

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1405 JAN 30TH '21 י"ז שבט תשפ"א

פרשת בשלח

PARSHAT BESHALACH

ב"ה
Over
40
Years
טו ישראל

SHABBAT SHIRA ▶



**SPECIAL FOR
SHABBAT SHIRA
SONG IN
JUDAISM**
Ari Goldwag
Singer-Songwriter
page 40



**OU ISRAEL
KASHRUT PAGE**
Rabbi Ezra Friedman
Director, The Gustave &
Carol Jacobs Center
for Kashrut Education
page 42

אז ישיר משה
ובני ישראל

שמות פרק ט"ו, פסוק א'

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT BESHALACH

Candles 4:35PM • Havdala 5:50PM • Rabbeinu Tam 6:29PM

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

When life flows from the past through the present to the great future that appears and illuminates, then life is complete.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l, Ma'amrei HaRa'ayah, p.18

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CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	BESHALACH	HAVDALA	YITRO	
			Candles	Havdala
4:35	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:50	4:41	5:56
4:53	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	5:53	4:59	5:59
4:54	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:51	5:00	5:57
4:51	Gush Etzion	5:50	4:57	5:56
4:51	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	5:51	4:57	5:57
4:51	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:51	4:57	5:57
4:51	Netanya	5:51	4:57	5:57
4:53	Be'er Sheva	5:52	4:59	5:58
4:52	Rehovot	5:52	4:58	5:57
4:35	Petach Tikva	5:51	4:41	5:57
4:50	Ginot Shomron	5:50	4:56	5:56
4:39	Haifa / Zichron	5:50	4:46	5:56
4:49	Gush Shiloh	5:49	4:56	5:55
4:51	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:51	4:58	5:57
4:50	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:50	4:57	5:56
4:51	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:51	4:57	5:57
4:53	Ashkelon	5:53	4:59	5:59
4:52	Yad Binyamin	5:52	4:58	5:57
4:42	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:47	4:49	5:54
4:47	Golan	5:47	4:54	5:53

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 6:29 PM • next week - 6:35 pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

**RANGES 11 DAYS WED - SHABBAT
14 - 24 SHEVAT (JAN. 27 - FEB. 6)**

Earliest Talit and Tefilin	5:42 - 5:36am
Sunrise	6:35 - 6:28am
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema	9:12 - 9:10am (Magen Avraham: 8:35 - 8:32am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	10:05 - 10:04am (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)
Chatzot (Halachic noon)	11:50 - 11:51am
Mincha Gedola	12:20 - 12:21pm (Earliest Mincha)
Plag Mincha	4:00 - 4:07pm
Sunset (counting elevation)	5:05 - 5:15pm

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Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

One of the advantages of working from home is getting to see the change of seasons in front of my eyes. It has been almost a year since Israel's first lockdown, and as I work at my dining room table I have a view of our garden to my right. Most years, traveling abroad for work and arriving home after dark when I am in Israel prevent me from appreciating the beauty of the changes of nature which occur in my very own backyard.

We have a large Shekediya (almond tree) behind my house, and this time of year it is in full bloom. As the Shekediya has become a symbol for Tu B'Shvat, I have been reflecting on this holiday more than usual. Over the past few weeks I have seen it grow and blossom with more flowers each day.

In addition to the beautiful Shekediya, we are blessed to have four trees of the Shivat HaMinim in our backyard: grapes, olives, pomegranates and figs. The olive tree has leaves year-round and can

easily be identified. Yet, this time of year the grape, pomegranate and fig trees are dry trunks and branches without even a single leaf. While they may look dead, my brother in law shared an interesting gardening lesson. He taught me that even though they look dead, it is important not to trim them during this time of the winter because underneath the dry branches there is life. If one were to cut them open, one would see that they are full of blossoming just below the surface. Cutting them now would kill the potential flowers and fruits which are waiting for the right time to sprout, and once these trees bloom they will be even more beautiful than the other trees that keep their leaves in the winter.

Why am I sharing this? My work with teens and raising my 9 (Blei Ayain Hara) children has taught me that it is so important to look beneath the surface. As an educator and parent, it is crucial to train oneself to look inside his/her children. Just like we need to see the potential beneath the branches of a dry tree, we must see the potential in each and every youth. We must water them with love and patience so that their individual potentials can blossom.

I must credit the OU Israel staff for helping me realize this important lesson. Last Thursday night, I was at the Zula with Shalom Eisner, Corona Projector for the Municipality of Yerushalayim. We were

In loving memory of
Rabbi Dr. O. Asher Reichel זצ"ל
on his ninth yearzeit, י"ט שבט
From the Bronner and Reichel Families

discussing how to continue to operate the Zula when the teenagers aren't always interested in complying with corona guidelines, such as not properly wearing their masks. Due to Corona, the Zula is operating outside its usual location on Yaffo Street since we cannot be inside. The cold in Yerushalayim was frigid, and my hands remained in my pockets while I shuffled my body to try and stay warm. Yet, a few meters in front of me our Zula counselors were strumming their guitars and sitting calmly as they listened to the youth unburden themselves. They were seeing the potential in these kids and watering them with acceptance and love because they know that they will be the future blossoming leaders of the Jewish people.



Avi
Executive Director, OU Israel



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BESHALACH



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Director of RCA
Israel Region

Paro pursues, the sea splits, the people sing. The people traveled and complained for water in Mara, for bread and meat in the Desert of Sin and for water in Refidim. Amalek attacked and was defeated.



1st aliya (13:17-14:8) G-d guides the Jews in the direction of the Sea. Moshe takes Yosef's bones.

A cloud guides them by day, fire by night. G-d instructs them to avoid the straight route to the Land of Israel, for fear that return to Egypt will be too easy. Rather camp at the sea so that Paro will notice. I will harden his heart and he will pursue, in order that Egypt will know that I am G-d. Paro led his elite chariots in pursuit.

Our parsha introduces a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people: the

Condolences to
Feygah Sarah Friedman
and family on the passing of her husband,
Simcha z"l

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

chapter of national freedom. A cloud has hung over the people from the moment Avraham was told: your people will be afflicted in a foreign land for 400 years. 7 complete parshas, from the sale of Yosef til now, have told that story.

But now with freedom comes the challenge of living. Being a free people is a wonderful concept: but a hard reality.

Even G-d Himself is concerned that the people will balk at the uncertainties of freedom; they will wish for the comfort of the certainties of slave life. And will want to return to Egypt. Hence He diverts them to a circuitous route.



2nd aliya (14:9-14) When Paro's army approaches, the people are afraid. They cry to G-d and

say to Moshe: why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? We would have preferred to be slaves in Egypt than die in the desert. Moshe tells them not to fear, for they are about to see G-d's redemption.

The focus of the Torah changes dramatically. There have been 4 main figures in this story: G-d, Moshe, Paro and the Jewish people. But one has been absent from most of the story: the Jewish people. We have heard precious little about the Jewish people in the entire story of the Exodus. Moshe, upon G-d's direction confronted Paro. Moshe received the mitzvot before the plague of the firstborn. All we hear of the Jews is that they did all that G-d commanded concerning the pesach offering. Even the dramatic night of the Exodus, when Paro ordered them to leave, we hear only of their receipt of gold

and silver and scrambling for provisions, with no time for the dough to rise.

What about joy and celebration? And of fear; concern, fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear of vulnerability, fear of retribution from Paro? What of their emotions, their thoughts?

All of that changes here. Now we hear of their struggles, their worries, their concerns. Because up until here, the narrative has been from G-d's perspective – in order to teach the lesson of G-d's Hand in the world. Now the focus shifts to the Jews. We have learnt His lessons. Now we have to live it. And that brings us to fear, joy, uncertainty, disappointment, and vulnerability – all that makes people human.



3rd aliya (14:15-25) G-d instructs Moshe to raise his hand so the sea will split. And that He will

harden the heart of Egypt in order that He be glorified through Paro and his entourage. And Egypt will know I am G-d. Moshe did so; the people entered the dry land in the sea with the waters as walls on both sides. The Egyptians followed; at morning they became trapped in the sea.

The splitting of the sea renews the theme of water as a symbol of beginnings. Water featured in Creation; in Moshe's cradle in the river; and now. Beginning of the world, beginning of the Exodus and now, the beginning of Jewish national life. Jewish national life begins with the Jews stepping into the water. It is no longer just His miracles; we participate as partners in His plan. Taking that first step into the water.

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4th aliya (14:26-15:26) The water returned and drowned all the Egyptians. The Jewish people saw the Egyptian dead, saw the Hand of G-d, feared G-d, believing in Him and Moshe. Moshe and the people sang “Az Yashir: I will sing to G-d, my strength, my savior, my G-d. He is the One of War. Your Hand is powerful, Your Hand vanquishes enemies. Nations will fear Him. G-d will reign forever.” Miriam led the women in song. Moshe led the people to the desert to Mara. The people complained for water. G-d instructed Moshe to throw wood and sweeten the water.

In the great song at the sea, we have emotion released. The people sing. Divine redemption demands a human response. In fact, when we quote the exodus from Egypt in our tefila, we add a mention of the Shira – redemption need be accompanied by our song, Shira.

Here we find joy, appreciation, elation and faith. And while the entire people sing with Moshe, the song is curiously in the first person singular: I sing, My strength (the English doesn't note singular but in Hebrew “Azi”, my, singular, strength.) This is personal, individual – mine, not ours. We all sang the song at the sea; yet in the singular. My G-d saved me.

In fact, though I am merely speculating, this could be the source for the phrase in the Haggada “Each person is required to view himself as leaving Egypt”. If we are exact in recounting the story in Egypt, we must note that each person, individually, personally sang the song in the singular:

My G-d saved me, My G-d fought the battle. And so, in telling the story of the nation at the seder, we too must feel individually our place in that story, just as the individual Jew did at that time.



