



יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵהֶי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּשְׁלַח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,  
רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לַפְּצוּעֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה, וּלְנִפְגְּעֵי מַעֲשֵׂי טְרוֹר וְאִנְטִישְׁמִיּוֹת  
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהֵם - עִם שְׂאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמֵן.

**May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured;  
may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel; may He end this war with  
success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.**



**YERUSHALAYIM in/out for SHABBAT SHIRA**

**י"ג שבט ה'תשפ"ו • 30-31 January '26**



**4:36PM**

PLAG

**4:05PM**



**5:51PM**

R' Tam

**6:24PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales



## Kiddush L'vana

By now, regardless of one's minhag, everyone should have already said Kiddush L'vana.

But just in case you haven't said it yet - the last opportunity for KL is Sunday night, the eve of TU BiShvat, February 1st.

## HAKARAT HATOV

There is a minhag to feed birds on Erev Shabbat Shira. Doing so is an act of HAKARAT HATOV.

From Parshat B'shalach, we owe bird two acknowledgments.

1) Main method of human communication is talking. For birds, it is singing. Bnei Yisrael at the Sea borrowed the birds' special talent (so to speak) to sing praise to HaShem for being saved by the Splitting of the Sea; and

2) It is told that Datan & Aviram spread MAHN around the camp on Shabbat morning, to make a liar out of Moshe who told them that the MAHN would not fall on Shabbat. Birds came and ate up the MAHN, thus "saving" G-d's and Moshe's honor (again, so to speak).

So we thank them for both.

Take this one step further. Realize that birds have a more difficult time finding food in the winter (the ones that stick around and don't fly to warmer places for the winter). So don't limit the feeding to just Erev Shabbat Shira.

On the practical side of this minhag, here's an email I received from a PhiloTorah reader/listener.

Hi Phil. Re the custom of feeding birds on Friday before Shabbat Shira, I would offer the following. Many people, including me formerly, think that bread crumbs and bread pieces are the ideal food for birds. Actually they don't like it. It is not even among the top 10-20 foods most birds like. For the past few years, I have been spreading out sunflower seeds. They are a BIG HIT!

According to the Royal Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, these are the favorite foods of urban birds: Fruit - apples, pears and soft fruits, raisins.

Suitable seeds and grains - like millet, oats, and sunflower seeds.

Peanuts - must be unsalted, fresh and that they don't contain aflatoxin (a poison caused by fungus mould). Small birds might choke on whole peanuts, so chopping the peanuts is a good idea.

Food scraps - cooked pasta, rice and boiled potatoes... Thanks, Mark

# B'SHALACH

## Shabbat Shira

16th of 54 sedras;  
4th of 11 in Sh'mot



Written on 215.33 lines (ranks 17th)

42 of those lines (one column) are wider than all others but with a lot of blank space. Actually, two of those lines are blank (and 10 of them are not part of Shirat HaYam).

14 parshiot; 9 open, 5 closed

116 p'sukim - rank: 23 (6th in Sh'mot)

1681 words - rank: 19 (4th in Sh'mot)

6423 letters - rank: 18 (4th in Sh'mot)

Higher ranking for lines is definitely due to the format of the SHIRA column, which has a lot of blank space. Higher ranking for words and letters is due to larger p'sukim than average.

## MITZVOT

B'SHALACH contains a single mitzva of the 613, the prohibition of leaving one's Shabbat boundary - T'CHUM SHABBAT (Ramban does not count T'CHUM SHABBAT as one of Taryag)

Remember to take a bird to lunch  
this Friday - HAKARAT HATOV -  
see CALnotes

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is [Perek:Pasuk](#) of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in **[square brackets]** are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. **A**=ASEI; **L**=LAV (prohibition). **X:Y** is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

## Kohen - First Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 13:17-14:8

[S> 13:17 (6)] "When Par'o sends the People...", G-d leads them along a circuitous route to prevent them from panicking and returning to Egypt. Moshe, in fulfillment of the promise made to Yosef by his brothers, takes Yosef's remains out of Egypt with the People.

**SDT:** Our Tradition is that the remains of all of the sons of Yaakov were brought out of Egypt. Why was Moshe, from the tribe of Levi, the one who took care of ATZMOT YOSEF? It has been suggested that Moshe was atoning for and effecting a TIKUN for his great-grandfather's role in the Sale of Yosef.

*(Heard from Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld)*

G-d provided an escort for the People in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night.

**[P> 14:1 (14)]** G-d tells Moshe of His plan to lead the People in such a way that Par'o will pursue them in the misguided hope of bringing them back to Egypt.

When Par'o is notified (by spies whom he had sent to accompany the Israelites) of the People's whereabouts, he (with G-d's help in making his heart "heavy", i.e. strong) takes a potent force with him and chases after the People of Israel.

**SDT:** "And G-d did not allow them to go DERECH ERETZ P' LISHTIM. Literally, they did not take the straight route to the territory of the Philistines. One commentator suggests an interesting DRASH based on a play on words. G-d did not take the People out of Egypt in DERECH ERETZ, in the normal, natural way of things, but in a miraculous way. Normally, bread comes from the ground; for the People of Israel, G-d sent them bread from above. Normally, water comes from below; for the People of Israel, G-d provided water from below, from a rock and from the miraculous well that accompanied them on their journey, in the merit of Miriam. Not taking us out in a natural manner, leaves us with no doubt that it was indeed G-d Who took us out of Egypt. This is a crucial foundation stone of Judaism. Not only did we get out of Mitzrayim, but it was G-d Who took us out. Not only did He take us out, but the people

knew and know it well. G-d's opening words at Sinai make the point abundantly clear - ANOCHI...

## Levi - Second Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 14:9-14

The mighty Egyptian army pursues the People. When the People of Israel see them coming, they are greatly frightened because there is no place to flee. They complain to Moshe that it would have been better to have died in Egypt. Moshe reassures the People, encourages them not to fear, promises them that G-d will fight on their behalf, and tells them that Egypt will soon cease to exist.

**SDT:** It seems that Par'o actually thought that he let the People go - that he expelled the People from Egypt. That's even what it seems to say at the beginning of this week's sedra (VAYHI B'SHALACH PAR'O - When Par'o sent the people out...). G-d arranged to have Par'o run after them. Then the events make it crystal clear to him - and to us - that G-d, and only G-d took us out of Egypt. Without this part of the Exodus experience, Par'o and his people - and probably some Jews as well - would think that Par'o had a part in letting us leave Egypt. With the opening statement of the Aseret HaDibrot stating, I am HaShem, your G-d, Who took you out of Mitzrayim... this point is essential. And this was prophesied



together with the Terms of Redemption - specifically, VIDATEM, and you shall know...

## Sh'lishi - Third Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 14:15-25

[P> 14:15 (11)] G-d "asks" Moshe why the People are screaming; let them just move on.

**SDT:** Our Sages teach us that there are times when prayer is called for, and other times when action is the order of the day. G-d says: MA TITZ'AK EILAI, why cry out to Me? MA is spelled MEM-HEI. MEM can represent the 40 days and 40 nights that Moshe was to spend in prayer on behalf of the People following the Sin of the Golden Calf. MEM represents long prayer. HEI can stand for the simple but eloquent 5-word prayer for Miriam's recovery from Tzora'at which she contracted in punishment for speaking disrespectfully of Moshe - KEIL NA R'FA NA LAH. And sometimes, neither short nor long prayer is appropriate. At this point of the Exodus, the order of the day was decisive action. Move it! We must know when to pray and when to act first, and when to do both. (Or at least to give it our best shot.)

G-d tells Moshe to raise his hand over the Sea and split it, so the People will be able to pass through it on dry land. G-d informs Moshe that He will again harden Egypt's heart so that they will

continue their pursuit. The Egyptians will finally know G-d's Might. The guardian angel (pillar of cloud) that was leading the People now was repositioned between the Jews and the Egyptian army, preventing contact.

Moshe raises his hand above the Sea and G-d causes a powerful easterly wind to blow all night, followed by a parting of the waters. The People of Israel enter the Sea on dry land, between walls of water.

Egypt boldly follows, but their arrogant attitude abruptly changes to fear and panic as their chariots lose their wheels and bog down in the seabed. (This is in sharp contrast with the perfectly dry land beneath the feet of Israel.)

Egypt finally (too late) acknowledges G-d, not only now, but retroactively, as the One Who had fought for Israel in Egypt.

**SDT:** Why the strong wind blowing all night? Could not G-d have split the Sea with the proverbial snap of a finger? The answer is: Of course He could. But the night's preparation for the miracles of the day serves several purposes. Egypt is lulled into a false sense of security when something is happening that they can explain. They don't want to accept the idea that the G-d of Israel is performing miracles for His people. No doubt, their wizards (call them meteorologists, this time) explained the desert winds

and the effects it can have. Among the Jews, there are always individuals who would like not to admit to G-d's awesome powers. They too will have their "excuse" in the natural components of the miracle. Perhaps, most importantly, this wind (and the like) allows us to relate to and better appreciate, the miracles themselves. A snap of the finger brings results too quickly for us to think about what is happening. A night to ponder what was going on, further enhanced the appreciation of the Children of Israel for what had happened, was happening, and was to happen - what and when! Mixing the natural with the supernatural will often enhance the miracle by allowing us to relate to it better.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 32 p'sukim - 14:26-15:26

[P> 14:26 (6)] Moshe is now instructed by G-d to raise his hand once more over the Sea so that the waters may return. He does so and the Egyptians drown. The People, however, have succeeded in passing through the Sea and are ecstatic in their salvation. They attain true belief and trust in G-d and in Moshe His servant.

**SDT:** Rambam states that complete, solid, lasting faith in G-d was attained at Sinai. Here we must say that the belief was great, but not yet permanent. One telling hint towards the

tenuousness of belief as a result of "flashy" miracles alone is the word UVMOSHE - they believed in G-d AND IN MOSHE His servant. The only other occurrence of that word UVMOSHE is in Bamidbar after Aharon dies and there was a battle against Emori, the people were disgusted with their wandering and spoke against G-d and Moshe. That's the other extreme of belief - same word occurs at both extremes.

[P> 15:1 (19)] Next comes the Song of the Sea. What makes the Song of the Sea so special is that it is a direct quote of the People of Israel that G-d put into His Torah, verbatim. In other words, the rest of the Torah is written by G-d; we composed this part. It is an inspiring passage that has been incorporated into our daily prayer.

This 19-pasuk parsha is unique in the way it is written in a Sefer Torah. The column that contains the Shira is wider than all the other columns in the Torah. It is a Tradition to start the column with 5 lines belonging to the previous parsha, beginning with the word HABA'IM. Then a line is left blank and then the first line of AZ YASHIR is written all the way across the column. The next line has one word, a blank space, a group of words (from 3-5), another blank space, and then a single word to end the line. Let's call this, line-pattern A. The next line starts with a group of words (2-5), a space, and another group of

words (3-5). We'll call this, line-pattern B. After the first line, the rest of the Shira parsha consists of another 29 lines, alternating patterns A and B, ending with an A. Then a line is skipped. Five more "regular" lines of Torah text finish off the column. The column with the Shira has many blank spaces and two blank lines.

**The following is straight from the Living Torah by Rav Aryeh Kaplan:**

**VAYOSHA HASHEM BAYOM HAHU**

... Thus, on that day, God rescued the Israelites from Egypt. The Israelites saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

The Israelites saw the great power that God had unleashed against Egypt, and the people were in awe of God. They believed in God and in Moshe His servant.

**AZ YASHIR MOSHE UVNEI YISRAEL**

... Moshe and the Israelites then sang this song to God. It went:

I will sing to God for His great victory,  
Horse and rider He threw in the sea.

My strength and song is God And this  
is my deliverance; This is my God, I  
will enshrine Him, My father's God, I  
will exalt Him.

God is the Master of war, God is His  
name.

