

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BEHALOSCHA - 5762

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Parshas Bahaloscha 5761
By RABBI ELI B. SHULMAN

1. Parsha begins series of setbacks; Vayisau Mehar Hashem, they left Sinai, Chazal say, Kitinok Haboreach Mibeis Hasefer, with a feeling of relief to be leaving those rarified spiritual heights. And then the bubbling discontent of the Misonenim, and the explosion of carnivorous and carnal appetite at Kivros Hataava, and the Chet of Aharon and Miriam. And finally, in next week's parsha, the crowning catastrophe of the Miraglim and the decree that they would have to spend forty long years in the dessert.

2. Between the first of these setbacks - Vayisu Mehar Hashem - and the second - the Misonenim - there appears a strange passage that seem to have nothing to do with what comes before and after: Vayehi Binsoa Haaron ... Uvenucha Yomar ... And Chazal say that it appears here Sheloh Lehachzik Bipuraniyus, to break up the series of disasters. But what good is it to break up the first two if there follows an uninterrupted series of disasters afterward?

3. The passage is set off by the strange device of two upside down Nuns, one before and one after, like parentheses. What is the meaning of these strange, upside down letters?

4. The Gemara says that these two verses constitute an entire sefer of the Torah. How can an entire sefer be made up of only two Psukim?

5. We, as Jews, count time from Yitzias Mitzrayim, from the month of Nisan, which is Rosh Chadashim. And we count time forward towards Achris Hayamim, the end of days. Because we experience time - not as an endless cycle of random events - but as a process, a progress, a journey, which begins with Yetzias Mitzrayim and ends with Achris Hayamim.

The physical representation of that journey in the Torah is the journey from Mitzrayim to Eretz Yisrael, over 42 Masaos (encampments), over forty years.

6. Had the people left Sinai properly, had they carried Har Sinai fully in their hearts, that journey would have been far shorter and less difficult. But because they left precipitously, they fell into the series of Chataim that begin with the Misonenim and culminate with the Miraglim. And reading of these disasters, one might think that the journey has been derailed completely, that the people are not moving forward at all, but, rather, backward.

The Torah therefore needs to teach us that even if, on the surface, this seems to be true, yet on the deepest level the Divine plan is still unfolding, and the Aron and the people are still moving ever forward, inexorably forward, their final destination where the Aron and the Shechinah will rest among the tranquil tents of Israel.

7. Therefore at the very beginning of this series of setbacks the Torah interrupts and opens a window, as it were, to allow us to look beneath the setbacks of the narrative, to the underlying process below: Vayehi Binsoa Haaron, the Aron is still going forward, until Uvenocha Yomar.

8. This window is framed by two upside down nuns. And that is significant. Because the letter nun represents 50, and that is a very symbolic number. Chazal always speak of fifty levels of Bina, of wisdom, the deepest of which is the fiftieth.

So we should think of these two upside down nuns as two upside down

periscopes, allowing us to peer deep down below the surface of events. fifty levels below the events that take place in the Sefer that is on the surface, to another Sefer, a parallel Sefer, far below.

9. If that Sefer seems very small to us, we should remember that we are seeing it from a very great distance. Because we are up here on the surface of events; we can't make out the details of that other Sefer, we can't see how - despite all the setbacks, through all the setbacks - the Aron is making its way forward. All we are allowed to see, from this distance, is that the Aron is still moving.

10. It is very rarely that we are able to catch a glimpse of that Sefer $\bar{n}\bar{o}\bar{e}$, to see the forward movement of the Aron. But even if all we see is chaos and confusion, setbacks and disasters, we need to remember that that Sefer is still there, that the Aron is still moving ever forward, until Uvenucha Yomar, until it will come to a final rest among the tranquil tents of Israel.

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2002 3:52 AM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha

When One Is In Pain He Says "Ouch"

Tosfos in Tractate Kiddushin [37b] says that when the Torah describes Pesach Sheni [the "makeup" Paschal offering], it is actually implying an indictment of the Jewish people for not offering the Korban Pesach during the next 39 years. The fact is that during the next 39 years -- after the offering of the Pesach sacrifice that year -- they never again offered a Korban Pesach. This was the first and only time they brought a Paschal sacrifice during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. The Haftorah of the first day of Pesach [Yehoshua Chapter 5] describes the next time that they offered a Korban Pesach, after they had already entered the Land of Israel.

The Chiddushei HaRim (1799-1866) questions Tosfos' assertion that this was an indictment of the Jewish people. The reason why they did not offer the Pesach during the years in the wilderness was not because they did not care about the Korban Pesach. Rather, they did not offer the Korban Pesach for a technical reason. The Halacha requires that everyone who brings a Korban Pesach must be circumcised and all the male members of his family must be circumcised. During the 40 years in the wilderness, they were unable to perform circumcision as a result of the adverse conditions that existed in the desert. Such an operation would have presented a danger to the child.

For forty years, their hands were tied. They were victims of circumstances beyond their control (anusim). This was a technicality. It was not due to callousness or a bad attitude on their part. So why, asks the Chiddushei HaRim, does Tosfos call this an indictment of the Jewish people?

The Chiddushei HaRim answers that the indictment consists of the contrast in attitude, between the people who brought the makeup Pesach that year and all of the Jewish people for the next 39 years. What happened in the story of the "make-up" Paschal offering? Certain individuals came to Moshe and complained, "We are ritually impure due to contact with the dead. Why should we lose out (lamah nigarah) on the opportunity to bring the Korban Pesach?" [Bamidbar 9:7] What is the meaning of the question "Lamah Nigarah?" They just explained why they should lose out -- because of the technicality that someone who is ritually impure could not bring a Korban Pesach! They were Tameh Mes. That is why they could not bring the Korban Pesach. So what is their question?

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that they were pained by the fact that they were losing out. They understood the technicalities of the Halacha, but they were pleading in desperation "...but what about our spiritual welfare? What is going to be with us? How are we going to manage without being able to bring a Korban Pesach?" They were not challenging the halacha. They were sharing their pain.

The people who brought the make-up Pesach in that second year

expressed their anguish at being told that they could not bring the Korban Pesach. Even if one is unable to fulfill a commandment for valid reasons, he should at least feel bad about it. This was the indictment of the Jewish People. True, for the balance of the 40 years, they could not bring the sacrifice due to halachic technicalities. However, it should have bothered them! It should hurt! The status quo should feel intolerable! There are many situations in life like this. Nothing can in fact be done, but we can at least feel the pain and anguish at the loss. When a person wakes up in the middle of the night and stubs his toe while walking around in the dark, he screams. How does screaming help? Clearly, it does not help. But when something hurts, we cry out in pain. Even if we cannot do anything about our inability to bring a Korban Pesach, we should at least cry about it. We should at least we should have the sensitivity to feel the pain. We should at least say the word 'ouch!'

