



## Mutual Respect

By Ariel Sacknovitz, Director of Production, 12th Grade

*"These were the same Aharon and Moshe to whom G-d said, 'Take the Children of Israel out from the land of Egypt...'" (Shemos 6:26-27)*

Rashi comments that in certain places Aharon is mentioned before Moshe, while in others, Moshe precedes Aharon. This is meant to teach that they were considered as being equal to one another. A question can be asked; no two people are actually equal. Each person is inherently different, each unique, possessing different capabilities and skills. One person might excel in one area, while the other excels in a totally different area. We must therefore define "equality" as proposed by Rashi differently. There is a tremendous lesson to be learned from Moshe and Aharon, or shall we say Aharon and Moshe. Every human being wants to be honored.

This is man's nature. Aharon had every right to demand honor from Moshe simply because Aharon was Moshe's older brother, while Moshe could have demanded honor from Aharon since Moshe was chosen by G-d to lead the Jews out of Egypt. Yet, we never find such a conflict between them. Each respected each other's unique greatness. It was not about demanding honor that occupied their minds; it was about recognizing the other's greatness that counted. This is what made these

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## Seeing the Miracles Behind Barad

By Eitan Kaszovitz, Layout Editor, 10th Grade

In this week's parsha, we see something very interesting by the makah of Barad (hail). Hashem tells Moshe what to say to Pharaoh: *"Because this time, I am sending all My plagues into your heart and into your servants and into your people, in order that you know that there is none like Me in the entire earth."* (Shemos 9:14)

This bothers Rashi, because wasn't Makos B'Chorot the makah with all the plagues being sent from Hashem's heart, not Barad? Rashi answers by saying that this is talking about Makos B'Chorot, it's just a preview for it. However, the Sifsei Chachamim asks on this: Why is Hashem choosing to foreshadow the makah of B'chorot now, by the 7<sup>th</sup> makah? He answers by saying that Rashi didn't mean Makos B'Chorot, rather he meant Makos Bikores, which is just another way of saying Barad. So, now we're back to our original question: why is Hashem saying Barad is the most plague-filled makah?

The answer is that this makah was the worst for Pharaoh, so Hashem is sending all his plagues out now by Barad because it will hurt Pharaoh the most. However, Makos B'Chorot will be the worst for the people of Mitzraim. The Rashbam, however, gives a different P'shat. He says that Barad really was the most wondrous, plague-filled makah. It

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**Torah Teasers**

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum

Parshas Vaera  
Questions

1. In this parsha, what is called a "*morasha*" - "a heritage"? What else in the Torah is called a "*morasha*"?
2. Which grandfather and grandson lived the same amount of years?
3. In this parsha, which married couple begins their names with the same letter of the *Aleph-Bet*?
4. Who is the ancestor of every king from the Kingdom of Judah, and every High Priest except for one?
5. In this parsha, which person has the same name as an ancient city in the Land of Israel?
6. Which body parts are referred to in this parsha? (7 answers)

## Answers

1. In this parsha, the land of Israel is referred to as a "*morasha*" - "a heritage" (Exodus 6:9) In parshas V'zos Habracha, the Torah itself is called a "*morasha*" (Deut. 33:4).
2. Levi and his grandson Amram both lived 137 years (Exodus 6:16, 18).
3. The names of Aharon and his wife Elisheva both begin with the Hebrew letter *aleph* (Exodus 6:23).
4. Aminadav, the father of Nachshon and Elisheva (the wife of Aharon), is an ancestor of King David (Ruth 4:20) and of every High Priest except for Aharon (Exodus 6:23).
5. Chevron, an ancient city in Israel, is also the name of the third son of Kehas (Exodus 6:18).
6. This parsha refers to: arm, hand, heart, palm of a hand, eyes, finger, lips. (1) Hashem informs Moshe that He will redeem the Jews "with an outstretched **arm**" (Exodus 6:6). (2) **Hand** is mentioned several times, mostly regarding the hand of Hashem that will punish the Egyptians (e.g. Exodus 7:4) (3) **Heart** appears several times in reference to Pharaoh's "hardened heart" (Exodus 7:3 is the first place). (4) Moshe informs Pharaoh that he will spread out the **palms of his hands** to stop the plague of hail (Exodus 9:29). (5) Moshe is told by Hashem to take a handful of ashes and throw them skyward in front of Pharaoh's **eyes** (Exodus 7:8). (6) The Egyptian magicians admit that the plague of lice is from "the **finger** of God" (Exodus 8:15). (7) Moshe refers to himself as having "blocked **lips**" (Exodus 6:17).

