

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS SHMOS 5775 BS"D

Ch. 1, v. 1: "Ish u'veiso" – A man and his household – "Ish" refers to Hashem, as in "Hashem ish milchomoh." "Beiso" refers to Hashem's celestial court. They also descended to Egypt, as per the words of our Rabbis that when the bnei Yisroel descended to Egypt the Holy Spirit of Hashem descended with them. (Rabbeinu Bachyei)

Ch. 1, v. 7: "Va'yaatzmu bimode m'ode vatimo'lei ho'oretz osom" – And they became mighty greatly and the earth became full of them – And they became wealthy, "m'ode" means wealth as in "uv'chol m'o'decho, m'ode m'ode," fist upon fist of wealth. Then "vatimo'lei ho'oretz osom," the physicality of the land filled them. This brought to "vatimo'lei ho'oretz osom," the world became filled with them, i.e. the bnei Yisroel filled all areas of the world during Pesach by going to hotels to escape putting in the physical effort of preparing a proper Pesach. This brought to "Va'yokom melech chodosh," a new king arose. Rather than pursuing mitzvos in the spirit they were given, including the proper "hachonos," the proper chumros, without all the leniencies of a kitchen that mass produces and whose chefs are goyim, the proper environment, in this case "seh lo'ovos seh labayis," the way the fathers made Pesach so should the next generation household make it, there was a "melech chodosh," a new set of dictates in ushering in a Pesach. Magicians, performers, singers abound and there is an empty Beis Medrash full of sforim that is used only for mandatory prayer, and then on to performances, mingling of teenage children, etc., etc., etc. (oy l'einayim shekach ro'ose)

Ch. 1, v. 12: "V'chaasher y'anu osom kein yirbeh v'chein yifrotz va'yokutz mipnei bnei Yisroel" – And as they pained then so they multiplied and so they strengthened and they became disgusted with the bnei Yisroel – The more the physical bodies of the bnei Yisroel were pained the greater their spirituality grew. Weakening the physical allows for greater spiritual growth. With the great expansion of spirituality of the bnei Yisroel the Egyptians, the earthiest people in the world, became disgusted of having them in their midst. (Ol'los Efraim)

Ch. 1, v. 13: "Va'yaavidu Mitzrayim es bnei Yisroel b'forech" – And Egypt made the bnei Yisroel work with severity – Medrash Plioh cites a disagreement between Rav and Shmuel. One says that they made them work with "kal vochomer" while the other says that they made them work with "g'zeiroh shovoh." The medrash likewise cites a disagreement between these two people as to the meaning of "b'forech." One says that it means "bifruchim," with crumbling work, harsh work. The other says that "b'forech" is to be understood as two words joined, "b'feh rach," with a soft mouth. The former explanation posits that the harsh work began immediately, not easy in the beginning and tougher later. The latter opinion is that the soft mouth was the starting point of easy work, and only later was there a change to much harsher labour. This is the meaning of the two opinions of Rav and Shmuel in the Medrash Plioh. They are in tandem. He who posits that the work was tough from the go says "g'zeiroh shovoh," it was an edict that was the same throughout, while the other, who posits that it started out easy and then became hard says "kal vochomer," easy and then harsh. (Perach L'vonon)

Ch. 1, v. 19: "Ki lo chanoshim haMitzrios hoIvrios" – Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women – Generally we apply the rule of "dina d'malchusa dina," the law of the king is the law, meaning that we are bound to the law of the country, however, this only applies when the citizens of the country are treated equally. The midwives told Paroh that the Ivrios are not treated equally to the Egyptian women. Their children are allowed to live and thrive, while the Hebrew children are to be put to death. This unfairness allows us to not abide by this law. (Yismach Moshe)

Ch. 2, v. 2: “Y’rochim” – Months – The word “chodesh” is used when it refers to solar months, and “yerach” when it refers to lunar months. (Rabbeinu Bachyei parshas Va’yeilech)
I wonder how this applies to “Hachodesh ha’zeh lochem” in parshas Bo.

