

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BESHALACH 5759

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ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas B'Shalach These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 179, Female Vocalists: The Problem of Kol Isha. Good Shabbos!

Parshas B'Shalach Insight Into An Age Old Dilemma "And it came to pass when Pharo sent out the people the L-rd did not lead them by way of the land of the Plishtim, because it was near" [Shmos 13:17]. When the Jews came out of Egypt there were two possible paths to Eretz Yisroel, each of which had an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage of the route by way of the land of the Plishtim was that the Jews would be travelling in civilized territory. They would travel among people in a place where food and water would be readily available. On the other hand, they would be travelling through a society of Plishtim, whose moral level was as bad or worse than that of the Egyptians. Choosing this path would run the risk of exposing the nation to great spiritual danger. In Egypt they had already been on the verge of falling into a spiritual black hole. The nation was on the "49th level of impurity", the last step before total spiritual doom. The other alternative was the way of the wilderness. This route presented no spiritual challenges. It was desolate and unoccupied land. There would be nothing to worry about in terms of people or society having a bad impact on Klal Yisroel [The Jewish Nation]. But the problem with this route was -- how does one take a nation of 2-3 million people through a desert and feed them? Where would the food come from? Where would the water come from? This was the dilemma when the Jewish people left Egypt. What does the verse tell us? G-d caused the people to circle away from the land of the Plishtim, by way of the Red Sea. G-d preferred the desert and all of its associated problems rather than sending the Jews through the land of the Plishtim. The Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, says that this verse teaches us a lesson in life. This section resolves an age-old question. If one has a choice between a situation where sustenance will come easily but be accompanied by spiritual danger, or a situation where earning a livelihood will be difficult but there would be relative freedom from bad spiritual influences, the Torah tells us to pick spirituality over livelihood. One should opt for the less spiritually dangerous environment, even though livelihood will come with greater difficulty. The reason for this is that as difficult as the yoke of earning a living is -- and we all know that it is a curse and it is a major problem -- it is the easier problem to solve. Furthermore, only the effort involved in earning a living is truly our worry. Providing the actual livelihood is G-d's worry. He will solve that problem. Our spirituality however, is our own problem. Therefore, we must

choose the path that will allow us to best resolve that problem. "Providing for man's livelihood is as difficult as the Splitting of the Red Sea" [Pesachim 118a]. The commentaries all comment on the analogy between providing for man's livelihood and the Splitting of the Sea. The reason for the analogy is that concerning the Yam Suf [Red Sea] it says "Speak to the children of Israel and let them travel forward" [Shmos 14:15]. This means that all we need to do is make an effort, even in the face of a hopeless situation, and G-d will take care of the rest. This is in fact what happened. The Children of Israel went into the water up to their necks, and then the miracle occurred. That is the way it is with a livelihood. Make the effort. That is all that we are required to do. If we make that effort, G-d will provide. This is a lesson that we must review over and over again. If there is an option of uncertain livelihood and confident spirituality versus confident livelihood and uncertain spirituality, we must always opt for the confident spirituality.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim dhoffman@torah.org Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 for further information. Now Available: Mesorah / Artscroll has recently published a collection of Rabbi Frand's essays. The book is entitled: Rabbi Yissocher Frand: In Print Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. http://www.torah.org/ Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

http://www.jpost.co.il/Columns/Article-3.html The Jerusalem Post Internet Edition Friday, January 29, 1999 á á 12 Shevat 5759

SHABBAT SHALOM: Every marriage a miracle By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN (January 28) "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and God caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." (Ex. 14:21) "Bringing two people together (in marriage) is more difficult than was the splitting of the Red Sea." (B.T. Sanhedrin 22a) I'd like to consider several explanations as to why the Sages connect these two events. First of all, the splitting of the Red Sea finds the Israelites in a state of pure panic. Behind them a powerful army is moving closer and closer. The Hebrews seem to be in a "no-win" situation: if they move toward the sea, they drown; if they don't, they'll die as the powerful chariots sweep down on them. Their only recourse seems to be prayer. But when Moses cries out to God, the Almighty answers: "Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the Israelites and tell them to start movingè" (Ex. 14:15) Clearly, then, one of the crucial messages of the splitting of the sea is that it marks a turning point in the relationship between God and Israel. Until that point, the miracles were entirely orchestrated by God. What transpires at the Red Sea requires the Israelites, for the first time, to become directly involved in their fate. If they don't move, tragedy is inevitable. Ultimately the miracle will occur and the waters will divide so as to allow safe passage for the entire nation, while the haughty Egyptians will be doomed. But before this miracle can transpire, the Israelites had to make the first move! So too with marriage. Comparing marriage to the splitting of the Red Sea is how the Sages address the doubts and fears all couples face. The comparison tells the questioning and even fearful loving friends at the brink of a critical decision that they have to take the plunge, be willing to work hard and to constantly move forward. Marriage is not a miracle that will happen automatically.

I had a cousin who hardly ever left the house, claiming that she was patiently waiting for her bashert (destined one). My wise grandmother admonished her: "If he is like you, you'll never even meet each other, so how can you possible get married?" My wife has suggested an additional explanation. She emphasizes the fact that our Sages consider the marital union to be the greater miracle. And herein lies the real significance to the comparison. At the Red Sea, God took one great waterway and separated it into 12; a magnificent tour de force, but in the final analysis it remains a division. Under the wedding canopy God takes two separate human beings and welds them into one. It is always easier to divide than it is to unite.

I would like to explore this idea of unity even further. Not only is it the secret of a successful marriage, but it is a necessary component for the two most crucial aspects of Judaism: Divine Revelation and the construction of the Holy Temple. Immediately prior to the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai,

when the Almighty first revealed Himself to His nation, we read how the Israelites arrive at the mountain to encamp: "And after they were departed from Rephidim, and they came to the desert of Sinai, and they had pitched in the wilderness, then Israel encamped before the mountain." (Ex. 19:2) All the verbs in this verse are in the plural except one - the last: "encamped" (vayihlan). Rashi comments that the reason for the singular is to teach how at this point the nation has become "one person with one heart." It was chiefly on the basis of this togetherness that the Almighty considered them worthy of the Torah. The second pillar of Judaism which requires unity is the Holy Temple, which will eventually become a "house of prayer for all nations," a beacon for universal peace. Centuries before King David's purchase of this land from the Jebusites, the uniqueness of the site had been established by the binding of Isaac by his father. In addition to the central motifs of commitment and sacrifice, what wells up from the narrative is the unity between Abraham and Isaac. The account describes how Abraham brings with him the wood of the burnt offering, as well as the fire and the knife, "and they went both of them together [yahdav]." Two verses later, Isaac has just asked Abraham about the burnt offering. He sees the wood, the knife, but not the lamb. He is almost afraid to ask, but he does - and he understands: " 'God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' And they went both of them together." Rashi comments: "Even though Isaac understood that he was to be sacrificed, they went both of them together with the same heart." And since the ultimate point of the binding is to eternally sanctify the place "from which God will be seen," the prerequisite is unity between the generations. Is not the fundamental mission of Elijah the prophet, forerunner of the Messiah, "to restore the hearts of the parents to the children, and the children to the parents"? Only against the backdrop of generational unity can we hope for ultimate redemption. Thus it is clear that unity among the children of Israel on the horizontal plane and inter-generational unity on the vertical plane are prerequisites for the restoration of the Temple. Often, especially in the land of infinite opinions, such a vision seems an impossible dream. Marriage, however, gives each of us hope; after all, if two strangers can become one - "therefore shall a human being leave mother and father, cleave to spouse, and they shall become one flesh" - how much more can brothers and sisters, parents and children, act as one? Indeed, every marriage is a greater miracle than the splitting of the Red Sea; and therefore every marriage ceremony legitimately concludes with the prayer of redemption, that "soon may there be heard, in the cities of Judea and the great places of Jerusalem, the sounds of joy and happiness, the sounds of bride and groom." Shabbat Shalom á á _ 1995-1999, The Jerusalem Post - All rights reserved

Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Beshalach No 737: 13 Shevat 5759 ...

A MITZVA IN THE TORAH PORTION: "Never Go Back to See Them Any More" [Shemot 14:13] by Rabbi Binyamin Tabori

This is one of three verses where we were commanded not to return to Egypt, as was written by the Rambam. But then, it is obvious to ask, how could the Rambam himself live in Egypt? The "Kaftor VaFerach" quotes the Rambam's grandson that the Rambam would sign his letters as follows: "the writer, who every day violates three prohibitions of living in Egypt." However, none of the many letters of the Rambam which have been preserved to this day have such a signature. So the question remains: how was the Rambam allowed to live there? And what about all those who travel there in modern times? According to a responsa of the Ritva, the city boundaries from ancient times were lost, and thus Jews are living in different areas, which were not forbidden. But this is still problematic, as the prohibition is against the land itself and does not refer to living in specific cities. However, it may be that the prohibition doesn't refer to the land but to the Egyptian people. If so, since Sanheriv thoroughly mixed the different nations of the world, there is no longer a prohibition. On the other hand, the "Semag" proved from the Talmud that the prohibition continued even after the time of Sanheriv. Rabbi A.Y. Kook accepted the position that the Torah only prohibited individuals from going to live among the extremely corrupt

Gentiles in Egypt. Thus, it is permitted for a community of Jews to live together in the land. According to the "Yerei'im," the prohibition is limited to the route which Bnei Yisrael took when they left Egypt. But it is hard to accept the premise that it is prohibited to go to Egypt from Eretz Yisrael but it is permitted to travel there from another place, or to assume that the prohibition is for the exact route that was taken by Bnei Yisrael. (Rabbi Y. Natanson indeed says that this is the case, and this explains why the Torah describes the route in such detail.) According to the Ritva, the prohibition is "only when Yisrael are living on their land, but in the time of exile, when we have been distributed all over the world, all lands outside of Eretz Yisrael are the same. And the only prohibition is to leave our land, to go into a foreign land." But what about today? Can we be considered as living on our land, now that we have our own independent state, or do we have to wait until all of the people have returned from exile to be considered as "living on the land?"

