

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Beshalach 5773

לע"נ ר' אריה לייב בן ר' נתן ע"ה

In My Opinion :: Rabbi Berel Wein WHO GOES FOR US?

I recently read an article written by a Jewish blogger who strongly defended Israel and was very critical of the growing blatant bent of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel writings of the progressive Left and some sections of world academia. He received a sharply worded letter from a fellow Jew who demanded to know why this blogger had not written such a blog about discrimination against Afro-Americans and Moslems and other minorities in American society.

In other words a Jew is not allowed to defend fellow Jews and the Jewish state unless he has first earned his true credentials of liberalism by defending others who are not Jewish. Being loyal to one's own tribe is no longer acceptable in liberal society. It is viewed as a petty, outdated form of chauvinism. The true liberal must be universal, even-handed, without national or religious loyalties.

Jews on behalf of other Jews is unacceptable in this skewed vision of universal tolerance. There are no good guys or bad guys - just other guys who must be defended before my own. So there are no more terrorists in the world - just militants; no aggressors - just people with justified grievances; and there are no concepts of defensible borders - merely "occupied territories."

Jews are prohibited by this new liberal set of strictures from defending fellow Jews and the State of Israel since doing so will violate the universalist even-handed, pie in the sky, utopianism beliefs and policies of the deluded Left. There are even Jewish groups that have altered the traditional prayer book of Judaism in order to make it less Jewish.

In the 1930's there were Reform temples that added prayers on behalf of the coal miners in West Virginia. Today there are those that pray on behalf of the California redwood trees and the diminishing sperm whale population. But who prays on behalf of the Jewish people and the Jewish state and for its rights to exist? Really, who?!

We read in the haftorah of this week that the prophet Yeshayahu finds himself in the midst of a vision of the Heavenly court, so to speak. And there he hears a Divine voice asking: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" That question reverberates through Jewish history and certainly sounds loud and insistent in our current time.

Who goes for us? Who places the survival and welfare of the Jewish people over and above all other priorities in our sick world? Who feels the pain and suffering of Ofakim and Sderot and does not first demand equal time for the problems of Morsi and Assad and the other victims of the ill-fated and bankrupt Arab Spring?

The great Jewish balladeer of the last century, Shlomo Carlebach would relate: "When I would visit college campuses and ask a student who he was, the Catholic would answer I am Catholic. The Protestant would answer I am Lutheran, Baptist, etc. The Mormon would answer that he was Mormon and the Moslem would say that he was a Moslem. But if someone would respond that he was simply a human being, then I knew that he was a Jew!" In today's milieu one is simply not allowed to be a Jew first. And therefore there is intermarriage, alienation and a dwindling American Jewish population, both in numbers and in being spiritually unattached to Judaism, Torah and the traditional Jewish value system. Many Jews sadly just do not hear the voice of Heaven calling out: "Who goes for us?!"

Much of this is simply attributable to the abysmal ignorance of many Jews regarding their own faith and its values and practices. In a book written by Water Lippman, a famous and influential Jewish political columnist and political pundit of the last century, his dedicatory verse was "The stone that the builders have rejected has become the cornerstone of the structure." He attributed this verse to the New Testament where it does appear, apparently completely unaware that the verse appears many centuries earlier in Psalms as written by King David.

During the Second World War, Lippman like many other American Jews of influence and ability made scant mention of the purposeful destruction of European Jewry by the German enemy. Emphasizing this aspect of the war would have made the war too Jewish and therefore one had to portray the struggle in purely universalistic terms.

Such Jews then, like many Jews now as well, could not afford to appear too biased for Jews and Jewish causes since that would compromise their universalistic credentials. But nevertheless the Heavenly question still echoes in our world awaiting our answer: "Who goes for us?!"

Shabat shalom

Weekly Parsha :: Rabbi Berel Wein B'SHALACH

The miracles performed by God through Moshe and Aharon, the apex of which is reached in this week's parsha by the splitting of Yam Suf and the final deliverance of the Jewish people from the oppression of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We are then further witness to the miracle of the manna falling six times a week to sustain the Jewish people in the Sinai desert and the ongoing miracle of water supplied to millions in that arid climate.

With all this, the Jewish people are trained and accustomed to a completely miraculous supernatural existence and way of life. They are, to a certain extent, lulled into believing that this is always the way things will be. Their passive role in all of these events is somehow the norm that will always be expected of them.

In the name of God, Moshe told them at the Yam Suf that God would fight their battle with Pharaoh and that they might remain quiet and passive in the ensuing struggle. It is this experience of constant visible and recognizable Divine intervention on their behalf, during the forty year span of residing in the desert of Sinai, that makes preparation for entry into the Land of Israel so difficult, as we will read later in the Torah.

A dependent society that is accustomed only to supernatural intervention will find it difficult to suddenly change and become self-reliant and independent. From this vantage point of practical living, the rabbis of the Talmud constantly reminded us not to rely solely on miracles.

Through the long and bitter centuries of Jewish exile amongst the Christian and Moslem nations of the world, the Jewish people somehow survived - barely so, but survive we did - in nothing short of a miraculous fashion. Powerless and defenseless, despised, hated and ridiculed, Jews nevertheless persevered, convinced that Divine intervention would somehow guarantee their continuance - individually and nationally.

Because of this enforced condition of passivity, Jews waited for supernatural deliverance from their plight. The hand of God, so to speak, acting almost invisibly and through seemingly natural forces and occurrences in the last century, changed these dynamics of Jewish life. Passivity now gave way to activity and great human effort and sacrifice.

God's miracles were always present with us but much of the Jewish nation girded its loins to struggle on its own for independence, self-reliance and national realization. The fact that these efforts proved successful is itself nothing short of miraculous. Viewing the Jewish world at the beginning of the twentieth century, who could have imagined what that Jewish world would look like a scant one hundred years later.

There are those who refuse to see the hand of God, so to speak, in these remarkable events. And there are those who refuse to see that positive human effort and initiative were necessary to bring this wonder about. But the truth is that both factors were and are present in the events of Jewish life today and will continue to be so in our immediate future as well.

Shabat shalom

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Beshalach
For the week ending 26 January 2013 / 14 Shevat 5773

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com
Insights

An Acquired Taste

"Moshe caused Yisrael to journey from the sea of Reeds..." (15:22)

They say that oysters are an acquired taste. They must be. The thought of swallowing (you don't eat oysters, you swallow them) what looks like a two inch disk of rubber with the odoriferous bouquet of an ancient seaweed must, I'm sure, take some acquiring.

There are some tastes, however, that require absolutely no acquiring whatsoever.

In the above verse, Rashi comments that Moshe caused the Jewish People to journey against their will. Let's picture the scene. The Egyptian army is lying scattered across the seashore. The Egyptians had crowned their horses with ornaments of gold and silver and precious stones. The Jewish People were busily gathering these jewels from the sea. Even before Moshe moved them on, the treasure that they amassed from the seashore was greater than the treasure collected when they left Egypt. The seashore probably looked like someone had raided all the storefronts on Fifth Avenue, including Tiffany and Cartier, and dumped it all on the beach. It's not surprising Moshe had to drag them away from such a bonanza.

What is strange is that in last week's Torah portion (11:2) G-d asked Moshe to tell the Jewish People to ask the Egyptians to give them their valuables. For unless they did so Avraham would have a grievance against G-d. G-d had promised Avraham to bring out his progeny from the slavery of Egypt with great wealth. If G-d asked Moshe to make sure the Jewish People took from the Egyptians, the implication is that without this chivvyng, the Jewish People would not have asked the Egyptians for anything at all.

So how come a few days later the reluctant and retiring Jewish People are all over the beach scabbling for jewelry? What happened to their diffidence?

It's amazing how some tastes take absolutely no acquiring whatsoever!

Source: Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

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

Bnei Yisrael were armed when they went up from Egypt... And Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him. (13:18, 19)

Rashi explains chamushim to mean "armed." In an alternative exposition, Rashi quotes the Midrash which posits that chamushim is derived from chomesh, "a fifth." This implies that actually only one fifth of the Jewish People left Egypt. Apparently, the bulk of the nation was prepared to adopt the Egyptian lifestyle. They did not want to be slaves, but they were not yet prepared to leave the country. They died during the three-day plague of darkness. In his Shemen Hatov, Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, quotes Horav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, zl, of Yerushalayim, who offered an insightful explanation of chamushim, armed. Of what did their weapons consist? Where did the Jewish people obtain weapons in the short span of time allotted to them to prepare to leave? They did not even have time to prepare food, let alone search for weapons.

