

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT BO · 5 SHVAT 5765 · JAN. 15, 2005 · VOL. 12 NO. 15

SPECIAL FEATURE

TSUNAMI & TSUSAMIN

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

While the entire world grieves over the disaster caused by the tsunami in South East Asia there are some aspects of this tragedy which deserve more attention than just counting how many are dead or missing.

First and foremost there is the humbling realization of the paradoxical fragility of man who is capable of reaching the moon but cannot protect himself against an earthquake and tidal wave.

One of the blessings an observant Jew makes each morning is to praise the Creator “Who spreads out the earth upon the waters.” Because we take for granted the security which G-d has provided us against the threat of the raging seas, it is necessary for a Jew to remind himself upon awakening that such security is a gift of G-d. It should not be necessary for a tsunami to serve as such a reminder.

As regards the Jews who were in the disaster area, the reaction of the government, the media and the general public in Israel to their plight served as a reminder of the *tsusamin* (Yiddish for “together”) nature of the Jewish People. The volunteers who quickly flew to help locate missing Israelis and to bring back the bodies of those who did not survive in order to provide them with a Jewish burial were only a part of the picture. Throughout Israel people had their ears glued to their radios, hoping and praying for news of another Jew removed from the list of the missing.

It was a reminder of a point made almost a century ago by the great Rabbi Meir Shapiro, the rav of Lublin and founder of both Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin and the Daf Hayomi program. The anti-Semitic Russians in the last years of the Czarist regime accused a Jew by the name of Mendel

Beilis of murdering a gentile child in order to use his blood for ritual purposes. In its attempt to base this alleged blood libel on a Jewish disregard for non-Jews as humans deserving of life, the prosecution cited a section of the Talmud which states that “You (Jews) are called Adam (Man) but the other nations are not called Adam.” The response of Rabbi Shapiro, which was read to judge and jury by the defense attorney, shed an entirely different light on this statement.

In *lashon hakodesh* – the Hebrew language – everything has a singular and plural form. The exception is the word Adam. When all people feel a togetherness as if they were a single man, they deserve to be called by the singular-plural term *Adam*.

If a non-Jew were on trial for murder rather than Mendel Beilis, went on Rabbi Shapiro’s brief, who would be concerned with his fate? At the most his defenders would be his family and a few close friends. But when a Jew like Beilis is on trial every Jew, everywhere, is deeply concerned. Jews of all economic classes have contributed funds to hire top defense lawyers and every effort has been made to see that justice is done. It is this sense of responsibility, of oneness, which makes Jews unique as *Adam* and in no way reflects on their attitude towards the sanctity of life of all mankind.

In this very spirit of regard for all mankind – a broadening of the *tsusamin* perspective – we take note of the fact that the amount of food and medical supplies sent to Southeast Asia by the Israeli government was far larger than what was sent by larger and richer nations in Europe.

Tsusamin – solidarity and brotherhood – should not need a tsunami to awaken it in the hearts of all Jews and all mankind.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d. Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go. During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon to remove the locusts, and he admits he has sinned. G-d ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh's heart, and again Pharaoh fails to free the Jews. The country, except for the Jewish People, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and tells him to take all the Jews out of Egypt, but to leave their flocks behind. Moshe tells him that not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too. Moshe tells Pharaoh that G-d is going to bring one more plague, the death of the firstborn, and then the Jews will leave Egypt. G-d again hardens

Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again, Moshe will be put to death. G-d tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the chief month. The Jewish people are commanded to take a sheep on the 10th of the month and guard it until the 14th. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach offering, its blood put on their door-posts, and its roasted meat eaten. The blood on the door-post will be a sign that their homes will be passed-over when G-d strikes the firstborn of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating *chametz* on Pesach. Moshe relays G-d's commands, and the Jewish People fulfill them flawlessly. G-d sends the final plague, killing the first born, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. G-d tells Moshe and Aharon the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first born son) and *tefillin*.

ISRAEL Forever

A REMINDER FROM OUTSIDERS

Sometimes it takes an "outsider" to remind us of our need for recognizing that G-d runs the world. At a recent conference on religious freedom in America held at Manhattan's Congregation Shearith Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in North America, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia compared the attitudes of European countries towards religion with that of the U.S.

