Parsha the curses are mentioned in the singular.
16. 28:37 - Whenever someone wants to express the idea of extraordinary suffering, they will use the Jewish People as an example.
17. 28:47 - Because they did not serve Hashem with gladness when everything was abundant.
18. 28:67 - Because the curse of each hour will be greater than that of the previous hour.
19. 29:3 - To the Tribe of Levi.
20. 29:8 - 40 years.

**Nitzavim**

1. Why did Moshe gather the Jewish People together on the day of his death?
2. Who are the wood-cutters and water-drawers mentioned in verse 29:10?
3. How do two parties “pass” into a covenant?
4. What is the connection between the verse “*Atem nitzavim*” and the curses in the previous parsha?
5. Why can't Hashem disassociate himself from the Jewish People?
6. How many curses were listed in *Parshat Ki Tavo*?
7. Which two leaders followed Moshe's example and assembled the people at the end of their rule?
8. With whom did Moshe make the covenant and oath?
9. Why did the Jewish People see only idols of wood and stone in Egypt?
10. What is meant by the punishment of “adding drunkenness to thirst (29:18)”?

**Vayelech**

11. How old was Moshe when he died?
12. Why was Moshe unable “to go out and come in” (31:2)?
13. What happened to Moshe's Torah knowledge on the day of his death?
14. How did Moshe foresee the relationship between Yehoshua and the Elders?
15. What did Hashem tell Yehoshua concerning his relationship with the Elders?
16. How often does the *hakhel* (assembly of the Jewish People) take place?
17. Why does the Torah call the year of the *hakhel* the “*shemita* year”?
18. What sections of the Torah does the king read at the *hakhel*?
19. In what physical location does the king read at the *hakhel*?
20. Why were the men commanded to come to the gathering?

## PARSHA Q&amp;A!

## Answers to Nitzavim-Vayelech's Questions!

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

1. 29:9 - To initiate them into the covenant with Hashem.
2. 29:10 - Canaanites who came to join the Jewish People.
3. 29:11 - The two parties place objects in two parallel lines and pass between them.
4. 29:12 - The Jewish People asked, “Who can survive such curses?” Moshe comforted them, saying, “You've done a lot to anger Hashem, and yet — ‘*Atem nitzavim*’ — Hashem didn't destroy you ...you're still standing before Him.”
5. 29:12 - Because He told them He wouldn't and because He swore to the *Avot* (Patriarchs) that the Jewish People would always remain His nation.
6. 29:12 - Ninety-eight.
7. 29:12 - Yehoshua and Shmuel.
8. 29:14 - With the people standing before him and all future generations.
9. 29:16 - Because these were exposed openly. The idols of gold and silver, however, were locked away by their owners for fear of theft.
10. 29:18 - Even unintentional sins will be considered by Hashem as if they were committed intentionally. “Drunkenness” refers to sins committed unintentionally. “Thirst” refers to sins committed intentionally.
11. 31:2 - Exactly 120.
12. 31:2 - Hashem did not let him because the power of leadership was being transferred to Yehoshua.
13. 31:2 - The well-springs of knowledge were closed up for him.
14. 31:7 - He foresaw that they would work in partnership.
15. 31:7 - That he alone would be the leader — for there can only be one leader in each generation.
16. 31:10 - Once every seven years, in the first year of the new *shemita* period.
17. 31:10 - Because the laws of *shemita* still applied to the harvest.
18. 31:11 - From Devarim: 1:1-6:9; 11:13-21; and 14:22-28:69.
19. 31:11 - On a wooden platform erected in the *azara*.
20. 31:12 - In order to learn.

### Nitzavim

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathers all the people, young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women, in a final initiation. The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe admonishes the people again to be extremely vigilant against idol worship because, in spite of having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies as a pretext for immorality. Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Israel which will result from failure to heed Hashem's *mitzvot*. Descendants of that generation and foreigners alike will remark on the singular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or to produce crops. The conclusion will be apparent to all — the Jewish People have forsaken the One who protects them in favor of powerless idols. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled. However assimilated they will have become among the nations, eventually Hashem will bring them back to *Eretz Yisrael*. Moshe tells the people to remember that fulfilling the Torah is not an impossibility; rather it's within the grasp of every Jew. The *parsha* dramatically concludes with Moshe comparing the Jewish People's choice to follow the Torah to a choice between life and death. Moshe exhorts the people to choose life.

