

A Promise Kept

By Nathaniel Danesh, 10th Grade

On December 13th, an armored Brinks truck was driving on Route 3 in East Rutherford near the Meadowlands, when one of its doors malfunctioned and \$600,000 blew out onto the roadway. There was a mad scramble by motorists to grab some of the fluttering bills. A motorist who viewed the scene said, "People had abandoned all sense of whatever and they were running after it. Young, old, men, women, workers, ladies out there dressed in high heels were all grabbing money." Police reported that the incident caused two accidents and even motorists on the opposite side of the 12-lane highway were seen jumping over the divider to retrieve the money.

Before the plague of Makat Bechorot, the final plague that would give the final push to free the Jews, Hashem had some instructions for Moshe. Hashem told Moshe to tell the Jews to ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold, silver, vessels and various types of riches and forms of wealth. Rashi is troubled by what looks like an extra word in the pasuk, "na" which means "please". Normally people just go and grab wealth. Let's say I opened a bank vault and told random people that they can take whatever they want from it, I wouldn't need to convince them by saying please; of course they would take. Especially if they have been working for it for 210 years while enslaved by the Mitzrim them-

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Speak With Caution

By Mordechai Kahn, 12th Grade

In Parshas Bo (4:11), Moshe informs Pharaoh about the 10th and final Makah—Makas Bechoros. Moshe told Pharaoh, "So says Hashem: Towards the middle of the night, I'm going to go out in the midst of Mitzrayim."

Rashi asks a phenomenal question on the pasuk. Why would Moshe say "Towards the middle of the night" when he can just say "midnight?" What is Moshe trying to emphasize here? Rashi beautifully answers that when it would come time for the Makah, had Moshe said the makah would occur at exactly midnight, Pharaoh's astronomers, not knowing exactly when midnight is, would mistakenly claim that Hashem's timing was wrong. As such, Moshe gave a more general time window. In response to this answer of Rashi, the Sifsei Chachamim asks why would Moshe adjust the word of Hashem just because he believed that Mitzrayim may not believe in His capabilities? Who cares if the Egyptians thought that Hashem's timing of a makah was incorrect.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Bo Questions

1. Aside from the actual plague of darkness, when else does the land of Egypt become dark?
2. In what context is an "east wind" mentioned in this parsha? Where else in the book of Exodus is an east wind mentioned?
3. The Red Sea is mentioned in Parshas Beshalach with regard to the splitting of the sea. In what context is it mentioned in this parsha - with regard to the ten plagues?
4. In this parsha, where is an animal hoof mentioned?
5. In what way is the number 21 associated with the command to eat matzah?
6. In what context are shoes mentioned in this parsha?
7. Which law in this parsha involves a bone?
8. In what context are shoulders mentioned?
9. What two-letter word appears 27 times in this parsha and has four different meanings in the Torah?
10. What two-letter word appears four times in this parsha, and has two different meanings?

Answers

1. During the plague of locusts, the swarm covers the entire sky, darkening the entire land (Exodus 10:15).
2. In this parsha, the locusts are swept into the land with an "east wind" (Exodus 10:13). In parshas Beshalach, the Red Sea is split with a powerful "east wind" (Exodus 14:21).
3. Locusts are blown out of Egypt by a west wind in the direction of the Red Sea (Exodus 10:19).
4. After the plague of darkness, Pharaoh proposes that the Israelites leave without their sheep and cattle. Moshe refuses, insisting that "not one hoof will remain behind" (Exodus 10:26).
5. The last day of Passover is the 21st day of the month of Nissan (Exodus 12:18).
6. The Jews in Egypt were instructed to eat the Passover offering with "their shoes on their feet" (Exodus 12:11).
7. The Torah states that one may not break any bones of the Passover offering (Exodus 12:46).
8. When leaving Egypt, the Jews carried matzah on their shoulders (Exodus 12:34).
9. The word "*ki*" appears 27 times in the parsha. Throughout the Torah, it is translated in four different ways: if, perhaps, rather and because (Rashi, Genesis 18:15).
10. The word "*na*" is used to mean "please" three times in this parsha (Exodus 10:11, 10:17, 11:2). The phrase "*al tochlu mimenu na*" - "Do not eat it [the Passover offering] raw" - has the alternate meaning of "raw" or "undercooked" (Exodus 12:9).

