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ON PARSHAS BESHALACH - 5756

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**From:** "Seth Ness <ness@aecon.yu.edu">  
**To:** CSHULMAN, " Yeshiva University s weekly devar  
**Date:** 2/2/96 2:05am  
**Subject:** enayim l'torah - beshalach

Beshalach

Enayim L'Torah - Parshat B'shalach Publication of Student Organization of Yeshiva University

On Emunah  
by Rav Aharon Kahn

We would expect that the scientist of today would be the greatest Ma'amin. After all, who knows better than the astronomer the profundity of the cosmos? Yet he is not a Ma'amin. Who can peer into the very edge of being, intuit the infinitesimal, claim the microcosmic, if not the nuclear physicist. But he too is not a Ma'amin.

Who, if not the scientist on the threshold of discovery, about to learn what no other human knows, can better sense what the hand of Hashem has wrought. Why, then, are there so few scientists intoxicated with Hashem? what happened to modern man that, although he can appreciate Hashem's world as never before, he does not know Hashem?

All man needs, the Ramba'm teaches, is to contemplate the creation, to gaze upon the Divine Handiwork, and he is seized with a profound love. He sings panegyrics to the Creator and craves to know

Him. If so, we must ask, what has happened to modern man? What happened to modern Homo Sapiens, apparently capable of sensing the infinite and the infinitesimal and yet incapable of sensing Hashem? Where are the odes of joy, what happened to the paeans to Hashem? Why has modern man forgotten even how to pray?

The answer is that modern man is thoroughly intoxicated with himself. Look at the concrete towers, the steel pyramids, the mighty bridges and tunnels, and despair! As the Torah warns the generation about to enter Eretz Yisrael: "Lest you eat and be sated, build houses and dwell therein, grow in gold and silver, and declare: 'My strength, the force of my own hand, has wrought for me all this might.'" The "Kochi V'Otzem Yadi" of today's scientist does not let him peer beyond the telescope to discover Hashem. The scientist is too intoxicated with his capacity to launch a telescope beyond earth's atmosphere and then correct with amazing prowess the lenses' defects. In this telescope's mirror he can see nothing but himself.

The Chofetz Chaim marveled at the innovation of the telegraph and the telephone. He sensed that man would better comprehend the dictum in Pirkei Avot: "Know what is above you -- an eye that sees, an ear that hears." Today we have sophisticated computers which allow us to do what was unimaginable yesterday. Should we not be sensitized by the computer's speed and capacity to be more aware than ever of the "Kol Ma'asecha BaSefer Nichtavim". Yet we are more remote than ever.

Today's agenda, burning and urgent, in every day school and every cheder, in every yeshiva and every Bais Yaakov, is the Ribono Shel Olam. We must understand that today our mandate is to return Hashem to His world. Whether in our B'rachot or in our Chumash lessons or in our science projects, we must place Hashem back into equation.

A Talmid became a Melamed in a modern day school. "Any words of advice?" he asked, as he informed me of his recent appointment. I told him, "teach them Chumash and Na"Ch and Halacha, but don't forget to teach them Hashem."

The Atah must be returned to the Baruch Atah . . . We must regain the sense of our presence before Hashem. We know, most of the time, that in shul we are Lifnei Hashem. In a very real sense, however, the entire world is Lifnei Hashem. That is the sense we should have after reciting the hundred daily B'rachot. Whatever we do, wherever we are, morning to night we recite Baruch Atah.

Eino Domeh Mi SheShoneh Pirko Meah Pe'amim. We practice saying Atah Hashem a hundred times a day! A hundred times a day we declare to Hashem in the personal, familiar "You" that we are in the middle of a cosmic rendezvous with Him. This is the "You" of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, who used to sing a "Dudele" to Hashem. Mizrach? Du! Maarav? Du! And it was Du, the familiar "you" in Yiddish; not "Ir" which is the formal, official "you" in Yiddish. East, West? You Hashem, only You!

The Ramba'n at the end of his commentary on Parshat Bo makes a powerful remark: "A person has no part in Torat Moshe if he fails to perceive the miracle of the everyday event, if he cannot see Hashem's command in all that befalls him." As once again we read the Shirah, let us repeat VaYaminu BaHashem with the conviction of a witness who sees and hears and feels Hashem everywhere.

The Golden Mean  
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell

Lezecher U'LeIlui Nishmat Harav Moshe Aryeh Ben Ya'acov Lehon ZaTZa'L SheHalach Le'Oloamo BeYud-Gimmel Sh'vat 5751.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 56b) cites the pasuk in Shemot (15:25)

and explains that at Marah, before the Jews received the Torah at Har Sinai, Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael certain mitzvot. Among these mitzvot were Shabat, Kibud Av Va'Eim, and Dinim. What do these three mitzvot have in common, and why would Hashem command them to the Jews at this time?

All three of these mitzvot are connected to Hashra'at HaShchinah - the revelation of G-d's presence upon us. The Siftei Chayyim (Moadim III:421) points out that both Shabbat and the Mishkan are vehicles for Hashra'at HaShchinah. The Talmud (Kiddushin 30b) states that there is Hashra'at HaShchinah in a place of Kibud Av Va'Eim; the MaHaRSh"A (Kiddushin 31b) explains that this is the reason for standing in the presence of a parent. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 7a) states that a judge who adjudicates properly causes Hashra'at Hashchinah.

All three mitzvot are also associated with the concept of Yishuv Shel Olam - the up-building of the world. The Tur (Choshen Mishpat 1) explains that a judge is considered a partner with G-d in the world's creation because he implements Hashem's will that the world be home to a civilized society. The Aruch HaShulchan (Even Haezer 1:1) explains that parents also fulfill the Divine will that the world be inhabited; they fulfill the command to engage in Yishuv Shel Olam. In a contrasting manifestation of this theme, Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch explains that the prohibition of creative work on Shabbat is a prohibition of the skillful, intelligent exhibition of our mastery of the world (Dayyan Grunfeld, The Sabbath, p.29).

Perhaps G-d's legislation of these mitzvot at Marah was meant as a preparation for the subsequent giving of the Torah. From Shabbat and Dinim, we see that the Divine presence can be made manifest by two totally opposite behaviors: involvement in settling the world and disengagement from doing so. In light of the fact that two total opposites are mandatory, we see that it is untenable to take any one idea and render it an absolute behavioral imperative. Indeed, how could the will of the Infinite One be fulfilled by constant adherence to one and only one man-made, finite idea? Therefore, we need instruction from G-d Himself on how to relate to Him and reveal His presence in His world. This is an appropriate psychological preparation for receiving the Torah.

Perhaps, from the details of Hilchot Kibud Av Va'Eim, we see to what extent we must avoid rendering any one idea as an absolute. Even filial piety, a most basic and understandable form of commitment, does not mandate unconditional compliance. It, too, may run counter to Hashem's will, and in those cases must be sacrificed. (See Vayikra 19:3, Bava Metzia 32a, Kiddushin 32a, and Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:12,15).

(My thanks to Rabbi Yaakov Genack, who once authored an Enayim L'Torah article which connected the prohibition of creative work on Shabbat to the Rav's Adam-One category.)

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**From:** "Rav Yissocher Frand <ravfrand@torah.org>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, "ravfrand@torah.org"  
**Date:** 2/1/96 10:46am  
**Subject:** Rabbi Frand on Parshas B'Shalach

Parshas B'Shalach:  
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Strange Pshat + Strange Pshat + Strange Pshat = Beautiful Pshat  
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The pasuk [13:18] tells us, "The L-rd caused the nation to go round about by way of the Sea of Reeds, and the children of Israel went up 'Chamushim' from the land of Egypt".

There are three different approaches used by our Sages to interpret the word 'Chamushim' in this pasuk.

Rash'i cites a Medrash that the word "Chamushim" comes from the word "chamesh" meaning five. The interpretation is that only one-fifth of the total Jewish population emerged from Egypt (the balance were unworthy and died during the plague of Darkness).

The Targum Yonasan ben Uziel offers a fantastic interpretation to the expression 'Chamushim': Each family came out from Egypt with 5 children. How strange! The Jewish People were more efficient in family planning than the American family. The American family has 2.2 children. The Jews in Egypt had exactly 5 children in each family! This is unbelievable. How could it be that everyone had, not 4, not 6, but exactly 5 children?

The third interpretation is found in the Targum Yerushalmi. The Targum Yerushalmi says 'Chamushim' means 'armed with good deeds'. This too is difficult. Our Sages tell us that the Jewish People were devoid of good deeds before they left Egypt. G-d had to give them the two mitzvos of Pessach and Milah so that by virtue of having fulfilled these two mitzvos, they would have the merit to go out from Egypt. How could it be that just a few days prior to going out they were totally devoid of mitzvos, and now they went out -- according to the Targum Yerushalmi 'armed with good deeds'? Where did they suddenly accumulate all these good deeds?

The sefer Be'er Yosef by Rav Yosef Salant suggests the following interpretation of these three difficult medrashim: Rav Yosef Salant ingeniously says, that these three medrashim dovetail and complement each other -- and what emerges is a unified picture of what actually happened.

Eighty percent of the Jews died in Egypt. Now, perhaps the parents were wicked and G-d wanted them to die, but why should their children die? It is inconceivable that G-d would wipe out the children because they had wicked parents.

What happened, suggests Rav Salant, is that the children became orphans. What do Jews do when there are orphans in need of homes? Jews take the orphans into their houses. As such, each remaining family was responsible for their own plus 4 other families of children. This is what Targum Yonasan means when he says everyone went out with five children. Chamushim doesn't mean five children literally. It means five families of children -- their own, plus the four-fifths whose parents died, for whom everyone else took

responsibility.

With this, we can now understand the Targum Yerushalmi -- the good deeds. It is one thing to adopt an orphan into one's own house. But when one is about to embark on a journey and he does not know what will be, where he is going to get food for himself, his wife and his children; and yet he takes these 20 little orphans with him on an unknown and uncharted path -- that is an entirely different matter. The Jewish People did just that. And that is why they were considered 'armed with good deeds'.

With this in mind, we see that the 3 Medrashim on Chamushim: that 4/5 died, that they went out with 5 children, and that they were 'armed' with good deeds are all part of the same idea.

I just want to add, that we see from this explanation of the Targum Yerushalmi that taking in an orphan can transform a person who is devoid of mitzvos into a person who is armed with good deeds. I think it is worthwhile to point out that we owe a great deal of respect and gratitude to those people in our community who have taken in (Iranian) families and children into their homes.

May they be strengthened and blessed.

#### Unhappy with Manna? Never Expect Happiness from Anything

In the end of the parsha, we find the incident with the Manna. The Jewish people complained they had nothing to eat and G-d gave them the Manna. In past years, we have spoken about some of the practical implications of what the Manna means. It is a lesson in Faith in G-d; it is a lesson in Sabbath observance; it is a lesson in wealth; etc.

