

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BO - 5763

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RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN
YOUNG ISRAEL OF MIDWOOD
[from last year]
Parshas Bo 5762

In 1776, when the thirteen colonies stood poised to declare their independence from England, they thought it necessary to issue a declaration, which would lay out before the world the causes of the separation, and define the principles that would define the new state and guide it in the future. They spoke, in that declaration of independence, about equality; about the self-evident truth that all men are created equal. They spoke about the dignity of the individual, who is entitled, by right of having been born into the shared patrimony of humanity, to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. They spoke eloquently and passionately, and their words still define the essential nature of America today.

Today we read about another declaration of independence, declaimed by Moshe Rabbeinu, as the twelve tribes of Israel declared their independence from Egypt. It is far older than the American Declaration of Independence; this Pesach it will 3,314 years old. And yet it continues to define the essence of the Jewish people, to this very day.

What did Moshe speak about on that momentous occasion? He might have spoken of our grievances against Egypt, about Egyptian ingratitude and barbarism, which impelled us to separation.

Or, perhaps, he might have spoken of individual liberty; of the right of individual to chart his own destiny, to see his own happiness. Or, perhaps, he might have spoken about national liberation; about the right of self-determination. He might have spoken of the shackled greatness of the Jewish people, which once freed would be able to flower. He might have spoken about his aspirations for the future, about the kind of society we were going to build in the land of Israel, about how different it would be from the cruel despotism of Egypt that we were leaving behind. He might have spoken about any, or all of these things. But he did not.

Rather, what Moshe said, in that first declaration on our first day of a people, was – that we should tell a story to our children. *Ve'higadta lebincha bayom hahu leimor ... Vehaya ki yishalcha bincha leimor mah zos... ve'amarta eilav ...*

Moshe said that we have to convey the story of *yetzias mitzrayim* – to future generations. He said that we should make a seder each year, on which to tell that story. Each year the father will tell the story to his son. And when his son grows up he, in turn, will tell the story to his son. And so the story will live, and be remembered.

Our history begins with a commandment to tell a story.

And that is as it should be. Because our identity as a people – which began that day in Egypt – is defined by a story. Many thinkers have wondered over the years exactly what defines the Jewish people. What makes a Jew – a Jew. It can't simply be belief or observance, because we know that *yisroel, af al pi she'chata yisroel hu*, even a sinner and a heretic is still defined as a Jew, although he may not be a good or even a professing Jew. It can't be ethnicity, or a specific genetic profile, since Jews come in all shapes and colors. It certainly can't be a particular idea or philosophy, since no two Jews can ever agree on anything. So what exactly is a Jew?

Of course, we know *who* is a Jew; a Jew is someone born of a Jewish mother or converted according to halachah. But that still doesn't tell us *what* is a Jew. What is it that all Jews have in common, that defines us as Jews? Jews have been pondering this question for a long time, at least since the time of R' Saadiah Gaon. R' Saadiah Gaon himself asks the question, and the answer that he gives, in essence, is that we are defined by the *beris*, by the covenant that hakadosh baruch hu made with us. This is a very profound answer. But it is also somewhat abstract; a *covenant*, to our mind, is something of an abstraction. But we can translate this abstraction, by saying that what defines the Jewish people is a story. What we all have in common is that we are participants in a single, coherent story.

It's a long story, and the first few chapters are glorious. The last chapter, which we haven't come to yet, is also glorious. In between there are a great many chapters, of different temper; some happy, some comic, some sad, some that we tremble to read. There are many different characters in this story; great heroes, some, and others great villains, and the whole gamut of humanity in between. The story takes many turns, and is full of surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant.

Essentially it is a love story, and tells of the love between hakadosh baruch hu and a small people who left Egypt and followed Him into the dessert. It is the story, also, of how the people later betrayed that love, although never fully; how they forgot it, but never completely. It is, for all its difficult passages, a beautiful story, full of wonders that pierce the soul.

And each of us plays a role in that story. Whether we are born into the story or are introduced into it as adults, our names are there. So long as we are Jews, it is our story; and because we share this story, we share a single identity as Jews. And so on that first day of our freedom, in that first declaration, Moshe stood before a people who could not be defined by a country, for they would live in many countries; who could not be defined by a language, for they would speak many languages; who could not be defined by an idea, for they would entertain many different ideas. Rather, they would be defined by a covenant, played out over history; in others words, by a story. And so he taught that our first duty as a people is to preserve that story, to teach it to ourselves and our children and our children's children. To make the story live, from generation to generation. Because as long as it lives, we live in it.

And that is the great challenge of our generation. So many of our people, have given up on this story, out of despair. So many of our young people are grown indifferent to it, out of ignorance. And so they have stopped telling this story. And that is tragic; because their parents' and grandparents' lives are written into its chapters. And looking closer to home, there is also a challenge. Looking at our young people today, in our own frum community, I sometimes feel that they perceive Yiddishkeit as simply a set of rules, with a final exam at the end, and that they look at other Jews only to consider how well they're observing the rules. There are rules, of course, and they infuse *kedushah* into our lives. But Yiddishkeit is not only about following rules. It's also about the privilege of being

part of a people whose story begins at the gates of Egypt, a people that has been the font of all human progress since then; a people unique in that its saints and its geni uses have been one and the same; a people who have, after being brought to the very edge of extinction, gone on to reclaim a land they had not forgotten after almost 2,000 years, despite every obstacle; a people whose history is a journey; so that each Jew is a shipmate. It is about being part of an *am nora min hu v'halah*, an awe-inspiring people, whose redemption is the redemption of the world. Being a Jew means being part of a very special story. And that should fill us with awe, with wonder and with great joy.

From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: January 08, 2003
RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN
CHESSED: LIFE ASSURANCE THAT OFFERS LIFE INSURANCE

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Rabbi Benjamin Yudin Chessed: Life Assurance That Offers Life Insurance

It is commonplace in the Torah for the same idea to be presented twice. Each time, it behooves us to analyze and understand the need for the particular repetition. Hashem promised Avraham at the Bris ben Habisarim (Breishis 15:13, 14), "Know with certainty that your descendents will be strangers in a foreign land. They will enslave and oppress them for 400 years. The nation they shall serve I will judge. Afterwards, they, the oppressed, will leave with great wealth."

Thus it is understandable that preceding the last and final plague, Hashem instructs Moshe (Shmos 11:2-3), "Please speak to the people, that each man request of his fellow, and each woman of her fellow, silver vessels and gold vessels. Hashem granted the people favor in the eyes of Egypt." What, at first glance, is strange in the use of the word .please.? When all the later preparations are communicated to the people, including the details of the first Pesach offering, at no point is the word "please" used. Moreover, why does the Torah repeat (Chapter 12:35-36), "The children of Israel carried out the word of Moses, they requested from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels, and garments. Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they granted their request, and they emptied Egypt. Why is the first mention not sufficient to inform us that they left Egypt with great wealth. In addition, Rashi, in his commentary on the second verse (12:35) adds to our understanding of the text by stating that Bnei Yisroel carried out the word of Moshe, and refers us back to the earlier verse, of having complied with Moshe.s directive of .each man requesting of his fellow..

The Vilna Gaon zt"l (as found in Kol Eliyahu) presents a magnificent understanding of the above cited verses. Initially he asks, as noted above, why the use of .please.? Secondly, our understanding of the first directive as referring to the Jewish nation requesting of the Egyptians silver and gold cannot be correct. He notes that the Torah uses the words "me.ace re.ehu" ("from his fellows") and proves from the Talmud (Bava Kamma 36b) that "re.ehu" is used to describe one Jew to another, and not a Jew to a non-Jew. Thus is Shemos (21:35), "if one man.s ox should strike his fellow.s ox", the ensuing laws apply only if both litigants are Jewish, and not if a Jew.s ox strikes the ox of an Egyptian. Thus the Vilna Gaon concludes that the first request was for Jews to ask and respond generously one to another. It is for this reason that "please" is used, as this was something that

was not necessarily understood as part of the departure preparations. The Gaon is teaching that in order to find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, they had to do chessed (kindness) to one another. Thus the above cited teaching of Rashi is most understandable. Prior to the last and final plague, the Jewish people established g.machs, initiated acts of kindness one to another (12: 2-3). After the killing of the first born, the former slaves being hastened out of Egypt, having demonstrated generosity one to another, the Egyptian people responded in kind, and they too forced valuables upon the Jews (12:35-36) (see Ohr Hachaim).

We generally look upon the Jewish people as passive in their liberation, except for the Pesach ritual. The later together with a circumcision was a spiritual connection with Hashem. The insight of the Gaon is that a social pre-requisite was also necessary, the extending of chessed one to another.

The notion is further developed by the Chofetz Chaim zt"l in his commentary on the Torah, on commenting Shemos (15:13), "with your kindness you guided this people that you redeemed". At first glance the words "your kindness" is referring to the kindness of Hashem. The Chofetz Chaim cites from the Tane D.bei Eliyahu (ch. 23) that already in Egypt the fledgling Jewish nation banded together and entered into a covenant with each other to do chessed. They saw as the servitude and persecution was intensifying that their only recourse was to emulate Hashem and exercise chessed. This concern for the needs of the next one, especially at a time when one would naturally focus on their pain, their needs, their suffering, facilitated their redemption and deliverance from Egypt.

