

# Torah Tidbits

ג' תמוז תשפ"ב 22 JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2021 ISSUE 1474

## פרשת חוקת

PARSHAT CHUKAT  
AVOT CHAPTER 5



Finding a Fruit with  
Kedushat Shvi'it

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page 54



A History of Egg  
Freezing

Rabbi Gideon Weitzman

Machon Puah  
page 56



## ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה

במדבר י"ט, פסוק ב'



**YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT**

Candles 7:13PM • Earliest 6:19PM • Havdala 8:31PM • Rabbeinu Tam 9:06PM



## This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

**Photo By:** Zev Rothkoff

I live in Efrat. Aliyah as a child in 1973.

**About the Photo:** Not only does this photo capture an image of a 'red cow' it also captures the breathtaking beauty of Eretz Yisrael!

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## KIDDUSH LEVANA

Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad **4 Tammuz/ Motzei Shabbat July 2**



7 Days After Molad **8 Tammuz/ Wed. night July 6**

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana Until **15 Tammuz, Wed. July 13, until 1:43 am**

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLIEST	CHUKAT	HAVDALA	BALAK		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
<b>7:13</b>	6:20	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	<b>8:31</b>	7:12	6:19	8:30
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	<b>8:33</b>	7:29	6:22	8:32
<b>7:32</b>	6:21	Beit Shemesh / RBS	<b>8:32</b>	7:31	6:20	8:31
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Gush Etzion	<b>8:31</b>	7:27	6:20	8:30
<b>7:31</b>	6:22	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	<b>8:34</b>	7:30	6:22	8:32
<b>7:29</b>	6:21	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	<b>8:32</b>	7:28	6:21	8:31
<b>7:31</b>	6:22	Netanya	<b>8:34</b>	7:30	6:22	8:33
<b>7:29</b>	6:21	Be'er Sheva	<b>8:31</b>	7:28	6:20	8:30
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Rehovot	<b>8:33</b>	7:29	6:21	8:32
<b>7:13</b>	6:22	Petach Tikva	<b>8:33</b>	7:12	6:21	8:32
<b>7:30</b>	6:21	Ginot Shomron	<b>8:33</b>	7:29	6:21	8:32
<b>7:22</b>	6:23	Haifa / Zichron	<b>8:36</b>	7:21	6:23	8:34
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Gush Shiloh	<b>8:32</b>	7:28	6:20	8:30
<b>7:31</b>	6:22	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	<b>8:34</b>	7:30	6:22	8:32
<b>7:29</b>	6:20	Giv'at Ze'ev	<b>8:32</b>	7:28	6:20	8:30
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>8:31</b>	7:27	6:20	8:30
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Ashkelon	<b>8:33</b>	7:30	6:22	8:32
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Yad Binyamin	<b>8:33</b>	7:29	6:21	8:31
<b>7:26</b>	6:21	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	<b>8:34</b>	7:25	6:20	8:32
<b>7:29</b>	6:20	Golan	<b>8:33</b>	7:28	6:20	8:31

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 9:06 PM • next week - 9:05 pm

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



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## JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat

June 29 - July 9 / 30 Sivan - 10 Tamuz

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:37 - 4:42</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:37 - 5:41</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:09-9:12</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:25-8:29</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:20 - 10:23</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:42 - 12:44</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:18 - 1:19</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:20 - 6:19</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:53 - 7:52</b>

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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



We believe in the power of *tefillah*. The time we take each day to *daven* not only provides us with a set time for connecting to the *Borei Olam* and self reflection, but it also helps us do our part as members of *Klal Yisrael*, providing us with the opportunity to *daven* for the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Between the first and second *Beit HaMikdash*, the *Anshe Knesset HaGedolah*, a body of 120 of the greatest *Torah* scholars, formalized the texts of *tefillot* and *brachot*. A careful review of these *tefillot* which we still say today gives us a clear understanding of the values we must live by. Among them, *kibbutz galuyot* has remained an essential part of our *tefillot* for over 2,000 years.

Three times a day we say the *bracha* of *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles) in the *amidah*:

תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו וsea נס לקבוץ גלויותינו וקבצנו  
יחד ארבע בונפות הארץ. ברוך אתה ה' קבוץ נdry עמו  
ישראל

*Sound the shofar for our freedom, raise a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us*

## Dr. Moshe Gottlieb z"l

### YARTZET

will be held at the kever  
on Har Menuhot, Har Tamir on  
**Thursday, July 7th, at 9:30 am**  
A Minyan is needed.  
The Gottlieb Family

*together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You HaShem, Who gathers in the dispersed of His people Israel.*

Three times a day when reciting *Modim d'Rabanan* we say:

מָזִים אֶתְנָנוּ לֵךְ ... וַתִּאֲסֹף גָּלִילֵינוּ לְחִירּוֹת קְרֻשָּׁן  
לְשִׁמְרוֹת חֶקְיקָה וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רְצׁוֹנָךְ וְלַעֲבֹדְךָ בְּלִבְבָּךְ שְׁלָם עַל  
שֶׁאֱנֹנוּ מָזִים לֵךְ .

*We thank You... and gather our exiles to the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary, to observe Your decrees, to do Your will, and to serve You wholeheartedly. [We thank You] for [inspiring] us to thank You.*

Every *Shabbat* before *Rosh Chodesh* we say:

קי שׁעשה נָפָים לְאָבוֹתֵינוּ וְגַם אֶתְמָם מְעַבְדּוּת לְחִירּוֹת  
הַוְיָה וְגַם אֶתְמָן בְּקָרְבָּן וַיַּקְבֵּץ נָצְחָנוּ מְאָרְבֵּעָן בְּגַפּוֹת הַאֲגָעָה.  
חֶבְרִים כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָאָמֵר אָמֵן :

*He who wrought miracles for our fathers, and redeemed them from slavery unto freedom, may He speedily redeem us, and gather our exiles from the four corners of the earth, all Israel united in fellowship; and let us say, Amen.*

In *shuls* around the world today, communities gather together on *Shabbat* and say:  
אם יהי נצח בקיצה השלים מלשם יקנץ ה' אליך  
ומשם יקחן: והיבאך ה' אליך אל הארץ אשר ירשׁו  
אֲבָתֶיךָ וַיַּשְׁתַּחַתְּ וַיַּטְבַּחַתְּ וַיַּרְבַּעַתְּ מְאֹבֶתֶיךָ:

*Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there your God HaShem will gather you, from there [God] will fetch you. And your God HaShem will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and [God] will make you*

*more prosperous and more numerous than your ancestors.*

Many of these *tefillot* were written right after the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, when hope of return to *Eretz Yisrael* was slim. Today, *Eretz Yisrael* is home to more than 7,000,000 Jews. A miracle which can be taken for granted all too easily.

This past week my wife and I had the tremendous *zechus* of marrying off our second son Shlomo to his wife Tamar.

As the father of the groom you can imagine that my feet barely touched the ground. Now you might say that when I tell you that the *chuppah* was special that every father of the groom says that. But the truth is that in the days since the wedding, guests continued to talk about how unique the *chuppah* was. While they mentioned some elements that stood out to them - a *chuppah* led by Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, the presence of notable *rabbanim*, I found something else to be truly remarkable.

As I stood under the *chuppah* and looked around me, I saw four sets of grandparents: one family emigrated to Israel from France, another from the United States, another from Yemen and another has a long history of Yerushalmi roots. On top of that, the *misader kiddushin*, Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, originates from Iraq! For over 2,000 years we have beseeched *HaShem* to bring us home and there I stood under a *chuppah* on a rooftop in Yerushalayim beside hundreds of my brothers and sisters who found

their way home. Before my own eyes I saw the power of *tefillah*.

The lighting of the *menorah* on *Chanukka* teaches us the concept of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing a miracle that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* performed. I too feel that the miracle



I witnessed this past Tuesday night must be shared. In 5782 *Am Yisrael* lives in a time where the prophecies of our *nevi'im* are coming to fruition and the *tefillot* of our ancestors are enabling

our future. May we recognize the miracles around us, see the fulfillment of our *tefillot* and welcome more of our brethren home as we merit the final *geulah*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

**Mazal Tov to**  
**Meir & Rachel Leah Berman**  
**on the birth of a son**

To the grandparents:  
**Rabbi Avi & Pnina Berman**

To the grandmother:  
**Rabbanit Sara Eisner**

and to the great-grandparents:  
**Fylvie & Rachel Leah Berman**  
**and Alex & Daniella Kuflik**

and to the entire family

# CHUKAT



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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

### 1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Bamidbar 19:1-17)

Para Aduma: This is the Torah law. Elazar the Kohen shall remove from the camp an unblemished red heifer that has never worked. It is burnt. Cedar, hyssop and red thread shall be burnt with it. The Kohanim involved in the process are Tamei until evening. The ashes are used to purify those Tamei from contact with the dead. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> day a mix of these ashes and water are sprinkled on the Tamei person. Absent this process, one who has come in contact with the dead cannot become Tahor.

Death defiles; even though there is a mitzvah to bury the dead. The tuma of contact with the dead prevents one from entering the Mishkan, the holy area. A theory of tuma I have proposed in the parshiot in Vayikra offers that entry to the holy

Condolences to  
Mrs. Leah Wasserman and children  
Daniel, Hillel and Adina  
and families on the passing of  
their husband/father/grandfather  
**Rabbi Chaim Wasserman z"l**  
המְקוֹם יִנְחַם אֶתְכֶם בָּתוֹךְ שָׁאר אֲבָלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלָם

places demands a lofty feeling of our majesty. G-d is Majestic; we, majestic. Death demoralizes. We feel: What's the use, we all end up in the same place. It bruises the sense of our majesty. A process of restoring our sense of majesty is required.

Why is this description of Tuma here and not back in Vayikra where laws of Tuma are addressed in great detail?

Perhaps because we are heavily into the theme of the practicality of establishing a Jewish society. The theory is being wed with the practical; the ideal is being tempered with the real. In this process of Para Aduma, some people become tamei while helping others become tahor. Meaning, building a society will require sacrifices. I cannot remain untainted and pure. In helping others, I may become temporarily tamei. But that is what community building requires; everyone cannot be concerned only for their own pristine spiritual state. The common good requires us all to willing to be tamei on occasion.



**2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (19:18-20:6)** Hyssop is dipped in the purifying waters and sprinkled on the person or vessels requiring this purification. A tahor person sprinkles on the tamei person on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> day; this tahor person then becomes tamei for the day. One who is tamei through contact with the dead and does not do this purification and then subsequently enters the Mishkan has committed a most grave sin. Miriam dies after the camp travels to Midbar Zin in the first month. The people complain: oh that we had died like the others (over these 40 years). Why did you bring us from Egypt to die in this nasty place? Moshe and Aharon

went to the Mishkan; G-d's glory appeared to them.

