

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR TAL



HASHEM MELECH!

At a Brit in Jerusalem a great Rabbi stood up to speak and wish well to the grandfather, an accomplished Talmud scholar, on the occasion of the Bris of his first grand-child, "Mazel Tov" he said, "today you are a human being!" Everyone was stunned. Maybe there is some hidden insult implied here. Until now he wasn't human?

Then he went on to explain that in the animal kingdom it is common to find creatures that have an instinct to protect its young.

However, only by humans does a grandparent demonstrate love and care for his or her grandchild and grandchildren have feelings for grandparents. This is symptomatic of real soulfulness, to see one's self in a grander historical or familial context. The greater one's spiritual development the broader is his grasp of the importance of the historical relevance of his life, and its mission.

The Gesher HaChaim lists a number of major differences between a human being and an animal. Amongst the items spoken about there is man's unique ability to perceive past, present, and future, and to see himself as a creature of history.

The Sephardim mention daily the words "Hashem Melech Hashem Malach Hashem Yimloch Leolam Vaed" - Hashem is King, Hashem, was King, and Hashem will be King forever!

We state that HASHEM is the King in the past, present, and future.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), (Vayigash) writes that whenever we recite this verse, we recite it twice. This verse expresses our acceptance of G-d as King over us, and we recite it twice to emphasize that we accept the Almighty's kingship over both our bodies and our souls. The precedent for this practice is found in the Book of Melachim I (18:39), where we read that Bnei Yisrael declared their loyalty to G-d by declaring, "Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim" ("Hashem is G-d, Hashem is G-d"). Just as Bnei Yisrael repeated this declaration, so must we repeat "Hashem Melech" in order to express our commitment of both body and soul to the Almighty.

The Shulchan Aruch (OH 5:1) states that whenever we make a blessing and mention G-d's Name it is important to contemplate about the way we pronounce His Name (Adnut) as well as the way we read His Name (YHVH). Thus we should ponder each time that He is the Master of everything (Adnut) and He always was, is and will be (YHVH).

It is interesting to note that in Hashem Melech we start with the present -- Hashem is the King. Whereas when relating the kavanot we are supposed to have when saying G-ds Name we are supposed to think, He was, is and will be.

In this case we are thinking about the past first. Why the difference?

In this week's Parasha Hashem tells Moshe that He had made Himself known to the forefathers only as Kel Shadai but never revealed himself as Hashem- (spelt Yud, Heh, Vav, Heh -YHVH).

It was now time to make use of this new revelation.

There are many different explanations of the distinction between these two names of G-d.

On a simple level the idea of YHVH is the concept of the Eternal. The name is a shortened version of "Haya, Hove, V'yehiye" (was, is and will be). G-d is not only powerful, great, kind etc. but as well He is Eternal. He has made us promises in the past and despite the fact that we have not always seen their fulfilment immediately, we have full confidence in what the future holds. ▶

2nd Shevat 5781

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:05 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:14 PM



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DVAR TORAH

Hashem Melech!

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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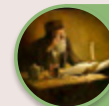


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Promises were made to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and now the time has come for fulfilling them.

Times can be tough, but we should always know that there is a long term plan and there is a Master of the world. Moshe had questioned why G-d sent him at this time if it made Pharaoh increase the burden on the Bnei Yisrael. G-d's reply was that the forefathers never asked, Ushmi Hashem Lo Nodati Lahem - they never needed Me to explain to them the essence of My Name - that I was, am and will be. Rather they lived my Name in comprehensively and understood and felt G-d constantly even in the tough times.

The Gemara (Ta'anit 25) relates the famous story of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. One Friday evening, he came in to see his daughter looking very sad because she accidentally lit Shabbat candles with vinegar (which doesn't normally burn) instead of oil. He consoled her saying not to worry, because it made no difference—Hashem can command the vinegar to burn the same way He commands the oil to burn. The Gemara relates the miracle that the candle lit the entire Shabbat!

The Ben Yehoyada asks: What was she worried about? After all, she had already lit the candles, and she SAW that they were burning from the vinegar! He explains that she was concerned because it is forbidden to derive benefit from miracles, and this was clearly a

miracle. Perhaps she had not fulfilled the mitzvah with these Shabbat candles?! However, Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa answered her—there's no difference! The fact that oil burns is also a miracle! What we perceive as nature is, indeed, a miracle as well. The law forbidding us to benefit from a miracle only applies where the miracle is perceived as something out of the ordinary, and supernatural. However, when one's Emuna is so strong and clear to see that EVERYTHING is under Hashem's control, then there is no difference between miracle and nature.

Every time we say a blessing we are supposed to have two ideas. First to internalise that G-d is the Master of the world and only then proceed to ponder that He is, was and will be. Once we have made Him Master of the world then we can think of past present and future.

With regards to the saying of Hashem Melech - we are in fact coronating G-d with our very words. We are emphatically stating He is the King. We must know first that He is the King, only then can we speak about past and future.

It is this constant knowledge and understanding that existed with the Avot and that Hashem now portrayed to Moshe.

Tosfot (Berachot 11a) asks an interesting question: Why don't we repeat Birkhot HaTorah each time we learn during the day, just like on Succot we make the blessing "Leishev BaSuccah" every time we sit in the Succah for a meal? Tosfot explains that Torah study is different from the other commandments because one's mind does not abandon thoughts of Torah. Since a person's obligation to study Torah applies all day long, as the verse states "Vehagita Bo Yomam Valaylah" (- you should meditate in it [the Torah] day and night), it is as if one's learning is not interrupted during the day.

