

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

HELP! THE PARANOIDS ARE AFTER ME!

**“We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so were we in their eyes.”
(13:33)**

Scene: A Psychiatrist’s office.

Psychiatrist to man lying on his couch: “Well, the trouble is that you’re paranoid. Ask anyone!”

When a person suffers from low self-esteem, he projects his insecurity, his self-view, onto the view of others: “We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we seemed in their eyes.”

Conversely, in warfare, sometimes the battle can be lost or won before a single shot is fired.

For if morale is low — if the army sees itself as grasshoppers — then there is just a small step to the enemy perceiving them as grasshoppers as well.

THE BEST PROTECTION

“Moshe called the name of Hoshea, son of Nun, ‘Yehoshua.’” (13:16)

Of all twelve spies that Moshe sent to scout out the land of Israel, only Yehoshua and Calev did not fall prey to a conspiracy to slander the Land of Israel.

Before Yehoshua (who was then called Hoshea) left to scout the land, Moshe added the letter *yud* to the beginning of Hoshea’s name so that it would begin with one of Hashem’s Names. He did this to protect Yehoshua against the evil of the spies.

Why didn’t Moshe also change Calev’s name to protect him?

Calev was married to Miriam. Miriam was Moshe’s sister. She was a prophetess in her own right. It was through her merit that the Children

of Israel had water in the desert.

The best protection a man can have is a righteous wife. If he has that, both his good name and his good sense will need no further protection.

FRINGE BENEFITS

“Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them; and they will make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments...” (15:38)

The world is like a *tallis* (prayer

“But the joke was really on the American military — they had indeed discovered the Israeli ‘secret weapon’ without realizing it.”

shawl). The world has four compass points. The *tallis* has four sides. We talk colloquially of the four ‘corners’ of the world. The *tallis* has four corners.

The *tzitzis* — the fringes that hang from the *tallis* — are strings. They look like unfinished parts of the *tallis* itself. They teach us that the world is incomplete as it stands. They teach us that man’s job is to perfect the world through his actions.

The *tzitzis* have five knots, which

correspond to the five Books of the Torah. Because the world reaches its fruition only with the giving and the observance of the Torah. The five knots also correspond to the five senses. All of which can be dedicated to the service of the Creator. The five words of the verse of the *Shema* are paralleled in the five knots of the *tzitzis*.

Tzitzis have eight strings. Eight is the number of transcendence. Their are seven days in the week; seven notes in the diatonic scale. Eight is that which links this world to that which is above this world.

The eight strings of the *tzitzis* relate to *bris mila* (circumcision), which takes place on the eighth day after the birth of a boy. This represents the ability of the Jew to elevate the physical to the metaphysical.

There are 613 commandments in the Torah. If you take the *gematria* (numerical equivalent) of the word *tzitzis* — 600 — and add it to the five knots and the eight strings, the result is 613.

Through the mitzva of *tzitzis* we can ‘attach’ ourselves to something that goes far beyond the physical world.

THE SECRET WEAPON

“Send for yourselves men to spy out the land of Canaan” (13:2)

After the Six Day War, the American military was intrigued to discover the secret ingredient which allowed Israeli pilots to knock-out an unheard-of ninety percent of the Egyptian airplanes.

The investigation examined every aspect of the pilots’ lives — even the most personal and secret. Any con-

PARSHA OVERVIEW

At the insistence of the *Bnei Yisrael*, and with Hashem's permission, Moshe sends twelve scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that Hashem should not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When ten of the twelve scouts state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua,

the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the spirit of the people. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead they demand a

return to Egypt! Hashem is 'angered' by this attitude, but is eventually 'placated' by Moshe's fervent prayers. However, He declares that the nation must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the false report of the scouts pass away. A remorseful group, regretting their previous mistake, rashly begins an invasion of the Land based on Hashem's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they fail to heed this warning, and are massacred. Hashem instructs Moshe concerning the offerings that will be made when the *Bnei Yisrael* will finally enter the Land of Israel. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, a donation for the *kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual person or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against Hashem and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people. One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbos, and is put to death. The laws of *tzitzis* are taught, and twice a day we recite this section of the Parsha because it reminds us of our Exodus.

