



Our Choice

Rabbi Yosef Dovid Rothbart, Rabbinic Administrator

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן ליקוק (ויקרא א, ב)

The sign outside the store indicated that one could find mirrors of all types and sizes within. Drawn by the sign, a young man after a long day at work entered the store looking for a suitable mirror to grace his hallway. The owner, after listening carefully as the customer described his house, took out a tall oval mirror with a frame that would bring out the colour of the hallway. The young man stared at the mirror for a long time before telling the proprietor that he had something else in mind. Taken aback and confused, the store owner, who prided himself on choosing the perfect mirror on the first attempt, asked the customer why the mirror did not appeal to him. "The face in the picture reflects a person who is dirty and unclean. I have no desire for such pictures to adorn the walls of my house. I am looking for a more distinguished face." The owner looked into the customer's eyes and calmly responded: "My friend, if you want a more distinguished face, do not wait until the end of a long day involving physical labour to choose a mirror. Pick out a mirror on the way to work and you will see a very distinguished visage looking back at you."

With this parable, the *Sefer Sha'ar Bas Rabim* explains the *pasuk* (*Malachi 3, 6*), כי אני יקוק לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם. (Literally, for I *Hashem* have not changed and you, children of Yaakov, have not been destroyed). –כי אני יקוק לא שניתי. I am *Hashem* and nothing changes within me. And although it may seem that I, *Hashem*, interact with the Jewish people differently now that they are in exile and are no longer the most exalted among the nations,

–ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם this is because the Jewish people have not completed what they were responsible for. And the way *Hashem* interacts with His people reflects how we interact with Him.

The *Ben Ish Chai* uses this principle to explain the *pasuk* (*Shemos 23, 15*) ולא יראו בני ריקם. (Literally, and you shall not see My face – when you come to the *Mikdash* on the *Regalim* – empty-handed – without a *Korban*). Jews will not merit to see *Hashem's* face – to have an intimate relationship with *Hashem* - if they are empty-handed, devoid of *mitzvos*.

Hashem has an overwhelming love for the Jewish people. His greatest desire is to have a close relationship with us and, by fulfilling the *mitzvos*, we enable *Hashem* to delight in such a relationship. And that is why *Hashem* gave us instructions regarding the most mundane tasks, elevating everything we do into an opportunity to allow Him into our lives. Every action we take, if done properly, can enhance our relationship with *Hashem*. For through this act we come closer to *Hashem* and He reciprocates by drawing near to us.

The *Ben Ish Chai* explains that this message could be seen in the *pasuk* אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן ליקוק. (Literally, a person from among you who will bring a *Korban* to *Hashem*). – אדם כי יקריב. A person who wishes to approach *Hashem* and deepen the relationship that he has with Him, מכם – in the manner that the person moves closer to *Hashem*, –קרבן ליקוק, –*Hashem* will advance to him.

Speaking Your Language

The story until now: R' Yaakov Shimshon, a student of the Maggid of Mezritch, was staying by the chief rabbi of Istanbul. One evening, his host asked him for advice. There was a dispute between Mr. "X" who was very connected to the government and Mr. "Y". When they arrived at the Beis Din, Mr. "X" had presented the host who presided over the Beis Din a letter from the Sultan instructing the Beis Din to exonerate his friend. R' Yaakov Shimshon (Y S) instructed his host to stay in bed and he will preside over the case in his stead.

Both Mr. "X" and Mr. "Y" agreed to accept R' Y S as the *Av Beis Din*. When the trial date arrived, Mr. "X" brought with him a new scroll (with the same message) tied with gold and presented it to R' Y S who read it without any expression. The trial proceeded with the judges asking and probing about the facts of the case. Once the facts were clear, *halachic* sources were researched and discussed. Finally, the court came to its decision and gave the verdict in writing to both parties.

Mr. "X" read the decision and his jaw dropped. He turned white with rage and ran out of the courtroom making a bee-line to the royal palace. The Sultan was incredulous at the *chutzpah* of this replacement rabbi who dared defy his own specific 'request'.

