



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BEHAALOSCHA - 5770

In our 15th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to subscribe@parsha.net. Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net>. It is also fully searchable.

To sponsor an issue (proceeds to Tzedaka) email cshulman@gmail.com

From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2008 13:06:06 -0400 (EDT) Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha To: ravfrand@torah.org Rabbi Yissocher Frand To sponsor an edition of the Rabbi Yissocher Frand e-mail list, go to <https://www.capalon.com/secure/torah/listDedicate.php?class1=35>.

Giving Klal Yisrael A "High Five"

The beginning of Parshas Beha'aloscha contains the consecration of the Leviim. It now came time to separate the Levites and go through the process that would consecrate the Tribe of Levi with a special sanctity that would allow them to perform their special role in the Temple Service.

The Leviim were granted this special holiness and role in lieu of all the firstborn males who forfeited this privilege as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf. The pasuk says, "Then I assigned the Levites to be presented to Aaron and his sons from among the Children of Israel to perform the service of the Children of Israel in the Tent of Meeting and to provide atonement for the Children of Israel, so that there will not be a plague among the Children of Israel when the Children of Israel approach the Sanctuary." [Bamidbar 8:19].

Five times in the same pasuk [verse], the term "Bnei Yisrael" [Children of Israel] is mentioned. This is certainly note-worthy. Rashi cites a Medrash commenting on this stylistic redundancy: "To make known their dearness to G-d is mention of them by name stated repeatedly in a single pasuk according to the number of the five Chumashim of the Torah. Thus I have seen in Bereshis Rabbah."

Even if we grant that the purpose of this five-fold repetition is to express G-d's love for the Jewish people, we may still ask why a special note of that dearness is specifically made here? I saw an interesting answer to this question from the Shemen haTov: The special role assigned to the Levites in the Temple Service preempted the role of the firstborn in that service. This was an occasion that was ripe for jealousy and sibling rivalry.

Try this at home. Take what should have belonged to one child and give it to another. We know what is going to happen. "That's not fair!" This is an explosive situation. But despite the inherent strain and stress that such a situation should trigger, there was no offense taken here. There was no negative reaction. Klal Yisrael said, "Fine, no problem. We are happy for the Leviim." It is this generosity of spirit that triggered the expression of dearness and admiration for the Jewish people,

specifically here. "My beautiful children are as dear to Me as the Five Books of the Torah!"

Give Your Brother The Benefit of the Doubt

The end of Parshas Be'HaAloscha contains the incident in which Miriam spoke Lashon Hara [slander] about her brother Moshe Rabbeinu. Miriam objected to the way Moshe was treating his wife. As the pasuk tells us, Moshe Rabbeinu's status was different from that of all other prophets and therefore he could not be a regular family man. His relationship with his wife was therefore not the relationship that a normal man would have with his wife.

Miriam saw what she perceived to be neglect on Moshe Rabbeinu's part and she spoke critically of him to their brother Aharon. The Almighty heard this Lashon Hara and as a result Miriam contracted leprosy (tza'ra'as). This is one of the famous incidents of Lashon Hara in the Torah. There is a mitzvah to remember what the Almighty did to Miriam as punishment for this sin. The Chofetz Chaim interprets this to be a Biblical command to study the laws of Lashon Hara. We are commanded to constantly remember this incident so that we do not succumb to the same sin.

Next week's parasha begins with the story of the Spies. Rashi explains the juxtaposition of that story with the incident here involving Miriam because they both involve the sin of speech (lashon hara). The spies failed to take note and draw the appropriate moral lesson from the punishment that befell Miriam.

The Chofetz Chaim says that most occurrences of Lashon Hara happen because the violator did not give the benefit of doubt (lo danu l'kaf zechus) to the person about whom he spoke. The root of the problem thus does not start with one's mouth. The problem ultimately begins with a negative assessment. A person makes a judgment or assessment about someone and the problem is in the assessment. If, writes the Chofetz Chaim, people would always take the trouble of giving their fellow man the benefit of the doubt, Lashon Hara would not begin.

Two classic examples of this are the incident with Miriam and the incident with the spies. At its core, Miriam's fault was that she made an assumption about her brother. She did not give him the benefit of the doubt. She asked, "Why does he treat his wife differently than we treat our spouses?" Her assumption was that his level of prophecy was no different than that of her's and Aharon's. Her assumption jumped to a conclusion without giving Moshe the benefit of the doubt.

Rav Chaim Shmuelivitz points out that the punishment of the Spies for speaking Lashon Hara against Eretz Yisrael was "a year for each day" - forty years corresponding to the forty days that the spies were in the Land of Israel. But that calculation is problematic. They did not speak Lashon Hara for 40 days. They only spoke Lashon Hara one day, the day they returned from their 40 day mission! The Lashon Hara that they spoke is covered in a handful of pasukim. At most, it could not have taken more than 10 minutes to speak those words. So why were they punished with forty years for forty days? The answer is that the punishment did not just come for the speaking of Lashon Hara - it came for the negative judgment as well. The negative assessments and perceptions that they developed during the 40 days of travel in the Holy Land caused them to be punished 40 years for 40 days.

This, says the Chafetz Chaim, is where the battle lies. The battle lies in training ourselves not to jump to negative conclusions. Lashon Hara is not merely a crime of speech. It is a crime of perception. The distance between character assessment and character assassination is very small.

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 (c) 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org Join the Jewish Learning Revolution!

from ravdalerstein@torah.org to ravhirsch@torah.org date Thu, May 27, 2010 at 9:05 PM subject The Timeless Rav Hirsch - Parshas Behaaloscha

**The Timeless Rav Hirsch
by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**
Parshas Behaaloscha
Prayers Without Words¹

When you come into war in your land against an oppressor who oppresses you, you shall sound teru'os with trumpets, and you shall be remembered before Hashem your G-d, and you shall be saved from your enemies. On a day of your happiness, and on your festivals and on your New Moons, you shall sound teki'os on the trumpets over your olos and over your shelamim...[2]

Tekiah is a noun, except when it turns into a verb, which it easily can do. Nouns often have a corresponding verb form. The verb that should be used for "sounding a tekiah" is תקעתם.

Teruah is also a noun. It, too, has a verb form: הרעותם. We would expect to see some agreement between the nouns and the verbs, like תקעתם and הרעותם תרועה. But that is not what we get! We do get some strange combinations, like 3] ותקעתם תרועה and 4] תרועה יתקעו], which mismatch the nouns and the verbs.

Of course there is no mismatching in the Torah. The unexpected combination indicates that blending them together is deliberate. The Torah wants us to combine them. In fact, this is exactly what the Gemara[5] demands whenever the combination is specified in a pasuk. On those occasions, whenever a teruah is sounded, it is both introduced and followed by a tekiah. So why, then, does the Torah use different terms to describe what in the end turns out to be the same sequence? The answer lies in a pattern we can detect by looking at the three events in our parshah that call for the sounding of the chatzotzros trumpets. The first of these events is the directing of Midbar traffic. What emerges from careful scrutiny of the verses is that a tekiah alone is a signal to gather and listen[6]. Furthermore, if the instruction to stop, assemble and listen involves the nation as a whole, through their delegated representatives, only one trumpet – a symbol of unity - is used[7]. If the message is intended for all the people individually, then two trumpets – signifying plurality – are used[8].

So far we have considered simply gathering the people for some urgent instruction. When the tekiah is followed by a teruah, however, the second sound instructs them to move rather than stand still[9]. In effect, it tells them to go about and make arrangements to break camp. A final tekiah directs them again to listen – this time, for instructions about reaching some final destination.

The difference between the messages is inherent in the nature of the sounds. Tekiah is unwavering, plain and continuous. Teruah is broken and discontinuous. The former can therefore connote coming together, while the latter connotes movement, or coming apart. (On Rosh Hashanah, our sounding of the shofar relates these same messages in precisely the same manner. Every teruah is both preceded and followed by a tekiah. Altogether, the first of the three sounds declares that we should stop and listen for the Word of the King. The teruah that follows tells us to move, to take up a different position in life, to get to a higher place. The final tekiah tells us to stop at our destination, to consolidate our gains and take up a new position with strength and confidence.) Having established the basic pattern and principle of the trumpet sounds, the Torah specifies two more events that require their sounding: during wartime [10] and accompanying korbanos[11].

Most often, the Torah speaks of going out to war. Rarely does it use a different expression - כי תבאו - when you "come in" to war, as it does here. The implication is clear. War is sometimes waged against a distant

enemy, beyond the borders. Such warfare usually involves advanced planning and strategy. Sometimes, however, war is thrust cruelly upon us. We "come in" to a war that we have no choice about, when we are attacked by an enemy – when the war is specifically בארצכם – in our land, against a true oppressor, who oppresses us.

Our immediate need at such a catastrophic time is salvation. We cry out to Hashem, Who is the only One Who can deliver us from our enemies. Sounding the trumpet is a national prayer without words. Interestingly, however, the pasuk does not reassure us by telling us that by crying out to Him we will be saved. Rather, it says that we will first "be remembered," and then saved. If we need to be remembered, then clearly we had previously been "forgotten." We recognize that we would not be faced with impending doom had not Hashem distanced Himself from us, removed His special Providence, and left us to the harsh realities of natural law. Most important to us, then, is that He should change His relationship to us. He should "remember," or turn to us again in closeness. Once He does, the salvation that we so desperately seek can follow without delay or obstruction.

We see here a reflection of the first instance of trumpet blowing. There, the trumpet was blown to call attention to the camp of Bnei Yisrael, and to ready them for a move. Here, the opening tekiah (assuming, as halacha does, that the teruah of this pasuk is both preceded and followed by a tekiah) is a prayer to Hashem that He should remember us, or turn to us once again. The teruah asks Him to move against our enemy, to act dynamically on our behalf. The final tekiah parallels that of the wilderness march. There, it directed the people to listen again – this time for instructions about stopping at a destination. Here, it entreats Hashem that His "remembering" us, His return to relating to us openly and directly should become a fixed feature.

The final application of the trumpet sounds concerns offerings in the Mishkan. According to our mesorah[12] the chatzotzros accompanied korbanos every day, at the time of the offering of the tamid. The "day of your happiness" does not imply fireworks and a special occasion. When you consider this pasuk against the backdrop of the previous one that dealt with an enemy attack, you can readily understand that the Torah means to drive home the realization that there can be no greater cause of happiness than peace. Any day free of war is a happy day – and not because of the absence of hostilities. Rather, when we are not distracted by worry and anguish, we find happiness in the consciousness of the presence of G-d in every moment of our lives.