The Chofetz Chaim buttresses this idea with the verse from Isiah (54:10) "for the mountains may be moved and the hills may falter, but my kindness shall not be removed from you and my covenant of peace shall not falter". The "mountains" refer to the zechus avos (merit of our forefathers). The "hills" is a reference to the zechus emahos (the righteousness of our matriarchs). Though the above may no longer sustain our people, but your kindness, the prophet promises, will permanently endure.

It is thus understandable that when the students of Rav Elazar (Sanhedrin 98b) asked him, what may they do to be spared the pains of the coming of moshiach? He responded "involve yourselves in Torah and g.milus chassadim". Chessed brings redemption.

It is fascinating to note an additional understanding of "olom chessed yiboneh" (Tehillim 89:3) "the world is sustained by kindness". When a Jew partakes of fruits or vegetables, fish or meat, or any drink other wine he recites the b.racha achrona (after blessing) of Borei Nefashos. The unique composition of this blessing is that the Jew thanks Hashem for "having created numerous living things with their deficiencies". We acknowledge that Hashem did not man self-sufficient, thus building into the very core and fabric of society the need for one to help another.

In this most difficult time for Am Yisrael, what can you do? Call a shut-in visit a senior citizen residence and spend half an hour with a lonely soul. Relieve a parent of an autistic child for an hour on Shabbos, giving them some rest as well. Invite the not-yet observant Jewish families down the block to your Shabbos table. The Vilna Gaon and Chfetz Chaim assure us that your unique acts of kindness today assure tomorrow.s redemption.

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalists@shemayisrael.com]
Sent: January 09, 2003
PENINIM ON THE TORAH
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
PARSHAS BO

This month shall be for you the beginning of months. (12:2)

The first mitzvah Klal Yisrael received as a nation was the mitzvah of Kiddush haChodesh, sanctifying the new moon. Indeed, the moon is the constellation by which we reckon our Yamim Tovim, festivals; and Klal Yisrael is compared to the moon. Simply, this is due to the waxing and waning of the moon every month. As the moon goes through a process of monthly renewal, so, too, does Klal Yisrael have the opportunity and ability to rejuvenate themselves spiritually. Even if a person has feelings of rejection, when he senses within himself a sort of spiritual deterioration, he can reinvigorate himself and return to his original spiritual plateau. Horav Mordechai Ilan, zl, supplements this idea with the consideration that the moon returns to its original state as it appeared during Creation. Similarly, this is Klal Yisrael's attribute. Upon rejuvenating themselves, they revert to the state in which they had been when they became a nation. While renewal is important, and rejuvenation is essential for growth, there has to be a base level position from which one proceeds and to which one returns. The starting point of one's renewal should be the point designated by Hashem, the position/plateau upon which he stood when he began his journey. Klal Yisrael reached their zenith when they accepted the Torah. This is their starting point to which they revert upon their renewal. If a person goes through a period of spiritual decline, he can pick himself up and return. He has to know, however, to where he returns and what position he must seek to rejuvenate himself.

Horav Avraham Pam, zl, cited in *The Pleasant Way*, derives another lesson from the moon. While the Torah refers to the sun and the moon as the meoros ha'gedolim, great luminaries, the moon hardly fits the description. The moon is actually tiny compared to the sun. Ibn Ezra and the Malbim explain that the appellation, meor ha'gadol, does not refer to the size of the luminary, but rather to what it accomplishes, to its function vis-?-vis the world. The sun gives light and heat to the earth - without which the world could not exist. The moon lights up the night, and, as such, it has a major role in illuminating the earth. While many of the stars are even larger than the sun, their power of illumination is relatively insignificant. What is especially significant is the fact that the moon is referred to as a great luminary, even though it does not even generate its own light. It only reflects the light it receives from the sun. We derive from here that the source of light is inconsequential; it is the actual manifest of light that counts. The moon illuminates the sky - that is important to us. The fact that this is reflected light has no bearing on the fact that the moon transmits this light to us.

Rav Pam explains that this may serve as an important lesson for bnei Torah, students of Torah, who feel shortchanged and unfulfilled because they are not mechadesh, do not produce novellae or original Torah thoughts. While it is true that in some yeshivah circles this is a barometer of success, it is regrettable that they overlook havanah, comprehension; hasmadah, diligence, and emes, sincerity in learning Torah lishmah, Torah for its own sake. The moon, which does not have any light of its own, is not mechadesh Ohr. Yet, since it reflects the light of the sun, it is still considered a meor hagadol, great luminary.

So, too, should a ben Torah feel success when he reflects the Torah of his rebbeim, their middos tovot, character refinement, and chochmas ha'Torah, wisdom inspired by the Torah. The fact that he represents everything that is good in Torah is in itself a mark of success.

When one reflects the light of a mitzvah, if through him the mitzvah has greater proliferation, he is considered a success. In other words, facilitating the fulfillment of a mitzvah is tantamount to performing it. There are people who are blessed with great wealth which they use wisely and share with others. Does that mean that one who is not wealthy is deprived of the mitzvah of tzedakah? No! If one reflects the light of tzedakah by motivating others to give, by encouraging others to fulfill this mitzvah, he is also performing the mitzvah. Tzedakah means charity - reaching out to others and giving assistance. Some fulfill this mitzvah with money; others with time; yet others lend their expertise to help others. It is all the same mitzvah. While it may not earn him a plaque in this world, the recognition he will receive in the Eternal World is what really matters.

Remember this day on which you departed from Egypt...Today you are leaving in the month of springtime. (13:3,4)

We are enjoined to remember the liberation from Egypt and to relate it constantly. Interestingly, the Torah seems to emphasize the fact that we were redeemed b'chodesh ho'aviv, in the spring. This is part and parcel of the geulah, liberation. It must be stressed again and again that we left during the spring. Rashi explains that we were redeemed in the spring, at a

time when it is not cold or hot, or rainy. Indeed, at a time when the climate is perfect.

At first glance, the answer makes sense. When we think about it, however, the fact that we left Egypt in the spring is secondary to the actual liberation and its ensuing miracles. Furthermore, Chazal note, "See the chesed, kindness, that He granted you," in regard to the "perfect" time for taking us from Egypt. This kindness is certainly laudatory, but is it to be mentioned in the same breath with the miracles surrounding the Exodus? Apparently, there is a significant lesson to be derived from this unique "chesed." Horav Chaim Goldvicht, zl, distinguishes between the concepts of gemilas chesed, acts of loving-kindness, and rachamanus, acts of compassion. In the Talmud Yevamos, 79A, Chazal state that there are three distinguishing characteristics by which we can identify a Jew: rachamanim, compassion; baishanim, a sense of shame, embarrassment, they can easily blush; gomlei chasadim, perform acts of loving-kindness.

To the average person, rachamanim and gomlei chasadim are one and the same. The one who acts kindly is compassionate. He who has compassion acts lovingly towards his fellow man. Why are these two similar features considered separately? We derive from here that rachmanus and chesed are the same characteristic. The Zohar HaKadosh defines a chasid as one who is mischaseid im Kono, acts with kindness towards his Creator. Certainly the concept of rachamim, compassion, does not apply in our relationship vis-?-vis Hashem. Yet, a concept of chesed does apply. The pasuk in Mishlei 11:17 reads, Gomel nafsho ish chesed. Chazal explain that the great Tanna, Hillel, viewed his body as a holy receptacle, catering to the needs of the neshamah, soul. We must, therefore, say that rachamim is an act of reciprocity whereby one manifests compassion for another human being. Chesed, on the other hand, is a sensitivity one demonstrates without provocation from another source. If one notices someone who is suffering, he has rachmanus on him and responds accordingly. When the reason for the rachmanus disappears, so does the compassion. Furthermore, even the most sensitive person, if confronted with pain and suffering on a constant basis, will, eventually lose some of his compassion. His sensitivity becomes numbed by too much exposure to pain.

The gomel chesed is different. He acts out of the kindness of his heart. Chesed is a characteristic within a person who seeks to perform kindness, to help others. He does not need external motivation to act. The baal chesed acts out of his own sense of duty. He wants to help others, even if they do not seek help or realize that they need his assistance. This may be noted from Avraham Avinu who helped the three Arabs/angels who he felt were in need of spiritual assistance, even though they did not apparently think so. Avraham was troubled when he lacked the opportunity or ability to be gomel chesed with others.

In explaining the pasuk in Mishlei, Chazal teach us that one can perform chesed even with oneself! The soul cannot be elevated as long as the body demands its physical gratification. Thus, when one addresses the needs of his body, he is essentially performing a kindness to his neshamah. Shlomo Hamelech tells us that one can be a gomel nefesh, act with chesed towards his soul by giving assistance to his body. Now that we see a clear line of demarcation between chesed and rachamim, we can begin to understand the relationship of chesed to yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt. Rav Goldvicht explains that if one were to examine the earlier pesukim in which Hashem states that He saw the Jews' affliction, listened to their cries and understood their pain, the implication clearly is that the Exodus had its genesis in Hashem's rachamim. This compassion evoked Hashem's response - yetzias Mitzrayim. An exodus based upon the middah, attribute, of rachamim is metzutzam, somewhat suppressed and constrained.

