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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BO - 5769

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Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger - Get the Message

Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger

Parshas Bo, which details the culmination of all of the makos, to my mind, begins with one of the sure signs of an impending redemption, that Hashem opens up to us and clearly reveals to us His game plan through which He will complete our geulah. What we would give to have that kind of clarity in our own time! It is in these first pesukim that Hashem recounts to Moshe alone, that He has strengthened Paroh's resolve to endure more suffering, and that Hashem is doing this to create through Moshe an eternal story of Hashem's presence in dark times.

Apparently this revelation was for Moshe alone, for the subsequent warning that Moshe delivers to Paroh focuses entirely on the upcoming plague of locusts. Surprisingly, Moshe opens with a seemingly peculiar demand from Paroh, "How long will you continue to resist humbling yourself to me?" The Brisker Rav, noting that this is a change of the routine that had been repeated time again throughout the parshiyos, suggests that Hashem expresses here His concern and perhaps anger that He has been ignored by Paroh. In other words, in addition to the makos displaying certain philosophical truths, and punishing the Egyptians for enslaving us at the same time, the makos were also a punishment for ignoring the earlier Makos. Though this point is revealed now, its tone indicates that this was a theme all along.

The Brisker Rav compares this to the beginning of the Rambam's Hilchos Taanis. There the Rambam records that when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, facing war, famine or drought, the Torah commands us to respond by prayer and ultimately fasting. Should one ignore this opportunity, codifies the Rambam, that will in turn bring greater anger and punishment to our people. In a very strong sentence, which may be primarily addressed to our leadership, we read that ignoring the difficulties and chalking them up to chance is a cruel practice as it continues to wreak pain and suffering on our people.

Rambam continues to address our time, having found us at war recently. It is remarkable that he states that prayer when offered in response to tzoros, is simply our way of saying "Hashem, we hear you" and thus begins the introspection and teshuva which will ultimately lead to authentic and lasting resolutions to our difficulties. In light of Rambam's position that prayer is Biblically mandated on a daily basis, expressing the fullness of our relationship with Hashem, our praise, gratitude, and needs, the prayer of an eis tzoro is an entirely different form of prayer.

I believe this is a Rambam that must be studied and restudied in these weeks. Accordingly if we understand that our prayers were effective and heard on High, then it follows that not only did Hashem listen to our pleas and our tears, and not only accepted the increased goodness that we expressed over the past few weeks, but more important for us now, is that Hashem accepted our call saying "We got the message". Thus the importance of following through with improvements in our service to Hashem and His people cannot be over estimated.

How fitting it is for us that the very beginning of the parsha emphasizes the messages of the recent weeks. In addition to increased introspection, we should be absolutely attentive to the miracles that Hashem has performed for us. We should read of and retell the miracles that will be reported to us by those who fought for us on the front lines. Thankfully these too are messages sent our way, messages of Hashem's presence and watchful eye over us.

Perhaps in the merit of humbling ourselves in response to the tzoros, Hashem will choose to address us through the clarity of open miracles.
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from Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> genesis@torah.org
toravfrand@torah.org date Fri, Jan 30, 2009 at 12:05 AM
subject **Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bo**

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bo

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 622, Ya'aleh v'Yavo. Good Shabbos!

Sanctification of New Moon Equates With Greeting Shechina

The Torah teaches "This month for you is the beginning of the monthly cycle." [Shmos 12:2]. This is the source of the Biblical command for the Jewish Court to sanctify the new moons and establish the monthly lunar calendar, thereby determining the timing of the lunar based Jewish holidays. We no longer perform the ceremony of Kiddush HaChodesh [sanctification of the new month] – the whole process whereby witnesses would come to court to testify they saw the new moon and Beis Din would proclaim the start of a new month based on this testimony.

We do have a taste of what this was like in the ceremony of Kiddush Levannah [sanctification of the moon]. The Talmud implies [Sanhedrin 42a]: that one who blesses the moon in its appropriate time is as if he greeted the Face of the Divine Presence. This idea is in fact quoted in the prayer recited during the Kiddush Levana service.

In fact, the Talmud derives this equation from a gezeirah shava [common word usage] between the pasuk [verse] in our parsha haChodesh haZEH lachem [THIS month is for you...] [Shmos 12:2] and the pasuk in the Song of the Sea ZEH keili v'anvehu [THIS is my G-d and I will glorify Him] [Shmos 15:2]. Chazal state that there was a great revelation of Divine Presence at the crossing of Yam Suf, such that the lowest handmaiden perceived more than even the great prophet Yechezkel (who witnessed the loftiest of prophetic visions). Hence, there is a connection between the sanctification of the moon and perceiving the Divine Presence.

However, we must ask – why is this so? All we are doing is taking note of something that is a very predictable astronomical event. We can know precisely to the minute when there is going to be a new moon. What is so

special about this phenomenon that our Sages equate it with greeting the Almighty?

I will elaborate on an answer I saw in the sefer Kometz HaMincha by Rav Ehrentreu, but I first need to preface that answer by introducing several basic ideas.

In Judaism we frequently refer to things that are a memorial to Creation (zecher l'maaseh Bereshis) and to things that are a memorial to the Exodus (zecher l'yetzias Mitzraim). Creation and the Exodus represent two fundamental beliefs of Judaism.

The belief in Creation is the belief that G-d created this world in six days and that on the seventh day He rested. The world was not created through some "Big Bang" theory where all that we have today is just accidents of the cosmos. It was a planned event that the Almighty Himself planned and executed.

But we have another fundamental belief in Judaism that is equally important. This is the concept that G-d not only created the world but that He continues to intervene personally in the events of mankind. This is the idea of zecher l'yetzias Mitzraim. The Almighty put His people in Egypt for a purpose that He felt was necessary. He promised to take them out. He indeed took them out and in so doing demonstrated to Pharaoh and the entire world that He is personally involved and interested in the affairs of mankind. Zecher l'yetzias Mitzraim teaches that G-d is the G-d of history. All the wars and kings and uprisings that have transpired over thousands of years of history have been Divinely directed under the rubric of zecher l'yetzias Mitzraim.

This is where we part ways with many other nations of the world. If a person does not believe in Creation, he is in effect an atheist. He does not believe there is a G-d who created the world. A person who believes in Creation but does not believe in "Yetzias Mitzraim" is in effect an agnostic. That is to say, there is perhaps a G-d who created the world but it is not a G-d who is interested in what I do or how I act. "G-d is too busy with other things to be worried about such trivialities." G-d may have set the universe in motion, but now everything is running on its own.

