

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### BANKING ON THE WORLD TO COME

**“Place now you hand under my thigh. And I will have you swear that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites....” (24:3)**

A Jew from the country was once leading his cow to town for slaughter. The nearest town where there was a qualified *shochet* (slaughterer) was a considerable distance away, and the Jew was tired. He looked up, and he saw in the distance, coming toward him, what looked like a very distinguished rabbi.

When the Jew reached the rabbi, he asked the rabbi if he would *shecht* his cow for him. The rabbi replied in the affirmative, pulled out a *shochet*'s knife, and proceeded to *shecht* the cow.

Afterward, the rabbi asked the Jew “By the way, do you think you could lend me a small sum of money for a few weeks?”

The Jew replied “I’d like to help you, but I’m afraid I really don’t know who you are. Don’t take it personally, but how do I know I’ll get my money back?”

The rabbi looked into the Jew’s face and said “When it comes to money, you want references, but with the cow, you’re quite content to let a perfect stranger *shecht* your animal... Aren’t you worried you’ll be eating non-kosher meat?”

Eliezer was Avraham Avinu’s most trusted servant. He was in charge of Avraham’s considerable wealth. In this, Avraham trusted Eliezer implicitly. However, when it came to spiritu-

al matters, to the critical choice of a wife for Yitzchak — a mother-to-be of the whole Jewish People — then Avraham made Eliezer take an oath.

If we are careful about our bank account in this world, shouldn’t we, at the very least, give the same concern to our bank account in the First National Bank of *Olam Habah* (the World-to-Come)?

- Based on the *Be’er Mayim Chaim* as heard from Rabbi Calev Gestetner, and a story by the *Dubner Maggid* as heard from Rabbi Reuven Subar

“...every Jew has a legacy to reach to the highest levels of spirituality.”

### ARE YOU DOZING OFF?

**“And it was the life of Sarah, one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years was the life of Sarah.” (23:1)**

“I dunno Rabbi — all that religion stuff is pretty complicated — I’m just a simple person — It’s over my head.”

Rabbi Akiva was giving a *drasha* (lecture) to the congregation, and they started to doze off. He said “How did Esther see that she would

reign over 127 states? — She saw that she was the descendant of Sarah who lived 127 years.”

What was so *awakening* about this information, that Rabbi Akiva said it to wake his slumbering congregants?

Rabbi Akiva had been talking about very lofty and exalted Torah concepts. The congregation dozed off. They thought that such elevated thoughts were way over their heads. So Rabbi Akiva wanted to awaken them to the realization that every Jew can connect to the highest Torah concepts.

For just as Esther’s ability to risk death by going before King Achashverosh without permission was her spiritual legacy from the righteousness of Sarah, similarly every Jew has a legacy to reach to the highest levels of spirituality.

Never to succumb to the negativity of “Who am I? What’s my life worth?” You have a hot-line to the highest and the deepest Torah!

- Adapted from the *Pri Tzadik*

### LIGHT BUILDING

**“And Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother....” (24:66)**

When Sarah was alive, her Shabbos lights would stay alight from Erev Shabbos to the next Erev Shabbos. There was a blessing in her dough. And the cloud of the Divine Presence stayed connected to her tent. When she died, these manifestations ceased. But when Yitzchak brought Rivka into the tent of Sarah his mother, all three returned.

The *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting) was a representation of the tents of the forefathers. For the same miracles that were to be found in the tents