Recently I heard a discussion on tape from Rav Pam, shlit'a, where he pointed out a very simple idea, but I think it is worth repeating. Rav Pam was giving a talk about Shidduchim to the boys in the Yeshiva.

Rav Pam described how before marriage a young man tries to get the "perfect shidduch" -- a girl that has "all the maylos". The amount of effort that is expended and the calculations that are made to get the perfect mate is phenomenal. The person gets married and everyone wishes him all the best and all kinds of blessings. Sometimes we find that after a person has been married for a while, that which had seemed just perfect, now leaves him dissatisfied.

Rav Pam said, happiness in marriage -- or in anything in life -- has nothing to do with "things", but it has everything to do with perception. There are two types of people in this world -- the people who will always be happy and the people who will never be happy.

From the parsha of the manna, we clearly see that happiness has nothing to do with having things. What could be better than the manna? From a spiritual perspective, Chaza'l tell us it was the food of angels; it was the concretization of the aura of Divine Presence (Ziv haShechina). From a physical perspective,... imagine -- sitting down to a meal and wishing what you want and that is what it tastes like! Could there be anything better in the world than Manna? And .... there's no waste! We all know the problems that stem from the digestive system. With the Manna, there were no digestive problems.

But what did the Jewish People say? "...we are getting disgusted from this wasteless food" [Bamidbar 21:5]. Why don't we like it? Because there is no waste! We can't stand this manna! Why? Because we don't have to go to the bathroom!

Rav Pam says "If one doesn't like manna, he'll never like anything!" Manna is the proof that happiness has nothing to do with having things or having items. Happiness is dependent on a person's perspective on life. One can be terribly happy with very little and terribly miserable with very much.

Rav Pam, switching from Yiddish to English, quoted a quip he once heard: "Everyone looks for the City of Happiness, but they fail to realize that the City of Happiness is in the State of Mind". That is the lesson of the Manna -- you either learn to look at life positively (be a sameach b'chelko) or you'll never ever be happy.

#### The "Pastor's Problem" is also the "Rabbi's Problem"

I read an article in the New York Times Magazine entitled "The Pastor's Problem." A man has a position in a small New England town called Milford. He is a pastor in a Protestant Church. He writes that as a young boy he was enamored with religion, decided to become a pastor and took a vow of poverty. He lived a very simple life and was very happy... until he had children. Because then he realized that his personal "voluntary" vow of poverty became an "involuntary" vow of poverty on his family.

This is a serious problem. Instead of the article being entitled "The Pastor's Problem," it could be entitled the "Rabbi's Problem" or the "Mechanech's Problem" or the "Rebbe's Problem". The pastor writes that when he was a child, his parents provided so many opportunities for him -- travel, a car at 16, education at private colleges, ... "opportunities I will not be able to make readily available to my children."

In addition, he has a rich congregation. The people in Milford are all wealthy. Everyone goes on vacations and has fancy cars and nebach the pastor -- what will be with him and his children? He writes, and this is very true, "ironically my choice of the ministry may preclude my children making such a choice for themselves -- because they will feel its sacrifices and may not enjoy its rewards."

"The best way", he says, "to get your children to not become pastors is to become a pastor yourself." And so it could be said, that the best way to make sure that you children will not become mechanchim and rebbeim is to be one yourself.

"What should I do?", he writes. His conclusion is a simple and true conclusion. It is basically a teaching of Chaza'l. He says, "I can never give my children all the things there are to make them happy; because things can never make anyone happy. What I have to give my children is an outlook on life. If I can do that, I will be a good provider, after all, because I will have provided them with the most important thing in life -- not cars, not travel -- but the outlook that true wealth comes from happiness with ones lot.

#### Personalities & Sources:

Rav Yosef Salant -- prominent Rav in Yerushalayim during early 20th century; author of Be'er Yosef.  
Rash'i -- R. Shlomo ben Yitzchaki (1040-1105); "Father of all commentaries".

Targum Yonasan (ben Uziel) -- Aramaic paraphrase of Chumash attributed by some to Yonasan ben Uziel the disciple of the Tanna Hillel (circa 50 c.e.). Rav Hai Gaon writes that it is of unknown origin.

Targum Yerushalmi -- Ancient Aramaic translation of the Torah,  
usually included alongside the Targum Yonasan and probably written around  
the same time or somewhat earlier.

Rav Avrohom Pam -- Current Rosh Yeshiva, Mesivta Torah V'Daath

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org

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**From:** ""Ohr@jer1.co.il" <ohr@jer1.co.il>  
**To:** CSHULMAN, " " Highlights of the Torah weekly  
port...  
**Date:** 1/30/96 10:19pm  
**Subject:** Torah Weekly - Beshalach  
Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion  
with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiro Parshas Beshalach  
For the week ending 13 Shevat 5756 2 & 3 February 1996

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## Summary

Pharaoh finally sends the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. Hashem leads the Jewish People towards Eretz Yisrael with pillars of clouds and fire on a circuitous route which avoids the Plishtim (Philistines). Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The Bnei Yisrael are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but Hashem protects them. Moshe raises his staff, and Hashem splits the sea, enabling the Bnei Yisrael to cross safely. Pharaoh, his heart hardened by Hashem, commands his army to pursue the Bnei Yisrael, whereupon the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in song thanking Hashem. After traveling for three days only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people start to complain. Moshe miraculously produces potable water for them, and in Marah they receive certain mitzvot. The people complain to Moshe and Aaron that they had better food in Egypt. Hashem sends quails so they can have meat and provides the 'Manna' for them. It is a miraculous bread that falls from the heavens every day except on Shabbos. However, on Friday a double portion descends to supply the Sabbath needs. Nobody is able to obtain more than his daily portion but Manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbos. Some of the Manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations. After the Jews complain again about the lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Amalek then attacks the Jews. Joshua leads the battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

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## Commentaries

### Imagine

"And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe His servant..." (14:31)  
To conceive and to imagine. We know that we cannot picture the infinite. We understand that our brain, a finite machine, can not imagine infinity. But if we cannot imagine the infinite, maybe we could, at least, conceive of it. Maybe we could probe the borders of the finite with the power of conceptualization, transcending the limit of synapses and neurons, blood and tissue that lie within our heads...

By the time they left Egypt, the Bnei Yisrael had experienced the most earth-shaking miracles in the history of the world. They had witnessed the entire natural order turned on its head. Water becoming blood. Plagues of frogs, lice, dangerous animals, an epidemic, boils, hail, locusts. Darkness engulfing their enemies. And finally the death of all of Egypt's first-born. Could it be that only now, with the splitting of the sea and the total destruction of the Egyptian army - only now - "they had faith in Hashem"? Didn't they have faith in Hashem until now? Obviously, the experience at the parting of the sea elevated Yisrael to some new level of faith in Hashem. What was this new dimension of faith that they reached after crossing the sea? When Yisrael saw the power of Hashem revealed in Egypt, they thought they had seen the extent of Hashem's dominion. They thought that even if they could not imagine the infinite power of the Creator, then, at least, they could conceive of it. However, when they saw the even greater miracles of the sea, they realized that not only was Hashem's power far greater than they had previously conceived, but even what they were witnessing now was not the total extent of Hashem's dominion. It was this realization which led to a new level of faith in Hashem, a faith unlimited by what they could imagine, or even what they could conceive...  
(Based on the Sfas Emes)

### Just One Heart

"And behold Egypt was journeying after them..." (14:10)  
Rashi says that the Egyptians were united 'with one heart like one man' - their desire to overtake and subdue Israel. Interestingly, a phrase almost identical to this - 'like one man with one heart' - also describes the Jewish People as they are about to receive the Torah at Sinai. An almost identical expression. But with just two small words reversed... The Jewish People are in essence a unity - like one man - because they are all offshoots of the same spiritual root. When they are divided, their schisms are superficial, and what they lack is only unity of purpose - one heart. But fundamentally they are an indivisible unit. The nations of the world, on the other hand, are essentially separate, and all that can bind them is pragmatism - one heart - then, temporarily, they become like one man. However, their unity is based only on expediency, and it dissolves soon as the common purpose is no longer, whereas the Jewish People are in essence 'one man', and when they are also of 'one heart', then the world stops and Heaven meets earth...  
(Rendered from the Ba'al Avnei Ezer from Socatchov zt"l in Mayana shel Torah)

### Are You Sitting Comfortably?

"And the hands of Moshe were heavy and they took a rock and placed it under him and he sat on it." (17:12)  
When Rav Simcha Zissel walked along the main road of Kelm, he would say "How can one walk along this road in peace?" His thoughts were of the tremendous suffering of the prisoners who had been forced to build the road. It was impossible for him to walk there without feeling some of the pain mixed into the asphalt on which he trod. For most of us, empathizing with others is one of the most difficult parts of serving Hashem. We can daven three times a day, and we can be careful what we put into our mouths, our eyes and ears, but when we wish someone "mazel tov," do we really feel great joy? When we hear about a tragedy, are we really distraught? Or do we just go through the motions? When Yisrael had crossed the Red Sea, they were set upon by Amalek and became embroiled in a bitter struggle. During the battle, when Moshe raised his hands, Israel prevailed, and when he lowered his hands, the enemy grew in strength. When his hands grew heavy, a stone was placed

under him so that he could sit down. When Moshe sat, however, he did no sit on a cushion, but on a stone - something uncomfortable, something that would allow him to experience physically the suffering of the Jewish

People. No one loved the Jewish People more than Moshe Rabbeinu, and yet Moshe himself didn't rely on his feelings alone to create empathy. How much more should we, pampered and anesthetized as we are by physical comfort, do something concrete to experience the joy and sadness of our friends!

(Based on Rashi, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz in Growth through Torah -

Rabbi  
Zelig Pliskin)

Haftorah: Shoftim 4:4-5:31

#### Special Delivery

This week's Shabbos has a special name - Shabbos Shira - for on this Shabbos we commemorate the song that the Jewish People sang after their deliverance from Egypt. Just as the Parsha this week contains a song of praise to Hashem, so too the Haftorah contains a song - the song that the prophetess Devora sang after the Jewish People threw off the Canaanite yoke.

It was the tribe of Naftali that produced Devora, an extraordinary woman of valor, whose heart burned with fiery devotion to Torah like a torch. Her husband, Barak, was not learned in Torah, but Devora contrived a way to elevate him spiritually.

She decided that she would supply wicks for the Menorah in the Mishkan, her husband agreed to deliver them for her. Devora lovingly made thick wicks of the finest quality, symbolizing her mission to illuminate the Jewish People with the light of Torah. She requested of her husband Bar that he alone should deliver the wicks, and consequently, he became a regular visitor to the Mishkan at Shilo. As Devora had hoped and planned in Shilo he imbibed the atmosphere of learning and intense devotion to the service of Hashem, with the result that he studied the Torah with such diligence that he grew and grew in spiritual stature. This was all thanks to his wife - "The wise amongst the women (who) builds up her household." (Mishlei 14:1)

(Adapted from "The Midrash Says")

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Sing, My Soul!

Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Yom Shabbos Kodesh Hu - "The Shabbos Day is Holy..."  
"Give praise and song to the G-d Who created the Sabbath."

Singing zemiros at the Sabbath meals has always been the traditional Jewish

way of combining praise and song as an expression of our appreciation of the Sabbath, which Hashem created for the entire world but singled us out as the recipients of the special gift of Sabbath observance and elevation. The striking contrast between a Jew's behavior at his festive meal and that of less disciplined nations is pointed out in the description of King Achashveirosh's banquet which Megilas Esther records took place on "the seventh day when the king's heart was happy with wine." The Talmud (Megillah 12b) points out that this feast was on the Sabbath when "Jews eat and drink and begin to say words of Torah and sing songs of praise" in contrast to the Persians and Medes who immediately began to discuss lewd matters. When the Jew's body is filled with Sabbath food his soul begins to sing.

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair  
General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer

**From:** "Mordechai Kamenetzky <ateres@ppmail.nyser.net>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, "drasha@torah.org"  
**Date:** 1/30/96 11:58pm  
**Subject:** Drasha B'shalach -- Bones and Bullion

#### PARSHAS B'SHALACH BONES AND BULLION 2/2/96

516-328-2490 Fax 516-328-2553 Volume 2 Issue 16

The beginning of this week's portion describes the Jews' exodus from Egypt.

They gathered their possessions and took gold and silver from the Egyptians. With sacks of dough on their backs, they prepared for a trek into the unknown desert. One person, however, was preoccupied with other treasures.

Exodus 13:19: "Moshe took Yoseph's bones with him, for Yoseph, had made the children of Israel swear, saying, "Hashem will remember you, and you shall

bring up my bones from here with you."

The Midrash explains a verse in Proverbs 10:8: "A man with a wise heart shall choose Mitzvos." "This verse," says the Midrash, "refers to Moshe during the Exodus. While the entire nation was busy collecting gold and silver from their former masters, Moshe was busy looking for the remains of Yoseph, the pioneering sojourner who laid the groundwork for Jewish survival in exile."

An obvious question arises. Why is Moshe lauded as a man searching for Mitzvos and praised as one who has special wisdom? Didn't the Jewish people

gather gold and silver at the request of Hashem? The Torah openly commands

the people in Exodus 11:2 "that each man ask his fellow (Egyptian) man and each woman ask her fellow (Egyptian) woman for gold and silver utensils."

If that is the case -- both Moshe and the Jews were all doing Mitzvos.

Why

then, is Moshe considered "wise of heart?"

During the early 1920s, Velvel Epstein drove a truck on the Lower East Side

for the Mittleman Seltzer Company. He delivered promptly and was courteous

to his customers. But one day a most terrible event occurred. A horse-drawn wagon veered in front of his truck and he swerved sharply to avoid it. Dozens of cases came barreling out of the truck and went crashing to the cobblestones. Glass and bubbles were everywhere, and Epstein knew that his career at Mittleman's Seltzer Company was over.

All of a sudden from the small throng of spectators a heavy-set man appeared with his fedora outstretched in his hand. He turned to all the onlookers. "Why are you all just standing there? Let's help this poor man out!" With that he thrust a ten dollar bill into the hat and passed it around. He cajoled and persuaded the gathered to help the driver in his plight. After a few minutes the man had gathered a sizable collection and approached the hapless driver.

"Now, young man. You give this money to your boss, and I'm sure he will be happy with the compensation!" With that the distinguished gentleman disappeared from the crowd. The onlookers were amazed. "What a mensch,"

cried one woman. "A real hero," shouted another. "Such a mitzvah!" declared a third.

Epstein rolled his eyes heavenward. "Mitzvah, Shmitzva," he sighed, "that was Mr. Mittleman!"

There are many, many Mitzvoths to do. Some are very enjoyable and easily performed. Some even mete out to us personal gain and honor. Others, however, require self-sacrifice and hard work. The mitzvah of retrieving gold and silver was quite honorable. However, there may have been much self-motivation involved. We do not know where the actual wealth finally ended up. It may have been contributed to the Mishkan (Tabernacle), or it could have served as a portion of the Golden Calf. One thing we do know. The

bones of Yosef that were taken by Moshe served as an inspiration to a generation that faced hardship, questions, and uncertainty. Even today, those bones, interred in Shechem (Nablus), still do. That is, thanks to Moshe, the man of wise heart who had a vision of the future. Good Shabbos

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Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov,  
the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore.

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**From:** ""Yeshivat Har Etzion" <yhe@jer1.co.il>  
**To:** CSHULMAN, "Sichot of the Roshei Yes...  
**Date:** 2/1/96 10:42am  
**Subject:** SICHOT - PARASHAT BESHALACH

#### PARASHAT BESHALACH SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

"Remain Every Man in his Place;  
Let No Man Go Out of his Place on the Seventh Day"  
Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig

Parashat Beshalach contains only one mitzva: that of 'techumin' (boundaries beyond which one may not walk on Shabbat), based upon the pasuk: "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (16:29).

What is the significance of this mitzva? It seems to run counter to common sense. During the entire week, a person's job confines him to a certain place. One would think that when he is given one day of rest and relaxation, when he is free from all other obligations, he may leave his house and go somewhere else, rather than remaining confined to one place, imprisoned by limitations and boundaries. How does the imposition of boundaries fit in with what this day is supposed to represent?

Indeed, the Torah teaches us that a person's entire life is bounded by limitations of both time and place. Time is dynamic and symbolizes movement, while place is static and

symbolizes stability. These two dimensions are active and influential throughout a person's life.

On the one hand, a person is carried upon the current of time and action; he is swept along by progress, expansion and diversification. On the other hand, he seeks to "find his place" - not in the sense of inactivity, of remaining passive, but rather in the sense of action and creativity with the purpose of "finding his place" - establishment and permanence.

A Jew has an obligation to find his own "place", somewhere to plant his roots and build his own edifice - a building with strong foundations. Only then can he expand and spread out. If he spends his whole life wandering, he will eventually discover that he is a displaced entity which, having rambled through every place, actually has no place at all.

Similarly, the midrash in Parashat Vayechi teaches (Bereishit Rabba 86:2):

"It is written, 'For I am a stranger with You and a sojourner' (Tehillim 39), and 'For we are strangers before You and sojourners... our days on the earth are as a shadow' (Divrei Ha-yamim I, 29) - If only we were at least like the shadow of a wall or of a tree; but rather we are like the shadow of a bird in flight, as it is written, 'like a passing shadow.'"

A person may often feel as though he is merely a "passing shadow". He prays that at least he should be like the shadow of a wall or of a tree, which are somewhat permanent, and not like the shadow of a bird in flight, which disappears and moves on.

In our modern world, since the Industrial Revolution, man has lost his connection with the earth. He is no longer confined to his patch of ground, and he travels away from his home to his place of work. Most people grow up in large cities - places which by their nature do not encourage the formation of strong ties to them.

Specifically in our times, a person has to intensify his efforts to "find his place." And this "place," as we have learned, is not necessarily his land or his home. Rather, "his place," from a spiritual point of view, refers to a "place" in which he can establish himself, a place which he can reinforce and strengthen himself, a place where he can plant his roots and grow and flourish, expand and spread out.

It often happens that a person who has not yet "found his place" is eager to be carried along by the current around him. He believes that thereby he will find a realm of activity and fertile ground ready and waiting for him. Of course, this is not so. His roaming guarantees him nothing, and a person has to establish his own place in life - not by refraining from action, but rather by prolific action and continuous building.

The fulfillment of this obligation, i.e. that of a person "finding his place," takes place on Shabbat. A Jew has to build his "place" specifically at the time when the whole world abounds with and is influenced by the holiness of Shabbat. He must desist from his roaming and find the solid center within. This is the obligation of Shabbat: "Remain every man in his place" - each individual should remain in his own place and not move from it until he is spiritually established and standing on firm ground. This explains the words of Chazal, "A person purchases for himself a resting place;" to "rest in one's place" means to acquire that place,

an acquisition of continuous creativity and construction, towards the ideal of an eternal acquisition, a "kinyan adei ad."

(Originally delivered on Shabbat Parashat Beshalach 5733.  
Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

**From:** "Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, DHUEBNER, NDIAMENT, " "  
Chumash shiur...  
**Date:** 2/1/96 10:41am  
**Subject:** PARSHAT B'SHALACH

Bnei Yisrael gloriously depart Egypt, expecting a short journey to a Land flowing with milk and honey (see 3:17). To their surprise, they encounter instead situations of frightening war, terrible hunger, and life-threatening thirst. Are Bnei Yisrael expected not to complain; to passively accept this fate, to wait patiently for God's salvation? Is God simply 'testing' their patience?

To answer these questions, this week's shiur discusses the significance of the events that transpire from the time of the Exodus until Bnei Yisrael arrive at Har Sinai.

#### BACKGROUND / REVIEW

According to God's prophecy to Moshe Rabeinu at the burning bush (3:8,17), Bnei Yisrael should have travelled directly from Egypt to Eretz Canaan, with a stop over at Har Chorev [= Har Sinai] to offer korbanot of thanksgiving to God. Reality, however, unfolds quite differently.

Instead of travelling directly into the desert, God re-routes their journey towards Yam Suf (the Red Sea). After crossing the Red Sea, Bnei Yisrael do travel the 'three day journey' into the desert, however, they arrive at Mara - NOT at Har Sinai. Later, during their five week journey from Mara to Har Sinai, they run out of food at Midbar Sin, they run out of water at Rfidim, and they engage in battle with Amalek.

Why does the redemption not proceed as originally planned? Are the events that transpire incidental, or are they part of some Divine plan?

To appreciate the significance of these events, we must keep in mind the ultimate goal of Yetziyat Mitzraim, i.e. the fulfillment of God's covenant with the Avot. Recall the intention of that covenant - Bnei Yisrael are to inherit the Promised Land and become God's model Nation, leading all mankind toward a moral, theocentric existence. The achievement of this goal requires not only that God redeem His people from Egypt, but also that Bnei Yisrael become an active covenantal partner. This process, which begins with Yetziyat Mitzraim, entails five critical stages:

- 1) Freedom from slavery in Egypt
- 2) Accepting God, i.e. the willingness to obey Him.
- 3) Receiving His Laws (Matan Torah)
- 4) Conquering the Promised Land
- 5) Establishing a Nation in that land, based on God's Laws.

According to the original plan, Bnei Yisrael should have accepted God (stage 2) BEFORE the Exodus (stage 1). Had they done so, they could have proceeded directly from Egypt to Har Chorev to receive the Torah (stage 3). However, as we explained in our last two shiurim, Bnei Yisrael do not answer God's original call

to perform "teshuva" prior to their redemption (see Shmot 6:6-9 & Ezekiel 20:5-9). Although offering the "korban Pesach" makes them worthy enough to survive "makkat bchorot" (the tenth Plague), they are far from ready for Matan Torah. That next stage can not ensue before the people refine their relationship with God.

Owing to this unfortunate circumstance, God finds it necessary to 'change His plan'.

