

The Number One TTopic

The first Torah Tidbits was a single sheet of A4 paper with the Israel Center schedule on one side and a Dvar Torah on the other. That very first Lead Tidbit set the tone for many (not all) to come - including this one. Every time we bring up this topic, however, we try to do it in a different way. The following began as a Chizuk & Idud column for this week's TT, but then we received the email with this week's piece. Rather than shelve the following, which was going to appear under the pseudonym of Pinchas Barmir, we turned it into this week's Lead Tidbit. No apologies for repeating the message; the Torah does it all the time, why not the Torah Tidbits.

The young fellow was in deep trouble. His father assured him that he would get him out of his difficult situation and in addition, he had two special gifts to give his son.

And so it happens. The father pulled off a daring rescue of his son and after the dust settled, the father offered the two special gifts to his precious child.

How does the son react? Does he thank his father for saving his life, but tell him 'no thanks' for one or both of the gifts? Or does he gratefully acknowledge his father's saving him and he then, filled with pride and appreciation of the love of his father, enthusiastically and graciously accept the gifts?

In the beginning of Parshat Va'eira, Moshe is instructed by G-d to tell the Children of Israel that He will save them and redeem them from Egypt. And that He is offering them two special gifts - the two "items" that the Torah calls "Morasha", a heritage. With the prophecy of V'LAKACHTI and V'HAYITI, G-d will give us the Torah. And with the promise of V'HEIVEITI and V'NATATI, He will give us Eretz Yisrael.

cont. on page 4

Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for VA'EIRA

4:10pm / 5:26pm (see page 3 for other zmanim)

Checked, double checked, and triple checked for Parshat VA'EIRA (m'vorchim)

ParshaPix Explanations on p.35



Word of the Month This Shabbat (Va'eira) we bench Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, which is always one day in our fixed calendar with Tevet having 29 days. This year, Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat will be on Thursday

ראש חודש שבט יהיה ביום חמישי הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה:

ד'תקפ"א: The molad will be on Tuesday, 22h 32m 5p (approx. 10:11pm)

המולד יהיה ליל רביעי (Tue. night), שלשים ושתים דקות וחמישה חלקים אחר עשר.

The actual (astronomical) molad is 11 hours earlier, Tue Jan 4, 11:03am IST



<u>Candles</u>	VA'EIRA	<u>Havdala</u>	<u>next week</u>
4:10pm	Yerushalayim	5:26pm	4:15 / 5:31
4:28pm	S'derot	5:29pm	4:33 / 5:34
4:25pm	Gush Etzion	5:27pm	4:30 / 5:32
4:25pm	Raanana	5:27pm	4:30 / 5:32
4:26pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:27pm	4:31 / 5:32
4:25pm	Netanya	5:26pm	4:30 / 5:32
4:26pm	Rehovot	5:28pm	4:31 / 5:33
4:26pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otniel)	5:29pm	4:31 / 5:34
4:25pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:27pm	4:30 / 5:32
4:10pm	Petach Tikva	5:27pm	4:15 / 5:32
4:10pm	Maale Adumim	5:26pm	4:15 / 5:31
4:24pm	GINOT Shomron	5:26pm	4:30 / 5:31
4:24pm	Gush Shiloh	5:25pm	4:29 / 5:30
4:26pm	K4 & Hevron	5:27pm	4:31 / 5:32
4:25pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:26pm	4:30 / 5:31
4:26pm	Yad Binyamin	5:28pm	4:31 / 5:33
4:28pm	Ashkelon	5:29pm	4:33 / 5:34
4:11pm	Tzfat	5:23pm	4:16 / 5:28
4:24pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:26pm	4:29 / 5:31

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - VA'EIRA 6:03pm

**Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
22 Tevet - 2 Shvat • Dec 29 - Jan 7**

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:44-5:46am
Sunrise	6:39-6:41am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:31-8:34am)	9:09-9:12am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:28-9:31am)	10:00-10:03am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:41-11:45¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:12-12:16pm
Plag Mincha	3:40¼-3:46¼pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:43-4:50pm)	4:49-4:55pm

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The name AHARON occurs 301 times in the Torah (0,116,80,101,4) and 46 times in NACH

The sedra of Love & Emunah

Speaking of FROGS צְפַרְדְּעִים (and ducks
and lots of other animals)... WEBBED FOOT
קְרוֹמֵי-שְׁחִינָה

About Yosef and the cries of Israel

20610 - the first of 69 identical what?
and one additional that continues

The 59 days of Tevet and Sh'vat
each have two days they cannot fall on
(and five days of the week that they can).

BARAD was like Manna

Pinchas introduced in his matching sedra

Gub and Eniv and whom?

Rosh Chodesh Benching of Sh'vat is on
Shabbat Parshat Sh'mot 40% of the time
and 60% on Shabbat Parshat Va'eira

Yosef, 32 6'36"N 35 2'4"E, Berechياهو

Eisav, Moshe, and two different nations

Par'o, Bil'am, Achan, Sha'ul, David

LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

Are we the kind of children who will not even be thankful to G-d for Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim. Sadly, there are Jews like that. We must teach these Jews the whole range of Torah values and Mitzvot. We must develop and support programs and organizations dedicated to spreading Yahadut in a pleasant and acceptable manner.

Are we the kind of "children" who thank Him profusely for taking us out of Egypt and thank Him as well for one of the two gifts, holding up our hand, palm out, and say "this is enough"?

These kind of Jews come in two main categories - with many variations within each category).

We have "modern" Zionist Jews who love the State of Israel, love the idea of a Jewish Homeland, but sadly do not consider the Torah relevant to their lives today. They will tell you that mitzvot were a part of their parents and grandparents lives, part of the life of the Jew in Exile... but it is unnecessary here in Israel and in modern times. "My Jewish identity is guaranteed by the flag of Israel - I don't need Jewish ritual to remind me and my children about our being Jewish.

How sad! Our plan: Education. Again, in a non-coercive and pleasant manner. Formal education, informal education, youth groups, etc.

And there is another category of Jews who always thank G-d for having taken us out of Egypt and for having given us

the Torah. Committed, mitzva-observant Jews, active members of thriving Jewish communities... all over the world. How about Aliya to Eretz Yisrael? How about living your Torah lives in the place G-d meant them to be lived? "What are you crazy? We have everything we need for a complete Jewish life here in _____ (fill in the name of the community that your sibling, child, cousin, good friend lives in)." How about this misguided statement: "It is easier to raise a child as a religious Jew in New York than it is in Israel!" Does this statement ignore the Gemara's and the Rambam's that a person should rather live in Eretz Yisrael in a place the majority of whose inhabitants are idol worshipers, rather than live in Chutz LaAretz in a place with a majority of Jews." Jews who have taken living in Israel off their agendas and life's dreams also need to be taught. Also in a pleasant manner. That Galut was the result of the sins of our ancestors and ours, and that Geula means return to Torah and return to Eretz Yisrael.

Too much secular influence? Every Torah observant Jew who comes on Aliya helps shift the balance. Every religious fellow who enters army service helps make it more Torah-oriented and less secular.

We can go on and on (and often do) but the point here is that G-d wants us to live lives of Torah in Eretz Yisrael. We can and should - on both counts. So let's.

Va'eira stats

14th of the 54 sedras;

2nd of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 221.8 lines in a Torah; ranks 16th

16 parshiot; 8 open, 8 closed

12 p'sukim - ranks 20th (4th in Shmot)

1748 words - ranks 15th (3rd in Shmot)

6701 letters - ranks 17th (3rd in Shmot)

P'sukim are above average in length

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Va'eira

The 18 sedras (that's a third of the sedras) from Nitzavim through Va'eira have a total of 5 mitzvot in them. The next third of Torah's sedras (Bo thru B'har) have 346 mitzvot. And the other third (B'chukotai thru Ki Tavo) have 262. Of course, the numbers change depending upon how you cut the cake. (For example, a "fairer" way of dividing the 54 sedras in thirds is to start with B'reishit. Okay, B'reishit thru Mishpatim, T'ruma thru B'haalot'cha, and Sh'lach thru V'zot HaB'racha give us a 94-290-229 breakdown.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Kohen - First Aliya

12 p'sukim - 6:2-13

LDT: The two most common names of G-d in the Torah are E-LO-HIM and A-DO-NOI (as an act of respect for G-d's sacred names, these two are generally pronounced ELOKIM and HASHEM respectively, when referred to other than in prayer or Torah reading). ELOKIM is usually considered to be G-d's name of strict judgment, whereas HASHEM carries the connotation of Divine Mercy. Notice that in the accounts of Egyptian oppression, the predominant name of G-d is Elokim (especially in 2:23-25).

Exile is certainly associated with the stricter side of G-d's treatment of His People. If the quality of mercy were dominant, perhaps we would acclimate too well to conditions and lose our yearning for redemption. (See what has happened in modern times when exile is accompanied by G-d's Midat HaRachamim and people are quite comfortable, and therefore, complacent - a regrettable state of affairs. Comfortable is not bad; complacent is - it means "contented to a fault".)

In the opening pasuk of this week's sedra, we find the unusual combination of both names. It is ELOKIM Who speaks to

👉 We are blinded by nothing so much as by our eyes.

