

# Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1359 FEB 8<sup>TH</sup> '20 י"ג שבט תש"פ

פרשת בשלח

PARSHAT B'SHALACH - SHABBAT SHIRA

40  
Years  
OU ישראל



## SHABBAT SHIRA THE POWER OF MUSIC!

By Lenny  
Solomon  
page 58



## SEDER TU BISHEVAT - NO DRIED FRUIT PLEASE!

By Rabbi Moshe  
Bloom  
page 60

"וְהַיָּמִים לָהֶם  
חֹמֶה, מֵימִינָם  
וּמִשְׂמָאלָם"

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT B'SHALACH

Candles 4:43PM • Havdala 5:57PM • Rabbeinu Tam 6:36PM



# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	B'SHALACH	HAVDALA	YITRO	
4:43	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:57	4:49	6:03
5:01	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot et al)	6:00	5:07	6:05
4:59	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:59	5:05	6:04
4:58	Gush Etzion	5:57	5:04	6:03
4:59	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	5:58	5:05	6:04
4:58	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:58	5:04	6:03
4:58	Netanya	5:58	5:05	6:04
4:58	Be'er Sheva	5:59	5:04	6:05
4:59	Rehovot	5:58	5:05	6:04
4:43	Petach Tikva	5:58	4:49	6:04
4:58	Ginot Shomron	5:57	5:04	6:03
4:47	Haifa / Zichron	5:57	4:53	6:03
4:57	Gush Shiloh	5:56	5:03	6:02
4:57	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:58	5:03	6:04
4:58	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:57	5:04	6:03
4:59	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:58	5:05	6:03
5:01	Ashkelon	6:00	5:07	6:05
4:59	Yad Binyamin	5:58	5:05	6:04
4:45	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:54	4:51	6:00
4:54	Golan	5:54	5:00	5:59

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 6:36pm • next week - 6:42pm

## OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

RANGES ARE 11 DAYS, WED-SHABBAT  
10-20 SH'VAT (FEB 5 - FEB 15, '20)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:31-5:39am
Sunrise	6:22-6:30am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'm'a (Magen Avraham: 8:31-8:34am)	9:07-9:11am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:32-9:34am)	10:02-10:05am
Chatzot (Halachic noon)	11:53-11:53½am
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:24-12:24pm
Plag Mincha	4:09-4:16pm
Sunset (counting elevation) (based on sea level: 5:16½-5:25pm)	5:21¼-5:30pm

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## WEEKLY INSPIRATION

“Divine Inspiration, Ruach HaKodesh, always flows upon the Assembly of Israel, Knesset Yisrael, irrigating with its invigorating moisture the souls of every single Jew. Even the lowest ranks- the ignorant and sinful Jews- are included in this flow.”

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook zt”l, An Angel Among Men, p.503

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# B'SHALACH



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the Parsha's beginning;

(Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.



## STATS

16th of 54 sedras; 4th of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 215.33 lines (17th)

14 parshiot; 9 open, 5 closed

116 p'sukim - rank: 23 (6th in Sh'mot)

1681 words - rank: 19 (4th in Sh'mot)

6423 letters - rank: 18 (4th in Sh'mot)



## MITZVOT

B'SHALACH contains a single mitzva of the 613, the prohibition of leaving one's Shabbat boundary - T'CHUM SHABBAT

## KOHEN FIRST ALIYA

### 14 P'SUKIM - 13:17-14:8

[S> 13:17 (6)] "When Par'o sends the People...", G-d leads them along a circuitous route to prevent them from panicking and returning to Egypt. Moshe, in fulfillment of the promise made to Yosef by his brothers, takes Yosef's remains out of Egypt with the People.

## SDT

Our Tradition is that the remains of all of the sons of Yaakov were brought out of Egypt. Why was Moshe, from the tribe of Levi, the one who took care of ATZMOT YOSEF? It has been suggested that Moshe was atoning for and effecting a TIKUN for his great-grandfather's role in the Sale of Yosef.

(Heard from Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld)

G-d provided an escort for the People in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and



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a pillar of fire at night.

[P> 14:1 (14)] G-d tells Moshe of His plan to lead the People in such a way that Par'o will pursue them in the misguided hope of bringing them back to Egypt.

When Par'o is notified (by spies whom he had sent to accompany the Israel- ites) of the People's whereabouts, he (with G-d's help in making his heart "heavy", i.e. strong) takes a potent force with him and chases after the People of Israel.

## SDT

"And G-d did not allow them to go DERECH ERETZ P'LISHTIM. Literally, they did not take the straight route to the territory of the Philistines. One commentator suggests an interesting DRASH based on a play on words. G-d did not take the People out of Egypt in DERECH ERETZ, in the normal, natural way of things, but in a miraculous way. Normally, bread comes from the ground; for the People of Israel, G-d sent them bread from above. Normally, water comes from above; for the People of Israel, G-d provided water from below, from a rock and from the miraculous Well that accompanied them on their

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journey, in the merit of Miriam. Not taking us out in a natural manner, leaves us with no doubt that it was indeed G-d Who took us out of Egypt. This is a crucial foundation stone of Judaism. Not only did we get out of Mitzrayim, but it was G-d Who took us out. Not only did He take us out, but the people knew and know it well.

G-d's opening words at Sinai make the point abundantly clear.

---

## LEVI SECOND ALIYA

### 6 P'SUKIM - 14:9-14

---

The mighty Egyptian army pursues the People. When the People of Israel see them coming, they are greatly frightened because there is no place to flee. They complain to Moshe that it would have been better to have died in Egypt. Moshe reassures the People, encourages them not to fear, promises them that G-d will fight on their behalf, and tells them that Egypt will soon cease to exist.

**SDT**

It seems that Par'o actually thought that he let the People go - that he expelled the People from Egypt. That's even what it seems to say at the beginning of this week's sedra (When Par'o sent the people out...). G-d arranged to have Par'o run after them. Then the events make it crystal clear to him - and to us - that G-d, and only G-d took us out of Egypt. Without this part of the Exodus process, Par'o and his people - and probably some Jews as well - would think that Par'o had a part in

letting us leave Egypt. With the opening statement of the Aseret HaDibrot stating, I am HaShem, your G-d, Who took you out of Mitzrayim... this point is essential.

---

## SH'LISHI THIRD ALIYA

### 11 P'SUKIM - 14:15-25

---

[P> 14:15 (11)] G-d "asks" Moshe why the People are screaming; let them just move on.

**SDT**

Our Sages teach us that there are times when prayer is called for, and other times when action is the order of the day. G-d says: MA TITZ'AK EILAI, why cry out to Me? MA is spelled MEM-HEI. MEM can represent the 40 days and 40 nights that Moshe was to spend in prayer on behalf of the People following the Sin of the Golden Calf. MEM represents long prayer. HEI can stand for the simple but eloquent 5-word prayer for Miriam's recovery from Tzora'at which she contracted in punishment for speaking disrespectfully of Moshe - KEIL NA R'FA NA LAH. And sometimes, neither short nor long prayer is appropriate. At this point of the Exodus, the order of the day was decisive action. Move it! We must know when to pray and when to act first, and when to do both.

G-d tells Moshe to raise his hand over the Sea and split it, so the People will be

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and family on the passing of his  
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able to pass through it on dry land. G-d informs Moshe that He will again harden Egypt's heart so that they will continue their pursuit. The Egyptians will finally know G-d's Might. The guardian angel (pillar of cloud) that was leading the People now was repositioned between the Jews and the Egyptian army, preventing contact.

Moshe raises his hand above the Sea and G-d causes a powerful easterly wind to blow all night, followed by a parting of the waters. The People of Israel enter the Sea on dry land, between walls of water.

Egypt boldly follows, but their arrogant attitude abruptly changes to fear and panic as their chariots lose their wheels and bog down in the seabed. (This is in sharp contrast with the perfectly dry land beneath the feet of Israel.)

Egypt finally (too late) acknowledges G-d, not only now, but retroactively, as the One Who had fought for Israel in Egypt.

**SDT** Why the strong wind blowing all night? Could not G-d have split the Sea with the proverbial snap of a finger? The answer is: Of course He could. But the night's preparation for the miracles of the day serves several purposes. Egypt is lulled into a false sense of security when something is happening that they can explain. They don't want to accept the idea that the G-d of Israel is performing miracles for His people. No doubt, their wizards explained the desert winds and the effects it can have. Among the Jews, there are always individuals who would

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like not to admit to G-d's awesome powers. They too will have their "excuse" in the natural components of the miracle. Perhaps, most importantly, this wind (and the like) allows us to relate to and better appreciate, the miracles themselves. A snap of the finger brings results too quickly for us to think about what is happening. A night to ponder what was going on, further enhanced the appreciation of the Children of Israel for what had happened, was happening, and was to happen - what and when! Mixing the natural with the super- natural will often enhance the miracle.

---

## R'VI' FOURTH ALIYA

### 32 P'SUKIM - 14:26-15:26

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[P> 14:26 (6)] Moshe is now instructed by G-d to raise his hand once more over the Sea so that the waters may return. He does so and the Egyptians are drowned. The People, however, have succeeded in passing through the Sea and are ecstatic in their salvation. They attain true belief and trust in G-d and in Moshe His servant.

**SDT**

Rambam states that complete, solid, lasting faith in G-d was attained at Sinai.

Here we must say that the belief was great, but not yet permanent. One telling hint towards the tenuousness of belief as a result of "flashy" miracles alone is the word UVMOSHE - they believed in G-d AND IN MOSHE His servant. The only other occurrence of that word UVMOSHE is in Bamidbar after Aharon dies and there was a battle against Emori, the

people were disgusted with their wandering and spoke against G-d and Moshe. That's the other extreme of belief - same word occurs at both extremes.

[P> 15:1 (19)] Next comes the Song of the Sea. What makes the Song of the Sea so special is that it is a direct quote of the People of Israel that G-d put into His Torah, verbatim. In other words, the rest of the Torah is written by G-d; we composed this part. It is an inspiring passage that has been incorporated into our daily prayer.

This 19-pasuk parsha is unique in the way it is written in a Sefer Torah. The column that contains the Shira is wider than any other column in the Torah. It is a Tradition to start the column with 5 lines belonging to the previous parsha, beginning with the word HABA'IM. Then a line is left blank and then the first line of AZ YASHIR is written all the way across the column. The next line has one word, a blank space, a group of words (from 3-5), another blank space, and then a single word to end the line. Call this, line pattern A. The next line starts with a group of words (2-5), a space, and another group of words (3-5). Call this, line pattern B. After the first line, the rest of the Shira parsha consists of another 29 lines, alternating patterns A and B, ending with an A. Then a line is skipped. Five more "regular" lines of Torah text finish off the column. The column with the Shira has many blank spaces and two blank lines.

[P> 15:20 (2)] Following the Shira

portion is a 2-pasuk parsha describing Miriam's rallying of the women to join in the Shira in their own way.

[S> 15:22 (5)] The People continue their journey and fail to find water for three days. When they do find some, they complain bitterly (PI) of the inability to drink it. G-d directs Moshe to perform a miracle by throwing a special piece of wood into the water whereby the water becomes sweet.

**SDT**

Aside from the literal meaning of the text, this episode is considered an allusion to the primacy of Torah in the life of a Jew. Both Torah and water sustain life - spiritual and physical. In the same vein, "3 days without water" resulted in our reading Torah on Monday and Thursday, so that in our wandering in the spiritual desert of life, we will not go 3 days without spiritual water. This is but one "use" of the analogy between Torah and water. This idea is not just a matter of DRASH. The parsha's last pasuk tells that if we will harken to G-d's Voice and follow the Torah, keep the mitzvot... then all the ills that befell Egypt will not be put upon us...

## CHAMISHI 5TH ALIYA

11 P'SUKIM - 15:27-16:10

[S> 15:27 (4)] The People next travel to Eilim and from there to Midbar Tsin, en route to Sinai. This time, they complain about the lack of food.

[S> 16:4 (7)] G-d tells Moshe about the manna (mahn, מן) which He will soon

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provide for the People. Moshe tells the People that they will soon see how G-d hears and listens to their complaints. Mahn is not just the food that sustains the people, it is also a crucial test of the faith that the people should have in G-d. (We find Moshe reiterating this aspect of the Mahn in Parshat Eikev.) The Mahn was to fall daily except for Shabbat, and was not allowed to be left over night (except for what fell on Friday). This facilitated a constant strengthening of our faith in G-d - the need to "trust" Him every single day.

