

## Mishnayot

### מסכת שבת

This week we start Mishna Bet Perek Bet in Messechet Shabbat. We will continue to discuss what one may use to light Shabbat candles with and what one may not.

The Mishna says that we may not use Tameh Terumah oil to light with on a Friday of a Yom Tov. Rabbi Yishmael says we may not light with *Itran* (a clear oily residue of pitch, according to Rashi) because it is not going to add to the honour for Shabbat. It smells bad when burnt and one will end up leaving the room and eating in the dark, rather than suffer the smell. The Chachamim, however, allow one to light with any oil. The Mishna then lists the following oils, all permitted by the Chachamim:

**Sesame oil,**  
**Nut oil,**  
**Radish oil** (oil made from the seeds of a radish)  
**Fish oil** (Rashi holds this is oil made by dissolving

fish stomachs! Tosaphot hold that it is oil extracted from the eye of a fish! Both quite gruesome.)

**Pakuot oil** (Artscroll identify this as colocynth. Very useful. It is meant to be a vegetable similar to a watermelon, which have seeds one can use to make oil.)

**Itran** (see explanation above)

**Neftha** (another bad smelling substance formed from pitch.)

Rabbi Tarfon disagrees with all the previous opinions and says that one has got to light with olive oil and nothing else. Even those who disagree, still hold that it will have the cleanest flame and so it is the best fuel.

Next week we will discuss more about wicks one can use for lighting the candles.

**Shabbat Shalom**

## 'Parasha Digest – Beshalach'

**ראשון:** Bnei Yisrael took the closest route to Eretz Yisrael which was along the Mediterranean coast. However, this territory was occupied by the Philistim and Bnei Yisrael were not ready for a battle, so Hashem lead them toward the Yam Suf. Pharaoh was told that Bnei Yisrael appeared to be lost, and he strengthened his resolve and that of his people and pursued the Jews into the Desert.

**שני:** The Mitzriyim caught up to Bnei Yisrael as they were camped by the edge of the sea. Moshe reassured them that they only had to trust Hashem and stand silently as he wiped out the might of Mitzriyim.

**שלישי:** Moshe was told to stretch out his staff over the sea. Hashem separated the Jews from the Egyptians with a cloud cover and caused an Easterly wind to blow the entire night. As the waters parted, Bnei Yisrael entered between the towering walls of water and crossed to the other side, the Mitzriyim chased after them.

**רביעי:** Moshe stretched his arm back over the sea and the waters returned to their natural state, drowning the Mitzriyim. Moshe, and then Miriam,

lead Bnei Yisroel in a song and thanksgiving. The incident with the bitter waters at Marah is detailed.

**חמישי:** Bnei Yisrael struggled with the realities of their experience, attempting to balance faith with practical concerns for survival. The concerns for food and water were overwhelming and Moshe promised them Manna.

**ששי:** Bnei Yisrael were given strict instructions regarding the gathering and eating of the Manna. Also Shabbos was given as a mitzvah.

**שביעי:** The nation travelled to Rephidim, and confronted Moshe over the issue of water. Moshe saw this as an unnecessary challenge to Hashem's caring and love. Hashem instructed Moshe to hit the rock and bring forth water. The final episode in the Parasha was Amalek's unprovoked attack on Bnei Yisroel. Yehoshua lead the attack against Amalek while Moshe, Aharon, and Chur (Miriam's son) stood atop the battle field with Moshe's arms stretched heavenward. Hashem commanded us to eradicate and never forget Amalek's evil.



The Hasmonean High School Weekly



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<b>No.</b>	Parashat Beshalach	תשע"ז 5770	31st January 2010
326			

## Just Jump Right In

In this week's פרשה it says that, when leaving Egypt, Moshe took with Yoseph's bones. Surely it would have been more respectful to say "ארון של יוסף" - the ark of Yoseph or something of the like and not "Yoseph's bones"? After all Yoseph is the first person to be referred to as a צדיק!

The word עצמות has the same root and is indeed similar to the word עצמויות, which means a person's characteristics/essence. But what characteristic or special quality of Yoseph did Moshe desire to take with him into the desert?

For this we need to look at why Rachel calls Yoseph what she calls him. The Passuk says,

“ותקרא את שמו יוסף - לאמור יוסף ה' לי בן אחר”  
 (Bereishit - 30:24)

which in essence means that she called him Yoseph because ה' will add far more sons. Surely this is a weird name to give a child especially after she's been waiting so long for one she then says ה' will give her more? Really the characteristic Moshe was talking about is shown in this very Passuk, the Passuk is coming to teach us that ה' - יוסף ה' לי בן - יוסף ה' will add for me sons, אחר - who are even heretics! (אחר is a common word used to describe a heretic.). So what Rachel was saying was that ה' gave Yoseph the ability to make any Jew, even an אחר into a בן - a young son who cannot be swayed from his faith. But why did Moshe desire this characteristic?