👉 As long as we know that we are fooling ourselves, there is still hope for us.

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Moshe, G-d Who has judged and treated the People strictly and harshly. (And G-d Who is also speaking harshly to Moshe for his outburst at the end of Parshat Sh'mot). However, His message to Moshe is "I am HASHEM" (which comes with VAYOMER, the softer "tell", rather than VAIDABEIR, the harsher "speak" that began the pasuk). And His words of hope and promise to the People begin with the same declaration, "I Am HASHEM". In this context, we are told that G-d will take the People out of Egypt, save them, redeem them, take them unto Him, be our G-d and ultimately bring us into the Promised Land. These stages of redemption are summed up with the reiteration of the statement, "I Am HaShem". It is as if G-d is saying to the down-hearted People: "until now you've experienced Me as ELOKIM, but rest assured that you will now see HASHEM - the G-d of Mercy - in full measure. The Egyptians on the other hand are being punished by the hand of G-d as ELOKIM. (see 5:15).

[S> 6:2 (8)] The sedra begins with G-d speaking to Moshe Rabeinu and telling him of the promises He had made to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Also, G-d tells Moshe that He has heard and is responding to the cries of the People of Israel.

[In other words, G-d will be taking us out of Egypt not only because of promises He had made to the Avot, but because of His feelings for us.]

Therefore, G-d will take the People out from under Egyptian oppression, will save them from bondage, and will redeem them with His might. He will then take

the People to Him as a Nation and be our G-d. He will then bring us into Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe relates this to the People, who are too exhausted to listen.

[P> 6:10 (3)] G-d then tells Moshe to go to Par'o and demand the People's release. Moshe questions how Par'o can be expected to listen, if the People (Moshe's own people) themselves didn't listen to him.

SDT: G-d tells Moshe to go speak to Par'o (about letting the People go). Moshe "demurs", using the logical argument known as KAL VACHOMER - if the People of Israel (my own People) didn't listen to me, how is Par'o going to listen to me. Seems logical, except that the Torah has told us why the people didn't listen to Moshe - they were utterly exhausted from their unusually difficult labors. If so, it does not follow logically that Par'o would not listen to Moshe. Maybe he would listen, not being exhausted. On the other hand, Moshe's KAL VACHOMER is based on his own statement - "I have a speech impediment". In trying to understand his failure to reach the people, Moshe finds fault in himself, not in the People. This is how a leader should behave. When a rabbi or teacher fails to communicate an idea to his charges, he should not conclude that the fault lies with them - they are dumb; they are not committed enough; they are not paying attention; etc. He should rather be critical of himself - I probably didn't explain things well; I wasn't patient enough; etc. This is one of the signs of humility that is such a desirable characteristic in a leader. This was one of the many qualities that made Moshe Rabeinu

The Leader and Teacher par excellence.

[P> 6:13 (1)] (Above Moshe's objections, so to speak,) G-d reiterates to Moshe and Aharon, that they are to tell the People as well as Par'o that the People will be leaving Egypt.

Note that this last pasuk of the first Aliya is one whole parsha. Single- pasuk parshiyot seem to say, LOOK AT ME a little harder and understand some special point. Perhaps, G-d is saying to Moshe - all your hesitations and protestations aside, it is time for TACHLIS. You and Aharon are going to tell/command the people and Par'o about leaving Egypt. Period.

Levi - Second Aliya **15 p'sukim - 6:14-28**

[S> 6:14 (15)] The Torah begins to enumerate the names of the tribes and family groups. It is obvious that the intention here is not to review the whole of the nation, but rather to focus on Moshe & Aharon. The Torah starts the list with Reuven and Shimon, and when it gets to Levi, there is much more detail. In this brief section, we meet many of the "main personalities" of the rest of the Torah. The Torah is also giving us the ability to continue to draw the timeline of Jewish history, by giving us the ages at death of Levi (we already know the ages of the three previous generation - Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov), his son Kehat, his

son Amram. That brings us to Moshe and Aharon. We are also introduced to Korach and his sons and Aharon and his family.

SDT: *Although the purpose of this partial genealogy is to identify Aharon and Moshe, the Torah began with Reuven and Shimon before it gets to Levi. A reason offered for this in one of the sources is that since Yaakov Avinu spoke critically of these three sons, the Torah here lists only them, to teach us that they were important tribes despite their progenitors' "mistakes".*

SDT: *When the Torah tells us that Aharon married Elisheva, she is identified as bat Aminadav AND as the sister of Nachshon. Rashi tells us that from here we learn that when a man marries a woman, he should check out her brothers (because children often take after their maternal uncles). The same idea was previously presented in reference to Lavan.*

SDT: *On the Torah's statement: HU AHARON U MOSHE, Rashi points out that sometimes (mostly - specifically, 34 times) Moshe is mentioned first, and sometimes Aharon is mentioned first (4 times in Tanach), to teach us that they were equals. (That is, on some levels, but on others, Moshe Rabeinu was obviously on a higher standing.)*

Shlishi - Third Aliya **9 p'sukim - 6:29-7:7**

[S> 6:29 (2)] After the "digression" of the previous passage, the Torah now repeats that G-d is sending Moshe to Par'o and that Moshe continues to "object"

because of his speech impediment. (But this time, the fact that the people didn't listen is not mentioned.)

Rashi says that G-d did not repeat the command, nor did Moshe repeat his objection. The Torah is putting us back where we left off before the genealogical data were presented.

BTW, **ARAL S'FATAYIM** has different meanings in commentaries. Literally, it means: I have uncircumcised lips; it is variously interpreted as, "I have a speech defect", "I can hardly speak", and "I have no self-confidence when I speak".

[P> 7:1 (7)] G-d tells Moshe that Aharon will do the talking, that Par'o will refuse the repeated requests to free the People, and that He (G-d) will take His people out, and that it will be clear to Egypt (and everyone else) that it is indeed G-d Who is doing everything. Moshe and Aharon do as G-d instructs them; they are 80 and 83 years old respectively.

Observation When the Torah is specific about ages, it usually is meant to give us an accurate way of constructing a timeline. Perhaps too, in this case, the Torah is pointing out something that we saw very often in the book of B'reishit - namely, the prominence of the younger brother over the older one.

SDT: *How is it that Moshe Rabeinu is able to speak to the People of Israel throughout his "career" as leader, in light*

of the fact that he complained of being "speech impaired"? When Moshe spoke to the People of Israel, it was the Sh'china that spoke from his mouth. He had no trouble with his speech defect. He was, however, concerned when it came to speaking to Par'o. See 6:30.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya **28 p'sukim - 7:8-8:6**

[P> 7:8 (6)] G-d tells Moshe and Aharon, that when Par'o asks for a sign, Moshe shall instruct Aharon to throw down the Staff before Par'o and it will turn into a TANIN. Moshe and Aharon appear before Par'o and do as G-d has instructed them.

Rashi says that TANIN means NACHASH, i.e. snake or serpent. Not everyone see it that way. When G-d first had Moshe throw his staff down, it changed into a NACHASH, a snake. Now with Par'o, it changed into a TANIN. Strong possibility is that we are talking about a crocodile (a fellow reptile to the snake), venerated and worshiped by Egypt. Many Pharaohs identified with the crocodile as the ruling animal of the Nile.

Adds the Baal HaTurim, that the Tanin's reverting to wood was a message to Par'o that just as the mighty crocodile turns to dry wood, so too will the mighty Par'o turn to dust and food for worms.

SDT: *Baal HaTurim points out that the pasuk says: G-d says to Moshe that when Par'o will ask for a sign, you (Moshe)*

shall tell to Aharon to take your staff and throw it (on the ground) in front of Par'o, it shall become a TANIN. It didn't say: AND it will become a Tanin. He explains that the staff was thrown down and then he was to command it to become a Tanin. And that's what happened, to show Par'o the power of speech that G-d has given to Moshe. In other words, the staff did not change upon being thrown down. It changed by a spoken command. That carries a pointed message to Par'o that his wizards aren't even in the same class with Moshe and Aharon.

Par'o calls his wizards who are able to duplicate (sort of) what Aharon does; however, Aharon's staff (note: not his TANIN, his staff) swallows those of the wizards. Nonetheless, Par'o refuses to listen to Moshe and Aharon, as G-d had said.

[S> 7:14 (5)] G-d then instructs Moshe to go to the river (Nile) in the morning, where Par'o will be, and to bring the Staff with him. Moshe is to say to Par'o that G-d has sent me (Moshe) to tell you (Par'o) to release the People and you have refused until now. "With this will you know Who G-d is..." Moshe (actually Aharon) will be striking the water of the river, turning it to blood and killing all the fish in it.

[S> 7:19 (7)] Following the official warning to Par'o, G-d tells Moshe to tell Aharon to take the Staff and strike the waters of Egypt. Moshe and Aharon do as instructed and the waters turn to blood, the fish die, and the

Egyptians cannot drink the water. Par'o's wizards again duplicate what was done, causing Par'o to remain stubborn. Egyptians are forced to dig for water (and/or buy water from the Jews). This first plague lasts 7 days.

