

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1471 JUNE 11TH '22 י"ב סיון תשפ"ב

פרשת בהעלתך

PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA
AVOT CHAPTER 2

ב"ה
ס
ט
ישראל



Aliya-By-Aliya
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Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Director of RCA Israel Region
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Menorah Mindset
Rebbetzin Shira Smiles
Faculty, OU Israel Center
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בהעלתך
את־הנרת
אל־מול פני
המנורה
במדבר ח', פסוק ב'



In memory of our parents and grandparents Lori & Bernard Levmore זכרונם לברכה

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA

Candles 7:09PM • Earliest 6:15PM • Havdala 8:27PM • Rabbeinu Tam 9:02PM

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Ephraim Fruchter // Ometz Shmidman



HELPFUL REMINDER

KIDDUSH LEVANA

Last opportunity: **15 Sivan/ Mon. night June 13, All night**

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	EARLIEST	BEHA'ALOTCHA	HAVDALA	SHELACH		
7:09	6:15	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	8:27	Candles 7:11	Earliest 6:17	Havdala 8:30
7:25	6:17	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:29	7:28	6:20	8:31
7:27	6:16	Beit Shemesh / RBS	8:28	7:30	6:18	8:31
7:24	6:16	Gush Etzion	8:27	7:26	6:18	8:30
7:26	6:18	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	8:30	7:29	6:20	8:33
7:25	6:17	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:28	7:27	6:19	8:31
7:29	6:18	Netanya	8:30	7:29	6:20	8:33
7:24	6:16	Be'er Sheva	8:27	7:27	6:18	8:30
7:26	6:17	Rehovot	8:29	7:28	6:20	8:32
7:09	6:17	Petach Tikva	8:30	7:11	6:20	8:32
7:25	6:17	Ginot Shomron	8:29	7:28	6:19	8:32
7:17	6:19	Haifa / Zichron	8:32	7:20	6:21	8:34
7:24	6:16	Gush Shiloh	8:28	7:27	6:18	8:30
7:26	6:18	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:30	7:29	6:20	8:32
7:24	6:16	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:28	7:27	6:18	8:30
7:23	6:15	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	8:27	7:26	6:18	8:29
7:26	6:18	Ashkelon	8:30	7:29	6:20	8:32
7:25	6:17	Yad Binyamin	8:29	7:28	6:19	8:31
7:21	6:16	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:30	7:24	6:19	8:33
7:24	6:16	Golan	8:29	7:27	6:18	8:31

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 9:02 PM • next week - 9:05 pm

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



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OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat
June 8 - 18 / 9-19 Sivan**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	4:34
Sunrise	5:33
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:05 - 9:07
Magen Avraham	8:22 - 8:23
Sof Zman Tefila	10:18 - 10:18
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:38 - 12:40
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:13 - 1:15
Plag Mincha	6:14 - 6:17
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:48 - 7:52

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



Chag Matan Torah has two elements that make up the special day: receiving the *Torah* and giving *bikkurim*.

In place of giving *korbanot* in the *Beit HaMikdash*, we use our mouths to sing praises to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for giving us the sweetness of *Torah* to guide and enrich our lives. I therefore will take this opportunity to share my gratitude to the *Borei Olam* for the wonderful gifts I experienced during *Shavuot* in which I feel I was able to maximize both elements of the *chag*.

Shavuot gives parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends the perfect opportunity to fulfill our obligation of learning *Torah* and teaching our children. Over the last 21 years in my various roles in the OU and within my own community in *Giv'at Ze'ev*, my *Shavuot* experiences consisted of teaching *Torah* to kids, teens and adults of all ages, usually pulling me away from my own learning and learning with my children.

When I worked for NCSY in Vancouver, British Columbia, I would fly in Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum from Toronto to give shiurim at Schara Tzedek for the 90 or so NCSY teens who came to celebrate *Matan Torah*.

Since moving back to Eretz Yisrael, my family spent the last 15 years creating programs for our community in *Giv'at Ze'ev*. Giving shiurim to Anglos in the area at

the homes of Harvey and Rivka Woolf and Michael and Joyce Vogel and hosting Bnei Akiva and Bnei Akiva Bogrim for various learning programs throughout the night in our home. For the most part, my wife and I were able to create programming that aligned with the ages of each of our kids, so that we wouldn't lose the opportunity to learn with our children during the course of *Shavuot*.

This past *Shavuot* was therefore a unique experience for my family. With a *Bat Mitzvah* and a wedding coming up and the fact that my in laws often ask us to come to them, we thought now would be the perfect opportunity to do *Kibbud Av V'Em* and spend the *chag* with them in *Har Nof*. Since I am not usually in Yerushalayim for *Shavuot*, I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to be at the OU Israel Center for our *leil Shavuot* program generously sponsored by Rabbi Nachman and Feiga Kahana.

Recognizing the importance of maximizing the opportunities that *leil Shavuot* offers, I had to find a way to adapt my *Shavuot* plans so I would have time to learn with my kids. Luckily, my nine year old son Mordechai was a trooper and agreed to join me late *Shabbat* afternoon on the long walk

משפחת או יו ישראל משתתפת
בצערה של יעל האופטמן ומשפחתה במות
אביה ז"ל
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

from Har Nof to the OU Israel Center, after which we planned to learn with his brothers, Tzvi Yehudah and Yechezkel, in their respective *yeshivot*, *Merkaz HaRav* and *Yashlatz*.

After a wonderful JCHAT (Jerusalem Community Hub for Anglos and Torah) dinner during which attendees had the opportunity to meet one another and form meaningful connections, I opened up the evening's *shiurim*, followed by Rabbi Moshe Hauer (EVP of the OU), and a line-up of great speakers. While I wasn't able to stay for the full program, I can assure you that the OU Israel team worked tirelessly throughout the evening to provide attendees with a powerful night of learning. The main hall was packed from wall to wall, and our team was busy providing and replenishing refreshments and guiding new visitors.

Before Mordechai and I left for *Kiryat Moshe*, I took a moment to appreciate how full the OU Israel Center was. It's hard to believe how empty the halls were during Covid-19, and I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for the miracle that was unfolding before our eyes. As Mordechai and I made our way back to *Kiryat Moshe*, we found ourselves walking beside *Am Yisrael* as our fellow Jews flooded every street we walked, many on their way to the Kotel, to celebrate the gift of *Torah*.

Once we arrived at *Merkaz HaRav*, my night of learning with my boys took me to new heights. The *beit midrash* was roaring with the sounds of hundreds of people learning *Torah*. The passion around us was palpable, and we were able to join in

the chorus of voices as we delved into the beauty of *Torah*. While I was concerned at first that the noise would prove too distracting for Mordechai, our learning was the most intense it ever was.

This *Shavuot*, I was not only given the opportunity to teach *Torah* at the OU Israel Center to Anglos looking for a meaningful night of learning, but I was also able to fulfill the mitzvah of *chinuch ha'banim* and reach new depths of *Torah* learning with my sons. May this summer be filled with joyful *Torah* learning, health and happiness for all of *Am Yisrael*. Be'ezrat HaShem, may we celebrate *Shavuot* next year united with all members of *Am Yisrael*, and walk beside one another as we head towards the *Beit HaMikdash HaShlishi*, bringing *bikkurim* and *korbanot* of our own.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

P.S. - For obvious reasons there are no pictures to add this week.



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

aberman@ouisrael.org



BEHA'ALOTCHA



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

Parshat Beha'alotcha is a pivotal parsha in the Torah and one of its richest. In it the preparation to march to the Land is completed; off we go, the march begins. It is the pivot from the sublime to the practical, from the ideal to the real, from theory to practice. In other words: people, warts and all come to the fore. There is complaining, disappointment, pettiness, disputes, frustrations. It is communal life in Technicolor. And that is its profundity. You see, if we were to stop the Torah here, we would imagine Jewish life to be a fairytale: G-d promised the Land, sweeps us out of slavery, gives us the Torah, wants to dwell in our midst, creates a place of rendezvous of man and G-d, gives us

days to meet with Him, and instructs us in choreographed detail how to march in life with Him. Beautiful. Then we would look at our lives – feeling parched, distant, chaotic – where is He, where is the order, the choreography, the Mikdash? We could feel the Torah is a fairytale, of living with G-d in a way we are unfamiliar. But then there is Beha'alotcha and the rest of Bamidbar. As if G-d says: I have shown you the ideal. And I know full well your complexities. I expect some of you to be dissatisfied, bored, jealous, resentful. Skeptical, cautious, weak. Man is very very complex. I, G-d says, know that perfectly well: I made you that way. Your job as a people is to figure out a way to live reaching for the ideal while living all the complexity that man is: all the differences, the divisions, the struggles, the talents, the weaknesses and the aspirations. Beha'alotcha assures us that the ideal is to aspire to, while the real is to manage.



1st aliya (Bamidbar 8:1-14)

Aharon is instructed to light the Menorah. The instructions concerning how the Leviim are to be purified and inaugurated through immersion and offerings are given. In so doing the Leviim are to be separated to be Mine.

These are the last verses of communal, national preparation to march to the Land. The Leviim are to serve the Kohanim.



2nd aliya (8:15-26)

The Leviim are to replace the first-born who are Mine after the plague of the first-born. The Leviim are to assist the Kohanim in maintaining the sanctity of the Mikdash. They are inaugurated and purified. They are to serve from ages 25-50,

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Ellie Goldstein a"h

on her 1st yahrzeit - 29 Iyar
I will treasure our friendship forever

Mel David

שתהא נשמתה צרורה בצרור החיים

but not to do the offerings.

Just as for the Kohanim and for the leaders, the ceremony of inauguration impresses on the Leviim that their special status is not mere privilege; it is service of the people, and service of G-d. A sense of entitlement or of privilege is the poison of communal life; a sense of service, its elixir.



3rd aliya (9:1-14) Moshe

instructs the people to do the

Pesach in the first month of the

second year. They do so, though some are unable due to their Tuma impurity. They query Moshe as to why they should be denied bringing the Pesach due to contact with the dead. Moshe defers to what G-d will tell him. He is instructed: all who are unable to do the Pesach in its proper time, due to Tuma or being distant from the Mikdash, may do it in the second month.

Even though the book of Bamidbar began on Rosh Chodesh of the 2nd month in the 2nd year, we have here a description of the first Pesach observed after leaving Egypt, which is on the 14th of the 1st month. Seems to be out of order. And the description of all the leaders' offerings in

In memory of our beloved parents,
grandparents and great-grandparents

Dr Charles Cohen z"l

ישעיה יצחק בן מנדל אריה הלוי ושרה ז"ל

נפטר יד סיון תשע"ו - Sixth yearzeit
and

Elaine Zimmerman a"h

עלקא ג'אנה בת חיים שלום הכהן

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Naso occurred on the first days of the 1st month. But the out of order is deliberate, for it wants to juxtapose the beginning of the March with the uncertainty of Moshe and Pesach. The theme of our book is the march to the Land of Israel. The leaders' offerings display their self-perception: we are servants of G-d, not self-serving. So too the bringing of the Pesach. We are all, all of us, servants of G-d, not self-serving. And the inquiry to Moshe from those who are impure is dramatic foreshadowing. Even though everything has fallen into place perfectly – the camp is set, the Mishkan in the middle, the leaders altruistic, the people dedicated – but get ready. Because things unexpected are, well, to be expected. All the planning in the world cannot avoid the expected unexpected of life. And that is the powerful theme of the rest of this parsha, foreshadowed by the uncertainty of how to accommodate the impure and their Pesach. Things are going to happen that you just didn't expect.



