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DAF KESHER

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This Daf Kesher is dedicated to the sacred memory of all our brothers and sisters who perished in the Holocaust, די"ד.

DVAR TORAH ON THE HAFTARAH "TOMORROW IS ROSH CHODESH"

This week's Haftarah is known as "Machar Chodesh – Tomorrow Is Rosh Chodesh." It gets its name from two words that appear in the first verse of the Haftarah (I Shmuel 20:18-42), and is read when Shabbat falls on the day preceding Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of the month. The Haftarah focuses on one episode, that took place surrounding Rosh Chodesh, when, through the help of King Shaul's son Yonatan, King David avoided being attacked by King Shaul.

The choice of Haftarat is puzzling. Is it possible that the mere mention of "tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh" would be a sufficient reason to justify veering from the normal cycle of Haftarat, whose theme is usually connected to the weekly Torah portion or the holidays? And to answer that the passage was chosen only to encourage people to have a seudat Rosh Chodesh, a special feast in honor of Rosh Chodesh, like King Shaul did (see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 419) is also not compelling. The main theme of the Haftarah seems to be the interaction between Yonatan, David, and Shaul – how Yonatan and David's intense friendship prevailed despite Shaul's pursuit of David, whereas the Rosh Chodesh feast seems to merely be the setting of the Haftarah, not its focus. Why, then, does the Haftarah of "Machar Chodesh" take precedence over that of Shemini or Tazria-Metzora?

In *בין הפטרה לפרשה*, a collection of essays on the Haftarat, Harav Yehudah Shaviv (of Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shevut), suggests that a Midrashic theme connects Rosh Chodesh – and even the day preceding it – with the main theme of our Haftarah and its hero, Yonatan the son of King Shaul.

Chazal noted the discrepancy between two ways the sun and moon are referred to in the same verse of Creation story: *וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹקִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמָּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַשְׁלַת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים* – G-d made the two great luminaries, the great luminary to control the day and the small luminary to control the night, and the stars" (Bereishit 1:15). Why are the sun and moon first referred to as both great, then as great and small? Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi (Chulin 60b) answers: "The moon said before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'How can two kings wear the same crown?' He said to the moon, 'Go and diminish yourself'."

David's success in the war against the Phillistines was seen by Shaul as a threat to his rule (I Shmuel 18:8-9), and fueled his aggressive pursuit of David. But Yonatan, Shaul's own son, took the opposite path. He realized that Hashem had chosen David over Shaul and therefore negated himself to David and forfeited royalty.

It is precisely on Rosh Chodesh, when the new moon appears, that Yonatan tested Shaul's reaction to David's absence at the royal seudat Rosh Chodesh (I Shmuel 20:18-34). Will Shaul "minimize himself" like Hashem instructed the moon, or would he still persist with his pursuit of David because "two kings cannot share one crown"? While Shaul's animosity towards David remained, Yonatan only intensified his love for David through the vow that ends our Haftarah: "Hashem will be between us and between our descendants forever" (I Shmuel 20:42). And it is precisely on the day **preceding** Rosh Chodesh, when the moon is totally invisible, that Yonatan's love and heroic negation to David shined like the moon, the night's "small luminary." Rav Shaviv concludes with a prayer that Yonatan-like humility among our People will cause the moon's light to renew as the sun's.

Also in this week's Daf Kesher: Source Guide – "Reactions to the Fire" · "Guide to the Piscatorially Perplexed," by Rabbi Yakov Haber

SOURCE GUIDE: REACTIONS TO THE FIRE

Our Parshah includes one of the peak moments of Jewish history, the dedication of the Mishkan on the first day of Nisan, almost a year following the Exodus from Egypt. On that day fire came down from Heaven and evoked a national response that the Malbim, in his commentary, describes as unique. This source guide is based on his description of the Nation's two-fold and complex reaction to the Divine fire.

A. Fire from Heaven

After seven days of intense preparations, Aharon the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) offered the special sacrifices of the eighth day, evoking an awesome Divine response:

<p>1. Vayikra 9:22-24 (22) And Aharon lifted up his hands towards the People and blessed them. He then descended from preparing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering. (23) And Moshe and Aharon went into the Tent of Meeting. Then they came out and blessed the People, and the glory of Hashem appeared to all the People. (24) And fire went forth from before Hashem and consumed the burnt offering and the fats upon the altar, and all the People saw, sang out (exulted), and fell upon their faces.</p>	<p>ויקרא ט:כב-כד (כב) וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם וירד מעשת החטאת והעלה והשלים. (כג) ויבא משה ואהרן אל אהל מועד ויצאו ויברכו את העם וירא כבוד ה' אל כל העם. (כד) ותצא אש מלפני ה' ותאכל על המזבח את העלה ואת החלבים וירא כל העם וירגזו ויפלו על פניהם.</p>
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B. Unique Reaction

The Malbim (Harav Meir Leib ben Yechiel Michael, זצ"ל, 1809-1877) notes how unique this reaction was:

<p>2. Malbim on Vayikra 9:24 "Singing out" and "falling on the face" are contradictory. For falling on the face is a result of trepidation and fear of visions of the awesome G-d, whereas singing out is a result of joy. These two never appear together elsewhere.</p>	<p>מלבי"ם על ויקרא ט:כד הרינה והנפילה על אפים הם ענינים סותרים. כי נפילת אפים יהיה על ידי חרדה ופחד ממראות אלקים הנורא, והרינה תהיה על ידי שמחה. ולא מצאנוהו ביחד בשום פעם.</p>
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Why did they sing out in exultation, and why did they fall on their faces?

