



Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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Light Insight

“And G-d said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron, take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt...so they should turn into blood.’” (Exodus 7:19)

Although G-d commanded Moses himself to “trigger” most of the ten plagues that befell Egypt when the Jewish People were enslaved there, G-d commanded Moses to instruct Aaron to trigger the first three plagues — blood, frogs, and lice.

Why were these three plagues specifically not brought about by Moses’ own hand?

In this G-d demonstrated to us the importance of recognizing and

appreciating the kindnesses that others have done for us. These three plagues afflicted entities that had aided Moses in the past, and thus for him to strike a plague upon them showed a lack of respect and appreciation for their assistance.

For example, when Moses was hidden from Pharaoh in a small floating basket, the Nile river played a part in saving Moses’ life. Since the waters of the Nile would be used for the plagues of both blood, when the Nile itself turned into blood, and frogs, which swarmed out of the Nile to cover the land, therefore Moses could not be the one to strike the Nile river and bring about those plagues. Thus G-d told Moses that

Aaron should do it.

In another of the events of Moses’ life that the Torah details, Moses rescued a fellow Jew by killing an Egyptian that was tormenting him. To avoid being killed himself by the Egyptian police, Moses buried the dead tormentor in the soil to hide his body. For the protection that the soil offered Moses, he was indebted. So for the third plague, lice, that arose from the soil, G-d did not ask Moses to strike the soil and initiate it.

Since the water and the earth had been so kind to Moses, G-d had him refrain from initiating the three plagues which came from the earth and the water, demonstrating to us how careful we must be to be gracious to every entity, and certainly to any person, that helps us.

LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel

Antipatris

Built on the ruins of the Biblical city Aphek, site of a great battle between Israel and the Philistines recorded in the Book of Samuel, Antipatris is mentioned in the Talmudic description of the proliferation of Torah study during the reign of King Chizkiyahu: “They checked from Dan to Beersheba (north to south) and found not one unlearned Jew; from Geves

to Antipatris (east to west) and found not a single child or adult unlearned in the laws of purity.”

Antipatris (or Antiparis as it appears in the Talmud) is also linked to a holiday of the Second Temple period known as “Mount Gerizim Day” held on the 25th of the month of Teves, which is the current month.

The Jew-hating Kuttites (Samaritans) in the Land of Israel incited Alexander the Great to destroy the Holy Temple, and he began marching at the head of his army towards Jerusalem to do their

bidding. When the High Priest, Simon the Righteous, learned of this, he donned his high priestly garments and, together with Jerusalem notables, walked all night to meet the approaching attacker. The two finally met at Antipatris.

There Alexander descended from his royal chariot and proceeded to bow down before Simon the High Priest. When he arose he explained that it was a vision of the High Priest which appeared to him before every battle that had always led him to victory. The tables were then turned on the Kuttites as the destruction which they planned for the Temple was visited instead upon their shrine on Mount Gerizim.

The Other SIDE of the Story

GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Sell U Phone

I was speaking on the phone recently when someone called me

from his cellular phone. I asked him to please wait a minute so that I could say good-bye to the person I had been speaking to on the other line. He said, "Call me back. I'm hanging up." And he did.

I thought, "How cheap can he

be, asking me to call him back instead of waiting for one minute?" But when I called him back, I understood why he had been in such a hurry. "I have to speak very fast," he said. "My phone battery is about to go dead."

And it did.

Response Line

Marilyn Brewer wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Who is Hashem? I have never found that name in the Bible.*

Dear Marilyn,

We use the word *Hashem* to refer to G-d. Literally, *Hashem* means "The Name." The word *Hashem* actually appears in the Torah, as in "...fear the great and awesome *Hashem* (Name) — the L-rd your G-d." (*Numbers 28:58*).

Essentially, the reason for using a

substitute is out of respect. The actual name of *Hashem* has inherent sanctity and must be treated with respect, for example, it may not be erased.

Sheldon J. Elfenbein wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Please differentiate for me between the Talmud, Mishna, and Gemara.*

Dear Sheldon,

The *Mishna* is the famous composition by Rabbi Yehudah the Prince

in which he compiled the Oral Law (revealed at Mt. Sinai) and the major teachings of the Tanaim, the early scholars from the time of the Second Temple until about 100 years after its destruction. The *Talmud* is the composition containing the explanations of the Mishnah by the Amoraim, the later scholars who lived after the death of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince, circa 220 CE-500 CE. It was compiled mainly by the Sages Ravina and Rav Ashi in the last generation of Amoraim.

The word *Gemara* means Talmud in Aramaic, the language commonly used in the period the Talmud was composed; hence these terms are used interchangeably.

.....Light Update

Dedication of Hochstein Residence Halls

Over 500 full-time students from countries around the world who reside in the dormitories of Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, participated in the mov-

ing ceremony this week dedicating their living quarters as the Hochstein Residence Halls.

Mr. Bernard Hochstein, his wife Miriam and their family have been staunch supporters of Ohr Somayach for many years and the Residence Halls were dedicated by them in honor of the memory of Mr.

Hochstein's parents and brother, obm.

Students representing the Hebrew speaking, English speaking, Russian speaking and Spanish-Portuguese speaking departments expressed their gratitude, in their own languages, to the Hochstein Family on behalf of all the students residing in the Hochstein Residence Halls.