Pharaoh's chariots and army He cast in  
the sea; His very best officers Were  
drowned in the Red Sea.

The depths covered them; They sank  
to the bottom Like a stone.

Your right Hand, O God Is awesome in  
power; Your right Hand, O God  
crushes the foe.

In Your great Majesty You broke Your  
opponents; You sent forth Your wrath  
It devoured them like straw.

At the blast of Your Nostrils the waters  
towered. Flowing water stood like a  
wall. The depths congealed In the  
heart of the sea.

The enemy said, 'I will give chase; I  
will overtake, divide the spoils I will  
satisfy myself. I will draw my sword;  
My hand will demolish them.'

You made Your wind blow; The sea  
covered them. They sank like lead In  
the mighty waters.

Who is like You among powers, God?  
Who is like You, majestic in holiness,  
Awesome in praise, doing wonders?

You put forth Your right Hand; The  
earth swallowed them.

With love, You led the people You  
redeemed; With might, You led [them]  
to Your holy shrine.

Nations heard and shuddered; Terror  
gripped those who dwell in Philistia.

Edom's chiefs then panicked; Moav's  
heroes were seized with trembling;  
Canaan's residents melted away.

Fear and dread fell upon them. At the  
greatness of Your Arm They are still as

stone. Until Your people crossed, O God, Until the people You gained crossed over.

O bring them and plant them On the mount You possess. The place You dwell in Is Your accomplishment, God. The shrine of God Your Hands have founded.

**God will reign forever and ever.**

[This song was sung] when Pharaoh's horse came into the sea, along with his chariot corps and cavalry, and God made the sea come back on them. The Israelites had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.

**VATIKACH MIRIAM HAN'VI'A...**  
Miriam the prophetess, Aharon's sister, took the drum in her hand, and all the women followed her with drums and dancing.

Miriam led them in the response, 'Sing to God for His great victory, horse and rider He cast in the sea.'

Ed. note: I do not usually put text in the SedraSummary, but The Song of the Sea - SHIRAT HAYAM is special. On that note...

It is the common practice in (Ashkenazic) shuls for the congregation to stand for the reading of Shirat HaYam. This custom does NOT have the objections that some authorities have concerning the standing for the ASERET HADIBROT. (A discussion on that will probably be in next week's PhiloTorah.) In fact, the standing for

AZ YASHIR is motivated by an excitement and enthusiasm, as we re-experience the events of the Exodus. Standing for ASERET HADIBROT has its objections; not so for AZ YASHIR (or the last pasuk (CHAZAK) of each Book of the Torah).

[P> 15:20 (2)] Following the Shira portion (or concluding the Shira) is a 2-pasuk parsha describing Miriam's rallying of the women to join in the Shira in their own way.

[S> 15:22 (5)] The People continue their journey and fail to find water for three days. When they do find some, they complain bitterly (pun intended) of the inability to drink it. G-d directs Moshe to perform a miracle by throwing a special piece of wood into the water whereby the water becomes sweet.

**SDT:** Aside from the literal meaning of the text, this episode is considered an allusion to the primacy of Torah in the life of a Jew. Both Torah and water sustain life - spiritual and physical. In the same vein, "3 days without water" hints at and inspires the practice of our reading from the Torah on Monday and Thursday, as well as on Shabbat, so that in our wandering in the spiritual desert of life, we will not go 3 days without spiritual water. This is but one "use" of the analogy between Torah and water. This idea is not just a matter of DRASH. The parsha's last pasuk tells



that if we will harken to G-d's Voice and follow the Torah, keep the mitzvot... then all the ills that befell Egypt will not be put upon us... Water & Torah, Water is Torah point to the partnership of Body & Soul which defines us as human beings and especially as Jews.

## Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 15:27-16:10

[S> 15:27 (4)] The People next travel to Eilim and from there to Midbar Tsin, en route to Sinai. This time, they complain about the lack of food.

[S> 16:4 (7)] G-d tells Moshe about the manna (MAHN) which He will soon provide for the People. Moshe tells the People that they will soon see how G-d hears and listens to their complaints. MAHN is not just the food that sustains the people, it is also a crucial test of the faith that the people should have in G-d. (We find Moshe reiterating this aspect of the MAHN in Parshat Eikev.) The MAHN was to fall daily except for Shabbat, and was not allowed to be left over night (except for what fell on Friday). This facilitated a constant strengthening of our faith in G-d - the need to "trust" Him every single day.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 16:11-36

[P> 16:11 (17)] The account of the MAHN continues... Quail miraculously appear in the evening, and the people

eat "meat". On the next morning, the MAHN - protected by a layer of dew above and below it - appears. The People are fascinated by it and when they question Moshe, he explains the rules and procedures set down by G-d. Nonetheless, there were some who left over MAHN from one day to the next, and this angered Moshe. And, despite being told that the MAHN will NOT fall on Shabbat, there were individuals who went out to search for it.

[S> 16:28 (9)] G-d "takes note" of this display of lack of faith and "asks" how long we will continue to refuse to keep His commands.

The parsha of the MAHN is our first real introduction to Shabbat. This is the meaning of the line in DAYEINU, Had You given us the Shabbat and not brought us near Har Sinai, DAYEINU, there would be sufficient reason to thank You... Although Shabbat is an integral part of Revelation at Sinai (commandment #4), it actually predates Matan Torah.

From the episode of the MAHN we learn the important lesson that Shabbat is honored by being prepared for. It is not just a corollary of the prohibitions of Shabbat that we prepare our food in advance; it is an essential feature of Shabbat and the role of the days of the week.

Included in the instructions about the MAHN is the command not to "leave our PLACE on the seventh day (to

collect the MAHN)". This was not just a rule for that generation; it is a mitzva among the 613 - the mitzva of T'chum Shabbat [24, L321 16:29].

Briefly, the point of T'CHUM is not about how far we may walk on Shabbat. It is about how far AWAY FROM HOME we may go. This is obvious from the halachic details of T'CHUM. The weekdays are for going. Shabbat is for staying put (as defined by halacha) and being able to "relax", to ponder G-d's Creation and Mastery over all.

A sample of MAHN was stored as a remembrance for future generations.

## MITZVAnotes

It is important to understand that the prohibition of T'CHUM, be it from the Torah or from the Sages, was not meant to put a limit on physical exertion or the distance a person may walk on Shabbat. A person who lives in a house in yemsvelt which is located on a small plot of land with a fence around it, is restricted to a distance of about a kilometer outside his fence, in any direction. Another person who lives in a big city can walk from one end to the other - from Gilo to Ramot and back again (or Washington Heights to the Bowery) - miles and miles - and not have a problem of T'CHUM at all. And even the first guy with the house near no

others, can walk around and around his property all Shabbat long. As long as he does not go outside his T'CHUM, he's okay. (Not really, because he has to figure out why he spends all Shabbat walking in circles around his house, rather than learning Torah, taking a nap, and spending quality time with his family.) The topics of T'CHUM and EIRUV are complex. This only touched on a few points.

Rambam holds that T'chum is a Torah prohibition, but only if one exceeds 24,000 amot (approx. 12 km.). The Sages reduced the limit to only 2000 amot. Ramban says that T'chum Shabbat is totally d'Rabanan - a prohibition from the Sages. Both, therefore, agree that the Rabbinic prohibition is not to exceed 2000 amot.

## Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 17:1-16

[P> 17:1 (7)] The People journey to R'fidim and again complain about the lack of water. (It is not the complaint itself that "angers" G-d - it is the apparent lack of faith and the doubt in the value of the Exodus that casts a negative light on the People.) In response, G-d tells Moshe to gather the Elders and People and strike a rock in their presence with his miraculous staff. The result is water for the People.

[P> 17:8 (6)] The final nine p'sukim,

which is also the Torah reading of Purim morning (and the Maftir for Shabbat Purim in Yerushalayim this year), tell of Amalek's attack on the fledgling nation of Israel. It is the archetypical fight against those who would seek to destroy us. This battle repeats itself differently throughout Jewish History.

**[P> 17:14 (3)]** G-d tells Moshe to write down and tell Yehoshua that I (G-d) will wipe out the memory of Amalek... This is not just Israel's battle, but G-d's as well.

**SDT:** It is significant to take a look at the pasuk that immediately precedes the portion of the attack by Amalek -

"He named the place Masa u'Meriva [testing and quarreling] because of the quarrel of the children of Israel and because of their testing G-d, saying, Is G-d in our midst or not? (Sh'mot 17:7)

It could be that the questioning as to whether HaShem is in our midst makes us vulnerable to attacks from the Amaleks of the world.

Differently, but essentially the same (I know that it sounds contradictory), is Parshat Zachor at the end of Parshat Ki Teitzei. There, the previous topic right before Amalek, is the possession of false weights and measures. It is consider an abomination before G-d, and non-halachic business practices can be seen as opening the way to Amalek to attack

us. Between the Jew and G-d in B'shalach; between the Jew and his fellow Jew, in Ki Teitzei.

## Haftara - 52 p'sukim - Sho-f'tim 4:4-5:31

In the time of the Judges, Bnei Yisrael found themselves cruelly oppressed. In the sedra it was Par'o; in the haftara it is Yavin and his general, Sisra. D'vora enlists Barak to lead an army against them. With the success of the battle, D'vora sang a song of praise and thanks to G-d, similar in nature to that of Moshe and Bnei Yisrael in the parsha. So too, the People's faith in G-d had similar "ups and downs" to those in the sedra. D'vora was key to restoring a high level of faith in G-d among the People and in leading the People to great victories.

Both Shirat HaYam and Shirat D'vora are written in the same unusual style.

*S'faradim read just the Song of D'vora as the haftara of B'shalach. Ashkenazim start earlier and include in the reading the story of Sisra's temporary escape from Barak and his army, only to find his demise at the hand (and tent peg) of Yael, wife of Chever HaKeini.*

# Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara  
by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

*Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

## EIN B'REIRA

**B'SHALACH (SHIRA) - 52 p'sukim  
- Sho-f'tim 4:4-5:31**

The Torah's story of Kri'at Yam Suf and Sefer Shof'tim's saga of Israel's battle against Yavin, the Canaanite King, share numerous details - which explains why Chazal chose the latter story from to be read as the haftara for Parashat B'Shalach - Shabbat Shira. We have discussed these similarities (many of which are found in Masechet P'sachim 118b), in past articles, but I take this opportunity to review some of them.

Consider:

- Both encounters took place at a body of water (Yam Suf; Nachal Kishon)
- Both clashes pitted a weakened Israel forced to face a far stronger military
- Both enemies boasted in their massive chariot forces (600; 900)
- Both fell in war when their chariot "brigades" were made ineffective, having being trapped in the marsh and mud of the sea/river.

- Both victories were celebrated by songs of praise to Hashem
- Both praises were led by prophetesses (Miriam, [who led the women]; Devora)

Despite the numerous similarities of the two events there is, I believe, an essential distinction between the two experiences. The distinction, however, cannot be appreciated without first studying the history of Israel's relationship with their neighbors - a history recorded in the earlier p'rakim and elucidated by Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch.

Rav Hirsch reviews the earlier years and points to the p'sukim in the third perek [5-7] that relate how B'nei Yisra'el had been ignoring the Torah's decree not to assimilate with the idolatrous nations around them. Yet, the text describes how Israel intermingled with the surrounding nations, intermarried with them, and, as the Torah predicted, abandoned their commitment to the One G-d. Hashem punished their unfaithful behavior by letting them fall into the hands of these neighboring nations, with the hope that such subjugation would awaken Israel to return. But it did not. Nonetheless, despite their wayward ways, Hashem responded to His nation's cries and saved Israel from each enemy. But their regret after the years of misery was but



fleeing for, despite the reprieve offered to them by G-d, they continued in their sinful ways.

