

# OHRNET

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE LAW OF ACCELERATING RETURNS

*“And you will eat it (the Pesach offering) in haste.” (13:17)*

In 1982, an Osborne Executive portable computer weighed 100 times as much, was 500 times as big, cost approximately 10 times as much, and yet was only about 1/100th as fast as a 2007 Apple iPhone.

“Moore’s law” is the observation that, over the history of computing hardware, the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles approximately every two years. In like fashion, microprocessor prices, memory capacity, sensors and even the number and size of pixels in digital cameras all are improving at roughly exponential rates as well.

Moore’s law has been applied not just to technology but also to accelerating change in social and cultural progress throughout history. It suggests faster and more profound changes in the future, leading to a point of “singularity” where the pace of change becomes so accelerated that it leads to an apocalyptic event where the world as we know it metamorphoses into something beyond our imagination. The futurists see technological change so rapid and profound

it represents a rupture in the fabric of human history.

*“And you will eat it (the Pesach offering) in haste.”*

The Exodus from Egypt was experienced as a moment of “singularity” — a moment faster than time itself, racing to meet the redemption from slavery.

Just as the first, so is the last.

The Rambam says that one should not speculate too much about what things will be like in the Messianic Era because “No one knows what it will be, until it will be.”

The world is accelerating faster and faster to its moment of climax. What secular futurists detect is indeed a world of accelerating returns. A world impossible to visualize. The coming of Mashiach, when all mankind will return to G-d.

*“The voice of my Beloved! Behold, it came suddenly to redeem me, as if leaping over mountains, skipping over hills.” (Shir HaShirim 2:8)*

May it come speedily in our days!

• Source: based on Rabbi Shimshon Pincus

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh’s heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d. Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go. During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon to remove the locusts, and he admits he has sinned. G-d ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh’s heart, and again Pharaoh fails to free the Jews. The country, except for the Jewish People, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and tells him to take all the Jews out of Egypt, but to leave their flocks behind. Moshe tells him that not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too. Moshe tells Pharaoh that G-d is going to bring one more plague, the death of the first-born, and then the Jews will leave Egypt. G-d again hard-

ens Pharaoh’s heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again, Moshe will be put to death. G-d tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the chief month. The Jewish people are commanded to take a sheep on the 10th of the month and guard it until the 14th. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach offering, its blood put on their door-posts, and its roasted meat eaten. The blood on the door-post will be a sign that their homes will be passed-over when G-d strikes the first-born of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating *chametz* on Pesach. Moshe relays G-d’s commands, and the Jewish People fulfill them flawlessly. G-d sends the final plague, killing the first-born, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. G-d tells Moshe and Aharon the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first-born son) and *tefillin*.

## YEVAMOT 114 - 122

*“Something in which a tzaddik is involved will not be a cause of suffering to him.”*

As taught in a *beraita* on our *daf*, this is how Rabbi Dosa explained how he was certain that Nechunya, the well-diggers' daughter, was not dead from having fallen into a well. After her falling in the pit, her father went to Rabbi Dosa to pray for her welfare. After the first and second hours passed, he told the father that she was still alive. After that, when it would be impossible to survive in the pit any longer, Rabbi Dosa announced that she had been taken out of the pit alive. When asked if he was a prophet, he replied, “I am not a prophet nor am I the son of a prophet, but something which a *tzaddik* is involved in will not be a cause of suffering to him.”

The *gemara* continues with a statement from Rabbi Aba, “Nevertheless, his (the well-digger's) son died from thirst.” This was despite the fact that the father dedicated his work to dig wells to provide water for those who came to Jerusalem (Rashi). Rabbi Aba cites another rule that G-d is “extremely exacting in judgment with the righteous”, as taught in various verses. Although we don't see any change in the righteousness of Rabbi Nechunya the well-digger, his daughter survived the pit and his son did not survive a lack of water, which the pits were dug in order to store. Why the difference? One explanation is that the daughter was in danger from being in a pit, something that her righteous father was involved in making. The son, however, did not die as a result of the pit — his father's work — but due to a lack of water (Tosefot as explained by the Bach).

