



Parshas Bo

January 11, 2019

A Taste of Torah

G-d in the Details

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

This week's parsha discusses the final three plagues that Hashem brought upon the Egyptians, culminating in the Exodus from Egypt. This event plays a major role in our lives, as we are commanded in numerous mitzvos to remember the Exodus. Typically, we commemorate the general concept of the Exodus on a daily basis. Once a year, however, on Pesach, we are obligated to retell the complete story in detail.

When Moshe commands the Jewish People to remember the Exodus, he mentions an interesting detail. The verse (13:4) states, "Today you are leaving, in the month of spring." Rashi asks the obvious question: "Did they not know in which month they went out?" Rashi explains that Moshe was telling them to look at the kindness bestowed upon them, for they left during the perfect season, when it is neither too hot nor too cold.

This comment from Rashi gives insight into how Hashem conducts Himself with us. He does not merely take care of our basic necessities, but rather goes out of His way to make sure every detail is taken care of. This is demonstrated by the season in which Hashem chose to redeem us. The mere fact that He took us out would have been sufficient kindness. However, being our Father, He wanted us to have the best experience possible.

This lesson ought to enable us to

properly express our gratitude to Hashem. For instance, when we recite a blessing over bread, we should try to think about the numerous details of the natural world that are necessary to create a loaf of bread. Rabbi Yisroel Salanter (1809-1883) adds another dimension with a parable of someone eating in a high-end restaurant. The exorbitant prices are not due only to the food, but also include the elegant décor, the relaxed ambiance, the beautiful music playing in the background. Rabbi Salanter would relate that the same is true with this world, as we should thank Hashem for creating a beautiful environment for us to enjoy the pleasures of this world.

The Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew; 1512/1526-1609) uses this concept to answer a difficulty in the Haggada. In the Haggada, it states that anyone who speaks more in telling the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy. Generally, when performing a mitzvah, we find that one should not add his own two cents, but should rather follow the script, yet this seems to be an exception. The Maharal suggests that for this mitzvah, if one would refrain from relating the story with all the detail he is aware of, one would be guilty of ingratitude. Only by speaking of every detail of kindness can one fully express proper *hakaras hatov* (gratitude) for what Hashem has done.

Stories for the Soul

Scroll Down

Baron Shimon Wolf Rothschild, of the famed Rothschild family, wanted a Torah scroll written for him, as per the commandment in the Torah that a Jew should write his own Torah scroll. He searched for a *sofer* who would live up to the high standards of piety he wanted imbued in his Torah scroll. Finally, he found a *sofer* who enjoyed an excellent reputation, and hired him to write the Torah scroll.

After many months, the *sofer* came to tell the Baron that the scroll was complete. The Baron, very excited, asked the *sofer* to make an accounting of how much money he still owed him. The *sofer* withdrew a notebook and started making an accounting, "In January you paid me this much, in February this much..."

Baron Rothschild cut him off. "Is this how a *sofer*, a man engaged in holy work, counts months?! By the secular calendar, not the Jewish calendar?!" He paid the scribe the remaining balance for his work, and told him to keep the Torah scroll; he didn't want a scroll written by a *sofer* who kept track of time using the secular calendar!

In this week's parsha, the Jewish People are given their first mitzvah, that of marking the new moon. While we may need to make many calculations by the secular calendar, we must not forget that we have our own calendar by which we sanctify time.

Kollel Happenings

GETTING PAST POLITICAL POLARIZATION AT NEXT TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Phil Weiser, Attorney General, Colorado and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they discuss how to approach discussing with a learning mindset and intellectual humility February 6, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at Edos, 198 S. Holly St. at 12:00 pm. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

SFAS EMES: A PIERCING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is one of the most widely-studied works of our time. Sfas Emes gives us a glimpse into the infinite depths of Torah and Jewish thought. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky is an expert in this great work, and a master in bringing its timeless lessons into daily life. Join Rabbi Karnowsky on Thursdays, 8:15-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What unique distinction does the Hebrew month of Shevat carry?

A: This is unrelated to any event marked during this month. A: For the first 3300 years of our history, the months were referred to by their place in the calendar (e.g., the first month, the second month, etc.). Only later did Babylonian names get attached to the months. The only books of Tanach containing these names are

Zecharia (one of the Trei Asar/Twelve smaller prophesies), Ezra/Nechemia and Megillas Esther. The first time this occurs is in the first chapter of Zecharia, where the month of Shevat is mentioned. It is of note the correct pronunciation (based on the abovementioned verse) is Shevut.

This week's question: When should one make the *ha'etz* blessing on wine?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, Chasam Sofer Part XXVIII

The yeshiva was quite successful and attracted many talented and erudite scholars from Hungary. Rabbi Sofer led the Erlau community for 64 years.

Rabbi Sofer spent much of his life editing and publishing his father's and grandfather's works; his aforementioned uncle, Rabbi Shimon Sofer of Krakow, encouraged people to send manuscripts of the Chasam Sofer and Ksav Sofer to his nephew. Rabbi Sofer also authored many of his own works, including his most famous work, *Hisorerus Teshuva*, by whose name he is often referred.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1885-1944) was the son of Rabbi Shimon Sofer, and he authored a work titled *Yad Sofer*. He served as a *dayan* (judge) on the Bais Din (Rabbinical court) of Erlau. Rabbi Moshe, like his father, devoted himself to editing the Chasam Sofer's and the Ksav Sofer's works, as well as *Sofer Mahir*, authored by Rabbi Yitzchak Leib Sofer of Drohobych, a son of the Ksav Sofer. He also published his own works, most of which were lost during World War II. After the war, his son, Rabbi Yochanan Sofer, published Rabbi Moshe's responsa, the aforementioned *Yad Sofer*, with his own glosses on his father's writings.

Rabbi Shimon Sofer and his son,

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, were deported to Auschwitz along with the Erlau community in 1944. Rabbi Shimon Sofer was murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz at the age of 94. Rabbi Moshe Sofer was murdered there, as well. Some of their children survived the war, among them, Rabbi Moshe Sofer's two sons, Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer and Rabbi Yochanan Sofer. Though Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyamin was the older of the two, and a Torah genius, he humbly refused to assume the leadership of a renewed Yeshivas Chasam Sofer in Pest, Hungary, following WWII. He passed away in 1948, having never married. His brother, Rabbi Yochanan, later published his deceased sibling's handwritten Torah novella, titled *Divrei Sofer*.

Following World War II, Rabbi Yochanan Sofer returned to Pest, Hungary, to rebuild the Jewish community. Along with Rabbi Moshe Stern of Debrecin (who would become a major halachic authority in America in his own right), he reopened Yeshivas Chasam Sofer, which had existed in Pest prior to the war. In 1947, he reopened the yeshiva in Erlau. He married in Erlau and was appointed rabbi of the fledgling community.

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