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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON **VAEIRA** - 5771

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From: Daf Yomi [difyomi@yutorah.org]
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2006
Subject: Daf Yomi for **Pesachim 53 R' DANIEL FELDMAN - Self-Sacrifice of Frogs**

The Self-Sacrifice of Frogs

The Talmud teaches that Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah were ready to give up their lives al Kiddush Hashem, because they derived that message from the frogs that plagued Egypt. Frogs have no commandment of Kiddush Hashem, and yet they jumped into fiery furnaces; they, who are commanded in Kiddush Hashem, should certainly do so.

The Sefer P'ninim MiShulchan Gavoah (p. 87, cited by R. Boruch Simon in Imrei Boruch, Shemot, p. 33) relates that the Sha'agat Aryeh questioned this deduction, noting that the frogs were commanded to do what they did, as indicated by the verse the Talmud cited (Shemot 7:28), in which G-d decreed that the frogs would "go up and come into your house, and into your bed-chamber, and upon your bed, and into the house of your servants, and upon your people, and into your ovens, and into your kneading-troughs".

The Vilna Gaon, who was seven at the time, impressed the Sha'agat Aryeh by explaining that while it was true that the frogs were commanded to occupy all those locations, any individual frog could have claimed that he was not obligated to enter an oven; he could enter a bed-chamber instead. Thus, the Talmud's logic still applies. [This question is also posed by the Resp. Shevut Ya'akov, II, 106, and answered in the same manner in the sefer Livyat Chein; see, in greater detail, Chavatzet HaSharon al HaTorah, Shemot, pp. 89-90.]

In general, the question of whether one can volunteer to sacrifice his life for mitzvot in situations where that is not obligated is the subject of a dispute among rishonim. According to Tosafot (Avodah Zarah 27b, s.v. yachol) one is permitted to voluntarily sacrifice himself. The Rambam, however, (Hil. Yesodei haTorah 5:1) forbids this, as does the Ramban (Milchamot to Sanhedrin 18a), who considers it suicide.

Neros Yom Kippur

The Talmud relates that Friday night candles should be kindled even when Shabbat falls on Yom Kippur. This is relevant to a question posed in many sefarim as to what purpose is served by Shabbat candles: "Oneg Shabbat", or "Kavod Shabbat". According to the Vilna Gaon (Biur to

O.C. 529:5), "Kavod" refers to action done before Shabbat, in its honor, while "Oneg" refers to actions done on Shabbat itself to evoke a pleasant atmosphere, primarily in the realm of eating and drinking. Many, including the Brisker Rav (see Kitvei HaGrach al HaShas, p. 331) assert that Shabbat candles are actually a function of both kavod and oneg, as indicated by the fact that the Rambam identifies both as motivating factors (Hil. Shabbat 5:1 and 30:5). However, on Yom Kippur, when eating and drinking are forbidden, the Oneg factor is largely impossible. Thus, candles for that occasion are purely a function of Kavod. Nonetheless, they are still kindled in the room where meals are normally held. Apparently, this location is considered a place of honor, even if no meal is actually taking place (see Moadim U'Zmanim, I, 56). The Daily Daf Email, by Rabbi Daniel Feldman, is a service of YUTorah, the online source of the Torah of Yeshiva University. Get more daf yomi insights, and hear thousands of other shiurim, by visiting www.yutorah.org. To unsubscribe from this list, please click here.

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Parsha Page

by Fred Toczek - A Service of Anshe Emes Synagogue (Los Angeles)

Parsha Page by Fred Toczek

A survey of parsha thoughts from Gedolei Yisroel compiled by Fred Toczek. Perfect for printing and use at your Shabbos tisch.

VAEIRAH

A. Summary

1. Hashem Reassures Moshe. Moshe questioned how Hashem could have allowed even greater suffering to befall the Jews after Moshe and Aharon met with Pharaoh. In response, Hashem revealed himself to Moshe as "Hashem", the One whose promises to the Patriarchs would now be fulfilled, for the Jews would be freed from bondage and taken to Israel. Their spirits crushed, the Jews refused to listen to Moshe as he revealed Hashem's message. Moshe, in turn, questioned how he could convince Pharaoh if he couldn't convince his own people, especially when his speech was impaired. Hashem again assured him that Aharon would be his spokesman and that Pharaoh would not let the Jews leave until Hashem inflicted severe punishments upon the Egyptians.

2. Moshe & Aharon Meet With Pharaoh. Moshe (then 80) and Aharon (then 83) again met with Pharaoh. Knowing that he would be impressed by such wonders, Aharon cast down his rod and it turned into a serpent. However, the Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate the feat and, despite the fact that Aharon's rod swallowed their rods, Pharaoh remained unimpressed.

3. The First Seven Plagues

a. Blood. After warning Pharaoh, Aharon followed Moshe's instructions and waved his rod over the Nile, causing it to turn into blood, killing the fish and causing an unbearable odor. The Egyptians, facing a water shortage, begged the Israelites (whose water supply was unaffected) for water. The plague lasted seven days, but when the Egyptian magicians duplicated it, Pharaoh would not budge.

b. Frogs. Aharon stretched out his hand over the Nile and frogs swarmed the land. Pharaoh pled with Moshe to stop the plague, promising to let the Jews leave and bring sacrifices to Hashem. However, as soon as Moshe complied, Pharaoh refused to fulfill his promise.

c. Lice. Aharon struck the dust with his rod, turning the dust into lice which swarmed over the Egyptian people and cattle. This time, however, the Egyptian magicians were unable to duplicate the feat and were forced to admit Hashem's superior powers; however, Pharaoh remained obstinate.

d. Wild Animals. Moshe's warning to Pharaoh that the Egyptians' homes would be invaded by wild animals went unheeded. However, after the invasion devastated the land, Pharaoh agreed to let the Jews bring

sacrifices to Hashem in Egypt; Moshe, however, insisted that they be allowed to journey into the wilderness for three days to bring such sacrifices. Pharaoh agreed, but again recanted when the plague stopped. e. Cattle Disease. After Pharaoh again failed to heed Moshe's warning, the Egyptian cattle were stricken with disease; however, Pharaoh still wouldn't give in.

f. Boils. In Pharaoh's presence, Moshe sprinkled ashes towards the heavens, which turned into dust and, in turn, boils on the Egyptian people and their animals. Pharaoh still, however, wouldn't relent.

g. Hail. After Pharaoh was warned, a torrent of hail (i.e. boulders with fire on the inside and ice on the outside) hit the Egyptian people, crops and cattle. This time, Pharaoh acknowledged his error, but when the hail ceased, his heart hardened.

B. Divrei Torah

1. LilMode U'hilamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

a. Moshe's Gratitude. Why did Moshe ask Aharon to perform the first three plagues (i.e., blood, frogs and lice)? According to Rashi, Moshe wanted to show his gratitude to the forces which helped him in the past (i.e., the waters of the Nile spared his life and the dust of the earth protected him by burying the overseer), and was thus hesitant to perform plagues involving them. We, too, must be grateful to the forces and people who have helped us.

b. "Bechira" ("Free Will"). Rambam teaches that Hashem grants each of us free will and, as a result, we are responsible for our actions and rewarded and punished accordingly. But did Pharaoh have free will? If not, how could he be held responsible for his actions? Actually, anyone seeing the plagues no longer had free will to deny Hashem's existence. To counteract the plagues' influence, Hashem restored free will to Pharaoh, who could thus make his decisions regardless of Hashem's obvious presence.

c. The Purpose Of The Plagues. Why couldn't Hashem bring one severe plague? Since the purpose of the plagues was twofold: (a) to punish the Egyptians measure-for-measure; and (b) to impress the Jews that this was the result of Hashem's Hand and not merely a one-shot act of nature, thereby preparing them to receive the Torah.

d. And you shall teach your children. Part of the observance of Pesach -- in fact the reason for reciting the Haggadah -- is recounting the story of Pesach to children. The unusual customs and foods of the Seder are meant to evoke questions from children and we must be ready to respond to their questions. Children are essential links in the chain which keeps Torah tradition strong and growing. Parents who raise a child endowed with an appreciation for Torah and mitzvos are considered the real heroes of Jewish survival and their work can never be sufficiently praised. As the Talmud teaches, "the world is preserved only by the innocence of the school children." (Shabbos 119). As Mishlei 22 teaches, "instruct the child in that to which he is inclined; even in his old age, he will not part from it."

