

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha is sponsored by Sony and Sharon Douer wishing Mazal Tov to their son Maurice and his wife Daniella on the arrival of their baby daughter Hannah Ruth.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
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PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE!

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 85a) tells how R' Chiya taught Torah to young children.

He would plant flax, spin thread from the flax, weave nets, trap animals, skin the animals, and make parchment from their hides, upon which the words of the Torah would be inscribed.

Our Sages ask why R Chiya needed to go through such a lengthy process. Would it not have been easier to buy the parchment, or even better, a Torah scroll?

Let us take a closer look into our Parasha for some further insight.

Our Parasha begins on a seemingly sombre note.

Moshe went to Pharaoh to ask for the Bnei Yisrael to be relieved of their duties in order to serve Hashem. Pharaoh responded by making life even more difficult for the Bnei Yisrael and Moshe complained to Hashem regarding his lack of success.

Since Moshe had come on the scene, things had only got worse, not better.

Moshe asked Hashem why?

Hashem allayed Moshe's concerns by telling him that things were just getting started. Then (according to Rashi's understanding) He began His reproach:

Vayedaber Elokim El Moshe – And the Almighty (Elokim) spoke to Moshe.

Whenever the Torah uses the word Vayedaber it refers to harsh words. Similarly the word Elokim refers to Hashem in judgement.

Hashem told Moshe that He had appeared to the Avot – Avraham, Yitschak and Yakov and they had never questioned His actions. Why was Moshe questioning Hashem?

The Gemara Sanhedrin (111a) explains further;

When Avraham sought to bury Sarah, he could not bury her until he bought a plot for a very high price from Efron. Similarly, with Yitschak, he sought to use wells his own father had dug and was not allowed to by the local shepherds. And also with Yakov, "And he bought the part of the field where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor" (33:19).

Hashem was implying to Moshe that they never questioned Hashem, and he should follow their example.

Why is it that Hashem chose these specific examples to show the forefathers unquestionable belief? Surely there are others better examples, such as the Akeida – binding of Yitschak! Avraham was promised children through Yitschak yet was told to sacrifice him. Yitschak was not told about this from G-d, yet did not question anyone and told his father to bind his hands so he would not struggle. Similarly why didn't Hashem tell Moshe how Yakov reacted to the incidents with Yosef!

Our Sages explain that it is with these examples that we see how much faith they really had.

The Akeida tells us how Avraham had faith, but that is all! G-d spoke to him, there was nothing to question! But when he gets home having passed his test, his wife is dead. ►

TEVET 27th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:20 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:28 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"You do not find the happy life, you make it."

> MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to Moshe Douer and his wife for the birth of a baby girl

Mazal Tov to Nigel Hanan and his family for the birth of a granddaughter

Mazal Tov to Roy and Monica Hanouka on the occasion of their son Sam's Bar Mitzvah

Mazal Tov to Daniel Elias and Shiri Cohen on their Engagement

Dr and Mrs Haim Kada on the engagement of their daughter Rosette

> UPCOMING EVENTS

► 9th Feb Children Tu Bishvat Event

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DVAR TORAH

Patience is a virtue!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

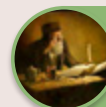
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And when he attempts to bury her, he realises he has no real place of his own. He must find her an honourable burial place. Yitschak is told the land will be his. He goes to the wells his father had so diligently dug up and finds them closed up. It seems all his fathers efforts were for naught. He doesn't despair, or question G-d; rather he re-digs the wells. Yakov was promised the land. He arrives back in Eretz Yisrael and needs to pay to pitch a tent.

When we know someone is watching, or that we are being tested, we put on the best display of our efforts as possible. But these are inaccurate. The true gauge of faith is in the mundane, where we think we are alone.

Hashem's message to Moshe was that although they were tested with harsh tests, they never questioned me. You are also on a high level and should not question.

Yet there seems to be a more subtle underlying message that Hashem was portraying at the same time.

