

# עטרת השבוע

## Ateres HaShavua

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

פרשת יתרו  
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February 2, 2013

Candle Lighting:	4:55
First קריאת שמע זמן:	9:01
Second קריאת שמע זמן:	9:36
First תפלה זמן:	10:03
Second תפלה זמן:	10:27
שקיעה	5:15
Earliest הבדלה:	6:05 <small>(50 minutes)</small>

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### DID YOU HEAR?

By Gavriel Guttman, 12th grade

The Bnei Yisrael served in Egypt for 210 long years; years full of sweat, pain and blood. The work was excruciatingly difficult and before long the Jews had given up hope. They couldn't even take Moshe seriously when he informed them of the salvation that Hashem had in store for them. But with Hashem's persuasion, Moshe persevered and he and Aharon asked Pharaoh for permission to travel to the desert as a nation in order to serve Hashem. Pharaoh didn't listen. Finally, after the Egyptians were struck with ten terrible plagues, Pharaoh let the Jews go. But the freedom didn't last long for long. Pharaoh gathered his army to chase after the Jews who were told by Hashem to walk through the sea of reeds which miraculously split for them and crushed and drowned the Egyptians. The Jews then traveled through the scorching desert where they were protected from the elements by clouds which surrounded the Jewish encampment. Before long, the Jews began to get thirsty and Hashem himself told Moshe how to make bitter water sweet. The Jews then began to go hungry but Hashem came to the rescue when he sent down "Man" from the heavens to satiate the palates of the Bnei Yisrael. Finally the Jews reached the climax of their journey: Har Sinai. The whole purpose of the Jew's exodus from Egypt was so that they would recognize Hashem and accept upon themselves His holy ways as dictated in the Torah which was given at Har Sinai. Despite all this, the events at Sinai do not merit their own Parsha; they are hastily recorded in the same Parsha which describes the arrival of Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law, at the Jewish encampment. Was Yisro's arrival more important than Matan Torah? In fact, according to Rashi, Yisro only arrived after the Torah was given so it cannot even be suggested that the Torah is simply recording the events in *(continued on page 2)*

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Moishe Wollman, 12th grade

”ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכריה ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלקי אבי בעזרי ויצלני מחרב פרעה“

“And her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he had said, “I was a sojourner in a strange land.” And the name of the other was Eliezer, for “the G-d of my father came to my aid, and he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” (18:3-4)

One might ask, why didn't Moshe name his sons corresponding to chronological order? He should have given the name Eliezer, which corresponds to the kindness Hashem did by saving him from Pharaoh's effort to kill him, to his older son. He then should have named his second son Gershom, which corresponds to his living as a stranger in the land of Midyan, which occurred after his flight from Egypt.

Rabbi Yonasan Eibschitz explains a principle. The Neviem could not tolerate to witness the suffering of the Jewish people and preferred death over a life in which they would be forced to experience the pain of a holy nation. Moshe, the greatest of the Neviem, was no different in this respect. When his first son was born, Moshe imagined still that the Jewish people's bondage in Mitzriam would drag on for many more years, in which case death was preferable to living. There was no point then, in expressing his gratitude for being saved, and so, he named him Gershom. Moshe's second son however was born after he learned the redemption was near. Therefore, he could rejoice that he was alive, and he named his son Eliezer.

Rav Moshe Feinstein answers differently. When Moshe was naming his children he was looking for a name corresponding to praises for Hashem and he *(continued on page 2)*

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*Gavriel Guttman (continued from page 1)*

chronological order. What exactly is the Torah trying to tell us by arranging the details of the events which happened in the Midbar as such.

