

Weekly Parsha Behalotcha
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

In many respects this is the saddest chapter that appears in the Torah. The Jewish people, having successfully been released from Egyptian slavery and arriving at Mount Sinai and accepting the sacredness of God's Torah, they then embark on the building of the Tabernacle. They are then able to successfully complete that project and are ready to undertake the final mission that they are charged with in the desert of Sinai – entry into the land of Israel, its conquest and settlement.

Here, on the threshold of victory and fulfillment, the whole project begins to unravel. The father-in-law of Moshe, Yitro, deserts them for reasons which the text of the Torah does not expand upon. Then the people begin to complain about the food – miraculous as it was – that is available to them in the desert and they complain about God and, naturally, about Moshe as well.

When people are in a bad mood, there is no way they can be satisfied, no matter what. We all know that if we come home after a bad day at the office and a terrible commute and enter our homes in such a mood, then whatever delicious dinner may have been prepared for us tastes like ashes in our mouths.

We are always prisoners of our psyche. The Jewish people were afraid of having to enter the land of Israel and to somehow build the nation state on their own, even though they are promised, in fact guaranteed, divine aid. They are in a bad mood, so the food is not good, and Moshe appears to them to be the wrong man for the wrong job.

The mood eventually spreads even to the brother and sister of Moshe. Inexplicably, his beloved sister Miriam who saved him from the ravages of the Nile River when he was an infant and who rallied the women of Israel to his leadership after the miracle of the splitting of the sea at Yam Suf, now speaks critically about him.

His brother Aaron, who came out of Egypt to greet and strengthen him at the beginning of his mission to free the Jewish people from the bondage of Egypt, now also joins Miriam in criticism. They are reflective of the mood of the people. When such a mood exists, nothing is good, and no one is above criticism no matter how unjustified that criticism may be.

This mood will eventually result in the debacle of the spies that will dissuade the Jewish people from even attempting to fulfill their God-given mission of settling in the land of Israel. There really is no accounting for human moods. In fact, one of the great struggles of life is simply to overcome the moods that come over us. Most times external frustrations and un-important things cause these behaviors.

The great men of the Chasidic and Mussar movements attempted to create mechanisms by which their followers would be able to overcome these bouts of depression and frustration. Judaism demands that we fortify our spirit with optimism and inner tranquility so that we can gain true happiness with our situation and circumstances. This is no easy task but all of us know that life demands it of us.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

Camp and Congregation (Beha'alotecha 5779)
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

The parsha of Beha'alotecha speaks about the silver trumpets – clarions – Moses was commanded to make:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [edah] and cause the camps [machanot] to journey." (Num. 10:1-2)

This apparently simple passage became a springboard for one of the most profound meditations of the late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik. It appears in his great essay Kol Dodi Dofek, on the Jewish approach to suffering.[1]

There are, says Rabbi Soloveitchik, two ways in which people become a group – a community, society, or nation. The first is when they face a common enemy. They band together for mutual protection. Like all animals who come together in herds or flocks to defend themselves against predators, we do this for our survival. Such a group is a machaneh – a camp, a defensive formation.

There is another, quite different, form of association. People can come together because they share a vision, an aspiration, a set of ideals. This is the meaning of edah, congregation. Edah is related to the word ed, witness. Edot (as opposed to chukim and mishpatim) are the commands that testify to Jewish belief – as Shabbat testifies to creation, Passover to the Divine involvement in history, and so on. An edah is not a defensive formation but a creative one. People join together to do what none could achieve alone. A true congregation is a society built around a shared project, a vision of the common good, an edah.

Rabbi Soloveitchik says these are not just two types of group, but in the most profound sense, two different ways of existing and relating to the world. A camp is brought into being by what happens to it from the outside. A congregation comes into existence by internal decision. The former is reactive, the latter proactive. The first is a response to what has happened to the group in the past. The second represents what the group seeks to achieve in the future. Whereas camps exist even in the animal kingdom, congregations are uniquely human. They flow from the human ability to think, speak, communicate, envision a society different from any that has existed in the past, and to collaborate to bring it about.

Jews are a people in both of these two quite different ways. Our ancestors became a machaneh in Egypt, forged together by a crucible of slavery and suffering. They were different. They were not Egyptians. They were Hebrews – a word which probably means "on the other side," "an outsider." Ever since, Jews have known that we are thrown together by circumstance. We share a history all too often written in tears. Rabbi Soloveitchik calls this the covenant of fate (brit goral).

This is not a purely negative phenomenon. It gives rise to a powerful sense that we are part of a single story – that what we have in common is stronger than the things that separate us:

Our fate does not distinguish between rich and poor...[or] between the pietist and the assimilationist. Even though we speak a plethora of languages, even though we are inhabitants of different lands...we still share the same fate. If the Jew in the hovel is beaten, then the security of the Jew in the palace is endangered. "Do not think that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace" (Est. 4:13).[2]

Our shared community's fate leads also to a sense of shared suffering. When we pray for the recovery of a sick person, we do so "among all the sick of Israel." When we comfort a mourner, we do so "among all the

other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” We weep together. We celebrate together. This in turn leads to shared responsibility: “All Israel are sureties for one another.”[3] And this leads to collective action in the field of welfare, charity, and deeds of loving kindness. As Maimonides puts it:

All Israelites ...are like brothers, as it is said, “You are children of the Lord your God” (Deut. 14:1). If brother shows no compassion to brother, who will? ...Their eyes are therefore lifted to their brothers.[4]

All these are dimensions of the covenant of fate, born in the experience of slavery in Egypt. But there is an additional element of Jewish identity. Soloveitchik calls this the covenant of destiny (*brit ye’ud*) – entered into at Mount Sinai. This defines the people of Israel not as the object of persecution but the subject of a unique vocation, to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6).

Under this covenant, the we became defined not by what others do to us but by the task we have undertaken, the role we have chosen to play in history. In Egypt we did not choose to become slaves, that was a fate thrust upon us by someone else. We did, however, choose to become God’s people at Sinai when r said, “We will do and obey” (Ex. 24:7). Destiny, call, vocation, purpose, task: these create not a *machaneh* but an *edah*, not a camp but a congregation.

Our task as a people of destiny is to bear witness to the presence of God – through the way we lead our lives (Torah) and the path we chart as a people across the centuries (history).

G. K. Chesterton once wrote that “America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed.”[5] Chesterton was notoriously antisemitic, and this evidently prevented him from recalling that the reason America was founded on a creed was that its founders, Puritans all, were steeped in what they called the Old Testament. They took as their model the covenant made between God and the Israelites at Sinai, and it was this that linked nationhood and the idea of a specific task or mission. Herman Melville gave this one of its classic expressions in his 1849 novel, *White-Jacket*:

We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people – the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world.... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours.[6]

It is the concept of covenant that gives Jewish (and American) identity this strange dual character. Nations are usually forged through long historical experience, through what happens to them – rather than what they consciously set themselves to do. They fall into the category of *machaneh*. Religions, on the other hand, are defined in terms of beliefs and a sense of mission. Each is constituted as an *edah*. What is unique about Judaism is the way it brings together these separate and quite distinct ideas. There are nations that contain many religions and there are religions that are spread over many nations, but only in the case of Judaism do religion and nation coincide.

This has had remarkable consequences. For almost two thousand years Jews were scattered throughout the world, yet they saw themselves and were seen by others as a nation – the world’s first global nation. It was a nation held together not by geographical proximity or any other of the normal accompaniments of nationhood. Jews did not speak the same vernacular. Rashi spoke French, Maimonides Arabic. Rashi lived in a Christian culture, Maimonides in a Muslim one. Nor was their fate the same. While the Jews of Spain were enjoying their Golden Age, the Jews of northern Europe were being massacred in the Crusades. In the fifteenth century, when the Jews of Spain were being persecuted and

expelled, those of Poland were enjoying a rare spring of tolerance. What held Jews together during these centuries was shared faith. In the trauma that accompanied European Emancipation and the subsequent rise of racial antisemitism, many Jews lost that faith. Yet the events of the past century – persecution, pogroms, and the Holocaust, followed by the birth of the State of Israel and the constant fight to survive against war and terror – tended to bind Jews together in a covenant of fate in the face of the hostility of the world. So when Jews were divided by fate they were united by faith, and when they were divided by faith they were united again by fate. Such is the irony, or the providential nature, of Jewish history.

Judaism in the past two centuries has fissured and fractured into different *edot*: Orthodox and Reform, religious and secular, and the many subdivisions that continue to atomise Jewish life into non-communicating sects and subcultures. Yet in times of crisis we are still capable of heeding the call of collective responsibility, knowing as we do that Jewish fate tends to be indivisible. No Jew, to paraphrase John Donne, is an island, entire of him- or herself. We are joined by the gossamer strands of collective memory, and these can sometimes lead us back to a sense of shared destiny.

The duality was given its first expression this week in *Beha’alotecha*, with the command: “Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [*edah*], and cause the camps [*machanot*] to journey.” Sometimes the clarion call speaks to our sense of faith. We are God’s people, His emissaries and ambassadors, charged with making His presence real in the world by healing deeds and holy lives. At other times the trumpet that sounds and summons us is the call of fate: Jewish lives endangered in Israel or the Diaspora by the unremitting hostility of those who call themselves children of Abraham yet claim that they, not we, are his true heirs.

Whichever sound the silver instruments make, they call on that duality that makes Jews and Judaism inseparable. However deep the divisions between us, we remain one family in fate and faith. When the trumpet sounds, it sounds for us. *Shabbat Shalom*.

Shlach: Repairing the Sin of the Spies

Rav Kook Torah

One of the greatest tragedies in the long history of the Jewish people occurred when the spies sent by Moses returned with a frightening report about the Land of Israel. Their dire warnings of fierce giants and a “land that consumes its inhabitants” convinced the people that they would be better off returning to Egypt.

Unlike other incidents in which the Israelites rebelled against God, on this occasion, Moses was unable to annul God’s decree. The entire generation died in the desert, never reaching the Promised Land. The best Moses was able to do was delay the punishment for forty years.

Rav Kook wrote that even today we still suffer the consequences of this catastrophic error. The root cause for the exiles and humiliations of the Jewish people, throughout the generations, is due to our failure to correct the sin of the spies.

How can we rectify the sin of the spies?

To repair this national failure, a *teshuvat hamishkal* is needed, a penance commensurate with the sin that will “balance the scales.” The spies defamed the Land of Israel, as it says, “They despised the desirable land” (Psalms 106:24). We must do the opposite and show our unwavering love for the Land.

“[We must] declare to the entire world the Land’s magnificence and beauty, its holiness and grandeur. If only we could express (with what may appear to us to be greatly exaggerated) even a ten-thousandth of the

desirability of the beloved Land, the splendid light of its Torah, and the superior light of its wisdom and prophecy!

The quality of wonderful holiness that Torah scholars seeking holiness may find in the Land of Israel does not exist at all outside the Land. I myself can attest to this unique quality, to a degree commensurate with my meager worth.” (Igrot HaRe’iyah, vol. I, pp. 112-113)

For Rav Kook, this recommendation on how to address the sin of the spies was not just a nice homily. Stories abound of his burning love for the Land of Israel and his indefatigable attempts to encourage fellow Jews to move to Eretz Yisrael.

Kissing the Rocks of Acre

The Talmud in Ketubot 112a records that Rabbi Abba would demonstrate his great love for the Land of Israel by kissing the rocks of Acre as he returned to Israel. What was so special about these rocks?

Rav Kook explained that if Rabbi Abba had bent down and kissed the soil of Eretz Yisrael, we would understand that his love for the Land was based on the special mitzvot that are fulfilled with its fruit - tithes, first fruits, the Sabbatical year, and so on. The soil, which produces fruit, signifies the importance and holiness of the Land through the mitzvot ha-teluyot ba’aretz.

But Rabbi Abba’s love for the Land was not dependent on any external factors - not even the Land’s special mitzvot (see Avot 5:16; Orot, p. 9). Rabbi Abba cherished the intrinsic holiness of Eretz Yisrael. He recognized that the special qualities of the Land of Israel, such as its receptivity to prophecy and enlightenment, go far beyond those mitzvot connected to agriculture. Therefore, he made a point of kissing its barren rocks and stones.

‘God Willing’

During a 1924 fundraising mission in America, Rav Kook tried to convince a wealthy Jew to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael. The man gave various reasons why he could not yet leave America, but concluded, “God willing, I too will soon make Aliyah to Israel.”

Rav Kook responded: “God is certainly willing. After all, settling Eretz Yisrael is one of His commandments. But you must also be willing...”

Without Calculations

Once, a Jewish tourist visited Rav Kook in Jerusalem, seeking advice as to the possibility of living in Eretz Yisrael. During the discussion, the visitor calculated the pros and cons of moving to Israel; and in the end, he decided that it was not worthwhile.

Rav Kook told the man:

“Before the Israelites entered the Land in the time of Moses, they first needed to kill Sichon, the king of Heshbon. This teaches us that one should come to the Land of Israel bli heshbon - without making calculations.”

The Eternal Impact of כיבוד אב ואם

Excerpted From a Ma’amar by the Tolna Rebbe שליט א”א

רבבות 'ובנוחה יאמר שובה ה...ויפוצו אויבך ויהי בנסוע הארון ויאמר משה קומה ה אלפי ישראל...