But the arrival of the Northern Canaanite tribe under the harsh reign of Yavin, brought twenty years of suffering for Israel who, once again, cried out to G-d. This time, Hashem responded through His prophetess, Devora. And so, begins our haftara.

Past history makes it clear that Israel's past pleas for relief did not lead the nation to genuine repentance. But under the leadership and inspiration of Devora, there was a change. The suffering under Yavin and Sisera (his general), was far more difficult than those of the past. Pointing to Devora's words in her SHIRA (5:8), Rav Hirsch reminds us that, throughout the 20 years of Canaanite control, all of Israel's weaponry was confiscated, leaving Israel with "neither spear or shield". The situation was beyond difficult. It was, seemingly, impossible. In effect, Israel faced the decision of EIN B'REIRA, they had no choice - much as the Israelites felt at Yam Suf.

But there was a difference.

The Israelites escaping the Egyptian army had no choice but to rely on the G-d they hardly knew. They saw their "savior" - primarily - as being Moshe. The miracle at the Red Sea was wrought so that the nation would discover G-d.

At Nachal Kishon, the nation of Israel knew well who Hashem was and what He could do. But they also recognized that they had turned away from G-d far too often in the past. Their pleas and prayers then, were not meant to discover a G-d they did not know... but to return to THE ONE, the ONLY ONE, who could help them.

When we are faced with a situation that gives us no choice, EIN B'REIRA, [chas v'shalom] our tefillot must direct us to remember, repent and return to the ONLY ONE, who can - and who will - help us! ★



**ParshaPix**  
**explanations**



*The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests*

**BO**

<> and two Unexplaineds

His Q here; the A in Va'etchanan

The CHACHAM's question at the Seder is in Parshat Bo; the answer is from Va'etchanan.

**male tapla**

Sorry for the typo. It should be talpa, which is a mole (the animal) in Italian. So the male is a HE-MOLE, as in the command to the Ger to HIMOL all males in his house and then he can bring and eat Korban Pesach.

# B'SHALACH-SHIRA



Pillar of Cloud by day <> Pillar of Fire by night <> Davka Judaica Clipart scene of the splitting of the sea <> Tambourine is TOF MIRIAM <> blown out tire represents the wheels of the Egyptian chariots that fell off and caused the chariots to become bogged down in the sea bed <> water coming from a rock that Moshe struck with the Staff <> Bird is a quail, as in quail - S'LAV, that preceded the manna <> Two challot on a board and covered is/are LECHEM MISHNEH, which commemorates the double portion of manna that fell on Friday, protected by layers of dew. This also represents the first presentation of

Shabbat (which is in B'shalach) to the soon-to-be nation of Israel <> Worm ate the leftover manna - there should not have been any leftovers (the worm is smiling, happy to do G-d's bidding) <> Three facets of the battle against Amalek: Moshe's upraised hands, Yehoshua's sword (it's an Egyptian sword), and the quill, ink, and parchment with which the account of the battle was written down <> The musical bee is for Shirat D'vora (haftara) <> Lightning-bolt = BARAK <> Milk that Yael gave to Sisra <> tent peg with which she killed him when he fell asleep <> Piece of a brick wall represents the brick pattern of words in the Torah for AZ YASHIR <> Upside-down heart refers to the phrase VAYEIHAFEICH L'VAV ... Par'o had a change of heart... <> Stop sign with the word Shabbat is found at the limit of T'chum Shabbat (only mitzva Rambam & Chinuch count from B'shalach) <> lead fishing sinker for the description in the Song of the Sea, referring to some of the Egyptians, "sank as lead in the (mighty) waters" <> toy soldier armed with a bazooka, with four pale shadows of the same figure of the soldier. Together, they represent the description of the Jews coming out of Egypt, CHAMUSHIM, which, according to Rashi's main explanation means "armed" (bazooka) and Rashi adds DAVAR ACHEIR, another thing, the fraction of the people that

actually left Egypt (CHOMESH, a fifth) <> Shofar with a C coming out of it represents the 100 (C=100 in Roman numerals) blasts we traditionally blow on Rosh HaShana. That number is connected to the lament of Sisra's mother in the haftara <> grogger for the Amalek parsha read on Purim morning <> Characters from the Wizard of Oz singing - OZ YASHIR <> T-pole, as in TIPOL ALEIHEM EIMATA VAFACHAD... <> Macabi logo for MI CHAMOCHA... <> Baked tofu, the people were told that which TOFU... which you bake... <> The seeds are coriander, which some commentaries say is ZERA GAD, as the manna is described <> the flower is a POPPY. In Yiddish, mahn, with the obvious connection to the manna <> The both direction arrows in quotes is something that is said forwards and backwards. The Moon was the clue to Kiddush L'vana, in which we say Shalom Aleichem and Aleichem Shalom. &? means and what else do we say forwards and backwards in KL? The answer is a partial pasuk from the Shira - TIPOL ALEIHEM EIMATA VAFACHAD... and KA'AVEN YID'MU... <> 10.5mm diameter, 44.5mm long are the dimensions of an AA battery (double A). 13.5 and 49.2 are the dimensions of an AAA (triple A battery). Together they combine to AAAAA, which stand for ALEF-ALEF-ALEF-ALEF-ALEF, which refers to the 5 words that each start with an ALEF

in Shirat HaYam - AMAR OYEIV ERDOF ASIG ACHALEIK (you can ask your Shabbat table partners - where are there 6 ALEF words in a row in the Torah?) <> The 11th enough. DAYEINU - even if You did this and not that, there would be ENOUGH to thank you for. The 11th DAYEINU - had you given us the Shabbat but not brought us to Har Sinai, DAYEINU. That's what happens in B'shalach. HaShem gave us the Shabbat as part of Parshat HaMan... and we didn't get to Har Sinai until Parshat Yitro <> Twice in the sedra; its heteronym once in B'reishit; another heteronym 54 times - where? The word HaMan, the manna, occurs twice in B'shalach. Heteronym are two words spelled the same and pronounced differently. G-d asked Adam - HAMIN HA-EITZ... Did you eat from the tree... And the name HAMAN occurs 54 times in Megilat Esther <> Tom of Tom & Jerry fame, has an A on his chest, making him a representation of the place called EITAM. In Parshat Bo, the Torah tells us that Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim from Ra-m'seis and traveled to Sukkot. In the beginning of B'shalach, we are told that they traveled from Sukkot and they camped in EITAM at the edge of the Midbar <> One Unexplained

לע"נ

הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

## To be a Leader of the Jewish People

### B'SHALACH

"That day, the Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians. And when the Israelites ... witnessed the wondrous power the Lord had unleashed against the Egyptians, the people were in awe of the Lord, and they believed in Him and in Moshe, His servant. And then Moshe and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord..." (Sh'mot 14:30-15:1)

The Song at the Sea was one of the great moments of clarity of history. The Sages said that even the humblest of Jews saw at that moment what even the greatest of prophets was not privileged to see. For the first time they broke into collective song - AZ YASHIR - a song we recite every day.

There is a fascinating discussion among the Sages as to how exactly they sang. On this, there were four opinions. Three appear in the tractate of Sota (30b):

Rabi Akiva expounded: When the Israelites came up from the Red Sea, they wanted to sing a song. How did

they sing it? Like an adult who reads the Hallel and they respond after him with the leading word. Moshe said, "I will sing to the Lord", and they responded, "I will sing to the Lord." Moshe said, "For He has triumphed gloriously", and they responded, "I will sing to the Lord."

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

Rabi Nechemiya said: It was like a schoolteacher who recites the Sh'ma in the synagogue. He begins first and they follow along with him.

According to Rabi Akiva, Moshe sang the song phrase by phrase, and after each phrase the people responded, I will sing to the Lord - their way, as it were, of saying Amein to each line. According to R. Eliezer son of R. Yosi the Galilean, Moshe recited the song phrase by phrase, and they repeated each phrase after he had said it. According to Rabi Nechemiya, Moshe and the people sang the whole song together. Rashi explains that all the people were seized by Divine inspiration and miraculously, the same words came into their minds at the same time.



There is a fourth view, found in the Mechilta:

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

Technically, as the Talmud explains, the Sages are debating the implication of the (apparently) superfluous words VAYOMRU LEIMOR, "they said, saying", which they understood to mean "repeating". What did the Israelites repeat? For Rabi Akiva it was the first words of the song only, which they repeated as a litany. For Rabi Eliezer, son of R' Yosi the Galilean, they repeated the whole song, phrase by phrase. For R'

Nechemiya they recited the entire song in unison. For Rabi Eliezer ben Taddai they repeated the opening phrase of each line, but then completed the whole verse without Moshe having to teach it to them. Read thus, we have before us a localised debate on the meaning of a biblical verse.

There is, however, a deeper issue at stake. To understand this, we must look at another Talmudic passage, on the face of it unrelated to the passage in Sota. It appears in the tractate of Kiddushin (32a-b), and poses a fascinating question. There are various people we are commanded to honour: a parent, a teacher (i.e. a rabbi), the nasi, (religious head of the Jewish community), and a king. May any of these four types renounce the honour that is their due?

Rabi Yitzchak ben Shila said in the name of Rabi Mattena, in the name of Rabi Chisda: If a father renounces the honour due to him, it is renounced, but if a rabbi renounces the honour due to him it is not renounced. Rabi Yosef ruled: Even if a rabbi renounces his honour, it is renounced... Rabi Ashi said: Even on the view that a rabbi may renounce his honour, if a nasi renounces his honour, the renunciation is invalid... Rather, it was stated thus: Even on the view that a nasi may renounce his honour, yet a

king may not renounce his honour, as it is said, "You shall surely set a king over you", meaning, his authority should be over you.

Each of these people exercises a leadership role: father to son, teacher to disciple, nasi to the community and king to the nation. Analysed in depth, the passages make it clear that these four roles occupy different places on the spectrum between authority predicated on the person and authority vested in the holder of an office. The more the relationship is personal, the more easily honour can be renounced. At one extreme is the role of a parent (intensely personal), at the other that of king (wholly official).

I suggest that this was the issue at stake in the argument over how Moshe and the Israelites sang the Song at the Sea. For Rabi Akiva, Moshe was like a king. He spoke, and the people merely answered "Amein" (in this case, the words "I will sing to the Lord"). For Rabi Eliezer, son of Rabi Yosi the Galilean, he was like a teacher. Moshe spoke, and the Israelites repeated, phrase by phrase, what he had said. For Rabi Nechemiya, he was like a nasi among his rabbinical colleagues (the passage in Kiddushin, which holds that a nasi may renounce his honour, makes it clear that this is only among his fellow rabbis). The relationship was collegial: Moshe began, but there-

after, they sang in unison. For Rabi Eliezer ben Taddai, Moshe was like a father. He began, but allowed the Israelites to complete each verse.

This is the great truth about parenthood, made clear in the first glimpse we have of Avraham: Terach took his son Avram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of Avram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. (B'reishit 31:11)

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

The prelude to the Song at the Sea states that the people "believed in God, and in His servant Moshe" - the first time they are described as believing in Moshe's leadership. On this, the Sages asked: What is it to be a leader of the Jewish people? Is it to hold official authority, of which the supreme example is a king? ("The rabbis are called kings.") Is it to have the kind of personal relationship with one's followers that rests not on honour and deference but on encouraging people to grow, accept responsibility and continue the journey you have begun? Or is it something in between? There is no single answer.

At times, Moshe asserted his authority (during the Korach rebellion). At others, he expressed the wish that "all God's people were prophets." Judaism is a complex faith. There is no one Torah model of leadership. We are each called on to fulfil a number of leadership roles: as parents, teachers, friends, team-members, and team-leaders.

There is no doubt, however, that Judaism favours as an ideal the role of parent, encouraging those we lead to continue the journey we have begun, and go further than we did. A good leader creates followers. A great leader creates leaders. That was Moshe's greatest achievement - that he left behind him a people willing, in each generation, to accept responsibility for taking further the great task he had begun.

### Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) Which kind of leader is Moshe depicted as in the Song at the Sea? Explain.
- (2) How does bestowing responsibility onto others allow them to grow?
- (3) How does Moshe's leadership in the Song at the Sea compare with leaders like Avraham, Yosef, or Yehoshua?

## Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

## Message from the Haftara

*Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander*

*President and Rosh HaYeshiva*

*Ohr Torah Stone Institutions*

## Women as Halachic Leaders, Then and Now

### B'SHALACH

The haftara for Parshat B'shalach begins with a striking description: "And Devora, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidot, was judging Israel at that time" (Sho-f'tim 4:4). For contemporary readers, this verse resonates powerfully. It presents a woman serving in a leadership position of spiritual, legal, and communal authority. At the same time, the verse raises a tension: how does Devora's role align with established halachic, Jewish legal, categories regarding testimony, adjudication and rabbinic authority? Can women like Devora truly function as POSKOT HALACHA, those who answer halachic questions, in a manner comparable to male rabbinic authorities?

This question is especially relevant today amid the increase in women who are indeed experts in Jewish law yet are still banned by Israel's Chief Rabbinate from taking halachic exams.

However, the issue is far from new; it

has occupied the attention of leading Torah scholars for centuries. The Tosafot, 12–14th cent. commentaries on the Talmud, raise the issue of Devora when addressing the legal principle - “all those fit to adjudicate are fit to testify.” Although the prophetess seems from our haftara to have served as a judge, according to the principles outlined in the Talmud; if she could not have been fit to testify in a beit din, a religious court, how can she judge religious matters and questions? How can her role be understood in terms of Jewish law?

In their commentaries on Tractate Nida (50a), Tosafot explain that Devora did not function as a judge in practice. Rather, she served as the Torah authority who taught the judges, certified them, and was involved in shaping judicial processes without occupying a formal judicial seat. At the same time, she actively engaged the broader Jewish community in the study, observance of Torah and answering their Jewish legal questions.

This explanation is echoed and expanded upon by later authorities. The Sefer HaChinuch (13th c.) writes that a woman who is accepted by the Jewish community as a Torah scholar may answer halachic questions. Once her expertise is widely recognized, no additional credentials are required for her rulings to carry binding authority.

Similarly, the Pitchei Teshuva – Rabbi Avraham Hirsch Eisenstadt of Bialystok (19th c.) – writes in Choshen Mishpat (7:4) that while a woman cannot serve as a judge, she may rule on halachic matters if she possesses the requisite knowledge and the community recognizes her scholarship. Once again, the prophetess Devora provides the central proof.

In the modern era, this position was articulated with particular clarity by Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, the S'fardic Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1993 to 2003. In his responsum Binyan Av (vol. 1, no. 65), he ruled that a woman may function as a Torah leader, even as one of the gedolei hador (great leaders of the generation), because such stature depends solely upon the scholarly and moral capacity of the Torah authority. Halachic leadership, he argued, is earned through knowledge, integrity and service to the community.

In our generation, we are privileged to encounter women whose learning, commitment and spiritual leadership reflect this tradition. Accordingly, a learned woman may serve the Jewish people by answering halachic questions and issuing rulings, provided her authority is also grounded in communal trust.

This aspect of the haftara has lasting ramifications on our present reality, as the Chief Rabbinate of the State of



Israel, continues to bar women from taking its halachic qualification exams. Certification through these exams is required for many official roles in government institutions, such as chaplains in hospitals and prisons, for which women have been deemed ineligible.

The consequences are not merely theoretical. It is deeply troubling that there are no female chaplains even in Israeli women's prisons, despite the existence of learned, capable and motivated women who could provide inmates with care and guidance.


In the IDF, where women are increasingly serving across nearly every corps, this glass ceiling has only been partially broken. Some women have recently begun to perform as spiritual guides or mentors, but only through intricate legal and bureaucratic work-arounds, as the Rabbinate continues to deny them access to the qualifying examinations.

These "rabbinical exams" are a required credential for filling any number of government and civil service positions that halacha itself does not reserve exclusively for rabbis. To prohibit women from taking them on the grounds that doing so would be tantamount to recognizing women as rabbis is unfair to these Torah scholars and, even more importantly, unfair to the greater Jewish community.

Israel's Supreme Court recently ruled that because women have the ability to serve as poskot halacha, excluding them from the examinations constitutes unjustified discrimination. In spite of this, the Rabbinate has responded by cancelling exam dates, leaving the entire examination process effectively in limbo for now – for deserving women as well as men.

Women must be given the opportunity to take the Chief Rabbinate's exams. This is not a call to blur halachic boundaries or assign prohibited roles. Rather, it is a call to honor Jewish law as it has been articulated by our authorities across generations.

As the opening verse of our haftara teaches, Devora, a woman of profound Torah knowledge, served as a spiritual guide, role model and halachic decisor for the Jewish people.

Today, we are blessed with many such Devoras: learned, pious, and courageous women capable of spiritual and halachic leadership. Enabling them to serve fully is not an act of concession, but an act of fidelity to the Torah, to halacha, and to the needs of the entire world Jewish community. 



**PhiloTorah D'var Torah**

## **The Nature of Miracles; the Miracles of Nature**

*I heard the words of the title a long time ago from Rabbi Natan Lopes-Cardozo. Loved the wording - love the idea. Thank you, Rabbi Cardozo.*

Parshat B'shalach contains the account of, perhaps, the greatest miracle ever to occur for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael. Our Tradition is that the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea was known, not only to our Nation, but to all nations of the world.

It was a supernatural miracle which demonstrated G-d's power in this world to reverse and overturn nature - the nature that He created.

And even if you want to believe that the sea could have split as part of nature - as some people prefer to accept - then the exquisite and perfect timing of the event at the Sea is in itself miraculous.

And the sedra has other miracles as well:

A tree (or wood) that can turn bitter, undrinkable water, into sweet drinkable water.

Quail that came in such large quantities that 2-3 million people

were able to "eat meat".

Miraculous "bread for the Heavens" that fell daily - except for Shabbat to feed the Nation and sustain it for almost 40 years in the Midbar.

Water that miraculously poured forth from a rock that G-d had instructed Moshe to strike.

Very impressive miracles. And, of course, B'shalach isn't the only sedra that tells us of supernatural miracles.

Specifically, the Splitting of the Sea and the return of the waters to drown the Egyptians led to Bnei Yisrael to revere HaShem and to believe in HaShem and in Moshe His servant.

But we need to take miracles to a further level. We need to realize and appreciate the miracles of G-d's creation that we call "nature".

Remember the sea that split? Well, what about it when it doesn't split. Like all the time except for the rare or one-time that it did split?

The seas of the world are pretty amazing and impressive. The teeming life they contain. The minerals they contain. The ships that sail on them. Their waves and tides. The salty undrinkable water that can be desalinated and made suitable for drinking - or, at least, irrigation. The water of the seas of the world that evaporate, form clouds, are blown by the wind, and deliver rain.

MA RABU MAASECHA HASHEM...  
How great are Your works, HaShem!  
You have made them all with wisdom;  
the earth is full of Your possessions!  
(T'hilim 104:24).

and - KI SIMACHTANI HASHEM...  
MA GADLU MAASECHA HASHEM...  
For You, HaShem, has made me  
rejoice through Your work: I will exult  
in the works of Your hands. How  
great are Your works, HaShem: Your  
thoughts are very deep. (92:5-6)

Supernatural miracles capture our  
attention. But that awareness should  
not be restricted to the specific  
miracle itself. we should let the  
miracle be the trigger to our  
reflection, study, and awareness of  
countless other miracles - the ones  
that people tend to take for granted.

Note also in the sedra is the descrip-  
tion of the 12 springs and 70 date  
palms that the people enjoyed when  
they camped at EILIM. Just as  
amazing as the splitting of the sea,  
the fact that in a desert or wilderness  
there are oases.

Miracle. Nature. The only difference  
between them is their frequency. By  
all means, be impressed with the  
account of miracles. And the experi-  
ence of miracles. But don't take the  
miracles of this world - the day-to-  
day ones - for granted.

TU BiShvat - which is always around  
Shabbat Shira time, underlines the

attention we should be paying to  
nature.

Which reminds me of a quote from  
Anton Chekhov's short story, The Bet  
(The Wager). In the protagonist's final  
words of his rejection a what  
humanity has become, he writes:

You would marvel if suddenly apple  
and orange trees should bear frogs  
and lizards... (but do not see the  
wonder and miracle of trees bearing  
fruit).

Yes, we have brachot for the WOW  
kinds of miracles, but don't forget the  
brachot we have for everyday  
wonders and miracles of nature:

Borei Pri Ha'eitz, Pokei'ach Ivrim,  
Oseh Maasei V'reishit... and so many  
more.

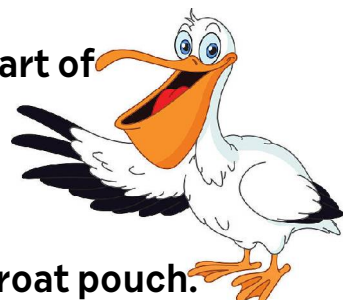
Let AZ YASHIR trigger in you the  
appreciation and gratitude for ALL of  
G-d's miracles - the open ones and  
the ones we tend to take for granted.

**PTDT**



SAK-NAI is Hebrew for PELICAN.

Notice the first part of  
the word is SAK,  
as in sack,  
referring to the  
pelican's large throat pouch.



# *Walk through the Parsha*

with **Rabbi David Walk**



**B'SHALACH-SHIRA**

## **Sing a Song!**

It's our practice to recite the Sing of the Sea every day. Why? There is no explicit Biblical demand to do so, as there is with SH'MA? The answer lies in the powerful sources which tell us that the reward for this practice is very great.

The Mishna B'rura (51:17) lists a number of extraordinary benefits granted to one who recites Shirat HaYam daily with great joy: one's sins are forgiven, it serves as a great tikun for the soul, and one merits to sing it again in the World to Come..

But why is this poetic description of the Jews' crossing so significant? One possibility is the sheer enormity of that miracle at the Sea. The WOW factor. After all, every Pesach at our Seder we read in the Hagada that the splitting of the Sea was many times greater than all of the Ten Plagues combined, because the Plagues were called the 'Finger of God', while the Splitting of the Sea was called the 'Hand of God'.

So Rebbe Akiva concludes: Thus one can deduce that the Egyptians suffered fifty plagues in Egypt but

250 plagues at the Sea. It must have been awesome!

But this year I'd like to suggest another approach to this query about our poem describing this wonder. It's not the enormity of the miracle; it's the enormity of its message!

This poem is remarkable. It is very textured, and complex. Its richness allows us to experience it differently depending on our perspective and even on the day we encounter it.

When we examine the poem we see that it falls into a number of sections. The first eight verses are a first person description of this awesome miraculous event ('My strength', 'My God', 'I will exalt'). Verses 9 and 10 describe the point of view of the Egyptians ('The foe said...'). Then we, again, praise God, Who is 'incomparable'. So, verses 11, 12, and 13 are our national take on this particular miracle and on the general power of God.

In verse 14, we turn our attention to the future. First, the near-term future: People will hear and tremble. For three verses, we discuss the universal repercussions of this immense occurrence: Nations will be petrified of the Jews. This fear persisted until the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael, forty years later. As Rachav told the two spies sent by Yehoshua: We have heard how God



dried up the waters of the Yam Suf for you when you left Egypt (Yehoshua 2:10).

However, in verse 17, we turn back to the Jewish people and their destiny: You will bring them and plant them in Your own Mountain; The place You made to dwell in, O Lord; The Sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands established!

What time frame does this statement describe? There are those who explain this declaration as a description of the building of the Temple in the time of Shlomo, a few centuries from the Crossing. In this scenario, the 'bringing' and 'planting' refer to the two miraculous crossings our ancestors experienced, the Yam Suf and the Jordan River (Maharal MiPrague in Gevurot Hashem).