5th aliya (15:27-16:10) They traveled to the desert of Sin. They complained: oh that we would have remained in Egypt with the abundance of bread and meat. The manna was provided in the morning: gather enough for a day, on Friday for 2 days. G-d appeared in a cloud.

The series of complaints begins the sticky business of being a people. However lofty freedom be, human concerns are often more immediate. They complain for water, bread, meat and water again. Moshe is exasperated.

Moshe's frustration is highlighted. In order to emphasize who the real leader is here. The entire Exodus story is the story

OU Israel mourns the loss of **Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari z'l**

who was an economist and author whose work in the field of Jewish Business Ethics was world renowned. He was among the first individuals to teach university courses, write scholarly works, and establish a study center in this field.

For many years Torah Tidbits was honored to share his weekly teachings in these pages. His involvement with Torah Tidbits and OU Israel were a source of great pride in his life.

Condolences to the family on his passing

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

of Divine intervention. He freed us; Moshe merely raised his staff. He split the sea; Moshe merely raised his staff. And He cares for us; Moshe merely hit the rock with his staff. It is not the story of Moshe, the charismatic leader, taking his people to freedom. It is the story of G-d, using His trusty servant to take His people to freedom. And to care for them.



6th aliya (16:11-36) Meat will come in the evening. Each person shall gather manna daily

for their needs. Some people saved for the next day; it spoiled. And some went to gather on Shabbat. G-d questioned: how long will you resist doing My commands? G-d has given you Shabbat, hence gives you double on Friday. Aharon, take a portion of manna to preserve forever. The Jewish people ate the manna for 40 years.

Shabbat precedes the giving of the Torah. The Mitzvah of Shabbat is the 4th of the Ten Commandments. Yet, here already, before Mt. Sinai, is the notion of Shabbat. Prepare what you need on Friday. Gather double on Friday. Do not gather on Shabbat. Because none will fall.

There is an irony to give the manna and Shabbat at the same time. 6 days you shall work. The seventh is a day of rest. But, they are being given their food falling from heaven. What work are they doing for six days?

Here, in a non-work environment, there is Shabbat. It is meant not only as a day off from the hard work of the week. It is a holy day, a rendezvous with the Shechina. The lack of work is a means to the end of spiritual focus. An intimate day with the

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Shechina is meaningful – whether after 6 days of work or not.



7th **aliya (17:1-16)** There was no water in Refidim. The people complained, as did Moshe.

Moshe was instructed to hit the rock; water was produced. Amalek attacked in Refidim. Yehoshua defeated Amalek. A remembrance of this war need be recorded.

The juxtaposition of the war of Amalek with all that came before is instructive. The Divine provided us with: redemption from slavery, intervention at the sea, water, food, meat, water again. It would seem that Amalek is attacking that reality. A people with a G-d that protects and provides – that is a people I attack.

The enemies of the Jewish people view us as the people of G-d. A people protected by His Hand. That provokes jealousy, resentment and denial. Of that we need no commentary. ■

HAFTORAH BESHALACH

SHOFTIM 4:4-5:31

This week's *haftorah* describes the decimation of the army of the Canaanites along with its' general Sisera. In response to this awesome event, Devorah offers a song of thanks. This is a parallel to the song sung by Moshe and the Israelites with the drowning of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea.

Devorah, who was a prophetess, relays a message to Barak son of Avinoam conveying the precise instructions from

Hashem: “Go and gather your men toward Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zevulun. And I shall draw to you, to the brook Kishon, Sisera, the chieftain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will give him into your hand.” Barak requests that Devrorah remain at his side and together head into battle.

Although Sisera was aware of the Israelite's mobilization, Barak's army, with the help of Heaven, the Israelite's utterly destroy Sisera and his troops.

When Sisera saw that his end was near he quickly fled on foot and arrived at the tent of Yael, wife of Hever the Kenite. Yael invited the general in and offered him a place of refuge. When he fell asleep, Yael took a tent-peg and with it killed the powerful general, the dangerous enemy of the Israelite nation.

The soaring song of Devorah describing the miraculous victory is undoubtedly the highlight of this Shabbat's magnificent haftorah! ■



STATS

16th of 54 sedras; 4th of 11 in Sh'mot
Written on 215.33 lines (17th)
14 parshiot; 9 open, 5 closed
116 p'sukim - rank: 23 (6th in Sh'mot) 1
681 words - rank: 19 (4th in Sh'mot)
6423 letters - rank: 18 (4th in Sh'mot)



MITZVOT

BESHALACH contains a single mitzvah of the 613, the prohibition of leaving one's Shabbat boundary - T'CHUM SHABBAT



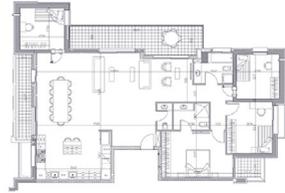
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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

The Redemptive Experience

For several weeks now, we have attempted to define the nature of redemption, *geulah*, in this column. We have struggled with the challenge posed by the Passover Haggadah: “In every generation, each one of us is obligated to see himself as if he had personally left Egypt.”

We have argued that this might not be a requirement to imagine ourselves as shackled slaves who are miraculously enabled to shed our shackles and to march confidently into an unknown wilderness.

Rather, we suggested that the Haggadah is simply challenging us to experience personal redemption. We defined “personal redemption” as does *Ramban*,

Condolences to
Zeev & Rina Golin
and family on the passing
of their daughter
Noa a”h

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Nachmanides, in his introduction to the book of Exodus. There, he writes: “Redemption, *geulah*, means recovering the status of our forefathers.” By this, he means engaging in self-improvement so that one recaptures the moral and ethical stature of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the past three columns, we outlined specific qualities that our Forefathers possessed, qualities that we can put to use in our own lives.

In this week’s column, we will describe two additional such qualities, drawing upon two analyses of a text in this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Beshalach* (Exodus 13:17-17:16).

The text to which I refer is near the very beginning of the “Song of the Sea,” the triumphant hymn of Moses and the Sons of Israel after miraculously experiencing the splitting of the Reed Sea, the *Yam Suf*. There, we escaped our pursuers and witnessed enemy’s descent into the depths of the sea.

The relevant passage reads:

“...They said: I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously;

Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and might;

He has become my salvation.

This is my God, and I will glorify Him;

The God of my father, and I will exalt Him.

Regrettably, I had only one occasion to converse with the great novelist and devout Jew, Herman Wouk. He is mostly remembered for his prize-winning novel, *The Caine Mutiny*. But for me, and for many of my contemporaries, his masterpiece was his book about Judaism, *This Is My God*.

Herman Wouk “borrowed” the title of his book from the above text. But he informed me that he would have preferred to use the entire sentence as a title and to have called his book “This Is My God... The God Of My Father”. For, he explained to me, each of us has our own relationship with the Almighty which is unique and special. But each of us also must relate to the Almighty in terms of our Forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and internalize the life lessons that they all exemplified.

Let us now examine how two commentators interpret our text. I begin with a passage in the posthumously published essays of a Holocaust victim, Rabbi Abraham Grodzinski. Rabbi Grodzinski was the moral guide for the hundreds of students of the Slobodka Yeshiva during the immediate pre-Holocaust years.

In this essay, Rabbi Grodzinski points out the connection between the phrase “horse and driver He has hurled into the sea,” a phrase which graphically describes the bitter end toward which evildoers are destined, and the phrases “This is my



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God... the God of my father.” He writes, “This song about the punishment of Egypt is an expression of the hatred one must bear, not to those who perpetrate evil, but rather to evil itself.”

He goes on to say that moral perfection must be prefaced by the recognition that there is indeed evil in the world and that one must disdain that evil. Only then can one begin to transform evil, to correct evil, and to appreciate the Almighty fully. The pious person is not naïve but recognizes the darkness that resides in the world. Without that recognition, we cannot achieve the “status of our Forefathers,” who knew evil and combated it, each in his own way. And so must we.

Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv, who passed away decades before the Holocaust but was also a moral guide for many yeshiva students, has a different take upon this text. He was known fondly by his students as the *Alter*, the “Old Man,” of Kelm. He juxtaposes the phrase “He has become my salvation, my *yeshuah*” with the phrases “This is my God... The God of my father”.

Rather daringly, the *Alter* suggests that just as the Lord is our salvation, so too can we “save” Him! You may ask, “How can one ‘save’ the Almighty?”

To answer this question, the *Alter* relates the story of Shimon ben Shetach, as it is told in the Jerusalem Talmud.

Shimon ben Shetach was a scholar who was once quite poor. His disciples purchased him a donkey to enable him to travel. They obtained the donkey from an

Ishmaelite, an Arab. When Shimon ben Shetach was about to mount the donkey, he spotted a tiny object in the saddle. He soon realized that the object was a large diamond. He asked the disciples for the identity of the original owner in order to return the diamond to him. The disciples objected and argued that the diamond was his to keep.

Shimon ben Shetach famously responded, “I purchased a donkey. I did not purchase a diamond.”

The Ishmaelite was so impressed by the fact that Shimon ben Shetach returned the diamond that he exclaimed, “Blessed is the God of Shimon ben Shetach.”

The *Alter* offers the story as but one example of a person’s ability to “save God;” that is, to bring glory to His name. “Thus,” concludes the *Alter*, “The Almighty brought us salvation, and we too can bring ‘salvation’ to Him.”

It has now been four consecutive weeks that we have identified the moral virtues of our Forefathers. We can now “see ourselves as redeemed from Egypt.” At least to a modest degree, we can attain the “status of our Forefathers.”

In conclusion, by way of review of the previous *parsha* columns, let us list some of the components of the moral and ethical stature of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Firstly, as we saw in *Parshat Shemot*, each of them was a *yashar*. As defined by *Netziv*, a *yashar* is an individual who relates cooperatively and constructively with individuals who differ from him religiously

and culturally, without prejudice.

