

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHEMOT · FOR THE WEEK ENDING 23 TEVET 5760 · JAN. 1, 2000 · VOL. 7 NO. 13

PARSHA INSIGHTS

HAPPY NEW SHABBAT!

"And these are the names of the Children of Israel." (1:1)

New Year's Eve is the loneliest night of the year. Such unrealized expectation! Hanging over one's head, the monumental question: "Where will I be, and what will I be doing when the new year is rung in?"

This year, that question will be amplified a thousand times.

And what will most people be doing? Immersed in a sense of deep introspection on what the coming millennium portends? I doubt it. Deep introspection of the bottom of a large Scotch is more likely. Many, with the help of legal or not-quite-legal substances, will try and escape from anything which resembles even mild contemplation. The more athletic amongst us will, of course, be experi-

encing the deep significance of the new millennium by jumping into fountains from London to Lagos.

Why will the world react to what it considers the most significant moment in a thousand years with total superficiality and escapism?

It's not by coincidence that this week, we begin reading the book of *Shemot*. In English the second book of the Torah is called Exodus, but in Hebrew, *Shemot* means "Names." In the Holy Tongue, the name of something defines its essence. When G-d created the world, He brought each animal before Adam, and Adam gave that creature its name. Adam's names were not imaginative. They were definitive. Adam gave expression to the essence of each and every creature through its name. The name is the pipeline to the spiritual essence above. The name is the root and the summation of essence.

Great events connect us to our essence. When someone gets married, is born or dies, we step back and take stock of our entire lives. Great events, whether they really are great or we merely perceive them as great, bring us to introspection. The secular world when faced with a "great event" realizes that all it has to look forward to is lines under its eyes, cosmetic surgery and heart disease. The Jew, when confronted with great events, sees how everything in this world leads beyond this world.

That's why this Friday, while the rest of the world is drowning its sorrows in various kinds of anesthesia, the Jewish People will be doing what it has been doing for the last three thousand years — basking in the light of the Shabbat candles, making blessings over wine and bread, and ushering in a day of rest and tranquillity with quiet faith. *Shabbat Kodesh*. The Holy Shabbat.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the death of Yosef, the Book of *Bereishet* (Genesis) comes to an end. The Book of *Shemot* (Exodus) chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov. At the beginning of this week's *Parsha*, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Jews, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate increases, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all newborn males. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and hides him in the reeds by the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts him, although she knows he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe and arranges for his mother Yocheved to be his nursemaid. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and Moshe kills the Egyptian. Realizing his life is in danger, Moshe flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yitro approves their subsequent marriage. On Chorev (Mt. Sinai), Moshe

witnesses the burning bush where Hashem commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to *Eretz Yisrael*, the land promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People will doubt his being Hashem's agent, so Hashem enables Moshe to perform three miraculous transformations to validate himself in the people's eyes: Transforming his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood. When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker Hashem tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman. Aharon greets Moshe on his return to Egypt and they petition Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that the Jews must produce the same quota of bricks as before but without being given supplies. The people become dispirited, but Hashem assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

DESTRUCTIVE SALVATION

After 210 years of Egyptian bondage, G-d finally redeemed us with unparalleled miracles. Surely G-d could have wrought miracles two centuries earlier and saved a lot of trouble.

Both the Egyptian bondage and its subsequent Exodus were promised to Avraham long before they occurred. The slavery and oppression were part of G-d's plan. The Prophet Yeshaya explains that we are not subject to the whim of our oppressors. Rather, our nation's suffering throughout the ages is part of G-d's plan. When the soul of the nation becomes soiled, when we stray from the Torah's path, G-d allows our oppressors teach us what a weak little nation we are.

Yeshaya foresees the time when the

People of Israel will repent. When we return to live a life of Torah, G-d will exact justice on our enemies and gather the exiled Jews home to Jerusalem.