“When the ark journeyed, Moshe said: Arise, O G-d, and Your foes shall disperse... And when it came to rest, Moshe would say: Reside, O G-d, among the tens of thousands in Yisrael.” (10:35-36)

The Midrash Tanchuma (Parshas Toldos, 11) associates Moshe’s proclamation with the story of Yaakov receiving the berachos from his father. When Yaakov came before Yitzchak, he said, קום נא שבה ואכלה (“Arise, if you please, please sit and please eat” – Bereishis 27:19), speaking in a courteous manner. The Midrash notes that Yaakov’s manner of speech contrasts with that of Esav, who later came before Yitzchak and rudely instructed his father, –יקום אבי ויאכל – “My father shall get up and eat” (Bereishis 27:31). HKB”H thus made a promise to Yaakov:

–אתה אמרת שבה. ויפוצו 'קומה ה"בנך משה יאמר לי -הרי בן – "קום נא"אתה אמרת "שובה ה"בן בנך יאמר."

You said, “Arise please” – so your descendant, Moshe, will say to Me: שובה ה. ויפוצו 'קומה ה. You said, “please sit” – your descendant will say, שובה ה. It turns out, then, that this great blessing – that of our enemies dispersing and fleeing – was granted only in the merit of the mitzva of performed by Yaakov Avinu, who addressed his father with special respect, asking, קום נא שבה.

The mitzva of –חמורה שבהמורות is כיבוד אב ואם “especially stringent” (Yerushalmi, Pei’a 1:1), and the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b) says about this mitzva, –השווה הכתוב כיבוד אב אם לכבוד המקום – the respect we must give our parents is equivalent to that which we must give to the Almighty. And from our parsha we learn that this mitzva has an eternal impact, resulting even generations later in the dispersion of Am Yisrael’s enemies, both physical and spiritual.

The mitzva of כיבוד אב ואם unique in that the Torah names the reward for its observance: כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יאריך ימך על האדמה אשר ה' –אלוקיך נותן לך – “Respect your father and your mother, so that your life will be prolonged upon the land which Hashem your G-d is giving you” (Shemos 20:12). Moreover, this is a mitzva which each and every one of us can fulfill, as the Gemara (Kiddushin 31b) teaches, מכבדו בחייו, מכבדו מותו – we must respect our parents both during their lifetime and after their passing. We must therefore invest all our effort and thoughts into fulfilling this mitzva, thinking of how we can best respect our parents, and to always speak with them in a respectful manner, just as Yaakov Avinu made a point of asking his father courteously, קום נא שבה. And, we must strive to fulfill this mitzva on the highest possible standard – at least as much as we try to fulfill other mitzvos – such as lulav and esrog – on the highest possible standard.

Additionally, we must fulfill this mitzva warmly and pleasantly. The Gemara (Kiddushin 31a) teaches, יש

–יש מטהינו בריחיים ומביאו להי העולם הבא, מאכיל לאביו פסיוני וטורדו מן העולם – a person can feed his father the finest delicacies but be punished for it, if he does this begrudgingly and unpleasantly, and a person can have his father perform arduous labor and thereby earn his share in the next world, if this is what he needs to do for his father, and he does so pleasantly.

The great value of this mitzva is emphasized in a remarkable passage in Tanna De’bei Eliyahu (26), explaining the reason why the command of כיבוד אב ואם mentioned in the immediately after the mitzva of Shabbos:

ללמדך שכל זמן שאדם מכבד את אביו ואת אמו אין חטא של חילול שבת ולא שאר שום ואם חטא נמחל לו, כל חטא בא על ידו.

This teaches you that as long as a person respects his father and his mother, he will not come upon the sin of Shabbos desecration, or any other sin, and if he did, he is forgiven.

It is told that the Sheim Mi’Shmuel ז”ע once attended an assembly of leading Torah sages, and he was given an honorable seat at the assembly. But he refused to sit there, explaining that if his father, the Avnei Neizer ז”ע א, were there, he would definitely have been given this honorable seat, and the Gemara (Kiddushin 31b) writes that one may not sit in his father’s seat, which could refer not only to the father’s regular seat, but to the seat that his father would have sat in.

With the general decline of the generations, we have seen a decline also in regard to this mitzva. It behooves us to try to observe this great mitzva to the best of our ability. We must remember that the way we treat our parents is the way our children will treat us, as our treatment of our parents shows our children the way parents should be treated. If we invest effort in this mitzva, we will be worthy of great blessings for all eternity, אמן כן יהי רצון.

Drasha By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Behaaloscha

Fish & Chip On the Shoulder

It seems that some people cannot appreciate something special. Imagine! The Jews were treated to a heavenly gift of manna, a supernatural delicacy that fell from the heavens, yet they complained about it. Not

only did the manna sustain the Jewish nation during their 40-year sojourn in the desert; it had the ability to transform itself to please the palate of the most advanced culinary critic. It tasted exactly the way its eaters desired it to taste! Whether Belgian waffles with ice cream, steak, or hash browns, through mere thought the eater was able to transform the manna's flavor into the most delicious of delicacies. Yet, the Jewish nation was still not happy. "We remember the free fish that we ate in Egypt!" (Numbers 11:5) they exclaimed. The Talmud is troubled by the words 'free fish,' "since when," asks the Talmud, "was anything free in the land of slavery?" The Talmud answers that the word free, means free from mitzvos (commandments). The Jews had no mitzvos to observe during most of their exile in Egypt. They had not yet received their charge at Sinai. Therefore, they recalled the free fish that they ate during the Egyptian bondage.

The obvious question is, however, what does food — fish or manna — have to do with freedom? Why did they complain about their new responsibilities and intrinsically link it with the miraculous bread? Was it the miraculous bread that changed their status? Why did they link fish with freedom? What was it about the manna that made them feel the had a chip on their shoulders?

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski tells a wonderful story that took place back in Europe.

Little Chaim sat in the back row of his cheder. One day the Rebbe, a stern fellow who had little patience with his young charges, called upon him to recite the letters of the Aleph-Bet from a small reader. The teacher took a long stick and pointed to the letter Aleph on the page. "Vos iz Das? (What is this?)" he shouted. Chaim looked him straight in the eye, shrugged his shoulders, and said nothing.

Whack! The stick came down solidly on the boy's hand. "I said, 'Vos iz Das!' " screamed the teacher tapping his stick fiercely on the letter.

Again, Chaim jutted out his lower lip and shrugged his shoulders even higher. He spread out his hands, palms up offering his hand as a sacrifice to the dreaded stick, while intoning, 'I have no idea what that letter is!'

His offering was duly accepted, and once again, the frustrated teacher brought the stick down on poor Chaim's hand. After futile attempts to have Chaim pronounce the Aleph, the teacher went to the next student who proceeded to recite the entire Aleph Bet flawlessly.

After class, Chaim's friends surrounded him. "We don't understand." They stated in uniform amazement. "Everybody knows the letter Aleph! When the Rebbe pointed to the Aleph, why didn't you just tell him, 'It's an Aleph'?"

Chaim smiled. "I'm smarter than that. Of course I knew what the letter was! But I also I knew that the moment I say 'Aleph,' our Rabbi would point to the Bet and ask me, 'what is that?' Then he'd point to the Gimmel and Dalet! Soon I'd have to recite the entire Aleph-Bet! I'd rather take a few whacks at the beginning and not have to go through the whole ordeal!"

The commentaries explain that when the Jewish people reminisced about free fish they remembered an era when they had no spiritual or moral responsibilities. The Jews understood that when one eats manna > the fare of the angels > angelic responsibility accompanies his gastronomic actions. The Jews would have rather foregone the delicacies of miraculous manna to be freed of the responsibilities it entailed. They did not want to recite even the Aleph in the knowledge that an obligation to recite the Bet and Gimmel would follow naturally.

Often in life we hesitate to begin the first step. Though that step may be simple and uncomplicated, we fear to begin treading in full awareness of the responsibilities that those first steps may lead us. Accepting responsibility is, however, the role of a people to whom the world looks for guidance.

The first bite of a new undertaking will be surely be deliciously challenging, though the second bite perhaps a little more difficult to swallow. But at the end of the meal you have will have not bitten more than you can swallow. Those who have dined on the fare of leadership and responsibility will realize that the food of accomplishment is truly

more delicious than chewing over misery. The fare of leadership may even be spiritually delicious — perhaps as delicious the manna.

Dedicated in memory of Dr. Manfred Lehman of blessed memory

Good Shabbos

Rabbi M. Kamenetzky is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Beha'alotcha
For the week ending 15 June 2019 / 12 Sivan 5779

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Skill Sets

"When you kindle the Menorah, towards the face of the Menorah the seven lamps will cast light." (1:2)

Sometimes you have something looking at you in the face and you don't even see it. I have a degree in English, which helped me acquire the skill to write passably, baruch Hashem, and for many years I have written "Torah Weekly," a publication of Ohr Somayach of insights based on the weekly Torah portion. I also have a degree in Drama, Radio, Film and Television, which gave me experience on both sides of the camera. I had a successful career as a music producer so I understand something about music and sound recording. I was always a keen photographer. (A few years ago Ohr Somayach published "Seasons of the Moon," an adventure in fine art black and white photography, poetry and Torah essays, and now sold out.) But I never put it all together until very recently. One day the penny dropped.

I had a bunch of lighting equipment left over from the heyday of my photographic obsession: a backdrop, a good camera that shot video as well as stills, over twenty-five years of short essays on the parsha and the realization that the Internet was the new frontier in Jewish outreach. Why not make short parsha videos with music and visuals? One of the things that kept me back was that I wanted the narration to be very precise and smooth. To memorize the monologue just wasn't in the cards. And then I found an inexpensive teleprompter that allowed me to read the script or the notes while still looking straight into the camera. Bingo! The last piece of the puzzle.

"G-d said to Moshe, 'One leader each day, one leader each day, shall they bring their offering for the dedication of the Altar.'" (Bam. 7:11)

After this verse the Torah goes on to list the offerings of each of the leaders of the tribes. They are all identical. Why did the Torah need to repeat over and over again the exact same list of offerings? Why didn't it suffice to list the offerings once and then say that each leader brought exactly the same thing?

We all have skill sets that G-d gives us. We look at what we can do and say, "Well that's me. That's what I can do. This is my box." Even though all those offerings were identical — they all came from the same box — each one of the leaders, however, put his own imprint on his Divine Service. Each one used those pieces in a different and unique way.

We see the same idea in this week's Torah portion.

"When you kindle the Menorah, towards the face of the Menorah the seven lamps will cast light." (Bam. 1:2)

The light that came from each of those wicks would constantly wax and wane. The light that emanated from the Menorah was a continuously changing blend of seven different lights. Each one of those wicks had only one job: to shine its light on the center. But the combination was continually changing. Seven different lights, seven different identities, seven different skill sets — all constantly blending in different ways.

With a little bit of imagination maybe we could look at the lights in our own box of skills and put them together in a slightly different way, coming up with something new and exciting that might energize ourselves and be good for the Jewish People and for all of Mankind? Just maybe...

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OU Torah

“Earning Self-Esteem”

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

It was a lesson I learned long ago, when I was a high school classroom teacher. I was new at this line of work, and found that my greatest challenge was to find ways to motivate the students. I tried various approaches, which all were basically attempts to motivate by giving. I tried giving special prizes and awards, granting extra privileges, and even resorting to outright bribery in order to get the students to pay attention, do their homework, and learn the subject matter.

It was a wise mentor who taught me that you can't motivate students by giving to them. Rather, you must find ways to encourage them to give to others. The student who gives to others feels important, and it is the consequent sense of self-esteem which is the most powerful motivator of all.

I'll never forget the first time I tried that strategy. I approached the most recalcitrant student in the entire class. He happened to be a very bright young man, who was, in today's terminology, “totally turned off” to his studies.

I asked him to assist two weaker students with their daily assignment. I caught him completely off guard, so that his reaction was one of utter surprise.

“Who, me?” he exclaimed. “Why should I help those two dunces? If they can't figure it out for themselves, let them flunk.”

Although I was convinced that any appeal to his sense of altruism would be futile, I nevertheless gave it a try. I told him that for a society to function successfully the haves must help the have-nots, the strong must aid the weak, and those who are blessed with talent must share their gifts with those who were less fortunate.

It was the phrase “blessed with talent” that did the trick, for he responded, “Do you really think I'm blessed with talent? I guess you're right. I am a talented dude, and I'm going to try to teach those blockheads a thing or two. But if I don't succeed, it won't be my fault!” He did succeed, and very dramatically. And he recognized that if he was to succeed again at this tutorial task, he would have to be even better prepared next time. He went home that night and studied hard, and was indeed even more successful with his two “blockheads” the next day.

I won't go on to provide the details of my strategy of applying this technique to the rest of the class. Instead I want to demonstrate that this secret of human motivation is implicit in a brief passage in this week's Torah portion, Beha'alotcha. In this parsha, the Torah devotes all of the tenth chapter of Numbers to a detailed description of the sequence in which the tribes marched through the desert. About two thirds of the way into this chapter, we unexpectedly encounter the following conversational interlude:

And Moses said to Chovav, son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, “We are setting out for the place of which the Lord has said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us and we will be generous with you; for the Lord has promised to be generous to Israel.”

” ‘I will not go,’ he replied to him, ‘but will return to my native land.’ ”

“He said, ‘Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness and can be our guide [literally read as “eyes”]. So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that the Lord grants us.’ ” (Numbers 10:29-32)

That ends the dialogue, and we are never explicitly told whether or not Moses' second attempt at persuasion convinced Chovav to accompany the children of Israel. His first attempt, promising to be generous to him, was rejected emphatically by Chovav with a resounding, “I will not go!” What did Moses change in his second attempt? Quite simply, he told Chovav that he would not be merely the passive recipient of another's generosity. Rather, Moses assured Chovav that he had expertise which was indispensable to the Jewish people. He could give them the

guidance through the wilderness that they desperately required. He would not just be a taker, but a giver as well.