Peninim Ahl HaTorah-Parshas Beshalach by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland [From Yated]

And he turned the sea to damp land, and the water split. (14:21) The splitting of the Red Sea was a remarkable miracle; is there a parallel in Jewish history? Was it truly the only time that water "deferred" to man? Indeed, in the Talmud Chullin 7a, Chazal recount an incident in which R' Pinchas ben Yair was on his way to perform the mitzvah of pidyon shevuyim, redeeming Jewish captives. He came to a river that was impassable. He commanded the water to split, so that he could pass through. The river responded, "You are performing the command of your Master, and so am I. You might be successful in your efforts to rescue the hostage, while I am assured of success. What makes you think that your mitzvah takes precedence over mine?" R' Pinchas ben Yair, responded, "If you do not split immediately, I will decree upon you that all of your water should dry up!" The river split, and R' Pinchas ben Yair passed through. Chazal summarize the story with the observation that R' Pinchas ben Yair's power was equal to that of Moshe and all of Klal Yisrael. Keeping this in mind, the Sfas Emes wonders how Krias Yam Suf demonstrates the singular greatness of Klal Yisrael. After all, did a similar miracle not occur for an individual? He offers a profound response. Certainly, Hashem can alter the course of nature for a single tzaddik. The righteous have extraordinary merits which grant them access to miracles. When, however, did Hashem alter nature for an entire nation? The chidush, novelty, of Krias Yam Suf was that an extraordinary miracle took place for an entire nation. This phenomenon demonstrated to the world the kedushah, holiness, of Am Yisrael-not just the individual Jew-but the totality of the nation! Horav Tzadok Ha'kohen, z"l, M'Lublin supplements this thought. Am Yisrael's innate kedushah was exhibited to the world through the miracle of Krias Yam Suf. After all, what virtue did the Jews have that made them more worthy than the Egyptians to be spared? They had sunk to the nadir of depravity, to the forty-ninth level of tumah, spiritual impurity. What distinguishes one idol-worshipper from another? The answer is that while externally the Jews may not have displayed a spiritual demeanor that would merit Krias Yam Suf, their inner being, their penimius, was inherently holy.

On that day Hashem saved Yisrael from the hand of Egypt. And The Bnei= Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea.(14:29, 30) And Bnei Yisrael ate the manna for forty years, until their arrival in an inhabited land. (16:35) One miraculous occurrence followed another; is there a relationship between the two? Chazal seem to think so. They say in the Talmud Pesachim 118a: "A man's sustenance is as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea." Simply, put, providing man with sustenance is as great a feat as Krias Yam Suf. The Zohar Ha'kadosh questions Chazal's statement. Is there any act that is difficult for Hashem to perform? Was Krias Yam Suf difficult for Hashem? Is it difficult for Hashem to sustain a person? A number of explanations address this Chazal. The Chozev M'Lublin, z"l, suggests a profound insight. Chazal are not focusing their observation upon Hashem. They are, rather, speaking to man concerning which path to take

when life becomes more demanding. Earning a living is-by any standard-a complex endeavor. It demands great fortitude and commitment. It requires determination, resolution, and-most importantly-faith in the Almighty. What does one do when the situation is bleak, when prospects for success are-at best-limited, when every way one turns the door to success "seems" closed?

Chazal's message is to follow the lesson of Krias Yam Suf. The Jews were trapped. They could either look forward to dying at the hand of the Egyptians or to drowning in the Red Sea. What could they do? They had no other choice but to be boteach b'Hashem, trust in the Almighty. They turned to Him in the hope that He would spare them. With this hope and trust, they entered the threatening waters of the Red Sea to be saved by Hashem. Likewise, when we are faced with the challenge of parnassah, livelihood, trusting humans is ineffectual. Absorbing one's mind-and even soul-in the anxiety that accompanies the quest for parnassah is wasteful and detrimental to one's physical and spiritual health. Only one approach will achieve success-bitachon, true trust in Hashem. If one truly believes that Hashem will help him, He will.

Horav Simcha Bunim, z"l, M'Peshischa gives a similar response with a slightly different twist. At the Yam Suf, the Jews had no idea how they would be rescued. In fact, the splitting of the Red Sea was probably the last thing they expected to happen. With regard to parnassah, Hashem sends salvation from a source that, for the most part, is unheralded. We have no idea from where Hashem will bring about our sustenance. We have only to trust that He will.

This is my G-d and I will glorify Him. (15:2) The Midrash explains that Klal Yisrael were privy to remarkable spiritual revelations as they stood by the shores of the Red Sea. Indeed, Chazal tell us that a common maidservant was able to perceive greater revelations of the Shechinah than Yechezkel Ha'navi! This is derived from the word "zeh," "this," of the phrase "Zeh Keli V'anveihu," "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him." The Jews were able to point with their finger to the awesome sights they were experiencing. Yet, as Horav Shalom Shwadron, shlita, notes, the maidservant remained a simple maidservant despite her exposure to such heightened spiritual vision. In contrast, the navi Yechezkel, despite the fact that he did not experience all there was to see, remained a navi. What happened? Why did so many, who saw so much, just relinquish their unparalleled experience?

Horav Schwadron recounted this Chazal in the presence of Horav Meir Chadash, z"l. He added his own inferences stating that, as life goes on, complacency takes hold of an individual-causing him to forget his extraordinary experience. Horav Chadash took issue with this statement. In order to impress his contention with what seemed to be the logical explanation of Chazal, he cited an incident that occurred in his own experience. When he was a young man in Russia, just before the first World War, he was caught by Russian soldiers without his required papers. This was a period in which the gentiles did whatever they chose, treating the Jew as some type of lowly parasite. The desire for Jewish blood was unleashed. Quickly, the soldiers determined that this young, Jewish man was guilty of treason and should be executed. They set up the firing-squad in preparation for carrying out their decision. Sensing the hopelessness of the situation, Horav Chadash nervously began reciting Vidui and Krias Shma.

The soldier in charge of the squad demanded that Horav Chadash stand erect and not fidget, since he was making it very difficult for the soldiers to aim well. Overcome with fear, the rav trembled, shaking back and forth. Once again, the soldier called out to him harshly to stand straight. This time, the soldier's scream awakened the Russian general who was taking his afternoon nap. He took one look outside and immediately scolded the soldiers for the terrible thing they were about to do. The soldiers quickly dispersed, and the rav was saved.

"One would think," continued Horav Chadash, "that after such an incredible experience, life would not be the same. After a little while, however, I began to notice the captivating power of complacency, and I realized that I was falling prey to this 'affliction'. It was causing me to lose sight and forget the amazing miracle that had saved me from certain death. Immediately, I made up my mind to grasp hold of the 'past' and transform it into the 'future,' forcing myself to remember the miracle. I made every effort to concretize in my mind my belief in Hashem, recognizing that if He desires

that I remain alive, then nothing whatsoever will be an obstacle. I reviewed this notion constantly, never forgetting the past, seeking every opportunity to translate what had happened in the past into the present and future."

yhe-intparsha-return@vbm-torah.org Intparsha -16: Parashat Beshalach
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)
Introduction to Parashat Hashavua by Rav Alex Israel
The vbm wishes a warm mazal tov to rabbi yair And hadassa kahn on the birth of twin girls. May They be zocheh to raise them l'torah, chuppa and Ma'asim tovim!
Parashat Beshalach

The Dubious Power of Miracles This is another grand parasha in which we witness a series of impressive miraculous events. We first read of the magnificent spectacle of the crossing of the Red Sea [1]. Next is the episode at Mara, when the bitter waters turned sweet for the thirsty throngs of Israel (15:25). The account of the Manna follows on from that. It tells the story of the miracle food that began to fall around the camp on a daily basis. The parasha ends with two further miracles. Moses produced a supply of water for the Israelites by hitting a rock, water gushing forth from the stone. And then came the war of Amalek. In this battle, the position of Moses' hands seemed to somehow secure defeat or failure. So, all in all, we have miracle after miracle - a rather impressive group of supernatural phenomena.

BELIEF IN GOD Where was all this to lead? What was the effect of these miracles upon the people? Popular wisdom has it that these wonders generated a steadfast belief in God. This theory is born out by the verses themselves. A good example would be the events of the splitting of the Red Sea. The reaction of the nation is one of faith: "They had faith in the Lord and in His servant Moses" (14:31). This feeling is also reflected in the jubilant song of victory and praise sang by the Children of Israel after the crossing of the Red Sea: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; Horse and rider He has hurled into the sea The Lord is my strength and might, He is my deliverance. This is my God and I will glorify Him, The God of my father, and I will exalt Him" (15:1-2). Rashi, examining the language of the song, notes the phrase, "Zeh Eli" - "This is my God." According to tradition, each and every usage of this word, "Zeh" indicates a visual image, an object to which one can point [2]. Here too, Rashi suggests that the people actually witnessed a revelation of God. "This is my God: In His fullest glory, God presented Himself to them openly, so that they could point at Him with their finger! A simple handmaid at the sea saw greater visions than the prophets" (Rashi on 15:2).

