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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Giving Is the Beginning of Redemption

“These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle...” (38:21)

It’s axiomatic that when you love someone, you want to give to them. It’s less obvious that the reverse is also true; giving brings to love. Parents usually love their children more than the children love their parents. From the moment junior opens his considerable lungs, the parents, and more often, mommy is constantly giving. Giving milk, giving food, giving clothes, giving pocket money, spending hours on the phone with teachers, shadchanim... the list goes on. When you give, you love.

We are in the middle of a period of spiritual uplift in the Jewish calendar that leads from giving to redemption. A journey from the beginning of Adar to Pesach.

The first Shabbat in Adar we read Parshat Shekalim in shul. This commemorates the beginning of the annual donation by the whole of Yisrael of a half a shekel each to buy communal offerings in the Holy Temple. Giving brings to love, and “those who love Hashem, hate evil.” (Tehillim 97:10). Hatred of evil leads to the desire to destroy it. That’s the message of Parshat Zachor, where we fulfill the Torah mitzvah to remember how Amalek wanted to destroy us, and commit ourselves to obliterate his memory.

Amalek makes many appearances on the world stage. Wherever you find implacable and irrational Jew-hatred, you have found Amalek.

The desire to obliterate the evil of Amalek leads to his destruction – that’s Purim, where Haman and his sons and all his followers were destroyed.

When evil is removed from the world, what takes its place is a spirit of Tahara – purity. This we commemorate with the reading of Parshat Para, which deals with the process of ridding ourselves of spiritual impurity.

Purity results in renewal, and therefore we read in shul “Parshat HaChodesh.” Chodesh in Hebrew has the same root as Chadash, meaning ‘new.’

And after renewal, we finally arrive at *geulah* – redemption. The archetypal redemption from Egypt at the time of Pesach.

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Maccot 2-8

Trying vs. Doing

The first chapter of this Tractate deals with the issue of “*eidim zomemim*” — plotting witnesses — that is taught in the Chumash in Parshat Shoftim. Let’s examine a case of alleged murder. Normally, if there are two sets of witnesses who offer contradictory testimony, the Beit Din does not know which witnesses to believe and therefore dismisses the charges and sends away the suspect and all of the witnesses. However, there is a special case when the second set of witnesses do not testify about whether the murder happened or not, but instead testify that the first witnesses could not possibly have seen what they said they saw (Reuven murders Shimon in a specific place at a specific time, for example) because the first witnesses were *with them at that time* in a completely different location. In this special case the Torah teaches to accept the testimony of the second set of witnesses and states, “And you will do to him (the first set of witnesses) as he intended to do to his fellow person” (Devarim 19:19). This means that just as the first witnesses plotted and attempted to have the defendant Reuven killed as a result of their testimony, “the stone they have cast bounces back at them” (see the Maharal on this verse) and it is the *witnesses* who receive the capital punishment they plotted for the defendant, who is exonerated.

There is, however, one seemingly unusual condition in order for this law to apply: The defendant must not have been killed by the Beit Din when the second set of witnesses testified about the first set. Rashi states this when explaining Ravina’s statement on 2b that *kal v’chomer* reasoning cannot be used in the case of *eidim zomemim*: “The Torah states ‘as he (the witness) plotted’, but not ‘as he did’.” “*K’asher zamam, v’lo k’asher asah.*” This oft-quoted line that Rashi states is not actually found in our *masechta*, but is rather taught by our Sages in the Mechilta. But we indeed find this same idea taught in our *masechta*, although based on a different derivation, in the *mishna* on 5b: “as he plotted to do to his fellow man (*achiv*)” — meaning that his fellow man is *still alive*.

Aside from the details of this particular case, there is what seems to be a quite basic question that needs answering. Normally in a case of two witnesses whose testimony is contradictory

with the testimony of two other witnesses we say that we don't know which set of witnesses is telling the truth, and we are therefore left in doubt as to the truth, and we "throw all of the witnesses out". The case of *eidim zomemim* is also a case of "two versus two", so why is it that in this case we believe the second set and punish the first set — doing to the first witnesses what they plotted to do to the defendant?

Numerous explanations are offered, with the seemingly most straightforward being that this particular teaching is a "*chidush*" — a novel idea that the Torah *decrees*: to believe the second set and to mete out punishment to the first set said "measure for measure", in accordance with what they plotted to do to the defendant.

