



BS"D

To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com

From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BEHAALASCHA - 5764

To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoo.com. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. A complete archive of previous issues (as well as a long list of torah links) is now available at <http://www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha>

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [<mailto:ryfrand@torah.org>]

Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha -

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 420, Fish and Meat.

It's Summertime, And The Parshiyos Are Depressing

A certain chassidic Jew came to visit the Gerrer Rebbe (The Chidushei HaRim). The chassid looked depressed and the Rebbe asked what was troubling him. The response was that he was bothered by the fact that it was summer. The Rebbe then asked if the heat bothered him. The chassid responded that his problem was not with the weather -- it was with the weekly Torah portions. For two months during the summer, we read parsha after parsha that relates troubling episodes about the attitudes and behavior of our ancestors in the Wilderness.

Beha'aloscha, Shelach, Korach, Chukas, Balak, Pinchas, and Mattos-Massei contain incident after incident in which the pioneers of our nation acted in a manner unbecoming of the "Dor Deah" ["Generation of Knowledge"] which they were supposed to represent. In these parshiyos, the Torah describes sin following sin, complaint following complaint, rebellion following rebellion. "If this can happen to the generation that received the Torah at Sinai, what hope is there for us?" moaned the visiting chassid.

Of course a person needs to be on a very high spiritual plane in order to become depressed for such reasons. Most people who are down during this time of year in fact are down because of the heat or some other minor reason!

The Chidushei HaRim responded that the "sins" that were committed by the generation of the wilderness are not "sins" in our sense of the word. At our level, these actions would in fact be considered to be "mitzvos," perhaps greater than the mitzvos we do.

This is the introduction to any analysis we might provide over the next several weeks of the various "sinful" incidents related in these "summertime parshiyos." The incidents, as they actually occurred, are only considered sins in contrast to the high spiritual level of the generation.

The Upside Down 'Nun's Symbolize Inconsistent Behavior

This week's parsha contains the first of many unfortunate incidents in Sefer Bamidbar. Parshas Beha'aloscha also contains the unusual upside down appearance of two letter 'Nun's which bracket the pasukim [verses] "When the Ark would journey, Moshe said 'Arise, Hashem, and let Your enemies be scattered and let those who hate You flee from before You.' And when it rested, he would say, 'Reside tranquilly Hashem among the myriads and thousands of Israel.'" [Bamidbar 10:35-36].

The Talmud explains that this section is bracketed to indicate that

sequentially it does not belong here. It should really have appeared in the Parsha of Bamidbar or Naso where the formations and the travels of the camp were discussed. The reason why it was placed here was to put separation between the "first account of punishment" and the "second account of punishment" (to relieve the gloomy impact of an otherwise unbroken narration of one punishment after another) [Shabbos 115b].

The Talmud identifies the "second punishment" as the section that begins "And the people were like those who seek pretexts of evil in the ears of Hashem" ("vayehi ha'am k'mis-onen-nim...") [Bamidbar 11:1]. The people complained they were sick of the manna, they longed for the food delicacies of Egypt. The punishment was a heavenly fire that descended and consumed at the edges of the camp. However, to which "first punishment" is the Talmud referring?

The allusion to a "first punishment" is more subtle. The Talmud identifies it with the pasuk [verse], "And they journey from the Mountain of Hashem..." [Bamidbar 10:33]. Rabbi Chama son of Rabbi Chanina elaborates: "They journeyed away from Hashem." Tosfos there clarifies: "In journeying away from Mt. Sinai, they acted like children running away from the school house."

It is ironic that parshas Beha'aloscha always comes out at this time of year when we can most vividly appreciate the metaphor of the child counting the days on the calendar and looking at his watch, waiting for the school year to end! Go watch the kids rushing out of school on that last day of class. The metaphor will become crystal clear.

When learning this Gemara I was always bothered by the attribution of the pasuk "They journeyed away from the Mountain of Hashem" with the term "first punishment" (puroniyus). This might be accurately described as a sin, but where is the punishment? The second "puroniyus" is clear: The heavenly fire consuming at the edges of the camp was a punishment. But, apparently, there was not a punishment for the sin of "running away from Har Sinai like a child running from the schoolhouse."

Rav Schwab asks this question and provides an answer. He says that running away from the Mountain of G-d without fully experiencing the impact of what was gained by having been in proximity to that mountain is itself the greatest punishment. The fact that a person could have achieved more and failed to achieve it is a self-inflicted punishment.

Likewise there may not be an independent Heavenly punishment for failing to properly enjoy the fulfillment of mitzvos -- whether it be the joy of the Shabbos experience or the uplifting feeling from fulfillment of any of a number of other commandments. However, the lack of experiencing that joy and uplifting is itself a tremendous punishment. It is a punishment that we bring upon ourselves by not properly contemplating and appreciating what we were given and what we have in G-d's mitzvos.

This insight can help us understand the urgent need to separate these two "punishments" with the section of the Ark's traveling. The immediately subsequent section begins with the words "And the people were k'mis-onen-nim". The word "mis-onen-nim" comes from the word 'onen' meaning a mourner. The people were mourning. What were they mourning about? The fact that they did not have meat!

"This is what should upset you? You are crying about the fact that you used to get 'free fish' in Egypt? When you left the Mountain of G-d, when you left the ability to learn Torah, you were not crying. You went out then with a smile! And now you are crying about the fact that you don't have steak to eat!"

This contrast compounds the sin and demonstrates the people's inconsistency. Therefore, this harsh juxtaposition of incidents needed to be separated by the section bracketed off by the upside down 'Nun's.

We set our own standards. We always need to ask ourselves "What makes me happy and what makes me sad? What excites me and what depresses me?"

Are we like the Jew who came to the Chidushei HaRim and was depressed because he didn't want to read about the sins of the Jewish

people? Or are we in mourning because we do not have enough delicacies and luxuries to satisfy all of our gluttonous desires?

Homiletically, perhaps that this is why it was specifically the inverted letter 'Nun' which separates the inconsistent behavior of the two otherwise adjacent portions. The letter 'Nun' symbolizes 'Ne-emanus' -- Consistency (Faithful loyalty). The inverted 'Nun' symbolizes inconsistency. That in fact was the sin represented by these two sections. It was easy to make them happy -- when they were running away from Mt. Sinai. On the other hand they easily became agitated and depressed if they did not have access to every luxury that they could imagine.

We must strive for consistency and we must strive to avoid the self-afflicting punishment of not appreciating becoming close to G-d through His Torah.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are: Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>

CHIEF RABBI JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation [From last year]

Behaalotcha

IT WAS THE WORST CRISIS IN MOSES' LIFE. Incited by the 'mixed multitude', the Israelites complain about the food: 'If only we had meat to eat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna.'

It was an appalling show of ingratitude, but not the first time the Israelites had behaved this way. Three earlier episodes are recorded in the book of Shemot (chs. 15-17) immediately after the crossing of the Red Sea. First at Marah they complained that the water was bitter 1 . Then, in more aggressive terms, they protested at the lack of food ('If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death' 2). Later, at Refidim, they grumbled at the absence of water, prompting Moses to say to G-d, 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!' 3

The episode in our sedra - at the place that became known as Kivrot Hataavah - was not, then, the first such challenge Moses had faced, but the fourth. Yet Moses' reaction this time is nothing less than complete despair:

Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you, that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat'. I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now - if I have found favour in your eyes - and do not let me face my own ruin. 4

It is an extraordinary outburst. Moses prays to die. He is not the last

prophet of Israel to do so. Elijah, Jeremiah and Jonah did likewise - making us realise that even the greatest can have their moments of despair. Yet the case of Moses is particularly puzzling. He had faced, and overcome, such difficulties before. Each time, G-d had answered the people's requests. He had sent water, and manna, and quails. Moses knew this. Why then did the fourth outburst of the people ('If only we had meat to eat') induce in this, the strongest of men, what seems nothing less than a complete breakdown?

Equally strange is G-d's reaction:

Bring me seventy elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Make them come to the Tent of Meeting that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the spirit that is on you and put the spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone. 5

To be sure, this is a response to Moses' complaint, 'I cannot carry all these people by myself'. Yet both complaint and response are puzzling. In what way would the appointment of elders address the internal crisis Moses was undergoing? Did he need them to help him find meat? Clearly not. Either it would appear by a miracle or it would not appear at all. Did he need them to share the burdens of leadership? The answer is again, No. Already, not long before, on the advice of his father-in-law Yitro, he had created an infrastructure of delegation. Yitro had said this: 'What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you. You cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may G-d be with you. You must be the people's representative before G-d and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people - men who fear G-d, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain - and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.' 6

Moses acted on the suggestion. He therefore already had assistants, deputies, a leadership team. In what way would this new appointment of seventy elders make a difference?