"The founding fathers never used the phrase 'separation of church and state'," he declared in his argument that the rigid separation practiced in Europe would be bad for America and bad for the Jews. He pointed to the experience of Jews in Europe as proof of his point.

"You will not hear the word G-d cross the lips of a French

premier or an Italian head of state," he added, "but that has never been the American way."

This seems to echo what the servants of Pharaoh said to him as recorded in this week's Torah portion. After Moshe warned the Egyptian ruler that unless he released his Hebrew slaves G-d would devastate his land with a plague of locusts, they cried out: "Send these people away to serve the L-rd, their G-d. Don't you yet realize that Egypt is lost?"

In the homeland of the Jews we should not need any reminders about G-d from Egyptian advisers or Italian judges. We have our own Torah and our own history to remind us of our need to depend on serving G-d as the best guarantee for Israel forever.

לע"נ
מרת חויה שרה בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

OHRNET magazine is published by Ohr Somayach Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

© 2005 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

SEIZE THE MOMENT

"...And you shall eat it in haste. It is a Pesach to Hashem." (12:12)

There's one big difference between the original Pesach in Egypt and every Pesach that followed it. The original Pesach was one of haste, of immediacy. All the other Pesachim throughout the generations have been conducted slowly and with deliberation. What can we learn from this difference?

When we come to free ourselves from the clutches of our own selfishness, when spiritualizing our lives, eschewing the unrelenting demands of our bodies for more and more pleasure, we must seize that initial moment and guard its inspiration. That first moment of spiritual ignition is so precious, so holy, that we must not let it sink back into the morass of habit and apathy from which it has freed itself. The Pesach in Egypt was the first moment when the Jewish people wrenched themselves away from the fleshpots of Egypt and became the standard bearers of spirituality in a dark world.

After that initial burst of light, however, we must move with deliberation and care, for a person cannot live on moments of explosive inspiration alone. After that first Pesach, there followed the generations of Pesachim which were all conducted slowly and deliberately, solidifying and internalizing inspiration until it becomes second nature.

• Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen

THE LAST HOUSE

"...And the blood will be for you a sign on the houses." (12:12)

The Torah speaks to all times and all places. A non-Jew once asked a Torah Sage how it was that the Jews still believed in the rebuilding of the Third Temple. As is their way, the non-Jew sought to prove his point from Scripture itself: "Doesn't it say in Hagai, chapter two, 'Greater will be the honor of the last House — meaning the Temple — than that of the first?' And in that verse the Prophet Hagai is referring to the Second of your Temples. In fact, continued the non-Jew, "I could quote you any number of similar examples of where the Bible calls the Second Temple 'the last House'. Obviously the prophet is saying that the Second Temple will be the last, that there will be no 'Third Temple.' "

The Sage replied: "The word in Hebrew *acharon* can mean 'last' or it can mean 'second'. Whenever *acharon* is preceded by the word 'first', as it is in the context you cite,

its meaning is 'second' and not 'last.' In Exodus 4:8-9, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to Moses, 'And it will be that if they (the Children of Israel) do not believe you and they will not heed the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the second — *acharon* - sign. And it shall be that if they do not believe even these two signs and do not heed your voice, then you shall take from the water of the River and pour it out on the dry land, and the water...will become blood...' Clearly the word *acharon* does not mean 'the last' but 'the latter.' "

Our Holy Torah speaks to all times and all places. For your challenge — and its answer — were already embedded in the Torah itself. It says in Exodus 12:2: "...And the blood will be for you a sign on the houses." In other words, the fact that the plague of blood is referred to as *acharon*, and nevertheless is followed by yet a third sign as a "sign on the houses", means it is a witness to the fact that when the Prophet writes *bayit acharon*, it means the Second House — and not the last one.

• In the name of the Gaon of Vilna

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

"...but with My Name Hashem I did not make Myself known to them..." (6:3)

Moshe had ten names: Moshe, Yered, Chaver, Yekutiel, Avigdor, Avi Socho, Avi Zanuach, Tuvia, Shemaya and Halevi. Of all these names, the only one that Hashem used was Moshe, the name he was given by Pharaoh's daughter, Batya.

Why, of all Moshe's names, did Hashem use the one name given to Moshe by an Egyptian princess? What was so special about this name?