Ironically, the purpose of our trumpet-sounding is similar to that of the previous pasuk. The word korban derives from the word for closeness. We strive for closeness to Hashem, but realize that something needs to change. We ask Him to come to us, and at the same time to change something within us. As was the case before, a tekiah is sounded before and after a teruah. In the previous pasuk[13], observes Ramban[14], the stress was on the teruah, and thus the verb והרעותם; here, we emphasize the tekiah, and thus the pasuk uses ותקעתם. Beset by an enemy already "in our land," our eyes are upon the salvation of Hashem's intervention. We realize, though, that the way to achieve it is through His drawing closer. Standing over our national offering, the priority is reversed. Our primary concern – the cause of our happiness and euphoria – is our sustained closeness to Him. In order to achieve it, however, we ask Him to change our inner lives, to wipe away our past conduct that would interfere with that closeness.

1. Based on the Hirsch Chumash, Bamidbar 10:3-10 2. Bamidbar 10:9-10 3. Bamidbar 10:5 4. Bamidbar 10:6 5. Rosh Hashanah 34A 6. Bamidbar 10:3, 4 and 7 7. Bamidbar 10:4 8. Bamidbar 10:8 9. Bamidbar 10:6 10. Bamidbar 10:9 11. Bamidbar 0:10 12. Sukkah 53B 13. Bamidbar 10:6, although his explanation varies considerably from that of Rav Hirsch

**The following divrei torah were collected by
Hamelaket@gmail.com:**

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
<info@jewishdestiny.com>
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Jerusalem Post :: Friday, May 28, 2010
ERAS :: Rabbi Berel Wein

I have often been asked by friends my opinion on what comparable era in Jewish history we are now living through. I feel that it would be most presumptuous for me to give any definitive answer to that question. That really is much more of a question for a prophet than for someone who is an interested bystander to Jewish history.

But since that question has been posed to me so often, I admit that I have given it some thought and consideration. So, with a strong caveat that I really am not certain about any of this being really an accurate assessment of our times, I am venturing to share my opinions with you.

I think that our time closely resembles the period of the Shoftim – the judges and leaders of Israel after the death of Yehoshua and before the rising of the strong monarchies of Shaul and David. The Tanach describes that time as being one of disunity amongst the Jewish people. A large portion of the people had strayed from Torah observances, beliefs and values and had aped the culture of surrounding nations. Everyone saw fit to do whatever they thought to be valid behavior in their own eyes, ignoring tradition and the warnings that the Torah had issued against such deviances from the Jewish mission and way of life. The Judges themselves were harshly judged and criticized, even ridiculed by the people, and the false prophets abounded with their clarion seductive call to be “like all of the other nations.” The leadership was weak, the external and internal enemies were numerous and powerful, the Jews were quarrelling and even fighting with one another and the dangers to the existence of the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel were ominous. Sounds pretty familiar doesn’t it? Is this not the daily fare of our newspapers and media? Yes, I think the era of the Shoftim/Judges repeats itself in general terms in our period of existence as well.

The similarities of that era to our current Jewish society here in Israel are striking. There is a determined group here that despises religion and Torah and demonizes those of their fellow Jews who do not subscribe to their agenda and “progressive” world outlook.

The Charedim are termed “parasites” at best and “vermin” (in the words of a noted media reporter here.). The Religious Zionists are “settlers” – a term of vilification and derision. The extremists on the Left are “heroic” and “peace loving” while all others are really only “undermining Israeli security.” And, there are no moral strictures or social inhibitions to any sort of behavior.

Having children and living a traditional family life is derided while promiscuity and unlimited experimentation with body and soul is exalted. Everyone can see fit to do whatever one wishes and there are no limits placed on behavior, speech and debate. Coalition governments, by their very nature, are weak and the politicians in the country are not held in high regard, especially in the wake of the sordid scandals that have dogged so many of them. Much of the values systems taught in our schools has little if any Jewish content to it, with emphasis on facts – bagrut – and little on spirit and loyalty.

But, the Book of Shoftim/Judges, in spite of all of its gloom, provides flashes of optimism and hope. There are military victories – Gideon, Devorah and Barak, Shimshon, etc. – and there are also relative periods of peace and calm in the country that are decades long.

There is an obvious longing within the people to somehow return to a status and level of Torah observance – to at least a minimum level of piety, social justice and comportment. And there are great people waiting in the wings that will reverse all of the negative trends of the people.

The prophet Shmuel and the kings Shaul and David are about to appear on the scene and fight the battles of Israel, both spiritual and physical. They will triumph and insure the continuity of the Jews and the land of

Israel. The true test of Israel is its ability to pass through such a period of crisis and despair.

The power of belief and resilience has been the greatest asset of the Jewish people over all of its ages and trials. The Book of Shoftim/Judges is but a prelude to the book of Shmuel and its story of Jewish greatness in the Land of Israel thousands of years ago. Our time of Shoftim/Judges will also somehow lead to an eventual strengthening of Torah and wisdom amongst all of us.

Shabat shalom.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
<info@jewishdestiny.com>
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha :: B’HALOTCHA :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The troubles, disappointments and disasters that visit the Jewish people on their trek through the Sinai desert begin in this week’s parsha. Moshe announces that “we are traveling now to our ultimate destination – the Land of Israel.”

But deep down in their hearts the people are not really that anxious to go there. They have in their minds and hearts two options, either to remain in the desert and live a life of supernatural miracles and there become the dor deah – the generation of exclusive intellect and Torah knowledge, or to return somehow to Egypt with all that that radical move would entail, physically and spiritually.

The Torah will soon detail for us that neither of these two options are satisfactory either. They will complain about the manna that falls from heaven daily and the seeming lack of variety in their meals. They don’t like the water supply which is never guaranteed to them.

They remember the good food that they supposedly had in Egypt but according to Midrash, only a small minority actually wishes to return to Egypt on a permanent basis. They will press forward with Moshe to reach the promised Land of Israel, but they will do so reluctantly and halfheartedly.

And, this will lead inexorably to further rebellion, tragedy and the death of an entire generation – notwithstanding its being a dor deah – in the desert of Sinai. This makes this week’s parsha a very sad and depressing one, for we already know the end of the story. We can already see that this generation has doomed itself to desolation and destruction.

Coming to the Land of Israel and its Jewish state, whether as a tourist and most certainly when someone immigrates, requires commitment and enthusiasm. There are many who came to Israel over the past one hundred years by default, but the country has truly been served and built by those who came with a sense of mission, purpose, happiness and expectation.

Moshe’s clarion call, “that we are traveling to the place” of our destiny, echoes throughout the Jewish ages. Not all such calls are heard and even fewer are followed. Nevertheless the call has resonated within the Jewish people for all of its history. It is that call that appears in today’s parsha and again it is that call that Moshe proclaimed millennia ago that was and is the guiding motive for the existence of the State of Israel today.

Just as then in the desert, there are options for Jews today present in our world. The many “Egypt” of the world beckon with all of their seeming allure but also with great underlying faults and dangers. And there are those who wish to continue to live in a desert that demands nothing from them and contemplate themselves somehow as being a dor deah.

History has always arisen and smitten these options from the Jewish future. The long trek begun by Moshe and Israel in this week’s parsha continues. We hope that we are witnessing, at last, its final successful conclusion.

Shabat shalom

From Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>
To weekly@ohr.edu
Subject Torah Weekly

**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Beha'alotcha
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com
Overview**

Aharon is taught the method for kindling the menorah. Moshe sanctifies the levi'im to work in the Mishkan. They replace the first-born, who were disqualified after sinning at the golden calf. The levi'im are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, G-d commands Moshe concerning the korban Pesach. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, allowing a "second chance" to offer the korban Pesach one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the eruv rav - the mixed Egyptian multitude who joined the Jewish People in the Exodus - some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. G-d tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. G-d sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. G-d explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with tzara'at as if she had gossiped about her brother. (Because Miriam is so righteous, she is held to an incredibly high standard.) Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

Insights

A Free Lunch

"We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge" (11:4)

It's axiomatic that there's no such thing as a free lunch.

Or as they say in Yiddish "Nothing is for nothing." And yet human nature has a marvelous ability to conjure the proverbial free lunch out of hefty tab.

For a while now, my son has been trying to convince me to invest in about 50 boxes of a certain brand of cereal so that we can be sure of getting a FREE plastic space station. (Of course, he contends that a space station is pretty much de rigeur for the average Orthodox Jewish family living in Jerusalem, a notion of which I am not totally convinced.)

The Ibn Ezra says that fish was so plentiful in Egypt that it was virtually free. The Ramban says that in addition to fish, the Jewish People received fruit and vegetables in abundance from the farmers.

All for FREE!

But was it really so free? It seems to me that being a slave is a pretty hefty price tag no matter how much free fish and veggies there is on offer.

And let us not think that FREE OFFER myopia only affects small Jerusalem children. If we honestly analyze many of our decisions we may realize how many things we do because we have convinced ourselves that we are getting a free lunch.

In life everything has a price. The trick is to know what the price really is.

© 2010 Ohr Somayach International - all rights reserved

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
To Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>
Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum
ParshasBeha'aloscha**

When you kindle the lamps. (8:2)

Rashi addresses the juxtaposition of the chapter, which deals with the lighting of the Menorah, upon the passage relating to the korbanos, offerings, brought by the Nesiim, Princes, for the Chanukas HaMishkan, Inauguration of the Mishkan. He explains that when Aharon saw that neither he nor any other member of his tribe had been included in these offerings, he became depressed. Perhaps, it was his fault. Did his involvement in the sin of the Golden Calf preclude his inclusion in this auspicious moment? Hashem allayed his fears when He told him, Shelcha gedolah mishelachem, "Your task is greater than theirs! For you prepare and light the Menorah!"

Why was Aharon depressed? If anyone should have been crestfallen, it should have been Moshe, the leader of the Jewish nation, who was also a member of the tribe of Levi. Aharon could also have been discouraged, but the person who really should have felt morose was Moshe. Yet, Moshe was not upset over the apparent "rejection" of Shevet Levi. Furthermore, Shevet Levi was involved in the inauguration ceremony. Moshe was commanded by Hashem to communicate all of the instructions concerning the construction of the Mishkan. He brought most of the sacrifices, and he personally carried out most of the dedication service. How could Aharon have felt that Shevet Levi had been excluded?

HoRav Yaakov Weinberger, zl, cited by Rabbi Boruch Leff in his anthology of the Rosh Yeshivah's thoughts, "Forever His Students," explains that Moshe, by virtue of his having become the leader of Klal Yisrael, was no longer a member of the Tribe of Levi. One who ascends to national leadership loses his sectarian, narrow interests. He is a national figure - not merely a provincial spokesman for a limited group. The President of the United States is no longer viewed as the governor or senator of a specific state. He has graduated beyond that. He reflects the entire country, because he represents the entire American people. He is the embodiment of the nation.

Moshe's engagement in the Mishkan cannot be viewed as representing Shevet Levi. He was beyond that. He was the leader of am Yisrael, and, as such, he represented the entire nation - all of the Shevatim - not just Levi. The Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 3:6, writes: "The king's heart encompasses the heart of the entire community of Jews." Thus, when one revolts against the king, his mutinous behavior is an affront to the entire nation, and he warrants the death penalty. The king is not "one" person. He is the nation.

