



שמע קולנו

“יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”



Parshas Bo

פרשת בא

A Life Worth Living

Shneur Agronin ('21)

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

A Life Worth Living - Shneur Agronin ('21)	1
A Short Vort	2
The Ability To Do Teshuva - Joey Greenfield ('22)	2
5 Minute Lomdus	3
Makkas Choshech - Shlomo Gold ('21).....	3
Purpose Of The Ten Plagues - Yosef Flamenbaum ('22)	4
.....	4
Pharaoh's Heart - Yisroel Hochman ('22)	4
Chumash B'iyun - Rabbi Mayer Schiller.....	6
Mussar Moments.....	7
Wisdom From the Haftorah	8
Halacha Hashavuah	9
Gedolim Glimpse: Maharam Padua	10
Parsha Puzzlers	10
The Elephant in the Room	11
Parsha Summary	12

Parshas Bo famously includes the detailed instructions pertaining to the *Mitzvah* of offering and consuming the *Korban Pesach*. In describing the ritual's performance, the *Torah* instructs that the blood of the animal used for the *korban* is to be painted “upon the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which it is consumed” (*Shemos* 12:7). A few commentators, notably the Ibn Ezra and Bechor Shor, explain that the purpose of this display was to mark that house as a dedicatedly Jewish one whose inhabitants followed the instructions of Moshe according to *Hashem* to bring the *Korban Pesach*. In doing so, the Angel of Death responsible for carrying out the last and most severe plague inflicted upon the Egyptians - the slaying of the firstborns - would know not to take the life of anybody in such a house. While one need not look far for an explanation as to the purpose of this particular element of the *korban*, another, more subtle question, begs for clarification: why specifically was the blood to be placed on the two doorposts (*mezuzos*) and the lintel? Why wouldn't one of those positions be sufficient?

A potential solution to this question stems from an explanation of the *Chizkuni* in tandem with a reminder of an additional intended purpose in spreading the blood around one's door. One of the animals fitting for use as a *Korban Pesach* is a sheep, an animal which *Rashi* notes (according to *Targum Onkelos's* reading) in *Bereishis* 43:32 was religiously revered by

the Egyptians. Thus, by publicly slaughtering and offering such an animal as a *korban*, the Jews whose loyalty was to *Hashem* gravely insulted and repudiated the idolatrous Egyptian culture from which they would soon completely separate themselves. It was such an action that merited salvation from the tenth plague. Thus, the blood spread along the doorposts and lintel served not only as a direct sign to the Angel of Death that the inhabitants of such a house were to be spared, but simultaneously as a sign to all of Egypt and even to themselves that *Hashem* was Who they trusted and served.

Additionally, the *Chizkuni* explains that the blood painted along the doorposts and lintel created the letter *ches*, which stands for *chaim* - life. It was in such a form that the blood indicated to the Angel of Death not to harm anyone in a marked house. Now, with a clearer understanding as to what the act of spreading that blood constituted, what exactly the "*chaim*" that the *ches* alluded to is now more readily appreciated. Not only did it refer to life in the sense of visceral human existence, the heart's mere continuation to beat, this "*chaim*" refers to a life whose foundation is rooted in serving *Hashem* despite what the predominant societal beliefs and practices might be. Thus, by expressing a desire not just to live, but to live with *Hashem* and His *Torah* against the cultural behavior of the Egyptians, the Jews truly proved themselves worthy of such a lofty existence in the face of potential destruction.

The Ability To Do Teshuva

Joey Greenfield (22)

