

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BO - 5758

B'S'D'

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"Please speak in the ears of the people; Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her fellow silver vessels and gold vessels." (11:2)
The gemara (Berachot 9a) teaches: Why did Hashem say "Please"? He wanted Moshe to request of Bnei Yisrael to be sure to ask the Egyptians for gifts, lest Avraham Avinu say, "You did not keep Your promise that they would leave with great wealth." (See Bereishit 15:14) R' Chaim Berlin z"l (died 1905) explains this as follows: Hashem told Avraham that Bnei Yisrael would leave Egypt with great wealth, but surely He did not mean material wealth. Why would a tzaddik such as Avraham care whether his descendants had material wealth? Rather, Hashem meant the "riches" of good character. Had Bnei Yisrael been so inclined, they could have helped themselves to the Egyptians' belongings during the plague of darkness. Therefore, Hashem said, "Please be sure that they _ask_ for gifts, rather than taking on their own" [even though they were entitled to be paid for their hundreds of years of servitude]. Why? Because one who must ask will (hopefully) ask modestly and accept even a small gift. That is the type of good character trait that Hashem promised Avraham his descendants would have. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Imrei Chaim)

"This month shall be for you the beginning of months . . ." (12:2)
[This verse refers to the mitzvah of kiddush ha'chodesh / sanctifying the new moon. When the Sanhedrin still existed, Jews did not have a written calendar. Rather, when two kosher witnesses saw the new moon, the Sanhedrin would sanctify it and declare the new month begun.] Rashi writes that Moshe had trouble understanding how big the moon must be for the new month to be sanctified, until Hashem showed him, "This month" - the moon should be like "this" when you sanctify it. R' Velvel Soloveitchik z"l (The "Brisker Rav"; died 1959) asks: Is there a minimum shiur/size at which the moon can be sanctified? The halachah is that as soon as it can be seen, it may be sanctified! He answers: That is the shiur - when the new moon is visible to the naked eye it may be sanctified. The gemara states that this occurs about six hours after the time which one would calculate mathematically to be the moment of the new moon. Earlier, however, even if it can be seen through a telescope, it cannot be sanctified. (Chiddushei Ha'Griz)

Ravfrand@torah.org Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> on Parshas Bo Project Genesis, <http://www.torah.org/>

Bechor -- Reminding Us That It Is A Miracle When Things Go Smoothly
The end of this week's parsha contains the reading, "And it will be when He will bring you..." (v'haya ki yeviacha... [Shmos 13:11-16]), which is one of the four portions contained in the Tefillin. This portion contains the mitzvah of the sanctification of the first-born -- including both first-born humans and first-born Kosher animals. Immediately following the mention of the mitzvah of sanctifying the first-born, we find the verse, "And it will be, when your son will inquire of you and ask 'What is this?' you will say to him 'With a Mighty Hand our G-d took us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage... and He killed the first born in Egypt, from humans and animals; therefore I offer to G-d the first of the womb...'" The Talmud relates that in Egypt all first-born sons died - whether they were paternal (from the father's side) or maternal (from the mother's side). Why then, it can be asked, is the command to redeem the first-born only applicable to maternal first-born sons? If the reason for the mitzvah is based on what happened in Egypt, the mitzvah should apply equally to all first-born sons. The Avnei Shoham answers this question based on an analogy to the laws of first fruits. When a

person plants a crop, he is required to sanctify the first fruits to G-d. The explanation given for this command of 'Bikkurim' is that it counteracts the normal human emotion that one confronts when he harvests his first crop of the season: "My own strength and the power of my own hand have made me this great wealth" [Devorim 8:17]. One plants a seed in the ground. The tree grows. He picks the fruit and eats. This is all very natural. The Torah has to stop us, and teach us that what appears to happen "naturally" is not so simple -- it still requires 'miraculous intervention' by G-d. People get married. Nine months or ten months later they have a baby. They think -- it's simple! The Torah teaches us that having a baby is not so simple -- it is a miracle. That is why the first child has special sanctity. [Some Biblical commentaries also point out that Jericho was made holy ('cherem') for the same reason. Jericho was the first city that Yehoshua conquered when he entered Canaan. G-d did not want the Jews to think that it is so simple and natural that upon entering a new country, one simply begins to conquer city after city. The 'first conquering' needed to be designated as holy; to make them conscious of the inherent miracle involved in conquest.] If this is the case, says the Avnei Shoham, then we can understand why Kedushas Bechor only applies to a first born from the mother. That is the natural way that things happen. There is a marriage, the wife becomes pregnant, she gives birth to her first child -- everything goes perfectly naturally. That is why the child must be made holy. When one has a first-born (only) from the father's side, something has happened which is already outside the normal order of events. Either this is a second marriage, or the child has been born by Cesarean [Only children born naturally are considered the "first-born" of the mother for purposes of these laws.] -- something has happened which is irregular, "unnatural." The Torah only needs to remind us not to think 'My strength and the power of my own hand...' when life goes perfectly naturally. When there has been a hitch in life, when the first marriage did not work out, perhaps, when the first baby was not born naturally, then we do not need the reminder of 'Bechor'. Then we are already well aware of the tribulations and valleys that can occur in life. We then realize quite well on our own that we desperately need the help of the Ribbono shel Olam (Master of the World).