---

## SHISHI SIXTH ALIYA

### 26 P'SUKIM - 16:11-36

---

[P> 16:11 (17)] The account of the Mahn continues... Quail miraculously appear in the evening, and the people eat "meat". On the next morning, the Mahn - protected by a layer of dew above and below it - appears. The People are fascinated by it and when they question Moshe, he explains the rules and procedures set down by G-d. Nonetheless, there were some who left over Mahn from one day to the next, and this angered Moshe. And, despite being told that the Mahn will NOT fall on Shabbat, there were individuals who went out to search for it.

[S> 16:28 (9)] G-d "takes note" of this display of lack of faith and "asks" how long we will continue to refuse to keep His commands.

The parsha of the Mahn is our first real introduction to Shabbat. This is the

meaning of the line in DAYEINU, Had You given us the Shabbat and not brought us near Har Sinai, DAYEINU, there would be sufficient reason to thank You... Although Shabbat is an integral part of Revelation at Sinai (commandment #4), it actually pre- ceded Matan Torah.

From the episode of the Mahn we learn the important lesson that Shabbat is honored by being prepared for. It is not just a corollary of the prohibitions of Shabbat that we prepare our food in advance; it is an essential feature of Shabbat and the role of the days of the week.

Included in the instructions about the Mahn is the command not to "leave our PLACE on the seventh day (to collect the Mahn)". This was not just a rule for that generation; it is a mitzva among the 613 - the mitzva of T'chum Shabbat [24, L321 16:29].

Briefly, the point of T'CHUM is not about how far we may walk on Shabbat. It is about how far AWAY FROM HOME we may go. This is obvious from the halachic details of T'CHUM. The weekdays are for going. Shabbat is for staying put (as defined by halacha) and being able to "relax", to ponder G-d's Creation and Mastery over all.

A sample of Mahn was stored as a remembrance for future generations.

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## MITZVAWATCH

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It is important to understand that the

prohibition of T'CHUM, be it from the Torah or from the Sages, was not meant to put a limit on physical exertion or the distance a person may walk on Shabbat. A person who lives in a house in yenessvelt which is located on a small plot of land with a fence around it, is restricted to a distance of about a kilometer outside his fence. Another person who lives in a big city can walk from one end to the other - from Gilo to Ramot and back again (or Washington Heights to the Bowery) - miles and miles - and not have a problem of T'CHUM at all. And even the first guy with the house near no others can walk around and around his property all Shabbat long. As long as he does not go outside his T'CHUM, he's okay. (Not really, because he has to figure out why he spends all Shabbat walking in circles around his house.) The topics of T'CHUM and EIRUV are complex. This only touched on a few points.

**SH'VII SEVENTH ALIYA**  
**16 P'SUKIM - 17:1-16**

[P> 17:1 (7)] The People journey to Refidim and again complain about the lack of water. (It is not the complaint itself that "angers" G-d - it is the apparent lack of faith and the doubt in the value of the Exodus that casts a negative light on the People.) In response, G-d tells Moshe to gather the Elders and People and strike a rock in their presence with his miraculous staff. The result is water for the People.

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[P> 17:8 (6)] The final nine p'sukim, which is also the Torah reading of Purim morning, tell of Amalek's attack on the fledgling nation of Israel. It is the archtypical fight against those who would seek to destroy us. This battle repeats itself differently throughout Jewish History.

[P> 17:14 (3)] G-d tells Moshe to write down and tell Yehoshua that I (G-d) will wipe out the memory of Amalek... This is not just Israel's battle, but G-d's as well.

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## HAFTARA 52 P'SUKIM

### SHO-F'TIM 4:4-5:31

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In the time of the Judges, Bnei Yisrael found themselves cruelly oppressed. In

the sedra it was Par'o; in the haftara it is Yavin and his general, Sisra. Devorah enlists Barak to lead an army against them. With the success of the battle, Devorah sang a song of praise and thanks to G-d, similar in nature to that of Moshe and Bnei Yisrael in the parsha. So too, the People's faith in G-d had similar "ups and downs" to those in the sedra. Devorah was key to restoring a high level of faith in G-d among the People and in leading the People to great victories.

S'faradim read just the Song of Devora as the haftara of B'shalach. Ashkena-zim start earlier and include in the reading the story of Sisra's temporary escape from Barak and his army, only to find his demise at the hand (and tent peg) of Yael, wife of Chever HaKeini. ■



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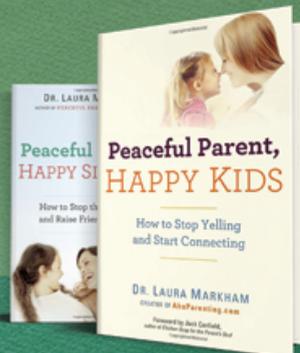
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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

## An Ounce of Prevention

I couldn't believe it. One of my trusted old reference books failed me for the first time.

You see, I am an old-fashioned guy and I still use books for reference rather than resorting to the electronic high-tech alternatives. Therefore, on the shelf next to my writing desk, I have three reliable works: *Webster's College Dictionary*, *Roget's Thesaurus*, and *Bartlett's Book of Familiar Quotations*. It was the latter that disappointed me as I prepared to write this week's *Person in the Parsha*.

This week's Torah portion is *Beshalach* (*Exodus* 13:17-17:16). It contains the following verse: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His eyes... I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee." (*Exodus* 15:26)

That is how Rabbi J. H. Hertz, late chief Rabbi of the British Empire, phrases it in the translation which accompanies his excellent commentary to the Pentateuch. However, Rashi's commentary suggests a

different translation.

This is what Rashi says: "Simply put, I am the Lord your physician, who teaches you Torah and *mitzvot* so that you will be spared illness, much as a physician would instruct his patient not to eat certain things because they may lead to his getting sick..." Thus, For Rashi, the more accurate translation of the end of our first is not "I am the Lord that healeth thee..." But rather, "I am the Lord thy physician."

At this point, you must be asking yourself, "What's the big deal? Is there any difference between "I heal you" and "I am your doctor"?"

Rashi would respond, "Yes, there is a great difference between the two. 'I heal you' means that you are sick and I make you better, whereas 'I am your doctor' means that I have the ability to prevent you from getting sick in the first place."

For Rashi, this is fundamental. The Almighty has the power to prescribe for us a lifestyle that will protect us from illness; from spiritual illness certainly, but arguably from physical suffering as well.

Rashi, of course, never knew the great physician who was Maimonides. But Rashi's conception of a good physician as

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one who does not merely heal the sick, but who counsels those who are well about how to avoid disease, is identical to Maimonides' definition of a good doctor.

## My memory told me that this was another wise saying of crafty old Benjamin Franklin

Maimonides was the court physician for the Sultan Saladin in medieval Egypt. The Sultan was never ill and once called Maimonides on the carpet, as it were, and demanded of him proof that he was a good doctor. "I am never ill," said Saladin, "so how am I to know whether you in fact deserve the reputation that you have for being a great physician?"

Reportedly, Maimonides answered: "The greatest of all physicians is the Lord, of Whom it is said 'I am the Lord thy physician'. As proof of this, it is written 'I will not place upon you the illnesses which I have placed upon ancient Egypt'. Who is truly the good doctor? Not the person who heals the sick from their diseases, but rather the one who helps

the person from becoming sick and sees to it that he maintains his health."

As Maimonides writes in one of his medical works, *Essay on Human Conduct*, "Most of the illnesses which befall man are his own fault, resulting from his ignorance of how to preserve his health – like a blind man who stumbles and hurts himself and even injures others in the process due to not having of a sense of vision."

As I was contemplating the merits of the translation suggested by both Rashi and Maimonides, I couldn't help but think of the old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." My memory told me that this was another wise saying of crafty old Benjamin Franklin. But these days, I have grown increasingly distrustful of my memory and so decided to confirm the origin of those words.

Here is where the reference books with which I opened this column came into play. I reached for my trusty and well-worn *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. I searched under "prevention," "cure," and even "ounce," but to no avail. Then I looked up "Franklin, Benjamin," and found all sorts of words of wisdom but nothing about "an ounce of prevention."

Google was my next resort. And there I indeed confirmed that it was Benjamin Franklin who echoed an important Jewish teaching when he said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

But there is more to be learned from the verse in this week's Torah portion

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which we have been pondering: That the Almighty describes Himself as a healer or physician is more than just a lesson in the importance of living the kind of life that avoids the very real physical suffering that is often the consequence of an immoral life.

The metaphor of “physician” also makes a strong statement about the nature of the relationship between the Almighty and us, his “patients.”

If the verse would read, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord... for I am the Lord thy Master,” that would suggest that He demands our obedience in order to assert His own authority. But by urging us to “hearken to His voice” because He is “our physician,” we gain an entirely different view of why we should be obedient. As Malbim, a 19<sup>th</sup> century rabbinic commentator, puts it, “A physician, like a master, demands obedience, but only for the purpose of securing the patient’s welfare.” Thus, the divine commandments are to be seen as being for our own benefit, for our own ultimate well-being.

The image of a divine healer is one of the special gems to be found in *Parshat Beshalach*, which is a rich treasury of such images. How helpful it is for the Jew to experience a life of Torah and *mitzvot* as a gift given to him by a divine being who is concerned with his benefit, and how meaningful it is to know that the observant life is designed to avoid every manner of illness and to promote spiritual health and material wellness. ■

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# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
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Dedicated by Dr. Robert  
Sreter DDS., M.S.

## Crossing the Sea

Our parsha begins with an apparently simple proposition:

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the land of the Philistines, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt prepared for battle. (Ex. 13:17-18)

God did not lead the people to the Promised Land by the coastal route, which would have been more direct. The reason given is that it was such an important highway, it constituted the main path from which Egypt might be attacked by forces from the north-west such as the Hittite army. The Egyptians established a series of forts along the way, which the Israelites would have found impregnable.

However, if we delve deeper, this decision raises a number of questions. First: we see that the alternative route they took was potentially even more traumatic. God led them around by the desert road towards the Red Sea. The result, as we soon discover, is that the Israelites, when they saw the Egyptian chariots pursuing them in the distance, had nowhere to go. They were terrified. They were not spared the fear of war. Hence the first question: why the Red Sea? On the face of it, it was the worst of all possible routes.

Secondly, if God did not want the Israelites to face war, and if He believed it would lead the people to want to return to Egypt, why did the Israelites leave *chamushim*, “armed” or “ready for battle”?

Third: *if God did not want the Israelites to face war, why did He provoke Pharaoh into pursuing them?* The text says so explicitly. “And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for Myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” (Ex. 14:4). Three times in this one chapter we are told that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 14:4, 8, 17).

The Torah explains this motivation of “I will gain glory for Myself.” The defeat of the Egyptian army at the Sea would become an eternal reminder of God’s power. “The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.”

Egypt may come to realise that there is a force more powerful than chariots, armies and military might. But the opening of our parsha suggested that God was primarily concerned with the Israelites' feelings – not with His glory or the Egyptians' belief. If God wanted the Israelites not to see war, as the opening verse states, why did He orchestrate that they witnessed this attack at the Sea?

Fourth: God did not want the Israelites to have reason to say, "Let us return to Egypt." However, at the Red Sea, they *did* tell Moses something very close to this:

"Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Ex. 14:11-12)

Fifth: God clearly wanted the Israelites to develop the self-confidence that would give them the strength to fight the battles they would have to fight in order to conquer the Holy Land. Why then did He bring about a state of affairs at the Sea where they had to do exactly the opposite, leaving everything to God:

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." (Ex.14:13-14)

The miracle that followed has so

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engraved itself on Jewish minds that we recite the Song at the Sea in our daily Morning Service. The division of the Sea was, in its way, the greatest of all the miracles. But it did not contribute to Jewish self-confidence and self-reliance. *The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.* The Egyptians were defeated not by the Israelites but by God, and not by conventional warfare but by a miracle. How then did the encounter teach the Israelites courage?

Sixth: The parsha ends with another battle, against the Amalekites. But this time, *there is no complaint on the part of the people*, no fear, no trauma, no despair. Joshua leads the people in battle. Moses, supported by Aaron and Hur, stands on a hilltop, his arms upraised, and as the people look up to Heaven, they are inspired, strengthened, and they prevail.

