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THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY

by Rabbi Ezra Wiener

In a descriptive account of the agricultural devastation following Makkat Barad, the Torah (9:31-32) states, "VeHapishta VeHase'orah Nukatah, Ki HaSe'orah Aviv VeHapishta Giv'ol. VeHaChita VeHaKusemet Lo Nuku Ki Afilot Heina," "And the flax and the barley were smitten for the barley was ripe and the flax was in bloom. But the wheat and the spelt were not smitten for they ripen late." Why is important that we are so thoroughly informed of these minor details? Would a broad description of the damaged crops not have sufficed? Many Parshanim were sensitive to the profound damage the hail caused to the crops, and many agree that the Pesukim are resolving an anticipated question in advance. Namely, if the hail caused such serious damage to the crops, what precisely did the plague of locusts from Parashat Bo achieve? Weren't the crops completely destroyed already in Makkat Barad? Rashbam explains that the Torah, therefore, answers this question by explaining that since the Barad fell in an early season, it only destroyed the crops that had already ripened. The unripe crops, however, like the wheat and the spelt, were able to recover from the damage due to their flexible nature at this part of the growth process. It was the Arbeh that brought about their permanent destruction.

Ramban adds that the description of the crops' destruction is actually part of Moshe's warning unto Par'oh. Moshe's goal is not to inform us of the degree of Barad's devastation, but, rather, to warn Par'oh that another plague can still cause great damage. Ramban formulates this warning as "VeHein BeYad Elokim Le'Abeid Otam MiKem Im Tashuvu VeTechetu LeFanav," "If you continue to sin, G-d has plenty more work left to do." Seforno agrees that these Pesukim are explaining that there are still crops to destroy, but he argues that these words are not part of Moshe's warning. The Torah is merely reporting that despite the vast amount of crops left to destroy, Paroh still had the audacity to continue to sin ("VaYosef LaChato").

I would submit that the Torah, homiletically, chooses to share with us the details of the agricultural destruction of Barad, because it remarkably parallels Par'oh's unwillingness to compromise and the resultant repercussions of such an unwavering delusion of G-ds eminence. Which plants cracked and what was lost? What characteristic could not survive? The rigid, ripe barley and flax cracked, and the flexible, yielding unripe wheat and spelt survived. Par'oh's unyielding personality led to his downfall. As the Torah

(Devarim 20:19) states, "Ki Ha'Adam Eitz HaSadeh." Sometimes, if we want to understand the personality of a human being all we need to do is observe the plant kingdom.

The same is true in neurology; rigidity is a symptom of several neurological disorders. For instance, if the brain is incapable of shutting down the firing of neurons, with no inhibition, the nerve fires continuously. This causes a muscle to be in a constant state of contraction, drastically reducing functionality. With no inhibition, there is no mobility. With no mobility there's no functionality.

Such is the case with an unbending, obstinate personality in any home environment, religious environment or vocation. Our success as professionals, teachers, religious leaders, and, most importantly, as parents and spouses, is the ability to surrender our controlling temperament and become more flexible, accepting, and tolerant. We will find that the more we train ourselves to exercise inhibition, the more tranquil, happy and functional we will be. Controlling this Middah is one of the best ways of achieving spiritual growth.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Yonason Rutta (20)

The Mishnah (Ketubot 104b) discusses two prominent judges in Yerushalayim who issued decrees with which the Chachamim disagreed. Their names were Admon and Chanan ben Avshalom. Fascinatingly, Tosafot (ibid. s.v. "Shnei") cites a Gemara (Yoma 38) to address the latter's name. The Gemara, based on the Pasuk of "VeSheim Resha'im Yirkav," "the name of the wicked shall rot," (Mishlei 10:7) explains that people should not be named after the wicked. Thus, the judge was named Avshalom instead of Avshalom, an individual known to have been categorized as a Rasha. (As per the opinion of R. Meir that he does not have a portion in the World to Come.) Thus, we see that names are significant.

In Parashat Va'era, the Torah states, "UBnei Shimon Yemu'el Ve'Ohad VeYamin VeYachin VeTzochar VeShaul ben HaKena'anit Aileh Mishpechot Shimon," "the sons of Shimon: Yemu'el, and Ohad and Yamin and Yachin and Tzochar and Shaul the son of the Canaanite, these are the families of Shimon" (Shemot 6:15). Targum Yonatan Ben Uzziel (ibid.) comments that "Shaul the son of the Canaanite" was actually the Nasi of Shimon, Zimri Ben Salu, who was later killed by Pinchas for having relations with Cozbi in Sefer BeMidbar. This has basis in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 82b), which explains that Zimri was called Shaul because he lent himself to sinful matters, and "Ben HaCana'anit" due to the fact that he performed a "Ma'aseh Canaan" (the Canaanites were known for their licentiousness).