Dedicate an issue of

OHRNET

*in memory of a beloved one
or in honor of a simcha*

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FATHERLY ADVICE

*Tidbits From the 'Ethics of the Fathers'
Traditionally Studied on Summer Sabbaths*

EXCESSIVE CONVERSATION WITH A WOMAN, EVEN ONE'S OWN WIFE, CAN BE HARMFUL.

• Avos 1:5

If a man comes home and pours out his heart to his wife about his unpleasant experience with others, she sometimes encourages him to make a fight out of it, as we find in the case of Korach who was encouraged by his wife to rebel against Moshe.

There is another danger as well of revealing to a wife the embarrassment and insult one has suffered from others. This may arouse in her the suspicion that there is a basis for their behavior and she may lose her respect for her husband.

IN HONOR OF

MR. AND MRS. MACY MEYERS

ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
dedicated by their children, grandchildren and great grandchild

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What was the name of the spy sent by the tribe of Levi?
2. What did Moshe mean when he asked the *meraglim* “Is there a tree?”
3. Who built Hebron?
4. Which *meraglim* returned empty-handed?
5. Why did Hashem shorten the journey of the *meraglim*?
6. Why did the *meraglim* begin their report by saying that the land is “flowing with milk and honey?”
7. How did Calev quiet the people?
8. Why did the Land appear like a “land that eats its inhabitants?”
9. Besides the incident of the *meraglim*, what other sin led to the decree of 40 years of wandering in the desert?
10. On which date did the *Bnei Yisrael* cry because of the report of the *meraglim*? How did this affect the future of the Jewish Nation?
11. “Don’t fear the people of the land... their defense is departed” (14:9). Who was one of their ‘defenders’?
12. Calev and Yehoshua praised *Eretz Canaan* and tried to reassure the people that they could be victorious. How did the Jewish People respond?
13. Which portion of *Eretz Canaan* did Calev receive?
14. What does ‘*Vayapilu*’ mean? What event is this word used in connection with?
15. Which two locations were named for events which occurred in *Parshas Shlach*?
16. How is the *mitzvah* of *challah* different from other *mitzvos* that are associated with *Eretz Yisrael*?
17. What is the minimum measurement of *challah* that must be given to a *Kohen* according to Torah Law? Rabbinical Law?
18. How does the prohibition against worshipping idols differ from all other prohibitions in the Torah?
19. How many times did the Jewish People keep Shabbos before someone violated it by gathering wood?
20. From what is “*techeles*” derived?

BONUS QUESTION?

“For the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea ben Nun.” (1:8) “For the tribe of Yosef, for the tribe of Menashe, Gaddi ben Susi.” (1:11) Why is only the tribe of Menashe identified with Yosef? Isn’t the tribe of Ephraim also descended from Yosef?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

And your children will delay in the desert 40 years...the number of days you spied out the land, 40 days — one year for every year...(14:34). There are 15 days missing from the 40 years of wandering. How so, and why? The Jews entered Israel on the 10th day of Nissan. But based on the punishment, they should not have entered the Land until at least the 14th of Nissan, being that they left Egypt on the 15th of Nissan. We must therefore subtract four days from the 40 year punishment. We must subtract another 11 days for the time it would normally have taken them to go from Mount Sinai to the Land of Israel. These 11 days can’t be counted as part of the punishment since they needed to travel 11 days anyway. All together, there are 15 days missing from the 40 years of punishment. Rashi in the beginning of the Parsha tells us that the spies were “righteous at that hour.” Therefore, for one hour of their mission they didn’t deserve to be punished. One hour is a 24th part of a day, just as 15 days is a 24th part of a Jewish calendar year.

