

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BESHALACH - 5760

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PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

The Bnei Yisrael were armed when they went up from the land of Egypt. (13:18) The simple translation of "chamushim" is armed. Klal Yisrael were prepared for the possibility of attack. Targum Yonasan ben Uziel says the root of chamushim is chamesh, five. Consequently, he asserts that each family went out with five children. Targum Yerushalmi suggests that chamushim means armed, but this is not a reference to war. Rather, it alludes to being armed with mitzvos. Klal Yisrael feared no enemy. They had the ultimate protection - mitzvos. Lastly, Rashi cites Chazal who maintain that chamushim is derived from the word "chamesh," five, meaning that only one-fifth of Klal Yisrael left Egypt. The other four-fifths were Jews who were enamored with Egyptian culture, who had regrettably acculturated. For some reason, they thought that they would eventually be accepted as Egyptians. They did not want to leave. They all perished, however, during the three days of makas choshech, the plague of darkness.

Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, zl, suggests that all three expositions complement one another. He questions Targum Yonasan who contends that each family left with five children. Is it possible that each family had only five children? No source supports this idea. Furthermore, how is it that previously they had had no mitzvos? They had been considered naked/bereft of zechusim, merits, that would warrant and support their redemption. Indeed, Hashem "gave" them the mitzvos of Korban Pesach and Bris Milah, so that they would have something "to show" for themselves. Yet, the Targum relates that they left Egypt armed with merits. What were these newly discovered merits?

The Torah is, therefore, suggesting that while four-fifths of the Jews died, their children remained alive and well - orphans with nowhere to go, no one to care for them. We may conjecture that since everyone left Egypt, it must have been the remaining one-fifth, the righteous Jews who were left, that cared for these orphans. Targum Yonasan means that each of the surviving families who left Egypt cared for four families of orphans. In other words, each family had five families of children: its own, and four families of orphans. The Torah lauds these virtuous Jews for their magnanimous support of the many orphans. They cared for them, took them into a wilderness, even though they knew not from where the food for their own children would come. These are the good deeds, the wonderful merits, to which the Targum Yerushalmi refers.

We still must understand why the Torah chooses this juncture to tell us that these good deeds helped to catalyze Klal Yisrael's release from Egypt. Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, explains that specifically at this point -- when Klal Yisrael stood at the threshold of the wilderness, a place infested with dangerous creatures, with no food or water, surrounded by menacing nations bent on destroying them -- they needed special zechusim, merits. They had to rely solely upon their Father in Heaven, the Almighty Who protects them from danger. Hashem Yisborach, the Avi Yesomim, Father of Orphans, looked at Klal Yisrael, at a People who had opened their hearts and homes to thousands of orphans. They had committed to caring for Hashem's yesomim; He would, in turn, care for them. There is no greater zechus than that of caring for someone who has been left bereft of his parents.

There is an incredible story that demonstrates this idea: The Yid HaKodesh of Peshischa was once studying an intricate passage in the

B'S'D'almud with his students. One of the students asked a profound question that literally stumped everyone - including the Rebbe. He became so totally engrossed in the subject that he lost perception of where he was. One of his metzuyanim, prized students, was an orphan who had lost his father. Food was a problem for most people in those days, and it certainly was an issue for a family who did not have a father to supply material support. This student was starved, not having eaten all day. Suspecting that the Rebbe would be involved in deep thought for some time, he decided that he would quickly run home to grab something to eat, so that he could better concentrate on his studies.

He ran home, ate quickly, and was almost out the door when his mother called him to give her a hand for a moment. If he could only climb up to the attic to bring down a sack of straw. Surprisingly, the young man turned to his mother and said, "I am late for shiur, I am afraid the Rebbe is ready to explain the answer. I cannot afford to be late." Recognizing her son's concern, the mother sighed and said to herself, "Fine, my son, go back to your learning. I really should not have asked your help. But what can I do? I am a widow who has no one at home but you."

The student ran back to the shiur. Suddenly it dawned on him that he had been neglectful of derech erez, respect, for his mother. Learning Torah is all-important, but it is also all encompassing. What benefit was his Torah learning if it did not bring to action? He quickly ran back home and apologized to his mother. After he brought down the sack of straw, he left. His mother called out to him, "I hope you did not miss your shiur." As he walked through the door of his Rebbe's home, the Rebbe picked up his head and smiled at him, "What great mitzvah did you perform that you are worthy of such a dignified escort? Do you know who accompanied you here?" The young man, not knowing to what the Rebbe was referring, just stood there, shamefaced, wondering what it was that the Rebbe saw that he could not. The Rebbe continued speaking, "When you entered the room I noticed the great amora Abaye escorting you. He enlightened me by clarifying the Talmudic passage that had us stumped. Tell me, what is it that you did that made you worthy of such a distinguished escort?"

Apparently ashamed, the young man related to the Rebbe all that had occurred, how he had left shiur, refused to help his mother, and ultimately had returned because of his responsibility as a son. Hearing this, the holy Rebbe patted his student on the shoulder as he explained the following: "Abaye was an orphan from both his father and his mother. His tragic circumstance led to his being named Abaye, which is an abbreviation of asher b'cha yerucham yasom, for it is with You (Hashem) that an orphan finds pity (Hoshea 14:4). Abaye never had the opportunity to honor his parents. The beautiful mitzvah of Kibud Av v'Eim was taken from him. Since he died, his spirit pays tribute to those who go out of their way to fulfill the mitzvah that eluded him during his lifetime. It was Abaye who clarified the Talmudic passage to me." How much more meaning does this story give to the mitzvah of honoring our parents!

Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him. (13:19)

Chazal note that only Moshe Rabbeinu took the responsibility for Yosef's remains. The rest of Klal Yisrael was occupied in "fulfilling" the injunction to relieve the Egyptians of their valuables. In doing so, Moshe exemplified Shlomo Ha'melech's dictum, "Chacham lev yikach mitzvos," "The wise of heart takes mitzvos." (Mishlei 10:8) In other words, a wise person devotes himself to the performance of mitzvos. Although requesting the Egyptian valuables was also a mitzvah, a wise man is able to distinguish between mitzvos. To paraphrase Horav Baruch Sorotzkin, zl, "A wise person knows which mitzvah to take." While engaging in transporting Yosef's remains may not have manifested the same material advantage as collecting the Egyptian valuables, its spiritual benefit certainly was greater.

Nachlas Tzvi notes that if all of Klal Yisrael was occupied in executing a single mitzvah, then Yosef became a "meis mitzvah," a corpse who had no one to care for him. Attending to this corpse's burial had the highest priority. Indeed, the care of a meis mitzvah precedes the mitzvah of Talmud Torah. He cites a powerful story which demonstrates the reward for one who is osek, occupies himself, in the burial of a meis mitzvah.

A Jewish businessman was once returning to Brooklyn, New York, from a business trip to Albany. Having been delayed, he left at nightfall for what should have been a routine trip. In addition to already being fatigued, he drove into a torrential downpour that delayed him even more. Realizing that it was probably too dangerous for him to continue his trip to Brooklyn, he began looking for a motel to spend the night. At the next tollbooth, he questioned the attendant for directions to the nearest motel. He was told that the closest motel was at least twenty-five miles away. There was, however, a geriatric center where he might conceivably find a place to sleep. Upon arriving at the home, he asked the head nurse if they had an "extra bed" for the night. He was told that while this was highly irregular, they would help him - just until the morning. It seems that a patient had just expired and his bed was available until the morning, when they would clean up the room in preparation for the next patient. Having no recourse, he took the bed and immediately fell asleep.