Besides which, why the emphasis in G-d's reply on spirit: 'I will take of the spirit that is on you and put the spirit on them'? In what way did the elders need to become prophets in order to help Moses? Being a prophet does not help someone in carrying out administrative or other burdens of leadership. It helps only in knowing what guidance to give the people - and for this, one prophet, Moses, is sufficient. To put it more precisely, either the seventy elders would deliver the same message as Moses or they would not. If they did, they would be superfluous. If they did not, they would undermine his authority -- precisely what Joshua [11: 28] 7 feared.

Aware of the multiple difficulties in the text, Ramban offers the following interpretation: 'Moses thought that if they had many leaders, they would appease their wrath by speaking to their hearts when the people started complaining. Or it is possible that when the elders prophesied, and the spirit was on them, the people would know that the elders were established as prophets and would not all gather against Moses but would ask for their desires from them as well.'

Both suggestions are insightful, but neither is without difficulty. The first - that the elders would become peacemakers among the people - did not call for a new leadership cadre. Moses already had the heads of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. The second - that their presence would diffuse the people's anger by giving them many people, not one, to complain to - is equally hard to understand. We recall that when the people had one other person to turn to with their concerns (Aaron), this led to the making of the Golden Calf. Why did G-d not 'take of the spirit' that was on Moses and place it on Aaron at that time? It would have prevented the single greatest catastrophe in the wilderness years? Besides which, we do not find that the seventy elders actually did anything at

Kivrot Hataavah. The text even says [11: 25] 'When the spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again' 8 [this is the plain sense according to most commentators, though the Targum reads it differently]. How then did this once-and-never-to-be-repeated flow of the prophetic spirit make a difference? The more we reflect on the passage, the more the difficulties multiply.

Yet something happened. Moses' despair disappeared. His attitude was transformed. Immediately thereafter, it is as if a new Moses stands before us, untroubled by even the most serious challenges to his leadership. When two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, prophesy not in the Tent of Meeting but in the camp, Joshua senses a threat to Moses' authority and says, 'Moses, my lord, stop them!' Moses replies, with surpassing generosity of spirit, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them.' In the next chapter, when his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, start complaining about him, he does nothing - 'Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.' Indeed, when G-d became angry at Miriam he prayed on her behalf. The despair has gone. The crisis has passed. These two challenges were far more serious than the request of the people for meat, yet Moses meets them with confidence and equanimity. Something has taken place between him and G-d and he has been transformed. What was it?

To understand the sequence of events we must first place them in their historical context. Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, in his insightful recent book on Moses' leadership, *Tzir ve-tzon* (Alon Shvut, 5762) notes that there is a marked change of tone between the book of Shemot and the book of Bemidbar. The complaints do not change, but G-d's and Moses' responses do. In Shemot, G-d does not get angry with the people, or if he does, Moses' prayers are able to turn away wrath. In Bemidbar, the response - sometimes G-d's, sometimes Moses' - are more unforgiving. What has changed?

R. Lichtenstein, correctly in my view, suggests that the early volatility of the people is forgivable. To be sure, they should have had faith in G-d, but they had never been faced with the Red Sea, or the desert, or lack of food and water before. Their greatest offence - making the Golden Calf - leads to a long pause in the narrative, essentially from Shemot chapter 25 to Bemidbar chapter 11. During this period, in response to Moses' prayer for forgiveness, G-d instructs the people to build a tabernacle which will ensure his constant presence among them.

Much of the second half of Shemot, the entire book of Vayikra and the first ten chapters of Bemidbar are dedicated to the details of the sanctuary, the service that was to take place there, and the reconstitution of Israel as a holy nation camped, tribe by tribe, around it. The whole of this sequence of 53 chapters, all of which is set in the desert at Sinai, is a kind of metahistorical moment, a break in the journey of the Israelites from place to place. Time and space stand still. Between the twin events of the Giving of the Torah and the construction of the Tabernacle, the Israelites are turned from an undisciplined mass of fugitive slaves into a nation whose constitution is the Torah, whose sovereign is G-d alone, and at whose centre (physically and metaphysically) is the Mishkan or sanctuary, the visible sign of G-d's presence. They are no longer what they were before they came to Sinai. They are now 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Hence Moses' despair when they murmured about the food. They had done so before. But they were different before. They had not yet gone through the transformative experiences that shaped them as a nation. What caused Moses' spirit to break was the fact that, no sooner had they left the Sinai desert to begin the journey again, they reverted to their old habits of complaint as if nothing had changed. If the revelation at Sinai, the experience of Divine anger at the Golden Calf, and the long labour of building the Tabernacle had not changed them, what would or could? Moses' despair is all too intelligible. For the first time since his mission

began he could see defeat staring him in the face. Nothing - or so it seemed -- not miracles, deliverances, revelations, or creative labour, could change this people from a nation that thought of food into one that grasped the significance of the unique ethical-spiritual destiny to which they had been called. Perhaps G-d, from the perspective of eternity, could see some ray of hope in the future. Moses, as a human being, could not. 'I would rather die,' he says, 'than spend the rest of my life labouring in vain.'

We now reach the point of speculation. I may be wrong (as Netziv puts it in his introduction to *Haamek Davar*, section 5) but I interpret the sequence of events as follows:

There can come a time in the life of any truly transformative leader when the sun of hope is eclipsed by the clouds of doubt - not about G-d, but about people, above all about oneself. Am I really making a difference? Am I deceiving myself when I think I can change the world? I have tried, I have given the very best of my energies and inspiration, yet nothing seems to alter the depressing reality of human frailty and lack of vision. I have given the people the word of G-d himself, yet they still complain, still they think only about the discomforts of today, not the vast possibilities of tomorrow. Such despair (lehavdil, Winston Churchill, who suffered from it, called it the 'black dog') can occur to the very greatest (to repeat: not only Moses but also Elijah, Jeremiah and Jonah prayed to die). Moses was the very greatest. Therefore G-d gave him the greatest gift of all - one that no one else has ever been given.

G-d let Moses see the influence he had on others. For a brief moment G-d took 'the spirit that is on you and put it on them' so that Moses could see the difference he had made to one group, the seventy elders. Moses needed nothing more. He did not need their help. He did not need them to continue to prophesy. All he needed was a transparent glimpse of how his spirit had communicated itself to them. Then he knew he had made a difference. Little could he have known that he - who encountered almost nothing from the Israelites in his lifetime but complaints, challenges and rebellions - would have so decisive an influence that the people of Israel 3,300 years later would still be studying and living by the words he transmitted; that he had helped forge an identity that would prove more tenacious than any other in the history of mankind; that in the full perspective of hindsight he would prove to have been the greatest leader that ever lived. He did not know these things; he did not need to know these things. All he needed was to see that seventy elders had internalised his spirit and made his message their own. Then he knew that his life was not in vain. He had disciples. His vision was not his alone. He had planted it in others. Others, too, would continue his work after his lifetime. That was enough for him, as it must be for us. Once Moses knew this, he could face any challenge with equanimity (except, many years later, at Kadesh, but that is another story).

Understood thus there is a message in Moses' crisis for all of us (that, surely, is why it is recounted in the Torah). I remember when my late father z'l died and we - my mother and brothers - were sitting shiva. Time and again people would come and tell us of kindnesses he had done for them, in some cases more than fifty years before. I have since discovered that many people who have sat shiva, r'l, have had similar experiences.

How moving, I thought, and at the same time how sad, that my father z'l was not there to hear their words. What comfort it would have brought him to know that despite the many hardships he faced, the good he did was not forgotten. And how tragic that we so often keep our sense of gratitude to ourselves, saying it aloud only when the person to whom we feel indebted has left this life, and we are comforting his or her mourners.

Perhaps that just is the human condition. We never really know how much we have given others - how much the kind word, the thoughtful deed, the comforting gesture, changes lives and is never forgotten. In this respect, if in no other, we are like Moses. He too was human; he had no

privileged access into other people's minds; without a miracle, he could not have known the influence he had on those closest to him. All the evidence seemed to suggest otherwise. The people, even after all G-d and he had done for them, were still ungrateful, querulous, quick to criticize and complain. But that was on the surface. For a moment G-d gave him a glimpse of what was beneath the surface. He showed him how Moses' spirit had entered others and lifted them, however briefly, to the level of prophetic vision.

G-d did this for no other person - not then, not now. But if it was enough for Moses, it is enough for us. The good we do lives after us. It is the greatest thing that does. We may leave a legacy of wealth, power, even fame, but these are questionable benefits and sometimes harm rather than help those we leave them to. What we leave to others is a trace of our influence for good. We may never see it, but it is there. That is the greatest blessing of leadership. It alone is the antidote to despair, the solid ground of hope.

