

# OHR NET

SPECIAL PESACH EDITION

PARSHIOT TZAV-SHMINI-TAZRIA-METZORAH · NISAN 5773 / 2013 · VOL. 20 NO. 28

## A Question About a Question

By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zatzal

“Why is this night different from all other nights?”

This is how the Pesach Seder begins as the youngster who has practiced so long in school finally gets a chance to ask his father four questions about the distinctive nature of Pesach eve.

The source of course is a *mishna* in *Mesechta Pesachim* (116a) in which these four questions are detailed. But if you take a look at that *mishna* and compare it with what is written in your Haggadah you are bound to have a question about one of those questions.

In addition to asking why on this night we eat only matza and maror, and why we dip twice, the son following the *mishna's* direction should ask why on all other nights we eat meat cooked or broiled whereas on this night it may only be broiled. In our Haggadah, however, this question does not appear and another is there in its place!

The answer to our question about this question lies in another *mishna* in *Pesachim* (53a) which mentions the custom of refraining from eating broiled meat on the night of Pesach. But how do we reconcile this custom with the Torah command to eat the *korban* Pesach only with a broiled preparation?

When we had the *Beit Hamikdash* and were able to offer the Pesach sacrifice we were required to broil the slaughtered animal and eat it on Pesach night. It was therefore in place for the son to ask why only broiled meat was eaten that night. But we may not offer sacrifices when there is no *Beit Hamikdash* and eating any broiled meat on Pesach night gives the wrong impression that we actually violated the law and offered a sacrifice. All we can do is put a piece of broiled meat (*zero'ah*) on the Seder plate as a reminder of the sacrifice, but we refrain from eating it that night — a custom followed by virtually all Jewish communities.

Now that we understand why the question regarding broiled meat is missing, let us try to analyze what lessons we can learn from the fact that in its place the Haggadah has a question about why we recline while eating.

The *Sefer Hachinuch* suggests two possible reasons for the Torah's

insistence on our ancestors' broiling the Pesach sacrifice. One is that as they were on the threshold of liberation from bondage it was important for them to internalize the awareness that they were not going to be mere freed slaves, but rather the “princes of the earth” who were destined to receive the Torah and be G-d's chosen people. Only aristocrats can afford the luxury of broiled meat, which may be the most delicious way of preparing meat but the least economical. The other reason is that the quickest way of preparing meat for consumption is broiling, so that the broiled sacrifice would be a reminder of the haste with which the Exodus from Egypt took place.

Although these reasons may seem to apply only to the generation of the Exodus, the command to broil the Pesach sacrifice was in force in later years as well because each Pesach is viewed as an experience of virtually reliving that Exodus in fulfillment of our Sages' instructions that “a person view himself as if he was liberated from Egypt.”

Our inability today to offer a sacrifice and eat its broiled meat is perhaps a reminder that our lack of a *Beit Hamikdash* and our dispersion diminish the sense of aristocracy to which we would be entitled if not for our sins. But despite the lack of respect for our nation in this final exile, we relive aristocracy on Pesach night by reclining in aristocratic fashion when we drink our four cups of wine and eat our matza. It is therefore fitting that in place of the question regarding broiled meat we substitute a question about reclining.

The other explanation of the *Chinuch* regarding the speed with which our Exodus from Egypt took place also fits in with our situation in exile. How can we eat broiled meat symbolizing the speed of liberation when our final redemption is so long delayed? And yet we call attention to our reclining in royal fashion as an expression of our still special status as G-d's chosen people, confidently concluding our Seder with the singing of “Next year in Yerushalayim.”

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*The Pesach Handbook*, a special 20-page booklet with articles, features and information to help make your Pesach an even more unforgettable experience, is available free at <http://ohr.edu/pesachbook/>

TZAV

## Virtual Reality

“Command Aharon and his sons, saying:  
“This is the law of the Olah.” (6:2)

Imagine you are walking through a field. Behind you some cows lazily are chewing grass. Ahead of you is a fence. In the fence is a narrow gate. You saunter towards the gate and without too much attention exit the field. You're just about to go back and close the metal gate when you see one of the cows that has been following you nuzzle up to the gate.

There is a blinding blue flash. The cow convulses in paroxysms. Thousands of volts course through its body. The air fills with the smell of burning flesh. A few seconds and it's all over. The cow is very quiet and very dead. Nothing can be heard except the birds singing away in blatant disregard to this scene.

What would you feel like? Wouldn't you think, “That could have been me”? That *should* have been me”?

The *korban* was the ultimate virtual reality experience.

An essential purpose of a *korban* was that a person who did a sin should see the death of the animal. He should see its

lifeblood thrown on the corners of the altar. He should see its limbs being burned and he should think to himself “That should have been me. I am the one that they should really be doing this to.”

Perforce we are sent into this world, and perforce we are taken from it. We do not own our lives. Our lives are always in the Hands of the Maker. When we do evil, we remove our *raison d'être*. We remove the reason for our lives. It is as though we tear up our contract with G-d. G-d has a deal with each of us: He gives us life and the ability to sustain ourselves and all He asks is that we use the world in the correct manner. When we renege on the deal we remove ourselves from the world.