### Vayelech

On the last day of his life, Moshe goes from tent to tent bidding farewell to his people, encouraging them to "keep the faith." Moshe tells them that whether he is among them or not, Hashem is with them. He summons Yehoshua, and in front of all the people, exhorts him to be strong and courageous as leader of the Jewish People. Thus, he strengthens Yehoshua's status. Moshe teaches the mitzvah of *hakhel*: Every seven years on the first of the intermediate days of Succot, the entire nation, including small children, is to gather at the Temple to hear the king read from the Book of Devarim. The sections read deal with faithfulness to Hashem, the covenant and reward and punishment. Hashem tells Moshe that his end is near, and he should summon Yehoshua to stand with him in the *Mishkan*, where Hashem will teach Yehoshua. Hashem tells Moshe and Yehoshua that after entering the Land the people will be unfaithful and worship other gods. Hashem will then completely "hide His face," so that it will seem that the Jewish People are at the mercy of fate, hunted by all. Hashem instructs Moshe and Yehoshua to write down a song — *Ha'azinu* — which will serve as "witness" against the Jewish People when they sin. Moshe records the song in writing and teaches it to *Bnei Yisrael*. Moshe completes his transcription of the Torah and instructs the *levi'im* to place it to the side of the Holy Ark, so that no one will ever write a new Torah Scroll different from the original, for there will always be a reference copy.



*The Ohr Somayach Family wishes you and yours and all of Israel a year filled with happiness, health and peace.*

## WHEN IT IS TIME TO LEAVE

When the Patriarch Avraham returned to Eretz Yisrael from his sojourn in Egypt the Torah tells us that “he followed the route of his earlier travel” and that he rested in “the place where he had previously dwelled” (*Bereishet 13:3*).

Our Talmudic Sages saw in this behavior of Avraham a lesson for all generations that one should not be quick to switch from his guest quarters, whether it be a hotel or the home of a host. The reason given is that abandoning one’s customary lodging harms the reputation of both the host and the guest since people who observe such an action interpret it as an indication that both parties are difficult to get along with.

There is, however, a limit to such consideration. There is a consensus among the Sages that if the host violently demonstrates his displeasure with the guest’s continued presence by either physically abusing him or forcefully removing his belongings, there is no point in the guest’s prolonging his stay. There is a disagreement, however, as to whether the host’s abusing “his wife” is also a cause to leave. Rashi’s explanation of “his wife” as a reference to the guest’s wife is challenged by Maharsha. How is it possible, he asks, for one of the Sages to suggest that the guest may remain indifferent to the suffering of his wife and to stay in the lodging when our Sages have commanded us that a man is supposed to honor his wife even more than himself?

An interesting suggestion is humbly made by *Eitz Yossef* to solve this problem. “His wife”, he suggests, is not a reference to the guest’s wife but rather to the host’s wife. Such abuse is presumably the result of a sharp clash with her husband over extending the stay of the guest. In opposition to the opinion that a guest can remain indifferent to such a situation not directly harming him, one Sage advises the guest to leave because he will inevitably be drawn into a conflict with his host.

• *Erachin 16b*

## HOW LONG IS THAT YEAR?

The animals offered as daily sacrifices in the *Beit Hamikdash* were “one year old lambs” (*Bamidbar 28:3*). Is this year calculated according to the age of the animal or does the beginning of a new calendar year on the Rosh Hashana after the birth determine the end of its

first year?

Our Sages taught us that the animal’s actual age is the determinant and not the calendar. The source for this ruling, explains Rabbi Acha bar Yaakov, is that passage describing the sacrifice offered by a woman after childbirth. She is instructed to offer a “lamb in its first year as an *olah* sacrifice” (*Vayikra 12:6*). The stress on *its first year* is an indication that the year in question is a reference to the actual age of the animal and is not affected by the beginning of a new calendar year in the middle of its first year.

