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date: Feb 2, 2023, 10:53 PM
subject: Jewish History Is a Study of the Future - Essay
by Rabbi YY

Jewish History Is a Study of the Future
“Moses and the Children of Israel Will Sing”
The Belzer Rebbe, Rabbi Aharon Rokeach (1880-1957)
Future Tense

"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..."[1]

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 a collective song—a song we recite every day during the morning prayers.

Yet, as is often the case, the English translation does not capture all of the nuances. In the original text, the Torah states:

Then Moses and the children of Israel will sing this song to the Lord, and they spoke, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for very exalted is He; a horse and its rider He cast into the sea.

אז יאמר משה ובני ישראל: בשלח טו, א
az yashir moshe uvnei jizrael, ... ashira lashem
ki gao gaa sus verochevo rama bayam.

It speaks of Moses' and the Jews' singing, in the future tense. This is profoundly strange. The Torah is relating a story that occurred in the past, not one that will occur in the future. It seems like a “bad grammatical error.”

The sages, quoted by Rashi, offer a fascinating insight: סנהדרין צא, ב: תניא אמר רבי מאיר מניין לתחיית המתים מן התורה שנאמר (שמות טו, א) אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת לה', שר לא נאמר אלא ישיר מכאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה.

One of the principles of the Jewish faith is the belief in Techiyas Hamesim, the resurrection of the dead, following the messianic era. Death is not the end of the story. The soul continues to live and exist, spiritually.

What is more, the soul will return back to a body.

This is why the Torah chooses to describe the song in the future tense: Moses and his people will indeed sing in the future, after the resurrection. Their song was not only a story of the past; it will also occur in the future.

While this is a fascinating idea, it still begs the question: Why does the Torah specifically hint to the future resurrection here, as opposed to any other place in the Torah? And why will Moses and Israel sing in the future as well?

After the War

The following story happened on this very Shabbos, 79 years ago.[2]

One of the great rabbis of Pre-war Europe was Rabbi Aharon Rokeach (1880 – 1957), the fourth Rebbe of the Belz Chasidic dynasty (Belz is a city in Galicia, Poland.) He led the movement from 1926 until his death in 1957. Known for his piety and saintliness, Reb Aharon of Belz was called the "Wonder Rabbi" by Jews and gentiles alike for the miracles he performed. He barely ate or slept. He was made of “spiritual stuff.” (The Lubavitcher Rebbe once visited him in Berlin, and described him as “tzurah bli chomer,” energy without matter.)

His reign as Rebbe saw the devastation of the Belz community, along with most of European Jewry during the Holocaust. During the war, Reb Aharon was high on the list of Gestapo targets as a high-profile Rebbe. They murdered his wife and each of his children and grandchildren. He had no one left. With the support and financial assistance of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe in the US, and Belzer Chasidim in Israel, England, and the United States, he and his half-brother, Rabbi Mordechai of Bilgoray, managed to escape from Poland into Hungary, then into Turkey, Lebanon, and finally into Israel, in February 1944. He remarried but had no children.

Most thought that Belz was an item of history. Yet, the impossible occurred. His half-brother Rabbi Mordechai also remarried and had a son, then died suddenly a few months later. Reb Aharon raised his half-brother's year-old son, Yissachar Dov, and groomed him to succeed him as Belzer Rebbe. Today, it is one of the largest Chassidic groups in Israel, numbering more than 50,000, with hundreds of institutions, schools, synagogues, and yeshivos.

The Belzer Rebbe not once said any of the prescribed prayers like Yizkor or Kaddish for his wife and children, because he felt that those who had been slain by the Nazis for being Jews were of transcendent holiness; their spiritual stature was beyond our comprehension. Any words about them that we might utter were irrelevant and perhaps even a desecration of their memory.

For Reb Aharon, the only proper way to respond to the near-destruction of Belz and honor the memory of the dead was to build new institutions and slowly nurture a new generation of Chasidim. This is what he did for the remainder of his life. He settled in secular Zionist Tel Aviv, and not in the more religious Jerusalem because, he said, it is the only city without a Church or Mosque.

The First Shabbos

The first Shabbos after he arrived in Israel during the winter of 1944 was Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, and he spent it in Haifa. He was alone in the world, without a single relative (save his brother) alive.

During the Shabbos, he held a "tisch," a formal Chassidic gathering, in which Chassidim sing, dance, and share words of inspiration and Torah. The Belzer Rebbe quickly realized that the Holocaust survivors present, who had endured indescribable suffering and had lost virtually everything they had, were in no mood of

singing. The Rebbe decided to address himself and his few broken Chassidim who had survived.

The Belzer Rebbe raised the above question of why the Torah specifically alludes to techiyas hameisim, the resurrection of the dead, in conjunction with the song that was sung celebrating the splitting of the Red Sea?

He gave this chilling answer. When the Jewish people sang the Song of the Sea, much of the nation was not present. How many people did not survive the enslavement of Egypt? How many Jewish children were drowned in the Nile? How many Jews never lived to see the day of the Exodus? How many refused to embark on a journey into the unknown?

According to tradition, only a fifth of the Jewish people made it out.[3] 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 fully rejoice in the miracles they were witnessing. Now, the sea split. The wonder of wonders. Moses says to them, "It is time to sing." But they responded, "Sing? How can we sing? Eighty percent of our people are missing!"

Hence, the Torah says, "Moses and the children of Israel will sing," in the future tense. Moses explained to his people, that the story is far from over. The Jews in Egypt have died, but their souls are alive, and they will return during the resurrection of the dead. We can sing now, said Moses, not because there is no pain, but because despite the pain, we do not believe we have seen the end of the story. We can celebrate the future.

Future and Past

This is what sets apart Jewish history. All of history is, by definition, a study of the past. Jewish history alone is unique. It is a story of the past based on the future. For the Jewish people, history is defined not only by the past but also by the future. Since we know that redemption will come, we go back and redefine exile as the catalyst for redemption and healing.

For the Jewish people, the future defines and gives meaning to the past.

With this, the Belzer Rebbe inspired his students to begin singing yet one again, as they arrived at the soil of the Holy Land, on Shabbos Beshalach 1944, 77 years ago. His disciples did sing. And if you visit the main Belz synagogue in Jerusalem (at least till corona), you can hear thousands of Jews, young and old, singing and celebrating Jewish life.

Sunrise

I once read an article by a survivor of Auschwitz. He related how every morning, as the sun rose over Auschwitz, his heart would swell with anger. How dare you?! How can the sun be so indifferent to the suffering of millions and just rise again to cast its warm glow on a world drenched in the blood of the purest and holiest? How can the sun be so cruel and apathetic? Where was the protest?

But, he continued his story, he survived. I came out of the hell. And the day after liberation, as I lie in a bed for the first time in years, I watched the sunrise. For the first time, I felt so grateful for the sun. I felt empowered that after the long night, which seemed to never end, light has at last arrived.

This is the story of our people. Our sun has set. But our sun will also rise. Life, love, and hope will prevail. “Netzach Yisroel Lo Yishaker,” the Eternal One of Israel does not lie. There will be an end to the night. “Moses and the children of Israel will sing.”

And the singing can begin now.

[1] Exodus 14:15

[2] The story is recorded in the book “B’kdushaso Shel Aaron,” page 436.

[3] Mechilta and Rashi Exodus 13:2

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Feb 2, 2023, 7:20 PM
Rav Frand - Parshas Beshalach

A Three-twined Lesson About Shabbos and Parnassa

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1235 Are women obligated in Lechem Mishneh? Good Shabbos! Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky makes the following observation in three different places in his Emes L’Yaakov, twice in this week’s parsha and once in Parshas Ki Sisa:

“And Moshe said, ‘Eat it today, for today is a Shabbos for Hashem, you will not find it (the mann) in the field.’” (Shemos 16:25). Rashi elaborates: The Jews went out every morning to find and gather mann for their daily food-consumption needs. They woke up Shabbos morning and asked Moshe whether they should go out to the fields and look for mann as they had been doing every other day that week. Moshe told them not to go out, but rather to eat what they already had.

Rav Yaakov comments that the question posed to Moshe was whether they should go out to the fields that day or not. The logical answer to that question was “No, don’t go out today. There is no mann in the fields today.” And yet, his answer was “Eat what you have.” Why did Moshe give that answer to the question ‘Should we or should we not go out to collect the mann?’”

Rav Yaakov answers that they thought that if they would not go out and collect another day’s worth of mann, perhaps they would not have enough to eat, because if they ate the food that they had today, they might not have anything to eat tomorrow. Remember, the mann had not been falling for forty years at this point. This was the first week of the mann phenomenon. If mann fell on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and then on Shabbos there was no mann, what would they eat on Sunday? In their minds they were fearful. If we eat the mann from yesterday’s gathering, what will be on Sunday? They did not know.

If you do not know what you are going to eat on Sunday, you may hold back from eating what you have on Shabbos! Moshe Rabbeinu corrected them: “No. You DO eat today!” Today is Shabbos and the lesson of Shabbos is that the Ribono shel Olam provides parnassa (livelihood). Therefore, observe Shabbos and keep all of its halachos. Eat what you need to eat on Shabbos even if you do not know what is going to be with tomorrow’s meal.

This was a very real and difficult nissayon (test) for Jews living in America in the early part of the twentieth century. We are almost all too young to remember, and even our parents may be too young, but our grandparents most likely do recall that there was a time in America when if someone did not come to work on Saturday, he did not come to work on Monday (because he was fired for not showing up to work on Saturday).