However, G-d in His infinite kindness and goodness allows us a way back. Through the process of *teshuvah* we can return to Him as though we had never sinned. G-d accepts the body of the animal instead of the body of the one who has sinned. The main point of the *korban* is to awaken in the heart thoughts of regret for evil actions; thoughts of returning to G-d.

It was the ultimate in virtual reality.

SHEMINI

## The Right Man For The Job

“Moshe said to Aharon, ‘Come near to the Altar...’ (9:7)

Bungee-jumping, hang-gliding, free-fall parachuting, and riding over Niagara Falls in a beer barrel all share one thing in common. You have to be absolutely *meshuga* to do them.

There's a big difference between being fearless and being foolhardy.

However, there are times when even being afraid is an advantage. The Chafetz Chaim once decided that a particular *talmid* should take a vacant post as the Rabbi in distant community. The *talmid* was reluctant to go. He told the Chafetz Chaim he was afraid of the responsibility of being the only halachic authority for an entire community. The Chafetz Chaim replied to him, “Should I send someone who's not afraid?”

Sometimes being afraid doesn't disqualify someone from being the right man or woman for the job. Sometimes it's the essential quality.

Moshe had to tell Aharon to “Come near to the altar”. Rashi says that Aaron was embarrassed and afraid to approach the altar. Moshe told him not to be afraid, for it was precisely Aaron's quality of awe which qualified him to be the *Kohen Gadol*.

When we want to become closer to G-d and serve Him with more conviction and faithfulness, we could be embarrassed by our inadequacies. We might feel afraid, incapable of such a task. “Who am I to serve G-d?” we can think to ourselves. It is precisely that quality of self-effacement, of fear, which is the pre-requisite to be ‘the right man for the job.’

## Seventh Heaven

“And it was on the eighth day...” (9:1)

When Moshe set up the Mishkan, he didn't set it up just one time; he set it up eight times. Every day, for seven days, Moshe set up the Mishkan and then

took it down again. On the eighth day he set it up and left it up. Why was it necessary for Moshe to set up the Mishkan for the first seven days?

Let's answer one question with a bigger question. Why did G-d create this world?

G-d created this world so that the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) could dwell in the lower worlds. After G-d created this world the Divine Presence rested on His Creation. However, Man, through destructive spiritual actions, caused the *Shechina* to retreat bit by bit, until it ascended back to the Seventh Heaven. After the world had sunk to this spiritual nadir there came seven spiritual giants in seven generations who managed to bring the Divine Presence down again to this world. They were Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Levi, Kehat, Amram and Moshe.

With the giving of the Torah at Sinai, G-d finally ‘descended’ once again to this world, as it says: “And G-d came down to Mount Sinai.” However, in all too short a time, the *Shechina* retreated back up to the Seventh Heaven after the infidelity of the Jewish People with the Golden Calf.

The healing process of seven generations of *tzaddikim* and the concomitant return of the *Shechina* to this world was concretized in Moshe's building the Mishkan for seven days. However, even after these seven days which represented the seven generations, the cure was not total. A golden calf was still possible. It was only on the eighth day, when Moshe set up the Mishkan for the eighth time, that the final cure to these spiritual maladies took effect. And thus, the Mishkan could remain standing.

This is one of the reasons that the Talmud says (Megilla 10) “On the day that the Mishkan was finally set up, G-d had the same happiness as the day on which the Heavens and the Earth were created.” For it was on that day that the purpose of this world — that G-d should have a ‘dwelling’ in these lower worlds — was finally achieved.

Sources: *The Right Man For The Job* - Degel Machane Ephraim, Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

*Seventh Heaven* - Chesed L'Avraham in Iturei Torah

## Two Signs

“And on the eighth day, the flesh of the foreskin shall be circumcised.” (12:3)

The greatness of Shabbat can be seen from the fact that a boy is not given *brit mila* until he is eight days old, until he has experienced Shabbat. In other words, the reason that *brit mila* is performed on the eighth day after birth is so that he can experience Shabbat before the *mila*. Only by passing through the holiness of Shabbat can he reach a level where he becomes fit to enter into the holiness of the Jewish People through *brit mila*.

## More Than Skin Deep

“And on the eighth day, the flesh of the foreskin shall be circumcised.” (12:3)

The custom at a *brit* is to say to the parents, “Just as he has been brought into the Covenant (*brit*), so should he be brought to Torah, marriage and good deeds.” Just as he has been brought into the *brit*, which is now an inseparable part of him, thus also should all the other *mitzvot* of the Torah form an inseparable part of him.

## PARSHA Overview

### TZAV

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon’s sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

### SHEMINI

On the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. G-d allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the Mishkan. Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by G-d. A fire comes from before G-d and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the Mishkan. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food.

The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate and holy — like G-d.

### TAZRIA

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara’at* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara’at* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person’s status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara’at*. One whose *tzara’at* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara’at* on clothing is described in detail.