The Rosh Yeshivah of Brisk explains that their klei zayin, weapons, were, as the Torah immediately states: "And Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him." These bones, the coffin of Yosef HaTzadik, protected the nation when they came to the Red Sea. Chazal say, "Hayam raah va'yanos", "The sea saw and fled." (Tehillim 114:3) Chazal ask what did the sea see that prompted it to flee /split? Raah arono shel Yosef, "It saw the coffin of Yosef." Yanus mipnei ha'nas, "Flee from the one who ran" is a reference to Yosef's reaction to the blandishments of Potifar's wife. These were the powerful armor of the Jewish People. It was Yosef's coffin which protected them.

Rav Weinberger integrates both p'shatim, explanations, demonstrating how one complements the other. The fact that only one-fifth of the nation left

Egypt - the fifth comprised of devout, committed, believing Jews; the faithful -- is the reason that they were armed. What greater protection is there than a group of Jews who are all righteous? They were armed with mitzvos and maasim tovim, good deeds.

Rav Weinberger employs this idea to explain the statement of the Chafetz Chaim regarding the fifth that left. The sage explains that even this unusual group of Jews - the fifth that left -- were the ones about whom it is said at the beginning of the parsha, V'lo nacham Elokim derech eretz Plishtim, "And Hashem did not lead them by way of the land of Plishtim" (ibid.13:17). Even this group of righteous Jews could not withstand the challenge of a confrontation with their ex-masters, the Egyptians. They were strong and committed, yet exposure to the moral bankruptcy evinced by the Egyptians was dangerous. When the "air" is spiritually impure, it has a detrimental effect on even the most righteous.

And Hashem said to Moshe, "Why do you call out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael, and they shall travel." (14:15)

Two specific aspects of the human experience--matrimony and earning a livelihood -- are compared to the splitting of the Red Sea. Kasheh zivugim shel adam k'krias Yam Suf, "It is as difficult to bring a man and his bride together as the splitting of the Red Sea." Kasheh mezonosav shel adam k'krias Yam Suf, "A person's livelihood is as difficult (to provide) as the splitting of the Red Sea." The word kasheh, difficult, is a term which creates a dilemma. Is there anything "difficult" for Hashem? He can do as He pleases. Nothing holds Him back. How can any act -- miraculous or not -- be perceived as challenging to Hashem?

Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, quotes Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl, who explains this "difficulty." The Rosh Yeshivah would often quote Chazal in the Talmud Chagigah 12A who posit that the rules of nature were composed with great wisdom. They cite the pasuk in Mishlei 3:19,20, "Hashem established the earth with chochmah, wisdom; He set the Heavens with tevunah, understanding; with His daas, knowing, the depths He split." The creation of the world and its ensuing design and continuity were great acts of penetrating wisdom. Thus, by its very definition a neis, miracle, is an abrogation of the laws of Nature. By implication, on some level, a neis opposes the wisdom of Hashem. Therefore, when Chazal say that Krias Yam Suf, parnassah, livelihood and zivugim, matrimony, are difficult for Hashem, they do not mean that the act is difficult - nothing is difficult for Hashem to do. They refer to the need to act contrary to the wisdom with which He endowed the world. This represents the "difficulty" for Hashem whenever He must perform a miracle which goes against the chukei ha'teva, laws of Nature. It is "difficult" for the very Source of wisdom itself to act in a manner which essentially undermines wisdom.

Rav Belsky quotes the well-known episode in the Talmud Shabbos 53b concerning a man whose wife passed away, leaving him with an infant that had to be nursed. The father lacked the funds to hire a wet-nurse. Hashem performed a miracle, such that the man himself was able to nurse the child. Rav Yosef said, "Come and see what a great man he is, for such a miracle was performed for him!" Abbaya, however, disagreed, saying, "On the contrary: how despicable is this man that the order of Creation was altered on his account."

Chazal are teaching us concerning the depth of wisdom inherent in the laws of nature, and how a miracle performed for a person indicates his level of righteousness. Yet, it also shows that a miracle performed for this person fundamentally contradicts the great wisdom Hashem has put into the natural order.

Bnei Yisrael came within the sea on dry land and the water was a wall for them, on their right side and on their left. (14:22) Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea. (14:29)

The commentators question the altering of the text in the sequence of the pesukim. First, why does the Torah repeat itself? Prior to the drowning of the Egyptians, the Torah writes that Bnei Yisrael "came within the sea on dry land." Afterwards, when the Egyptians were no longer a threat, the Torah reiterates that the people "went on dry land in the midst of the sea." Is this second pasuk necessary, once the Torah had already stated the same

thing earlier? Furthermore, previously the Torah wrote that they went b'soch ha'yam ba'yabashah; "within the sea on dry land." Following the Egyptian's demise, the Torah writes that they went, ba'yabashah b'soch ha'yam - "went on dry land in the midst of the sea." Were they on "dry land," or were they "within the sea"?

Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita, quotes the Noam Elimelech who explains the concept of, u'Bnei Yisrael halchu b'soch ha'yam ba'yabashah, "Bnei Yisrael came within the sea on dry land." There are tzaddikim, righteous people, who, even when walking on dry land, when they are not surrounded by water, still sense and perceive the miracles that took place during Krias Yam Suf, the splitting of the Red Sea. When the Jews experienced the incredible miracles that occurred before and during the splitting of the Red Sea, there were Jews that absorbed the miracles and assimilated them into their psyche to the point that they always felt surrounded by miracles - even when walking in relative safety and calm on dry land.

Rav Friedman supports this idea with the famous dictum of Ramban: U'min ha'nissim ha'gedolim ha'mefursamim, adam modeh b'nissim ha'nistarim, "And from the great public miracles, man concedes and acknowledges the covert miracles." In other words, we do not often acknowledge the everyday, every moment miracles that take place on a constant basis, miracles to which we, at first, do not give a second thought. Once we have experienced the awesome, earth-shattering miracles, we come to realize that, indeed, everything is a miracle. This is the idea of halchu b'soch ha'yam bayabashah - even when a person is on dry land, he acknowledges that he is experiencing a miracle.

In an effort to expand on the idea presented by the Noam Elimelech, Rav Friedman quotes the famous Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah, which interprets David HaMelech's closing pasuk in Sefer Tehillim: Kol ha'neshamah te'hallel Kah, "Every soul will offer praise to Hashem" - which the Midrash interprets: Al kol neshimah u'neshimah tehallel Kah, "For each and every breath you should praise Hashem." In other words, we must learn to realize that each and every breath of air that we breathe is not a given - it is a miraculous gift from the Almighty for which we must offer our gratitude and praise.

In the Talmud Shabbos 32, Chazal add: "When a man goes to the market, he should visualize that he is going before a judge; he has a headache, let him imagine that he has been placed in a dungeon; he is ill and becomes bedridden, it should be in his eyes as if he was standing before the executioner to receive his final judgment. Whoever has merit will be spared - whoever does not merit will die." The bottom line is: Do not take anything in life for granted! It is a miraculous gift from Hashem. One does not have to be in the midst of a raging sea with Egyptians dying all over the place to realize the depth of his miraculous salvation. Yes, one can be ba'yabashah - on dry land - and imagine as if he were b'soch ha'yam, in the midst of the sea.

This is why, in his commentary to Bava Kamma 16A, the Toras Chaim explains that Chazal were mesakein, instituted, the prayer of Modim/We give thanks, which is recited thrice daily in our Shemoneh Esrai. To paraphrase his holy words: "Since He performs kindness with every man, every moment, but, regrettably, a person does not always realize his personal miracle, thinking that this is the way of the world. One arises, goes about his daily endeavor as if this is what life is all about. He forgets that there are those who sadly do not arise - or who cannot get around. He does not recognize the verity that each and every movement of his body - every breath that he breathes - is from Him...! A person should, thus, have to stand all day in supplication to Hashem, praising Him and offering gratitude for his continued existence. This is not, however, the way of the world...Therefore, Chazal instituted a prayer which would be all-inclusive, acknowledging - al kol nisecha she'b'chol yom imunu - v'al niflosecha she'b'chol eis - erev, va'boker,vtzaharayim, "For all Your miracles which are always with us - and for all Your wonders which take place all of the time - morning, afternoon, and night."