2. The Chassidic Dimension (the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, z'tl) (the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, z'tl)

a. Egyptian Exile: Prelude To The Torah. When one undergoes suffering, one ceases to be self-absorbed and is able to transcend the limits of one's mortal logic (i.e., to undergo self-nullification) and absorb the spirituality necessary to accept the Torah and perform its mitzvos.

b. Matzos and Four cups of wine. The Parsha uses 4 expressions to describe Hashem's redemption of the Jewish people -- "I will release you . . . save you . . . liberate you . . . and take you unto Me as a Nation." The Four cups of wine commemorate these expressions. But, why do we only have three matzos? The matzos represent the first 3 expressions, which represent "redemption from Above" (i.e., through Hashem's -- not their own -- efforts, the Jews were compelled to leave Egypt). Wine represents

"redemption from Above and within" (i.e., in addition to Hashem's efforts, it was up to the Jews to prepare themselves to be worthy to be called Hashem's Nation and accept His Torah). Thus, Matzos are "tasteless", while wine has taste and is enjoyable.

3. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

a. View suffering as a tool for self-improvement. After the hail fell, Pharaoh said to Moshe "I have sinned this time, the Almighty is righteous and I and my people are wicked". While he admitted his guilt under the pressure of the plague, he recanted after the plague subsided. Why? Rabbi Noson Tzvi Finkel of Slobodka notes that this was because Pharaoh only viewed suffering from a limited perspective (i.e., merely as a punishment for his wrongs). By recognizing Hashem's hand in our suffering, and that it includes a strong element of kindness since it can propel us to improve ourselves, we can use it to motivate us to examine our lives and strive to reach new heights.

b. Remember your resolutions and insights. Pharaoh said to Moshe, "Entreat Hashem that there will no more hail and I will let you go". Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz notes that Pharaoh actually meant it at the time. But as soon as the plague let up, he forgot his good intentions. In the midst of suffering or challenges, we often have high ideals and make worthy resolutions. We must strive to remember them even after our suffering or challenge has lifted.

c. To give encouragement to others, speak in a way to which they can relate. "And Moshe spoke so to the Children of Israel, and they did not listen to Moshe for anguish of spirit and hard work." Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen explains that they didn't listen to the previous message which Moshe gave them (i.e., that they would come into the land of Israel). This can be understood that when someone is suffering much, all he/she wants to hear is that his suffering will be removed. He may not be ready to hear that he will have much good fortune and success in the future. Thus, we read in the thirteenth verse that Hashem told Moshe to just tell them that they would be taken out of Egypt, without any mention of a bright future. (Meshech Chochmah). This is an important principle in trying to give others emotional support and encouragement. If you paint a picture which is beyond their present ability to relate to, your words will not be comforting even if you have the best of intentions. Telling someone who is deep emotional distress, "don't worry, all will be well in future," might not have a positive effect. Instead, show them that you understand and empathize with their present pain and suffering, and help provide them with advice and encouragement to get out of their present situation.

4. Wellsprings of Torah (Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman)

Eventually, Hashem's words will sink in. "And Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon and gave them a charge to the Children of Israel. . ." Even though the Children of Israel refused to listen, for impatience of spirit and for cruel bondage, Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon to keep speaking to them, for Hashem's words must, of necessity, leave a profound impression. They may not take effect all at once, but eventually they must accomplish their purpose, for holy words can never be lost on man. (Sfas Emes, z'tl). (As Mattis Czapnik told over at his Bar Mitzvah, this is why the Shema says "let these matters which I [Hashem] command you today be upon your heart," and not "in your heart. That is, these matters may not "soak in" immediately since we may not be receptive to them at that particular moment; however, if we leave them "on our heart," they will be ready and near to be absorbed when our hearts are more receptive to opening up to them.) We must reach out to others, to share Hashem's; even if the effect is not immediate, they will eventually take root.

5. Darash Moshe (Rav Moshe Feinstein, z'tl)

Fulfilling One's Personal Mission. "This was the Aharon and Moshe." Rashi comments that in some places Aharon is mentioned before Moshe and in other places the order is reversed. This is to teach us that they were equal. Yet, since Moshe was the greatest prophet and sage of all time, to such an extent that Hashem chose to give His holy Torah to the Jewish people through Moshe, how can it be said that Aharon, for all his merits, was Moshe's "equal"? This can be answered in several ways. First, although Moshe's power was greater than Aharon's, they were still considered equals since they were both needed for the redemption of the Jews. By analogy, even though one business partner may have a greater role than the other, if the business can not function without both of them, they are equals in that sense. Second, like Moshe, Aharon performed Hashem's will throughout his life to the utmost of his ability and will complete faith. Both Moshe and Aharon devoted themselves completely and wholeheartedly to the things which they were given to do. Moshe and Aharon, even though they differed in their abilities, could be considered equals since they both achieved their full potential. In Hashem's scales, success is measured by how well we fulfill our personal mission.

6. Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

We should sympathize with others' suffering even when we are suffering. "Also I [Hashem] have heard the outcry of the Children of Israel. Rabbi Moshe Sofer explained that "also" meant not only Hashem, but that the Jewish people also heard each other's suffering even in the midst of their own individual suffering.

7. Majesty Of Man (Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz)

Time To Reflect. "And they [the Jews] did not listen to Moshe because of impatience of spirit and cruel bondage." Hashem told the Jews that He would redeem them from slavery, take them out of Egypt and give them the Torah. The S'forno explains that Hashem also guaranteed that if they absorbed this promise into their consciousness, they would be worthy to enter Israel. However, because of the heavy burden of slavery, they failed to properly contemplate the meaning of their redemption and, as a result, only their children (i.e., the next generation) were allowed to enter Israel. How could Hashem punish them for not properly contemplating the meaning of their freedom while they were in the midst of slavery? Because the human mind is capable of great feats, even when doubled over with work. One of the favorite techniques of the "Yetzer Hara" (evil inclination) is to keep us so busy and pre-occupied that we continue in our daily routine, oblivious to our true life goals and any wrongdoing. (A businessman once approached Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, said that he only had 15 minutes a day to study Torah and asked him what he should study. Rabbi Salanter replied that he should study Mussar and, as a result, he would soon realize that he had more than 15 minutes a day to study.) We too must take time to examine our priorities and actions, to guarantee that our lives are truly fulfilling Hashem's will.

8. Kol Dodi on the Torah (Rabbi Dovid Feinstein)

Hashem's Mercy. "And Elokim spoke to Moshe and He said to him I am Hashem." The name "Elokim" connotes the quality of judgment; the name "Hashem" connotes the quality of mercy. At the beginning of the Parsha, Hashem is referred to by both names. Why? At the end of last week's Parsha, Pharaoh intensified the Jews' workload, leading them to complain bitterly. Hashem's address to their grievances at the beginning of this Parsha can be understood to mean that He originally decreed that they would spend 400 years in exile in Egypt, but that after 210 years, He decided to redeem them. However, in order to do so, Hashem intensified their bondage to make it as though they served the "full term" of exile. Even though it "appeared" He acted harshly, it was clearly eventually for their good. When something unpleasant happens, we must remember it is really for our own good. The Talmud (Berachos 60b) says

that we should be happy when we recite the blessing "Baruch Da'yan HaEmet" ("Blessed is the True Judge"), which is said upon hearing bad news. Even when a particular event appears to be "judgment", it also contains "mercy". There is a parable of a little boy who gets lost in a crowd and stands crying for his parent. When his parent finally finds him, the parent chastises him for running off on his own. Yet, despite being chastised, the boy smiles when he is reunited with his parent, for he knows that his parent still cares for him. When things appear to be going badly for us and we have moments of suffering, we should be happy that Hashem is not ignoring us and eventually we will see that the things which appear to us to be bad now are actually for our benefit.