In the ninth edition of *Sefer Peninim Al HaTorah*, Rav Avrohom Leib Scheinbaum quotes the *possuk* "*vechol arell lo yochal bo*", "an uncircumcised person may not eat it", which is the *mitzvah* that only men who have had their *bris* may eat from the *Korban Pesach*. Rav Scheinbaum explains that the *korban* is celebrating our freedom from avdus, slavery, and so partaking in it is sharing in the freedom. To do this, he says, there is a demand to be fully aligned with the Jewish people.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik ZT"L, grandfather of Rav Yosef Dov ZT"L (the Rav), once attended a conference discussing halachic matters in St. Petersburg. One of the issues that came up was the question of whether or not to register children whom their parents left uncircumcised as part of the town's Jewish population. The majority of the *rabbonim* in attendance said that they should not be counted as Jews; maybe, they thought, the parents who chose not to circumcise their children would reconsider upon seeing that their children were censored from the Jewish population. Hearing the consensus, Rav Chaim demanded, "Show me where it says that an uncircumcised child is not a Jew! I understand that an arell is prohibited from eating *Kodoshim* and *Terumah*. He may also not eat of the *Korban Pesach*. But, where does it say that he is not Jewish? Why blame the child for the fault of the father?"

Similarly, many of the *rabbonim* took the side of

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Kra (21)

The *Mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* is the first *Mitzvah* given to the Jewish people. This seems strange. Wouldn't it make more sense if the first *Mitzvah* were related to the belief in G-d or something done more often than *Rosh Chodesh*? Why was the *Mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* chosen as the first official *Mitzvah* given to *Klal Yisroel*?

Rav Soloveitchik answers that when we were slaves, the Egyptians controlled what we did with our time. However, now that we were free, we needed to learn the value of time and how to utilize it properly. Therefore, *Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem* - use your time wisely.

Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter of *Ger* said that the best *Mussur* sefer is a golden watch because it constantly reminds the wearer how precious time is. Additionally, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said "The key to time management is to see the value in every moment."

May we all be able to internalize the lesson of *Rosh Chodesh* being the first communal *Mitzvah* and treasure our time and use it productively.

the Warsaw community leaders regarding the decision to refuse burial of a young child who died, having not received a bris at the command of his father, in the Jewish cemetery. Rav Chaim was the only one who disagreed, arguing that *al pi halacha*, while an *arell* (an uncircumcised person) is not aloud certain rights of a Jew, a Jewish burial is not one of those rights. The blame, he argued, should not be placed on the son, but it should be placed on the father. Rav Chaim suggested that they refuse burial for the father who rejected the *mitzvah* of *bris milah*.

Rav Scheinbaum concludes that from here we learn that we should place blame where it belongs, like Rav Chiam placed the blame on the father as opposed to the child. But another lesson can be learned from these incidents-while *bris milah* is a prerequisite to being able to carry out one's *avodas Hashem* to the fullest and being able to be *mikayem* every *mitzvah*, one who has not had his *bris* is still a member of *klal Yisroel*, and therefore, they can always do *teshuva*. So too, despite *klal Yisroel's* many sins, *Hashem* is still awaiting our return. The notion of *teshuva* is especially important during the *Yemai HaShovavim* which we are in now. May we be *zocheh* to do full *teshuva* prior to the *Yemai Hamashiach*.

Makkas Choshech

Shlomo Gold ('21)

וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ-אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים: לֹא-רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו וְלֹא-קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחַת יוֹשְׁנוֹ
יָמִים וְלֵכֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם

Moshe stretched forth his hand toward the heaven and darkness and gloom filled all of Egypt for three days. No one could see one another and nobody was able to get up from his chair. However, where the Jews lived, there was plenty of light. (Shemos 10:22-23)

There was no warning for Pharaoh before *makkas choshech*. *Hashem* appeared to Moshe telling him that he needed to raise his hands to the sky, and darkness would fall on Egypt. And so, Moshe lifts up his hand, and there is darkness in the land.

Rashi explains that *makkas choshech* was six days rather than three and that when the pasuk states that man couldn't see his friend, it means that the Egyptians could not see one another but were still able to move. When the *posuk* says that no man could rise from his seat, it means that the darkness possessed a further level of thickness and nobody was able to move from their position for an additional three days. The Ramban explains that the darkness was not like regular darkness when the sun sets, rather, Moshe brought down a special cloud of darkness with his staff. A candle would be useless in this type of darkness because such a special cloud would ex-

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman ('21)