Morning came very quickly, as an attendant came and woke him, explaining that he was here to clean up the room. Curiosity overtook the person, and he decided to find out in whose bed he had slept. Looking through the effects of the deceased, he saw a wallet with an identification card in the name of "David Almoni." He was shocked that a Jew had spent his last months in a Catholic nursing home. He questioned the attendant regarding the release of the remains. He was told that if there was no family to claim the body, he was to be buried in a private cemetery owned by the diocese, sort of a private "Potters field." Incidentally, "David Almoni" had no family and would be buried in the Catholic tradition in their cemetery.

Sensing that there was a providential factor in his spending the night in this home, the businessman offered to claim the body and bury it in a Jewish cemetery. The administrator of the home was certainly no friend of the Jews and did not expend any extra effort to accommodate his request. Stubbornness gave way to the businessman's persistence. After signing the necessary papers, the businessman was able to claim "David Almoni's" body. With the help of a few of the home's workers, he was able to place the casket with the body into his van. He left for Brooklyn on a mission to see to it that this niftar, deceased, would be availed a Jewish burial.

He came to his shul and asked the president how to go about burying a meis mitzvah. The president told him that he was aware that the Chevrah Kadisha of Washington Heights had access to a small plot of land in which ten gravesites were designated for such a need. He immediately called the Chevrah Kadisha in Washington Heights and related to them the entire story. They, of course, did their own checking to confirm the source of this body. After a short while, they agreed to prepare the corpse ritually in accordance with Jewish law and bury him in the special cemetery.

The chevrah took the body to the taharah, ritual purification room, along with his "sponsor," and they prepared to begin the process of taharah. No sooner had the sheet covering the face been removed than the leaders' face turned white, and he almost fell over in a dead faint. They brought him a chair to sit down and gave him a glass of water to drink until he finally calmed down. After awhile, those assembled asked the leader of the chevrah what was it that caused this terrible reaction on his part. He related the following story. "I recognize the deceased," he began. "He came to our community about twenty years ago, lonely and

homeless. He, more or less, made his home in the shul, eating and sleeping there. He spent most of the day studying in the bais ha'medrash. He would go around from home to home asking for alms, being invited to many members of the community for Shabbos and Yom Tov meals. He became a member of the community.

"One day, he approached me and asked, 'What happens if a member of the community dies and leaves no relatives? Who takes care of his burial?' I responded that it was truly a problem. We would have to make a collection to purchase a gravesite and all particulars needed for a funeral and burial. Indeed, if we fail to raise the necessary sum, we have a serious problem. 'The man looked at me and said, 'I would like to purchase a plot of land specifically for those people who leave this world 'alone,' without anyone to care for them or who have no money to bequeath to others to care for them. I am giving money to the Chevrah Kadisha to provide for ten mesei mitzvah.'" "Do you know who our deceased is? He is that individual! That man's name was David Almoni! Hashem repaid his kindness. He will be buried in the cemetery that he created for others like him."

From: RABBI LIPMAN PODOLSKY
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Shally Shiddes

I don't know about you, but sometimes I find the third Shabbos meal a bit cumbersome. After two sumptuous meals lovingly prepared by my wife (sometimes with a little help from the kids -- you can tell by the cute little fingerprints in the Challos), who has room for Shalosh Seudos? And while we're on the topic, why do Ashkenazim call it Shalosh Seudos (usually rendered as an incomprehensible Shally Shiddes), three meals? Wouldn't Seudah Shlishis (the third meal) be more appropriate?

The source of three Shabbos meals derives from our parsha. "How many meals must one eat on Shabbos? Three... [as it is written] (Shmos 16:25): 'Moshe said, eat it [the mann] today, for today is a Shabbos for Hashem; today you shall not find it in the field.' (Masechta Shabbos 117b)." The word 'today' appears three times. This serves as the basis for the rabbinic institution of eating three meals of bread on Shabbos.

Rav Yosef Karo (1488-1575), in his Shulchan Aruch, rules that one must "break bread" at all three meals (Orach Chaim 291:5). Nevertheless, special dispensation is provided for Shalosh Seudos: A person who is simply too gorged to eat bread, may fulfill his obligation with foods of a less filling nature (minei targima -- cake; meat and fish; fruits).

Why should the third meal be distinct from the first two? After all, the obligation to eat bread at all three meals stems from one verse!

The reasoning is elucidated by the Bach (1561-1640), Rav Yoel Sirkes: "Since the person has already eaten a full, Shabbos morning meal, which is the main meal, he would not necessarily need to eat bread again toward evening. For in order to satiate himself at that time, even other foods would suffice, satisfying him as much as bread."

On Shabbos, one must achieve contentment. The Shabbos meals are not like those of the rest of the week. Shabbos is special; it is a day akin to the World-to-Come. It represents a world without want, without lack. Normally, only bread can provide this level of satiation. But at the third meal, a person who is still full from the morning can fulfill his obligation with even lighter foods. (Shally Shiddes Light!)

Nevertheless, the Shulchan Aruch does emphasize that even at Shalosh Seudos, a person should ideally eat bread. The question is why? What is the point of forcing ourselves to eat bread, even when we prefer not to?

The Chida (Machzik Bracha), Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai (1724-1806), explains: A person who eats only when he wants to, only when he's hungry, is not necessarily eating for the sake of Heaven. On

the contrary, instead of honoring the Shabbos, he is honoring himself.

Picture coming home Shabbos morning after a long, drawn out davening. A bar-mitzvah celebration commandeered the shul. Uncle Harry, a self-proclaimed Chazzan, was honored with a Chazzonische Shacharis. The proud father exhibited his immense nachas by dispensing aliyahs to every single relative and synagogue board member. The sermon was, as usual, sermonic. Finally, faint with hunger, you drag yourself home. As you open the door, your olfactory nerves are tantalized by the pervasive aroma of a savory, succulent cholent. Your salivary glands go into high-gear, as you ready yourself to "dig in." Be honest. For whose sake are you indulging?

By forcing ourselves to eat a proper third meal, we show that our sole intent is to honor the Shabbos. We thereby demonstrate retroactively that the first two meals as well were for Shabbos' sake, and not merely to "lick our chops." By abstaining from Shalosh Seudos, on the other hand, we blatantly reveal our distaste for Shabbos. Our primary concern is ourselves.

By being meticulous regarding Shalosh Seudos, we rectify the previous two meals. Thus, the third meal embodies all three meals. It is perhaps for this reason that Ashkenazim universally call the third meal Shalosh Seudos (three meals). For by eating a full third meal, despite the difficulty, we improve all three meals, and intensify our Shabbos experience.

In the merit of properly honoring the Shabbos, may we deserve to fulfill in ourselves the following Talmudic teaching. "Rabi Yochanan said in the name of Rabi Yosi: He who makes the Shabbos spiritually pleasurable will receive an inheritance without borders... (Shabbos 118a)." A person who treats the Shabbos as a day without limitation, a day of spiritual pursuit, as Hashem's special day, is rewarded measure for measure. He will be worthy of experiencing the Yom She'Kulo Shabbos, a day that is eternally Shabbos, a day that is entirely good.