Secondly, as we saw in *Parshat Va'era*, each of our Forefathers was able to tolerate great frustration without losing their faith in the Almighty.

Thirdly, again in *Parshat Va'era*, each of them was grateful to the Almighty for the everyday blessings that most of us take for granted.

Fourthly, this time in last week's *Parshat Bo*, they each demonstrated *Kreatur-gefühl*, a deep awareness of having been created by the Almighty.

In this week's Torah portion, two early twentieth century spiritual guides brought two additional characteristics of the "redeemed" individual to our attention.

Rabbi Grodzinski taught that the "redeemed" individual does not ignore the prevalence of evil in the world but disdains it and confronts it wisely and successfully.

And Rabbi Ziv, the *Alter*, gifted us with the insight that our relationship with the Almighty can be reciprocal. Yes, He is our Savior. But we can reciprocate His salvation by bringing honor to His name by acting ethically and honestly, even in the face of temptation.

As we draw ever closer to the Passover holiday, *Chag HaPesach*, we now have learned of no less than six paths to redemption, six paths to "seeing ourselves as if we personally were redeemed from Egypt."

Which of the six will you choose as your path? Or will you try your hand at all six? ■

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Looking Up

The Israelites had crossed the Red Sea. The impossible had happened. The mightiest army in the ancient world – the Egyptians with their cutting-edge, horse-drawn chariots – had been defeated and drowned. The children of Israel were now free. But their relief was short-lived. Almost immediately they faced attack by the Amalekites, and they had to fight a battle, this time with no apparent miracles from God. They did so and won. This was a decisive turning point in history, not only for the Israelites but for Moses and his leadership of the people.

The contrast between before and after the Red Sea could not be more complete. Before, facing the approaching Egyptians, Moses said to the people: “Stand still and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today ... The Lord will fight for

you; you need only be silent.” (Ex. 14:13) In other words: do nothing. God will do it for you. And He did.

In the case of the Amalekites, however, Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men for us, and prepare for battle against Amalek.” (Ex. 17:9) Joshua did so and the people waged war. This was the great transition: The Israelites moved from a situation in which the leader (with the help of God) did everything for the people, to one in which the leader empowered the people to act for themselves.

During the battle, the Torah focuses our attention on one detail. Moses climbs to the top of a hill overlooking the battlefield, with a staff in his hand:

As long as Moses held his hands up, the Israelites prevailed, but when he let his hands down, the Amalekites prevailed. When Moses’ hands became weary, they took a stone and placed it under him, so that he would be able to sit on it. Aaron and Chur then held his hands, one on each side, and his hands remained steady until sunset. (Ex. 17:11-12)

What is going on here? The passage could be read in two ways: The staff in Moses’ raised hand – the very staff which

he used to perform mighty miracles in Egypt and at the sea – might be a sign that the Israelites’ victory was a miraculous one. Alternatively, it might simply be a reminder to the Israelites that God was with them, giving them strength.

Very unusually – since the Mishnah in general is a book of law rather than biblical commentary – a Mishnah resolves the question:

Did the hands of Moses make or break [the course of the] war? Rather, the text implies that whenever the Israelites looked up and dedicated their hearts to their Father in heaven, they prevailed, but otherwise they fell.¹

The Mishnah is clear. Neither the staff nor Moses’ upraised hands were performing a miracle. They were simply reminding the Israelites to look up to heaven and remember that God was with them. Their faith gave them the confidence and courage to win.

A fundamental principle of leadership is being taught here. A leader must empower the team. They cannot always do the work for the group; they must do it for themselves. But the leader must, at the same time, give them the absolute confidence that they can do it and succeed. The leader is responsible for their mood and morale. During battle, a captain must betray no sign of weakness, doubt or fear. That is not always easy, as we see in this week’s episode. Moses’ upraised hands “became weary.” All leaders have their moments of exhaustion and at such times

1 Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 3:8.



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the leader needs support – even Moses needed the help of Aaron and Hur, who then helped him to maintain his position. In the end, though, his upraised hands were the sign the Israelites needed that God was giving them the strength to prevail, and they did.

In today's terminology, a leader needs emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman, best known for his work in this field, argues that one of the most important tasks of a leader is to shape and lift the mood of the team:

Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal: Great leadership works through the emotions.²

Groups have an emotional temperature. As individuals they can be happy or sad, agitated or calm, fearful or confident. But when they come together as a group, a process of attuning – “emotional contagion” – takes place, and they begin to share the same feeling. Scientists have shown experimentally how, within fifteen minutes of starting a conversation, two people begin to converge in the physiological markers of mood, such as pulse rate. “When three strangers sit facing each other in silence for a minute or two, the one who is most emotionally expressive transmits their mood to the other two – without speaking a single

2 Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership*, (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press), 2002, 3.

word.”³ The physiological basis of this process, known as *mirroring*, has been much studied in recent years, and observed even among primates. It is the basis of empathy, through which we enter into and share other people's feelings.

This is the foundation for one of the most important roles of a leader. It is he or she who, more than others, determines the mood of the group. Goleman reports on several scientific studies showing how leaders play a key role in determining the group's shared emotions:

Leaders typically talked more than anyone else, and what they said was listened to more carefully ... But the impact on emotions goes beyond what a leader says. In these studies, even when leaders were not talking, they were watched more carefully than anyone else in the group. When people raised a question for the group as a whole, they would keep their eyes on the leader to see his or her response. Indeed, group members generally see the leader's emotional reaction as the most valid response,

3 *Ibid.*, 7.

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and so model their own on it – particularly in an ambiguous situation, where various members react differently. In a sense, the leader sets the emotional standard.⁴

When it comes to leadership, even non-verbal cues are important. Leaders, at least in public, must project confidence even when they are inwardly full of doubts and hesitations. If they betray their private fears in word or gesture, they risk demoralising the group.

There is no more powerful example of this than the episode in which King David's son Absalom mounts a *coup d'etat* against his father, proclaiming himself king in his place. David's troops put down the rebellion, in the course of which Absalom's hair gets tangled in a tree and he is stabbed to death by Joab, David's commander-in-chief.

When he hears this news, David is heartbroken. His son may have rebelled against him, but he is still his son and his death is devastating. David covers his face crying, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" News of David's grief quickly spreads throughout the army, and they too – by emotional contagion – are overcome by mourning. Joab regards this as disastrous. The army have taken great risks to fight for David against his son. They cannot now lament their victory without creating confusion and fatefully undermining their morale:

Then Joab went into the house to the King and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved

4 *Ibid.*, 8.

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King David does as Joab insists. He accepts that there is a time and place for grief, but not now, not here, and above all, not in public. Now is the time to thank the army for their courage in defence of the King.

A leader must sometimes silence their private emotions to protect the morale of those they lead. In the case of the battle against Amalek, the first battle the Israelites had to fight for themselves, Moses had a vital role to perform. He had to give the people confidence by getting them to look up.

In 1875 an amateur archaeologist, Marcelino de Sautuola, began excavating the ground in a cave in Altamira near the north coast of Spain. At first, he found little to interest him, but his curiosity was rekindled by a visit to the Paris exhibition of 1878 where a collection of Ice Age instruments and art objects was on display. Determined to see whether he could find equally ancient relics, he returned to the cave in 1879.

One day he took his nine-year-old daughter Maria with him. While he was searching through the rubble, she wandered deeper into the cave and to her amazement saw something on the wall above her. "Look, Papa, oxen," she said. They were, in fact, bison. She had made one of the great discoveries of prehistoric art of all time. The magnificent Altamira cave paintings, between 25,000 and 35,000 years old, were so unprecedented a finding that it took twenty-two years for their authenticity to be accepted. For four years Sautoula had been within a few feet of a monumental treasure, but he had missed it for one reason. He had forgotten to look up.

This is one of the enduring themes of Tanach: the importance of looking up. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things," says Isaiah (Is. 40:26). "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From there will my help come" said King David in Psalm 121. In Deuteronomy, Moses tells the Israelites that the Promised Land will not be like the flat plain of the Nile Delta where water is plentiful and in regular supply. It will be a land of hills and valleys, entirely dependent on unpredictable rain (Deut. 11:10-11). It will be a landscape that forces its inhabitants to look up. That is what Moses did for the people in their first battle. He taught them to look up.

No political, social or moral achievement is without formidable obstacles. There are vested interests to be confronted, attitudes to be changed, resistances to be overcome. The problems are immediate, the ultimate goal often frustratingly far away. Every collective undertaking is like leading a

nation across the wilderness towards a destination that is always more distant than it seems when you look at the map.

Look down at the difficulties and you can give way to despair. The only way to sustain energies, individual or collective, is to turn our gaze up toward the far horizon of hope. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once said that his aim in philosophy was “to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle”. The fly is trapped in the bottle. It searches for a way out. Repeatedly it bangs its head against the glass until at last, exhausted, it dies. Yet the bottle has been open all the time. The one thing the fly forgets to do is to look up. So, sometimes, do we.

It is the task of a leader to empower, but it is also their task to inspire. That is what Moses did when, at the top of a hill, in full sight of the people, he raised his hands and his staff to heaven. When they saw this, the people knew they could prevail. “Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit,” said the Prophet (Zechariah 4:6). Jewish history is a sustained set of variations on this theme.

A small people that, in the face of difficulty, continues to look up will win great victories and achieve great things. ■

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THE PROPHETS

It seems that each time I review the story of Devorah HaNeviah, the prophetess Devorah, and the victory of Israel over the Canaanites, I learn new thing or unveil a new concept that I had not understood before. Over the past five years, I have, in these pages, shared the many similarities between the events in the haftarah and those we read in the parasha. They share not only the victory over an oppressive enemy and the resultant song of victory and praise to Hashem, but even the destruction of the enemy armies through their “entrapment” in the marshy ground, which made their many chariots ineffective. Likewise, both battles were fought upon the command by G-d to His prophets, both clashes left but one survivor (“lo nish’ar...ad echad”) and after both wars, a woman prophetess sang a “shira”-Miriam together with the women and Devora together with her general, Barak. There are, of course, other parallels

between the two stories, as the G’mara in Pesachim (118b) enumerates, but I was struck recently at a parallel that I had not previously realized.