שְׁבַע יָמִים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ אֶת בֵּיזִים הָרִאשׁוֹן תִּשְׁבִּיתוּ
שָׂאֵר מִבִּתְּיָכֶם כִּי כָל-אֶכֶל חֲמֵץ וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת
מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מִיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן עַד-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי:

"Seven days you shall eat Matzos, but on the first day you should remove the leaven from your houses, since anyone who eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh will have his soul cut off from Yisroel" (Shemos 12:15)

Q. On the 14th of Nissan, the day before *Pesach*, there is a *mitzvah* of *hashbasas chametz*, destroying or removing *chametz* from one's *reshus* in order to avoid violations of the *issur* to own *chametz* on the holiday. This *mitzvah* also continues into the *yom tov* itself, as one who finds *chametz* on *Pesach* is also obligated to get rid of it. The *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chayim* 446:1) rules that if one finds *chametz* on *Pesach*, he may send a *goy* to throw it into the ocean without violating any *melachos* on *yom tov*. However, Rabbi Akiva Eiger points out that while no *issur melachah* is violated by asking a *goy* to throw the *chametz* into the ocean, this would appear to completely ignore the positive *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*, the destruction of *chametz*! Since a *goy* cannot act as a messenger to do a *mitzvah* in a Jew's stead, how can one dispense of their obligation to destroy their *chametz* by sending a *goy* to throw it into the ocean?

A. The *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* is not necessarily tied to the action which one does to destroy the *chametz*; rather, the *mitzvah* is to see to it that the *chametz* is eventually destroyed. Thus, the normal rules of *shelichus*, where the messenger does the *mitzvah* instead of the person, would not apply, since as long as the *chametz* will be destroyed, the owner of the *chametz* has fulfilled his obligation. (Note: This explanation would appear to only work according to the opinion of the Chachamim, who maintain that *tashbisu* can be accomplished through any mode of destruction. For the *shitah* of Rabbi Yehudah, which holds that *tashbisu* can only be accomplished through *sereifah* (burning), a different explanation will be required. See *Shiurei Yisamach Av* on *Perek Ohr Li'arba Asar* for a fascinating discussion of this topic.)

- Source: *Mishmeres Chayim Chelek I*, "Inyanei Pesach" 5

tinguish it. The Ramban brings proof from *Tehillim* that Hashem sent darkness which caused it to be dark. It was a sent darkness, not from the absence of the sun. Furthermore, the Ramban agrees with the Ibn Ezra who stated that it's similar to when one is on the ocean and a cloud comes over a boat and it is so dark that a candle can not be lit.

The Ksav Vehakabalah explains that since the *possuk* uses the word *veyehi*, it means that something had to be created that one can feel. He explains that in the eyes of all of the *Mitzrim*, a cataract was formed preventing all of them from seeing. However, for the Jews, the sun still rose and set each night. Also, when *Chazal* tells us that the darkness was the thickness of a *dinar*, he explains that this measurement was the thickness of the cataract on the eyes of the *Mitzrim*.

Additionally, the *Mitzrim* were not able to get up from their seats because they were frightened. Hashem caused the *Mitzrim* to see scary thoughts and visions that frightened them. They were so terrified that they were unable to move. The word *וַיִּפְתָּחוּ* does not mean from under them, it can rather be explained as due to fear. The word *וַיִּפְתָּחוּ* also means fear when Yoseph says "*Hatachas Elokim Anochi (Bereishis 50: 19)*" to his brothers when he tells them not to be scared because he fears Hashem. Their fear also prevented them from moving in a similar way to the *Mitzrim* being unable to move.

Lastly, when the *possuk* explains that the darkness was not where *Bnei Yisroel* was dwelling, it was not referring to *Goshen*. If it meant *Goshen*, the *possuk* would have said *Goshen* as it is mentioned in other *makkos*. Instead, the *possuk* says *בְּמוֹשְׁבָתָם*. This teaches us that the *Mitzrim* had darkness wherever they were located and the Jews had light even in the same place as the Egyptians.

Certainly there is a lot of depth in the *pesukim*, and a simple reading of them will not reveal their true meaning. Rather they require a closer look to reveal their full depth.