Rav Yaakov was addressing that very classic situation. People fretted, “If I do not work on Saturday then how am I going to eat?” The lesson of Shabbos is that you keep Shabbos and do not worry if you will have what to eat tomorrow. That is what Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to emphasize to them.

The second place where Rav Yaakov shares this idea is earlier in the parsha, when the pasuk says “...there He gave them chok u’mishpat and there He tested them.” (Shemos 15:25). The Jews came to a place called Marah. They were unable to drink the waters there, for they were

bitter. (Shemos 15:23). Moshe Rabbeinu threw a bitter stick into the water and the waters became sweet. The Gemara elaborates on the pasuk that at Marah they were given “chok u’ mishpat” (laws that are illogical and laws that are logical) specifying that at Marah they were given the laws of Shabbos, the laws of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer), and dinim (civil laws).

We are not going to analyze now why they were given the laws of Parah Adumah and dinim. But why were they given the laws of Shabbos at that point? The answer is the same idea. The people fretted: “What are we going to drink? The water is bitter!” Logically, the way to sweeten bitter water is to add sweeteners. The last thing we would think to put in the water to sweeten it is a stick that is also bitter. What is the lesson of that? The lesson is that Hashem provides us with bread and water. He provides sustenance. He can even take a bitter stick and use it to sweeten bitter water. That is why He gave us Hilchos Shabbos then. It is the same lesson as Shabbos. The Ribono shel Olam provides parnassa.

The third place where Rav Yaakov shares this idea in Emes L’Yaakov is in Parshas Ki Sisa. He asks the obvious question there: How could Klal Yisrael, within a short period of time of saying ‘Naaseh v’Nishma’ make a Egel Hazahav (Golden Calf)? Rav Yaakov answers that Klal Yisrael was in a wilderness. They were three million people who were dependent every day on the mann for sustenance. Moshe Rabbeinu suddenly disappears. He was supposed to come back by a certain time, and he apparently did not come back. The Satan even shows them Moshe Rabbeinu’s coffin.

They received the mann in Moshe’s zechus (merit). As far as they knew, Moshe Rabbeinu is dead. They wondered, “What is going to be with us? We are three million people with no supermarkets and no 7-Elevens.” Moshe Rabbeinu, the source of their sustenance, is seemingly gone. When people are fretting because they do not know what is going to be tomorrow, and they do not know what they are going to eat and their children are screaming, they panic. When people panic, they say “We need to do something!”

Rav Yaakov says a beautiful pshat in a pasuk in Yechezkel. “But the House of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not follow My decrees and they spurned My laws, through which, if a man fulfills them, he will live through them, and they desecrated My Sabbaths exceedingly. So I had thought to pour out My

wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make an end of them. But I acted for the sake of My Name, that it should not be desecrated in the eyes of the nations before whose eyes I had taken them out.” (Yechezkel 20:13-14).

Rav Yaakov asks: After the aveira (sin) of the Egel Hazahav, Hashem wanted to wipe them out. After the aveira of the Meraglim (spies), Hashem wanted to wipe them out. However, where does it say that Klal Yisrael desecrated Shabbos and afterwards Hashem wanted to wipe them out? It is unlikely for the incident with the mekoshesh eitzim (chopper of wood) to have generated Divine Wrath justifying wiping out all of Klal Yisrael.

Rav Yaakov explains pshat that once they lost faith in Hashem, they forgot about the lessons of Shabbos—that the Ribono shel Olam will provide for them. When they panicked and built an egel, while it was not literally Chilul Shabbos, it was forgetting the yesod of Shabbos, which is that the Ribono shel Olam will provide.

I mentioned earlier in the shiur about people who lost their job on a weekly basis because they did not come into work on Saturday. It is common practice that when a person is fired from a job, he receives what is known as a “pink slip.” There were Jews who were fired from a different job every single Friday because of Shabbos. Every single Friday, they came home with a new pink slip.

One Jew kept a collection of all his pink slips and hung them up on his Succah wall as his Succah decorations. That was his “Noi Succah.” What is a Succah? A Succah is a temporary dwelling that demonstrates moving out from our permanent dwellings into temporary dwellings, and putting our faith in Hashem. His pink slips were his badges of courage. His pink slips showed that he had faith in the Ribono shel Olam. Thousands of people were not able to withstand that nissayon. We must not judge people until we face the same challenges they faced. But for those people who WERE able to withstand the nisayon, those pink slips were the most beautiful thing that a person could hang up in his Succah. They demonstrated the love and faith that the person who received those pink slips had in Hashem. That is the lesson of Shabbos and that is the lesson of the mann.

The lesson of the mann is that the Ribono shel Olam provides parnassa, and when we have bitachon in the Ribono shel Olam, He takes care of us.

How Can Pharaoh Speak to Bnei Yisroel After They Left Mitzraim?

The pasuk says in Parshas Beshalach: “Pharaoh said to the Children of Israel, they are confounded in the land, the Wilderness has closed in upon them.” (Shemos 14:3). Rashi is bothered by the expression “Vayomer Par’o l’Bnei Yisrael,” which seems to imply that Pharaoh was speaking to the Children of Israel. The problem is that there were no Jews left in Mizraim (Egypt) at that time, so how could Pharaoh speak to Bnei Yisrael? Therefore, Rashi interprets the prefix lamed (which usually means ‘to’) as “al” (meaning about) Bnei Yisrael.

The Targum Yonosan ben Uziel was bothered by the same point, but he offers an incredible interpretation. He says that Pharaoh was speaking to Dasan and Aviram, two members of Bnei Yisrael who remained in Mizraim.

However, Dasan and Aviram are present later among Bnei Yisroel in Parshas Korach. We know for a fact that they did leave Mizraim and traveled with Bnei Yisrael in the Midbar. We also know that there are interpretations of the expression “Bnei Yisrael went up Chamushim from the land of Mizraim” (Shemos 13:18) which claim that 80% of Bnei Yisrael died in Mizraim (during Makas Choshech – the Plague of Darkness) and only one-fifth (‘Chamushim’) of the Jewish population merited to leave with Moshe. If all the wicked members of the nation died during Makas Choshech, how was it that Dasan and Aviram, who certainly qualify as reshaim (wicked people) managed to survive? Why were they still around in Sefer Bamidbar?

Last year, I shared the explanation of the Maharal Diskin that Dasan and Aviram survived despite the fact that they were wicked because they also had a tremendous source of merit. As shotrim (taskmasters) of Bnei Yisrael, they took it on their backs literally and figuratively during the years of Egyptian bondage. When the Jewish slaves did not meet their quota of bricks, the shotrim were whipped by the Egyptian supervisors. Suffering on behalf of another Jew, creates a certain immunity from the malach hamaves (Angel of Death) and hence they were able to survive the mass deaths that occurred among Bnei Yisrael during the Makas Choshech as a result of that great zchus.

The Medrash haChafetz gives another explanation. The Medrash says that when Hashem told Moshe that he was going to kill out all the wicked Jews during the Makas Choshech, Moshe Rabbenu pleaded “Don’t kill them out. Let them come with us to the Promised Land.” Hashem told Moshe “I know better. You don’t want them.”

Moshe still pleaded for mercy. Hashem finally ‘compromised’ with Moshe and left him these two individuals – Dasan and Aviram. The Ribono shel Olam proved his point because Moshe Rabbeinu suffered greatly in the midbar from Dasan and Aviram, culminating with the episode of Korach. This goes to show you – do not try to be holier than Hashem. He knows what is best. In fact, He told Moshe Rabbeinu “I told you so!”

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Rav Immanuel Bernstein

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PSHUTO SHEL MIKRA From the Teachings of Rav Yehuda Copperman zt"l PARSHAT BESHALACH Lashon HaKodesh and Machsvev HaKodesh

לֹא יָמִישׁ עֲמוּד הָעֶנָן יוֹמָם: He (Hashem) did not remove the pillar of Cloud by day. (Shemot 13:22)

Commenting on the words “לֹא יָמִישׁ,” Rashi explains: לֹא יָמִישׁ — הקב"ה את עמוד הענן יומם ואת עמוד האש לילה (would not remove) the pillar of Cloud by day, nor the pillar of Fire by night.

In other words, Rashi is observing that the word “יָמִישׁ” is הפעיל — causative, which means that the pasuk is not saying that the Cloud did not depart, but that someone did not remove it. That “Someone” — the subject of the sentence — is Hashem, Who is mentioned in the previous pasuk; “וְהָיָה ה' הַלֵּךְ — and לפניהם יומם בעמוד עָנָן לְנַחֲתָם הַדֶּרֶךְ וּלְלֵילָה בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ לְהַאֲרִיר לָהֶם — and Hashem would go before them with a pillar of Cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a pillar of Fire to give them light.”

The Mizrachi’s Approach Regarding this comment of Rashi, the Mizrachi writes:

Even though we also find the causative form used in an intransitive sense, (for example) “וּמִשְׁרָתוֹ יְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן נֹון נָעַר לֹא יָמִישׁ”

מתוך הַאֵהָלָה — his attendant, Yehoshua son of Nun, a lad, would not depart from within the tent” (Shemot 33:11),[1] nonetheless, since it is possible to explain it here as a causative, without having to add or remove anything, Rashi chose to explain it in accordance with its normal usage.[2]

According to the Mizrahi, it would have been entirely legitimate to explain the word “יָמִישׁ” as referring to the Cloud itself not departing, as we find in the case of Yehoshua. Nonetheless, since Rashi found a way to explain it as a causative, which is generally what the hif’il denotes, he saw that as the preferred option.

