

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHMOT · 19 TEVET 5775 - JAN. 10, 2015 · VOL. 22 NO. 13

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### DESIGNER WATER

*“And Egypt worked the Children of Yisrael with hard labor...” (1:13)*

Several years ago, I remember visiting a famous mineral-water plant in the North of Israel. This is a *tiyul* (recreational outing) that, for the average Israeli child, is like a day in Disney World.

Indeed, it’s quite fascinating to see the mechanical ingenuity with which the world’s most natural resource is turned into a “designer product” with serious brand-recognition and connoisseur cachet.

I never dreamed that I could impress my friends by the brand of water that I drink.

Imagine a constant production line of bottles like a highly sophisticated model railway, moving along at a constant but somewhat urgent speed. Just the right amount of water is injected. Then a gentle-giant of a machine squeezes the bottle-top onto the bottle. And finally the label is slapped onto the bottle.

It all works, quite literally, like clockwork.  
Well, almost.

Once in a while the bottle isn’t filled quite enough; or the

label is at a slight angle, or the gentle-giant isn’t quite so gentle when stuffing the top onto the bottle.

So at the end of the line there sat a young lady with a red button in her hand. If she saw anything about this bottle that didn’t live up to the highest standards of designer water, she plunged her thumb into the red button and consigned the hapless bottle to instant doom.

I’ve rarely seen such boredom and quiet desperation play across the features of a human face.

*“And Egypt worked the Children of Yisrael with hard labor...”*

The Hebrew word “*Perach*” which is usually translated as “hard labor” can also be read as “*Peh Rach*”, which literally means “a soft mouth.”

One might imagine the soft-sell advertisement for that job in the water-bottling plant: “This has got to be the easiest job in the world! All you have to do is to push a red button once in a while! That’s all there is to it!”

Work doesn’t have to be hard to be soul-destroying.

## 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 fulfill that role. 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 wit-

nesses the burning bush where G-d 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 G-d’s agent, so G-d 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, G-d 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 G-d assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

## YEVAMOT 100 - 106

*Rabba said, "Animal and grain offerings cannot atone, but Torah study can atone."*

*Abaye said, "Animal and grain offerings cannot atone, but Torah study and deeds of loving-kindness can atone."*

These statements of these two Sages were made in the context of what would alleviate the severity of a Divine decree that the descendants of Eli Hakohen would have only short life spans due to shameful behavior in the Beit Hamikdash. The *gemara* cites a verse from Sefer Shemuel (I, 3:14) in which God decreed that they would have no atonement and reprieve for this transgression through offerings in the Beit Hamikdash. Rabba and Abaye, however, despite being descendants of Eli, were granted relative longevity due to their involvement in Torah study and kind deeds, as they are respectively quoted as teaching above.

It is possible to suggest that the atonement and longevity through Torah study and kindness taught in our *gemara* is not limited only to the descendants of Eli. Also in our times, when there are no offerings in a Beit Hamikdash, these same merits of Torah and good deeds provide us with atonement and special benefits, as we learn in Avot (1:2) that "The world stands (exists) on three things: Torah study, sacrifices and good deeds." The remaining two "pillars" that remain in our time — Torah and kindness — enable our true existence in today's world.

• *Yevamot 105a*

*Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yossi said, "This is what my father taught: 'One who prays should place his vision downwards, and his heart upwards...'"*

This halacha of prayer is taught on our *daf* and is based on verses cited in the *sugya* from the Books of Kings and Lamentations. When the Sage says that one's vision should be faced "downward" this teaches that during prayer one should face towards the Land of Israel, where the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) exists even after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash (Rashi, Maharsha). One's heart, however, we are taught here, should be directed upwards, with intent that we are speaking to the One above us.

The Maharsha poses an apparent difficulty with this halacha from what is taught in the *gemara* in Tractate Berachot (30a). There we learn that during prayer a person should "direct his heart" towards the Land of Israel and even to the most holy place in the Beit Hamikdash if possible (not "upwards", as stated in our *gemara*). The Maharsha offers a possible answer that the *gemara* there really means to direct one's heart upwards to the "above" parallel of the places — such as the Holy of Holies — "below" in our world. He seems to reject this answer, however, and appears to intend that we delve further into this matter.

This halacha is codified in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 95:2, which states: "One should bend one's head downward a bit, so that his eyes will be facing the ground; and he should think that he is standing in the Beit Hamikdash; and in his heart he should focus upward to Heaven." (The "*Be'er Hagolah*" cites our *daf* as the source; and additional, related *halachot* are taught in the Mishna Berurah there, such as whether to pray with open or closed eyes.)