The name Moshe comes from the word meaning 'to be drawn', for Moshe was drawn from the water by Batya. When Batya took Moshe out of the river she was flouting her father's will. Pharaoh's order was to kill all the Jewish male babies to stifle their savior. By rescuing Moshe, Batya was putting her life in grave danger. Because Batya risked her life to save Moshe, that quality was embedded in Moshe's personality and in his soul. It was this quality of self-sacrifice that typified Moshe more than all his other qualities, and for this reason Moshe was the only name that Hashem would call him.

This is what made Moshe the quintessential leader of the Jewish People, for more than any other trait, a leader of the Jewish People needs self-sacrifice to care and worry

continued on page seven

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What was Pharaoh's excuse for not releasing the Jewish children?
2. How did the locusts in the time of Moshe differ from those in the days of Yoel?
3. How did the first three days of darkness differ from the last three?
4. When the Jews asked the Egyptians for gold and silver vessels, the Egyptians were unable to deny ownership of such vessels. Why?
5. *Makat bechorot* took place at *exactly* midnight. Why did Moshe say it would take place at *approximately* midnight?
6. Why did the firstborn of the animals die?
7. How did Moshe show respect to Pharaoh when he warned him about the aftermath of the plague of the firstborn?
8. G-d told Moshe, "...so that my wonders will be multiplied" (11:9). What three wonders was G-d referring to?
9. Why did G-d command the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh to Aharon, and not only to Moshe?
10. Up to what age is an animal fit to be a Pesach offering?
11. Prior to the Exodus from Egypt, what two *mitzvot* involving blood did G-d give to the Jewish People?
12. Rashi gives two explanations of the word "*Pasachti*." What are they?
13. Why were the Jews told to stay indoors during *makat bechorot*?
14. What was Pharaoh screaming as he ran from door to door the night of *makat bechorot*?
15. Why did Pharaoh ask Moshe to bless him?
16. Why did the Jewish People carry their matzah on their shoulders rather than have their animals carry it?
17. Who comprised the *erev rav* (mixed multitude)?
18. What three historical events occurred on the 15th of Nissan, prior to the event of the Exodus from Egypt?
19. What is the source of the "milk and honey" found in *Eretz Yisrael*?
20. The only non-kosher animal whose firstborn is redeemed is the donkey. What did the donkeys do to "earn" this distinction?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 10:11 - Since children don't bring sacrifices there was no need for them to go.
2. 10:14 - The plague brought by Moshe was composed of one species of locust, whereas the plague in the days of Yoel was composed of many species.
3. 10:22 - During the first three days the Egyptians couldn't see. During the last three days they couldn't move.
4. 10:22 - During the plague of darkness the Jews could see and they searched and found the Egyptians' vessels.
5. 11:4 - If Moshe said the plague would begin exactly at midnight, the Egyptians might miscalculate and accuse Moshe of being a fake.
6. 11:5 - Because the Egyptians worshiped them as gods, and when G-d punishes a nation He also punishes its gods.
7. 11:8 - Moshe warned that "All these servants of yours will come down to me" when, in fact, it was Pharaoh himself who actually came running to Moshe.
8. 11:9 - The plague of the firstborn, the splitting of the sea, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers.
9. 12:1 - As reward for his efforts in bringing about the plagues.
10. 12:5 - One year.
11. 12:6 - Circumcision and *Korban Pesach*.
12. 12:13 - "I had mercy" and "I skipped."
13. 12:22 - Since it was a night of destruction, it was not safe for anyone to leave the protected premises of his home.
14. 12:31 - "Where does Moshe live? Where does Aharon live?"
15. 12:32 - So he wouldn't die, for he himself was a first-born.
16. 12:34 - Because the commandment of matzah was dear to them.
17. 12:38 - People from other nations who became converts.
18. 12:41 - The angels came to promise that Sarah would have a son, Yitzchak was born, and the exile of the "covenant between the parts" was decreed.
19. 13:5 - Goat milk, date and fig honey.
20. 13:13 - They helped the Jews by carrying silver and gold out of Egypt.