[P> 7:26 (15)] G-d next instructs Moshe to go to Par'o (at his palace) and warn him that if he does not let the People go, Egypt will be smitten by a plague of frogs. Aharon is to raise the Staff above the river, which he does, and the land is blanketed with frog(s). The wizards are again able to replicate this plague with their magical powers. Par'o calls to Moshe and Aharon to pray to G-d that the frogs be removed, promising that he will let the People go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to G-d. Moshe asks Par'o when he wants the frogs to leave. (A strange question, to which Par'o gives a stranger answer). Par'o says "tomorrow", to which Moshe responds "so be it. And that will serve as proof of G-d's powers".

SDT: *Why would Par'o ask for the plague to be withdrawn on the following day? He and his people were certainly suffering and would want to rid themselves of the frogs as soon as possible. Par'o (still refusing to see the plagues as Divine, and assuming that there was some natural explanation for them) figured that Moshe came before him when he (Moshe) knew that the frogs would leave. Moshe would give the impression that he (in the name of the G-d of Israel) had power over the frogs. So Par'o tried to trick Moshe by*

asking the unexpected - do it tomorrow. Moshe's answer was that doing so would demonstrate that it was truly G-d's power that was being observed.

Egypt saw itself as great because of the Nile and because of the fertile land created by the waters of the Nile. The first plague smote the water. The second was a plague that came from the river and attacked the land. The third smote the land itself.

Chamishi 5th Aliya **12 p'sukim - 8:7-18**

So it happens, and after the frogs are gone, Par'o reneges on his promise, as G-d had said he would (an oft-repeated phrase indicating G-d's active role in the events of the Exodus).

[S> 8:12 (4)] G-d tells Moshe to tell Aharon to strike the dust of the earth (no warning to Par'o this time). The resultant plague of lice was not able to be matched by the wizards, who acknowledge G-d's might. Par'o, however, remains stubborn.

[S> 8:16 (13)] G-d sends Moshe to warn Par'o about the next plague (swarms of insects or wild animals, depending upon which opinion you follow). New element with this fourth plague - the obvious contrast between Egypt and the Jews.

There was always a contrast between the Egyptians and the Jews - Egyptians had no water

during the first plague; the Jews had water. The Midrash even says that if a Jew and an Egyptian drank from the same cup, the Jew would be drinking water and the Egyptian would have blood.

[Would work nicely for Edward and Bella in the early days.]

Similarly, the Jews did not suffer the plagues and the Egyptians did. Yet it seems that G-d had different messages for each of the plagues. (Or each set of 3 plagues.) AROV was the first plague that the distinction between Goshen and the Jews on one hand, and the land of Egypt and the Egyptians on the other, was so sharp and obvious. (And that Par'o was well aware of the differences.)

Shishi - Sixth Aliya **26 p'sukim - 8:19-9:16**

And so the AROV descend upon the land. Par'o calls for Moshe and gives permission for the people to sacrifice to G-d in Egypt. Moshe says that it must be in the Midbar.

Par'o agrees on the condition that Moshe pray for the removal of the plague. Afterwards, Par'o reneges.

[P> 9:1 (7)] G-d next sends Moshe back to Par'o to repeat the demand for the People's release and to warn him of the consequence of his refusal this time - DEVER. And so it happens that the Egyptian livestock all die, with not a single loss to the Jews. This

Par'o checks, yet he still remains stubborn.

[P> 9:8 (5)] The sixth plague (boils) is brought upon Egypt without warning. Although his people are being seriously beaten, Par'o continues to resist (from this point on, with G-d's "help").

[S> 9:13 (9)] Moshe is next sent to warn about the seventh (and very powerful) plague.

SDT: *In warning about HAIL, G-d says (through Moshe) that this time, I will send ALL my plagues... The Vilna Ga'on explains that G-d uses 3 main weapons, so to speak, to punish those who violate His commands - Fire, Water, and Wind. For example, to destroy Dor HaMabul, G-d used Water. To disperse Dor HaP'laga, He used Wind, and to destroy S'dom, His main weapon was Fire. The plague of Blood used Water. Plague 6 was the burning Fire of Boils on the skin. The locust came on the Wind. But Hail consisted of the whole arsenal - the Hail itself was Water, it had Fire in it, and the Hail was accompanied by strong Wind - hence the phrase: All My plagues.*

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya **19 p'sukim - 9:17-35**

The threat/warning about hail continues. Never has hail like this been seen. There is also a challenge to the Egyptians in that G-d is allowing servants and animals to be saved by taking them indoors.

[P> 9:22 (14)] Moshe raises his

hand heavenward and the hail falls. It is extremely destructive, but some plants survive (because they were young and pliable), as do the animals of those Egyptians who heeded Moshe's warning to bring them indoors. Par'o admits that he has sinned and grants Moshe's demands, if only the hail will stop. When Par'o sees that the hail and thunder have stopped, he yet again reneges, as G-d has said he would.

Maftir: the last three p'sukim.

Haftara 23 p'sukim **Yechezkeil 28:25-29:21**

The Haftara begins with the prophecy of redemption (as does the sedra). The main connection to the sedra is that the Haftara speaks of the downfall of Egypt, albeit at a different time in history. We also find in both the sedra and the Haftara, the extreme arrogance of the Par'o.

Famous Question

What's with Par'o's heart? The phrase LEIV PAR'O occurs 13 times - all in the book of Sh'mot - in Va'eira, Bo, and B'shalach, to be specific.

The first time, G-d "announces" to Moshe that He will harden Par'o's heart, so that I will perform many signs and wonders in Egypt.

Checking the verbs describing hardening or strengthening Par'o's heart, we find that at the beginning, Par'o himself

strengthened his own heart and at the end, the Torah states clearly that G-d strengthened Par'o's heart.

Does that take away from Par'o his Free Will to decide on his own whether to let the people out of Egypt or not?

Some commentaries say, YES, at a certain point, Par'o lost his free will. Usually, one loses his free will at death or incapacitation. In Par'o's case, we can say, he reached the limit of chances to do "the right thing" and the rest is further punishment and demonstration of G-d's might - for Egypt and for Bnei Yisrael.

Others say that the only way to allow Par'o to keep his free will was to strengthen his heart. Otherwise he would have given in because of the severe beating he and his people were getting. That's not a free will choice. He needed a stronger heart, so that his continued refusals to let the people go were still his own decision. This keeps him accountable until the end.

Diarei Menachem

Va'eira, as its name suggests, is all about the appearance of Hashem in our world. The interesting thing, however, is that Hashem can appear to us in an open, revealed manner or in a more subtle, diffuse way, almost begging us to search Him out in our topsy-turvy world. He reveals himself as Elokim, the Master of Justice, as Hashem, the Merciful G-d, and even as Keil Sha-dai, the One who sets limits or performs miracles in nature (cf. Artscroll).

Of course, much depends on our propensity to perceive the divine in a world where, so often, Hashem seems to be hidden. Indeed, the Hebrew word for "world" - 'Olam' - has as its root AYIN-LAMED-MEM, which stand for that which is concealed.

So it seems as if the objective is to seek out G-d. For in our technological society, we tend to see progress as something we achieved. And the pursuit of power is often perceived as the way we control Man's destiny.

And we may, like Par'o, even like ourselves so much that we tend see the products of our ingenuity as gods in themselves. We pride ourselves so much that our narcissism borders on idol-worship. No wonder then that Par'o could not bring himself to recognize the Source of the plagues. Even when Par'o's own magicians saw "the finger of G-d", he could not accept the empirical facts. And no wonder that the Hebrew language ascribes to Par'o's kingdom the name Mitzrayim, describing that which is anguished, twisted, and troublesome.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *I often layn, and sometimes my voice is scratchy in the morning, and I feel like I might need to drink water in between aliyot. Should I make Kiddush before drinking in those circumstances?*

ANSWER: It is a common halacha that one may not eat too much before performing a mitzva that is incumbent upon him. However, usually one is allowed to eat fruit and certainly allowed to drink water before doing the mitzva (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 232:3 and Mishna Berura 431:6). An exception is that before Kiddush one may not even drink water (Shulchan Aruch, OC 271:4; *ibid.* 289:1). Thus, your question is a good one.

The Magen Avraham (271:5) and the Mishna B'rura (271:13) say that one may rinse his mouth out with water before Kiddush because he does not do so for the enjoyment of the taste. The Machatzit HaShekel (*ad loc.*) and Sh'mirat Shabbat K'hilchata (52:3) say that the same is true of water that one drinks in order to wash down medicine. The precedent, according to the two, is that one who drinks water for medicinal reasons does not make a b'racha before or after drinking (Bi'ur Halacha to 204:7). The Mishna (B'rachot 44a) says that one who drinks water out of thirst makes a b'racha, and the gemara (*ibid.* 45a) says that this is

in contrast to one who drinks because something is caught in his throat. The poskim assume that this exemption applies also to using water to wash down medicine. The same should be true if the water is itself the "medicine", as in your case. One can actually claim that dealing with a scratchy voice and with the coughing it can bring on during layning is analogous to food caught in his throat. So, if no b'racha is required in your case, then Kiddush is not needed either. If you would need hot tea, that would be a different issue because if one washes down medicine with something that is considered to have a taste, he does make a b'racha even though his main intention is therapeutic (Shulchan Aruch, OC 204:8). However, regarding water to soothe your throat before or during layning, you should not need Kiddush.