Given the concept of "VeSheim Resha'im Yirkav," how was there a king named Shaul later in Tanach? Many Acharonim attempt to answer this question. R. Aharon Shmuel Assad zt'l answers, based on the Midrash (BeReishit Rabbah 98), that Shaul HaMelech was named Shaul due to the fact that his Malchut was "She'ulah," "borrowed." (It would eventually be replaced with the Malchut Yehuda.) He was not

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named after the Shaul in Sefer Shemot. However, R. Yehuda Assad z'l, the son of R' Aharon Shmuel Assad, takes issue with his father's approach; after all, Shaul's father could not have known that Shaul's Malchut would be "borrowed." R. Yehuda Assad proposes a different solution. The concept of "*VeSheim Resha'im Yirkav*" was introduced only in Sefer Mishlei, during the era of Shlomo HaMelech. This rule did not apply to prior generations.

Another approach is suggested by the Or HaChaim Hakadosh (BeMidbar 26:13). The Torah (BeMidbar 25:14) records that "*VeSheim Ish Yisrael HaMukeh Asher Hukah Et HaMidyanit Zimri Ben Salu Nesi Beit Av LeShimoni*," "the name of the Yisrael who was killed, the one who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, leader of a house of Shimon." This implies that Zimri was forgiven-- he is referred to as an "*Ish Yisrael*." Thus, it is completely permissible to name a child "Shaul."

However, the Chatam Sofer views the name Shaul in a negative light. In his Sefer "*Tiv Gittin*," he documents a personal custom to replace the name "Shaul" on a Get (divorce document) with "Sho'al." (Note from Rabbi Jachter: This is not the practice of contemporary Get administrators.) The Chatam Sofer cites I Shmuel 1:20, where Chana names her son Shmuel. Her stated reason for her choice of name was "*Ki MeiHashem She'iltiv*," "I asked Hashem for him." Now, if that was really Chana's reason for naming her son Shmuel, why wouldn't she name him Shaul, a more direct conjugation of the root "ask." Why did she opt to insert a letter 'Mem' into his name? The Chatam Sofer explains that she could not have named him Shaul due to the fact that the name once belonged to a Rasha.

Overall, the entire discussion sheds light on the importance of names throughout the Torah. A name is a person's identity and reputation. May we merit living up to our names and reputations.

A CHANGE IN NAME

by Eitan Mermelstein ('21)

At the beginning of Parashat Va'Era, Hashem comes to Moshe and tells him that he is not the first prophet of God. Hashem explains that there were three main prophets of Hashem before: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. However, He then elaborates that He appeared to them as "Keil Shakai," and that "*UShemi Adoshem Lo Nodati Lahem*," "My name Adoshem I did not reveal to them." Why is this change in name significant, and why was Moshe privy to this revelation?

The Midrash Aggadah explains that the name "Adoshem" refers to accountability and justice, as later used when referring to the Makkot, "*VeYeide'u Mitzrayim Ki Ani Adoshem*," "And Egypt will know that I am Adoshem." Here, Hashem explains to Moshe that he has heard the Jews' pain and suffering, and will free them. Through the use of His name "Adoshem," Hashem tells Moshe that Yetziat Mitzrayim and the Makkot will both serve as process of vengeance against the Egyptians.

However, Rashi (ibid. s.v. "Be'Keil Shakai") believes that the name "Adoshem" connotes truth and justice. Hashem did not use this particular name in his conversations with the Avot because He had not yet fulfilled that which He had promised them-- to relieve the Jews of their affliction and take them to Eretz Yisrael.

However, in Sefer Shemot, as Hashem is on the verge of fulfilling His promise to Avraham to take the Jews out of Egypt, God reveals Himself to Moshe as "Adoshem."

Seforno (ibid.), in contrast, believes that "Keil Shakai" refers to God's creation of the world, whereas, the name "Adoshem" refers to God when He alters the laws of nature on the Bnei Yisrael's behalf. God never had the need to change nature for the forefathers; however, in Sefer Shemot, God had to intercede to ensure the continuation of Am Yisrael.