So these miracles were deliberately enacted so as to engender a more tangible sense of God. After these miracles, the Israelites would feel that they had a clear and very real perception of their deity. The Ramban - Nachmanides - the 12th century scholar, was certainly of this belief. He looks at the miracles of the Exodus in the following way: I will now state a general principle which lies at the foundation of many mitzvot (commandments). Since the introduction of idolatry into the world ... the attitudes of people, as regards matters of faith, have become confused and have diverged from the true beliefs. Some people believe that the world has been in existence eternally with no creation ... others feel that God exists but that He does not know the deeds of man ... and that there is no reward nor punishment. They say (Ezekiel 8:20) "God has departed from the earth." When God performs a miracle in the sight of a desirable collective or individual - a miracle which will affect a change in the laws of nature - these (false) attitudes of faith will be disproved in the clearest way. For the miracle demonstrates God's mastery over the world: His creation of it, and His knowledge of, and involvement in its affairs. Additionally, when a particular miracle is preceded by a prophetic announcement, the existence of prophecy - that God speaks with man and tells him his secrets - will be proven and this in turn will prove the truth of the entire Torah. According to the Ramban, a miracle manages to transform certain philosophical truths into reality. The person who experiences the miracle will be convinced in the most powerful manners; of the existence of God, his involvement in the affairs of men and

His ability to reward and punish. The Ramban feels that this was the purpose of the plagues. We might put it in this context. Why does God want to perform miracle after miracle for the Israelites? The children of Israel are at a fundamental nexus in their development. They are at the birth of their nationhood. They have had the foundation period of the forefathers. They have grown in size, but have been enslaved, in exile. Now is the moment that they are to emerge as an independent entity, as a nation who can control its own affairs. God wants this nation to be born in an atmosphere of faith. It is essential that the Jewish nation enter the stage of nationhood with the existence of God in the forefront of their minds.

DID IT WORK? However, a closer look at our parasha would seem to demonstrate precisely the opposite phenomena. Despite the miracles, the Children of Israel seem to complain to God at each and every occasion possible. At the sight of the Egyptian army chasing them: As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened the Israelites cried out to the Lord ... "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that You brought us to die in the wilderness? What have You done to us, taking us out of Egypt? ..." (14:10-11). This complaint is after the ten plagues, after the night of the death of the firstborn. Later, when there is no food: ... the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron ... "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For You have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death" (16:3). And when the water runs out: The place was named "Massa U-meriva" because the Israelites ... tried the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord present amongst us or not?" (17:7). If miracles are supposed to create such a firm faith, then how is it that despite the miracles which surround them and characterize their wilderness environment, they can still deny God. They have seen the miracles of Egypt, and the splitting of the Red Sea, the daily manna is their food. How can they doubt God's presence? The problem becomes even more acute when we remember that just forty days after the impressive revelation at Mt. Sinai, the Children of Israel were dancing around the Golden Calf!

These observations are indeed in place. In the words of the famous thinker and provocateur - Yeshayahu Leibowitz: We learn from parashat Beshalach a greatly important lesson: The "miracle," revelation itself and even the man inspired to sing to God in response to a miracle of revelations; all these are but a passing fad which has no long-lasting influence on future events. It is not the song of life that persists, but the prose of life. ... Miracles and all other supernatural events are revealed as irrelevant from a religious perspective, or at the very least, we can say that they are ineffective in forming a basis for religious faith. The generation that witnessed the miracles and wonders did not believe! If we do say, "They had faith in the Lord and in His servant Moses" (14:31), it was faith of the moment for the fleeting moment that they experienced the feeling of victory. But afterwards, it was all gone" (Comments on the Weekly Parsha pg. 48). So what is the place of a miracle? Are we forced to debunk the miracles of the Bible as complete failures?

THE MIGHTY HAND AND THE WORD OF GOD If we think it through, we will notice that the phenomenon of the earth-shattering miracle comes to an end at Mt. Sinai. After this, there are still certain supernatural events - those which provide the nation with their food and water; however, we shall not see the impressive grand spectacles that we have seen until this point. The "mighty hand" and the "outstretched arm" of the Exodus are superceded. By what? By the word of God, by His Torah. In fact, we can almost talk of God leading the Children of Israel according to one of two methods - the leadership of the "mighty hand and the outstretched arm" on the one hand, and the leadership of the "word of God" on the other. Let us investigate this theory. The Exodus is to be remembered by the nation of Israel in the following way: Moses said to the people, Remember this day, on which you went free in Egypt ... how the Lord has freed you with a mighty hand (13:2-3). This phrase - God's mighty

hand - is repeated many times in connection with the Exodus experience (see 3:19, 6:1, 13:9,16 Deut. 7:19, 11:3 and more). It denotes God's unlimited power and His ability to free His people in a decisive, devastating and swift manner. God demonstrates His "mighty hand" by His "signs and wonders" [3]. These are impressive actions which talk to the minds of those around, showing them God's power. The symbol of this mode of God's leadership is Moses' staff. It is with this staff that Moses is first given "signs" to prove his authenticity to the nation. Moses said, What if they do not believe me and say "The Lord did not appear to you?" The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he replied, "a rod." He said, "Cast it on the ground." He cast it on the ground and it became a snake ... he put out his hand and seized it, and it became a rod again in his hand - that they may believe that the Lord ... did appear to you" (4:1-5). This rod or staff is waved over the River Nile turning it into blood. It enacts most of the ten plagues. It is this staff which when lifted up over the waters of the Red Sea, will split the waters (14:16). This rod strikes a stone and water bursts forth. It is this staff which is taken to the war of Amalek and is described as "the staff of God" (17:10). This staff in the hands of Moses would seem to possess the most enormous power. After Mt. Sinai, this staff was put into storage [4]. The miracles cease, and the new recurrent phrase is unrelated to signs, wonders, miracles or rods. The primary phrase of the Torah in the aftermath of Sinai is: And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying ... Moses' role as miracle maker is to be superceded by his role as the lawgiver and teacher. Moses is referred to by generations of Jews as "Moses our teacher" - "Moshe Rabbeinu" and by no other title. His teaching role became our primary memory of him. It is the Torah that defines him, not the miracles.

COMMANDMENTS Our theory can be borne out if we list the commandments that we were given prior to Mt. Sinai. What commandments (mitzvot) were given over to the Israelites? We have Passover (12:14-20, 13:3-8), the command of tefillin (13:9), mila (12:48), and Shabbat (16:22-29). All of these laws are described with the title of "ot," meaning that these very laws constitute some form of testimonial function. These laws are "signs." Tefillin: "It shall be a SIGN on your hand and frontlets between your eyes." Berit Mila: "This shall be the SIGN of my covenant between Me and you" (Bereishit 17:12). Shabbat: "Between me and the Children of Israel it is a SIGN forever" (31:17). Pesach: "It shall be a SIGN on your arm and a memory between your eyes, ... that God took you out of Egypt with a strong hand" (13:9).

This is the pre-Sinai world. But the minute we reach Mt. Sinai: You saw that which I did to Egypt, and I brought you forth on eagles' wings to Me. Now if you will listen to My voice and keep My covenant ... (19:4-5). And God spoke all these WORDS (20:1). The wondrous acts have been replaced by speech, by words. In the chapters of the revelation of Mt. Sinai, the word "devarim" and the verb "DBR" indicating speech and verbal communication, are repeated time after time. In fact, Moses intimates that this was the ONLY really important aspect of the revelation at Sinai: "God spoke to you out of fire. You heard the sound of WORDS; you saw no image; nothing but a voice (Deut. 4:12).

THE PROPHET Maybe one of the clearest demonstrations of the change which occurs at Mt. Sinai is the process of initiation for a prophet. Any reader of the book of Exodus would be in no doubt that to prove one's prophecy as authentic a miracle would be required. That is how Moses proves himself, and we could easily suggest that each and every prophet should be considered with a certain element of suspicion unless he can come up with a few supernatural signs. The Torah rejects this. In Deuteronomy ch. 13 it is the false prophet who delivers "sins and wonders." "If there appears among you a prophet, or dream- diviner, and he gives you a sign or wonder saying, "Let us follow and worship another God" ... even if the sign or wonder comes true do not heed the words of that prophet ... Follow none but the Lord your God ... observe His commandments alone and heed only His orders" (Deut. 13:2-6). Miracles and wonders bear no truth. They cannot prove the authenticity of a prophet. Rather, the true prophet is described as the continuation

of the experience at Mt. Sinai: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from your own people ... him you shall heed. This is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb, on the day of the Assemble, saying "Let me not hear the voice of the Lord my God any longer ... lest I die." Whereupon the Lord said .. "I will raise up a prophet for them ... I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him" (Deut. 18:15-22). To summarize what we have said thus far: The miracles of the Exodus were immensely impressive. They secured faith in the eyes of the people, but that faith was somewhat shortlived. People left their inspired "high," and returned to their everyday routine, and the miracle was a fond memory, but it could not impact their lives. It could not break into the daily bustle. That role was taken by the Torah. The Torah with its 613 laws applicable to every human activity, the periodic and the regular, has the power to pierce the tough shell of our lives. The Torah - no more than the word of God - has the potential to transform our lives, elevating and inspiring them throughout the prosaic tasks of daily living.