**This Week's Parsha Puzzler**  
By Natanel Abramchayev**L'elui Nishmat his loving grandfathers and uncles:**

יהודה בן יהושע וגם גבריאל בן טובה וגם מיכאל בן שרה וגם הפאל בן רבקה

In this week's Parsha, Hashem says to Moshe, "I have also heard the groaning of the Children of Israel whom Egypt enslaves" (6:5). However, at a second glance, there seems to be an extra word in the verse. The word "also" shouldn't be there. Who else heard the groaning of the Jewish people that the Torah felt it necessary to put the word "also" here? I have researched and found the answer in the Chasam Sofer. He gives a beautiful explanation to this verse. The word "also" refers to the Jews themselves who heard the cry of their brethren, and despite their own suffering, they still tried to help their fellow; it is through this merit that they were worthy of Hashem's mercy!

*(Ariel Sacknovitz — Continued from page 1)*

two brothers great. They, in essence, neutralized, or "equalized", their human tendencies for honor by recognizing each other's unique capabilities, and instead of being "honor seekers" they became "honor givers". The Torah is therefore teaching us an example of how two brothers have the capacity to live in harmony if they so choose. The Torah uses their names interchangeably to emphasize this very point. How are our interpersonal relationships? Is it like Aharon and Moshe, or Moshe and Aharon? Does it really matter who comes first? It shouldn't, as long as G-d's glory is of paramount importance!

Given over by Yehuda Katz

*(Eitan Kaszovitz — Continued from page 1)*

contained snow, smoke, fire, hail, and sulfur all in one! The makah of Barad was really a true nes. It was the most miraculous thing that could happen. There are so many things that we don't realize that Hashem put into this makah. Rashi explains that the biggest wonder was that fire and water were able to co-exist. Not just that, but it really symbolized something. It symbolized the fact that although B'nei Yisrael had gone through many small disputes among each other, like by the Dor Hamabul (which had a severe punishment of death), they are still always able to come together and be one nation. Water and fire always are against each other, and one

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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Uri Himelstein

## Singing and Clapping on Shabbos

*As we welcome the Shabbos, we say the Kabbalas Shabbos. This tefillah is generally musical (although in some places it is more musical than others), and therefore I thought it would be appropriate to discuss some of the things that we do when swayed by music, like clapping, dancing, banging, etc.*

- Uri

### I. Introduction

- a. This is one of those things in Halacha that is viewed as a great mitzvah or a great aveirah. The Gemara comes down very clearly on this issue; in Beitzah (36b), it clearly states that any activities such as clapping, banging, or dancing are not done on Shabbos, as a Gezairah that we might come to fix a musical instrument, which would be Tikun Maneh. So, we see that the whole prohibition is a Gezairah Miderabanan.

### II. Possible Heiterim

- a. The Gezairah against clapping, banging, and dancing is interesting, because we have a similar Gezairah where we worry about us coming to fix instruments against playing the instruments themselves, and this is even a step beyond that. Therefore, one may implement certain kulas by clapping, such as doing it Kilachar Yad, which the Biur Halacha rules may not be used by playing the instruments themselves.
- b. Another Heiter that one may employ by clapping is that the Gezairah doesn't exist anymore. Tosfos points out that nowadays we don't know how to fix instruments, so the Gezairah doesn't apply. Yet, the Aruch Hashulchan points out that this isn't necessarily true, as certain instruments are very simple to fix (for example a guitar string), and that there is no way that they had such superior knowledge in the past versus in the present. Rav Moshe says that this is also difficult because we have a rule that unless we have a greater Beis Din in number and

wisdom, we may not uproot a Gezairah (even, as the Ram points out, if the Gezairah no longer applies). So, Rav Moshe says that we must say that this must be like a Gezairah that was never accepted throughout Klal Yisroel, and even though it was accepted back then, Tosfos is telling us that if we "transported" those Rabbis to modern times, they would not make this Gezairah.