*Where then was the fear spoken of in the opening verse of the parsha?* Faced by the Amalekites, in some ways more fearsome than the Egyptians, the Israelites did not say they wanted to return to Egypt. The sheer silence on the part of the people stands in the strongest possible contrast to their previous complaints about water and food. The Israelites turn out to be good warriors.

*So why the sudden change between the opening of our parsha and its close?* In the opening, God is protective and miracle-working. At the close, God is more concealed. He does not fight the battle against the Amalekites; He gives the Israelites the strength to do so themselves.

In the opening, the Israelites, faced by the Egyptians, panic and say that they should never have left Egypt. By the close, faced by the Amalekites, they fight and win.

What had changed?

The answer, it seems to me, is that we have perhaps the first recorded instance of what later became a key military strategy. In one of the more famous examples, Julius Caesar ordered his army to cross the Rubicon in the course of his attempt to seize power. Such an act was strictly forbidden in Roman law. He and the army had to win, or they would be executed. Hence the phrase, “to cross the Rubicon.”

In 1519, Cortes (the Spanish commander engaged in the conquest of Mexico) burned the ships that had carried his men. His soldiers now had no possibility of escape. They had to win or die. Hence the phrase, “burning your boats.”

What these tactics have in common is the idea that sometimes you have to arrange that there is no way back, no line of retreat, no possibility of fear-induced escape. It is a radical strategy, undertaken when the stakes are high and when exceptional reserves of courage are necessary. That is the logic of the events in this week’s parsha that are otherwise hard to understand.

Before they crossed the Red Sea, the Israelites were fearful. But once they had crossed the Sea, there was no way back.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *This explanation does not work for the Midrashic view that the Israelites emerged from the sea on the same bank as they had entered. But this is, as far as I can tell, a minority view.*

To be sure, they still complained about water and food. But their ability to fight and defeat the Amalekites showed how profoundly they had changed. They had crossed the Rubicon. Their boats were burned. They looked only forwards, for there was no return.

Rashbam makes a remarkable comment, connecting Jacob's wrestling match with the angel to the episode in which Moses, returning to Egypt, is attacked by God (Ex. 4:24) and also linking this to Jonah on the stormy ship.<sup>2</sup> All three, he says, were overcome by fear at the danger or difficulty that confronted them, and each wanted to escape. Jacob's angel, Moses' encounter and the tempest that threatened to sink Jonah's ship, were all ways in which Heaven cut off the line of retreat.

Any great undertaking comes with fear. Often we fear failure. Sometimes we even fear success. Are we worthy of it? Can we sustain it? We long for the security of the familiar, the life we have known. We are afraid of the unknown, the uncharted territory. And the journey itself exposes our vulnerability. We have left home; we have not yet reached our destination. Rashbam was telling us that if we have these feelings we should not feel ashamed. Even the greatest people have felt fear.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rashbam, *Commentary to Gen. 32:21-29*.

Courage is not fearlessness. It is, in the words of a well-known book title, feeling the fear but doing it anyway.

Sometimes the only way to do this is to know that there is no way back. Franz Kafka in one of his aphorisms wrote, "Beyond a certain point there is no return. This point has to be reached."<sup>3</sup> That is what crossing the Red Sea was for the Israelites, and why it was essential that they experienced it at an early stage in their journey. It marked the point of no return; the line of no retreat; the critical point at which they could only move forward.

I believe that some of the greatest positive changes in our lives come when, having undertaken a challenge, we cross our own Red Sea and know that there is no way back. There is only a way forward.

Then God gives us the strength to fight our battles and win.

Shabbat Shalom ■

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*These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks are part of the 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org).*

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<sup>3</sup> Kafka, *Notebooks*, 16.



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## PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

## THE PROPHETS

Chapters 4 and 5 of Sefer Shoftim, from which this week's haftarah is taken, tell the story of Israel's struggle against the northern Canaanite tribes who oppressed Israel for twenty years. The parallels of this story to the events depicted in the parasha are numerous and convincing. Our Rabbis point out (Pesachim 118b) that the victory over the Canaanites actually mirrored, the victory over the Egyptians. As the Egyptians drowned in the waters of Yam Suf, so were the Canaanites swept away by the waters of Nachal Kishon. While the chariots of Egypt were mired in the muck of the sea bed so were the Canaanite chariots stuck in the mud of the overflowing river. And just as the Egyptians lost 600 iron chariots in the Reed Sea so the Canaanites lost 900 chariots at Har Tavor. In reaction to this miraculous and unexpected victory Moshe Rabbeinu led Israel in song and in the same way Devora the neviah led Israel in song after their miraculous and unexpected victory.

And although the parallels to, and the contrasts between, the stories are the clear reasons why this haftarah was selected to be read on Shabbat Shira, it also allows us to shed light on a most remarkable personality that is too often ignored, that of Devorah HaN'viah. When

looking back on Sefer Shoftim we realize the uniqueness of the prophethess.

She was the only female leader of B'nai Yisrael in all of Sefer Shoftim.

She was the only prophet(ess) among the shoftim.

She is the only neviah in all of Sefer Shoftim and, in fact, the only one we find during that entire historical period of over 300 years.

She is the only shofet(et) who was recognized as a leader BEFORE achieving any military victory and, therefore, had been recognized by the people for her outstanding prophetic and leadership qualities and not her military prowess. In fact, she was not chosen due to any miraculous birth-as was Shimshon, nor by an angel-as was Gidon, nor by a request from the nation's leaders-as was Yiftach. Her leadership was seemingly reached simply through popular acceptance.

She was the only woman who played an active role in a military effort, as her general Barak ben Avinoam refused to go to war-despite having heard the G-d's command from Devora-unless Devora accompanied him.

Yet her uniqueness might be best seen in her accomplishments as a shofetet. The function of a "shofet" was to bring unity

to the disparate tribes; to underscore their nationhood rather than their tribal identity. As part of that function, the shofet would have to highlight the fact they all the tribes were committed to the service of the one Hashem Who guides them, protects them and brings them victory over their enemies when they remain faithful to Him. Few shoftim were even partially successful in meeting that challenge. Gidon, who at first even questioned G-d's commitment to the nation, succeeded in gathering men from the tribes of Asher, Naftali, Zevulun and Menasheh to join his army. But after the battle he destroyed the cities of Succot and Penuel, dividing the people once again. Yiftach failed to gather other tribes into his army and, as a result, was opposed by the men of Ephraim against whom he was forced to fight in a "mini" civil war. And Shimshon never raised an army at all-neither from his shevet of Dan or any other tribe. His lifestyle was anything but "G-dly" and, one might argue, that he failed to meet any of the challenges that faced the shofet/leader during that time.

Not so Devora. Devora succeeded in building an army from various tribes and denouncing (in her victory celebration) those tribes who did not respond to her call. Following the victory, she composes and sings a song of praise to Hashem, teaching the populous that the victory did not belong to her or to her general Barak-but to Hashem only.

Indeed, she was the leader who was most close to achieving the goal of uniting the nation under G-d. The failure in doing

so was not hers but was that of the people themselves. We do ourselves a disservice when we simply read through this story without delving into the prophets' accomplishments.

How fortunate we are to read this lengthy selection on Shabbat and to pause to appreciate the remarkable woman who led Israel at this crucial time. ■




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# A Watered Down Complaint

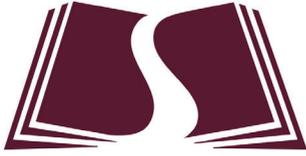
**T**owards the end of the parsha, once again Bnei Yisrael protest a lack of water. The Torah prefaces the nation's complaint by laying out the facts: "ואין מים לשתות העם" (Shemos 17:1). That statement is generally interpreted to mean that there was no water for the people to drink. Yet, if we take a closer look at that phrase, it is actually quite peculiar. Translated literally, it reads "there was no water to drink the people." Why is it stated in that manner?

The Ksav V'kabbalah suggests that there was in fact water, and it would have been sufficient if it was rationed appropriately among the people. What the nation feared was the fact that they were running low on water and could not consume an abundance of water and they were concerned about having an adequate water supply in the future. That is why the Torah does not use the phrase לעם לשתות - because there was water, just not enough for the amount they wanted to drink. This idea can help us with understanding

and answering a few other questions relating to our story.

**First**, when the people complain to Moshe they state "תנו לנו מים" – using the plural "tnu" rather than the singular form of "ten". **Second**, Moshe's response is why are you testing Hashem. How did Moshe arrive at that conclusion? All they asked for was water – not a rebellious word against Hashem. **Third**, when Moshe turns to Hashem, he does not specifically request water, rather he asks what to do with the nation. He expresses fear that they will soon stone him. Why does Moshe not relay the nation's request for water? Why did Moshe jump to the conclusion that they may stone him? **Fourth**, why did Hashem respond with a whole production and perform a great miracle by causing the rock to spurt water after being hit with Moshe's staff?

Rabbi Avishai David in his sefer Shai L'avi provides an answer to all the questions above. One of Moshe's greatest characteristics is that he was able to understand the root of Bnei Yisrael's complaint. Knowing that there was adequate water (as the Kesav V'kabbala suggests), the root of the protest must have stemmed from something else. By phrasing the question in the plural "tnu", Moshe understood that the complaint



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was not just against him but also against Hashem. That is why he asked why they are testing Hashem. Moshe did not bother to ask Hashem for water, since he knew this was not the main concern of the people. What troubled the nation was their lack of Emunah. They recently left Mitzrayim and were still uncertain as to whether Hashem will remain with them throughout their journey through the desert. As they were running low on water this fear heightened. Moshe turned to Hashem for advice on how to strengthen their Emunah (belief) in Hashem. The result was Hashem creating a spectacle using the same staff with which Moshe performed miracles in Mitzrayim, to illustrate that just as Hashem was with them in Mitzrayim, he will continue to protect the nation in the future as well.

At the end of the parsha the Torah names the location of this event as Mei Meriva – the place where Bnei Yisrael questioned Hashem’s presence - Hayesh Hashem B’kirbenu Im Ayin.” That was their true concern.

A great leader has to be attuned to

the people. He has to be able to read between the lines and decipher the underlying concerns of the people. Often what is expressed is not the root cause of an issue, but only a derivative. One of Moshe’s greatest attributes was his ability to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the nation.

The story is told that a woman came to the Bais Halevi before Pesach, asking if she can use milk for the 4 kosos. The Bais Halevi quickly told his gabbai to give the woman money for the entire chag, since she obviously has nothing. “But she just asked a simple question? Why the need for tzedakah?” asked the gabbai? The Bais Halevi explained: “If she wants to use milk, she obviously has no wine or meat, and thus is in need of everything.”

As an active member of the community, and as a parent, we should always be attuned to the fears and concerns of others and of our children so that we can properly mitigate and deal with the real issues and create a healthier and more peaceful environment. ■

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# Bringing Inspiration to Life

One of the most exhilarating moments in Jewish history was Am Yisrael's pronouncement, 'zeh keli v'anvehu', at the Splitting of the Sea. 'Zeh' connotes pointing to the reality of Hashem, to His clear and tangible Presence. What is the appropriate response to such a high spiritual vision? What are we to do when we experience a spiritual inspiration? Further, is there a way to create such levels of inspiration in our daily lives?

Rabbi Chayim Freidlander in *Siftei Chayim* notes that when one has such a clear spiritual revelation, one must

do something practical to concretize this newfound awareness. As such, it was imperative that *Klal Yisrael* added 'vanvehu'- and I will glorify Him. *Chazal* learn two important lessons here. Firstly, to beautify our mitzvot, to buy a beautiful lulav, decorate a beautiful sukkah, etc. Secondly, to try and emulate Hashem. 'Vanvehu' can be read as two words: 'ani vehu', I and Him. We are charged to act in a G-d-like way with mercy and compassion. A spiritual "high" can easily dissipate if it is not expressed in the world of action.

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in *Kedushat Levi* likens an inspiration to a flame that needs a candle to sustain it. He therefore suggests that one immediately do some mitzvah upon being uplifted to give the feeling an 'everlasting body', thereby create eternity.

Having said this, the word 'vanvehu'

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itself holds the secret to feel continually inspired. When one spends time and money to search for the most beautiful religious object, it engenders a sense of joy and exhilaration each time the item is used. Our Shabbos, for example is transformed with beautiful candlesticks, kiddush cups, and challah boards. When we take pause and admire these items, we allow the mitzvah to be infused with this special feeling again and again.