• *Yevamot 105b*

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why does the verse say “And Yosef was in Egypt”?
2. “...And they will go up out of the land.” Who said this and what did he mean?
3. Why did Pharaoh specifically choose water as the means of killing the Jewish boys? (Two reasons.)
4. “She saw that he was good.” What did she see “good” about Moshe that was unique?
5. Which Hebrew men were fighting each other?
6. Moshe was afraid that the Jewish People were not fit to be redeemed because some among them committed a certain sin. What sin?
7. Why did the Midianites drive Yitro’s daughters away from the well?
8. How did Yitro know that Moshe was Yaakov’s descendant?
9. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed?
10. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted G-d’s promise to redeem them?
11. Which expression of redemption would assure the people that Moshe was the true redeemer?
12. What did the staff turning into a snake symbolize?
13. Why didn’t Moshe want to be the leader?
14. “And G-d was angry with Moshe...” What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
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 - Pharaoh said it, meaning that the Egyptians would be forced to leave Egypt.
3. 1:10,22 - He hoped to escape Divine retribution, as G-d promised never to flood the entire world. Also, his astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer’s downfall would be through water.
4. 2:2 - When he was born, the house was filled with light.
5. 2:13 - Datan and Aviram.
6. 2:14 - *Lashon hara* (evil speech).
7. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed on Yitro for abandoning idol worship.
8. 2:20 - The well water rose towards Moshe.
9. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so too Moshe would be protected by G-d.
10. 3:12 - That they were destined to receive the Torah.
11. 3:16,18 - “I surely remembered (*pakod pakadeti*).”
12. 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.
13. 4:10 - He didn’t want to take a position above that of his older brother Aharon.
14. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a *kohen*.
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.

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

Love of the Land, written by Rav Mendel Weinbach, zt”l • Parsha Insights written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

© 1992 - 2015 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT SHMOT

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

When G-d directs Moshe to return to Egypt and take the Children of Israel out of Egypt, the Torah records a puzzling dialogue between G-d and Moshe: “Moshe said to G-d, ‘Behold, when I come to the Children of Israel and say to them, ‘The G-d of your forefathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’, what shall I say to them?’” G-d answered Moshe, “I Shall Be As I Shall Be”. And He said, “So shall you say to the Children of Israel, ‘I Shall Be has sent me to you.’” Furthermore, G-d said to Moshe, “So shall you say to the Children of Israel, ‘G-d, the G-d of your forefathers, the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak and the G-d of Yaakov, has dispatched me to you. This is My name forever and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.’”

Abarbanel cites numerous difficulties with this passage. Why would the Children of Israel inquire as to G-d’s name? What is the meaning of G-d’s answer? Why does G-d modify his answer twice, first by shortening His name to ‘I Shall Be’ and then referring to Himself as ‘the G-d of your forefathers’? What is the difference between ‘My name’ and ‘My remembrance’ and between ‘forever’ and ‘from generation to generation’?

Abarbanel answers that in those days it was common for those who called themselves prophets to prophesy on different levels. Some said they received their inspiration from the sun, moon or stars, and others said they received it by virtue of some unique higher intelligence. By asking “What is His name?” the people would be trying to ascertain the source and level of Moshe’s prophecy in order to determine whether or not he should be followed. G-d responds by telling Moshe that unlike the stars or human intelligence, His power is not dependent on anything else. Rather G-d Himself is the sole source of all existence. What G-d is saying is that ‘I Shall Be *because* I Shall Be.’ G-d alone can determine what is and what will be. Nothing else in existence can make this statement, as

its existence depends on a chain of causation outside itself. All it can say is, “I will be according to outside causes.” Everything else can be a predictor of possibility, but not of certainty. Only G-d has that power. Moshe will tell them that he was sent by the First Cause, not by a later creation.

This explains why G-d only then says “I Shall Be has sent me to you.” He has already explained to Moshe why He is called ‘I Shall Be’. From this point on Moshe only has to refer to Him simply as ‘I Shall Be’, which defines His essence. Another way to explain the shortened form of G-d’s name is in terms of Moshe himself. In reality, it was Moshe who needed to know exactly who was sending him on this mission. He phrased his concern in terms of what the people would want to know due to his own modesty. Once Moshe understood clearly that his prophecy was from the Ultimate Source, he only had to refer to the simple name of G-d when he spoke to the people.

When Moshe continues with the third expression, “G-d, the G-d of your forefathers...” he anticipates that there will be those who cannot understand the deep philosophical and theological concepts underlying the nature of G-d’s existence. They can, however, relate to the historical reality of G-d’s personal and providential relationship with the forefathers. This also explains the verse, “This is My name forever and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.” The first part of the verse refers to the theological and philosophical understanding of G-d in terms of all existence. The Hebrew word for “forever” also means “world”. G-d brings everything into existence, He is the First Cause and He is outside the concept of causation. The second part of the verse refers to the fact that G-d is “remembered” from generation to generation through his providential relationship with the forefathers.

## DEPTH AND BREADTH

**From: Alan**

*Dear Rabbi,  
I have had some introductory exposure to learning Torah. Some has been more in-depth, other focused more on breadth. I was wondering, which approach is preferable?*

Dear Alan,

This is a very important question, and one which is discussed in many sources.

There are several advantages to learning in-depth. It ensures that one learns and understands the will of G-d in order to fulfill it properly. It develops the mind, hones one's learning skills and imparts an appreciation for the wealth of Torah.