### METZORA

The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara’at*) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves *korbanot* and immersions in the *mikveh*. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals. Before a *kohen* diagnoses that a house has *tzara’at*, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The *tzara’at* is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

# TALMUD Tips

## Eruvin 16-36

*Rabbi Yirmiya ben Elazar said: “Every home in which words of Torah are heard at night will not be destroyed.”*

The *gemara* states that he derives this from the verse, “He does not say, ‘Where is G-d, my Maker, Who ‘gives songs’ (*zemiro*) in the night’” (*Iyov* 35:10). “Giving songs” refer to the act of singing the words of Torah, which at nighttime can be heard at a distance (Rashi). The verse teaches that whoever learns Torah during the night will not have reason to ask, “Where is G-d (Who could have saved my house from being destroyed)?”

• Eruvin 18b

*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: “What is meant by the verse, ‘That I command you today to do them? ‘Today’ (in this world) we are to fulfill the mitzvot, but ‘not to fulfill them tomorrow’ (in the World-to-Come); and ‘today’ we are to fulfill them and ‘tomorrow’ (in the World-to-Come) we receive reward for fulfilling them.”*

Rashi explains this statement in the *gemara* as follows: If a person after departing this world would come to fulfill a mitzvah in the Future-to-Come, this would not help him (receive reward), as we are taught “One who toils on the eve of Shabbat (i.e. in this world), will eat on Shabbat (i.e. will receive reward and will delight in the World-to-Come).” (*Avoda Zara* 3a).

We were not created for our situation here in this world as we tend to think, but rather for that in the World-to-Come. Our situation here, in this world, is merely the means to attain the one due us in the World-to-Come, which is actually our goal. (*Mesillat Yesharim* 1:4)

• Eruvin 22a

*Rabbi Yochanan said: “King Chizkiya was very ill and Yeshayahu the Prophet went and established a yeshiva at the entrance to the king’s dwelling. From here we learn that when a Torah scholar is ill we should establish a yeshiva at his entrance.”*

However, the *gemara* concludes that this should not be done, since it could entice and incite the Angel of Death to come. If so, why did Yeshayahu do it? The Maharsha answers that Yeshayahu knew for certain that the Angel of Death was going to come anyway, as G-d told him previ-

ously in a prophecy (*Melachim II* 20:1) Subsequently, Chizkiya prayed to G-d (20:3) and Yeshayahu then told him he would be healed (20:5).

• Eruvin 26a

*“When Rabbi Zeira was extremely weak from intense Torah study he would go and sit at the entrance of the yeshiva of rabbi Yehuda bar Ami. He said to himself, ‘When the Rabbis exit and enter the yeshiva I will stand up for them (in honor) and will receive reward for this’.”*

• Eruvin 28b

*“Sinai said two (eggs).”*

This statement is found on our daf to teach the amount of food needed to fulfill the mitzvah of *eruwei chatzzerot* — the rabbinical mitzvah that permit people to carry items from their homes into their common courtyard and from the yard into their homes — if (raw) eggs are used for the *eruv*.

Who was this mysterious “Sinai” who taught aforementioned amount? Rashi explains that he was Rav Yosef, and was referred to as “Sinai” (as we find Rav Yosef called by this name at the end of *Mesechta Berachot* and the end of *Mesechta Horiyot*), since he was an exceptional Torah expert in the knowledge of the *mishnayot* and *beraitot*.

• Eruvin 30a

*Rav Chanina Choza’a said, “It can be assumed with certainty (Heb. - chazaka) that a Torah scholar will not allow any unfinished item to go out of his hand.”*

This statement was made regarding finding fruits left by a Torah scholar and one is unsure whether the required *terumot* and *ma’asrot* separations were made. The sage teaches that it is a halachic presumption that everything required was already done. Rashi states that since the fruit is his and it is his obligation to make the required separations, he is careful not to “fix” the fruit so that he would not be potentially “placing a stumbling block before the blind”, as it were, in the event that another person should eat it in its forbidden state.

• Eruvin 32a

## TALMUD Tips

### Eruvin 37-43

Rav Yehuda replied, “Even when I see a newly grown squash from this year’s crop I say the *shehechyanu* beracha.”

This was the answer that the Sage gave to Raba when asked whether to say ‘*shehechyanu*’ on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur since they occur periodically, or only on the *Chagim* but not on these days since they are not called ‘*Regalim*’.

Raba clarified that he was not asking whether it was *permitted* to say *shehechyanu* — which is what Raba was teaching that it was — but rather whether there is an *obligation* to do so. After an in-depth discussion, the *gemara* rules that it is in fact an obligation to say *shehechyanu* on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur as well (*Aruch Chayim* 619:1)

• Eruvin 40b

“Behold, I will send you Eliyahu the Prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of G-d”. (*Malachi* 3:23)

Our *daf*, which speaks about whether there is a prohibition of *techumim* above ten *tefachim*, ponders about possible days of the week when ‘ben David’ (Mashiach) would come. The *gemara* states, “The Jewish People have already been assured that Eliyahu will not come on the days immediately preceding *Shabbatot* or the days immediately preceding the Festivals because of the ‘bother’.”

What is this “bother”? Rashi explains that if Eliyahu were to come on these days on the eve of Shabbat or Yom Tov, the people would cease their Shabbat or Yom Tov preparations in order to greet Eliyahu, and this make it difficult to make sufficient preparations to honor these holy days.