A possible issue might arise sometimes. If one drinks water in a medicinal setting but also enjoys it due to thirst, he does require a b'racha even though the main purpose is medicinal (Mishna B'rura 204:42). If so, he presumably requires Kiddush before it also. One who has drunk nothing or little since waking up is likely to be in that position and would require Kiddush.

Is it permitted to make Kiddush before Kri'at HaTorah? Making Kiddush before Shacharit without a special reason would seem to be a problem because it is forbidden to eat or drink things other than water (more or less) before davening, including the wine or

grape juice of Kiddush (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 89:3). It is true that the Bi'ur Halacha (to 289:1) says that one who, for reasons of weakness, must eat before davening should make Kiddush beforehand (see Igrot Moshe, OC II 26, who questions this but does not argue in practice). However, that is not the case when drinking water which is permitted before Shacharit, when it is not time for Kiddush. Before Musaf, it is permitted to make Kiddush and eat a small amount of food (up to a k'beitza of any food and a larger amount of light foods (Shulchan Aruch, OC 286:3)). By having a k'zayit of cake or an additional cup of wine/grape juice one can fulfill Kiddush and not eat too much (*ibid.* 273:5) and then he is able to drink water even when a b'racha is required. Although few sources talk about making this Kiddush before Kri'at HaTorah, it is presumably permitted then too (see Beit Yisrael (Landau) 50). Of course, technically, there is not much time to do this.

Therefore, we suggest a technically easier solution for a case that you think you may be thirsty when you want to drink in between aliyot. Since it is permitted to drink water before davening (Shulchan Aruch, OC 89:3), drink enough water that you should not be thirsty during Kri'at HaTorah, and then Kiddush will not be an issue if you need to drink between aliyot.

"ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE CORPORATION [4]"

A "Challenges of Money" article by Dr. Meir Tamari

All bankruptcy raises questions centered around the moral dilemma of justice for the creditor by safeguarding the loan he made or mercy for the debtor who cannot pay his debts.

The same moral code that obligates a Jew to lend money to another obligates the latter to repay his debts. "Even if the creditor is wealthy and the debtor poor, the debt is to be collected in full from his movable or immovable property" (Hilchot Malveh v'Loveh 1:4). From the continuation of this halacha of the Rambam and the decisions of other Codes, we learn that the debtor's personal property [including the family's luxury clothing, jewelry and fine household goods] are saleable, leaving the debtor with only mere essentials; this effectively prevents the immoral, even if sometimes legal, practice whereby the debtor retains his standards of living at the creditor's expense.

Experience has shown that merely legally forbidding or imposing certain behavior is insufficient to achieve morality whereas public disapproval and social ostracism have proved more effective in creating moral societies than judges, police or prisons. So the severity of the obligation in Judaism to repay one's debts is effectively heightened by the edicts of the Jewish

communities during the centuries that put people who did not honor their debts in Cheirem. They could not be counted in a minyan, nor receive communal honors, their wine was considered yayin nesekh, and their food not kosher; such social ostracism is a powerful weapon against bankruptcy. Social disapproval is similarly the most effective antidote to other immoral acts such as corruption, defined as criminal acts that have become norms.

If justice prevails, bankruptcy may result in dispossessed entrepreneurs, unemployed workers and additional poverty. However, if we insist that the creditors waive their rights, we make them responsible for the victims simply because they lent money or extended credit, which is untenable and unsustainable. A Jewish solution would be first to ask the creditors to give charity and forego their rights if the debtor will be made destitute by their claims. If they insist on their rights, then the community-state has to fulfill its obligations to look after the poor and weak. The creditors, as members of the community, have to bear their share, even if it turns out to be greater than the original loan/credit given.

If the creditor's recourse to the assets of the debtors is true of individual bankruptcies, does it also apply to shareholders of bankrupt corporations?

At the outset it should be repeated that in Torah law there is no such thing as a bankruptcy, of a debtor not repaying his debt or only a part of it. There are two factors that would nevertheless shield

the shareholder's private assets from the creditors. Firstly, Dina d'malchuta dina, the halakhic dictum that the law of the land applies in monetary matters [where it does not negate halacha]; almost all countries recognize the corporate limited liability, giving the sanction of halacha to this limitation. Secondly the condition of limited liability is well known and is accepted by custom, so that the creditors entered in their relationship with the corporation, knowing and accepting that they had no claims on shareholders private assets.

However, there is empirical evidence which would question the protection of shareholder's private assets in cases of corporate bankruptcy. Numerous forecasting models prove that the possibility of corporate bankruptcy can be foretold 3 to 5 years before it happens. This means that the officers of the corporation conducted its affairs knowing that this danger existed and nevertheless acquired debts that now cannot be paid. So that, ruling out acts of G-d [fire, war, floods etc.], all other bankruptcy should be considered fraudulent. Should the protection of the private assets of shareholders of bankrupt corporations still exist? It seems not, in view of the following ruling that where fraud is involved protection is not given to the shareholders private assets. "Corporation A owed Reuven money, its assets were moved to corporation B, under the same ownership and declared bankrupt. Normally there would be no recourse for Reuven to the assets of the

shareholders. However, this only applies where there has been no action to denude the corporation of its assets prior to bankruptcy" (Bet Din, London 1991).

Irrespective of the legal-halachic pros and cons of the protection of shareholders private assets, there is always the distinct moral demand that the debtor repay his debt, even out of his private assets, in order to be clean before G-d and man. □

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

VA'EIRA STAGES

Over the course of the past several years, we have had some marvelous opportunities to visit places where I had once lived. My wife and I had moved away from some of these communities ten or twenty years ago, and in one case, forty years ago.

It was delightful to become reacquainted with old friends, and even to renew some long-forgotten friendships.

On the other hand, it was difficult to deal with the changes that we observed in the people we once knew so well. Naturally, the years have taken their toll, and they all showed physical signs of having aged. Even more remarkable were the changes in their personalities and character, which in some cases were quite profound. More than once, I

found myself asking, "Is this the same person that I once knew?"

Typically, these deep changes were not even noticed by their peers, by those who were living with them all along. This is because people don't change overnight. They change gradually over time. It was the interval of many long years that enabled me to be aware, and yes, sometimes quite troubled, by these differences.

Our Sages were aware of the stage-like progression from infancy to maturity to senility, and ultimately, to death. Yehuda Ben Teima anticipated the insights of modern psychologists by teaching in Pirkei Avot (5:25) that "...five years old is the age to begin studying Scripture; ten for Mishna; thirteen for the obligation of the commandments... eighteen for marriage; twenty for seeking a livelihood... fifty for giving counsel... ninety for a bent back... at one hundred, one is as if he were dead and gone from the world."

In our own times, it was the famous psychologist Erik Erikson (who, despite his Scandinavian name, was Jewish) who taught us in his book, *Childhood and Society*, that when we go through the stages of life, we must master specific developmental tasks at each point, and only then can we truly mature.

Stages are not only typical of the development of individuals. Nations too must go through a system of stages as they grow and mature. This lesson is taught to us in the

opening verses of this week's Torah portion, Va'eira. The Almighty commands Moses to tell the Jewish people that they will be going through at least four distinct stages in their progress from slavery to freedom. "... I will take you out... I will rescue you... I will redeem you... and I will take you as My people..." (Exodus 6:6-7). Some add, "I will bring you into the land..." (ibid. 8)

These are the four "expressions of redemption", to which the four cups of wine that we drink at the Pesach Seder correspond. Commentators from ancient times to this day have seen in these four expressions four distinct stages through which a nation must pass if it is going to transcend its chaotic beginnings and become a cohesive cultural entity.

Representative of this school of interpretation is the analysis given by Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk in his masterful work, *Meshech Chochma*. For Rabbi Meir Simcha, a nation can only reach its full potential if it first becomes distinct and separate from its surroundings. Hence, the Almighty's first promise is that He will "take us out". Then it must demonstrate that it is worthy of "rescue" by developing a model of internal cooperation and self-protection. From there, it must develop a self-concept of freedom by being "redeemed" and no longer identifying with the persecutor. And finally, it must develop national pride, common morals, and a sense of destiny. That is what it means to be "taken as My people".

If, as some suggest, there is that fifth stage, then it is only after mastering the four initial tasks that there is hope for the Almighty to "bring us into the land".

In a homiletic tour-de-force, Rabbi Meir Simcha goes on to show that the sequence of the Pesach Seder ritual symbolically parallels the four stages necessary for the formation of a nation. And he demonstrates that these four stages correspond to the sequence of the spiritual and religious development of the individual. For an adequate description of this latter insight, dear reader, I refer you to the standard edition of Rabbi Meir Simcha's commentary at the beginning of this week's Torah portion.

In today's "now generation" there is a tendency to expect instant change and very swift growth. Our Torah portion, indeed our entire tradition, teaches us that those expectations are unrealistic. One can only reach psychological maturity by proceeding through a serial progression of painful life experiences. Achieving spiritual perfection demands a journey through the kinds of stages outlined by those books of our tradition that describe the process, the most famous of which is Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato's *Mesilat Yesharim* (The Path of the Just).