Ch. 2, v. 3: “Go’me” – Of reeds – This material was similar in colour to the common bulrushes found at the edge of rivers. Her hope was that no one would notice the little container and after the inspectors would leave her house she would fetch the baby. As we know, this didn’t work out as Bisayah the daughter of Paroh came by and saw the container. (Rabbi Yoseif B’chor Shor)

Ch. 2, v. 3: “Va’to’sem boh es ha’yeled” – And she placed into it the child – She did this a little while earlier than when she placed the container among the bulrushes. This way he would be used to the immediate surroundings and would not cry. (Divrei Yirmiyohu)

Ch. 2, v. 6: “Vatachamole olov” – And she had compassion on him – The gemara Sotah says that Bisayah went to the river to complete a conversion to Judaism by immersing herself in the river. How is this derived? Since we see that she had mercy on him it is evident that she had already converted. (shomati)

Ch. 2, v. 10: “Va’yigdal ha’yeled” – And the boy grew large – Moshe grew to the height of ten cubits. If so, even when he was very young he must have been large for his age. When Bisayah brought him home he looked much older than having been born during the time of the edict to throw all newborn Hebrew boys into the river. This is why Paroh allowed her to keep him. (N’tzi”v)

Ch. 2, v. 12: “Va’yifen koh vochoh va’yar ki ein ish va’yach haMitzi” – And he turned here and there and he saw there was not a man and he smote the Egyptian – Moshe did not want to fight with the Egyptian unless he was sure that he was weaker than Moshe. Moshe first wrestled with him and easily turned him to this and that side. He then concluded that this was not a powerful man. It was only then that he smote him. (Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel)

Ch. 3, v. 12: “E’h’yeh imoch” – I will be with you – Rashi comments that Hashem told Moshe that if he were to wonder by what merit do the bnei Yisroel deserve to leave Egypt, the answer is that they will receive the Torah at the end of three months after their exodus. This is problematic as the bnei Yisroel left Egypt on the 15th of Nison and received the Torah on the 6th of Sivon, less than three months, only 51 days later. Moshav Z’keinim offers that the day they heard the Ten Commandments was not called the main day of receiving the Torah, as all that happened was that they heard Hashem’s words. Rather, it was when Moshe descended from the mountain 40 days later with the Holy Tablets. This makes 90 days = 3 months. (Although 51 and 40 are 91, it was on the 51st day that Moshe ascended and that same day counted as the 1st of the 40 days.)

Alternatively, Moshav Z’keinim offers that a part of Nison, all of Iyar, and part of Sivon are considered 3 months, as we find this sort of calculation in numerous places.

OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS SHMOS

Ch. 4, v. 14: "V'ro'acho v'somach b'LIBO" - Rashi says that in the merit of Aharon's having true happiness in his heart that Moshe would become the leader of the bnei Yisroel, even though Aharon was his older brother, he merited to have the Choshen on his heart, as stated in Ch. 28, v. 29: "V'nosso Aharon es shmos bnei Yisroel b'choshen hamishpot al LIBO."
The MESHECH CHOCHMOH in parshas Acha'rei explains the words of our Yom Kippur prayer "ki Atoh Solchon l'Yisroel u'Mocholon l'shivtei Yeshurun." He says that besides our asking for individual atonement for our own personal sins, we ask Hashem for forgiveness for two communal sins, the sin of the golden calf, a sin between man and Hashem, and the sin of the sale

of Yoseif, a sin between man and his fellow man. Thus we say that You Hashem are the SOLCHON, Forgiver, to the bnei Yisroel, referring to the sin of the golden calf, where we find the term "Va'yomeir Hashem SOLACHTI kidvo'recho" (Bmidbar 14:20).

In regard to requesting Hashem for forgiveness for the sale of Yoseif we say "u'MOCHOLON l'SHIVTEI Yeshurun." This is a most unusual term to use for the bnei Yisroel. However, it is well understood if referring to the bnei Yisroel in regard to the lingering shadow of the sin of selling Yoseif, which was done by the tribal ancestors, SHIVTEI YESHURUN.

He goes on to explain that this concept of the two communal sins carries through to other matters. The gemara R.H. 26a says that the reason the Kohein Godol does not wear his normal eight priestly garments when he enters the Holy of Holies to beseech atonement is because the set of eight garments include the material gold, a stark reminder of the gold used for creating the golden calf. We have a rule that "ein ka'teigor naa'seh sa'neigor," - a prosecutor may not become a defender. Gold indicts the bnei Yisroel, so it is inappropriate to wear it when entreating Hashem for forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. The MESHECH CHOCHMOH adds that likewise it is inappropriate for him to wear the set of eight garments, which includes the Choshen that carries upon it the names of all the tribes, since we are also requesting atonement for the sale of Yoseif, which was perpetrated by his brothers, the tribal ancestors.

He says that this also explains why the holiest service of atonement, the offering of the incense in the Holy of Holies is brought specifically there. Besides the obvious that it is appropriate to have the holiest person do the holiest service on the holiest day of the year in the holiest location on earth, he says that since we are requesting of Hashem to forgive us the sin of selling Yoseif, it requires taking place in the tribal portion of Binyomin, who was not a partner in this crime. The Holy of Holies is in the tribal portion of Binyomin.