In short, Moses was appealing to Chovav's sense of self-esteem. He was saying to him, “You are an important person. Your talents are needed. You are an actor with a part to play in this drama.”

What I was doing, as a fledgling teacher so many years ago, to that turned-off student, was essentially precisely what Moses was trying to do with Chovav in his second attempt to convince him to accompany the children of Israel upon their journey through the desert.

When reading the text, one can easily assume that Moses learned a great lesson which caused him to abandon the strategy of promising to be generous. Instead, he adopted an entirely different strategy, one which conveyed the message to Chovav that he would not merely be a consumer of favors. Rather, he would earn the Lord's generosity because of the valuable contribution that he would make, and that only he could make.

There is a lesson here not just for teachers and students, or leaders and followers. There is a lesson here for all of us in dealing with other human beings. We must be sensitive to their needs for self-esteem. We must recognize their talents and what they can bring to bear upon whatever task lies at hand. When a person is convinced of his or her own importance and value, he or she will be motivated and will act accordingly.

Understanding the dialogue between Moses and Chovav in this manner allows us to readily accept the conclusion of our Sages. They filled in the “rest of the story” and assured us that Chovav was finally convinced by Moses' second argument and did indeed join his fate and those of his descendants to the destiny of the Jewish people.

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Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message

B'ha'a'lot'cha 5779-2019

“Giving Our Disciples A Firm Grounding”

(Revised and updated from B'ha'a'lot'cha 5760-2000)

In this week's parasha, parashat B'ha'a'lot'cha, G-d speaks to Moses and says to him (Numbers 8:2): דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו, בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת הַנְּרֹת, אֶל מִדְּלֵי פְנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה יֵאָרְרוּ שְׂבָעַת הַנְּרֹת וְהָיָה לְפָנֶיךָ, Speak to Aaron and say unto him: When you kindle {literally, “when you raise up,”} the lamps of the Menorah in the Temple, make certain that the lights of the candelabra face toward the central lamp.

Many commentators ask why the Torah specifically employs the word בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ —“b'ha'a'lot'cha,” when you “raise up” the candles, rather than the more conventional word, בְּהַדְלִיקְתָּךְ —“b'had'lakatcha,” when you “light” or kindle the candles. Rashi, cites the Midrash, the legendary interpretation, indicating that the use of the term to “raise up” implies that there was a step in front of the Menorah upon which the Kohen, the priest, would stand to set the candles in order.

However, an earlier Talmudic interpretation, from Shabbat 21a, cited by Rashi, emphasizes that the word “b'ha'a'lot'cha” indicates that the priest was to ignite the new candle until the flame of the new candle rises on its own.

The metaphor of kindling the light is often used in Judaism to represent Jewish education. In Numbers 11:17, when Moses empowers the 70 elders of Israel to serve as leaders, the rabbis again employ the metaphor. Rashi, citing the Midrash, asks: To what can Moses be compared at that moment? Answer: To a lit candle in a candlestick that was used to light other candles, but the candle itself was not diminished.

The particular Talmudic statement quoted by Rashi indicating that the priest had to ignite the candle in the Menorah until it remained lit on its own, serves as a rich source of insights about Judaism's views and attitudes regarding educators and education.

In the many decades that I've been working with Jews with little or no Jewish educational background, and seeking to help them to become more literate and knowledgeable in Judaism, the metaphor of the candle has served me well. Furthermore, the traditional Jewish principles that

we utilize in our engagement efforts also apply to the mainstream Jewish education of the already committed community and to much of general education, as well.

Over the years, I have learned, sometimes the hard way, that “reaching out,” is easy. What is most difficult is the “follow-up.” It may, in fact, be immoral to reach out to those with little or no background without a strategy for follow-up. Students who are excited by the dramatic and persuasive presentations on Torah and Jewish life, need to be gently guided and helped to understand the often radical implications of this new knowledge. If the “epiphany” of Jewish discovery is not followed-up with solid, one-on-one, counseling and study, the effects of even the most effective and impressive engagement programs are often ephemeral. After such letdowns, it is not uncommon for students to feel lost and betrayed, and attempts to win them back for a second chance are slim.

Related to the need for follow-up, and perhaps the basic principle for all follow-up, is that an engagement “professional” or teacher must be concerned with the entire person, and not just a particular aspect or objective. Those involved in Jewish engagement must never look at a person as simply another “neshama to chap”—another soul to capture, in order to put another notch on their engagement belt. Secular teachers, as well, should not consider it their mission to produce another literary or scientific prodigy, but should rather aim to produce a mensch—a thoughtful and moral human being. One way to judge whether the engagement/educational effort is properly focused, is to see whether the mentor is prepared to follow-up with those students who fail to make a religious commitment.

Although this may sound incongruous, the primary objective of engagement efforts should not necessarily be to ensure the religious commitment of unaffiliated Jews. Allow me to explain. I have often stated that for those involved in Jewish engagement, there is no such thing as losing or defeat. Even those students and participants who fail to make religious commitments, have, hopefully, had their lives enriched. The positive, joyous Jewish experiences and the meaningful educational opportunities that they have shared, will last a lifetime. It’s important to acknowledge that many who go through the “Teshuva process” are unable to, ultimately, make the commitment to practice Jewish rituals. Nevertheless, they leave with positive feelings, and, who knows, perhaps because of those good feelings will send their children to Jewish schools where the children may develop a greater commitment to rituals and mitzvot, in turn, influencing the parents. The fact that after their positive experiences they identify Jewishly and remain within the community, even if only on the periphery, means that there will be other opportunities to successfully engage them.

Sensitive teachers are well aware that education is always a “process.” There is no such thing as instant conversions. The quicker the conversion in, the faster the conversion out! Teachers must realize that no one person is G-d’s gift to everyone. There must be “chemistry” between student and teacher. Some students prefer a more cerebral intellectual approach, while others respond to dynamic experiences. Teachers need to be able to detect when there is a lack of symbiosis between student and teacher, and be prepared to direct non-responsive students to other teachers who might connect more effectively with those students.

I have often felt that Western education is really off target, because teachers are not held sufficiently responsible and accountable for students’ lack of success. In our parasha, the description of the candle standing on its own, underscores the fact that Jewish tradition maintains that teachers have a clear responsibility to successfully transmit the information to the students. In Judaism, students don’t fail, only teachers fail!

Perhaps the most profound implication of the candle lighting imagery, is that, once the candles—the students, are “lit,” they must be able to ultimately stand on their own two feet. This means that a healthy Ba’al Teshuva and a healthy student is one who, although respectful of, and grateful to, their teachers and mentors, is not unduly dependent upon them. For this to be so, every Jew who seeks to connect to Judaism must

be afforded multiple religious exposures and experiences. Students must be given the opportunity to study with a variety of teachers who present divergent points of view and different approaches, rather than there being one, and only one, teacher.

Unfortunately, we today are witnessing much greater restrictiveness in the Jewish community and in Jewish pedagogical circles. Doctrinaire approaches seem to be becoming more popular. Teachers today are more likely to proclaim that only their methodology is “valid,” and that unless the student strictly adheres to that particular approach to Judaism, be it left or right, chassidic or mitnagdish, Kabbalistic or mainstream, emotional or experiential, their education will prove meaningless. Divergent approaches are frequently invalidated.

This very sad state of affairs has led to a great reduction in the effectiveness of the movement of Jewish engagement. Doctrinaire approaches almost always scare away prospective neophytes and make it more difficult to attract independent thinkers and better-educated students. Unfortunately, the so-called “committed” community is also seeing an increase in dropouts due to its “cookie cutter” approach for all students.

While Judaism’s greatest leader, Moses, is known in our traditions as Moshe Rabbeinu—our ultimate teacher and master, Moses still had seventy elders assisting him to lead and teach. In addition to Moses, Aaron and his sons, and Joshua as well, served as teachers and mentors, so that the people of Israel received multiple religious exposures, resulting in a healthier and more balanced religious education.

If we genuinely hope to reach the masses of unaffiliated Jews, we need dramatic changes in the educational approaches that are currently popular in our community. It is critical that we offer a greater diversity of methodologies to reach larger numbers of neophytes who respond differently to the different approaches. This, of course, applies, with at least equal merit, to mainstream Jewish education that is offered to the already committed community.

If we remember well the message of the lighting of the Menorah—the need for each candle to stand on its own, we will more effectively nurture a world more imbued with light, specifically the light of Torah, and undoubtedly hasten the redemption of all our people, Israel.

May you be blessed.

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Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Libi Bamizrach Va’ani B’sof Maarav

The obligation to offer a korban Pesach begins at twelve noon on erev Pesach, and the korban must be offered in the Beis Hamikdash before shkia. One is considered to be "b'derech r'choka" if he is so far away from Yerushalayim on erev Pesach at noon that even if he were to walk non-stop at a reasonable pace he will still not arrive in Yerushalayim before the shkia[1]. He simply does not halachically relate to Yerushalayim; even if he could travel by horse or car and easily arrive in Yerushalayim before shkia, he is still considered b'derech r'choka. Furthermore, even if he joined with others and became a partner in someone else's korban Pesach, and he managed to arrive before the shkia, he still has not fulfilled the mitzvah[2]. Only one who is b'derech k'rova can become a partner in a korban Pesach and fulfill this mitzvah. All of those who are b'derech r'choka at noon on the fourteenth of Nissan are obligated to bring a korban Pesach sheini one month later, on the fourteenth of Iyar.

After the passing of the Nodah B'Yehuda a dispute developed amongst his close talmidim regarding the nature of this din. Why should derech r'choka be determined by the distance one can walk by foot to Yerushalayim? Was setting the requisite distance based on the pace of travel on foot built in to the very definition of the halacha of derech r'choka, and therefore how fast one could travel by other means was and is entirely irrelevant, or was travel only used as an example, since the average traveler in the days of the second Beis Ha'mikdash would travel by foot, but now that we have trains and cars and the average traveler

would certainly use other means of travel, the distance of *derech r'choka* should be adjusted accordingly?[3]

This debate regarding *korban Pesach* in the late 1700s was unfortunately not relevant *halacha l'maaseh* since there was no *Beis Ha'mikdash* at the time and the *korban Pesach* was not being offered. The rabbonim said that when the third *beis ha'mikdash* will be built, *techiyas ha'meisim* will take place and we will be able to ask *Moshe Rabbeinu* this *shaila*.

There is, however, another *halacha* which is a function of this *din* which is relevant today. The *Gemorah* tells us that if someone dies and the family starts sitting *shiva*, and a relative who is unaware of the death shows up in the home of the *aveilus* before *shiva* is over, he picks up *shiva* from what they are up to and he terminates his *aveilus* with those who started earlier. The *Gemorah*[4] says, however, that this is only in cases where the relative in question came from a "*makom karov*". The *rishonim* borrow the definition of *makom karov* from the *din* of *korban Pesach*: if the relative was close enough to the *beis ha'avel* when *shiva* began that he would have been able to arrive within one day, his location is considered to be a *makom karov*. Regarding this *din* we cannot wait until *techiyas ha'meisim* and ask *Moshe Rabbeinu* - this *halacha* is relevant every day of the year even when there isn't a *Beis Ha'mikdash*! Later *poskim* ruled that since we have a rule in the *Gemorah*[5] that whenever there is any slight *sofek* in *Hilchos Aveilus* we go *l'kula*, we should be lenient and say that when the *aveil* was more than ten *parso'os* away from the *beis ha'ovel* but could arrive within one day if he traveled by train or by car, which is the normal way of traveling a distance today, he should end his *shiva* with the rest of the family.

Today the average person traveling a long distance would certainly travel by airplane, via which one can get from one side of the world to the other within one day. Should we therefore say that there is no place in the world that is called a *makom rachok* or a *derech r'choka*? Rav *Moshe Feinstein* was of the opinion that this cannot be. The *Torah* has *dinim* that apply only to one who is *b'makom rachok* and all aspects of the *Torah* are eternal. Rav *Moshe* suggested that of necessity we must limit this *halacha* and say that the person's location must at least be on the same continent as the *beis ha'ovel* in order to be considered a *makom karov*, and one does not *halachically* relate to a city on a different continent. It is for that reason that Rav *Moshe* felt that this *din* cannot apply connecting people in *Eretz Yisroel* and a *beis ha'ovel* in *America*. Rav *Yehuda Halevi* lived in *Europe* when he declared, "*Libi Bamizrach Va'ani B'sof Maarav*", but those of us who live in *America* are on a different continent. As such, even if one living in *America* feels that his heart is really "*Bamizrach*", *Eretz Yisroel* can not be considered "*his makom*."

[1] The *Rambam* differs on this definition. See *Eretz Hatzvi* p. 81.

[2] *Pesachim* 92b – *shelo hurtza*

[3] *Sefer Chaim U'Beracha L'Mishmeres Shalom*, entry entitled *Gadol Habayis*, paragraph 12

[4] *Moed Kattan* 21b, *Tosafos s.v. Makom Karov*

[5] *Moed Kattan* 18a, *halacha l'hakeil b'aveilus*

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Behaaloscha

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya & Henya Chana Raizel bas Rochel Bayla.

Why Wasn't Moshe Rabbeinu Depressed?

At the beginning of the *parsha*, the *Torah* gives *Aharon* the *mitzvah* of kindling the lights of the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan*. *Rashi* here asks why this *mitzvah* immediately follows that of the offerings of the *Princes* at the end of *Parshas Naso*. *Rashi* answers that when *Aharon* witnessed the offerings of all the *Princes*, he became depressed that neither he nor his *Tribe* were included in that dedication ceremony. *Rashi* says that *Hashem* therefore consoled *Aharon*, by telling him, "I swear, your portion is greater than theirs—you will kindle the *Menorah*".