“Aseh lahem ...k’Sisra k”Yavin b’Nachal Kishon. Nishm’du b’Ein Dor, hayu domen la’adama”. The psalmist turns to Hashem (Sefer Tehillim 83: 11-12) asking Him to defeat Israel’s enemies as He had done to Sisra and his king Yavin. Given the miraculous victories that G-d had wrought for Israel over the years, I was curious as to why David HaMelech chose this war, the war fought by Devorah and Barak against the K’na’anim, as a “model” of a complete victory for which he prayed. And it dawned on me that this battle was the very last one that B’nai Yisra’el were to fight against any of the local Canaanite tribes. It was a total victory which, as the final words of the haftarah indicate, provided for a forty year era of peace. And, in this way as well, the saga of Devorah parallels the story in the parasha, for, after all, this too was a complete victory and was the very last battle that the Israelites would have to wage against the Egyptians for many years.

I would like to add, however, two differences between the two stories that are important to note. The newly freed slaves at Yam Suf were incapable of facing the Egyptians. They cried out to Moshe

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that they preferred remaining slaves to the Egyptians than meeting their inevitable deaths in the desert. Their perception of their oppressors as still being their “masters” weakened any resolve they may have had to fight them. Moshe silenced their cries by reassuring them by saying: “Hashem yilachem lachem” (“Hashem will fight for you...”). Devorah, however, turns to her general, Barak, and directs him to gather an army from Yissachar and Zevulun, turning to all of the tribes with the call to join Barak in battle.

The difference between fighting their own war rather than have G-d fight for them may well have been due to the second difference I alluded to. The threat of Sisera and his army was not simply to control Israel and demand tribute and taxation from them. The perek in Tehillim makes it quite clear that their purpose was “nirsha lanu et neot Elokim”, “to conquer the “meadows” of Hashem-i.e., Eretz Yisrael! And when your own land, promised to you by Hashem, is threatened, you cannot sit idly by and say, as Moshe had to tell the nation, “Hashem yilachem lachem”, G-d will fight for you. No. It is not up to G-d alone to fight for your land. He will help you in battle but will not do so by Himself.

The essence of victory is Man’s efforts and Hashem’s support. Hashem expected that of D’vora and Barak.

Hashem expects no less from us! ■

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Which Regulations Were Transmitted At Mara?

After Bnei Yisrael cross Yam Suf, they travel for three days without water, until they arrive at Mara. There Hashem sweetens their water and we are told *שם שם לו חק ומשפט* – there they were informed about *chok and mishpat* (certain rules and regulations). What were these laws that were transmitted to Bnei Yisrael at this juncture? We will offer three interpretations.

Rashi:

Rashi citing chazal, explains that the term *chok* and *mishpat* refer to the following laws that were commanded in Mara: the laws of *Shabbos*, *Parah Aduma* (the red heifer) and *dinim* (court system).

Ramban:

The Ramban is somewhat troubled with Rashi's interpretation. If these laws were in fact commanded at Mara, why are they not preceded with a statement such as: "these are the laws to command Bnei Yisrael" *צו את בני ישראל* as is stated on many

other occasions? Therefore, the Ramban suggests that these laws were perhaps "conveyed" to Bnei Yisrael in Mara, but they were not officially "commanded" until Matan Torah. Bnei Yisrael were not obligated to observe them yet. It was a sort of *heads up* as to the type of *mitzvos* that will be commanded in the near future. It was like a trial run – to see how we accept and observe these commandments, which is why immediately thereafter the *pasuk* states *v'sham nisau* *ושם נסו* (there they were tested).

The Ramban then offers an alternative explanation. *Chok u'mispat* refer to societal laws. When Bnei Yisrael entered the desert, they need to learn how to function as a self-sufficient independent nation. *Chok* is a term that refers to customary behaviors as well. They had to learn how to treat their fellow Jew and perhaps after complaining of a lack of water, how to speak respectfully to Hashem as well. As slaves they lacked an understanding of proper social behavior. That is why after they crossed Yam Suf, at their first stop over, they were taught social norms and how to build a function-

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ing society. Something that does not come naturally, especially for people who were subject to slavery for generations. This is consistent with the Ramban's explanation in Parshas Vayishlach (Bereshis 34:13), where he describes "dinim" as laws of a functioning society.

Rabbenu Bahya:

Rabbenu Bahya offers a different approach based on a literal reading of the text. Given the context, he suggests that the laws revealed to Bnei Yisrael were horticultural expertise. Immediately preceding this pasuk we are told of how Moshe inserted a branch into the water to sweeten it and make it drinkable. At that moment, Bnei Yisrael were informed of other agricultural secrets. They were taught the rules of survival in a desert. Which vegetation is edible and which is poisonous. Which sweeten and which make food bitter. Which flora can heal naturally and which require some sort of *segula*. That is what is meant by *chok umishpat*. The natural and supernatural remedies.

The very next pasuk states: "if you listen to God... and listen to His commands – the illnesses that existed in Mitzrayim will not affect you, because I am God the healer. *אני ה' רופאך*. This is to underscore that although Hashem is revealing these medicinal cures, He is the ultimate Healer.

Recently in Daf Yomi (Pesachim 56a) we learned that King Hezkia was *nignaz (hid)* the book of medicinal therapies. One of the reasons given for his act is that people began to believe in the treatments and forgot that it was Hashem who was ultimate-

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ly responsible for their being cured. Here we are warned to always remember – that Hashem is the Healer- not the medications.

During this worldwide pandemic – people are anxious about getting vaccinated. Of course, we should do our *histadlus* and get vaccinated, but at the same time, we must continue to daven for a refuah and recognize that the ultimate healer is the Almighty. The gemara in Berachos (60a) cited by many poskim, suggests that before one takes medication, one ought to recite a short prayer reminding us that our reliance is on Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׂיִהְיֶה לִּי עֶסֶק
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May the ultimate Healer, grant us all good health so we can serve Him properly. ■

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Tribute to the Trio

In a deeply powerful scene, Moshe Rabbeinu is found with his hands held high on top of the mountain praying for the people gripped in a raging battle with Amalek below. Ahron and Chur stood on either side of Moshe Rabbeinu holding his hands aloft (*Shemot 17;10*). Rashi teaches that Chur was the son of Moshe's sister, Miriam. What more do we know about Chur? What is the symbolism of his joining with Ahron to support the hands of Moshe Rabbeinu?

Rabbi Roberts in *Through the Prism of Torah* explains that Ahron and Chur personified contrasting character traits. Ahron was a peacemaker, he constantly looked for ways to create harmony among his people. Indeed, he was ready to compromise his own values to achieve this goal, as we see in the story of the sin of the golden calf. Chur,

on the other hand, was a person who stood strong in his values, unbending and resolute in his beliefs. Chazal teach that Chur tried to challenge the people when they wanted to build the calf and they subsequently killed him. Chur, a descendent of Yehudah, was a person who was inflexible and strong like a lion. Truly, a combination of both qualities is necessary. In interpersonal relationships it is wise to follow Ahron's path, to compromise and make peace whenever possible. However, in the service of Hashem and reinforcing *kevod shamayim*, one needs to follow Chur's example and be resolute in his values. These two special people joined Moshe Rabbeinu to activate the merits of these approaches as he implored Hashem to have mercy on His people and vanquish Amalek, physically and spiritually.

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Rav Schwab in *Maayan Beit Hashoeva* notes that the word 'echad' is repeated in describing each person standing on either side of Moshe Rabbeinu (*Shemot 17:12*). This emphasis reflects the unique *middah* of each one, singular to their personalities. Moshe Rabbeinu, standing between them, synthesized the two.

Rav Druk in *Aish Tamid* understands this three-way dynamic from quite a different angle. Amalek was the personification of evil, driven to destroy the spiritual world of the Jewish People. This war was about keeping the Hashem's nation and their world intact. A Jew's sphere revolves on three major principles, *Torah, avodah and gemilut chasadim*. Rav Druk maintains that each of these was represented by Moshe, Ahron and Chur. Moshe Rabbeinu symbolized the world of Torah, as he was the one who brought Torah down to *Am Yisrael*. Ahron *HaKohen* officiated in the *avodah* of the *mikdash*. Chur, son of Miriam the midwife, embodied *chesed*. In this episode, the Torah teaches us to unite these three pillars to protect and solidify our worlds, both on a national level as well as on a personal one. ■



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Sweet Waters

One day, when the Baal Shem Tov was standing outside his house with his students, they saw Cheikel the water *shlepper* coming down the street with two heavy pails of water on his shoulders. The Baal Shem Tov noticed that Chaikel was without his usual smile, and inquired as to his well being. “Oy, Rebbe”, *krechted* the water shlepper, hunched over and tired, “to tell you the truth, I’m feeling so down. I’m getting older, losing strength every day. *Yidden* are building new homes and moving up the hillsides, how am I supposed to *shlep* up there with heavy buckets on my back? It’s taking me so long to complete my route, and I’m losing money every day. Rebbe, things are really tough....”

The next morning, the Baal Shem Tov was once again standing with his students

outside of his house as Cheikel passed by shlepping his water. This time, as he approached, Cheikel had some spring in his step, and looked a head taller than the day before. The Baal Shem Tov greeted him and again asked how he was. This time, Cheikel responded with a big smile, “Rebbe, *chasdei Hashem*, all is well! Every day and it’s new opportunities, new challenges and new mountains to climb. What a privilege to be in the service of others!”