In my own rabbinic work, I have so often had to insist on patience to those newcomers to our tradition who wanted to integrate into Orthodox Jewish society too quickly.

In my teaching of young rabbis, I find myself stressing to them that they must think in terms of stages when undergoing religious growth. In fact, the one book that I recommend to those working with the newly religious is Rabbi Isadore Epstein's *Step-by-Step in the Jewish Religion*, which is sadly neglected, but available online in limited numbers, at a very reasonable price.

There is a lesson here for all of us. If our interest is politics, then we must recognize that nations develop and grow by slow changes, often only over centuries. If psychology is our concern, then we must be aware of the need to thoroughly master each developmental task that life presents to us before we can attempt to advanced levels of maturity.

And if religion and spirituality are the center of our lives, then we must learn the lesson of the "four expressions for redemption" and make sure that we advance "step by step in the Jewish religion." □

VA'EIRA Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

Belated Introductions

Context: When Moshe's birth was chronicled in Parshat Sh'mot, the text deliberately omitted any description of his lineage, choosing instead to preface his birth with the mysterious sentence "And a man went from the House of Levi

and he took a daughter of Levi."

This omission of Moshe's bona fides is now addressed in Parshat Va'eira.

God commands Moshe to return to Pharaoh and again demand the release of the Israelite slaves. When Moshe objects, citing his speech impediment, God repeats the directive, this time to both Moshe and Aharon.

The Torah then abruptly digresses to present a genealogical table listing the descendents of Yaakov's oldest sons, Reuven, Shimon and Levi. The listing concludes with a detailed description of the lineage of Moshe and Aharon's family within the tribe of Levi.

Upon completion of this genealogical record, the Torah returns to the narrative of the Exodus with the words "This was Aharon and Moshe.... They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh.... This was Moshe and Aharon."

Questions: Once again we are confronted with a strange and abrupt digression within the Torah text.

Why does the Torah specifically choose this dramatic moment to detail the lineage of Moshe and Aharon? Why interrupt the historical narrative midstream? This genealogical table would clearly have been more appropriate at the beginning of the story, when Moshe is first introduced.

Amram and Yocheved, the parents of Aharon and Moshe, are mentioned here for the first time by name. Given the reasons for the omission of their identities when Moshe is born, why does the Torah see fit to reveal those identities now?

Approaches:

A. Most of the classical commentaries are strangely silent concerning the most perplexing aspects of this passage, choosing to comment only briefly.

Rashi, for example, states that because the Torah mentions Aharon and Moshe at this time, the text feels compelled to tell us more fully of their birth and lineage. He fails to explain, however, why this information was not given in conjunction with the earlier appearances of Moshe and Aharon in the text.

The Sforno and Abravanel both maintain that the genealogical table is presented to show that the choice of Aharon and Moshe was not arbitrary. God begins His search for worthy leadership with the descendents of Yaakov's first- and second-born, Reuven and Shimon. Only when He proceeds to Levi, the third tribe, does God find the quality He is searching for in Moshe and Aharon.

Once again, however, neither of these scholars explains why this information must be shared with us abruptly, at this point in the text.

The Malbim, in contrast, does offer a solution concerning the placement of the genealogical record. He explains that the passage in Va'eira marks the first time that Moshe and Aharon are clearly appointed by God as full partners concerning all aspects of the Exodus. Only once this partnership of brothers is firmly established does the Torah digress to chronicle their familial credentials.

Rashi finally notes that, as the Torah closes the genealogical table and returns to the historical narrative, the text identifies Moshe and Aharon twice and reverses the order of their names: "This

was Aharon and Moshe.... They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh.... This was Moshe and Aharon."

Quoting the Mechilta, Rashi explains that, throughout the text, the Torah will variably list each brother first in order to demonstrate that Aharon and Moshe were equivalent to each other in greatness.

The premier halachic authority of the twentieth century, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Reb Moshe), objects, however, to the Mechilta's explanation: "Moshe was the greatest of the prophets, the teacher of the world, and the Torah was given by his hand. How can it be claimed that Aharon was his equal?"

Reb Moshe answers that at this juncture in the text, even as the public leadership of Moshe and Aharon is firmly established, the Torah conveys an essential truth concerning the worth of every human life. Moshe and Aharon each fulfilled his personal role to the greatest extent possible. They are, therefore, in the eyes of God, considered equal. God judges each of us against ourselves and not against anyone else. Someone of lesser ability, who reaches his full life potential, towers over someone of greater talent who does not - even if, on an objective scale, the latter's accomplishments seem grander.

B. The most extensive treatment of the genealogical passage at the beginning of Parshat Va'eira, however, is offered by Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch. Hirsch insists that the placement of this section specifically conveys a critical lesson concerning the nature of leadership throughout the Torah.

At this moment in the text, says Hirsch,

we confront a major turning point in the careers of Moshe and Aharon. Until now, their efforts have been marked by frustration and failure. From this point onward, however, their triumphal mission - marked by powerful miracles and supernatural events - begins. The Torah, therefore, feels compelled at this juncture to make one fact abundantly clear for all time. Moshe and Aharon are of "absolutely human origin and the absolute ordinary human nature of their beings should be firmly established." So important is this message that the Torah abruptly interrupts the historical narrative midstream to clearly delineate the ancestry of Moshe and Aharon.

As we have noted before, whereas pagans deified their heroes, and Christians returned to such deification, Judaism insists upon seeing its heroes as human beings. When your heroes are gods you can worship them, but you cannot emulate them. As long as we see the characters of our Torah as human beings, their greatness may be beyond our reach, but we can, nonetheless, aspire to that greatness.

On the other hand, Hirsch continues, a critical balance is struck in the passage before us. While the genealogical record clearly establishes the mortal origins of Moshe and Aharon, it also serves to counter the notion that every human being is suitable to prophecy. God's choices are far from arbitrary. Aharon and Moshe were men, but they were "picked, chosen men." God could have chosen from any tribe and any family. His specific selection of Aharon and Moshe serves to underscore that one who serves in a divinely ordained leadership role merits the appointment because of his own innate character.

The text thus captures the exquisite tension between the mortal origins of our biblical heroes and their overarching character and accomplishments. ©

CHIZUK AND IDUD
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

Our Parsha is most relevant and important, especially now, when the world questions our rights to Eretz Yisrael.

In Shmot 6:8, Hashem promises to bring us to the land He promised to our forefathers, V'heiveiti etchem el haaretz asher nasati et yadi lateit ota l'Avraham, l'Yitzhak ulYaakov v'natati ota lachem morasha ani Hashem. "I will bring you to the land which I promised to give to Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov and I will give it to you as an inheritance, I am Hashem." There seems to be a contradiction between "V'Natati" and "Morasha". Natati implies a gift, while Morasha implies an inheritance. A gift is something you give to one who is worthy and who has earned it. An inheritance is something which one receives automatically handed down from generation to generation.

There was much discussion in Talmud Bavli (BB117) and Yerushalmi (BB8:2), as to whom and how the land was divided. (TorahTemima Bamidbar 26:53). In any case, all agree that Eretz Yisrael was given to Am Yisrael as a Morasha, an inheritance. Why then is the term V'Natati (given) implying a deserved gift

in the same pasuk.

There is another Morasha which Hashem gave to Am Yisrael - THE TORAH - (D'varim 33:4) but at the same time it is considered a gift given to Am Yisrael.

The importance of inheritance and gift imply a dual responsibility. Inheritance is given to one with the purpose that the heir will cherish and guard it and eventually transfer to his heirs. Gift implies that the person receiving it is worthy of the gift and deserves it, but also that he will keep it and cherish it and perhaps give it, in time, to a person as worthy of him or her self.

Our generation has been privileged that Hashem has returned our inheritance to us and we once again have Eretz Yisrael as our Jewish homeland. It is now incumbent upon us to cherish this inheritance, to guard it and to make certain that it remains our inheritance - a holy land that we will leave for later generations as their inheritance.

However, we must also prove that we are worthy of this gift. One of the ways to preserve Eretz Yisrael is through aliyah. The more Jews that come to Eretz Yisrael indicate that we appreciate the gift that Hashem has given us.

The word Morasha and Natati, as used in the giving of the Torah to Am Yisrael imply the same thing - inheritance as well as a gift. It is therefore incumbent upon us to honor and preserve the Torah because we inherited it and also because it is a gift which we should guard and cherish and keep its commandments.

As Chazal have said, "Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael Chad Hu" The people of Israel the Torah of Israel and the Land of Israel are one."

Rabbi Binyamin Walfish, Yerushalayim

Praying with Passion

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah
One Week at a Time

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P'sukei d'Zimra: Hodu New Each Day

שִׁירוּ לַה' כָּל הָאָרֶץ, בְּשִׁירוֹ מִיּוֹם
אֶל יוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ. סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם אֶת
כְּבוֹדוֹ, בְּכֹל הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו....

Meaning: translation...

Sing (songs of praise) to Hashem everyone on earth, announce His salvation daily. Relate His glory among the nations, among all the peoples His wonders...

