

עטרת השבוע

Ateres HaShavua

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת ויגש
ט' טבת תשע"ג

December 22, 2012

Candle Lighting:	4:13
First קריאת שמע זמן:	8:59
Second קריאת שמע זמן:	9:35
First תפלה זמן:	9:57
Second תפלה זמן:	10:21
שקיעה	4:32
Earliest הבדלה:	5:22 (50 minutes)

All times are for The Five Towns

This week's edition of the Ateres HaShavua is sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Dov and Chana Bienstock in honor of the upcoming marriage of their son Shalom ('08) to Lauren Sigman of Woodmere

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No Excuses

By Ezra Sturm, 10th grade

”ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו אני יוסף העוד אבי חי ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אתו כי נבהלו מפניו” (מהג:ג)

“And Yosef said to his brothers, ‘I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?’ But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him.”

Finally, after twenty-two years, and after scaring his brothers by accusing them of being spies and thieves, Yosef reveals himself to his brothers with the famous line, “I am Yosef, is my father still alive?” The brothers are so stunned from this statement that they are unable to utter a word in reply. However, the Bais Halevi points out that there are several questions that need to be addressed in this narrative.

First of all, it seems unnecessary for Yosef to ask his brothers about their father’s welfare, if just a few Pesukim earlier, when they ate together in the palace, the brothers had already told him that their father is alive. Furthermore, why were the brothers so stunned when Yosef revealed himself to them, if one of their main purposes of going down to Mitzrayim was to find Yosef? Shouldn’t they have been happy and joyous to find their long-lost brother? Also, why was it necessary for Yosef to perform this elaborate trick of placing his goblet in Binyamin’s sack, and then accusing him of being a thief?

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Jewish Identity

By Gavriel Sturm, 12th Grade

”וירא את העגלות אשר שלח יוסף לשאת אתו ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם” (מה:כז)

“And Yaakov saw the wagons Yosef had sent to transport him, and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived.”

When Yaakov sees the wagons Yosef sent to him he realizes that Yosef was truly alive, and immediately snaps out of his depression and mourning over the loss of Yosef. The question is what was it that Yaakov saw in the wagons that made Yaakov believe that Yosef was actually alive.

The Midrash answers that the wagons Yosef sent were a hint to the last Gemara Yosef and Yaakov had learnt together regarding eglah arufah (the decapitated calf). The wagon, agalah, is reminiscent of eglah. The questions that arises from this is why did Yosef use this piece of evidence to prove his identity and not any other personal detail that only Yosef and Yaakov could have known. Further, Yaakov just found out his long lost son was alive, so why does he need such conclusive proof.

The answer lies in a story during the times of the Vilna Gaon. There was a woman whose husband had disappeared for 30 years. One day a man shows up claiming he’s her husband. The women who had been an agunah for so long doubted the man’s identity, so the man listed many private details that only the

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Ezra Sturm (continued from page 1)

The Medrash Rabbah on Bereishis comments on this passage the following: “Woe to us from the day of judgement, woe to us from the day of rebuke. Yosef was the youngest of his brothers, but they were not able to bear his rebuke. When Hashem will come and rebuke each and every one of us according to his own level (לפי מה שהוא) how much more will it be so.” The Beis Halevi asks, why does the Medrash use a double expression, “woe to us from the day of judgement, woe to us from the day of rebuke”? And what does the Medrash mean that Hashem will judge each person according to his own level?

To answer all these questions, the Bais Halevi explains that the story of Yosef and his brothers is a parable for what will take place on the day of judgement. Aside from just telling us our mistakes, Hashem will show us how our very own actions contradict themselves. When Yosef stated that he would keep Binyamin as his slave as punishment for stealing the goblet, the brothers retorted that if Binyamin was not returned, it would cause their father unbearable pain that it may even cause him to die. So Yosef answered back, “Is my father still alive?” Not as a question, rather, an expression of astonishment. IS MY FATHER STILL ALIVE?! How could you, my brothers, claim that you are worried about your father’s pain? Why weren’t you worried about his pain and suffering when you sold ME into slavery (i.e. Is he still alive even after selling me)?