THE VIEW FROM WITHIN

"For (they think) that each mitzvah is only there for another mitzvah, one line for another line, another one for another one, pettiness here, pettiness there."
(28:10)

With the above — some of Yeshayahu's sharpest words ever to the Jewish People — the prophet rebukes those people in whose eyes Torah law is mere semantics — one *mitzvah* for another *mitz-*

vah. Such people view Torah study as mental gymnastics — one line for another, nothing but pettiness.

What flaw underlies these people's skewed outlook?

It would be impossible to appreciate the beauty of the Bayeaux tapestry just by looking at a square inch of it. Likewise, the beauty of the Torah can only be appreciated by seeing the whole picture. The prophet's criticism is that they never studied the Torah. They have viewed only a tiny corner of it from the outside. And still they dare to mock it.

If we engage in proper Torah study and plumb its depths, then we will be able to see the Torah as one beautiful tapestry.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

KIRYAT SEFER

"Kalev declared: 'To whomever shall conquer Kiryat Sefer I shall allow to marry my daughter Achsah.'" (Shoftim 1:12)

As the Jewish People under the leadership of Yehoshua began their conquest of Eretz Yisrael, the Tribe of Yehuda headed by Kalev ben Yefuneh reached the city of Kiryat Sefer in its efforts to drive out the Canaanites from Yehuda's portion of the land. The city presented a serious challenge that motivated Kalev to make this attractive offer. It was Kalev's half-brother, Otniel ben Knaz, who conquered the city and won the hand of his extraordinary niece.



The gemara (*Mesechta Temurah 16a*) interprets the name Kiryat Sefer as meaning "the city of the book" and ascribes a different sort of triumph to Otniel. During the mourning period following the passing of Moshe, 1700 halachic interpretations received from him were forgotten. It was Otniel who, through his scholarly talents, restored them to his people and won the hand of Achsah.

The city today bearing the name Kiryat Sefer is about a half-hour's distance from Jerusalem, and is fast becoming the third largest *charedi* community in Eretz Yisrael. Right next to it is an area designated to house an Ohr Somayach housing project in the very near future.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"Remove your shoes from upon your feet" (Shemot 3:5)

Why does the verse say: "Remove your shoes from upon your feet?" Wouldn't "Remove your shoes" be enough? Certainly Moshe's shoes were on his feet!

Rather, the word for shoe, *na'al*, can also mean glove (in Biblical Hebrew), as in the glove that Boaz gave when purchasing a field (*Ruth 4:7*). Therefore, the verse needs to specify "from upon your feet."

• *Da'at Zekeinim M'Ba'alei HaTosefot*

Submitted by Avraham Yitzchak Elbaz, Jerusalem

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by
OHR SOMAYACH
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

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Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
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IT'S THE POTENTIAL THAT COUNTS

Is the testimony of witnesses in writing acceptable as evidence in a *Beit Din* (a court ruling according to Torah Law)? The difference of opinion on this question revolves around a passage of the Torah paraphrased in our gemara: "Upon the testimony coming from the mouths of two or three witnesses shall the truth be established." (*Devarim 19:15*)

Based on this rule of evidence, our Sages determined that testimony must come "from their mouths, but not from their writing."

Rashi, in his commentary on the Torah, explains this as an insistence on oral testimony which disqualifies testimony which the witnesses send in writing to the court. Tosefot, however, quotes Rabbeinu Tam as stating that it is customary for witnesses to send their written testimony to the court. According to his view, the Torah only disqualified the testimony of witnesses who do not recall the event at all and rely *entirely* on the record they once wrote. If they do remember the event, however, there is no problem in their transmitting their testimony about it to the court in writing.

There seems to be a support for Rashi's position from the gemara (*Mesechta Gittin 71a*) which disqualifies a mute from being a witness since he is incapable of saying his testimony. When the gemara questions this by suggesting that he is capable of writing his testimony, the Sage Abaye explains that the Torah disqualified written testimony on the basis of the above quoted passage.