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Constant Source of Wonder

G-d's constant salvation is worthy of our constant song of wonder and excitement.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

A Miracle a Minute

There is a saying, "Life is beautiful. Live

each moment as if it were a miracle." According to Iyun Tefillah, the words BAS'RU MIYOM EL YOM Y'SHU-ATO, "announce His salvation daily", convey that each moment of life G-d provides is truly a miracle. Yet, even miracles can seem routine.

The Midrash notes that Avraham Avinu was not told that his descendants would miraculously subsist on manna in the desert. Had Avraham been given this information, it would have been passed down through the generations and been known by the Jews who were redeemed from Egypt. When the manna finally came to fruition, it would have failed to impress them.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that the lesson in this Midrash is that even an open miracle loses its impact if it is not perceived as something new and unanticipated.

It is because of this trait of human nature that the Sh'ma, specifies 'And these words that I commanded you today shall be upon your heart.' 'Today,' Rashi explains, means that the words of the Torah "should not be in your eyes like an old law to which a person does not attach importance; rather, they should be like a new one to which everybody runs."

Albert Einstein once said: "There are two ways of looking at the world - either you see nothing as a miracle or you see everything as a miracle." The prayer exhorts us to choose the latter. SHIRU LASHEM KOL HAARETZ, BAS'RU MIYOM EL YOM

Y'SHU-ATO, "Sing to Hashem, every-one on earth, announce His salvation daily" - because every moment is a miracle.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

New and Improved

It's a day before the boy's thirteenth birthday. His father comes home bearing a package. Finally! They came! His tefillin have been completed. He opens the package and reverently removes the smooth, polished leather boxes from their case. The next morning, with his father by his side, he carefully dons his new tefillin, feeling as if he were already standing upon a whole new, higher rung of spiritual life. He knows this tefillah has to be different. He isn't a little boy any more. Now it is 'for real.'

It is, of course, equally real two years later. However, the inspiration emanating from those sacred boxes has long ceased to move him. He can put the tefillin on as mechanically as he can don his socks. The newness is gone, and with it the tefillin's power to move him.

Newness has a unique power to excite one's heart, and that excitement provides the power for higher levels of achievement. In fact, Rav Dessler explains: "The root of enjoyment by mankind is built on newness and change... The greater the change or newness the greater is one's satisfaction and pleasure."

Try this:

Have you ever been so pleasantly surprised that you've wanted to sing and shout out loud? It might have been on receiving some wonderful news, or upon waking up to a long-awaited day, or on the arrival of a beloved visitor. Capture that pure excitement, and this week, inject it into the words SHIRU LASHEM.

Word to the Wise:

Meaning within the meaning

Ba'al HaTurim (D'varim 3:23) states that the gematriya (numerical value) of the word SHIRA (song of praise) is 515, the same as the word VA'ETCHANAN (I implored). What is the connection between SHIRA and imploring G-d through prayer? Rashi (B'rachot 4b, s.v. 'zeh hasomaich') explains that a person should first draw G-d near to himself by reciting His praises. Then, while G-d is still at hand, he should pray for his personal requests.

Will Moshiach Reveal a New Torah?

Guest article by

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

"And Moshe took his wife and sons and mounted them on the donkey" (Sh'mot 4:20). Rashi makes the cryptic comment: "the donkey that Moshiach

will utilize to usher in the Final Redemption." How do we understand this strange comment of Rashi? Can a donkey live for thousands of years? The explanation is that when G-d appointed Moshe to be the Redeemer of Israel, He set those cosmic forces in motion that will culminate and climax with the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption.

One of the central prophecies of the Final Redemption is that "a Torah will go forth from Me" (Yeshayahu 51:4). On this verse Midrash Vayikra Rabba 13 explains that "G-d will reveal a New Torah" through the Moshiach.

Then we have another puzzling verse in Yirmiyahu (31:30): 'Days are coming', says G-d, 'when I will cut a new treaty (Brit Chadasha) with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.'

This needs explanation. According to the halachic ruling in the Rambam, the Torah, given to us at Sinai, is eternal and will never be changed or replaced. This is according to the verse in D'varim, "Everything that I command you, you shall keep to do; do not add to it or take away from it". There is another verse in D'varim, "the revealed things (of the Torah) are for us and our children forever to carry out all the words of this Torah". This teaches us that all the Mitzvot of the Torah were given to us forever and will never change.

Therefore, we must understand what Yeshayahu and Yirmiyahu mean when they speak about "a new Torah and a new covenant. The Talmud and

Rambam rule that no prophet can contradict the words and Mitzvot of the Torah. Thus, we have a puzzle.

We must understand the nature of this "New Torah" and "New Covenant" that the prophets spoke about which will take place in the Messianic Era. The Rambam in his "13 Principles of Faith" states that nothing can ever replace or even supplement the Torah that G-d gave us on Mount Sinai.

The key to this mystery is that the Torah, given to us at Sinai, is infinite and cannot be fully comprehended and grasped by our intellect. Every generation of Torah scholars tries their hand at interpreting the Torah's mysteries and constantly develop new insights and innovations in the Torah's teaching. Regardless of the many interpretations that have already been brought forth, there are still deeper levels that have yet to be revealed. This is because, according to The Talmud Bavli, Masechet Shabbat 109, the Torah is an expression of G-d's mind and soul. "Ana Nafshi Ketavit Yehavit" This is an acronym of the word "Anochi", "I" which is the first word in the Ten Commandments. This means that G-d says, "My soul, I wrote it (into the Torah); I give it (to you)". Thus, just as G-d is Ein Sof (Infinite and Endless), so too is the Torah.

This is the "New Torah" that Moshiach will teach. The Torah will not, G-d forbid, be replaced or modified. However, Moshiach will teach Torah on a profoundly deep level that we have never been able to see or grasp before.

All of Moshiach's teachings will be based on the same general rules that G-d handed down to Moses at Sinai but will appear new to us. It is considered a "New Torah", because these revelations are completely beyond anything that we have comprehended and learned until now.

ParshaPix explanations

- ⊗ 7 of the 10 images from the Davka Judaica graphic of the 10 plagues. The final three are in next week's sedra. (BO = BET+ALEF = 2+1 = 3 final plagues that are found in Parshat BO.)
- ⊗ The bullet of these ParshaPix explanations is a negation circle on a water faucet indicating the difficulty that the Egyptians had with water during the first plague of Blood.
- ⊗ Prominent in the middle of the ParshaPix is the MATEH, Moshe's Staff. It is burping because IT (not the TANIN it had changed into) eat the staffs of the Egyptian wizards.
- ⊗ The sword represents Z'RO'A N'TUYA, the "outstretched arm" with which we were to be taken out of Egypt. (Where is the connection made between an outstretched arm and the sword? In the Hagada.)
- ⊗ The shovel used by the Egyptians to dig for water - only way for an Egyptian to get a drink during the plague of Blood.

- ⊗ The oven is what some frogs went into, producing a Kiddush HaShem and a lesson to us that G-d is still in charge of nature - He renews, every day, the acts of Creation. (Each element of nature that was used by G-d in the process of the Plagues and Exodus sanctifies G-d's name because we see His control and involvement in this world.)
- ⊗ Four cups of wine for the Four Terms of Redemption (or other 4s, as posited by different sources - ask your children and guests for other reasons for 4 cups) which we find at the beginning of the sedra.
- ⊗ Triple-S J, Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, slogan: Let My People Go.
- ⊗ Pictorial representation of Par'o's heart strengthening, as is mentioned in several places in Va'eira (and Bo).
- ⊗ Emblem of the Hogwarts School. Par'o's wizards might have been dropouts from Hogwarts since they were not able to cope with the plague of KINIM (lice).
- ⊗ Below Davka's Hail are the standing wheat and the broken barley in the aftermath of that plague. As indicated in the Torah, some - but not all - grain and plants were destroyed by Barad. The rest that survived were set up for the devastating plague of Arbeh - locust (in next week's sedra)
- ⊗ Crocs, comfortable shoes whose

logo is a crocodile, as in the staff-turned-to-TANIN. (Not to be confused with alligator shoes.)

- ⊗ The compass needle points to the north, in Hebrew: EL TZAFON, as in ELTZAFAN b. Uziel, brother of Misha'el and Sitri.
- ⊗ C (atomic number 6, atomic weight 12.01) is the symbol for carbon, the main (only?) ingredient in the furnace soot that Moshe and Aharon used to bring about the plague of SH'CHIN (boils).
- ⊗ Flag of Vietnam. The key makes it KINAM, a.k.a. KINIM, plague #3. Apparently, KINIM is the plural, lice, and KINAM is singular, not referring to one louse, but to lice in the way we use the words sheep and fish - singular structure but referring to many.
- ⊗ Elazar b. Aharon HaKohein married one of the daughters of PUTI'EL; they had Pinchas. Elazar's wife was BAT-POOH-T-L.
- ⊗ There are sports teams' symbols for AROV. Detroit Tigers (baseball), Cincinnati Bengals (football), Memphis Grizzlies (basketball) Most appropriate - Why? Because Memphis was also the name of an ancient Egyptian city (and capital) Note to parents, grandparents, and other ParshaPix "presenters": This is an example of taking a ParshaPix element and carrying it further than just a connection to the sedra.
- ⊗ Under the sports logos is a picture

of snow cones, shaved ice with flavoring (and color). In Hebrew, BARAD, as in plague #7. Next to the BARAD is fire, which was contained within the hailstones of that plague. (The BARAD snow cones do not have fire unless you find one flavored with cinnamon and hot chili.)