Another way to view this case as being different is as follows: Other cases involving contradictory testimony revolve around whether the crime was committed or not, such as testimony that Reuven killed Shimon versus testimony that he did not. Here, however, the second witnesses are not testifying about the crime, but rather about the whereabouts of the first witnesses at the time. The first set say they were in a certain place, whereas the second set said that the first set could not have been in that place since the first set was with them at the time in a different place. The testimony of the first set about where they were is not acceptable, since that constitutes testimony about "a relative" — their closest relatives: themselves. However, the second witnesses are capable of giving acceptable testimony about the first witnesses and their location. Therefore, the set is believed.

There is another explanation, from Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen ("the Ohr Somayach") in his commentary on the Chumash called "Meshech Chochma". This explanation is based on human nature and behavior, and explains why the second set should be believed due to common sense.

Although normally we would have no way of knowing that the second set is the one that is telling the truth, in the case of *eidim zomemim* where the defendant has not been not yet been executed, we can logically understand why we should indeed believe the second set. Granted, if the defendant had *already been executed* we might suspect that the executed defendant's close relative — a son or father, for example — might very well seek revenge on the witnesses, and they would be suspected of hiring the second set of witnesses to falsely testify that the first are *zomemim* and should likewise be executed. However, if the defendant was sentenced (*gmar din*) *but not yet executed*, it would be a "smarter" and more efficient idea for the defendant or the close relative to hire a second set of witnesses to *contradict* the first set — to say that "Reuven did not kill Shimon" — but *not* to testify that the first set are *zomemim*. Why? When contradicting them, the court will be left in doubt, and this will result in a dismissal for everyone — the witnesses and the *defendant*. The case is over and everyone will go home, with the desired effect of hiring the second set of (false) witnesses having been accomplished. If, however, in this case, the defendant hires a second set who testifies that the first witnesses are *zomemim* — and therefore make the first witnesses obligated to be executed, as they sought to do to the defendant — it is possible, probable or likely that the first set would proceed to hire a *third* set who would testify that the second set are *zomemim*, in order to free themselves of the death penalty. And so on, the second would hire a fourth, etc. — and the defendant is not certain to go free in the end. Therefore, had he

hired false witnesses it would have been to his advantage to hire ones who *contradict* the first set but not ones who make them *zomemim*. Thus, if a second set comes and says that the first are *zomemim*, we can be assured that they were *not* hired. They are *true* witnesses. (See the Meshech Chochma who, with this approach in mind and considering the atonement aspect of a punishment delivered by Beit Din, explains why the Rambam distinguishes between a capital case and a case of lashes involving *eidim zomemim*. The Rambam rules that *eidim zomemim* are punished with lashes even if the defendant they testified against *already* received lashes, and we do not say in that case, “*K’asher zamam, v’lo k’asher asah.*”)

• **Maccot 5b**

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Torah portion. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels that had been fashioned. *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d’s specifications. Moshe blesses the people. G-d speaks to Moshe and tells him that the Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that G-d's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

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For the video of the Levaya and other Hespeditim, please click here:

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Bsuros Tovos,

Rabbi Zev Kaufman - Yeshivas Ohr Somayach

Q & A

Questions

1. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Why is the Mishkan called the "Mishkan of Testimony"?
3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the *midbar*?
4. Who was the officer in charge of the *levi'im*?
5. What is the meaning of the name Bezalel?
6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?
7. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
8. How were the gold threads made?
9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the *ephod*?
10. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitzit*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the "tent" which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)?
15. What "testimony" did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the Mishkan?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the Mishkan?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

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

Answers

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beit Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a "*mashkon*" (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that G-d forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Itamar ben Aharon.
5. 38:22 - "In the shadow of G-d."
6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the *levi'im*).
7. 39:1 - Linen (*See Rashi 31:10*).
8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (*See Rashi 28:6*).
9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes.
10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (*Rashi 39:29*)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

KRIAT SHEMA AL HAMITAH (PART 11)

“The amount of sleep required by the average person is five minutes more.”

Wilson Mizener – American Playwright

Kriat Shema al Hamitah continues with a verse from Tehillim (90:17): “May the pleasantness of my Lord, our God, be upon us. May He establish our handiwork for us; our handiwork, may He establish.”

The Midrash (*Sifri, Parshat Pinchas*) relates that when the construction of the Tabernacle was finally completed, Moshe blessed the Jewish nation that the Divine Presence would descend and dwell within it. On hearing his blessing, the people responded, “May the pleasantness of my L-rd, our G-d, be upon us.”

Malbim comments on the continuation of the verse, “May He establish our handiwork for us,” that when a physical building is constructed, those involved in its creation remain intrinsically unaffected. They may work very hard in order to ensure that the building is built, but it does not change their basic characters. However, when we toil to live a life of Torah, when we strive to keep the Mitzvot with all of their details, when we strive to draw closer to Hashem, we are adding new dimensions and facets to our very beings! In effect, our actions are being “established” upon us and they become an integral part of our identity.