HAFTORAH: YEHOSHUA 2:1-24

STREETS OF GOLD

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

But that’s exactly what Jews did in America at the turn of the century. To escape the pogroms of Czarist Russia, Jews fled to America, having heard stories of a *goldeneh medina*, a land where the streets were paved with gold. In a sense that may have been true, but to mine that gold meant working on Shabbos. And that was unthinkable. So, these Jews would get hired on Monday, work until Friday afternoon, not turn up on Shabbos and get fired again on Monday. This happened week after week. It was through this tremendous self-sacrifice that Torah was established in America.

What kept those spiritual heroes, and thus their descen-

dants, connected to Torah Judaism was that they never for one moment thought of breaking Shabbos. It never entered their minds for a second. You *had* to keep Shabbos! That was as self-evident as saying you had to breathe!

There is an interesting puzzle in this week’s *Parsha*: Why was it that the Spies that Moshe sent came back with a negative report, while those which Yehoshua sent in this week’s Haftorah came back positive and enthusiastic?

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

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

• Rabbi Abraham Twerski

WEEKLY DAF

ME'ILAH 12 -18

BETWEEN BLOOD AND BLOOD

The law of *me'ilah* (misuse of sacred property for secular purpose, which if done unintentionally requires a sacrifice for atonement) does not apply to the blood of a slaughtered sacrificial animal. This is the majority opinion of the Sages stated on the previous *daf*. The reason given there by Rabbi Yishmael's yeshiva is that the Torah (*Vayikra 17:11*) explains the ban against eating animal blood on the grounds that Hashem gave us the opportunity to utilize a sacrificial animal's blood on the altar to achieve atonement for our sins. This blood was intended only "for atonement" and not for the law of *me'ilah*.

What about the blood of a sacrificial animal which is taken from it while it is alive, such as in the case of bloodletting for medicinal purposes? The Sage Rav ruled that the law of *me'ilah* does indeed apply to this kind of blood. It is considered an inseparable, indispensable part of the animal and therefore differs from the milk and eggs produced by sacrificial creatures to which *me'ilah* does not apply.

This is adequate as an explanation of the distinction between blood taken from the live animal and any other substance which is not considered an integral part of the animal. But there is still a need to understand how any blood can qualify for the law of *me'ilah* if the Torah specifically limited the use of blood "for atonement" only and not for *me'ilah*.

The answer lies in that very phrase "for atonement." Only blood which is eligible to serve as atonement was excluded from the law of *me'ilah*. The blood taken from a live animal in the bloodletting process *cannot* be applied to the altar as any form of atonement, and is therefore not affected by the Torah's limitation on the law of *me'ilah* relating to blood.

It should be added that the ban against *eating* blood does, however, apply to such blood which cannot serve as atonement, in the same way that it is forbidden to eat the blood of animals which have not been consecrated as sacrifices or of kosher beasts and birds which are not even eligible for sacrifices. The Torah's explanation for the ban on blood because blood has a sacred purpose was intended to serve as a reason for prohibiting any sort of blood.

• *Me'ilah 12b*

THE MYSTERY OF THE NEST

An idol is forbidden for any use by a Jew unless the heathen has renounced his intention of further worshipping it. The clearest demonstration of such renunciation is an action on his part to smash that idol or any part of it.

What is the rule if the idol fell and was thus smashed, not through the action of the idol worshipper?

There is a difference of opinion on this point between the sages Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish.

The first is of the opinion that the remains of this idol are still forbidden because there was no visible renunciation of its worship by the heathen. The opposing view is that these remains are now permitted for use because we may assume that the worshipper has renounced any intention of continued worship. "If the idol was not capable of saving itself," says the heathen in his heart, "how will it be capable of saving me!"

Their differing opinions lead them to differing interpretations of the rule stated in the Mishnah that if there is an *ashera* tree worshipped as an idol with a bird's nest on top, a Jew may remove it from the tree with the end of a pole. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish understood this to mean that the nest had been formed from branches the bird had broken off that tree. This is therefore an idol which was smashed, albeit not by the idol worshipper, and permitted for use by the Jew who may now appropriate the nest.