It is possible that the miracles were necessary for a slave nation. Maybe they needed the impressive spectacle, the euphoria and exhilaration, to give them the self-confidence and the inspiration to carry on. They might have wished to relax, to take it easy and enjoy their freedom. God wanted them to harness their freedom to make their lives better. To this end, maybe the miracles were necessary in energizing the Israelites to take their first steps in faith, in nationhood. But this is not a long term plan. The miracles are leading to something. That something is the Torah [5].

MARA Then Moses caused Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds. They went on to the wilderness of Shur; they traveled three days in the wilderness and found no water. They came to Mara, but they could not drink water from Mara because it (they) were bitter; that is why it was named Mara. And the people grumbled against Moses saying "What shall we drink?" He cried to the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree. He threw it into the water and the water became sweet. THERE HE SET FOR THEM STATUTE AND JUDGEMENT and there he put them to the test. He said "If you listen well to the voice of the Lord your God, doing what is upright in his sight, giving ear to his commandments and keeping all his laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians for I the Lord am your healer" (Exodus 15:22-26). A strange story. A thirsty nation, bitter waters, a "magic" tree, statutes and judgements, the diseases of Egypt - what is happening here?

This is the first time that the people "grumble." It would seem that they are somewhat justified in their complaint! They have been travelling for three days in the desert. We can be sure that any water supplies that they brought with them have been consumed. Can we expect them to be silent? Not even to put in a request? Interestingly enough, we see no anger here, not on the part of Moses nor from God. It would appear that God accepts the request as legitimate and provides a solution to the water shortage. But this doesn't really get to the bottom of the issue. If one looks closely, this episode seems to have a second less obvious theme. It is the teaching of "statute and commandment" and the promises about listening to God and obeying his command. How does the water story and this emphasis on God's law and the Children of Israel's acceptance of it become a single story? The RASHBAM (15:25) puts it in the following way: There He set for them statute and judgement and there He put them to the test: There at Mara, through the fabrication of a test - God made them thirst for water and then 'healed' the water for them - He began to demonstrate to them, that if they will keep the statutes and judgements which He will teach, He will provide their needs. The Rashbam notes an important side of this event. It is all a set-up by God! He led them on a route on which there would be no water, he guided them to the bitter "mara" waters and then he "healed" the waters making them fit for human consumption. Why is God doing this? The Rashbam explains that God is teaching the Jewish people the most basic of lessons. That the national fortune of this people is tied up with their adherence to the word of God. This lesson is one of the central themes of the Bible. God shows them how He can provide for

their basic necessities and - at precisely the same time - begins to talk about Torah and a new way of life. The verse tells us that they were taught "statute and judgements." According to RASHI, it was here that God presented Israel with their first commandments.

CONCLUSION If we are reading this episode correctly, we begin to realize that our parasha is the transition stage between God's miraculous leadership - the "mighty hand" of God - and the introduction of "the word of God." It is in this episode that we begin to see an overlap. Miraculous happenings and actual teaching of statutes. If we are correct in our thinking, we might dare to say that our parasha describes one of the most important spiritual journeys ever taken by man. It is the process whereby we emerged from the world of miracles to find a voice of religious teaching. It is the process which created the Torah and the Jewish people. Shabbat Shalom. FOOTNOTES: [1] There is an entire literature about the possible location, and method of this miracle. Which sea did they cross? Or was it simply a swamp which was relatively easy to cross? To my mind, all the discussions are academic and irrelevant for our purposes. However, one wishes to explain the details of this happening, it is clear that a sea turned into dry land just at the moment that the Israelites needed to cross. Its reversion back to its former state drowned the Egyptian army. That is pretty miraculous! [2] Other examples would be Exodus/Shemot 12:1, Numbers/Bamidbar 8:4. See Rashi in both instances. [3] It is interesting to note that the "sign" or "ot" in Hebrew is always directed at the Israelites, whereas, the "wonder" - "mofet" - maybe better translated as "proof" is directed at the non-believing Egyptians. (Check this out through the language of the verses themselves. Compare 4:7-8 - the "ot" - with 6:9 - the "mofet." Or see the precise language of 4:21 directed at Pharaoh compared with 4:30 directed at the Children of Israel.) [4] See Bamidbar 19:9. [5] Rav Yoel bin Nun once noted that just as the "Song at the Sea" - shirat ha-yam - concludes the section of J, History which is inspired by God's leadership in the mode of might and wonder, the song of "Ha'azinu" at the end of Devarim, closes the verbal leadership mode of Torah and speech. The first is a song of jubilant unexpected military victory. The second is a pensive look at the inner workings of Jewish history dependent on the adherence of the Children of Israel to God and his Torah. see <http://www.vbm-torah.org/thisweek.htm> Internet & e-mail list hosting for the VBM provided courtesy of: The Yerushalayim Network (<http://www.yerushalayim.net>) a Centennial Project of the Orthodox Union (<http://www.ou.org>) Copyright (c) 1998 Yeshivat Har Etzion.

From: Jonathan Schwartz[SMTP:jschwartz@yml.yu.edu]
Subject:Internet Chabura -- Parshas Beshalach

Prologue: The gusto that led Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim soon is met with a hint of reality. The Possukim tell us that Hashem was worried that if Bnei Yisroel were to see war in Eretz Plishtim, they might return to Mitzrayim out of fear. The Chofetz Chaim notes that Hashem was faced with a dilemma: Should he lead them through the dangers of the desert or lead them through the dangers (more spiritual) of contact with the foreign peoples of the land of Plishtim. The Chofetz Chaim notes that Hashem, more concerned with the spiritual peril of the vulnerable nation, sent them via the land of the desert with a promise to protect them and show them the way to survive, live and grow. Modern peril accompanies us often as we associate with the modern world. Often, technological advances offer us an opportunity to stop and remember that he who protected us in the desert, continues to protect us today. This is most often true on planes, and in travel which leads into this week's chaburah topic entitled:

Coming in for a Landing: HaGomel after a Plane trip The gemara in Berachos (54b) notes the 4 people who must give thanks for their saving from a perilous condition. Those who cross oceans, cross deserts, an ill person who is healed and one who is released from imprisonment are the ones included. Rashi explains that these 4 are unique because they have all left a situation of sakana. Rabbeinu Hai Gaon notes that these people are not listed as they appear in the Torah because the gemara selected to

enumerate those in a greater danger first. (See Rabbeinu Yona Berachos 54b) The great danger involved in ocean travel was enough of a reason to be mistaken the beracha of "gomel" in those days. In fact, the danger of seaward voyage was the greatest of these 4 dangers. Rabbeinu Yona notes that people who travel from city to city don't usually encounter dangers such as wild animals or robbers. As such, the French Rabbis were of the opinion that only those travelling through desert, where these perils were likely to occur, would "bentsch gomel". However, the Shiltei Gibborim (3) and the Rambam seem to imply that any intercity travel would be worthy of a gomel beracha. The Michaber (Orach Chaim 219:7) brings both of these opinions. Simply understood, the implications for airplane travel are clearly understood: Sepharadim who make berachos even for inter-city travel would clearly make a Gomel beracha. Others, who might not see airplane travel as fraught with the dangers of the type or level of desert crossing, would not bentsch gomel on airplane flights. This distinction is noted by Dayan Weiss (Shut Minchas Yitzchok 2:47) who quotes Rav Ovadiah Yosef (Shut Yabia Omer 2:14) and disagrees based upon the above machlokes.

Rabbi Breisch (Shut Chelkas Yaakov 2:9) argues that perhaps airplane travel is akin to sea voyages. Clearly a flight over an ocean would constitute crossing the ocean. He proves his point from Rashi in Yevamos (116b) who equates throwing something across an ocean to actually crossing it. However, he also quotes the Belzer rebbe who felt that since the Rivash seemed unsure one should bentsch gomel without Hashem's name.

Rav Breisch also quotes the Mogen Avraham (301:58) who says that when new things come up that didn't exist in the time of chazal, we do not include them in a new gezaira. Dayan Weiss responded to Rav Breisch that this Mogen Avraham has key implications in that technological advances clearly are part of nature and, as such, are not subject to bentsching Gomel. Thus, L'halacha, he holds one does not make a beracha when flying on a plane even crossing an ocean. From the Meiri (Berachos 54b) it seems that even if there was no actually sakanna, those in the category of these 4, must make a beracha of HaGomel. Additionally, one in a sakanna that does not fall in the category of these 4 would also bentsch gomel. Thus, according to the Meiri, a turbulent flight might constitute danger and would be subject to Birkas Hagomel. However, a regular flight might not. The Tzitz Eliezer (11:14) writes that there is almost no flight today that does not cross an ocean or a desert. As such, he writes that anyone in a plane could be chiyav Gomel and should bentsch accordingly. He cites the Aruch who feels that the peril of sea travel is greater because in a moment life could be lost. Notes the Tzitz Eliezer, this situation could apply to air travel as well - one crash and that's all. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Orach Chain 59) concurs and this seems to be the generally accepted practice of today.

Now, what about the din in a situation where one is on a Boston to NY Shuttle and there is no ocean or desert travel? The Tzitz Eliezer likens this situation to a short boat trip where the sakanna is not as real and therefore gomel would not be recited. The Lubavitcher Rebbe agreed (Teshuvot U'Beurim 62) and held that in situations such as those, one would not recite HaGomel.