After concluding the laws of purification for those in contact with the dead, Miriam dies. With little fanfare, 39 years have passed. Take 2 on the march to the Land begins. The complaint of the people here is a twist on the past. Way back, 39 years ago they complained: why did you take us out of Egypt to die in the desert. Now they complain: oh that we would die in the desert. But more importantly, Miriam's death demoralizes the people. The Midrash maintains that water flowed for the people in Miriam's merit. It stopped with her death. But the simple flow of the story is that the death of leaders is demoralizing. It leaves a void. The people have a daunting task ahead, of entering and conquering the Land. The loss of Miriam demoralizes.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliyah (20:7-13)** G-d said to Moshe: gather the people to the rock. Speak to the rock. Water sufficient for they and their flock will be produced. Moshe said: Listen oh rebellious ones. Will water emerge from a rock? Moshe hit the rock. Water emerged, enough for the flocks. G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: since you did not believe me, you will not enter the Land.

If the loss of Miriam is demoralizing, the impending loss of Aharon and Moshe compounds that. But we have learned before;

In honor of the 42nd Yahrtzeit of  
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**Herbert Rose z'l**  
Beloved father, grandfather,  
husband, brother, uncle

**Jeff Mor**  
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look not just at the event, but at the bigger picture. Aharon and Moshe's impending death is a powerful statement of the greatness, the capability, the trust of G-d in His people. The Jewish people are greater than any leader or other; even Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. *You can take the Land; with or without them.* The Jewish people will always *have* great people; but the Jewish people *is* a great people. The Torah will end with the greatest leaders falling short of realizing the dream of entering the Land. But far from being a dystopia, and while not being a utopia, it is an affirmation that the Jewish people as a people rise above the presence or absence of individual leaders. The death of Miriam, then Aharon and finally Moshe affirm the greatness of the people of Israel.



#### **4<sup>th</sup> aliyah (20:14-21)** Moshe sends messengers to the King of Edom.

You are aware of your brother Israel's history: we left Egypt with G-d's help. We need to cross your land, at no cost to you, to enter our Land. The King said no. The people answered: we will stay on the road and pay for water. Edom said no and came with a large contingent. The Jewish people circled back.

Even though Moshe just received the word he will not enter the Land, you would never know it from his behavior. There is nary a hint of hesitation in leading the

people to the Land. Leadership is public service. Moshe is a lame duck leader; he is not going to benefit from leading the people. He is not going to see the Land. But he is not in it for himself. His service is for the people. They *will* enter the Land. And so lead them he must.



#### **5<sup>th</sup> aliyah (20:22-21:9)** At Mt. Hor Aharon is told he will die. Up

the mountain, Moshe clothes Elazar in the garments of Aharon. Aharon dies. The entire people mourn for 30 days. The King of Arad in the Negev hears and does battle with the people. The people prevail. The people travel to circumvent Edom. The long journey aggravates the people. They complain. Snakes attack. The people regret their sins. G-d tells Moshe to make a copper snake. When the people gaze on it, they recover.

The theme of punishment is a repeating theme in Bamidbar. And while we need to note that our failings are met with punishment, equally as important is the variety of manners of relief from the punishment. Here, gaze on the copper snake and you will recover. This is another example of what is the dominant theme of the entire Torah: G-d's love for man and for the Jewish people. Mankind is never completely destroyed. Nor the Jewish people. Sure, there is punishment. But, well, we err quite a bit. We can't ignore Divine justice. But we also can't ignore the unequivocal loyalty of G-d to His people. The punishments are all episodes of encouragement; because of how they end. He, yet again, is loyal to us.



#### **6<sup>th</sup> aliyah (21:10-20)** The travel takes the people to the east of

Mazal Tov to  
Avishag  
on her Bat Mitzvah  
daughter of Aharon & Herut Sterman  
Mazal Tov to the  
**Berelowitz, Gutwillig and Sterman families**

Moav. They travel north to the area of the Emori. The travels are recorded in the books of wars, traveling on to the well. They sang of their fortune and their travels.

The circuitous route of the march is perplexing. From the Sinai desert to Israel is, well, yashar, yashar. Straight up north. Enter Israel from the Negev. Travel north to Chevron. Then keep going. Straight. Yet, they travel east to the nations on the east bank of the Jordan. Edom refuses passage. So they travel south to Eilat, cross over farther east, traveling up through the heart of present day Jordan. Kind of the way to go to Petra. They end up opposite Jericho. And from there, once they enter the Land, they will go to Shechem. Why this wide, wide swing to the east, up north through Jordan? Why not enter from the Negev straight north? The Torah does not tell us. But, we can speculate. At this point in Jewish history, the Jewish people have entered the Land 3 times: Avraham. Yaakov when he returned from Lavan. And the spies. And now. Whose footsteps would you like to follow? Avraham and Yaakov both entered from the north and went immediately to Shechem. The spies came up from the south to Hevron. The Jewish people are following in the footsteps of Avraham. Deliberately avoiding the much simpler and direct route, the yashar, yashar route of the spies. Whose footsteps do we follow?

**Mazal Tov to  
Richard & Brondie Levine**  
and family on the Bat Mitzvah  
of their granddaughter  
**Ronit**

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**7<sup>th</sup> aliyah (21:21-22:1)** Messengers are sent to Sichon for permission to cross his land.

Sichon confronts them for war. Sichon is roundly defeated. The people settle in the land of the Emori. They travel to the land of Og, the king of the Bashan. G-d tells them they will succeed against Og, as they did with Sichon. They defeat Og, arriving at the plains of Moav, opposite Jericho.

In this march up the east side of the Jordan, the Divine has been conspicuously absent. Israel sent messengers to Sichon. No Divine command. Moshe staked out the cities along the route into the Land. The march into the Land has begun. And while the march of the people until this time has been with the Mishkan in their midst, the manna falling from heaven, slowly the transfer of leadership into the hands of

man is occurring. The Jewish people dance with G-d; at times He leads. At times, we. In this dance, the Divine allows the Jewish people to lead. He lurks, ever present. But man is leading this march.

## HAFTORAH CHUKAT SHOFTIM 11:1-33

The haftorah opens with an attack on the Israelites from the people of Ammon. The Israelites call upon Yiftach to lead them into battle. He sends a message to Ammon which includes a reference to the conquest of the Lands of Sichon and Og, which apparently is the tie in with our Torah reading.

Yiftach made a condition with the Jewish people regarding his willingness to take on this role as commander: "If you bring me back to fight with the children of Ammon,

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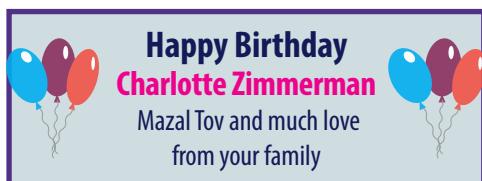
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יבכו את אהרן שלושים ים כל בית ישראל

"And they wept for Aaron thirty days all the house of Israel" (20:29)  
Why do we need to know that the Israelites mourned Aaron's passing and why specifically mention that ALL of Israel wept for him?

One answer is to differentiate between Aaron's passing where ALL cried for his loss as opposed to Moshe's passing where Israel wept, but the ALL is lacking from the text. Moshe was a leader who had to implement rules and boundaries, not always popular. Aaron, however, was always bringing peace amongst those in strife, thereby loved by all. (Rashi)

The Meshech Chochma (Rabbi Meir of Dvinsk 1843-1926) learns from the emphasis of "ALL" cried for Aaron that throughout all these forty years in the desert, there was not even one unintentional murderer, who would have needed to be exiled outside the camp, separated from his family. For if there would have been such exiles, they would have been rejoicing at Aaron's death, to now be allowed to return to their families from exile. Since All wept and no one rejoiced at his passing shows that there were none who required exile, thereby no unintentional deaths during this period. Shabbat Shalom



and God delivers them before me, I will become your head." The Jewish people accepted his terms.

Yiftach after trying to make peace with Ammon has no choice but to go to war. He successfully leads his people in battle and they eliminate the Ammonite threat. ■



## STATS

39th of 54 sedras; 6th of 10 in Bamidbar

Written on 159.2 lines; rank: 39

10 Parshiyot; 6 open, 4 closed

87 p'sukim; rank: 43

1245 words; rank: 40

4670 letters; rank 41

Smallest sedra in Bamidbar in lines, p'sukim, words, letters

Fewer p'sukim than Sh'mini, more words, same number of letters. Chukat is a bit longer.



## MITZVOT

3 mitzvot of 613; all positive



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## THE PERSON

## IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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# Discovering our Mortality

It was at a house of mourning, and she was saying something that I had heard many times before. In fact, I had said it myself when I was sitting *shiva* for my own mother.

She is a friend of long-standing, and a member of my former congregation. I hope that I am not being unchivalrous by describing her as late middle-aged. She had just lost her own mother, having lost her father several years ago.

"It is not just that I feel orphaned," she said. "It is that I feel vulnerable. As long as even one of my parents was alive, it was as if there was a kind of buffer between me and death. Now that they are both gone, it begins to feel that it is my turn. No one to protect me. I face the *malach hamavet* (angel of death) directly, face to face, head on."

We all deny our mortality, and as long as the older generation is around we feel that they, and not we, are the ones on death's frontlines. We are insulated from death's claws by them. It is their turn and not yet ours. But once we lose our own parents, we can no longer deny our mortality. It is our turn.

There is an excellent book by my esteemed colleague, Rabbi Marc Angel, entitled *The Orphaned Adult*. I often recommend this

book to mourners, particularly those who are fortunate to have entered adulthood, even late middle age, with both parents alive, and experience their deaths only after having long ago reached adulthood. Their feelings are unique and very different from those who experienced the trauma of a parent's death at an earlier stage of life. Rabbi Angel also describes this sudden sense of mortality, of vulnerability. With the death of parents, these older people finally must surrender their comfortable denial of their own inevitable demise.

In this week's portion, *Chukat*, we read of the death of two beloved leaders of the Jewish people, Miriam and Aaron. Both of them were parent figures, albeit not actual parents, of the Jews in the years of their wandering in the wilderness. Instructively, a period of vulnerability ensues immediately upon their respective deaths.