The Faithful Servant of G-d Was A Faithful Husband To His Wife
The end of the parsha contains the incident in which Miriam spoke lashon hara [gossip] about her brother Moshe concerning the "Kushite woman that he married" [Bamidbar 12:1]. G-d became angry with Miriam and defended Moshe Rabbeinu with accolades, the likes of which have never been written about any human being in the history of mankind. There are many varying interpretations regarding the exact nature of Miriam's complaint concerning the "Kushite woman who Moshe married". The Moshav Zekeinim m'Baalei HaTosfos has a truly unique way of explaining Miriam's complaint. He interprets that Miriam argued "it was beneath Moshe's dignity that he should be married, at this point in his life, to a Midianite woman". Moshe was almost 80 years old, was running away, and was stuck in Midian as a 'fugitive of the law' when he married Tziporah. Miriam could understand that under those circumstances he married such a woman. But now he is the greatest person of his generation. Now he must have a better, more worthy, wife for himself. It is simply inappropriate for the leader of the generation to have a foreign woman of unimpressive lineage as his soul-mate. The Moshav Zekeinim interpolates into the incident that Miriam had told this to Moshe, but he refused to divorce Tziporah. Moshe told Miriam that he would not divorce his wife for precisely for the factors that Miriam was calling to his attention. "When I was a fugitive and I was a poor penniless shepherd, this woman married me. She stuck by me when I was a nobody. Now that I am the 'Gadol HaDor,' the teacher of all Israel, and the master of all prophets, I will not abandon her. This interpretation, the Moshav Zekeinim suggests, is buttressed by G-d's testimonial for Moshe "In all My house, he is the most faithful" [Bamidbar 12:7]. Moshe felt a loyalty to the wife of his youth. He possessed the attribute of Hakaras HaTov [recognition the favors done to him] and is unwilling to discard an old wife who might now, in fact, be a less prestigious companion than he could find elsewhere. We must preface this next remark with a tremendous "L'havdil" (distinguishing between two incomparable situations). Such phenomena do occur many times in the secular world. A person gets married early in life and then becomes very wealthy. He is now a CEO and earns a 7 figure salary. His "old wife" is no longer worthy according to his station in life. So what does he do? He divorces her! It is scandalous. He pays her off, alimony. But that is part of his attitude: "It is OK what I'm doing. I can afford it! I am so rich that I can afford to pay \$100,000 a month in alimony." We hear of this - in one form or another - all too often. This Moshav Zekeinim is saying that the meaning of G-d's unprecedented praise for Moshe that "in all My house, he is the most faithful" is that he did not abandon the Midianite wife of his youth, when he "surpassed" her in terms of his station in life. Moshe simply did not think in such terms.

Source For Using "G-d Willing" In Conversation
The Shalo"h (1560-1630) mentions that this week's parsha contains a

source for the custom of using the expressions "G-d willing" (im Yirtzeh HaShem) or "With G-d's help" (b'Ezras HaShem) in our conversation. Where do we find such a source? The pasuk says, "Based on the utterance of G-d (al pi HaShem) they camped and based on the utterance of G-d (al pi HaShem) they traveled" [Bamidbar 9:23]. The Shalo"h also states regarding the pasuk "The plan of G-d it will come to pass" (Atzas HaShem He Sakum) [Mishlei 19:21] that the word 'He' (hay yud aleph) is an acronym (in reverse) for the words "Im Yirtzeh HaShem".

Of course, everything can be overdone or done to a fault. One can say "Im Yirtzeh HaShem" so much that it loses its effect and can even be said in situations where it sounds ridiculous. But the point that the Shalo"h is making is that one's conversation can have an effect on a person. If a person uses these expressions and thinks about what he is saying, it helps him realize that ultimately everything is in G-d's Hands. Verbalizing this and articulating it and making it a mode of regular speech causes a person to recognize the role of G-d in every day life.

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dhoffman@torah.org These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 332, Tefilas Tashlumim: Making Up a Missed Davening. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rwil_bahalos.html
RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

HUMILITY: THE KEY TO TORAH

The uniqueness of Moshe Rabbeinu's vision is described, "Peh el peh adaber bo u'mareh v'lo b'chidos," (Bamidbar 12:8) ("Mouth to mouth I speak to him, in a clear vision and not in riddles"), while in reference to other prophets we are told, "Bamarra eilav esvada bachalom adaber bo," (12:6) ("See only in reflections or in dreams"). Rav Chaim Volozhin (Ruach Chaim 1:1) links this distinction to Moshe's unique humility, "V'haish Moshe anav m'od mikol adam" – "And the man Moshe was more modest than any other person," (Bamidbar 12:3). This quality of self-negation enabled him to see directly and clearly (Yevamos 49b), to the point that Hashem spoke through him ("bo" Bamidbar 12:8), not just to him. Moshe's siblings mistakenly thought that other prophets were also on this level ("gam banu 12:2) but in reality they only communicated with Hashem via mirrors, dreams and riddles. Their sense of self, however small, distorted the picture that they saw through the lens of their personal bias. Only Moshe, who had absolutely no sense of self, and was the uniquely humble servant of Hashem, saw clearly and directly in a wakened state.

Therefore, only Moshe could receive the Torah and say this is what Hashem commanded. All other prophets merely approximated, i.e. "So said Hashem," (Rashi 30:2). Only Moshe received the Torah at Sinai in its entirety. Thereafter the Torah was given to Yehoshua, elders, prophets, and sages but no recipient captured it in its entirety (Avos 1:1).

Moshe's humility exceeded that of Avraham (Chulin 89a). Avraham said, "v'anochi affar v'eiffer" -"and I am dust and ash" (Braishis 18:27), whereas Moshe said "I am nothing" (see Shmos 16:8 – "v'nachnu ma" – "who are we", referring to himself and Aharon).

When Hashem called, "Avraham, Avraham" (Braishis 2:11), in the Torah a line separates between the two words. The call "Moshe Moshe" (Shmos 3:4) has no such separation (Shmos Rabba 2:6). The line signifies a gap between the soul and the reality which the body creates. Only Moshe, who negated his body, i.e. his sense of self, completely, reached his full potential, so that the Divine presence would speak, as it were, through his throat.

This lofty description of the greatest prophet carries an important

lesson for all people in all times. Our understanding of Torah is affected by who we are. In many cases, a personal agenda, explicit or implicit, leads to a distorted interpretation of Torah laws and values. Even a sincere effort to comprehend and apply halachah is affected by every person's tendency to see matters through his own "glasses". It is nearly impossible to totally remove personal bias in halachic analysis and decision. Yet this is the challenge imposed upon all recipients of Toras Moshe. If we cannot be "mikabel" completely, we must attempt to adhere to the mesorah described in the first mishna of Pirkei Avos.

It is noteworthy that the three things recorded in that mishna in Avos - be deliberate in judgement, develop many disciples, and make a fence for the Torah - relate to the theme of humility which is the very essence of mesorah. An arrogant person makes snap judgements, without consultation, and "pushes the envelope" to the limit. A humble person, cognizant of human frailty, is more deliberate, consults with peers and students, and allows for a margin of error.

Unfortunately, this conservative approach is attacked by promoters of various agendas, often with inappropriate self-assuredness. Even sincere Torah Jews sometimes fail to appreciate the mishna's long view, and criticize rabbonim who resist the zeitgeist.

Ironically, in Rav Chaim's words, the more a person negates himself, the greater he becomes. Only Moshe Rabbeinu, the humblest of all men, reached his full potential. Remarkably, the phrase "be all that you can be" is associated with military service, which demands selflessness and even self-sacrifice for a noble goal.