9. In The Garden Of The Torah (the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, z'tl)

Seeing And Believing (Recognizing Hashem's Revelation To Us). "Mitzrayim", which is related to the Hebrew word for "boundaries" or "limitations", is a paradigm for what exile is and the essence of our spiritual challenge. The world was created as a dwelling place for Hashem and our souls are a part of Hashem. Yet, we often overlook this as we are caught in the exile of our material world and daily routine which shapes our thoughts. However, Hashem doesn't allow this exile to continue indefinitely. In Mitzrayim, Hashem revealed Himself through the plagues, thereby transforming the Jewish people's thinking. But what about us? Hashem said "I revealed myself to Abraham, Issac and Jacob"; Rashi comments "to the Patriarchs". His comment, which seems redundant, is actually reinforcing that, by revealing Himself to our forefathers, Hashem make the awareness of His existence a fundamental element in their make-up (and the make-up of their descendants for all time). In every generation, Hashem sparks this awareness by performing acts transcending the natural order; some are obvious to us (e.g., the Gulf War, Entebbe, re-birth of Israel, the fall of Communism); others are not. By these acts, Hashem reveals Himself to us, allowing us to transform the limits of our "exile" and take in the awareness of His presence. We must open our eyes.

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
<info@jewishdestiny.com>
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Jerusalem Post :: Friday, December 31, 2010 THE EXODUS AND US :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The sections of the Torah that we are reading these weeks concern themselves with the well known but ever insightful story of the enslavement and subsequent exodus of the Jewish people in long ago Egypt. Jewish tradition has taught us that the narratives that appear in the Torah are not to be viewed as merely a recital of past events. Rather they stand as indicators and guideposts for the Jewish people's story throughout all ages and generations. The story of the Jews in Egypt was always subjected to intensive intellectual analysis and insightful commentary. The rabbis and scholars of Israel looked for the particular markers strewn throughout the narrative of the Torah that would shed light on later events in the story of the Jewish people – especially as they pertained to the long and bitter exile after the destruction of the Second Temple. This attitude towards the biblical narrative allowed it to come alive and be a current guide to events rather than merely remaining a record of ancient and sometimes boring facts. The Torah knows no limits to its timelessness and relevance. It is up to every Jew to ferret out the

particular messages that speak to one's time and place, generally and particularly.

That is what was meant by the rabbis of the Mishna when they stated the basic axiom of Judaism that the study of Torah supersedes all other goals in the Jewish world. For the study of Torah in depth and with analysis remains the mentor and guide for Jews throughout all generations and circumstances.

What were the motives that drove the Pharaoh and Egypt to persecute the Jews? The Torah grants us some insights. Firstly, Joseph died. As long as he lived there was a sense of appreciation and even adoration for the man who saved Egypt from the destruction of the great famine and established it as the mightiest power of the time.

But not only Joseph died, that whole generation, Jew and Egyptian also passed from the scene. In later generations no one remembered Joseph, no one remembered the famine, just as in our time few people now remember the Great Depression or even the horrors of World War II. Many Israeli students know nothing about the history of the creation of the State of Israel and thus have doubts about our legitimate claim to the Land of Israel. Now it is only dry facts in history books.

And, therefore, it was almost natural that a Pharaoh would arise "who knew not Joseph." He did not realize how the Jewish people entered Egypt, of what benefit they were to Egypt and what their presence in the country represented in historical and spiritual terms.

New rulers always come to power with "new" agendas of their own to solve age old problems of human existence and social and national life. When their agendas become cropper and all of the great theories are useless in the face of the harsh realities of society and governing, it is natural to look for a scapegoat for that failure.

The stranger, the Jew, has always provided that convenient scapegoat. The new rulers of the twentieth century, Stalin and Hitler exploited this to the fullest. The Moslem world till today explains all of its ills and shortcomings on the existence of Israel and the Jews. Many parts of the Exodus story repeat themselves today in our lives.

The Torah tells us that the Jews became numerous – a visible, sizeable and recognizable minority living in the midst of Egypt. People and states are intrinsically xenophobic; they do not tolerate minorities gracefully. Present day Israel is struggling with such problems and attitudes. So are most of the countries of Europe and the rest of the world.

There were too many Jews around for Egyptian sensitivities. And "the land was full of them." They no longer lived in the ghetto of Goshen but moved everywhere in Egypt. Wherever one went one saw a Jew. Hitler's complaint when living in Vienna was that he always saw Jews on the streets of that city. This sad story has been repeated in almost every country where Jews settled in the time of our exile.

Many Jews in Egyptian society attempted to escape Egyptian persecution by assimilating into general Egyptian society. But Pharaoh like Hitler and the Moslem world made it a racial thing, a blemish that could not be erased by even four generations of assimilation. Midrash teaches us that most of those Jews died in Egypt without being part of the Exodus. That is also, in my opinion, a warning lesson for our times as well.

Shabat shalom.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
<info@jewishdestiny.com>
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha :: VAEIRA :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Moshe faces a crisis of faith at the onset of this week's parsha. He apparently has made no headway with and little impression on the Pharaoh of Egypt. The situation of the Jewish slaves has worsened

considerably and the leaders of the people place blame upon Moshe for that situation.

So, Moshe is apparently unsuccessful with the Pharaoh and unsuccessful with the Jewish people all at one and the same time. Is it any wonder that Moshe complains to the Lord about this mission which, he now reiterates, he wishes to abandon? And even though the Torah does not state so in so many specific words, it is obvious that Moshe, so to speak, is disappointed in God as well.

The Lord patiently sends him back to his task and reassures him that all will yet turn out well for him and his people. And by the end of the parsha, we find Moshe in full strength and confidence delivering his message of redemption to Pharaoh and to the Jewish people. This crisis of faith has somehow passed, though we do not find that Moshe's earlier concerns have been addressed. The Lord merely reiterates the message that Moshe has already heard from Him a number of times. Yet Moshe is revitalized now that he hears God's promise once again, of Jewish redemption from Egyptian bondage.

Repeated promises rarely if ever inspire. So what causes this change of spirit and attitude within Moshe's thoughts and actions? What is the catalyst for his new found optimism and boldness of speech and purpose?

I have often felt that it was the very crisis of faith that Moshe endured that was the main contributing factor to his future steadfastness and strength of purpose. Only someone who has experienced doubt can truly come to faith.

The Lord created a world that tests our faith in Him daily. Life automatically introduces doubt into our existence. It is in dealing with our omnipresent doubts, with the unfairness of life itself and with the illogic and irrationality of it all that one achieves the plateau of faith and spiritual strength. Only the doubter can become a strong believer.

It is Moshe's crisis of faith that now anneals and strengthens his belief in his mission as the savior of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The rabbis stated that, "All things are in the hand of Heaven, except for fear and belief in Heaven itself." Therefore the Lord, so to speak, does not respond to Moshe's complaints directly. He does not explain to Moshe why the process of redemption has seemingly taken on such a difficult and negative turn. The Lord makes no excuses for what has occurred. He only tells Moshe to keep on persevering and redemption will eventually arrive.

Moshe has to overcome his crisis of faith on his own. There is no one that can help make one believe except for the person himself. This is probably the most important message that one can derive from the study of this week's parsha.

Shabat shalom.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
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Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

TORAH WEEKLY :: Parshat Vaera
For the week ending 1 January 2011 / 24 Tevet 5771
from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com
OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform the Jewish People that He is going to take them out of Egypt. However, the Jewish People do not listen. G-d commands Moshe to go to Pharaoh and ask him to free the Jewish People. Although Aharon shows Pharaoh a sign by turning a staff into a snake, Pharaoh's magicians copy the sign, emboldening Pharaoh to refuse the request. G-d punishes the Egyptians and sends plagues of blood and frogs, but the magicians copy these miracles on a smaller scale, again encouraging Pharaoh to be obstinate. After the plague of

lice, Pharaoh's magicians concede that only G-d could be performing these miracles. Only the Egyptians, and not the Jews in Goshen, suffer during the plagues. The onslaught continues with wild animals, pestilence, boils and fiery hail. However, despite Moshe's offers to end the plagues if Pharaoh will let the Jewish People leave, Pharaoh continues to harden his heart and refuses.

INSIGHTS

What Have You Done For Me Lately?

"Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land..." (8:12)

Two men walking toward each other in the street.

As they draw alongside, a smile spreads across the face of one of them. Excitedly, he says to the other: "Izzy, Izzy, it's me. Moishe. Don't you recognize me?"