We read first of Miriam's death. "The Israelites arrived at the wilderness of Zin... Miriam died there and was buried there." And then, immediately, "The community was without water." (*Numbers* 20:1-2)

As long as Miriam was alive, she was a source of water, a source of life. While she was alive, the *be'er* Miriam (well of Miriam)

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provided water for the people. With her death, and in her case, the well immediately dried up, the water ceased, and the people were vulnerable. Without "mother" Miriam, death by thirst threatened the people.

Soon afterwards, we read, "...and Aaron died there on the summit of the mountain." And then, this time not immediately but after thirty days of mourning, "When the Canaanite king of Arad heard... he engaged Israel in battle and took some of them captive..." (*Numbers* 20:28-29 and 21:1) "Father" Aaron died, and peace and security were shattered. War and that worst of fates, captivity, reared their ugly heads.

It seems that it is more than mere psychological reality that with the passing of its leaders, a nation faces calamity. With the death of ones parents, one's own well being is threatened. No wonder that when the young sister-in-law of the 18th century sage Rabbi Yonasan Eybeschitz lost her husband, the Rabbi cautioned her, in a letter which has come down to us, to take special care of her own physical well being and the health of her young children. As our sages put it in the Talmud, "When one member of a group perishes, the entire group needs to be anxious."

How apt are the words of the Psalmist, "When my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will take me in" (*Psalms* 27:10). When our parents "abandon" us and leave this world, we are bereft in many ways, and our positions in life become precarious. We need God at those moments, and turn to Him, confident that He will "take us in". ■

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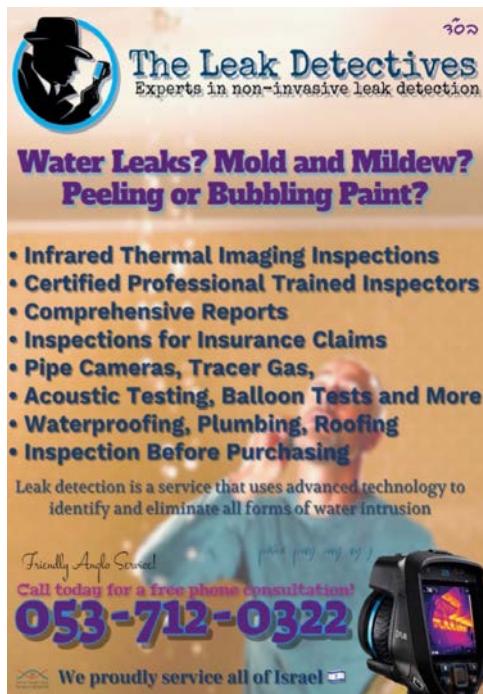
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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
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## Anger Management

There are some, say the Talmud, who acquire their world in an hour and others who lose it in an hour. No example of the latter is more arresting and bewildering than the famous episode in this week's parsha. The people have asked for water. God tells Moses to take a staff and speak to the rock and water will appear. This then follows:

He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, 'Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?' Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust in Me enough to honour Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into

the land I give them. (*Num. 20:10-12*)

"Is this the Torah and this its reward?" we are tempted to say. What was Moses' sin that it merited such punishment? In previous years I have expressed my view that Moses did not sin, nor was he punished. It was simply that each generation needs its own leaders. Moses was the right, indeed the only, leader capable of taking the Israelites out of Egypt. They needed another kind of leader, and a different style of leadership, to take the next generation into the Promised Land.

Within the framework of this year's series, though, as we discuss the ethics of the Bible, it seems more appropriate to look at a different explanation, the one given by Maimonides in *Shemoneh Perakim*, the "Eight Chapters" that form the preface to his commentary to the Mishnah, Tractate Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers.

In the course of these chapters Maimonides sets out a surprisingly contemporary account of Judaism as a training in emotional intelligence.<sup>1</sup> Healthy emotions are

<sup>1</sup> The term was introduced by Peter Salovey and John Mayer. See Peter Salovey, Marc A. Brackett, and John D. Mayer, *Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model* (Port Chester, NY:

essential to a good and happy life, but temperament is not something we choose. Some people just happen to be more patient or calm or generous-spirited or optimistic than others. Emotions were at one stage called the “passions,” a word that comes from the same root as “passive,” implying that they are feelings that happen to us rather than reactions we choose. Despite this, Maimonides believed that with sufficient training it is possible for us to overcome our destructive emotions and reconfigure our affective life.

In general, Maimonides, like Aristotle, believed that emotional intelligence exists in striking a balance between excess and deficiency, too much and too little. Too much fear makes me a coward, too little makes me rash and foolhardy, taking unnecessary risks. The middle way is courage. There are, however, two exceptions, says Maimonides: pride and anger. Even a little pride (some Sages suggested “an eighth of an eighth”) is too much. Likewise even a little anger is wrong.

That, says Maimonides, is why Moses was punished: because he lost his temper with the people when he said, “Listen, you rebels.” To be sure, there were other occasions on which he lost his temper – or at least appeared to lose it. His reaction to the sin

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*Dude Pub., 2004), subsequently popularised by Daniel Goleman in, for instance, his book Emotional Intelligence (New York: Bantam, 1995).*

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of the Golden Calf, which included smashing the Two Tablets, was hardly eirenic or relaxed. But that case was different. The Israelites had committed a sin. God Himself was threatening to destroy the people. Moses had to act decisively and with sufficient force to restore order to a people wildly out of control.

Here, though, the people had not sinned. They were thirsty. They needed water. God was not angry with them. Moses' intemperate reaction was therefore wrong, says Maimonides. To be sure, anger is something to which we are all prone. But Moses was a leader, and a leader must be a role model. That is why Moses was punished so heavily for a failure that might have been more lightly punished in someone less exalted.

In addition, says Maimonides, by losing his temper Moses failed to respect the people and might have demoralised them. Knowing that Moses was God's emissary, the people might have concluded that if Moses was angry with them, so too was God. Yet they had done no more than ask for water. Giving the people the impression that God was angry with them was a failure to sanctify God's Name. Thus one moment's anger was sufficient to deprive Moses of the reward surely most precious to him, of seeing the culmination of his work by leading

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the people across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.

The Sages were outspoken in their critique of anger. They would have thoroughly approved of the modern concept of anger management. They did not like anger at all, and reserved some of their sharpest language to describe it.

"The life of those who can't control their anger is not a life," they said. (*Pesahim 113b*) Reish Lakish said, "When a person becomes angry, if he is a sage his wisdom departs from him; if he is a prophet his prophecy departs from him" (*Pesahim 66b*). Maimonides said that when someone becomes angry it is as if he has become an idolater (*Hilchot Deot* 2:3).

What is dangerous about anger is that it causes us to lose control. It activates the most primitive part of the human brain that bypasses the neural circuitry we use when we reflect and choose on rational grounds. While in the grip of a hot temper, we lose the ability to step back and judge the possible consequences of our actions. The result is that in a moment of irascibility we can do or say things we may regret for the rest of our lives.

For that reason, rules Maimonides, there is no "middle way" when it comes to anger (*Hilchot Deot* 2:3). Instead we must avoid it under any circumstance. We must go to the opposite extreme. Even when anger is justified, we must avoid it. There may be

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times when it is necessary to *look as if* we are angry. That is what Moses did when he saw the Israelites worshipping the Golden Calf, and broke the Tablets of stone. Yet even when we outwardly display anger, says Maimonides, inwardly we should be calm.

The *Orchot Tzaddikim* (a 15th century commentator) notes that anger destroys personal relationships.<sup>2</sup> Short-tempered people scare others, who therefore avoid coming close to them. Anger drives out the positive emotions – forgiveness, compassion, empathy, and sensitivity. The result is that irascible people end up lonely, shunned, and disappointed. Bad tempered people achieve nothing but their bad temper (*Kiddushin* 40b). They lose all else.

The classic role model of patience in the face of provocation was Hillel. The Talmud says that two people once made a wager with each other, saying, “He who makes Hillel angry shall receive four hundred *zuz*.” One said, “I will go and provoke him.” It was *Erev Shabbat* and Hillel was washing his hair. The man stood by the door of his house and called, “Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?” Hillel robed himself and came out, saying, “My son, what do you seek?”

“I have a question to ask,” he said.

“Ask, my son,” replied Hillel.

He said, “Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?”

“My son, you ask a good question,” said

<sup>2</sup> *Orchot Tzaddikim, Shaar Kaas, “The Gate of Anger.”*

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Hillel. "The reason is that they have no skilled midwives."

The man left, paused, then returned, crying out, "Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?"

Again, Hillel abandoned his bathing, robed, and came out, saying, "My son, what do you seek?"

"I have another question."

"Ask, my son."

"Why are the eyes of the Palmyreans bleared?"

Hillel replied, "My son, you ask a good question. The reason is that they live in sandy places."

He left, waited, then came back a third time, calling, "Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?"

Again, Hillel dressed and came out, saying, "My son, what do you seek?"

"I have another question."

"Ask, my son."

"Why are the feet of Africans wide?"

"My son, you ask a good question. The reason is that they live in watery marshes."

"I have many questions to ask," said the man, "but I am worried that you might become angry."

Hillel then sat and said, "Ask all the questions you have to ask."

"Are you the Hillel who is called the *nasi* [leader, prince] of Israel?"

"Yes," said Hillel.

"In that case, said the man, "may there not be many like you in Israel."

"Why so, my son?" he asked.

"Because I have just lost four hundred *zuz* because of you!"

"Be careful of your moods," said Hillel.

**Refuah Shleima:**  
שרה שרים בא טמחה

"You may lose four hundred *zuz*, and yet another four hundred *zuz* through Hillel, yet Hillel will not lose his temper."<sup>3</sup>

It was this quality of patience under provocation that was one of the factors, according to the Talmud (Eruvin 13b), that led the Sages to rule almost entirely according to the School of Hillel rather than of Shammai.

The best way of defeating anger is to pause, stop, reflect, refrain, count to ten, and breathe deeply. If necessary, leave the room, go for a walk, meditate, or vent your toxic feelings alone. It is said that about one of the Rebbes of Lubavitch that whenever he felt angry, he would take down the Shulchan Aruch to see whether anger was permitted under the circumstances. By the time he had finished studying, his anger had disappeared.

The moral life is one in which we grapple with anger but never let it win. The verdict of Judaism is simple: either we defeat anger or anger will defeat us.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think anger is permitted as an outward display but not as an internal emotion?

What about when God Himself became angry with the people?

What methods do you find helpful when you become angry? ■

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#### 3 Shabbat 30b-31a.