Rabbeinu Tam's response to this challenge is to refer us to a general rule found in *Mesechta Menachot (103b)*. The *mishna* there tells us that if someone donates a *mincha* (flour offering) of 60 *esronim* he can bring the flour in one vessel; but if he donates 61 he must bring 60 in one vessel and the remaining one in another vessel. What limits a vessel to 60 *esronim* is the fact that this is the maximum amount which can be effectively blended with a *lug* of oil. The gemara challenges this explanation on the basis of the rule that a *mincha* is kosher even if the blending process was not done at all. To this, Rabbi Zeira responds that it is only kosher if it had the *potential* to be effectively blended and that it is the potential, not the actual blending, which is the determinant. In the same fashion, concludes Rabbeinu Tam, the Torah did not insist on a witness actually *saying* his testimony but rather on his *potential* to say it. The mute who lacks this potential is disqualified even if he writes his testimony, but a witness who has the potential to speak, and remembers his testimony, can also submit this testimony in writing.

• *Yevamot 31b*

THE UNFAITHFUL MINOR

A woman who willingly commits adultery is forbidden to her husband. What about a minor (less than 12 years old) whose father used the power the Torah gave him to marry off his daughter — will she too become forbidden to her husband if she willingly commits adultery?

Rambam (*Laws of Forbidden Relations 3:2 and Laws of Sotah 2:4*) rules that she does become forbidden as a result of willingly committing adultery, in the same fashion that a grown woman does. His ruling is challenged by Ravid on the basis of our gemara which states that the willingness of a minor is considered coercion because of her lack of maturity, and she is therefore not forbidden to her husband; only the wife of a *kohen* becomes forbidden as a result of forced relations. He also raises a question about the warning which Rambam says is given by the husband who suspects his minor wife of infidelity, a warning which if ignored can lead to her becoming forbidden to him even without witnesses to actual adultery, only to her secluding herself with the man whom she was warned to avoid. How, he asks, can a warning have any meaning in regard to a minor who lacks the maturity to understand its significance?

In regard to the challenge from our gemara, the Maggid Mishna suggests that no definitive ruling was given to the effect that a minor does not become forbidden to her husband. The gemara merely undertook to refute an attempt to prove that our *mishna* must not be discussing a case of willful wife swapping because such action would have made the sinful women offenders forbidden to their husbands, something which the *mishna* states clearly is not the case. Perhaps the women in question were minors, challenges the gemara, and the willful adultery of a minor is considered coercion and does not make her forbidden? The gemara then proceeds to prove its interpretation of the *mishna* from another detail in it and therefore does not continue its discussion of a minor's adultery. Since Rambam has a basis for his opinion from another gemara (*Mesechta Ketubot 9a*) he did not view our gemara as a definitive ruling on this issue.

As for the question as to how can a warning to a minor be meaningful, the answer may be found in the approach taken by the Ohr Somayach (*Laws of Forbidden Relations 3:2*) in regard to the problem of how a minor can become forbidden to her husband if she is not yet obligated in *mitzvot*. He cites the famous ruling of Maharik that a woman who committed adultery because she thought that it was not forbidden is still considered a willful adulteress and is forbidden to her husband. The reason for this is that in explaining why she becomes forbidden, the Torah does not stress the sin involved, only the fact that she "betrayed her husband." Ignorance of the law may serve as mitigation of the sin but not of the betrayal. Even though a minor lacks the maturity to be held responsible for *mitzvot* or to be punished for violation, she is expected to be capable of being faithful to her husband. The warning therefore has a meaning and her unfaithfulness does result in her being forbidden.