Ultimately, all of these opinions differ over one key feature: mainly, what the name 'Adoshem' represents. Midrash Aggadah believes that it refers to God's attribute of justice, Rashi believes that it refers to the divine attribute of truth, and Seforno understands it as a God's changing of the laws of nature. While each of these attributes is different, they are similar in that God never needed to actualize them before. Hashem never needed to change nature because the Avot did not need large miracles to initiate faith, nor did He need to use vengeance on their behalf, and He had not yet fulfilled his promise. In fact, the only time when God ever uses His name 'Adoshem' with the Avot is right before the Brit Bein HaBetarim, when He originally makes the promise to Avraham that He would eventually take the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt (Da'at Zekenim BeReishit 16:7 s.v. "ViAcharei Chein"), as recorded in BeReishit 16:7, "*Vayomer Eilav 'Ani Hashem Asher Hotzeiticha MeiUr Kasdim*" "And he said to him: 'I am Hashem who took you out of Ur Kasdim.'" This context unifies the approaches of the Midrash Rabbah, Seforno, and Rashi.

A HARD HEART

by Yehuda Koslowe ('17)

Editors' note: The following article was originally published in Volume 23 of Kol Torah in 2013/5774. To read more Parashah and Halachah articles from previous editions of Kol Torah, please visit koltorah.org.

In Parashat Va'Era, we read the story of the first seven plagues. By each of the plagues, Moshe asks Par'oh to let the Jewish people go on a three-day journey in the wilderness. Par'oh does not let the Jews go on their journey, and as a result, Hashem strikes all of Egypt (except for Goshen, where the Jewish people lived) with a plague. Par'oh then begs Moshe to remove the plague, and after he does, Par'oh's heart is hardened, and he refuses to let the Jewish people leave Egypt.

According to the simple Peshat of the text, Par'oh hardened his own heart for the first five plagues. Regarding the plague of Dever, pestilence, which is the fifth Makkah, the Torah states, "*VaYichebad Leiv Par'oh VeLo Shilach Et HaAm*," "Par'oh's heart became stubborn, and he did not send out the people" (Shemot 9:7). Since the text does not specify who hardened Par'oh's heart, the simple understanding is that Par'oh hardened his own heart. However, there is a shift in the phraseology of the text starting with the sixth plague, boils. By this plague, it states, "*VaYechazeik Hashem Et Leiv Par'oh*," "Hashem strengthened the heart of Par'oh" (9:12). This Pasuk clearly states that Hashem hardened Par'oh's heart. Par'oh now had no choice but to do what Hashem wanted.

The Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 13:3) quotes the obvious question raised by Rav Yochanan. It seems unfair to punish Par'oh for his

actions, if, in fact, his heart was hardened by Hashem. Rav Shimon Ben Lakish answers that Hashem sent the first five plagues as signs for Par'oh to repent, but Par'oh ignored them. As a punishment, Hashem hardened Par'oh's heart so that he would no longer be able to repent. This punishment was Middah KeNeged Middah, measure for measure. Just as with the first five plagues Par'oh hardened his heart and chose to ignore Hashem, with the latter plagues Par'oh was punished by losing the ability to control his heart, which he hardened himself.

Rav Shimon Ben Lakish's explanation leaves a question unanswered. Why was Par'oh punished only after ignoring the first five plagues? Was he not deserving of a punishment for all of his terrible actions before the first five Makkot? He cruelly enslaved the Jewish people, demanded that all male Jewish children be thrown into the Nile, and even killed Jewish children to bathe in their blood (Shemot Rabbah 1:34). Why, then, was he punished only after ignoring the first five plagues?

One explanation for the delay in punishment is that Hashem is slow to anger and compassionate when punishing. Par'oh was definitely deserving of punishment for his prior actions, but Hashem punished him only after ignoring the first five plagues. Hashem waited to punish Par'oh until He was sure that Par'oh would not do Teshuvah. This is a perfect example of Hashem being a 'Keil Rachum VeChanun,' 'Merciful and Compassionate God.' He is overly slow to anger, and he punishes with compassion.

We should try to emulate Hashem's ways, as the Pasuk states, "*VeHalachta BiDerachav,*" "And you should walk in His ways" (Devarim 28:9). If we do so, we will hopefully merit the blessings that are promised, "*VeHotirecha Hashem LeTovah,*" "And Hashem shall make you abundant" in all areas of life (28:11).

DISHWASHERS FOR BOTH MEAT AND MILK: A SEPHARDIC VS. ASHKENAZIC ISSUE?