- c. Another Heiter in terms of dancing might be, as the Aruch Hashulchan says, that the Gezairah was only made against specific dances which match specific songs, and that a general dance wouldn't be included. Rabeinu Chananel says in Beitzah (37) that a dance is defined as lifting one leg right as the other leg is dropping, similar to a jump in each step, but a few men walking in a circle would not even be considered dancing, as Rav Ovadia *zt"l* clearly points out.
- d. The Magen Avraham points out that a Heiter for dancing on Simchas Torah is Kavod Hatorah, so some poskim, such as Rav Avraham David Mipotoch, extend this Heiter to other areas of tzorech mitzvah, such as for zemiros or sheva brachos on Shabbos.

### III. What is the Minhag in this area?

- a. First of all, the Rema points out that even if you hold that this is Asur on Shabbos, if one sees somebody else doing these things, then he should not correct him, since it is better for them to be doing it beshogeg than bemeizid. The Mishnah Brurah points out (and as we pointed out before) it might even be mutar if it is letzorech mitzvah. However, since Rav Ovadia doesn't hold of this Rema, he holds that one should correct them. The Biur Halacha quotes that Rabbi Akiva Eiger said that we should correct this practice, since it might lead to dancing be-

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# It's All Connected

By Zachary Goldberg, 9th Grade

This week's parsha talks about the *maca* of *tzfardaya* – frogs. Many people ask why the Torah doesn't refer to the frogs in the plural tense, rather it refers to them in the singular tense. *Rashi* offers an answer and says that a huge frog came out of the Nile, and the Egyptians were hitting it, and a swarm of frog erupted from its mouth. This is a beautiful demonstration of *midda k'neged middah*. Pharaoh was afraid that the *Bnei Yisrael* would become too many, so he constantly beat us. But the more he beat us, the more we were fruitful and multiplied. Everything that Hashem does is *midda k'neged middah*. The frogs entered into the body of the Egyptians, and *Rashi* says that they would croak in their innards. Normally, if a frog entered into a person, he would die. But they didn't die. It was a *nes* upon a *nes*. And not only that, but the frogs went into their stomachs. This was also *midda k'neged middah*. The Egyptians made us unbelievably nervous. If we didn't make enough bricks, we would have to use our babies as a substitute. So too, Hashem went beyond nature and made the Egyptians constantly nervous by placing croaking frogs in their innards.

Given over by Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss of the Agudas Yisrael of Staten Island

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tween men and women (and of course this has nothing to do with the Shabbos Gezairah and might even be advisable to do during the week).

- b. Chassidim have the minhag to dance and clap, probably because of all the leniency that we have seen (the Aruch Hashulchan, who says that the Gezairah was only for special dances, and maybe the Rabeinu Chananel about the definition of dancing). This isn't necessarily true, though, because sometimes they get into it and actually dance. The real source is most likely the Minchas Elazar (the Munkatcher Rebbe), who ruled that only Chassidim may dance because only someone who is really excited about Shabbos and Yom Tov to the point that they can't control themselves because of Kavod Hatorah can dance; however, if one is a Misnaged who doesn't feel this compelled, then he may not dance or clap.
- c. In many circles, there is a minhag to dance by Kabalas Shabbos, based on the Rabeinu Chananel in Baba Kama (32a) that Rabbi Chanina would dance when he would say "Bo'u V'neitzeh Lekras Kallah". The Gemara there is talking about going out to greet Shabbos, and Rabeinu Chananel adds the word "meraked" in his explanation of the Gemara. Rav Belski was quoted in "Halachically Speaking" (by another Rabbi Lebowitz of no relation) that one may join in the dancing at any shul with this minhag because it is only a Derabanan Gezairah anyway, and it is also Bein Hasmashos, so there is what to be somech on. However, he wasn't so supportive of doing this during vadai Shabbos, and instead suggested that if one must do this because of darchei shalom then one should do it with a shinuy (which, as we mentioned before, would make it permissible).