Rashi says, as it were, that *Hashem* gave *Aharon* a consolation prize. He did not have the opportunity to participate in the *Mishkan* dedication with the other *Princes*, but he would have an opportunity for an even greater privilege.

The *Ramban* explains that this alludes to the *Menorah* lit in each generation by all *Jews* to commemorate the *Chanukah* story, in which *Aharon's* descendants played a major role. There are many things to comment on this *Rashi*, but I once heard an interesting insight from the *Rosh Yeshiva* [of *Ner Yisroel* in *Baltimore*], *Rav Yaakov Weinberg*, *Shlita*.

Aharon was supposedly depressed because the dedication of the *Mishkan* did not include him or his *tribe*. However, who was the titular head of the *Tribe of Levi*? Seemingly, the head of the *tribe* was *Moshe Rabbeinu*, not *Aharon*. *Moshe* was the head of all of *Israel*; he was a greater *Novi* than *Aharon*, so he was clearly the official leader of the *Tribe of Levi*.

So who should get depressed here? If anyone, *Moshe* should have been depressed. *Aharon* is the head of the *Kohanim*, who are only a subset of *Shevet Levi*. Yet it was he who felt depressed at the fact that the *Leviim* were not represented at the dedication. Why not *Moshe Rabbeinu*?

Rav Weinberg explained that *Moshe Rabbeinu*, by becoming the leader of all *Israel*, was no longer a member of the *Tribe of Levi*. When someone is the leader of the generation, he loses his provincial and parochial interests. He is no longer *Shevet Levi*; he is the 'Am'—the *People*. He embodies the *Nation*—*Reuvain*, *Shimeon*, *Yehudah*, *Dan*, everyone!

For example, *l'havdil*, the *President* of the *United States* no longer represents his home state—that is the job of the *Governor*. The *President* has gone on to achieve greater honor and higher office. The *President* can no longer be a *Texan* or a *New Yorker* or a *Marylander*—he must represent all the people.

That is the distinction between *Aharon* and *Moshe*. *Moshe*, by becoming the *Rabbi of Israel*, ceased to be merely a *Levi*. He left behind any personal interests and biases and became the representative of the entire nation.

Showing Appreciation for Miriam After 80 Years

Now we skip from the first *Rashi* in the *Parsha* to the last *Rashi*. The end of the *parsha* contains another famous incident. The *Torah* says that *Miriam* had complaints about her brother *Moshe*, and she talked about these complaints. *Hashem* Himself comes down and says, do not speak about *Moshe*; do not judge him by the standards of a regular human being—"Not so is My Servant *Moshe*, in My entire house he is the trusted one..." [*Bamidbar* 12:7].

Moshe was in a league by himself. *Miriam* was stricken with *tzora'as* [a skin disease caused at a spiritual level by improper speech] for talking about *Moshe*. The law concerning such a person who is stricken with *tzora'as* is that they need to be sent outside the camp. *Miriam* was in fact sent outside the camp of *Israel* for seven days. The *pasuk* says that "...The nation did not travel until *Miriam* was brought back in." [12:15]. *Rashi*, quoting the *Talmud* [*Sotah* 9b] says that this honor (that the entire *Jewish* people waited for her) was accorded to *Miriam* as reward for waiting by the *Nile* for her infant brother *Moshe* (to see who would pick up the basket in which he was floating).

The question can be asked—why now? It is 80 years since *Miriam* waited for *Moshe*. Why is suddenly now the time for her to receive a reward?

At a simple level, we could answer—now is when she needed it. She is down and out, so to speak, so now is a good time to give her honor.

The *Shemen HaTov* by *Rabbi Dov Weinberger* gives a better answer. He says that the reason why now was the appropriate time to reward *Miriam* is because now we—as a people—recognized what she did for us.

Sometimes a person does an act, and even though we appreciate the act, we cannot yet appreciate it fully. However, at this point, we retroactively realized what *Miriam* did—once we realize who *Moshe Rabbeinu* really is. Now is when *Hashem* gives personal testimony and says something about *Moshe Rabbeinu* that He never said about any other human being: "You do not realize who *Moshe* is. I speak to him mouth to mouth. He is in a league by himself!"

They had been living with *Moshe Rabbeinu*. They became accustomed to *Moshe Rabbeinu*. They forgot who *Moshe Rabbeinu* was. Therefore,

Hashem tells the people, “There is no one who was ever like him; there never will be any one like him.”

Now, eighty years later, they can realize what Miriam did. That act—standing and waiting, making sure that all would be all right with her brother, eighty years earlier—saved a Moshe Rabbeinu! Now they are finally able to appreciate this fully.

Sometimes we do a chessed [kindness] and we do not realize the implications. Sometimes it takes time, perhaps a week, a month, or a year. Sometimes it takes 80 years or longer to realize “Wow! What a remarkable act!” That is what they finally realize here. Now, eighty years later, they needed to show their appreciation.

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**Beha'alotecha - Office of the Chief Rabbi
Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis**

Our efforts in one mitzvah will always help lead to another...

Why is this mitzvah different from others?

Throughout the Torah when Hashem presents a mitzvah, He commands Moshe to command the people to carry it out. But in parashat Beha'alotecha we are given the mitzvah of 'Pesach Sheini'. This was to be the first anniversary of the exodus from Egypt, and the first Pesach on record was going to be celebrated. However, some of the people came with a complaint. They said “L'ma nigara – why should we be diminished?” – why should we miss out? “Anachnu t'maim l'nefesh adam” – we are impure!

According to the Talmud, they may have been those who had been carrying the coffin of Joseph or perhaps they had been engaged in a 'meit mitzvah' – assisting somebody who had died and who needed burial – and as a result they were impure. They couldn't participate in the celebration of Pesach, so they said “why are we being diminished?” They were complaining about the fact that they were to be omitted.

Moshe was stumped, he didn't know what to say. Therefore, he said to them “imdu v'eishma', just please wait here – and I will ask Hashem. Isn't it amazing, how Moshe had that hotline to God?

And then Hashem replied, and He said ‘these people have a point! We will establish a Pesach Sheini one month later for the sake of all those who will have been ‘tamei' at the time at the first Pesach.’

Sforno explains that at the root of the people's complaint was their appreciation of the concept of 'Mitzva goreret mitzvah' – one mitzvah leads to the performance of another mitzvah! The enjoyment of one mitzvah prompts us to want to benefit from the enjoyment of other mitzvot. For sure Pesach is not amongst the easiest of mitzvot to perform, and yet the people were insistent – ‘we want our Pesach, we don't want to be diminished!’.

They also appreciated the value of mitzvot. They could easily have said ‘We are exempt, – brilliant! Everybody else, you do what you have to – we are the lucky ones!’ – not at all! They felt that they were seriously missing out. Therefore, the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, and the manner in which it is presented in parashat Beha'alotecha by Hashem, teaches us how fortunate and privileged we are to be able to live a life of mitzvot. If ever we are not able to perform one, we feel seriously diminished.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

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***Behaalotcha: The spiritual transforms the physical
Ben-Tzion Spitz***

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced. - James Baldwin

God had revealed Himself to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai where they were presented with the Ten Commandments. They spent almost a year at the foot of the mountain, sinned with the Golden Calf, got a second set of Tablets and built the Tabernacle.

Now they set their sights on the Promised Land and start their journey across the desert. No sooner are they on their way and they start to complain. They complain about the food (how little has changed over the millennia).

They want meat, they fondly remember the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic they ate in Egypt. They are dismissive and disdainful of the miraculous Manna that God provided to them daily. The Torah takes the time to describe the Manna in a little more detail, but what is truly fascinating is the description of the Manna given by the Midrash. The Midrash states that the Manna was able to take on the taste, the texture, the flavor of whatever the eater desired.

If the person eating the Manna wanted to taste a sumptuous steak, that's what they tasted. If they wanted to taste a ripe melon, that's what they tasted. The Manna had the unique ability of taking our thoughts and transposing them into a new taste-able, edible, physical object.

The Berdichever points out that this equation demonstrates a counterintuitive and lopsided symbiotic relationship.

In the case of the Manna, a physical substance was feeding, sustaining the nation of Israel. But it was the spirit, the thoughts of the Israelites which really gave purpose and existence to the Manna. So, at a deeper level, the spiritual contribution of the nation of Israel to the formation of the Manna was more influential than the material benefit the Manna had upon Israel.

So too, the Berdichever explains, is the relationship between a giver of charity and a recipient of charity. Superficially it would seem that the giver of charity provides a substantial, if not complete benefit to the recipient, while the benefit the recipient provides is not apparent at all. Such an analysis misses the deeper spiritual reality.

It is true that the giver provides the recipient with a clear, important, physical benefit with his charity. However, the recipient causes the giver to receive a significantly more important spiritual return.

The recipient becomes the direct cause for the giver to receive the afterlife, holiness and purity, spiritually powerful gifts that we can barely appreciate, bestowed by God for the kindness the recipient enabled the giver to provide.

May we be supporters and enablers of charitable causes.

Dedication - To our son Netanel, on completing high school, and the exciting path ahead.

Ben-Tzion Spitz is a former Chief Rabbi of Uruguay. He is the author of three books of Biblical Fiction and over 600 articles and stories dealing with biblical themes.

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites

Humility, Trust, and Loyalty – Beha'alotcha 5779

One of the central stories in this week's Torah portion, Beha'alotcha, is the story of the “mitonenim”, the complainers. The nation complained about the difficult journey through the desert, saying they missed their relatively-comfortable life in Egypt. Moses, the leader of the nation, who knew what the nation had experienced, turned to G-d and asked Him to help the nation with their hardships and lack of food. In response, G-d promised an abundance of food – which indeed happened immediately.

Furthermore, in light of the personal hardship Moses expressed when facing the nation's complaints, G-d instructed him to share the leadership with seventy of the nation's elders. And this is what he did. On the fringes of this story, there is another short story, almost like an addendum, that we will focus on:

Now two men remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the second was Medad, and the spirit rested upon them...they prophesied in the camp.

The lad ran and told Moses, saying, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!"

Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant from his youth, answered and said, "Moses, my master, imprison them!"

Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? If only all the Lord's people were prophets ... (Numbers 11, 26 – 29)

What we see here is a story of two people who experienced a prophetic revelation independently, not together with Moses and not nearby. They were "prophesying in the camp". Three people respond in this short story: an anonymous lad, Joshua, and Moses. The frightened lad runs to Moses and informs him that Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. Obviously, his intent was to report to Moses on a problematic, possibly criminal, activity.

Joshua, Moses' servant, responded accordingly: "Moses, my master, imprison them!". Joshua's response stems from concern for the unity of the nation, fear of someone undermining Moses' authority. If there are people prophesying independently, then Moses is not the only channel of communication between the nation and G-d. Even if these are true prophets, tomorrow, false prophets could claim that they too experienced a revelation and received instructions to return to Egypt! The concerned Joshua suggests a practical solution: to imprison Eldad and Medad, the two independent prophets, and nip this problem in the bud. Thus, leadership will remain in responsible hands.

But Moses reacts completely differently. On the contrary, he says, there is no reason for fear or concern. "If only all the Lord's people were prophets..." I wish, says Moses, that I weren't the only prophet, that not only Eldad and Medad were prophets, but that every Jew would be a prophet! Moses trusts the nation. Anyone can reach the peak. There is no one who was born to be on the top of the mountain while others were fated to remain at the bottom. Everyone is welcome to climb up and whoever makes the effort will attain results.

Moreover, from the beginning of Moses' response to Joshua, he says "Are you zealous for my sake?" Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said that the prophecy of Eldad and Medad was to a certain extent disrespectful of Moses. This is how he interpreted the content of their prophecy:

"What prophecy did they prophesize? They said: Moses will die, Joshua will bring the Israelites into the land."

(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, page 17)

This addition puts the story in a whole new light. This is not just any independent prophecy or some hypothetical concern. These were the beginnings of a real revolt. Eldad and Medad claim that Moses will not merit completing his life's journey and will not be bringing the Jewish nation into the Promised Land.

It is important to note that we, who know the way the story unfolds, know full well that this is indeed what occurred and that Eldad and Medad's prophecy was true. But to those who heard it then, it was such a breach of authority that it could only be interpreted as a revolt against Moses' leadership. Now we can better understand the lad's panic when he ran to Moses to inform him that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp.

Now the greatness of Joshua and Moses really shines. Eldad and Medad crown Joshua as Moses' successor, but Joshua – not only does not get tempted by their words, but he tries to put down what looks like a revolt and suggests to Moses that they be imprisoned so their words do not reach the nation. Joshua displays complete and total loyalty to Moses.

And Moses does not even think of himself. "Are you zealous for my sake?" he wonders. Am I at the center of the Jewish nation's story? What do I care if the leader is someone else? On the contrary, everyone in the Jewish nation is worthy of being the leader. I wish, says Moses, that everyone in the Jewish nation could be a prophet!

These were the two first leaders of the Jewish nation: Moses, with more humility than anyone else in the world, and Joshua, who was dedicated

and loyal. These are the leadership traits we should all learn from these two leaders.