This is the reason why our verse is a part of Kriat Shema al Hamitah. We are expressing our heartfelt desire that the way we served Hashem throughout the day was pleasing to Him. In addition, we ask that whatever spiritual impact our day’s accomplishments have had, should be permanent. That we should end each day spiritually superior and healthier than we were on the day before. Ultimately, it is consistency that Hashem wants from us.

Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman (1914-2017) was one of the most venerated leaders of the Yeshiva world, whose piety was awe-inspiring. Despite the extremely long and demanding hours that he dedicated to helping all those who approached him, he was the epitome of consistency in his *Avodat Hashem*. During the Second World War, he managed to find refuge in Switzerland. Someone who was also living in Switzerland at the time asked Rabbi Shteinman what his goal in life was. Rabbi Shteinman, opening the classic work of *Mussar* called *Mesilat Yesharim*, turned to the final chapter, where he read aloud that a person’s obligation in this world is to become a “*Merkavah LeShechinah*,” literally, a “chariot for the Divine Presence.” *Mesilat Yesharim* is teaching us that a person’s aspirations towards holiness are supposed to be so noticeable that each and every one of us can serve as a vehicle for revealing the Divine Presence in this world.

Astonishingly, some *eighty years later*, when Rabbi Shteinman was one hundred years old, he told someone who was looking for spiritual direction and clarity in his life that he should focus on becoming a *Merkavah LeShechinah*! It was absolutely clear that throughout his long and infinitely productive life, he never lost sight of the greatest goal of all. His entire being was consistently dedicated to furthering Hashem's Majesty in this world.

And we should not make the mistake of thinking that such lofty aspirations are reserved only for the truly righteous individuals in each generation. Rabbi Avraham Weinberg (1884-1933), the Rebbe of Slonim, writes that each time that a person conquers the *yetzer hara*, he moves one step closer to success. Rabbi Weinberg compares this idea to a person who drinks a glass of wine. The first glass seems to have no effect whatsoever. They are not drunk and they are not even a little tipsy. But then they drink a second cup, and then a third cup, until they are well and truly intoxicated! Only after they (finally!) get over their hangover do they recognize that the first cup of wine contributed to their drunkenness. Similarly, when one initially overcomes the desire to do the wrong thing, nothing seems to have essentially changed. They seem to be the same person as they were before. But they really are not. Something has absolutely changed within them. And if they keep attempting to do what is right in the way of Hashem, it will soon become apparent that they have become a new person.

To be continued...

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Seeing Red (Part 2)

Last week, we read Parshat Parah, the third of four special Torah portions read during the Purim-Pesach season. Because that special reading outlines the laws of the parah adumah (literally the “red heifer”), we began our three-part exploration of Hebrew and Aramaic words associated with the color “red” with of adom and its etymological cognates. In this second installment, we will examine other terms for “red” in Hebrew. Next week, we will close the discussion with Part III that focuses on Aramaic words for this color.

As part of the process of preparing a *parah adumah* to be used in purifying people, another red ingredient is needed — *shni tola'at* (Num. 19:6). That term refers to a wool cloth dyed red that is used as part of the rituals used in preparing a *parah adumah*. That same ingredient is also crucial to the ceremony for purifying a person or house afflicted by *tzara'at* (Lev. 14:4; 14:6; 14:49; 14:51-14:52). The same thing is also sometimes referred to as *tola'at shani* (Ex. 25:4; 26:1; 26:31; 26:26; 27:16; 28:5; 28:8; 28:15; 28:33; 35:6; 35:23; 35:25; 36:8; 36:35; 36:37; 38:18; 39:1–2, 39:5; 39:8; 39:24; 39:29, Num. 4:8), *tola'at hashani* (Ex. 28:5; 35:25; 35:35; 38:23; 39:3), or even just *shani* (Gen. 38:30, Josh. 2:18; 2:21, II Sam. 1:24, Isa. 1:18, Jer. 4:30, Song of Songs 4:3, Prov. 31:21) or just *tola* (Isa. 1:18, as well as Lam. 4:5 according to Ibn Ezra and Mahari Kara).

Regardless of the exact terminology used, the sort of “red” denoted by these phrases is understood to refer specifically to “crimson red” — that is, a deep, rich red with a slight bluish or purplish undertone. This understanding is made explicit by such Medieval exegetes as Rabbi Saadia Gaon, Ibn Ezra, Rabbi Avraham Maimuni (in their respective commentaries to Ex. 25:4), Raavad and Rash M'Shantz (in their commentaries to *Torat Kohanim, Parashat Metzora*), Radak (in his *Sefer HaShorashim*), and Meiri (to Prov. 32:21).