Hashem went a step further. He redeemed Klal Yisrael with the middah of chesed. While it is true that the original stimulation was Klal Yisrael's pain and suffering, it evoked an overwhelming response of chesed. True, a nation that has heretofore been subjected to harsh, spirit-breaking labor is only too happy to be redeemed. The fact that this redemption took place during a propitious time just adds to the event. The most significant aspect, however -- the aspect that concerns them most -- is the actual redemption. Everything else is "frosting on the cake."

We now have a more profound understanding of this aspect of the redemption. It is an indication of the sheleimus hageulah, completeness, perfection of the redemption. Hashem redeemed them with chesed, demonstrating His boundless love for Klal Yisrael. Yetzias Mitzrayim was an outpouring of unmitigated kindness to Hashem's Chosen People. His

love for Klal Yisrael was manifest in the fact that He saw to it that every aspect of the geulah would be favorable. This should serve as a standard in our interpersonal relationships with people. Our friend should not have to fall into poverty, illness, or serious trouble before we reach out to help him. That is compassion; we respond when there is a need. Rather, we should act with chesed, in which we look for opportunities to reach out. Indeed, if that were to be the case, we might very well prevent the need for rachmanus.

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<http://www.koltorah.org/ravj/mediGELcaps.htm>
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TAKING MEDICINE IN A GEL-CAP BY RABBI HOWARD JACHTER

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Introduction The pharmaceutical industry commonly packages medicines in gelatin capsules. This presents potential complications in taking many medications since the practice of Orthodox Jews in North America¹ is to follow the opinions of Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Pinchas Teitz, who rule that gelatin is not Kosher. Of course, if life is in danger, there is no question that the gel-caps may be taken. The question is whether someone who is not dangerously ill, such as someone with a headache, may take aspirin in a gel-cap. In order to properly answer this question, we must review the extensive Halachic literature concerning gelatin. We will then review the decisions of contemporary Halachic authorities regarding the permissibility of taking gel-caps for those who are not dangerously ill.

The Halachic Status of Gelatin The McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology (1992) defines gelatin as "a protein extracted after partial hydrolysis of collagenous raw material from the skin, white connective tissue, and bone of animals." The source of gelatin is almost always non-kosher animals or animals that have not been slaughtered according to the dictates of Jewish law. Since in the manufacturing process of gelatin the raw materials are rendered inedible (as they have been placed in acids and then evaporated),² perhaps this process renders the resulting product Kosher, despite its non-Kosher origin. This question is of major importance because many food products such as yogurt, ice cream (see Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah II:32), jello, and marshmallows contain gelatin.

There are five major issues involved in the question of the Halachic status of gelatin. We will presently address each of these issues:

1. Since some gelatin is derived from bones, Halachic authorities have focused on the Kashrut status of bones from non-Kosher sources. On one hand, Rambam based on the Torat Kohanim (Leviticus 11:8) states (Hilchot Maachalot Assurot 4:18), "One who eats from a non-Kosher source its skin, its bones, its sinews, its horns, its hooves, its nails...even though it is forbidden, he is excused from punishment because they are not fit for consumption." Rambam indicates that bones are forbidden at least rabbinically.³ On the other hand, Tosafot (Avoda Zara 69a s.v. Hahu) questions the commonly accepted Halachic practice of the time to eat bee honey that had bees' legs mixed in. Rabbeinu Tam's explanation of this practice is that since the bees' legs are "mere bones," they are permitted. Rosh (Avoda Zara 5:11) adds that the bee's legs are "mere dust," and hence they are not included in the prohibition of eating bees.⁴ Apparently, Tosafot and the Rosh believe that there exists no prohibition to eat bones of non-Kosher animals.

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky (in a responsum published in the introduction to the fourth volume of Rabbi Eliezer Waldenburg's, Tzitz Eliezer) and Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (Achiezer III:33:5) try to reconcile these seemingly opposing views by maintaining that the Rambam believes that only "soft bones"⁵ are prohibited, while hard bones are permitted. However, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 2:27-end) and Rabbi Aharon Kotler (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon 1:16-17) reject this distinction and believe that the Rambam's prohibition applies even to hard bones. Accordingly, Rabbi Abramsky and Rabbi Grodzinski (who suggests other reasons for a lenient ruling) rule that gelatin derived from hard non-Kosher bones is permissible, and Rabbi Feinstein and Rabbi Kotler believe it is prohibited.

It should be noted that according to Kashrut experts, in this country there is no commercially available gelatin derived from hard bones. In fact, the Halacha considers pig skins (from which most gelatin is made) to be fit for human consumption (Chullin 122a).

2. A second lenient approach is to state that since gelatin has changed its form from its original state - bones or skin - then it can be said that it is a new entity (Panim Chadashot) hence, its previous non-kosher status is no longer relevant and it is now kosher. The source for this leniency is the opinion of Rabbeinu Yonah, cited by the Rosh (Berachot 6:38) regarding the status of musk. The Rosh writes, "Rabbi Zerachia Halevi (the Baal Hamaor) forbade eating musk out of concern that it originated from blood, and Rabbeinu Yonah explained that it might be permitted because it is a 'mere secretion';⁶ even though it originally was blood we are not concerned with this, because we are concerned only with its present status." At the conclusion of his citation, the Rosh expresses some reservations about the former's lenient approach.⁷

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (Achiezer 3:33:5), Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (Torah She-Ba'al Peh 5753 pp. 23-25), and Rabbi Eliezer Waldenburg (first comment to Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky's responsum on gelatin mentioned earlier) both apply Rabbeinu Yonah's ruling⁸ to gelatin because it has changed its form from its original form of bones and skin. Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, however, did not believe Rabbeinu Yonah's lenient ruling could be applied to the case of gelatin. He writes (at the beginning of his aforementioned responsum): It is clear that gelatin derived from bones⁹ is not a "new creation" which has changed from one form into another by a chemical process. Gelatin is the same product that existed in the bones beforehand. All the chemical means used in the manufacturing process of gelatin are used only to separate other materials present in bones that would negatively impact on the quality of the gelatin. Hence, it is not appropriate to apply Rabbeinu Yonah's lenient ruling to gelatin derived from non-kosher sources.¹⁰

3. The third possibility for leniency is that the gelatin becomes inedible during its manufacturing process. The Talmud records that non-Kosher foods that become inedible lose their non-Kosher status.¹¹ Although for Passover use the food must become inedible even to a dog to be considered permissible,¹² regarding other areas of Torah law most authorities believe that when food becomes inedible for human consumption it is no longer non-kosher.¹³ Accordingly, Rama (Yoreh Deah 87:10) cites from the Shibbolei Haleket (2:34) that "the stomach lining that is occasionally salted and dried and becomes likened to a tree and is subsequently filled with milk is permissible since it has dried and become 'mere wood' as it does not retain any drop of meat."¹⁴

The Shach (Yoreh Deah 114:21) applies this rule to the general practice in his time to consume saffron (Karkom) produced by non-Jews ("those excellent people who are strict regarding this matter are few," he writes) despite the concern that the non-Jewish producer introduced some non-Kosher dried-out meat into the product. He justifies the practice by stating that "in these lands, the saffron is as dry as wood; therefore, even if a strand of dry meat was introduced to the food, we do not have to be concerned, as the Rama explained in Yoreh Deah 87:10."

A major question, however, is the status of non-Kosher food that becomes as dry as wood but later becomes edible again. Four major authorities have ruled leniently on this matter. The Shach indicates that the food does not regain its non-Kosher status. He writes, "Even though occasionally the saffron will contain a moist strand [of meat], this is because it was stored in a cold and wet environment, and perhaps originally it was as dry as wood."¹⁵

Rabbi Yechezkel Landau (Noda Biyehuda, Yoreh Deah 26) also indicates that the food does not regain its previous non-Kosher status when it is rehydrated. He endorses the practice of German and Polish Jewry of his time to partake of a drink in which the gullet of a non-Kosher fish is placed to settle the sediments and to make the drink clear. His approval is based mostly on the fact that the non-Kosher component is dry and therefore loses its non-Kosher status. He does not regard the fact that the gullet is placed in water and thus rehydrated as relevant. Pitchei Teshuva (Yoreh Deah 87:20) cites Teshuvot Tiferet Tzvi as permitting red ants that are dried and then used to color drinks.¹⁶

Finally, the Aruch Hashulchan (87:43) rules leniently on this matter. The Ritva (Avoda Zara 39a, s.v. Hatam) clearly supports the lenient view. On the other hand, many prominent authorities rule that "dry as wood" non-Kosher products that become rehydrated regain their former status as non-kosher. Pri Megadim (Yoreh Deah 87, 33, and 103) and Teshuvot Chatam Sofer (Yoreh Deah 81) rule strictly on this matter.¹⁷

Contemporary authorities are divided on how to decide this matter. Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (Achiezer 2:11 and 3:33:5) and Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank (Har Zvi, Yoreh Deah 83) rule leniently, 18 Rabbi Aharon Kotler (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon 1:17) marshals many talmudic sources to prove that the strict opinion is correct, and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah I:37 and II:27) concludes that the matter is in doubt and hence prohibited because it may not be Kosher (Safek Issur). Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Henkin (Edut Leyisrael pp. 176-177) decides this issue in an interesting manner. He writes that bones of non-Kosher animals that are converted into something edible remain permissible since they were originally permitted.¹⁹ However, Rabbi Henkin believes that the question of edible non-Kosher food that was rendered inedible but subsequently made edible has not been resolved, and therefore one should be strict.

