

## O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAERA · 1 SHVAT 5773 - JAN. 12, 2013 · VOL. 20 NO. 14

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

## NAME CALLING

*"...but with My Name 'Hashem' I did not make Myself known to them..." (6:3)*

I write this less than a month after the passing of our beloved Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mendel Weinbach, *zatzal*. Of all the qualities that distinguished Rav Mendel none was stronger than his *mesirut nefesh* – self-sacrifice – for his students and his staff.

A case in point. Rabbi Mordechai Perlman relates that during the difficult birth of one of his children, Rav Mendel came to visit him in the hospital in the early hours of the morning. He saw that Rabbi Perlman was saying Tehillim in a desperate fashion. Rav Mendel said to him, "Mordechai, did you have breakfast yet?" Rabbi Perlman replied in the negative. Rav Mendel said, "Go and get some breakfast. You're saying Tehillim out of desperation – and that's not good. You go and get some breakfast and I'll carry on with the Tehillim." And so he did, until a beautiful new life entered the world.

A member of the Ohr Somayach staff could not get his daughter into one of the 'Ivy League' girls' schools in Jerusalem because they had no family or contacts to vouch for them. Despite numerous phone calls and the passing of months, the girl still had no school. The beginning of the semester came and went. Two days into the semester the girl was still sitting at home, sinking not-too-slowly into depression. On the morning of the third day, Rav Mendel appeared at the family's home and said to the girl, "Come, let's go to school." Together they went to the school that had rejected her and Rav Mendel sat her down in the classroom and proceeded to sit in the chair next to her and would not leave until the school agreed to take her.

Moshe Rabbeinu had ten names: *Moshe, Yered, Chaver, Yekutiel, Avigdor, Avi Socho, Avi Zanuach, Tuvia, Shemaya, and Halevi*. Of all these names the only one that G-d used was Moshe, the name he was given by Pharaoh's daughter, Batya.

Why, of all Moshe's names, did G-d use the one name given to Moshe by an Egyptian princess? What was so special about this name?

The name Moshe comes from the word meaning 'to be drawn', for Moshe was drawn from the water by Batya. When Batya took Moshe out of the river she was flouting her father's will. Pharaoh's order was to kill all the Jewish male babies to stifle their savior. By rescuing Moshe, Batya was putting her life in grave danger. Because Batya risked her life to save Moshe,

that quality was embedded in Moshe's personality and in his soul. It was this quality of self-sacrifice that typified Moshe more than all his other qualities, and for this reason Moshe was the only name that G-d would call him.

This is what made Moshe the quintessential leader of the Jewish People. For more than any other trait, a leader of the Jewish People needs self-sacrifice to care and worry over each one of his flock.

Another question – but with the same answer:

Of all the places that Moshe's mother, Yocheved, could have chosen to hide Moshe, why did she choose the river? Why not in a tunnel? Why not hide him in a barn, or any of the other numerous possible hiding places? Why did Yocheved choose to hide Moshe in the river?

Yocheved hoped that by putting Moshe into the river, the astrological signs would show that the savior of the Jews had been cast into the Nile, and Pharaoh would abandon the massacre of the baby boys. Yocheved was right. The Egyptian astrologers told Pharaoh the Jewish savior had been dispatched into the Nile and Pharaoh ordered the killing of the first born male children to cease.

It was not an easy thing for Yocheved to put her son into a wicker basket and abandon him to the eddies of the Nile. Before she placed Moshe into the water, Yocheved made a little canopy over the basket and said in sadness, "*Who knows if I will ever see my son's 'chupa' (marriage canopy)?*" Certainly there were safer places for a baby than a makeshift basket adrift in a river.

However, Yocheved chose a hiding place that may have not been the safest because it meant that she could save the lives of other Jewish children.

From two sides of the same event the quality of self-sacrifice was instilled into Moshe. By his real mother when she put him into the river, and also by his adopted mother when she drew him out from the river. If any quality epitomizes the essence of leadership, it is the ability to forget oneself and give up everything for the good of the people.