WEEKLY DAFootnotes

NIDDAH 23 - 29

SNAKE EYES

Is the snake considered a beast or a reptile? The answer to this question seems rather obvious. It is nevertheless the subject of a problem raised by Tosefot in our *gemara's* discussion of Rabbi Meir's position that a woman becomes ritually impure if she gives birth to a creature resembling a beast.

Rabbi Yochanan's explanation of Rabbi Meir's position is that the eyes of a beast have a similarity to the eyes of a human, so that in regard to ritual impurity the beast form that comes from the woman's womb is considered a birth. This explanation should then include the birth of a form resembling a snake whose eyes are round like those of a human. Why then, the question is asked, did Rabbi Meir, in the *mishna* at the beginning of this *perek*, mention only animals, beasts and fowl and fail to include the snake?

The problem raised by Tosefot is based on the passage introducing the encounter between the snake and the first woman in the Garden of Eden. The ability which this creature would demonstrate in coaxing Chava to eat from the Tree of Knowledge against the command of G-d is signaled by the description: "The snake was more cunning than all the beasts of the field which the L-rd G-d had created." (*Bereishet* 3:1) If the snake is thus included in the category of beasts, asks Tosefot, is it not a part of Rabbi Meir's listing of forms which includes beasts?

The solution to this problem offered by Tosefot is based on the Midrashic interpretation of the curse which G-d pronounced upon the snake as punishment for his role as an inciter to the first sin. "On your belly shall you crawl" (*ibid.* 3:14) is understood by our Sages as an indication that the snake originally had legs but they were removed as a penalty. Although the snake was referred to as a beast while it had legs, after their removal it was reduced to the status of a creeping reptile.

• *Niddah* 23a

WHO'S OUT FIRST?

A woman becomes ritually impure upon giving birth. In regard to what constitutes birth for such an effect, Rabbi Huna ruled that once the newborn has stuck his hand out of the womb his mother is ritually impure even if that hand was immediately withdrawn. As proof he cites the passage, "And it came to pass that when she gave birth he

extended his hand." (*Bereishet* 38:28)

In response to a challenge presented by Rabbi Yehuda to this ruling, Rabbi Nachman explained that according to Torah Law it is not considered a birth until a majority of the child's body exits the womb. Rabbi Huna, he pointed out, was referring to the rabbinical law which confers this status of impurity even for an extended hand and merely cited the above-mentioned Torah passage as an *asmachta* — a cryptic allusion to the rabbinical decree.

The fact that in reality the extended hand from the womb does not constitute birth is evident from the very chapter in which this passage appears. Tamar gave birth to twin sons. When one of them extended his hand the attending midwife tied a red string around that hand to indicate that he was the firstborn. No sooner had he withdrawn that hand than his brother came bursting forth, and it was he, Peretz, who was indeed considered the firstborn.

An interesting footnote to this account of the birth is presented by the *Ohr Hachayim* in his commentary. The midwife, he suggests, was possessed with a Divine inspiration to tie the red string on the extended hand which she believed would be the firstborn. While we pronounce the word *shani*, meaning a red string, it is written in the Torah without vowelization and can be read as *shaini*, meaning second, which indeed he was since the simple extension of his hand was not considered a birth to confer upon him the status of firstborn.

• *Niddah* 28a

The Weekly Daf

by RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

at Jewish
Bookstores
Everywhere!

Published by Targum Press / Distributed by Feldheim



FREE WILL POST SINAI

From: Terrett in Miami, FL

Dear Rabbi,

I have trouble with two apparent contradictions to wit: Judaism is less about faith and more about action. Yet we are to have faith that the instructions for our actions are immutable and divinely inspired. What gives?

Also, we have free will and this is why Hashem does not fully reveal His existence. Yet at Sinai His existence was proven and His Law made eternal. Doesn't that remove free-will? It seems to me that having been shown G-d's existence gave us no choice but to say yes and then transmit that decision through the generations. So if it is all based on mass revelation, then we, especially as Jews, really have no choice but to comply if we wish to keep in G-d's good favor.

How is this fair? Where is our free will? If I exercise my "free will" to comply, I'm not really making a decision born within me. I am deciding to comply based on an event that happened 3500 years ago in which G-d's existence was proven to us all. It's like saying, if you know something to be true, then of course you will decide to believe. Now, I accept the revelation at Sinai - that is not my issue. My issue is with the loss of free-will because of that belief/knowledge. And what about those for whom this knowledge is not concrete? The logic is circular I know, but I hope you understand what I am getting at. Thanks.