Cheikel joyfully made his way up the hill, leaving a group of baffled talmidim in his wake. They looked at their Rebbe in disbelief. It was as if they had seen two different people, two different Cheikels! Said the Baal Shem Tov: “*Chevreh*, it’s the same Cheikel, the same water pails, the same *shlep* to the houses high upon the hills. Cheikel is a *vasertreiger*, it is his place in the world. It is also his decision every day to decide whether he will be *sameach b’chelko*, happy with his lot, or *chalilah*, be mired in negativity and bitterness.”

The holy Baal Shem Tov looked his students in the eyes. “You might think that yesterday Cheikel had a bad day, and today he had a good day. But it’s not true! I tell you, there are no good times and bad times; there are only happy times when a *Yid* chooses to be *b’simcha*, and sad times, when we don’t see that

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everything happens for a reason. All that we experience in our lives is the same *ratzon Hashem* — it just depends on how we receive it.”

.....

Following the awesome and open miracles of the Splitting of the Sea, our sedra narrates: “Then Moshe caused *Bnei Yisrael* to set out from Yam Suf. They...traveled three days in the wilderness and found no water. They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water of Marah, *ki marim heim*, for they were bitter; that is why it was named Marah.” (*Shemos*, 15:22-23). Parched and exhausted from the journey, we cried out and complained to Hashem. As David haMelech describes in *Tehillim*, “Our forefathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; לא זָכְרוּ, אֶת־יְרֵב־חַסְדֶיךָ, they did not remember Your manifold deeds of kindness, וַיִּקְרוּ עַל־יָם־בַּיָּם, and they rebelled by the Sea of Reeds” (*Tehillim*, 106:7).

Reb Dov Ber, the great Maggid of Mezeritch, zy'a, offers a linguistic *he'ara*, an insight on this episode: “They could not drink water from Marah, *ki marim heim*, for they were bitter.” The pronoun

heim, “they” can be interpreted as not referring to the waters, rather to the Jews themselves. The real reason the water at Marah was undrinkable was because the *Jews* were bitter. In the same vein, the verse in *Tehillim*, “and they *rebelled* by the Sea of Reeds,” can mean, ‘and they *made bitter* the Sea of Reeds.’ Our negative attitude and ‘bitterness’ made all that we experienced — even the Splitting of the Sea and crossing through on dry land — seem bitter as well.

Indeed, being *farbissen* is a kind of ‘rebellion’ against our Creator and Redeemer. During our forty years in the *Midbar*, Klal Yisrael enjoyed open miracles all around them. From the clouds of glory and the pillar of fire accompanying us to show the way, to clothing that never wore out, Hashem took care of all our needs. Despite the clear *chesed* and revealed good we enjoyed throughout, we continuously complained. Again and again, we *kvetched* to Moshe Rabbeinu about our dirtied feet at the muddy banks of the Yam Suf, the waters at Marah, the lack of fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, and even about the miraculous *manah* that



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sustained us. After all Hashem had done for us, how could we have become so bitter?

On the other hand, David haMelech provides some insight as to how such an emotional condition could have developed: אַל־תִּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמֵרִיבָה... “Do not harden your heart as at Merivah, as on the day of *Massah* in the Desert, when your ancestors tested Me; they tried Me, even though they had seen My work (in Egypt)” (*Tehillim*, 95:8-9). This last phrase points out that our ‘bitterness’ was not rational; we had “seen” and even celebrated Hashem’s miraculous works. Deep down, we knew we had all we needed. The problem was, we were not yet unable to fully accept that we were worthy of all this Divine kindness. After so many generations of suffering, there was still

much for us to process. It would take some time for us to open our hearts and believe that we deserved Hashem’s *chesed*, and that Hashem loved us and would always take care of us. Such ‘bitter’ generational trauma can take a few decades to heal.

No matter our personal or family history, there is always something to complain about and there is always something to be grateful for. Regardless of our ups and downs, good times and difficult times, there are always at least small opportunities to receive the *ratzon Hashem* with *simchah*. May we take a lesson from Cheikel, open our hearts, and feel the “*chasdei Hashem*” in the water we are schlepping; may we taste the Divine sweetness in the water we are drinking, and may we know that we are truly worthy of it. ■



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10:15 AM

Rabbi Aharon Adler The Giants Who Shaped Modern Orthodoxy <https://zoom.us/j/403831319>

11:30 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz
Mishlei: Wisdom for Life (L'Ayla)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82280847618>

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld
Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,TH
<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

4:30 PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell
Men's Gemara B'lyun S,M,W,Th
<https://zoom.us/j/86466998217>

7:30PM Special Event

Bat Mitzvah and Beyond
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88296146464>

MON, FEB 1

9:15 AM

Mrs. Pearl Borow
Sefer Ezra (L'Ayla)
<https://zoom.us/j/144986284>

10:30 AM

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider
Rav Soloveitchik on the Parsha
<https://zoom.us/j/700303855>

11:45 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler
Ethics, family and society in the writings of Rav Hirsch, Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik <https://zoom.us/j/81925157325>

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub
Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/888974573>

9:00 PM

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TUE, FEB 2

9:00 AM

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9:15 AM

Mrs. Shira Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)
<https://zoom.us/j/98629920642>

10:30 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin
Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/195174554>

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

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Mrs. Sylvie Schatz
Chazal: Insights Into Our Times (L'Ayla)
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9:00 AM

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

Halacha and Medina

<https://zoom.us/j/6878683646>

10:15 AM

Rabbi Anthony Manning

Contemporary Issues in

Halacha and Hashkafa

<https://zoom.us/j/460662359>

11:30 AM

Rabbi Alan Kimche

Great Jewish Thinkers

<https://zoom.us/j/772450422>

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM Rabbi Baruch

Taub Halacha

<https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

8:30 PM Rabbi Ezra

Friedman Practical Kashrut

<https://zoom.us/j/698124792>

8:30 PM

Rav Meir Goldwicht

(Hebrew) Parshat Hashavua

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THURS, FEB 4

9:00 AM

Rabbi Ian Pear

Meaning in Mitzvot

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10:15 AM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua

<https://zoom.us/j/615813416>

11:30 AM

Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

<https://zoom.us/j/488542635>

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

4:30PM Rabbi Hillel

Ruvell

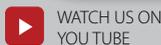
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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our *Sedra, Parshat Beshalach*, recalls the incredible miracle of *Kriat Yam Suf*, the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds. There are numerous rabbinic teachings in both the *Midrash* and the *Talmud* that depict the scene as the sea was actually parting into twelve sections, and each tribe walked on its own path amid the waters.

The *Birkat Avraham, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a*, comments on the verse: “*Uvnei Yisrael halchu bayabasha b'toch haYam*”- “*And the Jewish People walked on dry land within the Sea...*” The Rebbe explains that the word *b'toch* (*within*) is equal in *gematria* to the word *chatach* (one who divides or distributes), a reference to the fact that *Hashem Yitbarach* is indeed the source of *parnasa*-sustenance and stability. A person might often feel that he or she is drowning in debt or stress, that the waters of trouble are surrounding them on all sides, and they might not see or intuit any natural way out from under the pending

waves that they fear will engulf them. In such circumstances, says the Rebbe, a Jew must always recall and be strengthened by remembering the great miracle at the Sea, and realize that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is the One who will bring them out of the depths.

The same is true, the Rebbe continues, in spiritual matters. At times, one feels as if they are walking on dry land, they feel spiritually uninspired- dried out within the sea of *Kedusha*. In such instances, a person must recognize that even those spiritual dry spells are also from the *Ribono Shel Olam*, and thus be strengthened to persevere, and continue to cross the proverbial sea, to immerse themselves in the Sea of *Kedusha*, even when they might feel at the moment as if they are walking along on dry land. *Hashem* is there with us, even when we might be struggling.

May we all merit to embrace, and be strengthened by these two beautiful teachings from the *Birkat Avraham of Slonim zy'a*, and have the fortitude to face life's challenges, with the faith and confidence that *Hashem* is indeed there together with us, every step of the way. ■

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SPECIAL FOR SHABBAT SHIRA

WITH ARI GOLDWAG

Ari Goldwag is a singer and composer of contemporary Jewish music, as well as a Torah lecturer of note. He has been involved in Jewish music professionally for over 30 years, and has been producing Torah podcasts weekly for over 13 years. He has released over 20 music albums and is the author of a book entitled, "Perfectly Imperfect," which explores themes in personal growth based on Torah sources.

Song in Judaism

With Shabbos Shira comes an opportunity to think about the place of song in Judaism, the essential role it has played throughout our history. Not only was it used as a medium of expressing our gratitude and praise of Hashem, as was the case when the Jewish people sang at the sea, but it was also a vital aspect of the service in the Beis Hamikdash. What was unique about Jewish song in ancient times? Can we find a parallel to this in how we experience music today?

As an artist and musician making my way through the sounds and themes of 2021, it is certainly appropriate to think of music today as a vehicle for gratitude, as well

as a means to enhance our avodah in our personal Mikdash Me'at. But even more so, at the center of what music means to me is the ability to take the listener past the current place he finds himself to the place that person wants to be.

An obvious example of this is when we use a song to lighten our mood - to bring us out of the negative feelings we may have and to lift us up and bring us joy. But on another level it can profoundly affect our outlook, for the better. An example of this is what I tried to accomplish with the song, Am Echad. It is a song that speaks about Jewish unity, across the spectrum of religious observance, which was also portrayed in the music video that accompanied the song. The song has broad appeal (over 8 million views!), not just because the melody is catchy and fun, but also because it is an ideal that we all aspire to, even if we fall short sometimes.