And so it was with Rav Mendel, *zatzal*.

• Based on the Midrash *Shemot Rabba* 1:24, 1:29;  
Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, Rabbi C. Z. Senter

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**G**-d tells Moshe to inform the Jewish People that He is going to take them out of Egypt. However, the Jewish People do not listen. G-d commands Moshe to go to Pharaoh and ask him to free the Jewish People. Although Aharon shows Pharaoh a sign by turning a staff into a snake, Pharaoh's magicians copy the sign, emboldening Pharaoh to refuse the request. G-d punishes the Egyptians and sends plagues of blood and frogs, but the magicians copy these miracles on a smaller scale, again

encouraging Pharaoh to be obstinate. After the plague of lice, Pharaoh's magicians concede that only G-d could be performing these miracles. Only the Egyptians, and not the Jews in Goshen, suffer during the plagues. The onslaught continues with wild animals, pestilence, boils and fiery hail. However, despite Moshe's offers to end the plagues if Pharaoh will let the Jewish People leave, Pharaoh continues to harden his heart and refuses.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### “ARAB” TO THE RESCUE

**R**abbi Arye Levine was indeed “A Tzaddik in our Time”, the title of a book written about this saintly man, father-in-law of the great halachic authority, Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, *zatzal*.

In addition to all his legendary virtues he was exceptional in his concern for the widows, orphans and impoverished families of Jerusalem. He was especially busy before Pesach, collecting money to distribute to those who would otherwise lack the basic necessities for celebrating the holiday. One year during the Second World War, when times were tough even for the prosperous, Rav Aryeh did not manage to put together the sum he needed for helping all the families who depended on him.



What did a *tzaddik* like Rav Aryeh do in such a situation?

He went to the Kotel to pour out his heart in prayer to Heaven. After a long period of tearfully appealing to G-d to help him provide for the needy families he left the Kotel. He was suddenly approached by someone in Arab dress who, without a word, handed him a package wrapped in a newspaper and disappeared. When Rav Aryeh opened the package he found inside the exact amount of money he needed for his holiday distribution.

The great Torah giant of Bnei Brak, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, whose late wife was Rav Aryeh's granddaughter, is the source of this story and insists that it is believed in that illustrious family that the one who handed the money to Rav Aryeh was the Prophet Eliyahu.

לע"נ

הרב חנא מנחם מנדל בן ר' יחזקאל שרגא זצ"ל

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Did G-d ever appear to Avraham and say “I am G-d”?
2. What cause did the forefathers have to question G-d?
3. How was Moshe commanded to act towards Pharaoh?
4. How long did Levi live?
5. Who was Aharon’s wife? Who was her father? Who was her brother?
6. Why are Yitro and Yosef both referred to as “Putiel”?
7. After which plague did G-d begin to “harden Pharaoh’s heart”?
8. Why did Pharaoh go to the Nile every morning?
9. Give two reasons why the blood was chosen as the first plague.
10. How long did the plague of blood last?
11. Why did the frogs affect Pharaoh’s house first?
12. What did Moshe mean when he told Pharaoh that the frogs would be “in you and in your nation”?
13. What are “*chamarim*”?
14. Why didn’t Moshe strike the dust to initiate the plague of lice?
15. Why were the Egyptian sorcerers unable to bring lice?
16. What were the Egyptians likely to do if they saw the Jews slaughtering lambs?
17. Why didn’t the wild beasts die as the frogs had?
18. The *dever* killed “all the cattle of Egypt.” Later, boils afflicted their cattle. How can this be?
19. Why did Moshe pray only after leaving the city?
20. What was miraculous about the way the hail stopped falling?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 6:9 - Yes.
2. 6:9 - Although G-d swore to give them the land, they never actually had control over it.
3. 6:13 - With the respect due a king.
4. 6:16 - 137 years.
5. 6:23 - Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav, sister of Nachshon.
6. 6:25 - Yitro fattened (*pitem*) cows for idol worship. Yosef scoffed (*pitpet*) at his evil inclination.
7. 7:3 - After the sixth plague — *shechin*.
8. 7:15 - To relieve himself. Pharaoh pretended to be a god who did not need to attend to his bodily functions. Therefore, he secretly used the Nile for this purpose.
9. a. 7:17 - Because the Nile was an Egyptian god.  
b. 8:17 - Because an invading army first attacks the enemy’s water supply, and G-d did the same.
10. 7:25 - Seven days.
11. 7:28 - Pharaoh himself advised the enslavement of the Jewish People.
12. 7:29 - He warned that the frogs would enter their intestines and croak.
13. 8:10 - Piles.
14. 8:12 - Because the dust protected Moshe by hiding the body of the Egyptian that Moshe killed.
15. 8:14 - The Egyptian sorcerers’ magic had no power over anything smaller than a barley kernel.
16. 8:22 - Stone the Jews.
17. 8:27 - So the Egyptians would not benefit from their hides.
18. 9:10 - In the plague of *dever* only the cattle *in the fields* died. The plague of *shechin* affected the surviving cattle.
19. 9:29 - Because the city was full of idols.
20. 9:33 - The hailstones stopped in mid-air and didn’t fall to the ground.