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] To:
weekly@vjlists.com Subject: Torah Weekly - Beshalach * TORAH
WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Beshalach
INSIGHTS The ABC Of Ecology

"This is the thing that Hashem has commanded, 'Gather from it, for every man according to what he eats -- an omer per person -- according to the number of your people, everyone according to whomever is in his tent shall you take.'" (16:16)

The world gets smaller every day. One of the fears of living in a global village is that the village store is going to run out of food. Will we wake up one day and find our planet can no longer support its population? For years, science fiction has dwelled on highly imaginative schemes to "farm" the solar system. Here's the good news. You can relax and stop planning your trip to Andromeda. It isn't going to happen.

The letters of the Hebrew language are the building blocks of Creation. When G-d created this existence, He did so using "speech." "And G-d said: Let there be light. And G-d said, let there be sky.... And G-d said..." This is not merely a narrative tool, a stylistic convention; it means that existence consists of nothing more than G-d speaking, that it is built out of letters and words. This explains why the Hebrew word for "thing," *davar*, is comprised of the same letters as the word for "speech," *dibur*. Ultimately, "things" are no more than G-d's "words."

There's a prayer we say three times a day called Ashrei (Ashrei is the first word of this prayer.) Ashrei is a combination of two of the Psalms of King David. What is so important about these particular Psalms that we say them three times a day?

If you open a siddur, you'll notice that the first letters of each line of Ashrei go in alphabetical order: The first line starts with aleph, the second with bet, etc. Ashrei also contains the verse "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of all life." This is a promise that G-d will sustain each one of us. What is the connection between having enough to eat and the aleph-beit?

With that same aleph-beit that G-d created the world, He creates a sufficiency for every living thing. G-d created this world with a plan. Man is the centerpiece of this plan. Just as He created the ABC of Creation, He has made sure that His plan will be fulfilled, right down to XY and Z. Every creature will receive its needs. We don't have to worry that there won't be enough for everyone to eat. We don't have to worry that the world will become overpopulated. With that same "whole cloth" that G-d fabricated existence, the aleph-beit, He provided a sufficiency for His Creation at all times.

"This is the thing that Hashem has commanded, 'Gather from it, for every man according to what he eats -- an omer per person -- according to the number of your people, everyone according to whomever is in his tent shall you take.'" "

In this week's Parsha, we learn of the manna, the miraculous food that sustained the Jewish People for 40 years in the desert. Manna is the prototype of G-d sustaining man miraculously, providing for his every need. Just as in Ashrei, the above verse illustrates that every person receives according to his needs. And interestingly, it also contains all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Also, if you count the Hebrew letters of this verse, you will find they add up to 70. This corresponds to our global village's seventy nations who are constantly sustained by the Creator.

You don't have to worry. The "village store" is never going to be "out of bread."

Sources: * Rabbi Sholem Fishbane in the name of Rabbi Uziel Milevsky from Rabbeinu Bachye

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"RavFrand" List - RABBI FRAND ON PARSHAS B'SHALACH

I would personally like to ask each one of you to daven and learn for a dear talmid of mine who has been stricken with a serious but curable disease. His name is: AMIEL YIGAL BEN RUCHAMA ELKA VITEL. May we only hear besuros tovos and good news. Thank you.

Moshe's Wisdom: Booty Is Risky

The Torah tells us that Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him. The Talmud [Sotah 13a] comments, "How dear the Mitzvos were to Moshe -- for all of Israel was busy taking the booty out of Egypt, and he occupied himself with Mitzvos". The Gemara cites this as a personification of the pasuk [verse] "Chacham Lev Yikach Mitzvos" (The wise man chooses mitzvos) [Mishlei 10:8].

The Gemara contrasts the nation's preoccupation with the Mitzvah of collecting booty to Moshe's preoccupation with the Mitzvah of retrieving Yosef's remains. What is the connection?

The Jewish people received two instructions regarding taking things from Egypt. They were commanded to take out gold and silver utensils [Shmos 11:2]. (The reason for this command is because G-d foretold to Avrohom that his children would be enslaved for 400 years and eventually they would leave with great wealth [Brachos 9b].) In addition, they had sworn to Yosef that when they would be redeemed, they would take his remains with them [Shmos 13:19].

This means that each Jew had a dual obligation upon leaving Egypt. They were commanded to take something out. They needed to choose whether they would occupy themselves with the first obligation (taking out booty) or the second obligation (taking out the remains of Yosef).

The Talmud tells us that virtually the entire Jewish nation chose the first option and went for the booty. Moshe Rabbeinu opted for the second option -- Yosef's remains. The Talmud commented concerning Moshe's choice, "The wise-hearted man will take Mitzvos". Furthermore the Medrash elaborates, "Look at the piety and the wisdom of Moshe -- he took the bones and everyone else took the money."

I can understand why this should be considered an act of "piety" on Moshe's part. But why is this action repeatedly referred to as an act of "wisdom" on his part? What does taking the bones rather than the money have to do with wisdom?

We see from this Medrash that Moshe's decision was indeed wise. For who is the wise man? A wise man is the one who sees the future [Tamid 32a]. Moshe Rabbeinu was a wise man because he knew what money could do to a person. He knew not only what money could potentially do, but he foresaw what money would in fact do to the Jewish people.

For what, ultimately, did the Jews do with the booty that they took out of Egypt? They made it into a Golden Calf.

This was Moshe's wisdom. He knew something that we all know in theory but which is very difficult for us to act on in practice. Namely, that money is one of the root causes of all evil. Affluence is one of the greatest tests of religiosity. Moshe Rabbeinu said, "I don't want the money, because I know it's hard to handle." Moshe's wisdom was this firm knowledge of what too much money can lead to.

The Gaon Changed The Text of The Motzai Shabbos Song

At the conclusion of the Sabbath, we recite a song (z'meyra), which according to the popularly accepted text reads: "may our children and our money (zareinu v'kaspeinu) be multiplied like the sand". The Vilna Gaon changes the text of the song to read "may our children and our merits (zareinu u'zechyoseinu) be multiplied like the sand". The Gaon rejected the popular version because he said it was wrong for a Jew to ask for an abundance of money. "This is not a Jewish prayer," the Gaon said. "We may ask for a livelihood (parnassah), but not for wealth."

Now, one may ask, why didn't the Vilna Gaon object to the text of Birchas HaChodesh [the prayer recited on the Sabbath prior to Rosh Chodesh] where we ask for a "Life of wealth and honor?" Doesn't that prayer contradict the Gaon's axiom that asking for wealth is not a Jewish prayer?

I once heard what I believe is the true interpretation of the text in Birchas HaChodesh. Many years ago, there was a Jew who visited a small apartment in Jerusalem, which was home to two parents and eleven children. He saw that the parents and the eleven children lived in a one-room house. But he saw the exceptional respect with which the children treated their parents and the exceptional respect with which they treated each other. The house was neat and clean and full of dignity. The style of life was one of "wealth and honor," as if they lived in a mansion.

That family lived "a life of wealth and honor". A person can have millions of dollars without having a life of wealth and honor. Perhaps his wife drives him crazy, his kids drive him crazy and everyone is fighting. Is that a life of wealth and honor? What difference does it make that he has a million dollars if everyone is constantly bickering and nothing is ever good enough? On the other hand, one can have 11 kids in a one-room apartment and live "a life of wealth and honor". It is possible to have the life of a rich man without being rich, the life of a King without being a King.

