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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BEHAALOSCHA - 5771

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From **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** ryfrand@torah.org reply-to ryfrand@torah.org, genesis@torah.org to ravfrand@torah.org date Mon, Jun 6, 2011 at 5:05 PM
subject Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha

Parshas Beha'aloscha These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 728 - Lechem Mishneh Revisited. Good Shabbos!

Eldad and Meidad: The Rest of the Story

Parshas Beha'aloscha introduces two personalities about whom the Torah tells us very little. Nevertheless, according to certain sources Eldad and Meidad have a fascinating background. That which the Torah does tell us here about them, in light of this background, gives us new insight that is certainly worth pondering.

The nation complains to Moshe Rabbeinu, telling him they want meat. Moshe becomes frustrated with the people, shows his frustration to the Almighty ("Where will I find meat to feed this entire nation?") and finally confesses "I am not able to lead this entire nation by myself, it is too hard a job for me to handle." [Bamidbar 11:11-15].

G-d hears Moshe's request for help and commands him to gather 70 men from the elders of Israel and to have them join him in the Ohel Moed. "I will come down and speak to you. You will be enveloped in prophecy and then I will miraculously take the prophetic spirit that is upon you and will share it with them." [Bamidbar 11:16-17]

Rashi cites the parable of the candle. Moshe is the lit candle; the 70 Elders, who until now have not "been lit", will now have their wicks kindled, so to speak, by Moshe's candle. However, this in no way will diminish "the light of Moshe's candle."

This is exactly what happened. The seventy elders became deputized prophets, so to speak, and had the power of Moshe's prophecy transferred to them such that they too could prophesize. The Torah relates, however, that two people (Eldad and Meidad) remained in the camp. Rashi indicates that these two were supposed to be part of the 70 elders, but out of modesty, they refrained from joining the others. Rashi says that they used a lottery system to pick the 70 and these two were indeed picked, but they asked, "Who are we to merit receiving this Divine gift of prophecy?" Nevertheless, even though they did not join the others in the Ohel Moed, the spirit of prophecy was transferred to them as well and "they prophesized in the camp".

A young lad (Rashi identifies him as Gershom son of Moshe) ran to Moshe and reported that Eldad and Meidad were speaking words of prophecy in the camp. Yehoshua, upon hearing this states: "My master Moshe, put them in jail!" Moshe's response to Yehoshua is, "Are you being zealous for my sake? Would that the entire people of Hashem could be prophets, if Hashem would but place His Ruach upon them!" [Bamidbar 11:29]

Targum Yonasan ben Uziel teaches the amazing fact that Eldad and Meidad were half-brothers to Moshe Rabbeinu. How did that happen? We know based on the Gemara in Sotah that because of the decree of Pharaoh to throw the male children into the Nile River, Amram divorced his wife Yocheved. According to the Gemara, Amram was the leader of the generation and set an example that everyone else later emulated. Amram only remarried Yocheved after his daughter Miriam pointed out to her father that his decree was worse than Pharaoh's decree because it precluded Jewish girls from being born as well, while Pharaoh's decree only affected the males. Moshe was born from that remarriage.

According to the Tanna, Yonasan ben Uziel, during the period between her two marriages to Amram, Yocheved wanted to continue to have children and so she married Elzaphon ben Parnach and gave birth from him to two sons -- Eldad and Meidad -- during that brief marriage.

Let us ask a few questions about this amazing teaching: Here we have a situation where the Gadol haDor [leader of the generation] ruled that it was forbidden to bring children into the world while Pharaoh's decree was in effect and that therefore every married couple should separate. How could it be that Yocheved went against the ruling of her former husband Amram, the Gadol haDor, remarried and brought two sons into the world?

Aside from this halachik question, let us ask a psychological question: Is it harder for a father to throw a baby into the river or for a mother to throw a baby into the river? Obviously, it is harder for a mother to do such a thing. How could it be that the father (Amram) said, "I can't bear to throw my baby into the river. I would rather separate from my wife and not have children." Yet, the mother (Yocheved) was willing to take her chances in this matter and was prepared to accept the fact that she may have to throw her baby in the river. Would a mother be capable of doing such a thing?

Finally, Yocheved was over 120 years old at this time. For her to still have babies required a miracle. Yet she expects to remarry and have babies after the Gadol HaDor paskened not to have babies! Why would she think the Almighty would perform a miracle for someone who transgressed the ruling of the leader of the Jewish nation?

Where is Yocheved coming from? She contradicts the ruling of the Gadol Hador, she contradicts the natural maternal instinct, and she expects a miracle from G-d despite her transgressing the ruling of the Gadol Hador! What was she thinking?

I heard from a great person that there can be only one interpretation for Yocheved's behavior. Yocheved had a clearer understanding of the Will of the Creator than did her husband Amram, the greatest personality of the generation. She was a daughter of Levi, a granddaughter of Yaakov Avinu. She was a generation closer to the Patriarchs than was Amram.

The closer a person is generationally to the Patriarchs, the clearer the person's understanding of the Will of the Almighty will be.