Dear Terrett,

Your question is very deep and probing. With G-d's help, I hope I have understood it correctly and will answer it satisfactorily, point by point.

Judaism is not more about action than belief. Belief is just as important. It is one of the six Torah commandments incumbent on every Jew at every moment (see *Biur Halacha*,

Orach Chaim 1:1). It is true that one earns some degree of reward for *mitzvot* even without belief in G-d; while one who believes but doesn't do *mitzvot* is held accountable. Nevertheless, this is no different than any case where one is rewarded for one's *mitzvot* and corrected for transgression. Still, ideally, belief should be a prerequisite to, and impetus behind, the performance of the *mitzvot*.

Regarding free will, even though the Jews had a one-time revelation of G-d at Sinai, that did not preclude their own, or future generation's, free will. After all, shortly after having witnessed G-d with such clarity that they pointed saying, 'This is my G-d and I shall glorify Him' (Ex. 15:2, Rashi), they worshipped the calf and continued to challenge Him repeatedly. This, as you know, is explicit in the Torah. Therefore, rather than taking away free will, the revelation merely increases culpability for non-compliance. But the choice to not comply is certainly there.

If this is true regarding the generation of the revelation, it applies even more so for future generations who never really witnessed directly the presence of G-d. As Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto states in "The Way of G-d" (1:1:1), 'Every Jew must believe and know etc.' One is required to believe what was passed down from the revelation, but also to embark on his own spiritual path to know for himself the truths of G-d and Judaism. Even though it is incumbent upon one to do this, he may choose not to. Belief in the revelation does not inhibit one's individual, highly personal exploration – every person has a mandate to transcend belief to the realm of knowledge.

This applies even more so regarding people for whom the truths of the revelation are not concrete. They are challenged not only to come to know personally that which they believe, but to explore whether they even believe, and why or why not. From their perspective, this is a tremendous expression of free will, because there is really nothing other than a sincere search for truth to compel them to ask the questions and seek the answers in Judaism in the first place.

May we merit to truly search for G-d with a pure heart and humble spirit. Amen.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS

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

THE DAY THAT THE RAINS CAME

When a drought plagued Eretz Yisrael in 1639, the ruler of Jerusalem, Mohammed Pasha, tried to placate his discontented subjects by blaming the Jews for the problem. Blaming the Jews for plotting the drought, he issued an ultimatum that they must produce rain within three days or face exile.

Unsuccessful in their attempts at begging and bribing this unreasonable ruler, the leaders of the



community asked and received permission to pray at the Tomb of Zechariah at the foot of the Mount of Olives. All day long the revered tomb of the Prophet was the scene of prayer fervently offered by men, women and children. In the late afternoon clouds appeared and rain began to fall.

Even the Pasha himself was forced to concede that the long-awaited rain was a Heavenly response to the prayers of his Jewish subjects.

WHEN THE CELLPHONE RINGS

Question: I was recently in the middle of a lecture when the sound of a cellphone ringing caused me to stop. This greatly disturbed me, especially since I had requested at the beginning of my talk that all such phones be turned off. What is the right thing to do in such a situation?

Answer: I know exactly how you feel because I have suffered in the same manner. But let me share with you something which happened to a colleague of mine. He too had warned his audience to shut off all cellphones and when one began ringing in the middle of his lecture he exploded and publicly denounced the violator. It later turned out that this fellow had indeed turned off his phone but that it accidentally rang as a result of its being in the coat which he sat on!

Reaching rash conclusions about people's lack of consideration is a dangerous business. In addition to the cause of the ringing in the above-mentioned incident, there is also the possibility that an individual made the honest mistake of thinking that he had switched off the phone but actually had failed to do so.

The right thing for you to do in such a situation is to patiently wait for the ringing to stop and to comment that you are certain that you and your listeners are victims of an accident. If this was not the case, the violator would have learned his lesson, and if it was the case, you have avoided committing the grave sin of publicly embarrassing someone. In all cases you will win points with the audience, something every lecturer is interested in achieving.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

continued from page two

over each one of his flock.