The Rosh Yeshivah suggests that this is why David Hamelech was the author of Sefer Tehillim. The volume of Psalms is unique among literary works. It is a sefer whose verses are expressions of yearning, declarations of love, renditions of praise, statements whose relevance transcends time. They are intellectually and emotionally stimulating. The pesukim of Sefer Tehillim are an expression of the soul of Klal Yisrael, and accordingly, had to be authored by an individual who represented this collective soul. Who was better suited than David Hamelech, the "sweet singer of Yisrael" to be the one privileged with this function? As king of the Jewish people, he was acutely aware of--and sensitive to--the variegated needs of his flock. He knew their challenges, understood their passions and frustrations, and felt their pain and joy. He was the heart of the nation.

This is the story of Klal Yisrael's leadership, the gedolei Torah, giants of Torah that lead each successive generation. In searching for the perfect way to describe Torah leaders, I came across Rabbi Henschel Teller's book, "Sunset," stories of the lives of gedolei Yisrael. In his preface, he cites a N.Y. Times editorial from the year 1967, following the Six-Day War. The caption of the article was written in large bold letters: Acharai.

The writer was commenting on the credo of the victorious commanders of the Israeli army. He sought to underscore the difference between our people, its leadership, and that of our enemies. Acharai means "after me" or "follow me." Our nation's troops do not march leaderless into battle, at the command of a general ensconced in a plush, air conditioned office, or the safety of a protective bunker. Our leaders lead the attack; they go in front and call out: "Follow me." A leader must lead; he must stand at the forefront protecting his charges. This is what gedolei Yisrael are. They are not only erudite scholars; they boldly lead, take a stand, defend and maintain the dignity and sanctity of our holy nation.

We might add that while the word is read, acharai, "follow me," it could also be read, acharai, "responsible." A leader is one who assumes responsibility for the people, never thinking of himself until all of their concerns have been addressed. He does not shy away from controversy if it means defending Klal Yisrael, collectively or individually. His nation always comes first.

During the First World War, when many Jewish boys served in the armies of their respective European countries, the Chafetz Chaim, zl, refused to lie down in a bed. When he "slept" or actually dozed, it would be in a hard chair. He would say, "How can I sleep on my bed, when Jewish boys are suffering in the trenches?" That is true responsibility.

Then I assigned the Leviim to be presented to Aharon and his sons... and to provide atonement for Bnei Yisrael. (8:19)

In pasuk 16, after Hashem instructs Moshe Rabbeinu to separate the Leviim from the rest of Klal Yisrael, the Torah says, ki nesunim, nesunim heimah Li, "For they are given, they are given to Me." Sforno explains that the repetition of "give" refers to two separate givings. The first nesunim, given, refers to the time after the sin of the Golden Calf, when Moshe declared, Mi l'Hashem eilai, "Who is for Hashem should be with me," and the Leviim volunteered their services. The second nesunim refers to the giving of the Maaser, tithes, by Klal Yisrael as compensation to the Leviim for their service.

According to Sforno, Klal Yisrael gave Maaser, so that the Leviim would not have to work to support themselves and thus, be free to serve Hashem. Furthermore, by accepting the Maaser, the Leviim who replaced the bechorim, firstborn, provided Klal Yisrael with a means of atonement for their participation in the sin of the Golden Calf. In other words, a very strong relationship exists between the Jewish People and the Leviim. The people pay their dues via the Maaser, which supports the Levi and his family. In return, the Levi provides the atonement which the Yisrael needs.

HoRav Mordechai Gifter, zl, derives an important lesson from this pseudo partnership. The Levi is not a shnorer. He is doing nothing unethical by accepting support. In fact, if he does not take the Maaser, he is endangering the Yisrael's ability to achieve atonement. The Yisrael needs the Levi's spiritual abilities, and the Levi requires the support of the Yisrael. It is as simple as that.

Regrettably, this concept has been abused by both the Yisrael and the Levi, due to a lack of understanding. The Yisrael finds supporting the Levi a difficult undertaking, one which he does not understand. I think if he would have a greater appreciation of the value of Torah, understanding would be a non-issue. Indeed, the same Yisrael does not seem to confront such difficulty when it comes to supporting a secular program. Perhaps, it is because the success a ben Torah achieves in Torah is unlike that which is to be found in the secular disciplines. A ben Torah who has successfully navigated the labyrinth of Torah studies will not necessarily establish a hefty financial portfolio for himself.

The ben Torah must also acknowledge that by accepting the Yisrael's support, he is doing him a favor by enabling him to achieve atonement. The relationship between the Yisrael and the Levi is reciprocal, with each one respecting the contribution of the other. This is similar to a two-way street, where each driver respects his space. The problem arises when one wants to take up more space than is allowed in his "lane." There is sufficient room, if everyone watches where he is going.

Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.... "Why did you not fear to speak about My servant, about Moshe?" (12:3, 8)

Two descriptions are used to describe Moshe Rabbeinu: humble and servant. These two qualities have an intrinsic relationship in that a servant is humbled. Moshe serves as the prototype personality that sets the standard for prophecy. Only the unique individual who possesses the four qualities enumerated by Chazal can become a prophet. They are: gibor, physically strong; ashir, rich; chacham, wise; anav, humble. Elsewhere, Chazal make a statement which, at first, seems to contrast the qualities of a prophet. In the Talmud Nedarim 38a, Chazal state, "One who desires wisdom should turn towards the south, when standing in prayer. One who desires wealth, should likewise angle himself towards the north, for the Menorah, which was they symbol of wisdom was placed in the south, and the Shulchan, Table, upon which was placed the Lechem HaPanim, Showbread, which symbolized material well-being, was positioned in the north." Chazal seem to teach us that wealth and wisdom are not synonymous. One, who seeks wealth, turns one way, while the one who seeks wisdom positions himself towards the opposite direction. If one precludes the other, how can prophecy require both wisdom and wealth? Furthermore, there have been a number of distinguished, wise Torah scholars throughout history who were quite wealthy. How do these contending qualities coexist in harmony?

HoRav Nachman Breslover, zl, asks this question and replies that the simultaneous possession of these two qualities is possible in one who is humble, for "a person with humility does not have a place."

In his Michtav Eliyahu 4, HoRav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, explains what the Breslover means with this cryptic comment. HoRav Mordechai Miller, zl, expands on this. What follows is a synopsis of their explanation. The Midrash addresses the qualities of wisdom and physical strength, delineating between gifts that originate from Hashem and those which do not. Thus, strength and wisdom, which do not originate from Hashem, eventually leave the person. Chazal cite instances of famous people who possessed these qualities and lost them, as a result of the fact that Hashem was not the source of their supply. Obviously, this Midrash begs elucidation. Is there anything that does not originate from Hashem? A gift which does not come from the Almighty is transitory. Is there such a gift? Hashem is the source of everything. Without Him, we have-- and we are-- nothing!

Rav Miller asks another question. A well-known Chazal teaches that prior to a child's entry into the world, it is decreed whether he will be clever or foolish; rich or poor. These gifts are predetermined before birth. If so, no exertion can transform a fool into a wise man, and in no way can someone destined to be poor become richer, regardless of his machinations. If so, how can Chazal refer to a person whose wealth or wisdom did not originate from Hashem? How else did he get it?

Chazal teach that Betzalel, the Mishkan's architect, was bestowed with wisdom by Hashem, Yahiv chochmah la'chakimim, "He gives wisdom to the wise." This teaches us, claim Chazal, that a person is bestowed with wisdom only if he already possesses wisdom. A princess once asked the sage Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta: "Surely, wisdom should be given to someone who needs it - not to one who already possesses it?" He replied, "If a rich man and a poor man approached you for a loan, to whom would you be more comfortable lending?" "To the rich person," she replied. "He will find some way to pay back the loan, while concerning the poor man, I have no guarantee that my money will be reimbursed."

The sage explained, "The Almighty gives wisdom to one who will not squander or misuse it. Wisdom bestowed upon wise people will be utilized in a wise manner. It will not be wasted."

The fact that Chazal draw a parallel between lending money and the gift of wisdom indicates a relationship between the two. Clearly, if the question of giving money to the poor or rich were to present itself, one would give to the poor. What does lending money have to do with giving wisdom? Apparently, there is a powerful relationship, one that

illuminates for us the perspective we must maintain towards Heavenly gifts which are bestowed upon us.

The fundamental principle to be derived from Chazal is that those gifts that are bequeathed to us from Heaven are not really gifts. They are loans granted to us for the enhancement of our spiritual development. Yes - all of the bounty that Hashem grants us is for a reason, and that purpose is not self-gratification. Complete ownership of an item is achieved only when one is allowed to do whatever he wants with his newly-acquired possession. If, however, it comes to him with stipulation and restriction, then he is not really its complete owner.

The wisdom we receive from Hashem is to be used for the furtherance of Torah study - not to revel in futile intellectual pursuits. The material bounty we receive is to be used for the enhancement of spirituality - not for indulgence in physical/material pastimes from which we derive no spiritual fulfillment. Physical strength is granted to us for the purpose of advancing Torah endeavors - not to exalt in our physical prowess.

Whatever we receive from Hashem has a "string" attached: it is to be used with seichel, common sense, so that we become better Jews, more committed Jews, nicer Jews, more generous Jews.

Rav Miller now explains why Hashem grants wisdom to those who already possess it. The prerequisite wisdom is a reference to the knowledge and realization that money and resources are given to us for a purpose. They are basically "loans" from the Heavenly bank. With this in mind, some people comply with the loan's rules and apply the grant to appropriate uses. They act as faithful and trusted guardians of the grant which they have received, and, as such, will be worthy of receiving added "loans" such as: strength, money and intellectual acumen.

When a person realizes that what he has is really not his own, but a loan from Hashem, his attitude towards it changes. He has no pride in his wisdom, because it is not his. He has it only for the purpose of serving Hashem. There is no room for "I" or "mine," since it is all "His." "I" am only a caretaker who has been entrusted with a function.

Let us now return to the original question. Moshe is referred to as "servant" and "humble," two descriptions which we see are intrinsically linked one to another. These qualities are inherent and necessary in an individual who has been blessed with wealth, wisdom, or both. The possession of any of these qualities presents a constant challenge to man. It is his wisdom, his money. He begins to feel an unrestricted ownership; the money is in his domain, his makom, place. When this is the case, he can be certain that the money will elusively slip through his fingers. He will ultimately lose possession of it. If, however, he views it as a loan from Hashem, he will utilize his gift for the correct purpose. Therefore, he can hope to continue in this position for some time to come. It is the kind of loan that is not recalled.