The Gur Aryeh’s Approach The Maharal in Gur Aryeh takes an entirely different approach to this explanation of Rashi. The foundation of the Maharal’s approach is that the full meaning of the pasuk cannot be derived merely from following the rules of grammar. Anyone who wants to understand the pasuk fully needs to bear in mind that the language of the pasuk is lashon hakodesh, and as such, it is a written expression of Mochshevut Hakodesh — the holy thought and outlook of the Torah. In our case, the Maharal writes:

The word “יָמִישׁ” is a causative form, which is always transitive. Had the pasuk wanted to say that the Cloud did not depart, it would have said “לא ימושׁ” — lo yamush, with a vav. Therefore, the explanation here is that Hashem did not remove it, which means it is a causative. Even though the pasuk says regarding Yehoshua “לא ימושׁ מתוך הַאֵהָלָה,” there is a major distinction between the two cases as is apparent to anyone who knows lashon hakodesh. For with regard to people, a transitive form is appropriate, since the person moves himself.[3] In this respect he is acting causatively, for he is causing his body to move. In the case of Yehoshua, the pasuk is telling us that “לא ימושׁ” he did not move himself. The pasuk thus speaks of a person as two entities; firstly, his will, and secondly, his body. Similarly, the pasuk states later on (14:10) “וַיִּפְרָעָה הַקָּרִיב,” which Rashi explains to mean “הקריב את עצמו ומיהר לפני היילותיו” — he drew himself near and hurried before his armies.” This idea, however, is not applicable to a Cloud,[4] and therefore one must explain that “לא ימושׁ” refers to Hashem not removing the Cloud.

What we have before us is not a technical or grammatical dispute regarding how to explain a certain pasuk, but rather a fundamental dispute in the sugya of pshuto shel mikra. According to the Maharal, the grammar of lashon hakodesh is not the same as the grammar of other languages. We say that Hashem “רומתנו מכל הלשונות” — elevated us above all other languages.” This means that the language itself is more elevated and reflects holier ideas. As such, the laws of grammar alone will not do justice to the full meaning of what the pasuk is saying.

The Difference Between Taking People and Taking Objects In keeping with this approach as to the way lashon hakodesh looks at the person, the Gur Aryeh explains Rashi’s comments

whenever the Torah refers to someone being “taken.” For example, the pasuk states (Bereishit 2:15) that Hashem “took Adam and placed him in Gan Eden.” Rashi comments: לקחו בדברים נאים ופיתוהו ליכנס. He took him with nice words and persuaded him to enter.

Why does Rashi not leave the pasuk to its simple meaning, namely, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu physically took Adam? The Maharal explains that since the essential person is his da’at — his will — if a person is taken against his will, then “the person” has not been taken! One can only be considered to have taken someone else if he persuades that person to go, for then the essential person has been taken.[5]

In this regard, Rashi himself (Bereishit 43:15) points out that Onkelos uses a different verb for taking people than he does for taking objects. When an object is taken he uses the term “נטב,” whereas if a person is taken he translates “דבר,” indicating that these are two different types of taking.

Lashon HaKodesh and Derashot Chazal This approach of the Maharal opens up a whole new way of understanding the relationship between the words of the pasuk and derashot of Chazal. Quite often the drashah seems to depart from the pshat of the pasuk in that it reads it differently than the rules of grammar would dictate or require. The Maharal is telling us that the drashah is very often responding to a deeper or higher level of lashon hakodesh that is outside of the strict rules of grammar, but nonetheless contained within the words. In this vein, the Maharal speaks critically of those who dismiss the derashot as being incongruous with the rules of pshat, for in his opinion they have failed to understand the full meaning of the word as part of lashon hakodesh, based on which Chazal made their drashah.[6]

[1] Here, the pasuk uses the same word as in our pasuk — יָמִישׁ, yet it clearly refers to Yehoshua himself, that he is the one who did not depart, and not to someone else who did not remove him. [2] That is, as a causative. [3] That is, the person decides to move, in which case he is the cause of his movement. [4] Which is not capable of moving itself. [5] See also Gur Aryeh to Bereishit 16:3, Shemot 14: 6, and Vayikra 8:2. [6] See, for example, the Gur Aryeh to Bereishit 28:11 concerning the drashah of Chazal that Yaakov initially put a number of stones by his head and they combined into one, and Devarim 26:5 concerning Chazal’s peirush that “אָרְמֵי אֶבֶד אֶבְי” refers to Lavan trying to destroy Yaakov. Copyright © 2023 Journeys in Torah, All rights reserved.

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Ways We Shape Our Experience of God’s World
by **R. Gidon Rothstein**
The Evil Inclination Needs an Opening

Yalkut Shimoni 261, on Parshat Be-Shalah, compares Amalek to a fly, a comparison Kli Yakar notes Hazal also applied to the yetzer hara, the evil inclination, in Berakhot 61a. The fly is too weak to make an incision, but takes advantage of open sores or wounds, expands the opening, colonizes the area, and infects the body (still true of many bacteria today). By analogy, the evil inclination cannot seduce fully righteous people, because there is no opening.

Ha-ba litamei, one who seeks or is open to becoming impure, has allowed the inclination in, making it much harder to battle it.

As Does Amalek

Kli Yakar understands the Midrash to be saying the fly analogy applies to Amalek, too, that as long as the Jewish people are whole with God, and have peace among themselves, Amalek will have no power or ability to bother them.

The Jews' travels through the desert to this point have been to places such as Masah and Merivah, so called because the people were at odds with each other, and Rashi to Shemot 19;2 had added that they tested God as well.

Amalek Then Pushes It Further

Given the opening, Amalek found ways to add to their impurity, introducing sexual immorality, a way to have God absent Himself entirely, God forbid, because we know—such as from the Bil'am story later in the Torah—God only resides among the Jewish people when they are careful about sexual morality. Without God's protection, they would lose to Amalek in a war, because they also would not be able to band together to help each other, fighting amongst themselves as they were.

I cheated in that previous summary, because I left out the kind of sexual immorality Kli Yakar assumed Amalek brought. That it was sexual immorality at all he attributes to Moshe Rabbenu's description in Devarim 25;18, asher karekha ba-derekh, translated by some of the translations I found on Sefaria as “met,” “chanced upon,” “encountered.” I believe Kli Yakar was playing on keri, the word for a male seminal emission, what he took to hint that there was some element here of what the Midianite women did to the Jews later.

Except here he says it was homosexuality, for reasons I do not think he made fully clear; the best I can come up with is that he took karekha to mean it was an act of pure keri, with no procreative possibilities, but that is a guess.

Personalized Shiurim

The topic of shi'urim, how we calculate halakhic distance, weight, volume, and more, comes up often in our Jewish practice (prominently for most of us at the Seder, when we try to figure out how much wine and matzah to drink and eat to fulfill the mitzvot of the night). Shemot 16;16 gave Hatam Sofer a chance to advance a theory he likely would not have taken farther than he did, but that I find tantalizing.

The verse says the Jews gathered manna “ish le-fi ochlo, each person according to what s/he eats,” then also says it was an omer per person. If an omer was enough for a large person, Hatam Sofer points out, it was much more than needed for a smaller person. He suggests the solution lies in personalizing the omer. In other measures, the possibility of it being personal is clear: a tefah is four finger-widths, an amah six of those, and so on.

Pesachim 109b links length to volume in a mikvah, whose minimum size is either a space of three amot by one amah by one amah, or forty se'ah. Since an omer is .3 se'ah, you can do the math, but an omer can be figured out by lengths, and those lengths can be personal (in many areas of halakha, we adopt an average or general size; I think most who read this verse assume that was true of the manna that fell, the creative change Hatam Sofer is making).

As a person's body grew, his/her finger, tefah, and amah all grew, meaning that person's omer did as well, and more manna fell. Each day, when they measured the manna they gathered, and it was an omer, Hatam Sofer thinks it was that person's omer. To spot the lesson, people would have had to be aware of their growth, and take heed of the diet Hashem was teaching them, this amount for this size of person.

The Limits of Praising God

A climactic and famous verse from the Song of the Sea, 15;11, calls Hashem nora tehillot oseh pele, feared, fearful, or awesome in praise, Who performs wonders. Ha'amek Davar identifies the awe/fear in our approach to praising God for pele, wonders we do not understand. In his view, we are not allowed to speak to God as One Who performs whatever if we do not understand that whatever.

For him, it explains Yoma 69b's claim that Yirmiyah and Daniel adjusted their prayers, leaving out ha-gadol, the Great, ve-ha-nora, the Awesome. The way the Gemara presents it, the history of their times, non-Jews dancing on the place of the Temple and ruling over the Jewish people, made it impossible for them to use those appellations for God, until the Anshe Keneset Ha-Gedolah found an explanation.

Netziv is saying that Yirmiyah and Daniel did not doubt that God still was those things, they just didn't themselves understand it, and without such comprehension, it was prohibited to them to praise God in those ways.

Nora tehillot, awesome in praise, indeed, in that (according to Netziv) we must know what we mean when we address God with words of praise, even if Moshe Rabbenu taught us those praises. They must also be our own before we are allowed to say them.

How we shape our world, for Kli Yakar in making ourselves vulnerable to attacks from the more negative sides of existence, for Hatam Sofer in how much manna fell for each of us daily, and for Ha'amek Davar in what we may or may not

say to praise God as we address our Creator.

from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

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Beshalach: Preparing for Sinai: The Mitzvot of Marah

Beshalach: Preparing for Sinai: The Mitzvot of Marah Even

before the Torah was revealed at Mount Sinai, the Jewish

people received several mitzvot at a place called Marah:

“They came to Marah... there God taught them a decree and a law, and there He tested them.” (Exod. 16:23-25)

According to Sanhedrin 56b, one of the mitzvot that God taught at Marah was the mitzvah of Shabbat. It appears that Marah was a prelude of sorts for receiving the Torah at Sinai.