*continued on page four*

# PARSHA OVERVIEW

The life of Sarah, mother of the Jewish People, comes to a close at the age of one hundred and twenty seven. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham buries her in the Cave of Machpela. As this is the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham is prepared to pay its owner Ephron the Hittite the exorbitant sum which he demands for the cave. Avraham places the responsibility for finding a suitable wife for his son Yitzchak on his faithful servant Eliezer, who takes an oath to chose a wife from amongst Avraham's family and not from the Canaanites. Eliezer travels to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nahor, and prays to Hashem to show him a sign so he will know whom to choose. At evening time, as he is about to water his camels, Rivka providentially appears and Eliezer

asks her for a drink of water. Not only does she give him to drink, but she draws water for all ten of his thirsty camels. (Some 140 gallons!) This extreme thoughtfulness and kindness is the sign that she is the right wife for Yitzchak, and a suitable mother of the Jewish People. Negotiations with Rivka's father and her brother Lavan finally result in her leaving with Eliezer. Yitzchak marries Rivka and brings her into the tent of his mother, Sarah. He is then consoled for the loss of his mother. Avraham remarries Hagar, who is renamed Ketura to indicate her improved ways. Six children are born to them. After giving them gifts, Avraham sends them to the East. Avraham passes away at the age of one hundred and seventy-five and is buried next to Sarah in the Cave of Machpela.

For Information on dedicating an issue of OHRNET please call our office for details at 02-581-0315.

**OHRNET**

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by  
**OHR SOMAYACH**  
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POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel

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Produced and Designed by the  
Office of Information and Communication  
**Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director**

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PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

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## SING MY SOUL INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBOS ZEMIRO

### KOL MEKADESH "WHOEVER KEEPS SHABBOS..."

*"Always help those who hold back from plowing and harvesting on the Seventh"*

“**C**harish” — the Hebrew word for plowing — is a combination of the first letters of the Hebrew names for Thursday, Wednesday, Friday (*Chamishi, Revi'i, Shishi*). These three days preceding Shabbos are the time

for a Jew to prepare ground for what he will plant with his service on the Day of Rest. The three days following Shabbos are similar to the harvest during which the Sabbath observer can reap the fruits of his spiritual labor. Shabbos is therefore looked upon by our Sages, not as the “end” of the week but rather its center, with all of the other days revolving around it.

לע"נ  
ר' יוחנן עבי בן ר' אברהם דוב ז"ל  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Name the four couples buried in *Kiryat Arba*.
2. What did Sarah hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the *B'nei Ches* bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand?"
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Besuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?"
15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?
16. Who was *Ketura*?
17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?
18. How old was Avraham when he died?
19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of *Ever*?
20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

## BONUS QUESTION?

By giving the camels water, Rivka demonstrated her sharp intelligence, plus her sensitivity to the feelings of others. How so?

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Eliezer said "I will not eat until I have spoken my words..." (24:33) It is forbidden to eat before doing a mitzvah such as *lulav* or *shofar*. Therefore, now that Eliezer had the opportunity to fulfill the oath he made to Avraham, it was forbidden for him to eat.

• Rabbi Binyamin Diskin

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

	<b>RAMBAN</b>		<b>SFORNO</b>
22:9	The Cave of <i>Machpela</i>	24:14	Prayer or Divination
24:1	Blessed in all Things	24:65	The Awe of Yitzchak
24:64	Rivka's Modesty	25:8	Avraham's Death
25:8	Full of Years		

## HAFTORAH: MELACHIM I I

The need to secure the succession of the Jewish People, which is the subject of this week's Parsha, is reflected in the Haftorah: King David is coming to the end of his days (like Avraham) and his senior son, the handsome and indulgent Adonijah tries to wrest the succession from Shlomo, King David's appointed heir. But King David is alerted to Adonijah's scheme by his wife Bas-sheva and Nasan the prophet, and the plot is foiled.

### THE WILL TO DIVIDE

The Chafetz Chaim once wrote to a rich man that he was obliged to make a clear will, dividing his property between his sons, for, as we find in this week's Haftorah, if the prophet Nasan admonished King David to leave clear instructions regarding his succession, certainly this rich man was

obliged to do so. We do not find that King David was annoyed at the prophet for reminding him of his mortality; rather he took steps to rectify a difficult situation. As the Chafetz Chaim wrote: "Children are known to disobey their parents and quarrel amongst themselves even during their parents' lifetime — how much more so after their death!"