4th aliya (9:15-10:10) The cloud descended on the Mishkan by day; by night it appeared as a fire. When it lifted, the people traveled; where it settled, the people settled. It could remain in place for a long time or just

overnight, or a few days or a month. The people encamped and traveled by Divine signal. Moshe was instructed to make 2 silver trumpets. When both were sounded, the people were to gather; when just 1, the leaders would gather. A teruah would signal to travel; tekia, to gather. In wartime, sound a teruah; on holidays and joyful occasions, sound a tekiah.

This aliya poetically describes Jewish travel: guided by the Divine, while called by the trumpets. It is the Divine-human partnership. He calls; we call. So while guided by G-d, it is we who manage the people. And that foreshadows all that is to come; the messy business of managing people.



5th aliya (10:11-34) On the 20th of the 2nd month the cloud lifted; the people traveled from the desert of Sinai to the desert of Paran. The camp traveled just as had been instructed; each tribe in its designated position. Moshe asked his father-in-law Chovev (Yitro) to travel with them, for his insight would be valuable. He demurred, returning to his land. They traveled for 3 days.

The march to the land of Israel begins. And Moshe is well aware of its challenges. While he is unique in the workings of the Divine, his father in law Yitro has shown how masterful he is in the workings of the people. He desperately wants Yitro's



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publication on your 30th anniversary.
Charlie & Vivienne Simenoff (Netanya)

guidance in managing the inevitable, the expected unexpected. Although Moshe knows the challenges of life that await him, even he is surprised at how quickly the challenges of human foibles arise.



6th aliya (10:35-11:29) Moshe would pray upon travel: G-d, disperse Your enemies. And

upon rest: Return the myriads. The people complained, angering both G-d and Moshe, a fire burning on the camp's edge. They called to Moshe, Moshe prayed and the fire abated. A group amongst them cried for meat, recalling the fish and produce they ate freely of in Egypt: We are parched with just this Manna. G-d and Moshe were angry. Moshe complained: am I to hold them like a baby? Where am I to find meat to feed them all? I cannot bear them alone. G-d responded: gather 70 elders. I will give them some of your spirit and they will assist you. And I will provide meat. G-d's spirit flowed to the 70 elders; Eldad and Medad continued to prophecy.

Here begins the rest of the book of Bamidbar: the pivot from the ideal world of Divine guidance to the real world of human complexity. The first complaint comes fast; and we aren't even told what they are complaining about. Because life will never be satisfying to everyone. The second complaint, the complaint for meat is the dissatisfaction of the Manna. It is boredom. Desire for pleasure, for colour and variety. Though an obvious distortion of reality: is

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Mazal Tov to

David & Brenda Mandelzweig

and family on the birth of a granddaughter



the grass of Egypt really greener, was Egypt truly so pleasant? G-d will provide the meat. The elders will provide assistance. But as for the burden of cuddling the infant that Moshe feels he has been unfairly burdened with? As my friend Shmuel Goldin points out: that, Moshe, is what leadership is. Assisting the people as their nurse? That is the lot of the leader. You'll need to learn that on your own.



7th aliya (11:30-12:16) A wind brought quail, covering the earth. The place was called Kivrot Hataava. Miriam and Aharon spoke ill of Moshe's wife; Moshe was the humblest of all people. G-d spoke to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, calling to Aharon and Miriam. I speak to you in dreams: not so to Moshe. He I speak to face to face. Miriam became leprous. Moshe prayed for her healing.

The complaints continue; this time from an unexpected source, Aharon and Miriam. This challenge is brief but powerful. The challenges, conflicts, disagreements that arise in life are not to be seen as pettiness and weakness alone. Even the greatest of the great of our people can have disagreements with our leaders. That is a

crucial perspective on all the challenges to come; human beings will never be free of disagreement or challenge. It is not just lusting for meat. It is even the holiest of the holy who legitimately, but here incorrectly, question our most holy of leaders.

HAFTORAH BEHA'ALOTCHA

ZECHARIAH 2:14 - 4:7

The highlight of the haftorah describes the beautiful golden Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash. This parallels the Menorah mentioned at the opening of the parsha, which was lit daily by Aharon, the Kohen Gadol.

The vision comes to Zechariah prior to the building of the second Beit Hamikdash. We are able to get a sense from the wording in this passage of the great joy that will prevail with God's presence returning to Jerusalem.

The Almighty also speaks of the great reward that will be given to Yehoshua, the first Kohen Gadol to serve in the second Beit Hamikdash, if he and his descendants follow the directives of the Torah. The ultimate reward is, "Behold! I will bring My

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"And the man Moshe was very humble above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (12:3)
הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה (יב:ג)

The great Rabbi Yisrael from Salant (The Salanter Rebbe 1810-1883) who established the Mussar Movement in Lita points out that the Pasuk is written in the present tense. The description of Moshe is not written when he is retired or nearing the end of his services, when his actions or influence upon people may have been less felt. Rather, this description of Moshe is at his prime, in the middle of the Torah, where Hashem refers to him as "very humble" the humblest ever. To Moshe's merit, he does not take these words to heart. He does not let it go to his head and begins to become haughty.

Rav Yisrael Salanter felt this was the true message from Moshe Rabbeinu – he attained the highest level of humility.

Shabbat Shalom

servant, the Shoot,” an allusion to Mashiach, the Shoot of David.

The prophet then describes the actual seven-branched Menorah that he is able to discern in a prophecy. Its deeper meaning is to be understood in the following way: “Not by military force and not by physical strength, but by My Spirit...” The light of the Menorah represents the power of the Mashiach to fulfill his task and bring goodness and light to the world. ■

STATS

36th of the 54 sedras; 3rd of 10 in Bamidbar

Written on 240 lines, ranks 10

16 Parshiyot; 11 open, 5 closed

One of the parshiyot (a S'TUMA) is separated from the parshiyot before and after it by more than blank space (as is usual) - namely, backwards NUNs. Consequently, it is the "loneliest", most isolated of all parshiyot in the Torah

136 p'sukim, ranks 11th, 4th in Bamidbar

1840 words, ranks 12th, 3rd in Bamidbar

7055 letters, ranks 12th, 4th in Bamidbar

MITZVOT

5 mitzvot; 3 positives, 2 prohibitions.

To illustrate the "lopsided" distribution of mitzvot in the Torah, B'haalot'cha has more mitzvot than 28 other sedras, and fewer mitzvot than 25 sedras. Only 5 mitzvot and it's in the top half.



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THE PERSON

IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

A Candle of God is the Soul of Man

I no longer remember which Israeli artist colony I was visiting. Perhaps Jaffa. But I will never forget the crude, almost primitive paintings, which were on exhibit. They were all very different in color, style, and size. They varied from somber dark browns and grays to tropical oranges, reds, and yellows. Some were very realistic, some impressionistic, some totally abstract. One was a large mural. But in the corner, there were postcard-sized miniatures. In every painting, a candle predominated.

The artist was obsessed with the image of the candle. A tall, slim candle, wax dripping down its side, the wick erect, the flame flickering. Somehow, each candle evoked the picture of a person.

I made a note of the artist's name, hoping that one day I would be able to afford one of his works and would then find him, but I lost the scrap of paper with his name and address long ago.

The memory of the candles bedecking his workroom walls has remained with me. As long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by candles and by their human-like quality. In my early teens, I was taught to meditate in front of a burning candle and to associate my meditation with the biblical phrase, "A candle of God is the soul of man."

"What are some ways that human beings resemble candles?" This question was assigned to me by the old rabbi who was my first spiritual guide. In my early adolescence I was part of a group of six or seven peers who met with this rabbi once a month in a dark and, you guessed it, candlelit room.

It was our task to gaze at a burning candle and imagine the affinities between candles and men. At the end of the month, we were to report on our findings.

I never returned at the end of that month. Without that closure, it is no wonder that I still reflect, fifty years later, on the resemblances between people and candles.

This week's Torah portion, Parshat

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Beha'alotecha, speaks of the candles that Aaron lit in the ancient Tabernacle. The Bible speaks not of the "lighting of" the candles, but of the "raising up" of the candles. The commentaries eagerly point out that it is not sufficient to kindle the candle; one must see to it that the flame will continue to burn on its own.

There are things that we can do which will benefit not only a single other but an entire group

The candle thus becomes a metaphor for the process of teaching: parent to child, or master to disciple. It is never sufficient to merely touch the child with the flame of knowledge. Rather, one must "raise up" the flame so that it will grow and will nurture the student for a long time. The task of the teacher is to ensure that the flame will continue to burn on its own, that knowledge will be a lifetime process.

There is another traditional Jewish saying which inspires me: "A little bit of light can dispel much darkness." The little candle teaches us how much good a single person, or even a single act, can accomplish. It is not necessary for one to try to ignite powerful floodlights. If all that one can do is light a match, that paltry act can achieve unforeseen illumination.

Finally, there is a Talmudic dictum, "A candle for one is a candle for a hundred." There are certain things in life, an item of food for example, which can only meet the needs of one person. There are other things, certain

tools for example, which can only meet the needs of one person at a time. But one candle can benefit the single individual who needs illumination, and it can shed equal illumination for many others in the room.

A candle for one is a candle for a hundred.

And so it is in the human realm. There are things that we can do which will benefit not only a single particular other but an entire group, an entire community, an entire world. If we teach, for example, lessons that are useful practically and that are spiritually uplifting, those lessons are not limited to who hears them. Rather, they can benefit many unseen others. Intellectual accomplishments and religious achievements are candles not just for one, but for hundreds.

I have listed but three of the infinite number of ways in which the soul of man is the candle of God. Candle lighting symbolizes the teaching process; the single act can have massive consequences; and we can affect a much wider circle than we think.

The opening verses in this week's Torah portion render the candle image so central to the Tabernacle and Temple service, because the Torah wishes us to think about the candle, to meditate on it, and to discover for ourselves the manifold analogies which lie embedded in the candle image.

"Behold the candle," the Torah exclaims. It is one of the oldest, and certainly one of the simplest, human tools. But it can be a metaphor for the power and the potential of the human soul, which is no less than the candle of God. ■

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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from
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From Pain to Humility

David Brooks, in his bestselling book, *The Road to Character*,¹ draws a sharp distinction between what he calls the résumé virtues – the achievements and skills that bring success – and the eulogy virtues, the ones that are spoken of at funerals: the virtues and strengths that make you the kind of person you are when you are not wearing masks or playing roles, the inner person that friends and family recognise as the real you.

Brooks relates this distinction to the one made by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in his famous essay, *The Lonely Man of Faith*.²

¹ David Brooks, *The Road to Character*, Random House, 2015.

² Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, Doubleday, 1992.

This essay speaks of “Adam I” – the human person as creator, builder, master of nature imposing his or her will on the world – and “Adam II”, the covenantal personality, living in obedience to a transcendent truth, guided by a sense of duty and right and the will to serve.