That is why Yosef put on the whole show of accusing Binyamin as a thief, to show them how wrong they were from their very own actions. That is why the brothers were so embarrassed and unable to answer anything to Yosef. And that is the meaning of the Medrash when it says, “Woe to us from the day of judgement, woe to us from the day of rebuke”; not only will Hashem judge us on all our actions, He will also rebuke us and show us how our very own actions are contradicting themselves. We should learn out from this that many times we offer excuses and reasons for our misbehavior; but we should look closely into ourselves, and see that other times when something is important to us we do what we have to, and don’t offer those same excuses.

Gavriel Sturm (continued from page 1)

husband could have known about. However, the woman still was not convinced and brought the man to be questioned in Beis Din. The man passed the Beis Din’s questioning, but the woman was not convinced. The man was then taken to the Vilna Gaon himself. The Vilna Gaon simply asked the man where his mokom kavua (permanent place) in shul was. The man could not respond, and they knew he was an imposter. The man had befriended the real husband and collected numerous details about him. They then asked the Vilna Gaon how he knew what to ask the man. The Gaon responded that a man willing to try commit such a crime would never think to find about a man’s seat in shul or anything holy and spiritual about the husband.

The story teaches us that Yaakov could only truly be convinced that Yosef was alive and not an imposter, when he heard something holy and spiritual that no imposter would ever find out about the person. This thinking of Yaakov imparts a very important life lesson. The lesson is that a real Jew does not identify himself by his car, wallet or job he has, rather it is the mitzvos and chesed he performs, the place he sits in shul, or the last sugya learnt that defines a true Jew.

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ATERES HASHAVUA

Stories of Tzaddikim

By Binyomin Goldstein

I will like to share a letter written from Rav Yitzchok Hutner to a talmid who was struggling, and very discouraged. The talmid was having many slumps and was ready to give up, until this letter was sent to him.

A failing many of us suffer is that we focus on the amazingness of gedolim. The result of this is that when a young man meets obstacles, falls, and slumps, he immediately gives up because he thinks he cannot be like the greatest of the great. Someone who thinks this way thinks that flourishing in the Shechina's presence means to go along calmly with the yeitzar tov, and not to have to battle the yeitzar hara.

Know however, my dear friend, that we don't live in the tranquility of the yeitzar tov, but rather in the battle of the yeitzar tov. And knowing you, I know that you are very worthy in having the yeitzar tov. Certainly, you have stumbled, and you will stumble again and in many battles will lose. I promise you though, that after that loss you will come out victorious. Lose battles but win wars.

The wise say "a man falls seven times then rises." Most people think of the meaning in its simplicity, but we know that it means that we learn from the seven falls to help us rise. When you feel the turmoil of the yeitzar hara, know that you resemble great people who do have feeling of peace within themselves. In those areas where you feel yourself failing most frequently, particularly in those areas, you have the greatest potential for serving as a Kiddush Hashem. When the talmid received this letter, he realized what Rav Hunter said was correct. He made a fresh start and ended up learning full time for the next ten years. He is now a well-known rav in his community.

Thoughts On The Haftorah

By Ari Halpern

In this week's haftorah, Yechezkel prophetically foretells the future reunification of the Jewish nation, which is to occur when Mashiach comes. He compares the two kingdoms of Eretz Yisrael to two planks of wood that will eventually be put together; one signifying the kingdom of Yehuda and the other signifying the kingdom of Yisrael. He explains that when the two kingdoms will merge together Hashem promises that "my servant, Dovid" will rule over the reunited kingdom. At face value, this seems to mean that in the times of Mashiach, Dovid, the first king of Yisrael from the tribe of Yehuda, the composer of Tehillim, and, undoubtedly, Hashem's servant, would reclaim his throne. However, despite the evident nature of this prophecy, the Radak is unsure whether the original Dovid will come back to life to reclaim his throne or whether a new king, from the lineage of Dovid, whose name will also be Dovid, will emerge and be crowned as king over Klal Yisrael. Why would the Radak, find it necessary to posit a new king named Dovid when it is much more logical to say that Dovid HaMelech is the person referenced in the pasuk? Secondly, calling someone an Eved Hashem implies that the person has already proven his loyalty and subservience to Hashem. How can one refer to a person who has not even been born yet as an Eved Hashem?