This type of red color derives from a dye extracted from a certain type of worm, as the Hebrew word for “worm” is *tola'at* (see Jerusalemic Talmud *Kilayim* 9:1 and Malbim to Isa. 1:18). Similarly, pseudo-Rashi (II Chron. 2:6) writes that the word *carmil* (and *carmel* according to Ibn Janach's and Radak's *Sefer HaShorashim*) refers to the same red-colored cloth as *tola'at shani* (i.e., “crimson”), and Rabbi Tedeschi-Ashkenazi sees this word as related to *rimah*, which is a type of worm just like *tola'at*.

In fact, the English word *crimson* derives from the Proto-Indo-European root *kwrmi-*, which means “worm” or “mite.” It comes to English by way of the Old Spanish *cremesin*, which itself comes from the Arabic *qirmiz* and ultimately from the Sanskrit *krimija* (“produced by a

worm"), referring to a red dye made from scale insects (like kermes and cochineal). Even though Arabic is a Semitic language and Sanskrit is an Indo-European language, it seems that Arabic actually borrowed *qirmiz* from Farsi (*gharmaz/germez*), which is an Indo-European language like Sanskrit. Other related English words include *vermilion* (which refers to a bright, vivid red with a slight orange tint), which derives from the Latin *vermiculus* ("little worm," referring to the red dye made from the kermes insect) and *carmine* (a purplish-red color).

I used to think that the name of the world-famous Ghermezian family hinted to German-Ashkenazi origins from the town of Worms (sometimes spelled Germaiza). However, in light of what we've learned above, it makes more sense that this Persian family's surname comes from the Iranian word for "red." Although the truth is, that word itself is seemingly connected to "worms," just not the German town with that name.

If we focus on the word *shani/shni*, we might notice that it derives from the Hebrew root SHIN-NUN-(YOD), which primarily gives us the word *sheini* ("two"). But what does *shani* as a "red dye" have to do with the number two? The Torah relates that when Tamar was giving birth to twins, the midwife tied a *chut shani* ("red string") on the hand of the baby whose hand exited the womb first, but then the other twin ended up being born first, and the boy with the red string came out second (Gen. 38:28–38:30). Rabbi Yaakov Hibbert of Manchester conjectures based on the wording of the *Ohr HaChaim* (to Gen. 38:28) that perhaps crimson red relates to the number "two" because it was a string colored in that very color that was used to mark Zerach as the *second* son born to Judah and Tamar. I looked more into this question and found a different explanation that is presented both in Rabbi Moshe Tedeschi-Ashkenazi's *Otzar Nirdafim* and Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim's *Cheshek Shlomo*. Those two rabbinic philologists explain that clothes dyed with this sort of coloring were often dyed *twice* in order to make sure that the color sticks more strongly, hence the connection between *shani* and *sheini*.

Speaking of Tamar's son Zerach, Rashbam and Chizkuni (to Gen. 38:30) explain that his name actually means "red," and alludes to the red string tied to his hand as he was being born. In general, the Biblical Hebrew root ZAYIN-REISH-CHET from which Zerach seemingly derives actually refers to the act of "shining/lighting" and is most often associated with the sun. But sometimes that verb can be used to specifically refer to something "shining red." For example, when King Uzziah illegally offered the *ketoret* in the Temple (instead of allowing the Kohanim to do so, as prescribed by the Torah), the Bible reports that "*tzara'at* shined on his forehead" (II Chron. 26:19). Now since *tzara'at* is often manifest as a reddish skin discoloration, Rashbam explains that "shining" and "red" are connected, leading him to support his claim that Zerach means "red." Chizkuni and Rashbam also cite II Kgs. 3:22 as another proof-text to this effect.

Isaiah refers to Hashem taking revenge on Edom in the future, and expresses that idea as though Hashem had become dirtied from carrying out a bloodbath on that wretched nation. He is described as being bloodied from that battle, with Isaiah rhetorically asking, "Who is

this who comes from Edom? / [The one with] soiled clothes from Bazra... why are your garments red [*adom*] / and your clothes like one who tramps in the winepress?" (Isa. 63:1–2). The adjective for “soiled” used in that passage is *chamutz*. Menachem Ibn Saruk (in his *Machberet Menachem*), Rabbi Yonah Ibn Janach (Sefer HaShorashim), and Radak (in his *Sefer HaShorashim* and in his comments to Isa. 63:1) all write that *chamutz* means “red,” with Radak noting that this meaning can be gleaned from the context in which it appears (because that is the color of something stained in blood or wine).