Adam I seeks success. Adam II strives for charity, love, and redemption. Adam I lives by the logic of economics – the pursuit of self-interest and maximum utility. Adam II lives by the very different logic of morality, where giving matters more than receiving, and conquering desire is more important than satisfying it. In the moral universe, success, when it leads to pride, becomes failure. Failure, when it leads to humility, can be success.

In that essay, first published in 1965, Rabbi Soloveitchik wondered whether there was a place for Adam II in the America of his day, so intent was it on celebrating human powers and economic advance. Fifty years on, Brooks echoes that doubt. “We live,” he says, “in a society that encourages us to think about how to have a great career but leaves many of us inarticulate about how to cultivate the inner life.”³

³ David Brooks, *The Road to Character*, xiii.

That is a central theme of Beha'alotecha. Until now we have seen the outer Moses, worker of miracles, mouthpiece of the Divine Word, unafraid to confront Pharaoh on the one hand, his own people on the other, the man who shattered the Tablets engraved by God Himself and who challenged Him to forgive His people, "and if not, blot me out of the book You have written" (Ex. 32:32). This is the public Moses, a figure of heroic strength. In Soloveitchik terminology, it is Moses I.

Leaders were proud,
magnificent, distinguished by
their dress, appearance and
regal manner. They built
temples in their own
honour... Their role was not
to serve but to be served

In Beha'alotecha we see Moses II, the lonely man of faith. It is a very different picture. In the first scene we see him break down. The people are complaining again about the food. They have manna but no meat. They engage in false nostalgia:

"How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt for free! And the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic!" (Num. 11:5)

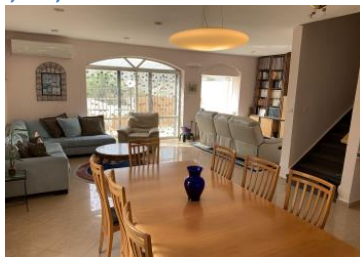
This is one act of ingratitude too many for Moses, who gives voice to deep despair:

"Why did You bring all this trouble to your servant? Why haven't I found favour in Your eyes, that You are placing the

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burden of this entire people on me! Did I conceive this people or give birth to them, that You tell me to carry them in my lap the way a nurse carries a baby...? I cannot carry this whole nation! The burden is too heavy for me! If this is how You are going to treat me, please kill me now, if I have found favour in Your eyes, because I cannot bear seeing all this misery!” (Num. 11:11-15)

Then comes the great transformation. God tells him to take seventy elders who will bear the burden with him. God takes the spirit that is on Moses and extends it to the elders. Two of them, Eldad and Medad, among the six chosen from each tribe but left out of the final ballot, begin prophesying within the camp. They too have caught Moses’ spirit. Joshua fears that this may lead to a challenge to Moses leadership and urges Moses to stop them. Moses answers

with surpassing generosity:

“Are you jealous on my behalf. Would that all God’s people were prophets and that He would rest his spirit on each of them.” (Num. 11:29)

The mere fact that Moses now knew that he was not alone, seeing seventy elders share his spirit, cures him of his depression, and he now exudes a gentle, generous confidence that is moving and unexpected.

In the third act, we finally see where this drama has been tending. Now Moses’ own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, start disparaging him. The cause of their complaint (the “Ethiopian woman” he had taken as wife) is not clear and there are many interpretations. The point, though, is that for Moses, this is the “Et tu, Brute?” moment. He has been betrayed, or at least slandered, by those closest to him.



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Yet Moses is unaffected. It is here that the Torah makes its great statement:

“Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than any other man on the face of the Earth.” (Num. 12:3)

This is a novum in history. The idea that a leader's highest virtue is humility must have seemed absurd, almost self-contradictory, in the ancient world. Leaders were proud, magnificent, distinguished by their dress, appearance and regal manner. They built temples in their own honour. They had triumphant inscriptions engraved for posterity. Their role was not to serve but to be served. Everyone else was expected to be humble, not they. Humility and majesty could not coexist.

In Judaism, this entire configuration was overturned. Leaders were there to serve, not to be served. Moses' highest accolade was to be called *Eved Hashem*, God's servant. Only one other person, Joshua, his successor, earns this title in Tanach. The architectural symbolism of the two great empires of the ancient world, the Mesopotamian ziggurat (the “tower of Babel”) and the pyramids of Egypt, visually represented a hierarchical society, broad at the base, narrow at the top. The Jewish symbol, the menorah, was the opposite, broad at the top, narrow at the base, as if to say that in Judaism the leader serves the people, not vice versa. Moses' first response to God's call at the Burning Bush was one of humility: “Who am I to lead?” (Ex. 3:11). It was precisely this humility that qualified him to lead.

In Beha'alotcha we track the psychological process by which Moses acquires a yet deeper level of humility. Under the stress



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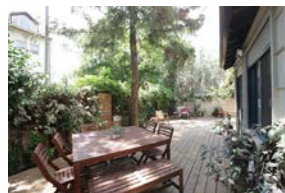
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of Israel's continued recalcitrance, Moses turns inward. Listen again to what he says: "Why have you brought all this trouble to your servant? ... Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? ... Where can I get meat for all these people? ... I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me." The key words here are "I," "me" and "myself." Moses has lapsed into the first person singular. He sees the Israelites' behaviour as a challenge to himself, not God. God has to remind him, "Is the Lord's arm too short"? It isn't about Moses, it is about what and whom Moses represents.

Moses had been, for too long, alone. It was not that he needed the help of others to provide the people with food. That was something God would do without the need for any human intervention. It was that he needed the company of others to end his almost unbearable isolation. As I have noted elsewhere, the Torah only twice contains the phrase, *lo tov*, "not good," once at the start of the human story when God says: "It is not good for man to be alone," (Gen. 2:8), a second time when Yitro sees Moses leading alone and says: "What you are doing is not good." (Ex. 18:7) We cannot live alone. We cannot lead alone.

As soon as Moses sees the seventy elders share his spirit, his depression disappears. He can say to Joshua, "Are you jealous on my behalf?" And he is undisturbed by the complaint of his own brother and sister, praying to God on Miriam's behalf when she is punished with leprosy. He has recovered his humility.

We now understand what humility is. It is not self-abasement. A statement often

attributed to C. S. Lewis puts it best: humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.

True humility means silencing the "I." For genuinely humble people, it is God and other people and principle that matter, not me. As it was once said of a great religious leader, "He was a man who took God so seriously that he didn't have to take himself seriously at all."

Rabbi Yochanan said, "Wherever you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you find His humility." (Megillah 31a). Greatness is humility, for God and for those who seek to walk in His ways. It is also the greatest single source of strength, for if we do not think about the "I," we cannot be injured by those who criticise or demean us. They are shooting at a target that no longer exists.

What Beha'alotcha is telling us through these three scenes in Moses' life is that we sometimes achieve humility only after a great psychological crisis. It is only after Moses had suffered a breakdown and prayed to die that we hear the words, "The man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone on earth." Suffering breaks through the carapace of the self, making us realise that what matters is not self-regard but rather the part we play in a scheme altogether larger than we are. *Lehavdil*, Brooks reminds us that Abraham Lincoln, who suffered from depression, emerged from the crisis of civil war with the sense that "Providence had taken control of his life, that he was a small instrument in a transcendent task."⁴

The right response to existential pain, Brooks says, is not pleasure but holiness, by which he means, “seeing the pain as part of a moral narrative and trying to redeem something bad by turning it into something sacred, some act of sacrificial service that will put oneself in fraternity with the wider community and with eternal moral demands.” This, for me, was epitomised by the parents of the three Israeli teenagers killed in the summer of 2014, who responded to their loss by creating a series of awards for those who have done most to enhance the unity of the Jewish people – turning their pain outward, and using it to help heal other wounds within the nation.

Crisis, failure, loss, or pain can move us from Adam I to Adam II, from self- to other-directedness, from mastery to service, and from the vulnerability of the “I” to the humility that “reminds you that you are not the centre of the universe,” but rather that “you serve a larger order.”⁵

Those who have humility are open to things greater than themselves while those who lack it are not. That is why those who lack it make you feel small while those who have it make you feel enlarged. Their humility inspires greatness in others. ■

5 Brooks, *ibid.*, p. 261.

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Over the past seven plus years I've been granted the privilege of sharing with you varied textual methodologies, diverse philosophical approaches and different moral lessons found in the words of the prophets. And, although it truly is a privilege to introduce to you new ideas from each weekly haftarah, it is also a challenge.

You see, each week I wonder whether I will be able to discover a fresh idea – one I hadn't shared before – in the haftarah reading, especially when these readings are somewhat limited and do not include the many ideas that can be found in an entire parasha. Over the years, therefore, I “discovered” a simple “trick” to uncover some subtle meaning, even, perhaps, a revelation, to shed light on the text and the navi's message. What I do is read the preface or the “postscript” to the haftarah selection, i.e., the section preceding and/or following the haftarah itself, a “trick” which often allows me to gain a deeper insight to the words of the prophet. And, given the fact that this week's selection is always read on Shabbat Chanuka as well, I turned to the postscript of the haftarah in the hope of uncovering a fresh new idea.

And it worked!

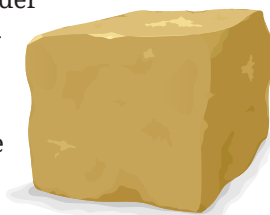
The closing pasuk of the haftarah speaks

of someone who will “bring out the stone to the cheers [calling] of: ‘Chen, Chen’ [‘Grace, Grace’]”. The verse is difficult to understand and many have offered various translations. To what stone is the reference? And who will bring it? Rashi explains that Zecharya is referring to the cornerstone of the Second Temple that would be brought by the Kohen Gadol,

Yehoshua, while the Metzudot believes that the stone referred to the foundation stone that would be laid for the Third Temple.

Both the Radak and the Ibn Ezra suggest that the “stone” is the weight used for the plumb line that would be used to measure and insure that the walls of the Beit HaMikdash would stand upright and strong.

But if we look back on the earlier nevuah told to Zecharya [1; 16-17] of how a plumb line would be stretched over Yerushalayim as a sign to the people that “Od t'futzena arai mitov”, that Hashem's cities will spread with bounty and Yerushalayim would grow and expand in the future, we might better understand this closing pasuk of our haftarah.



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Consider...have you ever toured through the Old City and seen the markings of the Second Temple walls? Do you remember them containing a much larger area than that encompassed by the First Temple walls? The truth is that Yerushalayim did not grow significantly during the Second Temple era – and certainly not during the subsequent centuries of exile! The Holy City remained a small, “backwater” village, often poverty-stricken and certainly not “spread with bounty”.

But 100 years ago, that began to change. Today, when we Jerusalemites gaze out of our windows, we are gazing at the prophecies of Zecharya as understood by the parshanim who saw the navi’s words as pertaining to the future messianic era – OUR era!

When we study the promises of the nevi'im and see them coming alive before our eyes it is important to realize that, often, those words were never realized in any of the past centuries. Because those promises were NEVER aimed for then! Only today do we see them coming true! Only today do the plumb lines spread the borders of our Holy City and our Holy Land.

Just as G-d promised.

And just as Zecharya said. ■

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The Miraculous Mann – Crystal Clear!