In a further irony, the more popular restatement of this theme has a chasidic source. The Rebbe Reb Zyshe told his followers that he did not fear that he would be asked by the heavenly court, "Why weren't you Moshe Rabbeinu, R. Akiva, Rav Ashi, the Rambam, or the Ba'al Shem Tov". Only one question worried him: "Reb Zyshe, why weren't you Reb Zyshe?"

Self-centered modern society promotes self-fulfillment, gratification of one's physical and psychological needs and wants, and self-actualization, the maximum fulfillment of one's potential.

The Torah teaches that these two goals are contradictory. Moshe reached the highest level of self-actualization precisely because he humbly negated his sense of self, and lived as an absolute servant of his Master. May all of us learn from his example and attempt to understand the Torah without a personal agenda. Paradoxically, by this self-negation we will be enabled to narrow the line between who we can be and who we are.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/rtwe_bahalos.html

[From last year]

RABBI MAYER TWERSKY

CONSEQUENCES AND REVERBERATIONS

Now on this matter there is a warning in the scripture which says "Take heed in the plague of tzara'as ... remember what the Lord thy G-d did unto Miriam by the way (Devarim 24:9). That is to say, consider what befell Miriam the prophetess who spoke against her brother, ... Now she did not speak despitely of him but erred only in that she put him on a level with other prophets; nor was he resentful about all of these things, for it is said, "Now the man Moses was very meek" (Bamidbar 12:3). Nevertheless, she was forthwith punished with tzara'as. How much more then does this apply to wicked and foolish people who are profuse in speaking great and boastful things! ...

... Now the way of the company of the scornful and wicked is this: in the beginning they are profuse in words, as in the matter whereof it is said, "A fool's voice cometh through a multitude of words" (Koheles 5:2). Thence thy go on to speak to the discredit of the righteous, as in the manner whereof it is said, "Let the lying lips be dumb which speak arrogantly against the righteous" (Tehilim 31:19). Thence they become accustomed to speak against the prophets and to discredit their words, as in the manner whereof it is said, "Bu they mocked the messengers of G-d and despised his words and scoffed at his prophets (Divrei Hayamim 2, 36:16); moreover it is said, "They have set their mouth against heaven and their tongue walketh through the earth" (Tehilim

73:9). What brought it to pass that they set their mouth against Heaven? Their tongue, which first walked through the earth. Such is the conversation of the wicked, occasioned by their idling at street corners, in the gatherings of the ignorant, and in the feasting of drunkards. But the conversation of the worthy ones in Israel is none other than the words of Torah and wisdom; therefore the Holy One, blessed is he, aids them and bestows wisdom upon them, as it is said, "And they that feared the Lord spoke together every man to his neighbor, and the Lord hearkened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name" (Malachi 3:17). (1)

The foregoing passage from Rambam's Mishnah Torah is remarkable in many respects - e.g., the analysis of Miriam's error, the symbiotic coupling of Torah and chochmah, and the description of the inexorable progression from lashon hara to heresy. While each of these is obviously worthy of exposition, the constraints of the present forum do not allow for such a lengthy presentation. Let us, therefore, content ourselves by briefly commenting on the theme of progression (2).

The sequence depicted by the Rambam is sobering. The process begins with constant, frivolous, futile chatter - admittedly religiously unworthy conduct, but seemingly not so terrible - and culminates in heresy! How does such an insidious process unfold?

The answer is rooted in a fundamental religious-psychological principle. What a person does or how a person speaks is doubly important. First of all, the action or speech per se is important. Mitzvos are intrinsically meaningful and meritorious; issurim are intrinsically inimical and evil. Moreover, ones actions and speech also impact upon oneself. Through one's actions and speech one fosters attitudes and inculcates character traits, thereby forming one's personality and influencing future behavior.

Case in point: constant idle chatter is not simply a self-contained waste of time. Such mindless prattle lowers a person, making him petty and hungry for gossip. When he habitually indulges these inclinations, he becomes cynical. This is the inevitable result of engaging in lashon hara whereby one focuses on the faults and negatives within a fellow Jew.

Every Jew abounds with mitzvos as a pomegranate with seeds (3). Speaking lashon hara bespeaks a cynical decision to focus on another Jew's faults, and ignore his virtues.

The insidious process continues to inexorably unfold. Initially, one's cynicism may manifest itself only vis-à-vis one's neighbors or acquaintances. Inevitably, however, the cynical attitude engulfs one's attitude towards tzadikim and prophets, and ultimately even Hashem. Cynicism is the antithesis of faith (4).

The Rambam's poignant description shatters the mythical line of defense which we oft-times present. "Just this once I will sleep late and not daven with a minyan", "It is not such a big deal if I skip the weekly gemorah shiur this Tuesday night" etc. Besides ignoring the fact that every moment is intrinsically invaluable, such rationalizations are skewed because no action or inaction is self-contained. Skipping minyan or a shiur even once weakens our commitment and makes us even more prone to such lapses in the future.

Our actions and speech reverberate. Whatever we do or say must be calibrated accordingly.

1 Rambam, Tumas Tzara'as 16:10 2. Cf. Rashi to Devarim 11:16 "once a person separates himself from Torah, he goes and clings to idolatry" 3. BT Chagigah 27a 4. Cf. Rashi to Devarim 1:12

From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2002 9:43 AM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Parshas Behaaloschah

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5762

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights
A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

"Towards the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light" (Beha'alos'cha 8:2)

IS IT PERMITTED TO OWN A SEVEN-BRANCH CANDLEBRUM
QUESTION: In view of the Biblical prohibition against duplicating

vessels that were used in the Mishkan, would one be allowed to make a seven-branched candelabrum? If one owns such a candelabrum, is he allowed to keep it?