ALIYAH SUMMARY

First Aliyah: Plague Eight: At G-d's behest, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and delivered a warning: "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, so that they can worship Me!" They informed Pharaoh that if he does not allow the Israelites to go, Egypt will be attacked by a plague of locusts. After Moses and Aaron left, Pharaoh's servants begged him to allow the Israelites to leave. "Don't you yet know that Egypt is lost?" they argued. Pharaoh called back Moses and Aaron, and offered to allow the Israelites to leave—provided that they leave behind their children as security. Moses and Aaron refused the offer, and Pharaoh stubbornly refused to allow the Israelites to go.

Second Aliyah: Moses stretched out his hands, and swarms of locusts swept down on Egypt. They consumed absolutely every blade of grass, and all the crops. Pharaoh beseeched Moses to pray to G-d for the removal of the locusts, promising to then release the Israelites. Moses prayed, and no sooner had a wind carried the locusts back to the Red Sea than Pharaoh changed his mind yet again. Plague Nine: A frightful darkness descended upon Egypt. For days, the entire nation was incapacitated by the debilitating pitch darkness. "But for all the children of Israel, there was light in their dwellings."

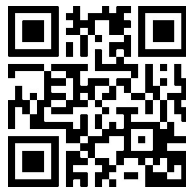
Third Aliyah: Pharaoh summoned Moses again, offering to release the Israelites if they leave behind their cattle. Moses refused the condition. Pharaoh sent Moses away, warning him to never appear in his presence again, "for on the day that you see my face, you shall die!" Moses agreed, but not before he delivered a final message that G-d relayed to him at that moment. G-d told Moses that he would visit one more plague upon Egypt, after which Pharaoh will actually drive the Israelites from his land. Parenthetically, at that time G-d also instructed Moses to ask the Israelites to borrow from their Egyptian neighbors jewels, silver and gold. The Israelites complied, and the Egyptians readily lent out their valuables.

Fourth Aliyah: Moses delivered G-d's warning to Pharaoh: "At midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt. Every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the slave woman . . ." G-d then gave the Israelites their first mitzvah, that of determining the New Moon (Rosh Chodesh) each month and establishing a lunar calendar. G-d also told Moses to instruct the Israelites to designate a lamb for the Paschal offering. The Israelites were to sacrifice this lamb and consume it, together with matzah and bitter herbs, on the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan. The blood of the lamb was to be smeared on the lintels and doorposts of the Israelite residences, and all inside those homes would be spared when G-d descended to smite the Egyptian firstborn. G-d also instructed that for all future generations this day would signal the beginning of the seven-day holiday of Passover, during which no leaven may be eaten or possessed.

Fifth Aliyah: Moses gathered the Israelite elders and conveyed to them G-d's instructions.

Sixth Aliyah: Plague Ten: At the stroke of midnight, G-d slew all the Egyptian firstborn. No Egyptian home was spared, and Egypt erupted in a great outcry. Pharaoh awoke and raced to Moses, and begged him to take the Israelites and leave. The Egyptians pressured the Israelites to leave as soon as possible, and the Israelites complied. Equipped with all the valuables they had borrowed from the Egyptians, and provisions for the way—dough that was baked before having time to rise—the Israelites left Egypt at midday of the fifteenth of Nissan. This section concludes with some more rules that pertain to the Paschal offering.

Seventh Aliyah: G-d gave the Israelites several mitzvot: 1) All male Israelite firstborn were henceforth sanctified to G-d. 2) Eat matzah on Passover. 3) Recount the story of the Exodus at the Passover Seder. 4) Bring all male firstborn of kosher animals as sacrifices. 5) Redeem all male firstborn donkeys for a sheep—which is given to a kohen (priest). 6) Don tefillin on the head and arm.



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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Yoni Sheinman

Hasagas Gevul

There was a question about whether a pizza store can open up next to another pizza store due to business competition (It should be fully mutar based on the fact that one should understand that Hashem plans how much money a person deserves already in the beginning of the year. Yet, we still can't act differently than the normal ways of nature). The Gemara in Bava Basra gives two cases regarding this issue.

The first case is that the Gemara says that if a fisherman sets up his net in an area, another fisherman may not set up his net next to that guy's net. Rashi explains that fish are naturally pulled towards a net because of the bait so if the second guy comes next to the first guy, he is in essence stealing the first guy's fish. The Nemukai Yosef argues with the explanation of Rashi and writes that we are not worried that they will go into the second guy's net first, rather we are worried that the fish will go into the first guy's net, and then swim out and go into the second guy's net and then it will be that the second guy kind of actually stole the first guy's fish. From the fact that there is no machloket here, everyone holds that this is assur.