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Beha'alozecha

פרשת בהעלותך תשע"ט

איש איש כי יהיה טמא לנפש או בדרך רחוקה לכם או לדתיתכם ועשה פסח לך

Any person, if he will be impure from a corpse or (is) on a distant road, (whether among) yourselves or your descendants, he shall perform the Pesach-offering for Hashem. (9:10)

The Laws concerning Pesach Sheini, the second Pesach, which occurs one month after the original Pesach, are unique in the fact that this is the only opportunity that the Torah provides to "make up" a mitzvah. Due to its overriding significance, Pesach is treated differently than other chagim. Pesach is much more than a Festival. It is a Festival that commemorates: our exodus from Egypt; our beginning as a nation; our establishing an identity as Jews; our relationship with Hashem based on total and perfect faith in Him as the G-d of Creation and History, Whose Divine Providence guides and directs our lives. Thus, if a Jew had been unable to celebrate Pesach during its designated, appropriate time, because he was ritually impure or was distant from the Bais Hamikdash, he had a second chance to make it up and bring the Korban Pesach at this later date. Rashi notes that the letter hay of the word rechokah has a dot over it. This dot implies that the requirement of Pesach Sheini applies not only to an individual who is literally distant – far away from the Temple confines – but also to one who happened to be just outside of the Azarah where the Korban Pesach was slaughtered.

The Mishnah in Pesachim (93b) quotes Rabbi Akiva as stating that derech rechokah, far away, is the distance between Yerushalayim and Modiin in all directions. Therefore, Rabbi Akiva contends that only one who is physically this distant (Yerushalayim to Modiin) is offered the dispensation/opportunity to slaughter the Korban Pesach on Pesach Sheini. As mentioned, (according to Rashi, who is quoting the opinion of) Rabbi Eliezer disagrees and permits one who was just past the Azarah to participate in slaughtering the Korban Pesach on Pesach Sheini.

The difference between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer, concerning their definitions of the concept of faraway, is quite vast: from just a few feet to miles; from a minute to days of travel (at a time in which there were neither roads nor cars). Horav Shimon Schwab, zl (quoted from a sermon by his son in Rabbi Schwab on Chumash), renders the machlokes, dispute, between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer homiletically, explaining that the two opinions of a "distant path" quite possibly represents two types of Jews. One Jew believes that the definition of "distant" from Hashem applies only when one has strayed very far from Hashem, failing to carry out the bulk of the mitzvos of the Torah. If he keeps the majority of mitzvos, the "main" prominent ones, but slacks off when it comes to the lesser known mitzvos, he is still a frum Jew; he is satisfied with his observance. He publicly observes Shabbos, but has no problem not observing all 39 melachos, forms of labor, especially when he is traveling or on vacation. He maintains Kashrus in his home, to a degree. This does not prevent him from having dinner in a non-kosher restaurant – as long as he does not order meat or chicken. Sadly, the list goes on, with this form of self-deluding, hypocritical observance serving as an imitation of religious commitment.

The other Jew is G-d-fearing and pious, performing all of the Torah's mitzvos meticulously and with the proper intention and devotion. This Jew adheres to Rabbi Eliezer's concept of distant: just outside of the Azarah is too far for him. Even if he is just outside of the Azarah, when he could be inside cleaving closer to Hashem, gaining more from the kedushah, holiness, of the Bais Hamikdash, he is dissatisfied. He must do everything to come closer. One is either "in" or "out."

We learn an important lesson from Rabbi Eliezer (according to the above exposition). When one begins to deviate ever-so-slightly, he is placing himself on a slippery slope from which he can completely slide down. A slight deviation does not remain slight. It grows with the help of the yetzer hora, evil inclination, who convinces the person that it is only a slight infraction. It cannot hurt. The pious person does not fall for this ruse. The other Jew has already been taken captive by his evil inclination. He thinks that one foot in and one foot out is “in”. How wrong he is.

איש איש כי יהיה טמא לגנפש או בדרך רחוקה לכם או לדורותיכם ועשה פסח לד' Any person, if he will be impure from a corpse or (is) on a distant road, (whether among) yourselves or your descendants, he shall perform the Pesach offering for Hashem. (9:10)

One who is unable to offer the Korban Pesach on the fourteenth of Nissan, due to ritual impurity or distance from the Bais Hamikdash (distance is relative) was afforded a second chance (so to speak) to make up the Korban. Chazal (Pesachim 73a) add that it is not only ritual impurity or distance which warrants a dispensation, but any case of inadvertence or duress. Even if it had been volitional and, as a result, the individual did not offer the first one – he may offer the second one.

The Sefer HaChinuch explains the shoresh, root, of this mitzvah (which is unlike any other mitzvah in that we do not have any other “makeup” korbanos). The mitzvah of Korban Pesach is a powerful and clear sign of the creation of the world. When Hashem took us out of Egypt, He performed great and wondrous miracles, thus altering nature for all of the world to behold. At that time, everyone came to the realization that Hashem created the world ex-nihilo – for, just as ex-nihilo is impossible for the laws of nature to fathom, so, too, is splitting the Sea and the many miracles that accompanied the Jewish nation prior, during and after the exodus of Egypt. It is the firm pillar of our faith that Hashem is the G-d of Creation and the G-d of history.

Pesach not only commemorates this, it also serves as the foundation for our belief in Hashem. Therefore, Hashem wants every Jew to merit in this mitzvah and not lose out on its vital lessons just because he could not “make it” the first time around.

Emunah in Hashem is the principle upon which our religion exists. It is the yesod, foundation, upon which Torah and mitzvos are built. To forfeit the opportunity to learn this lesson through the active, positive mitzvah observance of Korban Pesach would be an enormous, critical loss. We can have cognitive emunah, whereby a person thinks and applies his mind to deduce the existence of Hashem and His control of the world. Another form of emunah exists – emunah peshutah, simple faith – which is really far from being simple. The mere fact that one always believes, never asks questions, and does not permit doubt to becloud his thinking indicates a faith that is inexorable and abiding under all conditions and circumstances. This defines the Jew.

Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, related the following incident, one of myriads of incidents which demonstrate to us that everything which occurs in this world is under Hashem’s control and by His direction. The father of a kollel fellow who lived and studied in Bnei Brak lived in Northern Eretz Yisrael. It was a few hours’ drive to his home. The young man would make the trip whenever he could get away. It was not always convenient for him to take off time to visit his father, but the mitzvah of Kibbud Av, honoring one’s father, superseded the difficulty. One time, he had a late start to his trip, and he confronted an unusual amount of traffic. Hence, when he arrived on his father’s block, he was especially annoyed when he could not locate a parking spot. Disgusted about how things were going for him on that day, he decided to park in a “no parking” zone. When he returned to his car following a wonderful visit with his father, he was upset to find a ticket on his window with a fine of 500 shekel. He quickly ran over to the policeman to plead his case. His pleas fell on deaf ears. The policeman was not moved at all. Indeed, he warned him that if he would persist, he would double the ticket.

The young man was dejected. Here he had spent an entire day performing the mitzvah of Kibbud Av, and what did he receive in return? A ticket! When he returned to Bnei Brak, he proceeded to the home of Rav Chaim, with whom he was close, and he related the story to him. Perhaps the gadol could unravel the incident and make sense out of it. Rav Chaim responded, “How can I console you? All I can say is that you should believe b’emunah sheleimah, complete and perfect faith that everything is for the good – even the ticket!”

A few weeks passed, and the “good” was realized. The kollel fellow had a neighbor who was seriously disturbed. He sought every opportunity to make life miserable for the young man and his family. He resorted to slander and even went to the mishtarah, police, to complain that the young man had struck him repeatedly when he had broken into his house. He now sought compensation for the break-in and for the pain he had suffered as a result of being struck by him. The first few times that this deranged man made his claims, the police listened politely and ignored him. This latest time, they had no recourse but to arrest the young man and bring him before the magistrate to resolve the claim.

The two parties each presented his side. The kollel fellow said that he could not possibly have broken into this man’s house and assaulted him, because on that day, at that time, he was visiting his father in the Golan Heights.

The judge asked for verification that he had been away at the time the assault and break-in had purportedly taken place. The young man presented the ticket he had received for parking in a no-parking zone. “It is possible that someone else could have driven your car and received the ticket,” countered the judge. “Let us call the policeman,” said the young man. The policeman was summoned and attested to the verity of the young man’s statement.

When the judge saw what was transpiring before his eyes, he fined the slanderer 50,000 shekel and put into the record that he had very little faith in his claims – past, present and future. Rav Chaim’s portent was realized. Everything that happens is for the good – even the ticket.

ויאמרו הרק אך במשה דבר ד' הלא גם בנו דבר וישמע ד' They said, “Was it only to Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak also with us?” And Hashem heard. (12:2)

People often complain that Hashem’s ways are incomprehensible. As mortals, we are unable to begin to grasp the actions of Hashem. Yet, when something occurs which we are unable to fathom or for which we cannot come up with a reasonable rationale, we are troubled. Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, gives us an insight in how to better grasp – or, at least, come to terms with – Hashem’s actions.

The Torah recounts how Miriam HaNeviah spoke against her brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. She questioned Moshe’s decision to separate from his wife. She felt that if the reason was because of Moshe’s relationship with Hashem (he needed to be prepared at all times to speak with the Divine), she and Aharon had also spoken to Hashem. Nonetheless, they had not left their spouses. Hashem heard Miriam’s question and immediately responded, “It is through a revelation that Hashem appears to a prophet; in a dream, I speak with him. This is not so with regard to My servant Moshe... I speak to him mouth to mouth, via a vision and not through riddles, and he visualizes the image of Hashem.” In other words, the way Hashem spoke with Moshe was quite different than the manner in which he spoke with other Neviim, prophets. Miriam had no right to compare herself (and Aharon HaKohen) to Moshe in their relationship with Hashem.

Chazal (Talmud Yevamos 49b) distinguish between Moshe’s prophecy and the prophecy of all other prophets. The other prophets perceived Hashem’s word through an *aspaklaria she’einah meirah*, an unclear *aspaklaria/mirror*, while Moshe, the Adon ha’Neviim, master of all prophets, received his prophecy through an *aspaklaria meirah*, clear, unambiguous mirror.

Clearly, these terms (the very concept of speaking with – and perceiving – Hashem) are laden with profound esoteric meaning, far beyond and above the grasp of our mortal minds. Nonetheless, Ramchal (quoted by Rav Wolbe) illuminates this idea for us, giving us a path to

understand the meaning of this perception, thus availing us a window through which to prepare ourselves, each on his own level, to better comprehend and come to terms with Hashem's actions.

Ramchal writes that the composition of a human being in some way parallels the attributes of Hashem. Hashem wants to reveal Himself to us in a manner that we can comprehend. Therefore, He formed us in a manner similar to the image He wishes to convey. (In other words, Hashem provided us with the tools to appreciate what He is doing and why.) For example, one who perfects the middah, attribute, of chesed, lovingkindness, will be able to comprehend Hashem's acts of chesed to the greatest degree humanly possible. (We must add that chesed in Torah parlance might be quite different from our secular definition of kindness. Indeed, what we might believe falls under the rubric of chesed may not necessarily fit under the Torah's criteria of chesed.) Thus, to the extent that one refines and perfects his character, he will be able to perceive Hashem. His spiritual makeup will reflect Hashem's attributes, in a manner much like the manner in which a mirror reflects a person's own image.

Commensurate with the personal refinement of our middos will be our perception of Hashem's reactions to those specific middos. Moshe Rabbeinu was not only the Rabban shel Kol Yisrael, Rebbe of all the Jewish People; he was also a perfect specimen, a flawless person, who had worked on all of his middos to the point that he was a human mirror of Hashem's middos. (Obviously, the distances even between Moshe's middos and Hashem's middos is beyond human comprehension.) Moshe polished his spiritual mirror in a manner that allowed him to perceive Hashem with the greatest possible clarity – b'aspaklaria hameirah. In contrast, other Neviim lacked perfection in one or more of his character traits. Every character "flaw" (the slightest imperfection – even on the lofty spiritual plane which is the barometer of perfection for a prophet – is considered a flaw, because, after all, it is, to some degree, imperfect) acts as a smudge that clouds the mirror, resulting in a distorted and indistinct perception of Hashem – Aspaklaria she'einah mei'rah. Miriam was not only a great Jewish woman; she was also a Neviyah, prophetess – on par with other Neviim – but not with Moshe. She could not compare her spiritual achievements and refinement with that of her younger brother, who was the Adon ha'Neviim. Therefore, she was unable to understand him and his actions.

A powerful lesson can be derived from Ramchal's eye-opening explanation of the term aspaklaria. We now have a glimpse of the greatness of our Torah leaders. What can we, as Jews who have yet to understand and reach their level of spiritual accomplishment, say?

We all strive (or should) to connect with Hashem in any way that we can. By emulating Hashem's ways (compassion, kindness, etc.) and perfecting our character (patience, slow to anger, etc.), we will be able to better perceive His attributes, thus connecting with Him in a manner we otherwise would never have thought possible.

Is there one key middah, attribute/character trait that goes to the head of the class, such that, if one perfects it, the others will eventually also come to perfection? I think that the Torah gives the answer to this when it writes, V'ha'ish Moshe anav meod mikol ha'adam; "Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble" (Ibid 12:2). We often equate humility with low self-worth, hesitation and shyness. Wrong. Humility means "not arrogant, not proud" (Merriam Webster). In an alternative definition, humble is understood as acting "in a spirit of deference and submission." This definition contains no mention of lack of self-worth or shyness. Despite his incredible acumen and extraordinary success, the humble man does not allow it to go to his head. A humble man is grateful when he succeeds. An arrogant man is proud when he succeeds. It is all about attribution: Is it about me, or do I owe everything to others – to Hashem?

A true leader wants to inspire followership. This can be done only if he is humble. Good character inspires. One may have followers, but they are not necessarily inspired followers. They emulate and follow for personal reasons, to seek advancement. A sense of humility is vital to leadership because it authenticates one's humanity. Humility allows leaders to value the contribution of others to their success. A humble

person recognizes the impact of others with openness and gratitude. A humble leader sees others, while one who is arrogant sees only himself.