## When we show compassion to another, we are living a heightened spiritual reality

Rav Wolbe in *Alei Shur* emphasizes that beautifying a mitzvah includes mitzvot between man and his fellow as well. When one sends a gift or a meal, it should be wrapped in a beautiful way. Our lives should reflect consciousness of beauty and inspiration.

Finally, 'vanvehu' as emulating Hashem also holds the secret of continuous inspiration. We often imagine a spiritual person as one who is wrapped in a tallis, meditating. Rav Ahron Kotler, in *Mishnat Rav Ahron* dispels this notion. Each time we emulate one of Hashem's *middot*, when we go out of our way to converse with someone who is lonely, when we show compassion to another, we are living a heightened spiritual reality. It becomes our challenge to take these special moments and allow ourselves to connect emotionally, thereby generating ongoing inspiration. ■

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## Tree of Life

**R**ebbe Yosef Yitzchok, the Freidiker (“Previous”) Rebbe of Lubavitch was on a leisurely walk through the forest with his father, Rebbe Shalom Dov Ber zy’a, when Reb Yosef Yitzchok absentmindedly plucked a leaf off a tree as they passed by it on the trail.

Surprised, the father turned to his son and admonished him for his seemingly harmless action: “The leaf you tore from its branch was created by the Ribbono Shel Olam for a specific purpose! It is alive, its physical structure is akin to a body, it’s imbued with a Divine life-force, it’s guided by *Hashgacha Pratis* (Divine providence). Every blade of grass, every leaf on every tree is invested with G-d’s own vitality, created intentionally, each with a Divine spark, part of a ‘soul’ that has descended to

earth to find its correction and fulfillment. How can you be so callous towards a creation of G-d?”

~

The Ba’al Shem Tov taught: the all-encompassing Oneness of G-d is the fundamental reality underlying all Creation; everything is an expression of singular, Divine whole, the *Ein Sof*, the Infinite. Therefore, coming into contact with even one part, one element of Creation, is connecting to the entirety. Far beyond the Transcendentalist thinkers and writers of the 19th Century (lehavdil), the Holy Baal Shem Tov vividly perceived the interconnectedness of Creation with a supernal ecosystem, where all things share the same root and all pulsate with the same Divine heartbeat. All of Creation is branches of one tree.

Torah itself is called “*Eitz Chayim*, a Tree of Life for all those who grab onto it.”(Mishlei 3) When we grab hold of a single leaf at the very edge of the tree, a small twig, flower or fruit, we are “*ocheiz b’kulah*”, holding on to the entire tree

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as well, connected to the whole of Truth and Wisdom. (*Baal Shem Tov al haTorah*, Nasso)

In the same way that the Rebbe, Reb Sholom Dov Ber was sensitive to every blade of grass, every flower petal, so do we need to cherish every word of Torah learnt, every letter, every mitzvah. Connecting with just one idea or verse of Torah, uttering a single word of prayer, we are bound to the entirety of the infinite universe of Jewish experience and knowledge.

Part of the Torah is the whole of Torah; every detail is equally connected to the Source and the same Divine current flows through every *nekudah*, and every authentic commentary and *chidush* throughout time.

This Shabbos is called *Shabbos Shirah*, honoring the Song of the Sea at *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds. In the midst of *Az Yashir*, the song of praise celebrating the Exodus from Egypt, Moshe has a vision of the End of Days: *T'vi'emo v'sitaeimo b'har nachalasecha*, "Bring us to and implant us upon the mount of Your inheritance..." He envisions us 'planted' on *Har HaBayit*, flourishing with Temple consciousness, rooted in the headquarters of Divine space, time and awareness, drawing from the infinite Source of All Life. So may it be!

*Tu b'Shvat sameach*, a meaningful and sweet New Year for the Trees to you and to all of us who strive to cling to any and every part of it! ■

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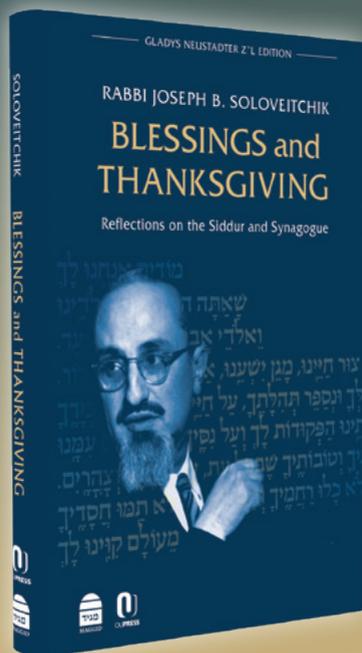
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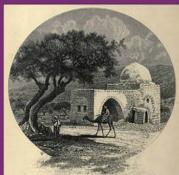
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**Feb 9th • ט"ז שבט • ז"ך שבת**

9:00am

Rabbi David Walk • T'HILIM

10:00am • L'AYLA

Mrs. Sylvie Schatz

Tomer Devorah

Applied to Modern Times

10:15am

Rabbi Aharon Adler

Haftara of the Week

11:15pm

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Wisdom for Life - Mishlei

12:00pm Rabbi Chaim Eisen

KUZARI

2:00pm

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

SHIRAT HAYAM - Our National Anthem

7:30pm

TU BiSHVAT SEDER

By reservations only

8:00pm

Rabbi Mordechai Machlis

The Book of Shmuel

**VIDEO - Monday, Feb 10th**

**2:00pm - 1¼ hrs total**

**Search for the Real Mt. Sinai (2003)**

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## MONDAY • יום ב'

**Feb 10th • ט"ז בשבט • ט"ו שבת**

9:15am

Mrs. Pearl Borow

The Book(let) of Mal-achi

9:30am & 10:30

Mommy & Me with Jackie

10:30am

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider  
Chassidut & Spirituality in the Parsha

11:30am

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler  
Halacha & Reason

11:30am • 050-415-3239

Get Fit While You Sit  
Exercise with Sura Faecher

1:45pm Mrs. Pearl Borow

Women in Tanach

2:00pm VIDEO see Sun col.

2:45pm Rabbi Zev Leff  
resumes in March

2:45pm Phil Chernofsky

Mishna, Mitzvot & more  
2:45 until Rabbi Leff's return

3:00pm

Music for Children with Jackie

5:20pm Pri Chadash

Writing Workshop for Women

Judy Caspi 054-569-0410

Ruth Fogelman (02) 628-7359

6:30pm **New Course:**

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**TUESDAY • יום ג'****Feb 11th • ט"ז שבט**

9:00am

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz  
Minchat Chinuch

9:15am

Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Torah Tapestries

10:30am

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin  
Parshat HaShavua

11:30am

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler  
**Contemporary Halacha Topics**

11:30am

Shprintzee Rappaport

11:30pm - Women's T'hilim

12:15pm

Rabbi Neil Winkler  
history is HIS STORY1:45pm Dr. Deborah Polster  
**DA MA L'HASHIV -  
Diplomacy of World War 1**

3:00pm Verna's Knitting Club

7:30pm Parshat HaShavua  
Dr. Avivah Gottlieb-Zornberg**VIDEO - Tuesday, Feb 11th  
2:00pm • 1½ hrs**

**Israel Philharmonic  
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**WEDNESDAY • יום ד'****Feb 5th & 12th****YOM IYUN in Jewish Thought**

9:15am

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel  
Medina & Halacha

10:15am

Rabbi Anthony Manning  
Contemporary Issues  
in Halacha & Hashkafa11:30am Rabbi Alan Kimche  
**Derech HaShem**

12:40pm until Mincha

Rabbi Sam Shor  
Modern Masters

2:00pm

Mrs. Pearl Borow  
**The transmission of Torah  
via Pirkei Avot  
Chumash with Meforshim**

2:00pm VIDEO see below

7:00pm Rabbi Yonatan Kolatch  
Topics in Parshanut7:00pm Rabbi Chaim Eisen  
Meaning & Mission of  
the Chosen People

Feb 12th - 7:45pm

Judge Dan Butler  
see flyer/ad elsewhere**THURSDAY • יום ה'****Feb 6th & 13th**Feb 6 - 9:00am Rabbi Ari Kahn  
Parshat HaShavua

9:00am

Dr. Avivah Gottlieb-Zornberg  
Parshat HaShavua

10:10am

Rabbi Baruch Taub -Thursday  
the Rabbi Gave His Drasha

11:30am

Rabbi Shai Finkelstein  
Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

12:00pm

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler  
**Book of Melachim**

2:00pm

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher  
Current Events in the Sedra & Haftara  
*Thank you Yehuda Lave for your support*8:00pm Rabbi Avrum Kowalsky  
Feb 6 NO. Feb 13 w/Divrei HaYa**UPCOMING**

**Tue Feb 18th - 8:00pm  
Surging  
Anti-Semitism  
Is the Party Over?  
Dr. David Luchins**

**VIDEO - Wednesday, Feb 12 2:00pm • 1¼ hrs, total**

**DOUBLE FEATURE - The Bielski Brothers** (1994) - Documentary on  
three heroes. After Nazis murdered their parents, the brothers took to the  
forest - built village to protect Jews; fought Germans, armed  
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destroyed railroad lines; blew up bridges. Saved 1200+ Jews, largest  
rescue of Jews by Jews. Interviews with survivors including one of the  
brothers and children of the other brothers along with dramatic film.  
**The Hunt for Nazis and Odessa** (1997) - Superb documentary on  
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"underground railroad", Catholic Church and CIA helping Nazis, Simon  
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**WHO:** Girls aged 9-12 and their mothers

**TIME:** 7:00pm

**PRICE:** 40NIS per mother-daughter pair

**Locations:**

- ◆ **Bet Shemesh** - Location TBD - Mtzsh. Feb. 8 - Chani Newman
- ◆ **Efrat** - 25/2 Haomer (Dagan) - Sun. Feb 9 - Cindy Wiesel
- ◆ **Yad Binyamin** - Bet Knesset Mercazi - Mtzsh Feb 8 - Adina Ellis
- ◆ **Yerushalayim** - OU Israel Center - Sun. Feb 9 - Zemira Ozarowski

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**Wednesday - Yimei Iyun in Jewish Thought**

**BEGINS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH**



**9:00- 9:15AM** - Registration

**9:15 AM- 10 AM**  
Medina & Halacha with  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

**11:30 AM- 12:30 PM**  
Derech Hashem with  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**



**10:15 AM- 11:15 AM**  
Contemporary Issues in  
Halacha & Hashkafa with  
**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**12:40 PM- 1:20 PM**  
Modern Masters with  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**  
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## Tevilat Keilim for Large Utensils

A large vessel that does not fit in a standard size *Mikvah* and/or would require much effort to *Tovel* (immerse) due to its weight or size may not require immersion, as will be explained below.

The *Mordechai* (*Beitza* 677) is one of the first sources to discuss a situation where a utensil cannot be immersed. The *Mordechai* rules that if someone forgot to immerse his utensils and only realizes on Shabbat or Yom-Tov when immersion is prohibited (see *Beit Yosef/ Shulchan Aruch, Or Hachaim* 323:7) he may give the utensil to a non-Jew as a present and then borrow it from him in order to use the utensil on Shabbat. Since only utensils belonging to a Jew require immersion, this solution exempts the utensil from immersion. The *Beit Yosef* adds that the *Mordechai*'s suggestion is also applicable on a weekday when someone does not have access to a *Mikvah* for a number of days. The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 120:16) cites the *Mordechai*'s ruling regarding Shabbat.

The *Rema* (Ibid) adds the option of such a case on a weekday as well.

The *Taz* (YD120:18) states that this solution is time limited. He explains that if the utensil were to remain borrowed for a long period of time the utensil would no longer be considered “borrowed”. Rather, it is as if the non-Jew deposited the utensil with the Jew and the utensil would then require immersion. The *Pitchei Teshuvah* (YD 120:15) relays a response written by the *Rashbash* (468) who questions the “loophole” cited by the *Shulchan Aruch*. The *Rashbash* felt that the loan between the Jew and non-Jew is not binding since in fact the non-Jew is really returning the utensil to the Jew and has no intention of reclaiming his loan.