Thus, the text of the Rosh Chodesh prayer is no contradiction to the Vilna Gaon's principle: The Jew does not ask for wealth, and the trials that come with wealth. The Jew asks only for an adequate livelihood and for a life of wealth, rather than for wealth itself.

I related the Vilna Gaon's axiom to a nephew of mine. This young man is also a nephew of Rav Aharon Soloveitchik (he should be healthy and well) from the other side of his family. My nephew told me that he heard from Rav Aharon the following frightening -- but true -- story.

A Jew came to the Vilna Gaon and asked for a way to ensure that his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren should all remain Torah observant and learned Jews. Is there anything that a person can do to ensure pious offspring? He asked the Gaon, "Is there a 'Segulah'? Which chapter of Tehillim should I recite daily to guarantee it? Which folio of Talmud should I memorize? Just give me the trick!"

The Gaon told him that the best way of helping to ensure that he will have righteous children is to recite the following petition every day in Shma Koleinu (the 16th blessing of the daily Shmoneh Esrei where we can insert personal requests):

"May it be Thy Will before Thee, G-d and G-d of my fathers, that my children should not be rich." (Not to pray they should be poor; not to pray that they should not have means of earning a living; just to pray that they not be rich.)

This, according to the Vilna Gaon, was the 'Segulah' to see pious and upstanding Jewish children. This is not because, Heaven Forbid, anyone who is rich is by definition not a pious Jew. But wealth is a tremendous temptation. If one wishes to have pious children, the Gaon said, he should pray for the removal of that temptation from before his children.

The Gaon, thus follows his own opinion that the correct reading of the Motzai Shabbos song should not be "our children and our money should be as numerous as the sand" but rather "our children and our merit should be as numerous as the sand."

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From: Kenneth Block [SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net] Subject: NCYI Weekly Divrei Torah - B'shalach
Parshat B'shalach Tu B'Shvat 5760 Daf Yomi: Yevamot 53
Guest Rabbi: RABBI ELIMELECH GOLDBERG
Young Israel of Southfield, Michigan

Some books should never be opened from the middle. A person beginning the Torah from this week's parsha, could possibly confuse Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, with Abraham Lincoln, the great emancipator of the slaves. "And it was as Pharaoh sent out the people..." Of course, those of us who either read the earlier sections of Breishit or at least saw the movie are well aware that the real liberator of the suffering Jewish People was none other than HaShem Himself. Pharaoh was less than a willing participant. Why such a confusing introduction?

Even if we allowed Pharaoh his moment as a great proponent of human freedom, that picture speedily dissolves as the Egyptian ruler rescinds his initial declaration to lead his fiercest troops into the desert to attack the Jews. Miraculously, the sea opens up as dry highway and the Jewish people are saved while the pursuing Egyptian army meets its end in the watery abyss of the Yam Suf. In response, Moshe and Bnai Yisrael compose a song. "Then Moshe and the Bnai Yisrael will sing this song.... Pharaoh's chariots and his army, He shot into the sea.... floods cover them... And by the blasts of Your nostrils, the water towered up and that which was flowing stood back as a wall." Our

meforshim question both the tense and order. "They will sing" seems as unusual as the statement that describes the chariots of Pharaoh underwater and only then portrays how HaShem had first piled up those waters to save the Jews. Why is the Shira backwards? The waters first had to pile up for the Jews and only then did they overturn the chariots of Pharaoh.

Not everything in life is as it appears. Miracles constantly surround us. Sometimes only in retrospect do we understand them. Imagine that stroll through the Yam Suf with the flowing water piled up on both sides. This liquid wall was enormous. It could not have felt very comfortable to be walking under a mountainous wall of a ferocious sea that, according to every human sense, should come cascading down upon their heads at any second. Could you not feel the unease of a people thanking G-d for this miracle, but also hoping that He wouldn't mind moving it a few miles away. Most humans would have been awfully frightened at that moment. Why did HaShem have to do it this way? Wouldn't a nice twelve lane bridge spanning above the sea do just as good a job? I am certain that we would have gladly paid the toll rather than experience the discomfort of walking where only the fish were made to live. It took until the very end of their journey, when they witnessed how the Egyptians were pulled into this crossing and drowned, did they understand the miracle fully. "Then they will sing." First it describes the drowning of Pharaoh's troops and then the piling of the waters is praised. Only after Pharaoh and his legions were drowned, were the Jews able to appreciate the beauty of those mountainous walls of water.

Parshat B'shalach is all about perception. There are many stories in life where the background is well known. Pharaoh sent out the Jews but there is never a doubt that it was HaShem who designed that outcome. But in most of life's events, we don't have a clue as to what is really going on. Often, we can only guess at what the outcome will be. At those times, we may become frozen by the immense walls that inhibit us from responding to our tasks. But are those walls really there or are they the visages of perception? "Why do you cry to Me," HaShem Yitbarach asks Moshe. "Speak to Bnai Yisrael that they travel forward." Just because you see a mighty river in your path does not mean that it is there. Nachshon ventured forth and the water covered his feet. It covered his legs, his shoulders, all of the way up to his mouth and nose. Even when he could no longer breathe, he continued walking forward. Only then did the waters part. Faith in HaShem is perception. It is the ability to perceive that there is nothing that stands in our way when we are traveling together with our G-d. There is never cause to be afraid.

As perceptions place obstacles in our path they can also allow us to miss great possibilities.

"And HaShem said to Moshe, behold, I am about to make bread rain from Heaven for you... so that I may test them whether they will walk in My Torah or not." What was the test? According to the midrash, the man tasted as anything the eater wanted it to. Yet, we see that it became a subject of scorn as the Jews complained about its dumpy form and tasteless appeal. "Man hu", "What is it?" Its question is its essence while perception is its answer. The eater is challenged to taste the flavors that it contains and reshape its form in his vision. Not to taste the unlimited pleasantness was to be fooled by the walls of limited perception. To perceive its flavor is to appreciate the spiritual beauty of the world that surrounds us. It is this vision of perception that we need to attain.

As the banquet of life can be so easily missed, so too the dung heaps of illusion can become palaces to the mind. "Oh, that we had died ... in the land of Egypt as we sat by the pots of flesh and when we did eat bread to the full." Separated from the suffering of the cruelest of servitude by only days, we repainted the blood stained walls of our slavery with the now embellished wisps of nostalgia toward the very chains that shackled our bodies. It is a limited human perception that

allows us to confuse the lifeless and ugly with the beautiful and exciting.

B'shalach contains an answer to this dilemma. What does it take to sweeten the bitter waters of our perception? As the Bnai - Yisrael cried over the wellsprings of Mara, Moshe Rabbeinu was instructed to throw a piece of wood into the water. The Netziv explains that in all of nature there is an antidote to that which is lacking and wrong. Human perception, so easily distracted from the supernal wealth that surrounds us, is given the medicant of Torah to refocus our view and strengthen our understanding. "Aitz chaim hi", the Torah is referred to as the tree of life. Man is compared to a tree at the end of Parshat Shoftim when we are enjoined from destroying the fruit trees in battle. Why the tree? Imagine if you grew up in the city and assumed that oranges grew in colored plastic bags. You would be hard pressed to believe that an orange came from a large living piece of wood. Our perception of wood is lifeless and tough. It takes a great deal of understanding of what miracles lie underneath that bark and how the sun and the roots combine their forces to provide life that will form from within. This is a symbol of the miracle of the human being. We are formed from the ground but blessed with the sweet essence of spiritual struggle and conquest from the illuminating soul that we are granted from Heaven. From that life source we produce the fruits of our labor of life.