The Purpose of the Ten Plagues

Yosef Flamenbaum (21)

The first *Mitzvah* ever given to *Bnei Yisroel* is in this week's *parsha* in the form of *Rosh Chodesh*, as the *possuk* states "*hachodesh hazeh lachem*

(*Shemos 12:2*)". The *Midrash* compares this situation to a king who saves storage houses of treasure for his son and finally gifts them to him when he grows up. So too, Hashem watched over the *Zmanim* until *Am Yisrael* "grew up" in *Mitzrayim* before giving it to us. This *Midrash* seems quite strange. What does it mean that Hashem "gave us" *zmanim*, as if we can now do with them whatever we want, and how do we understand this moment in History as being the appropriate time?

In order to understand the message of the *Midrash*, it will be instructive to understand the message of another aspect of *yetzias Mitzrayim*: because of *makkas bechoros*, the Jewish firstborn attained a special status of *kedushah* resulting in them being selected for *avodah* in the *mishkan* (before losing it due to their own actions) as well as various *korbanos* and the *mitzvah* of *pidyon habein* which we do until today. The Alter of Kelm derives a famous message from this status, by pointing out that it seems this was totally undeserved. After all, it was just Hashem that killed the first-born Egyptians, the *bechorim* did nothing to deserve all these special gifts! The Alter of Kelm therefore explained that the reward of the *bechorim* was simply due to their passive participation in a massive *kiddush Hashem*, and that these *mitzvos* can be a reminder to us, to always have awareness of our power to create an even greater *active kiddush Hashem*!

Perhaps we can say that this is similar to what our *midrash* on *zmanim* is referring to. The Sforno comments on the *possuk* that while we were in *Mitzrayim* our time belonged to our masters, but now that we are free, we are being given these *mitzvos* of *zmanim* to be able to be people who own our time. The *midrash* therefore powerfully explains that the *mitzvos* of *zmanim* can constantly remind us of our ability to harness our time for *kedusha* and *avodas Hashem*.

Now that we are "*bein hasemesterim*" we have a lot more free time. We should learn from our *parsha* that we have the ability to use this time for so much, and go higher and higher in *avodas Hashem*.

Pharaoh's Heart

Yisroel Hochman (21)

In the first *possuk* of this week's *parsha* Hashem commands Moshe to go to Pharaoh while at the same time "hardening Pharaoh's heart". This

phrase is most commonly explained to mean that *Hashem* caused Pharaoh to act more strictly with the Jews than he otherwise would have and caused him not to let the Jews leave Egypt. Many commentaries ask here how *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh's heart-changing the decision that Pharaoh made seems to be removing Pharaoh's free will.

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that it was necessary for Pharaoh's heart to be hardened because it explains why Moshe was told to go to Pharaoh in the first place. He asks why *Hashem* bothered to send Moshe to warn Pharaoh because he had already been to Pharaoh seven times prior and each time Pharaoh had refused to free the Jewish people. *Hashem* therefore should have just sent the plague and not given Pharaoh a warning when there was already a *chazakah* that Pharaoh would refuse to concede. The *Chasam Sofer* answers this question by explains that most of the time Pharaoh refused *Hashem* had already hardened his heart to ensure that Pharaoh would keep the Jews and *Hashem* would be able to send all ten of the plagues. This hardening was done already therefore there was no *chazakah* that in a vacuum Pharaoh would refuse to let the Jews go, so Moshe still had to go warn Pharaoh. Therefore it was necessary for Hashem to harden Pharaoh's heart but this still doesn't explain this apparent lack of free will.

The *Sforno* gives another reason why *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh's heart. He explained that the hardening had a two-fold effect. One was to show Moshe that the normal rules of psychology do not apply to Pharaoh at this point because of the hardening, therefore, Moshe should continue to warn Pharaoh as if there was no previous indication of his refusal. The second reason that the *Sforno* brings is that by hardening Pharaoh's heart he will be able to display more miracles that can serve to inspire later generations of Jewish people.