• *Yevamot 33b*

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why does the verse say “And Yosef was in Egypt?”
2. Why did Pharaoh specifically choose water as the means of killing the Jewish boys? (Two reasons.)
3. “She saw that he was good.” What did she see “good” about Moshe that was unique?
4. Which Hebrew men were fighting each other?
5. Why did the Midianites drive Yitro’s daughters away from the well?
6. How did Yitro know that Moshe was Yaakov’s descendant?
7. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed?
8. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted Hashem’s promise to redeem them?
9. Which expression of redemption would assure the people that Moshe was the true redeemer?
10. What did the staff turning into a snake symbolize?
11. For how long did Moshe refuse to be the redeemer of the Jewish People?
12. Why didn’t Moshe want to be the leader?
13. “And Hashem was angry with Moshe...” What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
14. How many names did Moshe’s father-in-law have?
15. What was special about Moshe’s donkey?
16. About which plague was Pharaoh warned first?
17. Why didn’t the elders accompany Moshe and Aharon to Pharaoh? How were they punished?
18. Which tribe did not work as slaves?
19. Who were the: a) *nogsim* b) *shotrim*?
20. How were the *shotrim* rewarded for accepting the beatings on behalf of their fellow Jews?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:5 - This verse adds that despite being in Egypt as a ruler, Yosef maintained his righteousness.
2. 1:10,22 - He hoped to escape Divine retribution, as Hashem promised never to flood the entire world. Also, his astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer’s downfall would be through water.
3. 2:2 - When he was born, the house was filled with light.
4. 2:13 - Datan and Aviram.
5. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed on Yitro for abandoning idol worship.
6. 2:20 - The well water rose towards Moshe.
7. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so too Moshe would be protected by Hashem.
8. 3:12 - The merit that they were destined to receive the Torah.
9. 3:16,18 - “I surely remembered (*pakod pakadeti*).”
10. 4:3 - It symbolized that Moshe spoke ill of the Jews by saying that they wouldn’t listen to him, just as the original snake sinned through speech.
11. 4:10 - Seven days.
12. 4:10 - He didn’t want to take a position above that of his older brother, Aharon.
13. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a *kohen*.
14. 4:18 - Seven.
15. 4:20 - It was used by Avraham for *akeidat* Yitzchak and will be used in the future by *mashiach*.
16. 4:23 - Death of the firstborn.
17. 5:1 - The elders were accompanying Moshe and Aharon, but they were afraid and one by one they slipped away. Hence, at the giving of the Torah, the elders weren’t allowed to ascend with Moshe.
18. 5:5 - The tribe of Levi.
19. 5:6 - a) Egyptian taskmasters; b) Jewish officers.
20. 5:14 - They were chosen to be on the Sanhedrin.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS “QUESTION”)

Emilio Kohn from Montevideo, Uruguay
<kohn@cs.com.uy> wrote:

“And she called him Moshe, for she said: ‘I drew him (*m’shithihu*) from the water.’ ” (2:10) “Moshe” was the name Pharaoh’s daughter gave to the little baby. But wasn’t there a name his parents gave him? I would like to know why, when we read the Torah we always find the name Moshe and not the other one?

Dear Emilio Kohn,

The Midrash relates that Moshe had 10 names. His father called him Chever, his mother called him Yekutiel, his sister Miriam called him Yered, etc. Yet the name given by Pharaoh’s

daughter was the one chosen by G-d. The Torah never refers to him by any name other than Moshe. Why?

Pharaoh’s daughter saved Moshe’s life and adopted him and cared for him as her very own son. Therefore, she merited that her name prevailed. Moshe himself may have used this name out of gratitude to her. This teaches us the great importance of gratitude.

Another reason the Torah calls him Moshe is the significance of the name itself. “Moshe” means that just as he was rescued and drawn from the water, so too he will rescue others from hardship, and that is what he did.

• *Shemot Rabbah* 1:26, *Vayikrah Rabbah* 1:3

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.org.il with your questions on any Parsha!

HIP! HIP! PHOOEY!