• *Yevamot 121b*

*“She went to the Sage Abayei, and waited there for three Festivals (for an answer).”*

The *gemara* relates a case where a non-Jew was heard threatening a Jew to desecrate Shabbat in order to provide food for his animals or else he would kill him, “Just as I killed a different Jew (whom he named) because I told him to cook food for me on Shabbat or be killed, and he refused.” The wife of the person whom he claimed to have killed was not sure if she could believe the statement of the non-Jew, which would make her a widow and permit her to remarry. She therefore went to the Sage Abayei to ask about her marital status according to Jewish law. But what is the meaning of staying there for three “Festivals” (“*rigili*” in Aramaic)?

Rashi offers two explanations. One is that for the three Festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot many great Torah scholars would gather together to hear the teachings of the laws for each Festival. At those times she would have an opportunity to ask them her serious question. Based on the response of the Geonim, Rashi offers a second explanation that these three “*rigili*” did not refer to these three Festivals. Rather, it refers to the custom of the Talmudic Sages to come with the rest of the people to gather at the gravesite of a departed Torah scholar on the date of his passing each year in his honor (“*yahrzeit*”) and “establish a Yeshiva there”. These occasions were ideal times to ask the Rabbis an important and difficult question of Jewish law.

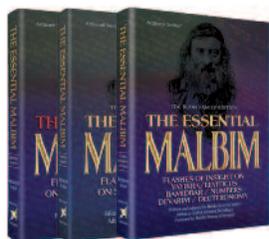
Rav Ada bar Ahava instructed her to ask Rav Yosef who was “sharp like a knife”. He ruled that the non-Jew's statement could not be taken as fact since he mentioned his first “kill” only in order to boost his credibility with the Jew to frighten him to cook on Shabbat; not that he actually killed this woman's husband.

• *Yevamot 121b, 122a*

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What was Pharaoh's excuse for not releasing the Jewish children?
2. How did the locusts in the time of Moshe differ from those in the days of Yoel?
3. How did the first three days of darkness differ from the last three?
4. When the Jews asked the Egyptians for gold and silver vessels, the Egyptians were unable to deny ownership of such vessels. Why?
5. *Makat bechorot* took place at *exactly* midnight. Why did Moshe say it would take place at *approximately* midnight?
6. Why did the first-born of the animals die?
7. How did Moshe show respect to Pharaoh when he warned him about the aftermath of the plague of the first-born?
8. G-d told Moshe, "...so that My wonders will be multiplied" (11:9). What three wonders was G-d referring to?
9. Why did G-d command the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh to Aharon, and not only to Moshe?
10. Up to what age is an animal fit to be a Pesach offering?
11. Prior to the Exodus from Egypt, what two *mitzvot* involving blood did G-d give to the Jewish People?
12. Rashi gives two explanations of the word "*Pasachti*." What are they?
13. Why were the Jews told to stay indoors during *makat bechorot*?
14. What was Pharaoh screaming as he ran from door to door the night of *makat bechorot*?
15. Why did Pharaoh ask Moshe to bless him?
16. Why did the Jewish People carry their matzah on their shoulders rather than have their animals carry it?
17. Who comprised the *erev rav* (mixed multitude)?
18. What three historical events occurred on the 15th of Nissan, prior to the event of the Exodus from Egypt?
19. What is the source of the "milk and honey" found in *Eretz Yisrael*?
20. The only non-kosher animal whose first-born is redeemed is the donkey. What did the donkeys do to "earn" this distinction?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 10:11 - Since children don't bring sacrifices there was no need for them to go.
2. 10:14 - The plague brought by Moshe was composed of one species of locust, whereas the plague in the days of Yoel was composed of many species.
3. 10:22 - During the first three days the Egyptians couldn't see. During the last three days they couldn't move.
4. 10:22 - During the plague of darkness the Jews could see and they searched for and found the Egyptians' vessels.
5. 11:4 - If Moshe said the plague would begin exactly at midnight, the Egyptians might miscalculate and accuse Moshe of being a fake.
6. 11:5 - Because the Egyptians worshiped them as gods, and when G-d punishes a nation He also punishes its gods.
7. 11:8 - Moshe warned that "All these servants of yours will come down to me" when, in fact, it was Pharaoh himself who actually came running to Moshe.
8. 11:9 - The plague of the first-born, the splitting of the sea, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers.
9. 12:1 - As reward for his efforts in bringing about the plagues.
10. 12:5 - One year.
11. 12:6 - Circumcision and *Korban Pesach*.
12. 12:13 - "I had mercy" and "I skipped."
13. 12:22 - Since it was a night of destruction, it was not safe for anyone to leave the protected premises of his home.
14. 12:31 - "Where does Moshe live? Where does Aharon live?"
15. 12:32 - So he wouldn't die, for he himself was a first-born.
16. 12:34 - Because the commandment of matzah was dear to them.
17. 12:38 - People from other nations who became converts.
18. 12:41 - The angels came to promise that Sarah would have a son, Yitzchak was born, and the exile of the "covenant between the parts" was decreed.
19. 13:5 - Goat milk, date and fig honey.
20. 13:13 - They helped the Jews by carrying silver and gold out of Egypt.