Why is it necessary to teach us this through this passage? asks Tosefot. If an animal born in the middle of the year became two years old on Rosh Hashana, how would we ever be able to have a one-year old lamb for the daily sacrifice on Rosh Hashana itself? If it was born before Rosh Hashana it already became a two-year old with the beginning of the new year and if it was born on Rosh Hashana itself, it would not yet have reached the minimum age of eligibility which is the eighth day!

The answer given by Tosefot is that while it is true that such reasoning would have led us to the conclusion that the year mentioned in the Torah is a reference to the actual age of the animal, we would still not have known that this year ends exactly to the hour of the day when the animal was born. It was therefore necessary to teach us through the above passage stressing *its first year* that the year ends to the exact day and hour.

• *Erachin 18b*

OHR SOMAYACH • WWW.OHR.EDU

# YOM TYUN

A DAY OF LEARNING

## Exploring Your Inner Space

COMING TO GRIPS WITH OURSELVES AS WE REACH FOR THE HEIGHTS

featuring

Rabbi Berel Wein • Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb

Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

NEW YORK - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2004

ALICE TULLY HALL • LINCOLN CENTER • 140 WEST 65TH STREET, NYC

**Ki Tetzei**

## THE BITTER LITTER

**Question:** While waiting for a bus I looked down at a small pile of litter and saw something I believed was of value. After picking it up I saw it was worthless and my instinct was to throw it right back. Something in my conscience, however, made me hesitate. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** Your conscience was telling you to consider a couple of factors before deciding to return that litter to its pile.

First of all, you were standing in a public place and it is very likely that there were people there who didn't see you pick up that object and will interpret your act of returning it as wanton littering. Seeing someone litter with impunity encourages others to do the same, especially if you are a person respected in your community.

Any littering in a public area is condemnable because it can create an obstacle for a pedestrian and because it abuses the esthetics of the environment. Even if you are not civic-minded enough to remove that entire pile of litter, why not at least place the piece you have already removed in the nearest disposal bin?

This is especially important for Jews living in Eretz Yisrael. The Talmud relates that Rabbi Chanina used to clear away the rubble from the streets in the Holy Land so that no one should ever have complaints about the condition of its roads.

**Ki Tavo**

## THE PRETENDED PLEDGE

**Question:** In my new capacity as executive director for a Day School in the U.S. I am about to run an annual fundraising dinner. Some people on my board of directors have suggested that we have some "dummy" pledges made at the outset of the scheduled appeal in order to inspire some of the wealthier participants to up their pledges. I have some hesitations about the honesty of such a move. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** There is a story in the latest volume of "*Aleinu Leshabe'ach*" in Hebrew about a fundraising dinner held half a century ago for the construction of a building to house the growing yeshiva which the great Rabbi Aaron Kotler, *zatzal*, had established in Lakewood.

The sum needed for this project was \$100,000, a very

large sum of money in those days. At the dinner two guests announced that they were willing to contribute a total of \$75,000 on the condition that a particular guest not noted for his generosity would contribute \$5,000. The latter took sharp exception to this effort to coerce him into making a pledge which he declared he was incapable of fulfilling.

A recess was called and an emergency conference was held. One of the yeshiva's supporters had suggested to the reluctant guest that he could raise the \$5,000 instead of giving his own and could thus make the pledge which would gain for the yeshiva the big sum offered by the others. When this plan was presented to Rav Kotler, however, he rejected it. The gentlemen who made the condition had in mind that this fellow must give his own money and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise. One cannot build a Torah institution on dishonesty, ruled the Rosh Hayeshiva, and forfeited the \$75,000 pledge.

Anyone who visits the impressive campus of America's largest yeshiva today in Lakewood sees the vindication of this policy.

**Nitzavim-Vayelech**

## SLEEP AND SLICHOT

**Question:** Many Jews in my community get up very early these days to say the traditional Slichot service. There are even more people of all ages who are still sleeping at that time of the morning and the noise made by the early risers on their way to the synagogue can be very disturbing. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** A thoughtful Jew should always be careful not to do any mitzvah at the expense of another person. Just as one would not consider stealing someone's lulav and etrog to fulfill the mitzvah of the Four Species because this constitutes "a mitzvah fulfilled through sin", so too one must avoid robbing someone of his sleep in order to say Slichot.