That is the ultimate way forward. Having G-d on our mind constantly - Shiviti Hashem Lnegdi Tamid.

This was the message to Moshe at the outset in redeeming Am Yisrael, a journey that would be supernatural and majestic.

Let us live and exclaim the words Hashem Melech - He is our King.

There is no difference between miracle and nature it all emanates from Hashem and through this realisation we will be able to experience both.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI MASHIACH KELATY - RABBI OF STANMORE SEPHARDI KHEILLA



THE TALE OF THE HOLY VESTMENTS

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 denotes their lineage. While tracing their heritage, the Torah also enumerates the descendants of all the tribes, starting from the oldest, Reuven. It eventually 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 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 shammash. 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 shammash 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. They 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 fulfil what one hears from G-d, he or she must also be ready to hear from Him.

■ Shabbat Shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI YESHUA BESSIS

Rabbi Yeshua Bessis occupies a special place among the great men of Tunis. Numerous extraordinary stories have circulated about him that reveal the miracles and wonders that he performed. He knew Torah perfectly and had also mastered Kabbalah. With tremendous kindness and great purity, he brought healing to all ill and helped his people when they found themselves in difficulty. In the year 5533 (1773), he became famous in the Jewish world.

The morning of Sukkot, the Jews of the city arrived very early at the market to purchase the myrtle in order to finish their Sukkahs. Imagine their surprise when the merchants displayed their prices. They went from one merchant to another, but everywhere the price had been increased by at least seven times. The Jews were not ready to accept this outlandish price increase, and so they began to confer with one another. However the merchants had all agreed among themselves on the new prices, and none was willing to lower it. After discussing the matter at length, the Jews decided to go to see Rabbi Yeshua Bessis. They immediately chose representatives who hurried towards the home of the Rav.

The news of the silhouette in the sky spread in a few minutes to the king's palace. King Albai, who recognized the power of the Jews' Rav, immediately sent his most important ministers to the him, as well as a horse-drawn coach so that the Rav could come to the palace.

Out of respect for the royalty, Rabbi Yeshua accepted the invitation without delay. The king told him, "My friend, I know that all this commotion has come from you. Tell me why you have so wronged that man." The Rav replied that he had simply asked the man to go up and bring his merchandise to the loft, and that this merchant did go up ... and up into the air.

"Don't hide anything from me," the king declared. "No harm will come to you."

Rabbi Yeshua saw that the king was sincere and that he wanted to help him. He began by recounting the Jews' misfortune in the city because the merchants had decided to increase their prices, and that no member of the community could afford it.

"Here is that man who is coming down towards you," the Rav added. "He will confirm what I have said." ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

SHABBAT – USING EYEDROPS FOR LUBRICATION, AND LOTIONS FOR CHAPPED SKIN

If a person on Shabbat needs drops to lubricate his eyes – such as for inserting contact lenses – he may use eyedrops for lubrication. This is the ruling of Hacham Ovadia Yosef, as cited in Yalkut Yosef (Shabbat, vol. 4, p. 110). Since this is not done for medical purposes, but simply to keep the eyes lubricated, it is permissible.

Hacham Ovadia permitted under certain circumstances the use on Shabbat of creams that are absorbed into the skin, despite the Shabbat prohibition of Memare'ah – smoothening a thick substance. This lenient ruling was based on the theory advanced by the Magen Abraham (Rav Abraham Gombiner, 1633-1683) that Memare'ah forbids smoothening a substance on a surface (such as applying wax to the cover of a barrel to seal it), but not when it is absorbed into the surface. Hacham Ovadia thus permitted the use of lotion for an infant's rash, and for somebody suffering from a painful backache. However, the Mishna Berura Tiferet (328:76) notes that it is uncertain whether Hacham Ovadia would have also permitted applying hand cream to heal chapped skin on Shabbat. It is very possible that Hacham Ovadia allowed relying on the lenient position of the Magen Abraham only for the sake of a child, or in cases of severe pain. Therefore, it is proper to avoid the use of hand cream on Shabbat. By the same token, one should not use olive oil to treat chapped lips or chapped skin on Shabbat. Since olive oil is used on skin today exclusively for medicinal purposes, this would be forbidden on Shabbat due to the prohibition of Refu'a (taking medicine on Shabbat).

Summary: One who needs to lubricate his eyes on Shabbat (such as to insert contact lenses) may take lubricating eyedrops. Although it is permissible on Shabbat to apply lotion to an infant's rash, and to use lotion in cases of considerable pain, it is proper to avoid using on Shabbat lotions or olive oil to treat chapped lips or chapped skin. ■

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Kids Time

TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ How long did the plague of blood last?
- ❷ Why did the frogs affect Pharaoh's house first?
- ❸ What did Moshe mean when he told Pharaoh that the frogs would be "in you and in your nation?"
- ❹ What are "chamarim."
- ❺ Why didn't Moshe strike the dust to initiate the plague of lice?

Answer ❶ 7:25 - Seven days. ❷ 7:28 - Pharaoh himself advised the frogs would enter their intestines and croak. ❸ 8:10 - Piles. ❹ 8:12 - Moshe killed. Because the dust protected Moshe by hiding the body of the Egyptian that

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