Knowing the power of a song to move us, I often try to use my songs to address the issue of the day. My recent album, Yesh Li Hakol, featured the song by that name, which strives to recognize that despite all the challenges we are facing, both from a health perspective and from the perspective of our livelihoods, we can count so many blessings if we look at our lives honestly - we really have it all. It is easy to praise Hashem at the moment of salvation

- as the Jewish people did at the Sea - but it is a deeper expression of gratitude to recognize the good in a situation that seems so negative on the surface. Another song, "Zeh Keili - He Believes in Me," talks about our recognition that although we may feel we are not always accomplishing all we would like to, nevertheless, we can be assured that Hashem believes in us, as he gives us life each day so we can fill it up with spiritual accomplishments.

This is something unique about Jewish music - it does not just afford us something that we can identify with, as is true of many secular songs, but rather it has the power to lift us up from where we are to where we would like to be. In that sense, the Song of the Sea, in expressing the intense gratitude of the Jewish people, brought them into a more intense feeling of that thankfulness. The music in the Beis Hamikdash also served to intensify the feelings of the penitent, to experience more deeply the remorse, and in turn to revel in the ecstasy of closeness to Hashem. This is the essence of what Jewish music has the potential to accomplish for us - to serve as a vehicle to bring us from our current state to one of deeper spirituality. ■

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Temperature for Kashering

There are two types of kashering for utensils: *hag'alah* and *libun*. *Hag'alah* refers to the use of hot water to remove flavor from a utensil, while *libun* uses the heat of a flame to remove the flavor.

The type of kashering used is based on the way in which flavor was absorbed into the utensil. The Talmud (*Avodah Zara* 75:b) calls this rule “*kebol’o kach polto*”, literally “the way it is swallowed is the way it is released.” If flavor was absorbed via hot water/liquid, then *hag'alah* would be sufficient to kasher it. However, if flavor was absorbed by means of dry heat, such as broiling or roasting, then *libun* would be required. This article discusses *hag'alah*.

Boiling Water

It would seem logical based on the principle of *kebol’o kach polto* that not only would the method of kashering be based on the form of absorption but the temperature as well. For example, if a utensil absorbed non-kosher soup at low heat, one might assume that the hot water used in the kashering process to remove the absorbed flavor would only need to be

slightly hotter than the temperature that the soup was cooked at. However, it is clear from early authorities (see *Rabeinu Yona Hagalat Keilim* 40) and codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Rema* (OH 552:1) that this is not the case. In order to remove absorbed flavor from the utensil, the water must be boiling hot, even if the original absorption occurred at a lower temperature.

This concept is explained by Rav Aharon Pfeuffer in his book *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Basar Bechalav* (volume 2 appendix:1). When our Sages codified the rule of *kebol’o kach polto*, it related to the **form** of absorption such as water or fire and not the **temperature** needed to remove the flavor. In order to remove absorbed flavor, a higher temperature is needed than the temperature in which the food was cooked. The temperature of the water must be boiling in order to remove all of the flavor. It should be noted, however, that Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe* YD 4:36) and other *poskim* ruled that in situations of severe need, *hag'alah* may be done using water only slightly hotter than the temperature at which the food was absorbed. The OU does not rely on this leniency.

Exact Temperature

At sea level, water boils at 212°F (100°C),



while at higher elevations water boils at lower temperatures. For example, in Denver, Colorado, water boils at about 203°F and in La Paz, Bolivia at about 190°F. Conversely, below sea level such as at the Dead Sea, water will not boil even at 212°F. The question arises regarding kashering: is *hag'alah* only based on the water's boiling point regardless of temperature, or is the temperature what causes the flavor to be removed? Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minchat Shlomo* 2:51) seems to maintain that the water's boiling point is the essential factor in *hag'alah*. According to this view, there would be no problem performing *hag'alah* at high altitudes where water boils at a lower temperature, even if the absorption of the non-kosher food occurred at sea level at a higher temperature. However, OU policy as determined by Rav Yisroel Belsky is that the temperature, and not the boiling point, is the deciding factor in kashering with *hag'alah*. Rav Belsky noted that earlier *Rabbanim* considered 190°F (88°C) to be the correct temperature to define water as boiling. Even if the bubbles are not as strong, Rav Belsky maintained that 190°F is the beginning of the boiling point. This is also the approximate temperature at which water will boil in the cities of highest elevation (e.g. Cusco, Peru - 11,152 ft., La Paz, Bolivia - 11,910 ft., and Lhasa, Tibet - 12,002 ft.).

The OU requires a minimum water temperature of 190°F in order to perform proper *hag'alah*. However, since later authorities do cite 212°F as the ideal (*Igrot Moshe* YD 2:31), the OU prefers that temperature whenever possible.

To summarize:

- *Hag'alah* is a form of kashering in which hot water is used to remove flavor absorbed by a utensil.
- Even though the halachic principle of kashering is that *kebol'o kach polto* (the way the flavor enters is also the way in which it is removed), the water of *hag'alah* must be boiling, even if the flavor was absorbed at a lower temperature.
- The OU does not rely on the leniency that kashering may be done at the same (lower) temperature that was used in the cooking process.
- The temperature of water for *hag'alah* should be 212°F (100°C). Rav Belsky rules that 190°F is also sufficient. ■

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RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Two Tiers of Chosenness

The exhilarating *Shirat HaYam*, Song Of The Sea, sung by Moshe and Israel contain not only lofty prose and praise extolling the Almighty but foundational principles of Jewish faith and belief. To cite three examples: one finds the declaration of the omnipotence of God, God's eternity, and the principle that a Temple be established to worship Him.

In this same vein, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l was intrigued by a particular verse in the *Shira* that appears to define a person's 'Jewishness'. The *Shira's* second verse states **זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְזֶה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ**. "...this is my God, and I will glorify Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him" (*Shemot* 15:2).

The Rav took note of Rashi's comment which addresses the phrase, "My father's God, and I will glorify Him". This phrase in the verse, says Rashi, highlights the fact that we receive our holiness as Jews as an inheritance from the Forefathers. "Holiness has been possessed and has remained by me, and His divinity has been upon me from the days of my fathers" (*Rashi* 3:2).

The Rav expounded on this teaching and explained that a Jew actually contains two tiers of 'holiness.' One is rooted in the fact that an individual is born a Jew. A Jew is the beneficiary of holiness as a direct result of being a descendant of the Avot, as Rashi's emphasized above.

A second level of holiness is found in a Jew. This aspect of sanctity is implied by the first half of the same verse from the *Shira*: "This is my God, and I will glorify him." This relates to the fact that a Jew accepts upon themselves the mitzvot, studies Torah, and builds a life of service and dedication. This is not dissimilar to the way in which a convert embraces a Jewish life (*Nefesh Harav*, *Shechter*, *Parshat Beshalach*).

The Rav demonstrated that this distinction between the two components of holiness is also implied by the two blessings a Jew recites each morning. Both blessings refer to the chosenness of Israel. We bless God, **שְׁלֵמֵנוּ עֲשֵׂנוּ נוֹי**, "*Who has not made me a heathen*" and we bless God, **אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר**, "*Who has chosen us from all the peoples.*" One of blessings seems superfluous. If we bless God for having made us Jews and not heathens, why repeat the assertion in another blessing by saying that He chose us from among the peoples?

The answer is that we are “chosen” in two distinct ways. One aspect of our chosenness relates to being the progeny of Avraham, and it is this aspect for which we bless God for not having made us heathens. There is, however, an additional aspect to our chosenness, one that is reflected in the verses, “And you shall be My own treasure from among the peoples...and you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Shemot 19:5-6). This chosenness involves a higher sanctification than is afforded through simple lineage. It comes through Torah study. It comes through commitment and dedication (*Mesorat HaRav Siddur*, Lustiger, pp.12-13).

This double layer of sanctity within a Jew is not only true in the homiletic or philosophic sense but has direct repercussions in the area of Jewish law. This dual nature of ‘chosenness’ touches on a complex area of Jewish law: the halachic status of a Jew who renounces his religion. On the one hand, if he betroths a woman, his betrothal would be valid. On the other hand, with regard to other specific halachot, an apostate Jew is considered no different from a non-Jew. For example, regarding slaughter of animals or writing of Torah scrolls, an apostate is considered to be a non-Jew; the meat would be considered non-kosher, and the Torah scroll is invalid.

What is the difference between the two cases? The answer is that the apostate Jew retains the sanctity afforded though his lineage. This heritage cannot be renounced no matter what he does. Therefore the case of the marriage is still binding. However, the second, or more

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elevated *kedusha* is dependent on the sanctity of the individual. Apparently, serving as a *shochet* or *sofer* who engages in a holy act, requires the higher tier of “chosenness” (*Derashot HaRav*, Lustiger, p. 208).

Receiving the Crown

One who strives and thrives as a Jew by ennobling their character merits a higher tier of Jewishness. Rabbi Soloveitchik suggested that this is the meaning of the notion that a Jew can achieve the lauded stature of *Keter Torah* (Crown of Torah).

The term *keter* (crown) as applied to Torah was first introduced in *Avot DeRav Natan* 41:1:

בשלושה כתרין נכתרו ישראל: בכתר כהונה, בכתר מלכות ובכתר תורה

“Israel was crowned with these three crowns; The Crown of priesthood (*Keter Kehunah*), the Crown of Kingship (*Keter Malkhut*), and the Crown of Torah (*Keter Torah*).”

The Rav asked what these three ‘crowns’

have in common? He answered that the first two share a commonality in that both the *kohen* and king are anointed. An individual being anointed symbolizes an inner sanctity and nobility which they attain in their position and stature. The Rav said that the same can be said regarding the one who acquires the *Keter Torah*. Such a person becomes elevated. There is a personal purifications. The knowledge of Torah and a dedicated life engenders a refinement of the character. The individual undergoes a transformation. The person engaged in Torah study and mitzvot observance gains a new sensitivity and a different view of the world (*Derashot HaRav*, Lustiger, pp.205-206).