One who is humble realizes that he must continue working on himself, so that he achieves greater refinement of character. Thus, humility is the catalyst which transforms the entire individual.

Stories abound which relate the self-effacing nature of our gedolim, Torah leaders. One Torah giant, Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Baranovitz and one of the preeminent pre-World War II leaders of Torah Jewry, personified humility. He was the consummate gadol; yet, as great as he was, the following story illustrates how small he was in his own eyes. A man once approached him for a blessing. The Rosh Yeshivah replied to him with all sincerity, "Believe me, if you would know me as I know myself, you would surely not ask me for a blessing."

His talmidim, students, related that prior to Yom Kippur, he would insist that they not call him up to the Torah. (It is the custom throughout yeshivos and shuls that on this holy day, the aliyos to the Torah are given to the distinguished members of the congregation. In every yeshivah, the Rosh Yeshivah is called to the Torah.) When the students stared at him incredulously, asking for an explanation, he replied, "I am afraid that when I will be given any undue attention, the Heavenly ledger will be opened to my name. At this point, when I am being unduly honored, they will delve into my life to ascertain if I am deserving of this honor. It would serve me much better to remain in the background, without calling attention to myself."

In his memoirs, Horav Moshe Blau, zl, writes about meeting Rav Elchanan at the Knessiah Gedolah. It was during a meeting of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, Council of Torah Sages, which is the ruling Rabbinical body of Agudas Yisrael, a pressing issue concerning Klal Yisrael was brought to the table. One of the prominent Rabbanim arose and announced, "Anyone who is neither a Rav nor Admor is asked to leave the session." (Apparently, the earlier session had been open to all attendees.) Rav Blau was in the hall and met Rav Elchanan. Surprised that the venerable Rosh Yeshivah and primary spokesman for the yeshivah world was not at the meeting, he made a point to ask Rav Elchanan why he was in the hall. Rav Elchanan answered in all (sincere) innocence, "Did you not hear the announcement? I am neither a Rav nor an Admor. I have no business being there." (The fact that the Moetzes is made up primarily of Roshei Yeshivah – and Rav Elchanan was a member of the Moetzes did not come into play.) As a Torah leader of repute, Rav Elchanan certainly knew what the Torah world thought of him and the veneration that he received, but it did not go to his head. He still felt undeserving of the honors and accolades.

Va'ani Tefillah

את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח – Es tzemach David Avdecha meheirah satzmiach. May You speedily cause the outgrowth of David, Your servant, to sprout.

The Chafetz Chaim offers a meaningful mashal, analogy, concerning our obligation to not only wait for Moshiach, but also to prepare spiritually for his coming. In truth, to wait is to prepare, because, unless one readies himself by refining his spiritual activities and commitments, he really does not demonstrate that he is waiting for Moshiach.

A king informed his general that on a given day, he would visit the barracks and review the soldiers. Prior to the arrival of the King, the general set about preparing everything from updating the barracks to seeing to it that each soldier's uniform was spiffy and eminently presentable. When the long-awaited day arrived, everyone lined up bedecked in their finest, their medals shining in the bright sunlight. Alas, when the appointed time arrived, the king had yet to show.

After a few hours of waiting, the general decided to dismiss his men, so that they could all relax. He instructed one of the younger recruits to stand guard and inform him as soon as any sign of the king became evident. How foolish the general appeared when, shortly after he left the king suddenly appeared to be greeted by only one young soldier who stood waiting patiently at attention. Obviously, the king was duly

upset. We, too, wait for Moshiach, but it has been a long wait, and, as a result, we often wait without preparation. As soon as we “hear” him approaching, we will rush and refine ourselves spiritually in preparation for his coming. This is not considered “waiting anxiously.” Unless one “prepares” for his coming, he really is not waiting.

In memory of Robert and Barbara Pinkis

ר' ברוך גמפל בן חיים יהודה ז"ל

ואשתו אסתר חנה בת ר' אביגדור ליה

Michele and Marcelo Weiss and Family. Lisa and Eric Pinkis and Family

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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

What May I Not Write?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Although this article may be a little late for those sending out their wedding invitations for this year's June weddings, it is still helpful in many other ways.

Question #1: Invitations

“I was told that I should not include quotations from pesukim on my daughter's wedding invitation. Yet, I see that ‘everyone’ does! Could you please explain the halacha?”

Question #2: Sukkah Decorations

“Someone told me that sukkah decorations should not include any pesukim. Is this true? My children bring home decorations like this from school.”

To answer these questions, we need to explain several halachic issues, including:

1. The original prohibition against writing Torah she'be'al peh, and the later “heter” to write and publish it.
2. The concern about producing divrei Torah that will not be treated appropriately.

The original prohibition against writing Torah she'be'al peh

Originally, it was prohibited to write down any Torah she'be'al peh (Gittin 60b), except for an individual's personal notes recorded for one's own review (Rambam, Introduction to Mishneh Torah; see also Rashi, Shabbos 6b s.v. Megilas). The Oral Torah was not permitted to be taught from a written format. Torah she'be'al peh was meant to be just that -- Torah taught completely without any written text. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu taught us the halachos of the Torah orally, and Klal Yisrael memorized them. Although each student wrote private notes for the sake of review, the Oral Torah was never taught from these notes.

The prohibition against writing Torah she'be'al peh included writing midrashim, prayers and the texts of berachos, as well as translations and commentaries of the Written Torah, since all these are considered Torah she'be'al peh. In those times, all these devarim she'be'kedusha were memorized, and the only parts of the Torah that were written were the pesukim themselves.

The Gemara (Gittin 60b) records this halacha as follows: Devarim she'be'al peh, iy atah resha'ie le'omram bichsav, “You are not permitted to transmit the Oral Torah in writing.” The Ritva (ad loc.) explains that this is because divrei Torah taught verbally are understood more precisely, whereas text learning is often misunderstood.

Another prohibition forbade writing the books of Tanach except when writing a complete sefer (Gittin 60a). Thus, one could not write out a parsha or a few pesukim for learning, although it was permitted to write an entire Chumash, such as Sefer Shemos. Similarly, one could not write out part of a sefer of Navi to study or to read the haftarah. In order to recite the haftarahs regularly, every shul needed to own all of the eight Nevi'im (Yehoshua, Shoftim, Shemuel, Melachim, Yeshayahu, Yirmiyahu, Yechezkel, and Terei Asar) to read the haftarah from the appropriate sefer. Similarly, a person who wished to study Shiras Devorah or the prayer of Channah had to write the entire Sefer Shoftim or Sefer Shemuel.

Why do we no longer abide by this prohibition?

Chazal realized that it was becoming increasingly difficult for people to learn Torah and to observe certain other mitzvos, such as reading the haftarah. Therefore, they ruled that the prohibition against writing Torah must be superseded by the more vital need of keeping Torah alive among the Jews. This takanah was based on the pasuk, Eis la'asos laShem heifeiru torasecha, which is understood to mean “It is the time to act for Hashem since Your Torah is being uprooted” (Tehillim 119:126). In order to facilitate Torah study, they permitted writing individual verses and teaching Oral Torah from written texts. (We will refer to this takanah, or heter, as “eis la'asos.”)

The first part of the Oral Torah to be formally written for structured teaching was the Mishnah, edited by Rebbe (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi) at the end of the period of the tanna'im (circa 3960/200 c.e.). To quote the Rambam, “Rebbe gathered all the laws and explanations that had been studied and interpreted by every beis din since the days of Moshe Rabbeinu and organized the Mishnah from them. He (Rebbe) proceeded to teach publicly the scholars of his generation from this text, so that the Oral Torah would not be forgotten from the Jewish people. Why did Rebbe change the method that had been used previously? Because he saw that the numbers of Torah students were decreasing, the difficulties facing the Jewish people were on the rise, the Roman Empire was becoming stronger, and the Jews were becoming increasingly scattered. He therefore authored one work that would be in the hands of all the students, to make it easier to study and remember the Oral Torah” (Introduction to Mishneh Torah).

We see that Rebbe instituted the first formalized use of a text to teach the Oral Torah, because of the new circumstances confronting klal Yisrael. After Rebbe's days, Chazal gradually permitted writing down other texts, first Aggadah (ethical teachings of the Gemara), later the entire Gemara, and still later, the explanations and commentaries on the Gemara.

As a very important aside, we see from the end of the quoted Rambam, “to make it easier to study and remember the Oral Torah,” that even though it is now permitted to write down the Mishnah, it is still important to know the entire Oral Torah by heart.

In the context of the rule of eis la'asos, the Gemara tells us the following story:

Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakeish (amora'im in Eretz Yisrael shortly after the time of Rebbe) were studying from a Talmudic anthology of ethical teachings, a “sefer Aggadah.”

The Gemara asks, “How could they study from such a book, since it is prohibited to learn Torah from a written text?” The Gemara replies, “Since it is now impossible (to retain all the knowledge of the Torah without a written text), ‘it is the time to act for Hashem, since Your Torah is being uprooted,’” (Gittin 60a). We see that the Gemara initially assumed that it was still prohibited to study Torah from a written text, except for the study of Mishnah. The Gemara responded that the prohibition had been further relaxed because it had become even more difficult to learn Torah than it had been in the days of Rebbe.

The Gemara relates a similar episode concerning the recital of the haftarah. As mentioned above, it was originally forbidden to write part of a book of Tanach, and, therefore, every shul needed to own scrolls of all the Nevi'im in order to read the haftarahs. However, as communities became more scattered, making this increasingly difficult, the Gemara permitted the writing of special haftarah books that contained only the haftarah texts, but not the text of the entire Nevi'im. This, too, was permitted because of eis la'asos (Gittin 60a).

What else is permitted because of eis la'asos?

We see that in order to facilitate Torah learning, Chazal permitted the writing of the Oral Torah and parts of the books of the Written Torah. To what extent did they override the original prohibition?

This is a dispute among early poskim, some contending that it is permitted to write only as much as is necessary to prevent Torah from being forgotten. According to this opinion, it is prohibited to write or print even tefillos that include pesukim when they are not intended for learning Torah (Rif and Milchemes Hashem, Shabbos Chapter 16). This

opinion also prohibits translating Tanach into any language other than the original Aramaic Targum, because proper translations constitute Torah she'be'al peh. In addition, this opinion prohibits the printing of a parsha of Chumash in order to teach Torah, since one could write or print the entire sefer (Rambam, Hilchos Sefer Torah 7:14; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 283:2).

Other poskim permit the writing of any Torah that one uses to learn. Thus, they permit writing a single parsha in order to teach Torah (Taz, Yoreh Deah 283:1; Shach, Yoreh Deah 283:3) and the translating of Tanach into any language. These poskim rally support to their opinion from the fact that Rav Saadya Gaon wrote sefarim in Arabic, including commentaries on Tanach (Ran, Shabbos, Chapter 16).

Both opinions agree that it is prohibited to publish translations of Tanach that will not be used to spread Torah knowledge (Ran, Shabbos, Chapter 16).

How does this prohibition affect us?

All of the opinions quoted above prohibit writing disparate parts of the Written Torah and any of the Oral Torah in situations where there is no Torah benefit. For this reason, early poskim note that one may not embroider a pasuk or a beracha on a talis, since writing this does not serve to teach Torah (Rabbeinu Yerucham, quoted by Beis Yosef, and Taz, Yoreh Deah 283:3. It should be noted that the Levush is more lenient, see Shach, Yoreh Deah 283:6.).

Another concern

There is an additional reason why one should not embroider pesukim on a talis. Since the talis could be brought into an unclean place, it is not proper to have a pasuk written on it.

A third concern – causing the words of Torah to be destroyed

To explain this concept, we must first introduce a surprising statement of the Gemara: Ko'vesei berachos kesorfei Torah, "Those who write berachos (to enable people to recite them) are considered as if they burnt the Torah" (Shabbos 115b). What does this Gemara mean? We would think that these individuals have performed a tremendous mitzvah, since they have enabled people to recite berachos correctly!

This statement was authored at the time when it was still prohibited to write down the Oral Torah. At that time, it was forbidden to teach any halachos in written form, even the correct text of a beracha. Everything had to be taught orally. Therefore, the Gemara states that by writing a beracha, even without the name of Hashem (Shu't Tashbeitz #2), one is violating the halacha by teaching Torah she'be'al peh in writing.

But why is it considered like "burning the Torah?"

This Gemara introduces a new prohibition. Someone who writes prohibited Torah works is considered culpable afterwards, if those divrei Torah become consumed by a fire! Writing unnecessarily, which results in subsequent destruction, is akin to burning Torah.

We know that it is prohibited to erase or destroy the Name of Hashem (Shabbos 120b), and that this prohibition includes erasing or destroying words of Torah and all other holy writings, including notes of Torah classes, stories of Chazal, sefarim for learning, "benschers," etc., even if they do not include Hashem's Name (Shu't Tashbeitz #2). Therefore, even small benschers, tefillos haderech and similar items published with abbreviated names of Hashem are still considered divrei Torah imbued with kedusha. For the above reason, one must treat these items with proper care and dignity and place them in sheimos when they become unusable.

It is also prohibited to cause an indirect destruction of words of the Torah or to produce divrei Torah that might subsequently be destroyed. This prohibition exists whenever there is insufficient reason to write and publish the divrei Torah. For this reason, the Gemara states that someone who wrote berachos when it was prohibited to do so is held responsible, if the words of Torah are subsequently destroyed.