Accordingly, four opinions emerge regarding gelatin that is rendered inedible during its manufacture. Rabbi Frank believes it is permissible regardless of its origin, Rabbi Henkin believes it is permissible if it comes from hard bones,²⁰ Rabbi Feinstein regards gelatin as forbidden because of doubt, and Rabbi Kotler seems to believe that gelatin derived from non-kosher sources is certainly forbidden.²¹

4. Rabbi Kotler advances the creative and persuasive argument²² that even according to the opinion that once gelatin has been rendered inedible it remains permissible even if restored to being edible, gelatin would still be forbidden because it is analogous to yeast.

Yeast,²³ explains the Chavat Daat (Yoreh Deah 103:1 Biurim), is forbidden even though it is not fit for human consumption because it can impact upon and improve other foods. Since "this is its purpose," it is biblically forbidden. Chavat Daat states that this rule applies not only to yeast, but also to anything similar.

Hence, argues Rabbi Kotler, even if gelatin is considered inedible, it is biblically forbidden, as "its purpose" is to improve other foods. The lenient opinions would probably reply that the analogy to yeast is inaccurate because unlike yeast, the purpose of the bones and skins from which the gelatin is extracted is not to improve other foods. Moreover, the aforementioned lenient opinions of the Shach and Noda Biyehuda clearly do not accept the approach of Rabbi Kotler.

5. Rabbi Kotler raises another reason to forbid consumption of gelatin from a non-Kosher source: the concept of Achshevai. This refers to the rabbinic²⁴ prohibition against consuming inedible foods. The fact that one consumes it indicates that he regards it as food.²⁵

Rabbi Grodzinski and Rabbi Frank rule that Achshevai is not a relevant concern for gelatin because this principle does not apply if the forbidden inedible object is mixed with edible Kosher food. It is forbidden only if it is consumed by itself. By consuming inedible items mixed into food one does not indicate that he considers them to be food. This would explain the medieval practice endorsed by Tosafot and the Rosh of eating bees' honey even if bees' legs were in the mixture because the legs were inedible. Eating this honey did not constitute a forbidden act of Achshevai because one did not eat the bees' legs alone.

Rabbi Kotler argues that Achshevai does apply to gelatin. He writes that the analogy to the bees' legs case is inaccurate. In that situation, the bees' legs were not intentionally mixed into the honey. However, in our case, the gelatin is intentionally added to the food product and thus the prohibition of Achshevai applies. Note that the previously mentioned Shach (concerning saffron) and Noda Biyehuda (concerning fish gills) appear to contradict Rabbi Kotler's thesis. In addition, Rabbi Kotler does not cite a source to substantiate his assertion.

Conclusion Regarding Gelatin We have seen that there are four opinions regarding gelatin: 1) It is always permitted,²⁶ 2) It is permitted when manufactured from hard bones, 3) It is forbidden because of doubt, and 4) It is forbidden because of certainty. The accepted practice among Orthodox Jews in North America is to consider gelatin derived from non-Kosher sources as not Kosher.²⁷

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, who permits gelatin produced from hard bones, nevertheless adds another reason to forbid consumption of gelatin even if it is produced from hard bones. He²⁸ notes a public policy concern to forbid eating a gelatin product: Since until now (1951) it has been accepted that gelatin is forbidden...it is not an unwarranted fear that if we will issue a responsum permitting gelatin, it will strengthen the hand of those who profess the erroneous view that Halacha is in the hands of rabbinic decisors, as is clay in the hands of the artist. Regarding an analogous situation, the Rabbis stated, "Do not strengthen the hand of the [heretical] Sadducees" (Yoma 40b) who, Rashi explains, claimed that the Rabbis ruled according to their whims.

The Halachic Status of Gel-caps We have seen that food that is inedible is permitted on a biblical level but forbidden rabbinically because of Achshevai. However, almost all rabbinic authorities rule²⁹ that Achshevai is not a concern when consuming medicine. When an individual consumes medicine he does so for healing purposes and does not regard the medicine as food.

Accordingly, since gel-caps are tasteless and taken for medicinal purposes, it would appear to be permissible to ingest them. Moreover, since the gelatin has not been introduced to food and has become a component of an edible substance, the opinions that led Rabbi Feinstein to rule stringently do not apply. Also, two of Rabbi Kotler's primary concerns are not relevant to gel-caps. The issue of Achshevai is not a concern with medicine according to almost all authorities, and gel-caps are not analogous to yeast since their purpose is not to improve other foods. Therefore, Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Henkin writes³⁰ (Edut Leyisrael p. 177), "It is common practice to ingest [medicine wrapped in gelatin] capsules. It appears that what is relied on is the evaporation [of the gelatin during its production, rendering it inedible] and the fact that one does not intend to consume [the gel-caps] as food."

Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rosh Kollel of Yeshiva University, informed this author that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik told him that it is permissible to ingest a gelatin coated medicine tablet. Rabbi Waldenburg (Tzitz Eliezer 10:25:20 2) also rules permissively. Moreover, Rabbi Schachter believes that even one who wishes to take medicine for relief from minor pain (Meichush Be'alma) is permitted to ingest a gel-cap³¹. Of course, if one has an alternative, he should avoid the gel-cap in favor of medicine that does not contain non-Kosher ingredients. One should make a reasonable effort to seek such an alternative (Rama, Yoreh Deah 155:3).

Footnotes - 1. The Israeli Rabbinat follows the opinion of Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank, Rabbi Eliezer Waldenburg, and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef that gelatin is permissible. One who plans to move to Israel and wishes to know whether he may rely on this lenient approach after his move to Israel should consult a competent Halachic authority. 2. The McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology describes the manufacturing process as follows: Collagen, the precursor of gelatin, is pretreated for 10-30 hours with a 1-5% mineral acid for type A gelatin production or 35-90 days with a lime slurry for type B gelatin production. Type A gelatin exhibits the isoelectric point at pH 7.0-9.5, whereas type B gelatin, due to domination in the liming process, exhibits the isoelectric point at 4.8-5.2.... Type A gelatin is manufactured from frozen and fresh edible-grade pig skins [Rabbi Shimon Eider informs this author that almost all the gelatin currently produced in the United States is produced from edible grade pig skins] or from bone ossein. Most of type B gelatin comes from bones. Most edible gelatin is of type A but type B gelatin is also used.... The bone pieces are first demineralized in 4-7% hydrochloric acid for 7-14 days before liming after pretreatment with either acid (type A) or lime (type B), the materials are washed and are subjected to four to five 4-8 hour extractions at increased temperatures of 131°-212°F. The extracts, containing 3-7% gelatin, are filtered, concentrated in a vacuum evaporator, chilled and extruded as noodles, and dried at 86°-140°F. The dry gelatin is then ground and blended to specifications. It is important to note that there is currently a firm that manufactures Kosher gelatin from Kosher animals that meets the standards of both Rabbi Aharon Kotler and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. This author has been informed that the major Kashrut certifying agencies in this country will certify gelatin manufactured according to these standards as Kosher. 3. Rabbi Aharon Kotler (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon I:16-17) seeks to demonstrate that the prohibition is biblical in nature. He asserts that even though the Sifra excludes bones from the prohibition of Neveilah (a Kosher animal that has not been slaughtered in a Halachically proper manner) they are biblically prohibited because of the principle of "Yotzei Min Ha-tamei, Tamei" (Bechorot 5b), "That which emerges from what is forbidden, is forbidden." He states that when the bones are not fit to be eaten, then there exists no biblical prohibition to eat them (Achila Shelo Kederech Hanaatan, see Pesachim 24b and Rambam Hilchot Maachalot Assurot 14:10-11). However, if they are rendered fit to be eaten, such as in a food product containing bone gelatin, the biblical prohibition of Yotzei Min Ha-tamei, Tamei applies. 4. For Talmudic examples of the principle that when a prohibited substance is reduced to dust the prohibition ceases to apply, see Temura 31a and Pesachim 21b. 5. A source for this distinction can be found in the comments of the Shach, Yoreh Deah 99:1, and the sources cited therein. 6. See Chullin 116b and Bechorot 7b. 7. Poskim debate the validity of Rabbeinu Yonah's lenient opinion; see Taz, Orach Chaim 216:2; Magen Avraham 216:3; Chatam Sofer commenting on that Magen Avraham; Har Zvi, Yoreh Deah 102; Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Mesorah 1:54-56. Also see Mishkenot Yaakov, Yoreh Deah 34, for an application of this ruling. 8. Rabbi Yosef seeks to demonstrate that Rabbeinu Yonah's ruling is accepted as normative. In Yechaveh Daat 2:62, he applies Rabbeinu Yonah's ruling as a consideration to permit the use of citric acid derived from Chametz for Passover use. He urges one to be strict on this matter, but this does not contradict his lenient ruling on gelatin. The reason for this is that Poskim in general are exceptionally strict regarding Passover laws (Chumrah D'chametz). Rabbi Grodzinski applies Rabbeinu Yonah's ruling only in a case when the product became completely dry in the manufacturing process and was thus rendered "mere dust." This approach is based on the Ran (Avoda Zara 16b in the pages of the Rif, s.v. Misrach). 9. It is clear that his logic applies equally to gelatin derived from skin. 10. Rabbi Avraham Rappaport (a rabbinic judge who served on the London Rabbinic Court) appears to persuasively prove the correctness of Rabbi Abramsky's assertion, in his essay on gelatin which appears in the Memorial Volume published in honor of Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky pp. 525-527. 11. Pesachim 21a, and 45b, and Avoda Zara 67b-68a. 12. Pesachim 45b and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 442:9. 13. Biur Halacha 442:9 s.v. Ad She'eino Rauy; Aruch Hashulchan 442:30, Achiezer 3:31:4, the many authorities cited by Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Torah Sheba'al Peh 5753 pp. 17-20. See, however, Noda Biyehuda I Yoreh Deah 26 and Har Zvi, Yoreh Deah 83 who require the food to be rendered inedible even to a dog. 14. The Shach (Yoreh Deah 87:33) comments on this Rama that the same rule applies to dried intestines, but initially should not be done (i.e., it is permitted only after the fact when the product has been made). The reason given by Acharonim for this limitation is the concern that the product has not become sufficiently dry to be considered "mere wood" (see Teshuvot Rabbi Akiva Eiger 207 and Teshuvot Chatam Sofer 81). Some authorities contend that this concern is not relevant when a product is thoroughly evaporated in a modern manufacturing procedure. See also Noda Biyehuda (Yoreh Deah 26) for a discussion of

