

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS BEHALOSCHA - 5757

B'S'D'

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ohr@jer1.co.il (Ohr Somayach) \* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Insights

Kilroy Was Here "And Aaron did thus." 8:3 One of the less attractive features of modern urban living is graffiti. Sometimes the motive is political; sometimes it is anarchic. Really, the granddaddy of all modern graffiti are the initials carved into an oak tree together with a heart pierced by an arrow - "Brian loves Brenda" and the like. Or the ubiquitous 'Kilroy' who must have been more well-traveled than Marco Polo. For from Macchu Picchu in Peru to the Acropolis in Athens, you can find engraved on those ancient stones: "Kilroy was here". What is the underlying motivation that makes people want to carve their names in stone, and spray their opinions in day-glow paint? Man is terrified by the thought of his own transience. By carving his name in the Acropolis, he tries to extend his life span to thousands of years. "Even though I may be dead and gone, I'm still alive as long as someone is reading this." Graffiti is a cry of anguish in the face of our own transience.

When Aaron lit the Menorah, we are told that he did it without changing. What's so special about that? Of course, if G-d commands us to do something, we do it without changing the command. No. When it says that Aaron didn't change, it means he didn't change one iota from the way G-d commanded him to do the mitzva. He did it exactly the way he was commanded. He resisted the natural desire to imprint his own character on what he was doing, to add something of his own personality, to immortalize himself. Aaron was praised because he wanted to do nothing less and nothing more than the will of G-d. Hashem's will - His Mitzvos - are flawless. When Man tries to 'improve' on them, he is spraying day-glow paint over an edifice of celestial perfection.

For Keep's Sake "According to the word of Hashem would the Children of Israel journey..." 9:18 When you think of man's first landing on the moon, the picture that probably comes to your mind is that of Edward 'Buzz' Aldrin with his arms slightly lifted from the sides of his body by the bulk of his space suit. Distorted by the curvature of his helmet's visor is a reflection of the photographer, Neil Armstrong. In front of him are a few footprints that represent a 'giant leap.' Behind him the blackness of space. Whenever we want to remember something, to have a reminder of a landmark event in our lives, we take pictures to immortalize the experience. Be it a wedding or a trip down the Orinoco, we make mementos of these moments. And by making these mementos, we fix these events in the map of our lives, and they become like signposts. Signposts that by telling where we have been, help us to clarify to where we are supposed to be going. When the Jewish People moved away from Sinai after the giving of the Torah, they did it in a way which was flawed. The Torah says that "And they traveled from Mount Sinai the way of three days." Rashi explains that 'the way of three days they traveled in one day.' And the Ramban says that 'they traveled from Mount Sinai with joy, like a child running out of school.' But if you think about it, it's difficult to understand what was flawed in their behavior. After all, a person is supposed to run to do a mitzva, and they were 'running' to Eretz Yisrael where many of the mitzvos were to be performed exclusively. Weren't they merely fulfilling the command to do mitzvos with alacrity? Furthermore, in this week's Parsha, the Torah itself teaches us that "According to the word of Hashem the Children of Israel traveled, and according to the word of Hashem, they camped." So what was their failing, since it was Hashem who commanded their movements? The flaw was not in their actions, but in their feelings. When something special happens in life,

we want a memento to immortalize the moment. The Children of Israel, while wanting to journey as quickly as possible to Eretz Yisrael, should still have left Mount Sinai, the site of the giving of the Torah, with mixed feelings, with a little hint of melancholy that they were leaving this, the site of the Creation of the Jewish People; the fulfillment of the purpose of Creation. They should have wanted, as it were, to have 'a photograph' -- an emotional keepsake -- of this, mankind's greatest giant leap.

The Best Man For The Job "And the man Moshe was more humble than anyone on the face of the earth." 12:3 How do you get a quart into a pint pot? If the walls of a pot are very thick, what you can put inside will be less than if the walls were thin. The thinner the walls of a container, the less they intrude into the space inside the container, and thus the greater its capacity. Moshe Rabbeinu was more humble than any man who lived. He made less of himself than anyone else. That doesn't mean he thought he was a shlepper! Moshe knew who he was. He was a king. But he understood that compared to Hashem, he was nothing. He understood this more clearly than anyone else who has walked this planet. Moshe made himself like the skin of a garlic clove -- virtually without substance -- just the absolute minimum for him to exist in this world. Thus, he was almost completely 'containing space.' It is for this reason that he was able to receive and contain the Torah in its perfection. It's not that Moshe was just 'the best man for the job.' It's not that he was relatively humble -- more humble than those who surrounded him. Rather, Moshe reached an absolute and quantifiable level of humility, at which point he became able to contain the whole Torah in all its fulness and complexity. It therefore follows, that even today, if someone reached Moshe's level of humility, that person too could receive the Torah in all its perfection and completeness -- like Moshe.

Chanukah Gelt "In your lighting the lights" 8:2 What is the connection between last week's Parsha which tells of the gifts that were brought for the inauguration of the Mishkan, and the beginning of this week's Parsha which describes the mitzva of the Menorah? At the end of last week's Parsha, when Aaron saw the princes of all the other tribes bringing their offerings for the inauguration of the Mishkan, he was depressed. Seemingly, he had been left out. Hashem consoled him, telling him that his lot would be greater than that of the princes, because he would prepare and light the lamps of the Menorah. Why was lighting the Menorah greater than bringing offerings? The Midrash answers that offerings can only be brought while the Beis Hamikdash is standing, whereas the mitzvah of the Menorah is eternal. But the question returns -- when the Beis Hamikdash is no longer standing, doesn't the lighting of the Menorah also cease? In reality, the Menorah lives on even after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, through Aaron's descendants, the Maccabees, who were of the priestly lineage. The Maccabees' miraculous defeat of the Greeks at the time of Channuka, will be commemorated eternally by the kindling of lights. That was the consolation that Hashem gave Aaron: That the Menorah would live on eternally in every Jewish home in the lights of Channukah.

Sources: o Kilroy Was Here - The Kotzke Rebbe, Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram o For Keep's Sake - Pirkei Avos 4:2, Rabbi Meir Chadash, Rabbi Menachem Zvi Goldbaum in 'Moser Derech' o The Best Man For The Job? - Ruach HaChaim o Chanukah Gelt - Ramban

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International

Ohr Somayach Parsha Q&A - Beha'aloscha ...  
I Did Not Know That! "...Eldad and Medad are prophesying (that Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the people into the land.)" (11:27). Eldad and Meidad were Moses's brothers. Moses's parents divorced due to the Egyptian decree that the babies be cast into the Nile. Moses's mother then married someone else and bore Eldad and Medad. Yonasan ben Uziel  
Recommended Reading List Ramban 8:2 Preview of Chanukah 9:1  
Korban Pesach in the Midbar 9:10 Pesach Sheini 9:14 Pesach of the Ger 10:29 Yisro's Choice 10:35 Flight from Sinai 11:1 Sin of Complainers 11:5 Fish and Vegetables in Egypt 11:6 Complaints about Manna 11:16

Significance of Number 70 Sefer Hachinuch 380 Pesach Sheini 384  
Significance of Trumpets Sforno 9:1 The Four Merits 11:22 Never  
Satisfied Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General  
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#### Project Genesis LifeLine Behaloscha

The week's reading begins with the Commandment to light the Menorah in the Tabernacle. And as my teacher Rabbi Asher Z. Rubenstein pointed out, G-d doesn't need our candles. He doesn't need our light. There is no darkness before G-d. In a house, the narrowest part of a window is on the outside - this is even true today. This method of construction allows maximal light to enter the house through the window. Yet the Holy Temple was constructed with just the opposite design - to allow the internal light of the Temple to radiate outwards. So G-d doesn't need our light - what He wants is for Israel to be engaged in the act of lighting. Yet, what does this symbolize? The answer may be found in Proverbs (20:27): "The light of HaShem is the soul of man." [Ner HaShem Nishmas Adam.] Again, G-d does not need our light, but He offers us the opportunity to radiate light. And we are to be involved with the lighting. This applies, said Rav Rubenstein, not only to ourselves. If we find a "candle" which isn't burning, it is our obligation to light it. If we find a Jewish soul which is not shining, we cannot leave it dim. Torah enlightens the mind and gives joy to the heart. A person may be "dim" because he or she is unhappy, or simply lacking the shine of Jewish spiritual life. One way or the other, we must participate in sharing light. One candle can light thousands of others - if it is, itself, burning brightly. There is no question - here too, G-d does not "need" our help. He alone can light the lights. But He wants us to be involved in the lighting. We - every one of us - has the opportunity to share, and to grow brighter along with others. G-d gives us not merely a place under the lights - He gives us the opportunity to radiate on our own, and to help others to shine as well.