On the surface Moshe had a good argument; why did Hashem ask him to announce the

"impending" salvation, only to have the Bnei Yisrael undergo a frustratingly long time lapse before things really start to move?

The Mishnah (Avot 6) lists 48 qualities one must acquire in order to learn Torah properly. The thirteenth way is Be-yishuv - by sitting.

Western culture has taught us to look for immediate results.

"Lose 20 Kilos in 30 days."

"Turn £1,000 into £10,000 in just hours a day." Something inside says it's too good to be true, yet the allure of almost instantaneous satisfaction is difficult to resist.

With Torah (as with most other things in life) there is no free lunch.

"If someone tells you, 'I have not toiled, yet I have acquired Torah knowledge - don't believe him. (Megillah 6b)"

The only way to become a true connoisseur of Torah is to "sit on the bench." Today we can load Shas onto our I-Phones, and learn the daf while driving to work, but to true Torah knowledge

there are no shortcuts.

Perhaps this is why Hashem made things happen so slowly at first. If He so desired, He could have delivered us on a moment's notice. But doing so would just have served to reinforce our perpetual quest for things to happen in an instant. Hashem needed us to know that becoming the People of the Book meant measuring success in small, consistent steps, not by leaps and bounds.

This was the message to Moshe. The Geula is a process. There is much to be taken in and learnt from this process. Appreciating Hashem and learning Torah also takes time - have patience.

We can now understand why R Chiya had to go through such a long process when writing out the Torah. He was trying to impress the students with the correct posture towards Torah study: If it comes too easily, it's not worth anything. If you want your Torah to be meaningful, you've got to toil with patience and with unending diligence.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI MASHIACH KELATY - STANMORE SEPHARDI KEHILLAH



THE TALE OF THE HOLY VESTEMENTS

In this week's parasha there is a narrative that includes two verses that seem superfluous. The Torah, in reintroducing Aharon and Moshe to us as they emerge as leaders of Klal Yisrael, also defines their lineage. While tracing their heritage, the Torah also enumerates the descendants of all the tribes, starting from the oldest, Reuven. It finally reaches Amram, the grandson of Levi and tells us that he married Yocheved who bore Moshe and Aharon. The Torah continues with Aharon's wife, descendants, and others from the tribe of Levi. Then the Torah stops the listings. The rest of the tribes are enumerated later.

However, the Torah re-identifies Moshe and Aharon with two verses. "This was the Moshe and Aharon to whom Hashem commanded "take the Children of Israel out of Egypt. They were the ones that spoke to Pharaoh telling him to send the children of Israel out of Egypt; that was Moshe and Aharon" (Exodus 6:26-27). We are talking Moshe and Aharon! Doesn't everyone who reads the Torah know that they are the ones that led the Jews out of Egypt? The details of their encounters with Pharaoh are clearly

appraised throughout the first three portions of the Book of Shemot. Why then does the Torah, in two succinct verses, tell us that these are the Moshe and Aharon that were sent on a Divine mission - these are the same pair that told Pharaoh to let the Jews go?

Rabbi Chaim of Sanz was once walking in a small shtetl with his shamash. Suddenly he stopped in front of the home of a simple Jew. "There is a certain spirituality that I sense here. I'd like to stop by this man's home."

His shamash knocked on the door, and as it opened the holy Rebbe exclaimed, "There is a smell in this home that must be from the Garden of Eden. It is sweet and pure. Pray tell me, where does it come from?"

The simple Jew did not know what to answer, but allowed the Rebbe to roam freely through his humble abode and open any door he chose. Suddenly the Rebbe pointed to a closet. "What is in that closet? The holiness comes from within." The man was reluctant to open the door, but the Rebbe urged him. The man opened the door and in the closet hung the vestments of a priest! The Rebbe turned to the man once again and asked. "Please tell me. What is a holy Jew doing with those clothing?"