Izzy furrows his brow, trying to bring to the surface of his consciousness some deep forgotten memory. "...Moishe? ...Moishe?"

Unfazed, the other continues, "You remember me, Izzy! It's Moishe.

Once I loaned you \$ 25,000 interest free for 10 years."

"Yeah..." replies Izzy.

"But Moishe, what have you done for me lately?"

Unlike the other plagues, G-d commanded only Aaron to initiate the plague of lice by hitting the earth — Moshe was not commanded. Why?

When Moshe killed an Egyptian who was beating a Jew, Moshe hid the body of the Egyptian in the earth. Thus, he had a debt of gratitude to the earth and could not strike it.

However, that killing became known and Pharaoh tried to kill Moshe, forcing him to flee the country.

So what really was Moshe's debt to the earth? He had to flee for his life anyway. The earth hadn't really done anything for him in the end.

Gratitude is not quantified by results. When someone does something for us, even if it turns out to be unsuccessful or unnecessary, we owe him as much gratitude as if he had just loaned us \$ 25,000 interest-free for 10 years.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair
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From TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>
To weeklydt@torahweb2.org

The Eternal Morasha

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky (The TorahWeb Foundation)

There are two gifts that were bestowed upon the Jewish People that are referred to as a morasha. The first reference appears in Parshas Vaera (Shemos 6:8), where Hashem promises to bring the Jewish People into Eretz Yisroel and present it to them as a morasha. Moshe Rabbeinu, in his final words in Parshas Vezos Habracha (Devarim 33:4), provides the second reference when he describes the Torah as the morasha of the Jewish People. What is the significance of this term as it relates to these precious possessions of our people?

Morasha is related to the word yerusha - an inheritance - and yet it has a very different meaning. A yerusha belongs entirely to the recipient to do with it as he chooses. In contrast, a morasha is not an inheritance but rather a heritage. It must be preserved to be transmitted to subsequent generations. We are guardians over the precious gifts of Torah and Eretz Yisroel, making sure to hand them over to our children as we received them from our parents.

There is another important distinction between yerusha and morasha. A yerusha is received without any effort. However, one must earn the privilege of being part of a morasha. For this reason Chazal teach us (Berachos 5a) that Torah and Eretz Yisroel are acquired through

suffering. Furthermore, a yerusha is only temporary. If the recipient consumes it during his lifetime, there is nothing left for the next generation. A morasha, by contrast, is eternal. Torah and Eretz Yisroel remain part of the heritage of the Jewish People for eternity.

Concerning the Torah which is a morasha, Chazal say (Pesachim 49b) that the word morasha can also be interpreted as a meorasa- a betrothed woman. Presumably, this can also be applied to Eretz Yisroel. What is the connection between a woman who is a meorasa and the gifts of Torah and Eretz Yisroel?

There are two stages of marriage- erusin and nisuin. Although today we perform them together, in olden times the woman was first betrothed (i.e. erusin) and then remained in her father's house awaiting the nisuin-entering her husband's home. The period between erusin and nisuin was a time of great excitement and anticipation. It is these feelings that Hashem wants us to have about the Torah and Eretz Yisroel. In Shema (Devarim 6:6) the obligation to have the words of the Torah on our hearts "hayom - today" is highlighted. Rashi comments that the word "today" teaches us that we must look at the Torah as something new each day. When a farmer brings his first fruit each year, he declares that he has arrived today in Eretz Yisroel (Devarim 26:3). Why? Because he must relate to Eretz Yisroel with the excitement of someone arriving there for the first time. It is these feelings of excitement and anticipation which are associated with the stage of erusin that must permeate our eternal relationship with Torah and Eretz Yisroel.

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From Rabbi Yissocher Frand ryfrand@torah.org & genesis@torah.org
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Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rav Frand - Parshas Vaera (torah.org)

Prayer Is THE Key To Invoking Divine Assistance

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 709, Kavod Malchus & Secular Kings. Good Shabbos!
Parshas Va'eyra contains the majority of the 10 plagues brought upon the Egyptians. There is a definite pattern of how the plagues came and how they left. For instance, with the plague of Tzefardeah [Frogs], Moshe threatened Pharaoh "Let my people go or else I will bring a plague." The Frogs came, Pharaoh asked that Moshe pray to Hashem to take them away. Moshe Rabbeinu prayed and they went away. The same thing happened with the plague of Orov [Wild Animals]. They came, Pharaoh suffered, he begged Moshe and Aharon. They prayed to G-d and the wild animals left. Likewise, with Barad [Hail] and Arbeh [Locusts], the King begs that Moshe daven for him, Moshe davens, the Hail stops, and the Locusts leave.

It almost seems like a play. Why was it necessary that every single time that Pharaoh had to ask "daven," Moshe would daven, and only then, the plagues would cease? The answer, according to Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (the Mir Mashgiach) is that this narration teaches us something very fundamental about life. The way to obtain things in this world is to pray for them. This is the ONLY way to achieve things in this world. Someone who has a pressing need – say a sick family member in need of a cure – might wonder what is the most effective spiritual way to help the person in need – to pray or to learn in the person's merit. Most people might tend to feel that learning on behalf of the sick person would be more spiritually beneficial than merely praying for the person. After all, "Talmud Torah k'neged kulam" – the merit of Torah learning outweighs all other merits [Peah 1:1].

Rav Yeruchem states otherwise: "And know that even though 'Torah learning outweighs everything' nevertheless, obtaining something in this world only happens through prayer." In other words, the concept that "Talmud Torah k'neged kulam" means that in the next world, when we look to collect our reward for all our good deeds in "this world," the greatest reward we will receive is for Torah learning. However, the way to get things in this world is with a different mechanism. The way to obtain things is to daven for them.

Rav Yeruchem sites Moshe Rabbeinu as a case in point. Moshe was the prime example of one who occupied himself in Torah study and Torah teaching. Nevertheless, when Moshe requested the nullification of the decree against the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf, his approach was not to "sit and learn" or to rely on any other merits he might have had, but to pray intensively to the Almighty for their forgiveness. The decree was not nullified through the strength of Moshe's Torah or his good deeds, but rather only through prayer as it is written, "And Moshe besought the L-rd his G-d" [Shmos 32 11]. Why didn't Moshe learn for Klal Yisrael? The answer is that G-d set up this world such that if a person wants things, the person needs to daven for them. However, the concept that "Torah study outweighs everything else" applies to reward in the World to Come.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, among his many other attributes, was a prolific writer. He spent an unbelievable amount of time writing down his thoughts and words of Torah. During every spare moment, he was either learning or writing. One of Rav Moshe's children once called and told him that one of Rav Moshe's grandchildren was very sick and was being taken to the hospital. Rav Moshe closed his Gemara, closed his notebook, went to his shtender [lectern], took out a Tehillim, and began reciting Psalms. Every 15 minutes he would ask – "Have they called that it is better? Have they called yet?" He was sure that in the merit of his Tehillim, things would be all right.

Why did Rav Moshe start saying Tehillim? Why did he not dedicate the merit of his writing a certain piece of Torah or a certain responsa to the merit of his grandchild, for a speedy recovery? The answer is that in this world, when we need something, there is only one way to obtain it – through prayer. The uniqueness of the reward of Talmud Torah only applies to the World-to-Come.

Our parsha emphasizes this idea through the recurrent theme of Pharaoh beseeching Moshe to pray and Moshe's praying to have each of the plagues removed.

It Was The Same Yosef Throughout; It Was the Same Moshe Throughout

The pasuk says, "These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh King of Egypt to take out the Children of Israel from Egypt, this was Moshe and Aharon" [Shmos 6:27]. Rashi is bothered – what does the pasuk when it says "This was Moshe and Aharon"? Rashi comments: "These are the ones who faithfully and righteously carried out their mission from beginning to end." In other words they did not change. They were the same righteous people when they began and when they completed their mission.

This comment of Rashi is reminiscent of another Rashi in last week's parsha, Parshas Shmos. On the words "And Yosef was in Egypt" [Shmos 1:5], Rashi states that this teaches us of Yosef's righteousness throughout. The same Yosef who faithfully watched the sheep of his father was the Yosef who was in Egypt and became King, remaining totally righteous. This concept that it is the same Yosef is totally analogous to Rashi's comment here that it is the same Moshe and Aharon.