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[mj-ravtorah@shamash.org](mailto:mj-ravtorah@shamash.org) bhaloscha.97 Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Bhaloscha (Shiur date: 6/7/77)

The Rav began the shiur by noting that Bhaloscha is one of the most difficult Parshios to understand. It is the number of seemingly diverse topics that are discussed, and not the complexity of the Mitzvos that are presented in the Parsha, that makes it so difficult to understand.

The Parsha begins with the command to Aharon to light the Menora in the Mishkan, followed by the sanctification of the Leviim, Pesach Sheini, the description of how the people traveled in the desert based on the cloud and pillar of fire and the actual traveling formation of the tribes, the command to fashion trumpets of silver to be used in assembling the people, the story of Yisro returning to his homeland, Vayehi Binsoa and the backward letter "Nun"s, the Misoninim and the story of Miriam. At first glance, these topics appear to be unrelated to each other. The Rav was searching for the common thread that runs through the Parsha.

The Rav explained that when Hashem commanded Moshe to take Bnay Yisrael out of Egypt, Moshe was given a double mission. The first was to physically take the people out of bondage in Egypt. The second was to build the Mishkan. This is obvious from the Passuk that says when you, Moshe, will take the people out of Egypt, you shall worship Hashem on this mountain, Mount Sinai. These 2 aspects of Moshe's mission were the divine plan of Hashem.

Moshe's first mission was essentially completed in Parshas Bshalach with the drowning of the Egyptians in the sea, thus closing the chapter of their bondage to, and exodus from Egypt. The Torah tells us next about the process they went through to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. This process was also the prelude to the construction of the Mishkan as well. In fact, Mount Sinai was the first Mikdash, as evidenced by the required separation of the various camps, Kedushas Machanos, for Giluy Shechina, the revelation of Hashem at Sinai. The second Mikdash was the Ohel Moed and the third was the Mishkan. According to the Ramban, with the completion of the Mishkan, Moshe's two tasks were complete, and Bnay Yisrael were ready for the fulfillment of the promise to march straight into Eretz Yisrael, of Vhayavaysi Eschem, in Parshas V'ayra.

With this understanding of the mission of Moshe, we can explain the

overall flow of the Parshios. Sefer Shemos begins with the story of the Exodus, followed by Kabbalas Hatorah. The construction of the Mishkan was delayed due to the unfortunate episode of the golden calf. Vayikra continues with the details of the Korbanos, all of which are included in the overall topic of the construction of the Mishkan. Sefer Bamidbar begins with the command from Hashem to organize the Mishkan and the tribes into Machanos, which will apply to the final Beis Hamikdash as well. This is followed with the dedication of the Mishkan by the Nesiim and the dedication of the Menora by Aharon. Both dedications were required. [The Midrash mentions, that Aharon was depressed that neither he nor his tribe was included in the dedication of the Mishkan. Hashem comforted him by saying that his part of the dedication ceremony was the greatest of all in that he was charged with the kindling of the Menora.] The details of the Mishkan continue with the description of the selection of the Leviim to serve as the stewards of the Mishkan. Pesach Sheini was an important part of the mission to worship Hashem on Mount Sinai, since the first Pesach took place in Egypt and not at Sinai. These details needed to be completed before Moshe could turn to Hashem and say Bnay Yisrael have done their part (the exodus and the construction of the Mishkan), it is now up to Hashem to fulfill His part, to bring them into Eretz Yisrael.

The people were now ready for their march into Eretz Yisrael. We know this from the discussion that Moshe has with Yisro. Moshe tells Yisro that we are traveling, all of us Bnay Yisrael and Moshe, into Eretz Yisrael. We will be there shortly, because we will not have to even fight to conquer the land. Hashem, who took us out of Egypt in the blink of an eye, will allow us to conquer the land without even so much as a battle. Moshe fully believes that he will lead the people into the promised land. He invites Yisro to come along with Bnay Yisrael, to join them on their way to Eretz Yisrael. He uses the present tense of Nosim, we are traveling on our way right now, as opposed to the future tense Nisa, we will travel. The glorious march is starting right now. The Torah tells us that the Ark was traveling ahead of the people in preparation of their imminent arrival at their appointed place of Menucha and Nachala, Shilo and Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, events did not unfold as Moshe hoped they would. Moshe was not permitted to enter the land. For had he entered the land as the leader of Bnay Yisrael and built the Beis Hamikdash, Jewish History would have unfolded differently. We never would have known exile nor would the Beis Hamikdash have been destroyed. The unfortunate episode of Vayivku H'am Balayla Hahu, (and the people cried the entire night of Tisha B'av after the return of the spies), never would have happened. There would have been no need for 7 years of battle to conquer the land in the time of Joshua.

Everything was on track for an easy conquest of the land. The first sign of trouble is the story of the Misoninim and the Misavim. Such people who complain and agitate, and lust after food are not ready to be ushered into Eretz Yisrael. So this caused a delay of their entry to Eretz Yisrael. We do not know how long this delay lasted. But it is followed by the story of Miriam and the delay of 7 days till she is cleansed from her leprosy. However, once the entry was delayed, it became permanently delayed with the subsequent sending of spies, causing Jewish History to take a painful detour in the road of their destiny.

How would Jewish History have unfolded if all these delays did not combine to change our destiny? We do not know for sure. But Chazal gave us a hint based on the apex of Parshas Bhaloscha, Vayehi Binsoa. The Gemara (Shabbos 115b) says on the Passuk (Mishlei 9) of Chatzvah Amudeha Sheva, that Vayehi Binsoa and the next verse of Uvenucho Yomar were to have been the first and last verses in an additional book of the Torah. Instead of there being 5 Books, there would have been 7, with Bamidbar subdivided into 3 distinct Books around the verses of Vayehi Binsoa and Uvenucho Yomar. Between these 2 verses, this middle Book would have told the complete story of the conquest of the land by Moshe and Bnay Yisrael. Had Moshe entered the land, we would have merited seeing the fulfillment of Kumah Hashem Vyafutzu Oyvecha, Arise Hashem and let Your enemies scatter, and the conquest of the land would have been immediate. Unfortunately, we did not merit to see what was to have been written in that

Book.