Yocheved had the true understanding that such "calculations" are not for man to make. Man must do what G-d commands and then G-d needs to worry about the calculations. She was right and her husband the Gadol HaDor was wrong. The proof that she was right is Eldad and Meidad. They did not need the borrowed prophecy from Moshe Rabbeinu employed by the other Elders in the Ohel Moed. They had their own prophesy and it was superior to those of the other Elders. According to Rashi, the other Elders only prophesied for that one day and then it stopped. Eldad and Meidad, however, continued, to have the gift of prophesy. Their prophesy was more pristine, holier, more genuine and longer lasting than that of the other Elders. Why? They were the children of Yocheved, who demonstrated self-sacrifice to do the Will of the Creator.

We have always known that Yocheved was rewarded for her dedication to G-d by having great children (Moshe, Aaron and Miriam) descend from her [See Shmos 1:21; Rashi there]. Now we know the rest of the story.

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Parshat Beha'alotcha

The Trumpets

Rav Zechariah Tubi, Rosh Kollel Rabbanut

In our parsha, Hashem commands Moshe Rabbeinu (Bamidbar 10:1): Make for yourself two silver trumpets - make them hammered out, and they shall be yours for the summoning of the assembly and to cause the camps to journey.

The trumpets are also mentioned at the end of this passage (10:9-10):

When you go to wage war in your land against an enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound short blasts of the trumpets ... On a day of your gladness, and on your festivals, and on your new moons, you shall sound the trumpets.

The Midrash Rabbah on the pasuk, "Make for yourself two silver trumpets" states:

"Make for yourself" – For yourself make, and not for another. You use them, and another does not use them. Even Yehoshua, Moshe's disciple did not use them, but rather shofars ... Not only Yehoshua, but even Moshe Rabbeinu – while he himself was still alive, they were hidden away.

Why were the trumpets used only during Moshe Rabbeinu's period and not during Yehoshua's period? Why did Yehoshua need to use specifically shofars?

The Rambam (Hil. Ta'anit 1:1-4) writes:

It is a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and sound the trumpets over every trouble that may come, as it says: "Against an enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound short blasts of the trumpets"...

This is part of the Teshuva process, that when trouble comes and they cry out and sound the trumpets, everyone will know that because of their evil deeds they were harmed, as it says, "Your sins have overturned" etc'...

During these fast days, they cry out in prayer and plead and sound only the trumpets. If they were in the Temple, they sound the trumpets and the shofar.

The Rambam distinguishes between the Temple and the rest of the country. Everywhere else, during a time of trouble only the trumpets are sounded, while in the Temple both the trumpets and the shofar are sounded. What does this mean? What is the conceptual difference between a trumpet and a shofar?

A trumpet is something that is made by man. Never has a person dug in the ground and discovered a whole trumpet ready for use. Instead, a person has to take raw material and shape it in order to create the instrument. In contrast to this, the shofar is made by Heaven. The instrument stands prepared on the head of the ram. It is already made, and all that man has to do is cut it, brush it and prepare it for sounding.

Another difference between the shofar and trumpet: The mitzvah of the shofar is to hear it, whereas the function of the trumpet is to make noise, to sound the blast in time of trouble.

The Rambam writes that at a time of trouble the trumpet is sounded so that people will know that this trouble came upon them because of their evil deeds. Just like man builds and forms the trumpet, so, too, a person should feel that he is a broken instrument that needs to be rebuilt – to repair his spiritual ruins. In contrast, the shofar that is blown on Rosh Hashana comes to awaken a person from his slumber, so that he will prepare himself as a receiving vessel for the spiritual bounty of Hashem and thus become even closer to Hashem.

We now understand why elsewhere only a trumpet is sounded during a time of trouble, while in the Temple they sound also a shofar. Outside of the Temple, it is the trumpet that is supposed to repair the ruins of sin. However, the Temple is the place not only for repairing the ruins, but also for receiving spiritual bounty at the same time.

Accordingly, we can understand the difference between Moshe's period and Yehoshua's period. In Moshe's period the nation was created. We were transformed from the slaves of Pharaoh into the slaves of Hashem. This situation is similar to a trumpet, when a person transforms from raw material into an instrument that is used for service. However, during Yehoshua's period – the generation of those entering the land, the nation was already bonded and unified, and all they needed was to prepare them to enter Eretz Yisrael. Here the shofar is sounded, because it is a ready-made instrument that needs only to be made fit for sounding.

We also understand why the trumpets were put away during Moshe's period. This is the end of the period in which the nation was formed and created, as symbolized by the trumpet. A new period is started by Yehoshua to prepare the nation, which is symbolized by the Shofar.