Although, nowadays, we are permitted to write and print berachos and siddurim to enable people to recite them properly, it is forbidden to produce these items unnecessarily. It is certainly prohibited to put pesukim, parts of pesukim, or divrei Torah in places where it is likely

that they will be treated improperly. Both of these reasons preclude writing pesukim on Sukkah decorations, unless one can assume that they will be properly cared for.

How much of a pasuk is considered to be divrei Torah?

Even three words in a row are considered a pasuk that may not be written without sufficient reason (see Gittin 6b). However, if the letters are improperly or incompletely formed or spelled, it is permitted (Shu't Tashbeitz #2).

For this reason, some people print on invitations the following, Naaleh es Yerushalayim al rosh simchaseinu, "We will place our memories of Yerushalayim above our celebrations." This is permitted, because it is not a quotation of a pasuk, although it is similar to the posuk in Tehillim 137:5.

There is another solution that may be used: rearranging the words of the pasuk so that they are not in the correct order. When doing this, one must be certain that one does not have three words in the proper order.

I once received an invitation which stated on the cover, Yom zeh asah Hashem nismecha venagila bo, "This day was made by Hashem. We shall rejoice and celebrate on it." The person who prepared this quotation had done his halachic research. Although very similar to the pasuk, "Zeh hayom asah Hashem nagilah v'nismecha bo" (Tehillim 118:24), the words of the original pasuk were transposed in such a way that there were no longer three consecutive words together!

Some authorities permit printing pesukim if marks are placed between the words, or if the words are not in a straight line. They feel that these arrangements of words do not constitute pesukim (cf. Shu't Tashbeitz #2 who disagrees).

Some producers of "lulav bags" are meticulously careful not to quote three words of the pasuk in order. Thus, they write, "Ulekachtem lachem... kapos temarim... usemachtem" avoiding writing three consecutive words of a pasuk (Vayikra 23:40). This is permitted.

Invitations

Perhaps people who print pesukim on invitations rely on the fact that this is considered mere poetic writing style, or that the printer has no intent to produce divrei kedusha. However, recent authorities prohibit this practice. In Sivan 5750/June '90, an open letter signed by the poskei hador warned that advertisements, invitations, receipts, signs, and raffle tickets should not include pesukim or parts of pesukim, except when the pasuk is written as part of literary style, with no connection to its context.

We live in an age of proliferation of written material. Many pamphlets have the positive value of spreading Torah. We must be careful to show our honor to Hashem by treating pesukim and divrei Torah with proper respect. May we always merit demonstrating Hashem's honor in the appropriate way!

***Ohr Somayach :: Insights into Halacha :: Weighty Waiting Options
For the week ending 6 June 2015 / 19 Sivan 5775
Rabbi Yehuda Spitz***

We often find that the Torah's description of even simple actions of our great forefathers impart to us a treasure trove of hanhaga, hashkafa, and even halacha.[1] Sometimes though, it is the exact opposite; a halacha is gleaned from the acts of those far from being paragons of virtue. In our parshiyos hashuva we learn fascinating halachic insights from people whom we would not consider role models by any stretch of the imagination.

Double Agents

Parshas Shelach details at length the grave sin of the Meraglim, the spies whose evil report about Eretz Yisrael still echoes, with repercussions continuing to be felt until today[2]. Of the twelve spies sent, only two remained loyal to Hashem: Yehoshua bin Nun and Calev ben Yefuneh[3]. The other ten chose to slander Eretz Yisrael instead, and consequently suffered immediate and terrible deaths. Due to their vile report, the Jewish people were forced to remain in the desert an

additional forty years, and eventually die out, before their children ultimately were allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael.

Hashem called this rogues' gallery of spies an 'eidah'[4], literally a congregation. The Gemara[5] famously derives from this incident that the minimum requirement for a minyan is a quorum of ten men, since there were ten turncoat 'double-agents' who were contemptuously called a congregation. If ten men can get together to conspire and hatch malevolent schemes, then ten men can assemble to form a congregation for 'devarim shebekedusha'. This exegesis is duly codified in halacha[6], and all because of the dastardly deeds of ten misguided men[7].

Covetous Carnivores

Another prime example of halacha being set by the actions of those less than virtuous[8],[9] is the tragic chapter of the rabble rousers who lusted after meat, and disparaged Hashem's gift of the Heavenly bread called manna (mun), chronicled at the end of Parshas Beha'alosecha[10]. The pasuk states that "the meat was still between their teeth" when these sinners met their untimely and dreadful demise[11]. The Gemara[12] extrapolates that since the Torah stressed that point, it means to show us that meat between the teeth is still considered tangible meat and one must wait before having a dairy meal afterwards.

There are actually several different ways to understand the Gemara's intent, chief among them are Rashi's and the Rambam's opinions[13]. The Rambam[14] writes that meat tends to get stuck between the teeth and is still considered meat for quite some time afterward. Rashi[15], however, doesn't seem to be perturbed about actual meat residue stuck in the teeth, but simply explains that since meat is fatty by nature, its taste lingers for a long time after eating.

Yet, the Gemara itself does not inform us what the mandated set waiting period is. Rather, it gives us several guideposts that the Rishonim use to set the halacha. The Gemara informs us that Mar Ukva's father would not eat dairy items on the same day that he had partaken of meat, but Mar Ukva himself (calling himself 'vinegar the son of wine') would only wait 'm'seudasa l'seudasa achrina', from one meal until a different meal[16],[17]. The various variant minhagim that Klal Yisrael keep related to waiting after eating meat are actually based on how the Rishonim understood this cryptic comment.

Six Hours

This, the most common custom, was first codified by the Rambam. He writes that meat stuck in the teeth remains "meat" for up to 6 hours, and mandates waiting that amount. This is the halacha according to the Tur and Shulchan Aruch[18], as well as the vast majority of authorities. The Rashal, Chochmas Adam, and Aruch Hashulchan[19] all write very strongly that one should wait six hours. The mandated six hours seemingly comes from the many places in Rabbinic literature where it mentions that the 'meals of a Torah scholar' are six hours apart[20]. Therefore, this fits well with Mar Ukva's statement that he would wait from one meal until the next after eating meat, meaning six hours.

Five Hours and a Bit

The idea of waiting five hours and a bit, or five and a half hours, is actually based on the choice of words of several Rishonim, including the Rambam and Meiri, when they rule to wait six hours. They write that one should keep "k'mosheish sha'os", approximately six hours[21]. Several contemporary authorities maintain that "six hours" does not have to be an exact six hours; waiting five and a half (or according to some even five hours and one minute) is sufficient, as it is almost six hours[22]. However, it should be noted that not everyone agrees to this, and many maintain that the six hours must be exact[23].

Four Hours

Waiting four hours is first opined by the Pri Chadash, who comments that the six hours mandated are not referring to regular "sixty minute" hours, but rather halachic hours, known colloquially as "sha'os zmanios". This complicated halachic calculation is arrived at by dividing the amount of time between sunrise and sunset into twelve equal parts. Each of these new "hours" are halachic hours and are used to calculate the various zmanim throughout the day. The Pri Chadash asserts that at the height of winter when days are extremely short, it is possible that six hours can turn into only four halachic hours[24]! Although several authorities rule this way, and others say one may rely on this exclusively in times of great need[25], nevertheless, his opinion here is rejected out of hand by the vast majority of desisors, who maintain that the halacha follows six true hours[26]. The Yad Efraim points out that if one follows "sha'os zmanios" in the winter, then he must also follow it during the summer, possibly needing to wait up to eight hours!

One Hour

Waiting only hour between meat and dairy, a common custom among Jews from Amsterdam, is codified by the Rema, citing common custom, based on several great Ashkenazic Rishonim including the Maharil and Maharai[27]. The Rema himself, though, concludes that it is nevertheless proper to wait six hours.

Three Hours

Interestingly, and shocking to some, the common German custom of waiting three hours does not seem to have an explicit halachic source[28]. In fact, one who delves into the sefarim of great Rabbanim who served throughout Germany, from Rav Yonason Eibeshutz to Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, will find that they all recommended keeping the full six hours! Yet, there are several theories[29] explaining how such a widespread custom came about. One, by the Mizmor L'Dovid, is that it is possibly based on the Pri Chadash's opinion of sha'os zmanios. Another hypothesis, by Rav Binyomin Hamburger - author of Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz, is that their original custom was to wait only one hour like the basic halacha cited by the Rema, following the majority of Ashkenazic Rishonim. Yet, when the six hours mandated by the Rambam and other Rishonim became more widespread, those in Ashkenaz decided to meet the rest of the world halfway, as a sort of compromise. According to this explanation, it turns out that waiting three hours is intrinsically a chumra on waiting one hour.

Bentch and Go

Another opinion, and one not halachically accepted, is that of Tosafos[30], who posit that "from one meal to another" means exactly that. As soon as one finishes his meat meal, clears off the table and recites Birkas HaMazon, he may start a new dairy meal. Some add that this includes washing out the mouth and palate cleansing (kinuach and hadacha). This is actually even more stringent than Rabbeinu Tam's opinion, that all one needs is kinuach and hadacha, and then one may eat dairy - even while part of the same meal[31]! It is important to realize that his opinion here is categorically rejected by all on a practical level.

A Day Away

The most stringent opinion is not to eat meat and milk on the same day (some call this a full 24 hours, but it seems a misnomer according to most authorities' understanding). First mentioned by Mar Ukva as his father's personal custom, several great Rabbonim through the ages have been known to keep this. Interestingly, this custom is cited by Rav Chaim Falag'i[32] as the proper one, and in his opinion, only those who are not able to stick to it can rely upon a 'mere' six hours.

Just Sleep On It

Another remarkable, but not widely accepted, custom is that of sleeping after eating a meat meal. The proponents of this, including Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, maintain that sleeping causes the food to digest quicker, thereby lessening the required waiting period[33]. It is told that the Chasam Sofer wanted to start relying on this leniency, but upon awakening, every time he tried drinking his coffee it would spill. He concluded that this hetter must not have been accepted in Heaven[34]. The majority of contemporary authorities as well, do not rely on sleeping as a way of lessening the waiting time[35]. The Steipler Gaon zt"l is quoted as remarking that this leniency is the exclusive domain of Rav Elyashiv zt"l, as most people sleep six hours a night and he only slept three hours nightly. Although there are many different and widespread opinions about the proper amount of time one is required to wait after eating meat, and "minhag avoseinu Torah hi[36]", nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the core requirement of waiting is based on the actions of those with less than perfect intentions. As it is stated in Pirkei Avos[37] "Who is wise? One who learns from every one."

[1] See article titled 'Maaseh Avos = Halacha L'Maaseh' at length.

[2] See Mishna Taanis 26b and following Gemara on 29a, that this, the first of five tragedies, occurred on Tishah B'Av.

[3] Calev's father's real name was actually Chetzron. See Divrei HaYamim (vol. 1, Ch. 2, verse 18) and Gemara Sota 11b.

[4] Bamidbar (Shelach) Ch. 14, verse 27.

[5] Gemara Megilla 23b, Brachos 21b, and Sanhedrin 74b. See Rashi at HaTorah ad loc. s.v. l'eidah.

[6] Rambam (Hilchos Tefilla Ch. 8, Halacha 5), Tur & Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 55, 1 & 69, 1), Aruch Hashulchan (55, 6), and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (15, 1). Many authorities cite this as the source for this law, including the Bach (Orach Chaim 55, 1), Taz (ad loc. 1), Levushei Srad (ad loc 1), Chida (Birkei Yosef ad loc 3), Shulchan Aruch HaRav (ad loc 2), Mishna Berura (ad loc 2), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc 6).

[7] For a full treatment of the Meraglim and their intentions, see relevant commentaries to Parshas Shelach, as well as Rabbi Moshe M. Eisemann's excellent "Tear Drenched Nights - Tish'ah B'Av: The Tragic Legacy of the Meraglim".

[8] Another interesting example of this is a potential halacha we glean from Bilaam. The Gemara (Brachos 7a) explains that Bilaam knew the exact millisecond that Hashem got angry and knew how to properly curse during that time. Tosafos (ad loc. s.v. she'ilmalei and Avodah Zarah 4b s.v. rega) asks what type of curse was it possible for him to utter in such a limited time frame (a fraction of a second!) and gives two answers: 1) the word 'kaleim', 'destroy them' 2) once Bilaam started his curse in that exact time frame, he 'locked it in' and can continue as long as it takes, since it is all considered in that exact time. The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 110, 5) takes the second approach a step further and applies this idea to Tefilla B'Zman. As long as one starts his Tefilla before the Sof Zman, it is considered that he 'made the zman' even if the majority of his Tefilla actually took place after the Sof Zman. Although not everyone agrees with this [indeed, many poskim, including the Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 89, 4 and 124, 4), Pri Megadim (Orach Chaim 89, Eshel Avraham 4 and 110, Eshel Avraham 1), and Mishna Berura (58, 5 and 89, end 5), are makpid

that one must finish his Tefilla before the Sof Zman], nevertheless a similar logic (based on Bilaam) is presented by the Machatzis HaShekel (Orach Chaim 6, end 6), quoting the Bais Yaakov (Shu"t 127) in the name of the Arizal regarding Tefillas HaTzibbur. If such design worked for one as despicable and reprehensible as Bilaam to enable him to curse us, how much more so should it work for us regarding Tefilla B'Tzibbur which is an eis ratzon!