The Midrash tells us that while standing at the foot of Har Sinai and hearing the "Kol" of Hashem, all of the Bnei Yisrael died and later came back to life. In addition, the fact that the Torah records that the Bnei Yisrael hear the "Kol"- the "voice"- of Hashem implies that the Jews were all experiencing Nevuah- prophecy. Why? Because, by definition, Hashem is beyond the physical and therefore cannot have an actual voice because sound is a physical reality. The point that the Midrash and this derivation from the Pasuk both give over is that, at Har Sinai, the Bnei Yisrael was experiencing everything together as a unified nation; as Klal Yisrael. They were all on the spiritual level on which they were able to hear Hashem through Nevuah. It is important to understand that Nevuah is not like regular conversation in between two mortal humans. In fact, it is not conversation at all. As the Rambam explains in Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah, that Nevua is really defined as understanding Hashem or an aspect of Him- so well to the point that you know with absolute certainty that it is true; to be as certain about it as you are about anything that you can easily see and experience in reality. So Nevua is not something which randomly occurs to random people; it's something that only people with a certain perspective can experience. Parshas Yisro begins by stating that "Yisro heard all of the things that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael when he took them out of Egypt". Yisro, a gentile priest from Midyan merely heard about what happened to the Jews and realized that Hashem is the one true God and came to be with the Bnei Yisrael; he wasn't even there when all the miracles and clear acts of God took place. So much more so, the Bnei Yisrael, who were part of all the miracles and the resulting redemption must have realized with even more certainty that Hashem really is the creator and master of the universe. It is because of these experiences that they had in the exodus that the Bnei Yisroel were able to understand Hashem and thus receive the Nevuah at Har Sinai. The coming of Yisro is simply brought down to show how much the perspective of the Jews must have comparatively changed and it is therefore clear why they merited prophecy at Har Sinai. Without knowing that even Yisro believed in God, it is more difficult to understand how the Jews understood things so clearly.

*Moishe Wollman (continued from page 1)*

certainly didn't want to admonish Hashem about anything that had happened in the past. But how does the name Gershom "a stranger in an alien land" correspond to thankfulness and praise to Hashem?

Rav Moshe explains that Moshe's status as "a stranger in an alien land" of Midian was all for the good. He was a man of great stature that the people of Midian must have recognized. We can imagine that they wanted him to assume a position of power and responsibility in their city that he of course declined. Moshe knew that if he would take the responsibility he knew he would have to have the mindset of a stranger. As long as he remained "a stranger in an alien land" as no more than a sojourning resident he and his family would be able to protect their identity and their heritage. The name Gershom commemorated this important aspect of his life in Midian the underlying factor in his spiritual survival.

According to this interpretation Moshe used the name of Gershom before Eliezer even though there was a chronological reversal. Moshe thought that unless he retained the mentality of a stranger his rescue from Pharaoh's murderous designs would have been useless. Therefore he first assigned the name Gershom thanking Hashem for allowing him to maintain his distance from the people of Midian and only then did he thank Hashem for his life. A conceptually similar, but somewhat different answer was given by the Chofetz Chaim. Moshe was concerned that by living with Yisro, he would eventually become accustomed to Yisro's life style. So when his first son was born he immediately named him Gershom, for that name would constantly remind him never to forget that he was not a citizen of that nation.

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## Stories of Tzaddikim

By Eli Bienstock

Many years ago, two bachurim came to the yeshivah of the Chasam Sofer in Pressburg, Hungary to take a farher, to determine whether or not the boys qualified for admission as talmidim in his prestigious yeshivah.

It was right after sukkos, just a few days before the new zman was to begin, and the bachurim were anxious to become part of the world-renowned yeshivah. One of the boys had the reputation of being an iluy, whose understanding and perception of sugyos was outstanding. The second boy also had the reputation of being an exemplary talmid for his age, but he was not known to possess the sharp mind that the first boy had. Both boys took the farher and afterwards the Chasam Sofer announced that he would be accepting only one of them-the second boy, the one with the fine reputation-but not the outstanding iluy.

Staff members who had observed and overheard the boys being tested were surprised. Both had done well, and the iluy certainly had done better. "Why," they asked the Chasam Sofer, "are you taking only the second bachur?" The Chasam Sofer peered at those who questioned him and answered sternly, "I was sitting by the window and noticed the two bachurim as they made their way from the street into this building. There was some schach, on the sidewalk from one of the sukkos that had just been taken down after the yom tov. The first bachur did not make it a point to avoid the schach, but nonchalantly stepped on it as he was walking. The second boy, however, walked around the schach. "I maintain," continued the Chasam Sofer, "that a bachur who can step on schach just two days after sukkos does not have the proper sensitivity to kedushas hamitzvos. He will find someplace else to learn."

### Thoughts On The Haftorah

By Ari Halpern

This week's haftorah begins by relating Yeshaya HaNavi's vision of Hashem, sitting in His throne-room, preparing to pass judgment on the king of Yehuda, Uziyahu, for transgressing one of the mitzvos. Uziyahu, who was not a Kohain, had the intention of personally burning the holy incense on the golden alter – thus usurping the sacred role of the Kohanim. He had erroneously concluded that Hashem, the King of Kings, would appreciate being served by a king more than by a "lowly" priest. Due to the severity of his sin, he was punished with leprosy, which is likened to death.