Battala News Mazal Tov to Rabbi Yaakov Werblowsky upon his engagement to Tova Adlerstein Mazal Tov to Seth Grossman upon his engagement to Esther Resnick

From last week: Weekly-Halacha - Parshas Bo - Does Your Dog Keep Kosher? By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt But against all the Jewish people no dog shall whet its tongue... (11:7) As a reward for this, the Torah advises that treifah meat be given to the dogs (Rashi, Pesachim 22a) Non-Kosher Pet Food QUESTION: Does one have to check the ingredients of dog or cat food to make sure it is kosher? DISCUSSION: Pet food need not be kosher. It may not, however, contain basar b'chalav (a mixture of cooked meat and milk). The reason is that the Torah forbids one to derive any benefit from basar b'chalav. If it happened that meat and milk were inadvertently cooked together in one's kitchen, it would be prohibited to serve that mixture to the household pet. However, the only basar b'chalav mixture from which it is prohibited to derive benefit is a meat and milk mixture which the Torah forbids one to eat (asur min ha-Torah). If the prohibition is of Rabbinic origin (asur mi-d'Rabbanan), it is permitted to derive benefit from the mixture(1). Therefore: Only meat which was cooked over a fire [or if it was placed in a utensil which was once over a fire - kli rishon2] with milk is prohibited. If the meat was just soaked in milk [even if spices were added to the milk], it is permitted. If the meat was fried or deep-fried in a dairy substance, although there are some poskim(3) who allow its usage, the majority do not(4); The meat of fowl, when cooked together with milk [which is forbidden to eat only mi-d'Rabbanan], may be fed to a

pet(5); All chayav (non-domestic kosher beast) meat, e.g. deer, buffalo etc., cooked together with milk [which is forbidden to eat only mi-d'Rabbanan], may be fed to a pet(6); Meat of non-kosher species of animals, e.g. horse meat, that is cooked together with milk, may be fed to a pet(7); Some poskim hold that whey is not considered "milk" in regard to this halachah(8). There is a disagreement among the poskim concerning meat from a kosher animal which was rendered non-kosher, either because it was terminally ill (treifah) or because it was not slaughtered properly (neveilah). The Rambam(9) holds that benefit may be derived from this type of meat. [According to this view, the milk in which the meat was cooked would also be permitted(10).] Many other poskim, however, hold that one may not derive benefit from this type of meat and it may not be served to a pet(11). This seems to be the majority opinion(12).

The majority of the poskim agree that a mixture which cannot be served to one's own pet cannot be fed to another person's pet either, or even to a stray animal(13). It follows, therefore, that one has to check the ingredients of pet food to determine whether it contains a mixture of kosher animal meat cooked together with milk. Similarly, on Pesach one must check for any chametz ingredients before feeding a food item to his pet. If a forbidden mixture of basar b'chalav was inadvertently purchased or otherwise obtained, it may not be given to a non-Jew. Neither may it be disposed of in a way that another person could derive benefit from it, nor may it be burned, since the ashes and coals of basar b'chalav are also prohibited, and another person may come to derive benefit from them. The mixture can only be buried, thrown into a river or flushed down the toilet(14). Some poskim maintain that such a mixture may not remain in one's possession at all but must be disposed of as soon as one becomes aware of it(15).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Rama Y.D. 87:1. 2 R' Akiva Eiger Y.D. 81 based on O.C. 318:9 3 Chavas Da'as Y.D. 87; Aruch ha-Shulchan 87:11 4 Pri Megadim 87:1; Chochmas Adam 40:1; R' Akiva Eiger 87. 5 Y.D. 87:3. 6 Ibid. 7 Ibid. 8 There is a disagreement on this issue among the poskim, but many are lenient - see Badei ha-Shulchan 87:75. 9 On Mishnah Kerisus 3, quoted by Dagul Mi-revavah Y.D. 87, who holds that one may rely on this view so as not to incur a loss. 10 Chasam Sofer Y.D. 92. See also Chazon Ish Y.D. 22 who seems to oppose this. 11 Chasam Sofer Y.D. 92; Pri Megadim (pesicha); Chavas Da'as Y.D. 94:4 and others. 12 Badei ha-Shulchan Y.D. 87:25. 13 Mishnah Berurah O.C. 248:27-28. See Sha'ar ha-Tziyon (75) who quotes a more lenient view. See also Sdei Chemed vol.1, pg. 62. 14 Entire paragraph based on Pri Megadim Y.D. 87; Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 87:2; Aruch ha-Shulchan 87:7 15 See Badei ha-Shulchan Y.D. 87:8 who questions this requirement. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright (c) 1999 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Project Genesis, Inc. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross@torah.org . The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. http://www.torah.org/Baltimore, MD 21215 410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

weekly-halacha Parshas Beshalach-Opening Containerss on Shabbos SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS BESHALACH By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav. Tomorrow is a holy Sabbath to Hashem. Bake what you wish to bake and cook what you wish to cook (16:23)

OPENING CANS, BOTTLES AND BOXES ON SHABBOS: Rulings of Harav S.Z. Auerbach The complicated question of opening cans and bottles on Shabbos has been debated at great length among contemporary poskim. It would be nearly impossible to quote all the different opinions and views on this controversial issue, let alone to reach a consensus for practical application. For this reason, we have decided to follow the approach of the venerable halachic authority, Harav S.Z. Auerbach, who wrote extensively on this subject and is widely quoted by other authorities(1). Since some contemporary poskim follow other rulings, however, one should consult his own rav for guidance.

There are four possible Biblical or Rabbinic prohibitions one may violate when opening bottles or cans on Shabbos. They are: 1) tearing; 2) fashioning an opening; 3) completing the formation of a utensil; 4) erasing. Opening all bottles and containers before Shabbos avoids any actual or potential Shabbos violations, but if one forgot to do so there are still some solutions. BACKGROUND AND BASIC PRINCIPLES: Tosefta(2) cites the following halachic decision which is quoted by all the poskim(3): "It is permitted to rip the skin [in olden times, skins were used to seal barrels] off the top of a barrel on Shabbos [as long as there is no intention of creating a spout]." There is a great deal of controversy among the poskim as to why this is permitted, since it is prohibited to tear on Shabbos. Several explanations are given, but let us concentrate on the two basic approaches:

The Chazon Ish(4) explains that it is permitted because the ripping is done in a destructive manner. The person who opens the barrel has no interest in preserving the cover for later use. A melachah done in a destructive manner is not considered a melachah and is permissible even mi-d'Rabbanan. The Chazon Ish permits ripping off a salami wrapper, for example, since the wrapping is destroyed while it is being ripped. Thus, according to this approach, it is permitted to rip something on Shabbos only if the packaging will be destroyed as it is being opened. Other poskim(5), however, explain the Tosefta differently. The reason it is permitted to rip the skin off the barrel [or the wrapper off a package, etc.] is that the wrapper is totally "subordinate" to its contents. Removing the wrapper is like removing a nutshell from a nut or unwrapping the binding which surrounds dates from the fruit - both of which are clearly permissible according to the Shulchan Aruch(6). As long as one is tearing for the sake of removing contents from a package, it is permissible to tear. According to this approach, it makes no difference if the package is destroyed in the process or not. Even if the wrapper remains partially intact and is able to retain its contents, tearing is permitted. Harav S.Z. Auerbach's rulings are based on this explanation of the Tosefta.

This debate has ramifications for opening cans on Shabbos also. In the view of the Chazon Ish, when one opens a can one "completes the formation of a utensil." Before the can was opened it was a closed shell, unusable for anything. After it is opened it becomes a container which can serve as a utensil. Since it was not destroyed in the process of being opened, it is forbidden to be opened on Shabbos. [In the view of yet other poskim(7), opening a can is not "completing the formation of a utensil" but rather "breaking an existing utensil" which is also prohibited on Shabbos.] But the