The consolation of the end of days, when the redemption of Am Yisrael will arrive and the Temple will stand once again, is that there will be happiness and renewal. This is alluded to by the pasuk: "On a day of your gladness, and on your festivals, and on your new moons, you shall sound the trumpets." This is the reconstruction of Am Yisrael during the redemption period. Then the sound of the shofar, the Mashiach's shofar, will be heard calling to all those who are lost or cast away from the way of Hashem, as the prophet says (Yeshaya 27:13):

It shall be on that day that a great shofar will be blown, and those who are lost in the land of Assyria and those cast away in the land of Egypt will come [together], and they will prostrate themselves to Hashem on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

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The Timeless Rav Hirsch - Parshas Beha'aloscha

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Parshas Beha'aloscha

The Little Committee That Could 1

How could it be understood, other than a complete repudiation of his message? To Moshe, the people's fond reminiscences of freely obtained garlic and onions signaled failure of his mission. Hashem had entrusted him not only to give Bnei Yisrael the Torah, but to shape them into a nation that cherished the highest ideals. Instead, they wailed in front of

their tents for a menu change. "We remember the fish that we ate freely in Egypt... the leeks and the onions and the garlic[2]."

Moreover, there did not appear to be any way out. Moshe had complete faith and confidence in Hashem's ability to perform miracles, but the demands of the people were disappointing and inappropriate. They were hardly in the kind of crisis that Hashem would respond to with miraculous intervention. If the people were to be placated, the meat they sought would have to come from natural sources. Where was he to find a supply of meat for the sizeable population of the Jewish travelers through the wilderness?

To make matters worse, Moshe was nagged by his recollection of the beginning of his public service career. When Hashem had first called upon him at the burning bush and asked him to argue the people's cause in front of Paroh, Moshe had demurred. For an entire week according to Chazal he attempted to persuade G-d to look elsewhere for His human spokesman. Moshe would gladly have suffered any shame and any harm, if it would better the condition of the Jewish people. But he believed that he was unqualified for the job, and implored G-d to choose an alternative. Nothing could disqualify a candidate for leadership more than self-doubt in his own abilities. It was a recipe for failure – and he had now been proven correct!

"Why have You so afflicted Your servant; why have I not found favor in Your eyes[3]?" Why had he found so little favor in Hashem's eyes that He had spurned Moshe's most reasonable request? How could he possibly have succeeded? "Did I conceive this entire people, or did I bear them[4]?" When parents fall short of their goals, their failures are offset by the bonds of love and respect that children have for them. Those can compensate for less than perfect parental performance. But Moshe was not their parent. Love and respect were not available as a kind of instinct. Obviously, he thought, he hadn't earned it either, or they would not be asking trivial and impossible things of him. Their crying for meat mocked him as a failure.

Hashem's response to Moshe was not instantly reassuring. "Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel[5]." What purpose could be served by surrounding Moshe with a committee of seventy elders? Surely, Moshe thought, the immediate purpose of their appointment was to address the practical issue at hand. What benefit was there in seventy-one people contemplating an impossible situation, rather than Moshe alone? "Six hundred thousand ... people, and You say that I should give them meat that they should eat for a month[6]!"

G-d amplified upon His earlier statement that there would be more than ample meat. Moshe had understood that to mean that it would be available through natural means, since Hashem would surely not work miracles for such a small-minded request. "Will the Hand of Hashem be insufficient? Now you will see whether My Word will happen to you or not[7]." There are far more opportunities than you realize for My Will to be accomplished even within the limitations of the natural world the fulfillment of My Word can occur in ways that humans will never anticipate – even without overt miracles! No one could have anticipated the "fortuitous" gathering of quail for the people to collect. Yet the laws of nature did not have to be overturned to satisfy their craving for meat.

HKBH showed that He was in full control of the laws of nature not only in breaking them at will, as He did at the time of the Exodus, but in squeezing unexpected results from them when that was what He desired. What, then, was the role of the elders? The election of the seventy zekeinim did not seem to play a role in the timely arrival of flocks of birds.

We should pause and consider that the seventy zekeinim became the prototype for the Sanhedrin that would guide and direct the nation in all exigencies of history, in good times and in troubled ones. Long after the death of Moshe, such batei din would bring the Word of G-d to the people in situations that would seem hopeless and impossible. They

would need firm resolve to stand by Hashem's expectations, even where conditions would seem unfavorable for those expectations to be realized.

This first crisis faced by the Sanhedrin as the ultimate source of human guidance set the stage for the future activities of the elders of all generations. They do not always need to see in advance how a problem would be solved. They need to determine the right course of action, and have confidence that Hashem would provide practical solutions that human beings could not conjure up on their own.

1. Based on the Hirsch Chumash, Bamidbar 11:11-13, 21-23 2. Bamidbar 11:5 3. Bamidbar 11:11 4. Bamidbar 11:12 5. Bamidbar 11:16 6. Bamidbar 11:21 7. Bamidbar 11:23

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From Chanan Morrison ravkooklist@gmail.com reply-torav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com to Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date Thu, Jun 9, 2011 at 11:04 AM subject [Rav Kook List] Beha'alotecha: The Unique Prophecy of Moses

Beha'alotecha: The Unique Prophecy of Moses Separating from Tziporah

"Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses regarding the dark-skinned woman he had married." (Num. 12:1) What exactly was their complaint against Moses?