The *Ben Ish Chai* (Vol 2, *Matot* 11) and *Shulchan Gavoa* (Vol 2, OH 451:7) felt that the *Shulchan Aruch*'s ruling can be used in a situation where a utensil is so large or heavy that immersion is very difficult. According to their ruling, the Jew could give the non-Jew a large utensil as a gift and then loan it to him forever.

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This topic is very relevant to OU kashrut supervision especially in factories with large metal cooking equipment. The same applies to wineries who store the wine in large metal silos during fermentation. Even if the silos could be transported, extreme effort is required to immerse such vessels, a process which could also be quite costly.

Another way to address this issue is to sell a part of the large utensil to a non-Jew. The *Rema* (YD 120:11) and *Shach* (YD 120:26) rule based on the *Issur V'heter* (58:91) that if a Jew and non-Jew had purchased a utensil together, immersion is not required. The *Shach* (Ibid) explained that the basis for this is that immersion is only required when the entire utensil is owned by a Jew.

Much responsa has been written regarding the immersion of large utensils. OU policy (based on the ruling of Rav Yisroel Belsky) has always been to sell a part of the large utensil to a non-Jew, rather than to rely on the opinion of giving the utensil as a gift to a non-

Jew and then borrowing from him for an extended period of time. ■

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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

There is a beautiful teaching in the *Netivot Shalom*, the collection of Chassidic discourses on the Torah and Holidays, written by the 20th Century sage Rabbi Shalom Noach Brazovsky, the Slonimer Rebbe. The particular piece is a commentary on the events of the seventh day of *Pesach*, when we commemorate the miracle of *Kriat Yam Suf*, the parting of the Sea of Reeds, which of course is recalled in our *sedra*, *Parshat Beshalach*.

As the Torah recounts this last great supernatural event of the Exodus narrative, we are told that Moshe leads the Jewish people in song, expressing gratitude and praise to G-d for this and each of the miraculous events in our departure from Egypt. The Song of the Sea is a pivotal event in Jewish history that we recall each morning by reciting the entire collection of verses which make up this great song.

The Slonimer Rebbe comments on the verse: *“Uvnei Yisrael halchu bayabasha b'toch haYam”*- *“And the Jewish People walked on dry land within the Sea...”* The simple interpretation of this verse is that as the Jewish People traversed the Sea of Reeds, a miracle occurred allowing the sea to part and literally the Jewish people walked on dry land. There are several rabbinic teachings in both the

Midrash and the Talmud that depict the scene as the sea actually parting into twelve sections, and each tribe walking on its own path amid the waters. But the Slonimer Rebbe cites an earlier Chasidic Master, Rabbi Elimelech of Lijensk, who offered this interpretation of this verse in his epic work, *Noam Elimelech*:

*“The verse speaks of the idea that ‘...the children of Israel walked on dry land amidst the sea.’ that is that G-d gifted them with such revelation that even after they had passed through the sea, and were now on dry land, their faith and ability to experience G-d’s presence, was exactly as they felt while in the midst of the sea, in the midst of the miracle.*

*... Nachmanides taught that we know that from experiencing the many wondrous revealed miracles a person comes to recognize also the many less obvious, subtle miraculous everyday events that form the foundation of the entire Torah... The highest form of faith is the awareness that Israel achieved after our departure from slavery and the parting of the Sea of Reeds, that is the faith that every aspect of our lives is miraculous, and that nothing is random and occurring simply of this world...”*

The parting of the Sea of Reeds left such an indelible mark on the Jewish conscience, that even after the Jewish

People had traversed the Sea and had seen the cessation of this supernatural event, they were acutely aware of the presence of G-d, even in the subtle, less obvious miracles that occur each and every day.

Perhaps this is precisely why we recite this song each and every day to reinforce this profound lesson - the lesson that the miraculous events of Jewish history, the many revealed supernatural occurrences are meant to bring us to heightened consciousness allowing us to appreciate the many less obvious gifts, the hidden miracles that occur each and every day. ■



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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

## Venerable Bones

Theodore Herzl, visionary of the modern State of Israel, in his will, asked to be buried in Vienna. He added to his will, however, the request that after a Jewish State be established, his bones and those of his family be brought for burial in the State for the Jews. Upon his death in 1904 he was indeed buried in Vienna, but shortly after the establishment of the State, on the 29th of Tammuz 5709 (1949), his remains and those of his family were brought to Israel and buried on Mount Herzl.

The first to demonstrate this deed was Yosef. The narrative of retrieving Yosef's bones is presented at the opening of parshat *Beshalach* in this way: "Moshe took Yosef's bones with him, because he had made his brothers swear saying, 'God will surely remember you, you shall bring my bones from here with you'" (Shmot 13:19).

What is the significance of this fascinating episode? The following three distinct approaches seek to identify its primary message:

Before his death Yosef declares that the Israelites stay in Egypt will come to a close. He faithfully proclaims that they will return to the Land of Israel. "Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will surely remember you and bring you up out of this land **to the Land that He promised** on oath to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov" (*Bereshit* 50:24). When that day comes, I want to join my people returning to the Land of Israel. Yosef optimizes the Jew's unbreakable bond to the Land of Israel.

A striking midrash highlights his unique relationship with the Land. The Sages contrast Yosef's positive association with the Land with the failure of Moshe: when Yosef is brought from prison before Paraoth, he identified himself as a Jew from the Land of Israel. However, when Moshe meets the daughters of Yitro in Midyan he failed to identify himself as a Jew linked to the Land. "God told Moshe, 'The one who acknowledged his homeland [Yosef, who said "I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews] would be buried there...you, who did not, will not be buried in your homeland" (*Devarim Rabbah*, Ch. 2).

One final example of Yosef's exemplary passion for Eretz Yisrael is affirmed in a stunning episode reported toward

the end of the Torah. The daughters of Tzelafchad came to ask Moshe for their deceased father's portion in the Land of Israel, since their father had died without sons to inherit his portion. On tracing the lineage of the daughters of Tzelafchad, the Torah seems to provide redundant information. The pasuk traces back their lineage: "The daughters of Tzelafchad...from the family of Menashe son of Yosef (Bamidbar 27:1). Why was it necessary to emphasize the fact that they descended from Yosef? Rashi asks this question and answers that the emphasis indicates that the love for Eretz Yisrael was passed down from Yosef. This love for the Land ran in the family such that his descendants (Tzelafchad's daughter) insisted that they be given a fair portion in the Holy Land.

Yosef personified a Jew's longing for the Land. His coffin leads the nation. When the Israelites will lift their eyes to the head of the procession they will be inspired by his image leading the way. A Jew outside the Land aspires to return to Eretz Yisrael. This sentiment is beautifully expressed by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov in his well known saying, "Wherever I walk, I am walking to Eretz Yisrael."

The Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson zt"l (1902-1994) offered a markedly different approach regarding retrieving the bones of Yosef; one which fits squarely with his distinctive chassidic worldview.

The Rebbe says that to better understand the significance of Moshe

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carrying Yosef's bones, one must focus on the word for bones - 'atzamot.' The same word, according to the kabbalistic work *Megaleh Amukot*, conveys the meaning: 'core' or 'essence' (like the word 'etzem'). Hence, the phrase 'atzmot Yosef' which is usually translated as, 'Joseph's bones' can actually be understood to mean, Yosef's essence.

What was Yosef's essence? The Rebbe suggests that we look at Yosef's name itself. The name of a person, especially in the Torah, reveals one's essential nature. What does the name 'Yosef' mean? The Torah explains that when Rachel bore Yosef - her first child after many years of childlessness - she named him Yosef, which means. 'May God add another son for me'.

ותקרא את שמו יוסף לאמר יסף ה' לי בן אחר  
(בראשית ל:כד)

Yosef's essence relates to the propensity to take 'another' or 'to add' to our people. The Rebbe suggested that this alludes to the trait and the duty of interacting with others, so that even a person who is an outcast, outside the pale of the community, is transformed and is 'added'

and integrated into the people of Israel.

When Moshe prepares the Jewish people for a long sojourn through the desert, he needed the trait of Yosef to serve as a paradigm for the nation regarding the daunting task of bringing the outsider into the fold. The Rebbe saw it a terrible tragedy that four-fifths of the Jewish people were lost in Egypt. This is something that must not happen again. (רש"י שמות יג: יח ד"ה חמשים)

The Rebbe taught that this is a fitting metaphor for the exile that many Jews live in today. We must bring the light and warmth of mitzvot to every Jew no matter how far they may have strayed. (*Likutei Sichot, Volume 26*).

A third approach is posited by Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveitchik zt"l (1903-1993). In the following penetrating insight he identifies a far reaching lesson embedded in this episode of Yosef's bones.

The Rav focused on Moshe's role in retrieving the bones. Why does the Torah emphasize his involvement in carrying out this task? He suggests that the answer is that Moshe was a grandson of Levi, Yosef's greatest antagonist. "Shimon and

*I found my shaitel macher on the*



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Levi are brothers...with their will they hamstrung a bull” (*Bereshit* 49:5-6). Levi was among the greatest scoffers as Yosef recounted his dream. It was he that was among the leaders of the other brothers to seek the demise of Yosef.

The Talmud (*Sotah 20b*) comments on the phrase: “*Moshe took Yosef’s bones with him - with him in his abode.*” Moshe both physically carried Yosef’s coffin and internalized Yosef’s legacy. Moshe acknowledged that the entire nation owed their everlasting gratitude to Yosef (*Chumash Mesoras Harav, Shemos* p.111). Yosef’s dream, as a young man of seventeen, prophesied that one day all the family would come to Egypt and acknowledge him. This had finally been fulfilled. It came to fruition at this moment when Moshe carried his coffin out of Egypt.

The dramatic account of the leader of the Jewish nation carrying the bones of Yosef serves as closure to the heart wrenching story of turmoil and divisiveness. The drama surrounding Yosef now came full circle with Moshe’s loving gesture of reconciliation; he himself will execute this responsibility. The *geula*, the redemption from Egypt rested on attaining a sense of true brotherhood.

This episode must serve as a guiding light for us today. The *geula shleimah*, the ‘future redemption’, depends on the capacity of *Klal Yisrael* to forge a path that leads to true harmony, one which achieves genuine peace within our people. ■



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Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center  
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# Freedom or Frailty?

**B**nei Yisrael just witnessed multiple plagues that destroyed Egypt. The Egyptians are in panic and the Israelites are taking spoils. Moshe is bidding the people to march forward – to a barren wilderness...

The “Pintele Yid” is confused. Yesterday he was beaten; now he’s a free man. Who, he asks, is taking us out of Egypt – Moshe or G-d? One day, his distant offspring will chant: “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and the Eternal, Our G-d, took us out from there.” But then, it was not easy to transform from a degraded slave to a servant of Hashem.

Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik observed that the slaves were a people with neither will nor freedom of action. No wonder that on Seder night we thank Hashem for both “our redemption and the liberation of our soul.”

To paraphrase the Rav, a slave is an untrustworthy person without options who lives in a constant state of fear. He lacks time-consciousness; he is incapable of establishing relationships. If so, what did the redeemed Yiddel see in the Crossing of the Sea?

On the surface, he saw a “miracle and a marvel,” a cataclysmic change in nature, whereupon, in the parlance of Rabbi Steinsaltz, “everything we know about reality is no longer valid.” How, asks the rabbi, does the “ordinary Jew” then proceed from there? – For he must eventually descend to mundane reality.

For Rabbi Steinsaltz, this transition is a major test. Later, our Jewish traveler will encounter Manna, the Amalekite defeat, quails that brought meat, a rock that sprouted water – more miracles and new spiritual heights. But these highs were not sustainable. How, then, does one shift from the Exodus to the bitter waters of Mara (and back?).

It appears that the Exodus story is our story: That is, perhaps, why we tell it as if we were being redeemed right now. Can we face the combination of miracle and routine? Are we capable of maintaining a “religious-spiritual” high? Many times, Bnei Yisrael failed that test, despite all the miracles. But what about us? Echoing Rabbi Soloveitchik, Rabbi Steinsaltz proposes that we might answer that question by best exercising our faculty of free will. ■

Shabbat Shalom!