Eric Posnack
<eposnack@sapient.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
I once heard that the expression, “Hip, hip, hurrah!” has anti-Semitic roots. The reason given was that during pogroms in Europe and Russia, excited masses would scream, “Hierosylma est Perdita,” Latin for “Jerusalem is lost,” which later was shortened to its acronym, “hep.” Is there any truth to this?

Dear Eric,

The phrase does have anti-Semitic roots. Rioters in Europe sometimes shouted “Hep! Hep!” while on prowl for Jews, and mob harassment of Jews in Hamburg, Frankfurt, and other German cities in 1819 became known as the “Hep! Hep!” riots. Hitler’s storm troopers adopted this jeer.

Regarding its source, Professor Robert Michael of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (E-mail: rmichael@umasds.edu) told us: “I have been looking for years but have not found any authoritative source for this phrase. Lots of arguments from German historians who feel it is just a call as for goats to get moving.”

But according to Dagobert Runes in *The War Against the Jew*, “Hep! Hep!” was an anti-Semitic riot slogan shouted by the Crusaders, deriving from the first letters of the Latin phrase “*Hierosylma Est Perdita* (Jerusalem is destroyed).” Another source claims it was a common toast used at Roman feasts to celebrate Rome’s defeat of Jerusalem in which one person would say “*Hierosolyma Est Perdita* — Jerusalem is destroyed,” and the guests would shout “Hurrah!”

Interestingly, the word “hurrah” is

similar to the word which King David predicts the “Children of Edom (Rome)” will shout as they destroy Jerusalem: “Remember, G-d, for the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem — for those who say ‘*Arruh! Arruh!* Destroy it to its very foundation!’” (Psalms 137)

DULBERG UPDATE

Most of you may already know about the Dulberg girls, two observant Israeli children taken away from their mother by the Italian courts. The Revered Rabbi Nissim Karelitz, *shlita*, has called this “the classic case of redemption of captives in our time.”

In brief: After four years of divorce, Moshe Dulberg of Genoa Italy reopened custody hearings against his ex-wife Tali when he learned of her move towards observant Judaism. He claimed that being an observant Jew renders her unfit to act as mother to their two girls.

In an outrageous court case in which Orthodox Jews were likened to drug addicts and war criminals, the Italian courts accepted the father’s claim. The mother’s great love for her girls and the girls’ adamant wish to remain with her were accepted as evidence *against* the mother as proof that she was indoctrinating the girls into a strange cult.

As a result, the court awarded complete custody to the father. The mother has been declared no longer legal guardian and is cut off from all contact with the girls in their native tongue, Hebrew. Her one monthly visit involves severe and complicated restrictions, and the girls are suffering as a result.

The father attempts to break the girls of their observant lifestyle. For example, he keeps the girls separate from one another and reads to them from the New Testament. Last year the father converted to Catholicism and has been baptized. For a full summary of this case, write to <amechad@isdn.net.il>

On a positive note, your emails, faxes, and letters of protest have apparently had a substantial effect. If you have not already done so, write, fax or email your protest to the following addresses, expressing your outrage — respectfully, of course — at the injustice of this court decision that denies the basic human rights of these girls and their mother:

(1) Ambassador Francesco Paolo Fulci/
Permanent Representative of Italy to
the United Nations
Two U.N. Plaza, 24th Floor
N.Y., N.Y. 10017
Phone: 212-486-9191
Fax: 212-486-1036
Email: Italy@un.int

(2) His Excellency Ambassador
Ferninando Salleo, Permanent
Representative of Italy to the United
States, Embassy of Italy
1601 Fuller St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
Fax: 202-483-2187.

(3) The Honorable Carlo Azeglio
Ciampi, President of Italy
Pallazo de Cuirinale
Rome, Italy 00187
Fax 3906-46992384

(4) The Honorable Massimo D’Alema,
Prime Minister of Italy
Palazzo Chigi, 370 Piazza Colonna
Rome, Italy 00187
Fax: 39066783998

Re: Y2K and the “Year 2100 Prayer Book Bug” (Ohrnet Vayechi):

Regarding the date for rain prayers changing to the 5th and 6th in the year 2100; I once saw an old *siddur* that had the 3rd & 4th.