This is not our belief. We believe that the Almighty is indeed personally interested in all that we do. This is how the Malbim understands the pasuk we recite at the beginning of Hallel. "Hashem is high above all nations upon Heaven is His honor [Tehillim 113:4]. The Malbim interprets this to mean that for the nations of the world, G-d's abode is limited to Heaven, to the exclusion of what goes on down on earth. How we talk, how we act, and how we conduct our business affairs – G-d is not interested in such things. However, this is not how Dovid HaMelech views G-d. Dovid HaMelech views Him as "the One who descends to view both in Heaven and on Earth." [Tehillim 113:6]

In the second volume of Darash Moshe, Rav Moshe Feinstein uses this idea to explain the dialog cited in the Medrash between the Roman matron and Rav Yosi ben Chalafta. The matron asked him how long it took G-d to create the world. Rav Yosi replied that it took six days. She then inquired, "Since then, what has He been doing?" The implication of her question was that we certainly need a G-d to create the world, but now that the world has been created, nature can take over. What is there left for G-d to do? Rav Yosi ben Chalafta responded that since then he makes matches – both matrimonial pairings as well as business transactions. This is a way of saying that G-d is personally interested in the life of every human being.

The Torah tells us that G-d hardened the heart of Pharaoh. This idea bothered all the commentaries. It seems to violate the principle of free will. How could Pharaoh be punished if he had no free will? The Zohar explains that the pasuk states: "And (the Name) Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay hardened the heart of Pharaoh". Pharaoh could not believe that G-d was interested in what went on in Egypt. The Name Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay, which connotes haya [was] hoveh [is] and yihehey [will be] – indicating G-d's role both in the past, present, and future made Pharaoh stubbornly resist Moshe's warnings. He theologically was convinced that G-d was not interested in him or in whether the Jews were enslaved or not enslaved. According to the

Zohar, the interpretation is not that G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart, but it was the word and concept HASHEM (the name Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay), that G-d should care and still be interested in what happens here, that led him to his hardened heart.

This is what Yetzias Mitzraim is about. It teaches that G-d did NOT merely set the world in motion and then say good-bye for the last 5700+ years.

Now we can understand and appreciate the answer of the Kometz HaMincha to our original question: Whoever stands and blesses the new moon in its time, is as if he greeted the Divine Presence. We go out after Shabbos, and we see the moon and praise G-d who set up the solar system, the planets, and the moon. Why are we doing this? This is science. This is nature. This is astronomy. Is G-d interested in our monthly acknowledgement of his role in Creation? That is the very point. Kiddush haLevana is about seeing the moon, and rather than attributing it to "Mother Nature," attributing it to the G-d who created it and who desires man's continued recognition of His role in nature. We acknowledge that G-d decided that there should be a new month this year. If He had decided otherwise, there would not be a new month. We testify that He renews new acts of creation every single day. This means He decides now that the world should go on for another second.

Thus, when a person goes out and gives this testimony in front of the new moon every month, it is as if he is greeting the Divine Presence. I am recognizing that even though this works like clockwork – better than clockwork – it is You who is controlling every aspect of it.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Bo are provided below: Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

From: hchaplains-owner@rabbis.org on behalf of Kramer, Doniel Z.
[Doniel.Kramer@med.va.gov] Sent: Sunday, December 11, 2005 7:36 PM
To: hchaplains@rabbis.org
Subject: **A very moving story from a nursing home about faith and prayer**

In the summer of 2000, 16-year-old Mordechai Kaler volunteered to help in the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington in Rockville, MD. One of his responsibilities was to invite the residents to attend the daily services (minyan) in the synagogue on the first floor. Some agreed and others refused, but even those who declined were pleasant about it.

There was one man on the second floor, however, who had been quite nasty and had even cursed another volunteer when he was asked to join the minyan. The volunteer was taken aback by the man's tirade, so Mordechai undertook the challenge of speaking to the angry gentleman.

Mordechai found the man sitting in a wheelchair in a lounge filled with residents of the home. After introducing himself, Mordechai said softly but firmly, "If you don't wish to join the services we can respect that, but why should you curse the volunteer? He is here to help and he was just doing his job.

"Young man," the elderly gentleman said sternly, "wheel me to my room. I want to tell you a story."

When they were in the room alone, the old man told his story of horror, pain and sadness. He came from a prominent religious family in Poland and when he was 12 years old, he and his family were taken to a Nazi concentration camp. They were all killed except for him and his father.

In their barracks there was a man who had smuggled in the tefillin shel rosh, the leather black box containing biblical passages worn on the head

during morning prayers. Every day the men in the barracks would try to seize an opportunity to put on the religious gear, even for a moment, when there were no Nazi S.S. guards nearby. The men knew that they hadn't fulfilled the religious duty because they were missing the second part of the tefillin, for the hand, but their love for doing the Creator's commands compelled them to do whatever they could.

The man continued, "But for my father that wasn't enough. My bar mitzvah was coming up and he wanted that at least on that day that I wear a complete set of tefillin. He had heard that in a barracks down the road, a man who had been killed had a complete pair of tefillin.

"On the morning of my bar mitzvah, my father, at great risk, went out early to the other barracks to get the tefillin. I was waiting by the window with trepidation. In the distance I could see him rushing to get back. As he came closer I could see that he was carrying something cupped in his hands.

"As he got to the barracks, a Nazi stepped out from behind a tree and shot and killed him right before my eyes! When the Nazi left I ran out and took the pouch of tefillin that lay on the ground next to my father. I managed to hide it.

The old man peered angrily at Mordechai and said vehemently, "How can anyone pray to a G-d Who would kill a boy's father right in front of him? I can't!"

The man pointed to the dresser against the wall and said, "Open the top drawer."

In the drawer Mordechai saw an old black tefillin pouch, crusted from many years of not being used. "Bring me the pouch," the man ordered. Mordechai complied.

The man opened it and took out an old pair of tefillin. "This is what my father was carrying on that fateful day. I keep it to show people what my father died for, these dirty black boxes and straps. These were the last things I got from my father."

Mordechai was stunned. He had no words - no comfort to give. He could only pity the poor man who had lived his life in anger, bitterness and sadness. "I'm sorry," he finally stammered softly. "I didn't realize." Mordechai left the room resolved never to come back to the man again. When he came home that evening, he couldn't eat or sleep.

He returned to the home the next day, but avoided the old man's room. A few days later, as Mordechai was helping the men who had come to the synagogue, one of the elderly wanted to recite the prayer said on the anniversary of a death, one that required a quorum.