This is the spiritual fringe benefit of Krias Yam Suf, which lent us insight to Hashem's ways, so that now, a Jew who walks on "dry land" is acutely

aware that but for the grace of G-d he would be in the sea. Life itself is its greatest miracle.

For every man according to what he eats. (16:16)

Horav Moshe Kramer, zl, became rav in Vilna. Prior to his ascent to the rabbinate he was a grocer. Hence, the name Kramer, which in Yiddish is a grocer. His illustrious grandson, Horav Eliyahu Kramer, was none other than the Gaon, m'Vilna. The great sage, who has continued to illuminate the minds of thousands of Torah students throughout the last two centuries, was the product of a home built upon middos tovos, good character traits, and incredible trust in the Almighty. When Rav Moshe was asked to accept the position of rav, he accepted the position on the condition that he would take no salary. Apparently, his grocery provided him with the funds necessary to live.

A short while after accepting the rabbanus, Rav Moshe noticed that there was more money available in their home. He wondered why. After all, he made approximately the same amount every week, his expenditures and accounts receivable allowing him a small profit. From where was this newly-found money? His wife explained that ever since he had become rav, more people were shopping in his store as a ruse to provide him with added income. Knowing that he would never take a donation, or even a gift, they were determined to help him by supporting his store.

Rav Moshe was aghast. He was causing the other grocers to lose money! If everyone would support the rav's store, what would the other vendors do? He came upon a course of action. After figuring out how much money he needed to sustain his family, he divided it into the days of the week and told his wife, "When you achieve the daily goal that I have set up for us, you must close the store in order to enable the other grocers to earn a living also. The Torah writes, ish l'fi acho, 'each man according to what he eats.' We should be no different." This is the type of people who were the progenitors of one of the greatest Torah scholars of all times.

Bnei Yisrael ate the manna for forty years...They ate the manna until their arrival at the border of the land of Canaan. (16:35)

In the Mechilta, Chazal teach that, Lo nitnah Torah lidrosh ela l'ochlei man, "The Torah was given to be expounded only by mann-eaters." This means that there were positive reasons for the Torah to have been given to Klal Yisrael while they were in the midst of their forty-year sojourn to the Promised Land. The wilderness was an integral part of this experience. The Torah had to be given in the desolate wilderness. It is not just because Egypt's prevailing environment was filled with spiritual bankruptcy and defilement. It was because to live in the desert is to defy the laws of nature. Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, explains that a nation cannot exist in the wilderness by natural means. It needs a miracle. By giving us His Torah in the desert, Hashem taught us that devotion to the Torah is never compatible with belief in nature. Unrestricted faith in "natural causes" cannot go hand in hand with Torah, because to view the world through the prism of nature is antithetical to Torah perspective.

A person who sees the world only as the arena for natural forces will inevitably consider any attempt at living a spiritual life to be doomed to failure. The two - "nature" and "Torah" - just do not go well together. The Torah demands from us faith in a Power, Who transcends nature and Who directs nature in accordance with spiritual purposes. Rav Dessler observes that this negation of the natural point of view and adherence to the spiritual perspective may, at times, lead us to make decisions which seem bound to lead to disaster. One clear instance is that of the nascent nation following the Cloud of Glory out into the wilderness, without making any provisions for the future. This was considered by Hashem to be our nation's finest hour. Zocharti lach chesed neurayich...lechteich Acharai ba'midbar b'erez lo zeruah. "I recall for you the kindness of your youth...your following Me into the Wilderness, into an unsown land"(Yirmiyahu 2:1). Pharaoh, as well as anyone whose perspective on life is dominated by nature, viewed this step as courting disaster. He only saw the "evil, blood and destruction," Reu. 'ki raah neged pineichem, "See! That evil intent is opposite your faces" (Shemos 10:10).

Hashem gave us the Torah on a supernatural basis. The Torah was given, to those who lived off the manna, to those who recognize on a daily basis that whatever they achieved was only by the grace of G-d. Indeed, Torah knowledge and retention are not based purely on acumen. One who is diligent and assiduous in his Torah study will be granted his achievement by virtue of a gift from the Almighty - its Divine Author. This concept applies to all of Jewish life, as well. There is nothing natural about serving Hashem. We serve Him with all of our kochos, abilities, until the very last moment, when we simply no longer have any strength left within us. We are stretched to the limit, and we still serve.

Hashem promised Avraham Avinu that he would father a son, upon whom the purpose of Creation would depend. Yet, the Patriarch found it difficult to accept, because he had seen "in the stars" that his fortune was not to have a son. Hashem told him to "leave his astrology," an idea which means: do not be moved by the power of nature which, from its very inception, is in violent confrontation with the spiritual purpose of Creation. The purpose of Creation can only be achieved by following a course which transcends nature.

Rav Dessler applies this idea to present day endeavor. On his own individual level, each one of us is confronted with challenges. For some, it is Shabbos. These people feel that Shabbos observance presents a serious test. Looking at earning a livelihood through the perspective of nature, Shabbos observance stands in the way of earning a living. The individual who trusts in Hashem, who understands that the Almighty provides, sees that even what seems to be "natural" is, in effect, miraculous. He trusts that "somehow" Hashem will find for him an avenue of financial salvation.

Likewise, one who seeks a lifestyle of solid financial freedom based on natural causes, with cause and effect playing a prominent role in his decision-making process, will certainly not take the "ben Torah" path. He will see that assuming such a course would collide with his perspective on earning a daily livelihood. Only one who takes the Torah plunge, taking his life in his hands, learning at all costs, despite the hardship and constant challenge, will find that he will be helped to learn and gain a meaningful livelihood without accepting the "vaunted" natural basis.

At a meeting of prominent Rabbinic leaders held in Lithuania, one of the speakers argued that, based upon the current financial situation, there was no way that the yeshivos could possibly have a future. There simply was no money, and, without a natural means of support, they simply could not survive. The gadol ha'dor, preeminent Torah leader of the generation, Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zl, uncle of Rav Dessler, immediately countered, "Do not worry: The Torah exists on miracles. It will never have a natural basis." This means that we must make every attempt to raise funds to increase a yeshivah's financial structure in order to glorify Torah, to make it great in the eyes of people. Regardless of how daunting the task and how difficult the challenge, however, we may never give up hope, falter or become complacent, because the future of Torah is assured. Hashem will "take care" of the Torah.

Indeed, Rav Dessler writes that the saintly Chafetz Chaim, zl, was unhappy with the idea of investing large sums of money so that the yeshivos could have a strong financial foundation from which to be assured a regular income. He said, "I would rather invest the money in expanding the existing yeshivos and in creating new ones. How will they exist? That is Hashem's business!"

The following story is a classic, related by Horav Yaakov Ades, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Porat Yosef. The mere fact that this story was related by an individual of such an enviable spiritual caliber indicates how we must view these (apparently not-so-simple) stories. Two "retail" textile merchants in Yerushalayim, circa pre-State of Israel, had stores in close proximity of one another. A silk wholesaler approached one of them, whom we shall call Reuven, and offered him a fine lot of silk at an incredibly low price. Reuven examined the merchandise and saw that it was well-made, light and flexible, yet strong, a perfect combination for long wearability. Now, came the haggling over the price. Back and forth they went, offer and counter offer, until they finally settled on a price. There was, however, one problem: It was a large lot which had to be purchased in its entirety. Reuven's business could not assume such a consignment. He decided to

call his competitor, Shimon, with whom he had a good relationship. Perhaps he would take half of the order. This was not unusual, since this was one way that they could drive down the wholesale price. They competed, but they were not at one another's throats.