The Torah is telling us that the seventh Book was prepared and ready to be written. All we have left from it is the first and last verses. That is why these verses are enclosed with reversed letter "Nun"s. We don't know how large this Book was supposed to be. The Gemara (Shabbos 115a) that a Sefer Torah that contains at a minimum the number of letters that are found in the verses of Vayehi Binsoa and Uvenucho Yomar, is to be treated as Kisvei Kodosh with regards to saving it from a fire on Shabbos. Because it represents a Sefer Shalem, a potential complete book of the Torah. While it would not have contained additional Mitzvos beyond the 613 we have in the 5 Books, it would have told the story of the conquest of Eretz Yisrael. This would have been the connection to the commandment to fashion trumpets, which were needed in times of war and conquest of the enemy that is referred to in Vayehi Binsoa.

The tragic story of how the destiny of the Jewish People changed does not begin with the story of the spies in Parshas Shelach. It begins with the events that prevented the fulfillment of the sefer of Vayehi Binsoa which culminated in Vayivku H'am Balayla Hahu.

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Beha'aloscha

Ascending Three Steps Prior to Kindling the Menorah This week's Parsha contains the Mitzvah of Lighting the Menorah. The Sifrei on the verse "... lit its candles..." (he-elah neiroseha) [Bamidbar 8:3] comments that from the use of the word 'he-elah' (which can be translated 'caused to go up'), we learn that Aharon built a stepping stool, which was placed in front of the Menorah, on which he stood to light the Menorah. This stepping stool is in fact mentioned in a Mishneh in Tractate Tamid [3:9]. The Mishneh states that there was a rock in front of the Menorah that had three steps upon which Aharon would ascend to light the Menorah. The fact that both the Sifrei and the Mishneh call our attention to the step stool indicates that there is something significant about this device, which transcends its practical functionality. Rash"i, in the beginning of this week's parsha, cites the famous Medrash that the section of the lighting of the Menorah was juxtaposed to the section of the offerings of the Princes for the following reason: Aharon became depressed after seeing the impressive gifts of the Princes of all the other tribes, because both he and his Tribe lacked representation in the entire ceremony of the Dedication of the House (Chanukas HaBayis). G-d promised him "Your (role) is far greater than theirs. They are merely bringing sacrifices that will terminate with the end of the Beis HaMikdash. But you will have something which is Eternal -- the lighting of the Menorah." All the commentaries are bothered by this Rash"i. What does Rash"i mean that the lighting of the Menorah will be Eternal? The lighting of the Menorah was also a function of the presence of the Beis HaMikdash. Since the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, we no longer have a Menorah either. What does Rash"i mean? The Ramba"n explains that the Sages are referring to the lighting of the Chanukah menorah, which continues even today. Other commentaries, however, suggest a different interpretation: The Menorah symbolizes Torah ("For the candle represents a Mitzvah; and the Torah represents Light" [Mishlei 6:23]), which is the guiding force of the Jewish people. The Torah is what keeps the Jewish people going, even today. By lighting the Menorah, Aharon symbolized the spread of the Light of Torah. If that is the case, we can understand why the Sages made a point of stating that Aharon had to step up on a three stepped rock in order to light the Menorah. The Sh'lah HaKodosh states that just as we find that there are four categories of damages [Bava Kamma 2a], and there are 39 categories of labor [Shabbos 73a], we find there are 3 categories of evil personality traits [Avot 4:21]: "...Jealousy, Lust, and (pursuit of) Honor drive a person out of this world." The three steps in front of the Menorah

symbolized these three categories of evil personality traits. Aharon was sending a message to all future generations: "If you want to come to spread Torah; if you want to ascend to the attribute of Torah; you must first fix your personality traits." Simply put, "Derech Eretz precedes Torah." Before we can begin to think about Torah, we must ensure that our personalities are in order.

Why Tell Over a Lesson That Everyone Already Knows? Why am I emphasizing this lesson, even though I am sure that virtually everyone has already heard of the teaching "Derech Eretz precedes Torah?" I am emphasizing this lesson because from my perspective of dealing with students and of involvement with educational institutions, I think it is clear that we are not doing an adequate job of educating our children simple menschlichkeit. Teachers complain they are frustrated in class because children are not acting properly. The response teachers receive when complaining to parents often indicates a total lack of cooperation. For example, consider the following exchanges that transpire when teachers attempt to inform parents about various disciplinary problems. Teacher: I caught David cheating on his English exam. David's parent: Who cares? He's not going to college anyway. I'm not concerned that he cheats. In this case, David's parent blatantly failed in his responsibility to instill Derech Eretz in his child. Another teacher phoned a woman to complain about her child's behavior in class. The parent responded, "I'm sorry, don't bother me -- I'm pregnant!" A third teacher called up a parent and was told "Don't bother me, it's tax season." Somehow, these parents neglect their responsibility to teach Derech Eretz to their children. How can we expect that our children will ascend to the attribute of Torah if they do not act like menschen? And how can parents who lack this trait instill it in their children. If teachers are leaving the profession because they don't get cooperation from parents when disciplining the children, then what are we sending our children to Yeshivas for? What is the whole point of trying to glorify the greatness of Torah when children don't act like menschen? I know that kids will be kids and boys will be boys and I was also young and I got into my share of trouble. But when I got into trouble my parents disciplined me. I like to think that when my kids get into trouble -- which they do -- I try to discipline my children, as well. But this attitude on the part of parents of "Don't bother me, I'm tired..." is unacceptable! This is why I repeat this lesson. Hopefully, when Shabbos comes and my listeners [or readers] will discuss a Torah thought at the meal, they will repeat over this lesson. Let them say, "Derech Eretz preceded Torah." Let them say that Aharon the priest had to climb up three steps before he could light the Menorah. That lesson has become very lax to us. I am not a sociologist. I am not a student of human behavior. I don't know what the cause is. Twenty years ago, parents emphasized manners, the importance of saying 'please' and 'thank-you,' and eating with knives and forks. I don't know why today many do not seem to do so. But this is what I see and this is what I hear. Teachers' frustration that they do not get cooperation from parents on elementary matters is a serious and growing concern. We have to repeat this thought over and over: Derech Eretz precedes Torah. We will not merit acquiring the Torah, if we are not, first and foremost, menschen.

Singular Men With "Dual Personalities" Towards the end of the Parsha, G-d tells Moshe Rabbeinu to gather together a Sanhedrin -- the leadership of the next generation. "Gather for me 70 men (shivim ish)" [11:16]. The Sifrei asks why the Torah used the singular term "ish" (man) when it should have used the plural "anashim" (men). The Sifrei answers that "ish" means singular people "comparable to Me and to you." "Like Me as it is written, "G-d is a Man of War (Hashem Ish milchama)" [Shmos 15:3] and like you as it is written, "And the Man Moshe (halsh Moshe) was the most modest of men on the face of the earth" [Bamidbar 12:3]. Thus the term "shivim ish" is a play on words. It alludes to the fact that the men of the Sanhedrin had to be individually designated as Ish, like G-d and like Moshe. Rav Shlomo Breuer, zt"l, points out that we see from here the requirements for a leader in Israel. A leader in Israel requires a very special and very difficult blend of personality traits. He has to be humble, not haughty -- a person who does not look condescendingly on the masses. But

on the other hand, he cannot be a wimp. The Jewish leader can not be a person who is never able to assert himself. He must be both like Moshe the man of Modesty and like Hashem the Man of War. When the prophet Shmuel stripped King Saul of his monarchy, Shmuel chastised Saul for not following his command to totally wipe out Amalek and all that belonged to them. Saul responded, "But the people wanted to keep the animals. I listened to the people." Shmuel answered, [Samuel I 15:17] "If you are small in your own eyes, but you are the head of the Tribes of Israel..." A King must lead with authority and with strength; he must be able to stand up to the people. He must be the 'Ish' of Hashem Ish Milchama. The king must be all this, while at the same time, the king must emulate Moshe, the man of humility! I once heard a beautiful vort, which summarizes the preceding thought. The verse at the end of the Torah, on the last day of Moshe Rabbeinu's life [Devarim 31:7], says that Moshe called over Yeshoshua and said to him, before the eyes of all Israel "Chazak v'Ematz" (be strong). In the first chapter of the book of Yehoshua, G-d tells Moshe's successor these same words four times [verses 6,7,9,18]. If we would take a superficial look at the words of the verse in Devarim, we would assume that the punctuation is "And Moshe said to Yehoshua before all of Israel (comma) -- "Chazak v'Ematz." However, if we look closely at the Trop we see that this is not how the verse is to be read. According to the Trop (zarka segol linking "Teinei chol Yisroel with Chazak v'Ematz") the punctuation reads "And Moshe said to Yehoshua (comma) 'Before all of Israel be strong.'" In front of the people, one must be strong. He must be able to stand up to them. He must be able to give orders and not take orders from them. In front of the mirror however, one must realize he is a mere mortal and never think "By the strength of my own hand..." However, regarding his public persona clearly he must always keep in mind the words "Chazak v'Ematz."