That's the minority position. Most authorities focus on the implication of God's 'hands' at the end of the verse. Many of them follow the Talmudic statement (Ketuvot 5a): Greater are the deeds of the righteous than the works of heaven and earth. For heaven and earth were created with one hand (Yeshayahu 48:13). But regarding the works of the righteous, it is written (here): The Sanctuary of the Lord, Your hands established it.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains that God uses two hands to

establish the Beit HaMikdash. This is because the Temple is built with both God's power and God's love; power in the left hand and love in the right hand.

Most importantly, we're discussing a Beit HaMikdash built by God. The first Temple was built by Shlomo HaMelech; the second by Ezra HaSofer. So, what Beit HaMikdash are we discussing here? Clearly, we must be discussing the Third Temple, May it be built and established speedily in our days.


As Reb Moshe Alshich explains: The Third Temple, for which our soul yearns will not be like the First and Second, which were the work of human hands. Rather, it will be the work of God. Concerning it Ya'akov said, "This is none other than the house of God" ... Thus it is said that through the Holy Spirit, in which they saw that it was possible for events to cause Israel to be exiled from His Land. Therefore Moshe and Israel entreated Him, and said: Behold, what we ask of You is that "You will bring them..." It is then that the Temple will not be built by human hands, but rather be "Your dwelling place, which Hashem has made" - namely, the Third Temple. Through it we hope to merit that we will no longer be exiled from our Land.

We allude to this future reality in our Shabbat Musaf prayer when we

declare: V'TITA'EINU BIGVULEINU!  
(And You will plant us within our boundaries). The Vilna Gaon explains that this declaration paraphrases our verse, and refers to the Third Temple.

Thus, the Song of the Sea concludes with its gaze firmly fixed on a distant future - on the culmination of history and the arrival of a more holy and peaceful era. This idea echoes an insight of Rav Amnon Bazak, who notes that the poem contains two central themes: the victory over the enemy and the revelation of God's infinite power.

It is this second idea, God's power, which truly interests us. The infinite power witnessed at the Sea made us aware of the ultimate goal of our Torah and Mitzvot: bringing about a better world! That vision will be fulfilled in the miraculous appearance of the Third Temple!

So, it is the power of this verse, describing the eventual and complete Redemption in the time of the third Beit HaMikdash, which gives us the strength and belief to finally raise our voices and cry out the final declaration (verse 18) of our Song and of our faith: HASHEM YIMLOCH L'OLAM VA'ED! The Eternal will rule for ever and ever! 

## Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison  
[www.ravkooktorah.com](http://www.ravkooktorah.com)

## Two Levels of Love

When the Israelites saw that they had been rescued from Pharaoh's army at the sea, they sang out with gratitude:

ZEH KEILI V'ANVEIHU...

"This is my God, and I will enshrine Him; My father's God, I will exalt Him" (Sh'mot 15:2).

Is the repetition in this line from Shirat HaYam – the "Song at the Sea" - merely poetic? Or is there a deeper significance to the two halves of the verse?

Although not apparent in translation, the verse uses two different names of God. The first half of the verse uses the name KEIL (ALEF-LAMED), while the second half uses ELOKIM. What is the significance of each name? How do they specifically relate to the desire to "enshrine" and "exalt" God?

### Natural and Contemplative Love

The song, Rav Kook explained, refers to two types of love for God. The first is a natural appreciation for God as our Creator and Provider. God, the Source of all life, sustains us every moment of our lives. All things are inherently drawn to their source, and this love for God comes naturally, like

our innate feelings of love and respect for our parents.

This natural love of God corresponds to the Divine name KEIL. The word KEIL is in the singular, reflecting an appreciation for God as the only true power and the ultimate reality of the universe.

A second, higher form of love for God is acquired by reflecting on God's rule of the universe. As we uncover God's guiding hand in history, and we recognize the underlying Divine providence in the world, we experience a higher love of God. This love corresponds to the name ELOKIM – in the plural – referring to the myriad causes and forces that God utilizes to govern the universe.

### **Enshrine and Exalt**

These two types of love differ in their constancy. Our natural love of God as our Creator should be constant and unwavering, like our love and respect for our parents. But the higher love, the product of contemplation and introspection, is nearly impossible to sustain continually due to life's distractions.

Regarding the innate love of God, the verse speaks of “enshrining” God. With this natural emotion, we can create a permanent place – a shrine of reverence and love for God – in our hearts. “This is my God, and I will enshrine Him.”

The higher, contemplative love, on the other hand, does not benefit from this level of constancy. We should always strive for an ever-deeper appreciation and reverence for God. This is a spiritual goal, attained through our intellectual faculties. Regarding this aspect of love, it is appropriate to speak about “exalting” God. This indicates a love that is the product of concentrated effort. “My father's God, I will exalt Him.”

*Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 235*

## **Rav Kook on T'hilim**

*from an unpublished work  
by Rabbi Chanan Morrison*

### **Tearless Cries**

#### **The Tachanun prayer**

This psalm - T'hilim 6, that keenly articulating the author's pain and anguish over his shortcomings, is well known as it is included in the daily prayers. It even has a special name – Tachanun (Petition) – and is recited immediately following the Amida prayer (on days when Tachanun is said).

According to the Ashkenazi rite. The S'fardi tradition is to recite Psalm 25.

When we recite the Amida, we

reconnect with our true goals and aspirations. But after this uplifting prayer, we return to reality and come to terms with our flawed traits and failings. The roller-coaster dive from the heights of the Amida to the disheartening depths of Tachanun can be heart-wrenching. “Be kind to me, God, for I am wretched” (6:3). We recite the psalm with bent heads and covered faces, expressing our profound embarrassment at our inadequacies.

“I am weary from my groans. Every night I cause my bed to float, I melt my couch with my tears. My eye is hardened from anger. It has aged because of my tormentors. Go away, all you evildoers! For God has heard the sound of my weeping.” (6:7-9)

A vivid picture of despondency and bitterness. For many years, the Midrash states, King David’s pillow had to be changed seven times(!) during the night, as it was repeatedly drenched with his tears.

But what about us, who recite this psalm with dry eyes? Can we claim in all honesty that our beds are soaked with tears?

## Hardened Eyes

The crying described here comes from a pure heart and a lofty soul. It reflects the sincere bitterness of an individual distraught over his faults and mistakes.

But as long as evil has its hold on a person, it captures the heart and hardens it, preventing it from crying. Even though the heart is aware of the bitterness of the soul, our eyes are like stone, unable to let loose a single tear.

Thus the psalmist complains, “I am wearied with groaning.” If only I could cry, this would at least ease some of my anguish and pain. But I can only sigh and groan, with dry eyes. If I could cry, I would soak my bed with tears. But “my eye is hardened from anger” (6:8) and self-revulsion. It has become stiff and toughened by my negative traits – the tormentors of my soul.

Before God, however, there are no secrets. God accepts my weeping, even if it lacks tears. He knows that the absence of tears is not because I lack a genuine desire to reject evil and improve, but because evil tendencies have hardened my heart. Therefore, the psalmist pleads, “Go away, you forces of evil, for God has heard the sound of my crying.” Even though you prevent me from shedding tears, “God has accepted my prayer” (6:10), since it flows from a sincere heart.

*(Adapted from Olat Re’iyah vol. I, pp. 302-304; 443)*



# The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

## A Guinness world record and what it says about us

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

A Guinness world record has been broken in Israel, a record of generosity and kindness. This week, 2000 kidney donors posed for a group photo at Binyanei HaUma in Jerusalem at the largest gathering of organ donors in history.

Here are three takeaways from this incredible event:

1) “On our way to donor 3000!” This was the slogan chosen by Rabbanit Rachel Haber, co-founder and chairwoman of the organization Matnat Chaim (Gift of Life), for this special commemorative evening. But it is more than a slogan; it’s a mindset. Not only is she celebrating 2000 kidney donations – a world record – but she is already focused on her next goal.

2) “Not everyone needs to donate a kidney”, Rabbanit Haber told the audience tonight, “but everyone can give something from their body. They can lend an ear to someone in distress; smile at someone with their mouth; lend a hand to help a friend,

or use their arms to hug them. The point is not that all of us should become kidney donors but that we should live with the awareness that every one of the limbs given to us by our Creator is designed to do good, all the time.”

3) I took a moment to examine the photos of the event more closely. I encourage you to do the same because it can act as a buffer against the images and opinions we are bombarded with day after day. The media is constantly trying to drive a wedge between us. This is always the goal but their efforts are ramped up during an election year. The truth is that the most meaningful “election” already took place: 2000 Israelis chose to donate a part of their bodies to save the lives of brothers and sisters whom they have never met but with whom they share a deep soul connection. Moreover, the modest and energetic woman behind this special evening, who is already focused on recruiting thousands of future kidney donors, is a Charedi Rebbetzin.

So don’t allow yourself to be influenced by all the rhetoric and brainwashing. Instead, take a closer look at the pictures. It is the true picture of who we really are.

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by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

B'SHALACH

## He Made His Own coffin

In his dying moments, Yosef made the Israelites promise that they would carry his remains with them when they finally left Egypt to return to the Promised Land. To make this possible, "they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (B'reishit 50:25-26).

Ibn Ezra points out that the Hebrew uses the definite article - not "a" but "the" coffin - i.e. the coffin he had prepared for himself.

Many years later, say the Sages, when the departure from Egypt was imminent, Moshe spent three days and nights vainly hunting for this coffin.

Eventually, Serach bat Asher, the last survivor of Yosef's generation and by then a very old lady, met Moshe and asked why he looked so weary.

When Moshe told her, she took him to the Nile and said that when Yosef died the Egyptians, knowing the Israelites could not leave without Yosef's remains, put Yosef's coffin in

another, leaden coffin and sank it in the Nile.

Moshe thereupon took Yosef's cup and cut four plates out of it. On one he engraved a lion, on the second an eagle, on the third a bull, and on the fourth a human figure. He threw the first into the water and implored Yosef to show himself, but without result. He repeated this procedure with the second and third plate, but still nothing happened.

Finally he threw in the fourth plate and implored Yosef to come up, and this time the coffin rose to the surface and the Exodus could proceed (Midrash Sh'mot Rabba 20:17).

It rarely happened in Jewish history that a family could take their ancestors' or dear ones' remains with them when they moved from country to country.

Tragically, the sacred spots where Jewish families had buried their dead were often desecrated by a heartless enemy who had respect for no-one, neither the dead nor the living.

This is all the more reason to ensure that wherever we are we conserve and preserve Jewish cemeteries and never let them decay or disintegrate.

**more...**

# Miracles & Manna

The food that sustained the Israelites in the wilderness was called manna because they wondered, MAN HU? - "What is it?"

Each day it covered the ground like hoar frost. Ground into flour and baked into cakes, it tasted like honey wafers (Sh'mot 16:31).

In later centuries travellers claimed they had come across it. Near Durban in 1932, for example, there was a fall of a white snow-like substance that looked like popcorn and tasted like honey. Some of our own generation compare it to tofu, a utility food with a versatile taste depending on how you prepare it.

Moshe said to Aharon, "Take a jar and put in it an omer of manna, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept throughout your generations" (16:33) - the first food museum in history, maybe the first museum of any kind.

What was in Moshe's mind when he told Aharon to "lay up" the manna?

One answer is hinted at in the sidra. The narrative goes from the drama at the Red Sea to the daily provision of manna. Obviously the crossing of the Red Sea was a miracle. So was the manna.

It showed God's constant care for His creatures. As the Siddur says, "Your

miracles are with us every day, Your wonders and favours at all times".

Those who wonder why miracles only happened in ancient times are making a false assumption. Miracles have never ceased, especially the gift of life and the capacity to love, think, create, conserve, tend the universe and succour human beings.