How did the mitzvah of Shabbat prepare them for the Sinaitic revelation? And in what way was Marah a “test” for the Jewish people?

Preparing to Receive the Torah The area was called Marah because the waters there were bitter (mar).

“When Moses cried out to God, He showed him a certain tree. Moses threw it in the water, and the water became sweet” (Exod. 15:25).

When a person is ill, that which is sweet may taste bitter. Such was the case with the waters of Marah, which appeared to be bitter, but were in fact sweet. This is a metaphor for the Torah itself — its laws are sweet to those with a pure soul and a refined character, yet bitter and burdensome to those with a coarser nature (Maimonides, Hilchot De'ot 2:1).

Marah laid the groundwork for Sinai by reinforcing the traits of kindness and compassion that characterize the Jewish people (Yevamot 79a). The people would then be ready to receive the Torah, as their moral state would allow them to appreciate the sweetness of the Torah's laws.

How did the mitzvah of Shabbat accomplish this?

Even though the Sabbath commemorates the creation of the universe, it was not given to all of humanity. Shabbat is a special gift for the Jewish people (Sanhedrin 58b). Why is that?

The Test of Marah To bolster social order and cohesion, it is important that people are actively engaged in working for their livelihood. Work and business interactions help build relationships and trust between individuals and groups. Even if two people would not ordinarily be inclined to like one another, work can provide a platform for them to bridge any divides, as it is in their mutual interest to collaborate.

If people are not working together, however, these incentives are no longer present. It is human nature to prioritize one's own interests. Without an impetus to gain the good will of others, people tend to revert to self-centered tendencies.1

This was the test of Marah. The Jewish people were given the Sabbath day of rest — would they discover within themselves an innate quality of compassion? Would they remain considerate and accommodating to one another, despite the

lack of material benefit to be gained from kindness on the day of rest?

The seven mitzvot of the Noahide Code, which are binding upon all of humanity, do not demand the refinement of human nature. They only require the avoidance of evil. The Torah, however, was given to the Jewish people in order to elevate them to be a holy people. The ethical ideals of Israel cannot be based on expediency and personal gain, but on a love for “that which is good and proper in the eyes of God” (Deut. 12:28). Therefore, it was necessary to bolster the foundations for their innate goodness. In this way, the mitzvot of Marah paved the way for the Torah's revelation at Sinai.

Adapted from Otzarot HaRe'iyah vol. II, pp. 172-173)

Illustration image: The Sabbath Rest (Samuel Hirszenberg, 1894)

1 We have seen how social distancing measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic have caused "major problems in the economic, social, political and psychological spheres... The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has caused widespread unrest in society and unprecedented changes in lifestyle, work and social interactions, and increasing social distance has severely affected human relations.” ('Social Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. A Systematic Review.' Invest Educ Enferm. 2022)

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Posted on 02/02/23

Parshas Beshalach - Sea-Splitting Laughter By Rabbi Zvi Teichman

Finding themselves between a rock and a hard place, with the sea on one side and the marauding Egyptians quickly approaching from the opposite direction, — וַיִּצְעֲקוּ the Children of Israel cried out to G-d'. Rashi explains that 'they seized the אומנות — art of their ancestors', implying that they prayed.

In the Selichos we recite on fast days and during Elul and Tishrei, we appeal to 'He Who answered our forefathers at the Sea of Reeds, may He answer us', alluding to the 'cries' that were expressed during that trying moment, that were responded to with the splitting of the sea.

Yet prior to the parting of the sea, almost in the same breath of their cry, the Children of Israel add an additional sentiment.

They said to Moshe, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the desert? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Egypt?" Is this the voice of someone imploring G-d for help? Did they suddenly lose it, giving up on their former reliance on G-d, now descending into angry cynical resentment for their dire predicament?

During the 70's, Time magazine related a statistic that eighty percent of all comedians were Jewish. Are we really that funny?

Humor has been described as something that occurs when a person simultaneously appraises a situation as wrong or threatening and yet appraises the situation to be okay or acceptable in some way. Watching someone walk through a door where a pail of water is pitched strategically to fall unknowingly upon the victim, and douses him, arouses laughter. [Benign Violation Theory – Warren and McGraw]

However, when the threat is hostile and hurtful, i.e., a heavy weight waiting to fall on his head, it becomes a formula for cynical and sarcastic demeaning of another. The transition from good humor to caustic assault is too close for comfort.

Nasty puns, sarcastic comments, and cynical mocking are all formulated by assessing a threatening or wrong situation or fact and directing blame or placing shame on another.

Why do Jews have big noses? Because air is free. One could laugh at this example of humor or take offense in the intimation Jews are greedy.

The ability to laugh or be offended would depend on each person's perception of 'benign'.

Cynical comments are often used to diminish the stature of others we feel controlled by. Someone with an overbearing mother-in-law will utter mother-in-law jokes with an undertone of hostility. One who has a healthy relationship, could benignly share a humorous anecdote evincing a warm and friendly laugh.

The Jewish nation are renowned for their skepticism, not easily convinced or influenced.

Rav S.R. Hirsch sees in this very verse — where they cynically comment on the irony of having just left the vast 'graveyard' of Egypt, only to become the unburied victims in the desert of the charging Egyptians, doubting Moshe's leadership and the promise of G-d — as proof of their discerning nature.

Quoting in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi he writes: These continuous doubts form an important proof for the mission of Moshe... Moshe had to deal with a clear-minded people whose minds were not befogged by fantastic ideas, and who were not easily taken in, or convinced, by the first man who comes along... This sharp irony — are there no graves... — even in moments of deepest anxiety and despair is characteristic of the witty vein which is inherent in the Jewish race from their earliest beginnings.

Our unique Jewish DNA evidently equips us to perceive a world and all its ironies with this double-edged tongue. Hopefully we can laugh in the face of these absurdities we observe, knowing that all is benign when we place our trust fully in G-d, Who does all only for our good. Or it can prod in those moments of doubt, accusatory and cynical comments bewailing our fate, wondering aloud why G-d has abandoned us.

Even in those dark times when we cannot quite fathom the benign kindness that ultimately prevails even in the most difficult challenges — and rather than laugh we become despairingly sarcastic — nevertheless we are pining for clarity and a closeness that will permit us to believe.

The Maharal addresses the question that all commentaries pose, how can we understand this depiction of their crying out to G-d as a positive prayer 'seizing the art of our forefathers', when immediately following that cry we contemptuously question our fate and the commitment of G-d and Moshe to our survival?

He asserts that this description of their seizing the craft of their ancestors was deficient, they merely responded instinctively, without much thought, heart, or devotion.

But, nevertheless, they were answered. Rav Hutner explains, it wasn't their prayers that were fulfilled — as the verse later states that G-d instructed, that He will fight but they should remain silent — but rather it was their alignment with the instincts of the forefathers that held out hope for their being saved. There is no need for prayer. (פחד יצחק פורים ענין יט)

But don't we pray in Selichos that 'He Who answered our forefathers at the Sea of Reeds, may He answer us', indicating that indeed it was their prayers that were heeded?

Perhaps we can take this one step further.

The Targum Unkelos on the word ויצעקו — and they cried, translates it as וזעיקו, and they wailed, a connotation of תרעומות — complaint. (רבינו בחיי)

In fact, we recite each morning ואת זעקתם — and their outcry You heard at the Sea of Reeds. (תפילת וחרות עמו) (הברית)

Their cry was one of complaint. They turned to G-d confused, upset and frustrated, but they didn't abandon Him. This too is a form of prayer, where we openly vent to a Father we may not yet comprehend, but a Father nevertheless.

Rashi after describing this crying out in the craft of their ancestors, cites three instances where each of our four forefathers turned to G-d in prayer.

The first is when Avraham sets out on the morning after having prayed the previous day on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom to see if his entreaties would be accepted, it reports he went to the place that עמד שם — he stood there the day before. (בראשית כט יז)

The second reference is when Yitzchok returns from Be'er-lachai-roi, going out לשוב בשדה — to supplicate in the field.

Lastly, when Yaakov leaves for Charan, it says, ויפגע במקום — he encountered the place, alluding to his praying.

There are many other verses, quoted in the Mechilta, indicating how they each prayed throughout their lifetimes, yet Rashi selected specifically these three, and actually cites a verse regarding Avraham, which is not quoted in the source, the Mechilta.

These three expressions of prayer avoid any mention to their calling out to G-d in supplication, rather emphasizing the nature of the encounter.

עמידה — standing accents a stationing of oneself directly before G-d.

שיחה — literally, conversing, portrays an image of an intimate, and almost casual conversation with G-d.

פגישה — synonymous with the term פגישה — connotes a meeting of two close parties.

Prayer is not merely a forum for petitioning G-d, but more importantly sensing His closeness, His concern, His love.

Confrontation is also at times, a mode of connection. This is the זעקה — we refer to in their 'relating' to G-d, that brought about their salvation. It may not be perfect, but in the relationship we are privileged to have with G-d, there is much hope even when we are cynical kvetchers.

The great Chassidic master, Reb Noach of Lechovitz, was once asked why he didn't follow precisely in the manner of avodah his father set forth. He responded that in fact he did exactly as his father did, "My father never imitated anyone else, and so I don't mimic him either!"