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## SHABBAT 100 - 106

*“In performing the mitzvah of giving tzedakah, take an initiative to find the needy and help them.”*

The source for this is the shape and order of the Hebrew alphabet. The letter *gimmel* represents the *gomail*, the benefactor, while the following letter *daled* refers to the *dal*, the poor man. The foot of the *gimmel* stretches out the *daled* in order to teach us that the benefactor must make an effort to search for the one in need.

• *Shabbat 104a*

*“Control your temper and avoid destroying things of value in your anger.”*

This is based on the statement of Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri:

“One who tears his clothes in anger or breaks vessels or throws away his money should be viewed as a potential idol worshipper. For this is the strategy of the evil inclination. Today he tempts him to commit one sin (in this case the forbidden destruction of items of value – Maharsha), tomorrow a different one until he eventually leads him to idol worship.”

• *Shabbat 105b*

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

## YESHIVA OF NO RETURN

**H**ow did the Chief Rabbi of the Israeli Air Force get to this position from his hometown of Seattle? During a *shiva* visit several months ago to the family of Rabbi Dov Cohen, of blessed memory, we heard the fascinating answer to this question.

Dov's older brother had been sent by his parents from Seattle to a yeshiva in New York. When he returned home after a while he was reluctant to go back to yeshiva because he longed to be with his family. When Dov became Bar Mitzvah his saintly mother was determined to

bring him to a yeshiva from which it would be much more difficult to come home. She took him to Eretz and enrolled him in the famous yeshiva in Hebron. No one his age from outside of the city was ever admitted to the yeshiva but the mother's determination succeeded in having him accepted.

He miraculously survived the Arab massacre in 1929, went on to become a distinguished Torah scholar and served for many years as Chief Rabbi of the Israeli Air Force.

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## LUNAR LITURGY LITERACY

**From: Simeon**

Dear Rabbi,  
*I came across your response Lunar Liturgy on the meaning behind the practice of sanctifying the new moon, which I found very interesting. I was wondering if you could elaborate on the details of the service regarding how and when it's done. Thanks.*

Dear Simeon,

*Kiddush Levanah*, the Hebrew term for Sanctification of the Moon, is a series of prayers recited shortly after *Rosh Chodesh*, the beginning of Hebrew months which occurs on the new moon. According to some, it may be performed from three days after the first appearance of the new moon, called the *molad*; others wait a full seven days. The latest time for *Kiddush Levanah* is mid-month, i.e., fourteen days, eighteen hours and twenty-two minutes (some authorities extend this limit to fifteen full days) after the *molad*.

The ritual is done at night when the moon is shining. The moon must be clearly visible and not covered by clouds and the ceremony is normally performed outside. In places where cloudy or rainy weather is very common such that the moon may not be visible, many people will recite the blessing as soon as they see the moon for the first time after the “three days”.