It is these daily wonders which the jar of manna was meant to symbolise.

-OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

## Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon

B'SHALACH

Shirat HaYam climaxes with prayer for the future:

*Nations heard and shuddered... fear and dread falling upon them... until your people crossed over... You will bring them and establish them in... the place You dwell in, in the holy places that you have founded (15:14-17).*

*G-d will be King for ever and ever (15:18).*

The Rashbam and Ibn Ezra both view "G-d will be king for ever and ever" as a separate prayer. Once Am Yisrael settles in the Promised Land, G-d should be recognized as King over the

entire Creation. The Shira tells us that during K'ri'at Yam Suf, nations sat up and paid attention to the absolute power that G-d was dramatically demonstrating. As the Ramban brings out, G-d was showing that He is Master of the Universe by supporting those who serve Him and destroying those who rebel against Him. So may it be way into the future generations that G-d will heed the good deeds of the righteous and the sins of the wicked, supporting those who strive to do what is right according to the spiritual principles of the Creation. Thus G-d will be King for ever and ever.

Yet the Mechilta, a much earlier Midrashic source, is not entirely happy with the future tense - HASHEM YIMLOCH L'OLAM VA'ED, that G-d will be King for ever and ever. This Midrash sees this look into the distant future as a cause for criticism. Had Moshe and the people declared: "G-d rules for ever" no nation would be able to threaten them. As the Chatam Sofer expands, even within the Shira, there is an implication that the impact of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim would not be permanent, that Am Yisrael could suffer churban and galut, as the whole world's recognition of HaKadosh Baruch Hu as King was expressed as being in the future only. Many unpleasant things might well happen on that long journey towards the future, with the

ultimate destiny being a mere dream.

There is a vital lesson here. It is to keep eyes on the final destiny - always, however far into the future that might be. In life's work. Whatever the project is. It might include a quality mastery of Shas and Poskim. It might be discovering and innovating a cure for a particular form of cancer. It may be leading a team to tackle a particular crisis in the community, for example shidduchim barriers for those in their late 20s and 30s. It could very likely be raising a family as fully-fulfilled B'nei Torah and Yir'ei Shamayim. Whatever the project, visualize yourself as having reached the goal and then plan and do what it takes to get there, even if it takes many years. Bear in mind that there are many supportive intermediate targets on the way. All these goals not only yield the proverbial pot of gold (and very much more) at the end, but their intermediate markers pay rich dividends on the grounded and single-minded focused journey to the objective.

Let's briefly look at a possible example. Torah learning has always been part of your life, but now you're seeking serious quality mastery of Shas and Poskim. That doesn't happen overnight. Work and family severely limit available fatigue-free hours.

Shas and Poskim are mentally



demanding. Shas before Shacharit tackled at Daf Yomi (for example) or Amud Yomi rates take 7½ or 15 years respectively, with the additional challenge of remembering what you've learnt (I write brief summaries for quick regular review). Whilst most dapim can be reasonably grasped in an hour or two, some demand formidable patience, persistence, and endurance. Similarly with Poskim. A page of Mishna B'rura for half an hour between Mincha and Ma'ariv can be monumentally challenging after a frustrating day at work or in the home, when it's quite a struggle to keep eyes on the Siddur during Mincha. In addition, Gemara and Halacha are not in a vacuum; you want to be conversant with Torah Bichtav, perhaps going through the Parasha plus a couple of chapters of Nach on Friday nights. You also want to get a sense of the times and events in which our Torah sources developed and unfolded and - most important - the mussar: the ethical, spiritual, and personal development principles that are shine brightly through our traditions and bring perspective to our Torah learning in terms of it being a positively life-fulfilling force.

Overwhelming, indeed. But constantly seeing yourself as Torah-conversant with Quality Mastery of Shas and Poskim is a vital of the journey in itself. In making it your

destiny, you make it your identity, as you're striding the way, and a very long one at that. You're not just learning when you feel like it. You're looking at that destiny along the path of work and focused commitment. You see each step, each daf and halacha mastered as another brick in your own Torah-constructed palace. You form deepening personal connections as you gravitate to those with similar goals and to those who can help you to that reality.

This then is a vital key. To constantly and consistently see your identity as already being inside your target as you strive to achieve it making it part of you, step by step. Imagining yourself already there enables you to slowly gravitate to there, and taking the challenges and frustrations in the strides to that destiny. 🌱📖



*Reprinted from Living the Halachic Process by Rabbi Daniel Mann - Eretz Hemdah, with their permission [www.erezhemdah.org]*

## Cutting down fruit trees

**Question:** May one cut down a fruit tree that is more bother than it is of value?

**Answer:** The Torah forbids cutting down fruit trees.<sup>1</sup> This is the most formal and strict application of the concept of the mitzva not to be destructive and wasteful, and it is the only application for which one can be punished with malkot (flogging).<sup>2</sup> Since the prohibition of cutting is not absolute but applies specifically to destructive activity,<sup>3</sup> the gemara and poskim cite examples of where it is permitted to cut down fruit trees.

The gemara<sup>4</sup> grants permission in the following cases:

1. The tree no longer produces a kav (around 1.5 liters) of fruit. (One may not take steps to cause a healthy tree to deteriorate to this point.)<sup>5</sup>
2. The tree is worth more for wood than for fruit.<sup>6</sup>
3. One tree is damaging a more valuable tree in a significant way.<sup>7</sup>
4. The tree is damaging someone else's property.<sup>8</sup>

We must know how broadly we can apply these rules. We cannot properly deal with all the different possible cases or cite all of the opinions and will need to be satisfied with a discussion of some of the main issues.

The Rosh<sup>9</sup> derives from the gemara above<sup>10</sup> that one may cut down a tree if he needs to use its location.

The Taz<sup>11</sup> applies the Rosh's rule to building a home on the site. Most poskim understand that the Taz is referring even to expanding a home, at least when the addition is significant and objectively more valuable than the tree.<sup>12</sup> The gemara tells of the son of an Amora who died because he cut down a fruit tree prematurely. R. Yehuda HaChasid also warned about the consequences of violating this mitzva. Therefore, because of the potential severity of the matter, some prefer that the work be done by a non-Jew<sup>13</sup> or that an effort be made to uproot the tree with earth and to replant it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. *Devarim* 20:19.

<sup>2</sup>. *Rambam*, *Melachim* 6:8.

<sup>3</sup>. *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup>. Primarily, *Bava Kama* 91b-92a.

<sup>5</sup>. *Rambam* *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup>. See *Rashi* ad loc.

<sup>7</sup>. See *Tosafot* ad loc.

<sup>8</sup>. *Bava Batra* 26a.

<sup>9</sup>. *Bava Kama* 8:15.

<sup>10</sup>. *Bava Kama* *ibid.*, specifically in regard to case #3

<sup>11</sup>. *Yoreh Deah* 116:6.

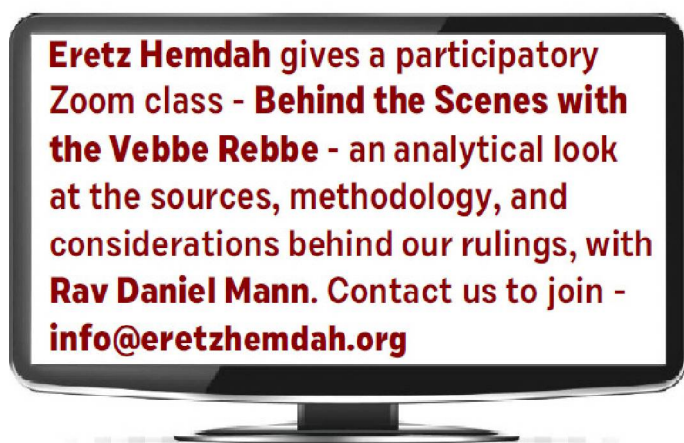
<sup>12</sup>. See *Chayim Sha'al* I, 22; *Yabia Omer* V, *Yoreh Deah* 12. Note that non-Jews are not commanded on the matter and should not be subject to negative consequences.

<sup>13</sup>. *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup>. *Chatam Sofer*, *Yoreh Deah* 102.

Questions sometimes arise in regard to cutting off branches. The gemara<sup>15</sup> forbids using wood from fruit trees to burn on the altar, but for a different reason. The Mishneh LaMelech<sup>16</sup> says that our prohibition doesn't apply in that case because he is only cutting branches and leaving the tree. The Be'er Sheva<sup>17</sup> says it could have been permitted in order to fulfill a mitzva (as it is, therefore, not in a destructive context). According to both explanations, it would be permitted to cut branches to use as s'chach.<sup>18</sup> One should keep in mind here that pruning is healthful for trees,<sup>19</sup> but, of course, not all cutting is healthful pruning.

Many practical cases combine a variety of factors (lenient or strict) and should be considered by a rav on an individual basis.



## Dvar Torah by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

*Graciously shared with PhiloTorah*

### B'SHALACH

In this week's parsha we read about the turning point for the Israelites as they leave the Egyptians behind. The miracle of the Crossing of the Red Sea allowed us to finally escape the treacherous grip of our Egyptian taskmasters. The Torah describes this moment in the famous words (14:31) "And Israel saw the great word. And Israel feared G-d."

VAYAR... VAYIR'U...

Why is there this duality in the terminology of the pasuk? First the Israelites are referred to as "Israel", then they are called HA'AM. This maybe the first time that the Jewish people coin themselves as an AM - a nation. The Torah seems to emphasize the transformation from simply being called "Israel" to being referred to as a free "nation".

However, in a deeper analysis, we notice that the reference to the Israelites as an AM was already used by Par'o earlier on (1:19) "Lo the people (AM BNEI YISRAEL) of the

<sup>15</sup>. Tamid 29b.

<sup>16</sup>. Issurei Mizbei'ach 7:3.

<sup>17</sup>. Cited ibid.

<sup>18</sup>. Yechaveh Da'at V, 46.

<sup>19</sup>. Har Tzvi, Orach Chayim 101.

children of Israel." It is also Moshe through the command of G-d that refers to the Israelites as AM - "Send my people (AM) free."

I read a very nice insight from my brother, Rabbi Moshe Yeres years ago. Yes, perhaps others like Par'o had been the first to call the Israelites an AM - "Nation", but it seems that the Jewish people had not yet internalized the concept until this epic moment of crossing the Red Sea. The feeling of being a nation did not transpire until this communal experience of K'riyat Yam Suf. This joint miraculous experience suddenly fused them from being a group of freed slaves into a people with nationhood and peoplehood. Perhaps this is the reference in the text after the crossing (15:16) - "Till your people (AMCHA) pass over, Oh G-d, till the people pass over that you have gotten."

#### AD YAAVOR AMCHA HASHEM

Only through such a communal miracle do we really understand and feel that we are all in the same situation. If one would have failed, we all would have been doomed. There was this urgency to unite the people into one AM to prepare them for the next communal experience of receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai. We could only be successful in accepting the word of G-d if we become a unified nation. As we know, there are

commandments that are befitting for individuals and there are other commandments that can only be properly kept as a community and nation. Today, once more, as the Jewish people are more divided, we need to remember the words AM ECHAD - One Nation, our secret to our eternal survival. 🚧

## The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

### B'SHALACH 5785

The event of Kri'at Yam Suf - the Splitting of the Sea - was a miracle of spectacular magnitude. The total defeat of the Egyptian empire and the astonishing salvation of the Jewish people were repercussive in many respects. Not only were the nations of the world aware of the occurrence, they were gripped with utter confusion and terrifying fear (15:14-15). Chazal famously comment (Michita, B'shalach 3, s.v. ZEH) that the spiritual intensity of the moment was so enormous that even the simple maidservant experienced prophetic visions that exceeded those of the great prophets. A special Yom Tov - the last day of Pesach - was designated to commemorate this unparalleled phenomenon. And finally, the significance of the event was such that it is mentioned numerous times in our daily and



holiday prayers.