The shipment arrived, and it was split evenly between Reuven and Shimon. Now, all they had to do was sell the merchandise. Reuven and Shimon had two distinct styles of doing business. Shimon was hardworking and diligent, working in his shop from early morning until evening. Reuven also worked hard, but he had his priorities. He went to shul in the morning and took his time praying. Afterwards, he would recite Tehillim and study his daily dose of Parsha and Mishnayos. He ate breakfast and took his time benchting. Then he went to work. When Reuven arrived at his shop, Shimon's shop had already been open for a few hours. Reuven was of the firm opinion that Hashem would provide him with his needs. His hishtadlus, endeavoring, would suffice. The Almighty would do the rest.

One evening, shortly after the shipment arrived, Reuven's shop was visited by a Russian Orthodox priest who happened to be a regular customer. Reuven proudly displayed his new material. The priest was visibly impressed, and, after purchasing a bolt of material for himself, hurried back to the monastery to share his good fortune with his fellow priests. Seeing what their friend brought back with him, the other priests suddenly had an urge to update their collection of apparel. First thing in the morning, they were going to present themselves at Reuven's textile shop and purchase material for themselves.

The next day, bright and early, a group of Russian Orthodox priests were to be found standing impatiently in front of Reuven's shop. Lo and behold, Reuven was nowhere to be found. Shul was more important. He opened for business only after his spiritual affairs were put in order. Meanwhile, Shimon, who had already been open for business for a few hours, saw the priests, and, like a good samaritan, he approached them and offered to show them his material, which just happened to come from the same shipment as to be found in Reuven's store. Hearing this, the priests proceeded to Shimon's store to examine his material. If his claim was true, he would be the lucky vendor.

They had brought a sample of the material purchased the day before from Reuven's store by the first priest. After comparing the two, they declared that Shimon's material was inferior to that of Reuven. They were going to stick with a winner and wait for Reuven to open his shop. Shimon explained that it was impossible - both materials were the same. The priests were not to be convinced.

Reuven made the sale, which profited him handsomely. Afterwards, Shimon came over and said, "We both had the same material, bought from the same shipment, at the same place - and, yet, they would only buy from you. You are right. You do your part - Hashem does His."

Va'ani Tefillah

V'ha'er eininu b'Sorasecha

Enlighten our eyes through Your Torah.

For every question -- be it general or personal in nature -- involving the collective Jewish nation; addressing the needs of the individual - the answer is to be found in the Torah. The Chafetz Chaim quotes the famous dictum, Leka midi d'lo remiza b'Oraissa, "There is nothing which is not alluded to in the Torah." Our Torah and the words of Chazal focus on the entire gamut of Jewish life. Chazal teach that one should apportion his finances into three parts. Thus, Chazal demonstrate their business acumen. Chazal issue advice on the relationship and attitude one must manifest toward his wife. While most seem to be common sense, they indicate penetrating insight into the human condition. If the Torah has all the answers, why are so many individuals wrong in their interpretation? Why do so many expound the Torah in a manner that not only shows their personal lack of scholarship and insight, but it almost seems that their interpretations are self-serving? The Chafetz Chaim explains that while everything may be found in the Torah, one must learn Torah well, so that he will know where to look. One must also be worthy of daas Torah, the wisdom that comes with Torah scholarship and commitment, so that he knows how to interpret what he reads. This is the meaning of, "Enlighten

our eyes through Your Torah." Without Hashem's illumination, we are groping in the dark.

Dedicated in loving memory of our dear mother and grandmother Leona Genshaft - Leach bas Rephael Hakohen a"h, niftara 17 Shevat 5770. by her family, Neil and Marie Genshaft, Isaac and Naomi

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Rabbi Weinreb's Parsha Column, Parshat Beshalach

Sponsored in memory of Nathan and Louise Schwartz a"h

"Preaching to the Choir"

Did you ever sing in a choir? If you did, you will easily be able to appreciate what I am about to describe.

I well remember singing in a choir, and I recall three different scenarios which occurred in my choir with my choirmaster, who was invariably also the cantor.

In one scenario, the cantor began by singing part of a selection, and then taught us the refrain. He would then proceed to a second part of the selection and instruct us to repeat the same refrain after it. Then he would sing a third part, after which we were again required to repeat the identical refrain. All we really had to learn was one short refrain which we interspersed into his singing.

In a second scenario, he sang a short selection, after which we would repeat that selection. He would go on to his second selection, which we again repeated after him. Throughout the performance he would lead and we would follow, singing every line, but singing it in response to him.

In the third scenario, we knew the entire song even before we arrived in the rehearsal room. He would then start the song, we would immediately join in, and continued to sing the entire composition in unison with the cantor.

In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16), we read about a choir and a choirmaster, or cantor. The choir consists of all the people of Israel, and the choirmaster is none other than Moses our teacher.

This week's Parsha contains a song, for the first time in the Bible. It is the Song of the Sea, which was chanted by Moses and the Jewish people after they witnessed the miraculous splitting of the sea, and thereby were delivered from their Egyptian pursuers.

"Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord. They said:

I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously;

Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and might;

He is become my deliverance." (Exodus 15:1-2)

It is quite clear that both Moses and the people sang. But, our sages ask, what was the relationship between them? Exactly how did Moses lead the lengthy song, and at which point did the Israelites respond?

Our sages ask this question in the Talmud, in the tractate of Sotah. As is often the case, they do not agree upon one single answer. Rather, three opinions are offered.

Rabbi Akiva maintains that Moses acted very much like the cantor in the first scenario described above. He began with the words "I will sing to the Lord..." which became the refrain and was then echoed by the people. He then continued, "the Lord is my strength and might...", to which the people responded with the refrain "I will sing to the Lord..." And so on throughout the song. Moses introduced each new stanza, which the people did not themselves sing, but instead repetitively sang the refrain, and only the refrain, over and over again.

Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Yosi HaGalili, disagreed. In his view, Moses sang each stanza, one at a time, and the people repeated that same stanza. Thus, Moses sang, "I will sing to the Lord...", and the people responded, "I will sing to the Lord..." Then Moses sang, "the Lord is my strength and might", and the people responded, "the Lord is my strength and might". This approach is identical to scenario two above.

Rabbi Nehemiah offering yet a third opinion. According to him, Moses began the song with words "I will sing to the Lord..." Immediately, the people joined in, and sang the entire song, from start to finish, along with

Moses. They were as inspired by the miracle as he was, but needed him to only begin, after which everyone, choir and choirmaster, sang the same song simultaneously. Rabbi Nehemiah's approach conforms to scenario number three.

I have often wondered what fundamental issue is being debated here. Permit me to suggest one possibility, which is consistent with my abiding interest in the subject of leadership, with which the regular reader of this column is well familiar.

In Rabbi Akiva's view, Moses as leader did all the work. The people merely chimed in, echoing repeatedly the brief phrase which he taught them. The leader is active, the people responsive, but passive.

Rabbi Eliezer proposes a different model of leadership. Moses sets an example, and the people emulate him. He sets a second example and is again emulated. The leader teaches, and the people imitate him. He is their role model.

Rabbi Nehemiah suggests an entirely different paradigm, one which is startlingly novel. For him the leader is but a spark which ignites the potential creative powers of the followers. A leader sets the stage, but all the followers have equal inspiration and join cooperatively with the leader. The ancient metaphor of shepherd and flock is no longer apt. There is no flock; all are shepherds.

I would further suggest that these three sages are not at all contradicting each other. Rather, each is referring to a different stage in the development of a nation.

Rabbi Akiva is referring to the first stage, during which the people are not yet ready to be innovators themselves, but must be taught to sing a simple refrain over and over again, in response to the choirmaster's creativity.

Rabbi Eliezer proceeds to describe a second stage. Here, the people are still not capable of originality themselves. But they are no longer limited to repeating the same refrain. They all ready to follow the master's example along the entire journey.

Rabbi Nehemiah envisions a third and ideal stage of development. The people are capable of composing a new song. They have the same degree of creativity as does the choirmaster. They merely need him to offer a brief introductory, and then they are capable of singing an inspired new song in tandem with each other.

Once again I have attempted to demonstrate to you how central is the concept of leadership in our Torah. It is so central that even the Song of the Sea, the choir of Israel and Moses our choirmaster, give us the occasion to reflect upon the subject of leadership.