The Donkey's Lesson: Potential Is A Terrible Thing to Waste
We find in the above-mentioned parsha, three types of Bechor -- the first-born of humans, the first-born of Kosher animals, and the first-born of donkeys. Donkeys are the only animal that are unfit to be offered as a sacrifice which nonetheless have a 'first-born sanctity'. The donkey has a special status. It is redeemed with a lamb, which is given to the Kohanim in place of the donkey. The Torah specifies that if the donkey is not redeemed, it must be decapitated. What is the significance of chopping off the donkey's head when it is not redeemed? The Netziv says this shows us that a First-Born which loses its potential and loses its chance (via redemption by the lamb) to indirectly bring benefit to 'men of distinction' (the Kohanim), forfeits its right to life. One who has the capacity for great things and chooses not to use that potential, is worse than one who never had such power in the first place. The Talmud states [Yoma 29a] that the contemplation of sin (hirhurei aveirah) can be worse than sin itself. Ramba"m in Moreh Nevuchim explains why thinking about an evil act can be worse than doing the act: Hirhurei Aveirah take man's most precious gift -- his capacity to think, his intellect -- and corrupts it. When a person sins with his body, he sins with his animal part. Sinning with one's physical being is understandable. But when one is engaged in thinking about sin, when one takes the potential for all the good things that one could think about and one allows that intellect to become corrupted by thoughts of sin -- that is worse than sin. Potential loss is the worse thing. In Koheles we find "Do not ask why were the earlier days better than now, for not out of wisdom do you inquire about this" [7:10]. Don't ask about the 'good old days'. The Rebbe Reb Bunim interprets as follows: One looks at his youth and says "I had so much promise and so much potential back then -- what happened to it all?" Solomon responds "not out of wisdom; it was lent to you" (interpreting 'shalta al zeh' not as 'you inquire about this' but 'it was lent to you'). That potential was not acquired or bought -- it was a gift! It was supposed to be developed and turned from potential

into reality. But if that potential was left to just evaporate, it will never return. Potential is lent to us. If we work and strive we can make something of it, but if we look back and can't find the potential -- it is because it is in fact lost. It was merely a 'shaylah' -- a loan. Our most precious possession is the potential G-d gives us. As the Netziv said, lost potential is a terrible thing, much worse than absence of potential in the first place. This is the teaching of the decapitated donkey.

Personalities & Sources: Avnei Shoham -- Rav Moshe Leib Shachor, Israel. Netziv -- Rav Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (1817-1893); Ha'Ameik Davar on Chumash; Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin. Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha -- (1765-1827); Polish Chassidic leader. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.org Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@clark.net RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frاند and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis 6810 Park Heights Ave. Baltimore, MD 21215

drasha@torah.org BO -- OUT OF AFRICA by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Imagine that you are a tourist on your way to see this nation's most revered document, the one that forged our beliefs and principles. You enter the hallowed halls of the Library of Congress and ask a guard, "which way to the Declaration of Independence?" He points to a sign with bold letters. The sign has a large arrow and reads; "This way to the "Declaratsiya o Nezavisimossti" " In small print it translates the two Russian words - "Declaration of Independence." You would be shocked. Why in the world would the United States government use a foreign language to identify the very document that symbolizes the essence of America? Of course the story is not true, and probably can never happen. That is why I am troubled by the Torah's choice of words to introduce us to the most Jewish of all symbols - tefillin. The Torah commands the children of Israel to wear tefillin with an interesting expression. "They shall be for totafos between your eyes." (Exodus 13:16) The Talmud in Sanhedrin is concerned with the origins of the word totafos, clearly it has no Jewish origin. The Talmud declares that totafos is a compound word that combines two foreign words. The word tot in Afriki (I assume Africa) means two, and the word pas in the Coptic language means two. The tefillin on the head has four compartments. Thus, tat-pas or totafos, means four. How baffling! Why would the Torah use a compound of two very foreign words to describe a Jewish - perhaps the most Jewish -- symbol? What is even more interesting is that just a few verses prior the Torah refers to the tefillin boxes as a zikoron (remembrance) between the eyes (Exodus 13:9). If the Torah calls tefillin a remembrance than why does it refer to them as totafos? Moreover, if they are totafos then why call them a remembrance?

Stephen Savitsky, CEO of Staff Builders, one of America's leading home health care providers, spends quite a bit of time travelling on airplanes. It is at 35,000 feet where he has met Jews of great diversity, backgrounds, and beliefs. Once on a flight out of Baton Rouge toward Wichita, Kansas, he was bumped to first class. He was seated next to a large man who had a thick gold ring on his pinkie and an even thicker gold chain hanging loosely from his neck. The man was chewing an unlit cigar while immersing himself in a sports magazine. As soon as the seat belt sign was turned off he ordered two drinks. All the while the flamboyant jet-setter was immersed in his own self, and hardly glanced at the neatly groomed executive who was sitting next to him. He surely did not notice that Steve's head was covered during the entire flight. The flight attendants began serving the meal. The smell of glazed ham that was wafting from his neighbor's tray made it difficult for Steve to eat his kosher food. It was only after the meals were cleared and the trays removed did Mr. Savitsky take out a small siddur (prayer book) to say Grace After Meals. All of a sudden a pair of eyes transfixed on the siddur. "Hey, my friend!" exclaimed the man. Steve heard a Brooklyn accent cowering underneath the Southern drawl, "is that a seedoor?" Steve nodded, "sure. Do you want to look at it?" "Look?" shouted the stranger. "I want to use it! Do you know how many years it has been since I saw a seedoor? GIVE IT TO ME! PLEASE!" The man grabbed it, kissed it, then he stood up in his seat and began to shake and shout with fervor! "BORUCHO ES ADON ♣" The entire first class section just turned around and stared in shock. For the next ten minutes the man stood and shook wildly as he recited the maariv

prayer - word for word - without care and concern for anyone who was watching. For those ten minutes he left Louisiana way below, as he ascended to the heavens with the world of his childhood. With a mixture of great pride and a bit of embarrassment, Steve watched. When the man finished praying, Steve presented the small siddur that evoked Jewish memories over the Delta as a memento to the former yeshiva boy.

Perhaps the Torah intentionally called tefillin a remembrance. And perhaps, with even more intention, did it give it a foreign name. The Torah tells us that no matter where a Jew may be, whether the jungles of the Congo or the Coptic Islands, the Jewish symbols will be there to remind him to come home. The Torah's observance is not relegated to any specific geographical location. It can be observed, albeit not in toto, every place in the world. And no matter where a Jew finds himself there are symbols to remind him of his Judaism. For there is a special spark in every Jewish soul that is waiting to be kindled. Even out of Africa. Good Shabbos!