Parshat B'shalach illustrates the great potential pitfalls and victories of human perception. We must choose to look from within and see the beautiful flavors of life that emanate from our souls, recognizing the incredible joy of our life travels. We can overcome the deepest seas and drink from the most bitter of waters if we sweeten our goals with the tree of life that produces the fruit of our existence. Pharaoh is not a great liberator - HaShem is. But it is we who must attain the vision that freedom is within our grasp. It is all about perception.

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From: Zomet Institute [SMTP: zomet@virtual.co.il]
Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Beshalach ... A MITZVA IN THE
TORAH PORTION: Reading the Torah Portion
BY RABBI BINYAMIN TABORY

"And they traveled for three days in the desert but found no water" [Shemot 15:22]. Those who understand texts said, water can only refer to Torah ... Since they went three days without Torah, they were corrupted. Therefore, the prophets among them decreed that they should read the Torah on Shabbat ... on Monday ... and on Thursday ... so that they would not go three days without Torah." [Bava Kama 82a]. The Talmud explains that the "prophets" in the desert decided on the principles of reading the Torah, and Ezra added the details, such as to call three people to read a total of at least 10 verses. Who were these prophets? The Rambam feels that the phrase refers to Moshe, since "Moshe was the greatest prophet of all, and all the other prophets in his generation were part of his Beit Din. In addition, they didn't make any decisions without his agreement, and it is therefore proper to give him the credit." It is written in the Talmud Yerushalmi that Moshe commanded that the Torah should be read on Shabbat, on holidays, on Rosh Chodesh, and on Chol Hamoed (Megilla).

Is this practice a Torah or a rabbinical obligation? The Talmud quotes an opinion, based on sources from the Torah, that the Torah "was said in all languages" [Megilla 17b]. Rashi explains that the Torah may be read in any language. But Tosafot ask how the source of this law could be a Torah verse if the custom of reading the Torah is only a rabbinical decree. Their answer is that the Talmud is referring to Torah obligations, such as "Zechor," the command to remember the evil of Amalek.

On the other hand, the BACH questions the words of the Tosafot: "The fact that the Tosafot assumed that Torah reading is a rabbinical requirement established by Ezra is problematic. This is especially true in view of the statement in Bava Kama that Moshe instituted the reading of the Torah (note that our version of the text attributes this to "prophets" and not to Moshe) ... According to this, all of the Torah reading on Shabbat and holidays is a Torah mitzva." It may be that the BACH based his reasoning on the Talmud Yerushalmi quoted above, and in addition that he considers a decree by Moshe as having the status of a Torah mitzva. He explicitly refers to the reading on Shabbat and holidays, but the Tashbeitz expands this to include all public reading of the Torah (section 163).

My mentor, Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, had a novel approach, that while there is only a rabbinical obligation to read the Torah, observing the custom is a fulfillment of a Torah requirement. He explained that studying the Torah includes accepting the yoke of the heavens, and if this is done in the presence of a minyan of ten men, the reading has the status of a holy ritual. This is the reason that the prayer "Barechu" precedes the Torah reading, in order to emphasize this relationship. It is said that the Rabbi of Brisk once arrived at the start of the Torah reading but missed the "Barechu," and he sighed and said that he would now have to find a different place to hear the Torah reading, in order to fully observe the ritual.

From: Heritage House[SMTP:heritage@netvision.net.il] To: innernet@vjlists.com INNERNET MAGAZINE
<http://www.innernet.org.il>

"TU BISHVAT"

by Eliyahu Kitov

BLESSINGS AND CUSTOMS Tu Bishvat is famous on the Jewish calendar as the "New Year for Trees." This year, Tu Bishvat falls on Jan. 21- 22, 2000.

On this day it is customary to eat fruit which is grown in Israel. Some plant new trees on this day. Some even have the custom of reciting a kabbalistic Tu Bishvat seder, modeled roughly after the more famous Pesach seder. The proper blessing before eating any fruit is: "Baruch ata Ado-nay Elo-heinu Melech ha-olam, borei pree ha-aitz." "Blessed are You, Our Lord and King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree." On Tu Bishvat, it is also the custom to eat a "new fruit" (one that you've not eaten in the past 12 months), so that the "Shehecheyanu" blessing can be recited: "Baruch ata Ado-nay Elo-heinu Melech ha-olam, She-heche-yanu, vi-kee-yemanu, vi-heeg-ianu, laz-man ha-zeh." "Blessed are You, Our Lord and King of the Universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this special occasion."

LOVE OF THE LAND Tu Bishvat bespeaks the praise of the Land of Israel - for on this day the strength of the soil of Israel is renewed and it begins to yield its produce and demonstrate its inherent goodness. And it is with reference to the fruits of the trees and the produce of the soil that the Torah praises the Land of Israel, as the verse states: "A land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olives and honey" (Deut. 8:8). The verse speaks of two types of grain and five types of fruit when describing the richness of Israel. The honey that the verse mentions refers to honey derived from dates. Thus, the day on which the soil of Israel receives renewed strength to give forth its bounty is a day of rejoicing for the people of Israel, who till the land, who love it and who yearn for it.

Inasmuch as Tu Bishvat recalls for us the praise of the Land of Israel, it is therefore fitting that we recall, on this day, some of the words of our Sages who greatly praised the Land and extolled its excellence.

LAND OF ISRAEL IS MOST PRAISEWORTHY This is the way of G-d: whoever is more beloved takes precedence. Because the Torah was most beloved, it was created before anything else. Because

the Land of Israel is the most beloved, it was created before any other. As regards other lands, each has something which the other lacks. But the Land of Israel lacks nothing, as the verse states: "A land within which you shall eat bread without scarcity, you shall not lack anything in it" (Deut. 8:9). (Midrash Sifri - Ekev)

DESOLATION WHICH CONTAINS BLESSING The verse (Leviticus 26:32) states: "And I shall make the land desolate." This is in fact a positive attribute, whose purpose is to prevent the Jewish people from saying: "We have been exiled from our land and our enemies will come and find satisfaction there." As the verse (ibid.) states: "And your enemies who dwell in it will find it desolate" - even the enemies who come after [Israel had been exiled] will find no satisfaction there. (Midrash Sifri - Bechukosai)

FRUITFUL LAND IS HARBINGER OF REDEMPTION Rabbi Abba taught: There is no more revealed redemption - no greater indication of the impending redemption - than that which the verse (Ezekiel 36:8) states: "And you, mountains of Israel, you shall give forth your branches and you shall bear your fruit for my people Israel, for they shall soon come." Rashi explains: When the Land of Israel will give fruit bountifully, this is an indication of the impending redemption, and there is no greater indication than this. (Talmud - Sanhedrin 98a)

WITH MILK AND HONEY Rami Bar Yechezkel once came to Bnei Brak and saw goats grazing under a fig tree. Honey was dripping from the figs and milk from the goats - and they became intermingled. He said: "Behold, a land flowing with milk and honey!" (Talmud - Ketubot 111b)

SWEET, SWEET FRUIT Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta said: It once happened that R. Yehudah told his son in Sachin, "Go and bring us a dried fig from the barrel." He went and when he put his hand in, he found that it was full of honey. "Father," he said, "[the barrel] contains honey [and not figs]!" His father replied: "Put your hand back in and you will find the figs." (Jerusalem Talmud - Pe'ah 7)

May we all have a meaningful and sweet New Year for the Trees!
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From: Rabbi.Yehudah.Prero@torah.org Subject: YomTov: Planting the Seeds of Eternity YomTov, vol. V # 16 Week of Parshas B'Shalach
 Topic: Planting the Seeds of Eternity

Tu B'Shvat, the beginning of the new year for trees, occurs this year on January 22, 2000.