The *Ohr Hachaim* explains that this phrase does not mean that *Hashem* influenced Pharaoh's decision, rather it means that at this point Moshe understood that Pharaoh was influenced by *Hashem*. He further explains that *Hashem* did not outright take away Pharaoh's free will, rather he displayed through the *makkos* by leaving some grains unaffected by the hail that it was truly him who was in power and this in a way served to

scare Pharaoh. He also offers a second explanation that this phrase was really referring to Moshe. Moshe had become very tired of following the same pattern of going to Pharaoh only to be shot down over and over. *Hashem* had to push Moshe a little bit more to ensure he would still go and give the Pharaoh the appropriate warning

The *Rabeinu Bechaye* says that there were two reasons that *Hashem* had to harden Pharaoh's heart. Hashem wanted to display that he was a stronger god. Because Pharaoh claimed that he himself was a deity *Hashem* wanted to show that he had power over him and display that pharaoh was nothing compared to him. The second reason was for these miracles to become the talk of the town, world-wide so that everyone would see *Hashem's* power over all of Egypt.

With these ideas in mind, we can see the power of *Hashem* and the importance of a free will. If these *mefarshim* go through so much effort to explain why *Hashem* acts so out of the ordinary, by taking away some aspect of free will from Pharaoh, it should become clear to us that free will is powerful. We should be careful to ensure that we only use our free will to make choices that we and *Hashem* can be proud of.

CHUMASH B'YUN Battle Of The Pashtanim

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

"And it shall be for a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes so that Hashem's Torah may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand Hashem removed you from Egypt. (Shemos 13:9) You shall observe this decree at its designated time from days to days." (13 :10)

The *Gemorah* in *Menachos* (36b) records a disagreement as to whether the tenth verse cited above refers to the *tefillin* of the previous *possuk* (R. Yosi Haglili) or to the laws of *Pesach* from verses three until eight (R. Akiva). In any event, we all know that the ninth *possuk* is referring to *tefillin*. In fact, there are four such passages in the Torah. (*Shemos* 13:9 and 13:16; *Devorim* 6:8 and 11:18) all stating the obligation to wear *tefillin*.

It is on the ninth *possuk* that the Rashbam (1085 - 1158) offers a comment which would create much controversy among the *rishonim* down through the years. First, though, we offer the Rashbam's own explanation as to what he saw his task as a *mefares* on Chumash to be:

"Let those who love pure reason always remember that the sages have said a Biblical passage must not be deprived of its original meaning (*Shabbos* 63a). . . (Yet) the *rishonim* due to their piety they were involved in the direction of *drush* – which is primary, a consequence of which was their lack of comfort with the depth of *peshuto shel Mikra*. Given the opinion expressed by them, that the constant study of the Talmud is one of the most laudable pursuits, commentators have been unable, by reason of such study, to expound individual verses according to their obvious meaning. Even my grandfather, Rabeinu Shelomoh, my father's mother, the light of the eyes of the exile . . . gave his heart to explain *peshuto shel Mikra*. And also I had an argument with him on that account, in which he admitted that he would revise his commentaries, according to the *pashtus* which is renewed every day, if he had time to do so." (Rashbam, *Beraishis* 37:2)

Thus, the Rashbam offers as a comment on the words "for a sign upon your eyes," the following:
"According to its plain, depth meaning (*omek peshuto*), 'It shall be remembered always as if it had been written upon your hand'. This is similar to 'he put me as a seal upon your heart' " (*Shir Hashirim* 8,6).
(Rashbam *Shemos* 13:9)

R. Meir Locksin, in his annotated Rashbam on the Torah, adds here a keen insight. "We should emphasize that, according to the Rashbam, the meaning of *derech hapeshat* is not necessarily that which is the literal translation. The opposite may be true that the metaphor is the simple meaning." (p. 214, n. 1)

Let us also clarify that whenever the Rashbam moves into areas where the *peshat*, as he saw it, conflicted with halacha, he was never advocating that halacha not be complied with. In fact, he himself authored many works on halacha, as well as lengthy commentaries on *Bava Basra* and *Pesachim*.