Dedicated By Dr. and Mrs. Keith Staiman and family in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Samuel Schectman (C) 1997 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore <http://www.yoss.org/> - rmk@torah.org 516-328-2490 Fax 516-328-2553 Drasha web site: <http://www.torah.org/learning/drasha> Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/ProjectGenesis> 6810 Park Heights Ave. Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

yhe-sichot@jer1.co.il YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PARASHAT BO SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A Appreciating Borrowed Values Summarized by Dov Karoll In this week's parasha, God commands Moshe that Bnei Yisrael should "borrow" gold and silver from their Egyptian neighbors (Shemot 11:2). Rashi (ibid.) comments that God wanted Moshe to make sure that the Jews leave Egypt with wealth so that Avraham will not have any claims against God. Otherwise, Avraham could complain that while God fulfilled the promise of slavery in berit bein ha-betarim (Bereishit 15:13-14), He did not fulfill the promise of remuneration ("ve-acharei chen yetzu' bi- rekhus gadol"). Why would Avraham care so much that his descendants leave Egypt with wealth? Furthermore, why would God command Moshe to have the people borrow these utensils, when they had no intention of returning them? The Ar"i says that Bnei Yisrael were supposed to take out the nitzotzot, the sparks of holiness, from Egypt. In other words, they were supposed to take those positive elements of their experience in Egypt - both what they learned from their experience as slaves, and what they gained from the society around them. Egypt was the most developed culture at the time, and they were supposed to draw out those positive values which they learned there. For this reason, God wanted to make sure that while the people should take these values, they should realize that they are borrowed values, and not elements original to Judaism. Similarly, there are many things in general society through which Torah study can be improved. When the Mishna was compiled, it was intentionally written unclearly so people would need to learn from a Rebbe, and not be able to understand it on their own. It was meant to be learned by heart in a Beit Midrash. In a similar manner, nowadays one can learn from a computer which has stored in its memory all of Tanakh, Gemara, etc., without ever opening a book. However, one should realize that this is not the way one is meant to learn, and that learning should be done primarily from books and teachers. Another example is the photocopy machine, through which people can read texts without having the book in their library, and without even borrowing it. However, there is a danger in these advancements. While it is very helpful to people who cannot otherwise learn from the original, it is still not ideal to go through life learning only from computers and xerox copies. There is some advantage to learning in a Beit Midrash, from a Rebbe, with a book - the way it was learned for hundreds of years. While it is proper to use these technological advancements for the advancement of Torah, it still must be recognized that they are borrowed techniques, and not the primary, original mode of Torah study. Nothing can compare with the experience of becoming familiar with a book, of interacting with a teacher, and of debating with a chavruta. And only by putting in the effort and mastering large amounts of material will we truly become talmidei chakhamim. (Originally delivered Shabbat Parashat Bo 5757.)

[From 2 weeks ago:] yhe-parsha.ml@jer1.co.il Shalom, Some important info./ announcements. For those of you living in the NY area; Rabbi Marc Penner of the Young Israel of Holliswood, Queens [HJC] has invited me to spend Shabbat Shira - Parshat B'shalach [Feb 6-7] as scholar in residence. Below is a copy of shul announcement: Young Israel of Holliswood/HJC 86-25 Francis Lewis Boulevard Holliswood NY Shabbat Shira - Parshat B'shalach [Feb 6-7th] Shabbaton With Rav Menachem Leibtag Shiurim on: Leil Shabbat Tish, misc. short topics Shabbat Luncheon - Why did Pharaoh 'change his mind' Shabbat afternoon [4:00 PM] - When did David first meet Shaul Seudah shlishit [5:15 YIJE] - From Rfidim, via Amalek, to Har Sinai MOTZEI SHABBAT - Melava Malka - 8pm Shiur (interactive) - Why David Hamelech was not permitted to build the Beit Hamikdash (followed by food and music/ Cost \$10) This event is

co-sponsored by the YIHJC and Yeshivat Har Etzion Alumni (Home hospitality available for Alumni] For more information & reservations call 718-776-8500 or 718-479-7921 or e-mail ampenner@aol.com.

[Last year's shiur] THE TANACH STUDY CENTER/ In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag <http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach/> by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT BO Already four hundred years BEFORE the Exodus, Pesach (Passover) was celebrated in the city of Sdom! According to Rashi (Br. 19:3), Lot baked matzot, because his guests arrived on Pesach. At first glance, this statement seems rather absurd, for what possible meaning could there be in commemorating an event which had not yet taken place! In this week's shiur, while discussing the purpose and significance of the Korban Pesach, we will uncover the fundamental biblical theme of "Yom Hashem". This theme will help us understand the relationship between the destruction of Sdom and the process of Yetziat Mitzraim.

INTRODUCTION / REVIEW In our study of Sefer Shmot thus far, we have focused on the double mission which Moshe receives at the burning bush: (1) The mission to Pharaoh, that he allow Bnei Yisrael to worship God in the desert. (2) The mission to Bnei Yisrael, that they recognize that God has come to fulfill His covenant. Although these two missions are interrelated, each constitutes an independent Divine goal: Firstly, it is significant that Egypt, the center of ancient civilization, recognize the existence of God and Bnei Yisrael's right to worship Him. [See shiur on Parshat Shmot.] Likewise, it is crucial that Bnei Yisrael be aware not only that the God of their forefathers has come to redeem them, but also that they be willing and ready to obey Him (Shmot 6:2-9). Unfortunately, Bnei Yisrael do not heed God's call for "teshuva". Nonetheless, the miraculous redemption process (b'shem Havaya) continues, for the Sake of His Name (Ezekiel 20:5-10). [See shiur on Parshat Va'eyra.] Bnei Yisrael's redemption from Egypt is merely the first step towards the fulfillment of God's covenant. However, it is not only God's responsibility to redeem them, Bnei Yisrael are expected to BECOME His Nation. [A covenant, by its very nature, requires active commitment by BOTH partners.] By following His laws and establishing a model nation in the Promised Land, Bnei Yisrael will lead all mankind toward the recognition of God - the final goal of that covenant (the theme of Sefer Breishit).