This concept applies equally to wisdom, physical strength, or any qualities which Hashem bestows upon a person. If the person attempts to "grab" it for himself, to make it part of his makom, he will surely lose it. Under normal circumstances, Hashem refrains from conferring both of these gifts, wisdom and wealth, on a person at the same time. It is just too much for an individual to handle, too great of a challenge; that is, if he is "a regular" person. As Rav Nachman Breslover said, "An anav, humble person, has no place." Possession of these gifts is dependent upon the individual's attitude towards them. An anav does not view himself as taking up any place. He withdraws from any makom. Such a person will not abuse his G-d-given blessings, because his humility will prevent him from ever appropriating them to himself. He has no "place" to put them.

Likewise, a servant is not his own boss. He belongs to a master; someone owns him. His acquisitions belong to his master. A servant is a person who is divested of all personal identity. He has no personal domain. He has no place. Moshe was both an eved, servant, of Hashem and the most humble man on earth. Thus, he was able to merit all of the qualities of wisdom, wealth and strength. He had no makom, because he had no delusions of pride. After all, he knew that he belonged to Hashem.

"Why did you not fear to speak about My servant, about Moshe?" (12:8)

Miriam commented concerning Moshe Rabbeinu's separation from his wife, Tzipporah. Hashem was angered by these comments, considering them lashon hora, slanderous speech, and He censured Miriam, saying, "It would have been wrong to speak about My servant, even if he were not as righteous as Moshe (the mere fact that he is My servant, should exclude him from your milieu). Additionally, it would have been inappropriate to speak about Moshe, even if he were not My servant. All the more so (is the infraction greater), if Moshe is My servant, and the servant of a king is (himself) a king. It is not without cause that I love him" (Rashi's interpretation). This is a very powerful critique which we simple people, thousands of years later-- who certainly have no concept of Moshe Rabbeinu --should take to heart, so that we do not utter an inappropriate word against our present day "Moshe Rabbeinu." What strikes me most about the pasuk is the word yireisam, "Did you not fear?" This indicates that our relationship and approach to Torah leadership must be one not only predicated upon respect, but also one of fear and awe. Only then, can we truly be assured not to be carried away every time we find it difficult to see eye to eye with their actions. Horav Avraham Pam, zl, quoted by Rabbi Sholom Smith, in his latest anthology of divrei Torah from the Rosh Yeshivah, "A Vort from Rav Pam," would often explain Rashi's exegesis as relating to an incident that occurred hundreds of years ago between two Torah giants. The Chozeh m'Lublin and the Ketzos HaChoshen were both dynamic, all-encompassing Torah leaders. They were separated by hashkafic, philosophic, differences resulting from the fact that the Chozeh was a Chassidische Rebbe, and the Ketzos was a misnagid, opponent of Chassidic doctrine.

It is important to have some idea of the background of this machlokes l'shem Shomayim, controversy for the sake of Heaven. Chassidus was founded by the Baal Shem Tov in the beginning of the eighteenth century. After the Shabbetai Tzvi debacle left much of Eastern Europe in a collective state of depression, much of the Jewish population suffered in terms of Jewish scholarship. This catalyzed a curtailment in religious observance. The average Jew was not connecting with Hashem. Enter the Baal Shem Tov with a doctrine that emphasized bringing G-d into all aspects of one's life, especially through prayer and singing. He taught that even the deeds of the simplest Jew, if performed with sincerity and devotion, were equal to those of the greatest scholar. Deveikus, clinging to Hashem, was a way of integrating Hashem's Presence into all areas of one's existence - not just by Torah study and mitzvah observance. This movement brought new and invigorated vision and depth to the entire corpus of Jewish thought.

Understandably, such a movement would have detractors, Torah leaders, whose concerns for the future intellectual and spiritual integrity of the Jewish nation was paramount. The Gaon of Vilna was the primary spokesman of the misnagdim, opponents of Chassidus. They felt that the chassidic concept of G-d being "in all things" was too close to pantheism. It would also lead to people believing that all things were equally holy. The idea that one elevates himself by attaching himself to a holy person was idolatrous. Moreover, there was a fear that Jewish scholarship and observance would be displaced by singing and dancing. Clearly, there were ample ideas on both sides to fuel a healthy dispute. Returning to Rav Pam's "vort." The Ketzos was Rav in Satria, a small town in Galicia, who had among its Jewish population a number of chassidim of the Chozeh of Lublin. One month, they publicly conducted Kiddush Levanah, Sanctification of the new moon, after the latest time of the month prescribed by halachah. When the Ketzos, as Rav of the city, criticized their behavior, they insolently shamed him, treating him in a most contemptible manner. The Ketzos responded as any decent Rav would respond, and he placed them in cherem, excommunication, for thirty days. They were forced to leave town, so they traveled to their Rebbe in Lublin. How shocked they were, when, after asking for an audience with the Chozeh, they were rejected. They were told to return after the Ketzos' cherem was terminated.

Thirty days elapsed; the ban was over, and the chassidim came to the Chozeh with their list of complaints about the Ketzos. They were shocked and quite dismayed when the Chozeh berated their unseemly

behavior. How does one insult the Ketzos? To make them understand their error, the Chozeh quoted Rashi's interpretation of the above pasuk. "What does Rashi mean when he says that Moshe and Aharon should have respected Moshe even if he were not Hashem's servant? If Moshe was not an eved Hashem, was there any obligation to honor him?" The question baffled the chassidim.

In order to elucidate Rashi, the Chozeh cited an episode from the Talmud Berachos 34b. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa came to study Torah under the distinguished Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai. Shortly thereafter, Rav Yochanan's son fell ill, and the Rebbe asked his student Rav Chanina to pray for his return to health. Rav Yochanan's wife was surprised, "Is Rav Chanina greater than you that you ask him to pray for our son? Are his prayers more acceptable than yours?"

Rav Yochanan replied, "Rav Chanina is like an eved, a servant before the king, while I am a sar, minister." Rashi explains that while a minister has greater eminence, his only access to the monarch is through an appointment or when the king summons him. A servant, however, is always in the company of the king and can therefore make requests of him at any time. This is why Rav Yochanan asked Rav Chanina to intercede on behalf of his son.

"A similar idea applies here," continued the Chozeh. "The Ketzos HaChoshen is a Sar HaTorah, one of the truly great Torah leaders of our generation. While he may not be a follower of the Baal Shem Tov, and he does not agree with our approach to serving Hashem, we must nevertheless give him the utmost respect. Under no circumstances may we impugn his dignity. We chassidim may consider ourselves servants of the King, but that does not give us license to be rude and disrespectful to such a man who may be compared to Moshe - af al pi she'eino avdi, "like Moshe - even if he was not My servant." A person should tremble in the presence of such a great Jew, even if his way of life and service to Hashem differ from ours."

Needless to say, the Chozeh's rebuke had the desired affect, and the chassidim returned to the Ketzos to apologize for their insolence. Rav Pam concludes with an important lesson for us to absorb. I may add that it takes a gadol of Rav Pam's caliber and sensitivity to make this statement. While one may choose a specific path of service to Hashem which he finds most suitable for himself, he must be tolerant of others who choose a different, halachically valid path. Their service of Hashem is of no less consequence than the one chosen by us. Their adherence to a Torah leader - be it a Rav, Rabbi, Rosh Yeshivah, or Chassidic Rebbe - must be respected, even if there is a variation in viewpoints and perspective.

In loving memory of our aunt Yolanda bas Baruch A"H Dr. & Mrs. Jacob Massuda

From Rabbi Yissocher Frand ryfrand@torah.org & genesis@torah.org
To ravfrand@torah.org
Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha

Chumras Must Be Stage-in-Life Appropriate

This week's parsha contains the people's complaint about their lack of meat. The Almighty's response was sending of massive quantities of pheasants (Slav), which the people consumed and subsequently died. The Torah tells us "The meat was still between their teeth, not yet gone, when the wrath of Hashem flared against the people, and Hashem struck a very mighty blow against the people." [Bamidbar 11:33] The Talmud derives the prohibition of eating dairy foods after meat (milchigs after fleishiks) from the expression "the meat was still between their teeth". One of the reasons for this prohibition is that we see from this pasuk [verse] that meat remains between a person's teeth after he has consumed it and thereby, he will in effect be eating meat and milk together if he eats milk products following the eating of meat. In discussing the laws of waiting between meat and dairy dishes, the Talmud [Chulin 105] quotes Mar Ukva as stating "Regarding this

matter, compared to my father, I am like vinegar compared to wine. My father would wait 24 hours between meat and cheese, and while I would not eat meat and cheese in the same meal, I would eat cheese at the next meal, even the same day."

This is the basis of the famous dispute among the early commentaries as to the meaning of the phrase "the next meal". Some Rishonim interpret literally that a person is allowed to say the Birkas HaMazon and begin a new meal (of dairy products) immediately following the conclusion of a meat meal. Others (Ramba"m and Shulchan Aruch) interpret that a person must wait the amount of time between the morning meal and the evening meal, which is the source of the custom to wait 6 hours between meat and milk.

Be that as it may, Mar Ukva said he was spiritually not in his father's league. His father waited 24 hours and he merely waited until the next meal. The question should be asked - why in fact did Mar Ukva NOT follow the custom of his father? While there may be some parental stringencies (chumras) to which a son might not realistically aspire, this would not seem to be one of them. All that is involved here is waiting. What is so hard about that?

Perhaps we would understand if his father used to spend a full hour davening Shmoneh Esrei. A son may realistically argue that he is not on his father's level - and cannot drag out his Shmoneh Esrei for a whole hour! But why couldn't Mar Ukva wait 24 hours after meat in order to follow his father's tradition in this area?

We learn from this Gemara that observing stringencies for the sake of doing stringencies, when one is not really on that spiritual level is a very hollow act. A person can adopt a certain practice, but if he is not ready for that 'chumrah,' if he is not ready for that spiritual level, then it can become a self-defeating act of piety. It may indeed lead to feelings of emptiness and spiritual regression when one takes on levels of super piety that he is not "ready for".

This is a very important lesson that people should learn about chumras. I was told that a certain Jewish books store sells baseball caps that have a caption: "I keep chumras that you haven't even heard of." A person must know where he is holding in the spiritual world. Halachic chumras are not a one-size-fits all religious expression. They must be appropriate to one's level of ascent of the ladder of spirituality. Dovid HaMelech [King David] asks "Who will ascend (mi ya'aleh) the Mountain of Hashem?" [Tehillim 24:3]. Undoubtedly many will say "I can do it!" But then Dovid HaMelech adds "And who will maintain his location (mi yakum) in His holy place?" It is easy to say that I can jump up there and go where I do not really belong, but who can really stay there and maintain his elevated stature? Only the few good men for whom stringencies are meaningful should embark on the road of ultra-piety. This is not the proper approach for the masses. Many people think they can ascend the Mountain of Hashem, but most of those who jump up there do not succeed in remaining at that elevation on a permanent basis.