From: Shlomo Katz [mailto:skatz@torah.org To: hamaayan@torah.org
Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Beha'alotecha
Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz
Beha'alotecha: Transition Volume XVIII, No. 32 16 Sivan 5764 June 5, 2004

R' Gedaliah Schorr z"l teaches that in this week's parashah, Bnei Yisrael enter a transitional period - the beginning of the end of Moshe's reign. He explains: According to one opinion in the gemara, there are not five books of the Torah, but seven. The Book of Bemidbar is actually three books, of which the end of one, all of the second, and the beginning of the third are found in our parashah. (According to this view, verses 10:35-36 are a free-standing book.)

At the end of the "first" book, we read that Bnei Yisrael traveled a distance of three days from Har Sinai. Rashi writes that they made this trip in only one day because Hashem was "in a hurry" to take His people into Eretz Yisrael.

Indeed, had Bnei Yisrael loyally followed Moshe, they would have entered the Land at that time and never been exiled. However, this did not happen. Instead, the "third" book opens by informing us that Bnei Yisrael were complaining about an unspecified subject. What was their complaint? Chassidic works explain that Bnei Yisrael were unsure whether the miracle of traveling three-days' distance in one day was good or not. The root of this uncertainty, R' Schorr explains, was the fact that Bnei Yisrael had made the golden calf at Har Sinai, thus distancing themselves from Hashem and also from Moshe. Because of this distance between Moshe and Bnei Yisrael, he could not lead them once-and-for-all into the Land. [Bnei Yisrael were unsure whether it was good to rush to the Land because they sensed that Moshe was no longer the right leader for them.] In the verses which follow, Bnei Yisrael lodge their complaints against the mahn. This is consistent with the above, for Chazal say that the mahn fell only in Moshe's merit. This is why Hashem's response to Bnei Yisrael's complaints was to appoint a sanhedrin / high court alongside Moshe. This is also why it is in our parashah that two Jews prophecy that Moshe will not enter the Land. (See Rashi to 11:28) (Ohr Gedalyahu)

"With matzot and bitter herbs they shall eat it." (9:11) R' Moshe Sherer z"l (1921-1998; prominent Jewish lay leader) writes: Compared to the symbols of the other holidays, matzah is rather low-key. On Rosh Hashanah, the shofar is blown loudly. On Sukkot, we parade with the lulav standing tall. On Chanukah, we light menorahs in our windows. On Simchat Torah and Purim, we also celebrate conspicuously.

Why is it, then, that throughout history, it was Pesach which seemed to

enrage our gentile neighbors the most? Why was it typically at Pesach time that Jews suffered from blood libels and pogroms?

Certainly, writes R' Sherer, this was the work of the sitra achra (loosely translated: the angel who is the guardian of all evil forces) himself. Matzah represents too much for us to be allowed to eat it in peace. What does matzah represent? It reminds us of Hashem's strong hand and of the eternity of the Jewish people. Even when our ancestors in Egypt fell perilously close to spiritual oblivion, Hashem saved them. Also, matzah represents the transmission of our heritage and beliefs from generation to generation, as it is written (Shmot 13:8), "And you shall relate to your son . . ." Over the matzah, we tell our children of the many empires that forced our ancestors to eat matzah in secret and of the fact that we outlived those empires.

From matzah, we also can learn how to fight those empires, R' Sherer writes. The gemara states that matzah which is made in direct sunlight is unfit for Pesach. So, too, our activism must be low-key. Matzah also may not contain food coloring. So, too, our activism must be free of foreign, non-Torah influences.

(Be'sh'tei Enayim p. 43)

"When you go to wage war in your Land against the enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound short blasts of the trumpets . . ." (10:9)

From the seemingly superfluous words, "against the enemy who oppresses you," Rambam derives that there is a mitzvah to sound the trumpets and pray to Hashem over any form of oppression, be it a drought, plague or other trouble. He writes that this is part of the process of teshuvah / repentance, and that through teshuvah one causes his troubles to depart. The biggest sin, Rambam writes, is to ascribe one's troubles to fate or coincidence. R' Yaakov Yitzchak Halevi Ruderman z"l added (during the Yom Kippur War): Even those who ascribe troubles to coincidence start to pray when the troubles are their own. That is how we must see the troubles of our brethren in Israel - as our own.

Moreover, said R' Ruderman, Chazal teach that every person should believe, "The whole world was created for me." This obligates each of us to believe that his prayers can make a difference.

(Masat Levi p. 332)

"Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and its officers . . ." (11:16)

Rashi quotes the midrash which says that the term "officers" refers to those people who were assigned by the Egyptians to whip Jews who failed to meet their work quotas. In fact, these officers failed to do their "duty" and were beaten themselves. R' Aharon Kotler z"l asks: Why is this a qualification to serve on the sanhedrin / high court? He explains that a Jewish leader can succeed, not in his own merit, but only in the merit of the Jewish people. It is therefore incumbent upon a would-be leader to demonstrate his total commitment and self-sacrifice for his people. Moshe, too, the midrash tells us, used to help his brethren with their slave labor although, as a Levite, he was exempted by Pharaoh.

(Mishnat R' Aharon Vol. II, p.113)

"My servant Moshe, he My whole house he is trusted." (12:7)

What does it mean to be a "servant" of Hashem? R' David Kimchi z"l ("Radak") explains (in his commentary to Yehoshua 1:1) that someone who devotes all of his powers to serving Hashem and who, even when he is engaged in mundane matters, does them for the sake of serving G-d, is called a "servant of Hashem." R' Elchanan Wasserman z"l hy"d elaborates: Slaves cannot own property; everything they acquire belongs to their masters. Similarly, when a person recognizes that all of his powers and belongings belong to Hashem and must be used exclusively to serve him, he can be called a "servant of Hashem." [Ed. note: Hebrew uses the same word - "eved" - to mean "slave" and "servant."]

In this light, adds R' Wasserman, we can understand Rambam's statement that, although no person will ever be as great a prophet as Moshe, one

can be as great a tzaddik as Moshe. Anyone can choose, as Moshe did, to direct all of his actions to serving G-d.

Of course, it was easier for Moshe to do this than it would be for any of us. However, the gemara teaches that a poor person's sacrifice of wheat is as beloved to Hashem as a rich man's sacrifice of an ox. One must only make the sacrifice. (Kovetz Ma'amarim p.48)

How can one serve G-d all of the time? R' Eli Reingold shlita (maggid shiur at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington) answered with the following parable: Imagine that you need to move your car from City A to City B, but you do not wish to drive it there yourself. There are companies whose business is finding people who need to travel from City A to City B but who have no cars. These companies match car to driver, collect a fee, and everyone's needs are satisfied.

To ensure the delivery of the car, the company gives the driver a deadline by which he must arrive at the destination (after which the police will be called). The length of time that the driver is given depends on the distance; however, the driver is not expected to drive 24 hours a day. Time is built in to the schedule for an appropriate amount of rest and relaxation. As long as the driver keeps his destination in mind, a reasonable amount of time may be spent on diversions. So it is with serving Hashem. One is not expected to learn Torah and perform mitzvot 24 hours a day or even at every waking moment. One is expected to keep the ultimate destination in mind and to relax so that he will be able to serve Hashem better. If he does that, even his diversions become part of serving Hashem. (Heard from R' Reingold shlita)

HaMaayan, Copyright © 2004 by Shlomo Katz and Torah.org. Posted by Alan Broder, ajb@torah.org. The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives are available starting with Rosh HaShanah 5758 (1997) at <http://www.torah.org/learning/hamaayan/>. Text archives from 1990 through the present are available at <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org

Summary and background of the Indian sheitel psak

<http://www.frumteens.com>

http://www.frumteens.com/topic.php?topic_id=5277&forum_id=34&topic_title=Sheitels&forum_title=Chukas+Akum&M=1&S=1

MODERATOR Posted - 14 May 2004 11:54

[From Chaim - Moderator of frumteens is apparently a musmach of Lakewood. Not sure of his name though.]

Almost 40 years ago, Rav Moshe Sterenbuch put out a kuntres called "Das V'halachah", wherein he prohibited deriving any benefit from human hair products out of India, because of the Isser of takrovos avodah zorah.

His writes that the Indian hair is purchased from Hindu Temples which get the hair from women who cut it off in an avodah zorah ceremony, which goes something like this:

The woman cuts her hair off as a sacrifice to the Hindu god, Vishnu. The cutting of the hair is done at or in the temple and is a religious procedure itself, like shechting a korban, and then it is supposed to be burned on an alter in a sacrifice to Vishnu.

The Hindu priests, however, after placing the hair on the alter and perhaps burning some of them, proceed to steal most of the sacrifice hairs and sell them to exporters. From those hairs come the Indian human hair shaitlach. There were also other possible scenarios that he entertained, but at the end of the day, he prohibited all of them.