BNEI YISRAEL AND THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES It is interesting to note that during the first nine "makkot" (plagues), Bnei Yisrael appear to be 'out of the picture'. From the time that "makkot" (plagues) are introduced to Moshe and Aharon (7:1-7) until the completion of the ninth plague (10:29), Sefer Shmot focuses exclusively on the confrontation between Moshe and Pharaoh, i.e. between God and Egypt. During that lengthy narrative, we find no mention of any instruction or commandment to Bnei Yisrael. The purpose of these makkot is stated explicitly in the introduction to this unit: "v'yadu MITZRAIM ki Ani Hashem" - And EGYPT will recognize that I am God, when I stretch out My Hand over Egypt..." (7:5)

These chapters form a distinct unit, for they describe the fulfillment of Moshe's mission to Pharaoh (1). [Note the connection between the opening (7:1-7) and closing psukim (11:9-10) of this unit.] In contrast, from this point in Parshat Bo and onward, Chumash changes its focus from the Egyptians to the Israelites. Moshe must now complete his mission to Bnei Yisrael (2) by encouraging them to become an active partner in the process of Yetziat Mitzraim. "Parshat Ha'Chodesh" (12:1-20), containing the first "mitzvah" given to Bnei Yisrael, begins this new unit.

THE TENTH PLAGUE During the first nine plagues, God finds no particular difficulty differentiating between Bnei Yisrael and the Egyptians (e.g. arov, dever, barad, choshech). Nevertheless, for the final plague - Makkat Bchorot - it seems that a special sign is necessary: Bnei Yisrael must sprinkle the blood of the "korban Pesach" on their doorposts so that God can distinguish between them and the Egyptians. Surely, God is mighty enough to recognize who was an Israelite even without a sign on their doorposts. Why then is this special sign necessary? Based on our introduction, the answer is quite simple: God does not need to see the blood on the doorposts

to determine the ethnic identity of the household. Rather, God requests this sign in order to determine who is WORTHY of redemption. Through the korban Pesach, Bnei Yisrael show that they understand the purpose of their redemption. They prove to God that they DESERVE to be saved. This explains why Bnei Yisrael are commanded to prepare this korban on the tenth of Nisan (12:3). The three (or four) days before their redemption need to be dedicated to spiritual preparation. The korban Pesach is significant in itself. Its purpose was not only to provide the blood for the sign on the doorposts. Offering this korban pesach serves as thanksgiving to God for His fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim [see Further Iyun Section]. With Bnei Yisrael free from their affliction and their oppressor punished (see Br. 15:13-14), the korban Pesach serves as proper recognition of God's fulfillment of that covenant.

PASS-OVER To fully appreciate this idea, the special name of this korban - Pesach - requires additional explanation. A change in lifestyle, especially that of a nation, cannot take place overnight. How much more so, the transformation of an enslaved people, immersed in Egyptian culture, into a free nation willing and ready to obey God. Had Bnei Yisrael begun this teshuva process prior to the first plague, as God had originally demanded, they could have been ready for the ideal redemption process. Possibly, Bnei Yisrael would have commenced their three day journey to Har Sinai immediately after the tenth plague. Spiritually ready to obey God, they would have received the Torah and continued to the Land of Israel only a short time later. Had Bnei Yisrael truly been worthy of this ideal redemption, the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts may not have been necessary. However, as we explained in last week's shiur, the people were not worthy; their hastened preparation for the Exodus was hardly sufficient to entirely erase their past. Now that God is about to reveal Himself b'shem Havaya, they deserve to be punished together with the Egyptians; but God has Mercy (Ezekiel 20:7-9). The fact that God has to PASS OVER their houses emphasizes this very point - that they actually deserve to be punished, but instead of smiting them, He saves them at the last minute. ["po'sey'ach" in Hebrew implies skipping over. One 'skips over' that which he should have stepped on.] Therefore, the Korban Pesach serves a double purpose: (1) By sprinkling the blood of the korban Pesach on their doorposts, Bnei Yisrael display recognition that they do not deserve to be saved. [Blood is a fitting symbol.] (2) Offering the korban in thanksgiving for the fulfillment of the first stage of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim, reminds them that if they are saved, it is IN ORDER that they can fulfill the next stage of that covenant, i.e. to become His special Nation in the Promised Land. [The special laws which govern HOW this korban is to be eaten (12:8-11), further enhances Bnei Yisrael's perception of this purpose.] This awareness, that although they deserve punishment, God 'passes over' them, is the primary purpose for offering this korban in this situation; and hence its name - "korban Pesach".

Any "teshuva" process must begin with both (1) man's recognition of God's Mercy in allowing him a second chance, as well as (2) man's realization of his purpose in life. [Note: Even if Bnei Yisrael had been deserving of their redemption, it may have been proper to offer this "korban l'Hashem" at this time (or three days later at Har Sinai) in thanksgiving for Brit Bein Ha'Btarim. However, the ritual of sprinkling the blood on the doorposts would have been superfluous. One could also suggest a reason why God afforded them a second chance. Although inexcusable, their stubbornness was understandable. As we explained in last week's shiur, because of their crushed spirits and cruel bondage ("m'kotzer ruach u'm'avodah kasha"), Bnei Yisrael did not heed God's original call (6:9). Possibly, for this reason Sefer Shmot only hints to their low spiritual level at that time, and does not record what Sefer Yechezkel mentions explicitly.]

PESACH IN SDOM Lot's situation in Sdom is strikingly similar to Bnei Yisrael's in Egypt. Recall that Lot is originally attracted to Sdom because of its climatic similarities to Egypt (Nile & Jordan Rivers / See Br. 13:10). The people of Sdom, as a result of their natural resources, are confident in themselves. They find no need for God and thus evolve into a corrupt society (13:13 / see shiur on Parshat Va'yera). In total disgust for this society, God punishes them b'shem Havaya (18:20-21). Before

destroying Sdom, God first consults with Avraham Avinu. Antithetical to the society of Sdom, Avraham's offspring were destined to become a 'blessing to Mankind' by establishing a Nation characterized by "tzekek u'mishpat" (see 18:17-19). Can Lot, a disciple of Avraham, not save that city? Upon hearing of the forthcoming destruction of Sdom, Avraham immediately assumes exactly what we have posited - that God would not punish the righteous together with the wicked: "Will you sweep away the innocent together with the guilty?... Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (18:23-25).