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*“Yiftach b’doro k’Shmuel b’doro” – “Yiftach in his generation is to be (as highly) regarded as (was) Shmuel in his generation” [Rosh Hashanah 25a]*

Sefer Shofetim reviews the history of B’nai Yisra’el during the time of the rule of the “judges” (local tribal leaders), a span of about 350 years, from the death of Yehoshua and the rise of Shmuel. During that period, the text tells the story of thirteen shofetim,– and yet, the accounts of only four of them extend beyond one chapter: the history of Devorah, the only prophetess (or prophet) who led Israel during that era, the story of Gid’on, who was asked (but refused) to accept the throne of Israel and the exploits of Shimshon HaGibor whose miraculous birth was accompanied by Hashem’s guarantee that “he would begin to save Yisrael from the ‘hand’ (control) of the P’lishtim” (Sefer Shofetim 13; 5). ....And then there was the record of the fourth shofet, the focus of our haftarah (Shofetim 11; 1-34) the story of Yiftach HaGil’adi.

But his story seems far different than that of the other three.

In the very first pasuk of the Yiftach saga we learn that he was a “gibor chayil” – a man of valor, usually a description of a warrior, but he was also described as the son of a “zonah” (in this context a “concubine”, as his brothers describe him as “the son of a different MOTHER” – but of the same father, Gil’ad). As a result, his brothers denied him any rights in their father’s inheritance and

chased him away from his house.

Not a very auspicious beginning.

We then learn that, after escaping to “Eretz Tov” Yiftach gathered a small army made up of “anashim reikim”, “boorish” men, so when the army of Ammon attacked the residents of Gil’ad, the residents ask Yiftach to lead the battle against the enemy. It is of no surprise that the rejected Yiftach refused – accepting only when they guaranteed to make him their leader.

But should we not be surprised?

His nation was threatened! His family and neighbors were on the brink of annihilation! His homeland would soon be overrun by the enemy! And yet Yiftach refused to help unless he would receive the power??

This is certainly not the leader we would expect G-d to choose.

But then we should not forget:

“Yiftach b’doro k’Shmuel b’doro”

This statement of Chazal is not simply a charge to each generation to accept and respect their chosen leader. Nor is it a warning to the later generations to avoid comparing the righteousness, brilliance or leadership qualities of one leader to another. This statement also includes another truth: A Divinely-chosen leader is one that is right for that specific generation and capable of fulfilling the divine mission. Such a choice need not require outstanding heritage nor great scholarship nor exceptional physical prowess. It requires only Hashem’s knowledge

that the individual “fits” the generation and can lead them.

And so, despite the questionable background of Yiftach and despite the limitations we might see in his character, he was chosen. Chosen, because he had the potential to carry out G-d’s mission; chosen, because his generation needed him.

Which brings me to our Torah reading.

I believe that Chazal’s choice of this haftarah was not based only upon its many parallels to the parasha’s description of Israel’s war with Edom. The parasha also includes the passing of two of the three leaders of Israel and the declaration that Moshe too, would soon pass on. And we all wonder what sin was committed that had these greatest of leaders pass on within months of each other! Could any future leader hope to “outshine” any of these three?

Perhaps our haftarah is teaching that future leaders are not meant to outdo the previous ones. At times, it is simply time for a leader to pass from the position. The leader did nothing wrong, but the generation needed a new leader. And that is why the G’mara tells us “Yiftach b’doro k’Shmuel b’doro”. Each “dor” requires its own leader.

So, don’t compare. Because, ultimately, Hashem knows what He’s doing! ■

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# RABBI SHALOM ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh  
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org  
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

## Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick

In Parshat Chukat we encounter the episode of Mei Meriva, where Moshe is punished for the way in which he dealt with the nation. The *mefarshim* argue as to what exactly was Moshe's transgression. Rashi suggests that Moshe **hit** the rock although he was instructed to speak to the **rock**. The Rambam zones in on Moshe's unjustified anger at the people. שׁמַשׁ נָא המרים. The Ramban notes Moshe's words נִצְאָ לְכֶם חִימָה which may be understood to connote that Moshe and Aharon were performing magic to extract water from a stone. There are various other explanations as well (See Shalom Rav).

Let's focus on Rashi's interpretation, which seems to be based on the simple reading of the text. Moshe was instructed ודברתם – “*speak to the rock before their eyes*” (Bamidbar 20:8). The Menachem Tzion posits that the crucial lesson that Hashem desired to have Moshe transmit to the people was the **power of speech**. As the

Kuzari cites, the difference between man and animal is the ability to speak. Man is a *medaber*. What got the people of this generation in trouble in the midbar was primarily their speech. They complained endlessly about the lack of food and water, Korach's accusations, the spies false testimony, to cite some examples. This was an opportunity to highlight to the nation that speech should not be taken lightly. Look what one can accomplish with proper speech. One can even obtain water from a rock.

Rav Chanan Porat in Me'at Min Haor adds an interesting insight. This is a new generation, as the individuals who left Egypt died in the desert. The previous generation that experienced slavery, grew up in an environment where through physical force one is able to accomplish an objective. The new generation that is about to enter the land of Israel (this is in the 39<sup>th</sup> year), needs to understand that through **speech** rather than force one can achieve desired results. This is an essential message to a group of individuals that are on the verge of founding a country and building its infrastructure and culture.

Perhaps that is why Moshe was asked to carry his stick (**טה**) although he was not to use it. As Theodore Roosevelt said: “*Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.*” This was the message God desired to be transmitted to the nation and it got convoluted. One can use physical might, but the

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preferred manner to accomplish a goal is through speech.

The message of the power of speech may not have successfully been conveyed to that generation, but it should resonate to our generation as well. We should be careful with our speech, realizing how we can hurt and offend someone with it. Today, included in the definition of speech is not just the oral word, but the written word as well, especially with the proliferation of social media platforms. Speech can also have a positive impact and we should use it more often to express gratitude, appreciation or even just a quick hello to a spouse, child or friend.

May we internalize this lesson from Mei Meriva and be careful with what “flows” from our mouths so that all of our communication is conducted in a positive and constructive manner. ■

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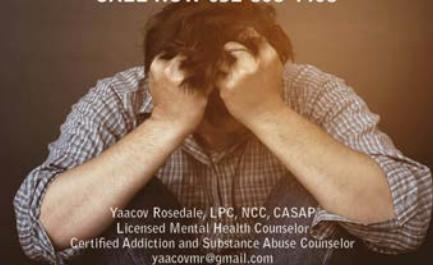
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## SMILES

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# Wonderful Well

In merit of our three great leaders, the Jews were granted three special gifts in the *midbar*. In Moshe Rabbeinu's merit the Jews were given the manna, Aharon Ha Cohen's merit brought the Clouds of Glory, and Miriam brought the well. What connection is there between Miriam and her gift, what is the deeper significance of the special source of water?

*Rabbeinu Bechaye* notes that Miriam had a singular connection to water. Because she stood on the banks of the Nile watching her brother to protect him, she is the one to bring the bounty of water to her people. Further, as a midwife facilitating life, Miriam herself is the paradigm of *chessed*, parallel to water that gives life and sustains humanity. The *Netziv* explains that the water and the manna were distributed to the people in the desert in a similar way. A person's level of righteousness determined how close the manna fell to his home. How did they receive water? The well would station itself near the Mishkan and send out a river to flow toward each tribe. Mini

tributaries would then branch off and flow to the homes of those who were *nedivei lev*, people of generosity. Yet another association between water and *chessed*.

The *Be'er Miriam* was one of the ten entities created at twilight on the very first erev Shabbos. The *Alshich Hakadosh* notes that it was no coincidence that these things were created after *Adam Harishon* sinned. Each one of them serves in some way to rectify Adam's sin and bring the world closer to its original perfection. How do we see that Miriam's Well accomplished this?

*Maharal* explains that a well is found deep in the ground and its water must be drawn upwards. This symbolizes the affinity of the Jew who desires closeness to Hashem; throughout *Shir Hashirim* this is characterized as the male-female relationship. Miriam, the quintessential leader of the women never gives up on redemption and closeness to Hashem. She encourages the women in Egypt to have children and is the one who inspires them to prepare musical

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instruments for the *Geulah*. She is the one who gives hope to those who didn't see the water/salvation and the belief that if they dig deep it will come. It was Miriam's inspiration that rekindled that feeling of desire to be close to Hashem, returning to the spirit of *Gan Eden* even in a state of exile.

Rav Eliayhu Ki Tov explains that we find the well of Miriam even earlier in *Tanach*. It is the same well of water that Hashem reveals to Hagar when she is parched in the desert. The well symbolizes *emunah*, the belief that Hashem is always taking care of us. This the legacy of Miriam and all righteous women through the millennia that believe in Hashem's salvation even when it is not clearly revealed. It is the lifeline that accompanies us always, we just have to believe it is there and ask Hashem to open our eyes so we can see it. ■

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# RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL

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Executive Director, Camp HASC  
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

## Lifting a Finger

A *maiseh* is recounted as part of the Brisker tradition:

Rebbetzin Chana, the wife of Rav Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna would go door to door collecting tzedakah with her close friend. Together, the two righteous women were so close that they made a pact, vowing to one another that whoever passed from the world first would come back in a dream and share a vision of *Olam haBa*, and of what goes on in the next world.

After some time, Rebbetzin Chana's friend was *nifteres*, and appeared to the wife of the Gr"a in a dream, saying, "The Heavenly court has forbidden me to fully reveal what happens here. But since we made an unbreakable vow during my life, I have returned to the world to tell you one thing: your merit in *Olam haBa* far exceeds mine..."

"You see, long ago on one of our fundraising missions we were expecting to meet a potential donor who ended up not being home. Later that day we saw the *baalas ha-bayis* up ahead in the distance about to cross the street. When we spotted her, you lifted your finger and motioned to catch her attention; she noticed your raised hand, and waited for us.

"Throughout all the years, we walked

the same roads, expended the same efforts in *zikui ha-rabim* and we shared the same merit for the tzedakah we raised together... There was, however, an additional merit that you earned. And now I can see the exalted portion in paradise reserved in honor of that act: the extra effort you expended by waving your hand! You can't begin to imagine the infinite value of that one movement. Just lifting your finger and motioning in that woman's direction has made an eternal impact in Heaven, and this will be your reward."

Our sedra recounts our journey toward Eretz Yisrael, as we established treaties with those who sought peace, and handily crushed those who engaged us in battle. As *Klal Yisrael* marched north toward the Bashan, it says:

וַיֵּצֶא עֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרָאתָם הוּא וְכָל-עַמּוֹ לְמִלְחָמָה  
אֲדֻרְעָם:  
וַיָּמָר הָאֱלֹהִים מֹשֶׁה אֶל תְּנִיאָהוּ כִּי בָּזֶה נִתְחַפֵּי אֶתְנוֹ  
וְאַתָּה כָּל-עַמּוֹ אֶת אֶרְצָךְ וְעַשְׂתָּה לוֹ כִּאֵשֶׁר עָשָׂת לְסִיחָן מֶלֶךְ  
הַאֲמֹרִי...