In this sense, the word *chamutz* — which is a *hapax legomenon* — seems to have nothing to do with the other Hebrew words derived from the trilateral root CHET-MEM-TZADI (which could mean “leavened,” “vinegar,” “anger,” or “stealing”). It is probably because of this that Rabbi Moshe Tedeschi-Ashkenazi writes that *chamutz* actually represents a metathesized form of the root MEM-CHET-TZADI (“stab,” “smite,” “lacerate”), as the act represented by that verb can result in something becoming “reddened” by blood. Indeed, Radak even agrees that *timchatz* (in Ps. 68:24), which uses the consonants MEM-CHET-TZADI in that order, also refers to become “reddened.”

When mentioning “red horses,” Zecharia uses a different adjective to denote their redness — *amutzim* (Zech. 6:3). Ibn Janach and Radak write that *amutzim* and *chamutzim* refer to the same thing, seeing as how the guttural letters ALEPH and CHET are often interchangeable. Radak adds that although Zecharia also refers to horses that are *adumim* (Zech. 6:2), *chamutz/amutz* differs from *adom* in that it is not as strong of a red color. Rabbi Moshe Tedeschi-Ashkenazi clarifies that the shade of red denoted by *amutz* resembles the color of a chestnut (what we might call “burgundy”).

He also suggests that the root ALEPH-MEM-TZADI in the sense of “strength” (*ometz/amatz*) might be derived from this meaning, as when girding one’s strength, the red blood inside one’s body begins to “boil” in the red parts of one’s innards (I’m not sure what this means). Similarly, Rabbi Pappenheim traces the word *amutzim* to the biliteral root MEM-TZADI, which he defines as “sucking/squeezing.” Other derivatives of this root include *mitz* (“juice”), *metzitzah* (“sucking”), and *ometz* (“power” in the sense that using that force requires mustering one’s energies and “squeezing” out every last bit). In the same sense, he writes that red horses are described as *amutzim* because they exert so much effort that their blood rises to the surface of their skin, as if being “squeezed out,” and this causes even their hairs to be red-colored.

Another word for “red” — *seruk* — is used when Zecharia saw a different vision that includes red horses. He describes them as *susim adumim serukim* (Zech. 1:8). Likewise, *sorek* refers to a type of high-quality “red grape” (Gen. 49:11, Isa. 5:2; 16:8, Jer. 2:21). This word is actually similar to *Zerach* because it seems to be cognate with the Arabic *sharaqa* (“shining brightly”) and Persian *sorkh* (“red/scarlet”), which again show a connection between “shining” and “red.” Although Radak (to Zech. 1:8 and in his *Sefer HaShorashim*) sees the word *serukim* as meaning “colorful” in a generic sense (without stating what color), Malbim (to Zech. 1:8) actually explains that *serukim* means “pink” or “light red.”

Sorek is also used twice in the Bible as a proper noun in a place-name: When Samson is said to have fallen in love with Delilah, she is described as a woman in Nachal Sorek (Jud. 16:4), which is a valley between Ashkelon and Gaza. One of the kings of Edom is known as Samlah of Masreikah (Gen. 36:36; I Chron. 1:47), with the place name Masreikah seemingly derived from *sorek* (which would make it semantically related to the name Edom itself, as both mean “red”).

In Mishnaic Hebrew, *sarak* refers to “red paint/rouge” often used by women as a cosmetic (see *Ketubot* 17a, *Sanhedrin* 14a). Elsewhere, the word *sarak* is actually spelled with a SAMECH, rather than a SIN (see *Shabbat* 95a, *Moed Katan* 9b).

Rabbi Yosef Noach Wilkover notes that *sikra* — a dye of red ink/dye mentioned in the Mishnah (*Shabbat* 12:4, *Gittin* 2:3, *Bechorot* 9:7, *Middot* 3:1) — is a metathesized form of *sarak*, with the same consonants simply changing places. He also connects these words with the Biblical Hebrew root SIN-KUF-REISH (“leering”), a *hapax legomenon* that only occurs once in the Bible, when describing promiscuous women (Isa. 3:16). The way he seems to explain it, it refers to those women adorning themselves with red cosmetics (“blush”) to become more attention-grabbing. This trilateral root appears as in the phrase *sikur ayin* (“scanning/wandering of the eye”) and the more modern term *sakranut* (“curiosity”).