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PARASHAT B'HA'ALOT'KHA RAV SOLOVEITCHIK'S LECTURE ON LEADERSHIP

Lecture given by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l on June 10, 1974 transcribed by Yitzchak Etshalom [note: a section of this lecture can be found in "Reflections of the Rav", vol. 1, pp. 150-159. This presentation was transcribed from a tape-recording; any errors or unclarity should be ascribed to the transcriber. Please take into account that it is a straight transcription - the beauty of the oral presentation is diminished by the written format.]

This paper will deal with a problem which is quite acute now - as it was 3500 years ago - the problem of leadership. The paper won't won't be restricted to the Sidra of B'ha'alot'kha, which is one of the most difficult Sidrot in the entire Humash. The Sidra of B'ha'alot'kha is very puzzling. It is puzzling for two reasons. First, certain events described in the Sidra are incomprehensible. We simply cannot grasp the etiology of these events - nor their teleology. For example, we do not understand the story about Miriam, her criticism and disapproval of Moshe. It is hard to grasp that Miriam, the devoted and loyal sister, who, as a little girl, stood alone on the shore of the Nile and watched the floating ark because she had faith and hope in the matter of her little brother (the baby in the ark) was concerned, while all adults, including his mother and father, resigned and abandoned the baby. And his sister stood from afar, in order to know... It is quite puzzling that this sister should suddenly turn into the accuser and prosecuting attorney of her great brother. Equally incomprehensible is the strictness, sadness and speed with which the Almighty meted out her punishment. Equally difficult to grasp is the connection between this episode and the tragedy which was recorded in the Torah earlier - the tragedy of "Kivrot haTa'avah" (the graves of the voluptuaries). This is one difficulty. There is a second difficulty.

Moshe went through many crises. He lived through many distressful experiences and moments. And worst of all, as you know, was the Egel (golden calf) experience, which threatened to terminate the very relationship between God and Israel. Yet, he never panicked, never complained, never acted out of black despair. On the contrary, steadfastly and heroically, he petitioned the Almighty for forgiveness; defending the people, arguing their case like an attorney in court. Our Rabbis describe this by way of a metaphor, commenting on the verse: Vay'chal Moshe. Vay'chal, in contradistinction to vay'vakesh or vayit'chanen Moshe, emphasizes the element of strength and boldness. There is bold prayer and there is humble prayer. Vay'chal has the connotation of bold prayer. In a strange, yet beautiful metaphor, Our Rabbis say:

Moshe seized the corner of the mantle of the Almighty, and said: "I will not let you loose unless you forgive the sin of the people." Suddenly, in our Sidra, Moshe began to complain. When the multitude, began to rebel, Moshe, instead of defending the people, began to complain, almost accusing the people. He said things which he had never before uttered: So Moshe said to Hashem, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once if I have found favor in your sight and do not let me see my misery." These are words which were never uttered by Moshe. It is true that he uttered a similar phrase when he was sent to Pharaoh on his first errand and his mission ended with complete failure. He came back to God and said: Hashem, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? This was the question of a young, inexperienced man. But Moshe, the leader who took the people out of Egypt, never repeated the question. It is not Moshe-like to act like a frightened person and to speak out of the depths of resignation and to condemn the people. These are two examples of events which require interpretation to understand. We have to study Humash the way we study Gemara, to analyze and conceptualize the Humash and to find in every verse the meaning, the connotation and the principle. However, the most difficult problem with B'ha'alot'kha is not limited to the substance of events as to the continuity of the Sidra. The lack of systematic development of the story which the Torah is trying to tell us is perplexing. The Torah is always careful about continuity and wholeness of the narrative. The Torah never tells us half a story. There is always development, transition, complete narration - when the Torah is finished with a story, the story is complete. As far as B'ha'alot'kha is concerned, we just don't know. We don't know how many stories there are in B'ha'alot'kha, how many stories are complete, how many are incomplete, we simply don't see the thread of continuity in B'ha'alot'kha.

Let us just simply review B'ha'alot'kha, the events which were recorded in the Sidra of B'ha'alot'kha. It commences with the Sanctification of the Levites (several verses were dedicated to the Menorah; Our Rabbis were right that B'ha'alot'kha et haNerot (the Mitzvah of the Menorah) actually belongs in Parashat Naso. That's what Rashi wanted to convey when he said: Aharon became upset) - "and you shall present them as an elevation offering". Then the Torah tells us about Pesach Sheni - it is Pesach baShana haShenit (Pesach in the second year) and Pesach Sheni (the second Pesach). Halakhically, Pesach Sheni refers to the Pesach which is offered in Iyyar, by the one who is far away and the one who is impure (at the time of the first Pesach). But here the story is of the Pesach baShana haShenit and the Torah recorded the incident with the ritually impure people within the framework of the Pesach baShana haShenit. They approached Moshe, why must we be kept from presenting Hashem's offering at its appointed time among the Israelites?; Moshe inquired of the Almighty and the institution of Pesach Sheni was established. Where is the transition from the Sanctification of the Levites to the Pesach baShana haShenit? We don't know. Two different stories? We have no continuous development. Then, following the description of the Pesach baShana haShenit and Pesach Sheni, we have another description of the cloud, the pillar of cloud guiding the people on their journeys. There is no transition from the story about the Pesach to the story about the pillar of cloud, and the Torah tells us in detail how the

journeys of B'nei Yisrael are completely dependent upon the position of the pillar of cloud. Whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, then the Israelites would set out... following the narrative about the cloud, the Torah relates to us the commandment pertaining to Hatzotzrot - the two trumpets - and their use for assembling the community and the journeying of the camps. And the Torah describes almost in detail the signal system connected with the Hatzotzrot; one blast, so one camp moves, another blast, a different camp moves, the T'ruah, the T'ki'ah. At the conclusion of the section dealing with the Hatzotzrot, the Torah reviews the previous theme; the journeying of the camps, and again tells us in detail the order in which the camps traveled, Yehuda at the head, followed by Yissakhar and so forth. Then, after the Torah describes the organization of the camps and how they moved and traveled, suddenly we hear a very strange conversation which, prima facie, is puzzling and enigmatic. A conversation between Moshe and his father-in-law. Moshe, humbly extending an invitation to his father-in-law: Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which Hashem said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will treat you well; for Hashem has promised good to Israel." But he said to him, "I will not go, but I will go back to my own land and to my kindred." He said, "Do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. Moreover, if you go with us, whatever good Hashem does for us, the same we will do for you. Moshe argued with his father-in-law; he wanted his father-in-law to leave Midian and to join B'nei Yisrael, but Yitro was stubborn. Following this conversation, we are suddenly confronted with a Parasha consisting of two Pesukim: Vay'hi bin'soa ha'aron... - Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, Arise, Hashem, let your enemies be scattered, and your foes flee before you." And whenever it came to rest, he would say, Return, Hashem of the ten thousand thousands of Israel."