He continues by saying that once the kingdom was split with a king of Yehudoh and a king of the north, the Urim and Tumim were no longer consulted for Divine guidance. This is because the Choshen contains the names of the tribes. Once the tribes were not unified, as the kingdom split, it was inappropriate to use the Choshen, which embodies the concept of the unity of the tribes. The words of Rashi mentioned earlier are now very well understood with the insight of the MESHECH CHOCHMOH. The Choshen symbolizes the unity of the tribes. The older brothers were jealous of their younger brother Yoseif when he claimed that he had received a prophecy by way of dreams that he would become a king. This was the antithesis of the Choshen. Aharon, on the other hand, displayed the opposite reaction. Hashem testified that when Aharon would meet Moshe who would become the leader of the bnei Yisroel, chosen over his older brother, nevertheless, he would feel only true happiness in his heart, the opposite reaction to that of the brothers of Yoseif, he deserved to have the Choshen with the names of all the tribes, indicating unity without jealousy, upon his heart.

Perhaps with the above, we can now understand a most perplexing Toras Kohanim at the beginning of parshas Shmini. During the dedication ceremony for the inauguration of the Mishkon Aharon brought sacrifices to atone for himself and the nation. The Toras Kohanim says that the sacrifices that Aharon brought to atone for himself were only for the sin of later, the golden calf, in which he took part, but the sacrifices brought for the bnei Yisroel were to atone for both the beginning, the sale of Yoseif, as we find that the bnei Yisroel required a "s'ir izim," a goat as an atonement, just as we find a "s'ir izim" in the sale of Yoseif (Breishis 37:31), as well as for later, the sin of the golden calf. These words are most puzzling. Aharon was a descendant of Levi, who along with Shimon took a most pivotal part in the sale of Yoseif, actually wanting to have him killed. How then was Aharon not in need of atonement for the sale of Yoseif more than any of the other bnei Yisroel? According to the above it is well understood. Although the tribe of Levi required atonement for the sale of Yoseif, Aharon personally did not. By displaying an attitude of total happiness that his younger brother Moshe would become the leader of the bnei Yisroel, Aharon by action rather than by sacrifice corrected this flaw, hence he did not require a sacrificial atonement. This might also explain why Hashem gave Moshe the prestigious position

of Kohein Godol for the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkon, starting a full week ahead of Aharon's becoming a Kohein Godol. This too might have been a test to see if Aharon would be jealous of his younger brother. He obviously wasn't jealous, as we see that when he finally had the status of a Kohein Godol on the eighth day he was still reluctant to act in the capacity of Kohein Godol, as indicated by the words "Va'yomeir Moshe el Aharon 'krav el hamizbei'ach'" (Vayikra 9:7).

We now have a new insight into the two exceptions to the prohibition of "shaatnez." The Torah in Vayikra 19:19 and Dvorim 22:11 prohibits the wearing of a garment that has in it a mixture of wool and linen. The Torah relates (Breishis 4:2-8) that Kayin killed Hevel when Kayin's sacrifice was not accepted by Hashem while Hevel's was. The Yalkut Shimoni remez #35 says that because Kayin brought linen as his sacrifice (verse 3) and Hevel brought sheep (verse 4) Hashem ordained that linen and wool should not be worn in one garment. Yet we find that the Torah permits the wearing of "shaatnez" in two circumstances. One is when a person has a four-cornered linen garment. He has a mitzvoh to attach fringes that are threads of wool that are dyed with the blood of a creature called a "chilozon" (Dvorim 22:12). This coloured thread is called "t'cheiles" (Bmidbar 15:38). The other case is the Kohein Godol (all Kohanim according to one opinion in gemara Yoma 12b) being required to wear garment(s) of linen and wool mixture during his/their service in the Beis Hamikdash.

Following through with the line of thought offered by the MESHECH CHOCHMOH it seems appropriate to say that since the source for the prohibition of wearing "shaatnez" is the hatred and jealousy of an older brother, Kayin, towards his younger brother, Hevel, wearing the blue thread of wool on a four-cornered linen garment is permitted. The gemara M'nochos 43b says that the colour of the "t'cheiles" thread reminds one of the colour of the sea, and in turn of the heavens, and in turn the "throne of glory" of Hashem. This throne has four faces, two of which are that of the king of undomesticated animals, the lion, and the king of domesticated animals, the ox. A lion is symbolic of Yehudoh, as per Breishis 49:9. An ox is symbolic of Yoseif, as per Dvorim 33:17. We find the lion and ox coexisting peacefully on Hashem's throne. This symbolizes that Yehudoh, the tribe that has rightful claim to the kingship of the bnei Yisroel, is at peace with Yoseif who received a prophecy that he would lord over his brothers. Since the wool thread reminds us of peace among the brothers, with the older one not being jealous of the younger one, in this instance "shaatnez" is permitted.