The rabbinic commentaries explain that they were upset that Moses had separated from his wife Tziporah, the dark-skinned daughter of Jethro. Miriam and Aaron were able to receive prophecy without resorting to celibacy; why did Moses feel it was necessary to separate from his wife?

The separation was in fact Moses' idea; God had not commanded him to do this. The Talmud explains that Moses decided it was necessary after witnessing God's revelation to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. He reasoned that

"The Shechinah spoke with Israel only on one occasion and at a predetermined hour. Nevertheless, the Torah cautioned, "Do not come near a woman." Certainly I, with whom the Shechinah speaks at all times and with no set hour, must do the same." (Shabbat 87a) The Sages noted that Moses' reasoning was sound and that God approved of his decision. Their proof: after the revelation at Sinai, God told the people, "Return to your tents" [i.e., your families]. But God said to Moses, "You, however, shall stay here with Me" (Deut. 5:27-28).

Why was this separation something that Moses needed to work out for himself? And why was only Moses obligated to separate from his wife, and not other prophets?

Divine Perspective

Despite the soul's innate greatness, we are limited by our private lives and concerns. Compared to the Shechinah's all-encompassing light - a sublime light that illuminates all worlds and all that they contain - our private lives are like a feeble candle before the blazing sun. The cosmos

are full of holiness - in all of their minutiae, in their processes of growth and advance, in their physical and spiritual paths. All of their heights and depths are holy; all is God's treasure.

In order to attain this higher perspective, a prophet must free himself from his narrow, personal viewpoint. The pristine dawn of elevated da'at (knowledge) must be guarded from all influences that could lead one to withdraw within a private love.

Moses, the faithful shepherd, could not be confined to the limited framework of private life - not even momentarily. Even from the natural perspective, his world was God's world, the all-inclusive world where everything is holy.

The necessity to separate from all private existence was Moses' initiative. From the Divine perspective, all is holy and such measures are unnecessary. For Moses, however, it was essential. It allowed him to raise his sights to the elevated outlook. Separating from his family allowed Moses' soul to be constantly drawn into the Soul of all worlds. It enabled the revelation of the Torah's unique illumination in the world.

Continual Light

What was so special about Moses' prophecy that, unlike all other prophets, he needed to avoid all private life? Rav Kook used the analogy of lightening to illustrate the qualitative difference between the prophecy of Moses and that of other prophets.

Imagine living in a pitch-black world where the only source of light is the light emitted by an occasional bolt of lightning. It would be impossible to truly understand one's surroundings in such a dark world. Even if the lightning occurs repeatedly, its lack of constancy makes this form of light inadequate. If, however, the lightening is extremely frequent - like a strobe light set to flash at a very fast frequency - its illumination is transformed into a source of constant light.

This analogy may be applied to spiritual enlightenment. One cannot truly recognize the elevated realm, its holiness and pure morality, the rule of justice and the influence of the sublime, without the illumination of continual prophecy.

Ordinary prophecy is like the intermittent light of an occasional lightening bolt. Only the Torah, the singular prophecy of Moses, is a light that radiates continually. By this constant light we are able to perceive the truth of the world's inner essence and live our lives accordingly.

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, p. 174; Orot HaKodesh vol. I p. 275.)

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Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas

Beha'aloscha

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The rabble that was among them cultivated a craving. And Bnei Yisrael also turned and they wept. (11:4) Klal Yisrael achieved exalted status in the wilderness, as evidenced by the Pillar of Cloud that rested above the Mishkan. At night they were protected by a Pillar of Fire. The Degalim, Flags/Banners, which represented each tribe's unique characteristics, were also a Divine indication of their unusually lofty plateau. It is specifically for this reason that their reaction to a meat shortage seems so bizarre. "And they cried and said, 'Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish which we

ate in Egypt, free of charge, the cucumbers, and the melons and the leeks, etc.'" (Bamidbar 11:4,5).

How did a nation which had achieved such lofty spiritual status descend so quickly to having such overriding concern for their physical needs? This is especially notable considering that this took place within the year following the Giving of the Torah. Certainly, their original reaction to the Giving of the Torah and the preceding miracles and wonders had been real.

Horav Chaim Kamil, zl, suggests that the answer to this anomaly lies in the pasuk which details Hashem's response to the people's complaining. "Until a month of days, until it will come out of your nose and will become nauseating to you, because you have rejected Hashem Who is in your midst (ibid 11:20)." Rashi explains: "Had I not planted My Shechinah among you, your heart would not have been so high as to entertain all of these matters." Mizrachi explains that it was the fact that Hashem was manifest in their midst which caused them to sin. Implied by this statement is the idea that the Presence of Hashem catalyzed an incredible spiritual leap, but, as with all achievement, responsibility accompanies it. They had achieved greatness; now, they had to guard and maintain this precious gift. They did not, and, as a result, they plummeted to a nadir of physicality and materialism in which food and the self-gratification it represents became the sources of their downfall. Spiritual advantage is a wonderful achievement, but it must be maintained. If it is not guarded like a precious jewel, it can be the cause of one's downfall. It is like playing with fire. This is a very important principle in avodas Hashem, one's service to the Almighty. The more one grows, the more one needs to watch, to guard, to be ever vigilant that he does not squander the spiritual treasures which he has acquired. It is not unlike any other treasure: it must be protected.