Rabbi Yochanan, however, reads the Mishnah otherwise. The branches used for building the nest have been brought from another, non-idolatrous tree, and the issue does not concern the nest. What is of concern are the fledgling birds in the nest. The Mishnah informs us that since these birds are already capable of flying wherever they wish they are not considered to be a part of the forbidden idol tree and may be removed with a pole from its top, for permissible use.

• *Me'ilah 14a*

continued from page one

PARSHA INSIGHTS

ceivable difference was investigated: Did they have pets? How many times did they shower each week?

After the results were collated, the Americans published their report: There was absolutely no identifiable pattern to differentiate between Israeli pilots and American... with one exception, said the report jokingly: The Israeli pilots all had *bris mila*!

But the joke was really on the American military — they had indeed discovered the Israeli 'secret weapon' without realizing it. The Midrash tells us that *Avraham Avinu* stands at the

gate of *Gehenom* and prevents anyone who has a *bris mila* from entering.

The purpose of sending the spies into *Eretz Yisrael* was that future generations shouldn't say that the dwellers of *Eretz Yisrael* were weaklings and that the Land of Israel was conquered by purely natural means. That's why the Torah says "Send for yourself men to spy out the land of *Canaan*," and you'll see that its inhabitants are extremely powerful. And if, in spite of this, you are able to conquer the land, you will realize that "That I am giving it to the *Bnei Yisrael*."

The Jewish People have but 'One Friend' in a world of seventy wolves. But He is the only Friend we need. When we triumph, it's not because of F-16s, superior morale, motivation, or fortified breakfast cereal; it is because Hashem wills it.

Sources:

Help! The Paranoids Are After Me! -
Mayana Shel Torah

The Best Protection - Rabbi Yaakov
Kaminetzky, heard from Rabbi Herzl
Schechter

Fringe Benefits - Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan
The Secret Weapon - Tzvi Yisrael, Rabbi
Mordechai Arnon

ASK the RABBI

BACK OF MY HAND

**Ben-Judah <pwgtn@aol.com>
from Georgia wrote:**

Dear Rabbi,

Is there a custom of the kissing of the hand? If so, what is it? Is it in the Holy Book, and what does it mean? Thank you very much. BE BLESSED!

Dear Ben-Judah,

Rabbi Akiva said: "There are three things I really like about the Medeans: When they cut meat, they do so only upon a table; when they kiss, they do so only upon the hand; and when they speak privately, they do so only out in a field."

These three things can be explained as follows: Cutting meat on a table is safe, as opposed to holding the meat in your hand while you cut it. Kissing the hand is more respectable than kissing the lips because of the saliva emitted. Private matters are best discussed in a field because — as Rashi wrote 900 years ago — 'walls have ears.' Or, as a verse teaches: "A little birdie told me."

Kissing on the hand can also be seen as more modest than kissing the lips.

Today, it is mostly the practice of Sephardic Jews to kiss the hand upon meeting a Rabbi or Torah scholar, and it is considered a sign of great respect. Chassidic Jews sometimes kiss the hand of their Grand Rabbi.

Many years ago, a friend of mine was studying and came across the above-mentioned statement of Rabbi Akiva. My friend asked: "Why does

the Talmud have to point out the danger of cutting meat while holding it in your hand? Isn't that pretty obvious?"

Well, last year someone sent me an article from the Detroit Jewish News. According to the article, hospitals across the country have identified a new malady which they call Sunday-Morning Bagelitis. (Seriously, this is not a joke!) Every Sunday morning, emergency rooms in major Jewish population centers report an increase of people with serious hand wounds. To what do they attribute this increase? To Jewish people who cut their hands while slicing bagels — especially frozen bagels, which are hard, slippery and quite a danger!

Sources:

- Tractate Berachot 8b
- Ibid., Rashi, Maharsha & Chochmat Shlomo
- Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 10:20, Bava Batra 4a

TO BE, OR TO DON'T BE?