Rav Simcha Zissel Brodie, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva, asks as follows. It is indeed a novelty to teach us that Yosef retained the righteousness of his youth as he went through his travails in Egypt and eventually ascended to greatness such that he had the full power of the throne behind him. One might have thought that he was no longer the

same Yosef after having been removed at age 17 from the serenity and insulation of his father's house and having been thrust into all the temptations and spiritually fraught situations he faced as a slave in the decadent land of Egypt. Yosef thought he would never see another Jew in his life. It would have been so easy to throw everything away. This lowly slave becomes the viceroy of Egypt. For him to remain the same Tzadik, after having undergone all that turmoil in his life, is indeed worth noting. That is an amazing accomplishment!

But Moshe Rabbeinu was 80 years old when he started his mission. From the moment he started his mission, he was in the spotlight. All of Klal Yisrael looked at him and watched his every move. He was in the Wilderness for 40 years but he talked to the Ribono shel Olam on a daily basis! The fact that he remained a Tzadik is hardly surprising. What then is Rashi saying here – "This is the same Moshe from beginning to end"? This is hardly on par with "This is the same Yosef from beginning to end".

Rav Simcha Zissel answers this question by citing one of life's great truths: Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The novelty of Moshe's leadership career was that even though he had absolute power and was "politically untouchable," he remained the same modest and humble individual from beginning to end. He defeated the greatest ruler on earth (Pharaoh). He brought the Torah down from Heaven to Earth at Sinai. People were hanging on his every word. They worshipped his footsteps. And yet, he remained an anav [modest person]. The power did not go to his head. He was not corrupted by it. That was quite an accomplishment, unheard of in the annals of mankind! It was noteworthy so as Rashi explains, the Torah makes note of it through the phrase "hu Moshe v'Aharon" [this is (the same) Moshe and Aharon].

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From Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>
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Subject [Rav Kook List]

Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Psalm 99: The Leadership of Moses and Aaron

The psalmist makes a surprising comparison:

"Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who invoke His name - they called out to God, and He answered them. (Ps. 99:6).

This appears to equate the prophet Samuel with Moses and Aaron. With all due respect to Samuel's greatness, can he truly be compared to Moses, about whom the Torah testifies "No other prophet like Moses has arisen in Israel" (Deut. 34:10)?

And yet the Sages taught that Samuel was in fact 'the equal of Moses and Aaron' (Berachot 31b). How can this be?

Two Styles of Leadership

Most people value Torah and mitzvot, not in terms of their intrinsic worth, but as a vehicle to acquire a happy, balanced lifestyle. "Its ways are pleasant ways, and all its paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17). An individual - and a society - following in the path of Torah will live a life of peace and tranquility. The sincerely pious do not become angry or haughty, do not lie or cheat, and are careful to respect others.

Yet in every heart burns an innate love of God. When we are filled with a lofty spirit of pure love, we are inspired to serve God altruistically. The righteous are constantly driven by this motivation for selfless devotion. For most people, however, these are special moments, spiritual high points. For most of their lives, they need to be encouraged to observe

mitzvot, and this happens when they are exposed to the Torah's beautiful ways and practical benefits.

Moses and Aaron were both extraordinary leaders, but they guided the Jewish people in different ways. Moses needed to be on a high spiritual level at all times, a level suitable for receiving prophecy. His mission was to instruct the people in the proper path. In order to accomplish this goal, he needed to live a life detached from the mundane concerns of the common man.

Aaron, on the other hand, "loved peace and pursued peace" (Avot 1:12). He was part of society, involved with the people and their problems. Aaron brought the Torah down to their level, demonstrating its beauty according to their spiritual and moral state.

Thus Moses and Aaron were very different types of leaders. Moses taught the Torah's intrinsic value according to its absolute truth. The Sages described Moses' approach of unyielding idealism as "yikov hadin et ha-har" - 'Let the Law pierce the mountain' (Sanhedrin 6b). This absolute truth was appreciated by tzaddikim at all times, and by the rest of the people at inspired moments. Aaron's task was to promote receptivity to these special moments, as he encouraged the people to elevate their daily lives.

Samuel's Leadership

And what about Samuel? In his tenure as leader and judge, he fulfilled both of these functions. A prophet like Moses, he spread the spirit of true service of God among the spiritual elite, and for the masses at inspired times. And like Aaron, Samuel strengthened Torah observance throughout society, teaching the Torah's pleasant paths and demonstrating how the mitzvot beautify life.

Thus, in his leadership style, Samuel was 'the equal of both Moses and Aaron.'

(Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. II, pp. 18-19)

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<http://www.torah.org/learning/edutainment/>

"Edutainment Weekly"

Insights from this week's Portion: Va'eira

from Jon & The Chevra (torah.org)

"Bring it on! Starring Pharaoh & Bruce Almighty"

This Week's RRR (Relevant Religious Reference):

"Pharaoh saw that there had been a relief (from the plagues), and kept making his heart stubborn" – Exodus, 8:11

This Week's SSC's (Suitable Secular Citations):

SSC 1: "Okay, God. You want me to talk to you? Then talk back... Give me a sign..." A truck pulls in front of Bruce transporting various road signs: 'YIELD', 'WRONG WAY', 'DEAD END', 'DO NOT ENTER', 'STOP'. Oblivious, he comments about the truck: "Oh, what's this joker doing now?!" – Jim Carrey as Bruce in "Bruce Almighty"

SSC 2: "Smite me oh mighty smiter! What, no pestilence no boils?" – Jim Carrey as Bruce in "Bruce Almighty"

"GO AHEAD – MAKE MY DAY"1

You've got to be kidding me, Pharaoh! You just received an uncontested whooping from the first few plagues; the frogs and the wild beasts had you begging for mercy; and now you're back for more as if none of it happened, essentially challenging G-d to "bring it on" and to "go ahead – make your day"?! No offense Pharaoh, but: what's your problem?

If Pharaoh were around today, he might be justified in saying back to us, "What's YOUR PROBLEM, Jews? How is your track record when it comes to learning the correct lessons from history's plagues and miracles? Aren't you the ones that are referred to as the 'stiff-necked people'? Aren't you known for being headstrong, opinionated, stubborn – even blind at times? Haven't you hit the collective snooze button rather than respond to obvious wake up calls throughout the ages?"

Regrettably, Pharaoh may have a point. The Jews are indeed a stiff-necked people! The difference is that Pharaoh channeled his stiff-neck qualities to the negative

point of no return. The Jews, however – beginning with our illustrious ancestors Abraham and Sarah – are also known for positively channeling our "stiff-neckedness", by stubbornly standing against the popular immoralities and injustices that have surfaced throughout the generations... But back to the negative pitfalls of this character trait: why is that we use the imagery of a "STIFF NECK" to illustrate this concept?

THE "STIFF-NECK SYNDROME" OF BRUCE ALMIGHTY

1. NEVER LOOKING BACK: a stiff neck conjures up the image of steamrolling forward with the tunnel vision of self-interest, never bothering to look back and reevaluate our course of action. Numerous danger signs are placed in front of us to reveal that our actions are destructive, immoral, illegal, or inappropriate. Numerous roadblocks are set in our path, all but begging for us to turn back. But somehow, our ego, laziness, pleasure-seeking drive, or other vice of choice has manufactured a prescription pair of blinders for us[2]. As long as we leave these blinders on, our neck becomes figuratively frozen, as if we can't turn our head to reassess our decisions.

Jim Carrey in "Bruce Almighty" clearly suffers from the "stiff-neck syndrome" when he asks G-d for signs, ignores them, and then smashes his car into a light post (see this week's SSC above) – symbolizing how his life might unfold if he proceeds down the path of cluelessness and recklessness. If his similarity to Pharaoh is not evident enough by this point, it becomes absolutely apparent when he looks heavenward and blasphemously challenges the Infinite: "Okay, if that's the way you want it. The gloves are off, pa! Let me see a little wrath! SMITE ME OH MIGHTY SMITER! WHAT, NO PESTILENCE NO BOILS?" But Bruce and Pharaoh are not alone. We all wear these blinders, especially when we tend to view ourselves as being a tad too almighty.