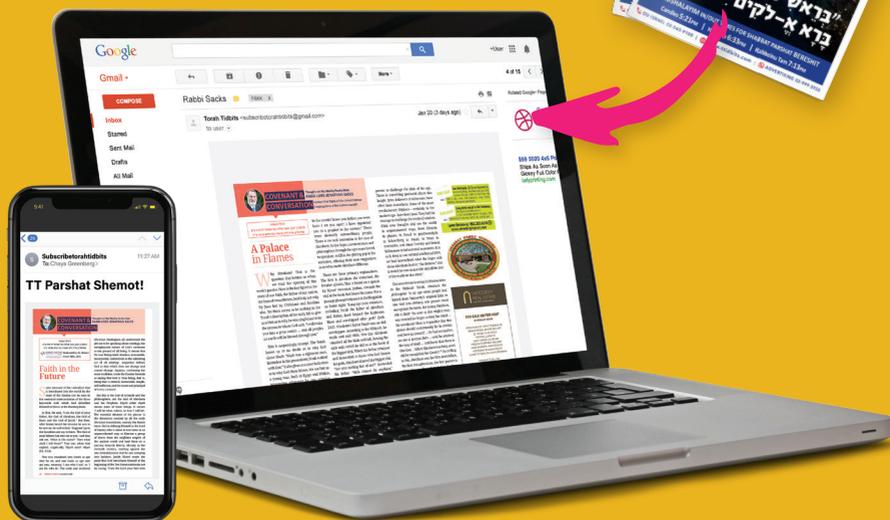
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# FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

RAV DANIEL MANN



## Definition of *Davar Gush*

**Question:** I have learned that a hot solid piece of food, such as a chunk of meat or a potato, has special *halachot* because it holds in the heat. How do we consider something like vegetable soup, which has both significant broth and solid pieces of vegetables?

**Answer:** The concept that you refer to, known as *davar gush*, has two major areas of impact. 1) When something is hot and is found in the utensil in which it was heated (*kli rishon*) it can cause transfer of taste from it to another food or utensil. This is less likely if it has been transferred to another utensil (*kli sheni*) (see opinions in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 105:2). If the hot food is a *davar gush*, then according to the Maharshal, cited in and accepted by the Shach (Yoreh Deah 105:8), we assume that it retains enough heat to be considered food in a *kli rishon*. The Rama (YD 94:7) disagrees. 2) Cooking on Shabbat takes place in a *kli rishon*, but not in a *kli sheni* (Shabbat 40b). But if the hot, *kli sheni* food is a *davar gush*, some say it is able to cook food put on top of it like a *kli rishon* does. The Mishna Berura (318:118) concludes that we treat the matter as a doubt. Some

*poskim* (including Issur V'heter 36:7) posit that a *davar gush* is only able to transfer taste but not to cook. Your question can apply to either area of Halacha, which also makes it possible to look for sources from either

The K'tav Sofer (Chulin 104b) comments on the *gemara's* search for a case in which one might come to cook meat and milk together at the table considering that one does not usually bring food in *kli rishon* utensils there. He wonders why the case is not when milk is in contact with a hot chunk of meat. He answers that if the meat is dry, there is no Torah prohibition of *basar b'chalav* with *tzli* (dry heat). If there is liquid, then the stringent status of *davar gush* would not apply for the following reason. Tosafot (Shabbat 40b) says that the reason *kli sheni* does not cook is that its cold walls lower the heat. Therefore, says the Issur V'heter (*ibid.*), since *davar gush* does not cling to the *kli's* walls, it does not become a *kli sheni*. Therefore, says the K'tav Sofer (the Minchat Solet 23:7 agrees), the liquid in a pot with a *davar gush* would be impacted by the walls and then impact the food. Therefore, the K'tav Sofer would clearly treat the soup in question as a *kli sheni*.

On the other hand, the Yad Yehuda (105:14) argues that the somewhat hot broth keeps the *davar gush* hotter than if

it is sitting alone in cool air. He therefore says that according to the Maharshal's camp, a *davar gush* in liquid in a *kli sheni* halachically remains a *davar gush*. Ostensibly then he would treat your soup as a *davar gush*. However, we will illustrate, with the help of a well-known *halacha* that the general assumption is not this way.

## *Davar gush* prevents the soup from being considered a *kli shlishi*

There is a *machloket* whether it is permitted to put bread into hot soup on Shabbat, as it is possible that cooking significantly changes the previously baked bread (see Shulchan Aruch/Rama, Orach Chayim 318:5). The Mishna Berura (ad loc. 45) permits putting bread in soup that went into a ladle and then into a bowl (in which case it might be a *kli shlishi* – see Mishna Berura 318:87). This compromise ruling is cited and accepted by many *poskim* (see Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 1:59; Orchot Shabbat 1:42). The Mishna Berura (whose language is unclear) and those who adopt his ruling do not warn us that this is not permitted if there are vegetables in the soup out of concern that *davar gush* prevents the soup from being considered a *kli shlishi*.

This can be due to the K'tav Sofer. However, the consensus on this point may be due to the following thesis. The impact that a “complex” warm food has is measured by its “average qualitative heat” rather than the highest level of any of its components. In summary, a *kli sheni* has lower level heat than a *kli rishon* and while some say a *davar gush* is an exception, that exception is applied only when the *davar gush* interacts with another food by itself (Orchot Shabbat 1:142 leans in this direction). ■

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## Fighting the Egyptians

For the past few weeks we have been reviewing the lecture delivered to doctors by Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein regarding the liability of a doctor when causing damage or a fatal casualty.

In his extremely entertaining shiurim and lectures, Rabbi Zilberstein is known for peppering the halachic discussion with stories and ethical messages mostly drawn from verses from the Tanach or from Midrashim. When discussing this subject of liability and suing the doctor, he brought a question raised by Rabbi Moshe Sofer on this week's Parsha.

The Torah writes "the Children of Israel ascended from Egypt armed"

(Shemot 13:18, and see Rashi ad loc.). If they were armed, why did they not fight the Egyptians who pursued them and caught up with the Children of Israel on the banks of the sea. Why did God have to split the sea and not simply encourage them to fight for themselves?

The Chatam Sofer explained that it was inappropriate for the Jews to fight the Egyptians since they had lived in Egypt for the past two centuries. The Torah itself instructs us "You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land" (Devarim 23:8).

This is a strange explanation since the Jewish people were subjugated by the Egyptians and suffered greatly in Egypt. Still, God instructed us to be grateful to the Egyptian people who took us in and allowed us to live in their midst for so many years.

Based on this principle, we could claim



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that it is inappropriate to sue the doctor and seek damages. The doctor treated us with dedication and commitment, and made a mistake that caused damage. In the same way that we respect the Egyptians' hospitality, despite their eventual cruelty, we should thank the doctor for his devotion and ignore the eventual unwanted and unfortunate outcome.

However, there is a distinction between the two cases; the Egyptians did house the Jewish people and so we owe them appreciation. Even though they later subjugated us, the kindness is not erased and needs to be noted. The doctor may have greeted us with a smile; however he did not heal us but caused damage. His good intentions and nice manner are appreciated but he did not fulfil his function as a doctor. A message of this week's Parsha is that we must appreciate good deeds, but we this cannot be read as an excuse for medical malpractice.

Still if the patient does have appreciation for the doctor's good intentions he is not obligated to publicize the doctor's mistake and decides not to sue him.

More on this next week. ■

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## SPECIAL FOR SHABBAT SHIRA

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*In honor of Shabbat Shira we asked one of the most successful personalities in the world of Jewish music to share a bit about his journey and the power of Jewish music on the Jewish soul. Thank you to Lenny Solomon for your guest piece in Torah Tidbits this Shabbat.*

# Shabbat Shira - The Power of Music!

I was anywhere from six to seven years old and my father took me and my younger brother next door to my Zaidy. It was Friday night and we sang niggunim. It was there that I had my first uplifting musical experience (at least that I can remember) of what music is all about. The song that we sang was Shlomo Carlebach's z"l *Eilecha*.

As I grew up, I started taking accordion lessons at the age of 8. It was there that I would plough my way through the books of Velvel Pasternack z"l. I would get the books as they came out and learnt a lot of my Israeli and Chasidic music that way.

By the time I was nine I was learning the Nussach Tefilah for Pesukei Dizimra. My shul Adas Yeshurun which was also called Kew Gardens Synagogue gave me a foundation in how to daven for the amud correctly. To this day, it saddens me when people get up on Shabbat and just "talk through the words". It is the correct melody that gives the words life. My father as a chazan taught me *chazanut* as well and I was well versed in "the basics" of Jewish Music.

In 1971, 1974 and 1975 spending summer camp in Camp Mogen Avraham and Camp Dora Golding I remember the entire dining room singing at the top of their lungs the songs of the day.

When I turned Bar Mitzvah in 1974, I received as presents some Jewish music records; the album Ruach (the red cover) with V'Alu Moshiyim, JEP and Kol Salonica. I also loved listening to the Toronto Boys Choir. Those songs shaped my life. They gave me simcha. They were one of the factors in me becoming who I was. The music of the Diaspora Yeshiva Band and the Megama Duo impacted me as well as the group Judaea. I was at the debut concert of Judaea at Brooklyn college. The music of the 1970's and 1980's were amazing. They lifted my soul and gave me simcha,

Simcha was the key. When you have simcha you can go places. If you don't it makes it much harder.

When I was thirteen, I wrote my first song. It was a niggun, a melody without words. I have never recorded it but I just might someday. Hashem has given me the power of creativity. The power to write songs both in Hebrew and in English. I have recorded over 40 albums in my career and have written over 500 songs both original and parody. As I look back on my thirty five year career I think about all the positive musical experiences that I have had: In NCSY, as the band at hundreds of Shabbatonim in the 1980's, as the musical director of the Jewish Public School Youth Organization, as the musical director of Counterpoint in Australia in 1986-87 and the Encounter program in South Africa from 1988-2005.

I have endeavored to partner music with education. Music has the ability to take the lessons learned in educational sessions and make it more impactful. I believe that music can touch every soul and change people for the better!

Music is not a luxury but a necessity and needs to go hand in hand with all learning! And so as Shabbat Shira is upon us I say – *Shiru L'Hashem*, Sing out to Hashem!

*Lenny Solomon is the leader of the group Shlock Rock as well as the Executive Director of the 4 Corners Project who's mission is to reach the Jews through music and media. Informal Jewish Education through Music. [www.4cornersproject.org](http://www.4cornersproject.org)*



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# Seder Tu BiShevat— No Dried Fruit Please!

**T***u BiShevat*, the New Year for Trees, is a day of halachic significance as far as *orlah*, *neta revay*, and *terumot* and *ma'aserot* are concerned (for instance, the transition from *ma'aser sheni* to *ma'aser ani* this year).

The 17<sup>th</sup> century kabbalists of Safed instituted a *Tu BiShevat Seder*, which involved eating fruit from the Land of Israel. The desire to eat fruit on *Tu BiShevat* that was not necessarily available in the market during the winter is why people purchased dried fruit. In addition, Jewish communities in the Diaspora who wanted to eat fruit from the Land of Israel generally needed to order dried fruit, since it took a long time for the fruit to arrive. For these two reasons, the custom developed to eat dried fruit on *Tu BiShevat*.

Today even Jews living abroad can purchase fresh fruit from Israel, which is preferable to dried fruit. The point

is to eat fruit from the Land of Israel; it's unnecessary to buy dried fruit that wasn't grown in Israel.

Even when buying fresh fruit in Israel, note that some of the fruit available in the supermarket is imported from different countries.

We recommend that for the *Tu BiShevat Seder*, one look specifically for fruit grown here in the Holy Land by Jewish farmers. Many *mitzvot* were performed with these fruit: *orlah*, *neta revay*, separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot*, and ensuring that they are not *kilei ilan* (grafted in a forbidden fashion), and if grapes, not *kilei hakerem* (grapevines planted near or above annual crops).

Using fruit grown in your garden, after performing the special land-dependent *mitzvot* with them, is the ultimate *hidur*.

Wishing you all a happy Tu BiShevat!

Check out our interactive Tu BiShevat Seder on our website: [www.toraland.org.il/en/beit-midrash/articles/around-the-jewish-year/tu-bishevat/digital-seder-tu-bishevat/](http://www.toraland.org.il/en/beit-midrash/articles/around-the-jewish-year/tu-bishevat/digital-seder-tu-bishevat/) ■

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# RABBI BEREL

## WEIN

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**M**iracles occur in all sizes and shapes. Some are major, completely aberrational and beyond natural or rational explanation. Other miracles that occur to us daily in our own lives and societies take the form of being natural events and part of the rhythm of society and life.