• Eruvin 43b

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### Who Needs Peace?

The greatest political controversy in Israel today is what price to pay for peace with those enemies who wish to destroy us.

Without entering into the practical aspects of this issue, it is worth reflecting on what the Torah says about peace in this week’s Torah portion.

After promising plentiful rain, bountiful harvests



and a booming economy if Jews study the Torah and perform the *mitzvot*, G-d adds that “I will grant peace in the Land.” (*Vayikra* 26:6)

One can have food and drink, explain our Sages, but they have no value if there is no peace.

“This teaches us,” they conclude, “that peace is equal in value to everything else.”

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# Introduction TO THE TEN PLAGUES *based on the* MALBIM

BY RABBI REUVEN SUBAR

**B**y carefully observing the first nine plagues, one discovers the emergence of a distinct and fascinating pattern: The plagues are grouped into three groups of three, with the first two plagues of each group always preceded by a warning from Moshe to Pharaoh, while the third plague comes without any warning at all.

*A further aspect of the pattern is that in the first plague of each triad Moshe is told to meet Pharaoh at the river where Pharaoh went each morning, and the expression “nitzavta li'krato – you should stand upright to meet him” is employed. Regarding the warning of the second plague of each group — i.e., the second (frogs), fifth (cattle disease), and eighth (locusts) plague — Moshe is always told to “come to Pharaoh”, to Pharaoh’s place of residence.*

*Why were the plagues grouped in this way, and why did the warnings come in the manner that they did?*

The concept of the Ten Plagues being broken into three groupings can be seen from the teaching of the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Yehudah, whose mnemonic acrostic of the plagues, “**d’tz’ch, a’d’sh, b’a’ch’v**”, divides the plagues into three groups.

Although Rabbi Yehudah’s acrostic includes the tenth plague, the ‘slaying of the firstborn’, together with the third group of plagues, this plague is not actually part of the pattern of plagues, for it served a different purpose altogether. The purpose of the ‘slaying of the firstborn’ was to get Pharaoh to agree to send the Jewish People out of Mitzrayim. The first nine plagues, on the other hand, were not intended to serve this purpose, as is evident from the fact that G-d hardened Pharaoh’s heart after these plagues in order that he *not* release the people! Rather, the purpose of these plagues was to teach the whole world three fundamental truths: A) That G-d exists, B) that He oversees world affairs, and C) that His power is supreme and incomparable to any other power.

The first group of plagues (blood, frogs, and lice) comes to verify the first concept mentioned above, that G-d exists; as the verse states regarding the first plague,

*“through this you will know that I am G-d. Because they come to clarify this point, the first two plagues of blood and frogs are therefore preceded by a warning. When Pharaoh then hardens his heart not once but twice, the third plague, lice, follows without warning. This plague’s purpose was not to prove G-d’s existence, for this had already been achieved by the first two plagues which, like two trustworthy witnesses, had already given their ‘testimony’.* Rather, the plague of lice served as a humiliating punishment to Pharaoh for having hardened his heart, and therefore there was no point in warning him about it.

Similarly, the first two plagues of the second group (wild animals and cattle disease) came to testify to the fact that G-d oversees the events that occur here on earth, as the verse states regarding the plague of wild animals: *“[This is] in order that you should know that I am G-d in the midst of the land”.* And because the purpose of these plagues was to clarify this, thus a warning preceded them.

These two ‘witnesses’ – i.e., plagues — having stated their testimony, the third plague of the group, the plague of boils, came without any warning, for its purpose was, as above, to punish Pharaoh in a humiliating way.

The third group (hail, locusts and darkness) follows the same pattern: The first two plagues come with a warning because they have the purpose of clarifying that G-d is the supreme power, as the verse states regarding hail: *“In order that you know that there is none like Me in the entire earth”.* This point having been established by two ‘witnesses’, the next plague strikes with no warning, because it comes only in order to punish. This time, the punishment is darkness, a fitting, measure-for-measure retribution for the wicked who live their lives with their eyes closed to the well-lit path of morality which G-d illuminates for the righteous.

Now that the first nine plagues had clarified these three fundamental principles — G-d’s existence, omnipotence, and His overseeing of events on earth — the stage was set for the plague of the first-born to come and force Pharaoh to release the Jewish People.

# THE Quinoa - Kitniyot Conundrum

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

In 2013, the biggest issue seems to be whether quinoa (pronounced Keen-Waah) is considered Kitniyot and whether Ashkenazim can eat it on Pesach. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the U.N. declared 2013 as the 'International Year of the Quinoa'.

## Quinoa Questions

Quinoa has developed an international following. Packed with protein (essential amino acids) and fiber, as well as magnesium, phosphorus, calcium and iron (and naturally cholesterol free!), quinoa packs quite a dietary punch. Although billed as the 'Mother of All Grains' and 'the Super Grain', this native of the Andes Mountains is actually "a grain that isn't"; it does not even contain gluten. But while its health benefits sound terrific, it still may be problematic on Pesach.