The Talmud (Ta'anis 23b) relates an interesting incident about the sage Choni HaM'agel (who once prayed for rain during a drought and refused to move from within a circle until the rain came - which it did). "R' Yochanan said: This righteous man [Choni] was throughout his whole life troubled about the meaning of the verse (Psalms 126), A Song of Ascents, When Hashem will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers.' Is it possible for a man to dream continuously for seventy years? One day he was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree; he asked him, How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit? The man replied: Seventy years. He then further asked him: Are you certain that you will live another seventy years? The man replied: I found [ready grown] carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted these for me so I too plant these for my children.

Choni sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. As he slept a rocky formation enclosed upon him which hid him from sight and he continued to sleep for seventy years. When he awoke he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree and he asked him, Are you the man

who planted the tree? The man replied: I am his grandson. Thereupon he exclaimed: It is clear that I slept for seventy years."

The commentator the Maharsha explains what exactly troubled Choni, and how his troubles were allayed. The exile to which the Psalmist was referring to in the passage that troubled Choni was that which occurred after the destruction of the first Temple, the exile of Bavel. This exile lasted a period of 70 years. The Psalmist, in Choni's understanding, was saying that those 70 years when the nation of Israel was in exile were like a dream, a fleeting, relatively insignificant period of time. This troubled Choni because of the significance of the 70 year time period. We find else where in Psalms (90) that "The days of our years among them are seventy years." The span of a person's life on earth is typified as lasting 70 years. Choni was asking "Is it possible that a person's life could be considered like a dream, of no significance and no substance?"

Choni then came across the man planting the carob tree. Choni saw an individual toiling, engaged in a task which did not produce immediate results nor satisfaction. The tree would not bear fruit for seventy years, at which time the planter would not be around to enjoy the literal fruits of his labor. Choni saw that although a tree could appear to be valueless and insignificant for such an extended period of time, it, in the long run, had value and was productive. Choni realized that people may toil and labor throughout their entire lives. This time may be like a dream, fleeting and insignificant for what results occur during that time period. However, upon arriving at the next world, the World To Come, we can reap our reward and realize how productive our lives were.

Furthermore, although a tree may not give direct benefit to the individual that planted it, the individual's children, his successors, will enjoy the product of his effort. When a person toils in This World, by following the dictates of G-d and His commandments, the person is not merely placing himself in a situation where he is deserving of reward, whether it come in this world or the next. He is also directly benefiting his children. He is setting forth a lesson. As the planter said " as my forefathers' planted for me, so too I plant for my children." He is directing his children's path for the future. He is establishing benefit for his children. Hashem rewards the children of those that love Him as well. Choni vividly saw this lesson, as when he woke up after 70 years, he saw the grandchild of the planter eating the fruits of his grandfather's labor. Clearly, the toil in a short and fleeting life, seemingly insignificant, could be nothing farther from that.

Choni learned that one's accomplishments are not necessarily valued for what they produce in the here and now. The days of the life of man, as it says in Iyov (20:8), indeed "shall fly away like a dream." It is what remains afterwards that is the judge of accomplishment and success. Did you plant during your life? If not, nothing remains when you are gone, and therefore your life does not have lasting significance. However, if we all plant, by learning Torah, by adhering to the commandments of G-d, by acting morally and compassionately, and by teaching our children to do the same, fruits will be borne. We may not see these fruits during our life. We may not get to enjoy them in this world. But we can rest assured, (unlike Choni, who slept for 70 years to learn this lesson,) knowing that we indeed will be harvesting our bounty in the World To Come, and our children will thrive because of our efforts.

Tu B'Shvat, the New Year for Trees, comes during a dry spell for holidays. The spiritual high of the High Holidays has waned, and the feverish preparations for Pesach will not begin (for most people, anyway) for some time. It is a perfect time to concentrate on the lesson of the tree, and to remember that now is not just time for physical planting, but the time to sow some spiritual seeds as well.

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From Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu Subject: Internet Chaburah -- Parshas BeShalach

Prologue: Within the same Sedrah that stresses the belief of Bnei Yisroel in Hashem, their unwavering devotion and jumping into the ocean to heed his word, his salvation and their song, we read of the stories of food. Sustenance and difficulty with it, can shatter one's Simcha and shows of strength. Hence one can understand the famous line of the Rambam (Hil. Kriyas HaTorah, <See prologue to Internet Chaburah Beshalach, 5759>) that the true end of the Shirah is the end of the story at Mara. For at the moment of Klal Yisroel's recognition of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's presence even in the face of adversity, and their ability to work together as one nation under G-d, the true Shirah was sung "VaYa'aminu B'Hashem U'B' Moshe Avdo."

It becomes interesting to see Klal Yisroel's Emunah challenged with respect to food even in the same Parsha. When the Manna came from Shomayim, each person was told to take for his needs ("Ish L'Fi Achlo"). Later, when the people didn't listen, Moshe got angry at them. The Torah then reminds us that after the incident, the people returned to taking as they needed ("KFI Achlo"). Why the change in the wording (L'Fi vs. K'Fi)?

Rav Elya Lopian (Lev Eliyahu) points out that indeed Hashem knows exactly how much a person needs for himself. He sent the proper amount for each one L'Fi Achlo. Larger people may have needed more, younger people less, each one got a necessary portion per day. However, once the people showed that they didn't trust Moshe, they satisfied themselves with a smaller portion. They then demonstrated that the smaller portion was enough for them. As a result, Hashem recalibrated Kfi Achlo, the amount that the people had actually eaten yesterday so as to minimize the amount of Ba'al Tashchis that might occur.

When a person has Pas B'salo, he must not worry about where the next meal is coming. The Mishna in Avos calls one who does "Mi'Katnei Emunah. (weak of faith)." Expressions of faith or devotion too, should be mindful of Baal Tashchis that might occur if one is Mi'Katnei Emunah. This week's Chaburah focuses on the issues of wastefulness that seem to arise in the process of spiritual activities such as weddings or service in the Beis HaMikdash. It is entitled:

Breaking Glass

There is a well known Minhag among Jews to break a glass at a wedding ceremony. The source for the Minhag is a Gemara in Berachos (31a) where the Gemara quotes Mar the son of Ravina and Rav Ashi who observed the Chachamim joking around at a wedding. They brought an expensive goblet to the table (worth approx. 400 zuz - See Rashbam, Pesachim 119a) and broke it. One could ask why this was Mutar if, after all, it was Baal Tashchis (See Kiddushin 32a where a similar question is asked but why not here?)