BLOCKING THE FLOW FROM HEAD TO HEART

2. HEAD FROM HEART: a stiff neck is also like an impenetrable impasse, blocking what we know in our heads from flowing down to our hearts. Information we gather remains clogged up in our brains – and as a result, our knowledge never gets the chance to become wisdom. Through "stiffening our necks", we are deciding not to live with what we know to be true. We are blocking ourselves from allowing important truths to filter down and express themselves in our actions. May we all have the good sense to avoid these pitfalls and to channel our tenacious tendencies in a positive direction! May we respond to the Pharaohs of the world that while our Jewish necks are undeniably stiff, we will only use our stubborn natures to live in opposition to what the Pharaohs of the world stand for!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos! Love, Jon & The Chevra

1. From Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan in Dirty Harry

2. The insights of this paragraph were gleaned from Shimon Apisdorf's fantastic Passover Survival Kit

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Could Blood be Kosher?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The first plague that attacked Egypt was that their water turned to blood. Can blood be used as a food color? Indeed we now that the master artisans building the Mishkan used a dye, tola'as shani, which is often assumed to be the "blood" of an insect, in the manufacture of the Kohen Gadol's vestments. This color was also used to dye the curtains and coverings of the Mishkan. In addition, processing the ashes of the parah adumah (Bamidbar 19:6), purifying a metzora and decontaminating a house that became tamei all use tola'as shani (Vayikra 14:4, 49). As we will discover, correctly identifying the tola'as shani not only affects these halachos and those of the Beis HaMikdash, but also concerns a wide assortment of foods and beverages that we eat and drink. Color is an important part of any food and in many cases is one of the main considerations of consumers when choosing food. Food technologists must take into consideration a number of factors when determining the appropriate color to use in a food application. Companies have increased sales by tinkering with the color of foods.

SEEING RED

As is evident from the verse, if your sins will be like shanim, they will become as white as snow; though they be red as the tola, they will become white like wool (Yeshayah 1:18), tola'as shani is a red color. Upon this basis, some authorities

identify tola'as shani as kermes, a shade of scarlet derived from scale insects (see Radak to Divrei HaYamim II 2:6). The ancients derived a red dye from the dried bodies of the species called Kermes ilices, which served as one of the most important pigments for thousands of years. As a matter of fact, the English word crimson derives from this ancient dye.

Are tola'as shani and kermes indeed identical? We should note that the Hebrew word tola'as, which is usually translated worm may include insects and other small invertebrates. Thus, it may indeed be that the tola'as of the verse is a scale insect that produces a red dye. One can rally support for this approach from the verse in Divrei HaYamim (II 3:14), which describes the paroches curtain as woven from techeiles, argaman, karmil, and butz, which is linen; whereas the Torah describes the paroches as made of techeiles, argaman, tola'as shani, and linen (Shemos 26:31). Obviously, karmil is another way of describing tola'as shani. Similarly, when describing the artisans sent by King Hiram of Tyre to help Shelomoh HaMelech build the Beis HaMikdash, Divrei HaYamim (II 2:13) mentions karmil as one of the materials used in construction of the Mishkan, and omits tola'as shani. Thus, karmil, a word cognate to kermes, is the same as tola'as shani, which the Radak assumes originates from the worm itself (Radak to Divrei HaYamim II 2:6). Similarly, the Rambam explains tola'as shani to mean "wool dyed with an insect" (Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 8:13).

However, Rabbeinu Bachyei (Shemos 25:3) takes issue with this approach, insisting that only kosher species may be used for manufacturing the Mishkan and the garments of the kohanim. He bases this position on the Gemara's statement that "only items that one is permitted to eat may be used for the work of heaven," which teaches that one may use only kosher items in the manufacture of tefillin (Shabbos 28a). Rabbeinu Bachyei assumes that the Mishkan itself, whose entire purpose is to serve Hashem, certainly requires all its materials to be kosher.

Which presents us with the question: How does this fit with the description of tola'as shani as a worm derivative?

Rabbeinu Bachyei himself explains that the dye called tola'as shani does not originate from the insect itself but from a fruit or berry that contains an insect. Both Rambam (Hilchos Parah Adumah 3:2) and Rashi (to Yeshayah 1:18) also seem to explain tola'as shani this way. Thus, we might be able to modify our explanation of the Rambam's words "wool dyed with a worm" to mean "wool dyed with a fruit that contains a worm." (However, see the contemporary work Be'akvus Tola'as Hashani, who explains Rashi and the Rambam differently.)

Thus, Rabbeinu Bachyei and possibly the Rambam and Rashi identify the tola'as shani as a fruit that contains a worm, whereas the Radak understands tola'as shani to be the derivative of the kermes insect itself. How does the Radak answer Rabbeinu Bachyei's question that only kosher items may be used to fulfill mitzvos? I know of several ways to resolve this concern:

(1) Some maintain that only the basic substance used to fulfill the mitzvah must be kosher but not a dye that merely coats the surface (cf. Shu"t Noda Bi'Yehudah II Orach Chayim #3). Therefore, tola'as shani may indeed be of a non-kosher source since it is not the material used for the mitzvah, but only colors the materials used.

(2) Others contend that the prohibition to use non-kosher items for mitzvos applies only to tefillin, mezuzos and other mitzvos requiring use of Hashem's name or of verses of Tanach, but that one may use non-kosher items for other mitzvos or for items used in the Beis HaMikdash (see Ran, Rosh HaShanah 26b s.v. umihu af al gav; Shu"t Noda Bi'Yehudah II, Orach Chayim # 3). According to this analysis, tola'as shani is acceptable for the Beis HaMikdash even if it indeed derives from a non-kosher source.

(3) A third approach asserts that kermes dye is kosher since it is no longer recognizable as coming from its original source. This approach is based on early poskim who held that a prohibited food becomes kosher when it transforms completely into a new substance. The Rosh (Berachos 6:35; Shu"t 24:6) cites Rabbeinu Yonah who permitted using musk, a fragrance derived from the gland of several different animals, many of them non-kosher, as a food flavor because it has transformed into a new substance no longer identifiable with its source. Similarly, the Rambam identifies musk as one of the ingredients in the incense burned in the Beis HaMikdash. Based on these authorities, one can theorize that although the source of the kermes is non-kosher, the dye itself is kosher. In a different article I noted that there is much dispute about this chiddush, and that virtually no late halacha authorities permit this, at least in regard to Torah prohibitions.

(4) Others contend that the kermes coloring is kosher since the creatures are first dried -- and an insect dried for twelve months (or the equivalent) is considered now to be an innocuous powder and kosher (Pischei Teshuvah, Yoreh Deah 87:20; Darkei Teshuvah ad loc. and 102:30, which contains a lengthy discussion on this topic; Shu"t Minchas Yitzchak 3:96:2).

Thus, we have several different ways of explaining how the tola'as shani may indeed have been identical with the Egyptian kermes and yet still be an acceptable

dye for mitzvah objects such as the garments of the kohanim and the curtains and coverings of the Mishkan. Analyzing the different opinions about tola'as shani leads into a practical discussion whether kermes is a kosher food coloring.

THE FOOD COLORING INDUSTRY

Whether we like it or not, many of our foods are colored with a host of coloring agents; some derived from food items, such as beets, berries, sugar (caramel coloring), turmeric and annatto; whereas others are derived from inedible materials, such as coal, petroleum and other sources most consumers would prefer to ignore. Although the processing of colorants can involve use of non-kosher ingredients or processing methods that compromise the kashrus of the finished product, only a few food colors are themselves obtained from non-kosher materials. However, among those that originate from non-kosher substances is carmine red, also called cochineal, which is a very common color used to color canned fruits, yogurts, juice drinks, maraschino cherries etc.

THE ORIGIN OF CARMINE

When the Spaniards colonized the New World, they discovered a scale insect, called the cochineal bug, which yields a red color eight times brighter than kermes. The Spaniards valued this insect, developing and marketing its carmine red pigment. The word carmine, used specifically for this color, is derived from the similarity of cochineal to kermes, which it eventually replaced as the most common color. One of the common uses of this dye is in bright red punch, which for this reason became commonly called in camps "bug juice."

KOSHER CARMINE?