At the beginning of the Parasha there is an inverted Nun and at the end of the Parasha there is an inverted Nun, in order to emphasize that this parasha is out of context here. Indeed it is out of context. And the question is obvious: if it is out of context, why did the Torah insert the Parasha into a section within which it would always stand out as out of context. The Parasha could have been beautifully inserted at the end of Pekudei: For the cloud of Hashem was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey. The two Pesukim would have been a most appropriate conclusion or sequel to that: Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, Arise, Hashem, let your enemies be scattered, and your foes flee before you." And whenever it came to rest, he would say, Return, Hashem of the ten thousand thousands of Israel." And finally, following the Parasha of Vay'hi bin'soa ha'aron..., the Torah tells us the tragic story - which we will analyze - of the Kivrot haTa'avah - the people who desired. They didn't do anything else, no crime, no idolatry, no murder, no sexual promiscuity, no robbery, no burglary - nothing, they just were overcome by a desire and they wept that's all - they didn't yell, they didn't throw stones at Moshe, like they did in other situations. Nothing, they didn't say anything, they weren't threatening anyone, just complaining. People of desire - this tragic story is told. The name Kivrot haTa'avah - could have been invented today, to characterize modern man. The grave of desire which man digs for himself, or I would rather say, the grave which the desire digs for man. The grave of the voluptuaries. Finally, the conclusion of the Sidra is the story of Miriam.

We simply are perplexed. How many stories are in B'ha'alot'kha? One story or many stories? If there is one, there must be transition; if there is no transition, if there is no gradual and systematic development of a theme, then there is no unity. Whoever writes a composition paper, in first year English, knows that there must be unity. Unity is when a theme is developed. Prima facie, there is no development of anything and there is no literary unity. There are many stories. But each story per se is half a story, not a complete story. (Whatever I tell you tonight occurred to me during the Torah reading on Shabbat - it's completely new, so you won't find it anywhere - no one plagiarized me yet. I'm just reviewing my thoughts to you tonight, for the first time.) I had a feeling when the Ba'al Qeriah (Torah reader) was reading

the Sedra, as if we were jumping like a bee on a clear warm summer morning from flower to flower accumulating the sweet nectar. Is it possible that the principle of the unity of the Torah, the unity of the themes which the Torah develops was lost in Parashat B'ha'alot'kha? It is an impossibility.

Now let me move slowly - my job, you understand very well, is to restore the unity of the Parasha. The Parasha is one story, one tragic story. A tragic story which changes Jewish history completely, from top to bottom. The inverted Nuns symbolize an inverted historical process here. An inverted Nun is not so bad. But when history is being inverted, not realized or stopped suddenly, this is very tragic. Our Rabbis speak about punishment in B'ha'alot'kha as the worst distressful events in Jewish History, "In order to separate between one punishment and another punishment."

Let us start with the Exodus. When the Almighty charged Moshe with the assignment of redeeming the Jews, liberating them from Egypt, he told him the following: (He told him many things, but the Hinuch, R. Aharon haLevi (?), said that the necessary prerequisite of the Exodus is the following sentence:) And it shall be your sign that it was I who sent you, when you will free the people from Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain. This is a difficult sentence. In other words, the Almighty told Moshe that the Exodus drama will culminate in two events: you shall worship God on this mountain. How many events does this encompass? It means that the Exodus will not be consummated until you worship God at this mountain. What does He mean by this? What did Moshe understand by these words? The Hinuch says: He meant two things: Mattan Torah the giving of the Law, the Torah teaches Man how to worship God, the continuous worship of God; the Man who lives according to the principles and rules of the Torah is a steady worshipper of God. There is no neutral moment; worship is a continuous process. However, he meant something else, namely the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Certainly the purpose of the Mishkan is worship. As a matter of fact, the Torah was given at Mount Sinai and the Mishkan was constructed immediately after Moshe came down from the Mount, Betzalel started the work of constructing the Mishkan on the day after Moshe came down from Mount Sinai, assembled the people and told them that a Mishkan should be constructed. It's no wonder that following the Aseret haDibrot (Ten Statements, - "Ten Commandments") in Parashat Yitro, God mentioned to Moshe the construction of an altar: But if you make for me an altar of stone... If the Jews hadn't succumbed to the hysteria of the Erev Rav (multitudes), had they rejected the Egel, the two objectives would have been realized much sooner. Because of the Egel, the time schedule was changed and the consumation of the "you shall worship God on this mountain" was delayed for 80 days. If the Egel had not been made and the whole tragedy of the Egel had been avoided, Moshe would have come down on Tamuz 17 and immediately they would have started to construct the Mishkan. Because of the Egel, Moshe had to spend 80 more days on Mount Sinai in prayer.

Moshe came down from Mount Sinai on the day following Yom HaKippurim -so the construction of the Mishkan was delayed for 80 days. However, on the day after Yom HaKippurim, after Moshe came down with the second set of Tablets and the message of forgiveness, he quickly assembled the congregation and told them about the immediate task to be discharged - the building of the Beit HaMikdash. The work of construction began immediately. How long did it take them to construct the Mishkan, to complete the work? The Mishkan was completed and put together on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, which was, according to Our Rabbis, the Shemini laMilu'im - (eighth day of the Milu'im - handing over the priesthood to Aharon) - the day on which the princes began to offer their gifts to the Beit HaMikdash. When those two objectives, Mattan Tora and the construction of the Beit HaMikdash, were achieved, the Geula found its realization. The "you shall worship God on this mountain" was translated into reality, into fact. The people, therefore, had no business prolonging their stay in Midbar Sinai (the Wilderness of Sinai). They stayed in Midbar Sinai as long as it was necessary to receive the Torah - which had to happen twice, due to the Egel, and as long as it was necessary in order to complete the work on the Beit HaMikdash, because both are encompassed by the commandment: But the very moment that the second set of tablets were delivered to Yisrael and the

Beit HaMikdash was constructed and completed, the vessels erected and the sacrifices offered, the task of Yisrael in Midbar Sinai was discharged and fulfilled. There was no purpose in extending the sojourn any longer. The Torah in Naso tells us about the final act of the dedication of the Mishkan, namely, the sacrifices by the princes. The Torah did not forget to mention a secondary matter, like the sanctification of the Levi'im. The Torah apprises us in Tzav about the sanctification of the Kohanim, which was of primary significance. In a word, with the dedication of the Mishkan by the princes and the election of the Levi'im, everything which was necessary in order to have the Mishkan serve the great purpose of worship was prepared and ready; the work was completed. When could B'nei Yisrael simply get up and leave Midbar Sinai? The Mishkan was completed on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the twelve princes offered their gifts, the Almighty said: They shall present their offerings, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar... meaning Rosh Chodesh Nissan plus 12 days. They were ready to march on the 13th of Nissan. However, the cloud did not move or rise, because the next day was Erev Pesach, the Korban Pesach, so the march was postponed until after Pesach. Everybody knew that the stay of the Jews in the wilderness of Sinai came to a close; the job was done; the Beit HaMikdash built, the Torah given, now we have to resume our march. However, the march had to wait until after the Jews offered the Korban Pesach. The second Pesach they celebrated in Midbar Sinai: Hashem spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: Let the Israelites keep the passover at its appointed time.