"I have yahrtzeit today and I need to say Kaddish," the elderly man beseeched. "We only have nine men here today. You think you could get a tenth?"

Mordechai had already made his rounds that morning and had been refused by many of the residents. They were too tired, not interested or half asleep. The only one he hadn't approached was the old man on the second floor.

Reluctantly and hesitantly he went upstairs. He knew the old man would scold him, but he still had to make an effort. He knocked on the door gently and announced himself.

"It's you again?" the old man asked.

"I'm so sorry to trouble you," Mordechai said softly, "but there's a man in synagogue who needs to say Kaddish today. We need you for a minyan. Would you mind coming just this one time?"

The old man looked up at Mordechai and said, "If I come this time, then you'll leave me alone?" Mordechai wasn't expecting that response. "Yes," he said in a whisper, "I won't bother you again."

To this day, Mordechai doesn't know why he then said what he did. It could have infuriated the old man, but for some reason Mordechai blurted out, "Would you like to bring your tefillin?"

Mordechai braced himself for a bitter retort - but instead the man said again, "If I bring them, will you leave me alone?" "Yes," Mordechai said, "I will leave you alone."

"All right," the man replied, "then wheel me downstairs and make sure that I'm in the back of the synagogue, so I can get out first."

Mordechai wheeled the old man to the synagogue and brought him to the back. "May I help you?" Mordechai asked as he took the tefillin out of the pouch. The gentleman put out his left hand. Mordechai helped him put on his tefillin and left the synagogue to do other work.

After the services, Mordechai returned and the synagogue was empty - except for the old man. He was still wearing his tefillin and tears were running down his cheeks. "Shall I get a doctor or a nurse?" Mordechai asked.

The man didn't answer. Instead he was staring down at the straps of tefillin wrapped on his left arm, caressing them with his right hand and repeating over and over, "Tatte, Tatte [Father, Father], it feels so right."

The old man then looked up at Mordechai and said, "For the last half hour I've felt so connected to my Tatte. I feel as though he has come back to me."

Mordechai took the man back to his room and as he was about to leave, the old man said, "Please come back for me tomorrow."

And so every morning Mordechai would go to the second floor and the old man would be waiting for him at the elevator holding his tefillin. Mordechai would wheel him into the synagogue where he would sit in the back wearing his tefillin, holding a siddur (prayer book), absorbed in his thoughts.

One morning Mordechai got off the elevator on the second floor but the man wasn't there. He hurried to his room, but his bed was empty. Instinctively he became afraid. He ran to the nurses' station and asked where the gentleman was - and they told him.

He had been rushed to the hospital the previous afternoon and late in the day he had had a stroke and died. A few days later, Mordechai was given an award by the Jewish home for his work as a volunteer. After the ceremonies a woman approached him and thanked him for all he had done for her. Mordechai had no recollection of the woman. "Excuse me," Mordechai said, "do I know you?"

"I am the daughter of that man you helped," she said softly. "He was my father and you did so much for him. You made his last days so comfortable. When he was in the hospital he called me frantically and asked me to bring him his tefillin. He wanted to pray one more time with them. I helped him with his tefillin in the hospital and then he had his stroke."

He died wearing them.

Bound to his Father - in Heaven.

Heard from Rabbi Zvi Teitelbaum, principal of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington in Silver Spring, Maryland, and passed on via emails.

<http://www.anshe.org/parsha.htm#parsha> Parsha Page by **Fred Toczek** - A Service of Anshe Emes Synagogue (Los Angeles)
Parsha Page by Fred Toczek A survey of parsha thoughts from Gedolei Yisroel compiled by Fred Toczek. Perfect for printing and use at your Shabbos tisch.

Next Week: Beshalach
BO 5757

A. Summary

i. The 8th Plague (Locusts). After being warned by Moshe that a plague of locusts would descend upon the Egyptian crops, Pharoh's courtiers urged him to let the Jewish males leave. However, Moshe and Aharon insisted that all of the Jewish people (and their flocks) be allowed to leave, leading Pharoh to drive Moshe and Aharon from his presence. The next day, Moshe extended his rod and a swarm of locusts descended, devouring the Egyptian vegetation. After witnessing the plague, Pharoh again admitted his error and begged Moshe and Aharon to make it stop; however, when they complied, Pharoh again became obstinate.

ii. The 9th Plague (Darkness). Moshe then brought the next plague -- total darkness -- which descended upon the Egyptians for six days (during the last three of which they couldn't move about). (The Jews, however, were given light in their dwellings.) As the chaos was overwhelming, Pharaoh offered to allow all of the Jewish people (but not their flocks, which he intended to hold as a surety for their return) to leave. Moshe refused Pharaoh's stipulation, and Pharaoh again drove away Moshe and Aharon from his presence. Moshe warned that there would be one last (and devastating) plague which would kill all Egyptian firstborn, and left for the last time.

iii. The Pesach Offering and Holiday. Hashem informed Moshe that redemption was near and that henceforth the year would begin with the month of their deliverance (Nissan), and that Jews should observe the laws of sanctifying the New Moon (Rosh Chodesh). Hashem commanded that, on the Tenth of Nissan, the head of each household should set aside an unblemished young male lamb, which should be examined for blemishes which would disqualify them as an offering. On the evening of the Fourteenth of Nissan, the lamb was to be sacrificed and some of its blood spread on the door posts of the home symbolizing that its inhabitants were Jewish. That night, the meat of the sacrifice was to be eaten when roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, with any remains to be burnt in the morning. This meal was to be consumed in haste and the Jews were to be ready to begin their journey, for that night Hashem would smite the Egyptian firstborn but spare those homes whose door posts were sprinkled with blood. Hashem further commanded that Pesach (Passover) be observed annually as a permanent reminder of the deliverance from Egypt. Only unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days, and the first and seventh days of Pesach are to be days of holy assembly on which all work is forbidden. (In addition, it was commanded that the sacrifice of the Pesach offering was to be observed in Israel and its significance explained to future generations.)

iv. The 10th Plague (Death of the Egyptian Firstborn). At midnight, Hashem smote the Egyptian firstborn people and animals. Pharaoh and his fellow Egyptians arose in the middle of the night, lamented their loss, and from a position of subjugation asked the Jews to leave Egypt.

v. The Jews Leave Egypt. The Jews left in such haste that their leavened bread didn't have time to rise (as a result, we eat Matzos on Pesach). 600,000 adult males, along with their wives and children, left Egypt along with a wealth of gold and silver which the Egyptians had given them. The Jews were commanded to bring a "Korban Pesach" (Pesach offering) every year on the Fourteenth of Nissan; to redeem their first born males in all future generations; and to wear Tefillin "for a sign on your hand and a memorial between your eyes" to remind them of the salvation from Egypt.