Another Hebrew word related to “red” is *chum*. That word appears only four times in the Bible, all in the context of the “redness/brownness” of sheep when Jacob was shepherding Laban’s flock (Gen. 30:32–33, 30:35, 30:40). Rabbi Moshe Tedeschi-Ashkenazi explains that *chum* refers to a specific shade of “red” that is closer to black (“dark red,” although in some later sources it seems to refer to what we now call “brown” or “bordeaux”). He explains that the name of this color is related to the word *chom* (“heat”) because it reflects the color of an oven as it begins to heat up (see Shadal to Gen. 30:32 who writes that *chum* and *shachum* are homogenous terms).

Another word that refers to becoming “red” is *chachlilei*. This term appears twice in the Bible, both time in reference to the “reddening” of one’s eyes due to heavy drinking (Gen. 49:12, Prov. 23:29). Rabbi Moshe Tedeschi-Ashkenazi explains that *chachlilei* is not a general word for “red,” but rather refers specifically to the reddening of the white part of the eye that serves as the “crown” in surrounding the iris. Accordingly, he explains the word *chachlilei* as derived from the word *kalil* (“crown”) by simply ignoring the initial CHET.

Another possible word for “red” is *tzachar*. When the prophet Ezekiel lists various commodities said to be exported from Damascus, he mentions *tzachar* wool (Ezek. 27:18). In the past, we discussed the word *tzachar* as a cognate of *tzachor*, meaning “white.” But another approach sees *tzachar* as related to “red.” For example, David J. A. Clines’ *A Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* defines *tzachar* as “reddish-grey color.” In fact, Rabbi Ernest Klein writes that the Hebrew root TZADI-CHET-REISH is related to its Arabic cognate *asharu* (meaning, “yellowish-reddish land”) that is the etymon of the name Sahara (like in the “Sahara Desert”). There is even a version of Rashi (to *Brachot* 31b, as printed in

the Vilna Shas) that claims that *tzachor* means “red” and Marcus Jastrow’s dictionary also defines *tzachor* as “glistening” and “light reddish.”

In a previous essay we mentioned the idea that *ketem* refers to “reddish gold,” I refer to “[Where’s the Gold?](#)” (May 2020), so we won’t rehash that discussion here.

To be continued...

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

“Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance.” (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

THE SHULCHAN

Mitzvah #97; *Shemos* 25:23-30 and *Vayikra* 24:5-9

One of the primary elements of the Mishkan was the golden Shulchan (Table). There were two stacks of six loaves of bread upon it, each loaf weighing approximately five kilograms. Placing bread on the Shulchan is serving bread on the table of the King of the world. We are also commanded to put frankincense on the Shulchan, apparently to aromatize the King's table.

The loaves remained throughout the week as hot and fresh as they were when they emerged from the oven. Every Shabbos afternoon, the Kohanim would replace the loaves with new ones and eat the old ones in sanctity. The Kohanim are like the members of the king’s household, who eat along with him (*Bechor Shor*). Since no part of the loaves is offered to Hashem in the fullest sense by burning, as are most offerings, we burn frankincense that raises a pleasant aroma to Hashem and indicates that the loaves, too, are an offering to Him (*Rabbeinu Bechaye*).

The presence of the bread on the Shulchan throughout the week provided a constant blessing of sustenance, and all the world's inhabitants were said to "eat from the King's table." Although the world's sustenance includes more than bread, bread symbolizes all sustenance because it is the main part of a meal. There was a manifestation of the blessing in the bread itself, in that whoever would eat even a *kzayis* (the measure of an olive) would feel satiated (see *Yoma* 39a).

The offering of bread upon the Shulchan thus follows the familiar theme that acknowledging the good that Hashem provides through a symbolic service brings forth additional blessing (*Sefer HaChinuch*). It appears that for this reason, the bread is replaced specifically on Shabbos, which is the day that is “good to thank Hashem” (*Tehillim* 92) and which is a source of blessing for the coming week (*Zohar* Vol. II, pg. 153b). Some Kabbalists have a

custom of serving twelve loaves on Shabbos to correspond to these twelve loaves (*Shaarei Teshuvah* §274). The Vilna Gaon would serve only two loaves at each meal, but he would cut both of them in two so that they would amount to twelve (*Maaseh Rav*). According to the common custom of serving two loaves and only cutting what is needed, we may suggest that the two loaves correspond to the two stacks of loaves upon the Shulchan. By dedicating our Shabbos table to Hashem and praising Him for His bounty, we merit additional blessing in the coming week.