#### THE NEW PLAN

The following table lists the key events that take place during this 'round about' journey to Har Sinai:

LOCATION	EVENT
1) Yam Suf (14:11)	Am Yisrael is ATTACKED by the Mitzrim;
2) Mara (15:24)	the WATER is bitter;
3) Midbar Sin (15:2)	there is no FOOD to eat;
4) Rfidim (17:3)	there is no WATER to drink;
5) Rfidim II (17:8)	Am Yisrael is ATTACKED by Amalek.

[See further Iyun Section for an explanation of the chiastic structure: war-water-food-water-war.]

Despite the distinctive nature of each of these events, they all share a common purpose, i.e. each incident helps prepare Bnei Yisrael for Matan Torah. In other words, God INTENTIONALLY INITIATES these events in order to catalyze Bnei Yisrael's spiritual growth, to 'train' them to become His Nation!

To appreciate the specific purpose of each individual event, we must consider the reason why in the first place Bnei Yisrael did not perform proper "teshuva".

#### BREAKING SLAVE MENTALITY

It is extremely difficult for a slave, even after he has gained his freedom, to act or think like a free man. As we explained in Parshat Va'eyra, Bnei Yisrael do not listen to God's original call because of their 'crushed spirits and hard labor' - "v'LO SHAMU el Moshe, mikotzer RUACH u'mAVODAH KASHA" - (6:9). The strain of their prolonged bondage and the fatigue of their daily routine had deprived them of all spirituality. Most probably, their highest aspirations had been a good meal and a little rest.

It was because of their bondage, that Bnei Yisrael had grown instinctively dependent on their masters - the Egyptians. Therefore, before they can accept His laws at Matan Torah, it is necessary to transform their instinctive physical dependence on Egypt to a cognitive spiritual dependence on God. Bnei Yisrael must rebuild their national character. We all know how difficult it is for a person to change his character, how much more so for an entire nation to do so.

A change of character can usually take place in one of two ways. On one hand, a traumatic experience will usually facilitate a sudden change. Otherwise, daily routine can slowly change instinctive behavior. [e.g. "k've i'tim la'torah"]

We will see that God employs both approaches in His attempt to bring about a serious improvement in the national character of Am Yisrael.

#### 1) KRIYAT YAM SUF - SPLITTING OLD TIES

Kriyat Yam Suf (the splitting of the Red Sea) can be understood as a traumatic experience that helps Bnei Yisrael break their instinctive dependence on Mitzraim.

At Kriyat Yam Suf, God inflicts His final punishment upon Pharaoh and his army (14:4). Even though this outcome could have

been achieved during "makkat bchorot", it appears that God wanted Bnei Yisrael to witness this final punishment while they themselves are in a situation of peril.

Bnei Yisrael's spontaneous complaint when confronted by the Egyptian army echoes this instinctive dependence on Mitzraim:

"... What have you done to us taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing WE TOLD YOU IN EGYPT: Let us be and WE WILL SERVE THE EGYPTIANS, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than die in the desert" (14:11-12)

This complaint reflects a complacency about their servitude to the Egyptians, the same attitude which caused them not to repent. Sure, they do not object to a little freedom, but not at the price of enduring the perils of traveling through the desert.

[Note: see Ibn Ezra's explanation (14:13) why Bnei Yisrael did not even consider encountering the Egyptians in battle.]

God's response not only calms their fear, but also teaches them that they must break this instinctive dependence:

"Do not fear, stand upright and watch God's salvation... for the manner in which you see Mitzraim today - you will NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN" ["LO TOSIFU li'rotam od ad olam".] (14:13)

Although God's reassurance appears to be a PROMISE, Chazal interpret this statement as a COMMANDMENT! [See Ramban]

God FORBIDS Bnei Yisrael to continue with this attitude of dependence, i.e. they must resist their instinctive reliance on their former masters. Thus, Chazal interpret this pasuk as follows:

"In this manner by which you look at Mitzraim today -DO NOT LOOK AT THEM THIS WAY EVER AGAIN." (14:13)

God is NOT promising His nation that they will never face an Egyptian army again: rather He is COMMANDING them to NEVER again look to Egypt for their salvation.

This interpretation of "Lo tosifu li'rotam" finds support in a parallel pasuk in Sefer Dvarim. In the "Tochacha" (28:1-69), God warns Bnei Yisrael that should they disobey Him, they will be exiled and sold into slavery (see Dvarim 28:62-67 / note "ki lo shamata b'kol Hashem..."). Their predicament will be so bad, the Torah warns, that they will actually HOPE that someone will PURCHASE THEM AS SLAVES. To express this point, the Torah employs the same phrase used at Kriyat Yam Suf:

"And God will return you to Egypt in ships, in the manner that I told you: 'LO TOSIF OD LI'ROTA" - [Do not look at them this way again] and you will offer yourselves to your enemies for sale as slaves and maidservants, but no one will purchase you" (28:68). [See also Dvarim 17:16!]

[The word "ba'derech" - in the manner - should not be understood as a description of the ship route to Egypt (as in the JPS translation), rather as a description of Am Yisrael's predicament when they will be exiled to Egypt in those ships.]

In other words, the last stage of the "tochacha" ironically returns Am Yisrael to the same state they were in when they left Egypt- a state of yearning for total dependence on their human masters, in Egypt!

Based on this understanding of "Lo Tosifu ...", we find the primary purpose of Kriyat Yam Suf: God orchestrates a situation that encourages Bnei Yisrael to break their instinctive dependence on Egypt.

God's plan appears to succeed. Upon seeing the drowning of the Egyptians in the sea, Bnei Yisrael conclude:

"...and Yisrael recognized His great Hand.. and the people FEARED GOD and BELIEVED in God and Moshe His servant." (14:30-31)

Instinctively, Bnei Yisrael respond in a song of praise to God: "Az ya'shir Moshe u'bnei Yisrael..." (15:1)

## 2) MARA - A DESERT SEMINAR

Crossing the Red Sea makes it possible to commence the 'three day journey' into the desert. However, instead of arriving at Har Sinai, Bnei Yisrael travel to Mara, a site where the water is bitter. Having severed their ties with Egypt, the time is now ripe to offer Bnei Yisrael a second chance to accept God's commandments and 'cure' their attitude problem of "V'LO SHAMMU EL MOSHE...":

"An He said - iym SHMOA TISH'MAU l'kol Hashem Elokecha - Should you LISTEN to the voice of God, and do what is proper in His eyes, and listen to commandments, then the affliction that I put on the Egyptians I will not put on you, for I am God your Healer" (15:26)

[See conclusion of shiur on Parshat Va'eyra where these psukim were discussed in further detail.]

Once Bnei Yisrael agree to obey God and follow His laws, the 'bitter' water of Mara becomes drinkable. Obviously, Bnei Yisrael had become thirsty for water. However, by linking the sweetness of the water to Bnei Yisrael's willingness to obey Him and follow His laws, God teaches Bnei Yisrael an important lesson of spiritual dependence.

[The 'message' of the "eytz" which God instructs Moshe to cast into the water obviously relates back to Gan Eden, the motif of an environment that requires obedience to God. The famous "drash" of "ein mayim elah Torah", i.e. when the Torah mentions water it is actually referring to Torah, almost emerges as "pshat"! See also Mishlei 3:18 and its context ("etz chayim hi l'machazakim bah...").]

Although Bnei Yisrael pass the 'test' at Mara, are they ready to proceed to Har Sinai? Not so fast! First, they must prove that they have truly 'turned over a new leaf'.

In the ideal situation at Elylim (15:27), where there is plenty of water and food, no one complains. However, when the going gets tough in Midbar Sin, they quickly revert to their stubborn ways. The short 'seminar' at Mara needed some follow up.

## 3) MIDBAR SIN - BASIC TRAINING

After arriving in Midbar Sin the food supply runs out, setting off another round of complaints (16:2-3). Even though Bnei Yisrael have the right to ask for food, HOW they ask is inexcusable:

"If only we had died by the Hand of God in Egypt, when we had plenty of meat and bread to eat. Now you have brought us out into this desert to die in famine" (16:3)

The tone of their complaint indicates that Bnei Yisrael had remained instinctively dependent on Mitzraim. When hungry, they reminisce about the 'good old days' in Egypt. The traumatic experiences were not sufficient to totally change their character. They require a daily routine that will slowly change their instinctive behavior.

The manna served this very purpose. It provided a daily routine that transformed their physical dependence on Mitzraim to a physical dependence on Hashem. As explained in Sefer Dvarim:

"And He tormented you and starved you, then gave you 'manna' to eat... IN ORDER TO TEACH YOU that man does not live on

bread alone, rather, that man lives by whatever God commands" (Dvarim 8:3)

By allowing Bnei Yisrael to gather only enough food for one day at a time, Bnei Yisrael learn to become dependant solely on God. To emphasize this point, their food falls directly from heaven. In describing this process, The Torah uses a key word - "nisayon" (a test):

"Behold I will rain down bread for you from the heaven, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion - l'maan A'NA'SENU (= "nisayon") - IN ORDER THAT I MAY TEST THEM, to see whether or not they WILL FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS..." (16:4).

The word "nisayon" should not be understood simply as a test to measure the level of man's relationship with God. God already knows the heart of every individual. Rather, a Divine 'test' challenges man to rise to the level required for a relationship with God. For example, at the Akeyda, God 'tests' Avraham (Br. 22:1), not to find out IF he is worthy, rather He tests him IN ORDER TO make him worthy.

Similarly, by the manna. God is not testing Bnei Yisrael to find out IF they obey Him, He is TRAINING them in order that they LEARN TO obey Him.

#### 4) R'FIDIM - PREPARING FOR HAR SINAI

Before actually arriving at Har Sinai, Bnei Yisrael stop at Rfidim, a site WITHOUT water (17:1-3). Why does God lead them to such a location? Does He expect Bnei Yisrael to survive without water?

When Bnei Yisrael cry for water at Rfidim, their complaint is not as before: that they would rather die in Egypt. In light of the fact that they might perish in the desert, Bnei Yisrael question only the purpose of Yetziat Mitzraim, but they do not express any yearning to return (17:3). Finally, at least some progress has been made.

What could be the purpose of this terrible predicament? Moshe himself doesn't know how to deal with this situation. He too cries for God's assistance (17:2,4).

The answer is - God WANTS Bnei Yisrael to complain! He purposely leads them to a location where there is no water.

#### WHY?

God's scheme at Rfidim had tremendous significance. It prepares Am Yisrael for 'Matan Torah'. Instead of providing Bnei Yisrael with water at Rfidim, God instructs Moshe to gather the elders (17:5-6) and go to the rock at Har Chorev (= HAR SINAI / see 3:1,12 & Dvarim 5:2). Upon hitting the rock the water gushes out, thence flowing from Har Chorev until the camp in Rfidim! The next step is obvious - Bnei Yisrael will travel from Rfidim to set up camp at Har Sinai, their NEW SOURCE of water. [For proof that hitting the rock created a gushing river flowing down the mountain - see Dvarim 9:21]

Not only have the heavens replaced the earth as the source of bread (food), Har Sinai has replaced the Nile as the constant source of water. Natural dependence on Mitzraim has now been replaced by natural dependence on God.