The problem is that those who make that noise on their way to the synagogue are often not aware that they are disturbing anyone's sleep. It would therefore be a good idea to bring it to their attention by posting signs in the local synagogues or on the bulletin boards of multiple dwellings appealing to those who are heading for Slichot services to avoid making any unnecessary noise which will disturb those still in bed.

You will be surprised to hear many an early Slichot-goer say "Slicha (sorry), I didn't realize I was disturbing anyone."

Ki Tetzei

## THE REBELLIOUS SONS

A shock went through Israeli society the other month with the news that a Jewish soldier in the Israel Defense Forces decided that upon his discharge from the army he would go live with a Moslem family in an Arab community.

While this may be seen as an isolated case, some observers see it as symbolic of the trend among Israeli youth to disassociate themselves from anything Jewish. The country's leaders are constantly reading surveys as to how many Israeli teenagers would have preferred not to be born Jewish and fret over the statistics of how many young Israelis would prefer to be living elsewhere. Perhaps they should learn a lesson on how to deal with this problem from the Torah portion which we will read this week in the synagogue.

A son who shows extreme signs of rebellion against his parents is viewed by the Torah as a threat to himself and to society. Preemptive action is therefore prescribed before the permissiveness of his parents turns him into a murderer. Our Sages tell us that the death penalty for the 13-year old "*ben sorer umoreh*" was never implemented because the technical details required for passing such a sentence made it virtually impossible to do so. This chapter regarding "the rebellious son" was placed in the Torah in order to teach us a lesson that we must take steps at an early age to prevent violent rebellion in the future.

If Jewish values are not inculcated in Israeli children it should not come as a surprise that they later rebel against their faith, their people and their Land.

Ki Tavo

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MORALITY

When we read and hear about the suspicion of corruption of high public officials in Israel who thought that they could get away with their well-concealed crimes, we are reminded of the historic scene described in the weekly Torah portion which will be read this Shabbat.

Our ancestors were commanded that upon entering Eretz Yisrael they were to assemble at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival to hear the blessings and curses enumerated in this chapter and to acknowledge them by calling out "Amen". This was akin to a new acceptance of the Torah upon entering the Land and a pledge of allegiance to the Torah as the source of Jewish nationhood.

The common denominator of the twelve commandments accompanied by the blessing for those who observe them and a curse for those who spurn them is that they are the sort of transgressions which would most likely be done secretly. By committing themselves through the saying of "Amen" to the blessings and curses proclaimed by the Levites, the people standing atop these two mountains declared their awareness that G-d knows what is done in secret and will eventually expose and punish the sinner. They also expressed the belief that there can be no conflict between public and private morality.

What a valuable lesson for those in positions of responsibility who publicly preach respect for the law and privately abuse it!

Nitzavim-Vayelech

## A RAY OF HOPE

The end of a year is a time for looking back at the days that have passed and of looking ahead to the future.

The year 5764 witnessed the return of thousands of Jews to their Jewish roots through the efforts of Ohr Somayach and other outreach organizations. As encouraging as this may be, this manifestation of *teshuvah* has been the good fortune of only a small percentage of alienated and assimilated Jews.

For the committed Jew who is deeply concerned about the future of our people as a holy nation, there is a message of comfort in the Torah portion which will be read in synagogues throughout the world on the last Shabbat of this year.

"It will be that when all of these things come upon you, the blessings and the curses that I have put before you, that you will take it to heart.. and *you will return* to Hashem, your G-d and heed His voice..." (*Devarim 30:1-2*)

Ramban (Nachmanides) points out that the term "you will return" is written in a form that communicates a double message – a command and a promise. The command is for every Jew to repent his errors and improve his ways, a message so timely on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana and the Ten Days of Repentance begin. But there is also a promise to us that eventually all Jews will return to their G-d, even if it takes suffering to bring them to their senses.