• Zvi Freund <miltonf@villagenet.com>

Hopefully, by the year 2100 the *mashiach* will already have come and re-established the central *Beit Din* in Jerusalem, so that all the calendar issues will be based on witnesses and the judge’s decision.

• Gianfranco Di Segni, Rome (Italy) <gdisegni@ibc.rm.cnr.it>

It’s really incorrect to call this year the millenium. The millenium is next year, not this year, because in their calendar there is no year 0.

• M. Perlman via the Internet

Re: Food Fight (Ohrnet Vayigash):

Regarding confiscating food from students: I was advised that when taking anything from a student I should ask him to *give* it to me rather than *taking* it. I try to be sure to return the item after school to show that I am acting for his benefit and not for any personal gain.

• Breindi Frishman <breindi@juno.com>

Re: Colored Candles (Ohrnet Miketz):

Regarding the reason for colored Chanuka candles: Many manufacturers recognize that some of us are too *ferklempt* to remember which night it is, so the candles are color coded: Two reds for the first night, three greens for the second night... This is sometimes harder than calculating the nights since most of the subtle pastels are indiscernible to folks like me with red/green color blindness.

• Jerry Jacob <jj@forprofit.com>

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

Giving People the Benefit of the Doubt

Some people pay little regard to the mitzvah to judge others favorably; so entrenched are they in their negative outlook, they feel that any attempt to change their attitude wouldn’t work. Well, we at Ohr Somayach insist that it...

WOOD WORK

My parents visited us in Israel. My father and I went to Me’ah Shearim one day to order some wood for an item we were going to build. The owner of a small shop offered to make the item for us in his shop for a reasonable price. We gave him the exact dimensions for the item and he gave a price of 130 shekels. We agreed and gave him a 50 shekel deposit.

A few days later we picked up the finished item. We paid him 80 shekels and left with the item. When we got home, my wife told me the owner had called to tell us we owed more money, and that I could come by his shop to pay him. We didn’t have his phone number, so there was no way to reach him to clarify the matter. Neither my father nor I remembered owing more money. We felt sure that we had paid for everything as agreed.

My father thought the owner was just trying to get more

money out of us, and I was embarrassed. I assured my father that since the owner was rather old, he probably forgot that we had given him a deposit. In any case, I had no intention of giving him any more money.

A few days later, I was in Me’ah Shearim. I felt bad about the incident — both because my father thought that the man had tried to cheat us, and because the elderly store-owner had forgotten the deposit and thought we still owed him money.

Since I had the receipt for the deposit with me, I decided to go out of my way to the shop to show him and settle his mind. When I got to the shop, and showed him the receipt, the owner smiled and shook his head. He gently reminded me that at our first meeting, as my father and I had been on our way out the door, as an afterthought, we had asked him to make a small addition to the item. He had agreed, but since it required more work he had told us it would cost extra. My father and I had forgotten all about it!

The owner told me that he wasn’t worried about the small sum of money, but called because it wasn’t good for a person not to pay for something they had agreed to.

• Name@Withheld

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

1:10	RAMBAN Politics of Genocide	3:18	The Code Word for Redemption	2:11,13,17	Reactions to Injustice
2:2	Certainty of Moshe’s Rescue	4:10	Moshe’s Speech Impediment		KLI YAKAR
3:5	The Burning Bush	4:13	Moshe’s Humility	2:2	Light and Three Months
3:8	Qualities of Eretz Yisrael	4:19	Moshe’s Family as Proof	2:7	Prophecy of Miriam
3:12	Moshe’s Concerns	2:10	SFORNO Moshe’s Name	2:13	Striking Words