This is the lesson of Mar Ukva. It is also the lesson taught by the Gemara [Yoma 47a] which relates that Kimchis had 7 sons who became High Priests because she was so modest that "the beams of her house never saw the hairs of her head" (She would always keep her hair covered even in the privacy of her own home).

The Gemara comments that "many tried to do what Kimchis did, but they were not successful". Why not? Anyone can keep their hair covered at all times. But only Kimchis and a select few like her can keep their hair covered at all times, even in the privacy of their own homes, as the result of an acute sense of the presence of the Ribono shel Olam [Master of the World] and what tznius [modesty] is all about. It is not a chumra that is appropriate for everyone.

Moshe's Lack of Ego Qualified Him To Be The Most Trustworthy in G-d's House

The Parsha ends with a validation of who Moshe Rabbeinu was. This is one of the Torah's greatest testaments to his unique status. Miriam and Aharon complained that Moshe Rabbeinu had separated from his wife. G-d tells them: "Please hear My words. If there shall be prophets among you, in a vision shall I make Myself, Hashem, known to him, in a dream

shall I speak with him. Not so is My servant Moshe, in My entire house he is trusted. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him, in a vision and not in riddles, and at the image of Hashem does he gaze." [Bamidbar 12: 6-8] Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato (RaMCh"l) writes in the Derech Hashem that other prophets only grasped small details that the L-rd wished to reveal to them. However Moshe Rabbeinu merited that the entire order of creation be revealed to him. Everything was opened to him. He had the keys, so to speak, to Heavenly secrets that were never given to anyone else. This is alluded to in the pasuk "In all My House he is the most trustworthy." [Bamidbar 12:7]

Rav Shimshon Pinkus, z"l offers the following example. A business owner may have a trusted employee who is trusted with the books and all the inner running of the business operation. And yet there will be certain personal business secrets that remain off limits even to him. He is trusted "only" 99.9%. Still, there remains that slight distinction between the owner of the business and his employee. After all, the employee is a different individual, who has his own ego and may have his own agenda. The owner and the employee are not the same. When the Torah says regarding Moshe Rabbeinu "In all My House he is the most trustworthy" it means there are no reservations on G-d's part about Moshe's trustworthiness. He could be given over all the information about G-d's business, as it were. Why was Moshe worthy of such unique trust? It is because "The man Moshe was the most humble person who ever walked the face of the earth" [Ba midbar 12:3]. Relative to the Almighty, he completely nullified himself. He had no ego when it came to the Ribono shel Olam. His agenda was 100% the agenda of the Almighty such that the Almighty did not have to withhold any secrets from him. Therefore, as the RaMCh"l writes, every secret of creation was open to him.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD
RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

From Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>
reply-To rav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com
To Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>
Subject [Rav Kook List]

Rav Kook List
Rav Kook on the Torah Portion
Beha'alotecha: The Seven Lamps of the Menorah

"Speak to Aaron and tell him, 'When you light the lamps, the seven lamps should shine towards the center of the Menorah.'" (Num. 8:2)
Why does the Torah emphasize this particular detail - that the seven lamps should face the center of the Menorah? Why not begin with the overall mitzvah - to light the Menorah each evening?
Also, what is the significance of the Menorah's seven branches?

Different Paths of Wisdom

The Sages wrote that the Menorah represents wisdom and enlightenment (Baba Batra 25b). All wisdom has a common source, but there exist different approaches to wisdom. Every individual pursues those spheres of knowledge to which he is naturally drawn.
The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 15:7) compares the seven lamps of the Menorah to the seven planets in the solar system, illuminating the nighttime sky. What is the meaning of this symbolism?
Many of the ancients understood that the planets and constellations influence our nature and personality traits. A person under the influence of Mars, for example, will have different traits than one under the influence of Jupiter (see Shabbat 165a). In other words, God created each of us with a unique character in order that we should perfect ourselves in the particular path that suits us. In this way, all of creation is completed; through the aggregation of all individual perfections, the universe attains overall perfection. Just as each planet symbolizes a distinct character trait, each branch of the Menorah is a metaphor for a specific category of intellectual pursuits. God prepared a path for each individual to attain wisdom according to his own character and interests.

Towards the Center

However, we should be careful not to follow our natural intellectual inclinations exclusively. The Torah stresses that "when you light the lamps" - when we work

towards that individual enlightenment that suits our particular character - we should take care that this wisdom will "shine towards the center of the Menorah." What is the center of the Menorah? This is the wisdom of the Torah itself. We need to draw specifically from the light of Torah, whose source is the underlying unity of all wisdom.

In truth, the seven branches of the Menorah are not truly distinct, separate paths. All seven receive light from the unified wisdom with which God enlightens His world. For this reason, the Menorah was fashioned from a single piece of gold, mikshah zahav. The special manner in which the Menorah was formed reveals the underlying unity of all forms of wisdom.

(Gold from the Land of Israel pp. 239-240. Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 53-55.)

Comments and inquiries may be sent to: <mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com>

from Rabbi Dovid Siegel <rdsiegel@torah.org>
to haftorah@torah.org
subject Haftorah - Parshas Behaaloscha

Haftorah - Parshas Behaaloscha Zecharya 2:14
Rabbi Dovid Siegel

This week's haftorah gives us a profound insight into the spiritual direction of our present exile and final redemption. The haftorah begins with the prophet Zecharya experiencing a vision wherein the ordained High Priest, Yehoshua, was brought to a critical trial regarding his pending esteemed position. Zecharya says, "And I was shown the High Priest Yehoshua standing before Hashem's prosecuting angel." (3:1) The reason for this prosecution is stated shortly thereafter in the following words, "And Yehoshua was clothed with soiled garments." (3:3) Our Chazal explain that these garments refer to the wives of Yehoshua's descendants. Although Yehoshua was personally a very pious individual some of his children were adversely affected by the foreign environment of Babylonia. They strayed from their rich heritage of priesthood and married women prohibited to them due to their lofty ritual status. Because of this offense to the priest hood, Yehoshua's personal status of the High Priest was under severe scrutiny.

Suddenly, an angel of Hashem interceded on behalf of Yehoshua and defeated the prosecuting angel with the following statement of defense. "Is Yehoshua not an ember rescued from the fire!?" (3:2) This response of defense was quite favorable in the eyes of Hashem and Yehoshua was immediately restored to his lofty position. The angel responded and said, "Remove the soiled garments from upon Yehoshua... See that I have removed his sin from him... Dress him with new garments." The prophet continues, "And they placed the pure priestly turban on his head." (3:4) Rashi (adloc.) explains that Yehoshua was granted the opportunity of rectifying his children's behavior and he successfully influenced them to divorce their wives and marry more appropriate ones. Once Yehoshua's garments - referring to his children's inappropriate spouses - were cleansed Hashem clothed Yehoshua with the priestly garb and restored him to the position of Kohan Gadol.

What was the angel's powerful defense that produced such immediate favorable results? After his sons' disgrace to the priesthood, what outstanding merit could Yehoshua have possessed that secured his lofty position? The Radak explains that the angel argued that Yehoshua was "an ember rescued from fire." Radak understands this to mean that Yehoshua had been previously thrown into a fiery furnace. He sacrificed his life for the sake of Hashem and was miraculously spared from the fire. Through this heroic act, Yehoshua demonstrated total submission for the sake of Heaven offering his life for Hashem's glory. Such individuals deserve to prominently serve Hashem and His people. Such devotion and commitment must be inculcated into the blood stream of the Jewish people. Although Yehoshua's children veered from the straight path there remained much hope for them.

The shining example of their father could surely inspire them to return from their inappropriate ways. They too could eventually become devout servants of Hashem and attain lofty levels of priesthood. Through their father's guidance they could also rise above their physical and mundane pursuits and develop the purest qualities. In fact, Yehoshua was told that his children could potentially perfect themselves beyond normal levels of human achievement. Hashem said, "I will establish them superior to these angels standing here." (3:7) Yes, Yehoshua's submissiveness could produce untold results and certainly lead his children back to perfect spirituality.

This same lesson is taught to us in this week's parsha regarding the newly appointed judges. We read about the masses of Jewish people straying from the perfect path demonstrating serious leanings towards certain physical and inappropriate dimensions of life. They disgraced the Heavenly manna bread which Hashem sent them on a daily basis and expressed their physical cravings for substitute foods such as; melons, onions and garlic. They even complained about the Torah's strict standards of morality and sought freedom from its taxing

and demanding life. Hashem responded with a severe punishment which ended the lives of many thousands of Jewish people. But at the same time Hashem responded to a plea from Moshe Rabbeinu and instituted a structure of seventy elders to share the judicial responsibilities. During this process these hand-picked judges experienced an incredible transition. The Torah states, "And Hashem intensified the Heavenly Spirit which rested upon Moshe Rabbeinu and shared it with the seventy elders." (Bamidbar 11:25) In addition to their new position as judges, these elders received prophecy and merited for a short time, to actually serve as a sanctuary for the Divine Presence.

Rashi comments on this incident and reveals the secret identity of the seventy elders. He quotes Chazal who explain, "These were the Jewish policemen in Egypt who were beaten mercilessly instead of their Jewish brethren." (Rashi to Bamidbar 11:16) These elders refused to enforce upon their brethren the unreasonable Egyptian demands and opted to accept torturous Egyptian blows on behalf of their brethren. This previous heroic act of self negation now served as a meaningful merit and lesson for the Jewish people. The recent outburst of the Jewish people revealed that they were embarking upon an immoral path, focusing on pleasure and self pursuit. Hashem responded to this by elevating a host of their own peers to the lofty position of leadership. These elders were not ensnared by self pursuit but were instead perfect role models of self negation. Their interest lay in spiritual association with Hashem and their selfless efforts brought them to the lofty achievement of personal sanctuaries for the presence of Hashem. With such personalities at the head of the Jewish people their direction could be effectively reversed. Their self sacrifice could secure the Jewish survival and hopefully remind the Jewish people never to plunge into self pursuit and immorality.

In our present times we hear repeated vibes of similar physical calls to immorality. We realize that our predecessors were also embers rescued from the fiery furnace - the fires of Europe - and their self sacrifice for the sake of Hashem surely serves as an everlasting merit for us. Our recollections of their total devotion to Hashem is a significant factor in the incredible transition for many of us from total physical pursuits to a sincere yearning to become sanctuaries of Hashem. May this new development continue to flourish and contribute to the hastening of Mashiach we so anxiously await.

Haftorah, Copyright © 2010 by Rabbi Dovid Siegel and Torah.org. The author is Rosh Kollel of Kollel Toras Chaim of Kiryat Sefer, Israel.