In Parshat Beha'alotcha we encounter Bnei Yisrael complaining about their lack of delicacies. They crave meat. They declare

זָכַרְנוּ אֶת־הַדֶּגֶה אֲשֶׁר־נֹאכַל בְּמִצְרַיִם חֵמָם אֶת־הַקְּשָׁאִים
וְאֶת־הָאֲבִטְחוֹת וְאֶת־הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת־הַבָּצְלִים וְאֶת־הַשּׁוּמִיִּם:
עַתָּה נִפְשָׁנוּ יֵבֶשָׁה אֵין כָּל בְּלִיתִי אֶל־הֶקֶן עֵינֵינוּ:

“We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge, the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now, our bodies are dried out, for there is nothing at all; we have nothing but manna to look at.” (Bamidbar 11:5-6).

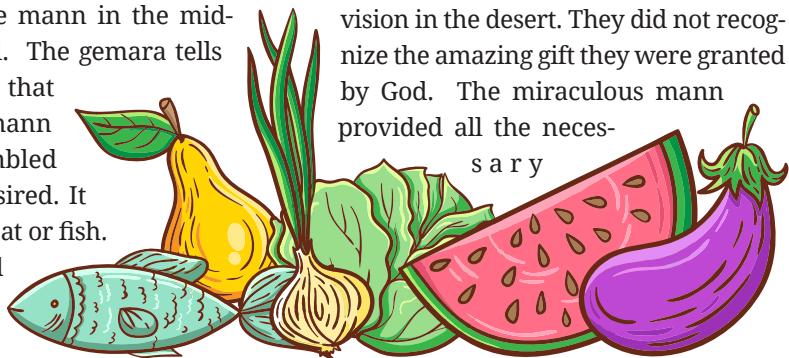
It is a bit strange that they are longing for the food they ate in Egypt as slaves. One would have thought that the meals they were provided were not of such high quality. Furthermore, Bnei Yisrael were provided with the mann in the midbar, gifted by God. The gemara tells us in Yoma (75), that the taste of the mann essentially resembled the flavor one desired. It could taste like meat or fish. If so, then why did the people feel as if they lacked

sufficient sustenance? If they yearned for fish, all they had to do was think of fish when they ate the mann and they would enjoy the taste of fish. What exactly were they lacking?

The Nachlat Tzvi offers an explanation based on a close reading of the pasuk. The complaint of the people is that they *“have nothing but manna to look at”* אֵין כָּל בְּלִיתִי אֶל־הֶקֶן. True they may taste a savory steak or fine fish. The issue was, as top chef’s put it: “it’s all about the presentation.” All they saw before their eyes was the mann and not the texture of fish or steak. As the gemara in Yoma 74b states that a blind person is never satiated because he does not see his food.

The flaw of the people was their tunnel vision in the desert. They did not recognize the amazing gift they were granted by God. The miraculous mann provided all the neces-

sary



nutrition and chazal tell us that it did not even turn into waste. The nation's shortsightedness led them to focus on what was directly in front of them rather than fully appreciate the greater picture.

In a similar light, Rav Asher Weiss in his commentary on *zemiroth L'shabbat*, cites the Klozenberg Rebbe who interprets the words ושבנו משובח – we should be satiated from your goodness. When we recite these words in benching, we are not only thanking Hashem for all he has provided, but requesting that Hashem enable us to recognize all the goodness that He bestows upon us. Only after we recognize that it is all from Hashem, we will be satiated. We have to “see”, understand and comprehend that it was provided by God and only then will we be able to appreciate it fully and be satiated.

Unfortunately, people take things for granted and do not always recognize the effort another invested, or that it is all coming from Above. May we learn a lesson from those that complained about the man in the midbar. Always see the bigger picture and appreciate all our blessings. Perhaps that is why the man is described as a crystal כעין הברדלס – so we can see through its appearance and appreciate its essence. ■

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Menorah Mindset

Every phrase in Torah is replete with meaning, even the statements that seem so obvious that it wouldn't occur to us to find further explanations. Rashi, in his inimitable wisdom, is always attuned to the nuances in every word and phrase. In our *parashah* we find a simple *passuk* describing how Ahron Hakohen kindled the *Menorah*. “*Vaya’as ken Aharon*”, Ahron did that, lighting the lamps to illuminate the *Menorah* as Hashem commanded Moshe (*Bamidbar* 8:3). The question is so glaring it practically jumps off the page. Would we ever have thought otherwise?! Certainly Ahron Hakohen did what Hashem commanded! Rashi's commentary, “Ahron did not deviate,” is further perplexing. Could we imagine that Ahron would do anything to deviate from his given task?

To help us understand this let us first look at the story of creation. We continuously find the Torah states, “*vayehi ken*,” and it was so, after Hashem forms each element of the world. Yet, this phrase is noticeably absent after the creation of light. Chazal explain that the original light was hidden away for the righteous to enjoy in the future so it wouldn't be abused by the wicked. This special light, which is known

as the “*ohr haganuz*,” enabled Adam to see from one end of the world to the other, representing the light of clarity. The *Malbim* notes that when he lit the *Menorah*, Ahron was able to infuse it with this special light. Thus, Ahron brought the “*ken*” that was missing at the time of creation back into the world. In doing so, the light of the *Menorah* merged with the light of clarity, radiating the belief of *ein od milvado*, the unmistakable reality that nothing exists other than Hashem. According to kabbalistic thought, Rashi's words “*shelo shinah*,” means that Ahron did not deviate as he ensured that the first day of creation would be congruous with the other days, linking them with the expression of “*ken*.”

In *Be'er Moshe*, the *Ozhorover* Rebbe notes that the word “*ken*” is related to the word “*kano*,” a base. The *Alshich Hakadosh* describes how lighting the lamps of the *Menorah* brought down Divine spiritual energies to the people. Not only did Ahron bring down this special concentration of spiritual and physical bounty, but he also created “*kano*,” a basis, the capacity for *Am Yisrael* to hold this energy and use it to grow closer to Hashem.

The *Saba* of Kelm teaches that Ahron's greatness was that he did this small act with “*ken*,” performing every task, understanding that it expressed the Will of Hashem. His preparedness and presence of mind was the same regardless of whether he

entered the *Kodesh Kodashim* or engaged in any other *avodah* of the *Beit Hamikdash*.

We are all aware that habit often breeds complacency, and how hard it is to keep up the same level of commitment. Rav Goldstein in *Sha'arei Chayim* characterizes Ahron's greatness in that he performed this service each day, always maintaining the passion and enthusiasm appropriate for doing the mitzvah.

As we *lein* this *parashah* immediately after Shavuot, there is a strong message for each of us. Let us not allow the dedication and energy we achieved on Shavuot to dwindle in any way. Let us prepare to do every mitzvah we encounter with passion and enthusiasm no matter whether it seems to be small, trivial, grand or glorious, for every mitzvah connects us to Infinity. ■



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Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Remember!

The *tzadik* Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, zy'a, was one of the most impactful leaders of the Chasidic movement. He led his talmidim along an expansive path, encouraging a broad embrace of intellectual study and rationalism, coupled with passionate introspection, authenticity and individuality.

Like the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Simcha would take his *chevreh* on mysterious trips and outings, during which Divine providence would deliver them some powerful, experiential lesson in *avodah* or elevated *midos*. Once, the group was *ba-derech* and stopped for the night at a *kosher* inn. The host, who was in the midst of preparing dinner, welcomed them warmly and invited them to settle in.

Before their meal was served, the assembled began to interrogate the *arendar* regarding his level of *kashrus*. Where did the meat come from? Who was the *shochet* and is he a *yirah Shamayim*? Did he check the shechita knife immediately before the *shechitah*? Was the *fleish* rinsed, soaked and salted correctly according to the strictest opinion?

Another traveler, a simple beggar sitting by the hearth, overheard the numerous questions, and spoke up: "My brothers! About what goes into your mouths, you

are so *makpid*, exacting and sensitive. May you have such high standards about what comes *out* of your mouths as well!"

The rebuke of the simple *Yid* caught the attention of Reb Simcha Bunim. "Chevreh, eat your fill," he grinned, "in the morning we'll return to Peshis'cha. We have accomplished the purpose of our journey."

וַתִּדְבֹר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁכָּה עַל־אֲדֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכַּשִּׁית
אֲשֶׁר לָקַח כִּי־אִשָּׁה כַּשִּׁית לָקַח:

Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe regarding the Cushite woman he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. (12:1)

Rashi notes that the term דָּבַר connotes a harsh way of speaking. Whereas the pasuk says both siblings used this form of speech in reference to Moshe, Miriam's name is first, suggesting that she initiated the conversation. This is why she is held accountable and stricken with *tzaraas*.

When Miriam heard that her younger brother Moshe had separated from his wife Tzipporah in order to attain a higher level of spiritual *d'veikus*, she turned to her brother Aharon HaKohen to discuss her concerns privately. Motivated solely *l'sheim Shamayim*, Miriam actually praised her sister-in-law Tzipporah as a righteous woman, and expressed her feeling that their brother's decision seemed inappropriate.

Miriam was a loving sister who had risked her life to protect Moshe, watching

over him as an infant when he was cast upon the waters of the Nile. Committed out of respect and sincere concern, her infraction doesn't seem to be so severe. She was only raising questions regarding Moshe's exclusive sounding approach to *avodas Hashem*, and was concerned for Tsipporah and her sense of *shalom bayis*. She meant well and did not wish her beloved brother any harm. Yet, there was some subtle harshness in her words, and despite her good intentions, Miriam was 'rebuked' and suffered from *tzaraas*.

Chazal enumerate six *mitzvos* of 'remembrance'. Among them, one refers to the episode that takes place in our *sedra* involving Miriam's comments about her brother: "Remember what Hashem did to Miriam *ba-derech*, as you were leaving Egypt" (Devarim, 24:9). Ramban explains that this verse is a positive commandment on par with other Biblically mandated *zechiros* or *mitzvos* of 'remembrance'. Those include to "remember the day of Shabbos...", to remember *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and to remember what Amalek did to us. To fulfill these six *mitzvos* every day, many recite the *Sheish Zechiros* printed in the Siddur after Shacharis.

Beyond memorializing these six moments in time as impactful experiences in Jewish history, each of these 'remembrances' calls our attention to a deeper message within the experience. The *mitzvah* of 'remembering what Hashem did to Miriam...' is not just focusing on what Miriam said per se, nor solely calling to mind the laws of *lashon ha-ra*. In a deeper way, this *mitzvah* is also urging us to remember, daily, that *even a tza-deikes* as praiseworthy as Miriam, the holy

prophetess — and when she meant well — even such a person can make a mistake.
ומה מרים שלא נתכוונה לגנותו, כך נענשה, קל וחומר לתספר בגנותו של חבירו:

"If Miriam, who did not intend to disparage him [Moses], was punished, all the more so someone who intentionally disparages his fellow" (Tanchuma, Tzav, 13).

Certainly, it is praiseworthy and holy to be *machmir* on laws of *kashrus* and what we put into our mouths. But *even* when we are on the level to do so — and even when we mean well — we need to 'remember' to have sensitivity about what we say to others, and how we say it. And this is especially crucial in relation to our brothers and sisters, those who are close to us.

May we learn from all our mysterious journeys, and experiences *ba-derech*, and become a blessing to everyone around us. ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The Chasidic Masters refer to this *Shabbat* following *Shavuot* as *Shabbes Noch Shvuiss - Shabbat that is still Shavuot*. On this *Shabbat* following *Shavuot*, we must continue to channel that renewed spiritual inspiration we felt on *Shavuot*, as we recalled the wondrous event of *Kabbalat HaTorah*.

Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the *Ohalei Yaakov* of *Husiyatin/Tel Aviv zy'a*, lovingly referred to as the 'Zionist Admor of Tel Aviv' was one of the great unheralded religious personalities of the pre-State *Yishuv* and early years of *Medinat Yisrael*.

In 1938, The Rebbe points to numerous *Maamarei Chazal*, that liken the *yom tov* of *Shavuot* to the proverbial wedding day between *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and *Am Yisrael*. Indeed, in certain communities among the *Eidot HaMizrach*, there is a *Ketuba* that is traditionally read on *Shavuot* morning before *Kriat HaTorah*.

The Rebbe explains that if the *yom tov* of *Shavuot* is the proverbial wedding day, then so too the following *Shabbat* is like the proverbial *Shabbat Sheva Brachot*. Just as the week of *sheva brachot* is a time where family and friends continue to rejoice with the happy couple, so too the inspiration and

joy that we feel on *Shavuot* should carry over into the week that follows.

Then the Rebbe gives us a powerful glimpse at this critical period in Jewish History:

Just as we must see and experience Shavuot as the loving marriage between Hashem and Am Yisrael, we must also realize that our right to settle here in Artzeinu HaKedosha is not dependant on England or any other nation, but rather is a manifestation of the love Hashem feels for the Jewish People.

Yehi ratzon, may the joy, inspiration, spiritual clarity, and most of all, unity, that we experienced on *Chag Matan Torah* carry us into this coming *Shabbat* and throughout the entire year, and may this beautiful message provide us with continued clarity and faith, even in trying times. ■

Rabbi Sam Shor at a recent visit to the Kever of the Rebbe of Husiyatin/Tel Aviv



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Rabbi Azarya Berzon

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion
in Tanach
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin
Perek 4
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

8:00 PM

Lighting Shabbat Candles-
Who, What, When, Where
and Why?
**Rabbanit Shani Taragin
(L'Ayla)**

MON, JUNE 13

9:15 AM

Divrei HaYamim (L'Ayla)
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav
Soloveitchik
**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

11:45 AM

Halacha and Agada in
Contemporary Society
**Rabbi Shmuel
Herschler**

Tea & Coffee Available

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver Program
**Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

TUE, JUNE 14

9:15 AM

Torah Tapestries
Rebbetzin Smiles

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning
in Mitzvot **Rabbi
Yitzchak Breitowitz**

10:30AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

12:15 PM

Jewish History
Dr. Deborah Polster

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud
Rabbi Bienenfeld

7:30 PM

Safrut Course (The Bais)
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner

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9:00 AM

Medina and Halacha
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

10:15 AM

Contemporary Issues in
Halacha and Hashkafa
Rabbi Anthony Manning

11:30 AM

Great Jewish Thinkers
Rabbi Alan Kimche

12:15 PM

Trailblazing the Text of
Tanach- Lunch and Learn-
Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:30 PM

Halachic Controversies
Rabbi Aschi Dick
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9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Baruch Taub

11:30 AM

Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin
Perek 4
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

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Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

Rabbi Goldwicht

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Kedushat Shevi'it Produce

This article examines the status of ownership of produce with *kedushat shevi'it*. According to Torah law (see *Rambam, Shemita Veyovel* 4:24), Jews must forfeit any possession of *shemita* produce (fruit, vegetables, legumes etc.) growing on their property. Based on this mitzvah, it would seem unusual for a consumer to find *kedushat shevi'it* at the supermarket or sold over the internet. However, based on numerous reasons *kedushat shevi'it* can be found almost anywhere in Israel mostly under the auspices of *Otzar Beit Din*.

Otzar Beit Din

In the times of the *Mishnah* our Sages made a decree that the Rabbinic courts in all cities would create a *Shevi'it* storage system, called *Otzar Beit Din*. The *Tosefta* (*Shevi'it* 8:1) an early Talmudic Source describes how the *Beit Din* (Rabbinic court) would appoint officers to collect forfeited

produce, give a certain amount to the original owners and then store the remaining produce. The purpose was to store the food for the poor or for others who wanted to collect for consumption.

The development and legitimacy of *Otzar Beit Din* has been disputed for centuries. Certain later authorities claimed that it was a temporary decree which was not accepted by early authorities (see *Hatorah Veha'aretz* 3, p.180). Others claim that it was widely accepted and remains an ideal form of providing the public with *kedushat shevi'it* produce (see *Responsa Mishnat Yosef* 3:40). The modern day *Otzar Beit Din* is disputed even during the current *shemita* year. Rav Mordechai Gross *Shlit"a*, one of the OU *Poskim* supports the *Otzar*

Beit Din solution and allows the distribution of such produce. It should be noted that *Otzar Beit Din* is a complex system which requires trained and experienced Rabbis and orga-

nizations to preform it properly. As such, the OU recommends only consuming *Otzar Beit Din* which has been reviewed and approved by *Rabbanim* of the highest caliber.





Otzar Beit Din products can be found at special distribution depots in predominantly religious cities. Such produce may also be found in large super market chains and is sold over the internet by various suppliers. *Otzar Beit Din* produce should have proper certification. When purchasing at a supermarket, the label or box should have the words *Otzar Beit Din* (אוצר בית דין) or *Kedushat Shevi'it* (קדושת שביעית).

During the current *shemita* year, *Otzar Beit Din* produce is almost only available in raw form such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Israeli processed products **do not** contain ingredients from fruit or vegetable sources that are *Otzar Beit Din*. The only possible exception is wine that was mistakenly imported.

When having guests or giving produce as a gift, it is important to mention that the produce is *Otzar Beit Din* and has *kedushat shevi'it*. This is in order to make sure the laws of handling *shemita* produce are kept.

Kedushat Shevi'it outside of Israel

According to most *poskim*, exporting fruit and vegetables with *kedushat shevi'it* is prohibited (see *Aruch Hashulchan Ha'atid* 24:25). However, certain circumstances

exist where *Otzar Beit Din* might be found in international markets.

Kedushat shevi'it fruit may be found in the form of imported wines (kosher wine, sometimes a mix of vintages) and imported citrus fruit (only from mid-winter).

It should be noted that when seeing *kedushat shevi'it* produce overseas, there is no reason to avoid purchasing it (see *Chazon Ish Shevi'it* 10:6). Such produce is permissible for consumption as long as the laws of *kedushat shevi'it* are adhered to.

In Summary:

- *Otzar Beit Din* produce has *Kedushat Shevi'it* and can be found in supermarkets.
- The OU approves *Otzar Beit Din* when the process and distribution is done properly.
- Only raw products and certain wines are classified as *Otzar Beit Din* during the current *Shemita*.
- One should inform recipients upon giving produce with *Kedushat Shevi'it*.
- *Otzar Beit Din* produce might be accidentally imported overseas. Regardless, the produce or product may be consumed. ■

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Messianic Sabotage

The first Sanhedrin in history is being assembled. There are 72 candidates for 70 positions and, unfortunately, two will not make the final cut. Eldad and Meidad aren't nominated and, feeling spurned, they go "renegade" and begin to prophesize without authorization. Their unlicensed prophecy riles Yehoshua, Moshe's trusted student, who suggests a stiff penalty for these rebels. It is only Moshe's magnanimity and generosity which spares them a potentially harsh fate.

What were these two rebel prophets speaking about? Evidently, it was something so provocative and so treacherous that it warranted severe punishment. The gemara suggests that they were prophesying about Moshe's ultimate demise, including the fact that he would not lead the people into the promised Land. Another account has them mocking the "slav" or the birds which Moshe had miraculously summoned to feed the starving nation. Each of these cynical prophecies subverts Moshe's

authority, and these incendiary statements must be stifled.

The gemara presents a third opinion: they predicted the Messianic wars of Gog and Magog. What is so sinister about this prophecy, and why does it elicit such a harsh response? Don't we eagerly anticipate Messianic redemption? Prophecies about that era should be welcomed, not sanctioned!

Part of the problem is the timing of these prophecies. Our nation stood at a very critical crossroads. We had spent an entire year at the mountain of Sinai, but now, we were beginning a journey into the great unknown. We now faced the specter of a long hot summer in an unforgiving desert. Hungry and fragile, the people began to vent their grievances against Moshe. Tensions were running high, to the point that Moshe required administrative assistance through a newly formed Sanhedrin. At this stage, the national mood was jittery and the state of the nation very unsteady.

These grandiose and provocative Messianic prophecies exploited the nation's fragile psyche. Misguided Messianism offers a seductive escape from our world and its struggles. It offers us an easy pass

By offering a glimmering vision of a future and better world,
it casts the current authorities as irrelevant or boring

into a perfect world without suffering and without hardship. “Escapist Messianism” de-anchors us from our world. The lure of messianic fantasy can dislodge humanity from its ideological bearings. Of course, we dream of a better world, but we must not abandon the current one. Utopia isn’t a “replacement” but a “result”. We gradually perfect our current world, building a platform for the Messianic state.

Reality will always appear dreary and tedious when compared to the luster of the Messianic world. It is more exciting to imagine the dramatic wars of Gog and Magog and the conclusion of history, than it is to wrestle with social strife and food shortages in the desert. At this stage, the war stories of Gog and Magog are nothing more than irresponsible distractions in the middle of a severe extreme national crisis.

Beyond the manipulative nature of their prophecies, these predictions are also subversive to Moshe’s authority. Messianism is sometimes weaponized to upend the established authority. As they portray a new world order, Messianic narratives dismiss or cancel the current order. Who needs current institutions of authority if a new world is about to break upon the horizon?

In its most extreme version, “anti-establishment Messianism” manifests as “antinomianism”- a complete rejection of law or religious norms. In 1666, having promoted himself as the Moshiach, Shabtai Tzvi conducted a meal of non-kosher foods. He began the feast by reciting a blessing of “boruch matir issurim” (blessed is the One who has now permitted previously forbidden foods”), signaling, that in his Messianic world, former prohibitions no



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Even when it doesn't erupt into rejection of halacha or law, unbalanced Messianism induces general anti-establishment sentiment. By offering a glimmering vision of a future and better world, it casts the current authorities as irrelevant or boring. Why comply with Moshe's decrees when they will just be washed away in the wars of Gog U'Magog? By posing zero-sum scenarios, aggressive Messianism subverts current systems of authority.

We are currently facing a more subtle form of anti-establishment Messianism. 1948 marked a shift into a new period of history. After a historical shift it is difficult to deeply identify with our past traditions. Those who don't view 1948 as a shift, aren't forced to wrestle with this issue. If 1948 is similar to 1748, our traditions aren't any less compelling today than they were two hundred years ago. Those who do believe that we are living in the future, must reinforce the past, its traditions, and its institutions. The leap into the future sometimes makes the trail of the past seem outworn.

There is a third danger to these radical prophecies about future wars. Interestingly, these two prophets do not portray

pastoral Messianic images. They don't cite Yeshaya's idyllic scenes of beating swords into plowshares. Instead, their imagination is riveted upon war and militancy. Very often, Millenarianism- extreme Messianic belief in apocalyptic change- is predicated upon violence and militancy. There is no better way to supplant the current reality than to bleed it to death. This type of unabated Messianism can easily slip into war mongering and confrontation. Bloodshed and violence can easily be justified as a necessary price for the larger payoff of the Messianic era. By speaking of war these two prophets are welding Messianic prophecies to war and violence.