DISCUSSION: The Talmud(1) forbids manufacturing a seven-branched candelabrum, in keeping with the Biblical(2) prohibition(3) of "imitating" any of the vessels (keilim) that were used in the Mishkan. There are three views in the early commentaries in regard to the extent of the prohibition. Some(4) hold that only an exact replica is prohibited. Any slight change from the original in the Mishkan is permitted. Others(5) hold that any menorah which would have been considered kosher b'dieved, is prohibited. Other poskim(6) are even more stringent. They hold that any seven-branched menorah, made out of any metal, regardless of its shape or form, is prohibited. The Shulchan Aruch(7) rules [in the opinion of the Shach] in accordance with the second view, i.e., that even a menorah that is not made exactly like the one in the Mishkan but would be kosher b'dieved is prohibited. He rules, therefore, that if the menorah is not made from gold but from other types of metals; if the replica is made without the decorative cups, knobs, or flowers that were part of the original menorah; if the menorah is shorter than the 18 tefachim (4.5-6 feet) that the original menorah measured, it is still prohibited to replicate. There are, however, some poskim who follow the third approach, that a menorah which would not have been considered kosher even b'dieved is still prohibited. In their opinion, it is forbidden to make any menorah, no matter what its shape or form, if it has seven branches. Even a menorah which is made to hold candles and not oil would be prohibited according to this strict interpretation of the halachah(8). A menorah which is round or square would also be prohibited(9). There is a debate among latter-day poskim as to whether the halachah should follow the [Shach's interpretation of the] Shulchan Aruch's lenient ruling or the stricter ruling of other poskim(10). The poskim are also undecided about whether the prohibition applies only to the manufacture of such a menorah, or also to keeping it in one's possession. The poskim are also in doubt concerning the status of an eight-branched menorah of which one branch broke off(11). Since this prohibition is of Biblical origin, we must, wherever possible, be stringent when in doubt. Therefore: 1. Any menorah with six, eight, or nine branches may be made and kept in one's possession. 2. It is prohibited to make a seven-branched menorah out of any metal whatsoever. 3. A seven-branched menorah made out of wood or porcelain is permitted(12). 4. A round, triangular or square menorah with seven branches is also included in this prohibition. Many poskim permit a seven-branched electric menorah(13), while others forbid it(14). Ideally, it is best to refrain from making one. If one happens to have such a menorah, many poskim allow one to retain it(15).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Rosh ha-Shanah 24a. 2 Tosfos, Avodah Zarah 43b. 3 Yisro 20:20. 4 The view of the Chacham Tzvi 60. See also Meiri (Rosh ha-Shanah 24a) who says that any deviation from the menorah in the Mishkan is permitted. 5 Ma'harik (75), in explanation of the view of Tosfos. 6 Bechor Shor (Rosh ha-Shanah, ibid.) 7 Y.D. 141:8. 8 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 141:14-15, rejecting the view of Mishnas Chachamim who permitted a seven-branched candle menorah. 9 Bechor Shor says that even according to the view of the Shulchan Aruch, a round menorah would be prohibited, since we do not find that the order in which the candles are placed invalidates a kosher menorah. 10 Pischei Teshuvah, Birkei Yosef and Sho'el u'Meishiv 3:71 rule strictly. Many other poskim, quoted in Darkei Teshuvah 141:56, Yabia Omer 1:12 and Yechaveh Da'as 3:61 rule leniently. Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:31, without quoting the various views, rules that only a kosher menorah is prohibited to replicate. He is undecided about an oil menorah which cannot hold the required minimum of half a lug. 11 See Darkei Teshuvah 141:52-53, who remains in doubt concerning these questions and quotes several views. See Birkei Yosef, however, who relates an episode where a seven-branched candelabrum was made and the Rabbis of Yerushalayim ruled that it must be removed. 12 Shach Y.D. 141. 13 Yesodei Yeshurun 1 pg. 47; Mishpatei Uziel Y.D. 18. 14 Shearim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 168:4 quoting Chavalim ba-Ne'imim 3:54; Yaskil Avdi 7:16. 15 See Yabia Omer and Yechaveh Da'as, ibid. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily

Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross+@torah.org . Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 learn@torah.org Baltimore, MD 21208

From: Ohr Somayach [ohr@ohr.edu] Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2002 12:32 PM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Beha'alotcha * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Beha'alotcha For the week ending 4 Sivan 5762 / May 24 & 25, 2002 - In Israel and 21 Sivan 5762 / May 31 & June 1, 2002 - Outside of Israel Sponsored by Kof-K Kosher Supervision <http://www.kof-k.org> OVER THE SHOULDER

"And when the Aron (Holy Ark) traveled..." (10:35)

Take a look at this week's Torah reading in a Sefer Torah and you'll see something unique.

Even if you can't read Hebrew, you'll notice that there is a small passage separated from the rest of the text by two upside down letters.

Nowhere else in the Torah will you find inverted letters. What is the hidden message of this anomaly?

The inverted letters are noons. Noon is the first letter of the world nafila which means "fall down."

"And when the Aron traveled..."

When we go against the Will of the G-d, we fall spiritually. G-d then distances Himself from us. Our withdrawal provokes His withdrawal. He "travels" away from us. The traveling of the Holy Ark symbolizes G-d "traveling" away from the Jewish People when they sin.

When you invert a letter, it points in the opposite direction. It looks back. In The Song of Songs, G-d is compared to a deer: "My Beloved is like a deer."

When a deer runs away, it always turns to look back. When Hashem "runs away" from us, He, like the deer, is always "looking back" to see how we are. He is always looking out for us even as He distances from us.

This is the symbolism of the backward-facing noons. Even in a time of nefila, of spritual decline, G-d is looking backward "over His shoulder", watching out for us.

Similarly it says in the Song of Songs that "G-d is watching us from the windows, peeking out at us from between the cracks." When someone watches you from a window, not only can he see you, but you can see him. But when he looks at you from between the cracks, you don't see him.

There are times when we can't see G-d in our lives, when we feel that He has "run away". However, we should know that He is still peeking out from between the cracks of this world (whose very name and essence is concealment), watching and guarding our every move.

Sources: Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshutz in Ahavat Yonatan as heard from Rabbi C. Z. Senter

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From: RABBI RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM LIST [parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2002 7:03 AM To: Shabbat_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Parshiot Behaalotcha (Diaspora) and Shelach (Israel) DIASPORA: Parshat BEHA'ALOTCHA (Numbers: 8:1-12:16) Efrat, Israel -The Book of Numbers begins with optimistic faith in the future, picturing a newly-freed nation divided into twelve (or more correctly thirteen) tribes united around a Sanctuary of the Divine Presence poised to enter the Promised Land. Tragically it soon degenerates into a despairing mass of cantankerous, querulous rebels who are doomed to die out in the desert. What and why happened - and how can we prevent such a dismal denouement in the future (or better still, in our present)?

A careful study of the Biblical text in our Torah portion will provide the clue for our understanding. First of all, the Biblical segment called 'Behalotcha' contains many seemingly desperate elements, - from the

kindling of the menorah lights, to the election of the Levites, to Pesach Sheni (the second chance to bring the Pascal lamb sacrifice), to the Israelites' preparation for war, to the mystery of the mito'nenim - which are strangely devoid of a connective thread. Indeed, the very first subject of the menorah hardly seems to belong in the Book of Numbers; logic dictates that it should have been recorded in the portions of Trumah and Tetzaveh in the Book of Exodus, in the context of the description of the Sanctuary accoutrements. Rashi hardly provides us with a solution when he links these first verses to the offerings of the tribal princes recorded at the conclusion of last week's Torah Portion, Naso, suggesting that Aaron was disappointed in not having been included in the dedication of the princes. G-d's comment concerning the higher calling involved in the task of preparing and kindling the menorah each morning still sounds like a poor consolation prize for not having been chosen to participate in the grand dedication ceremony, and doesn't really explain why this lofty obligation had not been set down earlier in the Torah portions dealing with the Sanctuary. There are also two difficult word usages in our portion. The first appears in the context of the "second chance" to bring the Pascal sacrifice for those who were unable to bring it on the preferred date, the fourteenth day of Nisan, because they were either "ritually impure due to contact with a corpse or in a place far away from you or your generations" (Numbers 9:10). What does it mean to be far from "your generations"? And the second difficult Hebrew word, which occurs only once in the Bible, is the rather cryptic Biblical statement that the Israelites had to suffer a plague of Divine fire because they were evil "mito'nenim" in the ears of G-d (Numbers 11:1). What does "mito'nenim" - usually translated as complainers, (the word is usually written 'mitlonenim') - really mean?

I believe that the very first issue we must attempt to understand is the symbolism of the menorah, which contains seven branches as well as flowers; the menorah is in actuality a tree which gives out light. If we turn back to the very first Biblical story of the Garden of Eden - indeed, the very introduction to the Bible - we find that the "tree of life" remains guarded in splendid isolation until humanity perfects itself and returns to the primordial period of harmony and peace. This is the goal of Judaism, the mission of Israel to the world: to prepare and kindle the menorah, to bring the "tree of life" to all of humanity by perfecting the world in the Kingship of G-d. We are truly to be a holy nation and a Kingdom of Priests-Kohanim, a menorah, light unto the nations of the world.