The rabbonim weren't doing much about this then, because first of all, shaitel manufacturers started covering it up, claiming that the hair doesn't really come from Temples, or that it doesn't really come from

India, or that only some of the Indian hair comes from the Temples but the majority does not, or they promise not to get hair from India but they did anyway; and secondly, it was hard to confirm Rabbi Shterenbuch's story, so and due to the contradictions, confusion, lack of confirmation, and the fact that in those days Rav Shterebuch was a young man with much less clout than he has today, nothing much happened.

Then, about 20 years later, in 1979, a rabbi in Flatbush received a call from one of his congregants who read in a business journal that the Indian hair that ends up in wigs comes from Buddhist temples. The rabbi announced in Shul that the shaitlach are prohibited.

Upon hearing this, many rabbonim did some research into the matter and found out that indeed about 70% of the Indian human hair comes from Hindu Temples, mostly in the Madras region, the by-product of a Hindu practice called "tonsure."

Rav Schwab ZTL was ready to prohibit the shaitlach, as were most other rabbonim in America. The more research was done, the scarier the situation looked.

That is, up to a point. What happened was that when the inquiries got really thorough a totally different picture emerged. There turned up many contradictory stories about the practice and procedure and meaning of the tonsure among the Hindus that were interviewed. Some said that the hair cutting is a sacrifice; some said it wasn't; some said that sometimes it is and sometimes it's not; some said that different Hindu sects and even different individuals do it for different reasons; some said that the Hindu hair is holy and therefore used in the religious practice and others said the opposite – that hair is unclean and therefore it is cut off before the woman enters the Temple; others said that really the process is not avodah zorah but the women who get their hair cut think it is, and that itself would prohibit.

I suppose it's kind of like, l'havdil, if a non-Jew would take it upon himself to find out about let's say the Jewish rite of circumcision. Who would he ask? An orthodox Jew? Conservative? Reform? A kabbalist? Metzitzah bepeh? Not b'peh? I mean, how many times do we see articles about Judaism in secular sources? And how many times do we laugh at them and say they haven't got a clue? The same thing seemed to be happening here.

So they contacted swamis, which are like Hindu rabbis, or teachers, or yogis, who referred them to a man who was supposedly the biggest scholar in Hinduism in this country, a Dr. Anand Mohan, professor of religion and philosophy at City College in Queens, NY, and a Hindu priest.

According to Dr. Mohan, the hair cutting practice is not a sacrifice to any god. What happens is, women sometimes make a vow that if either a simcha and/or a tzara happens to them, they will "give away a prized possession" of theirs. Since they are not allowed to cut their hair at all except under certain circumstances, their long, silky hair is their most beautiful and prized possession. So they make a vow to cut it off.

They do not have to do this in a temple, and they can throw the hair in the garbage of they want – it doesn't matter what happens to it. The point is that they do away with a prized possession. That possession could also theoretically be a gold bangle, or any object of value.

There are other times that they would perform a hair cutting as well, such as the first haircut of a baby.

Cutting the hair is kind of a purification process, like taking a shower, except instead of getting rid of dirt, they get rid of hair. In fact, after they cut the hair they take a bath before they enter the temples. And just as dirt would not be considered "holy" even if your bath was a religious practice, so too the hair is nothing but the garbage by-product of this purification process, and is in no way takrovos avodah zorah.

In the olden days, Dr. Mohan said, women indeed used to cut their hair and throw it away. Or they went to the temple to cut their hair, and the temple people threw it away. But then, some the temple people got an idea to make wigs out of the hair and decided to make a business out of

it.

So they stationed barbers outside of the temples where women would come and get their hair cut before they took their baths and entered the temple. The temple trustees – not the priests – take the hair and sell it. Theoretically, the women could sell it themselves, but if they would do that, it wouldn't be much of a self-sacrifice, since they are making profit on it, and the whole idea is that they have to “give away” something valuable.

Ad kan divrei Dr. Mohan.

His version of the story was confirmed independently by a Diana Eck, professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies in Harvard University. Without hearing what Dr. Mohan said, she provided the exact same report.

The tonsure practice is a preparatory act for worship. It is not an act of worship itself. The primary shrine where this takes place is in Tirupati, in Southern Andhra Pradesh. It is a hilltop shrine. On festival days, 20,000-30,000 pilgrims come to Tirupati.

Rav Moshe Shterenbuch was then contacted, and he said that he really isn't sure of the information that he received, and that even if it is true, it “quite possibly” – not “for sure” – would create a prohibition of takrovos avodah zorah

All the information – every contradiction, version, and opinion, with the documentation – was collected, and set to Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach ZTL and Rav Elyashev.

They both permitted. Rav Shlomo Zalman, as reported by Rabbi Portnoy, said you can be lenient because since there are several doubts whether the hair in any given shaitel is really avodah zorah, we have a sfek sfeika.

Rav Elyashev wrote a 3 page teshuva, quoting Dr. Mohan by name (although in the printed version they for some reason omitted it), and explaining, among other things, that since the hair is not cut inside the temple in front of any god, and is not done as a manner of worship, it is permitted. He also writes that it doesn't matter what the woman has in mind as much as it does what the barber has in mind, and he knows why he is cutting the hair, and it is not for idolatry.

This is because in order to constitute takrovos avodah zorah, the cutting of the hair itself has to be a religious ceremony, comparable to shechitah, and so depends on the “shochet” himself.

Rav Elyashev adds, that of course this halachah depends on the facts, and he is relying on the facts as presented to him, so his psak is contingent on the accuracy of those facts.

Rav Sheinberg then also permitted at that time, based on the facts that he researched, primarily through a sefardic “chacham”.

A lot of confusion happened during the research because when people investigated, there were a lot of Indian clerics talking about how the hair is an “offering” or a “sacrifice”, which sounded scary. But it was later found out that they meant “offering” not as in Korbon but as in something you offer – or give; and “sacrifice” was not meant in the context of Korbon but rather “self sacrifice”. So things were scary when they were investigated but when they were thoroughly investigated, things got better.

Rav Moshe Shterenbuch was sent the material as well, but he did not change his psak – he still prohibited. He disagreed with Rav Elyashev regarding certain halachos, plus he said he is not convinced that the Metzius is accurate, and so he does not have enough evidence to permit the safek d'oraisa.

Things were quiet until recently. The Wall Street Journal, last summer, published one of those articles describing the idolatrous practice of Indian tonsure as the source of the hair in American wigs. Just as 15 years ago, the tumult was triggered by an article in a trade magazine, so too now the tumult was triggered by the Journal article.

Slowly things started getting louder. It was discovered that Rav Shterenbuch prohibited, and about a month ago in Eretz Yisroel, Rav

Moshe Shterenbuch's name came up on tzetlach prohibiting the shaitlach again.

Dayan Dunner of London went to Rav Elyashev and obtained a heter to go into the Hindu Temples to see what the story is – kdei lehoros (in order to pasken a shailah) that would be permitted – and he took a trip to India last week, and came back with information that led many Rabbonim to prohibit the shaitlach again.

However, I am not aware of what information is being used, and how thorough of an inquiry was done. Last time this happened, everyone got scared based on the first level of investigation, but later on, when the investigation got pretty intense, we found out it wasn't a problem.

So far, as far as I can see, Rav Wosner and Rav Karelitz put out a psak saying that “based on the information that we received”, they consider it a maybe avodah zorah situation so you shouldn't buy any new Indian shaitlach going forward, and try hard to exchange what you already have. They did not say to throw out your shaitlach. They are paskening that they don't know, and giving over the halchic guidelines on how to act when you don't know.

Rav Elyashev did not put anything in writing, but Rabbi Efrati, one of Rav Elyashev's close people, wrote a couple of letters summarizing what he says Rav Elyashev said. I have heard that there are disagreements among Rav Elyashev's close people regarding the accuracy of those letters, as well as the accuracy of the information that is being given to Rav Elyashev.

In short, I have not heard a psak from any posek so far except that “until we find out the whole story, we should be careful.” Which is fine, but the issue was apparently investigated thoroughly and closed 15 years ago. And just as 15 years ago, this was the initial reaction, and even upon investigation this was the reaction, until we found out that we needed really thorough investigations, which were done, and resulted in a lenient ruling (i.e. from Rav Elyashev and Rav Shlomo Zalman), the question now arises: Is the information that is being given to the Rabbonim (a) accurate and (b) complete? And (c) is it more so than the extensive information that was collected 15 years ago?

