Morris Arking, Siryan Customs of Pesah 3/27/2018

Daily Mishne Tora In English – Hames uMassa Chapter 2, by Rabbi Jacob Bitton

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Hilkhot Hamets uMatsa (Laws of Pesah) from Maimonides MISHNE TORA CHAPTER 1

King Hizqiyah’s Tunnel

Creation and Big Bang

Dinosaurs in the Torah? JULY 25, 2017

IF YOU LOVE ME READ MY MIND West Deal Syn. June 28, 2017

[VIDEO] Dinosaurs and the Bible

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyQwo6E59qQ

Rabbi Refael Aharon ben

Shimon (1847-1928)

Rabbi Refael Aharon ben Shimon was born in Rabat, Morocco in 1847. In 1854 he came to Israel with his father, Rabbi David ben Shimon, who was also his main teacher. The family established themselves in Jerusalem. Besides his Rabbinical studies, especially in the field of Jewish law, Rabbi ben Shimon learned European languages. He was fluent in Italian, French and Spanish. In 1890 he visited Morocco and once there, he searched writings that were unpublished and he recommended the establishment of a institution *mekiṣe nirdamim* to publish old books and manuscripts of Moroccan Rabbis which were not accessible to the general people. On his way back from Morocco he was invited to visit the important Jewish community of Egypt. Once there, he was offered to serve as the Chief rabbi of Cairo, instead of the previous rabbi Yom-Tob Israel, who retired from the rabbinate. He served the Egyptian jewish community from 1891 until 1921.

Rabbi Ben Shimon had to face new challenges. The modern world brought about many innovations in technology and social values which needed to be reassessed from an Halakhic perspective. In the introduction of his most famous book, *umiṣur debash*, he mentions a few subjects that he had analyzed in research-like responsas. Among them: the use of electricity and matches on Yom Tob. The use of chariots driven by gentiles for the sake of burying a death during Yom Tob. The assessment of the Cairo water supply system in order to be considered as *mayim lo she-ubim* (non-transported waters), and therefore be suitable for a Mikve. The status of the children of mixed marriages, converts, etc. And the status of a wedding which took place in a private ceremony.

Let me refer briefly to this last issue. Rabbi ben Simon witnessed a new trend. Men coming from Europe would marry a Jewish girl in a private ceremony and then, after a few years of staying in Egypt, these gentlemen would come back to Europe abandoning their wives. These poor women would be considered now*'agunot*, i.e, not formally divorced from their husbands and therefore unable to marry again. Together with rabbi Elyahu Ḥazan from Alexandria and Rabbi Mendel haCohen, the

rabbi of the Ashkenazi community of Cairo (sic.) they forbade the celebration of secret marriage ceremonies, annulling those weddings retroactively (*hafqa'at qiddushin*) and thus, releasing these women from their status of *'aguna*.
(*To be continued…*)