<p>2. Malbim on Vayikra 9:24 Our sages explained (Torah Kohanim Shemini 23) that they saw two things: A] new fire that came down from Heaven, and this caused them to fall on their faces because of the fear of Hashem and His Greatness; and B] that it licked up the burnt offering, a sign that their sacrifice had been accepted willingly. Over this they rejoiced, sang out, and praised Heaven.</p>	<p>מלבי"ם על ויקרא ט:כד ופירשו חז"ל (תורת כהנים שמיני כג) שראו שני ענינים: א] אש חדשה שירדה מן השמים ועל זה נפלו על פניהם מפחד ה' וגאוונו; ב] שלחכה את העולה שזה אות שנתקבל קרבנם ברצון ועל זה שמחו וירונו ושבחו לשמים.</p>
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C. Shlomo Hamelech's Beit Hamikdash and the Future

The closest the Jewish People came to experiencing a similar complex reaction – "rejoicing in trembling" (Tehillim 2:11) – to overt Divine revelation was at the dedication of the King Shlomo's first Beit Hamikdash:

<p>3. II Divrei Hayamim 7:3 All the Children of Israel saw when the fire came down and the Glory of Hashem was on the House, and they bowed down to the ground on the floor, prostrated themselves, and thanked Hashem for He is good and His lovingkindness is forever.</p>	<p>דברי הימים ב ז:ג וכל בני ישראל ראים ברדת האש וכבוד ה' על הבית ויכרעו אפים ארצה על הרצפה וישתחוו והודות לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו.</p>
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Says the Midrash: The People of Israel will experience this complex reaction once more, in the Final Redemption, speedily in our days (see Torah Kohanim Shemini 23, based on Malachi 3:4).

Among the laws of kosher species outlined in Parashas Shemini, those pertaining to fish are unique. Both kosher beef and fowl require שחיטה, kosher slaughter (Rambam Hilchos Shechitah 1:1), their blood is prohibited (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros 6:1), and both are subject to the prohibition of אֶבְרַת מֵחַי, forbidding the consumption of the flesh severed from a live animal (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros 5:1). Domestic cattle is additionally subject to the prohibition of חֵלֶב, forbidden fat (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros 7:1), and all kosher animals must have the גיד הנשה, the sciatic nerve, removed (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros 8:1).

In stark contrast, fish are subject to none of these restrictions; in the language of the Talmud (Kerisos 21a-b), "כולו היתר" – it is entirely permitted." Contrary to a minority view in the Rishonim which maintains that אסיפה, taking the fish out of the water while alive, is required as a parallel to שחיטה (see Magid Mishneh to Hilchos Shechitah 1:3 quoting Rav Sa'adiah Gaon), the accepted view is that fish require no ritual act at all to permit their consumption; even if removed dead from the water, they are still permissible (Rambam Hilchos Shechitah 1:3). What lesson can be learned from these unique halachos?

The mystery deepens when we consider other facts concerning creatures of the sea. According to the Talmud (Sanhedrin 108a cited by Rashi on Bereishis 7:22), the fish did not perish during the Great Flood in the days of Noach. For this reason, there was no reason to take them onto the Ark to be saved (Ramban on Bereishis 7:23). Whereas the commentaries note that the Torah generally prohibits us from consuming animals and fowl which prey on other creatures (see Dayan Grunfeld's translation of Harav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, לוצ"ל's Horeb, par. 454), no such restriction exists concerning fish. As long as a given sea creature has fins and scales, it is rendered kosher. Indeed, many popular kosher fish (like flounder and bass) eat other fish. The popular tuna fish is a voracious carnivore devouring hundreds of other fish daily.

Before Adam and Chavah sinned by partaking of the fruit of עץ הדעת טוב ורע (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), they were only permitted to eat vegetation, not animals (Bereishis 1:29). The same was true concerning the Divinely implanted nature of animals – they would only eat vegetation (Bereishis 1:30). After the Flood, Noach and his descendants were permitted to eat animals (Bereishis 9:3). Even though the Torah does not specifically state that animal nature also changed, it clearly did as well (see commentaries on Yishayah 11:6-7, Rambam Hilchos Melachim 12:1, Ra'avad and commentaries there, and the Ramban's Commentary on Bereishis 9:5 and Vayikra 26:6). However, as noted by the author of Oznayim Latorah (on Bereishis 1:29), the absence of a statement concerning the permitted diet of sea creatures implies that many fish were always carnivorous, both before and after the Flood. All of these differences certainly require analysis.