Let us hope that we have suffered enough in the year gone by and that the year to come will be one of massive return.

"May the old year with its curses come to an end; may the new year with its blessings begin."

**Ki Tetzei**

## THE “EYES” HAVE IT

The current wave of anti-Semitism in Europe lends special relevance to a little-known Holocaust story which appears in the latest volume of “*Aleinu Leshabe’ach*” in Hebrew.

A Nazi officer decided to have some fun together with his comrades at the expense of a Jewish prisoner. He called him into the room where the group was gathered and said to him:

“When I was young I had an eye removed and replaced with a glass one. The surgeon did such a masterful job that no one was ever capable of detecting which of my eyes was real and which was glass. If you can correctly identify which is the glass eye you will live, but if you fail to do so you will be shot on the spot.”

While all the officers chuckled with sadistic pleasure at what they viewed as an exercise in futility, the Jew marched towards his one-eyed tormentor and correctly pointed to the glass eye. When asked by the surprised Nazis how he had managed to succeed where all others had failed, he offered this explanation:

“Your hatred of Jews is so intense that it is reflected in your very eyes. When I failed to see this hatred revealed in one of your eyes, I realized it couldn’t be your real one!”

**Ki Tavo**

## WHO IS LISTENING?

“O h Merciful G-d, I am an orphan without any means and I hope to soon get married. Please help me.” This was a part of the impassioned plea made years ago by a poor yeshiva student at the Kotel.

Although he had directed his prayer to Heaven alone, the passion with which he said his words caused his voice to rise enough for them to be heard by a Jew standing near him. When both had concluded their prayers and were about to leave the area, the young man was approached by the man who had overheard his prayers, the owner of a thriving food store in Jerusalem.

“I heard you describing your desperate situation,” he informed him, “and I am prepared to personally provide you

with the funds you need to arrange a wedding and purchase a home.”

A touching story but, even more than that, another reminder that when G-d answers the prayers which He has heard, He makes sure that the right party hears as well and answers those prayers on His behalf.

**Nitzavim-Vayelech**

## THE SEDER FOR SOCIALISTS IN VILNA

During a condolence visit to Rabbi Berel Wein, a distinguished member of the Ohr Somayach faculty, who was sitting *shiva* for his late father, o.b.m., this noted Torah scholar and historian told a story of a visit his father made back in 1930 to the leader of Lithuanian Jewry, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. The head of the yeshiva he was studying at in Grodna, Rabbi Shimon Shkop, had sent him to solicit financial assistance from the Yeshiva Fund in order to save the yeshiva students from starvation.

One story about Rabbi Chaim Ozer led to another. Rabbi Wein once asked a high-ranking official in the Israeli Ministry of Education how it was that a pronounced secularist like him was so helpful to Torah institutions. His response was a recollection of something that took place half a century before. At that time he was head of the Jewish socialist organization in the University of Vilna. One day he received a surprise visit from a messenger who informed him that Rabbi Chaim Ozer wished to see him. When he arrived he was warmly greeted by the rabbi who invited him to join him in some cake and tea. “I will make the *beracha*,” he said to his secular guest, “and all you have to do is say Amen.”

He then got to the point. “Pesach is drawing near and there are many hundreds of Jewish students in the university who will not be at a Pesach Seder. If I make a Seder for these irreligious students hardly anyone will come. But if you, as head of the socialists make one, you will get a big crowd. I will supply you with all the money you need to see that everyone who wishes to be at the Seder will have matzah and maror and four cups of wine.”

There were a thousand students at that Seder, the official concluded his story, so now you know that the money I am channeling to yeshiva is really coming from Rabbi Chaim Ozer.

# After the Return

BY RABBI MORDECHAI BECHER AND RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN  
PUBLISHED BY FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS

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## WON'T PAY AND CAN'T PAY

“**E**rachin”, the name of the *mesechta* currently studied in the *Daf Hayomi* cycle, refers to the pledge which a Jew makes to contribute to the Sanctuary the monetary value of himself or another person. An entire section of the Torah (*Vayikra* 27:1-8) is devoted to how much he is obligated to pay depending on the age and gender of the subject of his vow.