There may be violent wars which occasion the end of days. We certainly have ample traditions which assert as much. Sadly, there may be large-scale suffering. However, it doesn't have to be that way. If we merit, we may be able to steer a more peaceful Messianic course. without apocalyptic suffering.

Even if we accept the inevitability of Messianic wars it is not something we welcome but something we dread. It should never have been the inaugural prophecy of Eldad and Meidad. ■



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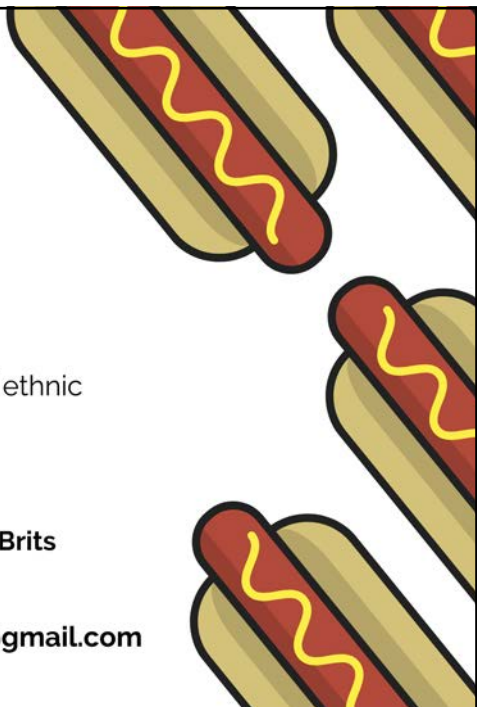
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When the Optimist Turns Pessimist

Was Moshe an optimist? – That is the question. The pessimist argues that it can't get worse, and the optimist says, "Oh yes, it can!" So, let us look at our Parsha to answer the question. The first part of the narrative describes the aftermath of the various tasks and ceremonies associated with the Mishkan.

Things looked good. And in the middle of the Parsha, we see Moshe optimistically imploring Hashem that when the Aron Habrit embarked on its journey, our enemies be dispersed, and when the Ark was at rest, the Eternal return to the myriads of Israel.

But then, the troubles began for Moshe. People at the edge of the camp started complaining. About what is not clear. Rashi indicates that these people were the *Eirev Rav*, the mixed multitude that joined the people during the Exodus. Not of our kin, they were looking for pretexts not to have

to follow the ways of Hashem.

There is nothing like a bunch of complainers to set the ball rolling and lower morale. Indeed, it really was of no consequence as to the nature of the complaint. These people had come for the ride, as it were, with no intention of keeping the Torah. Unfortunately, no one intervened to catch the fly in the works before the damage was done. And so the Almighty sent a fire to consume the troublemakers or, alternatively, the prominent members among them who should have nipped the complaints in the bud (Rashi).

There is nothing like a bunch of complainers to set the ball rolling and lower morale

This episode seems to have aroused not only the anger of Hashem but also the ire of the people who now wept in sympathy with the punished individuals. And now, the people as an entity murmured against Moshe, arguing that they missed the food in Egypt and hungered for meat to replace the

Manna. Moreover, with wailing and Chutzpah, the people hankered after the fish they "received freely in Egypt" (Bemidbar 11:5) – even though it was unlikely offered to the Hebrew slaves!

The point of the vexed protesters was that in Egypt, their food was supplied without the burden of heavenly demands; why now should their sustenance depend on obeying

Hashem's commandments?

All this commotion was too much for Moshe. Now, he, too, complains – but to Hashem. How much worse can it get? The burden is too much for him to bear. He takes things personally and despairs to the point of self-mortification.

How the mighty have fallen! How lack of gratitude and appreciation can lead us on the road to disaster. How consorting with the wrong types can turn our heads. How an inappropriate word or two can twist our minds and rattle along like wildfire. How easily positive thinking can be overturned with painful results. These are but several lessons that even the most optimistic among us might take to heart. ■

Menachem Persoff

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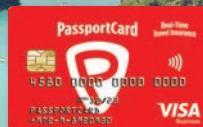
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Using the Sources, Coming to Conclusions

In concluding our discussion of the obligation, or permissibility, of the couple to undergo preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) in order to have children, we see that, sometimes, there are more questions than answers. Using the discussion between Yeshayahu and Chizkiyahu as our basis, we observe that the source can be interpreted in opposite ways.

Some use this tale to “prove” that we must not interfere with God’s plan; if we are supposed to have unhealthy children then that is what will eventually happen. We are not permitted to obstruct this Divine decree. In addition, we are not really capable of doing so, and, with all our will and use of technology, we still find that people have sick children. God’s will ultimately overcomes our own desires.

On the other hand, some poskim have used this very same Talmudic passage to claim the exact opposite; a couple has to utilize current medical technology in order to have healthy children. Yeshayahu rebuked Chizkiyahu for not getting married and

having children, but Chizkiyahu replied that he had refrained from doing so out of a fear for the fate of his children. Yeshayahu replied that this was not the king’s responsibility; we are to follow the Divine instructions and God will take care of the results. But this is only applicable in a case in which the concern is for the spiritual welfare of the children, not when dealing with a medical issue. Yeshayahu was conveying a message that he had directly received from God, and this must be followed regardless of the outcome. In other cases, we can decide not to have children, or only have them after first taking the proper precautions to ensure that they will be healthy.

As in many cases in halacha, the same source can be used to arrive at completely different conclusions. Practically speaking, since there is a difference of opinion, each case must be decided on an individual basis. Each case is unique and the halachic decision must take into account the exact medical situation, the family history and situation and the parents’ desire and ability.

This Talmudic tale, that may initially appear to be trivial, has been used as a paradigm for us to approach this modern, and extremely relevant, conundrum. Our rich Talmudic literature presents us with numerous thought-provoking sources that can enable us to develop an appropriate approach to the most complex medical ethical questions. ■



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RABBI AARON

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GOLDSCHIEDER

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik: *Brit Avot* and *Brit Sinai*

One of Rabbi Soloveitchik's most profound teachings addressed the critical question of what qualifies a Jew to be counted among the nation of Israel.

The Rav identified two epic events in the Torah which help answer this question. He employed two terms - *Brit Avot* and *Brit Sinai* - to describe two distinct junctures in the emergence of the Jewish people.

***Brit Avot*:** In the story of Avraham, the first Jew, we are introduced to the notion of *brit* in three places: *Brit Mila* (*Bereshit* 17:9-10), *Brit Ben Habetarim* (*Bereshit* 15:1-21), and a *Brit* associated with the Land of Israel (*Bereshit* 17:7).

The Rav taught that *Brit Avot* constitutes the unique relationship that the Jew maintains with one another and with God. It represents a distinct fate or historical path that the nation of Israel will travel and, oftentimes, endure, together. It should be noted that *Brit Avot* is also unique in that "it does not tell a Jew what to do (i.e. observe mitzvot) but rather how to feel and what to aspire to and long for." (Man

of Faith in the Modern World, p. 68).

***Brit Sinai*:** In contrast to *Brit Avot*, *Brit Sinai* is characterized by a clear and straightforward mandate. The Jewish people individually and collectively committed themselves and all future generations to the observance of the Commandments, taryag mitzvot, to which no other people was obligated. This notion is stated in unambiguous terms: "Not with you alone do I seal this covenant (*brit*)...and with whoever is not here with us today" (Devarim 29:13-14). A Jew and Jewish peoplehood is anchored in the commitment to Torah and mitzvot. (*Ibid.*, p. 66) Twice in the description of *Matan Torah* the term *brit* is employed (*Shemot* 24:7-8)

Expanding on this same theme the Rav took note of two similar terms which are employed to describe the communities that appear identical but have profoundly different meanings. A verse in the Torah that is easily passed over, the Rav took pause and noticed a glaring question.

"The Lord spoke to Moshe, saying: 'Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [*edah*], and cause the camps [*machanot*] to journey'" (*Bamidbar* 10:1-2). This simple passage became a springboard for a deep teaching of the Rav. Namely, *Machaneh*, is a group or society that is formed when individuals face a common enemy. They band together for mutual protection, knowing that only

by doing so can they survive. This kind of comradeship is not very different from the way animals herd together to defend themselves against predators.

However, there is quite a different form of association. People come together because they share a particular vision, aspiration, and a set of ideals. This is the meaning of *edah*, a congregation. *Edah* is related to the word “*ed*,” witness. *Edot* (as opposed to *chukim* and *mishpatim*) are the commands that testify to Jewish belief - as Shabbat testifies to creation, Pesach to the divine involvement in history, and so on. *Edah* represents a society built around a shared project and a vision.

The story of Patriarchs and Matriarchs, their family, and their descent to Egypt is paradigmatic of the *Machane* experience. They suffered together. There was a palpable sense that they were part of a single story. They were bound together in this shared experience. The Rav cited the verse from the Scroll of Esther that spotlights the notion that every Jew is intertwined with the fate of the nation: “Do not think that you, of all Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king’s palace” (Esther 4:13). (The Covenant of Faith and Destiny, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, JewishPress.com, June 4, 2015)

A religious Jew places strong emphasis on *Brit Sinai* and the fact that we define our community as an *Edah*. However, the fact that the roots of our peoplehood are to be found in *Brit Avot* and that we also possess the character trait of *machane*, should give rise to a powerful sense that every Jew, no matter one’s level of commitment, is part of a single story. In a word, what we have in common

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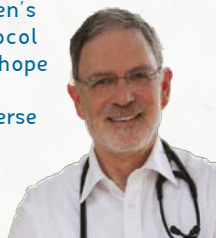
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The Rav identified four areas of Jewish life that emerge from the fact that we recognize the *Brit Avot* (Majesty and Humility, Zielgler p. 284-285):

No matter the social station or land of residence, we as Jews share a common history and fate; all will rise and fall together.

Since we share a common circumstance, we must share in one another's suffering as well. Wherever in the world a Jew is in pain a fellow Jew feels their pain.

Feeling another's suffering means that there is shared responsibility. This idea is plainly seen in the Halachic principle - "All Jews are guarantors for one another" (*Shevuot* 39a).

Finally, the charity and aid that we offer others in need is given not only as a fulfillment of requirement but from a sense of compassion and connection.

In sum, the Rav posited there are two components of Jewish identity. Both facets play an integral role regarding our relationship to our fellow Jew and speak to the very nature of what is required to live an authentic Jewish life.

The Rav applied the above teaching when called on to clarify the Orthodox communities' stance regarding participating with the other movements in the U.S. Jewish landscape. In 1956, in an article that appeared in a prominent Jewish newspaper (*Tog Morgen Journal*) the Rav set guidelines. He applied the two principles established above of *Macheneh* and *Edah*: "When we are faced with a problem for Jews and Jewish interests toward the world without, regarding the defense of Jewish rights in the non-Jewish world, then all groups and

movements must be united. In this area, there may not be division, because any friction in the Jewish camp may be disastrous for the entire people...With regard to our problem within [the Jewish community], however, - our spiritual-religious interests such as Jewish education, synagogues, council of rabbis - whereby unity is expressed through spiritual-ideological collectivism as a Torah community, it is my opinion that orthodoxy cannot and should not unite with such groups which deny the fundamentals of our *weltanschauung* (Community, Covenant and Commitment, pp. 144-145).