The bottom pair of loaves was placed upon the Shulchan itself, and the other pairs were placed on top of them with three pegs dividing between each pair, and two pegs between the top two pairs, to allow for ventilation and to prevent mold. The pegs were held together by vertical pins. This structure symbolizes that sustenance ultimately comes from Hashem's hand. The row of two pegs and four rows of three pegs correspond to the two bones in the thumb and three in each other finger, and as a whole, they symbolize Hashem's hand that provides the world's sustenance. This hand-structure holds twelve loaves to symbolize that all the blessing that flows to the world through the twelve astrological signs ultimately comes from Hashem. Just as the twelve astrological signs are arranged into two groups, the twelve loaves are arranged into two stacks (*Malbim*). We may further suggest that the twelve loaves symbolize the twelve day-and-night periods in the six days of the coming week that receive sustenance from the Shulchan. See also *Baal HaTurim* and *Rabbeinu Bechaye* to *Vayikra* 24:7 and *Torah Shleimah* to *Shemos* 25:30.

The Shulchan was surrounded by a crownlike frame called the *misgeres*, which the Sages termed "the crown of kingship." Hashem's kingship is symbolized by the Shulchan because one of the primary roles of a king is to provide sustenance for his people. The *misgeres* also symbolizes that the king similarly surrounds the people with his army and protects them (*Sforno*). The *misgeres* also hints that a person should set a boundary for earthly pleasures, and that such boundaries raise a person's stature like a crown. Just as we are commanded to place bread on the Shulchan before Hashem constantly (*Shemos* 25:30), we should similarly dedicate our own tables to Hashem and "place bread on the table before Him constantly," by gracing our meals with words of Torah and giving a portion of food to the poor (*Malbim*).

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INSIGHTS INTO HALACHA

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

5785 – The Rarest Year of Them All

Part IX – *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos* (Part 1)

As detailed in previous installments in our series, our current year, 5785, is not only a rare one, but calendarically speaking, actually the hands-down **rarest** of them all. 5785 is

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classified as a *HaSh" A* year in our calendars. This abbreviation is referring to Rosh Hashana falling out on Thursday (*hei*), both months of Cheshvan and Kislev being *shalem* (*shin* - 30-day months instead of possibly 29; these are the only months that can switch off in our set calendar), and Pesach falling out on Sunday (*aleph*).

A *HaSh" A* year is the rarest of years, and out of the 14 possibilities in *Tur's* 247-year calendar cycle, this year type occurs on average only once in about 30.19 years (approximately 3.3 percent of the time). Indeed, at times there are 71 years (!) in between *HaSh" A* years. The last time this year type occurred was 31 years ago in 5754 / 1994. The next time will be 20 years hence in 5805 / 2044. The next several times after that are slated to be 27 years further, in 5832 / 2071 and then a 51-year gap in 5883 / 2122.

The reasons and rules governing the whys and whens this transpires are too complicated for this discussion; suffice to say that when the *Mishnah Berurah* discusses these issues he writes "*ain kan makom l'ha'arich*," that this is not the place to expound in detail, which is certainly good enough for this author.

Obviously, such a rare calendar year will contain many rare occurrences. This series sets out to detail many of them. As we get nearer to the actual events, we will perhaps discuss them in greater detail. Let's continue on our journey through our unique year.

Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos

Our previous installments discussed Purim falling out on a busy Erev Shabbos this year and the incredible *Purim Meshulash* celebrated in Yerushalayim. Yet, whenever there is a *Purim Meshulash*, there is an even greater phenomenon with great *halachic* ramifications that will occur exactly one month later: *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos*. When this happens, we need an entirely new rulebook on how our Pesach preparations are supposed to ensue. Let's try to make some *Seder* (pun intended).

Pesach Pre-emptive Prep

For starters, the traditional *Shabbos Hagadol Drasha* is likely pre-empted to the previous Shabbos. Not to be outdone, the customary Erev Pesach *Taanis Bechorim* (Fast of the Firstborns) gets preempted two days earlier to Thursday. Perhaps more importantly, *Bedikas Chometz* cannot be done the night before Pesach as usual. Since Erev Pesach is Shabbos, *Bedikas Chometz* (and its declaration of '*Kol Chamira*') must be performed on Thursday night instead. But that means that *Sereifas Chometz* (the burning of the *Chometz*) has to take place on Friday morning, Erev Erev Pesach (still preferably done before *Sof Zman Sereifas Chometz* as in a regular year). But we can't recite *Kol Chamira* yet, as we still need to save some *chometz* for the Shabbos *Seudos* (remember, Shabbos is Erev Pesach), as it is forbidden to eat Matzah on Erev Pesach.