פרשת השבוע - פרשת בהעלותך

גליון זה קדוש כדון שאר דברי תורה המודפסים, נא לנהוג בו בקדושה ואחר מכן להניחו בגניזה
מאמרו של הגאון רבי זבדיה הכהן שליט"א, חבר בית הדין הרבני בתל אביב, עבור
"הלכה יומית"

השבת, נקרא על מצות פסח שני, דהיינו אדם, שהיה טמא או בדרך רחוקה, ולא יכול היה להקריב את קרבן הפסח במועד הראשון, ביום י"ד ניסן, התורה נותנת לו הזדמנות לעשות פסח שני, ביום י"ד אייר, להקריב קרבן פסח "על מצות ומרורים יאכלוהו"

והשאלה נשאלת, מדוע דווקא בחג הפסח ניתנה הזדמנות נוספת לעשות את החג למי שלא יכול היה לעשותו בפעם הראשונה, מה שלא ראינו בשום חג אחר, לא בסוכות ולא בשבועות ולא בראש השנה, מה מיוחד בחג הפסח שניתן לו פסח שני

בכדי להבין זאת, נקדים את מה שקדם לצייו של פסח שני. בפרק ט' פסוק ו' נאמר, 'ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם ולא יכלו לעשות הפסח ביום ההוא, ויקרבו לפני משה ולפני אהרן ביום ההוא, ויאמרו האנשים ההמה אליו, אנחנו טמאים לנפש אדם, למה נגרע לבלתי הקריב את קרבן ה' במועדו בתוך בני ישראל'

ומבואר אם כן, שהצייו לפסח שני נאמר בתגובה לבקשת עם ישראל למה נגרע, מה שלא היה בחגים אחרים, ולפיכך דווקא בחג זה ניתנה הזדמנות שנייה. וכדי להבין זאת היטב, נקדים ונאמר, כי המדד לבדוק יהודי המקיים מצוות, אם עושה זאת בעל כורחו ובלתי ברירה מפחד מעונש, או שעושה זאת מאהבת המצוות, היא לראות את תגובתו במקרה של פטור מהמצווה,

כגון מחמת חולי, או מצב מסוים שהאדם פטור מהמצווה, במקרה כזה, האם אז הוא שמח ואומר "ברוך שפטרני", או שהוא בצער ואומר, "אמנם פטור אני, אך צר לי מאוד שאיני יכול לקיים את המצווה, ומחכה לרגע שאוכל לקיים את המצווה". דוגמא לכך מצינו בתלמוד (במסכת ע"ז דף ג'), באו הגויים לה ואמרו, תן לנו מצוות ונקיימן, אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא, מצווה קלה יש לי, וסוכה שמה, לכו ועשו אותה, מיד הלכו ועשו כל אחד סוכה בראש גגו, והקדוש ברוך הוא הוציא חמה מנרתיקה, ונעשה חם מאוד, ואז כל אחד מהם קם ובעוט בסוכתו, וחוזר לביתו, שואלת הגמרא, הרי מצטער פטור מהסוכה, אם כן מה הטענה על הגויים? עונה הגמרא, אמנם מצטער פטור, אז יצא מהסוכה, אך מדוע לבעוט בסוכה? אם בעטו בסוכה, סימן הדבר שמראש עשו זאת בעל כרחם ולא מרצון! ולכן ברגע שיש מצב של פטור, מיד בעטים ושמחים להיפטר מהדבר. ועל זה נאמר "הוכיח סופו על תחילתו", לעומת זאת, עם ישראל שהיו טמאים או רחוקים בזמן פסח ראשון, הרי שהיו פטורים מעשיית הפסח, ועל פי דין יכלו לומר ברוך שפטרני, ויכלו לביתם לחיים טובים ולשלום, אך לא כך היה, אלא נגשו למשה רבנו, ואמרו למה נגרע לבלתי נקריב קרבן ה' במועדו? אנו לא שמחים במה שאנו פטורים, אלא אדרבא, אנו רוצים בכל זאת לקיים את רצון ה', ולכן כיון שגילו דעתם שרצונם בכל זאת בקיום המצווה, וזה נעשה רק בחג הפסח, זכו שניתנה להם הזדמנות נוספת לקיים המצווה, בתאריך אחר, מה שלא היה בשום חג אחר

דבר זה מלמדנו מוסר השכל לכל אחד ואחר מאיתנו הרוצה לדעת מה מצבו בקיום המצוות, האם עושה זאת מאהבת ה' יתברך וכדברי הפסוק 'ויהי אם שמעו תשמעו אל מצוותי אשר אנכי מצווה אתכם היום לאהבה את ה' אלוהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם', או שקיום המצוות אצלו הוא בבחינת "אין ברירה" או סתם מעשה שגרתו, וכדברי הנביא ישעיה בפרק ל"ט פסוק ג', "ותהי יראתם אותי מצוות אנשים מלומדה", שפירושו קיום המצוות מתוך ששגרה, או מתוך לחץ חברתי, ללא כוונה או התבוננות בקיום המצוות ועשייתן מאהבת ה' יתברך, הרי שהמדד לזה הוא מהי הרגשתו של האדם במקרה והוא פטור מהמצוות כדת וכדין, כגון שהוא חולה, או במצב מסוים שההלכה פוטרת אותו מקיום המצוות, האם הוא שמח בה, ואם כן מוטלת עליו החובה להתחזק ביראת שמים, או שמא מרגיש צביטה בלב, ואומר, אוי לי שאיני יכול כרגע לעשות את רצון ה', הרי שאז מצב יראת ה' שלו טובה

יהי רצון שנזכה להתבונן היטב בדברים אלו, ונעבוד את ה' בשחה ובטובה
לבב, אמן
שבת שלום

From TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>
To weeklydt@torahweb2.org

Spirituality Deficiency Syndrome

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski The TorahWeb Foundation

In Parshas B'haaloscha we find one of the most remarkable narrations in the Torah.

The Israelites grumbled. They were dissatisfied with the manna and longed for the "good old days" in Egypt when they had a variety of foods. "We want meat!" they said.

How did Moshe respond? Listen to this. "Moshe said to Hashem, 'Why have You done evil to Your servant? Why have I not found favor in Your eyes, that You place the burden of this entire people upon me? Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it, that You say to me, "Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a suckling, to the Land that You swore to its forefathers?" Where shall I get meat to give to this entire people when they weep to me, saying, "Give us meat that we may eat?" I alone cannot carry this entire nation, for it is too heavy for me for me! And if this is how You deal with me, then kill me now, if I have found favor in Your eyes, and let me not see my evil'" (Numbers 11:4-15).

Can we recognize this Moshe? When the Israelites sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe put his life on the line, saying to Hashem, "If You do not forgive them, take me out of the Book You have written." Later on, when they lost faith in Hashem and wanted to return to Egypt rather than conquer Canaan, Moshe again pleaded for them. At every step,

Moshe was a devoted advocate for the people, and here, when they ask for meat, he says "Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it?" and "If this is how You deal with me, then kill me now." This is completely out of character for Moshe.

Rashi provides the answer. When the Torah says, "Moshe heard the people weeping in their family groups" (ibid. 11:10), Rashi says they were weeping because the Torah forbids some intra-family marriages. That is why they were dissatisfied, but that is not what they said. They attributed their dissatisfaction to the manna. Moshe's attitude was, "Let them be truthful and tell me what it is that they want, and I can deal with it. But if what they really want is to lift the restrictions against intra-family marriages, but they don't admit it, how can I deal with them? If I give them all the meat in the world and all the fish in the sea, they will still not be satisfied, because that is not what they want."

Indeed, the Israelites themselves may not have been aware of the real cause of their unhappiness. It is quite common that we deceive ourselves, perhaps because we do not wish to own up to what is really bothering us. We may say, "I'd be happy if I had a better job, a better house, a better car, etc." Invariably, when we get what we said we wanted, our relief is very short-lived. We are again unhappy, and attribute it to something else.

I suspect that many people are unhappy because they are not fulfilling themselves. In Happiness and the Human Spirit I elaborated on this, pointing out that many people suffer from a "Spirituality Deficiency Syndrome," but instead of recognizing this and leading more spiritual lives, they attribute their discontent to various other causes. The reason for this may be that living a more spiritual life would require much more serious attention to Torah, and particularly to changing our middos. The latter is not easy.

Rebbe Yisrael of Salant said, "It is easier to learn the entire Talmud than to change a single character trait." The Gaon of Vilna said that man was created for the purpose of overcoming his natural inclinations. Failure to do so results in the "Spirituality Deficiency Syndrome," which is as real as iron deficiency and vitamin deficiency. The latter results in physical symptoms, whereas the former results in chronic discontent. Because we do not wish to exert the effort to change our innate character traits, we project our discontent to other things.

This is why Moshe reacted differently to the people's complaints. "It is impossible for me to satisfy them. They do not admit what they really want, and may not even be aware of it themselves."

This Torah episode provides an important teaching for us. We may delude ourselves, thinking that we know what we need, when the truth is that we are lacking in self-fulfillment. No psychiatric medication can eliminate the unhappiness of the "Spirituality Deficiency Syndrome." Copyright © 2010 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

From Jeffrey Gross <jgross@torah.org>
reply-To neustadt@torah.org, genesis@torah.org
To weekly-halacha@torah.org
Subject Weekly Halacha - Parshas Terumah
by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)
Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

Weekly Halacha - Parshas Behaaloscha by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Proper Disposal of Ritual Objects

Question: As ritual objects get worn out, frayed, torn, etc., and are no longer fit for use, how may one "dispose" of them?

Discussion: "Ritual objects" is a general term which, in halachah, breaks down into a number of different categories. How one should "dispose" of a given ritual object is determined by the category into which the object falls. In the initial breakdown, ritual objects are classified as either kedushah objects, which may not be discarded at all, and used mitzvah objects, which may be[1].

Kedushah objects are intrinsically holy (such as a Sefer Torah). The category below them, tashmishei kedushah, are objects which serve or beautify the kedushah objects (such as a Torah mantle, which beautifies the Torah scroll). An even lower category is tashmish d'tashmishei kedushah, which are objects that serve or protect the tashmishei kedushah, not the kedushah object itself (such as a plastic tefillin bag, which protects the velvet tefillin bag).

Used Mitzvah objects are objects with which one performed a mitzvah (such as an esrog). The category below them is objects which serve as accessories for performing the mitzvah (such as an esrog box). These are referred to as tashmish d'tashmishei mitzvah.

Question: How may one "dispose" of kedushah and tashmishei kedushah items?

Discussion: It is strictly forbidden to destroy or dispose of items that are intrinsically holy, even when they are no longer fit to be used[2]. Moreover, even tashmishei kedushah, which are objects that serve or beautify the kedushah object itself, may also not be destroyed or thrown away even when their condition has deteriorated[3]. Rather, they must be set aside and stored in a safe, secluded, permanent and honorable place - a process called genizah. Since it is not so feasible or practical to find such storage places, especially for larger collections of objects, the halachah permits burying kedushah and tashmishei kedushah in the ground - genizah b'karka[4]. There are two levels of genizah b'karka, depending on the degree of their kedushah:

Strict genizah: Some objects require strict genizah. These items must be encased and sealed in an earthenware or durable hard plastic casing and buried in a Jewish cemetery, preferably together with or in the vicinity of a grave of a Torah scholar[5] or in a specially designated section of the cemetery[6].