Rav Kamil posits that the greatest agent for protection is an unquenchable desire to achieve greater and loftier heights. In other words, more is better. One who "settles" for what he has achieved indicates a lackluster attitude towards his spiritual advantage. He can be certain that this spiritual gift will, regrettably, be short-lived. In the world of commerce there is the old, much maligned cliché?, "the rich get richer." This is because their wealth means something to them; thus, they work at acquiring more. If something is important, if it is valuable, we want more of it. Should spirituality be any different?

The rabble that was among them cultivated a craving; and Bnei Yisrael also wept once more, and said, "who will feed us meat?" Assemble for Me seventy men from the elders of Yisrael. (11:4,16)

Yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt; Krias Yam Suf, the Splitting of the Red Sea; Mattan Torah, the Giving of the Torah: despite having experienced all of these seminal events, Klal Yisrael still found reason to complain. After all, they were hungry. This teaches us a powerful - almost frightening - lesson: There are such forces imbedded within the human psyche that repel common decency. These same forces defy one's ability to maintain his spiritual ascendancy. Thus, regardless of the spiritual experience to which one has been privy, he should not pat himself on the back and say, "I am fine. I can now handle anything." In addition, those who attribute their spiritual deficiencies to a lack of spiritual leadership of the calibre that existed in previous generations will have a rude awakening, with the consideration that this criticism took place while Klal Yisrael was under the stewardship of our quintessential leader, Moshe Rabbeinu. Achieving a spiritual plateau does not guarantee that one will maintain his status quo. He can as quickly descend to a nadir far below that at which he stood earlier.

One must take hold of himself and use his mind to think cogently, to take a penetrating look at what is going on around him. By applying the brakes to life, one allows himself to reflect, to try to think rationally, thus realizing that there is a Creator Who guides every aspect of his existence. If one is not thinking, then the most seminal events leave no positive

impact. If one is not awake, life passes him by while he continues to remain clueless.

One can listen, understand, and still remain distant from the truth. Horav Shmuel Nariyah, zl, explains that it all depends on how one views the material he is studying or perceives the event which is to shake him up. When one views Torah as nothing more than a gut vort, nice thought, without it having any pertinence to him personally, then it remains nothing more than a gut vort. One can stand at the foot of Har Sinai and experience the greatest Revelation known to mankind and gain nothing at all. It is another gut vort.

An experience such as the Revelation must transform a person. It must alter his perspective, obligate him to do more, act better, change his life. The erev rav, mixed multitude, stood at Har Sinai, experiencing the same Revelation as everyone else; yet, they remained impassive, unmoved, unchanged. It was a gut vort. It did not apply to them. The gentile world has many wise men who compose, expound, elucidate many wonderful, valuable and meaningful ideas. Yet, these ideas remain nothing more than hypothetical concepts which rarely see fruition. Indeed, explains Rav Nariah, herein lies the difference between the chochmah, wisdom, of the secular, gentile world, and Torah. Wisdom does not make any demands on the individual. One listens, is impressed, even discusses it with others, but at no time does he feel compelled to obligate himself to execute the implied demands of the ideas personally. The individual hears the ideas, sees the revelations, understands the implications, but does not connect to the concept. The value of an idea is commensurate with its ability to achieve fruition. Chochmah does not find fulfillment. Torah, by its very nature, if studied properly, compels one to listen, see, think - and change.

Interestingly, immediately following Klal Yisrael's debacle concerning the physical desire to satiate their hunger for meat, the Torah relates that Hashem instructed Moshe to select seventy elders to serve as the nation's Torah scholars, their Sanhedrin, the adjudicators and teachers of Jewish law and ritual. This command seems out of place. After all, how is Torah going to fill their stomachs? The people had a craving for beef. Seventy elders will not satiate their physical cravings.

Rav Nariah views this as spiritual pragmatism. If, during such an auspicious time, while Klal Yisrael was preparing for their entry into the Promised Land, their primary concern revolved around the questions: "What will we eat? Where is our beef?", then they had a serious problem. They were clearly experiencing a serious spiritual deficiency. The nation was ascending the ladder of spirituality, preparing for the culmination of hundreds of years of affliction, after receiving the Torah amid the most revelatory miracles and wonders; yet, their concern was for their stomachs. They needed to undergo a transformation, mind-opening education that would enlighten them as it illuminated their path to return. A temporary filling would not suffice. They were approaching "crunch time." A complete, enduring metamorphosis was in order.

Enter the zekeinim, elders of Klal Yisrael, the scholars who would teach, guide, disseminate Torah and imbue the nation with the proper character traits. They would refine their coarse behavior and teach them how to control their physical cravings until they no longer meant anything to them. The zekeinim were the trauma team that would prepare the nation for their entry into the Promised Land.

