

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK?

“And I shall bring you to the Land...” (6:8)

One of my childhood’s magical moments at the Pesach Seder was when I was dispatched to open the front door for Eliyahu HaNavi – Elijah the Prophet.

I would stand there gazing into the somewhat unpromising night air of Hampstead Garden Suburb hoping to catch a glimpse of our illustrious and elusive guest.

Not too long ago here in our house in Jerusalem at the Yom Tov meal on the first day of Pesach, I took the cup of Eliyahu — that had been covered from the previous night — to use it for the morning Kiddush. As I removed the plate we all saw that the cup was barely three quarters full, far below its level at the Seder.

My younger son offered this as proof positive that Eliyahu had indeed visited us the previous night.

Why is this cup of wine — that we pour but don’t drink — called the cup of Eliyahu?

Rabbi Yochanan explains that the four cups of wine that

we drink at the Seder correspond to the four “redemptions” of which the Torah speaks: “I shall take you out ...” “I will rescue you...” “I will redeem you...” and “I shall take you to me...” (Talmud Yerushalmi Pesachim 9:1)

However, there is a fifth redemption written in the Torah, “I shall bring you to the Land...”

Why then don’t we drink five cups at the Seder?

In fact, there is a dispute amongst the early commentators, if indeed we should drink a fifth cup or not.

Thus our custom is to pour the cup but not to drink it.

But why is this called the cup of Eliyahu HaNavi?

In the time of the Mashiach, Eliyahu will return to us. It is he who will reconcile all previously unresolved halachic questions, and he will also resolve the question of the fifth cup: To drink or not to drink?

• Sources – *The Vilna Gaon, Talmud Bavli Pesachim 118*

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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 small-

er 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.

ISRAEL Forever

SHORT SPIRIT AND LONG WIND

Sometimes the situation in Israel seems so difficult that people lose their hope for light at the end of the tunnel. At such times it is worthwhile recalling the experience of our ancestors in Egyptian bondage as described in this week's Torah portion.

When Moshe delivered to them a message from G-d that they would be liberated and brought to their promised land, the reaction was that "they did not heed Moshe because of

a shortness of spirit and hard work." (*Shmot* 6:9)

In his commentary, the "Ohr Hachayim" notes that this "shortness of spirit" was prevalent because the Jews had not yet received the Torah at Sinai. Once in possession of the Torah, the Jew has a "long wind" which enables him to see the sun shining behind every dark cloud and to believe that Heaven will protect Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

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לע"נ

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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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- What is included in gift of movable property
- When a gift is valid only if everything is given
- What is included in a gift of everything to the Sanctuary
- Retractable gifts
- Will of a dying man with or without a formal element of transaction
- When the document fails to mention whether the giver was a dying man
- The sale in Bnei Brak by a suspected minor
- Is certification of a loan document necessary if debtor admits to the loan
- The age which qualifies one to make a sale

A QUESTIONABLE EXPRESSION

A gift made by a healthy person is not retractable while one made by a man facing death is not effective until after his death, and can therefore be retracted if the giver recovers.

What happens if the gift document reads that the gift is being made to the recipient “in life and death” – is this to be interpreted as a gift to be effective in his lifetime or only upon his death?

The ruling of the Sage Rav is that this is considered as the gift of a man facing death. The reason for his mentioning “in life” is that he wants to avoid pronouncing death upon himself and expresses the hope that Heaven will grant him the ability to recover and live.

Rashbam notes that this is in accordance with the counsel of the Sages to avoid “opening your mouth to Satan” by mouthing something of a negative connotation.

• *Bava Batra 153a*

What the SAGES Say

“It can be assumed that witnesses will not sign on a document of sale unless they, the seller and the buyer, are all adults.”

• *Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish - Bava Batra 155a*

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SOUND ADVICE

From: Benny

Dear Rabbi,

There's a person who has been coming to our shul of late who is a normal, nice guy. He is clearly not a beginner to yiddishkeit. However he has a peculiar way of pronouncing his blessings which mixes the different customs of pronunciation between Ashkenazi, Sefardi and Israeli. This is most apparent when he's called up to the Torah and makes the blessings out loud and everyone in the shul can hear him. To me, it doesn't really matter (although I think whatever his custom is, it should be consistent), but other people find it amusing and are a bit derisive. My question is, since he's not a beginner, should someone point out the inconsistency so that he can try to pronounce normally to avoid unnecessary embarrassment (if he were a beginner, it wouldn't seem so strange); or on the contrary, since he's already frum, he might get offended and feel unwelcome or uncomfortable and stop coming to our shul which would be a shame because he really is a good guy?

Dear Benny,

I commend you on your sensitivity and on your effort to seek advice before doing anything that might hurt another's feelings.

First, I think you should talk to those who might be making fun of the new person and explain to them that despite this person's inconsistency in pronunciation, he is nevertheless fulfilling the blessings, which itself is a great thing and not a joking matter.

In fact, the Midrash notes that G-d even finds such mis-

pronunciations, if uttered with a pure heart, as endearing. Commenting on the verse "His banner ("diglo") is for me a banner of love", the Sages note that this is how the Jewish people refer to G-d. But in G-d's referring to the Jewish people, He changes the word "diglo" to "dilugo" which effectively means "slip up". So that G-d says of His Jewish children, "His slip up is for Me a slip up of love." This can be compared to parent who adores his infant's first jumbled words.

Since all of us are like children before G-d, and all of us also make mistakes, even slip ups of Jewishly-educated adults are beloved in G-d's eyes, if we're sincerely motivated.

That being said, we are required to make every effort not to slip up. And, in fact, we must do our best to beautify every mitzvah, which for prayer includes clearly enunciating and correctly pronouncing the words. Within any particular custom of pronunciation, one must be consistent so that the prayer is recited correctly and accurately according to that particular tradition.

So I think that someone who can tactfully point this out to the person without embarrassing or hurting him should do so. It should be done privately, and out of the context of prayers and no one else has to know about it. Assuming that there is no hearing or speech impediment (and maybe that should be looked into), he probably would want to correct his pronunciation if this were pointed out to him. Of course, initially he may be a bit uncomfortable, but I think he will ultimately appreciate the friendly gesture intended for the betterment of his own prayer.

And while he doesn't (and shouldn't) know that he is being derided, calling his attention to improving his pronunciation will spare him from being viewed askance not only in your shul, but wherever else he may daven as well. And this is certainly in his best interest.

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DIVULGING SECRETS

Question: As a member of a research team working for a large pharmaceutical company I am sometimes approached by a friend employed as a researcher for a similar company and asked for details of the project I am working on. Although I believe I can trust my friend to refrain from divulging the information to his employer, I would like to know what is the right thing to do.

Answer: In the newly released second volume of his book

“Pure Money”, Dayan Shlomo Cohen, a member of a rabbinical court in Jerusalem, rules that it is absolutely forbidden for an employee to reveal any of his employer’s secrets since this may cause him harm in the form of competition.

The thing to do is to tell your friend that even though you trust him it is unethical for you to do anything that is objectionable to the employer for whom you work.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

A NOBLE REACTION

For years a resident of Jerusalem was concerned about finding a husband for his second daughter. The young lady had many virtues but suffered from a physical disability which necessitated wearing a brace on one of her legs.

Although it was not discernible in her walking there was still the lingering fear that once a suitor discovered this handicap he might back out of a *shiduch*.

A wonderful young man met the girl and when things looked serious she let him know about her problem.

The surprising response was “I am so sorry I took you for such a long walk which must have been an effort for you.”

This noble attitude vindicated all the fine things the girl’s family had heard about the boy and an engagement was soon announced.



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