R' Y S had just entered the home of his host when a battalion of Turkish special soldiers burst into the house looking for him. They escorted him straight to the palace, but not before he grabbed a *Chumash* on his way out. Despite the fact that the Sultan had absolute power and could have, with no consequence, R' Y S executed for insubordination and treason, R' Y S displayed no fear - even when the Sultan yelled at him angrily. When the monarch finished his diatribe, R' Y S calmly opened his *Chumash* and began to read

one verse after another about the obligations of judges to decide and mete out judgements with absolute truth and honesty, without fear and free of temptations. He did not translate from the Hebrew - he just read clearly - and the Sultan and all the advisors seated with him sat mesmerized. He spoke with expression and eloquence and by the time he had finished, they were so impressed by his style and grace, that they warmly and respectfully escorted him out of the palace. Back in the palace's meeting room, the Sultan was the first to comment. "Have you ever heard anyone speak such a wonderful and rich Turkish as this Rabbi? I would be hard-pressed to find a native-born Turkish intellectual who could do such justice to our glorious language!" The Grand Vizier interrupted, "Pardon me your majesty, but the Rabbi was not speaking Turkish at all - he was speaking a perfect Latin!" "What are you talking about," said the interior minister, "I grew up in France and I don't think I ever heard as poetic a French spoken as I did from the Rabbi!" The defence minister then insisted that what they had heard was a flawless German!

Each one was willing to swear on all that they heard their respective languages, and not prepared to think that they had all gone crazy, they immediately summoned R' Y S back to the palace. With the utmost respect, the Sultan almost sheepishly asked him in what language he had been speaking. R' Yaakov Shimshon looked into the eyes of the men in the room and answered modestly. "The words I read to you were not my own. They were the words of our Omnipotent One exactly as written in Hashem's Torah in Hebrew - the holy language. While I read the words to you, I did so with the intentions and '*Kavanah*' with which they were said at Mount Sinai, and since at Mount Sinai they were given in all 70 core languages, each one of you heard it in your respective languages."

How Can H.I.T. Help You?

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Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

Can a person fulfill his *mitzva* of *Mishloach Manos* by giving a package of food together with someone else?

In a *Teshuva* to Harav Efraim Greenblatt *zt"l*, Harav Yitzchak Isaac Leibes (*Teshuvos Beis Avi, siman 43*) writes that two people who send a joint *Mishloach Manos* fulfill the *Mitzva* of sending *Mishloach Manos* on *Purim*. The *Sefer Halichos Shlomo* (page 337) writes this as well, adding that there have to be at least two portions of food for each partner sending the *Mishloach Manos*. There also have to be two portions for each person receiving the *Mishloach Manos*.

Why do we reference *Haman* in the popular *Purim* treat “*Haman*”*tashen*? Should we not try to blot out his name?

The *Sefer Bishvilei Haminhag* (page 148) brings a number of different reasons for this custom. The common thread for the various reasons is that *Hamantashen* remind us about *Haman's* downfall. Remembering this would not be inconsistent with blotting out the name of a wicked person. Some say that having three corners is

based on the *Medrash* according to which, when *Haman* saw the *Avos*, he became weak (*tash*). Others refer to this treat as *oznei Haman*, which translates into *Haman's* ears. Some explain that this is based on the *Medrash* that describes how, when *Haman* entered into the treasury to retrieve the royal raiment that *Mordechai* was to wear, he did so bent over, mourning and with folded ears. Therefore, they say, there is a custom to eat a triangular treat which represents the folded ears of *Haman*.

I work in an all-Jewish office. I found a \$10 dollar bill on the floor in the lobby and it seems that it fell out of someone's pocket. What is my responsibility?

You may keep it. It would be considered praiseworthy or “*lifnim m'shuras hadin*” to ask your colleagues if they lost money or to put up a sign indicating that you found some money.

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answered call

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In this week's *Parsha* we are taught about various *Korbanos*. The *Korban Mincha* consisted of flour. Here are some interesting facts about flour:

- One whole grain of wheat makes over 20,000 particles of flour.
- One bushel of wheat contains approximately one million individual kernels, weighs approximately 60 pounds, and yields approximately 42 pounds of white flour.
- It takes around 350 ears of wheat to make enough flour for one 800g loaf of bread.
- It takes a combine nine seconds to harvest enough wheat to make enough flour for 70 loaves of bread.

RIDDLE



Although not similar in any respect, Avraham Avinu and Haman do share one thing in common. What is it?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: The *Gemara* (*Yevamos* 6b) derives from this week's *Parsha* that *Beis Din* may not kill someone on *Shabbos*. Can you bring a proof from *Tana"ch* (or from another source) as to whether or not a *Beis Din* may put a Jew into jail on *Shabbos*?

ANSWER: The *Shvus Yaakov* (*siman* 14) brings a proof from the *mekoshesh eitzim* in *Parshas Shelach* that a *Beis Din* could lock up someone on *Shabbos*. This though is not the *halacha*. (See *siman* 339 *sif* 4)

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

WINNER OF LAST WEEK'S PRIZE: Baruch Hess

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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