He directed the inquirer to this Rashi that speaks of the 'craft' of the forefathers, and cites three different synonyms for prayer, indicating each one's was originality of approach.

So too, the mode of 'crying out' ironically, was their attempt of connecting to G-d in a manner suited to their experience and circumstance.

The great 19th century Moroccan Gaon, Rav Yosef Knafo points out that the first letters of these three intimate approaches to prayer spell out the word שפע — abundant flow, but also the word פשע — sin.

We have a special relationship with G-d, it can effect copious blessing, or if abused, corrupt into sin.

Especially so, with this delicate mode of 'crying out' which develops from our unique DNA to be healthily skeptical, we must be wary to never become dangerously cynical that can lead to poisonous negativity.

This quality to laugh when the outcome is benign is our most potent talent. If we look at every difficulty as divinely directed, and no matter what comes our way, we know it is for our benefit, it can allow us to laugh even in the direst of situations.

A story is related how the great Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa was once standing near the ocean and caught sight of a fellow Jew who was drowning and struggling mightily against the powerful waves and current. The Rebbe noticed that the fellow began to wear down, seemingly succumbing to defeat, accepting the inevitable. The Rebbe suddenly screamed out to the poor fellow, apparently in jest, "Send my regards to the Livyasan!" In that instant of humor, he momentarily became distracted from his fate, and renewed his commitment to survive, eventually making it to shore!

Perhaps the Jews finding themselves in a precarious state at the edge of the raging sea, with nowhere to run, engaged in a moment of black humor, ironically blurting out in jest, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the desert?" In a flash of renewed reality, they forged forward, jumping into the sea, splitting it and seeing the brilliant truth of G-d's love

and commitment to them in all situations they may ever face!

צבי יהודה טייכמאן

From: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy info@rabbisacks.org

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Renewable Energy

Beshalach

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZTL

The first translation of the Torah into another language – Greek – took place in around the second century BCE, in Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy II. It is known as the Septuagint, in Hebrew HaShivim, because it was done by a team of seventy scholars. The Talmud, however, says that at various points the Sages at work on the project deliberately mistranslated certain texts because they believed that a literal translation would simply be unintelligible to a Greek readership. One of these texts was the phrase, “On the seventh day God finished all the work He had made.” Instead, the translators wrote, “On the sixth day God finished.”[1]

What was it that they thought the Greeks would not understand? How did the idea that God made the universe in six days make more sense than that He did so in seven? It seems puzzling, yet the answer is simple. The Greeks could not understand the seventh day, Shabbat, as itself part of the work of Creation. What is creative about resting? What do we achieve by not making, not working, not inventing? The idea seems to make no sense at all.

Indeed, we have the independent testimony of the Greek writers of that period, that one of the things they ridiculed in Judaism was Shabbat. One day in seven Jews do not work, they said, because they are lazy. The idea that the day itself might have independent value was apparently beyond their comprehension. Oddly enough, within a very short period of time the empire of Alexander the Great began to crumble, just as had the earlier city state of Athens that gave rise to some of the greatest thinkers and writers in history. Civilisations, like individuals, can suffer from burnout. It’s what happens when you don’t have a day of rest written into your schedule. As Ahad HaAm said:

“More than the Jewish people has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people.”

Rest one day in seven and you won’t burn out.

Shabbat, which we encounter for the first time in this week’s parsha, is one of the greatest institutions the world has ever known. It changed the way the world thought about time. Prior to Judaism, people measured time either by the sun – the solar calendar of 365 days aligning us with the seasons – or by the moon, that is, by months (“month” comes from the word “moon”) of roughly thirty days. The idea of the seven-day week – which has no counterpart in nature – was born in the Torah and spread throughout the world via Christianity and

Islam, both of which borrowed it from Judaism, marking the difference simply by having it on a different day. We have years because of the sun, months because of the moon, and weeks because of the Jews.

What Shabbat gave – and still gives – is the unique opportunity to create space within our lives, and within society as a whole, in which we are truly free. Free from the pressures of work; free from the demands of ruthless employers; free from the siren calls of a consumer society urging us to spend our way to happiness; free to be ourselves in the company of those we love. Somehow this one day has renewed its meaning in generation after generation, despite the most profound economic and industrial change. In Moses’ day it meant freedom from slavery to Pharaoh. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century it meant freedom from sweatshop working conditions of long hours for little pay. In ours, it means freedom from emails, smartphones, and the demands of 24/7 availability.

What our parsha tells us is that Shabbat was among the first commands the Israelites received on leaving Egypt. Having complained about the lack of food, God told them that He would send them manna from heaven, but they were not to gather it on the seventh day. Instead, a double portion would fall on the sixth. That is why to this day we have two challot on Shabbat, in memory of that time.

Not only was Shabbat culturally unprecedented. Conceptually, it was so as well. Throughout history people have dreamed of an ideal world. We call such visions, utopias, from the Greek *ou* meaning “no” and *topos* meaning “place.”[2] They are called that because no such dream has ever come true, except in one instance, namely Shabbat. Shabbat is “utopia now,” because on it we create, for twenty-five hours a week, a world in which there are no hierarchies, no employers and employees, no buyers and sellers, no inequalities of wealth or power, no production, no traffic, no din of the factory or clamour of the marketplace. It is “the still point of the turning world,” a pause between symphonic movements, a break between the chapters of our days, an equivalent in time of the open countryside between towns where you can feel the breeze and hear the song of birds. Shabbat is utopia, not as it will be at the end of time but rather, as we rehearse for it now in the midst of time.

God wanted the Israelites to begin their one-day-in-seven rehearsal of freedom almost as soon as they left Egypt, because real freedom, of the seven-days-in-seven kind, takes time, centuries, millennia. The Torah regards slavery as wrong,[3] but it did not abolish it immediately because people were not yet ready for this. Neither Britain nor America abolished it until the nineteenth century, and even then not without a struggle. Yet the outcome was inevitable once Shabbat had been set in motion, because slaves who know freedom one day in seven will eventually rise against their chains.

The human spirit needs time to breathe, to inhale, to grow. The first rule in time management is to distinguish between matters that are important, and those that are merely urgent. Under pressure, the things that are important but not urgent tend to get crowded out. Yet these are often what matter most to our happiness and sense of a life well-lived. Shabbat is time dedicated to the things that are important but not urgent: family, friends, community, a sense of sanctity, prayer in which we thank God for the good things in our life, and Torah reading in which we retell the long, dramatic story of our people and our journey. Shabbat is when we celebrate shalom bayit – the peace that comes from love and lives in the home blessed by the Shechinah, the presence of God you can almost feel in the candlelight, the wine, and the special bread. This is a beauty created not by Michelangelo or Leonardo but by each of us: a serene island of time in the midst of the often-raging sea of a restless world.

I once took part, together with the Dalai Lama, in a seminar (organised by the Elijah Institute) in Amritsar, Northern India, the sacred city of the Sikhs. In the course of the talks, delivered to an audience of two thousand Sikh students, one of the Sikh leaders turned to the students and said: “What we need is what the Jews have: Shabbat!” Just imagine, he said, a day dedicated every week to family and home and relationships. He could see its beauty. We can live its reality.

The ancient Greeks could not understand how a day of rest could be part of Creation. Yet it is so, for without rest for the body, peace for the mind, silence for the soul, and a renewal of our bonds of identity and love, the creative process eventually withers and dies. It suffers entropy, the principle that all systems lose energy over time.

The Jewish people did not lose energy over time, and remains as vital and creative as it ever was. The reason is Shabbat: humanity’s greatest source of renewable energy, the day that gives us the strength to keep on creating.

[1] Megillah 9a.

[2] The word was coined in 1516 by Sir Thomas More, who used it as the title of his book.

[3] On the wrongness of slavery from a Torah perspective, see the important analysis in Rabbi N. L. Rabinovitch, *Mesilot BiLevavam* (Maaleh Adumim: Maaliyot, 2015), 38–45. The basis of the argument is the view, central to both the Written Torah and the Mishna, that all humans share the same ontological dignity as the image and likeness of God. This was in the sharpest possible contrast to the views, for instance, of Plato and Aristotle. Rabbi Rabinovitch analyses the views of the Sages, and of Maimonides and Me’iri, on the phrase “They shall be your slaves forever” (Lev. 25:46). Note also the quote he brings from Job 31:13–15, “If I have denied justice to any of my servants...when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? Did not He who made me in the womb

make them? Did not the same One form us both within our mothers?”

YU Torah in Print

Beshalach: The One Who Sees The Good

Mrs. Michal Horowitz Jan 31, 2023

In this week’s parsha, Parshas Beshalach, many events of significance are recorded. Having just left Egypt, the Israelites are miraculously saved at the Sea of Reeds when the Egyptians drown in the churning waters, while Am Yisrael crosses safely to the other side. In response to this salvation, the people sing the Song of the Sea, which we recite each day in the Pesudei d’Zimrah of Shachris. Other events of note are the people thirsting for water, the manna falling for the first time, and the attack of Amalek against the newly freed slaves.

The pasuk tells us that after the nation journeyed from the Sea of Reeds, וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת-יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְלֹא-מָצְאוּ מַיִם, and they traveled three days in the desert and they did not find water; וַיָּבֹאוּ מִרְתָּה--וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לִשְׁתּוֹת מִיַּם מִמְּרָה, כִּי מָרִים הֵם; עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ, מֶרַה - and they came to Marah, and they could not drink the water from Marah, because they were bitter, therefore its name was called Marah; מַה-נִּשְׁתָּה, מַה-נִּשְׁתָּה, and the nation complained against Moshe, saying: What will we drink? (Shemos 15:22-24).