• Adapted from *The Midrash Says*

## WEEKLY DAF

### CHULLIN 75 - 81

## AN ANIMAL WHICH REQUIRES NO SHECHITA?

If an animal is properly slaughtered and there is found inside it a full-term offspring, the Torah gave permission to eat this “*ben pakuah*” without slaughtering it. We consider the *shechita* which was performed on the mother as having been a *shechita* on its unborn offspring as well.

Our Sages were concerned, however, that if people see any animal being eaten without *shechita*, they may mistakenly conclude that *shechita* is not required for any animal. They therefore decreed that the Torah’s permission to eat the meat of a *ben pakuah* without *shechita* be limited to such animals which are consumed before their feet touch the ground. Once this has happened and they have the appearance of regular animals they cannot be eaten without *shechita* because of the danger of confusing them with animals which require *shechita*.

By Torah law a full grown *ben pakuah* and its offspring may be slaughtered the same day, since the Torah ban on slaughtering mother and child on the same day applies only to animals where *shechita* is

required. Similarly, the obligation to give certain parts of a slaughtered animal to the *kohen* does not apply to the *ben pakuah* which requires no *shechita*.

What about the *ben pakuah* whose feet have touched the ground and requires *shechita* by rabbinic law — is the ban on slaughtering mother and son now applicable, and is there an obligation to give away those parts to the *kohen*?

It is the consensus of the halachic authorities (*Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De’ah* 13:2) that as regards the first issue, once *shechita* is required for the *ben pakuah* it will be forbidden to slaughter its child the same day. But the Sages did not totally equate it with an animal which requires *shechita* by Torah law, and therefore exempted the owner from making those gifts to the *kohen*.

• *Chullin 75b*

## WHAT’S IN A ROYAL NAME?

When Rabbi Zeira arrived in Eretz Yisrael from Babylon and heard Rabbi Yirmiyahu stating a matter of law he confirmed its reliability by reporting that the Sage “Arioch” had made the same ruling in Babylon.

Who is this sage with such a

strange name?

The Talmud identifies him as the Sage Shmuel. Rashi explains that this is a title of respect accorded to Shmuel on the basis of a passage in the Torah (*Bereishis* 14:1) identifying Arioch as the King of Alasar.

To fully appreciate the meaning of this title we must recall that in the many halachic debates between the Sages Rav and Shmuel we rule like Rav in matters of “*issur*” — laws relating to what may or may not be done — and like Shmuel in monetary matters. Shmuel’s king-like authority in monetary matters thus finds expression in this title borrowed from a famous king of history.

But why this kind in particular?

Tosefos (*Shabbos* 53a) suggests that the name Arioch contains in it the word “*ari*” which is Hebrew for lion, king of the animals, and therefore enhances the authoritative nature of the title.

Another commentary proposes an ingenious approach. Arioch was King of Alasar. Break down the country he ruled and you get two words “*Al*” and “*asar*” which translates into “not in cases of *issur*.” In this fashion Arioch denotes the area in which Shmuel’s halachic authority reigns supreme, while Alasar serves as the boundary on how far this authority extends.

• *Chullin 76b*

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

*continued from page one*

of the forefathers were also present in the Mishkan:

Like Sarah and Rivka’s lamps, the *Ner HaMa’aravi* (Western Light in the Mishkan) burned miraculously. From it they would light the other lights. Like the dough of Sarah and Rivka, the Show-Breads in the Mishkan were blessed. They would still be warm and fresh even after a week in the Mishkan, and all who ate from them

were satiated by but a small piece. And, of course, like the tent of the forefathers, a cloud would hover over the Mishkan.

*Why did Sarah’s lamps burn from Erev Shabbos to Erev Shabbos?*

The weekdays could not destroy the light which they achieved on Shabbos. The lamps burned all week, fueled by that same *kedusha* (holiness). Thus, when the following

Shabbos arrived, the light of the lamps that were lit only added to the light that had come from the previous Shabbos.