Should he refuse to pay, the agent of the Sanctuary has the right to confiscate his property and belongings to coerce him into paying his debt, and even to sell these items if he fails to redeem them. There is, however, a limit to this confiscation. The *mishna* tells us that we must leave him with enough funds to guarantee minimal survival – food for thirty days, clothing for twelve months, *tefillin*, shoes, and basic furniture – if he is lacking any of these.

What is the source for showing this sort of consideration for this debtor?

The answer is a passage concerning a Jew who has made such an *erachin* pledge and wishes to pay but lacks the funds to do so. “If he shall be too poor to pay his *erachin* debt” the Torah instructs us to have the *kohen* evaluate how much his financial situation allows him (*Vayikra* 27:8).

The word *he* in this passage is interpreted as a command to ensure that he, the debtor, survives after his belongings have been confiscated. Rashi points out that if we isolate the two words in the passage which speak of *he* and the *erachin* pledge, the message communicated is that *he*, the debtor, must survive after his *erachin* pledge has been forcefully collected from him.

Even though the context of this passage deals with the one who is willing to pay but cannot, the word *he* seems to be superfluous and is therefore applied to the opposite case of one who has the means but refuses to pay.

• *Erachin* 24a

## DOUBLE VOW, DOUBLE TITHE

**W**hen the Patriarch Yaakov was on his way out of Eretz Yisrael to escape the wrath of his brother Esav and to find a wife in the house of his uncle, Lavan, he made a double vow at Beth El. If G-d would pro-

vide him with all of his basic needs and return him to his father's home, he pledged to make an altar to G-d from the stone he had erected there and he would “tithe, surely tithe, all that You give me”. (*Bereishet* 28:22)

The double term for tithing in Yaakov's vow serves as the basis for the decree which the Sandhedrin issued during their stay in Usha that a Jew should not give away too much of his resources to charity lest he become himself impoverished and dependent. Our Sages (*Mesechta Ketubot* 50a) interpreted the double term for tithing in Yaakov's vow as a pledge to give a double tithe – a fifth of his fortune – and therefore established it as the maximum amount a Jew should give away. In our *gemara* Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah applies this principle to how much a Jew may consecrate “from all that he owns” (*Vayikra* 27:28).

When did Yaakov fulfill his double vow?

The first fulfillment was when, after two decades in Lavan's home, he prepared himself for an encounter with his still-seething brother by sending him a generous gift of cattle. “He took from what was *in his possession* as a gift to his brother Esav” (*Bereishets* 32:14) is understood by our Sages to mean what was in his possession after separating a double tithe to G-d as he had vowed to do. The fulfillment of the second part of the vow was only possible when he actually returned to Beth El where the altar was to be erected. He was indeed reprimanded by G-d for delaying his return there to fulfill his vow. The anguish he suffered from the abduction of his daughter in Shechem was attributed to this delay which he was ordered to end with the Divine command “Arise and go up to Beth El and there make the altar...” (*Bereishet* 35:1).

If Yaakov felt that fulfillment of his vow depended on his return to Beth El, why did he rush to double tithe his animals so much earlier?

It may be suggested that Yaakov's vow had two separate components. While making an altar had to wait until he “was returned to his father's home”, the vow concerning tithing had to be fulfilled as soon as he was to make use of the possessions G-d had granted him. Before using some of these resources to appease Esav he therefore made sure to first separate a double tithe.

• *Erachin* 28a

## THE LOST TRIBES WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

Dear Christopher,

Regarding your question as to where the Lost Tribes were exiled, we saw in the previous installment that according to our sources they were exiled south to Ethiopia, and East through Syria, Iraq, Iran, and as far as India. [This should not be confused with those Jews who settled these lands much later, after the Exile in Roman times]. In addition, while discussing whether the Tribes will be re-united with the Jewish people in the future (which will be brought in detail in the next installment), Tiferet Israel (Sanhedrin 10:3) mentions that there are remnants of the Tribes living in Afghanistan and China as well.