This is exceedingly difficult to understand. Uziyahu was a man who the Medresh Tanchuma describes as being "rooted to the ground". He loved the earth and its pleasures more than he valued the study of Torah. He wantonly partook of worldly experiences instead of spiritually elevating himself above the masses, as is expected of a Jewish king. Why, then, would he suddenly feel an overwhelming desire to perform the Ketores service? Why would he care about paying Hashem a little more respect?

Rabeinu Bechaii, in Parshas VaYikra, indirectly answers this question by explaining an odd terminology used to describe a Nasi (the leader of the Jewish people) who sins. Whereas, when referring to an individual, a kohen or the whole community, the Torah uses the expression "if he sins", when referring to the Nasi, however, the Torah says "when a Nasi will sin." This implies that it is inevitable that a Nasi will sin. As Rabeinu Bachaii explains - a Nasi (or a king) is more prone to sin due to the elevated level of haughtiness inherent in the office. When Uziyahu planned to burn the incense, his only intention was to raise his own stature. He did not care about the advancement of Hashem's glory in the slightest. That, combined with his lack of Torah knowledge of the severity of his intended sin, caused him to be judged so harshly by Hashem.

New

## Is there a problem with eating olives?

1. There's a גמרא in (ג' :ג) הוריות that says there are 5 things that make a person forget the תורה he has learned. a) Eating something that a mouse previously ate from b) Eating something that a cat previously ate from c) Eating the heart of an animal d) One who is accustomed to eat olives e) Drinking from water that one used to wash his hands with. (i.e. נטילת ידיים water)
2. The גמרא continues and says that there are also foods that help one remember the תורה he has learned. Olive oil is one of these things.
3. The מהרש"א asks on the גמרא in הוריות, why is olive oil one of the שבע מינים, isn't it different than the other 6? The others are actual items, yet olive oil is a derivative of an item? He answers by saying that we do not want to praise olives because they make one forget תורה! However, olive oil helps one remember תורה, so that is why it is part of the שבע מינים.
4. This הלכה of not eating olives is not found anywhere in the שלחן ערוך.
5. The מגן אברהם says (קע:יט) that these things that make one forget תורה, is only referring to an אברחם. But if someone has כוונה while eating one of these bad items, then it helps one remember. (it is unclear what כוונה actually means). He then adds to be very careful when it comes to eating hearts of an animal.
6. The מגן אברהם (קע:טו) agrees with the aforementioned שלחן ערוך.
7. The משנה ברורה (קע:כב) doesn't mention anything about olives. He only quotes the last part of the מגן אברהם regarding not to eat hearts. (seemingly according to the משנה ברורה, one may eat olives)
8. R' Yaakov Emden in (מור וקציעה:קע) says people aren't מקפיד today about olives either because a) it's only a problem if the olives are your meal, but if you're just having olives as a side dish or in a salad or something of the sort, it's okay or b) If it's raw it is no good but if it's cooked or pickled then it is good.
9. Not all agree with his חילוקים (the מאירי and קנייבסקי).
10. There is a discussion if women have an issue with eating olives. Or do we say that they don't have a מצוה of תורה תלמיד so there is no issue with forgetting ones תורה. See the ספר שמירת הגוף והנפש (סמין ח') for more details.
11. מתיר in רב שלמה זלמן (הליכות שלמה פרק א' footnote קג') says that he doesn't like being מתיר the olives by just adding olive oil because he doesn't know if the olive oil really balances out the lack of remembrance of תורה with the remembrance of תורה which is represented by olive oil. He adds that it's a מנהג today in ירושלים to add a little olive oil to olives whenever served.
12. Rav Moshe Shternbuch says in (חלק א' ס' ג') that it's an אסור דאורייתא תשובות והנהגות that if someone or something causes one to forget תורה, he is "over" the דאורייתא of "שמור פן תשכח."
13. The פסקי תשובות קע' gives a few other examples of things that cause someone to forget their תורה a) Staring at a dead body b) Someone who is sewing something while the person is still wearing the article c) Reading a מצובה that has the letters on it bulging out.

Disclaimer: This column is intended to provide the reader a background on the sugya, not to pasken.



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