

Rabbi's Column – January 20, 2020

This week's Torah Portion contains the promises that God makes to Moses which wind up being reflected in the cups we drink at the Seder (including Elijah's cup, which originally was not an indication that Elijah was actually going to attend). It also contains many of the plagues with which Egypt was smitten in order to encourage the country and Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave.

The prophetic portion is from Ezekiel. It mentions Egypt and Pharaoh a lot, and at one point it indicates that God will enable the Egyptians to return from their exile. In the meantime, God will place Egypt under the control of the Babylonians.

The Mishnayot which those who have been following the Daf Yomi (page of the day) have come across in their study of the Talmud have so far been mostly about the Shma. When to recite it, when to interrupt one's recitation of it, who is exempt from reciting it are the basics covered. In the process of covering the basics, we actually (even within the Mishnayot themselves) learn about a lot of other practices and some biographical information about a few of the Rabbis.

Practically anything within Jewish texts can be learned in some kind of daily process. One chapter or even one paragraph will eventually get you through any bit of text - whether it is one chapter of Torah, the Prophets, or the Writings on up to one segment of any of the legal codes. A little bit at a time is all any of us ever learn, at least in comparison to how much is available to learn.

May our lives be filled with learning about ourselves, the universe, our basic texts and each other.