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Typically, it is said that Sephardic Jews are permitted to use their dishwashers for both milk and meat utensils and Ashkenazic Jews are not permitted to do so. Indeed, many Ashkenazic Posekim forbid using a dishwasher for both meat and milk utensils (Rav Feivel Cohen, Badei Hashulhan 95:77; Rav Binyamin Forst, The Laws of Kashrut page 261 and Rav Yisrael Rozen, Tehumin 11:130-136). Rav Yosef Adler reports that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik also forbade using one dishwasher to clean both milk and meat utensils.

Moreover, it is fair to say that it is accepted in Ashkenazic families not to wash both milk and meat utensils in the same dishwasher.¹ Although Rav Moshe Feinstein wrote no less than seven Teshuvot² permitting the use of a dishwasher for both meat and milk, the fact that he required switching racks when switching from meat to milk (and vice versa) made the use of one dishwasher for both meat and milk quite inconvenient.

The premier Sephardic Poskim Rav Ovadia Yosef and Rav Yitzhak Yosef, on the other hand, permit using one's dishwasher for both meat and milk (Yalkut Yosef Otzar Dinim L'isha p. 618; Yalkut Yosef Isur Vheter 3:485 and Teshuvot Yabia Omer 10 Yoreh Dei'ah 4). They even (essentially) permit simultaneous washing of both meat and milk in the same dishwasher! Even Rav Eli Mansour³ who typically rules strictly, essentially endorses Rav Ovadia's ruling on this matter, though he expresses a strict preference.

However, Rav Shlomo Amar told a group of Shaarei Orah congregants (during his visit to our congregation on Shabbat Nachamu 5777) that he believes that a dishwasher should not be used for both milk and meat unless one "kosherizes"⁴ the dishwashers between uses of the opposite food types. Rav Amar typically follows in the Halachic paths of Rav Ovadia Yosef. However, regarding this issue he is not comfortable doing so.

We learn from Rav Amar's response, that this issue is not necessarily a debate that runs along classic differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews. In order to explain Rav Amar's approach let us first present Rav Ovadia's reasoning as set forth in Teshuvot Yabia Omer 10 Yoreh Dei'ah 4.

Rav Ovadia's Reasoning

Chacham Ovadia first describes how a dishwasher works. First off, a person normally removes large residue or food particles from the dish before inserting into the dishwasher. After putting the dishes in the unit, one adds a cleansing agent into a designated compartment inside the machine. **The process then begins, and first to occur is a rinsing of the dishes with cold water. After the cold cycle completes, the water is warmed and the cleaning agent is released.** The hot water mixes with the cleaning agent and together washes the dishes. After this process, the water shuts off, and a heating element is turned on to dry the dishes. Once dry, the process is complete.

Rav Yosef argues that the dishwasher is perfectly analogous to an issue addressed by Maran Rav Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Dei'ah 95:4). He describes a situation where people wanted to use giant pots normally used for dairy cooking for the purpose of cleaning various tableware and cookware including meat dishes. Maran rules that it would be permissible to use this giant dairy pot to clean meat dishes so long as a distasting agent such as Eifer (ashes) or soap is added. Such an agent would render the milk in the walls of the pot Pagum (unsavory, unfit, spoiled), thus allowing the insertion of a meat vessel for cleansing. This leniency applies even if the meat pot is dipped in the giant milk pot together with boiling hot water.

Chacham Ovadia defends Maran's ruling from its critics including the Shach (YD 95:21) and Taz (YD 95:15) and demonstrates that Maran's ruling is accepted in practice. Indeed, both the Chachmat Adam (48:15) and the Aruch HaShulchan (Yoreh Dei'ah 95:24) accept Maran's opinion.

Rav Yosef applies Maran's reasoning regarding the giant milk pot to permit simultaneous washing of meat dishes and dairy dishes in a dishwasher. When released together with the hot water, the soap deposited into the designated compartment renders any

¹ In my experience, Ashkenazic women typically are very uncomfortable using a dishwasher for both meat and milk.

² For example, Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 1:104, Yoreh Dei'ah 2:28 – 29 and 3:10.

³ <https://www.dailyhalacha.com/displayRead.asp?readID=810>.

⁴ Rav Amar requires running an empty cycle with detergent as a koshering process between uses of the opposite food type.



food particles in the dishwasher as Pagum. Chacham Ovadia therefore concludes that not only is it permissible to use the same dishwasher for both meat and dairy dishes, but it is also permissible⁵ for one dishwasher to be used to wash dairy and meat dishes simultaneously⁶.