B. Divrei Torah

1. LilMode U'Lilamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

a. "Mesiras Nefesh" (Offering One's Life For Hashem). How did Hashem know that the Jews were worthy of redemption? By asking them to publicly prepare the Pesach offering (i.e., to lead the lamb -- which was an Egyptian G-d -- though the streets, slaughter it and spread the blood on their door posts) was to ask them to put their lives in jeopardy. When they complied, Hashem knew that they were ready.

b. True Wealth. Why did Hashem command the Jews to ask the Egyptians for money and jewels as they left Egypt? The Dubno Maggid answers this question with the following parable: A young man was hired by a wealthy merchant, in return for which he was promised a bag of silver coins. At the end of the term, the merchant, extremely grateful for his efforts, gave him a check in an amount much greater than the value of the silver coins; however, the man felt cheated when he received a piece of "paper" in lieu of the coins. When he explained the situation to his father, the father contacted the merchant and explained that since his son didn't understand the value of a check, he'd appreciate it if the merchant would pay at least some of his wages in silver. In Egypt, the Jews were also too young and inexperienced to fully appreciate the value of receiving the Torah, so Hashem caused them to emerge from slavery with material wealth, thus

preventing them from becoming despondent. Only when the Jews grew in wisdom were they able to appreciate the vast richness of the Torah.

2. Artscroll Chumash

a. The Centrality Of The Exodus. Pesach is the inaugural festival of the Jews, as it marks our emergence as a nation. In fact, the Ten Commandments refer to Hashem as "the One Who took Israel out of Egypt" (and not, for example, to "the One Who created the world"). For us, the recognition of Hashem's Majesty and Mastery and our obligation to serve Him comes from the Exodus, for it was then that we saw His omnipotence and became His people. This is why we observe Pesach as an "eternal decree".

b. The Meaning Of Tefillin. Ramban teaches that the four passages in the Tefillin -- i.e., two passages from this Parsha respecting the Exodus and the first two passages from the Shema -- are central to Judaism. The former, which speak of the Exodus, are basic to our awareness of G-d, for it is when we saw that: (a) He liberated us and made us His nation, (b) He showed us that He controls nature, (c) nothing and no one can thwart His will, (d) He communicates through prophets, and (e) He carries out His words at will. The latter express G-d's Oneness and Kingship, the concept of reward and punishment and the responsibility to observe the Mitzvos. These principles must always be with us -- on our arms (i.e., in our actions and opposite our heart which is the seat of emotion) and on our head (i.e., in our intellect and memory).

3. The Chassidic Dimension (the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, z'tl)

Rosh Chodesh. Why is Rosh Chodesh the first commandment given to the entire Jewish people (and why, parenthetically, was Rosh Chodesh one of only three mitzvos prohibited by the Syrian-Greeks at the time of Chanukah)?: (1) Mitzvos allow us to permeate the world with goodness and holiness and transform the physical into the holy. Rosh Chodesh sanctifies the first day of the month (and time), by transforming it into a special day, and establishes the entire Jewish calendar (and festivals). (2) Mitzvos allow us to bring something "novel" into the world. The Hebrew word for month ("chodesh") is related to the Hebrew word for "novel" or "new". The novelty was that, through the performance of Torah and mitzvos, the Jewish people can transform the world into a dwelling place for G-d. (3) Rosh Chodesh symbolizes renewal -- the ability of the Jews to rise up from oblivion and restore ourselves; just as the moon disappears at the end of the month, but returns and grows to fullness, so Jews may suffer exile and decline, but are able to renew ourselves (until the coming of moshiach, when we will never be dimmed again).

4. Kol Dodi on the Torah (Rabbi David Feinstein)

a. A Festival For All Jews. And Moshe said to Pharaoh "With our youths and our elders shall we go, with our sons and our daughters shall we go, with our flocks and our herds shall we go, because it is Hashem's festival for us." It was not enough for only the dignitaries of the Jews to attend the festival; since it was Hashem's festival, all of the Jews were His guests.

b. True Wealth. Astronomically, the month of Nissan is represented by the constellation "Telleh" (sheep); the Egyptians worshiped sheep as a symbol of wealth. The month of Nissan is also the beginning of spring, the time of new life, when the earth is rejuvenated after a dormant winter. This is the season when people dream of the wealth they hope to realize from their new crops and sheep; as such, it is most important in springtime to denounce the concept that wealth is the primary goal of life. Therefore, the Jews were called upon to worship the sheep, the symbol of wealth.

5. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

a. When someone experiences joy don't say or do anything to decrease it. "And to all the Children of Israel no dog barked [as they left Egypt]". We should be careful not to diminish someone else's joy with a pessimistic or deflating comment.

b. Internalize the awareness that Hashem runs the world. R' Moshe Feinstein, z'tl commented that the month of Tishrei is the month of creation of the world and the month of Nissan is the month of the Exodus from

Egypt. Both are lessons in Hashem's power – the former teaches that Hashem is the Creator of the universe; the latter teaches that Hashem controls the events of the world. By designating Nissan as the "first of the months," the Torah teaches that the lesson of Hashem controlling world events is the more important of the two. That is, being aware that Hashem created the world may not alter one's behaviors and attitudes. However, believing that one is under Hashem's supervision in our daily events leads us to improve our behavior and, moreover, helps free us from worry.

c. You create yourself by your behavior. In response to the question of why the Torah gives a entire list of commandments which were reminders of the Exodus, the Chinuch explains that we influence ourselves and our thoughts by our actions. Even if one is not able to do a certain positive deed (e.g., give charity) with elevated thoughts at first, doing the action will manifest in you the positive traits that you want to integrate. After a while, your actions and thoughts will become consistent.