The second case the Gemara brings is with mills. Rav Huna says that if someone has a mill in a place, he can prevent a person from opening up another mill in that place by saying that the second guy would take away his livelihood. Rav Huna the son of Rebbe Yehoshua disagrees and says that you can't stop the second guy since he lives in the neighborhood and he has a right to also open up a mill. If he lives in another place, then he can't open up a mill, unless he pays local taxes. The Rama says that if he pays the taxes he can open up in the general vicinity but not on the same block. In this machloket most poskim (Tosfos, Rambam, Rosh, Shulchan Aruch) hold like Rav Huna the son of Rebbe Yehoshua.

So which case is our pizza store situation most similar to? The Mordechai quotes the famous opinion of the Aviasaf. The Aviasaf says that one can't open up a business on a dead end street since if you have the business at the end of the dead end, someone may just open up the same business in the front of the dead end and steal all of your business. Even though some people may still go to the guy at the end of the dead end since they like his business better, most people will still probably go to the front guy and therefore this is like the fisherman case. The Rama writes that if someone opens up a business knowing that it will ruin someone else's business, it is assur to open up that business. The Piska Teshuva says that you can't open up another business only if it will for sure put the other guy out of business. The Rashba says that if you have another business, you are not allowed to be a predator in terms of your marketing strategies (Ex: Going in front of the other pizza store and saying that there is cheaper pizza in your store down the block). The Piska Choshen writes that a perfect fisherman example is if you are waiting at a bus stop and then a cab offers you a ride. The bus pulled you in by going to their stop, and then the cab stole their business. The Aruch Hashulchan says that you can't have predatory prices that are inherent to put another company out of business.

The Gemara Bava Basra says that competition by schools is good since it will raise the level of the education. The Piska Choshen says that if there is a mikvah, one can still open up another mikvah since there is never bad competition when it comes to something spiritual. Rav Moshe says that if there is a vaad for kashrus in a town, another Rav can not come in and give a hashgacha to a store without consulting the other Rabanan since the other Rabanan know the standards of that place the best. There was a question about if a group of people could leave a shul because they didn't like the tunes and they davened nusach ashkenaz, while the shul davened nusach sefard. Rav Moshe said these reasons are not enough to leave a shul especially when the Rav's parnasa relies on the shul. The Avneah Nazer says that people can't open up a new shul if it will affect the livelihood of the first shul. Also, there needs to be a strong reason to do this because of birov am hadrat melach (it is better to daven with more people).

<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/1021734/rabbi-aryeh-lebowitz/ten-minute-halacha-hasagas-gevul/>

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



With
Ari Ivry

The Rambam: The 55th mitzvah is that we are commanded to sacrifice a lamb for Pesach on the 14th day of the month of Nissan. The source of this commandment is Hashem's statement "The entire community of Israel shall then slaughter its in the afternoon immediately preceding Pesach." The 56th mitzvah is that we are commanded to eat the Korban Pesach on the night of the 15th of Nissan. The source of this mitzvah is when Hashem says "Eat the meat on this night, roasted over fire."

The Question: The Rambam in his introduction to Sefer Hamitzvos states that if one mitzvah is contingent on another, both are to be counted as one mitzvah. Why then does the Rambam count the sacrifice and the eating of the Korban Pesach as two separate mitzvos? Additionally, the Rambam also does not consider the consumption of a sin offering as its own mitzvah. Rather, he groups the consumption of all sacrificial offerings, both of higher sanctity and lower sanctity, into one mitzvah. Being that the Korban Pesach is also one of these sacrificial offerings, why is consumption not included within the mitzvah of eating sacrificial flesh?

The Explanation: The solution to these questions lies in the Rambam's wording: "We are commanded to eat the Korban Pesach on the night of the 15th of Nissan, keeping all the conditions which are stated- that it be roasted, that it be eaten in one house, and that it be eaten with matzah and bitter vegetables." The Korban Pesach is different from all other sacrificial offerings in that the Torah provided several detailed laws for its consumption. Therefore, it is classified as its own unique mitzvah. Rabbi Avraham, the Rambam's son, gives another answer. He says that since the Korban Pesach must be offered on the afternoon of the 14th of Nissan and it must be consumed that evening (15th), the two different time periods indicate that they are two separate mitzvos.