Standard genizah: The objects on this list may be bagged in a nylon or plastic bag and buried anywhere (not necessarily in a cemetery), as long as it is a secure place where the objects will not be disturbed[7]. Nowadays, this type of genizah is generally referred to as sheimos genizah.

Question: Which objects require strict genizah and for which will the standard genizah suffice?

Discussion: The following items require Strict genizah:

An amulet that contains Hashem's Name[8]
Mezuzah parchment[9]
Nevi'im, Kesuvim and Megillah scrolls [10]
Sefer Torah scroll[11]
Tefillin, bayis shel rosh (even without parashiyos)[12]
Tefillin, parshiyos [13]

The following items require Standard genizah (sheimos):

An amulet holder (case)[14]
Aron kodesh[15]
Bentschers and zemiros booklets [16]
Bimah cover - embroidered[17]
Hashem's Name (handwritten or printed)[18]
Mezuzah case,[19] including any plastic or saran wrapper[20]
Sefer Torah accessories[21] - atzei chayim, band, bell, crown, mantle, pointer[22] and silver ornaments
Sifrei kodesh - printed or photocopied[23], hard or soft cover
Sifrei Kodesh - covers, binding, and bound, blank pages[24]
Tefillin, bayis shel yad (without parashiyos)[25]
Tefillin, plastic protective boxes [26]
Tefillin bag, velvet[27]
Torah manuscripts

Question: What are the rules for disposing of used mitzvah objects?

Discussion: Used mitzvah objects include "intrinsic" mitzvah objects, such as a shofar or a lulav, which were previously used in the performance of a mitzvah but are no longer needed - either because the objects are in poor condition or because the mitzvah is no longer applicable. Although a minority opinion holds that these items should

receive standard genizah and the Rama praises one who does so[28], the basic halachah and the prevalent custom follow the opinion that it is permitted to discard these items in a dignified manner. It is forbidden, therefore, to throw these items directly into the garbage. Rather, they should first be wrapped up or placed in a bag, and then put in the recycle bin or together with "clean" trash. Alternatively, they may be burned.

The following items may be discarded, but only in a dignified manner:

Arba'as ha-Minim [29]

Hoshanos[30]

Oil and used wicks remaining from Chanukah menorah[31]

A Shofar

Sechach

Tzitzis strings (detached from a tallis)[32]

A tallis gadol (with tzitzis)[33]

A tallis katan (with tzitzis)[34]

Question: What are the rules for disposing of tashmish d'tashmishai kedushah and tashmish d'tashmishai mitzvah objects?

Discussion: This lowest category of ritual objects includes those items which are not directly involved in either the kedushah itself or in the direct performance of a mitzvah. The basic halachah holds that once these items are no longer fit for use, or once the mitzvah that they were used for is no longer applicable, they have no significance whatsoever and require no special method of disposal. It is still recommended by many poskim[35], however, that in order to show honor and respect to a mitzvah, it is appropriate to dispose of these items in a dignified manner only.

The following items may be discarded in any manner, but it is recommended that they be disposed of with respect:

A Kiddush cup ("becher") - used for Kiddush and Havdalah only

A bimah [36]

A bimah cover, plastic

A bookcase (used exclusively for sifrei kodesh)[37]

Candlesticks (used for Shabbos candles) and leftover wicks [38]

A Chanukah menorah[39]

An esrog box

A Havdalah candle

Havdalah spices

A Lulav case and rings[40]

The nails used to affix a mezuzah case to the doorpost[41]

The paroches of an aron kodesh[42]

Succah walls[43] and decorations [44]

A Tallis gadol (without tzitzis)[45]

A Tallis katan (without tzitzis)[46]

A Tallis bag, velvet

A Tefillin bag, plastic

1.Megillah 26b. 2.See Rambam, Sefer ha-Mitzvos, Lo Sa'aseh 65; Kiryas Sefer, Hilchos Sefer Torah 10 and Chasam Sofer, O.C. 38. 3.Magen Avraham 154:9. 4.O.C. 154:5, as explained by Noda b'Yehudah, Tanina, O.C. 9; Binyan Tziyon 97; Aruch ha-Shulchan 154:8; Minchas Elazar 3:52; Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:38; Tzitz Eliezer 15:8. 5.O.C. 154:5. 6.Marcheshes 1:53; Gesher ha-Chayim 33:3. This is the custom today; see Ginzei ha-Kodesh 15:7. 7.Peri Megadim, Eishel 154:9 (quoted by Mishnah Berurah 154:22). See also Mishnah Berurah 154:13, as explained by Tzedakah u'Mishpat 15, note 65. 8.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 6:26). 9.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav N. Karelitz (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 15:1). 10.Mishnah Berurah 154:22. 11.O.C. 154:5. 12.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav N. Karelitz (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 6:6). Other poskim require standard genizah only. 13.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav N. Karelitz (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 15:1); Kinyan Torah 3:47. 14.Mishnah Berurah 154:14. 15.O.C. 154:3. 16.See Igros Moshe, Y.D. 2:135 and Ginzei ha-Kodesh 10:17. 17.Mishnah Berurah 154:10-11 — even if it is always protected by a plastic cover; see Piskei Teshuvas 154, note 49. 18.See Y.D. 276:9-10 for the seven Names of Hashem which require genizah. 19.O.C. 154:3. 20.Based on Mishnah Berurah 154:14 and Beur Halachah, s.v. v'davka. See also Mezuzos Beisecha 291:5 and Ginzei ha-Kodesh 6:21-22. 21.O.C. 154:3. 22.Aruch ha-Shulchan 154:5. 23.Mishnah Berurah 40:4, 154:7; Chazon Ish, Y.D. 164:3. 24.Mishnah Berurah 40:4, 154:9; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Ginzei ha-Kodesh 8:10. 25.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav N. Karelitz (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 6:6). 26.Mishnah Berurah 154:7 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 7. 27.Minchas Elazar 1:27. In addition, anything made especially to honor an item of kedushah, such as an embroidered tefillin bag, is considered tashmishai kedushah even if it does not touch the kedushah itself; see Beur ha-Gra, Y.D. 282:33 and Mishnah Berurah 154:9 and 14. 28.O.C. 21:1. Indeed, many people are careful to burn their lulav (together with the chametz) for this reason.

29.Mishnah Berurah 21:6. 30.Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 664:20. 31.O.C. 677:4. It is customary to burn them and not discard them even in a respectful manner. 32.O.C. 21:1. 33.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 17:13). 34.Ibid. 35.See Kaf ha-Chayim 297:11 and Ginzei ha-Kodesh 20:5. 36.Kaf ha-Chayim 154:12; Tzedakah u'Mishpat 15, note 45. [Although Mishnah Berurah 154:10 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun seems to hold that a bimah requires standard genizah, he contradicts himself in 141:4.] 37.Mishnah Berurah 154:9 and most poskim. But some poskim consider a bookcase as tashmishai kedushah, and require genizah. In order to avoid the issue, it is recommended to "redeem" the bookcase, a process detailed in Mishnah Berurah 153:62; see Imrei Yosher 1:45; Chelkas Yaakov 3:162; Tzitz Eliezer 7:7. 38.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 19:12). 39.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 19:13). 40.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 18:20). 41.Chovas ha-Dor 1, note 43. 42.Mishnah Berurah 154:11. 43.Mishnah Berurah 21:6. 44.Rav C. Kamievsky (Ginzei ha-Kodesh, pg. 270). 45.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Ginzei ha-Kodesh 17:13). 46.Ibid. Weekly-Halacha, Weekly Halacha, Copyright © 2010 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. Rabbi Neustadt is Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights.

From Yeshiva.org.il <subscribe@yeshiva.org.il>
reply-To subscribe@yeshiva.org.il

The Crisis of Unwashed Meat By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Devorah calls me: "During our summer vacation, I entered a butcher shop that has reliable supervision and noticed a sign on the wall, 'We sell washed and unwashed meat.' This seemed very strange: Would anyone eat unwashed meat? Besides, isn't all meat washed as part of the koshering process? What did the sign mean?"

Michael asked me: "Someone asked me if I have any problem with the kashrus of frozen meat. What can possibly be wrong with frozen meat?"

Answer: This week's reading teaches how the Jews ate meat in the Desert. This certainly provides opportunity to understand some details of the proper preparation of kosher meat. We should also be aware that although today we have a steady supply of kosher meat with all possible hiddurim, that in some circumstances this is not always feasible. This is where "washed meat" and "frozen meat" may enter the picture; both terms referring to specific cases whose kashrus is subject to halachic dispute.

Knowing that Devorah enjoys stories, I told her an anecdote that illustrates what can happen when kosher choices are slim.

I was once Rabbi in a community that has memorable winters. Our city was often covered with snow around Rosh Hashanah and on occasion it was still snowing in May. On many occasions, we could not use the sukkah without clearing snow off the schach, something my Yerushalmi neighbors find hard to comprehend.

One short erev Shabbos the weather was unusually inclement, even for our region of the country; the major interstate highway and all secondary "state routes" were closed because of a blizzard. The locals called this weather "whiteout" -- referring not to mistake correction fluid, but to the zero visibility created by the combination of wind and snow.

Fortunately, I lived around the corner from shul and was able to navigate my way back and forth by foot. Our house too was, baruch Hashem, sufficiently stocked to get through Shabbos.

About a half-hour before Shabbos, in the midst of our last minute preparations, the telephone rang:

"Is this Rabbi Kaganoff?" inquired an unfamiliar female voice. I responded affirmatively, even though somewhat apprehensive. People do not call with shaylos late Friday afternoon unless it is an emergency. What new crisis would this call introduce? Perhaps I was lucky and this was simply a damsel in distress inquiring about the kashrus of her cholent, or one who had just learned that her crock pot may fail to meet proper Shabbos standards. Hoping that the emergency was no more severe, I listened attentively.

"Rabbi Kaganoff, I was given your phone number in case of emergency." I felt the first knots in my stomach. What emergency was this when I hoped to momentarily head out to greet the Shabbos queen? Was someone, G-d forbid, caught in the storm? I was certainly unprepared for the continuing conversation. "I am a dispatcher for the All-American Transport Company," she continued. "We have a load of kosher meat held up by the storm that needs to be washed by 11 p.m. Saturday." My caller, located somewhere in the Nebraska Corn Belt, was clearly more familiar with halachos of kosher meat than she was with the ramifications of calling a frum household minutes before candle lighting.

Although I was very curious how All-American had located me, a potential lone washer in the Wilderness, the hour of the week required expedition, not curiosity. Realizing that under stress, one's tone of voice can create a kiddush Hashem or, G-d forbid, the opposite, I politely asked if she could call me back in about 25 hours which would still be several hours before the meat's deadline. I guess that she assumed that it would take me that long to dig my car out.