Rav Yaakov Bender shlita writes, “From the moment the nation left Egypt until it emerged from the sea, the people witnessed a string of miracles - a nation of slaves transformed and uplifted into the realm of princes, a chosen nation.

“As they traveled in the desert, the people thirsted for water. It was a seemingly reasonable complaint - a person needs water to live, and in fact, HKB”H provided sweet waters after they complained.

“Later in the parsha, as they traveled to Refidim, again there was ‘no water to drink.’ They complained a second time, and Moshe got upset. ‘Just a little more, and they will stone me!’ he called out to Hashem (17:4). The RS”O doesn’t seem to agree with Moshe’s perspective, and He instructs Moshe how to get water for the people. לָמָּה הוֹצֵאתָ לְעַז עַל בְּנֵי - Why do you slander My children?” Hashem asks Moshe (Rashi to 17:5). Hashem doesn’t just defend the nation, He expresses His love for them in calling them בְּנֵי, My children.

“But the truth is, wasn’t Moshe correct? How could a nation that saw so many miracles doubt that their Creator would provide for them? He had taken them out, carried them on eagle’s wings above their enemies, surrounded them by Clouds of Glory, and created paths for them through a stormy sea... Surely, He would give them water to drink! And yet, they complained. Why wasn’t Moshe’s perspective valid?” (Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash v.2, p.119-120).

Rav Bender answers that instead of focusing on the complaints of the nation, Hashem was focusing on the positive aspects of the nation. The lesson to Moshe - and to all of us -

is to strive to find the aspect of good in every negative situation. True, now they complained, but before that, they went for three long days without water, and without complaining. This is what the RS"O chose to focus on.

Rav Bender writes, "The Bnei Yisrael traveled for three days with no water. Three days! That is a long time to go uncomplainingly and Hashem saw this. He did not focus on the complaint, but on the long journey that came before it.

"This was His reaction, and His lesson to us... The Tanna d'Vei Eliyahu lists attributes of HKB"H, and it includes, among them, the fact that Hashem is samei'ach b'chelko, happy with His lot (keviyachol). The Vilna Gaon asked his talmidim what sort of praise this is. 'What does it mean - that the One Who created and owns all of creation is satisfied with His lot?' The Gaon answered as follows: 'It means that HKB"H rejoices with His cheilek, His nation that is His portion, and derives the very same pleasure from the avodah of simple people as He did from the tzadikim of generations past. He will bring Moshiach to a generation serving Him in their way, fighting their challenges, trying to find Him in such a blanket of darkness; He will rejoice in their hard work just as He did with the Torah of the great ones who came before.'

"Hashem has an ayin tovah, a good eye (keviyachol), seeing what we have done right and He accepts it and loves us for it. For three long, hot days, the people walked without water and did not complain, and so, they are 'בְּנֵי,' My children, beloved and dear" (ibid, p.120-121).

The pasuk tells us: "מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֲקִיץ חַיִּים, אֲהֵב יָמָיו? לְרָאוֹת טוֹב - Who is the man who desires life, who loves days? The one who sees good" (Ps.34:13).

If HKB"H sees the good in a nation of complainers, how much more so must we strive to see the good and focus on the positive in each and every person, and each and every situation, around us. For as Chazal teach us (Shabbos 133b and Sotah 14a) we have a halachic imperative of v'halachta b'drachav - to emulate and 'walk' in the ways of Hashem. Just as He is compassionate and does chessed, so too, must we.

"There was an organization that delivered food to the patients and their families in one of the Brooklyn hospitals, relying on the eruv to bring the food packages on Shabbos. Someone asked Rav Dovid Feinstein zt'l (1929-2020) if it was permitted to give money to the organization for that purpose. [Rav Moshe zt'l, opposed the eruv in Brooklyn, as did his son, Rav Dovid zt'l.]

"His face turned red and his voice rose a notch. 'For chessed!? For chessed, then avadeh, of course you can give them money!' he said. 'They are doing a wonderful thing in bringing food to people, and they surely have poskim they are relying on!'" (Reb Dovid, Artscroll, p.129).

Though there is much confusion in the world around us, may we always strive to see past the flaws, and focus on, embrace

and love, all that is good.

בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום

Fw From: Hamelaket@gmail.com

Since Az Yashir, which concludes pesukei dezimra, is in parshas Beshalach, this article about the conclusion of Pesukei Dezimra is most appropriate.

Between Yishtabach and Borchu By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Between Yishtabach and Kaddish

Avraham asks: "In the shullen in which I used to daven, during the aseres yemei teshuvah we always recited the chapter of tehillim, 'Shir hama'alos mima'amakim,' right after Yishtabach. Someone recently told me that the reason why I do not see this custom practiced any more is because it is a hefsek in the davening. Is this true?"

Question #2: Between Kaddish and Borchu

Yitzchak queries: "Because of my work schedule, I must daven at a very early minyan. At times, we begin davening when it is too early to put on talis and tefillin, so we put on talis and tefillin after Yishtabach. Someone told me that when we do this, we are creating a problem with reciting Kaddish after Yishtabach. Is this true? And if it is true, what should we do?"

Question #3: Between Borchu and Yotzeir

Yaakov inquires: "If I need to use the facilities during davening, may I recite the beracha of Asher Yatzar after answering Borchu, provided I have not yet begun to say the beracha of Yotzeir Or?"

Introduction: Pesukei Dezimra, Yishtabach and Borchu

All of the above questions deal with the same general issue: What are the laws about making an interruption, a hefsek, between completing the recital of Yishtabach and prior to reciting Birchos Kerias Shema, the blessings that are recited before and after the shema, which begin with the beracha of Yotzeir Or. Let me begin by explaining the reason why we recite Yishtabach in our davening.

The Mishnah recommends contemplation as an introduction to praying (Berachos 30b). This experience is reflected when we recite or sing the Pesukei Dezimra, literally, Verses of Song, prior to Borchu and Birchos Kerias Shema. To show how important this aspect of serving Hashem is, we find that the great tanna, Rabbi Yosi, yearned to receive the special reward granted to those who recite the Pesukei Dezimra daily (Shabbos 118b). Reciting Pesukei Dezimra properly helps elevate one's entire tefillah to a completely different level. This has the potential to cause our prayer to soar!

Chazal established that we say two berachos, Baruch She'amar and Yishtabach, one before and one after Pesukei Dezimra. Baruch She'amar notes that we use the songs of David to praise Hashem. Since these two berachos are part of the Pesukei Dezimra introduction to our prayer, one may not

converse from when he begins Baruch She'amar until after he completes the Shemoneh Esrei (Rif, Berachos 23a). This prohibition includes not interrupting between Yishtabach and the beracha of Yotzeir Or (Rabbeinu Yonah, ad locum, quoting a midrash).

The Tur (Orach Chayim 51), after citing this ruling, quotes the Talmud Yerushalmi that one who talks between Yishtabach and Yotzeir Or commits a sin serious enough that he loses the privilege of joining the Jewish army when it goes to war. According to halachah, prior to the Jewish army going into battle, a specially appointed kohen announces those who are exempt from warfare, which includes, according to this opinion, those who are concerned that their sins may cause them to become war casualties. The Jewish army is meant to be comprised of tzaddikim gemurim, the completely righteous, so that their merits will protect them on the battlefield. Those who are less righteous have no such guarantee, and the Torah therefore exempts them from fighting. Someone whose greatest sin is that he once spoke between Yishtabach and Yotzeir Or, and for which he has not performed full teshuvah, is too sinful a person to be allowed to serve in the Jewish army, out of concern that he might become a casualty.

Interrupting between Yishtabach and Borchu

As I mentioned above, the questions introducing this article all deal with the laws of interrupting between Yishtabach and the beginning of Birchos Kerias Shema. The details of these halachos are not discussed in the Gemara, and, therefore, in order to establish what are the rules related to them, the halachic authorities needed to compare these laws to those of Birchos Kerias Shema, which are discussed in the Gemara. In general, it is prohibited to interrupt during Birchos Kerias Shema, although the Gemara mentions a few exceptions, including, at times, responding to a person's greetings, so as not to offend him. The Rishonim dispute whether one may respond to Borchu, Kedusha, and Amen yehei shemei rabbah (in Kaddish) during Birchos Kerias Shema -- the Maharam Rotenberg prohibited it, whereas his disciple, the Rosh, permitted it (Rosh, Berachos 2:5). The Maharam Rotenberg contended that these responses are prohibited during Birchos Kerias Shema because it is inappropriate to interrupt praise of Hashem in order to recite a different praise, even something as important as responding to Kaddish or Kedusha. The Rosh permitted this interruption because he held that responding appropriately to Hashem's praises should not be treated more strictly than responding to the greeting of a person, which is permitted under certain circumstances.

The poskim follow the opinion of the Rosh, concluding that one may answer the following responses while reciting Birchos Kerias Shema:

(1) Kaddish: One may answer "Amen, yehei shemei rabbah mevorach le'olam ule'almei almaya," and one may also answer "Amen" to the Chazzan's da'amiran be'alma (at the point that

we end what is called chatzi-Kaddish). However, one may not respond to the other places in Kaddish (Chayei Adam 20:4).

(2) Borchu: One may answer "Boruch Hashem hamevorach la'olam va'ed." This is true whether it is the Borchu that the chazzan recites before Birchos Kerias Shema morning and evening, or whether it is the Borchu that the person receiving an aliyah recites prior to the Torah reading of his aliyah (Magen Avraham 66:6).