And even if there is a problem, how do you know which shaitlach are avodah zorah and which are not? Believability is an entire halachic issue in itself, especially since we are dealing with vested interests of vendors. Obviously this depends on the metzius more than on the halachah. And thus the question is: What is the real metzius. Many Rabbonim, such as Rav Wosner and Rav Karelitz, and perhaps Rav Elyashev, are saying they don't know. Yet.

The difficulty I am having with this is, the documentation that was done then seems compelling and conclusive. So it brings into question the accuracy and completeness of whatever information is causing doubts now. Especially since the current research was done in a very short time, and experience shows that until you get to the very bottom of the situation, it really does look like avodah zorah.

To me it seems that the metzius, the facts, as we know them at this point in time, indicate that there is no avodah zorah here, or at least there is enough reason to say there is no avodah zorah so as to permit the shaitlach, as per the psakim of Rav Shlomo Zalman, Rav Elyashev, and others back then. And since there has been no psak thus far issued except that “since we don't know therefore we should be careful”, and some statements in the name of Rav Elyashev whose reliability has been contested, therefore, I would say that if your Rav is unsure of the facts of the matter, then do not wear the questionable shaitlach until the issue is further researched. If your Rav, on the other hand, is comfortable that the research was already completed years ago, and that the current situation is merely a matter of these Rabbonim independently verifying what your Rav already knows to be true, then you are fully entitled to follow your rav, and it would not be considered going against Rav Elyashev or Rav Wosner, since even the great poskim admit that if someone really knows the facts, the psak would be different.

<http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/>
Large collection re sheitels

A letter put out by Rav Elyashiv
http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/Rav_Elyashiv-3L.jpg

The 2nd letter put out by Rav Ephrati.
<http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/RavEphrati2.pdf>

Rav Blumenkrantz in Torah Times on what sheitels he says have no problem at all. <http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/blum.pdf>

Rav Belsky's letter to Rav Elyashiv
<http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/RavBelsky-crudely-cleaned.pdf>

Rav Elyashiv's response to Rav Belsky (see below for Rav Belsky's letter) <http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~spotter/sheitel/wigRE2RB.jpg>

From Yated Neeman

Can a Sheitel be Prohibited Because of Avodah Zarah? A Background Discussion of the Halacha Issues Involved in the Use of Indian Hair by RABBI YIRMIYOHU KAGANOFF

By the time you are reading these words, you have certainly heard that there is a halachic concern about wearing sheitlach manufactured from hair of Indian origin. Suddenly, nearly all conversations in the frum world revolve around the origin of the hair in a sheitel. The purpose of this article is not to paskin anyone's specific shaylah; for that purpose, each individual should consult his personal Rav. This article is to provide background to some of the halachic issues and considerations involved.

Introduction to the Laws of Avodah Zarah In addition to the cardinal prohibition against worshipping idols, the Torah distanced us from any involvement with or benefit from Avodah Zarah. Furthermore, the money received in payment for the Avodah Zarah is also tainted with the stigma of Avodah Zarah and may not be used. As will be described later, this money must be destroyed in a way that no one will ever be able to use it.

Chazal prohibited benefit even from the wages earned for transporting an item used in idol worship. Thus, the wages of a person who hired himself to transport wine used in idol worship are prohibited (Mishnah, Avodah Zarah 62a). He is required to destroy whatever he received as a payment, and he must destroy it in a way that no one else can use it. The Gemara rules that if he received coins as payment, he must grind up the coins and then scatter the dust to the wind to guarantee that no one benefit from idolatry.

In this context, the Gemara recounts the following story: A man who had rented his boat to transport wine owned by idolaters was paid with a quantity of wheat. Since the wheat may not be used, the question was asked from Rav Chisda what to do with it. He ruled that the wheat should be burnt and then the ashes should be buried. The Gemara asks why not scatter the ashes, rather than burning them? The Gemara responds that we do not permit this out of concern that the ashes will fertilize the ground where they fall. Thus we see how concerned Chazal were that we should not gain any benefit from idols, even so indirectly.

There are several mitzvot of the Torah pertaining to Avodah Zarah, all of them to convey the Torah's concerns that we be extensively distanced from Avodah Zarah. For example, the Torah forbids having an Avodah Zarah in one's house (Avodah Zarah 15a). This is based on the verse *Vilo sovie so'aivah el bisecha*, You shall not bring an abomination into

your house (Devarim 7:26). In addition, we may not benefit from that which decorates an Avodah Zarah. Furthermore, we are prohibited from providing benefit to the Avodah Zarah (Gemara Avodah Zarah 13a). Thus, it is prohibited to make a donation if a neighbor or business contact solicits a contribution for his Avodah Zarah.

There is also a positive mitzvah to destroy avodah zarah. This is mentioned in the verse, *Abeid ti-abdun es kol hamekomos asher ovdu shom hagoyim ... es eloheiheim*, You shall completely destroy all the places where the nations worshipped their gods (Devarim 12:2). According to Rambam, the mitzvah min hatorah applies only to destroy the Avodah Zarah itself and that which decorates and serves it. There is no Torah requirement to destroy items used in the worship of Avodah Zarah (Hilchos Avodah Zarah 7:1-2, as proved by Kehilos Yaakov, Bava Kamma end of #3). However, as mentioned above, one is required midarabanan to destroy anything that is prohibited to use to make sure that no one benefits from the avodah zarah items (see Gemara Avodah Zarah 51b; Rambam, Hilchos Avodah Zarah 8:6).

Takroves Avodah Zarah – An Item Used to Worship an Idol One of the laws relating to idol worship is the prohibition against using takroves Avodah Zarah, that is, not to benefit from an item that was used to worship Avodah Zarah. According to the accepted halachic opinion, the prohibition against using takroves Avodah Zarah is min hatorah (Rambam, Hilchos Avodah Zarah 7:2; cf. Tosafos Bava Kamma 72b s.v. *de-ey*, who rules that the prohibition is only midarabanan).

It should be noted that one is permitted to use items that are donated to Avodah Zarah, provided these items are not used for worship. Thus, gold, jewelry, and other valuables donated to a Hindu temple may be used.

Some Background Facts in the Contemporary Shaylah About Indian Hair The Indian sub-continent is the home of the largest population of Hindus in the world. Hinduism is a religion that falls under the category of Avodah Zarah.

Most sects of Hindus do not cut their hair as part of any worship ceremony. However, there is one large sect of Hindus that shave their hair as an acknowledgement of thanks to one of their deities. This practice is performed by thousands of Hindu men, women, and children daily at their temple in Tirupati, India. The temple then collects the hair shavings and sells the women's hair for wig manufacture. Although the majority of human hair used in wig manufacture does not come from India, a significant percentage of hair in the international wig market comes from Indian idol worshippers.

A very important halachah issue is whether the hair shaving procedure that takes place in this Hindu Temple constitutes an act of idol worship or whether the hair is simply donated for the use of the idol. This distinction has major halachic significance. As mentioned above, it is permitted to use an item that was donated to an Avodah Zarah. Such an item does not carry the halachic status of takroves Avodah Zarah, which are prohibited from use. However, if the shaving is an act of idol worship, then the hairs may not be used.

The Earlier Ruling Many years ago, Rav Elyashiv shlit" a ruled that there is no halachic problem with using the hair from the Indian temples. This responsa is printed in his *Kovetz Tshuvos* (1:77). The person who asked the shaylah from Rav Elyashiv provided him with information based on the opinion of a university professor familiar with the Hindu religion. According to the professor, the Hindus who cut their hair did so only as a donation to the temple, just as they also donate gold, jewelry and other valuables to the temple. Although there is presumably still a prohibition in purchasing the hair from the temple (because of the prohibition against providing benefit to an idol), Rav Elyashiv ruled that there is no halachic prohibition to use these hairs.

However, Rav Elyashiv and several other prominent gedolim ruled recently that the hair sold by this Hindu temple is prohibited for use because of takroves Avodah Zarah.

What changed? The critical difference is that the hair shaving ceremony in this temple is no longer simply a donation, but has apparently become now a form of worship. As has been observed and described by several observers, both Rabbonim and secular observers, there has been a change in the Hindu ritual. Apparently, at the time of Rav Elyashiv's earlier responsum, the Hindus who donated their hair to the idol did not view this as an act of worshipping their god.

Although it may seem strange to quote the story of an idolater, I think this small quotation reflects how a Hindu views this ceremony of shaving hair:

Rathamma has made the two-day journey to India's largest Hindu temple with her family and friends to fulfill a pledge to her god. Provide us with a good rice crop, she had prayed, and I'll sacrifice my hair and surrender my beauty.

This quotation shows that this woman is not coming to make a donation of a present to her god, but that this is a method of worship.

It should be noted that Rav Moshe Shternbuch, shlit" a, currently Rosh Av Besdin of the Eidah HaChareidus in Yerushalayim, published a tshuvah on the question about the Indian hairs about the same time that Rav Elyashiv did. Rav Shternbuch ruled that it is prohibited to use any sheitel produced with Indian hair because of takroves Avodah Zarah.