Certain prep work for the Seder should preferably be done before Shabbos, as well, including checking the lettuce (for Maror), making the *charoses* and salt water, roasting the egg and *zeroa* (shankbone), as well as grinding the horseradish. Longtime Rav of

Yerushalayim in the early 1900s, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, cited practically by several later authorities, advises that when feasible and practical, even the Seder table should be set on Friday. Also, it is worthwhile to make sure to have Yahrzeit candles lit from before Shabbos to enable the Yom Tov candles to be lit on Motzai Shabbos—*Leil Haseder*, as transference of flame (as opposed to creating a new flame) is permitted on Yom Tov. Hence, in a way, this Erev Shabbos takes on the status of a traditional Erev Pesach, even though it is truly not.

An important reminder for this marathon Shabbos: as it is Shabbos that is immediately preceding Pesach, one may not perform any preparations on Shabbos for Yom Tov, and all Seder preparations may only begin from *Tzeis Hakochavim* (nightfall), after reciting “*HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L’Kodesh*,” either by itself or as part of the “*Vatode’ainu*” prayer in the Yom Tov Maariv Shemoneh Esrei.

YaKNeHa”Z

Whenever we have an *Erev Pesach Shechal B’Shabbos*, the Seder night’s *Kiddush* becomes a *YaKNeHa”Z Kiddush*. *YaKNeHa”Z* refers to the special hybrid *Kiddush-Havdalah* that is only recited when a Shabbos exits directly into a Yom Tov (not necessarily Pesach).

The word *YaKNeHa”Z* is an acronym of the proper order of *brachos* in this *Kiddush/Havdalah*. It stands for *Yayin* (“*Borei Pri Hagafen*”), *Kiddush* (“*Mekadeish Yisrael V’Hazmanim*”), *Ner* (“*Borei Me’orei Ha’Aish*”), *Havdalah* (“*Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L’Kodesh*”), *Zman* (“*Shehechyanu*”). In *Chutz La’aretz*, this year there is a second *YaKNeH”a* on the eighth (last) day of Pesach as well – just without the *bracha* of ‘*Zman*,’ as *Shehechyanu* is not recited on the last days of Pesach. Due to *Yom Tov Sheini*, *YaKNeHa”Z Kiddushim* are quite a bit more common in *Chutz La’aretz* than in Eretz Yisrael.

YaKNeHa”Z Candles

To help facilitate this special *Kiddush* that needs its own *Havdalah* candle(s) that will go out by itself/themselves (in order not to unwittingly transgress the prohibition of ‘*Kivui*,’ extinguishing, or even ‘*Gram Kivui*,’ causing it to be it extinguished), several companies recently started making “*YaKNeHa”Z Candles*” (a.k.a. “*avukalehs*”) – small candles containing several wicks (to be classified as an ‘*avukah*’ – torch, for *Havdalah*; as opposed to the traditional one-wick candle) that go out by themselves after several minutes – made especially to facilitate easy *YaKNeHa”Z* performance. It is reported that Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv’s “face lit up with joy” the first time someone brought him one of these *YaKNeHa”Z* candles, as it enabled him to properly perform this *Kiddush/Havdalah* without any potential issues. *Mi K’Amcha Yisrael!*

Wabbit Season?

Speaking of *YaKNeHa”Zes* makes this author ruminates about what is possibly the oddest connection to it. In what appears to be an interesting turn of phrase, many classic

Ashkenazic Illuminated *Haggados* over the centuries, including the Cincinnati, Ashkenazic, Prague, Venice, and Augsburg *Haggados*, depict an interesting phenomenon next to the hybrid *Kiddush-Havdalah* of *YaKNeHa"Z*: a rabbit hunt. Yes, you read that right. Not even remotely related to either *Kiddush* or *Havdalah* (or in fact anything else in Yiddishkeit; except possibly the *Noda B'Yehuda's* famous *teshuva* regarding hunting for sport or pleasure), a full-fledged rabbit hunt.

Scholars theorize that the reason this picture is placed specifically at this point of the *Haggada* is the similar-sounding German phrase “Jag den Häs,” which translates to “Chase the Rabbit” or “Hunt the Hare.” Apparently, this was an easy, albeit whimsical way to remind the locals in their vernacular of the proper order of *brachos* of this *Kiddush-Havdalah* on Seder night.

Although *YaKNeHa"Z Kiddush* is pretty common – as it is performed anytime Shabbos ends into Yom Tov, nonetheless, as with *Purim Meshulash*, *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos* is not slated to occur for another twenty years – in 5805 / 2045.

Our fascinating journey detailing the many remarkable facets of our rare year will IY”H be continued...

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch famously wrote that “the Jew’s catechism is his calendar.” It is this author’s wish that by showcasing the uniqueness of our calendar year and its rare *minhagim*, this series will help raise appreciation of them and our fascinating calendarical customs.

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