Thus, Har Sinai becomes a source of water for Bnei Yisrael before it becomes the source of Torah. In order to be appreciated as the source of spiritual life, it must first be identified as the source of physical life.

Again, the Torah employs the word "nisayon". At Midbar Sin, God tests (=trains) Bnei Yisrael. At Rfidim, Bnei Yisrael test

(=question) God; doubting if truly He is in their midst (17:7).

The events at Rfidim provide Bnei Yisrael with the proper answer. God can and will provide for them, if they are deserving.

#### 5) THE WAR WITH AMALEK - LOOKING UP TO HAR SINAI

While Bnei Yisrael begin to journey from Rfidim to Har Sinai (their new source of water), Amalek attacks the 'slow travellers' left behind at Rfidim. [See 17:8, and compare with Dvarim 25:18 - Note that Amalek attacks while Bnei Yisrael are travelling!] War breaks out, and God commands Moshe to instruct Yehoshua to lead Bnei Yisrael in battle. In contrast to Kriyat Yam Suf, this time Bnei Yisrael themselves do the fighting.

The people must recognize that even though they are actually fighting, it is God who will bring them victory. To this end, God instructs Moshe to climb the hill and raise his staff high heavenward. What hill is Moshe standing on?

Based on the juxtaposition between this narrative and "masa u'mriva", Ibn Ezra explains that Moshe is standing on Har Sinai! Just as Har Sinai has become their source of water, it now becomes a source of military salvation as well. For Yisrael to become victorious, Moshe must raise his hands (17:11) to show and teach the people that they must look to Hashem, to Har Sinai, for their salvation.

[Once again, the Midrash quoted by Rashi (17:11 /see also Rosh Hashana 29:1) emerges almost as "pshat". "v'chi yadav shel moshe osot milchama... elah bzman sh'Yisrael mistaklim klapai maaleh, um'shabdim et libum l'avihem sh'ba'shamayim...." ]

#### FROM PHYSICAL TO SPIRITUAL - FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

During the six week period after the Exodus, Bnei Yisrael encounter several traumatic experiences and changes in daily routine which help transform their instinctive physical dependence on Egypt to their instinctive physical dependence on God. They also become more active in the process of their redemption. Now, they are ready to take on a spiritual challenge: to receive the Torah in order to become God's special Nation.

Thematically, the events of Parshat B'shalach serve as preparation for Parshat Yitro, i.e. the covenant at Har Sinai.

Because Bnei Yisrael had not been prepared for their redemption from Egypt, God had placed them in various situations of peril. This encouraged Bnei Yisrael to raise their spiritual level high enough to enable that process to continue.

Should Am Yisrael today learn a lesson from that history? The sooner the better!

shabbat shalom  
menachem

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#### FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Relate the above shiur to Chazal's understanding of the seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot as preparation for Matan Torah.

B. Read Tehilim perek 78. Note that this perek describes most of the events that take place in Parshat B'shalach. Note also the use of "dor lo hechin libo" in pasuk 8 & 37.

- How does this phrase "dor lo hechin libo" explain why Bnei Yisrael were never successful in achieving the proper level?
- How does this perek enhance our understanding of the Parsha (based on the above shiur)?
- Read pasuk 38 : "v'hu rachum y'chaper avon v'lo yashchit ..."

[sounds familiar]. Based on the above shiur, this perek, and its context, explain the deeper meaning of this pasuk, and how

it applies to daily life.

Why do you think Chazal included it in our daily davening, shacharit and maariv?

C. Chiastic structure (as noted in the shiur)

war - water - food - water - war

(1) As in any chiastic structure (ABCBA), emphasis is placed on the center (C). In this case, the food, indicates that the most important process towards change is daily routine.

Use this to explain why the manna was placed next to the Aron.

(2) War-> War & Sefer Yehoshua

The contrast between the war at the beginning and end is also interesting. Note that at Yam Suf, the victory is miraculous and Am Yisrael is passive. ["God will fight for you, and you shall be silent "(14:14)]. By Amalek, the victory is natural and Bnei Yisrael do the fighting, Moshe's staff serves as a symbol of God's help. The next step is Matan Torah.

In Sefer Yehoshua, we find a striking similarity.

Yericho, is a miraculous victory, Am Yisrael is passive. The Ai, is a natural victory, Am Yisrael do the fighting. Yehoshua uses his staff in this battle as a sign (8:26)

Immediately afterward, Am Yisrael goes to Har Eival to re-enact Matan Torah (8:30-35)!

1. What does tell you about the need for Am Yisrael to be 'active' in nature before receiving the Torah?

2. Why is the symbol of the staff so important. What is the danger of winning of natural victory. Was is the danger of God constantly performing miracles to save Am Yisrael.

D. "Lo tosifu" = mitzvah/ See Yerushalmi Sucah 5:1 [Ramban's shita: "al daat raboteinu - zo mitzvat lo-tasseh l'dorot"].

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The superscriptions for the Psalms, that is the opening phrase that most of them have as an introduction, such as Lamnatzeiach Mizmor LeDavid, Shir HaMa'alot and so on, are interpreted in various ways by our Chachamim.

Two

of them, Mizmor LeDavid, 'A Song of David' and LeDavid Mizmor 'To David a Song', appear to be the same thing. And yet the Rabbis teach us that they

have different implications.

The Midrash explains that when a Psalm begins with the words 'LeDavid Mizmor' this teaches us that the Holy Spirit first rested on King David and then he was inspired to compose a Psalm. But 'Mizmor LeDavid' means that he

began to sing and this caused the Holy Spirit to descend. So we can see that song has a double power. Through it we have the ability to express the feelings that well up within us. Song enables all of us to voice our emotions easiest.

On the other hand, song also has the power to stir up feelings.

Mood-music

is employed to relax us, to arouse our passions, and indeed, to manipulate all kind of feeling.

Sometimes David needed to express the way he was feeling at that time (LeDavid Mizmor), and on other occasions, his singing aroused in him his awareness of G-d (Mizmor LeDavid).

Shul music fulfills exactly these roles. Each celebration has its distinctive melodies and singing the correct ones on the correct occasion draws us closer to the spirit of that day.

The most ancient of Jewish musical forms, are the melodies used for reading

the Holy Scriptures. It is obviously impossible for us to know how Moses chanted them to the Israelites, but we are quite sure that he did not merely read them. Indeed, the Torah calls itself a 'song'.

'And Moses wrote this song on that day and taught it to the Children of Israel.' (Deut. 31:22)

>From the earliest days our Chachamim instituted that the books of the Bible must be read with their proper melody. So important did they deem this to be that we find the statement in Megillah 32a:

R. Shefatya said in the name of R. Yochanan: 'Whoever reads the Torah without pleasantness (which Rashi explains means without the correct melody)....makes it appear that G-d gave him laws that he does not hold as good.'

This concept was extended to the entire Bible for in Sanhedrin 101a we find:

'He who reads a verse of Song of Songs and treats it as a secular air.....brings evil upon the world.'

The rationale behind these statements is that by chanting the Holy Scriptures, rather than drily reading them, the aesthetically pleasing experience will help them become implanted in the hearts and minds of the listeners.

When it came to Nusach Hatephillah, that is the melodies used for Davening, our Chachamim were equally insistent on the traditional ones being used.

The Ashkenasi Rabbis conceived the idea of consecrating special melodies for specific times and the oldest ones that are still in use have become sanctified by age. They are known as scarbove melodies (from the Latin sacra - sacred), but in order to invest them with the ultimate holiness, they were called Misinai melodies, implying that Moses was taught them on Mount Sinai!

>From the 10th-14th centuries, Rabbis often functioned as Chazanim themselves and they wrote poems and hymns, many of which have become

**From:** "Rafael Salasnik <rafi@brijnet.org>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, "daf-hashavua@shamash.nysernet.org"  
**Date:** 2/1/96 10:46am  
**Subject:** daf-hashavua Beshalach 5756/1996

Beshalach-5756

U N I T E D   S Y N A G O G U E   - L O N D O N (O)  
BESHALACH   Vol 8 No 19      3 February 1996   13 Shevat  
5756

Shabbat ends in London at 17:43      SHABBAT SHIRAH  
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This edition is dedicated to the memory of Rev I Livingstone Golders Green  
Synagogue

Some Thoughts on Jewish Music for Shabbat Shirah

by Rev. Geoffrey Shisler, Minister, Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation

integrated into our services. They also composed or adapted melodies and in time, some of these tunes gained popularity whilst others were discarded. Their purpose was to establish melodies which would both reflect and help to create the special atmosphere for each occasion.

Broadly speaking, our traditional melodies can be seen as either modes or tunes. The ancient modes that we still use include the introduction to Tal and Geshem, those used for the repetition of the Amidah, and Shacharit for Shabbat and Yom Tov.

Tunes that we consider to have become Nusach Hatephillah include Adir Hu, for Pesach, Kol Nidrei and Maoz Tsur.

We have a very rich musical tradition and beautiful melodies that have become associated with practically every special occasion in the Jewish year. Clearly there is absolutely no need to bring in melodies that we associate with the secular world and the desire to do so amongst some people who are called upon to lead our services, can only be deplored.

Those of us who go to Shul regularly are inspired by the modes and melodies that we have known from our childhood and we must protest loudly against those who, through their utter ignorance, attempt to foist unacceptable elements on us.

The words we utter are holy and singing them to well-known popular themes, distracts the concentration and leads our minds off at unwelcome tangents.

We must ensure that the traditions that have been handed down from one generation to another are preserved and passed on to our children.

By constantly utilising these Misinai melodies, we can be certain that they can be, for every one of us, Mizmor LeDavid and LeDavid Mizmor.

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Tu Bishvat by Bernard Koschland, Editor, Daf Hashavua

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"The Re are four New Years .... on 1st of Shevat is the New Year for Trees, according to Bet Shammai. Bet Hillel say it is on 15th Shevat" (Mishna Rosh Hashanah 1:1). The month is the period when the main rains in Eretz Israel have passed and the sap begins to rise again in the trees. Our calendar has four Tekufot ('seasons' i.e. 2 solstices and 2 equinoxes); they are already mentioned in the Pseudepigraphic work, the Book of Jubilees (composed in second century BCE; fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls), in which the first day of each of these four periods is connected with Noah and regarded as a celebration. The mid-points of the Tekufot also had celebrations of which three have survived, Second Pesach (Iyar), 15th Ab (a joyous occasion for, amongst other things, boy meets girl, Mishnah Taanit 4:7) and Tu (-15, the letters Tet and Vav) Bishvat, half way between the Tekufot of Tevet and Nisan. The 15th Cheshvan is mentioned in 1 Kings 12:32, where Jeroboam of Israel made it a second Sukkot. The Tosefta (Taanit 1:7) also marks 15th Shevat as a turning point in the sub-division of the year, from winter to cold. In times gone by Tu Bishvat was an important occasion, because it marked the end of the "tax" year as far as tithes from the fruit of trees was concerned. Eventually the day sank into oblivion.