(The Almighty said:) "I will postpone the journey until after the Korban Pesach will be offered." So the Torah told us about the Korban Pesach in B'ha'alot'kha, because the Korban Pesach was the only obstacle to the resumption of the march. During the offering of the Pesach, the ritually impure men inquired about their status, Moshe Rabbeinu asked the Almighty and the institution of Pesach Sheni was introduced for those who were unable to offer the Pesach in Nissan. It is perfect continuity: the sanctification of the Levi'im was the last act of "you shall worship God on this mountain." It was not as important as the sanctification of the Kohanim, which is why the Torah tells us about the sanctification of the Kohanim in Tzav and Tetzaveh. The sanctification of the Levi'im is not as important; you could operate the Beit HaMikdash without the Levi'im. Shira (the main function of the Levi'im) is not indispensable; the Levi'im are more or less a luxury. The Torah tells us that every detail was completed, we were ready to march, the Almighty told Moshe to offer the Pesach first in Midbar Sinai and after the Pesach was offered, the B'nei Yisrael were supposed to resume their march. In a word, I repeat, the two prerequisites for moving on were met: the Torah given and accepted and the Mishkan ready for worship. The great march was supposed to start; the march to Eretz Yisrael. All 4 freedoms were attained, "I will take out...I will save...I will redeem...", and with Mattan Torah and the construction of the Mikdash, the "I will take..." was realized as well. The hour was struck for the fifth freedom to be realized and be translated into a reality, namely "I will bring (you into the land...)". Now, how long was the march supposed to last? Several days. That's why the Torah reveals to us the details of the march. First, who was the guide, the leader? If you march towards a certain destination, particularly in the desert, you need a leader. The answer is the pillar of cloud - as an instrument in the hands of the Almighty. The guide was the Almighty as the Torah told us in B'shallach: Hashem went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Now the Torah tells us how the camps were arranged marching, which tribes formed the avant garde and which tribes formed the rear guard: M'asef lekhol haMachanot. The Torah speaks of Tziv'otam (hosts) of warriors: Kol Yotzei Tzava. The Torah also relates to us the story of the two Hatzotzrot in this context because it's very important, the story of the signal system. Since Moshe was the commander he instructed the various camps on their march to the promised land, so there was need for communication. And the means of communication were the two silver trumpets, the Hatzotzrot of silver. Torah is not only important to explain

intellectually in categories, but also in emotional categories. If you want to understand the beauty and greatness of the Torah, the emotional mood which is created by the reading of the Torah is perhaps more important than the intellectual gesture. Read B'ha'alot'kha carefully,

So they set out from the mount of Hashem three days' journey with the ark of the covenant of Hashem going before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them, and When both are blown, the whole congregation shall assemble before you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. But if only one is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall assemble before you. When you blow a T'ruah, the camps on the east side shall set out; when you blow a second T'ruah, the camps on the south side shall set out. A T'ruah is to be blown whenever they are to set out. There is a mood of expectancy and tension. Expectancy permeates the pages of B'ha'alot'kha. There is a mood of mobilization and rigid order in the air. All conditions were met, the reward is about to be granted, finally the promise to Abraham is about to be fulfilled. The "I will bring them" will become the fifth freedom. The people are on their final triumphal march. In this mood, Moshe was excited. He was expecting great things. There is tenseness in the air and there is determination and boldness to break through if necessary.

Interesting is the conversation between Moshe and his father-in-law. What kind of mood on the part of Moshe is mirrored or reflected by this conversation? We get a glimpse into Moshe, into his mood, those days, after the second Passover as the people started to march. In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the covenant. Then the Israelites set out by stages... It was not one of the many journeys; it was the journey, the final journey. What is the emotional climate of this conversation: Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which Hashem said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will treat you well; for Hashem has promised good to Israel." It is a climate of serenity, of peace of mind, an unqualified assurance. Moshe spoke of the final journey to the promised land. No waiting anymore, no Ani Ma'amin - I believe in the coming of Mashiach, even if he may tarry, I will wait for him... There would be no need for it anymore. No delays, no procrastination, no if and no when: Im Shamo'a Tishm'u - If you will listen - It is now! It is going to happen right now, not tomorrow. It is present tense, not "We will set out" - rather, "We are setting out" ...for the place of which Hashem said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will treat you well; for Hashem has promised good to Israel. all the promises will be fulfilled. I won't have to ask questions Hashem, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh... no problems, no questions, no doubts, nothing! It will be very simple.

I want to let you in on another secret. It was not an invitation which a son-in-law extended to his father-in-law. It was not an invitation extended by an individual to another human being to share the good things in life. It was more than that. It was an invitation extended by Moshe, as a representative of Klal Yisrael to all Gerim of all generations. The Midrash in Kohelet says: All of the rivers flow into the sea and the sea is never filled" - these are the Gerim who come to Eretz Yisrael to convert. It was extended to the entire non-Jewish world: Join us! Join us in the promised land - provided that the non-Jew is ready to subject himself to the same Divine discipline as we did. Any human being was offered the opportunity to join the march to the promised land, the march to the Messianic era. If that march had been realized, the coming of Mashiach would have taken place then and Moshe would have been the Melekh haMashiach. It was quite optional - the Jews could have reached it, they lost it so Moshe is not the Melekh haMashiach and the distance between them in time is long and far. The Torah was given to us. Eretz Yisrael was given to us, certainly. However, we were told to pass on God's word to mankind as such. We all know the famous verse in Shofarot of Rosh HaShana:

All you inhabitants of the world, you who live on the earth, when a signal is raised on the mountains, look! When a trumpet is blown, listen! We are all invited - all the dwellers on this world. We are setting out for the place of

which Hashem said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will treat you well...

What does Moshe think? That Yitro, the non-Jew, is dependent upon us? Our Torah is commodious enough to encompass the entire world.

There is enough Hessed, goodness and happiness in the Torah to be transmitted to others and to be shared by others. Join our triumphal march, Moshe said to Yitro, towards our destiny. It may become your destiny as well. When I read this Parasha, it attracts me; there is something moving, touching. Sometimes I want to cry when I read this Parasha. The simplicity with which the great Moshe, the master of all wise men and the father of all prophets speaks. He uses the grammatical first person: We are setting out...come with us, and we will treat you well...whatever good Hashem does for us... What does it mean? Moshe was certain - there was not even a shadow of doubt in his mind - that he was going to enter the promised land. He and the entire congregation will be classified as both Yotzei Mitzrayim (departers from Egypt) and Ba'ei ha'Aretz (those who come into the Land). He was sure, he was convinced that he would see the beautiful land, the hills of Judea, the prairie land of the Sharon Valley, he was certain that he will climb the mount of Levanon. Later he prayed, but his prayer did not come true: ...

Let me cross over to see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and the Lebanon. But that time he felt no need for prayer: there was no doubt about his destiny. The whole operation, if successfully brought to a close would have lasted several days. And at that time there was no need for Meraglim, for scouts to explore the land, to see whether the land is good or bad, or to see whether the cities are surrounded by walls or they are open cities, what kind of population is there - strong, weak, a sickly population or a healthy population. There was no need for it, all those scouts and all the exploration and intelligence work is only necessary if a man has doubts. This was the pre-doubt period in Jewish history. We are setting out for the place of which Hashem said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will treat you well... Share with us! An open invitation to everybody. Yitro or no Yitro, father-in-law of Moshe or the stranger. The Torah tells us indeed,

And they journeyed from the mount of the Eternal three days' journey, and the Ark of the Covenant went before them in the three days' journey to seek out a Menucha (resting place) for them, Where did it go? Where is Menucha for the Jews? What was the destination? Rashi, quoting Sifri, says: A distance of three days' journey they miraculously traveled in one day, because the Almighy wanted to bring them into Eretz Yisrael.