(3) Kedusha: One may respond "Kodosh kodosh..." and "Boruch kevod Hashem mimkomo" in Kedusha, but one may not respond to the other parts of Kedusha we traditionally say, even the sentence beginning Yimloch (Ateres Zekeinim).

(4) Amen to berachos: One may respond "Amen" to the berachos of Ha'Keil Hakadosh and Shema Koleinu (Rema 66:3), but not to other berachos.

Thundering applause

The poskim also dispute whether one should recite the berachos on lightning or thunder while in the middle of Birchos Kerias Shema. The Magen Avraham (66:5) rules that one should, whereas the Bechor Shor (Berachos 13a) disagrees, contending that one should not interrupt one praise of Hashem with another. The Chayei Adam reaches a compromise, ruling that one should recite the beracha on lightning or thunder if he is between the berachos of Kerias Shema, but not when he is in the middle of reciting one of the berachos. The dispute between the Magen Avraham and the Bechor Shor remains unresolved (Mishnah Berurah 66:19), and, therefore, someone who hears thunder while in the middle of Birchos Kerias Shema may choose whether to recite the beracha or not.

Between Yishtabach and Borchu

Now that we understand the accepted halachah concerning interrupting Birchos Kerias Shema, we can discuss the laws that apply between Yishtabach and Borchu. We should note that the interval between the completion of Yishtabach and the beginning of Yotzeir Or can be subdivided into three points:

(A) Between Yishtabach and Kaddish.

(B) Between Kaddish and Borchu.

(C) Between Borchu and beginning the beracha of Yotzeir Or.

Although one might think that Birchos Kerias Shema do not start until one begins reciting the words of the beracha, the early authorities rule that once one has said or responded to Borchu it is considered that he is already in Birchos Kerias Shema (Sefer Haminhag, quoted by Beis Yosef, Orach Chayim 57; Rema 54:3). Thus, one may not interrupt once one has recited Borchu, except for the list of four items mentioned above.

What interruptions are permitted?

Notwithstanding the fact that it is prohibited to speak between Yishtabach and Borchu, interrupting at this point is less severe than between Baruch She'amar and Yishtabach or during Birchos Kerias Shema. Therefore, under certain circumstances,

some interruptions are permitted. For example, if one needs to recite a beracha, it is better to do so after completing Yishtabach before answering (or saying) Borchu than during the Pesukei Dezimra. For this reason, someone who did not have tzitzis or tefillin available before davening, and they become available during Pesukei Dezimra, should put them on immediately after Yishtabach and recite the berachos on them. The authorities discuss several other instances of interruptions and whether they are permitted between Yishtabach and Borchu, even though none of these interruptions is permitted during Birchos Kerias Shema. All of the permitted interruptions qualify either as tzorchei mitzvah, mitzvah requirements, or community needs. To quote the Tur (Orach Chayim 54): “One may not interrupt between Yishtabach and Yotzeir if it is not for community needs or for someone who needs to be supported from charity.” Thus, the Tur rules that, even though it is prohibited to talk after Yishtabach, one is permitted to make an appeal for charity at this point. Although, as we will soon see, this position is not universally agreed upon, there were other early authorities who held this way (Rav Amram Gaon, quoted by Tur; Beis Yosef quoting Kolbo #4). The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 54:3) quotes this opinion, although he considers it to be a minority view (see also Hagahos Maimoniyos 7:70). In many places, it was customary to extend this leniency to include requesting personal assistance for other needs, as we will see shortly. It is certainly permitted to recite the beracha upon hearing thunder between Yishtabach and Yotzeir, and most authorities permit one to recite Asher Yatzar at this point (Mishnah Berurah 51:8; however, see Chayei Adam [20:3], who prefers that one not recite Asher Yatzar until after Shemoneh Esrei). At this point, we can answer one of the questions we raised at the beginning of this article: “If I need to use the facilities during davening, may I recite the beracha of Asher Yatzar after answering Borchu, provided I have not begun to say the beracha of Yotzeir Or?”

The answer is that one may recite Asher Yatzar before answering Borchu, but if one has already answered Borchu, he should wait until after Shemoneh Esrei before reciting it. Before Kaddish or after?

In a situation when one may interrupt after Yishtabach, is it better to interrupt before reciting Kaddish, or after Kaddish and before Borchu? This exact question is discussed at length by the Darchei Moshe, the Rema’s commentary on the Tur (Darchei Moshe, Orach Chayim 54:1):

“The custom is to make a mishebeirach for the ill between Yishtabach and Yotzeir; and occasionally, someone cries out [at this point in the davening to call attention to the need] to bring someone to justice, and these are considered mitzvah needs. (The Rema codifies this last practice in his comments to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 54:3.) However, I do not understand why the custom is to do so before Kaddish, and

then after the interruption to recite Kaddish. Since this Kaddish refers back to Pesukei Dezimra, as I will explain in Chapter 55, we should not interrupt before it. Furthermore, one following this practice no longer has a basis to recite Kaddish afterwards, since it now no longer concludes the Pesukei Dezimra.” The Rema then quotes the Kolbo (6), who says that if one did, indeed, interrupt between Yishtabach and Kaddish, then one should say Borchu without Kaddish. The Kolbo suggests another option for someone who interrupted after Yishtabach -- he should recite three or more pesukim of tehillim and then say Kaddish.

On the basis of this Kolbo, the Rema, with the agreement of other talmidei chachamim, changed the practice in his city and made a mishebeirach after Kaddish. However, he subsequently retracted this decision, because he found a more authoritative source that followed the original practice of interrupting before Kaddish rather than afterwards. The Or Zarua quoted a teshuvah ha’geonim that someone who began davening without a talis should stop after Yishtabach, recite the beracha, and put on the talis. However, if the community had already begun Kaddish, he should not recite the beracha. Thus, we see that if one needs to interrupt at this point in the davening, it is better to do so before Kaddish than afterwards. The Rema continues that this position is in line with the kabbalistic works that hold that one should not interrupt between Kaddish and Borchu. (By the way, the Rema himself was heavily steeped in Kabbalah, and authored a work on the topic.)

The Rema then concludes that it is best to avoid any interruption at all, and he cites that, in Prague, they had stopped all interruptions after Yishtabach. In a place where the custom is to interrupt, the Rema concludes that the best procedure is to interrupt after Yishtabach and before Kaddish. However, the chazzan should not interrupt between Yishtabach and Kaddish (Darchei Moshe, Orach Chayim 54:1; Rema, Orach Chayim 54:3).

At this point we can now answer Yitzchak’s question that we mentioned above:

“Because of my work schedule, I must daven at a very early minyan. At times, we begin davening when it is too early to put on talis and tefillin, so we put on talis and tefillin after Yishtabach. Someone told me that when we do this, we are creating a problem with reciting Kaddish. Is this true? And if it is true, what should we do?

The Rema concludes that everyone else should put on talis and tefillin after Yishtabach but the chazzan should put on talis and tefillin before Yishtabach so as not to interrupt between Yishtabach and Kaddish.

Kaddish before Musaf

There is a very interesting side point that results from this above-quoted Rema:

In a place where the rabbi delivers a sermon prior to Musaf, the custom is to do so before Kaddish. Is there any problem

with reciting Kaddish before Musaf, although there is now a huge interruption between the recital of Ashrei and the Kaddish?

Whether the chazzan may immediately recite Kaddish should depend on the above-cited dispute between rishonim. Just as the Kolbo ruled that the chazzan may not recite Kaddish once he interrupted, unless he recites a few verses prior to saying Kaddish, here too, he would be required to recite a few verses prior to reciting Kaddish. According to the Or Zarua, an interruption after the recital of the verses of Ashrei does not pose any problem with saying Kaddish afterward.

Az Yashir after Yishtabach?!

Prior to addressing the final remaining question, we need to discuss a curiosity. The last Biblical passage cited as part of Pesukei Dezimra is Az Yashir, the Shiras Hayam that the Jewish people sang as praise to Hashem, after witnessing the miracles at the crossing of the Red Sea, the Yam Suf. The Tur (51) and the Avudraham explain that this passage is included immediately before Yishtabach because it contains fifteen mentions of Hashem's holy Name, thus corresponding to the fifteen praises of Hashem that are stated in Yishtabach. Others cite a different, but similar, idea: We complete Pesukei Dezimra with Shiras Hayam because the four-lettered name of Hashem is mentioned eighteen times between the words Vayehi Be'ashmores (that precede Az Yashir in the Torah) until the end of the Shiras Hayam. This adds up to a total of 72 letters of Hashem's name and, thereby, represents a very high level of kedusha (Beis Yosef, 51, explaining Orchos Chayim; he also explains why we begin from Az Yashir and not from Vayehi Be'ashmores).

By the way, these two allusions are not conflicting, but complementary. One explains Az Yashir as the introduction to Yishtabach, and the other makes it a representative of the entire Pesukei Dezimra that serves as an introduction to the Shemoneh Esrei.

Notwithstanding the fact that it is now standard practice to include Az Yashir, the earliest versions of Pesukei Dezimra did not include any recital of Az Yashir, and others recited it after Yishtabach. For example, the Rambam's Seder Hatefillos (located at the end of Sefer Ahavah in his Yad Hachazakah) places Az Yashir after the recital of Yishtabach.

With this introduction, we can now address the question asked above:

"In the shullen in which I used to daven, during the aseres yemei teshuvah we always recited the chapter of tehillim 'Shir hama'alos mima'amakim' right after Yishtabach. Someone recently told me that the reason why I do not see this custom practiced any more is because it is a hefsek in the davening. Is this true?"