Let's explore who and where these Tribes are today, and whether they and their customs are Jewish:

The Jews of Ethiopia are from Northwestern Ethiopia bordering Sudan. They call themselves "Beta Israel" (House of Israel), claim to be from the tribe of Dan, and number about 500,000 (most currently live in Israel). In Ethiopia, they preserved authentic Jewish beliefs and practices, including belief in the G-d of Israel, His oneness, Jews as the Chosen People, Torah from Sinai, Reward and Punishment, Redemption, Messiah and Return to Zion. Their texts include: Torah (Orit), Prophets, Laws of Sambet (Sabbath), and Prayer book. They maintain strict Sabbath observance. For example, women prepare Sabbath food only after immersing in a *mikve*, work stops midday Friday, no fire is used to keep food warm, but they use candles for light, all work is forbidden, and they even wear a special Sabbath robe with no belt to prevent tying.

They pray 3 times a day – morning, noon, dusk – while facing Jerusalem, have certain blessings and observe Torah based Holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkoth, Passover, and Shavuoth - when only work to prepare food is permitted. They eat only meat from kosher animals and perform ritual slaughter while turning the animal's head toward Jerusalem and reciting a blessing. The blood is covered, the meat is salted to remove blood, and forbidden sinews and fats are removed. Meat and milk are not cooked together, but poultry is not considered meat for this purpose. They greatly emphasize ritual purity and their villages are always near a river for immersion. They purify from contact with dead after 7 days, sprinkling on the 3rd and 7th day with water from ashes of a red heifer. Menstruating women move to a separate tent for 7 days until immersion.

The "Beta Israel" of Ethiopia are generally considered Jewish. The great halachic authority, Rabbi David ben Zimra (Israel, 1500's) wrote: "Those that come from the land of

Cush (Ethiopia) are without doubt from the tribe of Dan, and because they did not have scholars of the Oral Law living with them they follow the superficial understanding of the Torah. But if they were taught, they would not reject the rabbinic teachings. Therefore it is a mitzvah to save them and support them" (Shut HaRadbaz 1:5, 1:7). Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, (Yabia Omer 8, Even HaEzer 11) also considers them Jewish without a doubt. Other *poskim* are unsure, and suggest that they undergo conversion to dispel any doubts.

The other groups we'll discuss do not profess to be Jewish, and, as a result of assimilation, forced conversion and large-scale intermarriage, are not considered Jewish, although they certainly have vestiges of Jewish practices.

The tribes in Afghanistan are comprised of two groups. Those in Western Afghanistan bordering Iran call themselves "Yusufzai", Children of Josef. They claim to be descendents of Efraim and Menashe and have a tradition of being taken away from their ancient homeland. They live secluded in high mountains and marry only among themselves. They are devout Muslims but have Hebrew names, wear fringes on the corners of their clothing, light candles for Sabbath on Friday night and don't cut the hair on side of the head, all resembling the Jewish custom. The other group lives on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and call themselves "Bani Yisrael", Children of Israel. They have a tradition of being the Lost Tribes and use names such as Asher, Naftali, Efraim, Menashe, Reuven, and Gad. They circumcise on the 8th day, wear four cornered garments with fringes and some wear small boxes with verses inside. They light candles Friday night, don't labor or cook and bake 12 loaves. The tribes of Afghan number about 15 million individuals.

The Kashmiri live in Northern India bordering Tibet and Nepal. They have a tradition that they are descendents of the Tribes of Israel. They have a lighter complexion and different facial features than the local population. Their tribal names are reminiscent of the Hebrew: Asheriya, Dand, Gadha, Lavi, Kahana, Shaul; as well as the names of their places: Samaryah, Mamre, Pishgah, Heshba, Gochen. They light candles for Sabbath, observe a feast in spring called Pasca, adjust the lunar and solar calendars to coincide, have beards and side-locks, and the Star of David is prevalent on their dwellings and places of worship. They number 5-7 million.