## Kitniyot Clash

The actual prohibition of *chametz* on Pesach pertains exclusively to leavened products made from the five major grains: wheat, barley, oats, spelt or rye. Yet, from the times of the Rishonim there was an Ashkenazic prohibition against eating Kitniyot (legumes; lit. 'little things') on Pesach, except in times of famine or great need. Although several authorities opposed this prohibition, nonetheless it is binding on Ashkenazic Jewry. The Aruch Hashulchan writes that "one who is lenient is testifying about himself that he has no fear of Heaven".

Several reasons are given for the prohibition, including that kitniyot often grow in close proximity to grain; are commonly stored together with grain and actual *chametz* might actually end up mixed inside the *kitniyot* container; cooked dishes made from grain and *kitniyot* look similar; and that *kitniyot* can likewise be ground up into flour that a "bread" can be made from. Since there are many who will not be able to differentiate between them and their Biblically forbidden *chametz* counterparts, *kitniyot* were likewise prohibited.

## Potatoes, Peanuts, and Corn...Oh My!

So how does quinoa measure up?

Perhaps we can glean some insight to quinoa's *kitniyot* status from *halachic* precedents of other now-common food staples that were introduced long after the *kitniyot* prohibition started, such as potatoes, peanuts and corn.

It would seemingly be quite difficult for anyone to mix

up potatoes with *chametz* grain, so that rationale to regard potatoes as *kitniyot* is out. But, potatoes can be and are made into potato flour and potato starch, and there are those who do bake potato 'bread'! Yet, even so, we find that potatoes are not considered *kitniyot*.

The main reason for this is that at the time when the Ashkenazic Rishonim established the decree prohibiting *kitniyot*, potatoes were completely unknown! It is possible that had they been readily available they might have been on the "forbidden list" as well! Yet, since they were never included, contemporary authorities have no right to add "new types" to the list. As Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach noted, Klal Yisrael never accepted the *kitniyot* prohibition to include potatoes.

Similar logic was used by several *poskim*, including Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, to permit peanuts (although actually a legume) for Pesach for those who had such a *minhag*. Yet, this was not as widely accepted.

On the other hand, we find that another New World crop, corn, was seemingly included as part of the *kitniyot* prohibition. Aside for the fact that the words 'corn' and 'grain' both stem from the same root, 'corn' is actually only the name for the grain 'maize' that is used in the United States, Canada, and Australia. In other parts of the English-speaking world and much of Europe, the term 'corn' is a generic term for cereal crops, such as real *chametz* - wheat, barley, oats, or rye. Additionally, corn exhibits many characteristics of *kitniyot*: it grows near other grains, is made into flour (that can be easily confused with grain flour), and corn bread is made from it. Therefore, since corn fits much of the criteria of *kitniyot*, it is included in the prohibition.

## Quinoa Connections

So, which category should quinoa be a part of? Like the potato and be excluded from the prohibition? Or like corn and be considered *kitniyot*? Contemporary authorities have been debating this very question.

Several Kashrut agencies, including the Star-K and cRe (Chicago) maintain that quinoa is essentially Kosher for Pesach. Since it is not even remotely related to the five grains, and was not around at the time of the *kitniyot* prohibition, it is not considered *kitniyot*. Additionally, the Star-K tested quinoa to see if it would rise; yet instead, it decayed, which is a sign that it is not a true grain. The only issue, according to them, is the fact that quinoa is

*continued on page eight*

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# ASK! the Jewish Information Service

## Pesach Today

**From:** Megan

Dear Rabbi,  
I am new to Jewish observance and am a bit confused about what to do at the Passover Seder. More accurately, I'm not sure which of the traditional observances apply or not, and why or why not. For example, I know there's a mitzvah to sacrifice a lamb for Passover, at least in the Torah, but I'm not sure if that's done nowadays. But eating matza certainly is done, as well as other observances. So could you please shed light on this for me?

Dear Megan,

I commend you on your interest in observance and for asking such important questions.

The main reason why some of the *mitzvot* of Pesach mentioned in the Torah are not observed nowadays is because we do not have the Temple in Jerusalem, and in particular, the altar upon which were offered sacrifices.

Therefore, the lamb that was commanded in the Torah to be eaten on the first night of Pesach cannot be performed. Similarly, since the bitter herbs mentioned in the Torah are to be eaten only with the Pesach lamb, this mitzvah is also not applicable nowadays. It is nevertheless customary to have some roasted meat or poultry (usually a thigh) on the Seder plate as a remembrance of the Pascal lamb. Regarding the bitter herb, it is actually a rabbinic

commandment to eat it during the Seder.

That being said, there are other *mitzvot* of Pesach from the Torah that do apply even today.

As you point out, one is the eating of *matzot* as in the verse, "On the fourteenth of the month in the evening you shall eat *matzot*" (Ex. 12). Even though it was a mitzvah to eat the matza with the Pascal lamb, the Talmud explains based on verses that the mitzvah of eating matza is independent of the lamb, and therefore operative even in the absence of the altar.

Another Torah mitzvah applicable today is relating the story of the redemption and departure of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt as in the verse, "You shall tell your child on that day saying, 'As this G-d did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.'" (Ex. 13). The Haggadah (literally "the telling") that we read on this night is essentially a rabbinic formula for fulfilling this mitzvah of relating the miracles of the redemption. It is to be recited even if one has no child, and even if one is alone.