Although he is more righteous than his neighbors, Lot does not merit to be saved from the destruction of Sdom. [He preferred the lifestyle in Sdom over the challenges of life with Avraham (13:10- 12).] In an act of Divine Mercy (19:16!), and for the sake of Avraham (19:29), God removes Lot from Sdom before He destroys the city. Lot is so undeserving that he is not even permitted to look back and watch the destruction.

It is only God's covenant with Avraham Avinu that evokes Divine Mercy. Like Bnei Yisrael during Makkat Bchorot, Lot is saved from destruction even though he is not worthy. Based on this thematic similarity, we can appreciate Rashi's concise comment regarding the time of year when the destruction of Sdom took place. Rashi comments on the pasuk that describes the meal which Lot prepared for the two "malachim" (who came to destroy Sdom): "And he [Lot] made for them drinks, and baked MATZOT, and they ate..." (19:3).

On the word MATZOT, Rashi explains that 'it was PESACH' that evening. After all, why else would they be eating matzah? Does Rashi need to inform us what time of year this episode took place? Do we need to know how 'frum' Lot was, that he kept all mitzvot, even matzah on Pesach? Rashi is not coming to teach us "pshat" (the simple meaning of the text). Rather, he hints to the thematic similarity between Lot and Yetziat Mitzraim. [Note: The following explanation illustrates the danger of understanding "drash" as "pshat". When we too quickly accept "drash" as "pshat", not only are we liable to miss the beauty of "pshat", we might also lose the full appreciation of the "drash".] According to "pshat", Lot did not bake matzah (19:3) because it was Pesach. He baked matzah instead of bread because his guests arrived SUDDENLY. In order to bake bread, the dough needs time to rise; matzah can be baked much more quickly. The "drash", brought down by Rashi, that Lot baked matzah because it was Pesach, thematically links the events leading to the destruction of Sdom to the story of Yetziat Mitzraim. In both events, God reveals Himself, b'shem Havaya, in Judgement. Thus, Rashi's commentary of this pasuk does not explain "pshat", rather, it points to a much deeper biblical theme - that of 'Yom Hashem'!

YOM HASHEM This biblical concept of a day when God reveals Himself, causing the wicked to be punished while the righteous are saved, is known throughout Tanach as "Yom Hashem" - God's Day of Judgement. For example, when Yeshayahu foresees the destruction of Bavel (Isaiah 13:1-22), he consistently refers to that day as 'Yom Hashem' (see 13:6,9,13). While describing that calamity, Yeshayahu even compares Bavel to Sdom: "Bavel, glory of kingdoms, splendor of the Kassdim, shall become like Sdom and Amarah, overturned by God" (13:19). Another important example is found in Amos. During the time period of Yerovam ben Yoash, Israel had reached prosperity and affluence. They eagerly awaited an even greater redemption, even though they were not deserving. In reaction, Amos warns the people concerning the danger involved: "Woe, you who wish for 'Yom Hashem', why should you want 'Yom Hashem', [for you] it shall be darkness and not light" (5:18). If the people are not spiritually prepared for God to reveal Himself, Amos warns, 'Yom Hashem' will bring upon them destruction rather than salvation. Our final example comes from God's 'farewell' message to Mankind; the last prophesy of the last prophet - Malachi: [also a popular song] "Hiney anochi sho'lay'ach la'chem..." - Behold I am sending you Eliyah the prophet BEFORE the great and terrible Day of the Lord ['Yom Hashem'] comes. And he will bring about the REPENTANCE of the fathers by the sons, and the repentance of the sons by the fathers, LEST I COME and STRIKE the entire land with DESTRUCTION." [this last phrase, we don't sing!] (3:23-24). Here again we find the necessity to perform teshuva prior to redemption, otherwise

God's revelation will lead to destruction. Since the ultimate redemption of Am Yisrael is the hope of all the prophets, it is only fitting that this becomes the closing prophetic message to Am Yisrael.

KOS SHEL ELIYAHU As we have seen, the redemption process begins without Bnei Yisrael being worthy of salvation. However, its continuation - receiving the Torah and inheriting the Promised Land - require spiritual readiness. In this week's shiur we explained how the offering of the korban Pesach was the 'first step' in the right direction, an important milestone on the road to spiritual redemption. Every year, when we commemorate the events of Yetziat Mitzraim on 'Passover', we thank God for His fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim (MAGID) and pray for our final redemption (HALLEL/ NIRTZAH). Before that prayer, we invite Eliyahu to our Seder table ('fathers and sons' gathered together), the same Eliyahu promised by Malachi: not only to taste our wine; and not only to encourage him to smite our enemies. Eliyahu comes to remind us that we need to do proper "teshuva" PRIOR to our redemption, and to warn us of the consequences lest we do not.

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Michlelet Torah Viregesht has undertaken to publish in English, for the first time (and for much of the material, for the first time anywhere), the ideas, thoughts and selections of Shiurim of Nehama Leibowitz ZTL. The original GILYONOT (pamphlets), which she distributed and reviewed= for 30 years (1942-1971), were not all published, and the =93Studies in the= weekly Parsha represent only a portion of her original oeuvre ... For information about the school or these Shiurim, please contact the school or Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel, the dean, at 02-571-2021 fax: 02-571-2022 or email mtv1@netmedia.co.il ... by Dr. Moshe Sokolow

I. CONTRADICTIONS Anyone who reads TANAKH thoroughly will often encounter a verse which appears to be contradicted or challenged by another verse in the same, or another, context--often even in another Biblical book. The Rabbis already indicated ways of dealing with such instances, to which they referred as KETUVIM (verses) HAMAKKHISHIM (which contradict) ZEH ET ZEH (one another). A significant medieval scholar, R. Avraham ben David (RAVAD) of Posquierres, formulated one such approach as follows: We are obliged to study and reconcile any two verses which challenge one another. We may not dismiss one [out of hand], nor may we regard the Torah as being confused. This week, we shall enumerate some of the many kinds of contradictions which verses present to one another, or challenges which they pose to our expectations. At the outset we shall only record the problems; not their solutions. [If you want to skip to the texts pertaining to this week's Parsha, go directly to Parts Two and Three.]