"...Og, the king of Bashan, came out toward them with all his people, to wage war at Edrei. Hashem said to Moshe, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him, his people, and his land into your hand. You shall do to him as you did to Sichon, king of the Emori..." (21:33-4)

On the surface, this seems hard to understand. Why would we need Hashem's

reassurance, ‘Do not fear...?’ We had already witnessed many miracles at the Exodus, and many military victories thereafter. We had also learned a bitter lesson, with the incident of the *Meraglim*, regarding what happens when we lack confidence and faith in Hashem and ourselves. What could Moshe Rabbeinu possibly be afraid of?

Rashi provides some background and context. In Parshas Lech Lecha, the shepherds of Lot and Avraham Avinu went separate ways. Lot settled in Sodom, among unsavory characters. Amid the ‘world war’ between four kings and five kings, Lot was taken captive. Then, *ויבא הפליט*, “A refugee came” (Bereishis, 14) from the battlefield to inform Avraham that his nephew had been taken into captivity and was in danger. This פליט was none other than Og who had escaped from the Rephaim. In response, Avraham gathered 318 men and embarked on a dangerous mission to rescue his misguided relative.

Og the giant is one of the more enigmatic figures in Tanach. His first appearance is as one of the *Nephilim* holding onto the side of *teivas Noach*, and there are many other Midrashim and *maamarei Chazal* about his identity and journey. Notably, it is told that in the merit of assisting the family of Avraham, Og was rewarded with longevity. Commenting on our sedra, Rashi suggests that Moshe was afraid to face Og lest the “merit of Avraham” advocate for him and give him the power to harm Moshe.

On the other hand, Midrash Rabbah (Bereishis, 42:8) reveals that Og’s intent in informing Avraham about Lot’s situation was far from *l’sheim Shamayim*, Og had actually hatched a contrived, malicious



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plan. He knew Avraham's dedication and loyalty to Lot. By gaining Avraham's favor, Og wanted to gain access to his household, murder him and kidnap Sarah Imeinu. Certainly, then, he did not have any merit or powers from helping Avraham. So, why was Moshe afraid?

Rebbe Moshe Yechiel Epstein, the *Be'er Moshe* of Ozerov, enlightens us with a *chidush*. Even though it had evil intent, there was a kernel of good within Og's deed. Since good came from it and Lot was saved, Moshe Rabbeinu feared the *zechus* that Og had generated generations earlier. And this teaches us the power of one good deed, regardless of its intentions. Any good deed, no matter how tiny or tainted, is true, it has lasting power and causes a vast, eternal impact in Heaven.



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Dr. Edward Lorenz, Professor of meteorology at MIT, innovated a theory of "deterministic chaos" best known as "the butterfly effect". He posited that even a minuscule disturbance like the delicate flapping of a butterfly's wings can induce enormous consequences. This theory was enshrined in the title of one of his talks: "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?"

This theory is a challenge to our sense of predictability; such causes and effects cannot be observed in *Olam haZeh*. And yet, our *tzadikim* who have spoken from the standpoint of *Olam haBa* have revealed a Theory of Holy Chaos, a supernal 'butterfly theory', a *chok*, a law beyond logic: every action, every choice, is vastly significant. We cannot imagine its effect on the cosmic order, on history, on others, nor on our portion in the World to Come. Every small, delicate detail of every mitzvah we do, even just lifting a finger *l'sheim Shamayim*, creates a tornado of blessing in Heaven.

תדע, שऐש זהה שהוא מוגש כל-כך, כל תנוועה ותנוועה שהוא מנתק עצמו מעט מעט גסמיות ופונעה להשם יתברר היא גדולה ויקרא מאד מאד, ואפלו נקדחה קטנה מאד, שהוא נעתך מגשמיות אלו יתברר, הוא רץ בזה כמה וכמה אלפים פרטאות בעולמות עליונים

Know that each and every movement which such a materialistic person makes to detach himself just a tiny bit from his materialism and turn to Hashem is extremely great and precious! Even if the shift from his materialism toward the Blessed One is minuscule (in this world), in the upper worlds he runs many thousands of miles with it.... (Likutei Moharan II, 48) ■



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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The opening verses of Parshat Chukat introduce us to the mystical elixir for impurity, the mysterious inexplicable remedy of the para aduma - the red heifer.

The Chasidic masters saw in these pesukim not only the halachic remedy to purify those who have become ritually impure, but also an eternal message regarding the relationship between the Jewish People and the Torah Hakedosha.

One of the perplexing aspects of the Para Aduma ritual, is that the Kohanim who were involved in preparing the ashes of the para aduma became tamei- impure through the process. In preparing the mystical compound which would return others to a state of purity, they in turn became tamei-impure. How exactly are we to understand this unusual outcome? How could it possibly be that in preparing this remedy for impurity, the Kohanim themselves are rendered to be tamei?

The Avodat Elazar, the Admor of Kozhnitz

z'y'a, explains this peculiar phenomenon based on the opening verse- Zot Chukat HaTorah- This is the inexplicable principle of the Torah.

This verse, the Rebbe explained, is not only describing the mysterious nature of the para aduma, but also teaching us a very fundamental idea about Torah itself. Like any remedy, when channeled appropriately it can transform and cure and bring complete healing, or if chas v'shalom it is misused, taken out of context and applied inappropriately, then it can bring further deficiency and harm.

The Netivot Shalom, the Admor of Slonim z'y'a offers a different interpretation of our verse Zot Chukat HaTorah. Our verse, explains the Rebbe, is not only introducing us to the transformative capacity of the para aduma as a vehicle to restore purity, but also communicating a fundamental eternal message which applies even now in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash and of the para aduma.



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Zot Chukat HaTorah- In our current state, in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash and with no para aduma, the vehicle for we as Jews to experience some form of a return to purity is by immersing ourselves in the study of Torah- Zot Chukat HaTorah!

The Bat Ayin, the Rebbe of Avrich zy'a, similarly points out that the para aduma is on some level meant to be a tikkun(fixing, correction) for the impurity introduced into the world through the Cheit HaEgel (The Sin of the Golden Calf). The Rebbe taught:

The Toldot Yaakov Yosef, zy'a, wrote that Cheit HaEgel impacted future generations, and that the word egel is an acronym for the words arayot (illicit behavior), gezel (theft) and lashon hara (inappropriate speech).

So too, the tikkun for all of these, as represented by the para aduma, also comprises an acronym for the word egel- Avoda, Gemilut

chasadim and Limud Torah...

The Bat Ayin taught that the para aduma not only provided a metaphysical healing for those who had come into contact with impurity, but also came to teach us how to overcome the impact that resulted from the Cheit HaEgel.

Yehi Ratzon that our limud haTorah, should indeed bring purity to our minds and hearts, that we should find purity in our avodat Hashem and though acts of chesed, and that we soon merit to experience the building of the Beit HaMikdash, and the return of all its associated sacred rituals and constant miracles. ■

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**SPECIAL EVENT**

**9:00AM-2:00PM**

Nach Yomi Tiyul to Tel  
Lachish and Tel Azeka  
with **Rivi Frankel**  
(L'Ayla)

MON, JULY 4

**9:15 AM**

Rebbetzin  
**Pearl Borow**  
Divrei HaYamim (L'Ayla)

**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)

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TUE, JULY 5

**9:15 AM**

Rebbetzin Smiles  
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

**9:30AM**

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

**10:30AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin  
Perek 4 **Rabbi Bienenfeld**

**7:30 PM**

Safrut Course (The Bais)  
**Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

**8:00 PM**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi  
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## WED, JULY 6

**9:00 AM**

Medina and Halacha  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

**10:15 AM**

Shelach in the Diaspora,  
Korach in Israel-Why Aren't  
We in Sync?  
**Rabbi Avi Herzog** (Rabbi  
Manning Resumes July 13)

**11:30 AM**

Great Jewish Thinkers  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**

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**12:30 PM-** Trailblazing the  
Text of Tanach- Lunch and  
Learn **Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**8:30 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
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## THURS, JULY 7

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
(Resumes July 14)

**11:30 AM**

Unlocking the  
Messages  
of Chazal  
**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-  
Sanhedrin Perek 4  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**



## VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

(Zoom Only Classes):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>

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### **Rabbi Taub**

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon  
(Resumes July 11)  
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed  
(Resumes July 13)

### **Rebbetzin Shatz**

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

### **Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
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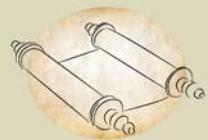
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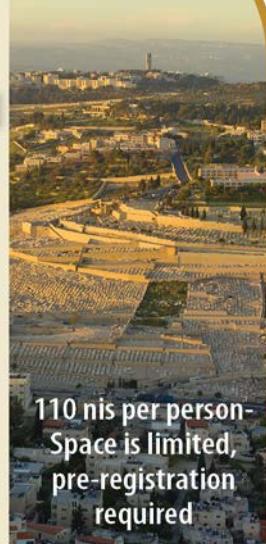
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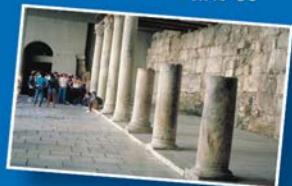
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# Shemitah in the Arava

Determining the Biblical borders of the Land of Israel is an essential component in regards to the mitzvot dependent on the land. These mitzvot include *Terumot* and *Ma'asrot*, the Mitzvah of *Challah* and *Shemitah*.

The Torah clearly maps out the borders of Israel in various passages. The current article focuses on the southern border as it applies to the mitzvah of *Shemitah*.

## The source

The Torah in *Sefer Bamidbar* (34:3-5) mentions various landmarks when defining the southern border of Israel. Based on these verses, it would seem that the south-eastern border is the edge of the Dead Sea, while the south-western border is almost in a straight line to *Kadesh Barnea*. This southern region of Israel is referred to as the "Arava"

## Can halacha rely on archeological research?

For hundreds of years, Rabbis, historians and archeologists have researched the borders of Israel for their own purposes. Halachically, the question arises whether archeological research and historical maps may influence the halachic ruling regarding the borders of Israel. The *Chazon Ish* (*shevi'iit* 3:18) ruled that since there are so many doubts regarding areas surrounding both the

southern and northern borders, we are stringent and determine the border to be further south. Others disagree claiming that there is sound proof regarding the accuracy of maps and research surrounding the southern borders of Biblical Israel (see *Moria* 10-12). This point is strengthened by the claim that numerous *poskim* would rely on *Seforim* like *Admat Kodesh* and *Tevu'ot Ha'aretz* in order to determine the exact borders. A third opinion brought by Rav Yaakov Ariel *Shlit'a* is that many historical and archeological proofs might not affect the halacha but in a case where there is an ancient tradition regarding certain borders even the *Chazon Ish* would agree (see *Be'ohalo Shel Torah* 3:1).