In addition to the rabbinic mitzvah of eating the bitter herbs, the Sages ordained another mitzvah especially for this night, which is the four cups of wine that correspond to the four different references to redemption in the Torah. Beyond these rabbinic *mitzvot* there are other rabbinic customs and practices such as: eating and drinking while reclining, dipping the *carpas* vegetable in salt water, dividing one matza and putting it aside for the end of the meal, eating the *afikomen*, and reciting special praises to G-d called *Hallel*.

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### The Quinoa Kitniyot Conundrum *continued from page seven*

processed in facilities where other grains are processed. Therefore, they maintain that if quinoa is processed in facilities under special reliable Pesach supervision there is no Pesach problem. In fact, this year, the Star-K gives special kosher for Passover *hashgacha* on certain types of quinoa.

However, Rabbi Yisrael Belsky, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah V'Da'at and *posek* for the OU disagrees. He argues that since quinoa fits every criterion for *kitniyot* it should be prohibited. Quinoa is the staple grain in its country of origin. It is grown in proximity of and can be mixed up with the five grains. It is collected and processed the same (and in the same facilities) as the five grains, and is cooked into porridge and breads the same as the five grains. He maintains that it should be compared to corn, which was, for similar reasons, included in the *kitniyot* prohibition. Although quinoa is a New World food item and was not included in the original prohibition, nevertheless, he explains that that line of reasoning applies exclusively to items that are not clearly *kitniyot*, to foods that may share only several characteristics with *kitniyot*. However, since quinoa and corn would certainly have been included in the

prohibition had they been discovered, since they share every criterion of *kitniyot*, they are consequently by definition considered *kitniyot*.

Therefore, the OU does not certify quinoa as Kosher for Pesach. This also seems to be the approach of the "Badatz" of Jerusalem, as in their most recent "Kashrut Guide" they maintain that food items that are planted in the ground as seeds, harvested as seeds and are edible, are considered *kitniyot*. This would certainly include quinoa.

Rabbi Avraham Blumenkrantz *zt"l*, in his annual Kovetz Hilchot Pesach, took a middle-road approach, acknowledging both sides to this quinoa quarrel. He did not give carte blanche for everyone to use it for Pesach, but ruled that anyone who suffers from gluten or any Pesach-related allergies or conditions (e.g. celiac) may eat quinoa on Pesach.

#### Quinoa Conclusion

It seems that there truly is no quite conclusive quinoa / *kitniyot* conclusion. One must ask his local *halachic* authority for guidance on this issue. But in this author's mind one thing is certain: Bubby did not have quinoa at her Seder!



## Chanuka Candles for Pesach Use

It was the evening before Pesach when Jews go searching for *chametz* with a candle. In the home of a prominent resident of Bnei Brak it was decided that one place they would not have to search was the new cabinet that had been installed in the kitchen only a short while before. After all, they had not yet used it to store any food and it was too high for any of the children to reach.

When the head of the family was about to begin searching the rest of the house he suddenly realized that he had forgotten to prepare a candle. He then recalled that the only thing that had been stored in that high new cabinet

was a box of colored Chanuka candles. Unable to locate any other candles at that hour he decided to take a ladder in order to reach those Chanuka ones which were on the highest shelf.

And what did he find on that shelf? A package of *chametz* wafers!

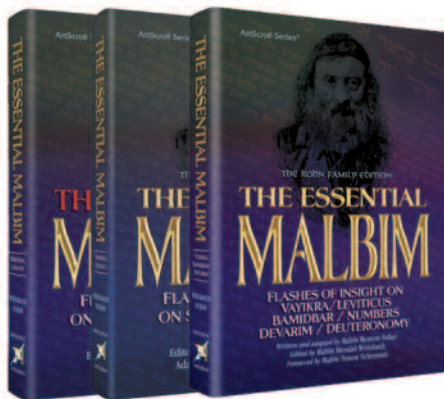
It turned out that one of the children had wanted to hide those wafers and had also used a ladder to get up to that shelf.

Only then did he realize how Heaven had saved him from sinfully harboring *chametz* in his home.

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# PARSHA Q&A

## TZAV

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they completely removed from the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this *Parsha*?

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## Answers to Tzav's Questions

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

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burnt completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burnt, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); a *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); an *onan* (a mourner on the day of death of a close relative).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; upon safe arrival from a desert journey; upon being freed from prison; upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - a) Until the morning. b) Until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *mincha* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

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# PARSHA Q&A

## SHEMINI

1. What date was “*yom hashemini*”?
2. Which of Aharon’s *korbanot* atoned for the Golden Calf?
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo’ed* with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons’ death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three *chatat* goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.
11. Which he-goat *chatat* did Aharon burn completely and why?
12. Why did Moshe direct his harsh words at Aharon’s sons?
13. Moshe was upset that Aharon and his sons did not eat the *chatat*. Why?
14. Why did G-d choose Moshe, Aharon, Elazar and Itamar as His messengers to tell the Jewish People the laws of *kashrut*?
15. What are the signs of a kosher land animal?
16. How many non-kosher animals display only *one* sign of *kashrut*? What are they?
17. If a fish sheds its fins and scales when out of the water, is it kosher?
18. Why is a stork called *chasida* in Hebrew?
19. The *chagav* is a kosher insect. Why don’t we eat it?
20. What requirements must be met in order for water to maintain its status of purity?