The major miracles command our attention, and as we see in this week's reading of the Torah, even cause us to sing eternal songs that extend through generations of Jewish life till our very day. Certainly, the splitting of the waters of the sea before the Jewish people, escaping from the army of the Pharaoh of Egypt, and then for those very waters receding and covering the drowning Egyptian enemy, is a miracle of major importance, and thus remains indelible in the collective memory of the Jewish people. So, Moshe and his sister Miriam lead the Jewish people in song to commemorate this event and to impress upon them the awesome quality

of this major miracle.

We are reminded daily in our prayers of this miracle, and the song of Moshe forms an important part of our daily morning prayer service. This type of miracle was repeated when the Jewish people crossed the river Jordan on their entry into the land of Israel after the death of Moshe and at the beginning of the reign of Joshua. This was less of a miracle, so to speak, than what took place with the Egyptian army. Nevertheless, it represented the confirmation of the divine will to protect the Jewish people and to enable them to enter, inhabit and settle the land of Israel that would be its eternal homeland over all of the millennia of civilization.

However, the commemoration and memory of the major miracle should also remind us of the so-called minor miracles that occur to us in our daily lives. We are accustomed to everything going right as far as our bodies, commercial enterprises



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and social interactions are concerned. But it should be obvious to all that for things to go just right – simply what we call normal life – countless minor miracles must take place and occur.

We recite this in our daily prayers as well, and, in fact, we do so three times a day when we acknowledge and thank God for these so-called minor miracles that are with us constantly, evening, morning and afternoon. This ability to recognize and give thanks for the minor miracles that constitute our daily existence and life itself stems from the fact that we experienced in our collective memory the great miracle that made us a people, and saved us from the destruction that Pharaoh wished to visit upon us.

It is this memory of the great miracle that enables us to recognize these so-called minor miracles that we are living through, especially here in the land of Israel, with the return of Jewish sovereignty. Therefore, it is important to develop within us the ability to recognize and be grateful for the wonders and miracles that the Lord grants us each and every day of our individual and national lives. ■

Shabbat shalom!

Rabbi Berel Wein

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The professional team in the Mordechai Fachler Family Therapy Unit at Mayanei Hayeshua's Menavital Health Center tailors the treatment plan for each family's needs on a personal and targeted level. Our goal is to create a respectful and empowering atmosphere for the families we treat here. There is tremendous investment both in terms of the therapies provided to the families and in terms of the variety of therapists who treat them. There is full collaboration between the parents and the professional team. Our working assumption is that despite impaired parental functioning, the parents have a deep knowledge of their own families. By utilizing our professional experience and the knowledge that we have accrued over the years, we try to help parents perform their roles in the best way possible.

We treat every family like an only child here, and we give them all the respect they deserve. We do not adopt a 'This is the way we do things here' approach. Our role as professionals is to learn the family, to map their areas of strength, to identify where they need further guidance and mediation, and to adapt the interventions to their needs." To this end, says Professor Strous, the Family Therapy Unit employs a housemother, a social worker, psychologists and psychotherapists. Together, they provide different combinations of private therapies for parents and/or children; guidance for parents – either to both together or to each individually; dyadic therapy; family intervention; and more.

Another area where we work closely with the family is eating disorders. Wherever possible, our policy is to actively involve parents in the healing process at all levels: psychiatric, physical and spiritual. It is helpful that in the religious community, children tend to defer to the authority of their parents, who also provide the necessary support and encouragement. We are seeing phenomenal success specifically when we can work with the parents. Similarly, we experience excellent cooperation with schools. One of our 7th grade patients goes to the teacher's room every day at the 12 o'clock recess and drinks her nutrient formula in front of the teacher.

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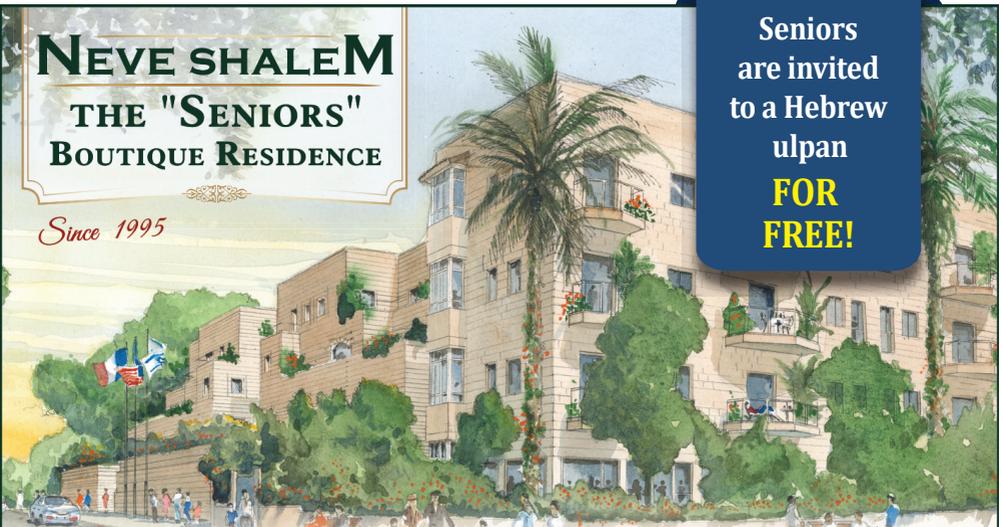
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See that the Lord has given you the Sabbath. Therefore, on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Let each man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day.

(Ex. 16:29)

The Children of Israel complain of hunger and God sends them food in the form of manna that falls from heaven. Every day they received the same amount, and on Fridays they would receive a double portion so that they would not need to gather it on

the Shabbat day. It is easy to become accustomed to this way of life and even to denigrate it.

Maybe this is the reason why Moses feels a need to emphasize the uniqueness of their situation: “See that the Lord has given you the Sabbath. Therefore, on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Let each man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day.”

The verse opens with the unique word “See.” Take a good look, or in the words of Rabbi Ovadia Seforno, “Understand that God has given you the Sabbath and this is not just a commandment, but also a gift.” In the wilderness, the Jewish people merited to experience the blessing inherent in Shabbat first-hand. (I wonder if it is like getting double one’s usual salary every Friday.) However, there is the immediate danger that

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they will ignore the blessing, so Moses instructs them to take a special look and internalize the nature of this gift.

## What would happen if we did not have the Shabbat?

Many years have passed, and we take the wonderful gift of Shabbat, which helps us “restart” our lives once every week, for granted. In the 1950s, Naomi Shemer composed a poem, *The Eighth Day of the Week (Yom Het BaShavua)*.

It will be a weekday

Like today, like yesterday

It will be the eighth day of the week

Then we will open our eyes

To a crisp morning.

When reading her poem, we ask ourselves: What would happen if we did not have the Shabbat? Would there be an eighth, a ninth, and a tenth day of the week? Maybe we would count days to infinity instead of having the cyclical counting which affords us a weekly day of rest after six days of work? Moses thus urges us to “see” that we have been given a wonderful gift. ■

*Sivan Rahav-Meir is an Israeli journalist, currently on shlichut of World Mizrahi movement to the US. She is the author of #Parasha and Reaching to Heaven (Artsroll). To receive her daily insight on the portion of the week, text your name to: 972-58-679-9000*



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Upper-left are the Pillar of Cloud by day • and the Pillar of Fire by night • Below them is the Davka Judaica Clipart scene of the splitting of the sea • Tambourine is TOF MIRIAM • Tire with a blowout represents the wheels of the Egyptian chariots that fell off and caused the chariots to become bogged down in the sea bed • Upper-middle is the water coming from a rock that Moshe struck with the Staff • Bird under the stream of water is a quail, as in quail - S'LAV, that preceded the manna • Two challot to the left of the quail is/are LECHEM MISHNEH, which commemorates the double portion of manna that fell on Friday • Shabbat candlesticks (top- middle) acknowledge the introduction of Shabbat that is presented in B'shalach to the soon-to-be nation of Israel • Worm ate the leftover manna - there should not have been any leftovers (the worm is smiling, happy to do G-d's bidding) • Three facets of the battle against Amalek (bottom-left): Moshe's upraised hands, Yehoshua's sword, and the pen with which the account of the battle was written down • Mid-bottom are pictograms for the Haftara. The singing bee is Dvora • Thunderbolt = BARAK • Milk that Yael gave to Sisra • and tent peg with which she killed him when he fell asleep • Piece of a brick wall represents the brick pattern of words in the Torah for AZ YASHIR • Upside-down heart refers to

the phrase VAYEIHAFEICH L'VAV ... Par'o had a change of heart... • Stop sign with the word Shabbat is found at the limit of T'chum Shabbat • Between the pillar of fire and the cloud is a lead fishing sinker for the description in the Song of the Sea, referring to some of the Egyptians, sank as lead in the (mighty) waters" • Top-right is a toy soldier armed with a bazooka. Below it are four pale silhouettes of the same figure of the soldier. Together, they represent the description of the Jews coming out of Egypt, CHAMUSHIM, which, according to Rashi's main explanation means "armed" (bazooka) and Rashi adds DAVAR ACHEIR, another thing, the fraction of the people that actually left Egypt • Shofar with a C coming out of it represents the 100 (C=100 in Roman numerals) blasts we traditionally blow on Rosh HaShana. That number is connected to the lament of Sisra's mother in the haftara • Grogger for the Amalek parsha read on Purim morning • Challa cover for the layer of dew that protected the manna • Characters from the Wizard of Oz singing - AZ YASHIR • Tee used to support the ball that a kid hits off of it with a bat, without his having to yet swing at pitches. That piece of equipment can be called a Tee-pole, as in TIPOL ALEIHEM EIMATA VAFACHAD... • Macabi logo for MI CHAMOCHA... • Tofu (looks like halva but it isn't), the people were told that which TOFU... which you bake... • The seeds - which look like pistachio, but aren't - are coriander, which some commentaries say is ZERA GAD, as the manna is described • the flower that the worm seems to be sniffing is a POPPY. In Yiddish, mahn, with the obvious connection to the manna.

# Torah Tidbits This 'n That

*Phil's page*



## Every Miracle is Proof of G-d's Creation

No one can turn a stick into a snake except the One who created the stick and the snake.

Only He who created water can make it turn to blood. Real blood. Not food coloring.

And so it goes throughout the Makot, each of which involved miracles that went against nature. The only One who can reverse nature, is He who created nature. Hail is frozen water and fire is fire. Only G-d can put fire into v'chail - because He created hail and fire.

He who made the Sea can command it to split. He who made rocks and water, can cause water to come from a rock at His command.

And so on, and so on, and so on...

But there is more.

We should not look at the miracles we are told about in the Torah and the rest of Tanach as - On the one hand, there is the norm, water, for example. And on the other hand, there is the WOW miracle of water turning to blood. On the one hand, there is the norm, the Sea, for example. And on the other hand,

there is the WOW, it split to allow Bnei Yisrael to pass through on dry land and then unsplit to drown the Egyptians.

Nothing wrong - everything right, with our WOW and appreciation of HKB"H for the miracles. But if that's all, then we are missing something very important.

Every norm, every element in nature, is also a reason to say WOW and to thank G-d at all times.

Water, H<sub>2</sub>O, is a miracle too. It is not a one-shot miracle. It is an everyday, all the time miracle. People tend to take it for granted - except in extreme circumstances of its absence. We should never take water (or any other element of nature) for granted. We should never stop thanking G-d for the every day miracles. If you read the MODIM bracha of the Amida, you'll see that we do thank him, three times a day. And every time we make a bracha.

We say AZ YASHIR in Shacharit every morning. That's a constant reminder of something that happened more than 3300 years ago. That's good, but we must also know and appreciate the miracle of the sea that preceded the Splitting of the Sea and continues from then until today and beyond. Evaporation from the seas of the world is the source of most rainfall, and ocean temperatures determine climate and wind patterns that affect life on land. MA RABU MAASECHA HASHEM...



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HALACHA

BY RABBI SHIMSHON HAKOHEN NADEL

Mara D'atra, Kehilat Zichron Yosef, Har Nof  
OU Israel Faculty

# The Mitzvah of Settling in the Land of Israel – Part II

## Rambam's View

Much ink has been spilled concerning the view of Rambam. Arguably the greatest of the Rishonim, many grapple with why Rambam himself does not include a specific mitzvah to settle in the Land of Israel in his count of the 613 mitzvot.