Much more important, the Song of the Sea brings us closer to attaining the vision of a time when all of the Jewish people are equally inspired to sing the same song. May that time come speedily, in our days.

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

To be a Leader of the Jewish People

"That day, G-d saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians . . . The Israelites saw the great power G-d had displayed against the Egyptians, and the people were in awe of G-d. They believed in G-d and in his servant Moses. Moses and the Israelites then sang this song, saying . . ."

The Song at the Sea was one of the great epiphanies of history. The sages said that even the humblest of Jews saw at that moment what even the greatest of prophets was not privileged to see. For the first time they broke into collective song – a song we recite every day. There is a fascinating discussion among the sages as to how exactly they sang. On this, there were four opinions. Three appear in the tractate of Sotah:

Our rabbis taught: On that day Rabbi Akiva expounded: When the Israelites came up from the Red Sea, they wanted to sing a song. How did they sing it? Like an adult who reads the Hallel and they respond after him with the leading word. Moses said, I will sing to the Lord, and they responded, I will sing to the Lord.

Moses said, For He has triumphed gloriously, and they responded, I will sing to the Lord.

R. Eliezer son of R. Jose the Galilean said: It was like a child who reads the Hallel and they repeat after him all that he says. Moses said, I will sing to the Lord, and they responded, I will sing to the Lord. Moses said, For He has triumphed gloriously, and they responded, For He has triumphed gloriously.

R. Nehemiah said: It was like a schoolteacher who recites the Shema in the synagogue. He begins first and they respond after him. (Sotah 30b)

According to Rabbi Akiva, Moses sang the song phrase by phrase, and after each phrase the people responded, I will sing to the Lord – their way, as it were, of saying Amen to each line.

According to R. Eliezer son of R. Jose the Galilean, Moses recited the song phrase by phrase, and they repeated each phrase after he had said it.

According to Rabbi Nehemiah, Moses and the people sang the whole song together. Rashi explains that all the people were seized by divine inspiration and miraculously, the same words came into their minds at the same time.

There is a fourth view, found in the Mekhilta:

Eliezer ben Taddai said, Moses began and the Israelites repeated what he had said and then completed the verse. Moses began by saying, I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, and the Israelites repeated what he had said, and then completed the verse with him, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and its rider He hurled into the sea. Moses began saying, The Lord is my strength and my song, and the Israelites repeated and then completed the verse with him, saying, The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. Moses began saying, The Lord is a warrior, and the Israelites repeated and then completed the verse with him, saying, The Lord is a warrior, Lord is His name. (Mekhilta Beshalach Parshah 1)

Technically, as the Talmud explains, the sages are debating the implication of the (apparently) superfluous words *vayomru lemor*, “they said, saying”, which they understood to mean “repeating”. What did the Israelites repeat? For R. Akiva it was the first words of the song only, which they repeated as a litany. For R. Eliezer son of R. Jose the Galilean they repeated the whole song, phrase by phrase. For R. Nehemiah they recited the entire song in unison. For R. Eliezer ben Taddai they repeated the opening phrase of each line, but then completed the whole verse without Moses having to teach it to them.

Read thus, we have before us a localised debate on the meaning of a biblical verse. There is, however, a deeper issue at stake. To understand this, we must look at another Talmudic passage, on the face of it unrelated to the passage in Sotah. It appears in the tractate of Kiddushin, and poses a fascinating question. There are various people we are commanded to honour: a parent, a teacher (i.e. a rabbi), the Nasi, (religious head of the Jewish community), and a king. Many any of these four types renounce the honour that is their due?

R. Isaac ben Shila said in the name of R. Mattana, in the name of R. Hisda: If a father renounces the honour due to him, it is renounced, but if a rabbi renounces the honour due to him it is not renounced. R. Joseph ruled: Even if a rabbi renounces his honour, it is renounced . . .

R. Ashi said: Even on the view that a rabbi may renounce his honour, if a Nasi renounces his honour, the renunciation is invalid . . .

Rather, if was stated, it was stated thus: Even on the view that a Nasi may renounce his honour, yet a king may not renounce his honour, as it is said, You shall surely set a king over you, meaning, his authority should be over you. (Kiddushin 32 a-b)

Each of these people exercises a leadership role: father to son, teacher to disciple, Nasi to the community and king to the nation. Analysed in depth, the passages makes it clear that these four roles occupy different places on the spectrum between authority predicated on the person and authority

vested in the holder of an office. The more the relationship is personal, the more easily honour can be renounced. At one extreme is the role of a parent (intensely personal), at the other that of king (wholly official).

I suggest that this was the issue at stake in the argument over how Moses and the Israelites sang the Song at the Sea. For R. Akiva, Moses was like a king. He spoke, and the people merely answered Amen (in this case, the words “I will sing to the Lord”). For R. Eliezer son of R. Jose the Galilean, he was like a teacher. Moses spoke, and the Israelites repeated, phrase by phrase, what he had said. For R. Nehemiah, he was like a Nasi among his rabbinical colleagues (the passage in Kiddushin, which holds that a Nasi may renounce his honour, makes it clear that this is only among his fellow rabbis). The relationship was collegial: Moses began, but thereafter, they sang in unison. For R. Eliezer ben Taddai Moses was like a father. He began, but allowed the Israelites to complete each verse. This is the great truth about parenthood, made clear in the first glimpse we have of Abraham:

Terach took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. (Bereishith 31:11)

Abraham completed the journey his father began. To be a parent is to want one’s children to go further than you did. That too, for R. Eliezer ben Taddai, was Moses’ relationship to the Israelites.

The prelude to the Song at the Sea states that the people “believed in G-d and in his servant Moses” – the first time they are described as believing in Moses’ leadership. On this, the sages asked: What is it to be a leader of the Jewish people? Is it to hold official authority, of which the supreme example is a king (“The rabbis are called kings”)? Is it to have the kind of personal relationship with one’s followers that rests not on honour and deference but on encouraging people to grow, accept responsibility and continue the journey you have begun? Or is it something in between?

There is no single answer. At times, Moses asserted his authority (during the Korach rebellion). At others, he expressed the wish that “all G-d’s people were prophets”. Judaism is a complex faith. There is no one Torah model of leadership. We are each called on to fill a number of leadership roles: as parents, teachers, friends, team-members and team-leaders. There is no doubt, however, that Judaism favours as an ideal the role of parent, encouraging those we lead to continue the journey we have begun, and go further than we did. A good leader creates followers. A great leader creates leaders. That was Moses’ greatest achievement – that he left behind him a people willing, in each generation, to accept responsibility for taking further the great task he had begun.

To read more writings and teachings from the Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, please visit www.chief Rabbi.org.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Beshalach

The Splitting Of The Sea and the Concept of Hidur Mitzvah

"This is my G-d and I will glorify Him (Zeh Keli v'Anveyhu); the G-d of my fathers and I will exalt him." [Shmos 15:2] The Talmud derives from here the idea of "beautifying ourselves before Him though our aesthetically pleasing performance of mitzvos: Acquire a beautiful Esrog, make before me a beautiful Succah, a beautiful Sefer Torah, beautiful Tefillin, and so forth." [Shabbos 133b]. This is the source for the general concept of "Hidur mitzvah".

Not only does the Torah expect us to fulfill the mitzvos, there is an additional aspect of fulfillment that involves carrying out the mitzvah in the most beautiful way possible. Even though one can buy a pair of Tefillin for \$300 - \$400 that are in fact kosher, buying an exceptionally nice pair of Tefillin with exquisite batim [housings] and exquisite writing on beautiful parchment can cost upwards of \$1000. We have spoken in the past that there is an obligation to spend up to 1/3 more to do mitzvos in a more beautiful way than what would be the bare minimum way of fulfilling those same mitzvos. All this is learned out from the above cited pasuk from Shiras HaYam: Zeh Keli v'Anveyhu.

One may ask: Why here? Why is specifically this, the time and place that the Torah decides to inform us of this concept of beautifying oneself before Him with our performance of mitzvot? It does not seem that it really fits into the context of Shiras HaYam.