As well, since Aharon cleansed himself of the sin of being jealous of a younger brother rising above him to a position of stature, he and all future Kohanim G'dolim were also permitted to wear "shaatnez" when they perform service in the Mikdash.

CHAMISHOH MI YODEI' A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS SHMOS 5774 – BS"D

1) Ch. 1, v. 15: "Va'yomer melech Mitzrayim" – And the king of Egypt said – Why until now were the harsh edicts expressed in the plural form, "va'yosimu, v'chaasher y'anu, va'yaavidu, va'y'mor'ru," and now in the singular?

2) Ch. 2, v. 1: "Va'yeilech ish" – And a man went – Why doesn't the verse simply say "Va'yikach ish mi'beis Levi?"

3) Ch. 2, v. 6: "Vatomer mi'yaldei hoIvrim zeh" – How did she know?

4) Ch. 2, v. 23: "Vataal shavosom el hoElokim" – And their cry rose up to Elokim – The next verse goes on to say that Elokim heard their entreaty. It is obvious that well before the king of Egypt contracted a skin affliction they were hard at prayer as well. Our verse is telling us that it was just now that their prayers had an affect. Why now all of a sudden?

5) Ch. 4, v. 8: “V’he’eminu l’kole ho’ose ho’acharone” – And they will believe the calling of the last sign – The next verse goes on to offer a third sign if the first two are not sufficiently convincing. If so, why does our verse call the penultimate sign “ho’acharone?”

ANSWERS:

#1

The Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh explains that although all the previous laws were Paroh generated, they were given much publicity and all the law enforcers of the land were involved, hence plural. However, this hideous law, to kill babies was not given publicity. It was told behind closed doors to the midwives only, because going public would bring the pregnant women to avoid using them, hence the singular form.

#2

- 1) The gemara Sotah 12a says that “va’yeilech” means that he went after the counsel of his daughter to remarry his wife.
- 2) When a person performs an act that takes great valour the Torah often not only tells of the act, but adds “va’yeilech,” as it takes much courage to move oneself to act. (Ramban)
- 3) His wife simply lived in another town, so he had to go there to marry her. (Ibn Ezra)
- 4) Many men gave up on reproducing because of the evil decree. They sent their wives to another community. Thus remarrying them required traveling. (Malbim)

#3

Chizkuni and Minchah V’luloh say that “V’hinei naar bocheh” was Aharon, who stood nearby. Bisyoh understood that he was the baby’s brother, and this was why he was crying. This explains how she knew that the child was an Ivri, because Aharon, who was 3 years and 3 months old, clearly gave the appearance of an Ivri. Ramban says that she simply understood that only an Ivri would cast away his child in the river to save him from infanticide. Alternatively, she saw that he was circumcised.

#4

The gemara Brochos 31a says that one should not pray while in a state of melancholy, but rather when in a positive happy frame of mind. Until now, because of the extreme servitude the bnei Yisroel were in a continual state of depression and their prayers were ineffective. It was only now, when Paroh was stricken with a debilitating skin affliction that the bnei Yisroel had a glimmer of happiness, as their oppressor was likewise suffering, that they had some level of simchah. At this point their prayers were effective. (Rabbi Menachem Pollack in Responsa Cheilek Levi)

#5

Ibn Ezra offers that since the third sign was an occurrence that had not yet taken place, at this moment the second sign was the final one. In Sedrah Selections parshas Bo 5759 we offered in the name of K’hilos Yitzchok that “acharon” doesn’t only mean FINAL, but also LATTER, as per the verse in Chagai 2, “Godol yi’h’yeh k’vode bayis ho’acharone min horishon,” even though there will eventually be a third and final Beis Hamikdash bb”o. This is alluded to in Shmos 12:13, “V’hoyoh hadom lochem l’ose al habotim.” The blood, not referring to “makas dom,” but rather to the third sign (Shmos 4:9), will be a sign for the three Houses, Bo’tei Mikdash.

However, the Holy Zohar on Vayikra page 221a says that the second Beis Hamikdosh is called the FINAL one because indeed it was the final one built by man, as the third will descend from heaven. (See responsa Rashba 4:187)

FEEL FREE TO COPY AND/OR TO DISTRIBUTE. TO SUBSCRIBE FOR WEEKLY EMAIL
PLEASE SEND ONE WORD REQUEST – SUBSCRIBE – TO sholom613@rogers.com