Later on in the Parasha עמלק come and battle with the Israelites. עמלק only ever come about when the Israelites are losing faith in ה'. Therefore when the clouds of glory depart from those Jews who had lost faith and were therefore able to be attacked by עמלק, Moshe sends none other than יהושוע, who is a direct descendent of יוסף because he too had this fantastic characteristic. So יהושוע didn't just fight off עמלק with other faithful people, physically he also helped the Jews who were struggling spiritually and he managed to change them from becoming an אחר into them becoming a בן.

For these very Jews Moshe found it necessary to take with this special characteristic of Yoseph's on the journey through the wilderness. Therefore Moshe was not being disrespectful by using this word, rather he was highlighting the need for this ability.

Now days we too must utilize this essential characteristic of Yoseph's to help every Jew who is struggling spiritually, and try and make them into a בן who's faith can not be swayed regardless of the conditions in the wilderness we live in.

So I wish you all a Shabbat Shalom and I hope we can all use this message to help every Jew in need.

**Adapted from ליקוטי שיעורי by the Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn)**

**By Itamar Katsch**

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## Real Art

Once there was a great and wise king who loved roosters. He was so inspired by their majestic fierceness, their flashing colours, and their every graceful move, that he commissioned hundreds of artists to draw him giant paintings of roosters to hang on the wall of his palatial throne room. But to his dismay, none of the portraits were to his liking. He invited greater artists, and then even greater ones, but was left unsatisfied.

So he sent invitations to three of the greatest artists in the world along with fine presents and promises of fame and fortune. Each would receive fifty thousand gold pieces in addition to a fine house with servants and all their needs for one year, and at the end of that time the king would pay one million gold pieces for any picture that found favour in his eyes. The year passed swiftly and word of the three pictures spread throughout the kingdom.

The day of the unveiling arrived. A massive stadium, built especially for the occasion by the king's orders, was packed with thousands of noisy people. On the stage were the three huge canvases, each covered with its own ornate curtain.

The crowd fell silent as the first artist approached his canvas, hesitated a moment, took hold of the cord that opened the curtain, and turned to face the king. The king nodded, and the artist, without even turning around, triumphantly pulled the cord and a hum went out from the crowd. It was a masterpiece. The king rose from his royal seat, walked to the picture, examining it from every angle, and announced. "It is truly a work of genius, but... it is not exactly what I want".

The crowd was abuzz as the king returned to his seat and motioned for the second artist to approach. The same scene repeated itself: silence, tension, the victorious pull of the cord. This time when the painting was uncovered, shouts of 'Bravo!' were heard. But the king, while admitting that the picture was exquisite, was still not satisfied.

Finally the third artist approached and stood by his picture. Again the king nodded. But the artist, before he pulled the cord, made a request. "Your Majesty, I hum-

bly ask that you make no judgment of my work until fifteen minutes after it is unveiled." An unusual request, but the king nodded in agreement. The artist pulled the cord and revealed -- the crowd gasped -- an empty canvas!

"What is the meaning of this?!" shouted the king, but remembering his promise he fell silent. The artist, meanwhile, had paid no attention to the King's outburst. He was concentrating on the empty canvas before him, palette in one hand and brush in the other. Suddenly he began to paint.

The colours flowed from his very being, the lines danced, changing like fire, like a rushing river, like a field of wheat, like the eyes of a child, of a king. And then, after ten minutes the picture was finished and the artist turned to face the king.

Everyone was so silent you could hear only the wind; everyone was frozen as though hypnotized.

Then someone broke the spell and began clapping, then another and another, until the crowd was like thunder, on their feet whistling, clapping and shouting "Bravo! Bravo!" The king rose from his seat with open arms, walked to the artist and embraced him with tears in his eyes. "This is what I have been seeking!"

The king in our story wanted to really appreciate the painting by watching it being created in front of him. By seeing a blank canvas become a breath-taking image of beauty before his eyes, he could truly understand the effects of all the colours and brushstrokes involved. Only then could he truly be satisfied.

The world is Hashem's canvas. There is a well-known idea that the world and all of its aspects are recreated every moment. Just imagine what it would be like if we could actually watch the world around us being 'painted', time and again, from a blank canvas to a sensationally detailed masterpiece. Then we would see clearly the astonishing depth and complexity behind all of its wonders.

### Thought of the Week

*"If you won't be better tomorrow than you were today, then what do you need tomorrow for?"*

Rabbi Nachman of Breslav

We are supposed to advance and develop constantly throughout our lives. Our experiences, successes and failures should help shape us and guide us as we consistently grow from day to day. But if we stay still, content with our present state, time becomes worthless and each new day is pointless, as it will be identical to the day before. We need to ensure throughout our lives that our tomorrow is not like our today.