6. Peninim On The Torah (Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum)

a. Parents/Teachers Must Also Be Students. "And you shall tell in the ears of your son and your son's son . . . that you should know that I am Hashem." The end of the pasuk "and you should know" seems to be inconsistent with the beginning. The purpose of teaching the exile and Exodus to our children is that these fundamental experiences become an integral part of our Nation's heritage, and a vehicle to embue our children with faith in Hashem. Thus, it should have stated "that they should know." We can learn from this that the lessons to be derived are not only for the children, but also for the parents. In order for this "course" to be a shared family experience, the parents and teachers must also become the students. (HaRav Yitzchak Aizik Sher, ztl)

b. Individual responsibility. "And they shall take to them (every man) a lamb for their father's house, a lamb for a household." "And they shall slaughter it, the whole assembly of the Congregation of Israel . . ." In this pasuk, we note this mitzvah in which B'nei Israel are enjoined as they prepare for the Exodus from Egypt focuses upon the head of the household, yet also embraces the entire family and community. Even though there is a great need for collective communal involvement, the individual is not absolved of his personal responsibility. We often become so dependent on communal institutions that we forget what it means to personally fulfill our individual responsibilities. We send the aged to be cared by the communal organizations and the poor to the central Tzedakah funds, and relegate our children to be brought up and taught by others. As B'nei Israel approached freedom and eventual nationhood, they were admonished to bear this idea in mind . . . no nation becomes a nation unless each individual bears his individual responsibilities. Moreshe Moshe also relates this pasuk to one's parental duties, noting that Moshe could never have imposed his will upon the people without their consent; it was necessary for the entire assembly to be involved. The Rabbi, teacher and school cannot succeed without the parents' active participation. Lessons in Shabbos, prayer, etc. learned in school can only soak in if they are reinforced at home. Thus, the message from this pasuk is that one must make personal sacrifices at home; one can't rely on others to do the job. When there is obvious personal sacrifices for Jewish idealism, children grow up consciously aware of their heritage.

7. Wellsprings of Torah (Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman)

a. Rosh Hodesh. "This month shall be to you the beginning of months . . ." The Jewish calendar is built around the moon, not sun. Like the moon, which can shine even though the darkest night, the Jewish people can survive and spread light even in darkness. (Sfas Emes, ztl)

b. The Meaning of Pesach. " . . . and you shall keep it a feast to the L-rd; throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever." If one views Pesach merely as the anniversary of liberation from physical oppression and slavery, it would be justifiable to argue that there is no sense in celebrating it as long as Jews continue to be exiled and enslaved anywhere in the world. However, if the Exodus is understood in its proper meaning as the spiritual liberation of our people, in which Hashem led us forth from the corruption of Egypt to take us to Himself as His people and

to have His Presence rest upon us so that we became a Holy Nation, then it can be readily seen why Pesach must be observed even while we are still in physical exile and suffering from persecution and oppression. If you celebrate Pesach as a "feast to the L-rd" -- as a Divinely commanded feast marking the anniversary of the Jews' spiritual liberation, then "you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever" (i.e., you will be able to observe it always, even during the worst periods of your exile). (Meshekh Hakham)

8. Living Each Day (Rabbi Abraham Twerski)

Learning from experience. The Exodus is not merely a historical narration. Everything in Torah is a universal and eternal lesson, to be applied in every age and in every place. The story of the 10 plagues and Pharaoh's reaction to them may seem irrelevant to us today, but it is in fact most relevant. How is it that after each plague Pharaoh promised to yield to Moshe's request to allow the Jews to leave, but no sooner was a plague removed that Pharaoh reneged on his promises? When Moshe subsequently warned him of upcoming plagues, Pharaoh remained unimpressed until the disaster occurs and then promises only to recant again when the pressure is off. Was Pharaoh so ignorant that he was unable to learn from experience? Pharaoh's failure to learn from experience is not unique. Many of us fail to do so. Often, we refuse to admit that we were wrong. Self-centered feelings prevent us from learning from painful experiences and thereby avoiding the repetition of our mistakes. What can we do to overcome this shortcoming? One of the most effective ways is to avail ourselves of a trusted teacher and guide, someone who is unaffected by our emotional distortions and who can help us see reality more clearly and learn from our experiences. As Pirke Avos teaches, "make unto yourself a teacher".

From: **Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz** <rjspsyd@comcast.net>

Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2009 21:27:08 To: <internetchaburah@yahoo.com> Subject: [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah Parshas Bo 5769

Prologue: Ever wonder why Nissan was the designated "first month" if Rosh Hashana is in Tishrei? After all, shouldn't the beginning of the year be the beginning of both the months and the day of the year?

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Kol Ram, Vol. I) notes that Tishrei may serve as the beginning of the year, referring back to the process of creation (as we note – Zeh HaYom Techilas maaseicha ZIKARON L"YOM RISHON) and as such, he declares Rosh HaShana in tishrei. However, Jews are obligated to recall and believe that Hashem did not only create in the past, but is in a constant state of control over our world. He regularly reconstitutes and recreates Maaeh Berashis. The proof-text is that despite its context long after creation, Hashem still performed all of the supernatural miracles necessary for Yetzias Mitzrayim. Hence, the Jew keeps Rosh Chodesh Nissan as the beginning of the month cycle to note and remind himself of the obligation to remember Hashem's daily involvement in our lives and his control, until today, of everything in our world.

Reminding oneself of Rosh Chodesh is an important part of Tefilla. One who leaves out the special Rosh Chodesh addition of Yaaleh V'Yavo must repeat Shemoneh Esrai (if forgotten during Shachris or Mincha). This week's Chaburah examines the process of reminding oneself about Rosh Chodesh. It is entitled:

***** Knocking out loud *****

A well-known practice on Rosh Chodesh is the requirement to recite Yaaleh V'Yavo in one's Shmoneh Esrai. At times, the uniqueness of the Shmoneh Esrai necessitates a brief reminder that Yaaleh V'Yavo be recited. Is it permitted to remind others to say Yaaleh V'Yavo during services?

The Rashba (Shut HaRashba I:293) notes that when one needs to interrupt Tefilla (prayer) in order to offer a Tefilla related comment, it is not considered a Hefsek (interruption). This is based upon the Talmud (Berachos 40a). Certainly, adds the Rashba, when the interruption directly affects the quality of the Tefilla, one would be permitted to announce the

reminder. This is the position assumed by the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 236:2). The Rashba emphasizes that the case is highlighted at night when Maariv is a Reshus anyway.

The Shibbolei HaLeket (170) noted a Minhag that went one step further. He noted that during the night of Rosh Chodesh the Gabbai would announce "Rosh Chodesh" to which the congregation would respond "L'Sasson UL'Simcha" in order to remind the congregation to say Yaaleh V'Yavo. Here, the Shibbolei HaLeket noted that he could not understand why the congregation was able to answer L'Sasson UL"Simcha" as that would be a Hefsek for no reason.

The Mateh Moshe (509) takes exception to the position of the Rashba in regards to the issue of Maariv being a reshus. He notes that today we all daven Maariv and today would be a Chova. Notwithstanding, one may allow the Yaaleh V'Yavo announcement as the main issue is that it is not a Hefsek but a Tzoreich HaTefilla. The Bach agrees (O.C. 236).