Are kermes and carmine kosher for food coloring?

Whether kermes and carmine pigments are kosher or not depends on why some contend that kermes could be used to dye the garments of the kohanim. Let us review the four answers that I quoted above and see how each one impacts our shaylah.

Approach (1) above permitted dyeing a mitzvah item using non-kosher material since the latter is not the primary item but only a coloring. This approach would prohibit use of color from a non-kosher source in a product that one intends to eat. Approach (2) ruled that mitzvah items that do not contain Hashem's name or a holy verse may be derived from non-kosher substances. This reason would also forbid use of kermes or carmine colors for food.

Nevertheless, both the third and fourth approaches mentioned would permit using cochineal coloring in a kosher product.

Approach (3) held that the color is now transformed into a completely different substance and has therefore lost its non-kosher status.

However, although approach #3 held that the color is now transformed and has therefore lost its non-kosher status, the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 114:2) and other authorities (see Rama 467:8 and Magen Avraham 216:3) rule like the Rishonim who prohibited a transformed food item whose original source was prohibited min haTorah. (Some permit a transformed food item whose source is prohibited because of rabbinic injunction [Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos Zahav 216:2; Shu"t Chasam Sofer Shu"t Yoreh Deah #117; Shu"t Imrei Yosher 2:140; Mishnah Berurah 216:7].)

Approach (4) maintained that the kermes scales are dried out to the point where they are no longer non-kosher. Indeed for this reason, some authorities maintain that carmine is kosher (Pischei Teshuvah, Yoreh Deah 87:20; see Minchas Yitzchak 3:96:2). Many years ago, I remember seeing carmine color certified kosher by responsible talmidei chachamim. However, today every respected kashrus agency I know treats carmine color as non-kosher.

The relationship we have with food is not limited to taste and smell. As we see from the laws requiring lighting candles for Shabbos, so that one should enjoy the Shabbos repast. Similarly, the Gemara teaches that a blind person is never satisfied from what he eats (Yoma 74b). Much of the skill involved in catering and the restaurant business is unrelated to cuisine but to the appearance and presentation of the food, in which the choice of colors figures prominently. As we see from the above article, we should keep in mind the kashrus ramifications of the color of the food we eat.

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YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

THE LAWS OF SHABBAT

by Rav Doniel Schreiber

SHIUR #12: Se'udot Shabbat

I. General Background

1. Source

One is obligated to eat shalosh se'udot (three meals) on Shabbat. The source for this is found in the pasuk (Shemot 16:25): "And Moshe said, eat that (the manna) today, for today is a Shabbat to Hashem, today you shall not find it (the manna) in the field." The gemara Shabbat 117b derives from the threefold citation of "ha-yom" (today) in the pasuk that there is an obligation to eat three meals on Shabbat.

There is a dispute amongst poskim whether this is a Torah (Levush Sefer Chareidim 14:3, and Maharal of Prague) or a rabbinic obligation (Maharil no. 94, and Peri Megadim OC 291, in Mishbetzot Zahav note 1). The Arukh Ha-shulchan (OC 291:1) writes that even if shalosh se'udot are not a Torah obligation, at the very least they were instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu. For further research, see Rashi Shabbat 117b s.v. Telata, Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 30:9, and Taz OC 291:1; also note that shalosh se'udot is not counted in the various listings of taryag (613) mitzvot.

2. Are women obligated to eat all shalosh se'udot?

Even though it is not discussed in the gemara, Rishonim cite different reasons as to why women are obligated in the mitzva of eating three Shabbat meals. Rabbeinu Tam (Sefer Ha-yashar volume of responsa 70:4) argues that since "af hen hayu be-oto ha-nes" - i.e., women were also included in the miracle of the manna - women are obligated in the mitzvot of lechem mishneh and shalosh se'udot. The Ran (Shabbat 44a in pages of the Rif s.v. Ve-katav) states that Rabbeinu Tam's reasoning was unnecessary. According to the Ran, women are obligated in these mitzvot simply because men and women are equally obligated in all positive mitzvot of Shabbat; see also Arukh Ha-shulchan 291:4. This is rooted in the rule (gemarot Berakhot 20b and Shevu'ot 20b) that whoever is responsible in shemirat Shabbat (refraining from melakha on Shabbat) is obligated in zekhirat Shabbat (the positive mitzvot of Shabbat). Rabbeinu Tam, however, may understand that this rule only applies to positive Torah obligations, such as kiddush, but not rabbinic ones such as shalosh se'udot (see Maharil cited in Peri Megadim Eshel Avraham OC 291:11).

On the strength of these arguments, the Shulchan Arukh (OC 291:6) rules that women are obligated to eat three Shabbat meals. See MB 291:26, and also shiur #11: Lechem Mishneh, par. 1. This is also the ruling of the Arukh Ha-shulchan (291:4) who notes that many women are generally unaware of this responsibility and proclaims that this must be rectified.

3. One who is not hungry

One must eat all three meals even if one is not hungry (OC 291:1). However, since the whole reason for eating is to increase one's enjoyment, if one is so full that he absolutely cannot eat, one is exempt (OC 291:1 and MB 291:3).

4. What are the proper time periods of each meal?

Some poskim are of the opinion that since the shalosh se'udot are derived from the threefold citation of "yom" (day), each meal should be distinct. Consequently, they should be eaten during three different periods of the day - leil Shabbat (Friday evening), Shabbat morning (prior to midday), and Shabbat afternoon (after midday). See Arukh Ha-shulchan 288:2 and compare with the formulation of the Mishna Shabbat 117b and Rambam Shabbat 30:9. See also Mesorah Torah Journal no. 4 p. 17, where the Rav zt"l posited that one is obligated to eat shalosh se'udot during the times of ma'ariv, shacharit, and mincha in order to fulfill "chatzi la-Hashem ve-chatzi lakhem" (the notion that half the day must be dedicated to spiritual service to Hashem, and the other half to appreciating Hashem by enjoying our physical environment). This idea is based on the Yerushalmi Shabbat 1:3 which applies "chatzi la-Hashem ve-chatzi lakhem" to Shabbat as well as Yom Tov. Davening and eating at each period of the day divides one's service to Hashem on Shabbat between the spiritual and the physical realms.

The details of timing the three meals will be discussed in section II.

5. What are the recommended foods for the shalosh se'udot?

It is preferable for one to enjoy more meat, delicacies, and wine on Shabbat than one does during the week, although one is not obligated to do so (OC 250:2, Shulchan Arukh Ha-rav 250:2, and SSK vol. 2 42:16). Minimally, one should try to eat two cooked dishes and fish (assuming one enjoys fish) at each meal (MB 242:1,2). In today's society, meat may have replaced fish as the greater delicacy. (See SSK, vol. 2, 42:16, note 63.) One should eat warm food at each of the Shabbat meals as this not only honors Shabbat but increases one's enjoyment as

well. (Rema 257:8). However, one who does not like warm meals may enjoy cold meals instead (MB 257:48).

The obligation to eat bread will be discussed in section II.

6. One who cannot afford shalosh se'udot

If one only can afford two meals, he nonetheless fulfills his mitzvat oneg Shabbat with them. Furthermore, one is not obligated to borrow money for a third meal. However, if one cannot afford even two meals, then he should borrow enough money to buy three Shabbat meals; this is so since God guarantees that He will repay the debt. Nonetheless, if one feels that one will not be able to repay the loan, he should forgo mitzvat shalosh se'udot. (See Mishna Berura siman 242 note 3 and SSK, vol. 2 42:18, 19 note 71).

II. Laws pertaining to each of the shalosh se'udot

1. Se'uda rishona (the first meal)

A. Time

The first meal may be eaten as early as pelag ha-mincha (if one has accepted early Shabbat) and as late as alot ha-shachar (dawn) (OC 267:2, MB 267:5, and Shulchan Arukh Ha-rav 271:16). One should begin the meal soon after returning home from shul so that he fulfills the mitzva of sanctifying the Shabbat day by reciting kiddush as soon as possible. However, if one is not hungry, he may delay the se'uda until later in the evening. Clearly, one should not delay the meal if eating later will disrupt the household or detain servants or guests. See OC 271:1 and MB 271:1.

One who did not eat the first meal on Friday must eat three meals on Shabbat day (Rema 291:1).