## Crisis of Emunah

”וירא ישראל את הד הגולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים ויראו העם את ה' ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו”

“Bnei Yisrael saw the great hand that Hashem had inflicted on Egypt and the people revered Hashem and they faith in Hashem and Moshe his servant” - (14:31)

The Kli Yakar on this week's Parasha cites the Mechilta as 'עמלק', and both refer explicitly to the Ketoret. saying that עמלק is nimshal to a fly.

The Baal Haturim points out that the first letters of ”זכרון” are זכור. The Kli Yakar explains that the metaphoric use of 'fly' alludes to an insect that does not have ability to pierce the skin. It is only when the skin is broken that the fly causes all sorts of problems.

When a fly lands on you and walks around, the fly is thinking "is it dead yet?" A fly cannot instigate a problem; it can only exploit and aggravate a problem. Similarly, עמלק cannot do anything when the spiritual integrity of Bnei Yisrael is intact. Only when there is a breach in our belief, when the skin of our *emunah* is not intact, can עמלק exploit that breach and attack us.

עמלק and ספק each have the Gematria of 240. עמלק has been described as '*Korcho Baderech*', which some read to refer to the philosophy of randomness and coincidence, the philosophy that denies Din Vechesbon and Hashgacha Pratis. When our *emunah* is weak, when we doubt the existence of Hashgachat Hashem, עמלק is empowered to exploit the breach that is our crisis of *emunah*. As Rashi says it was only after we began to wonder "ה' בהרבנו" that עמלק attacked. They were attracted to the foul odour of spiritual decay.

The Gemara (Shabbat 89a) says that the *Malach HaMavet* taught Moshe Rabbeinu that the Ketoret has the power to stop a *Mageifah*, to halt the *Malach HaMavet*. The sefer Nifla'os Mi'Toratecha by R'Mordechai Aran notes that the word עמלק only appears twice in all of Tanach as a *Roshei Teivot* of four consecutive words, once in order and once out of order.

עַל מִזְבְּחִי לְהִקְטִיר קֶטֶרֶת  
incense” - Shmuel I (12:28)

and

”take for yourself firepans” -  
Bamidbar (16:6)

Both of these references involve the bringing of Ketoret. Imagine that! In all of Tanach, only these two phrases have consecutive words beginning with the letters 'AMLK or

עמלק', and both refer explicitly to the Ketoret.

The antidote to the power of עמלק is the sweet smell of the Ketoret, which symbolizes our strong *emunah* and the power of our Mitzvot.

This Parasha contains the Shira, and for that reason we read this Shabbat Shira. The Shira corresponds to the Ketoret, as we can see in Mizmor Ledavid (Tehillim 141:2): 'תכון תפליתי קטרת לפניך' - let my prayer stand as an incense before you'

This idea is reflected in the placement of the *amud* of the *Chazan* in shul in a position that parallels the *Mizbeach Hazahav* of the *Beit Hamikdash*, which was used for burning the Ketoret.

Az Yashir is preceded by ויאמינו בה'. When the Torah begins the Shira it uses the words 'או שר' not 'או ישיר'. Rashi explains that ישיר is in *Lashon Atid*, and Chazal say that sometimes *Lashon Atid* is used to say that "he was moved to...". So the Pasuk mean "Then having experienced the Miracle, Moshe and Bnei Yisrael were inspired (moved to) to sing, and they said...". The question is, why the three step introduction? 1. Experienced miracle, 2. Their hearts were moved to sing, and 3. They sang. Why not just say that in response to the miracle, they sang? What does the extra step – their hearts were moved to sing – add?

The answer is that the Shira is not just singing, it is song that comes from the heart. Mere chazanut is empty. Shira means song that comes from inspiration, from the essence of our being, from the Kedushah generated by the awareness of Hashem's loving presence.

So we see in Beshalach, the Torah is really showing us a contrast, the spectrum defined by, on the one hand, Shira, and on the other, עמלק.

When Bnei Yisrael came to then ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו then וירא ישראל את הד הגולה then ה' בהרבנו then וירא עמלק.

*Emunah* brings Shira, which is like the Ketoret. Sofeik brings עמלק.

### Riddle for the Week

Bitter not sweet,  
Then sticky, a treat! What happened?  
(Answer in next week's Living Torah)  
Answer To Last Week's Riddle:

'Lo' means 'no' and 'not.' It sounds like the word spelled 'lamed vav' which is Hebrew for 'his.' 'Lo' spelled backwards is 'Al,' which also means 'not.'