Part One: Contradictory Instructions The three families of Levi'Em, GERSHON, KEHAT, and MERARI, were selected to perform duties in Ohel Mo'Ed (Bamidbar 4:3). They were entrusted with the responsibility for, serially, taking apart the Mishkan, packing up its utensils, transporting them, and setting it all up again, as they traveled through the wilderness. HAZAL instruct us that they were also in charge of such other responsibilities as musical accompaniment and guard duty. Seven times in this Parsha the Torah repeats that they serve: "From the age of 30 to the age of 50" (4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47). However, the Torah also says (8:24-25): "As regards the Levi'Em, from the age of 25 and above they shall come to participate in the service of Ohel Mo'Ed, and at the age of 50 they shall retire from service."

QUESTION: How shall we understand the discrepancy of five years? There is also a discrepancy regarding their habitations. The Torah (Bamidbar 35:1-8; especially verse 7) stipulates that after the conquest they are to receive "48 cities and their environs." With respect to those environs (MIGRASHIM), one verse (3) sets their area as 1,000 cubits (ELEF AMMAH), while the very next verse sets it as 2,000 (ALPAYIM AMMAH). **QUESTION:** How shall we understand this discrepancy?

Part Two: Instructions with Contradictory Fulfillment A. In reviewing his forty years' experience with the Israelites, Moshe recollects how he organized their government by appointing captains and officers. He says (Devarim 1:9-15): "I told you at that time that I could not suffer you alone... How could I bear the burden of your fractiousness by myself? Nominate wise, understanding, and well-known members of your tribes and I will appoint them to lead you...I took the captains of your tribes, wise and

well-known men, and I made them your leaders: officers of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens, by tribes.ö QUESTION: Moshe instructed them to nominate people with three qualities. Why did they delete the second one (understanding)? Were none available?

B. When designating Yehoshua as his successor, God instructs Moshe (Bamidbar 27:18): öTake Yehoshua bin Nun... and place your hand upon him.ö In fulfilling his instructions, however, we read (verses 22-23) that: öMoshe did as God instructed him; he took Yehoshua, stood him before Elazar the Kohen and all the people, and placed his hands upon him.ö QUESTION: As God had only instructed him to place one hand upon Yehoshua, why did Moshe feel it necessary to use both his hands?

C. Another illustration of this point comes from this week's Parsha. When Moshe instructs the Israelites on the performance of the KORBAN PESACH, he specifies (12:3-5): öLet each man take one lamb per family and household... Each person shall each a quota of the lamb. It shall be an unblemished, one-year old, male lamb, selected from amongst the sheep or goats.ö In the review of the laws of Pesach appearing in DEVARIM, however, we read (16:2): öYou shall sacrifice the Pesach to the LORD, your God, sheep or cattle.ö QUESTION: Was the Pesach sacrifice to be a lamb (or, at the most general, a sheep or goat), or were even cattle permissible?

Part Three: Notice of an Event and How it Transpires In the event that God gives an instruction and it is carried out with variation, we assume that the person who was instructed effected the change, and we canicker over whether the change was necessary, salutary, or prohibited. When a prophet transmits a detailed divine warning, however, and the event transpires in a considerably more severe manner than the warning forecast, what sense do we make of it? Did God change His mind (so to speak), or did He intend to deliberately mislead the audience? Such questions have, of course, a decided theological bent to them which motivates us strongly to seek their resolution.

In SHEMOT 11:4-8 we read Moshe's forecast to Pharaoh of the catastrophe about to sweep Egypt: öMoshe said: God has said, At midnight I shall go out in the midst of Egypt. Every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die... and there shall arise a great cry throughout the land of Egypt... and all your [Pharaoh's] servants shall descend to me, prostrate themselves before me, and say: Get out!, you and all the people at your feet...ö The realization of the forecast, however, states (12:29-30): öAt midnight, God slew all the firstborn of Egypt... Pharaoh arose at night along with his servants and all of Egypt, and there was a great cry throughout Egypt...He summoned Moshe and Aaron at night and said, Get up and get out of the midst of my people, you and the Israelites...ö QUESTION: If Pharaoh was destined to beseech Moshe personally to leave Egypt, why did Moshe speak only of his servants coming to implore him? Why did he not deliver the more ominous threat?

Part Four: Korban Pesach After the plague of AROV (literally: a mixture, it can refer to either a swarm of insects, or more commonly, a horde of wild beasts), Pharaoh made Moshe the offer of allowing the Jews to offer sacrifices to God without leaving Egypt. Moshe declines the offer, explaining (8:22): öIt would not be proper because the Egyptians regard our sacrifices to the LORD as abominations. Could we break an Egyptian taboo before their very eyes without their stoning us?

We should recall [see VAYIGASH: Part Three] that because the Egyptians held the eaters of the flesh of sheep and cattle in the lowest regard, Joseph's brothers were fed separately from the other Egyptians (Gen. 43:32). Joseph also encouraged his brothers to list their occupations as shepherds in order to keep them isolated from the rest of Egypt (46:34). Both of these references feature the word öabominationö (TO'EVAH).