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## Answers to Shemini’s Questions

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

1. 9:1 - First of *Nissan*.
2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. 9:11 - It’s the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe’ach* that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe’ach*.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe’s presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a *halachic* ruling. Also, a *kohen* is forbidden to enter the *Ohel Mo’ed*, approach the *mizbe’ach*, or perform the *avoda*.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of *Rosh Chodesh*, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.
11. 10:16 - The *Rosh Chodesh chatat*: Either because it became *tamei*, or because the *kohanim* were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of *aninut* (mourning).
12. 10:16 - Out of respect for Aharon, Moshe directed his anger at his sons and not directly at Aharon.
13. 10:17 - Because only when the *kohanim* eat the *chatat* are the sins of the owners atoned.
14. 11:2 - Because they accepted the deaths of Nadav and Avihu in silence.
15. 11:3 - An animal whose hooves are completely split and who chews its cud.
16. 11:4,5,6,7 - Four: Camel, *shafan*, hare and pig.
17. 11:12 - Yes.
18. 11:19 - Because it acts with *chesed* (kindness) toward other storks.
19. 11:21 - We have lost the tradition and are not able to identify the kosher *chagav*.
20. 11:36 - It must be connected to the ground (i.e., a spring or a cistern).

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# PARSHA Q&A

## TAZRIA

1. When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the *mikveh*?
2. After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?
3. What animal does the woman offer as a *chatat*?
4. Which of these offerings makes her *tahor* (ritual purity)?
5. Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the *olah* or the *chatat*?
6. Who determines whether a person is a *metzora tamei* (person with ritually impure *tzara'at*) or is *tahor*?
7. If the *kohen* sees that the *tzara'at* has spread after one week, how does he rule?
8. What disqualifies a *kohen* from being able to give a ruling in a case of *tzara'at*?
9. Why is the appearance of *tzara'at* on the tip of one of the 24 "limbs" that project from the body usually unable to be examined?
10. On which days is a *kohen* not permitted to give a ruling on *tzara'at*?

## METZORA

1. When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?
2. In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?
3. Why does the *metzora* require birds in the purification process?
4. In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?
5. During the purification process, the *metzora* is required to shave his hair. Which hair must he shave?
6. What is unique about the *chatat* and the *asham* offered by the *metzora*?
7. In the *Beit Hamikdash*, when the *metzora* was presented "before G-d" (14:11), where did he stand?
8. Where was the *asham* of the *metzora* slaughtered?
9. How was having *tzara'at* in one's house sometimes advantageous?
10. When a house is suspected as having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?

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## Answers to Tazria and Metzora's Questions

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

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## TAZRIA

1. 12:2 - At the end of seven days.
2. 12:6 - An *olah* and a *chatat*.
3. 12:6 - A *tor* (turtle dove) or a *ben yona* (young pigeon).
4. 12:7 - The *chatat*.
5. 12:8 - The *chatat*.
6. 13:2 - A *kohen*.
7. 13:5 - The person is *tamei*.
8. 13:12 - Poor vision.
9. 13:14 - The *tzara'at* as a whole must be seen at one time. Since these parts are angular, they cannot be seen at one time.
10. 13:14 - During the festivals; and ruling on a groom during the seven days of feasting after the marriage.

## METZORA

1. 14:2 - At night.
2. 14:3 - Outside the three camps.
3. 14:4 - *Tzara'at* comes as a punishment for *lashon hara*. Therefore, the Torah requires the *metzora* to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.
4. 14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that *tzara'at* comes as a punishment for haughtiness.
5. 14:9 - Any visible collection of hair on the body.
6. 14:10 - They require *n'sachim* (drink offerings).
7. 14:11 - At the gate of Nicanor.
8. 14:13 - On the northern side of the *mizbe'ach*.
9. 14:34 - The Amorites concealed treasures in the walls of their houses. After the conquest of the Land, *tzara'at* would afflict these houses. The Jewish owner would tear down the house and find the treasures.
10. 14:36 - It is *tahor*.

## What's the Right Thing to Do?

### Choosing a Synagogue

#### Question:

There are two synagogues in my neighborhood, both of them equally Orthodox and both having services with the same Ashkenazi text. For personal reasons I prefer to pray in the one a little farther from my home. A neighbor of mine recently told me that there is resentment among the members of the nearer synagogue to my avoiding their place of worship as if it is not good enough for me. What is the right thing to do?

#### Answer:

Rabbi Yochanan (*Mesechta Sotah 22a*) states that he learned the importance of striving to gain greater Heavenly reward from a widow who came from a distant neighborhood to pray in his synagogue. When he asked her why she did not pray in one of her local synagogues, she replied that she wished to gain a reward for the extra steps she had to take to get to his place.