The Minhag of Yirushalayim seems to be somewhat suspect. The Kaf HaChaim (236: Os Tov) notes that Yirushalayim's Minhag is not to announce Yaaleh V'Yavo. Rav Ovadiah Yosef (Chazon Ovadiah Chanukah, p. 260) notes that the Minhag of Yirushalayim today is to allow the announcement. He adds that the kaf HaChaim may have referred to the Kabbalistic community, most of whom do not forget Yaaleh V'Yavo anyway.

Today, most Shuls seem to follow the practice of allowing a single Yaaleh V'Yavo announcement. To the congregations concerned with the detractors to the Rashba (See Shalmei Tzibbur 219, 4th column) perhaps a single bang on a table, Bima or Shtender can prevent the Hefsek of Geula L" Tefilla.

Shabbat Shalom

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Bo 1 message
Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> Thu, Jan 29, 2009
at 5:31 AM To: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> PARSHAS BO

On the tenth of this month they shall take for themselves - each man- a lamb or a kid for each father's house, a lamb or kid for the household. (12:3) The Jewish People were prepared to leave Egypt. Hashem had to give the word, and they would be on their way. There was one "slight" problem: they were not yet worthy of redemption. The time had arrived, but they were really not as ready as they thought. One must merit redemption. Hashem granted them two mitzvos which would occupy them in preparation for the big moment. They were told to prepare a sheep four days before it would be slaughtered and sacrificed, and they were to circumcise themselves. While these are both seminal mitzvos, why were they singled out to be the mitzvos that would warrant access to the redemption for Klal Yisrael?

In his inimitable manner, Horav Shabsai Yudelevitz, zl, presents for us an illustration of how Egypt appeared four days before the Exodus. The Jew is seen walking down the street carrying a young sheep. "Where are you going?" his Egyptian neighbor asks him. "I am preparing this sheep, so that in four days, I will slaughter it in honor of my G-d."

One can imagine that the Egyptian did not take very kindly to this idea. The sheep was his god! It is one thing to slaughter it quickly and get it over with, but why did Klal Yisrael have to take it four days before the redemption? It was to inculcate in their minds that they had nothing to fear from the hands of the Egyptians. The Egyptians were powerless to do anything to them.

Hashem wanted the Jews to know that once they "signed on" with Him, they no longer had anyone or anything to fear. A Jew fears only Hashem - no one and nothing else. Let us proceed to the next mitzvah: circumcision. When the Egyptian heard that the Jews en masse were taking his G-d and slaughtering it, he assumed that the Jews were planning a rebellion. They were going to war against their oppressors. Otherwise, why would they be doing this? However, something else occurred that confused the Egyptian and destroyed his theory. The Jews proceeded to have themselves circumcised. Not one, not one hundred - but each of the Jews was having a Bris Milah. This meant that for the next few days, the Jews would be in pain as they recuperated. They certainly could not be planning a revolt. One does not go to war when he is lying in bed in pain. Look at what happened in Shechem, when Shimon and Levi - two young boys - destroyed an entire city!

Apparently, another reason accounted for the Jews' attitude, for their seemingly ridiculous behavior. Hashem was telling the Jewish People to demonstrate to the

entire Egyptian nation that their faith in the Almighty was affirmed. The Egyptians with their gods could do nothing to them as long as they were under Hashem's protection. This public declaration of their unequivocal faith in Hashem set the wheels in motion. They had earned their redemption. They were now worthy of being liberated from the Egyptian exile. This is a timely lesson for all of us. We are worthy of salvation when we demonstrate our true conviction. When we show that we truly believe only in Hashem, He is there for us. May that day come speedily in our time.

Bnei Yisrael carried out the word of Moshe; they requested from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels and garments. (12:35)

The Egyptians were only too happy to give their possessions to the Jews. If it meant that they were leaving, this would mark an end to the plagues. If so, good riddance! Ibn Ezra comments that not everyone received the same valuables. Indeed, "each person asked according to his personal virtue." This is noted from the fact that in the contributions for the Mishkan, it was only the Nesiim, Princes, the highest echelon of Jews, who contributed the precious stones, jewels and expensive oils. They were the only ones who obtained these expensive materials from the Egyptians, because they were the only ones who asked for them. What does Ibn Ezra mean? What special maalah, virtue, quality, did one need in order to borrow expensive articles from the Egyptians?

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that given Klal Yisrael's background as slaves for generations, it would require tremendous courage and self-confidence for them to ask their Egyptian masters for expensive jewelry and other such items. These were people who until now had been on the lowest queue of humanity. They were viewed by the Egyptians as vermin, human garbage. For them to go to their masters and ask for their most expensive possessions took incredible strength of character. Thus, only those who had preserved their dignity throughout the many years of servitude were able to muster up the fortitude to ask for the very expensive silver and jewelry. These were the Nesiim, who were destined for distinction. They did not buckle under the pressure and abuse which the Egyptians had orchestrated.

Pharaoh was no fool. He was acutely aware of the Jews' talents, their acumen, class and moral character. Once the Egyptians were to get wind of the elevated level of the "foreigners," they would gravitate towards them, even acculturate and eventually assimilate with them. In order to prevent this from occurring, Pharaoh painted a bleak and degrading picture of the Jews. He compared them to human refuse, lowly and slovenly, slaves who could not be trusted, filthy, base people. After a few hundred years of this forced image, the Jews began to believe and even act out their parts. The slavery and degradation took their toll on the Jews' self-image. They became self-conscious, sheepish and unsure of themselves. When they were instructed to go to their masters and borrow their material possessions, it was a difficult task for them. Each, according to how he was affected by the Egyptian propaganda, responded differently. Those who were obsequious asked for very little, while others had no qualms about asking for the finest jewelry. They had risen above the Egyptians. They were men of great value.

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, explains that this is the strategy employed by the yetzer hora, evil-inclination, in his never-ending battle to encourage us to sin. First, he attempts to convince us that what we are about to do is really permissible. He finds a way to justify our actions. The way to protect oneself from the yetzer hora's guile is to remain shtoltz, exclusive and resolute, strong in his belief in Hashem and in himself. When one views himself with self-respect, with dignity, as a member of the mamleches Kohanim v'goi kadosh, kingdom of Priests and a holy nation, he rises above the yetzer hora's blandishments.