I saw a very beautiful answer in the name of Rabbi Tzvi Cheshen from Eretz Yisrael. The Mishna teaches that 10 miracles were done for our fathers at Yam Suf [Avos 5:4]. In other words, the events at the Red Sea did not only involve one miracle – the splitting of the water – but rather there were 10 distinct miracles that happened there. The Bartenura and Tosfos Yom Tov proceed to list the 10 different miracles referred to by the Mishna. I am not going to go through the entire catalog. But just to cite a few examples -- besides the basic splitting of the sea -- they enumerate the following: The sea became like a tent (with protection from above) and the Jews entered into the midst of it; the sea bed was dry and firm without being muddy; as soon as the Jews crossed through, the sea bed turned back into mud and quicksand to trap the pursuing Egyptians. The list of miracles goes on...

The question is, why were all these miracles necessary? With the Egyptians on their tails and nowhere to go, Klal Yisrael would have been perfectly satisfied with the "mere" splitting of the sea! No one would have complained if there was not a tent of protective water over their heads or if the ground was still a little muddy. Nine of the ten miracles were most likely superfluous. All they really needed was "split the Sea and let's get out of here". Why did G-d add all these flourishes to the basic miracle? They were basically a form of "hidur mitzvah". "When I do something for My Nation, I want it to be first class! I do not want to just 'get by.' I want it to be as nice as possible."

Therefore, it makes a tremendous amount of sense why this is the source from which we learn that when you do a mitzvah, you do it right; you make it beautiful. It is because that is how the Ribono shel Olam treated us. When we buy someone a present, it is a sign that we appreciate them and like them. Typically, when we buy a person a present, we put it in a beautiful box. We want the presentation to be as nice as possible. When we buy our wives jewelry, we do not just take the necklace out of our pocket and say "here is the necklace!" We get a nice box which itself costs a few dollars. We have it wrapped really nicely – with a ribbon and a bow -- which costs a few more dollars. Who cares? She cares!

These extra flourishes beyond the basic gift are done to demonstrate how much we love the person to whom we are presenting it. The splitting of Yam Suf showed us how much He loved us. Hiddur Mitzvah – the beautiful Tefillin, the beautiful esrog, etc. – are intended to show Hashem how much we love Him!

In Search Of Something New To Have Faith In

The second idea I would like to share, I saw in the Sefer of the Tolner Rebbe in the name of the Chiddushei HaRim. Chazal point out the grammatical problem with the pasuke "Az yashir Moshe u'Bnei Yisrael es haShirah hazot l'Hashem" [Then Moshe and the Children of Israel WILL sing this song to Hashem] [Shmos 15:1], which seemingly is speaking in the future tense, when in fact the past tense should have been employed in describing what took place. The Rabbis cite this pasuk as one of the Biblical allusions to the Resurrection of the Dead (Techiyas haMeisim).

Here too, we can ask the same question we raised regarding Hidur Mitzvah: Why here? Why is specifically this used to provide a hidden allusion to the concept of Techiyas haMeisim in the Torah?

The Tolner Rebbe answers this question based on a second question. If you study the text of the Shira, you see that the opening pasukim speak of G-d in the third person: "A horse and its rider He threw into the sea"; "Pharaoh's chariots and army He cast into the sea." Then, suddenly in pasuk 6, the style switches and G-d is addressed in the second person: "Your right hand, Hashem, is majestic in might;" "...You devastate your opponents; You send forth Your wrath..."

Why does the Torah switch from third person to second person? The Zohar states that Klal Yisrael went through a transformation here. The transformation was that they started Krias Yam Suf with a basic belief (Emuna) in the Master of the World. However when they experienced

Krias Yam Suf and they saw the Revealed Hand of G-d, their belief changed into a reality! [The Rabbis comment that a common handmaiden on Yam Suf saw visions greater than the great prophet Yechezkel.] Previously, belief was just a concept. It was "third person" (detached). By the time they experienced Krias Yam Suf and saw the Hand of G-d, it was a reality: I can point: This is my G-d.

If that's the case, at this time Klal Yisrael was devoid of Emuna. There was no question of belief anymore. It was reality. The Master of the Universe said "I want to still give you the opportunity to believe – to use faith to believe in something you have not yet witnessed! What's that? Techiyas haMeisim – the fact that everyone will die but everyone will also come back!" That was not yet reality, it was still in the realm of Emuna.

When BELIEF in the Almighty was no longer possible because it became REALITY, the Jewish people were given the promise of Resurrection (Az Yashir Moshe U'Bnei Yisrael...) to provide them with a concept about which they could have Emuna (belief).

A second answer to this same question comes from the Belzer Rebbe, zt"l, cited by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetsky. When the Belzer Rebbe tried to gather his people together after World War II, he saw that the Chassidim -- most of them Holocaust survivors who had lost large portions of their families -- were in no mood to sing Zemiros on Shabbos.

The Belzer Rebbe posed this question to his Chassidim: Why specifically now at the time of the splitting of the Sea were the Jewish people taught the Biblical allusion to the concept of Resurrection (Techiyas haMeisim)?

The Belzer Rebbe explained: Realize that when the Jewish people sang the Song of the Sea, the entire nation was not present. How many people did not survive the enslavement of Egypt? How many survivors had lost the majority of their families in Egypt who had never lived to see the day of the Exodus? According to Chazal, 80% of the Jews died in Egypt. It is safe to say that everyone who did make it out of Egypt had lost relatives and could not therefore fully celebrate the miracles they were witnessing at that time.

Moshe Rabbeinu told them "It is time to sing." But they responded, "Sing? How can we be happy? Eighty percent of Klal Yisrael is missing!" Moshe then explained that we have an allusion to the resurrection of the dead from this very place in the Torah: We will get your relatives back! The knowledge that the dead will rise and come back is very consoling.

Not long ago, I read the story of a woman who lost her only son in the War (Shalom HaGalil) in Lebanon. She was inconsolable. She refused to go to any family simchas. She would only go to funerals. She was a widow who lost her only son, "what joy is there any more in life?" She once went to a family levaya. A woman accompanied her to the cemetery. Following the burial, they stopped at the grave site of Reb Aryeh Levine (The Tzadik of Yerushalayim: A Tzadik In Our Time) to say Tehillim. On Reb Aryeh Levine's tombstone, she saw the following written: Anyone who comes to pray at my grave should first say 'I believe with a complete faith that Resurrection of the dead will transpire when it is the Will of G-d, blessed be He that this will happen.' The woman read that and it touched a chord. Suddenly, it became a reality to her that "one day I will get my son back." From that moment on, she began to live her life again because the hope that there will be Techiyas haMeisim consoled her.

Last Sunday, I had to fly to St. Louis for a wedding. I was sitting in the aisle seat with the seat next to me empty. The window seat was taken by an older woman with a box of tissues. She kept on blowing her nose. I was thinking to myself "I am going to catch a cold after this flight." The plane took off and I noticed that the woman was wiping her eyes also. I thought to myself, maybe she doesn't have a cold, she's crying!

The stewardess came down and sat in the middle seat and started talking with her, at which point the woman broke down and cried loudly. The stewardess tried to console her. Apparently Southwest Airlines was alerted that this woman had some kind of problem. The stewardess left. The woman continued to cry the whole time.

I said to her, "This is none of my business, but what is bothering you?" She told me, "I found out this morning that my daughter was killed in a car crash and I am on the way to her funeral. My only other child, my son, was

killed in Iraq two months ago!" She was inconsolable. I asked her, "Is there anything I can do for you?" She said, "Just pray for me."

The knowledge of "From here there is a Biblical allusion to Tachiyas HaMeisim" - the idea that one day we will again see the relatives whom we so dearly miss, is a very consoling thought. That is what rejuvenated the Belzer Chassidim who were Holocaust survivors and that is what consoled the woman at the grave site of Reb Aryeh Levine -- one day she will see her son again and she can therefore go on living her life.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Tu Bishvat: Every Creature Utters Its Song

Reb Aryeh Levine (1885-1969), known as the "Tzaddik of Jerusalem," recorded the following incident in his memoirs.

I recall the early days, after 1905, when God granted me the privilege to ascend to the Holy Land; and I arrived at Jaffa. There I first merited meeting our great master, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (of blessed memory), who greeted me with good cheer, as was his sacred custom to receive all people.