this comment of the Shach. Rabbi Grodzinski (Achiezer 3:33:5) contends that the Shach's ruling does not apply to hard bones. 15. It is unclear why the Shach regards the policy to be strict on this matter as praiseworthy. One possibility is the concern that perhaps the meat in the Karkom was not as dry as wood. The other possibility is that he believes it is best to avoid relying on and extending the Rama's rule. 16. A contemporary analogy is carmine, an insect product that is thoroughly dried and then used as a coloring agent. This author was informed that the major Kashrut agencies in this country have a policy to rule strictly and not to certify a product containing carmine. 17. Also see Chavat Daat (103: Biurim 1), who distinguishes between a non-Kosher product that has disintegrated and become inedible and a non-Kosher product that has become inedible because bitter items are added to it. In the former case, its non-Kosher status cannot be restored. However, in the latter case, if the bitter items are subsequently neutralized and the food becomes edible again, its non-Kosher status is restored. Rabbi Avraham Rappaport (Memorial Volume to Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, p. 527) suggests that since the collagen and ossein from which the gelatin product is taken are never rendered inedible by the acid or lime in which the skin or bones are placed, the manufacturing process of gelatin is analogous to the situation in which the non-Kosher item did not disintegrate but rather became inedible due to the bitter item added to it. Hence, according to the Chavat Daat, gelatin should regain its former non-Kosher status. 18. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (Torah Sheba'al Peh 5753, pp. 21-33) endeavors to demonstrate that the consensus of authorities follow the lenient opinion. It is important to note that Rabbi Frank's lenient ruling regarding gelatin explicitly applies even to gelatin derived from pigskin. Interestingly, Rabbi Frank suggests that a chemist should be consulted to determine if a food product has become unsuitable for canine consumption. Other authorities, however, do not mention this requirement and seem to believe that a layman's judgment is sufficient in this matter. 19. Rabbi Aharon Kotler strongly rejects this opinion in his essay on the Halachic status of gelatin. 20. This may be the opinion of Rabbi Grodzinski, though, because of differing considerations. 21. At the beginning of Mishnat Rabbi Aharon (1:16) Rav Aharon Kotler writes, "I have demonstrated that [gelatin] is forbidden according to most opinions, and even according to the minority opinion there is no clear manner to permit [gelatin]." 22. Ibid. 1:17. 23. For a summary of the sources regarding yeast see Biur Halacha 442:9, s.v. Chameitz Shenitapash. 24. See Mishna Berura 442:43 and Aruch Hashulchan 442:30, citing Taz 442:8. 25. The Rosh (Pesachim 2:1) articulates this prohibition, and it is accepted as normative (Mishna Berura 442:43 and Aruch Hashulchan 442:30). However, the Rosh cites opinions that do not believe that there exists even a rabbinic prohibition to consume inedible objects. The Talmudic source for this concept is in Shavuot 24b. 26. If in the future, the process to manufacture gelatin changes and the bones or skins are not rendered inedible, then Rabbi Frank would say that gelatin is forbidden, but Rabbi Yosef and Rabbi Waldenburg might still believe it permissible because its form has been changed (Rabbeinu Yonah's lenient ruling). 27. Rabbi Kotler (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon 1:16) rules that gelatin from a kosher source is considered Pareve and Rabbi Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah I:37 and II:27) rules that gelatin produced from the skin of a kosher animal is considered Pareve. 28. This appears in his responsum on gelatin, mentioned earlier. Rabbi Waldenburg's comments to this responsum are added. He too accepts this aspect of Rabbi Abramsky's essay, unlike other sections of the responsum to which he does not hesitate to express his disagreement. 29. Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 2:92; Chazon Ish Orach Chaim 116:8; Tzitz Eliezer 6:16, 7:32:8, 10:25:20; Yechaveh Daat 2:60; Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Minchat Shlomo 17 following Rama, Yoreh Deah 155:3 and Yad Avraham commenting on this text. The opinion of Shaagat Aryeh (responsum 75) that Achshevai applies even to ingesting medicine appears to be a lone opinion (although Rabbi Grodzinski does take it into consideration (Achiezer 3:31)). Two excellent essays (written in Hebrew) discussing this matter have been recently published: Rabbi David Heber (Mesorah 7:91-96) and Rabbi Yoezer Ariel (Techumin 15:348-362). 30. From Rabbi Henkin's writings on this issue (Edut Lcysisrael p. 177) we see that he was aware that the commercially available gelatin would be forbidden according to his approach, as it is not derived from hard bones. 31. Even Rabbi Auerbach (Minchat Shlomo 17), who raises the possibility that one who suffers only a slight ache might not be permitted to ingest tasteless non-kosher medicines, might rule leniently regarding gel-caps. This is because regarding gel-caps, there exist a Sfek Sfeika, a double doubt. First, perhaps even one who has a slight pain is permitted to ingest non-kosher medicines. Second, Rabbi Feinstein regards gelatin as a Safek Issur, something that is forbidden because of a Halachic doubt. However, according to the approach of Rabbi Kotler who considers gelatin to be certainly forbidden, it is possible that gel-caps may not be permitted for someone suffering only a minor degree of pain.

From: National Council of Young Israel
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 Parshat Bo
 Parshat Bo 8 Shevat 5763 / January 11, 2003 Daf Yomi: Makkos
 10

Guest Rabbi: RABBI BOAZ TOMSKY
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Parshat Bo Jewish time. We've all heard that before. It is a declaration that gives us the permission to come and go as we see fit. It is a statement that enables one to arrive at set appointments, at their leisure. Jewish weddings are notorious for this. The most striking two words on any wedding invitation is "Promptly at..." Still everyone feels it is perfectly fine to come "fashionably late". Is this the appropriate perspective we should have about the concept of time? To answer this, we must first understand where Jewish time originated. In this week's Torah reading, we find the evil Pharaoh not letting the Bnai Yisroel depart from his land. The eighth and ninth plagues of locusts and darkness are carried through. Now, Moshe approaches the king in preparation for the tenth plague, the slaying of the firstborn. Moshe said, "so said HaShem, At about midnight (kachatsot) I shall go out in the midst of Egypt." Rashi cites a question with regard to the wording of the verse. The

Passuk says, the plague would occur kachatsot - around midnight. Why was it necessary to only provide an approximate time for when the plague would occur?

Rashi answers that it was purposely said in this manner for the sake of the Egyptian astrologers. Perhaps they would miscalculate the precise moment of midnight. The plague would occur at exactly midnight unbeknownst to the astrologers. They, in turn, would wrongly conclude that Moshe provided inaccurate information. Therefore, to avoid this potential misunderstanding, Moshe gave a more generalized time for when the plague would occur.

The question screams out, who cares what these wicked, corrupt Egyptians think? After all, this is the tenth time a tragedy has befallen upon Mitzraim. Every single thing that Moshe said thus far has come completely accurate. He's been right nine out of ten times. The odds are certainly in his favor to go ten for ten. Yet, these astrologers still have the audacity to accuse Moshe of making a mistake! It's irrational and completely absurd!

Furthermore, the astrologers could only make this statement after all of the firstborn Egyptians died. So what difference does it make if it happened a few minutes before or after midnight? The plague still occurred!

Certainly such wicked individuals search for any excuse to deny that there was any sort of Divine intervention in their midst. Seeing the flawless leader Moshe and hearing an accurate message didn't change them even an iota. The reality is, we don't care what the astrologers think because after witnessing all they have seen, they remained wicked. The reason Moshe gave an inaccurate time for the plague was for the sake of the Bnai Yisroel. If they would hear the sly remarks of the astrologers, they wouldn't know how to respond to them. The astrologers could negatively affect some of the Jewish people. Doubt and uncertainty could creep up into the minds and hearts of the Bnai Yisroel. They could potentially lose their confidence and trust in Moshe as their leader. This was too much to risk and therefore Moshe was compelled to amend the words of HaShem and say kachatsot.