other poskim mentioned earlier do not consider opening a can as "completing the formation of a utensil" [nor do they consider opening a can as "breaking an existing utensil"]. In their view, since cans are always discarded after their contents are removed, no usable utensil is created. Opening a can is merely like the peeling off of a "shell," which is a permissible activity. Indeed, if the can is made from durable material which is meant to last for a long time, then it is prohibited according to all poskim to open it on Shabbos, since none of the leniencies mentioned above apply. Harav S.Z. Auerbach rules in accordance with this view. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS: Bottle caps: Bottle caps which lift off with a bottle opener may be removed(8). Bottle caps which break when unscrewed and leave a ring around the bottle neck [and bottle caps which perforate along the edge when the bottle is opened(9)] are forbidden to be unscrewed(10), since the cap, which originally served as a seal, now becomes a functional cap which is used as a cover(11). Thus, the first time the cap is unscrewed, it completes the formation of a utensil - the bottle cap(12). [If, however, the bottle is opened with the intention of throwing away the cap, it may be permissible to unscrew it(13), but it is not advisable to rely on this(14)]. If, mistakenly, such a bottle was opened on Shabbos, it is permitted to drink the beverage. The bottle cap itself, however, is muktzeh(15). But only caps made out of metal are included in this prohibition. It is permissible to unscrew a plastic cap, even if it separates and leaves a ring around the bottle neck. This is because plastic caps are functional even before they are screwed onto a bottle [as opposed to metal ones which - due to technological differences - become operational only after being unscrewed from the bottle the first time(16)]. Often, people break off the sharp edges of a metal cap [which was opened before Shabbos] so that they will not injure themselves on them. It is prohibited to do so on Shabbos(17). TUNA CANS: Nowadays, it is permitted to open tuna cans on Shabbos since they are discarded after their contents are removed. Even though the contents of the can are not removed immediately, it is still not considered as if one is completing a utensil, since a tuna can has no purpose except to be opened and thrown away(18). It remains unclear, however, if it is permitted to remove the metal lid of a can which is meant to hold its contents for a lengthy period of time [such as a soup croutons can, for example] since this type of container is made to last for a longer period of time than a tuna can. Such cans are normally not emptied out right away, but are retained for as long as their contents last(19). SODA CANS: It is permitted to lift off the tab of a soda or beer can, whether one pours its contents into a cup, drinks from the can, or uses a straw(20). It is also permitted to poke a hole and insert a straw into bags or boxes which contain beverages(21). PACKAGING: It is permitted to rip off or tear a wrapper which surrounds wine or grape juice bottle caps, candy bars, etc. It is permitted to rip off a seal that covers the contents of a container, such as the inside seal of a coffee jar or an aluminum foil seal on a yogurt container, etc. When tearing any packaging, one must be sure that no letters or pictures are torn. It is permitted to cut or tear between the letters of a word or between words(22). BOXES: It is permitted to open any box or bag, even if one does not immediately empty out its contents and even if the box or bag is not destroyed in the process. It makes no difference if the box is made out of carton, plastic or paper, nor does it make a difference if the box contains food or something else such as medicine, clothing or toys. It is only prohibited to open a container which is made of strong, long-lasting material such as a barrel or a corrugated box which will be kept for a long time(23). MILK CONTAINERS: It may be permitted to open the spout of a milk or juice container(24). Even though one is creating a spout when opening the container, it is not considered fashioning an opening or tearing. Whenever possible, however, it is clearly preferable to open a milk bottle before Shabbos(25). [Another permissible way of getting milk or juice out of a carton is by puncturing the bottom of the container before opening the spout(26).] General note: Even if one mistakenly opened a can or a bottle in a manner which is clearly prohibited, it is not forbidden to eat the food or beverage(27). FOOTNOTES: 1 The footnotes will reflect other opinions as well. 2 Beitzah 3:9. 3 Beis Yosef, Magen Avraham and Mishnah Berurah 314:25. See also Shulchan Aruch Harav 12 and Chayei Adam 29:4. 4 O.C. 51:13; 61:2. For a complete understanding of the view of Chazon Ish, see Respona K'nei Bosesem 1:22. 5 Shevitas ha-Shabbos, pg. 12b; Chazon Yechezkel (hashmatos to Toseta Shabbos); Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa and Tikunim u'Miluim 9:11 and responsum in Binyan Shabbos, second edition, pg. 209. See also Igras Moshe O.C. 1:122 for a complete explanation. 6 O.C. 314:8. 7 Tehillah l'David 314:12. 8 Mishnah Berurah 314:17; Chazon Ish 51:11. 9 Harav S.Z. Auerbach in a written responsum published in Me'or ha-Shabbos vol. 1, pg. 481; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9 note *61. 10 One may, however, puncture a hole in the cap and then unscrew it - Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9:17, or better yet, puncture a wide hole in the cap and then pour the beverage through the punctured hole - Melech Shabbos, pg. 344. 11 Even if the cap was partially unscrewed before Shabbos, but it remained attached to the ring, it is prohibited to unscrew it further on Shabbos - Binyan Shabbos pg. 139; Melech Shabbos, pg. 343. 12 Harav S.Z. Auerbach in Minchas Shelomo, pg. 551 and in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9:17. While many prominent poskim (Harav Y.Y. Weiss quoted in Divrei Moshe O.C. 12-13; Harav S. Vozner quoted in Shomer Shabbos Ka-das; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv quoted in Shalmei Yehudah pg. 104; Az Nidberu 3:40) agree with this ruling, there are other poskim (Harav Y.Y. Fischer in Even Yisrael vol. 2:14; Tzitz Eliezer 14:45; Yechaveh Da'as 2:42; L'horos Nasan 7:21; Kinyan Torah 4:34; Harav Y. Roth in Ohr ha-Shabbos, vol. 11) who do not. They allow all bottle caps to be opened. Igras Moshe does not address this issue, and there are conflicting reports as to what Harav M. Feinstein's opinion was. 13 Harav S.Z. Auerbach in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9 note 61 and in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 480. See explanation in Binyan Shabbos, pg. 143. Other poskim do not agree with this leniency - see Divrei Moshe O.C. 12-13 and Melech Shabbos, pg. 342. 14 Harav S.Z. Auerbach, written responsum published in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 2, pg. 584, reevaluating his original lenient ruling quoted in the above footnote. 15 Harav S.Z. Auerbach, written responsum published in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 2, pg. 612. 16 Harav S.Z. Auerbach in Tikunim u'Miluim pg. 14 and in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 481-482. See further explanation in Binyan Shabbos, pg. 94. [Harav Y.Y. Weiss is quoted (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 42, pg. 14) as prohibiting plastic caps as well.] It is also permitted to remove the plastic caps that are opened by tearing a narrow strip connected to the bottom of the cap - Binyan Shabbos, pg. 94 quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach. 17 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Binyan Shabbos, pg. 97). 18 Harav S.Z. Auerbach in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9:3, in Tikunim u'Miluim 9:11 and in Binyan Shabbos, pg. 127. Although there are other poskim (Igras Moshe 1:122; Minchas Yitzchak 4:82; Chelkas Yaakov 3:8) who agree with this leniency in principle, there are other poskim (Chazon Ish 51:11; Az Nidberu 11:12) who do not. In order to satisfy the views of the other poskim (see Igras Moshe who is hesitant about this leniency), it is best to first puncture the

can and then open it on the other end. 19 Harav S.Z. Auerbach did not give a definitive ruling on this issue (see Binyan Shabbos first edition pg. 128 and second edition, pg. 208). See also Tikunim u'Miluim 9:11. 20 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (written responsum published in Binyan Shabbos, second edition, pg. 209, in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 490 and 528); also quoted by Harav Y.Y. Neuwirth (published in Moriah, vol. 109-110 (Nisan 5752) and vol. 211-212 (Tamuz 5752)). There are other poskim who do not agree with this leniency, see Ohr l'Tziyon (Harav B.Z.A. Shaul) 26 who only allows opening a can part of the way. Surely the poskim who forbid opening a can of tuna also forbid the opening of a can of soda, even partially. 21 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Binyan Shabbos, pg. 127). 22 Entire paragraph based on rulings of Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9:11-12; Tikunim u'Miluim 9:11; Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 496) based on Mishnah Berurah 314:25. Rabbi P.E. Falk (Zachor v'Shamor, sec. 33, pg. 13, concerning cutting a cake with pictures on it) maintains that "pretty patterns such as a zig-zag design along the edges, criss-cross lines running across the surface, etc.," are not considered as pictures and it is permissible to cut them. 23 Entire paragraph based on Tikunim u'Miluim 9:11. See also Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 15:80 [and note 249] quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach. We have previously explained that the Chazon Ish prohibited opening boxes or bags unless they are torn "in a destructive manner," i.e., they are immediately destroyed and their contents are removed. 24 Although no ruling of Harav S.Z. Auerbach's concerning milk containers is published, we have nevertheless quoted this leniency based on the opinions of Harav Auerbach's son, Harav E. Auerbach, and Harav C. Cohen [author of Binyan Shabbos and a close disciple of Harav Auerbach who spent many hours discussing these matters with him], since in their view Harav Auerbach would have permitted this. See Binyan Shabbos, second edition, pg. 222. 25 See Igras Moshe O.C. 4:78 who explicitly forbids the opening of a milk bottle. 26 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9 note 20 quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach. 27 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 9:23; Harav S.Z. Auerbach in Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 527 and vol. 2, pg. 612. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright (c) 1999 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Project Genesis, Inc. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross@torah.org. The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. http://www.torah.org/Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