Bitul -- Nullifying the Prohibited Hair What happens if the Hindu hair is mixed in with other hair? This is a very common case, since Indian hair is much less expensive to purchase than European hair and at the same time is not readily discernable in a European sheitel. (As a matter of fact, it has been discovered that some manufacturers add Indian hair on a regular basis into their expensive "100% European Hair Sheitlach.")

Assuming that hair shorn in the Hindu temple is prohibited because of takroves avodah zarah, does that mean that any sheitel that includes any Indian hair is prohibited to be used? What about the concept of bitul, whereby a prohibited substance that is mixed into other substances in a manner that it can no longer be identified is permitted.

However, the concept of bitul does not apply in most cases when avodah zarah items became mixed into permitted items. Chazal restricted the concept of bitul as applied to Avodah Zarah because of the seriousness of the prohibition. Therefore, if a sheitel contains hair from different sources, such as hair made of European hair with some Hindu hair added, the sheitel should be treated as an Indian hair sheitel. Thus, according to Rav Elyashiv, this sheitel should be destroyed in a way that no one may end up using it. It is not necessary to burn the sheitel. It would be satisfactory to cut it up in a way that it cannot be used, and then placed in the garbage.

However, there is some halachic lenience in this question. Since the concept that avodah zarah is not boteil is a rabbinic injunction and not a Torah law, one may be lenient when it is uncertain that there is a prohibition. This is based on the halachic principle called safek dirababanan likula, that one may be lenient in regard to a doubt involving a rabbinic prohibition.

Thus, in a situation where a sheitel is manufactured from predominantly synthetic material, or predominantly European hair, yet there is a concern whether some prohibited hair might have been added, the halacha is that the sheitel may be worn.

It should be noted, that when attempting to determine the composition of a sheitel, one cannot rely on the information provided by a non-frum or non-Jewish manufacturer. In general, halacha accepts testimony from these sources only in limited instances, none of which would be fulfilled in this application.

Hairs and Sheitlach of Undetermined Origin What happens if you have a human hair sheitel, but you cannot determine the origin of the hair used in the sheitel. In this situation, the determining factor is what is the status of most sheitlach. If most sheitlach contain non-kosher hair, then the sheitel of indeterminant origin may not be worn. However, if most of the sheitlach are permitted, than this sheitel is also permitted. At the moment

this article is being written, it is unclear whether most sheitlach contain forbidden hair or not. Many poskim in Eretz Yisroel have ruled that a sheitel of undetermined origin that was produced in Eretz Yisrael should not be worn. According to the information available to them, it appears that most sheitlach produced in Eretz Yisroel contain hair that originated in Hindu temples. It is for this reason, that most chareidi women in Eretz Yisrael are not wearing sheitlach at this moment. However, the poskim in Europe and North America have determined that one need not assume that sheitlach marketed as "European Hair" contain prohibited hair and may therefore be worn.

This author believes that there is no dispute in halacha here between the poskim, but a difference in fact. Due to economic and market geographic factors, there appears to be a much greater use of Indian hair in sheitlach manufactured for the market in Israel than in sheitlach manufactured for Europe and North America. As in all areas of halacha, the individual is directed to ask the shaylah from their own Rav.

Many synthetic sheitlach contain some natural hairs to strengthen the sheitel. In this instance, there is an interesting side shaylah. One can determine whether there are human hairs in these sheitlach by checking the hairs of the sheitel under a microscope. The human hairs will look differently than the synthetic material. However, there is no way that this can tell us the country of origin of the human hairs, and it certainly cannot tell us whether the hairs were involved in any worship. Is one required to check the hairs of a synthetic sheitel under a microscope to determine whether there are any human hairs? All the poskim I have heard from have ruled leniently about this issue – one is not required to have the sheitel checked.

Color of Sheitel I have heard people say that there should be no halachic problem with blond- and red-headed sheitlach since Indian women have dark hair. Unfortunately, based on my conversations with sheitel machers, there does not seem to be any basis for this assumption. In most instances, the hair used is sheitlach is bleached and then (much later in the process) dyed to a specific color. Thus, there is no reason to assume that simply because a sheitel is a fair color that it cannot have originated in a Hindu temple.

Had someone told me six months ago that I would be dealing with a shaylah pertaining to Hilchos Avodah Zarah, I probably would have laughed. Who could imagine that in the modern world, shaylos about these issues would affect virtually every frum household. It goes to show us how ayn kol chodosh tachas hashemesh, There is nothing new under the sun (Kohes 1:9).

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [mailto:office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2004 4:51 AM To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: Sichot64 -29: Parashat Beha'alotekha

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Beha'alotekha

SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT" A

Please pray for a refuah sheleimah for Eytan Yaakov ben Miriam Esther for Elka bat Shoshana for Moshe Yechezkel ben Aliza Nechama

"Your Share is Greater Than Theirs" Adapted by Dov Karoll

And G-d spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you light [literally, raise up] the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light opposite the frame of the menorah." And Aharon did so, and he lit the lamps opposite the frame of the menorah, as G-d commanded Moshe. And this was the work of the menorah: it was of beaten gold, from its shaft to its flowers it was beaten work; according to the pattern which G-d had shown Moshe, so he made the menorah. (Bemidbar 8:1- 4)

Rashi says that Aharon was feeling dejected after the inaugural offerings of the princes, for he had no share in the offerings; G-d came and comforted him, stating that his share is greater than theirs,

for he lights the menorah. What is the reason for this explanation? The Torah already commanded Aharon about the lighting of the menorah in Sefer Shemot – at the beginning of Tetzavveh (27:20) and in Parshat Pekudei.

There is an ethical point that we can learn from the repetition of this command. The Torah commanded the lighting of the menorah at the beginning, and Aharon followed through on that command. As with all such important tasks, at first it was difficult and required great effort. However, as one gets used to a task, it became easier; furthermore, one tends to forget the significance of the project as it becomes standard. Accordingly, the Torah found it appropriate to repeat the command, to remind Aharon of the importance of lighting the menorah, so that he not take it for granted.

The Ramban addresses this same issue, and asks what was the cause of Aharon's frustration, and in what way did the command of the menorah solve that problem? A first suggestion the Ramban cites is that, while all the princes brought their offerings voluntarily, Aharon's service was mandatory; as such, he felt he was unable to express the same spontaneity shown by the princes in their offerings. The Ramban rejects this answer, based on the fact that the lighting of the menorah was also mandatory. But this suggestion of the Ramban is worth discussing, as it teaches us an important lesson. I recognize that this notion has not been popular in recent years.

Aharon felt that his service was inferior because it was mandated and standard, lacking the newness of the princes' worship. Nevertheless, G-d told him that his share is greater than theirs. How so? "Gadol ha-metzuvveh ve-oseh mi-mi she-eino metzuvveh ve-oseh," "The fulfillment of one who is commanded is greater than the fulfillment of one who is not commanded" (Kiddushin 31a and elsewhere).

When one fulfills mandatory and regular tasks, one gets into a routine; voluntary and spontaneous acts have vigor and liveliness. This is why Aharon felt that the offerings of the princes were superior. However, G-d assured him that his share was greater, for even things that are ongoing and set can be done with excitement and vigor. The Midrash that Rashi and the Ramban are explaining says that "the flame rises on its own." The flame of the menorah is a symbol for the power of fulfilling the command. Fire, by its nature, is never static – it is always changing, always moving, always developing. This is the lesson that G-d was teaching Aharon. It is the value of "You shall offer the one lamb in the morning, and you shall offer the other lamb in the evening" (Bemidbar 28:4), of the daily offering, of consistency, of following the command of G-d.

Tosafot (Kiddushin 31a s.v. gadol) explain that the performance of one who is commanded is superior because he has greater concern and anxiety to fulfill his duty; the person who is acting voluntary is more relaxed, knowing that if he so desires, he can simply leave the task.

This brings us to an important distinction regarding the difference between one who is commanded and one who volunteers. One who is commanded faces the pressure and challenge of proper fulfillment. One who fulfills out of good will strives for inner tranquility and serenity. Tranquility is desirable when one is trying to fall asleep, but our worldview is that this is not a guiding principle in life. Rather, one needs to be striving to advance, to progress, to take on new challenges and to conquer them.

In our spiritual lives, we seek the pressure of challenges rather than tranquility. It is only by following this path that one can be considered to be moving "with G-d."

This healthy pressure, that leads us to growth and striving in our service of G-d, is the message we gain from the principle of "Gadol ha-metzuvveh ve-oseh mi-mi she-eino metzuvveh ve-oseh."