In sum, the Rav demonstrates that we are ‘chosen’ in two distinct ways. One aspect of our chosenness relates to being the progeny of Avraham. There is, however, an additional level which is based on what the Rav called *bechira*, chosenness; how each one of us choose to incorporate the Torah’s teachings in one’s life.

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“And you shall be for Me a **treasure** from among the nations...and you shall be for Me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation** (*Shemot* 19:5-6). There is a ‘treasured’ or *segulah* status that we inherit from our forefathers. However, attaining the nobility of priests and holiness requires personal intention and investment. ■

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Shirat Hayam: A Momentous Turning Point

Yetzi'at Mitzrayim marks a momentous turning point in the history of our people. At that time, Bnei Yisrael became a nation. Beforehand, living in Goshen, they had not witnessed the plagues – but now, having seen first-hand the demise of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and their deliverance on dry land, Bnei Ysrael “had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant.” And then they burst into Song.

Shirat Hayam – the Song of the Sea – is remarkable in several ways. But first, with the rise of a new American president, our thoughts might turn to that country’s “song,” if not also to the anthem of the

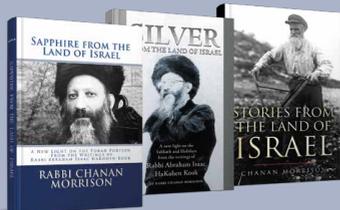
State of Israel, that both talk of freedom. Indeed, our people were freed from servile oppression both in ancient Egypt and in the not-too-distant past. But *Shirat Hayam* does not mention that term, “Freedom,” even once!

One of the main themes of *Shirat Hayam* is praise of God, the mighty Savior, before whom no-one can stand. In the introductory lines, we find the following: “This is my God and I will build Him a sanctuary; the God of my fathers and I will exalt Him.”

Again, no talk of freedom as we might understand the term as used in western society today: The freedom to do as I wish, to be who I want to be without boundaries, without any binding obligations to tradition, to a system of ethics, or to a heavenly, divine imperative. By way of contrast, the “Israelites,” in one short, wondrous breath of revelation, accepted Hashem unconditionally – and not as a temporary, passing fantasy – with these words on their lips: ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד – “Hashem shall reign for all eternity.”

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thank Hashem and sing to Him – but they did not: not Adam, Avraham, Yitzchak, or Yaakov. So how did Bnei Yisrael reach the stage that song emerged from their mouths, whereby “the Song” is a “profound and unusual spiritual phenomenon” of which only ten were ever recorded from Creation to the end of the scriptural period (Artscroll)?

The Netivot Shalom explains that the people underwent a process of what we might call today “mindfulness.” They realized that they were no longer slaves. But also now they comprehended that they were, indeed, true children of Hashem who, following the Medrash, were acutely aware of the care and love bestowed upon them from on high during the parting of the Red Sea. For example, each tribe had a designated path to follow along the dry land; moreover, the waters surrounding them were sweet.

The Song represents the climax of an intuitive experience of heightened cognition and intense emotion. Like the components of an orchestra, the parts came together to form a melodious and harmonious symphony. The people now saw the “dry land” amidst the outpouring of the treacherous waters. They now perceived the parts of the puzzle; they understood that all their suffering was part of a bigger picture, a long-term divine plan, a reflection of the Covenant made with Avraham their forefather.

These sudden insights led the people to trust and believe in Hashem and Moshe. This instant, enhanced state of *Emunah*

rapidly elevated the people to untold spiritual heights. Our rabbis taught that the lowest echelons of the people now saw prophetically what Yechezkiel the prophet never saw. The freedom that the people had now was the freedom to follow Hashem and His ways unabashedly. They now had the prophetic insight to foresee that one day, “You will bring them and implant them on the mountain of Your heritage...”

So, *Shirat Hayam* is not just a victory song or a national Anthem; it is far more than that. It is a statement of belief, a declaration of God’s majesty in the world, and a commitment to follow in His path for all time.

Please God, give us the freedom today to choose You as You have chosen us. As our Father, have mercy on us and bestow upon us Your loving kindness. Heal us (from Corona) with the same care and concern You showed us when we shifted our servitude under Pharaoh to submission to Your will, when You took us through the raging waters of the Red Sea. ■

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FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

RAV DANIEL MANN



Borer on Plates

Question: We set our Shabbat table with a larger “charger” plate under the main plate. At the end of the meal, we clear off the dirty dishes and leave the charger plates. Is there a problem with *borer* (selecting)?

Answer: Avoiding suspense – it is clearly permitted. One reason for our confidence is that while charger plates may be new, fish or appetizer plates sitting on top of main plates and are then removed, have been common, without *poskim* over the generations being bothered. We now set out to identify the precise reason(s).

Ostensible *borer* is permitted when three conditions are met: the desired is taken from the undesired; it is done soon before usage; it is done by hand. The classic usage of a plate is to serve on it; you are taking the plates right after their use, not soon before the next meal. Even if you were to wash them right away and use them later on Shabbat, selecting them specifically among other objects in a *taarovet* (mixture) of utensils would not be considered for immediate use (Orchot Shabbat 3:121).

Our rationale of permitting removing the

dirty off the charger plate at meal’s end will thus be based on the premise that there is no halachic *taarovet*. In Living the Halachic Process (vol. I, C-19), we dealt with sorting silverware after washing at night after they were joined together in a sink, well before their being placed on the table the next day. We presented the *machloket* among contemporary *poskim*, which we will review very briefly, on whether this may be done without special care.

The Terumat Hadeshen (57) suggests that there is no *borer* between relatively large foods in close proximity to but clearly discernible from each other. However, he stops short of permitting this in practice, and the Rama (Orach Chayim 319:3) concurs.

Yet, Rav Ovadia Yosef (V, OV 31) is lenient regarding silverware due to a combination of (weaker and stronger) possible leniencies. 1) According to the Aruch Hashulchan (OC 319:9) *borer* does not apply to big pieces that are clearly discernible; the Ohr Sameach (Shabbat 8:11) posits similarly that *borer* does not apply for almost all intents and purposes to utensils or clothes (even according to the Taz (OC 319:12) that it is not limited to food). 2) The Pri Megadim (319, MZ 2) says that if the various objects being sorted will all be used at the same time in the future, it is permitted. 3) Perhaps (it is a fringe opinion) *borer* only applies to things that

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



“grow” from the ground. 4) Selecting for the next meal is considered short term no matter when that meal is. Leniencies 1 & 3 apply to this case, whereas #2 and #4 do not (at least at the last meal the plate will be used). Thus, one cannot prove from Rav Ovadia’s responsum that he would be lenient here. While the Tzitz Eliezer (XII:35) also considers the Ohr Sameiach’s position a significant contributor towards leniency, the Mishna Berura (319:15) and Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata (3:78) do not.

However, we are confident that all *poskim* would not consider the two plates sitting one on the other to be a *taarovet*, for the following reason. Everyone agrees with the Terumat Hadeshen’s basis thesis that objects that are touching but absolutely separate are not a *taarovet*. His and the Rama’s hesitation was because it is not always easy to know the level of ease of discerning. In our case, though, since the normal usage of these plates is to have a normal plate sitting on top of a charger plate, one can “separate” them with zero concentration and blindfolded with ease. This idea is at the heart of the aforementioned Yabia Omer and Tzitz Eliezer.

We find a close precedent in the distinction between books piled on a table and those in their place and/or labeled in a bookcase (Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata 3:179); Orchot Shabbat 3:23-4). While the

Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata is hesitant to use the leniency, taking off the right plate is far easier than grabbing for the right *sefer* (I not infrequently reach for one book and take its neighbor). The strong logic is only strengthened by the *minhag* regarding fish plates. ■

Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join while places are open.

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Tu B'shvat in My Garden

Orla and Tu B'shvat

Tu B'shvat of the fourth year from when a tree is planted is the date its fruits leave the category of the orlah prohibition. Any fruit that blooms after Tu B'shvat of this fourth year will assume the sanctity of neta revay, fourth-year saplings.

Fruits such as lemons and other citruses, almonds, loquats, and peaches, among others, often bloom around Tu B'shvat time. Sometimes fruit that bloomed before Tu B'shvat—and thus are orlah and prohibited for consumption or benefit—are hanging on the same tree as fruit that bloomed after this date, which will be neta revay. How do we distinguish between these two groups?

We should go to our trees just after Tu B'shvat, take off all the fruit that already bloomed, and leave only the flowers. In this way, we will ensure that whatever fruit grows from this point on is not orlah,

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but rather neta revay.

This can be a family activity (even by zoom), teaching the Halachot throw visiting our trees in the garden.

Ma'aser Sheni and Ani and Tu B'shvat

Tu B'shvat is also the date when the ma'aser year changes for fruit from 5780 (ma'aser sheni) to 5781 (ma'aser ani).

Optimally fruit that already bloomed on Tu B'shvat should be marked on the trees so it will be clear that when ripe they will need ma'aser sheni taken while the rest will be obligated in ma'aser ani. Practically speaking, this is difficult.

In practice, we can follow the majority (Mishna Machshirin 2:11): mix together the fruit and separate terumot and ma'aserot, using the conditional formula: “these are ma'aser sheni, and if it is necessary to separate ma'aser ani—these are ma'aser ani.” Then redeem the fruit on a coin without a blessing.