B. What must one eat to fulfill the mitzva?

One should preferably eat a little more than a ke-beitza (the volume of an egg) of bread; one who has eaten a kezayit (the volume of an olive) of bread has nonetheless fulfilled his obligation (OC 274:4, ibid. 291:1 and MB 291:2). The required amount must be eaten tokh kedei akhilat peras (2-9 minutes).

For further research: Rishonim dispute whether the reason for eating bread is due to oneg Shabbat or kavod Shabbat. See Rashba Berakhot 49b (oneg) and Tosafot Pesachim 101a, s.v. Ta'amo (kavod). See also MB 274:9.

2. Se'uda shniya (the second meal)

A. Time

Since it is prohibited to fast beyond chatzot (midday) of Shabbat day (OC 288:1) one must begin the se'uda shniya prior to chatzot. Even if one has taken something to eat or drink before chatzot (e.g., one drank water before tefilla, or partook from the kiddush in shul), some poskim still require him to begin the meal before chatzot (Arukh Ha-shulchan 288:2). Other poskim rule that if one is involved in tefilla or Torah study, he may fast past midday and start the se'uda shniya later (MB 288:2).

B. What must one eat to fulfill the mitzva?

See se'uda rishona, B, above. It is advisable not to overeat during this meal so that one will have an appetite for se'uda shlishit (OC 291:1).

3. Se'uda shlishit (the third meal)

A. Time

i. Earliest Time

Rishonim dispute whether the se'uda shlishit may commence any time during the day (Ba'al Halakhot cited in Ran, Shabbat 43b in pages of the Rif, s.v. Tanu rabban kama) or specifically at the onset of mincha time (a half-hour after midday in sha'ot zemaniyot - see shiur #3, part B, section IV) (Tosafot Shabbat 118a, s.v. Be-mincha, and Rosh ibid. 16:5). Shulchan Arukh (OC 291:2) rules in accordance with this latter opinion.

ii. Before or After Mincha?

Some Rishonim posit that one should eat before davening mincha; this is out of concern for the view that one may not drink between mincha and ma'ariv (Rabbeinu Tam Tosafot Pesachim 105a, s.v. Ve-hanafka mina, and Rosh ibid. 10:13). Others write that it is best to eat this meal after davening mincha (Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 30:10, Hagahot Maimoniyot ibid, note 20). The Rema (OC 291:2) cites both opinions and mentions that the custom is to follow the latter opinion. If it is difficult to have the meal after mincha, one may eat se'uda shlishit before mincha (MB 291:11). See also Arukh Ha-shulchan 291:1.

iii. Latest Time

Although the Shulchan Arukh (OC 299:1) forbids one to begin eating after the onset of sheki'a (sunset) (see MB *ibid.*) due to the approaching mitzva of havdala, the Mishna Berura allows one to start se'uda shlishit in a case of need until a half-hour before tzeit ha-kokhavim (nightfall). Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* (Igrat Moshe OC vol. 4 no. 69 par. 6), however, is stringent; he rules that one may only begin eating until a half a mil (i.e., 9 minutes) after the onset of sheki'a. If one began eating prior to sheki'a, he may continue eating even after tzeit ha-kokhavim (nightfall) (OC 299:1 and MB *ibid.*). For further research see Bi'ur Halakha 299:1 s.v. Mi-shetechshakh.

B. Must one eat bread and have lechem mishneh at se'uda shlishit, or do other foods suffice to fulfill one's obligation?

This is disputed among the Rishonim. Many Rishonim are of the opinion that one must not only eat bread at the third Shabbat meal (Tosafot, Yoma 79b, s.v. Minei) but have lechem mishneh as well (Rambam Hilkhos Shabbat 30:9, Rosh and Tur OC 291). This is due to manna's status as a major staple and its connection with shalosh se'udot. Other Rishonim rule that even eating other foods suffices (Rabbeinu Tam Tosafot Berakhot 49b. s.v. I, Rabbeinu Yona Berakhot 36b in pages of Rif, s.v. Birkat, and Ran Shabbat 44a in pages of Rif s.v. Ve-ika).

The Rema (OC 291:4) rules that it is best to eat bread and to have lechem mishneh. When this is not possible, one should recite birkat ha-motzi on a whole loaf of bread. If one is too full to eat bread, the Shulchan Arukh (OC 291:5) rules that one may fulfill the obligation of se'uda shlishit by eating mezonot foods. If this is not possible, one may eat meat or fish (like Tosafot *ibid.*), or as a last resort fruit (like Rabbeinu Yona and Ran *ibid.*).

The Arukh Ha-shulchan (OC 291:12), though, vehemently disagrees with this leniency, arguing that, inasmuch as the Rif, Rambam, Rosh, Tur, and Shulchan Arukh fundamentally require one to eat bread, one may eat foods other than bread only if one is ill. He furthermore contends that one who is lenient in this matter has committed a "great violation."

For further research: See Mesorah Torah Journal vol. 5 p. 14 which records an insight of the Rav *zt"l* (Maran Rabbi Joseph B. Halevi Soloveitchik) on the lenient opinion that allows one to fulfill se'uda shlishit by eating foods other than bread. Why should se'uda shlishit be different from the first two meals? The Rav *zt"l* explains that this opinion understands that the mitzva of shalosh se'udot does not require one to eat bread at any of the Shabbat meals. Rather, it requires one to only eat food, be it meat, fish, or fruit. On the other hand, the requirement of eating bread at the Shabbat meals springs from a completely different source - oneg Shabbat (the mitzva to have enjoyment on Shabbat). Oneg Shabbat divides Shabbat into two periods, Friday night and Shabbat day. Each period requires one meal consisting of bread. Thus, one is required to have one meal of bread on Friday night (the first meal) and one meal of bread on Shabbat day (the second meal). Once oneg of Shabbat day has already been fulfilled, there is no requirement of bread at the third meal.

An alternate reason can be found in Rabbeinu Yona (Berakhot 36b in pages of Rif, s.v. Birkat). He cites Rabbanei Tzarfat who say that the obligation to eat bread springs from the obligation to recite kiddush; kiddush must be recited where there is a meal (ein kiddush ela be-makom se'uda; see shiurim #8 and #9). Since the obligation to recite kiddush is only once on Friday night and once on Shabbat day, there is no necessity to eat bread at se'uda shlishit.

C. If one has lechem mishneh or bread for se'uda shlishit, must one cover them prior to birkat ha-motzi?

This depends on whether one covers the bread as a remembrance of the miracle of the manna or because bread generally has priority over wine. See shiur #7 Kiddush - part 1 paragraph 5. The Arukh Ha-shulchan (OC 299:14) understands that we follow the latter opinion. Thus, since we do not recite kiddush at se'uda shlishit, there is no need to cover the bread.

D. Must one drink wine at Seuda Shlishit?

Although there is no mitzva of kiddush at se'uda shlishit, it is commendable to recite a blessing over wine during the course of the meal (OC 291:4 and MB 291:21). See also Rambam Hilkhos Shabbat 30:9 and Arukh Ha-shulchan OC 291:10. The Mekubalim, cited in Arukh Ha-shulchan *ibid.*, state that one should recite kiddush at se'uda shlishit as well. This does not appear to be our custom.

E. Talmud Torah and Seuda Shlishit

One should not schedule se'uda shlishit to take place during one's appointed time of Torah learning. However, one should not extend one's Torah learning or shiur, past the time of se'uda shlishit. One should even leave an unduly

long shiur if the lengthy shiur will impinge upon one's fulfillment of se'uda shlishit (Peri Megadim, Eshel Avraham, OC 290, Arukh Ha-shulchan OC 290:3, Kaf Ha-chaim OC 290 no. 14, and Mishna Berura 290:8).

However, if one schedules se'uda shlishit to take place during the shiur, instead of before or after the shiur, then one must attend the shiur even if it will mean missing se'uda shlishit (Rokeiach no. 55; see Sha'ar Ha-tziyun 290:5). The Magen Avraham (OC 290) adds that this ruling only applies to a shiur that educates people in halakha and inspires "fear of Heaven." This would exclude shiurim limited to theoretical analyses or lectures on politics and the like. See also Bach, OC 290:2.