The Weekly Daf #259 Yoma 23 - 29 Parshas Beshalach /www.ohr.org.il/yomi/yomi259.htm
Running For or Against The original system for determining which kohen would be privileged to perform any of the sacred services in the Beis Hamikdash went like this: A call was issued asking for volunteers. If there were more than one, they were told to race up the 32-cubit ramp leading to the altar. The first to reach the top four cubits of the ramp won. In case of a tie, all the kohanim of the family unit on duty gathered and a lottery was conducted. This system was eventually abandoned due to the following incidents: First there was the case of the kohen who became so incensed seeing his competitor reach the finish line first that he drew a knife and stabbed him to death. As terrible a tragedy as it was, this did not yet lead to an abandonment of the system since it was viewed as a one-time aberration of an individual, and not indicative of any general risk. In a later race, one of the kohanim accidentally pushed a competitor off the ramp, causing him to break a leg. Once the Sages saw that there was a general danger involved they abandoned the race system in favor of a lottery. This gemara leaves us with an obvious difficulty in understanding how the Sages were not aware at the outset of the danger involved in a race such as this. One of the great Chassidic leaders, the Rebbe of Kotzk, is reported to have offered this explanation: The idea of the race was that the kohen most enthusiastic about performing the sacred service would muster the drive to run faster than those less consumed with this holy passion. In the earlier generations this system worked perfectly because when the call came forth "who wishes to perform the service?" the kohanim said to themselves "Hashem wants someone to perform His service!" and they went forward with zeal. When this is the motivation, no kohen will be so vicious as to stab a competitor, or so careless as to push him, because his motive is that the service be performed, not that he be the one to perform it. As the generations degenerated, the response to the call was "I must have the honor of performing the service!" Where ego is involved and personal honor is the motivation, a race can indeed become dangerous. * Yoma 23a
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From: owner-daf-insights[SMTP:owner-daf-insights@shemaisrael.com] Subject: Insights to the Daf: Yoma 18-25 INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld daf@shemaisrael.com.il
Yoma 18 has been dedicated by Zvi and Tamarah Sand of Har Nof, Yerushalayim, in memory of Tamarah's grandfather, Chanan (ben Yakov) Bromberg, on his Yahrzeit.
Yoma 20b AGADAH: SOLAR SAWDUST QUESTION: Rav Levi asked why a person's voice is not heard as well during the day as it is at night. He answered that it is "because of the sound produced by the sun's disc as it saws its way through the firmament like a sawyer cutting down cedars." The Gemara discusses this "sun dust" further and says that "the dust which can be discerned hanging in the air where the sun shines is the sawdust that is produced by the sun's progress. It is referred to in Hebrew as Lo -- 'nothingness.' This is what Nevuchadnezzar referred to when he said (Da niel 4:32), 'All of the inhabitants of the earth are as Lo [to Hashem].'" What is this "sun dust," and what does it mean that the sun "saws its way through the firmament?" ANSWER: [I] The Gemara (Sotah 10a) tells us that the Hebrew word for "sun" -- "Shemesh" -- can be used as an appellation for Hashem, as it says, "Hashem is a Shemesh and a shield" (Tehilim 84:12). Why should the sun be called by the same word that denotes its Creator?

David ha'Melech wrote, "The heavens proclaim the glory of Hashem... The sun appears like a groom coming out of his bridal canopy; it rejoices like an athlete running his course. It emerges from one edge of the sky and it goes around to the other; no one can escape its heat" (Tehilim 19:2-7). In what way do "the heavens proclaim the glory of Hashem?" Through the sun's great night, Hashem's power is demonstrated. This colossal nuclear furnace is the source of all life on earth. The sun, our only directly observable star, is the greatest public demonstration of the awesome might and glory of Hashem. This may explain why the word "Shemesh," which is used to describe Hashem, was borrowed as a name for the sun, His great emissary on this world. After all, an emissary is entitled to go by the name of his dispatcher. The sun is the great witness to Hashem's power in this world [II] RABEINU BACHYE (introduction to Parshas Yisro; see also Kli Yakar, Bereishis 32:27) uses this idea to explain a Gemara in Bava Basra (16b). The Gemara there relates, quoting Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, that there was a precious stone that hung from the neck of Abraham Avinu. Whoever was sick would come and gaze at the stone and be healed. When Abraham died, Hashem hung the stone on the sphere of the sun. Rabeinu Bachye notes that the Gemara is comparing Abraham's capability to "enlighten people's eyes," in a spiritual sense, to a brilliant gem. The Gemara said that the gem hung from his neck, because speech emanates from one's throat which is in the neck, and it was through his words that Abraham was able to enlighten the spiritually ill. When Abraham died, he left behind no other human being who was capable of demonstrating Hashem's unity and greatness to others. This capability now rested only with the sun, as it says, "The heavens proclaim the glory of Hashem." [III] This is the deeper meaning in our Gemara as well. The nighttime represents the period when, without the bright sun shining on the land, we do not see Hashem's hand clearly in the world. It is under the cover of night that a person is particularly susceptible to the persuasions of the forces of evil. The darkness of night allows a person to forget his Creator. When Rav Levi asked, "Why is the voice of person heard better at night," he meant, "Why is a *person* dominated by his physical, worldly impulses at night more than by day?" His answer was that by day, the sun can be heard boring through the heavens like a man sawing through cedars. The daytime is dominated by the "voice" of the sun, that great harbinger of Hashem's mighty presence. This bolsters a person's faith and makes him less susceptible to the persuasions of the Yetzer ha'Ra. The manner in which the sun cuts through the firmament is compared to "a man cutting through cedars." The tall, erect cedar tree is used by the Torah as a symbol of haughtiness (Rashi, Vayikra 14:4). As the sun cuts its way through the heavens, Hashem cuts down the haughty. The sun humbles the arrogant by openly demonstrating Hashem's power. "The dust which can be discerned hanging in the air where the sun shines is the sawdust that is produced by the sun's progress." The dust that reflects light in the sun's rays reminds us of the lesson in humility that we derive from the sun. Wherever the sun shines, we are reminded that, "You are dust, and to dust you will return" (Bereishis 3:19). We are made aware of the overwhelming power of Hashem compared to our own feebleness. This is precisely the context in which "Lo" is quoted in Daniel -- "All of the inhabitants of the world are like nothingness [to Hashem]." This, then, is the lesson of the sun's "sawing," a lesson of which we are reminded every time we see dust suspended in a beam of sunlight. Our Gemara, rather than being a lesson in ancient astronomy, is actually a deep philosophical lesson of faith in Hashem. (M. Kornfeld; see "Be'er Hagolah," ch. 6, for the Maharal's approach to this Agadah.)

YOMA 21 - Dedicated to the memory of Moshe Simcha ben Dovid Z"L Rubner by his parents, Dovid and Zahava Rubner of Petach Tikva.

Yoma 21 "OMDIM TZEUFUM, MISHTACHAVIM REVACHIM" AGADAH: Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav that when multitudes of Jews would crowd into the Beis ha'Mikdash during each of the Shalosh Regalim, a miracle occurred. When they stood in the Azarah, they were crowded, but when they bowed down, they had plenty of room. The Gemara says that this is one of the ten miracles which occurred in the Beis ha'Mikdash. RAV YONASAN EIBESHITZ (Ahavas Yonasan) explains this miracle as follows. The Gemara in Berachos (6a), in a discussion about Shedim, says that at the periodic public lecture prior to the festivals, at which many people gathered to learn about the Halachos of the upcoming festival, the crowded feeling that was experienced was due to the presence of Shedim. The Gemara in Kidushin (29b) relates that there was a certain Shed, which had the appearance of a seven-headed serpent, terrorizing the Beis ha'Midrash. Rav Acha went into the Beis ha'Midrash, and when the Shed attacked him, he bowed down to Hashem in prayer. When he bowed down, one head of the Shed fell off. He bowed seven times until the seven heads of the Shed had fallen off and the Shed was dead. From there we see that one way to destroy Shedim is by bowing down to Hashem. The crowded feeling the Jews felt during Regalim in the Beis ha'Mikdash, like the crowded feeling during the gatherings to teach the Halachos of the Regalim, was due to Shedim. However, when the people bowed down to Hashem, their acceptance of Malchus Shamayim caused the (momentary) destruction of the Shedim, eliminating the crowded feeling! (Cited by EINEY SHMUEL)

22b AGADAH: SHA'UL'S MISGIVINGS QUESTION: Rav Mani expounds the verse, "And he fought in the brook" (Shmuel I 15:5) to mean that Sha'ul fought with himself about the brook. When Hashem told Sha'ul ha'Melech to go and destroy Amalek, Sha'ul said to himself, "If for one dead soul (a person found killed on the roadside) the Torah tells us to bring an Eglah Arufah, then all the more so for all of these souls! And if the men sinned, did the animals sin? And even if the adults sinned, did the children sin?" What did Sha'ul mean? What was his logic in contesting the command of Hashem? Is it possible that Sha'ul, who is called the "chosen one of Hashem," doubted the justice of Hashem's command?

ANSWERS: (a) To better understand Sha'ul's intentions, we must ask another question. Why was Eglah Arufah the only source that Sha'ul found with which to stress the value of human life? Why did he not simply quote the verse, "One who kills another man should be put to death" (Shemos 21:12)? The answer to this may be based on an analysis of Sha'ul's eventual sin. We are told that in the end, Sha'ul did not kill the animals of Amalek, preferring to use them as sacrifices to Hashem. It may be that he felt some specific *need* to offer sacrifices now, perhaps as an atonement for the eradication of an entire nation. Although Sha'ul was prepared to keep the word of Hashem and entertained no rebellious thoughts, his calculation was intended to show simply that killing Amalek's sheep and children was something essentially "wrong" and demanding atonement. (That is, perhaps, in Sha'ul's view, it was only necessary to kill the livestock and babes in order to insure that the Jews would actually destroy every living adult in Amalek, for had they not concentrated on a complete abolition, they would not have kept even this crucial part of the command properly. Therefore, Sha'ul saw the deaths of the cattle and children as a symptom