[9] An additional example of a halacha gleaned from the wicked actions of Bilaam is that of Tzaar Ba'alei Chaim, causing living creatures unnecessary pain. Although the Gemara (Bava Metzia 32a-b) debated whether this halacha is D'Oraysa or DeRabbanan, according to most authorities, including the Rambam (Hilchos Rotzeach Ch. 13, 13), Rif (Bava Metzia 17b), Rosh (ad loc. 30), Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzva 451, end s.v. kasav), Tur (Choshen Mishpat 272, 11), Rema (ad loc. 9), Bach (ad loc. 5), Gr"a (ad loc. 11), SM"A (ad loc. 15), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (191,1), and Aruch Hashulchan (Choshen Mishpat 272, 2), as well as the mashmaos of the Gemara Shabbos (128b), Tzaar Ba'alei Chaim is indeed D'Oraysa. According to the Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim vol. 3, end Ch. 17) and Sefer Chassidim (666) this can be gleaned from Bilaam's actions of hitting his donkey. In fact, they maintain that since Bilaam remarked that if he had a sword in his hand he would have killed his donkey on the spot, that is why he eventually was slain b'davka by sword! Thanks are due to Rabbi Shimon Black of the London Beis Din for pointing out several of these sources.

[10] Bamidbar (Beha' alosecha) Ch. 11.

[11] Ad loc. verse 33.

[12] Gemara Chullin 105a, statements of Rav Chisda.

[13] For example, the Kreisi U'Pleisi (Yoreh Deah 89, Pleisi 3) and Chochmas Adam (40, 13) posit that the waiting period is actually dependant on digestion.

[14] Rambam (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros Ch. 9, 28).

[15] Rashi, in his glosses to Gemara Chullin 105a s.v. asur.

[16] Although the Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 89, 4) maintains that the waiting period starts from when one finishes theseudah that he partook of meat, nevertheless, most authorities, including many contemporary decisors, follow the Dagul Mervavah (ad loc. 1), and are of the opinion that the waiting period starts immediately after one finishes eating the actual meat product and not the entire seudah. These poskim include the Erech Hashulchan (ad loc. 3), Darchei Teshuva (ad loc. 4), Atzei HaOlah (Hilchos Basar Bechalav, Klal 3, 1), Shu"t Moshe Halsh (Yoreh Deah 16), and the Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 9), as well as Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (cited in Piskei Halachos, Yoreh Deah, Basar Bechalav 8, pg. 54), Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner (Kovetz m' Bais Levi on Yoreh Deah, Basar Bechalav 2, pg. 33), the Debreciner Rav and Rav Asher Zimmerman (both cited in Rayach HaBosem on Basar Bechalav Ch. 3, Question 28), Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg (cited in Shu"t Divrei Chachamim, Yoreh Deah Ch. 1, Question 6), Rav Chaim Kanievsky (cited in Doleh U'Mashkeh pg. 257), Rav Menashe Klein (Shu"t Mishna Halachos vol. 5, 97, 2), the Rivevos Efraim (vol. 5, 516), and Rav Shalom Krauss (Shu"t Divrei Shalom on Yoreh Deah, 25).

[17] For an elucidation of what exactly Mar Ukva and his father disagreed upon see Toras HaAsham (76, s.v. v'kasav d'nohagin).

[18] Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 89, 1).

[19] The Rashal (Yam Shel Shlomo, Chullin Ch. 8, 9; quoted l'maaseh by the Shach - Yoreh Deah 89, 8) writes that anyone who has even a "scent of Torah" would wait six hours. The Chochmas Adam (ibid.) writes that whoever doesn't wait six hours violates "Al Titosh Toras Imecha" (Mishlei Ch. 1, verse 8). The Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 89, 7) writes that whoever doesn't wait six hours is in the category of "HaPoretz Geder" who deserves to be bitten by a snake (Koheles Ch. 10 verse 8).

[20] See, for example Gemara Shabbos 10a, Ritva (Chullin 105a s.v. basar bein), Rashba (ad loc.), Rosh (ad loc. 5), Baal Hatur (Shaar 1, Hilchos Basar BeChalav 13a-b), Lechem Mishna (on the Rambam ibid.), Biur HaGra (Yoreh Deah 89, 2), and Mor U'Ketzia (Orach Chaim 184 s.v. v'chein).

[21] Rambam (ibid.), Meiri (Chullin 105a s.v. v'hadar), Agur (223), Kol Bo (106, s.v. v'achar basar), Orchos Chaim (vol. 2, Hilchos Issurei Ma'achalos pg. 335, 73 s.v. v'achar).

[22] Several authorities make this diyuk, including the Minchas Yaakov (Soles L'Mincha 76, 1), Butchacher Gaon (Daas Kedoshim - Yoreh Deah 89, 2), and the Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 89, 2). Contemporary authorities who rely on not needing a full six hours include the Divrei Chaim zt"l (cited in Shu"t Divrei Yatziv, Likutim V'Hashmatos 69; see also Shu"t Yashiv Yitzchak vol. 5, 14), Rav Chaim Brisker zt"l (cited in sefer Torah L'Daas vol. 2, Beha' alosecha pg. 229, Question 5), the Matteh Efraim (Ardit; pg. 28, 4), Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l (cited in Shu"t Ohr Yitzchak vol. 1, Yoreh Deah 4), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l (Kovetz Moriah, Teves 5756 pg. 79), Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l (Shu"t Yissa Yosef Orach Chaim vol. 2, 119, 5), and Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l (Shu"t Yabea Omer vol. 1, Yoreh Deah 4, 13 & vol. 3, Yoreh Deah 3).

[23] Including Rabbeinu Yerucham (Sefer HaAdam, Nesiv 15, vol. 2, 27, pg. 137), Chamudei Daniel (Taaruvo vol. 2, 15), Shu"t Ginas Veradim (Gan HaMelech 154), Perach Shoshan (1, 1), Mikdash Me'at (on Daas Kedoshim ibid., 2), Yalkut Me'am Loez (Parshas Mishpatim pg. 889 - 890 s.v. shiur), Yad Yehuda (89, Pirush HaKatzter 1), Chofetz Chaim (Nidchei Yisrael Ch. 33), Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer zt"l (Shu"t Even Yisrael vol. 9, 126, 5), and Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlit"a (cited in sefer Doleh U'Mashkeh pg. 257). Several other contemporary authorities maintain that one should strive to keep the full six hours l'chatchila, but may be lenient in times of need, including Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (cited in Shu"t Divrei Chachamim Yoreh Deah 1, 1; and in private conversation with Rav Moshe's grandson Rabbi Mordechai Tendler), Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l (cited in Shu"t Avnei Yashpei vol. 5, 101, 3 & 4 and Ashrei Halsh Orach Chaim vol. 3, pg. 441, 10), Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner shlit"a (Kovetz M'Beis Levi on Yoreh Deah pg. 34, 3, & footnote 3) and Rav Menashe Klein zt"l (Shu"t Mishneh Halachos vol. 5, 97, 3).

[24] Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 89, 6). Others who rely on his opinion include the Gilyon Maharsha (ad loc. 3), Ikrei HaDa"t (Ikrei Dinim 10, end 5) and Minchas Yaakov (Soles L'Mincha 76, end 1).

[25] Including the Yad Efraim (Yoreh Deah 89, 1), Yeshuos Yaakov (ad loc., Pirush Hakatzter 1), Maharsham (Daas Torah ad loc.) and the Zeicher Yehosef (Shu"t end 196), who allow one to rely on the Pri Chadash only if one is sick or in times of great need.

[26] Including the Pri Megadim (Yoreh Deah 89, Mishbetzos Zahav 1), Pischei Teshuva (ad loc. 3), Knesses HaGedolah (Haghos on Tur, ad loc. 6 - 7), Kreisi U'Pleisi (ad loc. Pleisi 3), Chochmas Adam (40, 12), Chida (Shiyurei Bracha - Yoreh Deah 89, 3 - 4), Zivchei Tzedek (ad loc. 2), Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Shelach 9), and Chaguras Shmuel (Yoreh Deah 89, 8).

[27] Rema (Yoreh Deah 89, 1), Maharai (Haghos Shaarei Dura 76, 2), Maharil (Minhagim, Hilchos Issur V'Hetter 5, s.v. achal), Issur V'Hetter (40, 4). Although the Rashal (ibid.) and Taz (Yoreh Deah 89 2) cast aspersions on this custom, the Gr"a (Biur HaGr"a ad loc. 6) defends it as the Zohar's minhag as well to wait an hour between all milk and meat meals. Relevant to the proper custom in Amsterdam see sefer Minhagei Amsterdam (pg. 20, 24 & pg. 52), Shu"t Yashiv Yitzchak (vol. 13, 25) and Shu"t Shav V'Rafa vol. 3, 114).

[28] There is no mention of a three hour wait in any traditional halachic source, save for one. And, although in Rabbeinu Yerucham's Kitzur Issur V'Hetter (39) found at the end of his main sefer, it does mention waiting 'Gimmel Shaos', it is an apparent misprint, as in the full sefer itself (Sefer HaAdam, Nesiv 15, vol. 2, 27, pg. 137) Rabbeinu Yerucham states unequivocally that one "must wait at least six hours"! Additionally, the source cited for his three hour quote is Rabbeinu Peretz, who also actually mandates waiting six hours (Haghos on SMA"K 213). Moreover, it seems likely that Rabbeinu Yerucham is not the author of the Kitzur Issur V'Hetter attributed to him (see Rabbi Yisrael Ta Shma's article in Kovetz Sinai, Shevat - Adar 5729). For more on the topic of Rabbeinu Yerucham and three hours, see Rav Moshe Sternbuch's Orchos HaBayis (Ch. 7, note 45), Rav Chaim Kanievsky's opinion cited in Kovetz Nitzotzei Aish (pg. 860, 32), and Rav Asher Weiss's Shu"t Minchas Asher (vol. 1, 42, 2, s.v. u'mkivan). Renowned Rabbonim who served throughout Germany who wrote to keep six hours include Rav Yonason Eibeshutz zt"l (Kehillos AH"U - Kreisi U'Pleisi 89, 3), the Pri Megadim (Kehillos in Berlin and Frankfurt - Yoreh Deah 89, Mishbetzos Zahav 1), Rav Yosef Yuspa Haan zt"l (Noheg K'Tzon Yosef - Minhag Frankfurt, Hilchos Se'ah pg. 120, 4), and Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch zt"l (Chorev vol. 4, Ch. 68, pg. 30).

[29] Mizmor L'David (Yoreh Deah 89, 6). Rav Hamburger's explanation is found in a letter written to mv"r Rav Yonason Wiener. See Shu"t Nachlas Pinchas (vol. 1, 36, 7) for a similar assessment. For other sevaros, see Rabbi Yaakov Skoczylas' Ohel Yaakov (on Basar BeChalav, 89, end footnote 1, quoting Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l) and Shu"t Mishna Halachos (vol. 16, end 9).

[30] Tosafos (Chullin 105a s.v. l'eudasa), Ravyah (1108, cited by the Rosh and Haghos Ashiri to Chullin Ch. 8, 5), Rema (Yoreh Deah 89, 1).

[31] Rabbeinu Tam's opinion is found in Tosafos (Chullin 104b s.v. oif).

[32] Kaf Hachaim (Falaj'i; Ch. 24, 25 - 26). This was also known to be the Arizal's custom (Taamei HaMitzvos of Rav Chaim Vital, Shaar HaMitzvos, Parshas Mishpatim). See also Shulchan HaTahor (173, 2), Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Shelach 15), Shu"t Torah L'Shma (212) and Shu"t Shraga HaMeir (vol. 7, end 105). Some say (see Piskei Teshuvos end 494) that based on his writings on Parshas Mishpatim (s.v. lo sevashel), the Noam Elimelech must have also kept this stringency. However, it is known that there were several Gedolim who held this to mean to wait an actual 24 hours from eating meat before allowing milk products, including the Shla"h (cited by his chaver Rav Yosef Yuspa Haan in his Yosef Ometz, 137; interestingly, he writes that he personally could not keep it and instead waited a mere 12 hours!) and the Reishis Chochma (in his sefer Totzaos Chaim, Shaar 2, Hanhaga 45, pg. 32). Thanks are due to Rabbi Eliezer Brodt, author of Bein Kesseh L'Assor and Lekutei Eliezer for pointing out these sources.

[33] See Daas Kedoshim (Yoreh Deah 89, 2), VaYaas Avraham (of Tchechnov; pg. 333, 51 & Ateres Zekainim ad loc. 155), Piskei Teshuva (vol. 3, 285), Piskei Halachos of HaGri"sh Elyashiv shlit"a (Yoreh Deah, Basar Bechalav pg. 53, 6; see also Shu"t Yissa Yosef - Orach Chaim vol. 2, 119, 6 and Ashrei Halsh - Orach Chaim vol. 3 pg. 442, 15, who claim that Rav Elyashiv zt"l only meant to be lenient after chicken and not actual meat).

[34] The story about the Chasam Sofer is cited in Zichron L'Moshe (pg. 79), Shu"t Divrei Yisrael (vol. 2, pg. 28, footnote) and in Shu"t Siach Yitzchak (399).

[35] Including Shu"t Siach Yitzchak (ibid.), Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanagos (vol. 1, 431), Kovetz M'Beis Levi (on Yoreh Deah pg. 34, 5; citing the opinion of Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner), Shu"t Beis Avi (vol. 3, Yoreh Deah beg. 108), Shu"t Mishna Halachos (vol. 7, 70), Shu"t Shulchan HaLevi (vol. 1, 22, 10, 1), sefer Doleh U'Mashkeh (pg. 257 - 258 and footnote 15; citing the opinion of Rav Chaim Kanievsky, as well as his father, the Steipler Gaon). This leniency is also conspicuously absent from the vast majority of earlier authorities.

[36] Tosafos (Menachos 20b s.v. v'nifsal).

[37] Avos (Ch. 4, Mishna 1).

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

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L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda, and l'zchus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam and her children for a yeshua teikef u'miyad!

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לע"נ

שרה משה בת יעקב אליעזר ע"ה