Similarly, when they lit the lamps in the Mishkan from the miraculous *Ner HaMa’aravi*, they were building on the light that shone from the previous day. And thus the light would build and build...

• *Adapted from the Shem MiShmuel*

## BACTERIA IN THE CAFETERIA

**Susan**  
<mendysusan@juno.com>  
wrote:

*Why is yogurt with live acidophilus and bifidus cultures kosher to eat if we are not allowed to eat bugs?*

**David Preiss**  
<preiss@ecf.utoronto.ca>  
wrote:

*Why does the Torah speak of forms of life that are visible only to the human eye?*

Dear Susan & David,

Good question. Now let me ask you one: Why are we allowed to breathe? Zillions of microorganisms are floating around in the air, and we swallow some with every breath.

The answer is: The Torah prohibits only bugs which can be seen by the naked eye. Organisms seen only with the aid of a microscope are kosher.

The logic is this: The Torah was given to human beings, not angels. Its laws are geared to normal human experience. Bugs we see in 'real life' are forbidden. 'Invisible' ones — which seem like they exist only in

a laboratory — are not forbidden.

When improved microscopes brought improved awareness of microscopic organisms, some people suggested that perhaps we should filter our water to avoid consuming the organisms. A renowned rabbi responded: "If you give a nickel to charity while holding it under a magnifying glass, do you get credit as though you gave a dime?"

Speaking of germs: Three amoebae are sitting on a park bench. Suddenly, one of them jumps up and runs off.

"Hey! Where did Harry go?" one asks the other.

"Guess he had to split." (Thanks to E.C.S.)

Sources:

• *Aruch Hashulchan, Yoreh De'ah 84:6*

## A ROSEN BY ANY OTHER NAME

**Josh Kaplan**  
<jokaplan@vassar.edu> wrote:

*Are all men with the last name KAPLAN kohens?*

Dear Josh Kaplan:

Often, people named Kaplan are *kohanim*. This name is said to mean "Kohen Ploni" — "So-and-so the Kohen." Katz, another name common for *kohanim*, means "Kohen Tzedek" — "Righteous Kohen."

But having a name like Kaplan or Katz isn't proof of being a *kohen*. Two of my best friends are named Kaplan, and neither one is a *kohen*. In fact, I know someone named Cohen who is not a *kohen*!

A *kohen* is a male descendant of Aharon, Moses's brother. If you have a family tradition that you are a *kohen*, and that family members were called to the Torah as *kohanim*, then you need check no further.

If there is no family tradition, other evidence is required. For instance, an ancestor's gravestone inscription. Someone who can't determine his father's personal status is automatically considered a *Yisrael*.

Try looking up long lost relatives, and ask them. If you are like many people, you may very well have relatives here in Israel, Russia or elsewhere whom you don't even know.

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

**Last week we asked:**

If a tree falls in a forest, and there's nobody around to hear it, does it make a noise?

**Answer:**

Yes, it makes a noise. The verse says, "There is no speaker, and no words, without their voice being heard." (Psalms 19:4) Even if no creature hears the noise, Hashem hears it.

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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. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered.
3. 23:6 - Prince of G-d.
4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.
5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn't graze in the fields of others.
6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter marry him.
7. 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness.
8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached.
9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
10. 24:31 - Idols.
11. 24:39 - His own daughter.
12. 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer.
13. 24:50 - That he was wicked.
14. 24:58 - I will go even if you don't want me to go.
15. 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children.
16. 25:1 - Hagar.
17. 25:5 - The power of blessing.
18. 25:7 - One hundred and seventy five years old.
19. 25:17 - Fourteen years.
20. None!

## BONUS ANSWER!

Rivka had a dilemma. She couldn't bring home a jug of water from which Eliezer, a total stranger, drank. But if she spilled out the water, Eliezer would be embarrassed. She solved the dilemma by giving the water to the camels.

• *Beis Halevi*

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