However, there is a lesser known - under the radar - meaning to this miracle that warrants our attention.

The Midrash makes a disturbing comment in the wake of the miracle (Shochar Tov, T'hilim 15:5): "R. Azariya says in the name of Rabbi Yehuda: In the future, all the nations will come to accuse Israel before the Holy One, blessed be He, and will say: 'Master of the Universe, these [the Egyptians] are idolaters, and these [the Israelites] are idolaters...' Why are they [the Egyptians] descending to Gehinom and they [the Israelites] not? Why do You show them special favor?" HaShem's response is enigmatic. Quoting two verses in the Song of Songs (Shir HaShirim 8:7-8), Gd declares His boundless love for His people and compares them to a young maiden.

The issue, as homiletically explained by different Midrashim, can be summarized thusly : The Attribute of Justice had reason to be severely critical of the vulgar assimilatory practices of the Jewish people, aping the Egyptian culture and abandoning their identity. When, in describing the splitting of the sea, the verse states that the "water was a wall for them" (14:22). Interestingly, the Hebrew CHOMA is written without a VAV (which only then properly translate as "wall"), but minus the VAV, the word

can be read as CHEIMA, "anger". Indeed, the waters, acting upon the fury of the Almighty, actually threatened to drown the people because of their sins. And later, when in the Torah (D'vorim 4:34), Gd is described as "taking a non-Jewish nation [Israel] from a non-Jewish nation [Egypt] GOI MIKEREV GOI", the Jewish people are denominated as a non-Jewish nation - GOI and not with the more Jewish designation of AM. All of which depicts the Jewish people as no better than their Egyptian counterparts, and clearly supports the argument of the nations of the world (see above) in their claim: that both peoples were idolaters.

How then does the Almighty justify exercising His Attribute of Mercy to redeem the Jewish people and overlook their transgressions? The answer is given by the Alshich HaKadosh in a number of places in his commentary. He asserts that HaShem discerned something quite precious about the Jewish people. True, outwardly, they appeared to be nothing but a motley bunch of slaves, crude and pagan, much like the burning thorn bush with no redeeming qualities. But HaShem can penetrate the surface personality and uncover the jewel in the rough. For in just a few weeks, these very slaves would stand at Sinai to receive the Torah, and they would qualify to be so

chosen because, notwithstanding their external deficiencies, they possess the great spiritual potential to stand as dignified human beings and thus partner with Gd in the sacred Sinaitic covenant.

Put differently, the people can be compared to an immature youth - the young maiden of Shir HaShirim - who, as yet, has not fully displayed her marvelous qualities and aptitudes.

A very similar answer to the Alshich's is offered by Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky who employs a famous Midrash to make the same important point. Based on a verse in T'hilim (114:3), Chazal comment (Midrash T'hilim ad loc): "The sea saw and fled." What did it see? The casket containing the remains of Yosef." Why did the sight of Yosef's casket compel the sea to split, to flee? Says the Midrash, "The sea recalled how Yosef fled from his master's wife who sought to entice him, and the sea chose to do likewise and it too fled." What are we to make of this strange Midrash?

Rav Kamenetsky's explanation is dramatically amplified by R. Aaron of Karlin. When Gd originally arranged for the sea to split before the Jewish people, the sea, as it were, asked Gd to see one of those "Jews" for whom it would need to defy its nature and part. When the sea observed the souls of these Jews in heaven, it

melted away in joy and ecstasy. Observing the extraordinary greatness and untold depth of a yiddishe neshama, of that Divine spark embodying the goodness, holiness, dignity, and Gdliness of its Creator, the sea declared to Gd, "If for these souls I need to split, it would be my great honor and pleasure. But now, at Yam Suf, those souls looked quite different. They were exhausted and broken and could only complain when they found themselves trapped between the sea and the advancing Egyptian army.

According to Rabbi Aaron of Karlin, at this moment, a dialogue ensued. "Why?" asked the sea, "should I split"? "The Jews - they have, at last, arrived," came the answer. "Who arrived?" asked the sea. "The Jews. "Sorry, but these are not the same people I observed in the past. The souls I saw then were limitless in their depth, splendid in their dignity, glorious in their spirit. They constituted sheer celestial beauty. These people in front of me are grouchy, frustrated, divisive, filled with anger, fear, and negativity." The sea refused to part. It claimed it was deceived: The Jews of heaven were not the Jews on earth. The sea had agreed to split before rich spirits, not before depleted souls.

Until... until it saw the casket of Yosef. "Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him"

(B'reishit 42:8). When the brothers descended to Egypt to purchase food, and they encountered their estranged brother, why did they not recognize him? The Chassidic masters explain that Yosef's depth of morality and holiness was concealed behind the dense facade of an Egyptian statesman. On the outside, Yosef seemed no more than a handsome young man, charming and charismatic, skilled as a diplomat, and politician with endless ambition. It was not easy to realize that beneath these qualities lay a soul on fire with spiritual passion, a kindred spirit for whom the moral legacy of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov remained the epicenter of his life. But the brothers lacked the ability to discern the Divine dignity etched in the depth of Yosef's heart. They never understood who their brother really was. When they now encountered him in the form of an Egyptian leader, they failed to observe that beyond the mask of a savvy politician lay the soul of Jewish nobility.

This dual identity that characterized Yosef's life played itself out in the most powerful way when his master's wife attempted to seduce him. On the outside, she thought, it would be fairly easy to entice young Yosef to sacrifice his moral integrity for some sensual gratification. But when Yosef displayed heroic courage by resisting and fleeing, the sea remembered the

story of Yosef, it understood that it had erred. Yes, the souls it had encountered in heaven were far greater and loftier than the exhausted humans it saw at its shore. But when the sea observed the life of Yosef, it understood that it must not limit its vision to the external appearance of man, often flawed and distorted. It had to gaze deeply into the depths of the human spirit to encounter royalty.

In a way, Yosef's casket was whispering this message to the sea: "When you gaze at another human being, do not make the same error that others make when they gaze at you. Some simple folks look at you, dear sea, and assume that there is nothing beneath your bed of water. But who better than you knows that underlying your facade of water lies an entire exquisite universe!" When the sea encountered Yosef's presence, it understood its mistake. It grasped the truth that the great drama and beauty of human life lie not in our perfection and flawlessness, but rather in the human battle not to surrender to the external forces of darkness, despair, and shallowness, and to remain loyal to the light, hope, and depth etched within. And with this realization, the sea parted before the Jewish people.

The hidden message of the Splitting of the Sea should now be plain. We were spared at the sea because

HaShem chose to look beyond and beneath the immediate spiritual poverty of the slaves before Him. Instead, in His bountiful mercy, the Almighty acted upon what He knew were the hidden virtues of these descendants of the Forefathers and dismissed their wrongdoings. He confronted His chosen charges with an exciting but challenging future, one which would hold out the promise of greatness and ultimate fulfillment. In a word, Gd believed in us and we rose to that challenge and believed in ourselves!

If this is how HaShem embraced us - and empowered us - even with all of our faults, we should feel obliged to behave the same way toward our fellow. And it is this that we should remember when reciting the great drama of Kri'at Yam Suf. 🙌

## Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

## MARK'VOT PAR'O... V'CHEILO YARA BAYAM

Par'o's chariots and army He threw (YARA) in the sea.

In AZ YASHIR which Moshe and B'nei Yisrael sing after the splitting of the sea, they say the above words. The word YARA is used in a different form again a short while later when, after three days of traveling, the Jews

couldn't find water. When they finally reach Mara, the water they found was undrinkable because of its bitterness. As a result of the complaints of the people, HaShem directs Moshe: VAYOREIHU HASHEM... and HaShem showed him a tree, he threw it into the water and the water became sweet. In the first usage, the root YUD-REISH-HEI clearly means to 'throw', while here, that same root is used to mean something completely different. It means to 'show', or 'direct'. We use that form of the word to refer to a teacher - MOREH, a parent - HOREH, indicating the essence of their job: to show, instruct, and teach. (The verb used here to refer to 'throwing' is VAYASHLEICH.)

The Concordance differentiates between the meaning of the root YUD-REISH-HEI as throwing or shooting and its meaning as teaching and directing. It points out the relationship between these two usages. It explains that one who teaches is "as if 'shooting' the cornerstone of wisdom into the heart of the student". The same word is used in terms of shooting arrows: ...the arrow which Yehonatan shot (YARA). (Shmuel Alef 20:37) Similarly, we use this word to describe the rain we receive: I will provide rain for your land in its proper time, the early rain (YOREH) and late rains (MALKOSH)... for this describes rain that comes

down like an arrow.

Chazal tell us that the inability to find water was because they had gone three days without learning Torah. I never understood this because not only had they not received the Torah yet, but the very verse that tells of Moshe sweetening the water, finishes with "there He established for the nation a statute and a judgement", which is understood as having been taught then about certain mitzvot, among them: laws of Shabbat, honoring parents, monetary laws.

In addressing this difficulty, the Kli Yakar explains the "lack of Torah" differently. The verse that tells of there being no water, begins with - Moshe caused the people to travel. They didn't do it on their own. They were more interested in collecting the vast amount of spoils of silver, gold, and gems that had come from the Egyptian chariots and horses. They weren't in a hurry to proceed to where they were to receive the Torah. It was this attitude that caused 'measure for measure' response, given that MAYIM - water - often refers to Torah. If they weren't so involved in seeking Torah (MAYIM), then, indeed, they would not find it. The solution to the problem was for Moshe to throw this EITZ into the bitter water.

If it is, indeed, true that the lack of water was a result of the lack of

learning Torah, then using the root YUD-REISH-HEI to mean 'to teach' as well as 'to show', I thought that maybe the verse is teaching us something else as well. How about VAYOREIHU HA'ETZ - meaning He taught him Torah - since Torah is EITZ CHAYIM? And if the water was bitter because of the lack of Torah, this would be the cure. The end of the verse seems to support this because it immediately says: This is where they were first instructed about the laws of the Torah; hence, the water became sweet. ❀

## Insights into Halacha - Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

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## Photogrey Glasses on Shabbat

A story is told about Rebbetzin Leah Auerbach a"h, wife of Rav Ezriel Auerbach shlit"a, whose doctor (ophthalmologist, perhaps) prescribed photogrey glasses for her. These are glasses with photochromatic lenses, which darken when exposed to direct sunlight, and become transparent when removed from the sunlight. The doctor, attuned to religious sensitivities, explained to her that some authorities feel that one should refrain from wearing them on



Shabbat, while others maintain that they are acceptable for Shabbat use. He instructed her to ask her rabbi for a final halachic decision.

But to understand the halachic issues involved, a bit of background is needed. Photochromatic lenses contain millions of molecules of silver chloride or silver halide embedded in them. These molecules are transparent to visible light in the absence of ultraviolet rays, which is normal for artificial lighting. But, when exposed to ultraviolet (UV) rays, as in direct sunlight, the molecules undergo a chemical process that causes them to change shape and absorb portions of the visible light, causing the lenses to darken. ([Explanation based on www.science.howstuffworks.com](http://www.science.howstuffworks.com))

The potential issue with wearing such lenses on Shabbat is that of TZOVEI'A, Dyeing, one of the 39 Shabbat-prohibited categories of “creative labor” (melachot). It must be noted that our potential issue with photogrey glasses cannot be considered part of the actual Biblical prohibition, as that is exclusive to a type of dyeing that leaves a lasting effect (mitkayeim). Rather, it’s a potential Rabbinical prohibition of temporary coloration, arguably similar to makeup application, which falls under this prohibition.