On the border of Northeastern India between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma) live the Shin lung. They claim to be descendents of Menashe and have a detailed oral history of exile through Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Afghanistan where they were forcibly converted to Islam. They later migrated to Tibet, following the Wei River into central China, were persecuted by the Chinese, escaped and hid in mountainous caves, and there became known as "Shin lung" meaning mountain/cave dwellers. They were later

*continued on page fourteen*

continued from page thirteen

banished and migrated west through Thailand, Myanmar, finally settling in the Chin Mountains on the border between Burma and Bangladesh. They performed circumcision on the 8th day until it became too difficult because of exile and persecution; now they only give the name on the 8th day.

The priest of every village is called Aaron, whose wardrobe resembles that of the high priest including a tunic, breastplate, embroidered coat, with belt and high hat. Apparently, they have offerings and sacrifices similar to those of the Torah. They have a traditional song that accompanied them through their migrations: "We must keep the Passover festival because we crossed the Red Sea on dry land. At night we crossed with a fire, and by day with a cloud. Enemies pursued us with chariots and the sea swallowed them up and used them as food for the fish. And when we were thirsty, we received water from the rock." There are some 1-2 million Shin lung. In the late 1800's missionaries arrived, and the Shin lung, recognizing beliefs and events in the Old Testament, converted to Christianity thinking they were returning to their ancestral people. Eventually, many realized they descended from Jews, and thousands converted to Judaism. Of those, 5000 live in Burma, and a few hundred have settled in Israel.

The last group that lives in areas mentioned in our sources is the Chiang-Min, on the border between Tibet and China in the mountainous area of Sichuan. They appear more Semitic than Oriental, and have a tradition of having

migrated from the West after a journey of 3 years and 3 months. They claim to descend from Abraham, and their ancestor had 12 sons. They believe in one all-powerful god called the "Father of Heaven" who they refer to in times of trouble by the tetragrammaton. He watches over the world, judges fairly, rewards the righteous, punishes the wicked, accepts repentance, and gives atonement. In the past, they had written scrolls of parchment and books, but they were lost. It is forbidden to worship foreign gods or idols upon punishment of death. They also have priestly and sacrificial services reminiscent of those of the Torah, using an earthen altar that must not be fashioned by metal tools, where the priest places his hand on the head of the sacrifice.

Thus far, we have located peoples that may be remnants of the Lost Tribes, living in places mentioned in our sources such as Ethiopia, Iran/Afghanistan, India and China. In the next installment, we'll explore the possibility of the Lost Tribes reaching a place not mentioned in our sources, namely Japan, and we'll conclude with a discussion of whether the Lost Tribes will ever be re-united with the Jewish people.

Sources:

- North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry
- Arimasa Kubo, *The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Myanmar, and China*
- Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, *Amishav Organization*

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

### Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous Ohrnet features

#### Torah's the Best Merchandise

I am currently in the process of building a website which is designed to provide people with the essential tools they will need in order to do succeed in whatever business venture they are involved in using the Internet. To make a long story short, after consulting with a Rabbi today, I was told that if I am to succeed with my venture I must "Lzakot et harabim" — provide a special Torah merit for the public — by incorporating some type of "Torah Corner" on my website. The Torah corner could contain popular expressions drawn from various Torah sources that deal with business ethics, success in business, mitzvot between people, etc. If you have any suggestions from which sources I can draw upon, I would be most appreciative. Also, I would be thankful for permission to copy from your website Ohr.edu for this purpose.

• David N.

#### My First Ohrnet

I received your Ohrnet Magazine via my free email subscription from you last week for the first time and enjoyed it

very much. Thanks a lot. My question is: Can I pass along your articles to friends I know whom I believe will enjoy it very much?

• Thank you, M. L.

**Ohrnet replies:** Of course! Please continue to enjoy and write anytime.

#### Patience Please

In a recent Ohr Somayach Ohrnet newsletter you told a story of a cancer patient who refused treatment because he would have had to wear some sort of four cornered garment which didn't have tzitzit fringes attached. Wouldn't that violate the prohibition against relying on a miracle as well as refusing necessary medical treatment?

• Debra S.

**Ohrnet replies:** While we agree with your diagnosis of the situation (although we are not aware of all the exact details) the story was published to emphasize the special personal interest that G-d takes with every individual.