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# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT BO

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**A**t the beginning of the Parsha, Moshe and Aharon warn Pharaoh that a plague of locusts will descend on Egypt the following day. Moshe and Aharon then leave, but Pharaoh's servants, fearing the total destruction of Egypt, convince Pharaoh to bring them back. The Torah then relates the following exchange between Moshe and Pharaoh: "So Moshe and Aharon were returned to Pharaoh and he said to them, 'Go and serve G-d, your G-d; which ones are going?' Moshe said, 'With our youngsters and with our elders shall we go; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flock and with our cattle shall we go, because it is a festival of G-d for us.' Pharaoh said to them, 'So be G-d with you, as I will send you forth with your children. Look! The evil intent is opposite your faces. Not so, let the men go now. Serve G-d, for that is what you seek.' And he drove them out from Pharaoh's presence." (Shemot 10:8-11)

Abarbanel finds the exchange very 'confusing' and offers a number of different ways to interpret both Moshe and Pharaoh's words. From verse 11 it is clear that Pharaoh was willing to let the men go. By asking which ones are going he may have been referring to a select group of men. Abarbanel is puzzled by Moshe's response. Instead of listing every group he should have simply said that 'everyone' is going. Abarbanel answers that Moshe was unsure of what Pharaoh actually meant. He may have been referring only to the males, or perhaps he was asking if females were included as well. Similarly, he may have been distinguishing between adults and children. Finally, he may have been distinguishing between the people and their animals. As a result, Moshe had to enumerate specifically each group. Abarbanel initially interprets Pharaoh's response, 'So be G-d with you, as I will send you forth with your children' as a sarcastic rejoinder, meaning 'I have no intention of sending your children and certainly none of the other groups either.'

Pharaoh then says, "Look! The evil intent is opposite your faces." Abarbanel offers three possible explanations of these words: 1. Pharaoh felt that they simply wanted to flee; that evil intention could be seen on Moshe and Aharon's faces. 2. The evil intent that Pharaoh was referring to was his own. He was telling Moshe and Aharon that his anger could very well flare up against them and he would kill them with the sword, as he sensed that the people intended to flee. 3. As mentioned above, Pharaoh's rejoinder was sarcastic — he had no intention of sending everyone and he was contemptuous of Moshe's arrogance in including the other groups. His statement: "Look! The evil intent is opposite your faces" is actually directed towards his servants who had urged him to listen to Moshe and Aharon. He is telling them to look at the evil in the dishonest and duplicitous requests of Moshe and to stop blaming him (Pharaoh) for what had befallen Egypt.

Finally, Pharaoh's last statement, "Not so; let the men go now. Serve G-d, for that is what you seek" also has three interpretations: 1. If it is actually true that you have no intention of fleeing, then go with the men only, as this is what I believe you really want. 2. Pharaoh's previous statement, "So be G-d with you as I will send you forth with your children" was actually not meant sarcastically. He did intend to send the children also. However, now, by saying "Not so" he is changing his mind — only the men can go. 3. The entire exchange between Pharaoh and Moshe was similar to a bargaining session between a buyer and seller. Each comes with an extreme position and eventually they meet in the middle. Moshe starts out by asking that everyone go. Pharaoh starts out by referring to only a select group of men: no old men and no children. They finally compromise: all the men, young and old, and the children may go. Since Pharaoh feels that he has been more than generous there is nothing more to be said and he dismisses them curtly.

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Rav Bulman *zt"l*  
on the  
Torah Portion of the Week

## THANK THE LORD

**From: Jennifer**

*Dear Rabbi,  
With so many horrible things happening in the world,  
I'm having trouble making sense of it and wondering  
where G-d is in all this. Do you have any suggestions  
for coping?*

Dear Jennifer,

The essence of being a Jew is to give thanks.