Perhaps we can suggest an insight into the mystery of the denizens of the sea. With only occasional manifestations of its existence, sea life occurs hidden from the human senses. The seemingly lifeless waters of the ocean, lakes and rivers hide the lively activity of its millions of inhabitants (see Harav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, לוצ"ל's Commentary on Bereishis 48:16). Furthermore, all of their residents highly depend on the aquatic environment for survival, most of them utilizing water for the very breath of life. The life-sustaining quality which the waters of the seas provide its inhabitants is only noticeable when one cares to take notice – to study its depths.

In Rabbi Akiva's famous analogy of the fox and the fish (Berachos 61b), water represents the life-giving and life-sustaining nourishment of Torah. This ultimate truth – that our connection to our Creator as manifested through the Torah is what really gives us life rather than a series of biological processes – requires diligent study and reflection. It is not immediately manifest unless one thinks deeply about the world and its true nature, just as a student of the sea must reflect on its nature which is not immediately apparent.

Mankind, living in a world of confusion and hiddenness – a world in which a different narrative of existence seemingly and tantalizingly presents itself, a narrative in which the purely physical reigns supreme, a narrative of "survival of the fittest" of "eat or be eaten", a narrative indicating that the mighty and the wealthy have

ultimate power – is called upon to "reveal the mask", to realize that עולם, world, is rooted in the word העולם, hiddenness. The individual is challenged to look beneath the surface of the "sea" of the world, deeper into the true Reality of Existence. He is challenged to realize that the complex web of animal life, the rules of nature, economic success and failure, marriage, family, careers, goals, aspirations and their fulfillment are all only tools with which to achieve the ultimate goal – cleaving to G-d via His Torah.

Therefore the world in which we live is a world where careful restrictions and boundaries must be legislated by the Creator to train humanity in general, and, more specifically, the Jewish People as the teachers of mankind, that the world has a Creator and Legislator. Only He determines how the world is to be utilized and for what purpose. Therefore, initially, Man was only permitted to partake of part of the world, its vegetation. Even later, when the consumption of animals was permitted, this consumption is informed by many complex halachos – shechitah, eiver min hachai, dam, cheilev, gid hanasheh, and more. The world of the sea, by contrast, represents a truer reality. In the sea, dependency on the water and its analogy to Torah is more manifest. That world does not require all of the restrictions that highlight man's limited control. Hence, fish are "כולו היתר."

We should not be surprised then that talmidei chachamim, in the analogy of the Zohar (Shemini 42a), are compared to fish, recognizing as they do this true Reality. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 97) comments, "Even though fish live and grow in the water, when a drop of rain falls, they receive it with great thirst as if they never tasted water before. So too, the people of Israel grow in the waters of Torah, but when they hear a new Torah insight, they receive it with zest!" The same passage in the Zohar even uses the analogy of one fish swallowing another to illustrate one talmid chacham being "victorious" over another (who has not mastered Torah properly and yet rules in matters of Torah law incorrectly) by proving the latter's view to be incorrect.

This fundamental truth of the purpose of the world was immutable even though the sinners of the generation of the Flood refused to lead their lives by its implications. Hence, the fish, representing this deep, unchanging truth were not destroyed. Fish also never needed the directive to initially limit their diet to vegetation.

Perhaps, based on this approach, we can suggest an insight into the kosher signs of fish. The scales represent armor or defenses similar to a coat of mail referred to as "kaskasim" (I Shmuel 17:5), and the fins represent mobility or functionality. Chazal teach us, "כל שיש לו קשקשת יש לו סנפיר" (Mishnah Niddah 6:9 quoted in Chulin 66b) but not the opposite – all scaled fish have fins, but not all finned fish have scales. Perhaps the message is that only one with armor, protecting the precious truth of the Reality of the world, can function properly in the world. This is notwithstanding the fact that there are many who seemingly function in the world deluding themselves into thinking that they are living Reality - ויש שיש לו סנפיר ואין לו קשקשת some have fins but no scales; they operate in the world without the necessary protection and correct outlook.

שבת קודש represents מעין עולם הבא, a time when we reconnect to the true dimension, to the World of Eternity, of communion with Hashem toward which this world is directed. The whole week is infused with its holiness and draws from its reservoirs. This is, perhaps, the reason for the ancient custom to eat fish on Shabbos – בשר (see Mishnah Berurah 242:2 and the Biur Halachah: "Zeicher"). May we all merit to absorb the message of the sea, constantly sanctifying all aspects of the world to connect to our Ultimate Source. (Reprinted with permission from TorahWeb.org)

שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, Hebrewbooks.org, and the Tanach section of Chabad.org.

We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.