Brit Avot's Bond with the Land

The first Rashi on the Torah famously asks why the Almighty did not opt to begin His Torah enumerating the mitzvot. Perhaps, if we rephrase Rashi's question slightly, the issue is why *Brit Avot* is necessary to recount; is not *Brit Sinai* the defining character of Jewishness and the nation of Israel? Rashi's well known answer is quite important for this discussion. Rashi says that the opening chapters of the story establish a foundational principle that, to some degree, stands separate from the commandments. Namely, the promise of the Land of Israel to the Jew. (See Rav Dr. Judah Goldberg, *Components of Berit Avot*, VBM)

A trusted student of the Rav, Rabbi Walter Wurzberger understood his teacher to be expressing the notion that *Brit Avot* 'acknowledges the unique and preeminent position of the Land of Israel as the central arena for the fulfillment of Jewish destiny.' (*Ethics of Responsibility*, Wurzberger, p. 15)

The Rav hammered home this very point

in a memorable addresses to the Mizrahi movement:

“The Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael is endowed with two sanctities: the sanctity of Abraham (Brit Avot) and the sanctity of Sinai (Brit Sinai); while one living abroad must be satisfied of that of Sinai alone, since he lacks the sanctity of Abraham which is indivisibly bound up with the Land.” (Five Addresses, p. 143)

The Rav brilliantly elucidated a Talmudic statement that is seemingly very troubling. “The Rabbis taught in a Baraita: a person should ever dwell in Eretz Yisrael even in a city with a majority of non-Jews, but not outside Eretz Yisrael even in a city with a Jewish majority, since one who lives in Eretz Yisrael is as if he has a God, and whoever lives outside Eretz Yisrael is as if he does not have a God” (Ketubot 110b). The question is obvious: How could the Talmud assert that living outside of Israel is like living bereft of God?

The Rav draws our attention to another statement that makes an identical claim, however, the proof-text that is cited in this passage offers the key to understanding this challenging statement. In the Tosefta (Avodah Zarah Chapter 5) it quotes the verse which describes Yaakov’s unfailing efforts to return home, “So that I come back to father’s house in peace” (Bereshit 28:21).

In the Tosefta the verse cited emphasizes the fact that the Jew’s relationship is rooted in Brit Avot, and the Land in particular. The forefathers resided in the Land and they were promised by the Almighty that this was where their descendants would also make their homes. The sharp statement made in the Talmud which states that

living outside Israel is compared to being disconnected from God, refers specifically to a Jew distancing himself from Brit Avot. The Jew who fulfills all the mitzvot is loyal to Brit Sinai but if he chooses to live outside the Land of Israel, willy nilly, compromises their fealty to the unique Brit Avot. (The Rav Speaks, pp. 140-143)

The Torah, in the infamous words of the tochacha, speaks of a future time of destruction and suffering within the nation of Israel. And yet, even within the curses, the Torah conveys words of solace. It harkens back to Brit Avot that remains in tact: “I will remember My covenant (briti) with Yaakov and also My covenant with Yitzchak, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land” (Vayikra 26:42).

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlop explained this verse to mean that even if the Jewish people reach the lowest rung when they no longer are characterized by the traits of the Avot, the people’s attachment to the Land will be a merit and with that the people of Israel will be lifted by the Almighty and be forgiven (Mei Marom, Vayikra 26:42). The Rav expressed a somewhat different perspective and explained that the Torah is saying that although Jews may stray from a religious life, the Land of Israel will inevitably remind him of his connection to his roots and his people. Ultimately this fact will awaken the Jew to fully return to a committed Jewish life. ■

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Mistake in *Beracha* on Delayed Laying of *Tefillin* – part II

Question: I was at home with a weak stomach and decided it would be halachically prudent to put on my *tefillin* for a shortened period (from after *Yishtabach* through *Shemoneh Esrei*). After I fastened the *tefillin shel yad*, I realized that the *beracha* I had recited was not the one for *tefillin* but that I had instinctively said *Yotzer Ohr*. I continued *davening* with just the *shel yad* until the next semi-break, *Yotzer Hame'orot*, at which point I put on the *shel rosh*. Was that correct?

Answer: [Last time we saw that in the midst of *Birkat Yotzer Ohr*, there were two reasonable ways to time putting on the *shel rosh* and making the *berachot*.]

Had you switched the *beracha* to *L'hani'ach Tefillin* within *toch k'dei dibur* (app. two seconds), you probably could have combined the *beracha* opening with the intended, preferable wording and ignored *Yotzer Ohr* (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 209:2). Having not done so,

were you truly in the midst of the *beracha* of *Yotzer Ohr* and were correct in continuing with it or was the unintended *beracha* of *Yotzer Ohr* worthless?

It might seem to depend on the question (see Berachot 13a; Megilla 17a) of *mitzvot tzrichot kavana* (are *mitzvot* valid *b'di'eved* if the right action was done without intention to fulfill the *mitzva*?). While the ruling is not fully clear, especially concerning a Rabbinic *mitzva*, including almost all *berachot*, the main current is that one does not fulfill the *mitzva* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 60:4 and Mishna Berura 60:10). Also, it is possible that a *beracha* made with a different *beracha* in mind is worse (see Tosafot, Berachot 12a). Furthermore, arguably a “slip of the tongue” (you apparently went from *Yishtabach* to *Yotzer Ohr* on “auto pilot”) might be considered *mitasek*, which is worse than lack of intent (see Rosh Hashana 32b). On the other hand, this case might be better than classic *mitasek*, as you intended to praise Hashem with a *beracha*, albeit a different one.

Whether your *Yotzer Ohr* was valid might depend on how one learns a Magen Avraham (209:5). Writing about one who

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recites *Malbish Arumim* with *Poke'ach Ivrim* in mind and then immediately inserts *Pokeiach Ivrim*, the Magen Avraham is unsure which *beracha* he fulfills. If he had intended for *Malbish Arumim* and then tried to "erase" it in favor of *Pokeiach Ivrim*, he fulfilled *Malbish Arumim*. The Panim Meiros (I:58) changes the text in the Magen Avraham because one can correct a mistaken recitation immediately (Shulchan Aruch, OC 209:2 about one who recited *Borei Pri Hagafen* on water), and the Magen Avraham says that one who mistakenly recited, at *Havdala*, *Borei Me'orei Ha'eish* before *Borei Minei Besamim* can correct to *Borei Minei Besamim*. The Dagul Meirevava keeps our text and distinguishes as follows. In the case of water and of *besamim*, the object he held during the *beracha* proved he made a mistake, which enables him to switch to the correct *beracha*. In contrast, regarding *Pokeiach Ivrim*/*Malbish Arumim*, there is no physical indication the *beracha* was mistaken and therefore, it is unclear

if he can change it. The *Yad Ephrayim* (ad loc.) makes a different distinction. Because *Borei Pri Hagafen* on water is nonsensical, moving on from *Borei Pri Hagafen* is natural, whereas regarding *Malbish Arumim* and *Pokeiach Ivrim*, which are both appropriate *berachot*, it might not be possible to switch, as the originally recitation takes effect. Our case contains a split between the distinctions. On the one hand, *Yotzer Ohr* and *L'hani'ach Tefillin* were both appropriate at that point, but being about to fasten the *tefillin* made it clear you did not intend then for *Yotzer Ohr*.

The above, though, is moot. Since *Yotzer Ohr* is a long *beracha*, even if lack of intention invalidates its beginning, the continuation of the *beracha* validated it. If you would have stopped for *L'hani'ach Tefillin*, you would have given up on the *beracha* you began, making it *l'vatala*, so it was good you continued. It might have been better to repeat "yotzer ohr..." (without "Baruch ata..."), with *kavana*, but the *beracha*, as you did it, was valid *b'di'eved*. ■

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The Responsibility Of Individuals For Planting Flowers And Trees In Their Municipality During Shemitah

I am a resident of Modi'in and the municipality is currently expanding the road and planting flowers and trees alongside it. Since I pay municipal taxes, public land is also mine to a certain extent. Am I violating *shemitah*? Was *heter mechirah* employed?

Answer:

Heter mechirah was never meant for gardening, rather for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, few municipalities in Israel decided to plant during this *shemitah*. To minimize *shemitah* violation in such places it is preferable to sell the land, but this is not optimal. We checked with the rabbanut of Modi'in, who told us that the municipality sold its land to a non-Jew and that only non-Jews are involved in planting activities. The basic guidelines during renovations is wait until after *shemitah* to plant trees and

flowers. Note that also **filling in soil** after renovation is problematic, since it prepares the ground for future planting. Our instructions *lechatchilah* are to lay soil but save 10–30 cm, which should be filled in after

shemitah or to fill in the upper 30 cm with material that is not fit for planting, such as gravel. After *shemitah* the gravel can be removed and replaced with soil.

Am I transgressing *shemitah* if the municipality is?

Rabbi Moshe Sternbach in *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (5:305, 5765) relates that the Chazon Ish warned the gardener of the Bene Berak

municipality that if he performs forbidden work in the city's gardens, all of the city's residents will be violating *shemitah* since (1) public land also belongs to residents and (2) the municipality cares for the gardens



on their behalf. However, continues Rabbi Sternbach, if an individual protests and declares that he is against these forbidden activities, he does not transgress *shemithah* prohibitions. Rabbi Nissin Karelitz (*Chut Hashani*) writes similarly.

In conclusion: Complain to the Urban Improvement Department (SHEFA) or the municipality. It is best to also petition to religious council members and the city rabbi. After you protested the violation, you are no longer held accountable and are not considered violating *shemithah* prohibitions.

In cases where the municipality performed *heter mechirah*, such as Modi'in, it seems there is not a need to protest (even those who do not rely on *heter mechirah*) since the municipality relies on rabbis who are lenient. ■



PORTION FROM

BY RAKEL BERENBAUM

Contributor, Torah Tidbits

THE PORTION

The Menorah, Inaugurating The Leviim, And A Tribute To A Special Jerusalemite

When preparing this week's column I couldn't help but think about its connection to Batsheva Yisraelevi, z"l, better known as the "Lady in Yellow," an icon in Jerusalem, who passed away just over a month ago, and is truly missed. She was born, Bat-sheva Siegal, and changed her name when coming to settle in Israel since she loved Israel, and was a Levi. I would like to dedicate the learning from this week's portion, which actually talks about inaugurating the Leviim, to her memory .

The portion begins with instructions on how to light the Holy Menorah .

The Kohen is instructed to light " El Mul Pnei HaMenorah" When you light the lamps, the seven lamps shall illuminate

the menorah" (8:1). What does this mean? Rashi explains " Toward the middle lamp, which is not on [one of] the branches, but on the menorah [base] itself" . Rashi continues "The six on the six branches; the three eastern wicks-facing towards the center one, and likewise, the three western wicks, the tops of their wicks facing toward the center one. Why [were the wicks facing inwards, thus giving off so little light]? So that [people] should not say that He [God] needs the light."