Many contemporary authorities debate this issue, with the vast

majority offering different rationales why photochromatic lenses are dissimilar to the makeup case and should be permissible to be worn on Shabbat. These include:

The dyeing that is forbidden on Shabbat is limited to coloration which results from applying one substance to another, i.e. purple dye upon wool. Coloration caused by exposure to the sun’s rays would therefore be excluded from the prohibition.

There is no tangible action being done by the person himself, rather by the sun and shade. The fact that one is actively walking in and out of the sun is irrelevant, as he is not doing any extra activity to accomplish the lenses' darkening.

There is no actual dyeing happening; as soon as the lenses are taken out of direct sunlight they revert back to clear, similar to covering and uncovering an object.

There is no concrete change happening to the glasses, only their appearance changes; the chemicals are always inside and their nature is to transform back and forth depending on exposure to sunlight. Furthermore, they are simply shading the eye from the sun.

The coloring effect is a temporary occurrence whose existence is continuously dependent upon exposure to the sun.

The coloring and subsequent reversion to clearness is part of the lenses' regular designed function.

Several decisors mention more than one reason to permit wearing photogrey glasses on Shabbat, while others simply write that there is no issue at all with them. Although some are uneasy about certain aspects of the various halachic rationales, nevertheless, the consensus of virtually all contemporary authorities, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, the Debreciner Rav, his brother - Rav Betzalel Stern, the Tzitz Eliezer, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner, Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Menashe Klein, the Rivevos Efrayim, and Rav Nissim Karelitz, is to rule permissively, and allow photogrey glasses to be worn on Shabbat. This is also how many works written on the Laws of Shabbat conclude.

However, there is a minority opinion: that of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. He maintains that since the glasses do not revert back to clear immediately after going indoors, it might be considered having a slight lasting effect, and possibly might be therefore included in the Rabbinical prohibition of TZOVEI'A. Due to this potential issue, he advises not to wear photochromatic lenses on Shabbat.

With this halachic background in mind, we return to Rebbetzin Auerbach. As requested of her, she asked the opinions of the greatest rabbis she knew of: her father, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv shlit"a, and her father-in-law, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, none other than the preeminent Gedolei HaDor!

At her next visit, she told the doctor that she was in bit of a quandary as her father told her she should not wear them on Shabbat, while her father-in-law told her she may. "Lady", the obviously oblivious ophthalmologist replied, "I told you to ask a rabbi, not your parents!!"

*For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomot & sources, please email the author: [yspitz@ohr.edu](mailto:yspitz@ohr.edu)*

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**Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.**

**Rabbi Yehuda Spitz's English halacha sefer, "Food: A Halachic Analysis" (Mosaica/Feldheim) containing over 500 pages featuring over 30 comprehen-**

sive chapters discussing the myriad halachic issues pertaining to food, is now available online and in bookstores everywhere."



## B'SHALACH

**GM** Here's a short and sweet GM. Sh'mot 15:18, in Shirat HaYam states:

יְהוָה | יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:

*"God will reign forever and ever."*

One of the features of the world when all will recognize that HaShem is the only King of the Universe, will be PEACE. Internal and external. The word **SHALOM** shares a gimatriya (300+30+6+40=376) with this pasuk, which is so important that we say it twice in the davening and we repeat it again in its Aramaic translation.

That was the short and sweet GM; here's an add-on:

And to bring one more pasuk into this picture, we use the AT-BASH gimatriya of our pasuk in B'shalach, 644. Only one pasuk in Tanach has a regular gimatriya of 644 and that is in

Parshat Haazinu, D'varim 32:12 -

יְהוָה בָּדָד יְנַחֵנִי וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר:

*[So] HaShem guided them alone, and there was no alien deity with Him.*

We can understand this pasuk as hinting to the prophesied time when all people of the world will recognize the G-d of Israel as the True One G-d of the World and that HaShem will truly reign over all - and there will be SHALOM.

*USFUNEI T'MUNEI CHOL is the working title of my hopeful book of Gimatriya Matches. The title translates to Hidden in the Sand. That's how I feel about my Gimatriya searches. Like walking along the beach with a metal detector. Beep-beep-beep. Lean down and find something. Usually, nothing of note. But sometimes you find something special.*

## RED ALERT!

### B'SHALACH

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)  
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -  
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

## DIVREI TORAH

- When the Torah states that Par'o sent the Jews out of Egypt (13:17), it can be interpreted in different ways. The Targum Onkelos interprets the clause as: Par'o got rid of them. The Mechilta interprets the verse as:

Par'o escorted them out into the desert with honor. Obviously, there is a big difference between these two commentaries. From Par'o's perspective, there were now way too many Jews in Egypt. The Jews left an Egypt in terrible shape. Besides the damage afflicted via the Plagues, the departure of the huge labor force left the country in a terrible economic condition. Par'o could have opted to rebuild his country, but he was obsessed with the multi-layered problems, "caused" by Jews, and Hashem was in control. Par'o was merely a pawn in the narrative.

- While the people were accumulating the Egyptian gold and silver, Moshe was busy gathering the remains of Yosef to travel with his nation to be re-interred in Eretz Yisrael. Primarily, this was a fulfillment of Yosef's request before he died. But there is an important message here. The remains of Yosef were a physical reminder to the Jewish nation that they were descendants of royalty. They were no longer slaves. They should be able to shed the slave mentality that plagued them now. Did it work? Sadly, it did not. The years of slavery had permanently scarred them, and they could not ever shake it. The Ibn Ezra and centuries later, the Malbim, both expressed that the people were possessed with a severe case of a slave mentality and an inferiority complex.

- Travel in the desert was crafted by Hashem so that the people were constantly aware of His presence among them. A Pillar of Light was there for night travel, and a Pillar of Cloud was there for daytime travel. But more importantly, these Pillars were signs of Hashem's presence. Whether they were traveling or resting, Hashem was with them. Yet, as we see in the narrative, this was not enough. Lapses in the people's religious conduct showed their inability to be constant servants of the Almighty. Forty days after receiving the Torah at Mt.Sinai, they worshipped a Golden Calf. These reminders that Hashem was with them could not protect them from primitive desires for non-religious practices that they acquired and absorbed during their long period of slavery.

- There is no logical reason for Par'o to pursue Bnei Yisrael after suffering for about a year with ten Plagues. Clearly, it was due to Hashem hardening his heart once again (14:8). Par'o was thoroughly wiped. Yet Hashem is orchestrating the entire scene. Question: When was the true miracle of the Exodus from Egypt? Was it at the end of the Ten Plagues? Or at the Splitting of the Sea? It seems that it should be at the Splitting of the Sea, but we celebrate it at the end of the Plagues when the



nation of Israel marched out of Egypt on the fifteenth of Nissan. But the fight wasn't over at that time. When Par'o amassed his chariots for the last time to attack Bnei Yisrael it showed that the fight wasn't finished. The final scene was the Splitting of the Sea.

- The obligation to say Birkat HaMazon after Meals is only after a meal with bread. (There are times after other grain products, but we generally answer bread.) Definitely not after eating fruit and vegetables. Rav Soloveitchik explained the making of bread necessitated man working and developing the finished product after harvesting it in the field. When Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, they didn't sing Shira, a Song. But they did sing after the Splitting of the Sea. The Rav noted that the Exodus was completely arranged by Hashem, with no participation on man's part. But they did sing after the Splitting of the Sea because that event did require action on man's part. So we see two levels of the miracle. One that is all Hashem's doing and then one that is including man's participation. Each event is recognized during the Pesach holiday.

- "This is my God and I will build Him a sanctuary; the God of my father and I will exalt Him" (15:2). There are two aspects of the holiness that a Jew can acquire. One is Jewish holiness

that I possess by being born to a Jewish mother. The second is the sanctity that I gain when I observe Torah and the commandments. In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 44a), our Sages state: A Jew, even though he sinned, is still a Jew. Even though he cannot be a sacred person by virtue of one definition, he still has his sanctity from birth. There is another Talmudic passage that states that a Jewish heretic is considered as a non-Jew indicates a loss of Jewish holiness. These two aspects of our holiness is apparent from the phrase in every Amida when we say "our God and God of our fathers." And we see their concept in the above quote from the Song of Moshe in our Parsha. (Rav Soloveitchik)

- In the description of the war with Amalek, the Torah stated that Yehoshua weakened Amalek and its people... (17:13). If Amalek is the name of the nation, why does it state Amalek AND ITS PEOPLE? The Ozneyim LaTorah suggests that possibly the person Amalek, the son of Elifaz, was still alive and led his followers in the battle. Highly unlikely. He also suggests that the nation Amalek attracted other people who were also anti-Semitic and they fought together. This is quite possible because throughout our history, we have anti-Semitic foes, even today. Unlike the fight for our freedom in Egypt, where Hashem



fought and punished our enemy, now and later in our history, the Jewish people are called upon to fight our enemies.

- MIDRASH. In the war against Amalek, the Torah states that when Moshe raised his hand, the Jews prevailed (17:11). The Mishna states (Rosh HaShana 3:8) that this teaches us: that as long as Israel looked heavenward and subjected their heart to their Father in Heaven, they would prevail. But when they did not, they would fall.

## Questions by RED

### From the text

1. Why didn't Hashem lead Bnei Yisrael up the coast, via the closest route to the Promised Land? (13:17)
2. What did Moshe take with him out of Egypt? (13:19)
3. Where did Par'o die? (14:28)
4. What musical instruments did Miriam and the women have with them when they sang their song about the Splitting of the Red Sea? (15:20)
5. What did Hashem arrange for Bnei Yisrael to eat every day during their travel in the desert? (16:4)

### From Rashi

6. Rashi stated that only 20% of the Jews left Egypt. What happened to

the 80% of Bnei Yisrael? (13:18)

7. How did Par'o find out that the Jews had no intention to return to Egypt?(14:5)

8. The Torah describes the Egyptians drowning in the Sea in three ways. As stone (15:5), as straw (v. 7), as lead (v. 10). What did this represent?

9. Why was Hashem upset with Moshe regarding the Manna on Friday? (16:22)

10. Why did Hashem command Moshe to take his staff with him to hit the rock for water?

### From the Rabbis

11. The last verse of the last Parsha states that Hashem took us out of Egypt. Now the first verse of this Parsha states that Par'o sent "the nation" out of Egypt. According to the Baal HaTurim, whom did Par'o send out?

12. What lesson is learned from Hashem providing a double portion of Manna on Friday? (Hirsch)

13. Ramban: when Hashem told Moshe to "write this (the victory over Amalek) as a remembrance in the Book..."(17:14) - what book?

### Midrash

14. Who was the first person to enter the waters of the Red Sea?

## Haftara - Sho-f'tim

15. Who was Devora's partner who led the war over Sisera? What tribe was he from?

### Relationships

- a) Elisheva - Nadav
- b) Livni - Shimi
- c) Guni - Naftali
- d) Kehat - Peretz
- e) Sheim - Ashur

### ANSWERS

1. Lest Bnei Yisrael would be confronted by the Philistines and want to return to Egypt.
2. The bones of Yosef.
3. In the Red Sea.
4. Drums
5. The Manna ("bread from Heaven")
6. Hashem killed them during the Plague of Darkness.
7. Par'o sent spies to go with the Jews, and they reported this fact to him.
8. The evil Egyptians died in the water like straw, being thrust about in the water. The best of them died quickly, sinking immediately like lead. Those in between were sinking like stones.
9. Moshe failed to tell Bnei Yisrael that there would be a double portion of Manna on Friday.

10. To show the people that the staff can produce good things, and not just Plagues.

11. The Eirev Rav ( the multitude of mixed non-Jews who accompanied the Jews leaving Egypt.)

12. Shabbat would never be an impediment to a livelihood.

13. The Torah

14. Nachshon, the son of Aminadav, prince of Yehuda.

15. Barak, the son of Avinoam from Naftali.

### Relationships

- a) Mother & Son
- b) Brothers (sons of Gershon b. Levi)
- c) Son & Father
- d) First Cousins
- e) Father & Son