Immediately afterwards, the Bnai Yisroel are given their first Mitzvah, the concept of Rosh Chodesh, the new moon. One could ask, why was this the first Mitzvah to be introduced to the Bnai Yisroel? If you were to randomly ask people of what they perceive to be the most important Mitzvah (if we could even say such a thing) we'd hear a whole slew of responses, ranging from Shabbat to loving your neighbor. Few people would suggest Rosh Chodesh as their choice. Why then, would HaShem elect to offer the Bnai Yisroel this Mitzvah over all the other seemingly better choices?

Initially one could properly respond that the new month is necessary in establishing the proper times for all of the chagim - holidays. Without the knowledge of when to celebrate the chagim, many other Mitzvot would be impossible to perform. Therefore, Rosh Chodesh becomes the requisite for other Mitzvot and is appropriately given first. This would also explain the mindset of why Antiochus and the Syrian-Greeks banned the observance of three specific Mitzvot: Shabbat, Brit Milah, and Rosh Chodesh. Shabbat and Milah are understandable, they represent a special sign and covenant with HaShem. But why Rosh Chodesh? Since without this Mitzvah, we would have no idea when we should celebrate our chagim throughout the year.

It is clear that the Mitzvah of establishing the new month is indeed an important one. There could be another reason why Rosh Chodesh was selected. At this point in time, Moshe publicly said, "kachatsot". This was a weighted decision but, so as not to cause doubt and mistrust among Klal Yisroel, Moshe elected to say it this way. However, now a new problem arises. The Bnai Yisroel

now are given the perception that it isn't necessary to be exact with time. As long as things are eventually done, then the rest doesn't matter. This is why HaShem introduced the Bnai Yisroel with the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. Judaism does believe in the exactness of time. We need to calculate the proper days of each month. Whichever day we decide should become Rosh Chodesh becomes Rosh Chodesh. It is our own responsibility to be exact and precise with our months and days.

It is not a coincidence that within this section is the statement, "ushmartem et hamatsot - that we should guard our Matzah from turning into leaven." The difference between Matzah and Chamaitz is a split second. If the dough is allowed to rise, it is no longer Matzah, instead it is chamaitz. This is the message the Torah is teaching us, be exact with our time. A split second could make all of the difference.

Rashi further cites the words of Rebbe Yeshaya, "do not read guard your Matsot rather read guard your Mitzvot. Just as one shouldn't tarry in making their Matzah so it won't become chamaitz, so to, one shouldn't delay in the performance of a Mitzvah so the opportunity won't slip away from your grasp. Instead, the Mitzvot should always be performed immediately." Rebbe Yeshaya is teaching that the negative trait of tardiness is simply unacceptable. Promptness is a requisite to performing Mitzvot and adhering to the Torah properly.

This was why Antiochus and the Syrian-Greeks were so adamantly against the performance of Shabbat, Milah, and Rosh Chodesh. All three of these Mitzvot are connected to the preciseness of time. Shabbat must only be celebrated on the seventh day of the week. Milah is on the eighth day of one's life. Rosh Chodesh enables Klal Yisroel to know when each of the Jewish holidays are to be celebrated throughout the year. Antiochus wished to disconnect Klal Yisroel from doing the Mitzvot which were directly connected with the concept of time. By eliminating time Mitzvot, he hoped this disconnection from time would foster assimilation among the Jews and increase the Hellenistic culture. [The miracle of the oil could also be described as the suspension of time.]

Being precise with our time is so important in our Jewish beliefs. Yet, ironically, we dismiss its importance by covering it up with excuses. We say, "I'll be there at 12:00'ish...you know...Jewish time." Yes, we do have Jewish time. But that means exactly at 12:00! You must arrive at chatsot not kichatsot. That is the true Jewish time.

The importance of time, is clearly articulated in the book, Zadig, A Mystery of Fate. It states, "What, of all things in this world, is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended, the most neglected and the most regretted, without which nothing could be done, which devours all that is little, and enlivens all that is great?" The answer, "Time. Nothing is longer, since it is the measure of eternity. Nothing is shorter, since it is insufficient for the accomplishment of your projects. Nothing is more slow to him that expects; nothing more rapid than him that enjoys. In greatness it extends to infinity, in smallness it is infinitely divisible. All men neglect it; all regret the loss of it; nothing can be done without it. It consigns to oblivion whatever is unworthy of being transmitted to posterity, and immortalizes such actions as are truly great. Time is man's most precious asset."

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From: Menachem Leibtag [tsc@bezeqint.net] Sent: January 09, 2003 To: Pareg Subject: [Par-reg]PARSHAT BO - Pesach & Brit

Milah THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [http://www.tanach.org] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag
RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG
PARSHAT BO
KORBAN PESACH AND BRIT MILA -

In our shiur on Parshat Bo discussing Parshat ha-Chodesh / Shmot 12:1-20, we discussed why the Torah 'prematurely' presented the laws of 'chag ha-matzot'. In the following shiur, we discuss why the Torah 'belatedly' [i.e. after Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt] presents the laws of 'chukat ha-Pesach'.

INTRODUCTION We begin our shiur with a quick overview of the Torah's presentation of the story of Yetziat Mitzraim by charting the progression of 'parshiot' in chapters 12 and 13:
PSUKIM TOPIC

12:1-20 Hashem commands Moshe to tell Yisrael the LAWS of:

- a. Pesach Mitzrayim (12:3-13)
- b. Pesach Dorot (12:14)
- c. Chag ha-matzot (12:15-20)

12:21-28 Moshe relays to Bnei Yisrael the LAWS of:

- a. Pesach Mitzrayim (12:21-23)
- b. Pesach Dorot (12:24-28)

12:29-36 The STORY of the Tenth Plague and the Exodus

12:37-42 The STORY of traveling from Egypt, baking matza, and concluding remarks regarding the '430 years'...

12:43-50 Some more LAWS re: offering Korban Pesach [Titled -"zot chukat ha-Pesach"]

12:51 A short summary pasuk

13:3-10 Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael the LAWS of chag ha-matzot

[Note 13:1-2, God commands Moshe re: 'kedushat bechor'.]

13:11-16 Moshe tells Yisrael the LAWS of Kedushat Bechor.

As you study the above chart, notice the transition from 'parshiot' that tell the story and 'parshiot' that describe the related MITZVOT. Now it only makes sense that the laws regarding offering the Korban Pesach should be recorded before the story of the Tenth Plague, for it was brought in anticipation of that plague. And that is exactly what we find in 12:1-28. However, for some reason, after the Torah finishes its story of the Exodus (see 12:42-43), we find yet an additional 'parshia' concerning additional laws that relate to offering the Korban Pesach: "And G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: These are the laws of the Pesach - anyone not circumcised may not eat from it... Then Bnei Yisrael did just as G-d had commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did" (see 12:43-50).

To our amazement, this entire 'parshia' appears to be recorded in Chumash a bit too late! Let's explain why: The laws in 12:43-49 command Bnei Yisrael to perform 'brit mila' BEFORE offering the Korban Pesach. Therefore, it must have been taught BEFORE Bnei Yisrael left Egypt. Furthermore, this 'parshia' includes several other laws that would apply to Pesach Mitzrayim (just as they apply to 'Pesach dorot'). Finally, the last pasuk of this unit informs us that Bnei Yisrael did exactly as Moshe commanded them (see 12:50). [Note Rashi on 12:43. Even Ramban agrees that this 'parshia' had to have been given earlier!]

Why then does the Torah record these laws only AFTER the story of the Exodus? Shouldn't this 'parshia' have been included together with all the other laws of Korban Pesach (see 12:2-14 & 12:21-28)? Considering our discussion in our first shiur that 12:15-20 may also be 'out of place' (ie. It really 'belongs' with 13:2-8), we find a very peculiar phenomenon in chapter 12: The laws of chag ha-matzot (12:15-20), which belong AFTER the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, are recorded beforehand - while the laws of 'chukat ha-Pesach' which should have been recorded earlier, are recorded later (i.e. AFTER the story of the Exodus). In other words, to put this chapter back into its correct 'chronological

order,' we would simply have to swap these two parshiot. Nevertheless, the Torah prefers to record them 'out of order', and the obvious question is WHY.

THEMATIC ORDER These questions relate to a wider topic of Chumash study known as "ein mukdam u-me'uchar" - that the parshiot in Chumash do not necessarily follow chronological order. However, this does not mean that Chumash follows a completely random sequence. Rather, even though the Torah usually does follow chronological order, it occasionally prefers to place a certain 'parshia' in a different place IN ORDER to emphasize a THEMATIC connection. [One could say that this is the Torah's way of saying: 'darsheini!']

If this assumption is correct, then we can conclude that the Torah presented these parshiot in this manner in order that we should search for a thematic connection between: a) Korban Pesach and chag ha-matzot; and b) the concluding story of Exodus and chukat ha-Pesach.

In Part I we discussed (a); now we must discuss (b).