To this, the Pri Megadim (Mishbitzot Zahav 560:4) explains that Baal Tashchis would not apply. The logic is as follows: Baal Tashchis does not allow one to waste an item without purpose. However, if there is a defined purpose for an item's use, it would not be Baal Tashchis if used for that purpose. Since Mar Bar Rav Ashi saw a purpose in breaking the glass, doing so would not constitute Baal Tashchis.

Similarly, we find in the Mishna that the Ish Har HaBayis was allowed to burn the clothing of the members of the Mishmar who had fallen asleep on the job (Middos 1:2). The Rosh (Pirush Hamishna) explains that the reason for the Heter is that Hefker Beis Din Hefker. Once Beis Din allowed the individual to burn the clothes, Beis Din released the Ish Har HaBayis from liability. The Shut Mahari Asad (164) proves from here that the Rosh does not hold of a problem of Baal Tashchis when an item is Hefker. The Rosh, rambam and Ran disagree

(see Noda B'yehuda Tinyanna, Siman 10). How is one to understand the Machlokes?

A stronger question could be assessed to the position of the Rosh. Hefker is potentially anyone's and everyone's (See Nedarim 34a and Ritva to Avoda Zara 53b). If so, how could the Rosh decide that the rule of Baal Tashchis does not apply to Hefker. The item being destroyed is not specifically his?

Perhaps one could suggest that the application of Hefker Beis Din in the Mishna did not merely make the clothing ownerless. Rather, it allowed the Ish HaHar to burn the clothing (not to possess them). For that point specifically, the Rosh pointed out that there was no problem of Baal Tashchis since there was a necessity to do so. How does this differ from other Baal Tashchis situations where the item does not belong to the Mashchis who does the destruction for a Mitzva yet is still held liable (Avoda Zara 11a)?

Perhaps to this we can apply the answer of the Gemara (Tamid 28a). The Gemara notes that following the decision to burn the offending person's clothes, the crowds would speak of the noise. They would note that the noise was the sound of a Ben Levi's Makkos and his clothes being burned. The Meiri notes that Klal Yisroel is praiseworthy because they are careful about Mishmeres HaKodesh. The Hefker Beis Din gives the Ish HaHar permission to teach the Klal a lesson of Mishmeres HaKodesh. The lesson learned is a Tzorech for all potential owners of the Bigdei HaLevi, namely to teach them all to be careful of the need to guard the Beis Hamikdash. Hence, there is no problem burning the clothes for it is considered the same Tzorech for the owners that breaking the glass has on its owner.

Battala News Mazal Tov to Maran HaGadol Harav Hershel Schachter Shlita and the Rebbetzin and family upon the marriage of Yaffa and C. Tanchum Cohen. Mazal Tov to Yeichiel Morris upon his engagement to Adina Gewirtz Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Judah Diamant upon the birth of a baby boy.

From: David Green[SMTP:dgreen@torah.org] To: dvartorah
RABBI LABEL LAM Parshas Beshalach 5760 Closer to the Source
And Hashem said to Moshe; "Behold I shall rain down to you food from heaven; let the people go out and pick each day's portion on its day so that I can test them, whether they will follow my teaching or not."(Shemos 16:5)

What's the big test about the manna? After it falls every day we know with certainty and confidence that we are on a definite meal plan. As Alfred E. Newman said, "What, us worry?"

The Mishna of Yoma discusses the laws of Yom Kippur and outlines the procedure of the famous scapegoat whose destiny and purpose it was to be thrown off the cliff in the dessert. The person leading the goat had certain designated stops he needed to make along the way and at each tent they told him, "We have bread and we have water." The commentaries ask; "Why does he need to know about bread and water if it's Yom Kippur, a fast day and he's forbidden to eat?" The answer is that because it is a fast day and he is heading out to the dessert where there is no food and water he might get more and more hungry knowing that he's getting farther and farther from a food source. When they tell him that there is food and drink available they are helping to lessen his appetite. This psychological concept is known as "bread in the basket". We generally feel more secure and we are less hungry when we have real food on hand.

The Sanzer Rav, however, used to empty his house of money every night before going to sleep, distributing whatever was there to the local poor before retiring. One night, he was disturbed from his sleep. He searched the house and found that someone (his wife) had hid some money in a jar. He immediately went out and found a poor person to give

the money to and was able to sleep that night.

The Chovos Halevavos, in The Gate of Humility, tells us that wealth is a greater test than poverty. For thousands of years, though, people have been crying, "Test me!" It's not so easy. He writes that wealth is given for three reasons; 1) As a reward 2) As a test. 3) As a punishment. He gives symptoms to indicate which of the three categories our personal wealth falls into. 1) If a person has more time to learn and resources to perform mitzvos then the money came as a blessing. It is a reward of a mitzvah that generates more mitzvos. 2) If the person is busy managing and maintaining his money then it is clearly a test. He can neither spend on himself or others. It is there to be protected and managed all day, every day. 3) If someone becomes more indulgent and self-destructive because of wealth then it is certainly given as a punishment.

Once in my life I bought a lottery ticket for 180 Million Dollars from a friend who went to Florida specifically to purchase them and resell them for a charity raffle. I went to sleep that night wondering what I would do if I actually won. By the time my mind had finished wandering, I was totally occupied with trying to expand the amount to meet charity and family commitments and deeply saddened about the portion that would have to go to the government for taxes. I was never in such a poor and needy state of mind before in my life. The next day when I realized that I didn't win, I was greatly relieved. I felt rich again.

Although our natural desire for security drives us to squirrel mass quantities of blue chip nuts, the temptation to rely on that cache may lead to a greater sense of lack. The Sanzer Rav lived as the generation of the dessert. He went out to collect his portion of manna daily. The promise of tomorrow's loaf was as real as "The Giver" and worth more than any crumb or coin of today.

The whole Jewish Nation lived like the Sanzer Rav for forty years in the dessert. Their real life experience tested them on this concept and trained them to trust the hand that fed them daily. How many loaves, then, does one need in the basket? How many guaranteed tomorrows do we need in the bank? How many daily meals must be dutifully delivered to our doorstep before the psychological need for visible security is obviated by an emerging sense that we are moving not farther away from the food basket, as we journey, but closer to the source.

Good Shabbos!

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INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of
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YEVAMOS 44 (6 Shevat) - l'Iluy Nishmas Moras Keila Bas Ha'chover Moshe
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Yevamos 45b LIVING WITH AN "EVED" OR A "NOCHRI"
QUESTION: The Gemara explains why, when an Eved or Nochri has relations
with a Jewess, the child is not a Mamzer, whereas when two people who are Asur
to each other because of an Isur Ervah have relations, the child is a Mamzer. In
both cases, Kidushin does not take effect, and thus in both cases the child should be
a Mamzer. The Gemara explains that in the case of Arayos, the Kidushin does not
take effect only between those particular persons who are Asur to each other
because of Ervah; Kidushin will take effect when each person marries someone
else, to whom he or she is permitted. An Eved and Nochri, though, cannot marry
anyone -- their Kidushin never takes effect, and therefore the child is not a
Mamzer.

What is the logic behind this? If the Kidushin of an Eved or Nochri can never
take effect with anyone, then on the contrary, the child should certainly be a
Mamzer!