In this particular case the Rashbam had the noted philologist Menachem ibn Saruk (c. 920 – 950), who is often cited by Rashi on Chumash, as a source for his understanding of "sign" as metaphor. (*Machberes, LetterTes*)

Rabbeinu Avraham ibn Ezra (1089 – 1164) is often viewed as similar to the Rashbam in his devotion to *peshat*. Full fledged investigation as to the extent of their similarities is a complex matter for another day. However, here and in *Devorim*, the Ibn Ezra staunchly disagrees with the Rashbam.

In a long comment on this *posuk*, he writes " . . . at the beginning of the *sefer Mishlei*, Shelomoh writes 'mishlei Shelomoh' and therefor much therein is metaphor. But, in the Torah nothing is written as metaphor, only as it means literally, except where the literal meaning conflicts with logic as in 'circumcise the foreskin of your heart.' (*Devorim* 10:16)

Incidentally, this particular Rashbam was very troubling to other *rishonim* since the Karaite movement was still extant and they did not wear tefillin, since they viewed the “sign on the heart” as simple metaphor.

Rabbi Shelomoh Danziger, my tenth grade rebbi, pointed out a unique weakness in the Rashbam's position here.

If we are to say that the sign is a metaphor for placing Torah or, perhaps the Exodus, on our hearts then the rest of the *possuk* is impossible to explain. It states that the sign should be done in order that Torah should be in our mouth as well as the Exodus. But if the sign is not *tefillin* then we are already told that we should have this devotion. In other words if tefillin is reality then it can lead to other spiritual devotions but if the sign is itself referring to devotions then why restate them?

As usual in these areas, much work remains to be done to clarify the assorted meanings of *drash* and *peshat*.

MUSSAR MOMENTS

Max Korenman ('22) and Avidan Loike ('22)

In this week's *parsha*, *parshas Bo*, Moshe gives over the commandment of the *Korban Pesach*. After pleading with Pharaoh numerous times to allow the Jews to go to the desert, the *Korban Pesach* symbolizes the end of a centuries-long stay in Egypt. The multi step process of the *mitzvah*, ranging from the inspection of the sheep all the way through its slaughtering was given over from *Hashem* to Moshe with the intent of it being spread to all of *Bnei Yisroel*. While the commandment is ultimately given over to *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole, the *zekeinim*, elders, are the ones that are mentioned within the *possuk*. The *possuk* states וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “and Moshe summoned the elders of Israel.” The *Torah Temimah* (quoting the *Mechiltah*) explains that the reason the *zekeinim* were highlighted amongst the rest of *Bnei Yisroel* was because Moshe and subsequently *Hashem* wanted to give respect and honor to them. This notion of respect is also depicted within *parshas Shemos* when *Hashem* tells Moshe אָסַף־תָּאָסְפוּ אֶת־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “go gather the elders of *Bnei Yisroel*.” The *possuk* hints to the idea as despite the fact that the message was given to all of *Bnei Yisroel* the *possuk* singles out the *zekeinim*. So, as we go into *shabbos* and the reading of this week's *parsha*, we should realize how crucial it is to respect others and make our gratitude and appreciation known.

WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

Yirmiyahu 46:13-28

אַתָּה אֶל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב נֹאם ה' כִּי אֲתָךְ אֲנִי כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּלָה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדְחִיתִיךָ שָׁמָּה וְאַתָּךְ
לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּלָה וְיִסְרִיתִיךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט וְנִקְּהָ לֹא אֲנַקֶּה:

“Do not fear, my servant Yaakov, says Hashem, for I am with you; though I will end all the nations which have scattered you, I shall not make an end of you- I may punish you, but I will not wipe you out” (Yirmiyahu 46:28)

This *possuk* of comfort follows a *Haftorah* which predicts the downfall of Egypt at the hands of the Babylonians, led by Nevuchadnetzar. The *meforshim* offer different explanations as to the exact purpose of this *possuk* being placed here. The Radak understands that the placement of this statement is meant to contrast with the strict punishments described earlier from *Mitzrayim*. In other words, this *possuk* is meant to reassure the Jewish people that while other nations may meet their end at the divine hand, the *Bnei Yisroel* will never suffer the same fate. While we may be exiled and punished, we will not be wiped out. The question is, why? Of course we merit special protection as Hashem's chosen nation, but why is it that other nations and countries do not survive exile while we have?