Pesach Sheni: If, due to forces beyond a person's control, he was unable to fulfill the mitzvah of Korban Pesach, there is a second opportunity to do so one month later, on the 14th of Iyar. The Rambam similarly divides the offering and the eating of the Pesach Sheini into two separate mitzvos yet again. Now, we can understand this division in the same way we have explained the division of the first Korban Pesach into two mitzvos. But, why is the mitzvah of eating the Pesach Sheini not included in the mitzvah to eat the first Korban pesach? They are both essentially one obligation- to eat the Korban Pesach, ideally in Nissan, and if not, then in Iyar?!

There is an important distinction between the two pesach offerings. The first is eaten on the 15th of Nissan, a holiday commemorating Yetzias Mitzrayim. Pesach Sheni however, is not intrinsically connected to the day of the 15th of Iyar; it just happens to be the day designated for this sacrifice. Therefore, they are not the same and are two separate mitzvos (and the reason we say Hallel for the first Korban Pesach and not the second is for this exact reason).

The Deeper Message: The slaughter of the Korban Pesach represents our rejection of Egypt's idolatrous mindset and our subjugation to Pharaoh. The eating of the Korban represents us "ingesting" our faith in Hashem. There are two critical steps in the development of Am Yisrael on Pesach; therefore they are divided into two separate mitzvos. This is also why the individual Jews who were unable to join the original Pesach sacrifice lobbied Moshe for another chance, even though legally they were exempt because the time had passed- because the Korban Pesach represents the crucial first steps of becoming an Eved Hashem. Reciting Hallel while eating the Korban Pesach, however, is not linked to the actual eating, but to the special time of the holiday. This is not a fundamental element of becoming an Eved Hashem and so it is not included in the ritual of Pesach Sheni.

Hillel Schein

11th Grade

A Sign For Hashem

This week's Parsha describes how during the last plague, makat bechorot, Hashem would pass over the Jewish houses and see the blood that the Jews were commanded to paint on their doorposts. "And you shall observe this as an ordinance for you and for your sons forever" (12:24). The Ramban and Ibn Ezra note that the last part of this pasuk seems puzzling since the command to paint the blood on the doorposts was not a commandment to be followed "forever," meaning every year; rather, as the Gemara clearly teaches us, it only applied that year in Egypt. Another possible problem with this pasuk is raised by comparing it with a previous pasuk, which states, "The blood shall serve as a sign for you" (12:13). Rashi quotes the Mechilta in saying that this teaches us that the blood was placed on the inside of the doorpost, where only those in the house can see it. This explanation seems to contradict our first pasuk, which tells how Hashem was able to see it as He passed over the houses. Wouldn't it then make more sense if the blood was a sign on the outside of the houses?

To solve these problems, Tal Sh'chakim takes a new interpretation to the command. He says it can be explained as an eternal sign of how Jews should guard their homes from harmful external forces. The blood on the doorposts was, in fact, a sign for us forever. Following Hashem's command to make a sign inside their houses showed that this was to be their first priority as a young, new nation: to follow Hashem's commands. This is what Hashem "saw" when he passed over the houses, that Bnei Yisroel had listened to His command. It is also what Bnei Yisroel were supposed to be reminded of from their viewpoint inside their houses. This shows that a basic protection for our nation against harmful external forces is achieved by keeping mitzvot, commands given to us by Hashem. By staying loyal to these commandments, we stay separate and special from the possible harms in our secular environment. The placing of blood on the insides of the doorposts was a sign of the importance of mitzvot, which would be a "sign forever," to remind us of the major role Hashem's commandments play in Judaism.

(Kahn- Continued from page 1)

The Sifsei Chachamim answers that Moshe was nervous that Pharaoh's astronomers/magicians would doubt the validity of everything that Moshe had said up until that point, and claim that all of the Makkos were acts of witchcraft, not miracles from Hashem. They would attribute the actions of Hashem to mere men, which eliminates the whole purpose of Hashem performing miraculous acts for everyone to witness.

The lesson that can be learned from this is that one must be very careful in the way they speak. One's words can be used against them if not said carefully. We should all look to Moshe's cautiousness when speaking to learn how cautious we must be when we speak.