In the Middle Ages it began to emerge again, first as a day when Tachanun is not said, and when fasting is forbidden. In a new garb, it emerged in the 16th century from the kabbalistic circles of Safed; they linked it with the soil of Eretz Israel. The Ari Hakodosh and his circle arranged Tikkumin (midnight liturgies for various occasions); there was a special one for Tu Bishvat, which included the eating of fruit. Hence the Ashkenazi custom of eating fruit, the number varying according to custom.

The Sefer Chemdat Yamim, ascribed to Benjamin Nathan of Gaza, sets out in detail the Tikkun for the occasion. There are similarities to the Seder,

such as drinking four cups of wine, red and white, eating fruit and studying Tenach, Talmud and Zohar. One fruit eaten was the etrog, whose harvest G-d considered on this day. In Salonika they had special celebratory meals, with a kind of cholent, followed by fruit, especially from Eretz Israel, accompanied by songs in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish).

Since the return to Eretz Israel in the last century and the founding of the JNF (in 1901), Tu Bishvat has become a true festival of trees, with the planting of saplings, to form the forests of Israel today and of the future and the forging of a link between the Jew and the soil of Israel.

**From:** "Dovid Green <dmgreen@skyenet.net>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, " Dvar Torah <dvartorah@torah.org>"  
**Date:** 2/2/96 2:51am  
**Subject:** Parshas Beshalach

The Torah relates to us the wonderful and miraculous events that occurred in our forefathers' exit from Egypt; the ten plagues, the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Sea of Reeds, and others. When the Children of Israel saw the Egyptian army laying dead on the shores of the sea, they sang "shirah". The entire song they sang is written for all generations in the Torah (Exodus 15:1). The "shirah", or song begins with the word "az", or "then" ("Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang"). Interestingly enough in Exodus (5:23) when Moshe makes his first appearance before Pharaoh and receives his first refusal he returns to G-d with a complaint. "Why did you send me?" "From when ("az") I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has

only made it worse for this nation" In Moshe's complaint he uses the same word "az". The midrash states that Moshe said "I sinned to G-d (by complaining) with the word "az", so I'll begin the "shirah" with the same word." The question is how does that help?

Rabbi Chaim Soleveitchik in his work "Bais HaLevi" writes an interesting and revealing explanation. Usually when a person thanks G-d for getting him out of a tough situation, he thanks Him for the rescue, and that he now finds himself in a better situation. In this particular person's thank you there will be no thanks for the suffering he found himself in before, needless to say, but just for the rescue. However the nature of the song of thanks which the Children of Israel sang was somewhat different. They sang for the suffering as well. Why? The reason is as follows. When G-d rescued the Children of Israel from the slavery in Egypt His existence and greatness was publicized throughout the civilized world. The suffering in Egypt was purposeful. The Children of Israel merited to be the vehicle through which G-d's name was exalted and sanctified. This was their main happiness, at that time. See for yourself in the verses of the song.

Earlier, when Moshe complained with the word "az", He was complaining about the severity of the enslavement. Now when he sings praise to G-d, he uses the same word to give thanks even for the very same enslavement!

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**From:** "Project Genesis <genesis@j51.com>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, JHURWITZ, " Project Genesis  
LifeLine  
**Date:** 2/2/96 2:54am  
**Subject:** \* PG LifeLine - Beshalach

Please pray for the speedy healing of Messodit bat Rivka, Esther Miriam bat Aliza Geula, and Menachem Azriel Zelig ben Yaffa Miriam

"It happened that when Pharaoh sent the nation out of Egypt, G-d did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although it was close..." [13:17]

According to the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel M. Kagan, G-d had two choices, each of which had its good and bad aspects.

The first choice was to lead the Nation of Israel through the land of the Pelishtim (Philistines), in which food was available, but where the degraded practices of the Pelishtim could be witnessed. The Jewish people had been repeatedly exposed to the Egyptians and their ways during the centuries they spent in that country, and this had influenced them - so much so that our Sages, who explain that there are fifty different "gates" of impurity, also tell us that the people of Israel had descended through forty-nine during the Egyptian exile. Had they gone further, through the fiftieth gate, they would have been "beyond redemption." There was a great danger that the Pelishtim could also influence Israel, and perhaps even draw them down through the fiftieth gate.

The alternative was the desert, which was entirely pure - but was also bereft of food. How could several million people survive there?

HaShem's final decision was that it was better to take the people through the desert, avoiding the temptations of the Pelishtim. In order to avoid starvation, he brought them Manna - miraculous food from Heaven. This was preferable to risking further spiritual descent on Israel's part.

[Obviously, HaShem could also simply have made the Nation of Israel impervious to the effects of the Pelishtim. But as mentioned last week, free will is critical to a Jewish understanding of Creation and our reasons for being here, and thus we might understand why even an open miracle might be preferable to changing human nature, even for a short time.]

This, says the Chofetz Chaim, is the response to all those who "sell themselves" into inappropriate businesses and business dealings, claiming that their behavior is necessary "to make a living." One who claims to believe that G-d could sustain and support 600,000 men - and thus several million men, women and children - in miraculous fashion, must certainly believe that He can provide bread and sustenance to someone who follows His ways, and engages only in honest business.

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The answers are varied, but the solution is the same - a server will make more Torah available worldwide to more people, in more ways than we can now accommodate. Two \_teachers\_ with Project Genesis have pledged to help match the \$5,000 grant - and with their help and others we have already raised over \$1,700 to meet it... so don't miss out! Additional donations from this and the "Tendonitis Fund" will be used for other Project Genesis purposes.

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**Beshalach**-----

ARCHIVES are going up, slowly but surely, and we invite everyone to see the updates by visiting our Learning page, <http://www.torah.org/learning/>. We have a few Web pages for the Maharal class, extensive Yomtov archives (though still being "fine-tuned"), and new updates for RavFrand. While we do not yet have a Web page for Iyov, you can still follow a link to full ftp archives (available directly at <ftp://ftp.torah.org/pub/classes/iyov/> ).

Volunteer efforts have made all of the above Web pages possible, and we do appreciate all of the help received from Yitzy Weiss, David Hoffman, Ellen Deutsch, Neil Parks, and others. If you would like to help out, please be in touch - and look for major expansions once our server is in place!

Good Shabbos,  
Rabbi Yaakov Menken

**From:** "Mordecai Kornfeld <74401.3314@compuserve.com>"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, " Torah insight by Mordecai Kornfeld ..  
**Date:** 1/31/96 9:06pm  
**Subject:** Parashat Beshalach 5756 - "Lessons of the exodus"  
The Weekly Internet  
P \* A \* R \* A \* S \* H \* A - P \* A \* G \* E

---  
by Mordecai Kornfeld  
kornfeld@jer1.co.il

This week's issue has been dedicated by Dr. Simcha Bekelnitzky in memory of his mother, Leah bat Mordechai David Z'L, whose Yahrzeit is this week.

**LESSONS OF THE EXODUS**

And the Bnai Yisrael walked on dry land in the middle of the sea, and the water was a wall for them to their right and to their left. Hashem saved the Jews that day from the hand of the Egyptians... and the nation feared Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in His servant Moshe.

(Shemot 14:29-31)

Said Rabbi Yochanan: Who is a person who is deserving of the World to Come? One who begins the Amidah prayer (or the "Shemoneh Esreh") immediately after mentioning our redemption from Egypt.

(Berachot 4b)

The Gemara seems to offer unusually extravagant praise to one who performs what would appear to be an ordinary, everyday act. Anyone who follows his prayerbook will come to the Amidah prayer immediately after reciting the passage praising Hashem for taking us out of Egypt. How does following the prayerbook classify a person as a "Ben Olam Habba" -- a person worthy of a portion in the World to Come? What is so extraordinary about this act?

Rabbenu Yonah (Berachot, loc. cit.) offers two explanations for this Gemara. Both of his explanations assume that it is not simply through following the prayerbook that one becomes a "Ben Olam Habba." One can achieve this lofty level only if he follows the mention of the exodus with the Amidah prayer \*for the proper reasons\*. If one then follows through, and conducts himself throughout the day according to the principles

inherent in connecting the account of the exodus to the Amidah, he will undoubtedly be worthy of the World to Come.

## II

In Rabbenu Yonah's first approach, he proposes that the principal lesson learned from the Egyptian exodus is that we are Hashem's servants. In Vayikra (25:42) Hashem declares, "They [= the Jews] are My servants because I have taken them out of Egypt." In other words, when Hashem drew us out from the Egyptian bondage, He took us to be His Own servants. The lessons we learned in Egypt concerning being good servants were eventually put into practice in the service of Hashem. According to Rabbenu Yonah, what we learn from the story of the exodus is that we are the servants of Hashem.

But what is the connection between this idea and the Amidah prayer? Rabbenu Yonah cites a Gemara in Bava Kama (92b): "What is meant by the verse, 'And you shall \*serve\* Hashem your God' (Shemot 23:25)? This refers to the Amidah prayer." Our Sages refer to prayer, and the Amidah prayer specifically, as "Avodah," or "service."

(While it is true that we \*serve\* Hashem every time we perform a Mitzvah, prayer is the most intimate form of service. First of all, when we pray, we picture ourselves as if we were standing before Hashem Himself, with no worldly matters to distract us from His service. Secondly, in prayer we beseech of Hashem to supply us with all of our needs, thereby acknowledging His total mastery over us. For these reasons, prayer is similar to the priestly service in the Holy Temple, which is also referred to as "Avodah." In the Temple courtyard, the priests stood directly before the Divine Presence (see Parasha-Page Tetzave 5755). Also, the daily sacrifices were brought as a plea to Hashem to provide for all of our worldly -- and other-worldly -- needs. -MK)

This, says Rabbenu Yonah is the connection between mentioning the redemption from Egypt and praying the Amidah. A person who learns the lesson taught to us by the exodus (that he is a servant of Hashem) and immediately puts this lesson into practice (by serving Hashem in the form of prayer), has internalized a very important lesson. Such a person, who recognizes that he is but a servant of Hashem, will eagerly perform all of Hashem's commandments. He will certainly be worthy of a portion in the World to Come.