Let's begin by taking a closer look at the previous 'parshia' that concludes the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim: "...And the settlement of Bnei Yisrael in Egypt was thirty years and FOUR HUNDRED years. And it came to pass after thirty years and FOUR HUNDRED years, on this day, all of G-d's hosts LEFT from the land of Egypt..." (see 12:40-42).

Clearly, these psukim focus on the completion of FOUR HUNDRED years; but the Torah is not precise in regard to what these four hundred years are counting from.

BRIT BEIN HA-BTARIM & CHUKAT HA-PESACH The commentators all agree that the 'four hundred years' mentioned in these psukim must relate in one form or other to G-d's promise to Avraham Avinu concerning the 'bondage of his offspring in a foreign land,' as promised in 'brit bein ha-btarim'. [See Breishit 15:13-14, see also Rashi, Ramban, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra on 12:40.] In other words, this final 'parshia' (12:37-42) points to the fact that this Exodus from Egypt marks G-d's fulfillment of His promise to Avraham Avinu at 'brit bein ha-btarim'. With this in mind, let's take a look at the 'parshia' that follows: "And G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: These are the laws of the Pesach - a son of a non-Jew may not eat from it... and if he owns a servant, then he must CIRCUMCISE him, and then he may eat it... and if a stranger lives with you and wants to offer a korban Pesach, first he must be CIRCUMCISED... and anyone NOT CIRCUMCISED may not eat from it." (see 12:43-48). Note how the primary focus of these mitzvot in 'chukat ha-Pesach' is the requirement to perform BRIT MILA before offering the Korban Pesach (note 12:43,44,48).

But as we noted above, the final psukim of the preceding story relate back to the theme of BRIT BEIN HA-BTARIM! Therefore, this juxtaposition may point once again to thematic connection between these two central covenants of Sefer Breishit. [See last week's shiur on Parshat Va'era.]

In this manner, Chumash may be alluding to an important thematic message: If we consider Korban Pesach as the manner by which we thank G-d for His fulfillment of Brit bein Ha-btarim, then before doing so, we must first remind ourselves of our commitment to His covenant of 'brit MILA'. Recall how Brit Mila reflects the special relationship [or patnership] between G-d and Bnei Yisrael (to accept Him as our G-d - "lihiyot lachem I-Elokim" / see Breishit 17:7-8). Hence, this intentional juxtaposition may emphasize how one must first confirm his commitment at a personal and family level - as reflected in Brit Mila, before he can proclaim his affiliation at the national level, as reflected in brit bein ha-btarim. This same theme will resurface numerous times in Chumash, for our underlying commitment to serve G-d exists at both a personal and national level.

Shabbat shalom, Menachem
FOR FURTHER IYUN:

A. The Position of 'Zot Chukat Ha-Pesach' Three answers as to why this section is transplanted from its chronological location appear in the following mefarshim:

1) According to the Ibn Ezra, Seforno and Chizkuni, there is no question here in the first place: these psukim do not appear out of chronological sequence. These mefarshim explain that these mitzvot were issued after yetziat Mitzrayim as they speak of 'Pesach dorot', the festival observed by future generations, rather than 'Pesach Mitzrayim' - that year's observance. This understanding stands in opposition to the Mechilta (on 12:43), which brings a debate between Rabbi Yoshia and Rabbi Yonatan as to whether these psukim refer only to Pesach Mitzrayim or to Pesach dorot, as well. The Ibn Ezra disputes both views, and claims that this section deals strictly with Pesach dorot. As the Ibn Ezra himself notes (in his commentary to 12:50), the concluding pasuk of this section seems to call his position into question: "All of Bnei Yisrael did just as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon..." If these halachot bore relevance only for subsequent years, how can the Torah here record Bnei Yisrael's compliance with these commands? The Ibn Ezra answers that, indeed, this pasuk refers to Bnei Yisrael's observance of Pesach in the wilderness in the years following Yetziat Mitzrayim. The Chizkuni explains differently, that this pasuk tells of Bnei Yisrael's acceptance of these laws for observance in future years.

2) The Ramban here cites Ibn Ezra's approach and strongly rejects it. Despite his general aversion towards applying the principle of "ein mukdam u-me'uchar", the Ramban here nevertheless accepts Rashi's view, the one we adopt in the shiur, that this section was transmitted earlier, before yetziat Mitzrayim. The Ramban generally maintains that we may not rearrange biblical chronology unless the Torah makes it explicitly clear that a given unit appears out of chronological sequence. (See Ramban's commentary to Shmot 18:1 & 23:1, and Vayikra 16:1.) In our instance, he understands the concluding pasuk, recording the nation's observance of these laws, as an explicit indication that this section chronologically belongs earlier, before the account of yetziat Mitzrayim. The Ramban explains that the Torah wished to record the story of yetziat Mitzrayim immediately after Moshe conveys to Bnei Yisrael G-d's promise of redemption and they express their faith by prostrating themselves (see 12:23-27). This juxtaposition underscores Hashem's fulfillment of His promise. After the story of yetziat Mitzrayim, the Torah then returns to complete the transmission of the laws relevant to the korban pesach. Rav Elyahu Mizrachi, in his work on Rashi's commentary, explains along similar lines.

3) A much different explanation is given by the Abarbanel and, later, by Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch. They claim that this section, which deals primarily with the procedure required before a foreigner or convert may partake of the korban Pesach, is directed towards the 'erev rav', about whom the Torah speaks just several verses earlier. (In their respective commentaries, both the Abarbanel and Rav Hirsch go through all the halachot mentioned in this section and explain how they all address the unique circumstance of the erev rav.)

B. The Four Hundred and Thirty Years of Bondage As we noted, the Torah says in 12:40 that Bnei Yisrael spent 430 years in Egypt. Rashi there notes that based on the genealogical record of Yaakov's family when he relocated in Egypt (in Parshat Vayigash - Breishit 46:8-27) as well as that in Parshat Va'era (Shmot 6:14-25), this is a mathematical impossibility. (In short, Kehat, Moshe's grandfather, is included among those who moved with Yaakov to Egypt: four hundred years could not have passed from Kehat's move to Egypt until his grandson, Moshe, led the slaves to freedom at the age of eighty.) Further confounding the issue is the fact that Hashem had informed Avraham of a 400-year period of bondage, not 430 years. For this reason, most sources among Chazal and the mefarshim claim - as mentioned in the shiur - that the period in question began with the birth of Yitzchak. Hashem had promised that Avraham's offspring would be "foreigners in a land not their own" (Breishit 15:13). This period began when his heir, Yitzchak, was born in a country where he was deemed a foreigner. Why Yitzchak - and, after him, Yaakov and his children - held foreigner status in Canaan is not entirely clear. Ibn Ezra (commenting on our pasuk) cites a theory that during this period Canaan was subject to Egyptian rule. Although the Ibn Ezra claims that there is no source to substantiate such a theory, Rav Menachem Kasher (Torah Shleima on our pasuk, footnote 601) indeed brings several sources to this effect. The Maharal, by contrast, in his commentary, "Gur Aryeh" on our pasuk, posits a different explanation for this foreigner status. As Hashem had decreed that Avraham's offspring would come under subjugation in a foreign land, their residence in Canaan before their descent to Egypt was not permanent. As such, they could not be considered anything more than foreigners. Rashi, in his commentary to Breishit 15:13, cites psukim that imply that Yitzchak and Yaakov's residence in Canaan was indeed that of foreigners. In any event, the sixty years of Yitzchak's life before Yaakov's birth (Breishit 25:26) and Yaakov's one hundred and thirty years before moving to Egypt (Breishit 47:8) combine to comprise 190 of the 400 years of exile. This leaves 210 years, the commonly accepted duration of the Egyptian exile (see Breishit Rabba 91:2). This theory, that the period of 'exile' began with the birth of Yitzchak, dates back as early as the Septuagint, which adds onto our pasuk the words, 'u-bish'ar aratzot', meaning, that the 430 years mark the period in which Bnei Yisrael were foreigners in Egypt as well as in other lands.

As for the discrepancy between the 400 and 430 years, we find four approaches in the Midrashim and mefarshim:

1) The Mechilta on our pasuk, as well as Rashi here and in Breishit 15:13, maintain that the 400-year period began with the birth of Yitzchak, and the 430-year period began at brit bein ha-btarim, which took place thirty years prior to Yitzchak's birth. This raises a vexing problem: Avraham was 100 years old when Yitzchak was born (Breishit 21:5), which would mean that he was only 70 at the time of brit bein ha-btarim. Yet, he was already 75 years-old when he first migrated to Canaan (Breishit 12:4). How, then, could Avraham have been only 70 at brit bein ha-btarim, which

occurs three chapters after his resettlement in Canaan? The Seder Olam Rabba therefore explains that Avraham originally moved to Canaan at age 70. After the brit bein ha-btarim, he returned to Charan for five years, after which he once again settled in Canaan. The presentation in Parshat Lech-Lecha thus does not follow chronological sequence.

2) The Ramban (in his commentary to our pasuk) argues that the 430 years began with brit bein ha-btarim; the 400 years which Hashem mentioned to Avraham marked the minimum duration of the exile, not the definite period. As a result of Bnei Yisrael's sins in Egypt, Hashem added thirty years to the decree, resulting in a total of 430 years. According to the Ramban, Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt for 240 years, not 210 as is commonly understood.