- ⊗ Below the fire and snowcones is a pile of... no, not stones - Lentils. With the arrow pointing to a single lentil, we have ADASH, in the context of Va'eira, that's Rabbi Yehuda's "code" for plagues 4-6.
- ⊗ Under that is an uzi and a bottle and glass of ale, combining to UZIEL, uncle of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam. (The hard challenge in this is to get UZIEL. Once gotten, ask who he was? If they don't know, send them to a Chumash)
- ⊗ The frog who thinks that 2+2=5 is a DUMB TZ'FARDEI'A (old joke).
- ⊗ The letter E formed with a date palm and 3 dates is an ITAMAR.
- ⊗ Lower-right is the structure above Me'arat HaMachpeila in Chevron. Who is the Chevron mentioned in the sedra?
- ⊗ Lower-left is a RAMZOR, traffic light, with green for GO followed by a tooth, in Hebrew, SHEN, combining to GOSHEN, the area of the Jews which stood in sharp contrast to the rest of Egypt that was smitten by the plagues. This contrast is an issue with Par'o, as

presented in the sedra.

- ⊗ Livni for the son of Gei-r'shom
- ⊗ PAR (bull) + O (in sign language).
- ⊗ Hoover Dam is for blood (DAM)
- ⊗ Scorpion was one of the wild animal mix of AROV (according to Rashi).

The Puah Institute
for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Ovarian Transplants and Halacha (2)

Last week we discussed ovarian transplant as a possible option for women with premature ovarian failure. However, this treatment has some serious limitations.

Firstly, published articles thus far have reported this procedure successful only with monozygotic twins [commonly called identical twins, with an identical set of genetic makeup] due to the delicate nature of all organ transplants.

One of the biggest problems in transplant procedures is the body's natural rejection of any foreign body. Even if the medical professionals can successfully overcome the obvious difficulties of removing the organ, keeping it viable and transplanting it in the correct location with the proper blood supply, the body's natural immunological system will still tend to reject any foreign organ - even a life-saving one such as a heart or a lung.

It is therefore imperative to find an

ideal donor who has a near-perfect human leukocyte antigen (HLA) match. When the match is deemed compatible, the organ can be transplanted. The recipient must then take immune-suppressant drugs which prevent the body from rejecting the new organ by suppressing the natural immunological response. The problem, however, is that these medications stop the body from rejecting all foreign bodies, including potentially life-threatening bacteria and viruses.

When dealing with a life-threatening condition that requires a new organ, most people are willing to undergo this risk in order to live. However, when dealing with premature ovarian failure and a new ovary - a non-life-threatening condition and a non-life-essential organ - the risk is deemed too high. Therefore the doctors are only willing to offer this treatment for identical twins who are HLA matches. And since few women have identical sisters, this treatment is obviously not appropriate for everyone.

And even if we find a woman with an identical sister who is fertile, the act of removing part of her ovary may limit her own fertility. The doctors have assumed that, at worst, the donor sister would reach menopause a few years earlier than she might have, had she not been a donor. But this could be very significant, especially for those who have begun to have children a little later in life. It may be understandably difficult for a woman to limit her own fertility, even to aid her sister.

In addition, it cannot be proven that the new ovary will continue ovulating until a woman reaches the age of menopause; it may ovulate for a few years, but not indefinitely. So again, it is not really a cure but rather another treatment option.

For all these reasons, ovarian transplant is not a perfect solution.

Next week we will go back in medical history to look at some fascinating reports of ovarian transplants.

Portion from the Portion From Strangers to Free Men - The Redemption Process

Last week's portion ended with Moshe feeling frustrated. He had gone to Par'o in order to help the Jewish slaves and it seems that he made matters worse for them - they were no longer provided with straw, but still had to keep to the same quota of bricks.

This week's portion begins with Hashem trying to answer Moshe's feelings of despair so he will be able to go back to encourage the Jewish nation about the redemption process they were to be a part of. Hashem tries to explain to Moshe the redemption stages that He had described to Avraham in BRIT BEIN HABETARIM. Verses 6:6-7 describe the four phases of deliverance: V'HOTZEITI, V'HITZALTI, V'GA'ALTI, V'LAKACHTI - The first three are the freeing from the existing GALUT and the last,

V'LAKACHTI, is the object of the whole deliverance - GEULA.

In B'reishit at BRIT BEN HABETARIM (15:13-14), the exile of Egypt was predicted to Avraham with the words GER YIHYEH ZARACHA B'ERETZ LO LAHEM, VAAVADUM, V'INU OTAM ARBA MEI'OT SHANA... The process is 1)GERUT, 2)AVDUT, 3)INU'I. The process in Egypt began with GERUT - being a stranger in the land - once they were looked at as strangers all the succeeding miseries grew quite naturally. They were treated as slaves, AVADIM, without any freedom and were also tormented and deprived of all joy of life - INU'I. In the verses from this week's portion Hashem describes the redemption process which goes the opposite way 3) V'HOTZEITI MISIVLOT

- 2) V'HITZALTI MEI-AVODA
- 1) V'GA'ALTI.

Whereas the verse tells us what Hashem will HOTZI AND HITZIL us from, it doesn't tell us what He will GA'AL us from. It seems it is from the situation of being a GER as told to Avraham - and a GER is described in (Bamidbar 5:8) as someone who has no one to redeem him, EIN LA-ISH GO'EL. The GO'EL is the relative who takes the need of his relative (even if he is not a close relative) as his own and stands up for him. A stranger in a foreign country usually has no one at all to protect him. So when Hashem speaks of V'GA'ALTI ETCHEM, He means that He will stand up for Israel as their relative as the GO'EL who bails out his relative after something bad has happened to him.

Once Hashem does this GEULA and we become upstanding, free and conscious of our rights, then Hashem promises to V'LAKACHTI ETCHEM LI L'AM - take you to ME as a nation. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch comments here on the uniqueness of Judaism. Although people call it a religion, really it is much more. We are G-d's nation. In Judaism we have components of religions such as a place to worship, priests and congregations. We also have components of nations such as kings, and leaders. We are AM HASHEM, the conditions of our ordinary social life are guided by G-d's judgement and are a revelation of His spirit. While other nations have their national bond in their country, the Jewish nation have theirs in their common G-d.

These words about the redemption process may be uplifting when we read them today but unfortunately when Moshe spoke them to the Children of Israel they were unable to value them and could not listen to Moshe because of the hard work they had to do in Egypt. The appreciation would follow later on.

TTTriddles

Warning: Contains regular serious material in addition to the light TTTriddles "stuff"

Last issue's (SH'MOT) TTTriddles:

[1] Eliezer to Rivka ≈ Egyptians to Israel

In the hard copy of last week's TT, we used the curvy equal sign (as above) which means "is approximately equal to". Eliezer gave Rivka gold and silver vessels and clothing (B'GADIM). G-d's prophecy to Moshe in Parshat Sh'mot is that the Egyptians would give the departing Israelites gold and silver vessels and S'MALOT (dresses in modern Hebrew, but garments is the more likely meaning in this context).

[2] consume, finish, eat, fear to speak

Dayton Allen, a comedian and voice actor (Deputy Dawg, Heckle & Jeckle, and many more) was a regular "interviewee" on Steve Allen's (no relation) "Man of the Street" routine. His famous reply to many different questions was an exaggerated, WHY NOT. This faint memory was triggered by the phrase in Parshat Sh'mot, MADU'A LO... In the Sh'mot example, Moshe approaches the burning bush with curiosity, to see MADU'A LO YIV-AR HAS'NEH? Why isn't the bush being consumed by the fire. Aside from this MADU'A LO, there is another one in the sedra of Sh'mot, when Par'o asks the representatives of the Jews why the quota for bricks had not been

completed. Of the 13 occurrences in Tanach of this WHY NOT phrase, two others are in the Chumash. One in Vayikra when Moshe asks Aharon's two remaining sons why they had not eaten of the korban that day. The other is in Bamidbar when G-d asks Miriam and Aharon why they had not feared to speak about Moshe. FYI, of the 71 times in all of Tanach that the word MADU'A occurs (including the 13 MADU'A LOs), 10 are in the Torah and four of those are in Parshat Sh'mot. The other two in the sedra are Par'o asking the midwives why they did not do as ordered, and Yitro asking his daughters why they had returned home earlier than usual. The other one in the book of Sh'mot is also by Yitro when he asks Moshe why he sits to hear the people's questions and complaints all by himself.

[3] whatsthis?

What's this? is MA ZEH. In the sedra, the two-word phrase is written as a single word MAZEH, although it is to be read as two words.

[4] ABCDIJLEFGHK

If we "number" the twelve sons of Yaakov in the order of their birth, with the letters A through L, then they are listed in the opening p'sukim of Sh'mot in the order indicated by the letter-sequence of this TTTriddle.