[This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Behaalotekha 5763 (2003).]

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash Alon Shevut, Gush Etzion 90433 E-Mail: Yhe@Etzion.Org.II Or Office@Etzion.Org.II
Copyright (C) 2004 Yeshivat Har Etzion

From: RABBI BENJAMIN G. KELSEN, Esq. [mailto:kelsen@riets.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, June 01, 2004 7:19 AM To:
parshas_hashavuah@yahoo.com Subject: [parshas_hashavuah]
HaGaon HaRav Shlomo Elimelech Drillman, zt"l on Parshas Beha'aloscha

HAGAON HARAV SHLOMO ELIMELECH DRILLMAN, zt"l Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon

Parshas Beha'aloscha

Editor's Note: The following is based upon a private conversation between HaRav Drillman, zt"l and the editor that took place on 13 Sivan 5753 (6/2/93). Many of these ideas are based upon ideas expressed by Rabbeinu u'Moreinu HaGaon HaRav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, zt"l at a Shiur sponsored by the RCA in Honor of HaRav Yisroel Klavan which The Rav gave in June of 1974. A tape of this shiur can be obtained from Mr. Milton Nordlicht of Queens or heard on the Internet at www.613.org. - BGK

Parshas Beha'aloscha is, perhaps, the most confusing and difficult Parshios in the Torah to understand. HaRav Drillman pointed to the difficulty in understanding Miriam's critique of Moshe's behavior and the swiftness with which HKB"H punished Miriam. Furthermore, what is the connection between this incident and the catastrophe at Kivros HaTa'avah when the people complained about their lack of meat? Especially difficult to understand is Moshe Rabbeinu's response to the complaints of the Asafsuf. Interestingly, during the hardest trial of Moshe's rule, that of the Eigel HaZahav, which could have led to the termination of the relationship between the Ribbono Shel Olam and Klal Yisrael, Moshe never despaired. Instead, Moshe resolutely defended his people and, k'vayachol, grabbed the HKB"H's clothes and refused to let go until He forgave Klal Yisroel. In fact, according to Chazal, the tefillah of "Va'Yichal Moshe" is read on public fast days because it, as opposed to other examples of prayer found in the Torah, emphasizes the strength and energy that is the epitome of prayer. However in the case of Kivros HaTa'avah we find Moshe Rabbeinu displaying a feeling and attitude of frustration not previously seen. Though these complaints are similar to the reasons that Moshe gave to HKB"H why he felt that he was not appropriate to lead Bnei Yisroel they are not the language that we find being used by Moshe one his leadership is confirmed.

One of the things that makes Parshas Beha'aloscha difficult to understand is the apparent lack of continuity in the relating of the stories contained within the Parsha. We know that the Torah is always very meticulous in the way it tells a story and yet in Parshas Beha'aloscha it is difficult to point out how many stories are actually contained in the parsha. In a perusal of the Parsha we find the Parshas HaMenorah, which Rashi HaKadosh tells us is, according to Chazal, in reality part of Parshas Naso as it is a sub-section of the Chanukkas HaMizbeach. According to this approach, the first real episode of the Parsha is that of Kedushas HaLevi'im which is followed by the relating of the second Chag HaPesach that occurred during Klal Yisroel's second year in the Midbar and the laws of Pesach Sheini. However, there seems to be little connection or transition between the section regarding Kedushas HaLevi'im and Pesach Sheini. Why? The next story is that of the cloud that guided the people on their journey through the wilderness followed by the commandment to fashion trumpets and the marching formation of the tribes. The Parsha then tells of Moshe inviting his father-in-law Yisro to join Klal Yisroel on the journey and the section of "Vayehi binsoch

HaAron..." which is interesting in that these two passukim are preceded and followed by an inverted letter Nun. According to our Mesorah, the inverted letters teach us that these verses are not being related in chronological order. Rather, these passukim belong at the end of Parshas Pikudei.

The obvious question is why are these passukim not at the end of Sefer Shemos? Finally the ends with the tragedy of the Kivros HaTa'avah and the story of Miriam. HaRav Drillman said that The Rav had been known to say that when he listened to Krias HaTorah for Parshas Beha'aloscha he felt like a bee flying from flower to flower gathering a little nectar at each one. The Rav explained that this Parsha is in fact a depiction of the telling of Jewish History in reverse. In the opinion of Chazal the tragedies that befall Klal Yisroel in Parshas Beha'aloscha are among the most compelling and tragic of all those to befall them. Based upon the words "Ta'avdun es HaElokim al hahar hazeh" the Sefer HaChinuch writes that HKB"H told Moshe Rabbeinu that Yitzias Mitzrayim will be composed of two events. The first event was Matan Torah because following the Ribbono Shel Olam's laws is the most fundamental constant in the worshiping of HKB"H. The second event needed was the construction of the Mishkan which was constructed immediately after Moshe Rabbeinu brought the Luchos down from Har Sinai.

In light of this explanation of the words "Ta'avdun es HaElokim al hahar hazeh" the Cheit HaEigel takes on an even greater importance in the history of Klal Yisroel because due to the Cheit HaEigel the construction of the Mishkan was delayed as Moshe Rabbeinu was required to spend extra time on Har Sinai praying for forgiveness for the people. This delayed the construction of the Mishkan until immediately after Moshe brought down the second set of Luchos and the work was completed on the following Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Once Mattan Torah and Binyan HaMishkan had been completed there no longer was a reason for Klal Yisroel camping in the wilderness.

In Parshas Naso we read the of the korbanos that were brought by the Nesiei HaEidah for the dedication of the Mishkan and the consecration of the Levi'im. Once all the prerequisites for the Mishkan and its service were completed Klal Yisroel was ready to march toward Eretz Yisroel on the 13th of Nissan. However, the Cloud that led Klal Yisroel through the Midbar did not move, postponing the move on ward until after Pesach. It was clear to everyone that the stay of the Jews in the Midbar would soon be coming to a close. However, the trip was delayed till after the bringing of the Korban Pesach both during the month of Nissan, and as we later learn, on Pesach Sheini.

HaRav Drillman explained that with such an understanding of the sequence of events, the chronological continuity of the parsha is perfect. Once the Kedushas HaLevi'im, the last event to occur at Har Sinai, was established Klal Yisroel was ready to proceed on towards Eretz Yisroel however it was to close to Pesach so HaShem ordered them to first bring the Korban Pesach. Since Bnei Yisroel was about to begin their journey the Torah tells us the order in which they were to march. The discussion of the signal system and the trumpets was very important as Moshe needed to be able to communicate with the people while they were in the Midbar and while they were traveling.

Moshe and the people were excited and expecting great things as they prepared to enter Eretz Yisroel. HaRav Drillman explained that this mood can be seen in the conversation between Moshe and Yisro. Moshe Rabbeinu tells Yisro "Nosim anachnu...", we are traveling to the land now, using the present tense.

The inverted "Nun's" indicate that something has changed, something is now out of its proper context. Chazal tells us that had the people entered Eretz Yisroel under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu we would never have been exiled and the Messianic era would have commenced with Moshe as Moshiach.

What happened? Nothing out of the ordinary, nothing spectacular.

Rather the people fell victim to very human emotions. The Torah tells us that this capitulation to their desires was evil and aroused the wrath of Hashem and the resentment of Moshe. Why did Moshe feel discouraged and why did he not pray for the people as he had done previously?

In order to understand this we must look back at the Cheit HaEigel. The Cheit HaEigel was somewhat understandable because the people were overcome with panic at the thought that Moshe would not be returning. The Eigel was meant to be the substitute for Moshe, not an idol to be worshiped on its own. In evaluating the seriousness of one sin over another the motive behind each sin must be taken into account. In this case the difference between idol worship and the adopting of a pagan lifestyle must be taken into account. It is possible for people to live a paganistic lifestyle without idol worship.

A paganistic lifestyle is antithetical to Yehadus because Yehadus demands that we control our desires and not be controlled by them instead. The Torah definition of the Jewish way of life is described in the Parshas HaMan in Parshas Beshalach where the Torah tells us that each person was to gather only the amount of Man that he needed however there were those that collected more than they needed. It was at this point, when the people began to cry out of frustration at their unsatisfied desires, that Moshe realized that he would not enter Eretz Yisroel. It is for this reason that Moshe HKB"H to kill him rather than require him to put up with such a situation.

With this understanding we can now place the prophecy of Eldad and Meidad that Moshe would die in the desert and Yehoshuah would accompany the people into Eretz Yisroel. This also explains "Vayehi binsoh HaAron..." is surrounded by the upside down "Nuns". The triumphal march of Klal Yisroel to Eretz Yisroel becomes a thirty eight year wandering through the wilderness that ended with Moshe Rabbeinu's death.