of his people's lack of eagerness in the execution of the Divine will. This view, however, may have been based on a misinterpretation of the verse in the Torah describing the necessity of destroying Amalek. Sha'ul may have read the verse as, "Eradicate every male (Zecher) of Amalek," mispronouncing the vowels of "Zecher." The verse actually says, "Eradicate every 'trace' (Zeicher) of Amalek." It was this very mistake that is attributed to Yoav, the commander-in-chief of the Jewish forces a short while after Sha'ul's reign (see Bava Basra 21a). According to the traditional reading, it would be clear that the destruction of the livestock was just as important as the killing of Amalek's men (see Rashi, Devarim 25:19). Support for this hypothesis can be found in Pirkei d'Rebbi Eliezer (ch. 44), which relates the episode mentioned in our Gemara and adds another detail to Sha'ul's argument: "Even if the men sinned, the *women* did not sin." This clearly indicates that in Sha'ul's mind, only the *males* of Amalek ought to have been killed). If so, it is clear why Sha'ul quoted only the verse about Eglah Arufah, where a "sacrificial" atonement for killing is involved, and not the verse which prescribes the death sentence for a killer. He wanted to justify saving Amalek's livestock by using them for sacrificial offerings of atonement for the destruction of Amalek! (IYUN YAKOV and RABEINU CHANANEL) (b) The KEHILLOS YITZCHAK (Parshas Shoftim), in the name of Rav Yakov, the "Magid" of Vilna at the time, offers another approach to this Midrash. In the end of Parshas Shoftim and beginning of Ki Setze, the Torah discusses various details involving the Halachos of waging of war. In the middle of these laws, we find the Parshah of Eglah Arufah! The appearance of Eglah Arufah here seems totally out of place. (In fact, it seems that an Eglah Arufah is not even brought during times of war, see Sotah 45b.) Rav Yakov of Vilna explains that specifically in times of war it is necessary to remember the laws of Eglah Arufah. After participating in the waging of a war, even if the war is necessary for the survival and protection of the Jewish nation, the warriors undoubtedly become somewhat desensitized and "accustomed" to seeing death and killing. It is therefore necessary to remind them of the importance of a human life. Otherwise, they might take the lessons of war into their peacetime lives, which would certainly be tragic. This is why the Parshah of Eglah Arufah appears here -- to remind the soldiers that even one killing demands the attention of all the elders of Israel. This, too, was Sha'ul's intention. Sha'ul was keenly aware of the section of the Torah that deals with the laws of war (see Shmuel I 8:20). If so, Sha'ul undoubtedly studied this particular Parshah very well. Sha'ul was not intending to belittle the command instructing him to eradicate all traces of Amalek. Rather, he found it necessary to teach his troops, while on the way to war, the immortal lesson of the importance of a human life, just as the Torah teaches this lesson in the section dealing with war.

What, then, was Sha'ul's sin? The Torah only reminds us of Eglah Arufah in the section *following* the one dealing with the actual waging of the war. Only after the will Hashem has been fulfilled and the war is over does the time come to remind us to be aghast of a killing. Sha'ul's mistake was teaching his soldiers (and himself) this lesson *before* the actual war! There is a time for everything. If one gives a talk on the value of human life on the way to a war, it is destined to affect the success of the battle. As we see, Sha'ul and the nation were so affected that they "had mercy on Agag and on the finest of the sheep" and did not carry out the full word of Hashem!

(c) RAV SHALOM SHVADRON, zt'l, the famed "Magid" of Yerushalayim, gave an original approach to this issue (which the present writer heard from him personally). Rav Shalom quoted the RAMBAM in his preface to Avos (ch. 6 of the Shemonah Perakim) who points out an apparent disparity between the view of the philosophers and the view of our Sages, regarding the service of Hashem. The philosophers believe that one who innately desires to do good is on a higher spiritual level than one who desires to do bad but constantly subdues his innate urge. Verses in Mishlei seem to support this view. Why then, asks the Rambam, do we find that "one should not say I do not desire to eat milk and meat, or wear Sha'atnez, but rather I desire them, yet I shall refrain from them against my desires, because my Father in heaven has decreed upon me such" (Toras Kohanim, cited by Rashi Vayikra 20:26)? The Rambam answers that both views are correct and they supplement each other. An act that logically ought to have been outlawed even had the Torah not been given -- such as murder, theft, property damage or disgracing others, or any of the acts which cause damage to society at large -- certainly must be considered obnoxious and unsavory even to a person on a low spiritual level. It is to these acts which the philosophers referred. However, an act that does not seem to carry any evil ramifications but was outlawed by the Torah for reasons beyond our grasp, should be avoided only "because my Father in heaven has decreed upon me such." Sha'ul could not understand the necessity of killing out the entire nation of Amalek. Nevertheless, he undoubtedly accepted the word of Hashem, just as he accepted the other decrees of the Torah that do not seem to have a backing in our logic, such as not wearing Sha'atnez. As such, he felt that the best way to perform this Mitzvah would be with the attitude that "I shall perform this act against my desires, because my Father in heaven has decreed upon me such." To this end, he brought home clearly to himself the importance of a human life -- not to doubt the integrity of the word of the Almighty, but rather to the contrary, in order to fulfill his Mitzvah in the best possible manner, as the Rambam described. His mistake was thinking that killing is always, and absolutely, cruel. Putting to death a confirmed murderer, though, is not a cruel act at all. It is, if anything, a logical act and even one of mercy (see Targum Yonasan and Koheles Rabah [7:17] on, "Al Tehi Tzadik Harbeh"), since "One who shows mercy towards the cruel will eventually show cruelty towards the merciful" (Koheles Rabah 7:17). Sha'ul should have convinced himself of the necessity and justice involved in the destruction of Amalek. Then he undoubtedly would not have "had mercy on Agag and the finest of the sheep" and would not have strayed from the letter of the law as presented to him by Shmuel the prophet!

KING DAVID'S "GOOD FORTUNE" The Gemara quotes Rav Huna who exclaimed that how fortunate is the person whom Hashem assists, for we find that Sha'ul sinned once and lost his kingdom because of it, while David sinned twice but did not lose his kingdom as a result. Hashem helped David but not Sha'ul. Why did Hashem help David more? If it was because David was a greater Tzadik than Sha'ul, then the Gemara should say so, instead of implying that they were equal in terms of Ma'asim Tovim and David's good fortune was just a matter of his "good fortune!" ANSWERS: (a) The GEVURAS ARI explains that the assistance granted by Hashem is certainly not dependent on Mazal. Rather, David ha'Melech was Zocheh to Hashem's help for a different reason. David ha'Melech was Mekabel Yisurim b'Ahavah -- he accepted with love all of the afflictions that occurred to him, and he sang to Hashem to thank Him for all of his experiences. Sha'ul, on the other hand, did not express gratitude to Hashem when he suffered afflictions. In the

merit of accepting everything b'Ahavah, David became the recipient of Hashem's expressions of love for him and He pardoned him for his sins. (b) The VILNA GA'ON (Kol Eliyahu #203) writes that the difference between David and Sha'ul did, in some way, depend on their Mazal. The two kings were equal in their Ma'asim Tovim. However, Sha'ul was born with a natural tendency to be humble and with an inborn propensity for doing Ma'asim Tovim. David, on the other hand, was born with a tendency to be prideful and with an attraction towards warfare, and he did not have the same inclination to do Ma'asim Tovim as Sha'ul had. (He was an "Admoni.") Therefore, even though they were equal in the amount of Ma'asim Tovim which they did, David had to struggle much harder to reach that level. Since David overcame his natural tendencies, Hashem rewarded him measure for measure and Hashem's mercy overcame His will to deal justice to David ha'Melech for his sins. He dealt with David with "Erech Apayim," and accepted David's Teshuvah.

Yoma 23 HOW FORGIVING MUST A TALMID CHACHAM BE QUESTION: The Gemara says that a Talmid Chacham should not forego his honor when he is slighted, but he should remember the affront in his heart, unless the offender asks him for forgiveness. How are we to reconcile this Gemara with the Gemara in Megilah (28a) which relates that Mar Zutra, before going to sleep each night, used to forgive everyone who slighted him?

ANSWERS: (a) MAHARSHA answers that Mar Zutra forgave only those who apologized to him. Even though there were some whom he did not forgive right away, by the time he went to sleep he was ready to forgive everyone. He did not forgive those who did not apologize to him, as our Gemara says. (b) The RITVA says that it is not reasonable to answer that Mar Zutra only forgave those who apologized to him. If someone apologized to him, he certainly would forgive that person right away. Rather, the Ritva explains that our Gemara is talking about when someone insulted him with regard to "Mili d'Shemaya," matters pertaining to Torah and Mitzvos. When it comes to such matters, a Talmid Chacham should not forgive or forget the offense to the honor of the Torah. When it comes to insults pertaining to "Mili d'Alma," worldly matters, though, one should certainly be forgiving with a full heart, as Mar Zutra was. (c) The KESEF MISHNAH (end of Hilchos Talmud Torah) points out that the RAMBAM answered this question by explaining that our Gemara, when it says that a Talmid Chacham should not forgive an offense done to him, refers to when someone

publicly disgraced the Talmid Chacham. He should keep such an offense in his heart until the perpetrator apologizes. If, however, the affront was done only in private, then he should forgive the perpetrator even in his heart, as Mar Zutra did. (This is based on a logic similar to that of the answer of the Ritva, for a public affront to a Talmid Chacham is in itself an affront to the honor of the Torah.) (d) Perhaps RASHI is addressing this question. When the Gemara says that a Talmid Chacham should remember in his heart what was done to him, Rashi explains that it means that the Talmid Chacham should *forgive* the perpetrator wholeheartedly, but that if someone else wants to do justice for the Talmid Chacham then he should not stop him from doing so. The other person should not be stopped, perhaps, because that person is acting on behalf of the honor of the Torah.

As far as his personal feelings are concerned, though, the Talmid Chacham should forgive the offense entirely (and that is what Mar Zutra did), and not take any punitive action at all for fear that personal revenge, and not just Kavod ha'Torah, is motivating the act.

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