Yosef Hatzadik almost fell into the clutches of sin when Potifar's wife attempted to seduce him. According to one explanation in the Midrash, he demurred because he said, "What will I do if Hashem appears to me and I am tamei, ritually unclean? It will be humiliating." It was his dignity-- the realization of who he was and what he represented-- that made the difference. This is what saved him from sin.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, once asked the Gerrer Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael, zl, to pray for his brother who was ill. The Rebbe replied, "I will pray, but remember, you are a Yehudi and, therefore, you do not need an intermediary. Why do you not go to the Kosel and daven? Daven for your brother and he will be healed!"

This is Klal Yisrael's koach, power. Our belief in Hashem is what distinguishes us from the nations of the world. A Jew who has emunah, faith, has no reason to feel inferior to anyone. His faith connects and bonds him with the Almighty. What more can one ask for?

It happened on that very day: Hashem took Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt. (12:51)

Freedom has many meanings. It all depends on who you are, what your restrictions and values are, and how limited you are in achieving your goals. One thing is certain: the Jews' redemption from Egypt was the seminal event in their history, an event which catalyzed all future religious events. Without freedom, they could never

have attained the monumental experience of receiving the Torah. How is a Jew to understand freedom, and what should the liberation from Egypt mean to us?

I think that freedom is an attitude. One may have complete freedom of movement, but remain restricted because his mind is subject to various inhibitions-- or he is a slave to his desires over which he has no control. Thus, a free man is one who is in control. It is a spiritual state, in which one expresses his convictions at all times, unafraid of the circumstances. True freedom is being able to maintain fidelity to one's values, despite the challenge of adversity and the ability to choose his actions without having to compromise his principles or beliefs. This freedom is in the mind. It cannot be taken away by persecution, nor can it be affected by constant oppression. A prisoner in an 8' x 4' cell can be a free man if his mind is free, if he does not allow the choking environment around him to manipulate his thought process. Indeed, it is specifically during periods of duress, when one is under intense pressure or suffering, that he becomes aware of his spiritual / emotional freedom.

Hashem gives us the "opportunity"-- through the various challenges we confront-- to prove that we are free. We are confronted daily with Hashem's "concealment" whereby He wants us to search for Him, to rise above adversity, to triumph over vicissitude, and to maintain our connection with Him. This is freedom. Our ability to choose the correct response, to make the right decision, to hold our heads up high under any given circumstance, connotes freedom. This is freedom that cannot be taken away from us. We relinquish it when we lose control over our lives by reneging our spirituality.

In a very poignant prayer, a group of tortured Jews, inmates in a concentration camp, composed the following "Prayer of Chametz," which I discovered recently in the Hagaddah, "In Every Generation," by Rabbi Moshe Grylak.

"Father in Heaven, it is revealed and known before You that it is our will to perform Your will, to celebrate the festival of Pesach with the eating of Matzoh and adhere to the observance of the prohibitions of chametz. However, it is about the following matter that our hearts worry. Due to our internment we may be restricted from properly observing Your commandments. Moreover, our lives are at risk. We are prepared and ready to carry out Your commandment V'chai bahem, And you shall live by them, (but not die by them). We will be careful to heed Your warning: Beware of yourself and greatly beware for your soul. It is, therefore, our prayer to You that You keep us alive, sustain us, and liberate us speedily, so that we should be able to observe Your commandments, perform Your will, and serve You wholeheartedly, Amen."

One can only imagine the circumstances and conditions under which this prayer was composed. Yet, each one of these afflicted Jews symbolized the true essence of freedom. He had risen from above his Nazi oppressors as he soared in the heights, experiencing a connection with Hashem only possible under such circumstances. He might be in pain; the tears flowing down his cheeks; his heart broken over the many losses in his life, but he nonetheless raises up the piece of matzoh and makes a brachah, blessing, with love, joy and fervor. This is freedom at its zenith! He is tasting the sweetness of freedom, because he connects spiritually with Hashem. No one can take that away from him.

When the Jews left Egypt, it was not an open-door automatic policy. They had to earn freedom. They had to present a mindset that was freedom-oriented. The physical redemption followed a spiritual redemption, a purging of one's spiritual frailties, a fusion of one's spiritual convictions. Commitments had to be made: the slave mentality that had enveloped them for centuries had to be extirpated from their psyche. In order to be free, they had to think like free men - with pride, with goals, with purpose, with initiative.

The performance of two mitzvos, which were given to the Jews prior to their redemption from Egypt-- the mitzvah of Bris Milah, circumcision; and Korban Pesach, the slaughter and sacrifice of the Paschal lamb-catalyzed this transformation. It was the "bloods" of circumcision and the sacrificial lamb which gave the Jews the ability to transcend materialism and to remove themselves from the Egyptian culture and slave mentality that had plagued them. It took great courage to spill these bloods. The lamb was the Egyptian godhead. For the Jews to overcome their natural fear of the Egyptians was an incredible step. Circumcision was their first step towards control over their physical tendencies. By taking the reins over their physical /material proclivities, the Jews became free in body and soul. They were now ready to leave the accursed country that had enslaved them for so long. Hashem's words could now penetrate into their hearts and minds, because there was no longer anything preventing these words from entering. The Jews were ready for their destiny as the Jewish nation.

We must break the chains that enslave us, for only when we make the move do we prepare ourselves for the freedom that comes with a life of Torah commitment. The messages are being conveyed on a regular basis, but we are in the midst of a slumber called habit. When we break the self-imposed chains that bind us, we will be able to apply the eternal message of the Exodus to our own lives. When those Yidden prayed in the concentration camp, they broke the chains of enslavement. The Nazis no

longer controlled them. We can do the same. Why wait until we are confronted with a challenge?

Yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt, was more than a one-time experience. It is not an isolated historical event that is supposed to have great meaning for us. The exodus from Egypt serves as the prototype of our relationship with the Almighty. In other words, a Jew must believe that Hashem will redeem him. Despite the misery that we have experienced throughout the ages, we have always maintained the resolute belief that we would one day be redeemed. It has become part of our nature - or, at least, it should.