Another question – but with the same answer:

Of all the places that Moshe's mother, Yocheved, could have chosen to hide Moshe, why did she choose the river? Why not in a tunnel? Why not hide him in a barn or any of the other numerous possible hiding places? Why did Yocheved choose to hide Moshe in the river?

Yocheved hoped that by putting Moshe into the river the astrological signs would show that the savior of the Jews had been cast into the Nile and Pharaoh would abandon the massacre of the baby boys. Yocheved was right. The Egyptian astrologers told Pharaoh the Jewish savior had been dispatched into the Nile and Pharaoh ordered the killing to cease.

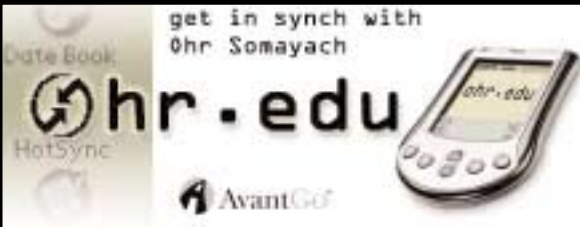
It was not an easy thing for Yocheved to put her son into a wicker basket and abandon him to the eddies of the Nile.

Before she placed Moshe into the water, Yocheved made a little canopy over the basket and said in sadness, "*Who knows if I will ever see my son's 'chupa' (marriage canopy)?*" Certainly there were safer places for a baby than a makeshift basket adrift in a river. However, Yocheved chose a hiding place that may have not been the safest because it meant that she could save the lives of other Jewish children.

From two sides of the same event the quality of self-sacrifice was instilled into Moshe — by his real mother when she put him into the river and by his adopted mother when she drew him out from the river, for if any quality epitomizes the essence of leadership, it is the ability to forget oneself and give up everything for the good of the people.

• Based on the Midrash Shemot Rabba 1:24, 1:29;

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, Rabbi C. Z. Senter



GET THE LATEST FEATURES FROM OHR
SOMAYACH DIRECT TO YOUR HANDHELD DEVICE AT

www.ohr.edu

Re: Ethics - What's the Time?

Regarding children asking adults for the time and the correct attitude in responding to them (www.ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1982), I'd like to add, that because I walk my dog, kids talk to me. But I agree that at every opportunity it's good to take the time to talk to kids. It keeps us oldies young. I'm only 52.

• Andrew

Ohrnet replies:

Dear Andrew, I once read that you don't stop laughing because you get old. Rather, you get old because you stop laughing. So keep laughing and making kids laugh with you and may you live to be one hundred and twenty years ...young!

Re: MisMatchmaker's Fee (Ohrnet Vaera)

I'm not sure if I entirely agree with your reasoning in the case of the matchmaker (ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1991). It seems to me that if s/he had agreed to make the match for a fee, to refuse the fee would be to admit that his/her

friend's daughter had become engaged to the "wrong" man - something that could be harmful to their marriage and create doubts should the couple face stressful times in the future. In order to maintain the couple's confidence in their relationship, it seems to me that the matchmaker should take the fee as if the *chatan* were in fact the "right" one - and then quietly donate the entire fee to an appropriate charity, since s/he didn't in fact create exactly the match that occurred.

• Don Radlauer, Alfei Menashe, Israel

Re: Marriage Customs

Your answers in "Marriage Customs" (<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1989>) were very interesting. All this time I thought it was called a "Vort" because the *chatan* was meant to give a *d'var Torah* as part of the engagement party (as in any festive meal for a mitzvah where speeches of Torah are exchanged). All the best to you!

• Danny

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE PRICE OF A TEARDROP

A strange will came before the rabbi. It was the last will and testament of a woman who divided up her wealth among her children and grandchildren. What was puzzling was a line directing that ten thousand dollars should be awarded to one particular granddaughter above and beyond what the others would inherit.

This unexplained favoritism raised doubts about the reliability of the entire will. After some serious investigation the reason came to light.

A letter was found in which this grandmother emotionally described the night she sat together with all her grandchildren and told them what she experienced in the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jewish people during that period.

All her grandchildren listened attentively but one granddaughter actually wept. As a reward for those tears she was awarded a great inheritance by the grandmother who so appreciated her compassion.

s u b s c r i b e
www.ohr.edu

for Ohrnet and other publications delivered to your email