#### IV. Other Kinds of Noise Making

- a. The Shemiras Shabbos Kihilchasa paskens (like the pashtus of the Gemara) that one may not bang on the tables during zemiros as drums. Rav Belski (quoted by "Halachically Speaking") said that one may not even applaud, even though it is just random noise not to any beat. However, Rebbe wasn't so sure about

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*(Stories of Greatness — Continued from page 8)*

without first swearing an oath as to the validity of one's claim; and here there were neither document nor witnesses.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak hesitated to pronounce his verdict and finalize the case. Two nagging thoughts disturbed him. Why, in his first days in his new position, did the Almighty arrange for his inaugural judgment to be something so straightforward and clear-cut, with no room to budge left or right to attempt any sort of compromise? Could it be a hint from Heaven that his practice to always pursue accommodation and compromise was not correct? That only adhering strictly to the letter of the law can be considered the way of truth?

The other thought that made him uncomfortable was: Why did the Supernal Judge arrange it so that his very first ruling in this town would be considered bizarre by the entire populace? After all, the merchant from Hemelnick was well-known to everyone in town as a scrupulously honest man, as someone who was already wealthy and as such immune to monetary pressures, and as far from theft as east is from west. Furthermore, everyone knew that the merchant and the deceased were old friends who trusted each other implicitly, never resorting to documents or witnesses in their transactions. Surely, the entire town would be paying attention to the first ruling handed down by their new rabbi. Everyone was sure to wonder: Why should the law of the Torah be so opposite to common sense? "Why me and why now?" thought Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to himself.

He couldn't bring himself to issue the verdict just yet. The contradiction between the natural sense of what was right and the law of the Torah was too great. Even though the claimant and defendants anxiously awaited his word, he asked them to excuse him for a few more minutes. Turning aside to a corner of the room, he poured forth in silent prayer his frustration, beseeching G-d to enlighten him with understanding.

Suddenly, the owner of the honey jumped off his seat as if struck by a bolt of lightning, and exclaimed: "I remember! I remember!" So struck was he by his recollection, and so convinced of its importance and relevance, he didn't hesitate to interrupt the Rabbi, who was standing in the corner, absorbed in his personal prayer.

"Honored Rabbi, please forgive me," he called out excitedly. "While waiting here I had the most amazing realization! An old memory, which I haven't thought about in many years, just flashed through my mind. Rescued from oblivion! I'm talking about something that happened fifty years ago, when I was just a young lad.

"Our father died suddenly, leaving us a large inheritance in cash and possessions. Included in this was a storage room filled with casks of wine and oil.

"One day, the father of these two young men -- may his rest be peaceful -- came to our home in Hemelnick. He claimed that the wine and oil were his -- that he had stored it with our father for safekeeping. My brothers and I were still quite young then, and had never been involved in any of our father's business affairs. We had no idea what we were supposed to do, but we were reluctant to give up the merchandise just like that.

"We all went to the rabbi of the town and presented our case. He ruled in our favor, explaining that nothing can be taken from the inheritance of orphans without absolute proof and an oath. The wine and oil remained in our possession. After a while, we sold the entire lot for a good price.

"What I just realized is that the money we received for that wine and oil is exactly equal to the value of my honey, which is now in the possession of the sons of my departed friend!"

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's face shined with inner happiness. With his apt comparison of the two parallel events fifty years apart, the merchant had conceded his own present case. For the same reason that, as an orphan, he was entitled to keep the wine and oil that long time ago, he had to relinquish his claim on these orphans for his honey today.

Now, all was clear to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak: Divine Providence had presented him this case, so early in his new tenure, to teach him an important lesson. Not always is what seems obvious and true to human eyes necessarily the truth, or even fair. Absolute truth resides only with the laws of the Torah. G-d's ledger is always open, and all accounts are forever being reckoned and balanced. Some may take fifty years for resolution, others more, others less. What is guaranteed is that the Master of the Universe constantly oversees to be sure that justice is done.