It is crucial that we never lose sight of our mission, that we remain committed to the prophetic vision of a perfected society and a return to Eden. Each of the incidents in the Torah portion of Behalotcha deals specifically with leadership - and stresses the necessity of inspired leadership reminding the Israelites of each generation to attempt to fulfill their lofty mission of tikkun olam, world perfection.

This is the logic behind the Biblical understanding that an individual may be physically distanced from Jerusalem when he is obligated to bring the Pascal sacrifice - and he may also be spiritually distanced, "removed from his generation," from the traditions of his forbears, from the vision of his Biblical heritage. Indeed, Rashi even comments that "one can even be standing at the threshold of the Sanctuary," but because he is far away from his generations, he may not even think to enter and give his Pascal offering. Such an individual is given a second chance to become inspired on Pesach Sheni.

Most important of all is our Torah portion's description of the "kvetching" Jews who refuse to conquer the Land of Israel and querulously whine for meat, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. They are "K'mito'nenim" - a word which sounds like complainers but which is actually derived from onen, a mourner for a deceased parent (as interpreted by HaRav Samson Raphael Hirsch). I would suggest that they have indeed lost their parents, they have lost the Abrahamic tradition of the 'covenant between the pieces', they have lost the patriarchal and matriarchal dream of the Biblical return to Eden and repair of humanity.

Fascinatingly enough, the Da'at Zekenim suggests that the phrase means that they saw themselves as mourners when they anticipated the war in conquest of Israel; they were afraid to engage in a combat

which might mean the loss of Israeli lives. I would suggest that this interpretation is also linked to what I've just explained: a nation bereft of its national goal and national ideals is frightened to risk individual lives because it no longer participates in an eternal life based upon eternal values which is necessary if it is to enjoy a meaningful future. We must constantly inspire every generation to be committed to our traditional ideals in order to face future challenges with courage and faith. Only then shall we merit kindling the menorah so that the Tree of Life from Eden may be restored and regained.
Shabbat Shalom

From: elaine@jewishdestiny.com Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2002 4:35 AM Subject: RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS

Parsha Archive May 31 2002 BEHALOTCHA Great projects are oftentimes derailed by small details. The Jewish people are marching towards their goal of the Land of Israel. Moshe tells Yitro: "We are travelling to the place that the Lord has promised to us." The stay in the desert will be a relatively short one, barely two years. The generation of slaves in Egypt is on the verge of becoming an independent nation in its own promised land. And suddenly the whole thing begins to unravel. Yitro abandons them and returns to Midian, thereby weakening the resolve of the people to enter and conquer the Land of Israel. The Jews complain about their diet in the desert, rebel against Moshe, complain against G-d, become frustrated and depressed and the grand march to Israel is aborted.

Small problems and prickly details undo great schemes. The Torah teaches us that the reaction of even one individual such as Yitro to the grand scheme can be sufficient to destroy the plan. Yitro has his reasons for leaving the Jewish people and returning to his home in Midian. Some of his reasons are truly lofty and spiritual ones - he wants to introduce the ideas of monotheism in his pagan society. Nevertheless, the damage done by his leaving the camp of Israel in the desert becomes irreparable. The Jews suffer a loss of morale and confidence. Their mood turns sour. And when one's mood is dark, no menu or diet is good, no leadership is acceptable, no faith can be sustained. The great opportunity for entry into the Land of Israel is lost for the generation of those who left Egypt.

Small details and foul moods combine to create catastrophe. This scenario is present in all generations of Jewish history, certainly in ours. There are many unpleasant details that darken the general Jewish scene. If we fall prey to those problems and interrupt our grand march towards a Torah society and the strengthening of Israel, we shall also suffer from the loss of the opportunity presented to us in our time. To see the large picture, to rise above the weaknesses of time and detail and to be optimistic and hopeful - this is the challenge the Torah reading presents before us.

May we be worthy of this challenge and escape the trap of the desert that engulfed our ancestors.

Shabat shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

MessageFrom: chrysler [rachrysl@netvision.net.il] Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2002 5:15 PM To: Midei Parsha Subject: Midei Shabbos by RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER Vol. 9 No. 33

Parshat Beha'aloscha One Sin Leads to Another The Gemara in Shabbos (116a) cites a Machlokes between Rebbi and Raban Shimon ben Gamliel. It explains how, according to Rebbi, the Parshah of "Vayehi bi'n'so'a ho'Oron"(10:35), is written in its correct place, and the two 'Nunin' there serve as a form of brackets (parenthesis), symbolizing that these two Pesukim are 'a Book on their own'. And how consequently, the Torah consists of seven books, rather than five (in keeping with the Pasuk in Mishlei 9:1) "He carved its pillars seven". Raban Shimon ben Gamliel, on the other hand, holds that the Torah consists of five books and not seven. He considers these two Pesukim to be out of place, and the two (back to front) 'Nunin' indicate that they belong fifty Parshiyos back in Bamidbar (where the Torah deals with the journeys in the desert). And the reason the Torah inserts them here is 'to divide between one punishment and another'. (I have deviated

slightly from Rabeinu Bachye, who establishes Raban Shimon ben Gamliel as a third opinion in the Gemara, rather than being synonymous with the Tana Kama).

According to Rashi, the Gemara is referring to the two sins which follow immediately - their grumbling about the lack of meat (which began already during the first three days [before the Parshah of "Vayehi bi'n'so'a ho'Oron"]), and their unspecified grumbling (which the commentaries ascribe to their having to travel in the desert). Tosfos however, disagrees (presumably because then the two sins are mentioned in the reverse order (see Ramban on the Pasuk), and besides, both sins are then written after "Vayehi bi'n'so'a ho'Oron", leaving us with no real division. Consequently, the Ramban (as well as many other commentaries) cite the Medrash that Yisrael sinned when they left Har Sinai (which the Torah has just described in the previous Pasuk), by running away from it 'like a child runs away from school'. And that is the first sin, the sin which the Gemara describes as having taken place before "Vayehi bi'n'so'a ho'Oron". In fact, the Ramban goes even further. In his opinion, it is not just two punishments juxtaposed which the Torah is trying to avoid, but three: running away from Har Sinai like a child ... , and their grumbling, first about travelling and then about the shortage of meat.

And what the Torah sets out to avoid here is that Yisrael should develop a Chazakah (a triumvirate) of punishments. One of the other punishments, (as opposed to just sins) suggests the Ramban, is the fact that they did not enter Eretz Yisrael immediately, as they would otherwise have done.

The difficulty with the Ramban's interpretation of Chazal lies in the fact that Chazal only refer to two punishments and not three. According to his explanation they should have said, not 'to divide between one punishment and another', but 'in order to divide between two of the punishments and the third'. And what's more, it would then have been more appropriate to make the break between the second sin and the third (in order to stop the Chazakah), rather than between the first and second. Maybe that is why Rabeinu Bachye, who often follows in the footsteps of the Ramban, prefers here to learn like Rashi. In fact, he equates the sin of Yisrael's desire with that of their running away from Har Sinai. Yisrael ran away from Har Sinai like a child from school, he explains, because they had had enough of 'ruchniyus' (spirituality). They wanted more 'gashmiyus' (physicality), which they deliberately developed, as implied by the words "his'avu ta'avah" (they desired [to have] a desire). That was their first sin, as Rashi explains.

