



## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

# Grateful Nation

OUR SAGES TEACH US THAT NATIONS OF THE world are defined by more than geographic location. Each nation has an inborn identifying characteristic. The Talmud *Yevamos* (79a) relates regarding the Jewish people: *There are three character traits of the Jewish people; they are merciful, modest, and kind to others.* Conversely, there are nations whose defining characteristics are antithetical to the good character of the Jewish people. It follows that nations into which the Torah commands us not to marry, even upon conversion, must have a defining



RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

characteristic that is viewed very negatively by G-d. Let us examine whom the Torah forbids us from marrying in order to identify traits from which we must distance ourselves.

This prohibition applies to two nations: Amon and Moav. The *pasuk* explains that the nations Amon and Moav deserved to be blacklisted because they did not treat the Jewish people to bread and water on their way out of Egypt. Ramban explains that it was not just the lack of gesture that the Torah deems problematic, but rather the lack of gratitude.

Avraham had twice saved Lot and his daughters, the forebears of Amon and Moav, once through Avraham's personal intervention in the war with the four kings and once in his merit. This should have compelled Amon and Moav to display their gratitude to the descendants of Avraham by at very least offering food and drink as the Jewish people passed their land. This shortcoming revealed a bitter root of ingratitude extending deep into the personality of those nations.

Interestingly, no such restriction ap-

plies to the nation of Amalek, whom we are commanded at the end this week's *parasha* to wipe out. Incredibly, a convert from the nation that stands out as our mortal enemy is permitted to marry into the Jewish people! How do we explain this? The answer could be as follows: All negative characteristics have some situation or circumstance where they are necessary in Jewish life. Take the propensity for killing. Sometimes in Jewish life we find it necessary to kill another human, whether in war or when required to administer a penalty ordered by the Torah. A lack of gratitude, though, has absolutely no place in Judaism. On the contrary, our service of G-d starts with recognizing how much G-d does for us. It is for this reason that the Torah tells us to stay away from Amon and Moav. ❧



*The Kollel is back in session!*

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

A woman once had a young child who disappeared into thin air. For many years she searched fruitlessly for her son, but to no avail, and she cried incessantly over him. One day, a foolish thought entered her mind and she approached a sorceress and begged her to find out if her son was

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## TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Ten years after splitting with Congregation Bene Israel over the decision to accept Reform practices, on the 12th of Elul, 5625 (1865), Congregation Shearith Israel elected an eloquent defender of Orthodox practice—Rabbi Dr. Yissochor Dov (Bernard) Illowy. Rabbi Dr. Illowy was a student of the famed Rabbi Moshe Sofer, commonly known as Chasam Sofer. Rabbi Dr. Illowy attended the University of Budapest and received his PhD in Philosophy. During a Bohemian revolt against the Austrian Empire, he found himself under suspicion of being in league with the rebels and, therefore, fled for his life to America in 1848 and joined the Rabbinate, making him the first Orthodox Rabbi in America with a doctorate as well. Standing up for Jewish tradition made it difficult to remain in one congregation for very long, and he led congregations in New York City, Syracuse, Baltimore, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and New Orleans before his final pulpit in Cincinnati. He retired in 1868 because of poor health. Rabbi Dr. Illowy was an exceptional orator and returned many to traditional Judaism through his power of speech and personality. ❧

SOURCE: "Biography." *Jewish-American History Documentation Foundation*. 2018. Retrieved 20 Aug 2018 from <http://www.jewish-history.com/illowy/biography.html>

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## A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What unusual term is used in two unrelated places in the parasha?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 🗨️

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

alive, and where he could be found.

The sorceress then told her that her son was indeed alive, and he was adopted and living with a certain family. When the woman came home and shared the information with her husband, he became terribly aggravated and proclaimed, “How could you transgress the Torah’s prohibition and turn to sorcerers?” The woman also felt terrible about what she had done.

**Q** After the fact, may they take steps to check out the information the sorceress told them?

**A** The sorceress definitely transgressed a Biblical negative commandment of *koseim kesamim*—practicing divination. One who asks a sorcerer, however, though he does not receive Biblical lashes, does transgress a positive commandment.

However, once the deed was done—the sorcerer was sought out—my father-in-law, Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, ruled that it’s permitted to verify the information, since the penalty to prohibit benefitting from a forbidden act is limited to Shabbos transgressions.

Although doing so may seem to the onlooker that the sorcerer’s actions are condoned, however, in our scenario, we need not be concerned because the worry of the boy marrying into a family forbidden to him overrides the former concern.

Furthermore, it’s important to seek out the matter to denounce the actions of the evildoers who grabbed the child. 🗨️

## THIS SHABBOS

Come celebrate the completion of the first seder of mishnayos by the Mishna Kavua program at the kiddush at CZE.

# At the Kollel

DAILY

WEEKLY

MORE

## Sunday *Free brunch!*

👉 **Beginner’s Halacha & More** (skills-building)  
Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren. 9:30–10:30 AM

👉 **Shivti** (Self-contained learning, geared toward practical halacha)  
Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib.. 10 AM–noon

## Monday

👉👤 **Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

## Tuesday

👉👤👤 **Partners in Torah at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Michael Soroka ..... 8 PM

## Wednesday

👉👤 **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

## Thursday

👉👤👤 **Yehoshua/Shabbos** in the former Back Office  
Rabbis Michael Soroka and Moshe Dovid Zeffren..... 9:10–10 PM

👉👤 **Leil Shishi Halacha Chabura** for boys in grades 7–8, with the occasional kumzits  
Rabbi Moshe Fuchs ..... 8:15–9 PM

👤 *Homemade refreshments served*

**KEY:** 👉 Beginners   👉 Intermediate   👤 Advanced   👤 for men and women

**Chavrusos are available** for private and group learning—  
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## GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE CHILDREN THAT ARE easy targets for being made fun of by their peers. One of these children was Benjy. Benjy was nine and put up with a lot. Benjy’s teachers were aware of this and worked on resolving the issue, but were as of yet unsuccessful in stamping it out completely. One day the Rebbe noticed that after Benjy was teased he muttered something under his breath. Watching over the next few days, he found that the mut-

tering continued. The Rebbe called Benjy’s father to tell him what he noticed. After hearing this, Benjy’s father casually asked Benjy, “After a boy teases you, do you say something under your breath?” “Yes, I do Daddy.” “What are you saying?” Benjy’s answer took his father off guard. “I learned that the Talmud says that someone who is insulted and doesn’t answer back is beloved by Hashem and has a special power of prayer at that point. So, every time someone tries to hurt my feelings I pray for any people that are sick that I know of. I hope my prayers can help them get better.” 🗨️



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