ANSWERS: (a) The RASHBA answers that the reason a child becomes a

Mamzer is because of the severity of the Isur involved with his conception. That severity is expressed by the fact that the union between the mother and father could not make Kidushin take effect. That is, the Isur is so severe that Kidushin cannot exist in such a union.

In the case of a woman who is Asur to a man because of an Isur Ervah, since she (and he) could marry others and have Kidushin take effect, but they cannot marry each other, this shows that there is a very strong Isur between them. It is the strength of the Isur that prevents Kidushin from taking effect. However, in the case of an Eved or a Nochri, the fact that he cannot make Kidushin with the Jewess with whom he had relations does not show anything about the strength of the Isur, because an Eved and a Nochri cannot make Kidushin with *anyone*. The reason they cannot make Kidushin with anyone is because the Torah did not give them the ability to make Kidushin in the first place. It has nothing to do with the Isur of the union between him and a Jewess. Hence, the child is not a Mamzer.

RAV ELCHANAN WASSERMAN (in Kovetz He'oros 37:2) asks that according to the explanation of the Rashba, how could the Gemara use this logic to legitimize the child of an Eved or Nochri who had relations with a *married* Jewess (an "Eshes Ish")? We know that the Isur of "Eshes Ish" is a strong Isur from the fact that she cannot make Kidushin with even someone who is able to make Kidushin (such as a normal Jewish man). Thus, even if she has relations with an Eved or Nochri, we should say that the child should be a Mamzer!

Rav Elchanan answers that even though an Eshes Ish cannot make Kidushin with any other man, since she could not make Kidushin with an Eved or Nochri *even when she is not an Eshes Ish*, the fact that she is an Eshes Ish and is unable to make Kidushin with anyone else does not affect the child.

This is difficult to understand, though, because the Rashba says that the ability of Kidushin to take effect is only a *sign* of the strength of the Isur. Accordingly, it should make no difference if she cannot make Kidushin with an Eved because he is never fit for Kidushin. As far as the strength of the Isur is concerned, we see from the fact that this Eshes Ish cannot effect Kidushin with anyone that the Isur is very strong! What difference does it make if Kidushin cannot be effected with an Eved? The child should still be a Mamzer.

Another answer may be suggested to the original question of Rav Elchanan. Even though an Eshes Ish has a very strong Isur to any other Jew, nevertheless, the Isur to an Eved or Nochri is different, because the act of Bi'ah with an Eved or Nochri is less severe (TOSFOS, Kesuvos 3b). Thus, an Eved living with an Eshes Ish is a less severe Isur, and therefore we have no proof for the strength of the Isur from the fact that she cannot make Kidushin with any other Jew.

(b) The RAMBAN and RITVA cite RAV HAI GAON who had a different Girsas in the Gemara. The text of his Gemara reads not that an Eved and Nochri cannot make Kidushin, but that in the case of "an Eved and Nochri, the child's lineage does not follow him (the father)," but rather it follows the Yichus of the mother. That is why the child is not a Mamzer. The father cannot affect the status of the child at all, even to give him a disqualifying trait, since the lineage of the child is not traced at all to the father who is a Nochri (as the Gemara says earlier on 17a).

They add that even though our Girsas is different, our Gemara might mean the same thing. When our Gemara says that the Kidushin of an Eved and Nochri does not take effect at all, it means that the father cannot affect the status of the child because the child is not considered to be related to the father, just like the Jewess with whom he had relations cannot be related to the father (since Kidushin cannot take effect).

Yevamos 46 THE SOURCE FOR MILAH FOR A GER QUESTION: The Gemara explains that the source for performing Milah for a Ger is the Milah that our ancestors performed when they left Mitzrayim.

Although we find in Parashas Bo that the Jewish people performed Milah when they left Mitzrayim (Kerisus 9a), that was a specific commandment to perform Milah in order to eat the Korban Pesach, since an uncircumcised person cannot eat the Korban Pesach. Where, though, do we find that they performed Milah in order to become Gerim? (RAMBAN)

ANSWER: The RAMBAN and RASHBA explain that the Milah the Jewish people did in Mitzrayim was not just for eating the Korban Pesach, but they did it because Moshe Rabeinu told them to do so in order to be accepted upon themselves the Torah and to be "Nichnas Tachas Kanfei ha'Shechinah" -- to become the nation of Hashem. That is what the Midrash means when it says that at the time of Yetzi'as Mitzrayim, the Jews were lacking Mitzvos, and therefore Hashem gave them two Mitzvos to perform -- Milah and the Korban Pesach. The Midrash means that Hashem gave them these Mitzvos in order to become His chosen nation.

However, we find that not everyone in Mitzrayim had to have a Milah in order to eat the Pesach. True, most of the Jews had abandoned the Mitzvah of Milah

until the night they left Egypt. But the Torah says that the tribe of Levi always observed the Mitzvah of Milah (Devarim 33:9), and the RAMBAM (Hilchos Isurei Bi'ah 13:2) explains that this means that even in Mitzrayim they kept the Mitzvah of Milah. If so, they did not need to do Milah when they departed. Where do we find that *they* have a Milah for Gerus? When they did Milah, it was the normal Milah for the sake of the Mitzvah of Avraham Avinu, and not for the sake of becoming Gerim!

(a) The RAMBAN and RASHBA suggest first that the men of Levi were "Matif Dam Bris," let some blood from the place of their Milah, for the purpose of Gerus. The Gemara understands the verses to mean that *every* man who left Mitzrayim had some sort of Milah done to them, so the men of Levi must have had Hatafas Dam Bris done to them as well.

(b) The RAMBAN suggests further that perhaps the tribe of Levi did not need Milah again, because their original Milah was done to fulfill the Mitzvah that Hashem commanded.

The Ramban seems to hold that a person who already had Milah done to him is like a person who cannot have Milah. If a person was born deformed or the like, he can still become a Ger and he does not need Milah (as Tosfos says on 46b, DH d'Rebbi Yosi). Similarly, if Milah was already done to him, then it is not possible to do Milah again to him, for the sake of Gerus. The Milah of Gerus is not a new Mitzvah per se, but rather there is a Mitzvah to perform *the Mitzvah of Milah* on him for the sake of Gerus. If the Mitzvah of Milah was already done to him, it cannot be done again for conversion purposes! Therefore, it is impossible to do a Milah for the sake of Gerus on him, and because it is impossible, the lack of Milah (for Gerus) does not prevent him from becoming a Ger.

(c) TOSFOS (46b, DH d'Rebbi Yosi) quotes RACH who rules that, even today, any Nochri who comes to convert and already has a Milah does not need Hatafas Dam Bris in order to become a Ger. He seems to hold that even though their Milah was entirely secular, since it cannot be physically done again for Gerus, he does not need a Milah for Gerus. Even though other Rishonim hold that Hatafas Dam Bris comes in place of Milah, Rabeinu Chananel seems to argue. He maintains that it is done only for a child born with a Milah; since that was the way he was born, there is a different form of Milah for him -- Hatafas Dam Bris. For one who was born normal, the only valid form of Milah is the removal of the Orlah, and since he had his Orlah removed already, he cannot have another Milah. (See Insights to Shabbos 135:2.) This would also answer why the tribe of Levi did not need a new Milah for Gerus.

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