Concerns with Rav Ovadia's Ruling

Rav Ovadia's ruling seems to be convincing and even airtight. The analogy between a dishwasher and the giant pot discussed in the Shulchan Aruch seems perfect. He cites those who disagree with his ruling and responds to their objections. Indeed, any objection can be rebutted by citing the precedent of the Shulchan Aruch's giant pot.

Rav Feivel Cohen and Rav Yisrael Rozen, for example, raise concern about food particles that remain in the dishwasher's filter. They argue that these food particles remain edible, and that these particles are absorbed into utensils of the opposite type, rendering them an unkosher mixture of meat and milk.

However, the Shulchan Aruch was not concerned with this issue since the ashes render the food particles inedible. Similarly, Rav Ovadia argues that the detergent used in dishwashers, which are at least as caustic as the ashes mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch, also renders inedible any food particles remaining in the dishwasher's filter. Why then is Rav Amar not comfortable with Rav Ovadia's ruling?

There is one major chink in the armor of Rav Ovadia's ruling. Rav Forst raises the very serious concern that "in the very beginning of the washing cycle, hot water may start spraying before it has been rendered Pagum by the detergents." Rav Menahem Genack, Chief Executive Officer of OU Kosher, expressed a similar concern in his Shiurim to Yeshiva University Semicha students in 1988.

Rav Yosef's description of the operation of a dishwasher shows that he assumed that the water released before the detergent is introduced is cold. However, this is not always the case. If so, if one simultaneously washes milk and meat utensils in the same dishwasher where hot water is released before the detergent, not only are all the utensils rendered non-kosher but one also runs afoul of the Torah level prohibition to cook milk and meat together! Even if one washes meat and milk utensils consecutively in such a dishwasher one renders the dishwasher itself a forbidden mixture of milk and meat, since its walls would absorb both meat and milk taste particles.

Conclusion

Rav Ovadia Yosef wrote a very persuasive responsum permitting washing meat and milk dishes in one dishwasher. However, this ruling presumes that hot water is introduced only after

the detergent has been released into the dishwasher. This assumption does not apply to all dishwashers.

While one could try to determine that the dishwasher one purchases releases the water only after the detergent is introduced⁷, this could lead to confusion and complications. If some dishwashers carry with them serious Halachic concerns it is sensible to adopt a policy of not permitting the use of any dishwasher for both meat and milk. Rav Amar's atypical veering from Rav Ovadia's ruling might stem from the concern that permitting the use of some dishwashers could lead to serious Halachic violations.

In practice, I advise Sephardic Jews to follow the ruling of Rav Amar and wash milk and meat in the same dishwasher only if one "kosherizes" the dishwasher between uses of the opposite food type by running it through an empty cycle with detergent. Indeed Rav Shmuel Khoshkermann told me that Rav Ovadia's Teshuvah does not apply to today's dishwashers due to concern that hot water is released into the dishwasher before the detergent is released⁸.

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⁵ Rav Ovadia and Rav Yitzhak both prefer that the dishwasher not be used to wash meat and milk items simultaneously.

⁶ It is particularly touching to read the conclusion of this Teshuvah where Rav Ovadia, who wrote this responsum in his elder years, cites his son Rav Yitzhak, as support for his ruling. This is a beautiful example of the synergetic relationship between this outstanding father and son pair. In fact, Rav Aharon Soloveichik noted at the funeral of his brother Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik that Rav Yosef Dov and his father Rav Moshe rank among the great father son learning pairs in Jewish history. These include, according to Rav Aharon, Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son Rabi Elazar and Rav Akiva Eiger and Rav Shlomo Eiger. We now may add Rav Ovadia and Yibadeil L'Chayim Arukim Rav Yitzhak alongside these outstanding father son learning teams.

⁷ Obtaining reliable information about precisely how a particular dishwasher operates is not necessarily a straightforward and simple process.

⁸ I asked Rav Khoshkermann if one is permitted to eat at a home that still relies on Rav Ovadia's leniency and simultaneously washes meat and milk utensils in the dishwasher. He replied that he did not know how to respond. Rav Hershel Schachter agreed (personal communication) that this is a serious problem (unless one is convinced that there is sixty times the amount of water to nullify the meat and milk particles - which is subject to considerable debate as noted in Rav Rozen's aforementioned article). There is, however, a defense for the use of a dishwasher for both meat and milk when done consecutively. Once the initial full cycle runs, let us say of meat dishes, the dishes experience the entire wash cycle, so the hot water with soap/detergent has already rendered any particles Pagum (unfit for human consumption), so the next wash should be 'ready' for a milk run without a koshering run in between.