I would suggest another way of understanding the Gemara in Shabbos. Rabeinu Bachye himself points out how their complaint about the travels in the desert and their desire for meat did not end there. (Besides what Chazal say, that they immediately went on to grumble about the prohibition of incest), this Parshah is followed in quick succession, by the Lashon ha'ra of Miriam, and the Parshah of the Spies (one sin leads to another - all the sins note, are connected with evil speech). So we see that we are dealing here, not with one or even two, sins, but with a spate of sins that takes up the whole of this Parshah as well as the next (and even beyond).

A great man once said that when, in the World to Come, a person is taken to task for idle chatter, he will not be asked why he spoke devarim beteilim for so many hours, but why he began speaking in the first place. Having begun, he cannot help but continue, and 'O'nes Rachmana patreih' (one is not taken to task for something that is beyond his control). It is his opening words which he could, and should, have nipped in the bud.

The same concept can be applied to the idea of 'Aveirah goreres aveirah'. Having sinned once, he is, to a certain degree, an O'nes on his subsequent sins, and the brunt of his guilt lies on his first sin (perhaps we can refer to them as 'the cause'). The subsequent sins are one string of sins, rather than so many individual ones ('the effect'). And that is what Chazal mean when they say that the Torah inserts "Vayehi bi'n'so'a ho'Oron" 'to divide between one punishment and another. Because in this way, the cause (running away from Har Sinai), is on one side of the divider, and the effect (the ensuing sins), on the other.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Sunday, May 26, 2002 3:24 AM To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT62 -31: Parashat Beha'alotekha Yeshivat Har Etzion Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Summaries Of Sichot Delivered By The Roshei Yeshiva Beha'alotkha SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A OBLIGATION AND INITIATIVE Summarized by Ari Mermelstein

In the beginning of this week's parasha, Rashi explains why the command for Aharon to light the menorah follows the section dealing with the sacrifices brought by the tribal leaders (nesi'im). Upon witnessing the tribal leaders' role in the consecration of the mishkan, Aharon grew envious of the great honor which G-d bestowed upon them. In order to allay his anxiety, G-d gave Aharon the daily task of lighting the menorah, an honor which far outweighed that of the tribal leaders.

The Ramban (Bamidbar 8:1) is disturbed by this midrash. Did Aharon not know that the tribal leaders' sacrifices paled in comparison with the sacrifices he was designated to bring at the consecration of the mishkan? Furthermore, why would G-d choose to console Aharon specifically by honoring him with the daily lighting of the menorah, as opposed to his other functions in the mishkan, such as the daily incense offering or the Yom Kippur service?

In an attempted defense of the midrash, the Ramban proposes that Aharon's jealousy stemmed not from a sense that his honor had been slighted, but rather from a recognition that the nesi'im had VOLUNTEERED their korbanot. Aharon coveted the spontaneity and creativity which that sense of good-will afforded them. In contrast, Aharon's role, though important, was not a matter of choice, and he understood that this obligation might lead to a mechanical performance of his duties. The Ramban ultimately rejects this explanation because it fails to explain why granting him another obligation (the lighting of the menorah) should console him.

It is to this last point in the Ramban that I address my words. Although the Ramban felt it illogical that the Torah should try to remedy the situation by adding to Aharon's obligations, it seems to me that in doing so, the Torah was actually solving Aharon's problem. The Ramban writes (Hilkhos Kelei Ha-mikdash 3:1): "It is a positive commandment for Levites to be available and ready to perform their duties in the Temple, whether they wish to do so or not ..." However, Aharon erred in his conclusion that coerced duties would be devoid of any spiritual content and spontaneity; rather, only through a sense of obligation and unwavering commitment could he achieve religious fulfillment. Therefore, G-d presented him with an additional obligation, to demonstrate that only through a sense of total commitment could he attain true spontaneity in his worship.

This message is particularly relevant today. Western culture has slowly crept into the beit midrash - not Western culture symbolized by earrings and long hair, but rather something more subtle. Individualism is a hallmark of the Western world, and one's right to do that which is most pleasing to him is taken for granted. This sense of liberalism has had a marked impact in the beit midrash. No longer is the sense of obligation (which the Torah stressed to Aharon as the ideal) widespread among the "yoshvei beit ha-midrash." A subjective preference to learn in one's room rather than in the beit midrash, or to learn some books rather than others, takes precedence. In contrast to this new wave of independence, the Maharal quotes an appropriate midrash (Netivot Olam, Netiv Ahavat Ha-reia, chapter one): "'The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer in the evening'" (Bamidbar 28:4) - zeh klal gadol ba-Torah, this is a major principle of the Torah." The message is clear: consistency stemming from a sense of obligation is a basic tenet in service of G-d.

In my life, I have had personal experience regarding the importance of this message. I had two very gifted friends with me in yeshiva, one of whom was a free spirit doing as he pleased. When the yeshiva slept, he learned, and when it learned, he slept. If the yeshiva learned Zevachim or Bava Kama, he learned Menachot or Bava

Metzia. My second friend was very disciplined, always doing what he was supposed to do. Both of my friends became important people, but my disciplined friend, who always felt a sense of obligation, became the more creative and spontaneous of the two. He developed a strong base for himself which allowed him to continue to grow. By contrast, my other friend wasted so much creative energy, never doing what he was supposed to do and solely doing what he wanted to, that his potential remains untapped.

Aharon heeded the message of the Torah and internalized it. The Torah states regarding the commandment to light the menorah, "and so did Aharon" (Bamidbar 8:3). Rashi there comments that this statement intends "to praise Aharon that he did not alter" the procedure which the Torah instituted for him. Apparently, Aharon understood that service out of a sense of obligation, performed with consistency, was the preferred path in avodat Hashem (divine service). We, too, should hearken to this message, understand it, and implement it in our daily lives as benei Torah and ovdei Hashem.

(Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Beha'alotekha 5757.)

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From: Kol Torah [koltorah@hotmail.com] Sent: Friday, May 24, 2002 5:35 PM To: koltorah@koltorah.org Subject: Parshat Naso
KOL TORAH A Student Publication of the Isaac and Mara Benmergui Torah Academy of Bergen County Parshat Naso 14 Sivan 5762 May 25, 2002 Vol.11 No.28
[From last week]