## The southern border

Three main opinions exist regarding the southern border of Israel in regards to *Shemitah* and other mitzvot. According to *Responsa Mishnat Yosef* (1:44), the border of Israel ends around the area of Ein Yahav which is approximately 130 kilometers north of Eilat. According to this opinion one may plant, maintain and harvest any vegetables or fruit south of Ein Yahav (including). *Kedu-shat Shevi'iit* and the prohibition of *sefichin* would not apply in this southern region (see *Teshuvot Ve'hagot* 5:307).

The second opinion is that of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (*Ashrei Ish YD* 2:202) and others (see *Chelkat Ha'sadeh* 2:4) that the southern border is further south. Rav Eyashiv ruled that the area of Yotvata is the southern



The OU Israel Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education was created to raise awareness and educate the public in all areas of Kashrut in Israel. Rabbi Ezra Friedman, a Rabbinic Field Representative for the OU is the Center's director.

border of Israel. Kibbutz Yotvata is approximately 45 kilometers north of Eilat. There is also testimony that the *Chazon Ish* who was very doubtful regarding the actual borders of Israel allowed the cultivation and selling of produce south of Yotvata as no doubt exists regarding this region.

The third opinion is that of Rav Yechiel Michal Tikochinsky (*Ir Hakodesh Vehamikdash* 3, p. 263). Rav Tikochinsky fiercely disagrees with some of the proofs both historically and halachically of his predecessors. He brings testimony from the time of the *Geonim* (10<sup>th</sup> century) that the borders of Israel end around Akaba which currently is within the borders of Jordan. The *Tzitz Eliezer* (3:23) strengthens Rav Tikochinsky's opinion that sources show that the Judean kingdom conquered Eilat and even south of it. The *Rabanut Harasheit* (Chief Rabbinate of Israel) rules like this opinion and requires all areas currently under the Israeli government to sell their land through *Heter Mechira* if they wish to work the land. Although according to the *Chazon Ish* and *Mishnat Yosef* the additional *Heter Mechira* requirement is unnecessary in the Arava region as those areas are not considered part of Biblical Israel. It should be noted that Rav Mordechai Eliyahu held that the areas around Eilat may not be considered part of Biblical Israel, yet he was stringent to handle produce from such areas with *Kedushat Shevi'it* (*Ma'amar Mordechai* 11:5).

This specific dispute has numerous halachic applications and causes much controversy. According to each one, the opposing opinion would be considered a transgression of the mitzvah in terms of planting and cultivating in areas which are part of Israel. As such, it is recommended to discuss this matter at length with one's own competent halachic authority. ■

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# GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Ezton

## The Isaac Accords

The time had finally come. After forty miserable years of wandering through sandy dunes, we arrived at the doorstep of Israel, ready to claim our ancient birthright. There was only one problem- several other empires lined the borders of Israel. Unless one of them granted us passage, history would stall.

Our first request was posed to our brother, Esav, who had established the formidable kingdom of Edom on the southern border of Israel. While we suffered centuries of Egyptian persecution, our older brother had fashioned a mighty nation. As we were arriving in Israel from the Sinai desert, a route through Edom would have provided the most direct access to our homeland.

Sadly, our request was flatly denied, and we were forced to circumvent the southern flank of Israel, crossing into the East bank of the Jordan river. Rattling their sabers, the Edomites amassed a huge army along the border, in an aggressive display of defiance. Thankfully, no hostilities broke out, and we went along our way, peacefully. Unlike the subsequent wars with a mighty warrior king named Sichon and a Titan named “Og”, this faceoff had no long-lasting impact.

Yet, this standoff feels eerily familiar

to Ya’akov’s first encounter with Esav, in Breishit. Moshe dispatched or **מלכים** messengers, just as Ya’akov had previously sent **מלכים** to Esav. We generously offered to purchase Esav’s water, even though we had ample supply. This gesture was reminiscent of the lavish gifts which Ya’akov presented to his alienated brother. The term **כלאך**, which can refer to a messenger or to an angel, is mentioned twice in the current negotiations. This recalls the angels who Ya’akov encountered on his way to meet Esav and, of course the heavenly visitor who Ya’akov wrestled the night before his rendezvous with Esav. The current meeting feels more than just *diplomatic*, it feels *historical*. Evidently, this interaction is a sequel to Ya’akov’s first confrontation with his brother. Evidently, we had some unfinished business.

Prior to entering the Land of history, we wanted to “patch up” history. What better way to repair our historical rupture with Esav, than to solicit his help in entering our historical homeland. This isn’t *negotiation* but *rapprochement*.

For this reason, Moshe refers to our shared heritage with Esav. Before submitting our request for passage, Moshe reviewed the past 290 years of Jewish history since our last meeting with Esav. Much had transpired, Moshe announced, since “*our parents descended to Egypt*”. By casting the Egyptian experience as the exile of *our parents*, Moshe signals that Hashem had

originally selected the *entire family* for the mission. Esav had opted out, leaving Ya'akov to wrestle with harsh historical challenges and to face a crushing exile, alone.

This historical mission was now concluding and here was an opportunity for Esav to support the broader family project. Here was an opportunity for Esav to sign-on to the "Yitzchak Accords".

Unfortunately, history wasn't yet ready for mending. Old battle lines had been drawn and the parties couldn't reconcile. Moshe reported that, under duress in Egypt, we prayed to Hashem for liberation. In response, Edom threatened to assault us with their swords. It was the "same old same old": the voice of Ya'akov's prayers clashing with the bellicose sword of Esav. On this day, Esav and Ya'akov would not reunite. Time wasn't ripe.

Yet, hope for future reconciliation was not totally lost. For this reason, we were warned against any hostility, or even provocation of our recalcitrant brother: *אל תתגרו בם כי לא את لكم מארצם עד מזרק כף רגל כי ירושה לעשו נתתי – את הר שער – "do not hassle [Edom] ..for the land of Se'ir is their inheritance."* Unlike the Emori and Bashan nations, Edom was not to be antagonized. We were not to burn any bridges.

Esav is different from other nations. Esav was raised in the house of Yitzchak, which was built upon the monotheistic traditions of Avraham. That background provided a basis, which could, one day, develop into pure monotheism and moral lifestyle. At this stage Esav wasn't yet ready to be educated and History wasn't yet ready for reconciliation. Everything was suspended. No merger, but no hostility. The future was



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still wide open, it would just take a while. Just not now.

About 1900 years later, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the “Esav shift” would be launched. Esav’s descendants, now residing in Rome, would turn away from the ancient world of crass paganism and adopt a monotheistic-infused religion of Christianity. That monotheism would still be contaminated by vestiges of ancient paganism, but it would be preferable to outright idol worship. The potential redemption of Esav had begun.

About 1000 years later, Esav’s descendants—now dominating Western Civilization—would begin to reimagine their society and their government. A feudal world of oppression and poverty would be replaced by a world of democracy and equality. A savage world would yield to one of greater civility. Not only was Esav veering toward monotheism,

but he was now becoming more moral. The reclamation project continued.

Would Esav pass the next stage? Though he had advanced religiously and morally, he had still mercilessly persecuted Ya’akov, in particular over the last millennia. Slowly but surely though, much of the Christian world has begun to abandon its discriminatory views of Judaism and formally ban antisemitism. The rapprochement was almost complete.

Which brings Esav to the final step of historical reclamation: assisting the return of Ya’akov to their homeland. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1947, many of Esav’s descendants voted to allow the Jews to pass into Israel. Since then, we have received significant support from many parts of Esav’s family. The rapprochement was delayed thousands of years, but it has occurred—at least for many segments of Esav’s family.

Not all of Esav’s descendants have made the shift. One day Hashem will purify all monotheistic religions of their adulterations. Furthermore, He will judge the residents of Se’ir, Esav’s “capital”. Those who reconciled with Ya’akov will be redeemed, those who did not will be disciplined.

We never “gave up” on Esav. It just took some time and a lot of patience. ■



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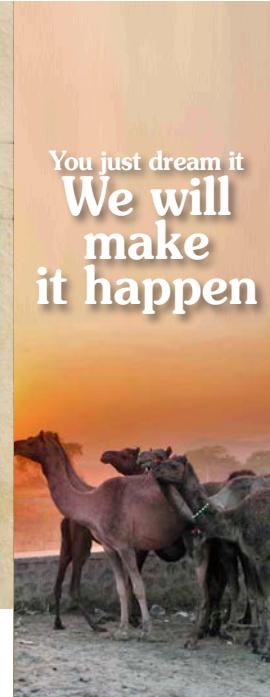
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## DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

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# The Ways of Water

It is probably true that a primary source of conflicts between nations revolves around resources, especially water. So, it is not surprising that water springs up in our Parsha several times as a weary troupe of Israelites slowly wind their way through the parched desert on their way to the Promised Land.

At first, we read of Miriam's demise and no mention of national mourning. Consequently, our commentators declare, the well of water (in Miriam's merit) that accompanied the people on their travels dried up.

Then, after the thirsty people clamor for water, Moshe slips up by hitting the rock instead of talking to it. Whatever the actual cause of his sin, Moshe is castigated for not sanctifying God's name sufficiently in the eyes of all the people.

The people should then have recognized that the Source of all their providence lay in the hands of Hashem. However, hitting the rock *and* proclaiming, "Can this rock produce water?" apparently undermined that perception.

After this unfortunate episode, the people reached the border with Moav by the tributaries of the Arnon River.

Following the Midrash and various commentaries, several miracles occurred at this point. (1) The local Amorites waiting in ambush on the sides of the gorge were crushed when the cliffs merged, allowing the people to progress. (2) Miriam's well reappeared and was lifted to the heights where Bnei Yisrael stood. And (3) its waters were colored red from the blood of the slain Amorites.

And why these miracles? – so that an unsuspecting people would know Hashem had delivered them from their enemies. Indeed, when the people saw the blood, they broke out into song (Bemidbar 21:17-20).