# STOP And Think

BY YONI FENSTER, 12TH GRADE

*"The one among Pharaoh's servants that feared the word of Hashem whisked his servants and livestock indoors." (Shemos 9:20)*

Moshe very graciously gave the Egyptians ample warning that they were about to be stricken by *barad*, the seventh plague. Hailstones would rain down from the heavens and destroy everything in the field. If they wanted to save their livestock, they should bring them indoors quickly. What did the Egyptians do? The Torah tells us (9:20-21), "The one among Pharaoh's servants that feared the word of Hashem whisked his servants and livestock indoors. But the one that paid no heed to Hashem's word left his slaves and livestock in the field."

Statistics are usually quite reliable, especially when the percentages are very high. So far, Moshe was "six for six" in his predictions about the upcoming plagues. He had not yet made a single mistake. One would think the probability of him being right again regarding the seventh plague was pretty high. So why didn't all the Egyptians pull their slaves and livestock indoors until the danger passed, at least on the off chance that Moshe was right?

The Midrash identifies "the one that feared the word of Hashem" as Iyov and "the one that paid no heed to Hashem's word" as Bilam, both of whom were advisers to Pharaoh. Bilam was an interesting fellow. In some ways he was intelligent, even brilliant, but in others he was quite obtuse, a person so focused on himself that he "pays no heed" to what is going on around him. Many years later, when Balak hired Bilam to curse the Jews, he mounted his trusted donkey and began the journey. Then his donkey saw a sword-wielding angel in the middle of the road and he came to a sudden stop, refusing to budge an inch, no matter how much Bilam prodded and cursed him. Finally, miraculously, the donkey spoke to Bilam: "Is this my normal pattern of behavior? Have I not been your trusted donkey for all these years? Have I ever stalled on you once or given you a moment of trouble? So why are you beating up on me?" In other words, can't you see that something extraordinary is happening here? Why don't you pay attention to what's going on, Bilam? Wake up! The Chafetz Chaim points out that the entire episode of Bilam in the Torah appears as one long uninterpreted narrative, no *stumos*, no *psuchos*, no breaks whatsoever. Why? Because Bilam never stopped to think about what he was doing. He never stopped to take stock and consider the wisdom of his actions.

This was Bilam. When Moshe issued his warning about the impending hailstorm, Bilam could not be bothered to "pay heed" to it. He was thinking about his own plans, his own agenda. His mind was made up. We think this sort of behavior is bizarre. We laugh at Bilam's foolishness. But are we much better ourselves? Consider just a small thing, the pace of life. It used to be that we had to spend inordinate amounts of time on tasks that are accomplished easily and quickly by modern appliances. We have cars, computers, phones, email. The list is practically limitless. So have we had a net gain in time? Have we managed to catch our breaths because of all these labor-saving devices? Do we have more time to learn, to spend with the family, to reflect, to rest? In fact, just the opposite is true. We are more rushed than ever. The pace of life is so rapid that we can barely breath. Something is wrong. But do we "pay heed"? Do we stop and think about what is going on around us? Do we stop to assess our lives to see if we may perhaps have gone a little off the track? Maybe Bilam isn't the only one who fails to stop and think...

Adapted from "Rabbi Frand on the Parsha"

# Increasing Honor in a Harsh Way

By Chaim Leib Alper, 9th Grade

In this week's Parsha, we watch as Pharaoh's magicians desperately try to copy the first 3 plagues that G-d, through the hand of Moshe and Aharon, brings upon Egypt.

The Torah says in Pasuk 22, Perek 7, in regards to the Plague of Blood, "*The necromancers of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; so Pharaoh's heart was strong...*"

In the Plague of Frogs, Pasuk 3, Perek 8, it says the same but with a subtle change, "*The necromancers did the same through their incantations, and they brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt...*"

Perhaps through the minute addition of, "*and they brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt*", we can derive that the magicians didn't just create some harmless frogs to show their skill, but in fact they *worsened* the plague by bringing up even more horrible frogs, just so as to demonstrate their powers to be equal to that being supposedly used by Moshe and Aharon.