**YOM HASHOAH AND TISHA BEAV
BY RABBI HOWARD JACHTER**

Introduction Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik was less than enthusiastic about our practice to observe Yom Hashoah (see Nefesh Harav pp.197-198) on the twenty-seventh of Nissan. He felt that we should integrate mourning and remembering the Holocaust into our observance of Tisha Beav. In this essay, we seek to demonstrate how a seemingly peculiar opinion of the Rambam might support Rav Soloveitchik's argument. This essay is based on studies with my cousin Yehuda Brandiss of Efrat, Israel. Gemara Rosh Hashana 18b The Gemara cites the verse in Zecharia chapter eight that states, "The fast of the fourth [month - Shiva Asar Betammuz], the fast of the fifth [month - Tisha Beav], the fast of the seventh [month - Tzom Gedalia], and the fast of the tenth [month - Asara Betevet] will be for the House of Judah [times of] joy and jubilation." The Gemara notes the contradiction in the verse, as it describes these days as a joyous and yet as days of fasting. The Gemara cites Rav Papa's explanation that the Pasuk alludes to three different historical periods. "When there will be peace - these days shall be for joy and jubilation; when there will be government decrees [against the Jews] - these days will be for fasting; when there will be no peace yet no government decrees, we will have the choice whether to fast or not." The Gemara adds that these rules do not apply to Tisha Beav because of the many misfortunes that occurred on this day (see Tosafot ad. loc. s.v. Ho'il). Accordingly, when there is neither peace nor government decrees, fasting on Tzom Gedalya, Asara Betevet, and Shiva Asar Betammuz is optional and Tisha Beav is mandatory. The Maggid Mishneh (explaining Rambam's Hilchot Taaniot 5:5) writes "the Jewish People have accepted to fast on these days and thus we are obligated to fast [on Tzom Gedalia, Asara Betevet, and Shiva Asar Betammuz] until the Bait Hamikdash is rebuilt." Thus, it is a rabbinic obligation to fast on Tisha Beav and a custom to fast on Tzom Gedalia, Asara Betevet, and Shiva Asar Betammuz. However, during times of government decrees against the Jews, there is a rabbinical obligation to fast on these three fast days. This entails a much stricter observance of these fast days, including a greater reluctance to permit someone who experiences difficulties fasting, to eat. We treat rabbinical obligations with greater stringency than customary obligations. Moreover, the Biur Hagra (Orach Chaim 550:2) approvingly cites the Ramban who believes that in times of government decrees (when it is a rabbinical obligation to fast the three fasts) one must observe the three fasts the same way we observe Tisha Beav. This includes fasting a full twenty-five hour period and

abstaining from bathing, wearing leather shoes, and marital relations as well as refraining from eating and drinking. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited in Nefesh Harav p.197) reports that there were eminent rabbinical authorities that followed the Ramban's view during World War II, when there were specific government decrees against the Jews. Rav Hershel Schachter clarified to me that this applied only to those Jews who lived in the countries whose government issued decrees against the Jews. I have not heard of rabbis in Israel who have stated that the same applies today because of the Palestinian Authority's encouragement to murder Jews. This is probably because Jews do not live under the sovereign authority of the Palestinian Authority. The Gemara refers to a tragic situation such as that which existed during World War II, where Jews lived in countries whose governments issued decrees against the Jews. The Palestinian Authority's actions are a serious problem, but do not seem to rise to the level of government decree against the Jews.

The Ritva and Rambam The Ritva and Rambam argue whether Jews observed Tisha Beav during the period when the Second Temple functioned. The Ritva (Rosh Hashana 18b s.v.U'farkinan) explains that "a time of peace" refers to a time when there is Jewish sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael and the Bait Hamikdash is functioning. He explains that "a time of government decrees" refers to a time when the Bait Hamikdash is destroyed and Jews are being persecuted. The intermediate period is when the Bait Hamikdash is destroyed and the Jews are not being persecuted. According to the Ritva, none of the fasts were observed during the period of the Second Temple. Rashi (Rosh Hashana 18b s.v. Detalinhu Beinyan) appears to agree with the Ritva. The Rambam, on the other hand in his commentary to the Mishna (Rosh Hashana 1:3) believes that the Jews did fast on Tisha Beav during the period of the Second Temple "because of the many tragedies that occurred on this day."

Intuitively, the Ritva appears to be much more logical and convincing. It appears counterintuitive to observe Tisha Beav when the Bait Hamikdash is functioning. The Rambam, though, apparently believes that Tisha Beav is not a day devoted exclusively to mourning for the Bait Hamikdash. Rather, it includes mourning for all of the destructions and pogroms that occurred to the Jewish People throughout the ages. A proof to this is the venerated Ashkenazic practice to recite Kinot for the tragedies caused by the Crusaders to the German Jewish communities of Speyers, Worms, and Mayence and the venerated Sephardic practice to recite Kinot for the expulsion from Spain and Portugal. Therefore, since the establishment of the second Bait Hamikdash did not constitute an end to Jewish suffering, the Jewish People continued to fast on Tisha Beav. Of course, the Rambam (Hilchot Taaniot 5:19) agrees that when the Mashiach will arrive, all of the fasts will be transformed into days of rejoicing. My cousin Yehuda Brandiss adds that when the Mashiach will arrive we will recognize that all of our collective tragedies and suffering were part of the historical process that was necessary for the Mashiach to arrive. Thus, we will view our earlier sorrows as cause for celebration, because these tragedies set the stage for the arrival of the Mashiach. According to this approach, we understand the aforementioned comment of the Maggid Mishneh, that we must observe all of the fasts until the Bait Hamikdash will be rebuilt. Why do not we say that when there is a serious presence of Jews in Eretz Yisrael that we may cease observing Tzom Gedalia (which mourns the loss of the last bastion of organized Jewish settlement in Israel, as explained by Rambam Hilchot Taaniot 5:2)? Why do we not say that when Jews enjoy sovereign control over Jerusalem we may cease observing Asara Betevet and Shiva Asar Betammuz? The question is strengthened by the accepted practice not to perform Kriah upon seeing the city of Jerusalem because it is under Israeli sovereignty (unlike the Temple Mount, for which we must still perform Kriah). An answer might be that these three fasts are essentially branches and extensions of the fast of Tisha Beav, since Tisha Beav is a day of mourning for all of the tragedies that befell the Jews. Thus, only when we will not observe Tisha Beav will we cease to observe the other three fasts.

Rav Soloveitchik and Yom Hashoah Accordingly, we can appreciate Rav Soloveitchik's attitude regarding Yom Hashoah. He felt that we should subsume Yom Hashoah into our observance of Tisha Beav, as Tisha Beav is the day that is designated to mourn for all Jewish tragedies. Indeed, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein related (at the 5760 convention of the Rabbinical Council of America) that the Rav convinced Prime Minister Menachem Begin to make this change, when Begin met the Rav during a visit Begin made to the United States in 1978. We should parenthetically note that I heard from Rav Aharon Soloveitchik (in a talk to students at Yeshiva University in 1986) that Menachem Begin's father, Dov Begin, served as

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's Gabbai in Brisk, Lithuania, and the two enjoyed a particularly close relationship. Thus, there is a history of a warm relationship between the families of the Rav and Prime Minister Begin. Rav Lichtenstein relates that when Prime Minister Begin returned to Israel after meeting with the Rav, the former tried to convince the appropriate authorities to make the change. The Israeli government did not make the change due to pragmatic concerns such as the fact that the Israeli education system would not have an opportunity to teach about the Holocaust, since Tisha Beav is observed when Israeli schools are on vacation. Perhaps in the future a change will be made. Rabbi Yosef Adler, principal of the Torah Academy of Bergen County (who is a devoted student of the Rav), notes that until the broader community makes the change we should observe Yom Hashoah on the twenty-seventh of Nissan.