QUESTIONS: A. Why was the 15th of Nisan chosen for the sacrifice? B. Why was it necessary to select the sacrificial animal four days earlier? C. Why was the blood smeared on the door posts and lintel? ANSWERS: A. The astrological symbol of the month of Nisan is Aries, the ram, and the 15th day is the apex of a lunar month. The ram-god of the Egyptians was to be slaughtered on the evening of the full-moon of its very own month (ostensibly, the height of its powers), and the Egyptians would be powerless to prevent it! B. By selecting the sheep or ram four days in advance of the

actual sacrifice, the Jews were flaunting their intentions in the faces of their Egyptian neighbors, as though daring them to interfere. C. Similarly, the smearing of its blood on the door posts and lintel was intended to force the Egyptians to suffer the further indignity of seeing the lifeblood of the animal, the essence of many pagan rituals, "profaned."

QUESTIONS: A. Why is it forbidden to eat it raw זNAö? B. Why can it not be cooked in a pot but only roasted? C. Why did it have to be roasted whole--with its head, hind parts, and internal organs, all intact? ANSWER: These details were intended to increase the indignity the Egyptians were meant to suffer--and, correspondingly, increase the risk to the Jews participating in the sacrifice. A. B. Roasting the sheep (or ram), rather than cooking it in a pot or eating it raw, meant that the aroma could not be contained. Even if the Egyptians did not actually see their taboo being slaughtered, they could not avoid the smell. C. By requiring the principal organs to be kept intact, the identity of the roasting animal could not be denied. Moshe Sokolow

II. WHOSE FIRST BORN WERE ACTUALLY SLAIN? In promising to destroy Egyptian people during the final plague, God says through Moshe öAnd all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh that sits on his throne, even to the first born of the maidservant who is behind the mill; and all the first born of beastsö (Exodus 11:5). God says He will even smite the first born of the Egyptian maidservants. However, when the plague of the First Born actually occurs, The Torah says öAnd it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattleö (Exodus 12:24). Instead of the promised slaying of the first born of the maidservants, the Torah substitutes (or adds) the first born of the women (descended from actually) taken captive.

QUESTION: Which first born actually died, and why the change? ANSWER: Nehama states many times that any subtle or not so subtle change in the Torah is never accidental. In this case, she explains that when Moshe told Pharaoh who will receive the plague, it would have had absolutely no impact upon him to describe the killing of the öBECHOR HASHEVI,ö the first born of an earlier Egyptian conquest. These people were not citizens of Egypt and not natives, and it did not matter to Pharaoh if they were to die or not. However, the native Egyptian maidservants were important to Pharaoh, and, thus, Moshe warns Pharaoh that they will be killed in the plague. In reality, of course, the first born of both groups died.

QUESTION: Why, then, did God actually kill the first born of the captive women? After all, neither this mother or son did anything to hurt the Jewish people? ANSWER: Nehama cites Rashi who explains that had they not been killed, then this group of captives in Egypt would have believed that their god had ultimate power, and it was for this reason that they were spared. That would have sent the wrong message to this group and the rest of the world, creating a Chilul Hashem, a desecration of God's name. Therefore, they had to be killed as well. ...

owner-dafyomi@jer1.co.il Insights into Daf Yomi from Ohr Somayach By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

When Left is Right - Which shoe do you put on first, right or left? In a beraisa we are taught that the right comes first. The basis for this is the Torah's command (Shmos 29:20 and Vayikra 14:14) regarding a kohen's inauguration and a metzora's purification, to place sacrificial blood upon the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot. Rabbi Yochanan, on the other hand, sees a reason for favoring the left foot from the fact that the Torah directed us to place our tefillin on the "weaker arm" (Shmos 13:16) -- the left. "The man who fears Heaven," said Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak, "fulfills both views." He was referring to the Sage Mar, the son of Ravana, who found a way of accommodating both views. He first put on his right shoe but did not tie it. Then he put on the left shoe and tied it before proceeding to tie the right one. This seems like a perfect compromise which gives each foot precedence at one stage. But what if you wear shoes which have no laces -- which shoe do you then put on first? Tosefos offers a simple resolution to this problem. Rabbi Yochanan never intended to give the left foot precedence in anything else but tying the laces, because only in regard to "tying them on your arm" did the Torah designate the left arm as the one where the tefillin are placed. Where no tying is necessary, the left foot no longer has any primary status and it is the right shoe which goes on first. This explanation is the basis for the halacha codified in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (2:4) which has become the daily practice of most observant Jews. But if you are a lefty who ties his tefillin on his right arm, add the halachic

authorities, you should also tie your right shoe first. An interesting extension of the precedence given to the right foot applies to the custom for the chasan at a wedding to break a glass at the end of the chupah, which recalls the destruction of the Beis Hamidkash at the height of his joy. He does so with his right foot because this is an act in which there is no element of tying and is therefore the domain of the right foot. Shabbos 61a

What Goes in the Worlds to Come "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more." This prophecy of Micha (4:3) is the vision which has inspired all those who seek universal peace. But when is it scheduled for its ultimate fulfillment? One opinion of the Sages is that the Prophet Micha was referring to the days of Mashiach. This led the proponents of this view to conclude that weapons are only a necessary evil in an imperfect world, and can therefore not be considered an adornment for the one who bears arms. This is the position expressed in the mishna which declares that it is forbidden for a man to carry a sword or spear in the street on Shabbos. In contrast to this approach is the declaration of the Sage Shmuel. Shmuel stated that the only significant difference between today and the days of Mashiach is that then Jewry will not be subservient to other nations. Wars between those other nations, however, will continue to be waged until a period called the "World to Come" when Micha's prophecy of weapons converted into agricultural instruments will be fulfilled. But when we speak of the "World to Come" we conjure up an image of a world in which there is no eating or drinking or any physical activity, as the Sage Rav describes it in Mesechta Berachos (17a). What need is there in such a spiritual world for agricultural tools? Maharsha solves this problem by distinguishing between the finite period following the resurrection of the dead, when there will still be a physical world, and the infinite world of souls which follows it. Micha's prophecy of peace will be fulfilled in that post-resurrection era when man still needs to eat, and it promises him the ability to cultivate his food without fear of war. This "World to Come" comes after resurrection. It will be followed in due time by an even more perfect "World to Come" when the only activity will be to delight in the glory of the Divine Presence. Shabbos 63a

daf-insights@shemayisrael.com Insights to the Daf: Shabbos 56-60 brought to you by Kollel Iyud Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld

Shabbos 60 THE "SANDAL HA'MESUMAR" (see GRAPHIC #1) QUESTION: The Mishnah says that it is prohibited to wear "Sandal ha'Mesumar" (nailed-up shoes) on Shabbos. The Gemara explains why the Rabanan enacted such a prohibition, relating that several tragedies occurred whereby many Jews inadvertently killed each other. What do these tragedies have to do with Sandal ha'Mesumar? ANSWERS: (a) RASHI explains that the cause of death was that they trampled each other with their Sandalim ha'Mesumarim, which had thick nails protruding from their bottoms. (b) According to TOSFOS (DH v'Sham'u) and other Rishonim, the Sandal ha'Mesumar was the cause of the stampede in the first place. In the first incident, it was a Sandal ha'Mesumar that was reversed, that caused everyone in the cave to panic at the thought that someone may have walked out of the cave and been spotted by the Romans. In the second and third incidents, it was the noise of a Sandal ha'Mesumar's nails clanging against the ground that caused the Jews to panic at the thought that a Roman had found their whereabouts and was approaching to kill them.

60b THE PROHIBITION OF "SANDAL HA'MESUMAR" ON SHABBOS QUESTION: According to both explanations above (Insight #2) as to why the Rabanan prohibited wearing the Sandal ha'Mesumar, why did they prohibit it only on Shabbos and Yom Tov? Granted, the Gemara says that the incidents occurred on Shabbos, but the tragedies themselves were unrelated to Shabbos (and they could have happened any day of the week). They were simply a result of the Jews fleeing from the Romans! What is the logical connection between the tragedies and Shabbos? ANSWERS: (a) The ME'IRI explains that the Rabanan wanted to prevent the joy of Shabbos and Yom Tov from being compromised if people were to be reminded of the tragedies that occurred on those days. Therefore, they prohibited the Sandal

ha'Mesumar on Shabbos and Yom Tov, the very day that the tragedy happened, so that people would not be reminded of it and saddened. (b) The Rabanan were concerned of a recurrence of those tragedies. Therefore, on days when Jews gather together because they cannot work (Rashi DH Ika) -- which closely resembles the circumstances in which the tragedies occurred -- the Rabanan prohibited wearing the Sandal ha'Mesumar. On other days of gathering, such as a fast day, since people gather together to Daven (i.e. for a positive and not a negative reason), the Rabanan assume that they will be engrossed in their prayer and no tragedy will occur. (M. Kornfeld)

Business-halacha@torah.org] Business-Halacha -
Deducting Expenses From Our Maaser Obligation

Question: Which expenses and losses are deductible from a person's income before separating Maaser (tithe of our income) to charity, and which are not?

Before answering this question, we must acquaint ourselves with one of the basic underlying principles of our Maaser obligation. To quote Rabbi David Oppenheim (1664-1736. Author of Shaalos U'Teshuvos Nishal L'Dovid. This quote can be found in Sefer Maaser Kesafim, edited by Dr. Cyril Domb, page 61), "Regarding financial Maaser, a person is a (9/10) partner with Hashem in his income. When it comes to deducting expenses, a person may deduct any expenses or losses that occur in his business as long as they are not due to his negligence, for there is a mutual liability (between the business and Maaser).. therefore any expenses incurred in earning the income, including any clothing that must be purchased for a business related journey, may be deducted". This concept of a person being a partner with Hashem has direct ramifications on what expenses may be deducted from our income before setting aside Maaser, and on the distribution of Maaser funds. We are only going to discuss the former in this class.

Answer: A. Money spent by a person to enable him to earn an income, may be deducted from his income before separating Maaser, even if it was used for this purpose unsuccessfully. Any expenditures or losses that are not for the purpose of producing more income are considered a person's private income, and Maaser must be separated from these funds. B. In light of the above, the following may be deducted from the gross income before separating Maaser by a self employed business owner: Wages paid to an employee, any inventory related expenses, cost of leasing property or vehicles, advertising, and any business related taxes. Any financial loss caused by theft, loss, or broken machinery may also be deducted, as long as it is not due to negligence on the business owner's part. However, if property or vehicles were purchased for the business, the money used for this purpose is not considered a business expense, rather it is a capital investment, and Maaser must be paid on it. Depreciation of these items due to normal wear and tear may be deducted. Obviously, the cost of maintaining these items may also be deducted. C. Employees may deduct from their wages any income taxes, child care costs that are necessary to enable them to take a job, transportation costs to and from work, and the cost of any educational courses that they must take to enable them to function properly on the job. However, expenses incurred in hiring cleaning help for the home may not be deducted, even though it would be difficult to keep a job and clean the home without extra help, unless it would be objectively determined that the person would be totally unable to earn an income without this help. D. If a person is involved in two businesses, and made a profit in one but took a loss in the other, or if he received an inheritance or present but had a business loss, if he makes a Maaser accounting for both at the same time, he may deduct the loss from his overall income and only needs to pay Maaser on his net gain from both businesses. If he made a Maaser accounting on his profit and only suffered the loss in the other business afterwards during the same year, there is a difference of opinion whether or not the loss may be deducted from the pre-Maaser income. The preferable method of dealing with this situation is to stipulate in the beginning of the year that he will give Maaser only on his net income after all expenses for that year.

Sources: For the benefit of those interested in delving further into this topic, we will mention some sources worthwhile looking into. See the Shaalos U'Teshuvos Shaar Ephraim (84), Chut HaShoni (90), Shvus Yaaakov (Vol. 2 Siman 86), and Avkas Roechel (3). See also the Pischei Teshuva (Yoreh De'ah 249:1), Nodeh B'Yehuda (Yoreh De'ah Vol. 2 Siman 199), Chavos Yair (224), and Ahavas Chessed (Vol. 2 18:2).

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