Perhaps this could be another reason that Pharaoh's heart wasn't hardened right away, because unlike by the blood, his once all-powerful magicians were becoming detrimental.

Although it may seem preposterous that the great magicians of Egypt brought even more hardship on Egypt just to show off, in our present time many people do things harmful to both themselves and others to increase the respect that others have for them.

We can all learn from this episode that some people do damaging actions to increase their honor, and that we, as the chosen people of Hashem, should not follow in their footsteps.

(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 4)

this because this doesn't seem to be what Chazal had in mind; they seemingly had only musical clapping in mind.

- b. The Rema says that it is mutar to whistle on Shabbos, but the Magen Avraham says that it is only mutar to do it to get someone's attention, and not to whistle in a musical way. The Mishna Brurah argues and says that it is totally mutar, and that Chazal were never gozeir on any noise that comes from the mouth, just like singing. This is very interesting, because according to that Mishnah Brurah, one would be allowed to "beatbox" as many acapella groups do to produce musical sounds, even though it seems to be worse musically than clapping.

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would think it's impossible for them to get along, just like we think it is impossible for every single Jew to get along and co-exist. However, Hashem sent the message to Pharaoh that it is possible for all members of a nation to unite as one, and perhaps he should consider uniting with the Jews, or at least agree to make peace for a brief amount of time like the fire and water did. And since Hashem saw Pharaoh wouldn't understand this message, the Sifsei Chachamim says that Hashem sent a different message. Hashem chose to make the flames in the hail go down, even though flames always rise up. The reason for this is that now a nation that has been on top all this time over the Jews will decline and fall down.

Perhaps we can see and understand this amazing message through the miracle of Barad and unite together as one nation. Only when that occurs will we be able to see the forthcoming of Moshiach, *bimheirah vityameinu, amen*.

## STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: NOAM LEVY

*This week's story shows us the real in-depth involvement Hashem has in our daily lives. While sometimes we realize and other times we don't, we have to always believe that Hashem has our best interests in mind and that everything will work out in the end. Hopefully, from this story, we can strengthen our faith and always keep in mind that Hashem is looking after us. Adapted from [chabad.org](http://chabad.org). Have a great Shabbos!!*

- Noam

Less than a week after the tzaddik Rabbi Levi Yitzchak moved to Berdichev in 1785 to serve as chief rabbi there, three men knocked on his door to ask him to decide a question of Jewish law between them. It would be his very first case as a rabbinical judge in his new position.

A wealthy merchant from the nearby town of Hemelnick had brought several barrels filled with honey to sell at the big fair in Berdichev. Unfortunately, just then, the price of honey dropped sharply. Not wanting to suffer a loss on his investment, he asked an acquaintance to store the honey for him until the price rose again.

The two were old friends, and the local man was happy to oblige. Knowing each other to be completely honest, they didn't write down anything of their arrangement or call in witnesses.

Time went by. The price of honey remained low, so the barrels remained in their Berdichev cellar, untouched and unnoticed.

More time went by. The man on whose property the honey was stored contracted a fatal disease and passed away. Everything happened so quickly, he never had a chance to explain to his family anything about the state of his affairs.

More time passed. The price of honey finally began to slowly climb. When the increase became significant, the owner of the barrels showed up at his deceased friend's house and claimed his honey from the sons who had inherited and taken over their father's business. They, however, having heard nothing about it from their father, refused to honor the Hemelnicker merchant's claim. After some discussion, they decided to proceed to the bet-din (rabbinical court) to present the case before the new rabbi.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak listened to the litigants carefully, even though the law in such a case was clear. Of course he would have to rule against the out-of-town merchant. Even if there had been witnesses or a signed document, Torah law stipulates that no claims against "orphans" (i.e., heirs who are disadvantaged by the fact that they have no way of knowing what transpired between the deceased and their litigant) can be collected

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