Rabbi Adler explains that until we properly integrate commemoration of the Shoah into Tisha Beav observances, we should observe Yom Hashoah on the twenty-seventh day of Nissan. He says that it is better to remember the Holocaust on Yom Hashoah with the rest of the Jewish community, than to neglect it altogether. Indeed, Rav Soloveitchik once told me that one who studies about the Nazi Holocaust fulfills the Mitzva of remembering what Amalek has done to us. This comment is consistent with Rav Moshe Soloveitchik's (the Rav told me that people inaccurately attribute this comment to Rav Chaim) celebrated comment that anyone who identifies with the ideology of Amalek (baseless hatred of the Jewish People) has the Halachic status of Amalek. Thus, it is vital for us to properly study and commemorate the European Holocaust, even if we do so on a less than ideal occasion.

Conclusion Rav Soloveitchik believes that Tisha Beav is the designated day for mourning all Jewish tragedies, including the Holocaust. We hope that the broader Jewish community will agree to observe Yom Hashoah on Tisha Beav. Until then, we should observe Yom Hashoah on the twenty-seventh day of Nissan. We eagerly anticipate the time when Tisha Beav will be a day of rejoicing for the Jewish People, when we will no longer know of sorrow and tragedy.

Halacha of the Week I asked the Rav (in 1983) if he felt it appropriate to purchase a German produced automobile. Rav Soloveitchik responded that he was not sure, because a conflict of Torah values is involved. On one hand, the Torah commands us to remember what Amalek did to us. On the other hand, the Torah believes that the children should not be punished for the sins of their parents. Rav Soloveitchik said that each individual should follow his moral intuition regarding this matter. Rav Avraham Shapira (the former Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel) expressed similar sentiments when I posed this question to him in 1984.

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This publication contains Torah matter and should be treated accordingly.

From: National Council of Young Israel [YI_Torah@lb.bcentral.com] Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2002 9:41 AM To: List Member Subject: Parshat Behalotcha 21 Sivan 5762 June 1, 2002 Daf Yomi: Baba Batra 73
Guest Rabbi: RABBI MENDEL KAUFMAN Young Israel of Briarwood, NY
This D'var Torah is written in memory of my father Yisroel Meir Ben Chaim Tzvi z"l whose Yahrzeit is on 26 Sivan. All of the traditional commentators are puzzled by the placement of Parshat HaMenorah at the beginning of Parshat Behalotcha, immediately following the long recitation of the offerings of the tribal leaders. Rashi, quoting from the Tanchuma, explains that Aaron was chagrined that his tribe, the Leviim, had not participated in the dedication of the Mishkan and the insertion of Parshat HaMenorah, which discusses the privilege of lighting the Menorah, was brought forward to serve as a sort of compensation.

I would like to suggest that the placement of Parshat HaMenorah at the beginning of Parshat Behalotcha serves an additional function. It provides a framework for a sedra which otherwise seems disjointed and lacking in a cohesive structure. If not for the framing of the Parsha, as it were, with Parshat HaMenorah, we would experience the sedra as a series of unrelated topics and events, which took place during Bnai Yisroel's sojourn in the desert. How does Parshat HaMenorah unify the sedra? The Menorah, we learn, was built from one solid ingot of gold and consisted of various components and ornamentation. These included the branches (kanim), cups (gevi'im), knobs (kaftorim) and blossoms (perachim).

Our Chachomim tell us that each component of the four minim taken during the holiday of Succot represents a different type of a Jew. The etrog represents the most righteous Jew, the willow the lowest type of Jew with the Lulav and Hadassim representing those in between. We are then instructed to bring them together in a demonstration of cohesiveness and membership of every type of Jew.

In a similar sense, the different components of the Menorah can be said to represent

different types of Jews. The branches represent the leaders of the nation of Israel holding and supporting while responsible for the overall stability of the nation. The cups represent the teachers who are the source of knowledge. The flame, which burns in the cups, is representative of the light of Torah. The knobs represent the simplest Jew, with their absence of utility; they are simple, unadorned elements in the design. And the last element, the blossoms, can be said to represent the repentant Jew who displays spiritual growth and development and is an ornament that enhances the beauty of the Menorah.

At the core of our sedra we encounter several different groups of Jews. The sedra begins with the consecration of the Levites. The Levites are the teachers of Klal Yisrael and serve in the Temple and can be said to be represented by the cups fixed in the Menorah as they bring the light of Torah to those whom they encounter. We then encounter the next group of Jews who were denied the opportunity to bring the Pascal lamb in its proper time because they were spiritually unclean. They presented their disappointment to Moshe who consulted with HaShem and afforded these people a second opportunity, which was to become the Pesach Sheni. These people are represented by the blossoms fixed in the Menorah for they display spiritual growth and are an example of the gracious response that HaShem extends to those who seek a second opportunity. The next group we encounter is composed of complainers who expressed their dissatisfaction with the Manna and whined for meat as they nostalgically recalled their experiences in Egypt. This group is represented by the knobs found on the Menorah. This lowest type of Jew was goading HaShem to see whether the Al-Mighty had the ability to satisfy their craving for meat (Soforno). The final group that we encounter in this Sedra is the newly formed Sanhedrin, comprised of seventy men. These are the leaders of the people, represented by the branches of the Menorah. Thus we see that the Parshat HaMenorah, placed in the beginning of the Sedra, acts as a unifying theme that represents all the different kinds of Jew that we encounter in the Sedra itself. Furthermore, Parshat HaMenorah reminds us that every Jew, from the most spiritually uplifted to the lowest, are all an integral part of the national Menorah. This point is stressed even more dramatically by the insistence that the Menorah be constructed from only one ingot of gold, thus demonstrating that each element is an indivisible part of the whole.

This approach may also explain the difficulty that Moshe experienced in reference to the Menorah. As Rashi notes, Moshe had difficulty conceptualizing the Menorah until HaShem actually provided him with a model and pointed to a celestial Menorah saying, "So shall you make the Menorah". Moshe's difficulty was in his inability to understand how such diverse groups could be united into one united whole - "Miksha" - and form a cohesive nation. It was this very unity, despite diversity, that HaShem deemed possible and demonstrated it to Moshe. Looking at the Menorah, as a representation of the diverse elements of the Jewish people will allow us appreciate the Midrash, which states, "your opening words enlighten". The commentators explain that each element of the Menorah represents another one of the five books of the Torah. The seven branches of the Menorah are reflective of the seven words in the first sentence of sefer Bereshit. In sefer Shemot the first sentence has eleven words, which corresponds to the eleven buttons while in the first verse of sefer Vayikra there are nine words, which coincide with the nine blossoms. In sefer Bamidbar there are seventeen words, which equal the height of the Menorah, which according to some opinions was seventeen tefachim high (other opinions suggest a height of eighteen tefachim). Finally, the first sentence in sefer Devarim has twenty-two words and corresponds to the identical number of cups on the Menorah. The Menorah is thus representative of the entire Torah. According to tradition the Torah has six hundred thousand letters each one corresponding to another Jewish soul suggesting that every Jewish is precious and inherently critical to the well-being of the whole. For the Halacha states that if one letter is missing the entire Torah is rendered posul. The Talmud (Babba Basra) tells us that if one would like to acquire wisdom he should pray towards the southerly direction consistent with the placement of the Menorah, which represents the wisdom of Torah, and stood on the south side of the Temple. In today's critical times there is little question that we need wisdom and insight to sustain the Jewish people and the land of Israel. We need to look in the direction of the Menorah so as to learn its' lesson of unity and achdus amongst Am Yisrael.
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