Although there is no clear cut answer to whom the pasuk is referring, there are commentators other than the Radak who mention this other Dovid. Rashi in Sanhedrin, along with the Sefer HaAruch, say, on the topic of the future king of the Jewish nation, that the "Melech HaMashiach" is, in actuality, a king called Dovid. He says that this Dovid is not Dovid Hamelech, rather "a new Dovid." We see from these sources that the Radak is not alone in this opinion, even though it does not seem to be the Poshut Pshat in the Pasuk.

אם תשיב משבת רגלך

Merakaid-Sifting

Basic Premise– The melacha of merakaid is separating an unwanted matter from a mix using a sifter or anything similar to a sifter (i.e. a sieve).

The reason that merakaid is different from other similar melachos like borer and zoreh is that merakaid is specifically talking about a sifter.

Merakaid in the Mishkan– Like the melachos we have discussed, merakaid was used in the sifting of the herbs and wheat in order to produce the certain dyes needed for the mishkan as well as the lechem hapanim.

Shiur needed to transgress merakaid– There is no specific shiur required to transgress this melacha as any amount of sifting is the melacha of merakaid and is therefore forbidden.

Places where merakaid applies:

- 1) Merakaid includes straining and filtering as well, since the entire purpose of merakaid is to remove unwanted material in a mixture, therefore any type of separating using a sieve, filter, or strainer is considered merakaid.
- 2) Merakaid applies to nonfood items as well- the melacha of merakaid includes nonfood particles such as sand or pebbles the same way it does salt and sugar.
- 3) Unlike borer, merakaid is transgressed whether the unwanted particles or the wanted particles are sifted. Also, merakaid differs from borer in the fact that merakaid is not allowed to be done for immediate usage whereas borer may be done for immediate usage.

וקראת לשבת עונג

שלחן בתריסר תסדר

Dear Ateres Hashavua,

I was fascinated to read, in your most recent issue, that there are actually *halachos* about setting the Shabbos table. In my home we consider a well set table of paramount importance; however, occasionally debate arises as to what appropriately should grace the Shabbos table. Some family members prefer sushi for the fish course, while others vehemently insist that sushi has no place at a traditional *Shabbos Tish* and that only gefilte fish will do. Perhaps you can help us resolve the dilemma.

-A devoted Ateres Hashavua reader

Dear Reader,

We appreciate your devotion and welcome your letter. While we suspect that *le'asid lavo* the *leviasan* is not going to be served with wasabi, we cannot provide a definitive answer to your question. Of one thing however, we are certain; one of the most important aspects of Shabbos (to which we devoted a number of columns last year) is *Shalom*-peace, harmony and tranquility. Vigorous discussion is fine, but please don't allow gastronomic differences to cause your *Shalom Bayis* to go to Pisces, that is, pieces.

As an aside, you may be interested to know that there are in fact *halachic* underpinnings to the origins of gefilte fish. We hope eventually to get there, but meanwhile we would like to first discuss something mentioned last week that we can all agree belongs on the Shabbos table: *lechem mishneh*.

We mentioned last week that the Shabbos table parallels the *Shulchan* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Accordingly, the *lechem mishneh* correspond with the *lechem hapanim*, which were placed on the *Shulchan* all week and eaten by the *Kohanim* on Shabbos. This correspondence has led to some interesting *minhagim* regarding the baking of Challah:

- Some bake the challah in an oblong shape, roughly that of the letter *vov*, whose numerical value is six. The two challos of the *lechem mishneh* together represent the twelve challos of the *lechem hapanim* which were likewise arranged in two rows of six.
- Another common method of accomplishing this representation is by braiding each of the challos of the *lechem mishneh* from six strands.
- Yet another way of representing the two rows of six is with 'break-away' challos; baking each challah as one central challah surrounded by five others.
- Some *tzaddikim* actually use twelve challos for *hamotzi* on Shabbos.

Believe it or not this is not the only aspect of deeper meaning involved in *lechem mishneh* on Shabbos. On account of space constraints the continuation will have to wait until our next issue. In the meantime, we hope that this has been enlightening regarding the depth and extent of *minhagei Yisroel*. And, yes, this is true of fish as well; as we said, we'll get there iy"H.

-A Guten Shabbos



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