The poor Jew told his tale: "Years ago, I was asked to help raise money for a family thrown into jail by a poritz (landowner) to whom they owed rent. My Rebbe asked me to raise the funds, and I immediately agreed. After all, I thought, with the Rebbe's wishes it would be an easy task. Everyone would give to save a Jewish family! I was wrong. Everyone in town had an excuse not to give. There was a deadline approaching, and I had no choice but to approach the wealthiest Jew in town who was known for

his malevolence toward Chassidim. "The man told me he would give me the entire sum that day on one condition. I must parade through the town, dressed as a priest singing psalms in Hebrew and asking for tzedaka (charity) in Yiddish. At the end of the day, he would pay the ransom.

"I did what I had to do, while a group of his friends followed me around, laughing and mocking me wherever I walked. I got the money and I never returned the vestments he gave me."

The Rebbe turned and said, "Yes. These clothes are truly holy. They are the source of the spirituality I sense." Legend has it that the Rebbe told the man to be buried in those clothes.

The Torah sums up the mission and job of Moshe and Aharon in two verses. They were the ones enthusiastically sent to redeem the Jews. Then it tells us that they were the ones that had to deal with Pharaoh. They were mocked with the words, "who is this Hashem that I shall listen to Him?" (Exodus 5:2). They were the ones who were threatened by Pharaoh that "the day you return to see me you will die! (Exodus 10:27). But they did not back down. The suffered the threats, the humiliation, the skepticism, and the failures with strength and fortitude. We may remember them as the ones who were told to take the Children out of Egypt but the Torah reminds us in the ensuing verse that we should never forget the difficult process that led to their great accomplishments.

For in order to fulfill what one hears from G-d, he or she must also be ready to hear from.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI NISSIM SHAMAMA

Rabbi Nissim Shamama was loved and respected by all. As the finance minister of the king of Tunis, he strived to help all those in need, especially Torah scholars. He helped them to publish their books, even though printing at that time was very difficult. His heart and hands were always open and ready to help anyone in need, and whoever was poor could expect to be offered a sizable amount of money by his generous heart.

Rabbi Nissim enjoyed the respect of the king, who trusted the exemplary wisdom with which Rabbi Nissim managed the kingdom's finances. His position made him famous, but just as his friends were numerous, so too were his enemies, who were jealous of his position and wanted to get rid of him.

One day some of his enemies slandered him to the king, who in his gullibility believed them. Without the least bit of inquiry, the king condemned Rabbi Nissim to death. This decree quickly became known, and Rabbi Nissim set out to leave the country. However he could not find his passport, and it remained lost despite an extensive search.

Rabbi Nissim was a regular at the home of the Gaon Rabbi Avraham Cohen Itzchak, the author of Mishmerot Kehuna. He was his faithful disciple and saw to everything he needed. Now that his fate had turned, he was convinced that Rabbi Avraham would be his defender and savior.

Rabbi Nissim went to see his teacher and recounted how the king had

condemned him to death because of his jealous enemies. He also told him that he could not find his passport, for perhaps someone had taken it from him. With a calm and confident voice, Rabbi Avraham tried to reassure him, and after reflecting upon the matter he advised him to assemble a minyan to study Tikkun HaLaila. By the merit of this study and his good deeds, he told him, he would find his passport and succeed in fleeing the country.

That same night, Rabbi Nissim assembled a minyan of Torah scholars at his home to fervently study Tikkun HaLaila and Torah. After all, does the Torah not protect a person from all harm?

At dawn the Torah scholars went home one by one, and Rabbi Nissim decided to go see Rabbi Avraham. As he was about to leave, however, Rabbi Avraham had already beaten him to it and was there at his home, his face beaming.

"I asked a question and in a dream it was revealed to me that your passport is well hidden between the pages of [such and such a book] on your shelf."

Rabbi Nissim rushed towards the shelf that contained his books, excitedly took out the book in question, and found his passport inside! It was exactly where he had put it.