HaRav Drillman cited an example of such an intuition as we find by Moshe Rabbeinu from The Rav. The Rav said that he, too, felt a similar kind of intuition towards the end of his wife's illness. The Rav stated that throughout the four years that Rebbetzin Soloveitchik was ill The Rav always felt optimistic regarding the possibility that his wife would recover. However, during the last Yom HaKippurim prior to her death, immediately after Kol Nidrei, the Sefer Torah that The Rav had been holding was placed in the Aron Kodesh by one of his talmidim. Suddenly the Sefer Torah slipped and fell inside the Aron. It was then that The Rav realized that his hopes for his wife's recovery were for naught. The Rebbetzin she passed away later that year.

HKB"H selected Moshe to be the teacher and spiritual leader of Klal Yisroel as opposed to a politician or diplomat because the purpose of Yitzias Mitzrayim was not to achieve political freedom for Klal Yisroel but rather Kabbolas HaTorah. However until the case of Misavim Moshe Rabbeinu did not expect that he would have to fulfil the role of an Omein, a nursing mother and of a father. Once he realized that he was indeed an Omein he also realized that he would have to devote his entire life to anticipating the needs of his people and to protecting them. It is for this reason, say Chazal, that he separated from his wife.

Unfortunately, Miriam and Aharon HaKohein were not able to recognize this aspect of Moshe's position. Miriam felt that even though she and Aharon were also prophets they had a normal life with their families. She could not fathom why should Moshe be different. It was for this lack of introspection that Miriam was punished. She should have looked closer at Moshe's role before rebuking him.

We now can understand and appreciate the idea that the events of this Parsha really are one story and that there is, in fact, chronological continuity to the relating of these episodes. This parsha is the description of Jewish leadership and the difficulty involved in completing that job.

The triumphant march of Klal Yisroel to the Promised Land, which

could have begun the messianic age, was derailed by those who sought to satisfy their own desires and would not accept the limits of Yehadus. HaRav Drillman taught that this idea can also be applied to Eretz Yisroel in the modern age. There are groups today that look to repeat the experience of the Misavim. However, true Jewish leadership is a Torah leadership that reflects the role of the Omein. Klal Yisroel is a community of children requiring a parent figure. Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest of all Neviim and the greatest of teachers, thought that he was not qualified to lead the people. The lesson, HaRav Drillman taught, is that though all Torah leaders that are worthy of the title have such doubts they may not cast off the mantle of leadership until they have completed their tafkid, their purpose in this world.

Rabbi Benjamin G. Kelsen, Esq. 1380 D Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ 07666 Phone: 201-692-0073/ Fax: 201-692-0151 Email: kelsen@riets.edu

From: Jeffrey Gross [mailto: jgross@torah.org] Sent: Wednesday, June 02, 2004 7:06 PM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas BeHaaloscha

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav

KERIAS SHEMA: DO WE HAVE PROPER KAVANAH?

WHAT TYPE OF KAVANAH IS NEEDED?

There are two types of kavanah that are required for Kerias Shema. The first is the kavanah needed to fulfill one's obligation of reciting Kerias Shema: Before beginning to recite Shema, one should have the intention of fulfilling mitzvas Kerias Shema. Although one who recites Shema as part of his daily davening has an "automatic" degree of intention to fulfill his obligation - why is he reciting Shema just now if not because of the mitzvah to recite Kerias Shema - nevertheless, it is proper to have specific intention to fulfill the mitzvah.(1)

The second type of kavanah required is to understand the basic meaning of the words being recited. One who recites Shema but does not understand what he is saying, has not fulfilled the mitzvah.

WHICH PART OF KERIAS SHEMA REQUIRES KAVANAH?

L'chatchilah, one should understand the basic meaning of the entire Kerias Shema. As he pronounces each word, he should have in mind the meaning of the words that he is saying. This requires full concentration, and it is the proper and preferred manner in which to perform this mitzvah.(2)

If it is difficult to achieve such intense kavanah, one fulfills the mitzvah b'dieved even if he only had kavanah for [in order of preference]:

1.The first parashah (the parashah of Shema Yisrael... V'ahavta)(3;)

2.The first verse of Shema Yisrael and Baruch Shem(4;)

3.The verse of Shema Yisrael. (5)

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF ONE FAILED TO CONCENTRATE DURING THE FIRST VERSE OF SHEMA YISRAEL?

One who failed to concentrate during the first verse of Shema Yisrael(6) must repeat Shema. Since it is forbidden to repeat a word,(7) or even an entire verse of Shema Yisrael,(8) it is advisable to finish the first parashah and then start again from the beginning.(9)Other poskim allow repetition during Kerias Shema [when one failed to concentrate] if the following two conditions are met: 1) it is done quietly enough that no one else can hear; and 2) only an entire verse at a time may be repeated; single words may not be repeated.(10)

One who remembered - while reciting the second parashah of Kerias Shema (V'hayah im shamo'a) - that he failed to concentrate during the recitation of the first verse of Shema Yisrael, should finish the second parashah, repeat the first verse and the first parashah (V'ahavta), and

continue on to the third parashah (Va-yomer).

If, after reciting the second parashah, one remembers that he did not concentrate properly during the first verse of Shema Yisrael, he must repeat the first verse and the first parashah (V'ahavta), but no more than that.(11)

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM KAVANAH REQUIRED FOR THE FIRST VERSE OF SHEMA YISRAEL?

The basic meaning of the first verse of Shema Yisrael combines two themes: 1) Hashem is our G-d - a declaration of accepting Hashem's sovereignty over us, and 2) Hashem is one - a proclamation of His status as the exclusive power controlling the entire world. When reciting Kerias Shema, therefore, one must bear in mind the following basic meaning: Hear O Yisrael, Hashem is our G-d and we accept His kingdom, and He is the only G- d - up, down and in all four directions.(12) This is the minimum degree of kavanah which is acceptable. If one did not have this idea in mind when reciting Shema Yisrael, his recitation is invalid and must be repeated as outlined above.

In addition to this basic meaning, there is another level of kavanah pertaining to the deeper meaning of the two Names of Hashem mentioned in the first verse. The name "Hashem" has two meanings: The first meaning is based on the way Hashem's Name is pronounced, Ad-onai, which refers to Hashem as Master of all. The other meaning, based on the manner in which Hashem's Name is written, Y-k-v-k, refers to Hashem's essence as the One who was, is, and will always be, timeless and infinite. The name Elokeinu refers to Hashem being the Almighty, Omnipotent and the Master of all powers. The halachah is that one should bear in mind all of these meanings when reciting the Names of Hashem during Kerias Shema.(13) B'dieved, however, one who did not does not need to repeat Kerias Shema.(14)

Rabbi Neustadt is Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights. He may be reached at 216-321-4635 or at jsgross@core.com

FOOTNOTES: 1 Mishnah Berurah 60:10 quoting Chayei Adam. 2 Mishnah Berurah 61:1, 4-5. 3 Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5, to fulfill the view of those (see Berachos 13b) who require this. 4 Mishnah Berurah 63:11 quoting Magen Avraham. According to the view of the Mishnah Berurah, this is the minimum requirement. One who failed to have kavanah during Baruch Shem must repeat the Shema. 5 Aruch ha-Shulchan 61:6;63:6; Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. If he remembers before beginning to recite V'ahavta, then he is required to repeat Baruch Shem. If he remembers after starting V'ahavta, then he is no longer required to repeat Baruch Shem. He may, however, do so provided that he starts Shema all over again. 6 In addition, one must not think other thoughts during Kerias Shema, even when not actually saying the words. According to some poskim, those thoughts may constitute a hefsek which may invalidate the Kerias Shema; - see Mishnah Berurah 63:13 and Beir Halachah 101:1 quoting the Rashba and Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. 7 Even b'dieved it is possible that one has not fulfilled the mitzvah if he repeated a word of Kerias Shema; - see Beir Halachah 61:9 and Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. 8 O.C. 61:9. 9 Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. 10 Mishnah Berurah 61:22, 23; 63:14. 11 Based on Mishnah Berurah 63:14. 12 In some siddurim there is a reference to "Hashem being king over the seven heavens." There are many sources for this; see Bayis Yosef O.C. 61 quoting the Smak, and quoted further by several later poskim; see Shulchan Aruch Harav, Derech ha-Chayim and Aruch ha-Shulchan. But in the opinion of Harav M. Feinstein, one should not have this intention when reciting Kerias Shema; see -Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. For a full explanation, see The Weekly Halachah Discussion, Hebrew Notes, pg. 267 13 Mishnah Berurah 5:3. Indeed, these meanings should be thought about not only during Kerias Shema but each time Hashem's name is mentioned. 14 Igros Moshe O.C. 5:5. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur

of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos.

The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross@torah.org. The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org