Zekeinim, elders, are more than teachers; they are a Jewish institution, without which our nation cannot survive. Our elders are indispensable. In the Midrash, Rabbi Akiva expresses this idea with the following comment: "Yisrael is compared to a bird. Just as a bird cannot fly without its wings; likewise, Klal Yisrael is helpless without its elders."

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, explains the definitive nature of this statement. A bird without its wings is in worse shape than an animal who never had wings to begin with. A wingless bird is helpless, has no way of getting around; indeed, it is a very pitiful creature. Other nations survive without elders. The tradition which they transmit to the next generation

will not "make or break" them. For Klal Yisrael, elders are requisite to our survival. To usurp the power of our elders is equivalent to striking a blow at the very core of the lifeblood of our nation. Judaism is a religious continuum, a chain that stretches from Sinai until this very day. We pray the same way our ancestors prayed; we serve Hashem in the very same manner. We have a tradition, a code of Jewish law and custom, that have been meticulously and lovingly transmitted from generation to generation. To undermine the Mesorah, tradition, by "clipping the wings" of the zekeinim of previous generations is dealing a death blow to our religious observance.

The secularists associated with the German Haskalah, Enlightenment movement, attempted this. By portraying the rabbanim and zekeinim in the most negative terms, they succeeded in eroding centuries-old traditions and belief. It was only through the superhuman efforts and mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, of a group of dedicated German rabbanim and laymen that these defilers of the Jewish religion did not totally succeed in their nefarious goal.

When the dew descended upon the camp at night, the manna would descend upon it. (11:9)

The daily manna was a lesson in bitachon, trust, in Hashem. The Jewish People learned to trust that Hashem would provide their necessities at the appropriate time. They would be allotted the amount that they needed, as determined by Hashem. Things have not changed. Hashem still provides for us. It may not look or feel like manna, but it is a modern-day version. Our livelihood comes to us compliments of Hashem. Fortunate is he who realizes, acknowledges and appreciates this. As in the wilderness, Hashem provides each individual with enough to address his needs. Those who have more should realize that Hashem wants them to share it with others. Those who have less should be patient; Hashem will provide.

Concerning bitachon, a distinction exists between gashmius, materialism, and ruchniyos, spirituality. Chazal teach us that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son lived for thirteen years in a cave. How did they sustain themselves? We are taught that a carob tree and a spring were in the cave. Thus, their daily fare consisted of carob and water. Not a very diverse diet, but nutritional none-the-less. They were pleased, considering that they were able to study Torah all day and night, unencumbered by anyone or anything. Their material needs were cared for. Life was "great"!

There was, however, one problem: their clothes. Since they had no idea how long they would be compelled to live in the cave, they were concerned lest their clothes wear out. One must wear a garment in order to daven. If they were to wear their clothes all day, they would soon wear-out, leaving them with nothing to wear for davening. In order to alleviate this problem, they dug a hole in the sand floor of the cave, entered and covered themselves with sand. This is how they learned Torah. When it came time to daven, they would exit the sand, get dressed and daven.

Hashem's role in our sustenance is an intrinsic one. In a way, it was much easier in the wilderness to see that role played out. One form of sustenance came via Heaven. That was all! Today, we think that the sustenance comes via our job, our investments, etc. Accordingly, we are thrown for a loop. We think that it is our hishtadlus, endeavoring, that catalyzes results. For instance, we work for someone. He provides our paycheck and, hence, our sustenance. It does not work that way, as evidenced by the following incident

Prior to his being revealed to the world as founder of chassidus, the holy Baal Shem Tov was extremely poor. He lived off what he was able to beg. Regrettably, a few hundred years ago, this was not an uncommon sight in Europe. Most Jews struggled and were compelled to live off the charitable donations of others. Thursday was the day that they were forced to "hit the street," begging for alms, so that they could acquire the simplest necessities for Shabbos.

On one particular Thursday, the Baal Shem Tov closed his Gemorah and went out on a fundraising trip. Approaching the home of a well-to-do philanthropist, he walked up to the door, gave a few knocks, and immediately walked away. The philanthropist came to the door and was quite upset to see no one standing there. "What chutzpah!" he declared. Not giving up quickly, he looked around his vast estate only to discover the Baal Shem Tov sitting in a corner across the street. The man donned his coat and went out to the holy man.

"Rebbe! Sholom Aleichem! Possibly you were the one who knocked on my door?" the man asked. "Yes, it was I," the Baal Shem Tov replied.

"What were you seeking?" the man asked.

"Shabbos is approaching and I have no funds with which to purchase the basic necessities," the Baal Shem Tov answered. "So, why did you run away? You did not even allow me to make it to the door with a donation," the man queried.

"Why should I wait by the door?" the Baal Shem asked. "An obligation rests upon me to be mishtadel, endeavor. I executed that hishtadlus by knocking on the door. Now, it is up to Hashem to help me. What difference is there if He assists me through you or through another avenue? The main thing is that I did my part."