It is customary to say *Kiddush Levanah* at the conclusion of Shabbat if possible. While it is customary to say the prayer after the Saturday evening services and with a minyan, it can be also said in the middle of the week without a minyan. In such cases, effort is made to recite it with at least three people if possible.

In the month of Tishrei, it is usually delayed until after the conclusion of Yom Kippur since the prayer should be said in a spirit of joy; others have a custom to say it specif-

ically before Yom Kippur in order to increase one's merit before Judgment. In the month of Av, it is traditionally postponed until after the fast of Tisha B'Av, since the beginning of the month is a time of mourning. If a holiday falls on Sunday, *Kiddush Levanah* is delayed until after that day.

The source of the *Kiddush Levana* is in the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 42a), where Rabbi Yochanan taught that one who blesses the new moon in its proper time is regarded like one who greets the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence), as it is written in Exodus 12:2: “This month is to be for you the beginning of months...”

This verse in Exodus 12:2 is the source of what is considered to be the first commandment in the Torah, which is to sanctify the new month, and is the basis for our lunar calendar. Although *Kiddush Levana* is not the Torah-prescribed method of establishing the new month (which is not practiced today), we may still apply Rabbi Yochanan's opinion to our *Kiddush Levana* as showing respect to the first commandment in the Torah, and therefore it is like greeting the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence).

This is one of the reasons that it is customarily recited at times when we are happy, so that it can be said with great joy. It is told of the holy Baal Shem Tov that one year after Yom Kippur when the community desired to recite *Kiddush Levana* it was very overcast and the moon could not be seen. The Baal Shem Tov, concerned that the atonement of Yom Kippur might not be complete without the joyous celebration of the rejuvenation of the moon, corresponding to the “re-Jew-ination” of Yom Kippur, secluded himself in his study to pray for that the clouds disperse. In the meantime, anticipating the great mitzvah of *Kiddush Levana* which is compared to the greeting of the *Shechina*, the congregants broke out in fervent song and dance which spilled into the Rabbi's study and carried on into the street. At that moment the clouds dispersed, the moon shined onto the community who then burst into an exalted sanctification of the new month. Afterward, the holy Baal Shem Tov remarked, “Your joyous song and dance did more to ‘dispel the clouds’ than did my fervent prayer...”

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# QUESTION MARKET

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written by Shimon O'Heron

**Julius Berezin**  
**Palo Alto, CA UCLA – Physics Major**  
**Center Program**

Having parents from the Soviet Union makes for a tough stance against authority figures and a thick crust of distrust for religions; yet Julius was raised with Jewish holidays and sent to Sunday School. The Jewish lessons he had were little more than fairy tales, and his mind turned to the sciences.

While in the Jewish Fraternity at



University, he heard about the J.A.M. program that would pay him \$300 to prove the rabbis were stupid. Who could say no to that? Slowly realizing his plans to crush the rabbis were falling through, Julius found himself between extremes. He believed that either you were completely religious or totally secular. No half and half. The problem was that although he saw the logic, reason and evidence for the Torah, he thought keeping certain mitzvahs would be a burden. He began with *kipa* and *tsitsit* and soon joined the Center Program at Ohr Somayach. He enjoys the dedication and wealth of knowledge given over so clearly and humbly.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### POST-PURIM AMENDS

**Question:**

In accordance with the spirit(s) of the day, I got a little high this past Purim. After sobering up I learned that I had gotten a little out of hand in the home of a friend and may have caused some damage to his furniture and to his honor. What is the right thing to do in making amends?

**Answer:**

In regard to damages caused as a result of getting high in fulfillment of the mitzvah to drink on Purim, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 695:2 in the *Rema*) rules that there is no responsibility for compensation unless there was intent

to do damage. There is a difference of opinion amongst the halachic authorities whether this applies as well to bodily damage. The ruling of the *Mishneh Berura* (ibid. 13) is that both in regard to material and physical damages it all depends on the degree of the damage.

While you may have to consult your rabbi as to what constitutes substantial damage, it is a good idea in any case to ask the forgiveness of your victim for any harm you did to his feelings, his body or his property, even if you didn't mean to cause it.

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