My dear friends, tell me, at that time, before the great reversal took place, was the Parasha of Vay'hi bin'soa' ha'aron in its proper place or out of context? Before the Jews alienated God, before they fell from Him and they needed the Meraglim as scouts and they had doubts. Before, every Jew was convinced: This is the final consummation of all hope. It was beautiful, the Torah tells us:

And they journeyed from the mount of the Eternal three days' journey, and the Ark of the Covenant went before them in the three days' journey to seek out a Menucha (resting place) for them, the cloud of Hashem being over them by day when they set out from the camp. (meaning security on all sides) Vay'hi Binsoa' ha'aron - Whenever the ark set out (leading them right into Eretz Yisrael) Moses would say, "Arise, Hashem, let your enemies be scattered, and your foes flee before you." Who were the enemies? The last war they fought was the war against Amaleq and the next war was against Sichon and Og, 40 years later. Why was Moshe speaking about enemies and fiends and people who threatened them? Who did Moshe have in mind? We are travelling fast to Eretz Yisrael - there we will be confronted by somebody, if the great hope had been realized, there would have been no need to engage in battle for seven years.

Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, Arise, Hashem, let your enemies be scattered, and your foes flee before you." And whenever it came to rest, he would say, Return, Hashem of the ten thousand thousands of Israel." It was not misplaced. It was the continuation of the great story of the final, triumphal Messianic march into Eretz Yisrael, which was supposed to take place approximately 3500 years ago. It was certainly in its place and

there was no need for an inverted Nun at the beginning and for an inverted Nun at the end, it would have been the climax of the whole story. Had this come true, nothing had happened, the whole Jewish history would have taken a different turn. According to our tradition, (Hazzal said it many times) had Moshe entered Eretz Yisrael, it never would have been taken from us - because Moshe would have been crowned as Melekh haMashiach. The Messianic era would have commenced with the conquest of Eretz Yisrael by Moshe. Moshe believed with a great passion and love that the final march of redemption had begun - it was only a question of days.

Suddenly, something happened. Neither Moshe nor anybody else expected the event to transpire. What happened? In the story of the Egel, we know what happened. Concerning the Meraglim (spies) we know what happened. About Pe'or in Midian, 40 years later, we know what happened. What happened here? [Seemingly] nothing in particular.

And the multitude that was among them felt a lust, had a desire. And B'nei Yisrael wept again and they said: Who shall give us flesh to eat? And the Torah tells us that this seizure by desire was evil. It aroused the wrath of the Almighty and also Moshe resented it. Uv'einei Moshe ra' - In Moshe's eyes it was evil - first time in Jewish history. Moshe was not the defense attorney: it was evil. This interrupted the great march. - it has brought the march to an end. The vision of Mashiach, of Eretz Yisrael, of the redemption of Yisrael, became a distant one, like a distant star on a mysterious horizon. It twinkled, but the road suddenly became almost endless. Why did Moshe feel discouraged? Why didn't he offer prayers for the people as was his practice in past situations?

Because the incident of Kivrot haTa'avah differed greatly from that of the Egel. The making of the Egel was the result of great primitive fright. The people thought that Moshe was died, they were afraid of the desert, they did not know what the future held in store for them, they were simply overwhelmed by a feeling of loneliness and terror, consequently, they violated the precept of vrz vsucg. There were mitigating circumstances - they wanted the golden calf to substitute for Moshe, as all the Rishonim (medieval commentators) say.

When you speak about Avodah Zarah (idolatry), you have to distinguish between Avodah Zarah as a ceremony/ ritual and between the pagan way of life. In Hazzal's opinion, an Avodah Zarah-worshipper will also adopt the pagan way of life. But in this day and age, we know that it's possible for people to live like pagans even though no idolatry is involved. Paganism is not the worship of an idol, it encompasses more - a certain style of life. What is the pagan way of life, in contradistinction to the Torah way of life? The pagan cries for variety for boundlessness for unlimited lust and insatiable desire, the demonic dream of total conquest, of drinking the cup of pleasure to its dregs. The pagan way of life is the very antithesis of Yahadut, which demands limitedness of enjoyment and the ability to step backwards if necessary, the ability to withdraw - to retreat. The unlimited desire, which the Greeks call hedone, is the worst desire in Man. When Man reaches out for the unreachable, for the orgiastic and hypnotic, then they don't violate the prohibition of Avodah Zarah, but they adopt the pagan way of life; and the Torah hated the pagan way of life more than it hated the idol. Because an idol cannot exist for a long time, it cannot last. Finally, an intelligent person realizes that it is just wood and metal; it has no life. Avodah Zarah per se is short-lived, however the pagan way of life has a tremendous attraction for people. The Torah describes so beautifully the way in which the pagan gathers, accumulates property - gathers the Slav, the quail, how he gathers property, means of gratification for his hungry senses. So the people worked all that day and night and all the next day, gathering the quails; the least anyone gathered was ten homers; and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. They were mad with desire, there was no controlling/limiting element in their desire for vastness, the imagination excited them and their good sense was surrounded with a nimbus which was irresistible, "the more, the better, and you start gathering new goods even before you have completed gathering the other goods." The pagan is impatient and insatiable. That's what the Torah describes in Kivrot haTa'avah.

There's another story in the Torah which, in contradistinction to the unlimited desire of the pagan, the Torah describes the Jewish way of life. It's interesting - it's the *Manna*. And Moshe said to them: this is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat, gather as much of it as each of you requires to eat, an omer to a person, for as many as you as there are. But when they measure it, by the omer, he who gathered much had no excess and he who gathered little had no deficiency. This is the approach of Yahadut. The great tragedy happened, the great triumphal final march suddenly came to a stop, the people who rejected the basic principle of economic limitedness and aesthetic enjoyment, these people were not worthy to enter the Land. Suddenly, parashat Vay'hi binsoa' ha'aron found itself dislocated. The distance to that land suddenly became very long. Of course, there was no edict yet concerning the 40 years, the time the people would have to spend in the desert, but Moshe felt intuitively that the great march had come to an end. Hopes he had will be unfulfilled and visions he had will not be realized and his prayers will be rejected. He knew that.

I tell you frankly, I don't have to say Moshe, Moshe was the master of the prophets, God revealed everything to him. I remember from my own experience, during the illness of my wife, who was sick for four years. Of course, I am a realist, and it is very hard to fool me - not even doctors can fool me. But, somehow I was convinced that somehow she would manage to get out of it. And I lived with hope and tremendous unlimited faith. I remember, it was the last Yom Kippur before she died. It was Kol Nidrei and I was holding a Sefer Torah for Kol Nidrei and when the Hazzan finished Kol Nidrei and said Shehech'yanu veqiy'manu vehigi'anu laz'man hazeh I turned over the Sefer Torah to a Talmid of mine and told him to put it in the Aron Kodesh. He put it in the Aron Kodesh, apparently he didn't place it well, I don't know what, but the Sefer Torah slipped and fell, not on the floor, but in the Aron Kodesh. At that time I was filled - don't ask me how or why - I felt a gefil - nothing will help. And indeed it was.

When the Am haMit'avim ( the people who had the craving) began to complain and to weep, Moshe knew: This is the end, he'll never see Eretz Yisrael, never! That's why he said:

If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once...and do not let me see my misery. And how beautifully our Rabbis said: "Eldad and Meidad were having prophecy in the camp" What did they say? What was the excitement about? They said just one short sentence: Moshe's hopes: "We are setting out...come with us, and we will treat you well..." will never come true Moshe will die - he'll be buried in the sand dunes in the desert - he'll never see the beautiful land and the Levanon - Moshe meit viY'hoshua makhnis Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead [the people] in to the Land.