This incident teaches us that the hishtadlus does not necessarily coincide with the results. The blessing comes from Hashem after we are mishtadel. In other words, we might be working for one person - and receive our sustenance from another. Working is the hishtadlus; the consequences come from Hashem as He sees fit.

What is bitachon? The usual response is: "I trust in Hashem that He will do such and such for me." This is not bitachon. In the sefer Chovas Halevavos, it is explained that bitachon is a status quo, a state of being, whereby the individual remains calm and secure, trusting that the Almighty will provide him with whatever is appropriate. It is a sense of trust, a feeling of solitude.

The Chafetz Chaim compares this to medicine that must be ingested by a sick person. It is bitter medicine and, hence, difficult to swallow. The pharmacist wraps the medicine in a plastic capsule, so that the person will not taste the medicine. Indeed, we do this all of the time: wrap the bitter pills in life in some form of "plastic coating." This idea applies equally to bitachon. The individual who trusts in Hashem is not unaware of the troubles that beset him. He is acutely aware that they come from a Source: Hashem, Who "provides" them out of a sense of kindness. This awareness is the plastic capsule that engenders courage, fortitude and resolution to continue with the knowledge and trust that Hashem is purifying him. No, the pain does not go away. The perspective concerning this pain changes. It has been ameliorated through chesed.

When "push comes to shove," people trust in Hashem. On the one hand, it should not come to that. We should not trust in Hashem only when we have exhausted all other options. Hashem is the only option. Perhaps, if we would understand this concept, and turn to Hashem first - because He is the only option, then our prayers might achieve greater efficacy. I am writing this before Pesach, and I have before me a wonderful commentary on the Haggadah by Rabbi Yechiel Spero. He relates the following story which underscores and elucidates this idea.

A young couple - who had not yet been blessed with a child - had exhausted all avenues of hope. They had tried everything, to no avail. As a final attempt, they asked for a meeting with Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl. Rav Shimshon said that he would pick up the young man that evening at 11:00 p.m. Despite the young man's protests, Rav Shimshon was adamant; he was driving. At the appointed time, Rav Shimshon pulled up in his car, and they were off.

They drove for quite some time until they were driving in a completely uninhabited area. This continued on for a while. Suddenly, Rav Shimshon pulled off the road and continued driving on a dirt road. Another ten minutes elapsed until Rav Shimshon finally pulled over, stopped the car and asked the young man to step out of the car. One can

imagine what thoughts were coursing through the young man's mind, but one does not question Rav Shimshon.

"Spend the next half hour davening to Hashem, and then I will return to pick you up," Rav Shimshon told him. Having issued his instructions, Rav Shimshon returned to the car and pulled out, leaving the young man alone "somewhere" in the southern part of Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Shimshon returned thirty minutes later to find the young man sitting on a rock waiting for him. "Why did you leave me alone?" the young man asked. Rav Shimshon looked the young man in the eye and said, "This is it. I instructed you to daven because you are all alone right now in the middle of nowhere. You have no one else to turn to other than the Ribono Shel Olam. So, turn to your Father in Heaven and beg Him with all your strength to bless you with a child. I cannot help you. The doctors cannot help you. Nothing and no one can help - only Hashem. Daven as if you realize this."

Rav Shimshon drove off again, returning in a half hour. This time, however, the young man was not there. Rav Shimshon waited another half hour and began to worry. Suddenly, the young man emerged from a nearby field. Eyes swollen, his face tear-streaked, he looked at Rav Shimshon and said, "I think that we can go now."

Not a word passed between the two on the return trip home. Rav Shimshon dropped the young man off and continued on home. Within that year, the couple was blessed with a child, the fruit of a broken father's prayers. He knew that no one but Hashem could help him, and he davened like he believed it. He had discovered true bitachon.

Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble. (12:3)

The word, v'ha'ish, "and the man (Moshe)," is seemingly superfluous. Obviously, he was a man. Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, notes that even in the consummate middah, character trait, of anavah, humility, one can go overboard, become carried away by taking humility to an extreme. Shmuel HaNavi criticized Shaul Ha'Melech for his immoderate humility, an error that was a primary factor in his downfall. Shmuel said, "Though you may be small in your own eyes, you are the head of the tribes of Yisrael; and Hashem has anointed you to be head of Yisrael" (Shmuel 1, 15:17). "Because you rejected the word of G-d, He has rejected you as King" (Ibid 15:23).

Humility is a wonderful character trait, but it must go hand-in-hand with dignity. One, who out of a sense of humility, allows people to step all over him is not humble; he is foolish. He is not a baal ha'bayis, owner, over his G-d-given component. He is created b'tzelem Elokim, in the image of G-d, and, as such, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Shaul Ha'melech permitted his humility to control his life; thus, he erred. As the king, he should make decisions based upon what he feels is correct - not public opinion. Shaul feared offending the people, so that he did not heed the words of Shmuel HaNavi.