We chatted together on various Torah topics. After an early Minchah (the afternoon prayer-service), he went out, as was his custom, to stroll a bit in the fields and collect his thoughts. I accompanied him.

During the walk, I plucked a twig or a flower. Our great master was taken aback when he saw this. He told me gently:

"Believe me - in all my days, I have been careful never to pluck a blade of grass or flower needlessly, when it had the ability to grow or blossom. You know the teaching of the Sages, that there is not a single blade of grass below, here on earth, which does not have a heavenly force above telling it, Grow!

"Every sprout and leaf of grass says something, conveys some meaning. Every stone whispers its inner message in its silence. Every creature utters its song [of praise for the Creator]."

Those words, spoken from a pure and holy heart, engraved themselves deeply on my heart. From then on, I began to feel a strong sense of compassion for all things.

(Adapted from "A Tzaddik in Our Time" by R. Simcha Raz, pp. 108-109)

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Rabbi Asher Meir

Beshalach - Shabbat Boundaries

Although the primary commandment to keep Shabbat is part of the Ten Commandments, the first Shabbat commandments are in our parsha: the double portion of manna on the sixth day which kept until Shabbat, which is the precedent for oneg Shabbat, and the commandment "no man shall go out of his place" (Shemot 16:29), establishing Shabbat boundaries which are the original kind of Shabbat rest.

Many authorities rule according to the Talmud Yerushalmi (Eiruvin 3:4), that this verse teaches a Torah prohibition for any Jew to go twelve Hebrew miles beyond the place of his Shabbat station; all agree that the Sages imposed a more stringent boundary of two thousand amot, which is one Hebrew mile - about a kilometer.

The Talmud explains the source of the two-thousand amot "city limit" based on a most cryptic inference: "We learn place from place, and place from fleeing; fleeing from fleeing, and fleeing from border; border from border, and border from beyond". (Eiruvin 51a)

Rashi explains: The word "place" in the verse "No man shall go beyond his place" is clarified by the word "place" in the verse "And I have

established a place whither he may flee" (Shemot 21:13), referring to the cities of refuge which provide sanctuary for an unintentional manslaughter. And the word "fleeing" in this verse is clarified by the word "fleeing" in the verse "from the border of his city of refuge, whither he may flee" (Bamidbar 35:26). And the key to the meaning of this fleeing is the word "border" - there is a specific boundary in which the inadvertent killer is protected.

The word "border" in this verse is clarified by the the word "border" in the next verse, "And the blood avenger will find him beyond the border". The key to the meaning of this border is the word "beyond" - a border demarcates an area within and an area without.

Finally, the word "beyond" is clarified by the word "beyond" in the verse "And you shall measure beyond the city" two thousand amot in each direction (Bamidbar 35:5). This measurement refers to the environs of the special Levite cities, which may not be built up for two thousand amot around. We conclude that the Shabbat boundary is two thousand amot.

SHABBAT AS A CITY OF REFUGE

City of refuge (ir miklat)Shabbat:City of refugeThis passage suggests that our Shabbat location can be likened to a city of refuge - the ir miklat where the negligent but unintentional killer is protected from the blood avenger. When the period of exile is through, he is free forever from the threat of vengeance.

Shabbat is a place of refuge for the Jewish people, a time when we are safe from the worries and concerns which pursue us relentlessly during the week.

Like the unintentional killer, most of the worries which stalk us are of our own making, the results of our own careless actions. Even so, the Torah provides us a refuge in the form of the Shabbat. Ultimately, the killer is released from his time of exile, and the avenger may no longer pursue him; after Shabbat, we start our week anew, with an inner peace which protects us from the weekday worries which seemed so daunting on Friday afternoon.

We further learn "fleeing" from "border". The inadvertent killer is not automatically granted protection from reprisal; he must flee to the specific boundary of the city of refuge. Outside of this boundary he may be accosted.

Shabbat also has a border. Like the case of the cities of refuge which don't protect us until we enter their boundaries, Shabbat doesn't protect us unless we keep it. The arrival of sunset on Friday doesn't automatically free us of worries, it merely provides a city of refuge. We then have to hie ourselves to this sanctuary, by observing the Shabbat. (As we explained in parshat Bo in 5760, referring to the idea of a "sukkat shalom". In a later column we will explain G-d willing the profound likeness of Shabbat to a city of Levites.)

Rabbi Asher Meir is the author of the book Meaning in Mitzvot, distributed by Feldheim. The book provides insights into the inner meaning of our daily practices, following the order of the 221 chapters of the Kitzur Shulchan Arukh.

Carrying Nitroglycerin on Shabbos

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

This week's parshah includes one of the main sources for the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos. I therefore decided to send the following article, the original of which I wrote almost thirty years ago.

The Torah's concern for the protection of life and health is axiomatic. In virtually all instances, Torah restrictions are superseded when a life-threatening emergency exists. If the situation is extenuating, but not life-threatening, then the rule of thumb is that the Torah restriction remains in force. Sometimes, however, mitigating factors allow the overriding of a rabbinic injunction because of extenuating circumstances.

A contemporary halachic question which relates to this issue is as follows: Is there way whereby a person suffering from angina or other heart disease carry his medication on Shabbos through a public thoroughfare? In case of a sudden attack, there would indeed be a life-threatening need that permits procurement of such medication through any necessary means. However,

there is no medical reason that compels the patient to leave his home where his medicine is kept. Is there halachic basis to allow him to leave his house with his medication, since the possible medical emergency can be completely avoided by staying home? Granted that this would result in a great hardship by making the patient housebound on Shabbos, yet this deprivation would not constitute a life-threatening emergency and would not be grounds for overriding a Torah-proscribed Shabbos prohibition.

The halachic question is two-fold: Can carrying the medicine be considered a rabbinic violation, as opposed to a Torah violation, thus making it more acceptable? Does halachic basis exist to permit overriding a rabbinic prohibition because of hardships?

The same principles can be applied to other medical situations. For example, the diabetic who receives insulin injection is usually medically advised to carry with him some food items containing sugar as a precaution against insulin shock; and certain asthmatics and other allergy sufferers are advised never to go anywhere without their medication available. Would these patients be allowed to carry their sugar or medicine on Shabbos in a way that involves violating only a rabbinic decree?

Most contemporary authorities who address this issue base their discussion on a responsum of Rav Shmuel Engel, dated 9 Tammuz 5679 (July 7, 1919).¹ At the time of this question, there was a government regulation in force requiring the carrying of identification papers whenever one walked outside, with serious consequences for those apprehended in violation. Rabbi Engel was asked if a person could place his identification papers under his hat on Shabbos while walking to shul. Rabbi Engel's analysis of the halachic issues involved will clarify many of the aspects of our question.

Shabbos violations fall under two broad headings: those activities that are forbidden

min hatorah (Torah-mandated), and those that are forbidden by rabbinic injunction, but do not qualify as melacha (forbidden work) according to the Torah's definition.

Torah law is not violated unless the melacha is performed in a manner in which that activity is usually done. An act performed in a peculiar way, such as carrying something in a way that such an item is not normally carried, constitutes a rabbinic violation, but is permitted under Torah law. This deviation from the norm is called a shinui.²

Rabbi Engel points out that carrying identification papers in one's hat would constitute a shinui, thus allowing a possibility of leniency. He quotes two Talmudic sources that permit melacha with a shinui on Shabbos due to extenuating, but not life-threatening, circumstances.

Rabbi Marinus said, "One who is suffering is allowed to suck milk directly from a goat on Shabbos. Why? [Is not milking an animal on Shabbos a violation of a Torah prohibition?] Sucking is considered milking in an unusual way, and the rabbis permitted it because of the discomfort of the patient."³

Tosafos notes that the leniency is allowed only if the suffering is caused by illness and not simply by thirst. The Talmudic text and commentary of Tosafos are quoted as halachic decision by the Shulchan Aruch.⁴

There is another Talmudic text with a similar conclusion:

Nachum of Gaul said, "One is allowed on Shabbos to clean a spout that has become clogged by crushing [the clogged matter] with one's foot. Why? [Is it not forbidden to perform repair work on Shabbos?] Since the repair work is done in an unusual manner, the rabbis permitted it in a case of potential damage."