While you may be getting a reward for those extra steps, and this is a factor in choosing your synagogue (*Orach*

*Chaim 90:11, Magen Avraham 22*), it is not the only consideration in choosing a synagogue in which to regularly pray. Preference should be given to one in which there are more worshipers, unless there is too much noise there which interferes with hearing the repetition of the service and the reading of the Torah (*Mishneh Berurah 90:29*). There may be other factors which are responsible for your "personal reasons" in skipping the nearer synagogue, but you should make an effort to dispel any suspicion of snubbing it, perhaps by making an occasional appearance.

You certainly do not wish to be seen by your neighbors as the personification of the legendary Jew who was stranded for years on a desert island following a shipwreck. When a ship finally arrived to take him from the island he gave his rescuers a tour of all that he had built by himself, including a home and two synagogues. When asked why he needed the second synagogue when there was certainly enough room in the first to accommodate a lone worshiper, "That one," he replied, "is the synagogue I don't go to!"

## @ OHR Profiles of Ohr Somayach Alumni and Students

written by Daniel Keebler

**Shimon Yitzchak O'Heron**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
UCLA – Major: Theater, Film, and Television  
Intermediate Program

Shimon Yitzchak O'Heron describes his Jewish background as "Well, we knew we were Jewish. And we celebrated Chanuka. But, we loved Christmas and the other non-Jewish holidays too." By the end of college he was a successful Shakespearean actor in the largest theater company between Texas and Florida. Shimon was one step away from New York City and Broadway. So what stopped him? Everything the secular world taught him led to one conclusion. Reality is empty and meaningless: people are advanced monkeys; the universe is an accident; and morality is relatively defined by personal prefer-



ence.

At the height of his career his soul hit rock-bottom. Just then Ohr Lagolah graduate Rabbi Shlomo Gelbtuch entered the stage. A six-month study partner experience and a full Shabbat experience put Shimon face-to-face with the decision of a lifetime – keep Shabbat or keep his life dreams?

Shimon left the theater company to join Ohr Somayach's Shores program. Shimon is currently in the Intermediate program and is heading for the Beit Midrash with zeal. He says that "Up until I joined the Shores program, I enjoyed Judaism, but I didn't really believe it. The yeshiva, especially Rabbi Gottlieb, resolved the Reality Is Meaningless bug I had acquired from university." Shimon wants to spend his future dedicating himself to the Jewish people.

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# Pesach Q&A

## Q

1. What is the holiday of Pesach called in the Torah?
2. Why did our ancestors carry dough when they left Egypt?
3. Where is there a hint in the Torah to the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder?
4. What do we do on Pesach Eve to remember the Korban Pesach?
5. What do these numbers represent – 10, 50 / 40, 200 / 50, 250?
6. How many mornings on Pesach do we say the entire Hallel?
7. How do we refer to Pesach in our *kiddush* and in our *tefillot*?
8. What are the three prohibitions regarding *chametz*?
9. When is the eating of matza obligatory according to the Torah?
10. What was the date of the crossing of Yam Suf?
11. How many days of Chol Hamo'ed are there in Eretz Israel and elsewhere?
12. Is there any limit to what may be done during Chol Hamo'ed?
13. How many times do we wash our hands during the Seder?
14. What cannot be done after eating the *afikomen*?
15. Why do we recline when drinking wine and eating matza?
16. What unusual thing do we do to stimulate children to ask questions?
17. What is the meaning of *datzach, adash, beachav*?
18. Who are the four sons alluded to in the Torah as requiring us to inform them regarding Pesach?
19. What is the meaning of *Dayenu* that we sing?
20. What is the Torah term on which the word Haggadah is based?

## A

1. *Chag Hamatzot* (The Festival of Matzot).
2. They left in such a hurry that there was no time for the dough to rise.
3. The four expressions of redemption found in *Shemot* / Exodus 6:6-7.
4. Place a shankbone or other piece of meat on the Seder plate.
5. The number of plagues with which the Egyptians were smitten in Egypt and at the Sea according to three different Sages.
6. One morning in Eretz Israel and two everywhere else.
7. *Zman Cheiruteinu* (The Season of Our Freedom).
8. To eat, to benefit from and to possess.
9. On the first night of the holiday at the Seder.
10. The seventh day of Pesach – the 21st day of the month of Nisan.
11. In Eretz Israel 5 days and elsewhere only 4.
12. Definitely! Study the laws or consult a rabbi.
13. Twice - once before dipping *karpas* into salt water and once before eating matza. (A third time is *mayim achronim* before saying *birkat hamazon* – Grace after meals.)
14. We cannot eat nor drink wine.
15. In order to express our sense of nobility as free men.
16. We dip a vegetable in salt water before saying the Haggadah.
17. These are acronyms formed by the first letters of the ten plagues.
18. The wise son, the wicked one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask.
19. "It would have sufficed for us" – a reference to all the stages of benevolence which G-d granted us.
20. "*Vehegadeta levincha* – And you shall relate to your child" (*Shemot* 13:8).

The Ohr Somayach family wishes  
you a Chag Kasher v'Somayach.

מַנְעִי נֶעֱסָ דִּין