On the other hand, learning in-depth can be very time-consuming. The limited focus may compromise a wider knowledge of Torah, may cause confusion, or frustration which might even undermine practice.

Learning which emphasizes breadth also has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it ensures a broad, general knowledge of many Torah topics, it is novel and stimulating, and illustrates the inter-connectedness and con-

tinuity of Torah. On the other hand, it is less mind-sharpening and may result in over-looking certain important details.

If the question is which approach is preferable from an over-all Torah point of view, it would seem to me that, if it must be one or the other, for most people, a broader knowledge of more topics is considered better than thorough knowledge of less.

This way, one becomes familiar with most ideas and practices of Judaism, and will at least know what and how to ask about anything he's not clear about. Also, it will ultimately be more stimulating, as a person is continually engaged in learning new things which he'll be able to incorporate into what he already knows.

That being said, the traditional model of Yeshiva learning attempts to strike a balance by harnessing the benefits of both approaches. Typically, the morning hours of the day are dedicated to in-depth learning which hones one's analytical and learning skills, while enabling one to acquire sophisticated, detailed knowledge of the topic. The afternoon hours are dedicated to acquiring breadth of knowledge with its particular benefits. The evening hours of learning are often used for reviewing what was learned during the day.

In this way, the areas of one's learning compliment each other and become holistically integrated into one balanced whole.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## DALTON — TOMB OF THE GALILEE SAGE

**W**hile most of the Talmudic Sages are identified with the name of their father or simply with their own name, the exception is Rabbi Yosef HaGalili.

This colleague of Talmudic giants such as Rabbi Akiva



earned his surname through spending his early years in Galilee.

Tradition has it that his tomb is located in Moshav Dalton, some three miles north of Tsefat.

*Please daven for a refuah shleimah for*

**Chaim Yechiel ben Malka** (Ohr Somayach alumnus Chaim Howard Rothman)

**Chaim Eitan ben Sarah - Yitzchak ben Chaya**

**Shmuel Yerucham ben Baila** (Rebbetzin Heller's son-in-law)

*May we all hear Besoros Tovos.*

## SHEMONAH ESREI - EIGHTH BLESSING - PART 3

**“For You are a (kind) G-d, (and) King ...”**

The Divine name of G-d (*Aleph and Lamed*) used here to address G-d connotes the attribute of kindness. The intent is to emphasize that it is an act of kindness when G-d heals a person from his illness. In contrast to this, we also refer to G-d as a King. What connection is there between healing and G-d’s function as King? Since the healing process requires utilizing many naturally grown substances, we refer to G-d as “King of the world” — Who is in total control of nature.

### A Deeper Look

As mentioned before, a person often becomes sick as a result of a Heavenly decree. However, what most people are not aware of is that his cure is also a result of that same decree. Thus, it is G-d’s function as a King — Who sits on His throne of judgment — that ultimately causes a person to be healed from his sickness.

This can be compared to a person sent to jail for a crime he committed. Although at the end of his sentence he will be set free, this can hardly be called an act of kindness. Not sending him to jail in the first place would be an act of kindness. The same is true regarding sickness. When the time arrives for a person’s sickness to end, he is healed. According

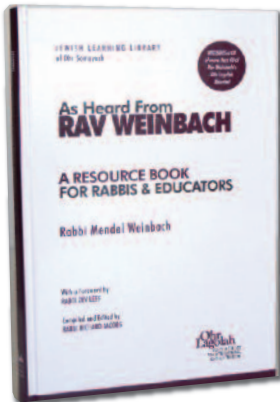
to the above one may ask why we in fact mention that G-d is kind in this blessing.

To understand the answer we must first explain the reason a person becomes sick. According to kabbalistic teachings a person becomes sick as a result of the sins he has committed. The pain and suffering serve as atonement for his transgressions, cleansing his soul from the blemishes caused by sin. Although one sometimes goes through great pain, he will ultimately be better off as a result.

We see there is a manner of “hidden kindness” involved in the process of sickness and healing. Perhaps this is the reason the Sages refer both to the attribute of kindness as well as referring to the attribute of judgment in this blessing. Accordingly we can explain the language of the blessing as follows: “For You are a kind G-d, acting as a King, decreeing sickness upon a person for his ultimate benefit.

### “The faithful and compassionate healer”

G-d is “faithful” to heal a person at the appointed time. However, when one merits — through *teshuvah* (repentance) — he can arouse G-d’s compassion, causing him to be healed even before the originally decreed time. This is a deeper expression of G-d’s kindness, even though it may still remain hidden from the person.



As Heard From  
**RAV WEINBACH**  
 A RESOURCE BOOK  
 FOR RABBIS & EDUCATORS

INCLUDES a CD of more than 40 of Rav Weinbach's Ohr Lagolah Shiurim!

**Ohr Lagolah**  
 HERTZ INSTITUTE  
 FOR INTERNATIONAL  
 TEACHER TRAINING

  
**JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY**  
 of Ohr Somayach - Tanenbaum College

**Now Available in Jewish Bookstores!**  
 Order online at [www.menuchapublishers.com](http://www.menuchapublishers.com)