And then parashat Vay'hi binsoa' ha'aron lost its place - it was dislocated and displaced. Do you know why it was dislocated and displaced? Because two little Nuns were inverted - the march was inverted. Instead of the march bringing them closer to Eretz Yisrael, the march took them away from Eretz Yisrael. Binsoa' ha'aron the Nun was inverted and with the inversion of the Nun, Jewish history became inverted- and it is still inverted. The Parasha is still "dislocated". We cannot say "we are setting forth" with the same assurance and certitude that Moshe said it to Yitro his father-in-law just 24 hours before the Mit'avim inverted the Jewish process of redemption.

Finally, is now the continuation of the Parasha - I didn't yet explain the problem of Miriam, which I will now explain. The Torah describes the Exodus, Mattan Torah in Parashat Yitro, the construction of the Mikdash in Parashat Teruma. Suddenly, something happened which interrupted the continuity - the Egel, the construction was delayed for a certain number of days. Sefer Vayikra (Leviticus) is devoted completely to the worship, to "you shall worship God on this mountain."

In Sefer Bamidbar (Numbers) the Torah tells us about the last act of dedication by the princes, and the lighting of the candles, and the sanctification of the Levi'im, so "you shall worship God on this mountain" was attained, the two objectives were reached, now the march began. The Torah tells us how the Jews were marching on the final triumphal march on the final triumphal journey to Eretz Yisrael, the pillar of cloud covered them, protected them, shielded them it was in front and was also the rear guard

protecting them in back, and then how Moshe communicated with the camps, the Hatzotzrot of silver, and Moshe's conversation with Yitro, he already had Eretz Yisrael within his reach, he extended the generous invitation to mankind, to share in our Ge'ulah - our redemption, and everything was ready.

Vay'hi Bin'soa' ha'aron - it should take us just a few more days. During the last few days, something happened - disaster struck. That disaster inverted Jewish History and that disaster dislocated Parashat Vay'hi Bin'soa' ha'aron. And that disaster inverted the march - instead of marching to Eretz Yisrael, we began to march away from Eretz Yisrael. Moshe discovered something else - he realized something else. He knew pretty well that he was chosen as the teacher of Klal Yisrael. God did not elect him as a diplomat, as a negotiator, but as the teacher or the Rebbe of the people, as their spiritual and moral leader. God Himself told him, when Moshe asked: "Who am I, that I should go to Phar'ao?" He said: "you shall worship God on this mountain".

Basically, "Moshe, had I been looking for a negotiator, I wouldn't have selected you. But I'm not looking for a negotiator - I can do the art of negotiating by myself. I need a teacher for my people - as a teacher, you yourself will agree that you are the best one - you are a teacher par excellence. And that's why I selected you: 'And it shall be your sign' - and that is the reason 'that it was I who sent you'; that I selected you and not somebody else (this is how the Sefer haHinukh understands it)." There were many people in Egypt who were qualified to be negotiators; because the purpose of the Exodus is not political freedom, but the conversion of a slave society into a Kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation. And for that you are wonderful. Moshe knew this. However, he did not expect, until the Mit'avim, that he would assume the role of a teacher, but of a nursing mother/father - an Omein.

What is an Omein?- it is a nursing mother or father. Of course, a nursing mother teaches the baby. Perhaps the mother is the best and most important teacher in the life of a baby. But she does something else - the Rebbe teaches the talmidim. The nursing mother, in addition to teaching, carries the baby in her bosom or in her arms. "...as a nurse carries a sucking child,". What does this mean? Usually the father doesn't do it, the mother does it. The father has no patience for that. It has more meaning than the literal meaning of the word. The teacher does teach his disciple, but the disciple very seldom becomes a part of him. When the mother teaches the baby, the baby becomes a part of her. The mother, when she rears the baby, has one calling, one purpose, to protect the baby. The Omein or the mother basically do not belong to themselves. Many may be very critical of my statement but this is true according to Yahadut. A mother has no life of her own. She belongs to the infant. At least as long as the infant is helpless and is exposed to the dangers of a hostile environment. She belongs to the infant.

Moshe discovered now that teaching is not enough for a leader of Yisrael. A teacher, no matter how devoted, has a life of his own. That his job is nursing, carrying the baby in his arms, watching every step, guessing the baby's needs (a baby cannot say what she wants, you have to guess) feeling pain when the baby cries and being happy when the baby is cheerful. Teaching or instructing her good performances, but that is not everything. Moshe, who reconciled with his role as a teacher and leader of adults, began to doubt his ability to play the role of an Omen or mother nurse. Listen to his words: Did I conceive all these people, did I bear them, that you say to me: Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries an infant? Moshe discovered something tragic in a mother's life. That from now on, as an individual, he has no rights at all, no right to rejoice, whenever God will be good to him. As a private person, he is not entitled to enjoy life as an individual, to be happy in an ordinary way, like any other human being, because his children will never belong to Moshe. He lost his family. He became the mother nurse of K'lal Yisrael, no family of his own. This is what our Rabbis say: "he separated himself from his wife." It isn't just his wife from whom he separated, it's the wife and children (two lovely boys), his sister, his brother. He could not share his joy with them, they could not share their joy with him, he is the father of Yisrael, the father of K'lal Yisrael, and that is what he

means: the role of "as a nurse carries a sucking child" was imposed upon him during the rebellion of the Mit'onenim. He separated himself, not only from his mate, but also from his children. Where are Moshe's children? Do we ever come across Moshe's children? There was a census taken in the desert the beginning of the 40 years and at the end of the 40 years. Are Moshe's children mentioned? Not once.

This is the lineage of Aaron and Moses...These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar; Where are Moshe's children? Moshe didn't have children. And it is later, in T'nakh, the name of Moshe's child was mentioned, not as the son of Moshe, but the son of "Menasheh". Why was a little Nun added to the name? Not only in order to reflect unfavorably upon Moshe - this is ridiculous, Moshe was not responsible for what happened, but because Moshe did not have children. I always say that if Moshe had a child, then according to the law he would have been in a most awful dilemma. According to the law, it would have been required of him to give preference to his child, as far as the study of Torah is concerned, over the child of his next-door neighbor. This is a law which Moshe Rabbenu taught us: Your own son takes precedence (in teaching Torah) over the son of your fellow. On the other hand, Moshe had no right to give any preference, or to give an additional second to his son, because he was the father of every child within the Jewish community. So Moshe lost his children. He became the Omein, the nursing mother, of K'lal Yisrael. And that is exactly what God told him at the time of Mattan Torah: You say to them, return to your tents, to your private lives, but you, stay here. Moshe realized it during the incident of the Mit'onenim. And that is what Miriam, the true, loyal sister, resented. Does prophecy require of Man alienation of his family? Does God require of the prophet that he should forget his sister and brother, his children and wife, and dedicate himself only to the people?

...Has he not spoken through us also? And we live a beautiful life with our husbands and children and relatives. And it doesn't interfere with our devotion to the people. That's exactly what God resented and told her: There is a difference between you and Moshe. An ordinary prophet does not have to sacrifice his private interest, his selfish concern, his family, his father, mother children, brother, sister; he can be a prophet, communicate with God, and at the same time be a devoted father, a loving brother, and a helpful head of the family. "Not so my servant Moshe." He's consecrated fully and wholly to me. And that's how the Parasha of B'haalot'kha concludes its long story - it's one story, this story - of a great march which could have led us into the Messianic era. On that day, God will be one and His Name one. but which was interrupted by some multitude which was permissive, hedones.

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