In general, a nation is defined by a shared homeland and culture. The reason there are seemingly arbitrary borders which divide Europe and Asia into separate countries is because the citizens of those countries feel bound together by a sense of national history and identity. It therefore follows that the destruction of a country's national homeland will lead to the disbandment of that nation. What is a Greek without Greece, or a Roman without Rome?

In contrast, the Jewish people are unified by something else. We were made into a nation at *matan Torah*. As the German poet Heinrich Heine wrote: “the Bible is the portable homeland of the Jewish people.” This was the original goal of the *daf yomi*, that a Jew should be able to travel anywhere in the world and be assured that he could speak with his brothers about a *sugya*. Anywhere a Jew goes he is at home with the *Torah*. We can therefore see why the *possuk* assures us that we will never fall apart as a nation- even if we are scattered to the four corners of the earth, we are unified by a shared love of Hashem's *Torah*. We must remember even today, when many of us are lucky enough to live in countries with fellow Jews, that the only flag which defines a Yid is the flag of *Torah*. If we cling tightly to our portable homeland, we will merit to see our physical one rebuilt *bimheirah biyameinu*.

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Yosef Weiner ('23)

The *Shulchan Aruch* paskens that one may read *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* during *krias hatorah* (*Orach Chaim* 285:5). However, the Shelah and the Vilna Gaon are of the opinion that one should not do this and rather should simply listen to the *baal koreh*. The *Mishnah Berurah* cites another opinion that one may do *shnayim mikra veached targum* between *aliyos*. The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that it seems to him that one may read each word at the same time as the *baal koreh* to fulfill one of the readings of *shnayim mikra* and the *Magen Avraham* is of the opinion that one may do this even *lechatchila* (M.B. 285:14). In fact, the Steipler had the practice to fulfill his second reading of the *prasha* by reading with the *baal Koreh* and in between *aliyos* he would read the *targum* (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:32).

Regarding if one may count listening to the *baal koreh* as one of the reading of *shnayim mikra veachad targum* the *Magen Avraham* (285:8) and the *Chayei Adam* (7:9) write that one is *yotzei bedieved* by doing so; however, the *Beis Yosef* is of the opinion that one does not fulfill their obligation by doing so (*Orach Chaim* 285: *Kasuv*). Rav Nissim Karelitz explains that those who are of the opinion that one cannot even do this *bedieved* believe that there are two separate obligations. One is to hear *krias hatorah* and the other is to do *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*. Thus, when one hears the *parsha* being read by the *baal koreh* he cannot fulfill his obligation of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* as he is fulfilling his separate obligation of *krias hatorah*. He adds that following this reasoning even the *baal koreh* himself cannot count his reading towards the obligation of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:5).

Parenthetically, Rav Chaim Kanievsky is of the opinion that if one reads *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* during *chazaras hashatz* one does not fulfill his obligation as it is a *mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah* (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:31).

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: MAHARAM PADUA

Meir Morell ('22)

Rabbi Meir Katzenellenbogen (1482 –1565), more commonly known as Maharam Padua, was born in Prague to Rabbi Yitzchak Katzenellenbogen and Malka, daughter of Rabbi Yechiel Luria of Brisk. After learning in Prague under Rabbi Yaakov Pollak, he went to Padua, in Northern Italy and entered the yeshiva of Rabbi Yehudah Minz, whose granddaughter, Chanah, married him. He succeeded his father-in-law, Rabbi Avraham Minz, in the chief rabbinate of Padua; he held this position until his death on 12 January 1565.

He was also a part time Rabbi in Venice, where he went a few times a year. MaHaRaM was considered by his contemporaries a great authority in *Shas* and *Hala-cha*, and many rabbinic authorities consulted him, including Rabbi Ovadia Sforno, author of the Sforno, and Rabbi Moshe Isserlis, Rama.