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: ARIEL KORORI

Chassidic master Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rymanov (c.1755-1815) was a very special person, an ascetic who was known for his tremendous awe of G-d, his modesty, and his passionate prayers. He was also considered a miracle worker, and always had many people coming to see him.

Despite all of his accomplishments, the Rymanover Rebbe did not have money and didn't care for money either. He was actually so poor that he often could not feed his children.

There is a beautiful story about how he came home one day and found his little son crying, for the poor boy had not eaten in a long time. "I can't bear being hungry anymore!" sobbed the child. With a bleeding heart his father rebuked him: "If your hunger was really as great as you say, G-d would provide something..."

The boy could not stop crying and he left the room in tears. After a moment his father called him back and said to him: "Please forgive me, my sweet child! I had no idea that your hunger was so overwhelming. I just took one of my books off the table and look what I found next to it—a coin. You see, G-d always helps when it is needed most. Now go and buy some bread and make a blessing..."

We often think that we can't hold out any longer, be it due to hunger, grief or some other test, but G-d knows what we truly need, and at the right moment—which He alone knows—He gives. So trust Him and Him alone.

(Danesh- Continued from page 1)

selves! Why did Hashem feel it was necessary to tell Moshe "please" tell the Jews to take money from the Mitzrim? Furthermore, why was it necessary for Hashem to make sure the Jews took money from the Mitzrim?

Hashem wanted to make sure that the Jews asked for the wealth. If they didn't then their forefather Avraham would be upset. Hashem had promised him wealth after the Jews would be freed from Egypt. If the Jews didn't take the wealth Avraham could have complained to Hashem that he didn't keep the second half of the promise. But then you can ask a question. How could Avraham complain? Hashem made the wealth readily available, and if the Jews decided not to take it, it would be their fault.

From Hashem's example of requesting that the Jews should take the wealth, we see how far we need to go to make sure that a promise that is made is kept. Hashem didn't offer the wealth to Bnei Yisrael, he made sure they took it by pleading to Moshe to tell the Jews to take it.

The same thing applies when you promise to do chesed for someone. It's not enough to offer chesed by simply saying "my house is open" or "come when you want". You need to be proactive and actually invite the person over, making sure the guest feels welcome. You need to remove all obstacles such as laziness and imaginary fears so that we can achieve true Chesed. Hashem is showing us that we must do everything in our power to keep our word, and similarly by Chesed we should do everything in our power to accomplish it.

Adapted from a Dvar Torah by Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l

Everyone is Important

By: Mishael Lalehzari, 9th Grade

This week's Parsha contains the last three plagues that Hashem put on Egypt. Before the plague of locusts, Pharaoh temporarily agrees to let the Jews go out and he asks Moshe who he wants to take with him to the wilderness to serve Hashem. Pharaoh said, "Go and serve G-d, who and who is going?" "And Moshe said: "with our young and old we will go, with our sons and our daughters...because we have a celebration of Hashem" (Shemot 10:8-9). Pharaoh then answers back: "not so, let the men go and serve Hashem because that is what you are requesting" (Shemot 10:11). The problem is that Moshe never asked that only the men should go and everyone else should stay. This question is addressed in the book "Kometz Mincha". The author quotes a Midrash that explains why Pharaoh used the word "who" twice on a deeper level. Pharaoh asked, "who and who is going?" This is referring to what is said in Tehillim (24:3), "Who may ascend the mountain of Hashem, and who can stay in His holy place?" The midrash tells us that this is why Pharaoh assumed that only the adult

men would go. Not to say that Pharaoh knew those two Psukim from Tehillim. These Psukim are quoted in the Midrash because they show what Pharaoh was thinking. He thought that the service of Hashem is really only for those few people who are fully dedicated to serving Hashem. Pharaoh thought that he was being generous to let all of the men go. He didn't think that men, women, and children would all go to serve Hashem. Moshe had never asked Pharaoh that just the men should go, but that was just what Pharaoh understood of Moshe's request. In Judaism, everyone participates. Everyone has a role to play; no one is exempt, and everyone is important. Everyone has an opportunity and an obligation to do their part in serving Hashem. The young escort the old and they also participate and learn from the experience. Moshe even says the young before the old to show the importance of the younger people. Our relationship with Hashem is a shared relationship. So too, the experience is meant to be shared.

Adapted from Rabbi Dovid Green

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