Later, I determined the meat's ultimate destination, a place we will call Faroutof Town, information that ultimately proved highly important. Why was a Nebraska truck dispatcher calling to arrange the washing of kosher meat? Before returning to our meat precipitously stalled at the side of the highway, I need to provide some halachic background.

EXORCISING THE BLOOD

In several places, the Torah commands that we may not eat blood, but only meat. Of course, blood is the efficient transporter of nutrients to the muscles and permeates the animal's flesh while it is still alive. If so, how do we extract the prohibited blood from the permitted meat?

Chazal gave us two methods of removing blood from meat. One is by soaking and salting the meat, and the other is by broiling it. In practical terms, the first approach, usually referred to simply as kashering meat, involves soaking the meat for thirty minutes, shaking off the water, salting the meat thoroughly on all sides, and then allowing the blood to drain freely for an hour. At the end of this process, we rinse the meat thoroughly in order to wash away all the blood and salt. Indeed, Devorah is correct that the salting of all meat involves several washings. She was correct in assuming that the sign she saw in the butcher did not refer to these washings, but to a different washing that I will soon explain.

BROILING MEAT

An alternative method of extracting blood from meat is by broiling it. This is the only halachically accepted method of removing blood from liver. In this approach, the liver is sliced or slit to allow its blood to run out, the surface blood is rinsed off and the liver is placed under or over a flame to broil. Accepted practice is that we sprinkle a small amount of salt on the liver immediately prior to broiling it (Rama, Yoreh Deah 73:5).

Halachically, it is perfectly acceptable to broil any meat rather than soak and salt it. However, on a commercial level, broiling is impractical and therefore the usual method used for kosher cuisine is soaking and salting. For most of mankind's history, this was performed at home, but contemporarily the properly supervised butcher or other commercial facility almost universally performs it. Although this explains why one must salt meat before serving it, we still do not know why Ms. Nebraska was so concerned that her meat be washed en route.

SEVENTY-TWO HOURS OR BUST

The Geonim enacted that meat must be salted within seventy-two hours of its shechitah. They contended that after three days, blood inside the meat hardens and is no longer extractable through soaking and salting. Should meat not be soaked and salted within 72 hours, they ruled that only broiling successfully removes the blood. Of course, if one does not want to eat broiled meat, this last suggestion will not satisfy one's culinary tastes.

Is there any way to extend the 72 hours?

The authorities discuss this question extensively. Most contend that one may extend the time if the meat is soaked thoroughly for a while during the 72 hours (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 69:13, see Taz ad loc.), although some permitted this only under extenuating circumstances (Toras Chatos, quoted by Shach 69:53). On the other hand, some authorities ruled that a minor rinsing extends the 72 hours (Shu"t Masas Binyamin #108). It became standard to refer to meat that was washed to extend its time by the Yiddish expression, gegosena fleisch, hence the literal English translation, washed meat.

Also, bear in mind that this soaking only helps when the meat was soaked within 72 hours of its slaughter. Once 72 hours have passed without a proper soaking, only broiling will remove the blood.

WASHING OR SOAKING

At this point in my monologue, Devorah interrupted with a question:

"You mentioned soaking the meat and extending its time for three more days. But the sign called it 'washed meat,' not soaked meat. There is a big difference between washing something and soaking it."

"Yes, you are raising a significant issue. Although most early authorities only mention 'soaking' meat, it became common practice to wash the meat instead, a practice that many authorities disputed (Pischei Teshuvah, Yoreh Deah 69:28; Darkei Teshuvah 69:231-237). There are also many different standards of what is called 'washing' the meat. Some hechsherim permit meat that was not salted within seventy-two hours of its shechitah by having the meat hosed down before the seventy-two hours have elapsed, and consider this washing as a renewal of the seventy-two hours. Thus, this meat is only permitted if it was washed within seventy-two hours of its shechitah or previous washing. If the meat was washed thoroughly, it is now 'good' for another 72 hours. If one is unable to kasher it by then, one can rewash it again to further extend its 72 hours. However, most authorities require that the meat be thoroughly wetted with a high-power hose so that the meat becomes moist even inside. This is unlike cases I have seen where someone sprays a light mist over the meat and assumes that the meat is 'washed,' or often simply takes a wet rag and wipes down the outside of the meat."

"Why would anyone do that?" inquired Devorah?

"In general, people like to save work and water, and soaking properly a whole side of beef is difficult and uses a lot of water. In addition, if one hoses meat while it is on a truck, the water may damage the truck, whereas it is even more work to remove the meat from the truck. But if one does not hose the meat properly, most authorities prohibit it.

At this point, we can understand why Ms. Nebraska was concerned about the washing of the meat. She knew that if the meat went 72 hours without being hosed, the rabbis would reject the delivery as non-kosher. During my brief conversation, I asked her if she knew the last time the meat was washed. "It was last washed 11 p.m. Wednesday and needs re-washing by 11 p.m. Saturday," she dutifully notified me.

At this point, I noted to Devorah that we now had enough information to answer her question. "The sign in the butcher stating that they sell washed meat means that they sell meat that was not kashered until 72 hours after its slaughter, but was washed sometime before the 72 hours ran out. It does not tell us how they washed the meat, but it is safe to assume that they did not submerge it in water. If they were following a higher standard, they hosed the meat on all sides until it was soaking wet. If they followed a different standard, hopefully, they still did whatever their rav ruled. Since you told me that it was a reliable hechsher, presumably they hosed the meat thoroughly."

I then asked Devorah if she wanted to hear the rest of the blizzard story. As I suspected, she did – and so I return to our snowed-in town.

MOTZA'EI SHABBOS

By Motza'ei Shabbos the entire region was in the grips of a record-breaking blizzard. Walking the half block home from shul had been highly treacherous. There was no way in the world I was going anywhere that night, nor anyone else I could imagine.

At the very moment I had told the dispatcher I could be reached, the telephone rang. A different, unfamiliar voice identified itself as the driver of the stuck truck. His vehicle was exactly where it had been Friday afternoon, stranded not far from the main highway.

The driver told me the already-familiar story about his load of kosher meat, and his instructions to have the meat washed before 11 p.m. if his trip was delayed. There was little I could do for either the driver or the meat, a fact I found frustrating. Out of desperation, I called my most trusted mashgiach, Yaakov, who lived a little closer to the scene of the non-action. Yaakov was an excellent employee, always eager to work whenever there was a job opportunity. I explained the situation to him.

"Rabbi," responded Yaakov, "I was just out in this storm. Not this time. Sorry." I was disappointed. Not that I blamed Yaakov in the slightest. It was sheer insanity to go anywhere in this storm. In fact, I was a bit surprised at myself for taking the matter so seriously. After all, it was only a load of meat.

With no good news to tell the trucker, I was not exactly enthusiastic about calling him back. I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings. So I procrastinated, rather than tell the trucker he should sit back and wait for his kosher meat to expire. An hour later, the phone rang again with Mr. Trucker on the line. "Rabbi," He told me, with obvious excitement in his voice, "I've solved the problem." I was highly curious to find out where he located an Orthodox Jew in the middle of a blizzard in the middle of nowhere. For a fleeting moment I envisioned a frum Jew stranded nearby and shuddered at the type of Shabbos he must have experienced.

The trucker's continuing conversation brings me back to the reality of the unwashed meat.

"Well, Rabbi," he exclaimed with the exhilaration Columbus's look-out must have felt upon spotting land, "I discovered that I was stranded a few thousand feet from a fire station. And now all the meat has been properly hosed. Listen to this letter." The trucker proceeded to read me the documentation of his successful find:

"On Saturday evening, the 22nd of January, at exactly 9:25 pm, I personally oversaw the successful washing of kosher load of meat loaded on trailer 186CX and tractor 2008PR. To this declaration I do solemnly lend my signature and seal,

"James P. O'Donald, Fire Chief, Lincoln Fire Station #2."

Probably noticing my momentary hesitation, the trucker continues, "Rabbi, do I need to have this letter notarized?"

"No, I am sure that won't be necessary," I replied. I was not about to tell the driver that halachah requires that a Torah observant Jew supervise the washing of the meat. On the contrary, I complimented him on his diligence and his tremendous sense of responsibility.

At this point, I had a bit of halachic responsibility on my hands. Since I knew the meat's ultimate destination, I needed to inform the rav in Faroutof Town of the situation.

I was able to reach the Faroutofer Rav, Rabbi Oncelearned. "I just want to notify you that your city will shortly receive a load of meat that was washed under the supervision of the 'Fire Station K.'" Rabbi Oncelearned had never heard of the "Fire Station K" supervision and asked if I was familiar with this hechsher. I told

him the whole story and we had a good laugh. I felt good that I had supplied Rabbi Oncelearned with accurate information and prepared him for the meat's arrival. After all, it would be his learned decision that would rule once the meat arrived in town.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Of course, Rabbi Oncelearned now had his own predicament: Would he have to reject the town's entire order of kosher meat, incurring the wrath of hungry customers and undersupplied butchers? Or could he figure out a legitimate way to permit the meat.

There was indeed a halachic basis to permit the meat under the extenuating circumstances because of a different heter, but not because of the Lincoln fire station hose.

FROZEN MEAT

It is common that meat is slaughtered quite a distance from where it is consumed – such as slaughtering it in South America, and shipping it frozen to Israel.

Today, all mehadrin supervisions arrange that meat shipped this way is kosher butchered (called traberling) and kashered before it is frozen and shipped. This is a tremendous boon to proper kashrus, but it is a relatively recent innovation.

Initially, these meats were shipped frozen and, upon reaching their destination several weeks later, they were thawed, trabered and kashered. Thus, the question developed whether this meat was fit to eat since it arrived weeks after its slaughter.

In truth, earlier halachic authorities had already debated whether meat frozen for 72 hours can still be kashered by salting, some contending that this meat can only be broiled (Minchas Yaakov, Responsum #14 at end, quoted by Be'er Heiteiv 69:8; Pri Megadim, Sifsei Daas 69:60), whereas others ruled that deep freezing prevents the blood from hardening (Aruch HaShulchan, Yoreh Deah 69:79; Yad Yehudah 69:59; Shu"t Yabia Omer 2:YD:4 and Shu"t Yechaveh Daas 6:46). Some frowned on making such arrangements lechatchilah, but ruled that kashering this meat (by salting) is acceptable under extenuating circumstances (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:27; 2:21).

Rabbi Oncelearned consulted with a posek who reasoned that since the truck had been stuck in a major blizzard, unquestionably the meat had been frozen solid and that they could rely on this to kasher the meat after it thawed out. Thus, the firemen's hose was used for naught, but I never told them. Please help me keep it a secret.

Someone meticulous about kashrus plans trips in advance to know what hechsherim and kashrus situations he may encounter. If one's plans go awry, he should be aware that in extenuating circumstances, a rav may permit products that he would never allow in a normal situation.