**Mike Fulstone
<decatur@swbell.net>**

Dear Rabbi,

I have long felt that when G-d commanded light into existence that it was a direct command to light as in "Light, be!" rather than saying "Let there be light." In other words as in the sentence "John, stop!"

Saying "Let there be light" or "Let light be" doesn't seem to

ring true to me. I am not very familiar with the Hebrew language so please let me know if I am all wet here.

Dear Mike Fulstone,

Since light did not exist yet, G-d could not address it and tell it to be. He did, however, say "Let light be." By saying that, G-d was addressing the space/time reality that He had already created, telling it to bring forth light. A more correct translation of the original Hebrew is "There shall be light."

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

What blessing can't you say when you're on the moon?

Answer: Kiddush Levana — the blessing on seeing the New Moon.

The blessing said when sighting the New Moon can be recited only at night when you can benefit from the moon's light. Even at night, if it's cloudy and you see only a vague image of the moon you don't say the blessing, since you don't benefit from its rays. So too, if you were actually standing on the moon you wouldn't be able to say the blessing of Kiddush Levana, because you wouldn't be deriving benefit from the moon's rays!

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 426:1 Rema
- Ibid. Magen Avraham 1

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PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 13:4-15 - The tribe of Levi did not send a spy.
2. 13:8 - Is there a righteous person whose merit will 'shade' and shield the Canaanites?
3. 13:22 - Cham.
4. 13:23 - Yehoshua and Calev.
5. 13:25 - Hashem knew the Jewish People would sin on account of the *meraglim* and would spend a year in the *midbar* for every day of the mission. Therefore, Hashem shortened the journey to soften the decree against the Jewish People.
6. 13:27 - Any lie which doesn't start with an element of truth will not be believed; therefore, they began their false report with a true statement.
7. 13:30 - He fooled them by shouting, "Is this all that the son of Amram did to us?" The people quieted themselves to hear what disparaging thing Calev wished to say about the 'son of Amram' (Moshe).
8. 13:32 - Hashem caused many deaths among the Canaanites so they would be preoccupied with burying their dead and not notice the *meraglim*.
9. 13:33 - The golden calf.
10. 14:1 - The 9th of Av. Therefore, the Temples were destroyed on this date.
11. 14:9 - Iyov.
12. 14:10 - They wanted to stone them.
13. 14:24 - Hebron.
14. 14:44 - *Vayapilu* means strength and brazenness. It's used in connection with the people who tried to go to the Land of Israel without Moshe's consent.
15. 13:24, 14:45 - *Nachal Eshkol*, because of the cluster of grapes taken there. *Chormah*, because of the destruction that occurred there.
16. 15:18 - The obligation to observe other *mitzvos* associated with *Eretz Yisrael* began only after the possession and division of the Land. The obligation to observe the *mitzvah* of *challah* started immediately upon entering the Land.
17. 15:20 - No fixed amount is stated in the Torah. Rabbinical Law requires a household to give 1/24, and a baker to give 1/48.
18. 15:31 - Hashem gave this commandment directly to the Jewish People.
19. 15:32 - Just one.
20. 15:39 - From the blood of the *chilazon*.

BONUS ANSWER!

The Torah here is identifying the spies, most of whom spoke ill of the land of Israel. Therefore, the Torah points out that Gaddi ben Susi is descended from Yosef, who himself spoke ill of his brothers. Hoshea ben Nun, on the other hand, did not speak ill of the Land; therefore, the Torah does not identify him here as a descendent of Yosef.

• *Musaf Rashi*

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN	14:17	Moshe Rabbeinu's Prayer	386	<i>Tzitzis</i>
13:4 Order of the <i>Meraglim</i>	15:2	Order of the Chapters	387	Avoiding Intellectual and Physical Temptations
13:27,32 &		SEFER HACHINUCH		
14:1,3 Tactics of the <i>Meraglim</i>	385	<i>Challah</i>		

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