Middos, character traits, have to be implemented properly, correctly, and under the right conditions. There is a time for humility and a time when one should show a little class. Regrettably, we find the converse. Moshe Rabbeinu was the anav mi'kol adam, most humble man on earth; yet, he knew when to make demands as a leader. Everything has a time and place. Moshe was an anav, but he was also an ish, "man," strong in his ability to lead, guide and direct the destiny of the nation. When one conjures up the name of Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, not only does unparalleled distinction in Torah knowledge come to mind, but so does this revered gadol's humility. Rav Moshe was, as his namesake, the essence of humility. Likewise, his humility was not the product of weakness. When necessary, he could be firm and unyielding, if such was the dictated course of action.

Once, when adjudicating a halachic dispute between two litigants, he caught someone offering testimony that was clearly prevaricated. The Rosh Yeshivah reprimanded the man and asked him to leave the room. In another episode, Rav Moshe stated a halachah to which one of the litigants did not agree. The man had the insolence to accuse Rav Moshe

of falsifying the law in order to expedite the case. Rav Moshe rose up to his full height and exclaimed, "My name is Moshe Feinstein. True, I do not know how to learn, but go in the streets and inquire if I am a liar!"

Yishtabach shimcha lo'ad malkeinu Ha'Keil. Your name should be praised forever, our King.

We arrive now at the conclusion of Pesukei D'zimrah. Beginning with Baruch She'Amar and concluding with Yishtabach, the "Verses of Song," are filled with praise to Hashem. This is how we begin our day. Now, at the conclusion of these verses of praise, we declare that we regret concluding. Horav Avigdor Miller, zl, presents it so beautifully. We simply do not want to end our praise of Hashem, for He ought to be praised forever, without cessation. Why? Because Hashem is "our King." This appellation denotes two factors which necessitate our endless praise. First, as our King, He created us and conducts all of our affairs, continues to sustain us and supply all of our needs. Second, if He is our King, then we are His subjects. As such, we serve Him with all of our ability and power. Praising Hashem is one of the primary forms of serving Him.

The roshei teivos, first letter of each word, shimcha, lo'ad, malkeinu, ha'Keil, spell out the acronym Shlomo, referring to Shlomo Ha'Melech to whom this prayer is attributed. It contains, Yud Kay, fifteen descriptions of praise, coinciding with the fifteen Shir Ha'Maalos, the Yud Kay. They should be recited together as one, without interruption.

Sponsored in loving memory of our dear father and zaidy on his yahrtzeit Rabbi Shlomo Silberberg Harav Shlomo ben Nosson z"l niftar 14 Sivan 5759 t.n.tz.v.h. Zev Aryeh & Miriam Solomon & Family

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at a particular time that will still be binding under changed circumstances? Is he capable of accepting upon himself to behave in a certain manner even under totally different conditions? Thus there was a certain problem when the people of Israel accepted the Torah, saying, "We shall do and we shall obey," for it would be very difficult to keep this promise in all the changed circumstances under which Israel would live. The solution to this problem lies, of course, in the hands of God, Creator of the universe. God "overturned the mountain upon them like an inverted cask" – He adjusted the world so that it should accord with the Torah, and in that way He ensured that all situations, times and places would be suited for Torah observance. Through this act of overturning the mountain like an inverted cask, which symbolizes the fashioning of reality in light of Torah observance, Israel's statement, "We shall do and we shall obey," received absolute force. Now this statement was not merely a fleeting declaration, but a proclamation with eternal significance, for from this point on, the world would be suited continually for fulfilling the Torah. It was only by virtue of the inversion of the mountain that the Torah has survived from the time of the creation of the world and will continue to survive for all generations. This is the deeper meaning of Tosafot's statement that the mountain was inverted in order that the people of Israel should not be alarmed by the fire and retract their promise. Had God not inverted the mountain upon them, the people of Israel's acceptance of "We shall do and we shall obey" could have been a quickly passing utterance, and certain occurrences, e.g., seeing the fire, could have brought about its annulment. The primary role of the assembly at Mount Sinai was to establish the Torah's standing for all generations. It was by virtue of the assembly at Mount Sinai that the Torah received eternal and binding force.

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He Overturned the Mountain upon Them

Based on a sicha by Harav Yehuda Amital zt"l Translated by
David Strauss

"And they stood under the mount" (Shemot 19:17). Rav Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them: If you accept the Torah, it is well; if not, there shall be your burial. (Shabbat 88a)

The Tosafot raised an objection from the fact that the people of Israel had already said: "We shall do and we shall obey" (Shemot 24:7). Why, then, was it necessary to hold the mountain over them? The Tosafot answer that there was a danger that Israel, when they saw the great fire at Mount Sinai, would renege on their promise to keep the Torah. Therefore, it was necessary to prevent them from backtracking by overturning the mountain upon them like an inverted cask. The words of Tosafot contain a very profound insight. At each moment, every individual is in a specific situation, subject to the limitations of place and time, affected by his environment and other external conditions, from whose influence he can never totally free himself. This being the case, we must ask ourselves: Can an individual make decisions