Because of G-d's mercy, Rabbi Nissim left Tunis before the guards at the port were told about the king's decree. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

"PERI HA'GEFEN" OR "FERI HA'GEFEN"; THE PROPER BERACHA OVER COGNAC

There is a debate among the Halachic authorities regarding the proper pronunciation of the Berachot recited over fruits and wine. According to some opinions, the text should be pronounced "Boreh Feri Ha'etz" or "Boreh Feri Ha'gefen," as opposed to "Peri." Meaning, according to this view, the Beracha should be pronounced without a Dagesh (dot) in the "Peh," such that it is pronounced "Feri" instead of "Peri." This was the view of Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998), in his Or Le'sion (vol. 2, p. 304), who noted the grammatical rule that when a word ends with an "Alef," and the next word begins with a "Peh," the "Peh" is pronounced without a Dagesh.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, disagreed. In his Yabia Omer (vol. 9, Siman 22), he explains that the aforementioned rule applies only when the two words are read together. But in the text of these Berachot, the words "Peri Ha'etz" and "Peri Ha'gefen" are read together, separate from the word "Boreh." As such, the letter "Peh" is pronounced with a Dagesh, and the word should therefore be pronounced as "Peri."

There is a debate among the Halachic authorities as to which Beracha should be recited over cognac, which generally contains wine. Of course, if one drinks cognac which was prepared from a fruit other than grapes, such as figs, then the Beracha is "She'hakol," and if one recites "Ha'gefen" he has not fulfilled his obligation. But when it comes to cognac that is made with wine, we find a debate among the Halachic authorities. Rav Yaakov Emden (1698-1776) ruled that since cognac contains wine, it requires the Beracha of "Ha'gefen" just like ordinary wine. Others, however, including the Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1807), in his Mahazik Beracha, and the Kaf Ha'haim (Rav Yaakov Haim Sofer, 1870-1939), in Siman 202 (Se'if Katan 15), rule that the Beracha recited over cognac is "She'hakol." In their view, if a gentile handles cognac it does not become forbidden, because its status is not determined by its wine content, and thus by the same token, its Beracha is "She'hakol," and not "Ha'gefen."

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, as documented in Yalkut Yosef (English edition, vol. 3, p. 39; listen to audio recording for precise citation), ruled that one should recite "She'hakol" over cognac, in accordance with the view of the Hida and Kaf Ha'haim, but one who recited "Ha'gefen" has fulfilled his obligation and does not recite a new Beracha. He notes that the common custom follows the view of the Hida and the Kaf Ha'haim, and thus one should follow this practice and recite "She'hakol." Nevertheless, if one mistakenly recited "Ha'gefen," he does not recite another Beracha, as long as it contains wine. Incidentally, it should be noted that cognac may not be drunk unless it is prepared under Rabbinical supervision, due to its wine content.

Summary: The proper pronunciation of the Berachot over fruit and wine is "Boreh Peri Ha'etz" and "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen," as opposed to "Boreh Feri..." The proper Beracha over cognac is "She'hakol," though if one mistakenly recited "Ha'gefen," he has fulfilled his obligation, as long as the cognac contains wine. ■

MONDAY NIGHTS

Monday evening classes are very intimate and chilled. Rabbi Tawil takes complex ideas and explains them on a level everyone can understand. It's a great social atmosphere, perfect for a Monday!

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ANSHEI SHALOM



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 What were the Egyptians likely to do if they saw the Jews slaughtering lambs?
- 2 Why didn't the wild beasts die as the frogs had?
- 3 Why did Moshe pray only after leaving the city?
- 4 How long did the plague of blood last?
- 5 What was miraculous about the way the hail stopped falling?

1 Stone the Jews 2 So the Egyptians would not benefit from their hides. 3 Because the city was full of idols. 4 Seven days. 5 The hailstones stopped in mid-air and didn't fall to the ground.

Answer



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HEY! YOU CAN'T CALL ME PIPSQUEAK!!

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UHM, YOSHI, LOOK...

...OUT.

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OH NO!