This conditional text solves our problem of whether to take ma'aser sheni or ma'aser ani; however, there is still the issue of taking ma'aser from one year to exempt another; even bedi'avad, this separation does not count (Rambam Terumot 5:11). For the above case of fruit blooming before and after Tu B'shvat, it is possible to be lenient (see Hilchot Ha'aretz, pp. 49-50). ■

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Rabbi Manning's shiurim for the 2021 academic year have been sponsored anonymously in the merit of an aliya neshama for **Matisyahu ben Visrael z"l**, **Aharon ben Menachem Lev a"l** and **Eliana bat Yaakov a"h**

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A Therapeutic Journey

Parshat Beshalach describes Israel's first steps in the desert after the drama of the Exodus. The people of Israel may have left physical bondage behind, but the long process of healing still lies ahead and the people's main challenge now is recovering from the trauma of slavery engraved in their souls, and discovering the inner forces that will help them complete the journey to their land.

This point is key to understanding parshat Beshalach, and in the following lines I will focus on the beginning of that process.

The Parsha opens with God's surprising decision not to take the people by way of the shortest path to Canaan, "Now

*when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not **guide them**, **וַיְהִי**, by way of the land of the Phillistines, although it was nearer; for God said, "The people may have a **change** of heart **וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ** when they see war, and return to Egypt."*

According to Maimonides, these verses express a fundamental religious principle: healing takes time, and the process of Israel regaining freedom should not be shortened miraculously, or even accelerated -even if that decision comes at the cost of delaying the divine plan.

Later in the parsha, however, the same verb 'guide' appears in another context: "And the LORD went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, to **guide them** **וַיִּהְיֶה** along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, that they might travel day and night."

Healing need not take place in a vacuum

or alone and here, God accompanies the people by guiding them in the form of a pillar of cloud and pillar of fire that accompany them on their way. *“The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night **did not depart** [לא יָרָקָה] from before the people.”*

Even as God guides the people, the parsha describes human initiative, *“And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the **children of Israel**, saying, ‘God will be sure to take notice of you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you.’”*

This verse links the national story of the Book of Exodus to the family’s roots in the Book of Genesis to teach us that the Exodus from Egypt and the process of national healing are incomplete

without the healing of the deep family rift of Joseph and his brothers. In the closing verses of Genesis, Joseph asks **Bnei Yisrael** (his brothers), to take an oath that they will restore his bones. Now Moshe, the representative of **Bnei Yisrael** (this time a people, not a family) fulfills Yosef’s last request.

Joseph descended to Egypt through the betrayal of his brothers. Centuries later, his brother’s descendants raised his bones from the land into which he was sold. At the final moment of redemption, the parsha emphasizes Jewish solidarity -as if to remind us that it is only as one people, looking out for one another and willing to atone for the sins with which we betray one another, that we will leave our slavery behind. ■



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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



Shema

During Operation Protective Edge, a female suicide bomber in Gaza attempted to detonate her explosive belt and kill a group of Israeli soldiers. The soldiers realized they were about to die and one of them cried out “Shema Yisrael”. The suicide bomber flinched for a moment, giving the soldiers just enough time to stop her. After some questioning, it came out that this woman was actually the daughter of an Israeli Jew who had married an Arab. Despite her complete distance from Judaism, somehow the words “Shema Yisrael” were still ingrained deep inside her soul.

We have all heard many stories similar to this one - stories of young children who grew up in Christian monasteries during the holocaust and had no idea they were Jewish but upon hearing the words Shema Yisrael recited by those who came to rescue them, jumped up and began screaming out.

Shema is the first tefilla we learn as children (my own one-year old can practically recite the entire thing by heart) and it's the last thing we say before we die. We recite it three times a day and it is the most well-known verse in the

entire Torah. What is so special about the Shema? What is the deep significance of this Tefilla?

Today, we will focus on just the first line - שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד

As we mentioned previously, Shema is preceded by two Birchot Kriyat Shema, יוצר אהבה רבה and אור. We prepare ourselves for this momentous moment of מלכות עול, accepting upon ourselves Hashem's Kingship. In fact, the whole Pesukei dZimra is leading up to this moment.

In six simple words, we encapsulate our entire belief system, the whole reasoning and meaning behind how we live our lives. Let us look at those words together –

The Shulchan Aruch (61) writes that we must say this Tefila with רתת, וזיע – with fear, trembling, and sweat! The words we

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are about to say are intense, we can't just mumble through them. We need to cover our eyes so that we can have complete concentration, and not be distracted by anything going on around us.

שמע ישראל - Listen, fellow Jews - We call out to the entire Jewish people, it's not enough to just accept Hashem's rule over us as individuals, we need to do so together as a people.

ה' - Hashem is the master over everything. He is הוה, ויהיה - He is beyond time, He simultaneously exists in the past, present, and future. He embodies the middah of רחמים, of mercy.

אלוקינו - Not only does He embody the middah of רחמים, He concurrently exemplifies the middah of דין, of strict judgement, as well. Additionally, we specifically point to the fact that He is not just אלוקים, He is אלוקינו, **our** G-d. He watches over every single one of us, in a very personal, detailed way.

ה' אחד - Hashem is the One and Only. One should enunciate the letter ד long enough to focus on the magnitude of this statement. He rules over the entire world from one end to the other, the good and the bad, the world of nature, the world of politics, war and economy, medicine and current events....*everything*.

Continued next week... ■

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Miryam **HaNeviah: Dancing into** **History**

In this week's Parasha we are introduced to Miryam for the very first time. Even though she appeared in the story of Moshe's birth and river adventures she was never mentioned by name – only as 'Achoto' – his sister.

Miryam bursts onto the stage of the Tanach in the most spectacular way – singing, dancing, and praising Hashem for the splitting of the red sea. But if we take a closer look at the text, we shall discover the hints of a much more important story which tells us the hidden tale of the very first Neviah (Prophetess) of the Jewish People.

Long before her brother Moshe appeared on the scene, Miryam was well known to the Jewish people as a visionary and spiritual leader. The Midrashim visualize Miryam's prophecies, foretelling the birth of the coming savior and inspiring the people to not give up hope.

The Torah does not tell us any of Miryam's prophecies, that is left to the imagination and Midrashic license. All we know about her is what other people saw in her and how they were inspired by her. The Midrash famously says: "Ra'ata Shifcha Al HaYam" – Miryam saw and acted - the rest of the women saw her and reacted. We might not know what this prophetess said, but we know what she did and how it changed the face of Tefila as we know it. Rabeinu Bechayai lists her as one of the revolutionary women, who by example, innovated new pathways of Tefila and spiritual communication with Hashem.

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The Nevuah of Miryam is not one of words and letters, but one of music and dance!

If we take a moment to listen closely and peek between the letters of the text, we might be able to behold a truly majestic sight: the first feminine Jewish leader, inspiring by example, moving hearts and souls without saying a word, beating the rhythm of hope and faith that echoes and calls to us, to this very day.



Adiella Cohnen 11th Grade, Efrat Let the Light In

In this week's Parsha, Beshalach, the Jewish people leave Egypt. On their way out they suddenly find Pharaoh and his troops chasing them. These Egyptians are the same people that tortured them for many years. The Jewish people stop to pray until Hashem says to Moshe, "Why do you cry out to me? Speak to the children in Israel and let them journey forth!"

"מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו"

Hashem is saying Yallah! Don't just stand there praying- go travel and wherever you go, I'll be with you. Act like what you are praying for and don't just "wait" for a miracle.

We may not be chased by the Egyptians today but we all have our own times that can be hard. If you are metaphorically sitting in a dark room in your life, you can open the window and let in the light and air. A ray of light representing clarity will shine through.

When the Jewish people jumped into the yam suf to put G-D into their hearts this is exactly what they did. They put their faith in action, they opened their window of light. We can self-sabotage and try to get rid of this ray of light by throwing water on it. It will still be there. Maybe try some paint. Yup, it's still there. Hashem will always be there. You can get stuck and close the window or put some action to your words and let the light in. But we always have the ability to push forward and let in the light of perseverance.

Prayers need belief and action and actions need belief and prayer. איתון. Balance! It is all up to you. Let the light in!

Shabbat Shalom:) ■

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Sunday In Holon With A Dying Man

Last week on Sunday night, just after 7:00 p.m., United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Meir Turgeman was at his home in Holon with his family, when he received an emergency alert from his communications device. A 71-year-old man had collapsed in his apartment, not so far away from Meir's location, on Ehad BeMai street.

Meir quickly grabbed his medical kit and raced to the given address, arriving in just under four minutes, alongside Yosef Cazes, an EMT in training and an ambulance crew. A total of seven medical personnel walked into the apartment. Working together the team located the man and checked his vitals. Finding no pulse and no breathing, the team launched into a full-blown CPR.

Meir initiated chest compressions and Yosef helped with providing assisted ventilation. The ambulance crew attached a heart monitor, which showed that the man was in ventricular fibrillation, and administered a shock. The man's pulse kept fading in and out inconsistently, causing the team to switch off between rounds of chest compressions.

"As a trainee, nearing the end of my full training to become an EMT, I was able to experience and witness many tactics and strategies I have never seen before," commented Yosef. "During my time in training, I have been to many emergencies involving CPR, but in this incident in particular, I got to learn a lot, which is helping me get one step closer to becoming an EMT."

After an hour of compressions and assisted breathing, and six shocks from the monitor, the man's pulse began to stabilize, slowly, he began to breathe once again. Still unconscious but breathing and with a pulse, the elderly man was taken to the nearest hospital.

"This was by far one of the hardest CPR efforts I experienced," said Meir. "We worked on the man for over an hour and a half. There was great teamwork between all of the first responders; we were constantly rotating jobs and all very active the entire time. When we finally stabilized the man's pulse and he was loaded onto the ambulance, we were all very drained. However, it was all worth it, because we knew that our hard work had just saved a life."

Yosef concluded by saying: "I have always been interested in the medical field, and I've always wanted to volunteer. I want to be a part of an organization that saves lives and is completely run by volunteers. One that is changing our world for the better. When I learned about United Hatzalah I knew that this is what I want to do. Saving the man's life on Sunday was a reminder of why I began this journey and why I hope to continue it for many years to come."





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