## II

Rabbenu Yonah offers a second explanation. Perhaps, he suggests, the most significant point of the exodus was that the Jews trusted in Hashem. Because the Jews (or at least some of them) demonstrated unwavering faith in Hashem, the Jewish people were saved from the Egyptians in so miraculous a manner. (See Midrash Shemot Rabba 21:8, "Hashem said, 'The trust which the Bnai Yisrael placed in Me makes them worthy of having Me split the sea for them!'" See also Shemot Rabba 21:10, "'The Jews went into the sea on dry land...' From here we learn that the sea did not split for them until they showed their trust by entering the water up to their nostrils." -MK)

Prayer demonstrates a person's trust in Hashem. As Rabbenu Yonah puts it, "One who does not trust in Him will not request anything of Him." The very fact that a person addresses his prayers to God is a sign of his faith in Him. When a person mentions the exodus from Egypt, he is acknowledging the reward of those who put their trust in their Creator. By praying immediately, he shows that he has learned from the experience of his ancestors. He, too, is placing his trust in Hashem. If a person does this, it demonstrates that he has internalized the lesson of the exodus, and taught himself to trust that Hashem will provide for him. If one has accomplished this, Rabbenu Yonah suggests, then he has the basis for acquiring G-dfearingness and faith in Hashem, the two main ingredients

necessary for acquiring a place in the World to Come.

This, then, is the message of the Gemara. If a person prays the Amidah prayer after mentioning the redemption from Egypt \*because\* he has learned to trust in Hashem, his reliance on his Creator will certainly guide him through all of life's trials and tribulations, and lead him along the path to Olam Habba.

Rabbenu Yonah brings support for this approach from the Midrash to this week's Parasha:

Why do we mention the splitting of the sea in the blessing which precedes the Amidah? Because when Hashem split the sea for the Bnai Yisrael, they had faith in Him... and because of this they merited to sing the praises of Hashem and to have the Divine Presence rest upon them. For this reason, immediately after the verse, "and they believed in Hashem..." it says, "Then Moshe and the Bnai Yisrael sang..." (Shemot 14:31 and 15:1). A person must pray the Amidah immediately after mentioning the redemption from Egypt, just as the Bnai Yisrael sang praises of Hashem immediately after trusting in Hashem at the splitting of the sea.

(Shemot Rabba 22:3)

The Midrash tells us that we must mention the splitting of the sea before praying the Shemoneh Esreh. Just as our forefathers learned from the miracles at the sea to perfect their faith in Hashem, so should we also perfect our faith by recalling those miracles. And just as they immediately acknowledged their debt of gratitude to Hashem through a song of praise, so must we immediately pray the Amidah. The Amidah begins with words of praise for Hashem, and is followed by our lengthy list of requests, demonstrating our trust in Him. We acknowledge that everything we have comes from Him, and that we must ask of Him all that we need.

## III

According to Rabbenu Yonah's first explanation, the Amidah prayer exemplifies that we are \*servants\* of Hashem. According to the second, it shows our \*trust\* in Him. These two views are, of course, entirely compatible with each other. One is the cause while the other is the effect. If a person places his trust in Hashem, then he will be eager to do whatever Hashem tells him, and will thus develop into a servant of Hashem.

In any case, these two suggestions -- that the Shemoneh Esreh is an expression of either our trust or our servitude -- can perhaps help us to understand another unique point about this prayer. The Amidah is recited differently from all of our other prayers. Our other prayers must be said out loud (see Ramban, end of Parashat Bo). The Amidah, on the other hand, must be prayed silently (Berachot 31a). We move our lips, but we do not make ourselves heard. Why is this?

Along the lines of Rabbenu Yonah's first approach, that the essence of the Amidah prayer is servitude, the answer is clear. Our Sages refer to prayer, elsewhere in the Gemara (Ta'anit 2a), not simply as "service," but as "service of the \*heart\*." This implies that the servitude which is expressed through prayer is not exemplified by our actions, nor even by our words, but by our very thoughts and feelings. When saying the Shemoneh Esreh prayer, we devote all of our thoughts to the service of Hashem. Since the Amidah is a service of the heart, we must eliminate anything which would impinge on the intimacy of this service, including the sounds of our voices. The "prayer of the heart" must be prayed silently.

Following the second approach, that the essence of the Amidah prayer is that we are showing our trust in Hashem, it is also appropriate that it be uttered inaudibly. The greatest expression of complete trust is silence. The serenity of silence displays our confidence in Hashem. We are so certain that Hashem will ultimately redeem us, that we need not even cry



\* Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

\* HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Morah D'Asra

FOOTNOTES:

1 OC 208:7. Mishnah Berurah 204:57; 207:7; 212:1.

2 Aruch Hashulchan 212:2.

3 Mishnah Berurah & Aruch Hashulchan 212:1. This is true even if the taste of the barley is not the most preferred.

4 OC 208:2

5 OC 204:12

6 Mishna Berurah 208:49; Shaar Hatzion 212:6.

7 Mishna Berurah 168:43.

8 This depends on a disagreement among the Poskim, see Sharei Teshuva 212:1; S.A. Harav 249:4; Shaar Hatzion 212:15.

9 Aruch Hashulchan 212:2; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in V'zos Habracha p.56).

10 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (V'sain Bracha p.247) and Harav S.Z. Auerbach (V'zos Habracha p. 89) rule that concerning Brachos we follow the lenient shiur of R' A.C. Naeh

11 Harav M. Feinstein (Kol Dodi, V'zos Habracha p.89).

12 Igros Moshe OC 4:41. Harav S. Y. Elyashiv (V'sain Bracha p. 247).

13 Shiurei Torah 3:15; Aruch Hashulchan 202:8.

14 OC 212:1; MB 208:48; Igros Moshe OC 1:68.

15 The Bracha is valid even though the Cholent has not yet been served.

**From:** "listserv@lubavitch.chabad.org (W-2 LIST Chabad-Lubavitch)"  
**To:** CSHULMAN  
**Date:** 1/30/96 4:23pm  
**Subject:** Torah Studies- Beshalach

Adaptation of Likutei Sichos  
by

Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks  
Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion  
BESHALACH

This Sidra relates the story of the division of the Sea of Reeds, its waters parted by a powerful wind sent by G-d. When the wind ceased and the waters closed on the pursuing Egyptians, we are told that "the sea returned to its strength."

Why did the Torah add this extra phrase? The Midrash finds an allusion in it to the condition (the words "strength" and "condition" in Hebrew are composed of the same letters) which G-d made with the Sea when it was first created, that it should part its waters for Israel when the time came.

The Rebbe explores this theme in depth, analyzing in general the part which natural objects and forces have to play in G-d's design for the universe.

### THE DIVISION OF THE SEA

"And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its former strength at the turning of the morning; and the Egyptians fled towards it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea."

The Midrash comments on this that G-d made a stipulation at the time when the Sea was first created, that it should divide itself for Israel when they needed to cross it. This is the meaning of the phrase "the sea returned to its former strength," namely that it "kept to the terms of the condition which

I stipulated from the beginning" (a play on the words "condition" and "former strength" which have the same letters in Hebrew).

But the Midrash is difficult to understand. For the verse refers, not to the fulfilling, by the sea, of the undertaking to divide; but clearly to its returning to its former state, closing its waters over the pursuing Egyptians.

An answer has been suggested. In the Talmud, Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair tells the River Ginnai to divide its waters and when it refused, he told it "If you do not do so, I will decree that no water shall flow in you forever." If the same were true of the Sea of Reeds, then its returning to its former strength would

be evidence of its having fulfilled its agreement with G-d.

But the answer itself is incomplete:

(i) It suggests that if the Sea had not divided, it would not only not have had its strength returned, it would not have had any waters at all. The verse, on the other hand, suggests that only the full strength of the Sea hung on the agreement, not its very continuance as a sea.

(ii) In any case, the Midrash sought to couple the words "full strength" with the word "condition." But the explanation makes the Sea's strength only a consequence of its previously fulfilling the condition and does not link it with the condition itself.

### THE CONDITION MADE AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

We can resolve the first of these difficulties by the explanation given by the Maggid of Mezeritch (which he had heard from the Baal Shem Tov).

At the time of the creation of the world all the objects of nature were created on the condition that they obeyed the will of righteous men, even if it ran counter to their normal physical laws. So that if they did not do so, not only

would they cease to exist: It would be as if they had never been created.

In other words, had the Sea not divided, it would not only never have water

again, its whole previous existence would be obliterated. So that when the verse tells us "the sea returned to its former strength," it is conveying that in the fulfilling of its agreement with G-d it both assured its future continuity and at the same time ratified its past existence.

This point may be difficult for us to understand: For though we know what it is for something to be obliterated, surely its past existence is an objective

fact, which cannot be retroactively removed? The mental block we have in comprehending this possibility is because of a two-fold secular conception to which our minds tenaciously cling: Firstly, that objects have a real and independent existence, and secondly that our time-scheme (in which we cannot

reach back and change the past) is the only possible one.

Both conceptions are false in Judaism. In the first instance objects only exist because G-d continually creates them; in the second instance, time is a human conception, one by which G-d is not bound (indeed, one which G-d created and so, obviously, can stand aside from).

It follows that if G-d decides to "uncreate" something, He can do so retroactively and by removing its whole (past as well as future) being.

The closest analogy in human terms (and one which is germane to the subject

in hand) is that of a conditional legal agreement.

If the condition is not fulfilled, it is not that the agreement suddenly terminates, but rather that this establishes that the agreement never came into being.

## TWO KINDS OF MIRACLE

But the second difficulty still remains: That the sea's returning to its strength was a result of and not the same as its fulfilling its condition.

To resolve this we must understand why the Midrash needed to comment on the phrase "the sea returned to its strength." What is problematic about it?

The answer is that since the phrase "the sea returned" would have sufficed, there must be some additional point made by the phrase "to its strength." Now why should we doubt that the sea's strength would return? Is there any ground for thinking that its parting, to leave dry land for the Israelites' crossing, permanently "weakened" it, so that a second miracle was needed to restore its force?

Now we can discern two distinct types of miracles:

(i) The miracle which transforms the whole nature of a thing, so that a second miracle is needed to return it to its original state  
(for example: When G-d made Moses' hand leprous as a sign of the authenticity of the revelation at Horeb? He performed a second miracle in turning it back).

(ii) The miracle which only changes the appearance or form of a thing, leaving its essential character unaltered, so that when the miracle ceases it returns to its earlier state of its own accord (like the rivers

which were changed into blood, the first of the ten plagues, which later returned to water without further miracle, for the rivers, were not essentially transformed, they still remained as water when the Israelites drank from them.)

Therefore, if we were to say, that the division of the Sea was of the first kind, it would follow that a second miracle would be needed to return it to its former state. This is what the verse negates by informing us that the Sea returned "to its strength," i.e., that the Sea had only changed externally, but not essentially.

But in fact we cannot say this, for the Torah already stressed that the Sea was only kept in its divided state by constant vigilance: "And the L-rd caused the sea to go back by a powerful east wind all the night."

From which it is clear that, had the wind dropped, it would have returned to its flowing of its own accord, so why need the Torah stress in a later verse that the Sea returned "to its strength?"

Therefore the Midrash implies that the extra information conveyed by telling us that the Sea returned to its strength, must be that it had its whole previous existence ratified by its fulfillment of G-d's condition. And even though it had fulfilled it by dividing rather than returning, the sign of its fulfillment was evident only when its waters were restored.

## TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL EXISTENCE

But why did G-d need to make an agreement with the Sea, and why particularly at the moment when it was created? For His power over His creations is unlimited and He could have divided the Sea when He wanted and without its "consent."