He wrote *Sheilos Uteshuvos*, *Chiddushim* on the Rambam, as well as many other *seforim* and commentaries.

Based on a few of his *teshuvos*, with people such as Rama and Rabbi Avraham Minz, it appears as though he was lenient in order to keep peace between both Jews and non Jews.

He died on 10 *Shevat*, 5325.

He had many notable descendants such as the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz, Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, Chanoch Dov Padwa and many others.

PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. Which two passages in this week's *parsha* are found in most *siddurim*? Where are they in the *siddur*?
2. How can Hashem ask us to eliminate the *chametz* on the first day of *Pesach* (*Shemos* 12:15) if at that point it is already prohibited for *chametz* to be found in your possession?
3. Rashi (*Pesachim* 4b) tells us that the obligation to eliminate the *chametz* can be fulfilled through *bittul chametz*. If so, why are we also required to check for *chametz (bedikah)*? (any opinion)

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Yisroel David Rosenberg ('23)

Barking Mad

"וְלֹכֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא יִחָרֵץ-כָּלֵב לִשְׁנֹנ...אֲשֶׁר יִפְלֶה ה', בֵּין מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל" (שמות יא:ז)

What exactly is meant by this *possuk* is not entirely clear so the *meforshim* have several different approaches explaining the possible meaning and purpose of these words.

Rashi takes a more direct and simple approach, citing many *pesukim* throughout *Tanach* that all use words with the root of “*charatz*”. In those cases the word clearly means “sharpen” so according to Rashi, this *possuk* means that no dog will “sharpen its tongue,” or in other words, “snarl” at *Bnei Yisroel*.

The Ibn Erza says similarly that the dogs will not bark or bite despite the destruction of the firstborns.

The *Or Hachaim* questions why this point about the dogs was necessary for the *Torah* to mention and if it means that none of *Bnei Yisroel* would not be killed by a dog, then why not say that plainly? The *Or Hachaim* cites the *Gemara* in *Bava Kama* that says that dogs cry when the *malach hamaves* is around (*Bava Kama* 60b) and proposes that the *possuk* in *parshas Bo* is really revealing that the dogs did not even attack *Bnei Yisroel* despite being riled. This, says the *Or Hachaim*, is the meaning behind “*asher yafleh*”, the distinction that *Hashem* makes in *makkas bechoros*; *Bnei Yisroel* will not suffer from the dogs, rabid and wild in the presence of the *malach hamaves*, but the people of *Mitzrayim* will.

The *Or Hachaim* further suggests that “*ulechol Bnei Yisroel*” means that the dogs would cause no disturbance to the collective *Bnei Yisroel*, but would bark to prevent any Egyptian from sneaking out among the group. At all of *Bnei Yisroel* they would not bark, but they would bark at a group of both *Bnei Yisroel* and *Mitzrim*.

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Parsha Summary

The plagues continue with a devastating locust swarm and palpable darkness. Next, the *Bnei Yisroel* are commanded about the *mitzvah* of *rosh chodesh* (the first *mitzvah* they receive as a nation). Each family (or group of families) is then commanded to obtain a lamb or baby goat and watch it until the fourteenth day of *Nissan*, at which point they are to slaughter it, roast it, paint its blood on their doorposts, and eat it along with *matzah* and *maror*. Furthermore, the *Bnei Yisroel* are commanded to keep the holiday of *Pesach* (which includes eating *matzah*, not eating or possessing *chametz*, and bringing the *korban Pesach*) for all future generations. The final plague, the death of every Egyptian firstborn, then occurs (this plague, however, has no effect on the *Bnei Yisroel*, as *Hashem* sees the blood on the doorposts of their homes and does not enter them to kill their firstborns). At this point, Pharaoh has seemingly had enough, and he and the Egyptians beg the *Bnei Yisroel* (and the 'great conglomeration' which goes with them) to leave Egypt. The *Bnei Yisroel* leave with the riches of Egypt, and they are commanded to keep the *mitzvos* of *tefillin*, *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, and *pidyon/arfis peter chamor*.

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