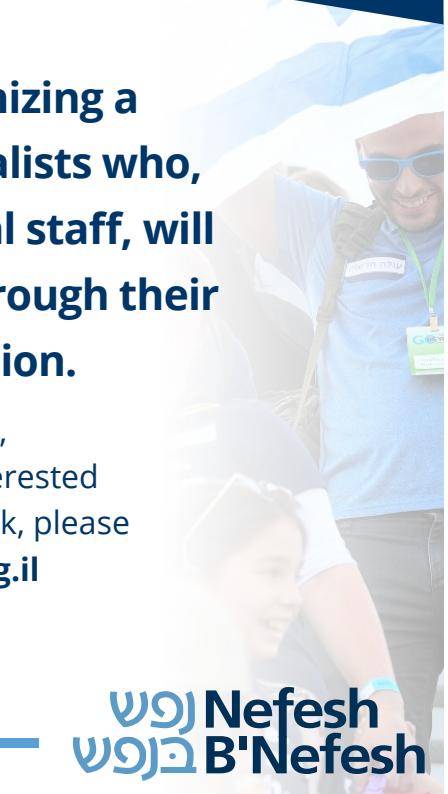
For Rashi, citing the Midrash and Talmud, this episode and the song were on par with the parting of the Red Sea and *Shirat HaYam* (as hinted in the Hebrew text). However, in deference to Moshe's previous trials with water, the details of these miracles were not recounted in the Torah.

We might learn from these events that Hashem's handiwork never fails. Sometimes, we are aware, but miracles pass us by at other times like butterflies' wings. How often have we looked back on events only to realize that something extraordinarily unexpected and profound suddenly occurred in our lives? Perhaps we need to look more carefully and then break out into song. ■

Menachem Persoff



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# Real Life Rescues

Two weeks ago, on Wednesday evening, a woman in her late 70s in Tel Aviv had mixed up some of her medications and by accident took too many pills of a certain kind causing her an adverse medical reaction. The woman, weak from the unintentional overdose, managed to call emergency services for help before she nearly lost consciousness and fell on the floor of her apartment.



Netanel Yakoby a volunteer EMT from Tel Aviv was out with a few friends and fellow United Hatzalah volunteers at a local coffee shop when his emergency device and those of the responders with him began to sound, alerting the first responders to the emergency taking place near their location. Together with two of his fellow EMTs, Netanel rushed out of the coffee shop, jumped on his ambucycle, and raced over to the given street.

With very limited information as to the incident's location, Netanel and his teammates searched along the street for signs of an emergency. After a few minutes, they were beckoned over by a couple of pedestrians. Apparently, they had heard a faint voice calling for help from one of the buildings.

The dedicated medics went from door to door, listening for sounds of distress. Their faithful search was eventually rewarded when they finally located the correct apartment. Police officers, who had just arrived, enabled entry to the apartment and the EMTs and officers entered.

Netanel found the woman lying on the floor, moaning in pain. Her relief at seeing her rescuers was enormous. Netanel assessed the woman's condition and took a full set of vital signs. After that, the first responders carefully lifted her to the couch.

Netanel contacted the woman's family members and provided emotional support to the distraught, pain-wracked woman. A few minutes later an ambulance arrived. The devoted volunteer was there with the woman for over an hour until he was sure that she was stable and in good hands, with family members arriving and the ambulance crew who were still on scene and

"I may have missed the rest of my evening with my friends due to helping the woman," said Netanel, "but it doesn't bother me at all as I was helping someone. My friends are mostly fellow EMTs so they all get it. I am glad that I was able to help the distraught woman and care for her in her time of need."

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# Rabbi Soloveitchik: Making Meaningful *Berachot*

Not a day passes in the life of an observant Jew without reciting *berachot*. Beginning our day with prayer, when we eat, when performing certain mitzvot - *berachot* are rendered.

We generally understand the idea of making a *Beracha* as a formula by which we ‘thank’ God or ‘offer praise’ to Him. The formula *Baruch Ata Hashem*, is often translated, “Praised be God’s name.” Yet, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggested that this explanation does not capture the true meaning of making a *beracha*.

The Rav cited such giants as the Ari Hakadosh, the Vilna Gaon, and the author of the Tanya, who all reject the standard explanation stated above. Rather, they offer a kabbalistic view, which the Rav claimed,

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should be accepted as a *beracha*’s true connotation.

Even before elucidating this idea, we first need to take a close look at the way the Torah uses the expression *baruch*. This will clarify its accurate meaning. The following verse is a key: “God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and God said to them: ‘Be fertile and increase; fill the earth and master it” (Gen. 1:27-28). This verse does not mean that the Almighty was praising or giving them acclaim. Rather, the verse asserts that the Creator imbued human nature with the desire to procreate and produce more offspring. The notion of *beracha* relates to expanding, procreating, or multiplying. (*Blessings and Thanksgiving* p.116)

Consider the meaning of the following verse: “And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (*Bereshit* 2:3). R. Avraham ibn Ezra (*ad loc.*) explains: “The meaning of *beracha* is an increase of goodness. On this day, the body’s reproductive strength is renewed, as is the soul’s power to discern.” Nachmanides agrees with this interpretation, calling it true and accurate. (*Ibid.*, p.120)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Maharal of Prague comments that the word for blessing, which consists of letters bet, resh, chaf - all hint to the notion of doubling. The letter bet is double

Thus, when we begin our blessings to the Holy One with the traditional word “*baruch*,” we mean the same thing that God meant in his *beracha* to Adam and Chava and what he meant when he endowed the Shabbat with beracha. When the Torah commands us to bless God - “You shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good Land that He has given you” (Devarim 8:10) - it means that we, as it were, bless God in the same vein; increase, expand, enlarge. But what does this actually mean?

In answering this question, the Rav simplified certain kabbalistic idioms, explaining that although the Creator is the Holy King, the all-powerful maker of all, the foundation and purpose of all creation, there is the reality that God needs man, as it were. Just as the people of Israel were a necessary component in the giving/receiving of the Torah and the revelation at Sinai, God needs man in order to be manifest and known to the world. God is concealed and hidden until he is revealed. “The Shechina, as it were, cannot reveal Herself...the “King is held captive

---

*the previous letter (alef), resh is double the prior letter (kuf), and Chaf is double the previous letter (yud). Also, Shabbat is noteworthy for its many examples of “doubling”: Lechem Mishne (two challot based on the double portion of manna, Musaf (additional prayer) which consists of shnei temidim, and the neshama yetera (the double soul).*



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in His Tresses" (Song 7:6). Man must free the *Malka Kadisha* from His chains, bring Him out of hiding, scatter the dense cloud, so that He may illuminate the world with His radiance. The master of the world is all-powerful, except when it comes to His own revelation." (Blessings and Thanksgiving, pp. 123-124).

In this context The Rav elucidated the following Talmudic teaching. "All is in Heaven, except for reverence of Heaven" (Berachot 33b). Reverence of Heaven, *yirat Shamayim*, is none other than the perception of Heaven, *re'iyat Shamayim* - "seeing" ("*re'iyah*") and revering (*yir'ah*) share the same Hebrew word. The manifestation of the presence of God (the *Shechina*) depends on man himself. (Ibid., p.124)

It is interesting to note that words we include in a beracha: *melech haolam*, king of the world, has another connotation. The Rav quotes the talmud (Kiddushin 71a) which states: The Torah says, "This is my name forever" (Shemot 3:15), but "*le'olam*," forever, is spelled "*le'alem*", to be obscured. Although the Almighty fills the world, nevertheless, He conceals Himself and remains hidden. Man can reveal more of God if he chooses. (Ibid., p.140)

The following chassidic story is illustrative of the above notion:

"The first Karliner Rebbe, who was referred to as R"Aharon Hagadol (the great; 1736-1772), was a man of great piety and depth. In his eloquent liturgical songs, he often expressed his longing and love for Hashem, and his soul's constant quest to be close to Him.

One *motz'ei Shabbos* (Saturday night) R. Yaakov, one of R. Aharon's chassidim came

to visit. During the conversation, the *gab-bai* brought him a plate of fruit. The Rebbe picked up an apple, fervently recited the appropriate blessing, thanking God for the fruits of the trees and cut off a slice. He then proceeded to eat the apple.

The chassid sat across from his Rebbe and watched his every move, He had always considered his Rebbe somewhat akin to an angel, and yet here was his rebbe eating a mundane apple just like anyone else. For a fleeting moment a thought flashed through R' Yaakov's mind, "we both eat apples, we both recite blessings. Sure the Rebbe recites the blessings with more fervor than I, but essentially we are both pretty much the same."

The Rebbe, quick to note the subtle change of demeanor from reverence to careful appraisal, said to his student, "Tell me, R' Yaakov, what indeed is the difference between you and me? I eat apples, and you eat apples. I recite blessings and you recite blessings. So how are we different?"

"I was just wondering the same thing," replied R' Yaakov, somewhat startled and embarrassed.

"I'll tell you the difference," said R' Aharon thoughtfully, "When I get up in the morning, I look around and see the beautiful trees in the garden, the miracles of creation, and the wonders of the world. I become so enthralled that I want to recite a blessing to express awe. However, I know that it is forbidden to recite God's name in vain, so I must take an apple over which I can recite a blessing.

"But, when you arise in the morning , your first thought is, 'I'm hungry. All night I haven't eaten.' You would like to eat an apple, but of course you know that you cannot eat

an apple without reciting the appropriate blessing. So you take the apple, recite the blessing, and eat it. Here is where we differ. You make a *beracha* so that you can eat an apple, while I eat an apple so that I can make a *beracha*." ("The Maggid Speaks," Krohn. 163-164)

The Rav asserted that the meaning of the formula "*Baruch Ata*" - Blessed are You - that a Jew recites before eating is similar to that of Moshe's petition, "May the power of the Lord be increased (*Bamidbar* 14:17). In other words, Lord of all worlds, please reveal the glory of Your dominion to the eyes of all." By the virtue of my discovery of You, my God, in this apple that I am eating, in this cup from which I sip wine, You and I merge with one another. The Master of the world is present when the *beracha* is recited, because its meaning is the disclosure of the Shechina."

(Blessings and Thanksgiving, p.124)

The Rav powerfully summed up this important teaching: "If you ask me what Judaism is, I will respond: Judaism is contained in the words "*Baruch Ata*." The recognition that the Almighty, as it were, needs our *berachot*, means that He, as it were, needs to be discovered by us and needs our constant aspiration to seek and find Him." (Ibid., 125) ■

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# FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

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## Finding a Fruit with *Kedushat Shvi'it*

**Question:** My wife shopped at a special *kedushat shvi'it* fruit distribution. A few hours later, I spotted on the walkway to our building (of seven apartments) a single fruit. I took it home and asked my wife, who said it made sense that it fell from her, but asked how we can know it is not from a neighbor who might have also bought. Do I have to put up a sign or ask neighbors (whom I trust) if it could be theirs? Is it more lenient because there is no ownership of *kedushat shvi'it* fruit?