Rav Chaim Benvenisti writes that according to the Rambam, the Torah command to settle the Land applied only during the initial conquest of the Land of Israel in the days of Joshua. Today, he explains, the mitzvah to settle the Land is only Rabbinic (Knesset ha-Gedolah, YD 239:38). Rambam, per the Introduction to his Sefer HaMitzvot, enumerates only Biblical mitzvot. The fact that according to this view, Rambam believes Yishuv Eretz Yisrael is only Rabbinic would not impact our performance of this mitzvah, as rabbinic mitzvot are also to be observed with the same care as Biblical mitzvot.

Another famous explanation as to why this mitzvah is seemingly missing from Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot, is that of Rav Isaac de Leon. He writes:

"It appears to me that the Rabbi [Rambam] did not count the mitzvah of taking possession of the Land and settling it because it applied only during the days of Moses, Joshua and David and at all times when they [the Jews] are not exiled from their land. But after they have been exiled from their soil, this mitzvah does not apply until the arrival of the Messiah. On the contrary, we were commanded with what is said at the end of Ketubbot (111a), not to rebel against the nations and take the Land by force. They proved this from the verse, 'I have adjured you, O maidens of Jerusalem...' and expounded that 'they not ascend like a wall'" (Megillat Esther to Nachmanides' Addenda to Sefer HaMitzvot, positive commandment no. 4).

This explanation is difficult to accept since Rambam includes in his work many mitzvot which, 'do not apply nowadays,' like the sacrifices in the Holy Temple, for example. It also contradicts the view of many authorities who rule in accord with a simple reading of the text, that the mitzvah of living in the Land of Israel applies at all times. The opinion of R. Isaac de Leon is based on the 'Three Oaths,' a passage from Tractate Ketubbot, which

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will be discussed in these pages in future weeks.

Rav Avraham Borenstein of Sochatchov explains that the Rambam does indeed consider living in the Land to be a Biblical mitzvah that applies at all times. Like in other instances, however, he includes it within another, more general mitzvah (Avnei Nezer YD 454:5-6). Here, he explains, the Rambam includes the mitzvah of settling the Land under the commandment to conquer the Land and rid her of her inhabitants (Deut. 7:2, 20:17). A similar approach has been taken by others, as well: Rav Shaul Yisraeli writes that Rambam includes the mitzvah of Yishuv HaAretz in the mitzvah of Birkat HaMazon. Rav Hershel Schachter suggests that the Rambam includes Yishuv HaAretz in the commandment to appoint a king.

In the cases we discussed at length last week, the Rambam rules that a spouse can be compelled to ascend to Israel (Hil. Ishut 13:19-20), and one may ask a gentile to write a contract on Shabbat in order to purchase Land in Israel, “because of [the mitzvah to] settle the Land of Israel, they [the Sages] did not prohibit this” (Hil. Shabbat 6:11). He also rules that a servant can compel his master to ascend. This serves to prove that the Rambam too believes the mitzvah of dwelling in the Land is a Biblical commandment, which applies at all times (See Rav Shlomo Goren, Mishnat HaMedinah, p. 21: Chazon Ish, Kovetz Igrot, Vol. 1, no. 175; Tzitz Eliezer, Vol. 7, no. 48, sec. 12).

For anyone who still questions his

position on the Land of Israel, the Rambam’s own words provide clarity. Based on statements in the Talmud, he writes:

“It is forbidden for one to leave the Land of Israel for the Diaspora at all times, except: to study Torah, to marry, or to save [one’s property] from the gentiles, and then he must return to the Land. Similarly, [one may leave] to do business. However, it is prohibited to settle permanently in the Diaspora unless the famine there [in Israel] is so severe that a dinar’s worth of wheat is sold at two dinarim. When do these conditions apply? When one possesses financial resources and produce is expensive. However, if produce is inexpensive, but a person cannot find financial resources or employment and has no money available, he may leave and go to any place where he can find relief. Although it is permitted to leave [under these circumstances], it is not pious behavior. Behold, Mahlon and Khilyon were two of the great men of the generation and they left only out of great distress. Nevertheless, God found them worthy of death.

Great Sages would kiss the borders of the Land of Israel, kiss her stones, and roll around in her dust. Similarly, it is said: ‘For your servants have cherished her stones, and favored her dust.’

The Sages said, ‘Whoever dwells in Eretz Yisrael will have his sins forgiven,’ as it is stated: ‘The inhabitant shall not say I am sick, the people who dwell there shall be forgiven of sin.’ Even one who walks four

cupits there will merit the World to Come. Similarly, one who is buried there receives atonement as if the place in which he is buried is an altar of atonement. As it is stated: ‘His land will atone for His people.’ And as [an expression of] punishment it is said, ‘You will die in an impure land.’ There is no comparison between the merit of a person who lives there and one whose body is brought there after his death. Nevertheless, great Sages would bring their dead there. Take for example our patriarch, Jacob, and Joseph, the righteous.

A person should always dwell in the Land of Israel even in a city whose population is primarily gentile, rather than dwell in the Diaspora, even in a city whose population is primarily Jewish. For whoever leaves to the Diaspora is considered as if he

worships idols...” (Hil. Melachim 5:9-12).

These statements by the Rambam should not be understood as mere hyperbole as they make up a section of his Code of Law, the Mishneh Torah.

Some suggest that the reason the mitzvah of living in the Land of Israel is not stated explicitly by the Rambam is due to how central or basic or fundamental the mitzvah is. It is a mitzvah, which includes many other mitzvot. Per his introduction to his Sefer HaMitzvot, the Rambam does not include mitzvot “which encompass the entire Torah or [include] many mitzvot.” This mitzvah need not be stated explicitly, as all of the other mitzvot in the Torah are predicated upon it! (See Tzitz Eliezer, Vol. 7, no. 48, sec. 12). ■



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## THE NEW OLD PATH

BY RABBI BENJI LEVY

CEO Of Mosaic United

# The Cleansing Effect of Getting Hands Dirty

Amidst the epic events of the Exodus, the Torah's words are triumphant, celebratory and truly joyous in describing redemption from Egyptian servitude. Yet embedded within these verses, is a short and often overlooked episode, 'Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had firmly adjured the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely remember you, and you shall bring up my bones from here with you"' (Ex. 13:19, alluding to Gen. 50:25). Stylistically and thematically this verse does not belong and serves as a deviation from the very jubilant celebration, yet it contains subtle heroism, revealing the true leadership of Moses our teacher.

Amidst the frenetic departure from Egypt, the Jews do not even have time to fully bake their bread. The Talmud notes that while Moses concentrated on taking Joseph's remains with them, the nation was acquiring the valuables of

Egypt (Tractate *Sota* 13a). At face value, Moses simply recognises the eternity of invaluable values in contrast to monetary pursuits (Rabeinu Bachya on Ex. 13:19), but on a deeper level, there is a moral aspect to his choice. In the explicit mention of the oath that Joseph made with the Children of Israel, the Torah is highlighting the personal element that Moses felt he owed his ancestor (Ex. 13:19).

Moses' leadership is reflected in the fact that he did not lose the capacity to pursue common, basic moral obligations, even amidst the grandeur and intensity of his pivotal role at that moment in history. Given that he was in the midst of leading the greatest Exodus of all time, Moses could justifiably have excused himself from the tedious task of gathering his ancestor's bones by simply dispatching someone else to carry out the task. Furthermore, since Moses did indeed choose to busy himself with such a matter, one could understandably presume that these bones were enshrined in a mausoleum which Moses marched to as an act of pomp and glory. However, the Midrash explains that the bones of Joseph were buried deep in the Nile and that Moses treaded through the swamps to recover the coffin in a far from glamorous manner (*Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael*).

While the rest of the nation appears in their fancy attire, pockets full of treasures ready for the momentous event of the Exodus from Egypt, Moses arrives on the scene with his hands dirty from recovering Joseph's bones. Moses' ultimate act of benevolence and respect towards his deceased ancestor shows that true nobility is not found in external adornments, but rather in one's inner convictions. Though the placement of the verse is contextually disjointed, perhaps it is nestled specifically where it is in order to show that Moses did not 'lose his head' amidst everything that was going on. Although he grew up in the royal palaces of Pharaoh and became the leader of the Jewish people, through it all Moses maintained his humility, preserved his humanity and waded into the Nile to honour a multi-generational promise. It is this ability to remember and act upon such menial tasks while carrying out his key role within the historic events at the time that reflects Moses's true heroism.

Whether tending to sheep, saving damsels at the well or rising in moral indignation when witnessing a person being beaten, Moses' life is punctuated with these moments of humane heroism. It is a universal mistake to sever oneself from original character moorings in the journey towards influence and sophistication. One of the most powerful, yet subtle dangers to the human character is the trait of avarice – the lust to obtain and to acquire. There is no greater desire for greed than when it's

free for the taking and legitimate. But when the Jewish people busy themselves with acquiring warranted valuables from Egypt, Moses recognises the danger of this feeding frenzy and instead busies himself with honouring a pledge. To Moses, they are more than physical bones, they are the remains of a pioneer who built foundations of Jewish identity and continuity. For Moses, recovering these bones means retaining humanity and redeeming Jewish values worth far more than the Egyptian valuables. ■

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### Within The Waters

“The pure righteous do not complain of the dark, but increase the light; they do not complain of evil, but increase justice; they do not complain of heresy, but increase faith; they do not complain of ignorance, but increase wisdom.” – Rav Kook

In Beshalach we experience arguably the greatest miracle of all time, the splitting of the Red Sea. There were many miracles that occurred during that monumental event, from the actual splitting of the waters, the destruction of the Egyptian Army behind them, and many more. But, the miracle that stands out to me the most is from the Pasuk in Az Yashir, “And the Jewish people walked on dry land, within the sea.” What is the significance of this miracle? What was Hashem trying to teach us?

The great Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk tells us of every Jew's ability to be a Tzaddik, a righteous person. He says, although, that there are two types of Tzaddikim. First, there is the Tzaddik who recognizes the challenges he

has and focuses on fighting them and defending himself against them. The second type of Tzaddik, recognizes those same challenges as an opportunity not only to defend himself, but to create and push forward.

Rav Elimelech says that dry land, lifeless sand, represents the challenges and dark times that come to a person. The waters represent life and movement. The first Tzaddik is still righteous but Rav Elimelech teaches us that the uniqueness of a Jew is that even when he's on 'dry land' he is able to be 'within the waters'.

As Jews in the land of Israel we all have our challenges. The question is what will we do with them. Will we complain about the 'dry land', 'the darkness'? Or rather, as Rav Kook says, increase the light, live 'within the waters'. The choice is ours. ■



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### The Instrument We Can All Play

I was scrolling through my Instagram feed reading random facts and stumbled

upon a post claiming that people listen to five hours of music per day. I didn't believe it. I did some casual research and it turns out this statistic may not be far off. Surprisingly, we listen to quite a bit of music.

Parshat Beshalach is also known as Parshat Shirah - due to Shirat Hayam, the song that the Israelites sang after the splitting of the Red Sea. If you look throughout the generations, you will see the special status that song holds in the Jewish culture. David sang his famous song that is brought down not once, but twice in the Tanach. The Navi states that King Solomon wrote 5,000 songs, and even the entire Torah is referred to as a song.

One song that we are looking forward to singing rather than just mumbling as we take off our tefillin, is the song that the Leviim sang daily in the Beit Hamikdash. While discussing Shirat Halevi'im, the Gemara in Erchin debates if the essence of song is "bapeh", by mouth, or "bakli", by instrument. The Rambam says that the essence is by the mouth. In theory, this makes no sense. The instruments are what make the music what it is! As we see during Sefirat Haomer, even when there is a halacha not to listen to music, acapella is permitted. So how could it be that singing is more important?

We all know the amazing feeling of sitting around the shabbat table singing together off key and with no instruments to accompany us. It is what the Gemara refers to as the best kind of music because you don't need any special

talents to play the non-instrument called our mouths. What you need is full presence in the moment. At the shabbat table when we sing together, we are all in, no distractions. It is not the background music of the week, it is sharing the essence of ourselves. May we all continue to sing off tune but, most importantly, together. ■

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