The hope that every Jew should have can be expressed with the following story: A Jew in Russia returned from shul one Shabbos HaGadol, the Shabbos before Pesach, to find his house completely destroyed by the Cossacks, and his family scattered all over, walking around in shock and bewilderment. Nu, it was Shabbos HaGadol, and the Rav was going to give his derashah, lecture, in the afternoon. Although this Jew was heartbroken and in shock, he bid his family Gut Shabbos and left for the shul to listen to Horav Yeshaya Heschel, zl, the Apter Rebbe. The city had suffered greatly. Many had lost their homes, their livelihoods, yet the Rebbe talked about Pesach and freedom. Pesach was a time for redemption. They listened to the Rebbe. The unfortunate Jew returned home to his destroyed house, to the desolation of what once was his home, and on Motzoei Shabbos he could be seen dancing and singing amid the ruins, singing the praises of Hashem. How did he do it? He believed in the lesson of Pesach: Hashem always redeems us. Sooner or later, we will be free of this wretched exile. Until then, we maintain a freedom mindset. We will be redeemed from the exile, from the dire straits, from the poverty, from the illness, and from the despair. Pesach is the festival of hope and faith. They go hand in hand with the Jew, as he learns to confront and transcend adversity.

And it shall be a sign upon your arm, and an ornament between your eyes, for with a strong hand Hashem removed us from Egypt. (13:16)

The Ramban discusses the mitzvah of Tefillin and its relationship with the Exodus. The principles of the Shema and yetzias Mitzrayim, exodus from Egypt, are central to the belief of an observant Jew. It is for this reason that these principles must always be with us, as they are wrapped around our arms, symbolizing our capacity for action, opposite the heart, the seat of emotion, and upon the head, connoting the intellect, the soul and the ability to remember. The Tefillin inspire us to fulfill our obligation and do His will. He continues by defining the purpose of the mitzvos which serve as remembrances of the miracles of the Exodus. He views miracles as the basis for the Jewish belief in Hashem as the Creator and Ruler of the world. The Ramban concludes with his famous treatise on miracles: "From the great and public miracles man learns to recognize the concealed miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A man has no part in the Torah of Moshe unless he believes that all things and occurrences are all miracles and have no nature or the 'way of the world' in them, whether communally or individually. Rather, if he fulfills the mitzvos, his reward will bring him success, and if he transgresses them, his punishment will cut him off - everything by the decree of the Almighty."

Ramban distinguished between two types of miracles: the great overt, public miracles; and hidden miracles. The first category is a reference to such mind-blowing miracles as took place in Egypt during and after the Exodus. The second category includes every other occurrence that affects the believer, those happenings which we refer to as acts of nature or natural occurrences. According to them, nothing is natural. It is all G-d's intervention. The relationship between the two forms of miracles is educationally causative. The existence of the overt-- public miracles and man's recognition of what they teach him about G-d-- leads him to recognize that the second set of miracles in the guise of nature are miracles, examples of the personal intervention of G-d in the life of the believer. In other words, nothing "just happens." It is all by design. The world we live in is guided by Hashem in such a manner as to allow one to believe that it is all part of nature. This, too, is a miracle. Horav Mordechai Schwab, zl, cites Horav Yonasan Eibyschutz, zl, who notes the word hateva: hay, tes, bais, ayin has a numerical equivalent of eighty-six which is the same gematriya, numerical equivalent, as Elokim. Hashem guides teva, nature, with the name Elokim. This is the meaning of neis nistar, covert miracle: it is hidden under the guise of nature.

The Mashgiach of Yeshivas Lomza, Horav Moshe Rosenstein, zl, explained this with an analogy. Rain can go on for days and even weeks. Snow, however, which is frozen rain, never lasts for more than a few hours or, at most, a day. This is Providential. Imagine if it snowed the way it rains. We would be buried in snow. The world would practically come to a stop. The daughter of the Alter, zl, m'Kelm once shared a room in the hospital in Koenigsburg, Germany, with a German Jewish woman who was totally assimilated. The Alter's daughter made an attempt to reach out to her, to no avail. Finally, she related the above analogy to substantiate that G-d continues to rule over the world and that nothing just happens. Shortly thereafter the lady became observant as a result of her encounter with the Alter's daughter.

Horav Asher Weiss, Shlita, in his commentary to the Haggadah, relates the following "story." A young boy sat at the Seder table, listening to his father recount

the many miracles our ancestors experienced when they left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. Suddenly, the child interrupted his father and asked, "Abba, what is so special about the splitting of the Red Sea? If Hashem created the sea, surely He is able to split it. What is the big thing?"

The father replied, "Let me tell you a story which will explain why Hashem split the sea. There was a brilliant craftsman who could sculpt an animal so well that it actually looked like the real thing. He once created a horse out of clay that looked exactly like the real thing. Having invested much time, energy and money in its creation, he decided to put it up for sale. He placed it in the market place and waited for the right customer. We can imagine how miserable he felt when, at the end of the first week, no one had even noticed the sculpted horse, let alone offer to purchase it. Obviously, this depressed the sculptor who was certain this was one of his most realistic works of art. Confiding to a friend about his concern, his friend told him, 'What do you expect? It is so realistic that no one believes it is a work of art. They think it is a real horse! No one stops to gaze at a horse!'"

"So what should I do?" the sculptor asked. "I have not put countless hours of backbreaking labor to produce this work of beauty to have it ignored."

"His friend gave him some practical advice. 'Cut the horse in half and place the two halves side by side. You will then see how many people stop in wonderment to see a horse cut in half.'"

The same thing applies to miracles. If we would appreciate the creation of the sea and all of the countless miracles which we experience on a daily basis, there would be no need to split the sea. After all, what novelty is there for Hashem, Creator and Ruler of the world? Is it because we forget to take note of all the miracles that Hashem has to make "changes," so that we realize that everything around us is really a work of art, a miraculous creation by the Master Creator: Hashem.

Va'ani Tefillah Ratzon yireiav yaaseh v'es shavasam yishma v'yoshieim. He will do the will of those who fear Him; He will hear their cries and save them.

We pray to Hashem and, at times, we are answered to our satisfaction. Other times we supplicate, we beg, and yet, our entreaty seems to be ignored. Hashem does the will of those who fear Him. Are we not among those who fear Him? Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, cites the Midrash Tanchuma that distinguishes between the prayer of a Jew and a gentile. A person asks for children, unaware that they will be a source of misery and disgrace for him and the Jewish people. An individual asks for money, not realizing that if he receives his wish, he will end up rebelling against Hashem. In such cases, Hashem knows the true ratzon, will, of a Jew and therefore will not grant him his wish. The gentile, however, receives what he asks for.

A person prays for something, thinking that it is good for him. Hashem knows it is not and, therefore, this is not the G-d fearing Jew's will. Hashem does his real will, what is best for the individual. He hears his cry. He does not always answer him positively, because, at times, what the Jew is asking might be to his detriment. How ignorant are we of the ways of Hashem!

l'zechus u'lerefuah sheleima for Baruch ben Sara Chasia b'soch she'or cholei yisrael