

# HAMA`YAN

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## Survey of This Issue

The issue opens, in anticipation of the eighty-second anniversary of the passing of Rav Kook, which occurs this coming Elul, with two gems recently discovered but not yet published: a eulogy for Rav Kook delivered the first year after his passing by one of the leading Sephardic rabbis of Jerusalem who emphasizes the figure of Rav Kook as an unparalleled communal leader, as well as the letter of invitation of Rav Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of Lubavitch to the Rav in honor of the marriage of his daughter, in which he requests of him that he bless the young couple.

Rav Azariah Ariel, a communal Rav in Jerusalem and a great scholar, lays out a revolutionary explanation of the halakhic principle 'the sword [defiles] like the corpse', in contrast to the understanding accepted for centuries, citing dozens of proofs for his approach for the consideration of his colleagues and their opinions. Rav Boaz Mordechai, among the important researchers at the Shlomo Aumann Institute, presents a halakhic study which he edited while preparing for the publication of the book of responsa *Yehuda Ya'aleh* by Rav Yehuda of Aszód (Hungary, 19th century) in which he shows the difficulties in identifying and permitting consumption of the 'new' species of fowl which were then reaching Europe – associated with India, Cochin, Cyprus and other distant locales. Rav Dr. Yisrael Meir Levinger, among the world's great contemporary kashrut experts, elaborates the dilemmas and possible solutions involved in classifying and permitting plants and animals which have undergone significant genetic modification from their original condition, an increasingly developing phenomenon in our era.

Rav Yaakov Sayag of Beit El discusses the image of a Greek letter 'ki' used as an illustration by the *Talmud* in discussing five topics. Current publications show the twenty-second character of the Greek alphabet. The author traces this enhancement back through five centuries and finds that it seems to be based on an incorrect latter day understanding of the words of Maimonides. He untangles the topics and the texts, and suggests removing misleading images from future editions.

Moshe Wolf, once a senior officer in IDF Intelligence and now a CEO, offers new understanding of an old grammatical topic. The formative letters (prefixes indicating grammatical particles) in Hebrew divide

into two groups, arranged as a mnemonic: in the first group are the letters Mem, Shin and He (מִשׁ"ה) and in the second group are the letters Vav, Kaf, Lamed and Bet (וּכ"ל). There is a rule of grammar in Hebrew regarding whether to pronounce the letter Aleph (א) at the beginning of a name of Gd after the formative letters. The letter Aleph is pronounced after the first group of letters and is silent after the second group. The article defines the details of this rule, and proposes an explanation as to why the Masorah presents two alternative tallies of the number of exceptions in the Biblical corpus. R' Yonatan Karni of the U.S. defends the famous grammarian R' Zalman Hanau, claiming that the accusations against him (including some published in Hama'yan) are unjustified. A number of (the many) claims in the work of R' Reuben ben Aaron Grishaber's *Avotot Ahava* and in the writings of R' David Yitzchaki, are shown to be inaccurate. R' Yitzchaki responds.

Rabbis Grinzaig and Sitton of Yad Binyamin set out rules governing change of prayer rite for individuals and for groups, and Rav Dendrovitz attempts to clarify why there is no inherent contradiction in saying of certain Torah *halakhot* that they were 'given in one utterance' while at the same time saying that Moshe Rabbenu was 'given space and time to distinguish between them'.

Rejoinders are presented both for and against the Satmar approach to Gd's watching over the Land and to the Three Oaths; Moshe Oren, member of Kibbutz Shaalvim, recounts the spontaneous reaction of an Ultra-Orthodox Hungarian Rav upon the establishment of the State in 5708 [1948] – reciting hallel and prayers of thanks; then we have another comment on the story of the Golem of Prague, and a further clarification of the approach of the Eminent Maharsham Z.T.L. [Rav Shalom Mordechai Schwadron] in agreeing to the *Heter Mechira* [sale to ameliorate restrictions on working the Land during *Shemittah*]. The issue is rounded out with a debate on the fundamentals of communal *kashrut* between Rav Weitman, the Rav of *Tnuva* [the National Dairy and Food Cooperative] and Rav Dvir, one of the leaders of the *Kosharot* organization, and with a review of the new French work on the Jews of Medieval Provence, and review notices of new publications.

With wishes for a good summer and good news בְּעֵזְרָה, Yoel Catane