3) The Ibn Ezra and Rabbenu Yosef Bechor Shor suggest that the 430 years begin with Avraham's migration with his father from Ur Kasdim. Towards the end of Parshat Noach (11:31), the Torah tells that Terach took his family from Ur Kasdim to live in Canaan, but for some reason he never made it past Charan. These mefarshim suggest that this event, which, they claim, occurred thirty years prior to brit bein ha-btarim, marked the beginning of Avraham's period of 'exile', as this was the point at which he uprooted himself from his homeland. (The Netziv adopts this approach, as well, and elaborates further on the significance of Avraham's move from Ur Kasdim.)

4) The Abarbanel cites a view that the pasuk in brit bein ha-btarim that speaks of 400 years was imprecise; it rounded off the number 430 to an even 400. This view would then yield the same result that emerges from the Ramban's approach: Bnei Yisrael spent 240 years in Egypt. (The Abarbanel himself, however, accepts the Ramban's position.)

All these mefarshim agree that the 400 years of bondage foreseen at brit bein ha-btarim begin at that point, when Hashem informs Avraham of the exile. They argue only as to the nature of the thirty years. We do find two other views, which deny this assumption upon which all the aforementioned explanations are predicated: Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer (48) cites the view of Rabbi Elazar Ben Arach that the 430-year period begins with the birth of Efrayim and Menashe, the last two tribes of Yisrael to be born. Their birth occurred five years before Yaakov and his family moved to Egypt, such that 215 years passed from their birth to the Exodus. Since the slavery required Bnei Yisrael's service both by day and night, they served as slaves for the functional equivalent of 430 years. (Haktav Ve- hakabbala explains this based on another Midrash, that the Egyptian taskmasters forced the slaves to sleep in the fields rather than going home to their families; they thus 'worked' both by day and by night.) More familiar is the Midrash cited by the Vilna Gaon, in Kol Eliyahu on Parshat Shmot, that states more simply that the torture and hardship of the 210-year slavery term rendered it equivalent to a standard, 400-year term. According to this approach, that Bnei Yisrael's slavery equaled - but did not last for - 400 years, our pasuk does not at all relate to brit bein ha-btarim. Perhaps the most startling view is that of the Shadal, who claims, in opposition to all other commentators (including the Septuaginta, as quoted above), that Bnei Yisrael indeed spent four hundred and thirty years in Egypt. Earlier, we parenthetically noted the proof against this possibility, that the Torah identifies Kehat as Moshe's grandfather (Shmot 6:18, 20), and he was among the seventy members of Yaakov's family who descended to Egypt (Breishit 46:11). The life-spans of Kehat and his son Amram, plus Moshe's eighty years before freeing Bnei Yisrael, do not add up to anywhere near 430 years. The Shadal refutes this proof by claiming that the Torah omits several generations in its genealogical record in Parshat Va'era. In fact, he brings a very strong proof to his claim: in Parashat Vaera, the Torah lists only eight members of the tribe of Levi in Amram's generation (Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron, Uziel, Machli, Mushi, Livni and Shimi - Shmot 6:17- 19). Yet, when Moshe - Amram's son - took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, the tribe of Levi numbered 22,000 (Bemidbar 3:39). Clearly, Levi's population could not have grown from 8 to 22,000 in a single generation. Undoubtedly, the Shadal argues, there were several interim generations that the Torah - for whatever reason - neglects to mention.

Rav Yaakov Medan (of Yeshivat Har Etzion - Daf Keshet vol. 3, p.220) refutes this seemingly convincing proof of the Shadal. He suggests quite simply that the Torah omitted not interim generations, as the Shadal claims, but rather the brothers of those eight levites, or even the brothers of their parents. Rav Medan notes that when Yaakov bestows the bechora upon Yosef, whereby his sons, Efrayim and Menashe, become independent tribes, he adds that any future children born to Yosef will be included in those two tribes (Breishit 48:6). In other words, 'less significant' brothers often became formally included as part of their brothers' families. It stands to reason, then, that in each generation in the genealogical listing the Torah records only several brothers. In fact, Rav Medan adds, the genealogical records in Va'era, Bemidbar and Pinchas do not mention any grandsons of Yaakov besides those listed as part of the family that descended to Egypt. As Yaakov's sons were still relatively young when they relocated in Egypt, we have no reason to believe that they did not continue bearing children in Egypt. Clearly, then, there were siblings omitted in the Torah's genealogical record, thus refuting the Shadal's proof.

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From: Michael Gros [mgros9@yahoo.com] Sent: Wednesday, January 08, 2003 4:05 PM To: ethicist@besr.org Subject: Jewish Ethicist #92
The Jewish Ethicist #92

by RABBI DR. ASHER MEIR,
ameir@mail.jct.ac.il Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem To sponsor an issue of the Jewish Ethicist, visit <http://www.besr.org/ethicist/sponsorfor.html> BCC:EMAIL ETHICS WHEN IS IT ETHICAL TO SEND A HIDDEN COPY OF AN E-MAIL?

Q. Is it unethical to send a "bcc" of an e-mail? I'm worried that this could be deceptive.

A. While the ethics and etiquette of e-mail are still evolving, the basic principles of thoughtful behavior are always applicable. For the e-mail uninitiated, "bcc" stands for "blind carbon copy." Once upon a time, copies of correspondence were made by putting two or three sheets of paper in the typewriter with a sheet or two of carbon paper sandwiched in between. Usually the original stated "cc to" indicating that carbon copies were being sent to other individuals; occasionally a "blind" carbon copy was made and the recipient was not informed. Today our e-mail programs do the same thing by sending a copy of an electronic letter to the "bcc" recipient without the knowledge of the original recipient.

There are many reasons we might want to keep the additional recipient hidden, some of them good and others not so good. A not-so-good reason for this is when you conceal the other recipient because you know the addressee would not want the message known. The message you send generally reveals some private information about the recipient and the nature of your relationship, and if recipients want this information kept private their wishes should be respected. If you feel you have a very good reason to disclose the information, then at the very least the recipients should be informed that the content is known, by making the copy a "cc" instead of a "bcc."

The problem is far worse when the message you send contains a copy of the letter you originally received -- the usual case in the world of e-mail. Letters you receive should generally be kept in the strictest confidence, and Jewish law protects them in a variety of ways. Revealing the content of a letter may be considered a form of gossip; in addition, the ancient decree of Rabbenu Gershon prohibits reading someone else's mail without their permission. (This should remind us that forwarding e-mails can also be problematic.)

However, there are some valid reasons to take advantage of the bcc feature. One good reason to keep someone hidden is to protect his own privacy. Using the "cc" line not only reveals that the letter was sent to others, it also discloses their identity as well as their e-mail address. This can be ethically problematic, as demonstrated by the following true story:

Not long ago there was a very unfortunate incident in which an individual who ran a small-scale meeting service (shadchan) wanted to send a message to all of her clients. She wrote a message and put each one on the "cc" list. Being a neophyte in the new-fangled world of e-mail, she probably didn't realize that this would disclose the identities of her customers. Many felt significant embarrassment at having it widely known that they were using this person's services. Using the bcc would have saved the customers from this discomfort and the business from suffering significant ill will.

In other cases, people don't mind having their identities revealed but they don't want to go the extra step and have their e-mail addresses publicized, since this can lead to unwanted mail, which may be annoying, offensive, or even threatening.

Another possibility is that the "cc" is being sent to an innocuous individual, but the recipient doesn't know that the recipient of the copy is trustworthy. Sending an ordinary "cc" may cause the recipient unnecessary worry that confidence has been breached. For example, on some sites which print the Jewish Ethicist,

queries sent to the Jewish Ethicist are first received by the host site, which then forwards them to me. When I reply to the questioner, I often send a copy of my answer to the representative of the host site. (This is a courtesy because these representatives are often extremely curious to know how I will respond.) This doesn't breach any confidence, because that person has already seen the letter. But if the letter had a cc, the recipient would be understandably concerned, because he or she probably doesn't know that the other recipient is already in the loop. So I generally use a bcc for these replies.

In these three cases, it is definitely appropriate to use a "bcc" rather than a "cc." But we may still encounter the problem mentioned above: the recipient may be misled into thinking the communication is private. There are two solutions to this problem: 1. Mention in the body of the letter that a copy is being sent to another individual. Perhaps in the future I will add to my replies the line, "I'm sending a copy of this reply to the editor of the host website."

2. Avoid shortcuts. Instead of sending the exact copy of the letter with a bcc, prepare a sanitized copy that eliminates any problematic details, and send it as a separate e-mail to someone who needs to know about the correspondence but doesn't need to know the identity of the correspondent.

There are many reasons that your recipient might not want details of your correspondence to be known. Perhaps the personal details revealed by your letter are unflattering; perhaps they are confidential. Even positive information can have negative consequences if it is too widely known. The book of Proverbs tells us, "When someone blesses his friend in a loud voice early in the morning, it is considered like a curse" (Proverbs 27:14).

Therefore, careful thought is needed before routinely forwarding e-mail or sending copies. At the very least the recipient should be informed about the disclosure, except in the cases we mentioned where the message isn't really private or when this disclosure could cause unjustified worry. Even in these cases we can often find better solutions than the bcc, which should be used sparingly.

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