That's what the name for Jew in Hebrew means: *Yehudi* - one who gives thanks or acknowledgment.

As spiritual descendants of Judah, who was so named by Leah as an expression of thanks to G-d, it is incumbent upon us to develop awareness of G-d's goodness and express appreciation for it.

In fact, paradoxically, it's the very abundance of G-d's goodness which actually masks His presence in the world!

How so? Example:

We cannot live without air. And, thank G-d, it's everywhere, and for free. Yet we hardly ever think about it or its value and importance. Can you imagine how much attention we'd pay to air if it was limited!

So, the very preponderance of air "prevents" us from properly appreciating it.

The same thing applies to health and food and children and so many things. G-d gives us so much bounty, so much blessing, so much good that we actually come to take all that abundance for granted.

The result is that on the backdrop of overlooked blessings, the relatively few difficulties we have, or become aware of, gain un-proportional importance precisely because of their being so few in number!

The Hebrew word for World is *olam*, which actually means hidden. G-d's hidden kindness in the world is one manifestation of this concealment. Rather than allowing the few bad things in life to further deflect our acknowledgment of G-d's blessing in the world, we should actually recognize them as detour signs directing our attention back to the highway.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## ZICHRON YAAKOV

One of the first Jewish settlements in the country, Zichron Yaakov was established by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and named in honor of his father Yaakov (James). It is the home of "Carmel" and other wineries, where the grapes that grow in the vicinity produce the wine sold throughout the country and the world. Its altitude, proximity to the coast and natural beauty has made it a popular vacation area.



The population of Zichron Yaakov is a combination of veteran settlers and new immigrants.

There is a sizeable religious community with a wide range of educational institutions, including Yeshivat Ohr Yaakov that was established by the founders of Ohr Somayach Institutions — Rav Nota Schiller, *shlita*, and, *l'havdil* *bein chaim l'chaim*, Rav Mendel Weinbach, *zatzal* — and attracts English-speaking students from all over the world.

*Please daven for a refuah shleimah for*

**Chaim Yechiel ben Malka** (Ohr Somayach alumnus Chaim Howard Rothman)

**Chaim Eitan ben Sarah - Yitzchak ben Chaya**

**Shmuel Yerucham ben Baila** (Rebbetzin Heller's son-in-law)

*May we hear Besoros Tovos.*

## SHEMONEH ESREI: NINTH BLESSING - PART 2

**“Give blessing across the land,  
and satisfy us from Your bounty.”**

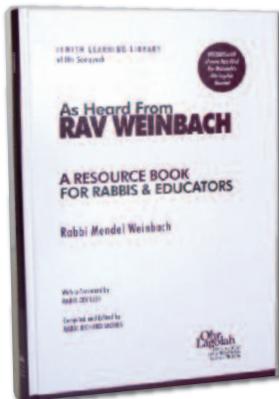
The Rabbis explain that the events that took place in the desert serve as a lesson applicable in every generation. Let us ask, how were the Jewish People sustained while in the desert? During their years of wandering, the only effort they had to make in order to find food was to take an empty vessel and go out to the field and collect the manna which descended from Heaven.

In a deeper sense this is true today as well. G-d sends us from Heaven all that we need. We just have to approach Him with a “vessel” and He will fill it. We must make ourselves into an empty vessel, depending on G-d to deliver our success. The effort one invests in trying to earn his livelihood is this vessel. Once one has done his part, he should trust that G-d will take care of the rest.

A foundation of Jewish faith is that G-d governs, by Divine providence, over all that occurs under the sun per-

taining to man. Everything is in His hands. In fact, it is only as a result of Adam’s sin do we have to work at all. As it is written, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.” However, personal efforts are only one component of making a living. The most important component is G-d’s blessing. And so we pray, “May G-d bless the work of our hands”, for without G-d’s blessing all of our efforts would be useless.

Our Sages point to the episode of the Heavenly bread that rained upon us in the desert to illustrate that a person can — through his faith and trust in G-d — merit earning his livelihood by putting out minimal effort. They teach that each person’s manna was sent to him according to the degree of his faith in G-d. If one’s faith was impeccable, then his manna fell just outside of his tent. If he was lacking in complete faith he would have to go out to the field to gather his portion. Everything was arranged according to the person and his relationship to G-d.



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