Here is the background: The Magen Avraham (54:2) quotes the Arizal that during the aseres yemei teshuvah one should add Shir hama'alos mima'amakim after Yishtabach. The Magen

Avraham then asks why this is not considered a hefsek. In response to this concern, the Dagul Meirevavah notes the Rambam's placement of Az Yashir after Yishtabach; thus, it is curious to understand what was bothering the Magen Avraham. (One could also mention the Tur and others, who noted the custom of making charity and other communal appeals after Yishtabach, as proof that reciting Shir hama'alos should not be considered an interruption.)

Presumably, the Magen Avraham feels that adding Az Yashir is not a hefsek, since this is a praise of Hashem, which is the same theme as the entire Pesukei Dezimra. We may, therefore, add other praises to Pesukei Dezimra. However, Shir hama'alos is being added as a supplication, and the Magen Avraham considers this to be an interruption. And, although the Tur and the Rema mention a custom of interrupting for communal or mitzvah needs, today the prevalent practice is to not interrupt, as the Rema himself preferred. We could then conclude that although one may add quotations and passages from Tanach that praise Hashem both to the Pesukei Dezimra and immediately afterwards, one should not add passages that are being used as supplication, and that this is the reason why some did not observe the practice of reciting Shir hama'alos mima'amakim after Yishtabach. However, those who do maintain this practice are following the custom of the Arizal, and should continue to do so.

Conclusion:

The Ramban (Commentary to Shemos 13:16) explains: "All that Hashem desires from this world is that Man should thank Him for creating him, focus on His praise when he prays, and that the community pray together with concentration. Mankind should gather together and thank the Lord who created them, announcing: We are your creations!"

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The Curious Case of the Karpef by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

The title of this article will probably engender much inquisitiveness. What exactly is a karpef? No, it is not a type of French pastry, nor is it referring to the vegetable dipped into saltwater at the Pesach Seder. Rather, it is a term used to refer to an area not designated for human habitation. Before the colloquial "Huh?" is heard, some explanation is in order.

Tale of Three Reshuyos

According to Tosafos, the well known halacha of not carrying outside on Shabbos ('Hotza'ah') is based on the episode in Parashas Beshalach of several people attempting to gather the mun (manna) on Shabbos.[1] The Pasuk states "On the Seventh Day each person should remain where he is and not leave his place". The main prohibition taught here is to refrain from carrying from one's house or private enclosed area (known as a Reshus HaYachid) to an area available for the

entire Bnei Yisrael in the Desert to traverse (known as a Reshus HaRabbim). Chazal further explain that transporting the item in the reverse order (from Reshus HaRabbim to Reshus HaYachid), or even carrying it 4 Amos (between 6 - 8 feet) in a Reshus HaRabbim itself is prohibited as well.[2] So, basically, one may carry inside an area that is considered a Reshus HaYachid on Shabbos, while one may not carry in an area that is considered a Reshus HaRabbim. However, in order to be designated a Biblical Reshus HaRabbim, certain specific complex requirements must be met, including: It must be unroofed, meant for public use or thoroughfare, at least 16 amos wide, and be used by at least 600,000 residents daily.[3] Any area that does not meet the Torah's definition of a Reshus HaRabbim, and yet is not enclosed (and therefore not in the category of a Reshus HaYachid), is called a Karmelis. A Karmelis shares the same basic rules of a Reshus HaRabbim, but since the prohibition is only rabbinic in origin, Chazal allowed a more lenient method of 'enclosing' it. This method is called an eruv, which in essence turns a Karmelis into a quasi-Reshus HaYachid, and therefore allows carrying throughout on Shabbos.

So... What's a Karpef?

It is not the author's intent to get involved in the extremely complex and complicated issues involved in what constitutes a proper eruv,[4] but rather to highlight a seldom known related issue: the obscure halacha of a karpef. As mentioned previously, a karpef refers to an area not designated for human habitation. The basic halacha is that one may not carry inside of a karpef on Shabbos,[5] even though Biblically a karpef is considered a Reshus HaYachid! What many do not know[6] is that its unique halachic status is that if there is a karpef larger than 5,000 square amos[7]- "Yosair M'Beis Sa'asayim" (roughly 1,650 sq. meters or 17,750 – 20,000 sq. feet; approximately the area size of two or three buildings) inside of an eruv, it can render the entire eruv invalid![8]

If so, we must properly identify a karpef, as its definition can greatly impact the validity of many an eruv, since every city has non-residential areas. The Gemara, as well as the Shulchan Aruch, discuss it as place where it's "nizra ruvo ha'zra'im", mostly full of plants and shrubbery - meaning not a place where people ordinary would traverse or live.[9]

Gardens & Parks

Although this ruling holds true, many decisors extend the definition of human habitation (and thus exception to the aforementioned rule) to include a use of the area for regular human needs. For example, many authorities maintain that a karpef refers exclusively to a vegetable garden or possibly a place that is overgrown with plants and weeds, which is why people would have no reason to go there. On the other hand they aver, public parks and gardens, which are purposely planted for people's pleasure and enjoyment,[10] [11] would

not fall under this category, as they are similar to orchards,[12] and would not invalidate an eruv.

Additionally, since public parks are purposely created by a non-Jewish government, it would not fall into the category of a karpef that can be mevattel an eruv, since our intent is subject to the government's, as well as belonging to non-Jews.[13] Yet, several others do not agree with this explanation and rule stringently, that even a flower garden would be included in the definition of a karpef.[14] The halacha pesuka seems to follow the majority (lenient) opinion, especially as it is has support from the Meiri, a Rishon whose opinion on topic the machmirim had not known about.[15]

Cemeteries, Zoos and Empty Expanses

The Chazon Ish[16] maintains that an empty expanse of land (perhaps a construction site) has the same applicable halacha of a karpef, since it currently has no residential use and consequentially can also invalidate an eruv. Yet, it appears that this is a novel approach, as it does not appear in earlier halachic literature.[17]

A more common issue is how to classify a cemetery. Although some seem hesitant to "zone it" as such, nevertheless, since many come to a cemetery to daven on specific days (Tisha B'Av, certain Arvei Rosh Chodesh, Yahrzeits, etc.), the prevailing opinion is to consider it a residential area,[18] and not a karpef.

Similarly, since many visitors come to a zoo on a regular basis, it has the status of a residential area and would not invalidate an eruv.[19] Other interesting places that one might not think are considered residential, yet are considered so from a halachic standpoint, include a shuk[20](open air marketplace), a prison courtyard,[21] and an airfield tarmac (runway);[22] all of which are not considered karpifiyos, and do not invalidate an eruv.

The Dvar Shmuel's Approach

The most commonly cited as well as most controversial approach to the halachos of karpef is that of the great Rav Shmuel Abuhav. In his famous sefer of responsa, Shu"t Dvar Shmuel,[23] he raises an interesting point and an exception. He maintains that in an enclosed city (Ir Mukefes Choma), even one with a karpef inside larger than 5,000 amos, the eruv is still valid. He explains that the reason a karpef normally invalidates an eruv is because an eruv only helps for places of human habitation, and a karpef is not suitable for such. Yet, if the whole city is enclosed, it shows that the whole city is meant for habitation, including the karpef; for if it wasn't, the city's founding fathers would never have enclosed it. In other words, the karpef becomes cancelled out by the city itself!

Many authorities, although several not agreeing with his proofs, nevertheless followed his lenient ruling; chief among them the famed Chacham Tzvi, and his son, Rav Yaakov Emden.[24] A number of other prominent poskim, however, vehemently disagreed, maintaining that such a karpef would

invalidate an eruv, even in an enclosed city.[25] Several decisors ruled that one may only rely on this heter under extenuating circumstances[26]. The Mishna Berura and the Chazon Ish, among other authorities, maintain that one should not rely on this leniency,[27] rather asserting that one should erect an eruv around this karpof, thereby excluding it from the rest of the city-wide eruv, and as a result sparing the city eruv from any karpof related consequence.[28]

Bottom Line

Many contemporary authorities do take the Dvar Shmuel's rationale into account as an additional factor to permit an eruv to exist, even with a karpof in its midst.[29] It is well known that many cities with a large concentration of observant Jewry in generations past traditionally relied upon the Dvar Shmuel's approach[30] in construction of their Eruvin, including Yerushalayim in the days of the Aderes, Warsaw in its heyday, and Vilna in the days of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski zt"l. So, what does your city do? Which opinions does your city's eruv follow? One should speak to his Rav and /or Eruv Vaad to find out.

However, as stated before, this article was not meant to give a definitive ruling on the complexities of the karpof. Rather, its purpose is to highlight a small aspect of the extremely intricate and complicated issues involved in the construction of an eruv, and to give the reader an appreciation of those Rabbanim who erect and check the eruv weekly in rain, sleet, or hail, just to save their fellow Jews from potential Chillul Shabbos.[31]

This article was written in appreciation to and in honor of my father, Rabbi Manish Spitz, who has for decades tirelessly worked and continues to do so, to ensure that a proper eruv is up to save the rabbim from nichshal, and was the impetus for my interest and research in this inyan, l'iluy nishmas the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben Yechezkel Shraga and R' Chaim Baruch Yehuda ben Dovid Tzvi and l'zechus for R' Yaacov Tzvi ben Rivka and Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chaltzeha for a yeshua teikif umiyad. Thanks are also due to noted author and posek Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff for graciously allowing me to paraphrase part of his relevant article "Carrying in Public and the Use of an Eruv".

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu.

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[Footnotes

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