Usually when one transfers fire to a wick it is to spread light from the wicks to the room around. Rav Chanan Porat, in his book "Meat Min Haor" says that the Gemara explains (Megila 21:) that the six wicks on the side of the Menorah face towards the center one, which faces up towards the shechina, in Kodesh Hakedoshim – the Holy of Holies. These candles

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were not needed to shine light into the Holy of Holies, but rather to take light from the Kodesh Kedoshim, and share this holy light with the 6 candles that pointed to the center candle, to then spread to the whole Mishkan. Only if the candles below receive their light from the source of holiness, will they be able to shed light for Israel from generation to generation.

This is in a sense what Batsheva z"l did. She was so connected to God, starting with her early Vatikin prayers where she really conversed with God. She shared this true connection she had with God with those all around her by organizing weekly shiurim for women in her house on Shabbat afternoon. She would call everyone each week to make sure they would come and managed to fill her living room with women of all ages who were willing to give up their Shabbat nap to learn Torah. In her quest for knowledge she was like the wicks of the Menorah soaking up the light from above. She would soak up divrei Torah and ask many questions and do her best to understand. Her yellow clothes, her positive words and the Torah she organized for others to learn brought light from above like the Holy Menorah. Her passing is a great loss and her memory should inspire us all to strive even higher.



RECIPE

This week's recipe is in memory of Batsheva z"l. From the time she came to Israel she fasted a lot. She ate to live. She didn't live to eat. She would put nuts, grains and sprouts in a blender and eat the mixture for nourishment. Here is a salad using the

ingredients she would eat.

HEALTHY BULGUR WHEAT, SPROUTS, AND NUTS SALAD

- 1 cup Bulgur wheat (medium sized)
- 1 carrot, peeled and formed into ribbons with a vegetable peeler.
- 1 small cucumber, chopped
- 1-2 cups sprouts (store bought or sprout your own from chickpeas, lentils...)
- 1/4 cup coriander, chopped
- 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1-2 scallions, chopped
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- Dressing
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp tacha
- 1/2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp ginger (optional)
- hot water to thin

Cover bulgur wheat with 1 1/2 cups of water. Bring to a boil, cover and let sit for about 8 minutes. While the wheat cooks mix the dressing ingredients. Toss the salad ingredients with the bulgur wheat. Pour the dressing over the salad and serve. ■



Pirkei Avot: A Users' Manual

by Jeremy Phillips



Pirkei Avot (the "Ethics of the Fathers") is the ancient Jewish code of ethics and good conduct. Jews have loved and learned Avot for nearly 2,000 years—but has it lost its immediacy and relevance in the world of social media and high-tech innovation, a world that faces the ongoing challenges of a new social revolution?

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Jeremy Phillips is coordinator of the Avot Today Facebook Group and the Avot Today weblog.

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How Was Your Chag?

Here's an attempt to summarize the Jerusalem Shavuot experience, 5782.

To see tens of thousands learning Torah in the middle of the night. In lectures, learning in a group or with a partner, in saying the traditional Shavuot Tikkun. Not to mention more than a few parents and children who simply are sitting and learning together until one of them falls asleep (which was generally not the child...).

To see tens of thousands of people flowing to the Western Wall at five o'clock in the morning. They poured out of all the neighborhoods and alleyways and overflowed the Kotel plaza with emotional early morning prayers. As I was going down the steps leading to the Kotel and the throng below was revealed, a woman next to me asked in astonishment: "Is it like this every year? I am already 30 years old, so how is it that I never knew about this?".

To see the night disappear and the sun

come up. I do not remember the last time I was so privileged. To disconnect from my cell phone for two consecutive days. I do not remember the last time I was so privileged.

To be silent for a moment and to hear the different prayer services, the varying styles, the piyutim (liturgical poems), the Hallel songs, Megillat Ruth, the Ten Commandments. And to read the words in the prayer book that define this unique festival: "the time of the giving of our Torah."

To meet tourists from Israel but mostly from

abroad who are returning to Jerusalem. To hear from them that there is no room available in any of the city's hotels, baruch HaShem. Welcome. We missed hearing English and French and Spanish at the Kotel.

To meet the many reservists that returned from that huge IDF exercise in Cyprus. I saw at least three of them who returned Shavuot Eve and recited the HaGomel blessing on Shabbat morning after a week away from their families, during which time there was no possibility of calling home.





To see the many security forces on guard and also the refreshments that kind souls were distributing to them. And to see the distribution stations where water and food were available to all. Thanks to whoever bought so many colorful frozen treats and was passing them out at Jaffa Gate. It was amusing to see little children next to adults and bearded Chasidim, all of them walking around with an ice pop in their hand. Perhaps this represents the sweetness of the Torah for everyone.

And how do we come down from all these emotional experiences? It is said that on Shavuot each of us must accept a new obligation, however small, that is connected with the Torah. Some positive action to which we can surely commit ourselves. Everyone is invited to try.

Shavua tov. ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

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Optical Illusions

In the cool Spanish spring of 1452, Joseph ibn Shem-Tov, mentor of Don Isaac Abravanel and author of the earliest Jewish treatise on preaching (Ein ha-Qore), delivered a rousing sermon to the reeling Jewish community of Segovia. Through analyzing Rebbe Akiva's shopkeeper metaphor in Pirkei Avot (3:20), ibn Shem-Tov responds to the tendency of comparing the nature of human and divine justice by developing a distinction between them. According to ibn Shem-Tov, divine justice is true since it accounts for all factors and nuances, governing in a fashion unattainable by beings of flesh and blood.

This tendency to conflate what are really two distinct notions is endemic to the human condition, expressing itself in the communal, material, and spiritual realms. *Parshat Beha'alotcha* presents instances of these three spheres of comparison. Firstly, as Rashi (Bemidbar 8:2) notes, the task of lighting the menorah was given to Aharon after he had contrasted his more static role in the dedication of the Mishkan with the dynamic participation of the *nesi'im*. And *masechet Pesachim* (96a) scrutinizes where the obligations of *Pesach Rishon* and *Sheni* converge and diverge. Within the

second category, the Jewish people persist in promoting collective nostalgia for the fleshpots of Egypt, with disastrous results. Finally, even the best are not immune from making incorrect equivalencies. Aharon and Miriam misassess Moshe's spiritual requirements, thinking his were the same as theirs, eventually paying a price.

As much as we try, it's inevitable that we will incorrectly match and equate the infinitely diverse people, ideas, and experiences of the world. But neither was the world created for nor the Torah given to the ministering angels. We will make mistakes, but preserving a perspective which "loves the maybe" (Derech Eretz Zuta 1:11) will ensure a modicum of humility as we attempt to organize our world. Ultimately, what matters is faithfulness to Rava's words, constantly examining ourselves to see whether "fear of the Lord is our treasure" (Shabbat 31a).



Ometz Shmidman Alon Shvut, 9th Grade

Just Give Me a Second

Can't make it to Jerusalem for Pesach? Are you *tamei met* (impure due to contact with a dead body)? What do you do now? Are you destined to be excluded from the rest of Am Yisrael? The carriers of Yosef's bones (Rashi) were faced with this very

problem. They went to Moshe and started complaining that they were excluded from the mitzvah of korban pesach, asking “Why should we be excluded from the rest?” You can almost hear their screaming for justice and political correctness. Why should impurity be a reason for exclusion? This is such a big question that Moshe brings the question to G-d, whose response is immediately in the very next pasuk! Unbelievably fast!

G-d doesn’t go back on what He said that whoever is *tamei* can’t perform the korban pesach. That would disrespect Him. Instead, He sets another date, a “second pesach” on the 14th of Iyar, whereas if you are tamei on the first pesach you can do the korban pesach during this “second pesach.” Granted, you are still being excluded from the main event. But imagine there is a test, and everyone takes it except you. Wouldn’t you feel excluded from the group? On the other hand, once you do it, you can get back into the group, so not the worst.

Pesach Sheni is very similar to the case of splitting the Land of Israel according to the fathers, where another group was being excluded from the rest of the shevet. Normally, if a father dies his sons inherit him. Tzofchad, who sinned severely when he gathered wood on Shabbat, died and had only girls but no sons. The girls went to Moshe and asked- Why should our father’s legacy die just because he doesn’t have sons? He has daughters, that should be enough to deserve land in Eretz Yisrael! Once again, Moshe brought the question to G-d. They got their land and it started a whole other set of questions.

Seeing how important it is to be inclusive, when you are with friends playing something in school, and you see someone just

there on the side, encourage them to come and join, to be a part of the group, of the class. We learn that when someone is excluded, it’s such a difficult case that Moshe brought the case to G-d himself! ■

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Making Sure Breakfast's Bracha Rishona Wasn't a Bracha Achrona

At around 9:15 on Friday morning last week, a 75-year-old man was eating breakfast in the kitchen of his home in Afula when he lost consciousness and fell to the floor. The man's wife, son, and daughter were there with him and called emergency services for help.

Karen Ezouz, a United Hatzalah volunteer EMT, was shopping in preparation for Shabbat when she received the emergency alert. Karen realized that she was not far at all from the address written on her communication device and could drive there in just a few minutes. Karen abandoned her shopping cart on the side of the grocery store and ran out to her car in the parking lot.

When Karen arrived at the scene, a United Hatzalah paramedic and two other EMTs were already tending to the patient. She was relieved that they had started CPR so quickly. Karen surveyed the scene to see what she could help with. The team was still in the early stages of CPR. The EMTs were performing chest compressions and the paramedic had just started to intubate the man in order to allow for easier assisted breathing. Karen connected a Lucas device that provided automated compressions in an attempt to stabilize the patient.

Once the situation had calmed somewhat and CPR was underway, Karen got an okay from the others to step aside in order to assist the worried family members, whom she had noticed had developed severe emotional reactions to the incident. "It's always important to make sure the witnesses to the medical emergency are okay as well," Karen explained. "Things like this often take a strong emotional toll on those close to the person undergoing the medical emergency, especially if they are family. By utilizing the psychological first aid training that we received from the Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit, we can help alleviate sensations of helplessness that can build up the trauma for family members."

Karen took the family members into another room where it was quiet and brought each of them a glass of water and got them to drink in order to help calm them down. "I don't have that much experience with psychotrauma as I am not a certified practitioner, but we all learn the basics in the EMT training course that United Hatzalah provides and we pick up bits and pieces from other emergencies that we are present at. They had a lot of questions, many of which I couldn't answer because I couldn't say for sure what the outcome of our efforts was going to bring. All I could do at that moment was reassure them that their loved one was in good hands and that we were doing everything possible to save their loved one. I also explained to them that they are not alone and that I would keep them updated on everything. I was in a difficult situation because they wanted to hear good news, but I couldn't tell them that everything was okay when that was not the reality. It wasn't easy, but thankfully they started to relax."

After around 15 minutes, the man's pulse returned. The team continued treatment for another few minutes until the man was stable enough to be transported to the nearest hospital. The patient had sustained a head injury from his fall so the team tended to his wound before the transport.

"It was really emotional seeing the patient be successfully resuscitated, especially because he was along in years when successful outcomes are less frequent," Karen said after the incident. "As always, it was encouraging being one of the EMTs to be a part of such a miracle. I consider myself fortunate that I was able to help both the patient and his family go through such a serious event."





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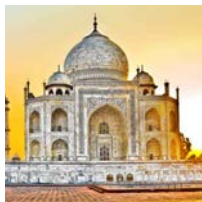
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