Rashi's comment that the world was created "for the sake of Israel and the Torah" does not simply mean that it exists to allow Israel to perform G-d's will on earth, but more strongly that by Israel's service the world itself is sanctified into becoming a "dwelling-place" for G-d and thus brought to its own fulfillment.

Thus by stipulating at the outset that objects should change their nature when it was necessary for the sake of Israel, G-d wrote this miraculous possibility into their very constitution. So that when miracles occurred, this would not be an interruption of their normal purpose but a continuation and fulfillment of it.

And indeed this makes their existence of an entirely different order.

They become not things which exist for a while and then pass away; but rather things whose destiny is (by the very nature of their creation) linked with that of Israel. And Israel is, in the deepest sense, eternal. They are, to G-d "the branch of My planting and the work of My hands." And this makes natural objects far more than the instruments of Israel's progress (for they would then be bound to their natural functions only); but instead they are embodiments of G-d's will (even when this involves a change in their nature).

This is why the Midrash connects the fulfilling of its agreement with G-d with the sea's return to its strength, rather than with its division. For while it was divided to reveal dry land, it still did not show the vindication and eternalization of its existence (for it could have been a (change and) negation of its nature). Its true fulfillment came only when its waters returned. And when they returned, it was to their "full strength," not simply as they had been before, mere waters of a sea, but as the eternal bearers of G-d's will for the destiny of His people.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. VI pp. 86-94).

**From:** "kollel@mcs.com"  
**To:** CSHULMAN, "haftorah@torah.org"  
**Date:** 2/1/96 9:33pm  
**Subject:** Haftorah - Beshalach

MESSAGE FROM THE HAFTORAH PARSHAS BESHALACH  
Shoftim 4:4  
This weekEs haftorah calls upon us to demonstrate total faith in Hashem. Throughout the era of the Shoftim the Jewish people fluctuated between devout service of Hashem and practices of idolatry. They would typically become comfortable with their life setting and stray from the proper path. In response, Hashem would send one of the powerful nations to oppress the Jews and call them to return to Him. In this weekEs haftorah, the Jews strayed severely from the path and Hashem sent Yovin, the king of C'naan to capture them and annex them to his empire. After Yovin ruled over the Jews for twenty

years Hashem responded to their initial stages of repentance and sent them the Prophetess Devorah to inspire them to great heights. The Jewish people merited an incredible miracle and Devorah composed a most moving song of praise over HashemEs great revelations.

Barak, the leading Jewish general at the time was instructed to lead ten thousand men and charge into the C'naanite lines. Yovin, the king of C'naan had gathered an army of hundreds of thousands and prepared a massive attack.

Hashem stepped in and created an illusion of enormous dimensions and the C'naanites retreated and fled for their lives. Then, Hashem brought blazing heat to the area and the C'naanites went to cool off in the Kishon Brook. The brook overflowed and the C'naanites were swept into the water and drowned. Devorah sings about this miracle and says, ¶The Kishon Brook swept them away, that ancient brook Kishon, my soul treads with strength. Devorah refers to the Kishon as a figure of the past which seems to relate the Kishon to some earlier incident. Our Chazal in Tractate Pesachim (115b)

explain that this earlier incident was in fact the splitting of the Reed Sea which we read about in this weekEs sedra.

Chazal quote a peculiar conversation between Hashem and the angel who was appointed to take charge over the sea. They expound upon a passage in Tehillim (106) which indicates that the Jewish people lacked a dimension of faith when crossing the sea. They reasoned that they were unworthy to have a miracle done exclusively for their sake. They therefore entertained the possibility that the Egyptians were also spared from drowning in the sea and had actually exited safely on the other side. Hashem instructed the angel in charge to spit the dead Egyptians onto the shore so that the Jewish people would realize what had truly transpired. The angel accepted but responded that the fish deserve their newly acquired present and therefore requested from Hashem to provide a replacement sometime in the future. Hashem agreed and informed the angel that the Kishon Brook would eventually sweep the replacements into the sea.

The above discussion indicates a direct corollary between the splitting of the

Reed Sea and the Kishon Brook. It suggests that there was a missing dimension of faith at the sea which was finally rectified at the Kishon Brook. It seems that the Reed Sea was not permitted to serve in its fullest capacity by swallowing the Egyptians due to the shortcomings of the Jewish people. In truth, the splitting of the sea served a dual function; its splitting provided salvation to the Jewish people and its returning provided destruction for the Egyptian nation. This second function was not openly seen

by the Jewish people due to their doubts regarding its actuality. Although they learned about it in retrospect they were not eyewitness to it. Their lack of merit produced that the sea could not act in its usual manner by swallowing the Egyptians but instead was forced to spit them out and prove the authenticity of its role in their destruction. The angelEs response to this was that the sea deserved a perfect role in miracles and it should have the opportunity of complete demonstration of the revelation of Hashem.

The response of Hashem was that the miracle of the Kishon Brook would serve this capacity in full.

In the days of Devorah a similar climate existed to that of the Jews when exiting Egypt and the Jewish people didnEt feel worthy of great revelations. However, when Barak was instructed to charge against the C'naanites he responded immediately and acted out his role. His ten thousand men demonstrated total faith in Hashem and believed whole-heartedly that Hashem would perform an open miracle solely on their behalf. This time there was no

doubt and no need existed for Hashem to prove the extent of His involvement on

behalf of His people. This time the sea was granted its complete role and was permitted to swallow the C'naanites never to return them to the shore.

The revelation of the Reed Sea was finally complete and the complete miracle of the Kishon reflected the perfect faith of the Jews in Hashem.

by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel (Dean), Kollel Toras Chesed of Skokie  
3732 West Dempster, Skokie IL 60076 (847)674-7959 fax (847) 674-4023

e-mail: kollel@mcs.com

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Bshalach

#### Shiur Harav on Parshas Bshalach

"Ashira L'Hashem Ki Gao Ga'ah". Rashi's first interpretation is to mention the Targum Unkelus, who explains the verse as "I will sing to Hashem because (or since) he is above all". Rashi adds an additional interpretation: the praise that is appropriate to offer Hashem is infinite and due to human limitations it is always incomplete, as opposed to a mortal king who is praised even though he is found wanting of deeds and not deserving of praise.

According to the second interpretation offered by Rashi, Moshe was indicating that Bnay Yisrael lacked sufficient praise to offer Hashem. This is the same concept found in the Gemara (Megilla 25a) that restricts our praise of Hashem in our Tefilah to Ha'kel Hagadol Hagibor V'honora. This limitation is so stringent that anyone who adds praises of Hashem beyond that which the Anshei Kneses Hagedolah established is viewed negatively based on the verse L'chah Dumiah Tehila (Megilla 18a).

The second interpretation of Rashi defines the word Ki as "even though", or "despite" (similar to the use of Ki Karov Hu, that Hashem did not lead Bnay Yisrael through the Land of Plishtim EVEN THOUGH it was closer). The Passuk is saying that I will sing to Hashem EVEN THOUGH he is exalted above all and I can't possibly sing all His praises. Based on the above mentioned restriction that limits the praise we may offer Hashem, how did Bnay Yisrael and Moshe have the right to offer the additional praise of Shiras Hayam?

The Gemara (Megilla 25a, Berachos 33b) says that had the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah not incorporated the words Ha'kel Hagadol Hagibor V'honora into our Tefilos, we would not have been able to utter these words of praise of Hashem either. Their right to incorporate these words was based on Moshe using these words in praise of Hashem (Devarim 10:17). However we still need to understand the fundamental source of permission (Mattir) to pray, on which even Moshe relied to utter these praises.

The Rav offered 3 explanations of the Mattir of Shira, each derived from Shiras Moshe (Note: The Rav used Tefilah and Shira interchangeably in much of this shiur):

The first explanation is based on the Rambam (Note: The Rav mentioned

Hilchos Berachos but did not specify the Halacha. See 1:3.). Man has an instinctive need to give thanks and recognition to someone who performs an act of kindness towards him. As pertains to Hashem, this natural urge is translated into praise to Hashem for all His acts of kindness that He does for man on a continuous basis.

Limited man is generally enjoined from praising Hashem because he can not complete the praises of Hashem. However, Moshe and Bnay Yisrael at that moment on the banks of the Yam Suf were incapable of controlling their need to sing the praise of Hashem

for His many miracles and acts of kindness towards them.

There was an urge for Bnay Yisrael to recite Shira and thank Hashem that could not be stifled (similar to the uncontrollable urge felt by Joseph when he revealed himself to his brothers).

This uncontrollable need to thank Hashem is also the basis of permission (Mattir) for our Tefilos in general.

Man is distinguished from the animal kingdom by his ability and need to pray. Even though man recognizes the inadequacy of his Tefilos, even before he offers them (Ki Gaoh Gaah), he instinctively must offer them anyway (Azi Vzimaras Kah). This uncontrollable need to thank Hashem serves as the Mattir for Shira and Tefilah.

The Rav offered a second suggestion as to what is the Mattir for Shiras Hayam: How did Moshe know that Shira is permissible?

Shiras Hayam required a precedent. Moshe had a tradition from father to son back to Avraham Avinu, that the Jewish Nation is a people that offers prayer and praise to Hashem in times of need and times of joy. The Gemara (Berachos 26b) says that our fore-fathers established the various Tefilos that we have. The intention of the Gemara is not merely to present a history lesson. Rather, it is to show us that because they established the Tefilos (Shacharis, Mincha and Maariv), we too are permitted to pray accordingly. As Moshe mentioned in the Shira, Elokey Avi V'aromimenu, just as my fore-fathers before me offered Shira to Hashem, so too will I.

The Rav offered a third possibility as to what is the Mattir for Shira based on the Rambam (Note: Source believed to be Moreh Nevuchim). As mentioned in the Gemara (Megilla 25a), only

one who is capable of reciting all the praises of Hashem may praise Him (Mi Y'mallel Gevuros Hashem Yashmia Kol Tehilaso, Tehillim 106:2). This of course is impossible for mortals. Yet the prophets often revealed the praise of Hashem (e.g. Rachum Vchanun). These revelations were intended to teach us the ways of Hashem so that we may emulate them and follow His ways and behave accordingly. The permission to recite Shira Vashevach derives from the fact that the Shira Vashevach itself, describing the Midos of Hashem, provides the blueprint that shows man how to follow and emulate the ways of Hashem.

The Gemara (Shabbos 133b) derives the obligation to emulate the ways of Hashem from the verse Zeh Kayli V'anvayhu (similar to the obligation of Vhalachta Bdrachav). As Hashem performs acts of kindness so to should you. This is based on the analysis of the word V'anvayhu, as an acronym for Ani V'hu (I and He). When we recite Shira to Hashem we are also reiterating and reenforcing our obligation to emulate the very ways of Hashem for which we are praising Him. The Mattir for Shira is that the Shira itself defines how we fulfill the Mitzvah of Vhalachta Bdrachav.

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