Based on these Talmudic sources, Rabbi Engel concludes that the rabbis permitted the performance of melacha with a shinui under extenuating circumstances, even though rabbinic prohibitions are not usually waived in these situations. Furthermore, he points out two other mitigating factors to permit carrying identification papers: According to most opinions, the prohibition to carry on Shabbos in our cities (even in the usual fashion) is rabbinic, because "our public areas do not constitute a public domain according to Torah law." And, carrying identification papers would constitute a melacha done without any need for the result, which would also provide a reason to be lenient, as will be explained.

Melacha She'einah Tzericha Legufah

In several places,⁵ the Gemara records a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon as to whether a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah, an action done intentionally and in the normal fashion, but without a need for the result of the action, is forbidden by the Torah or if it is a rabbinic injunction. For example, carrying a corpse from a private domain into a public domain would not constitute a Torah desecration of Shabbos according to Rabbi Shimon, since one's purpose is to remove the corpse from the private domain and not because he has a need for it in the public domain. Similarly, snaring or killing a predator insect or reptile when one's concern is only to avoid damage is a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah, and therefore constitutes only a rabbinic violation according to Rabbi Shimon. Since one has no need for the caught reptile, Rabbi Shimon considers the violation rabbinic.

Both of these cases violate Torah prohibition according to Rabbi Yehudah, who opines that a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah is a Torah-mandated prohibition.

Although the Rambam⁶ follows the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, the majority of halachic authorities follow the opinion of Rabbi Shimon.

Rabbi Engel considers carrying identification papers in one's hat to be a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah, because the carrier has no personal use for the papers and is carrying them merely to avoid injury or loss. He compares this to the killing of a snake, where the intent is to avoid injury. Although his point is arguable, as evidenced by a later responsum,⁷ Rabbi Engel reiterates his position that this situation qualifies as a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah.

Furthermore, there is a basis to consider carrying only a rabbinic prohibition because no Torah-mandated public domain exists today. (It should be noted that notwithstanding Rav Engel's statement on this subject, this position is strongly disputed by many authorities who contend that there is a reshut harabim today.)

Thus, because of these two mitigating reasons, Rabbi Engel permitted carrying the identification papers in one's hat, which is an indirect method of carrying, in order to attend synagogue or to perform a different mitzvah.

As we will see shortly, some later authorities quote this responsum as a basis to permit our original question, although certain aspects of our case differ significantly from those of Rabbi Engel's. Firstly, whereas in Rabbi Engel's case, the identification papers had no inherent worth to the carrier, the nitroglycerin tablets do have intrinsic value to the patient. This would render them a melacha hatzericha legufah, a melacha performed with interest in the results being done, which constitutes a Torah forbidden melacha. Thus, one of the reasons for being lenient is nullified.

Secondly, whereas our question includes carrying medication for social or other reasons, Rabbi Engel permitted the carrying of the identification papers only for the performance of a mitzvah. Would he have allowed a greater leniency for someone who is ill and permitted it even for social reasons? Bearing in mind the case of Rabbi Marinus, where permission is based on medical needs, could leniency be extended to allow carrying with a shinui, even for social or other reasons?

Several later halachic works discuss the question of a patient carrying medication with a shinui as a precaution against a sudden attack. Rabbi Yekutiel Y. Greenwald⁸ suggests that a sugar cube be sewn into the pocket of a diabetic's coat before Shabbos, so that he would not be carrying in the usual manner on Shabbos. Rabbi Greenwald bases his opinion on the Gemara⁹ which allows the carrying of an amulet on Shabbos as a medicinal item, and the responsum of Rabbi Shmuel Engel quoted above. Unfortunately, the comparison to the law of kemeiya (amulet) seems strained. The halacha clearly states that the kemeiya must be worn in the way that it is normally worn, and that it can be worn only if it is a proven remedy. Under these circumstances, the kemeiya is considered to be like a garment. There does not seem to be a basis in these considerations to allow carrying an item. However, Rabbi Greenwald allows the diabetic to go outside with a sugar cube sewn into his garment, even for non-mitzvah-related activities, whereas Rabbi Engel permitted the carrying of identification papers only when going outside for mitzvah purposes.

Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg¹⁰ cites the responsum of Rabbi Greenwald, but disputes his conclusions sharply. In addition to the difficulty we have noted, he also disputes two of Rabbi Greenwald's assumptions.

1. Whereas Rabbi Greenwald says that in these circumstances one could sew a sugar cube or medicine tablet into a garment in order to carry it, Rabbi Waldenberg does not feel that the circumstances justify carrying an item in this fashion.

2. Rabbi Waldenberg writes that the only situation in which Rabbi Engel permitted carrying with a shinui was when the activity would have constituted a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah. This applies to carrying identification papers, where the carrier has no personal need for the papers and is carrying them only to avoid being apprehended. It does not apply to the case for medication, where the patient wants the medicine available for his own use.

Rabbi Waldenberg concludes that the leniency proposed by Rabbi Engel does not apply in the situation at hand, and that this patient would not be allowed to carry his medication outside, even when using a shinui. A mediating position is taken by Rabbi Yehoshua Neuwirth.¹¹ Although he equates the situation of the person carrying identification papers to the one carrying medication, and does permit the carrying of medication with a shinui for the purpose of performing a mitzvah, Rabbi Neuwirth recommends other specific guidelines which would reduce the violations. The reader is encouraged to see Rav Neuwirth's entire ruling, and also see Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah, Volume 1 #248, understands the Gemara's discussion in Kesubos in a way that preempts the basis for Rav Engel's lenient ruling.

In a responsum on this topic by Rabbi Menashe Klein,¹² he concludes that a patient is allowed to carry nitroglycerin tablets with a shinui for the purpose of going to shul or for another mitzvah. He bases himself on the following two rationales:

1. There is currently no public domain according to Torah definitions.
2. He considers this carrying to be a melacha she'einah tzericha legufah, a point which is certainly disputed by the other authorities quoted.

An interesting comment quoted in the name of the Chasam Sofer by the Levushei Mordechai¹³ should also shed light on this issue. Levushei Mordechai reports that the Chasam Sofer was in the habit of carrying a handkerchief tied around his wrist outside of the eruv on Shabbos, because it is considered carrying with a shinui and is permitted because of the need for the handkerchief. The prohibition of rabbinic origin is overridden by the need for personal dignity (kavod haberiyos). No stipulation is made by Levushei Mordechai that the walking is done exclusively for the purpose of performing a mitzvah.

One would think that the discomfort of staying home on Shabbos provides greater reason to be lenient than the concept of personal dignity, and that this responsum could therefore be utilized as a basis to allow carrying of nitroglycerin with a shinui. However, few later poskim refer to the comment of the Levushei Mordechai.¹⁴

Having presented the background and references on this issue, I leave it to an individual who finds himself in these circumstances to discuss the question with his or her individual posek.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (Shemos 20:10) notes that people mistakenly think that work is prohibited on Shabbos in order to provide a day of rest. This is incorrect, he points out, because the Torah does not prohibit doing avodah, which connotes hard work, but melachah, which implies purpose and accomplishment. On Shabbos, we refrain from constructing and altering the world for our own purposes. The goal of Shabbos is to emphasize Hashem's rule as the focus of creation by refraining from our own creative acts (Shemos 20:11).

1 Shu't Maharash Engel, 3:43

2 See Shabbos 92a, 104b

3 Kesubos 60a

4 Orach Chayim 328:33

5 Shabbos 12a, 31b, 73b etc.

6 Hilchos Shabbos 1:7

7 Shu't Maharash Engel, 7:20

8 Kol Bo on the laws of Aveilus, Volume 2, page 20

9 Shabbos 60a, 67a

10 Shu't Tzitz Eliezer 13:34

11 Shemiras Shabbos KeHilchasah, Chapter 40 #7

12 Shu't Meshaneh Halachos 7:56

13 Shu't Levushei Mordechai #133

14 It is quoted by Shearim HaMetzuyanim BaHalacha 84:13 and by Lev Avraham Volume 1, Chapter 6.