**Answer:** Let us take off the table the confusing matter of *kedushat shvi'it*. The field owner is required to treat his fruit as *hefker* (ownerless). There is a *machloket* whether it is automatically *hefker* based on divine decree (*Shut Hamabit* I:11; see *Bava Metzia* 39a) or whether it occurs only after the owner is, properly, *mafkir* (*Avkat Rochel* 24). When one permissibly receives fruit for consumption, he does become owner of the fruit, with *kedushat shvi'it* dictating *halachot* of its consumption and treatment. For that reason, a man is able to use fruit with

*kedushat shvi'it* to marry a woman (*Kiddushin* 52a; see *Rashi ad loc.*) even though this requires the *chatan's* ownership. Only at the time of *bi'ur* (when the fruit are no longer available in the field) must one temporarily return them to *hefker* (see *Derech Emuna, Shemitta* 7:17). Therefore, the *kedushat shvi'it* status will not make a difference.

Do you have to worry that it is someone else's fruit? Your wife is not sure it is yours because this fruit, like most, has no *siman* (identifiable sign). By all indications, had it fallen from anyone else, they also would not have a *siman*. In such a case, *Halacha* assumes that the owner gave up hope of reclaiming it (*yei'ush*), as an honest finder will not be able to find and confirm the owner. We rule that *yei'ush shel mida'at* (a person will have *yei'ush* when he finds out of the loss but this has yet to occur) is ineffective, as the *yei'ush* must precede the finder picking it up (*ibid.* 22b). Therefore, for it to be permitted to take it, one would have to assume that the owner realized that the fruit fell. We *pasken* one may make this assumption (*Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 262:7) even though it is not a simple assumption (see *S'ma ad loc.* 15). Therefore, you are permitted to keep it.

Does the concern of your wife, who is not even sure if she lost such a fruit, that perhaps it does belong to a neighbor beckon for taking steps beyond the letter of the law? The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (*Metzia* 18)

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does say this is proper even after *yei'ush* and with no *siman*. However, this is only when the finder finds out who lost it; he does not have to announce his find. In some ways your need might be more compelling, as you have the list of candidates effectively down to six trustworthy people, so might it is still be worthwhile?

In another way, your rights are much greater than the average one, because there is strong reason to think it is yours. In fact, even if a neighbor would have seen you picking up the fruit and demanded it back due to the possibility he dropped it, he would not be able to extract it from you without proof. You can then take comfort in the answer to the Mahari Basan's famous question (cited in Kuntras Hasefeikot I:6) about the *halacha* that Reuven who is in possession of something does not have to give it to Shimon who makes a claim with insufficient proof, even if Reuven is unsure what the truth is. Why don't we require Reuven to give it up due to the doubt that he might be stealing from Shimon? The most accepted answer is that once we determine who has rights to it based on the rules of monetary Halacha, the prohibition of stealing does not apply. Here too, if no neighbor is expected to be able to prove himself more deserving than you, you have no reason for concern.

If you want to try to return, not out of concern but out of love of going beyond the

Halacha in monetary matters, that is a different story. However, it would seem that such steps are more appropriate in cases that make a difference to people, not a single fruit. ■

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# A History of Egg Freezing

Last time we discussed the biological clock that determines the limited time a woman has in order to get pregnant. As a woman gets older she is less likely to get pregnant and more likely to have a pregnancy with a genetic abnormality.

But the age of marriage is increasing worldwide. People are getting married later, and, when they do get married, often postpone having children due to concerns for their career development, academic study, or for financial, personal or medical reasons.

One important development that must be considered is the technology that enables women to freeze their eggs and thus achieve extended fertility.

Let us examine something of the biology and history of egg freezing.

Eggs are the largest cell in the human body. While the nucleus of all cells is about the same size, the egg is larger than other cells since it contains more fluid, or cytoplasm. Many fluids, cytoplasm included, expand on freezing. Until relatively recently, this determined that it was extremely difficult to freeze eggs, as on freezing the cytoplasm expanded and this ruptured the Zona Pellucida, the outer

shell of the egg. In addition, the cytoplasm crystallized thus rendering the egg incapable of being used at a later stage.

A few years ago, a new method of freezing, called vitrification, was developed. This was a method of rapid freezing that prevented the effects of expansion and did not enable the fluid to crystallize. The result was the new technology of egg freezing.

It was initially developed and used to bank eggs in a clinic dealing with egg donations. The problem with such clinics is coordinating the ovulation induction of the donor with the preparation of the recipient to be ready to carry the egg. Egg freezing solved this problem; there was no longer a need to coordinate the timing of the two women. The donor could produce eggs which could then be frozen and stored, and, when the recipient was ready, the eggs could be thawed and implanted.

This program proved to be effective, but the eggs were only stored for a very short period of time. However, it suggested that eggs may be able to be stored for longer periods, under different circumstances, and for a very different purpose.

Thus was born elective egg freezing, in which women froze their own eggs to gain more time to have healthy children at a later date.

More on this next week. ■

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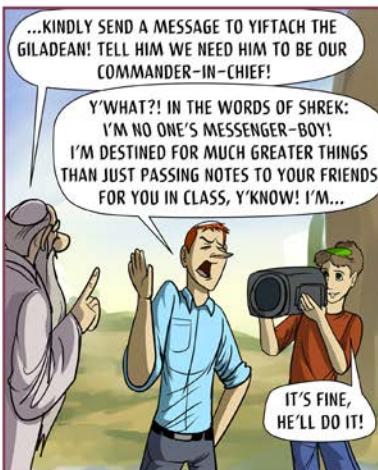
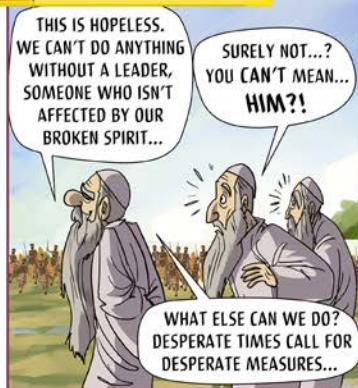
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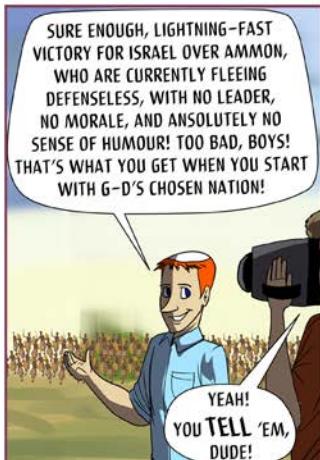
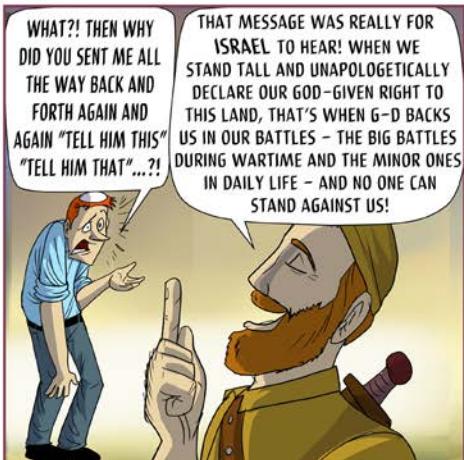


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**Shlomo Rayman**  
Beit Shemesh  
Chapter Director

### Sweet Taste of Curiosity

Growing up, when someone in my family asked a worthy question, it was declared a ‘Slurpee Question’ and they were rewarded with a large slurpee from 7-Eleven. The excitement my parents had over clever questions combined with the delicious taste of carbonated-sugar-water played a significant role in my love for learning, my curiosity, and my sweet tooth. Looking back, this is actually quite counterintuitive. One would expect parents to reward answers! Where does this love for questions come from? The *mitzvah* of *parah aduma* is filled with enigmas. A cow is used, despite its resemblance to the golden calf. The *kohanim* who prepare the ashes and purify others, become impure themselves. The cow is slaughtered outside the *Beit Hamikdash*, something normally forbidden. Though, the biggest enigma is that history’s smartest person, Shlomo Hamelech, didn’t have an answer! I’m sure that in this publication alone, there are multiple answers to these very questions. Sometimes we are too quick to offer superficial answers and we minimize the importance of dwelling on a question.

There are other questions our greatest leaders have asked without answers. Why is there evil? Why isn’t there obvious divine justice? Sometimes asking and pondering over these questions is more important than having the answers. To ask questions is to care about the truth and to believe in the value and importance of our role in this world. To question the *mitzvot* is what drives us to understand them. To question evil is what drives us to fight it. How fortunate we are to be part of a tradition that values and encourages questions. Stay curious and keep asking!



**Menachem Kramer**  
11th Grade, Ramat  
Beit Shemesh

### The Protection That Peace Provides

In the middle of this week’s parsha, we are told about the death of Ahron. We see that Am Yisrael was deeply affected by this news and every household, man and woman, mourned the loss for 30 days. The question that arises from this is what warranted such an extreme reaction from the people, which was unlike any other reaction that took place after the deaths of other leaders?

The answer can be found by analyzing a singular character trait that Ahron embodied, which was a drive for Shalom/

Peace. Rashi explains that Ahron was a “Rodef Shalom,” or pursuer of peace within Am Yisrael, and actively strove to settle arguments between people. We also know that the Ananei Hakavod, which had been protecting Bnei Yisrael in the desert, were brought in Ahron’s merit, and Rashi explains that they disappeared when he died. This left Am Yisrael susceptible to attacks from other nations like we see in the following pasuk that says that a Canaanite nation fought with Bnei Yisrael immediately following the death of Ahron, because the Ananei Hakavod had disappeared.

The reason that this explains the extended mourning of Ahron is that Ahron was the generator of peace within the nation. His actions allowed for an atmosphere of peace to be produced around the nation, and in the merit of the peaceful surroundings the Ananei Hakavod were brought to protect the nation. However, when Ahron died, the nation lost their source of the peaceful atmosphere and protection that emerged from that atmosphere, and as a result mourned that loss greatly.

From here we can learn the importance of creating peace between people and settling arguments. Just as the Ananei Hakavod protected Am Yisrael in the desert and flattened the roads for them in the merit of the peace within the nation, so too when we come together and stop arguing we will be protected from all problems and the path forward will be much smoother. ■

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