[5] Yaakov's and Moshe's awareness

The word in the Torah that indicates an awareness that dawns upon a person, is ACHEIN. Yaakov's ACHEIN

was his realization that the place at which he slept on the night of the dream of the ladder was a holy place. Moshe's ACHEIN was his realization that he had been informed on to Par'o by Dan and Aviram concerning Moshe's killing of the Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Jew. This awareness had the unfortunate result of Moshe's fleeing to Midyan and his attitude change of the worthiness of Bnei Yisrael being redeemed from Egypt. Although he went out to see the plight of his brethren, and risked his life in saving a fellow Jew, the Dan and Aviram betrayal led him not only to flee, but to absent himself for almost 60 years from any involvement with his people. G-d sent him back to Egypt when he was 80 years old.

[6] Names: Pinchas or Matot

Names = Sh'mot. The haftara of Sh'mot according to the EIDOT MIZRACH tradition is the first perek of Yirmiyahu, the same haftara that we read for the first of the three Shabbatot of the Three Weeks, which is either Parshat Pinchas (when Matot and Mas'ei are combined) or Parshat Matot (when it and its usual partner sedra are separated - the less frequent situation).

[7] "And on the fourth day, ten bulls..." Who's hiding right up front?

UVAYOM HAR'VI' PARIM ASARA. The Rashei Teivot (initial letters, which are "right up front") of these four words rearrange to spell PU'AH.

[8] Aharon's rod and Amram - how so?

BEIT LEVI, the house of Levi, occurs in Tanach three times, two of which are in the Chumash and are the solution to this Triddle. And a man from BEIT LEVI went and (re)married the daughter of Levi. He is Amram; she is Yocheved. The rod of Aharon, which represented BEIT LEVI, flowered in the demonstration that G-d commanded Moshe to perform with rods collected from each tribe.

[9] 18,000 men - who's hiding at the end?

Similar to [7], this time the SOFEI TEIVOT (final letters, "at the end") of the phrase from the book of Shoftim, SH'MONA ASAR ELEF ISH rearrange to spell the name SHIFRA.

[10] The picture of the baby caught him in ____ - ____

The picture caught the baby in MID-YAWN, as in where Moshe's father-in-law, his wife and sisters-in-law lived. Sorry, but we put something like this in every so often in honor of punster extraordinaire and Torah Tidbits columnist, MP.

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WISDOM & WIT
by Shmuel Himelstein

R' Yehudah Leib Ashlag, the author of

the Sulam on the Zohar decried all those who spend their entire lives trying to amass an ever greater fortune. "Imagine," he said, "that a king issues coins which are only valid for the next

two years, after which they will become valueless. Would any person strive to amass a fortune of such coins, knowing that soon they will be worthless? The same," he said, "is the case with people who try to amass an ever greater fortune in this world. Don't they realize that whatever money they have will be valueless in the World to Come?"

Once, one of his chassidim asked the Kotzker, "Since we are told that both one who does a great deal and one who does much less are both considered praiseworthy, provided they both have lofty thoughts toward Heaven when they perform what they do, doesn't that then mean that there is no difference between the two?"

"You're absolutely right," replied the Kotzker. "Indeed, even one who does a great deal is also obligated to have the proper thoughts when he does what he does."

R' Yechezkel of Shinova was asked why it is that even though the Torah states a person is to receive forty lashes, the halacha is that he only receives thirty-nine? "That is to teach the person a lesson," said R' Yechezkel, "namely that he has not yet paid off his debt in full for his sin."

**The Jerusalem Institute
of Jewish Law**
Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 545

Laws Regarding Stealing

The other day there was an article in the newspaper about a gang of youths stealing pocketbooks from older ladies.

In addition to violating the laws of the State of Israel, what are their violations of halacha?

Maimonides, in his introduction to the "Laws Concerning Theft" list seven commandments regarding theft, two positive and five negative: (1) not to steal anyone's property; (2) to administer the laws of theft; (3) to maintain accurate scales and measures; (4) not to act dishonestly regarding weights and measures; (5) not to possess extra [dishonest] weights and measures even if one does not use them for buying and selling; (6) not to move a boundary line; and (7) not to abduct human beings.

The basic commandment is found in the verse "You shall not steal, you shall not deny falsely, and you shall not lie one to another." (Vayikra 19:11) Thus if one steals anything having the worth of at least a p'ruta (the smallest halachic coin) one transgresses the commandment not to steal.

There is no flogging administered for transgressing this commandment since the part relating to the victim can be

undone by making restitution. No flogging is administered for violating a negative commandment that can be rectified by restoring the stolen or robbed object or by making a monetary payment (See Maimonides, Laws Dealing with Sanhedrin 18:2). The prohibition against stealing applies equally against stealing from a Jew or Gentile, from an adult or from a minor. It is prohibited to steal anything, however small its value. It is prohibited to steal in jest or to steal an object with the intent of restoring it to its owner, or with the intention of paying for it and for paying the victim the double penalty or to distress the victim. All these things are prohibited so that a person will not get accustomed to stealing. The Torah also provides for a thief to have to pay a double penalty for theft if there were witnesses to the theft and other criteria were met.

The theft commences as the thief acquires the object he is stealing. An object is stolen the same way an object is acquired if it is purchased. If the thief lifts the object, he steals it the moment it is lifted up, and this is effective any place that the thief lifts the object, even in the premises of the owner or in a public place. He has transgressed the commandment not to steal. If he steals the object by drawing it to him, the theft occurs when the object is drawn into the premises of the thief or to a side street that is not frequented by many people, or premises belonging to both the victim and the thief. If the object, such as an animal, enters upon the premise of the thief and he intends to steal it, the theft occurs immediately if the premises are guarded by a fence,

even if the thief is not present.

(to be continued in the next lesson IYH)

Parsha Points to Ponder

VA'EIRA

1) Why does the Torah first state HE IS AHARON AND MOSHE (HU AHARON U MOSHE, 6:26) in the singular which indicates that they were on the same level but then switch to the plural when saying THEY WERE THE ONES WHO SPOKE in the very next verse?

2) Why does the Torah relate that the hardening of Par'o's heart happened when there was a pause (HARVACHA) in plagues specifically after the plague of frogs and no other plagues (8:11)?

3) Why does Par'o use the phrase G-D IS THE RIGHTEOUS ONE (HASHEM HU HATZADIK) after the plague of hail (9:27) and no other plagues?

Parsha Points to Ponder by
Rabbi Dov Lipman

Maharal on the Sedra

Demons and Barleycorns

Sh'mot 8:14 - And the sorcerers did so with their incantations to draw forth the lice, but they could not.

Rashi: This was because the demon has no power over a creature smaller than a barleycorn.

Gur Arye: A bone fragment must be at

least the size of a barleycorn to confer tum'a [ritual impurity that results from touching a corpse, Ohalot 2:3], for tum'a is the work of demons, and the domain of demons does not extend to things smaller than a barleycorn. Demons rule only over the tamei.

Demons [sheidim] were not foreign to our forefathers. The gifts given to the sons of Ketura [B'reishit 25:6] were the secrets of the "name of tum'a", which, Rashi [Sanhedrin 91a] explains, are "the work of demons and sorcerers". One may ask how this is possible, in light of the forbidden nature of witchcraft [Sh'mot 22:17]. It does not mean he taught them how to use sorcery, rather he gave them the knowledge required to exorcise demons. "Work of demons" includes both the forbidden and permissible. For example, there is a way to ask the demons for help in finding a lost object [Rashi, Sanhedrin 101a].

What is the significance of the barleycorn? At some measured point an item is large enough to be considered an individual [prati] thing unto itself, and anything smaller is considered just a part of the general world. Tum'a can attach only to individual things, not to generalities. The boundary between the individual and the general is the barleycorn. Lice are smaller, such that the demons had no rulership over them. Hence the sorcerers could not duplicate Hashem's miracle.

Note the word for barley [s'ora] has the same letters as the word for measure [shi'ur].

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

TBDATR

After the dumb frog comes **LICE** KINIM was the third plague in Egypt. The word occurs three times in Va'eira, twice with a YUD between the NUN and MEM SOFIT, and once without a YUD. Additionally, it occurs with a YUD in T'hilim. Twice, the word is KINAM (no YUD)...

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim explains that while Moshe and Aharon were equal in level in other areas of life, specifically when it came to speaking they were not on the same level since Aharon did the talking instead of Moshe who had a speech impediment. Thus, the plural is used specifically when describing them speaking to Par'o.

2) The Kli Yakar answers that with every other plague, when the plague ended, it ended completely and was removed from existence and, therefore, there was no reason to explain why Par'o's heart hardened. Of course, this happened because the plague ended. However, in regard to the frogs, they remained after the plague concluded and created a terrible smell. One would have thought that Par'o would remain somewhat subjugated to G-D as long as the frogs were still around. Thus, the Torah reports that Par'o saw that there was SPACE (another meaning of HARVACHA), meaning that the smell only impacted people who were close to the dead frogs but if any space was created then the smell had no impact. This justification was enough to enable Par'o to harden his heart and deny the power of the plague.

3) Da'at Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot teaches that Par'o made this declaration after seeing that G-D warned them to bring in the things from their fields and that had they done so, the damage would not have been so great, something which did not occur with the other plagues.