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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON BESHALACH - 5763

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[From last year]

From jr@caldera.com To: mj-ravtorah@shamash.org Date: Jan 25 2002 Subject: Shiur HaRAV Soloveichik ZTL on Bshalach bshalach.02

SHIUR HARAV SOLOVEICHIK ZT"L ON PARSHAS B'SHALACH (Shiur date: 2/9/58, Nordlicht tape 5223)

(Note that this Shiur was given at a YU RIETS Alumni dinner where the Rav's theme was Shira and HaKaras HaTov)

The Krias HaTorah for Parshas Bshalach includes 2 Shiros, Az Yashir and the Haftorah of Vatashar Dvorah. On the Seventh day of Pesach we again read Az Yashir with a different Haftorah, Shiras Dovid (Shmuel 2, Chapter 22) which is also Shira.

However Shira is not limited just to these 2 occasions. Indeed, it would not be a stretch to say that Shira is a fundamental principle of Judaism. When we recite Kiddush and Havdalah over a Kos, it is a Kiyum of Shira, as Shira requires Kos. The Rambam says that even according to the opinion that Birkas HaMazon does not require Kos, he agrees that if one did use a Kos for Birkas HaMazon he fulfills a Kiyum of Shira. Hence there is the Chalos, effect, of Shira Al HaYayin. The same thing applies to the blessings of Ayrusin and Nisuin, Asher Kidesh Ydid M'beten (Bris Milah), Shehechyanu on Yom Tov, Borei M'Oray Haish and Bsamim. Every Bracha that is Msudar Al HaKos carries with it a Kiyum Shira. Otherwise it would not be included in the overall framework of the Kos. These Brachos fit into the principle of Ayn Omrim Shira Ela Al HaYayin, Shira is only recited over wine.

There are also Kiyumim of Shira that we recite without a Kos. For example, Hallel on Yom Tov is a Kiyum Shira. Also the Kedusha that we recite 3 times daily is a Kiyum Shira. When we say Kshem Shemakdishim Oso Bshmay Marom, we refer to the Shira recited by the angels in heaven. We try to emulate them and also express Shira to Hashem. Chazal held that this Shira recited by the angels is connected to the Shira recited by Yisrael, for the angels cannot recite Kedusha until Yisrael recite their Shira. Apparently Chazal felt that the Kedusha in Shmoneh Esray is a Kiyum of Shira, just like that contained in Az Yashir Moshe.

The Psukei Dzimarah that we recite daily, enclosed by the blessings of Baruch Sh'amar and Yishtabach are also Shira. Before a Jew can pray for his needs he must sing praise to Hashem. Shiru L'Hashem Shir Chadash, Kol Haneshama Thalleh Kah. Whenever the word Hallelukah is used, it is a reference to Shira. The importance of saying Shira every day before one prays for his needs was underscored by the inclusion of the last portions of Psalms in the Psukei Dzimrah, each of which concludes with Hallelukah.

Shira is divided into 2 categories. The first is Shira that said on a miracle and great deliverance that occurs in a supernatural way.

When a miracle occurs that transcends nature we say that Hashem has broken the laws of nature to create the miracle. Chachmei Hachidah say that the Hashgacha was Mshaded, broke, the laws of nature to create the miracle. The Ibn Ezra says that the word Sh-day and the word Shoded have the same root, for sometimes Hashem is a robber, he robs the laws of nature to fulfill His will. Shira that is recited over supernatural events is called Hallel Hamitzri, or as we generally refer to it simply as Hallel. Since Yetzias Mitzrayim was a supernatural process of visible miracles, Chazal established that this Shira that speaks about the miracles at the time of the exodus, should be recited over supernatural miracles, Ninsim Shelo B'derech Hateva. The Shira for supernatural miracles can be recited by great and simple people alike. One need only look at Az Yashir, to see that the Shira was recited by Moshe as well as through all of Bnay Yisrael, from the greatest to the simplest. The Zohar has accepted the opinion of Rabbi Nechemiah, that Bnay Yisrael repeated the entire Shira after Moshe, they did not limit themselves to reciting the refrain of Ashira L'Hashem, as the divine countenance settled on all of them. As Chazal say, a maid witnessed miracles and revelations at the Yam that Yechezkel did not see, hence they all saw and sang the complete Shira to Hashem.

Shira is also recited over the wonder of the continuity of the nature process. This Shira is not said over the breaking of the laws of nature, but rather in celebration of the consistency and continuity of nature. Besides the chapters of Hallel Hamitzri, Dovid Hamelech focused the Psalms on Shira that expresses praise to Hashem for the continuity of nature. Barchi Nafshi Hashem Elokay Meod Gadolata. Chazal called this type of Shira Hallel of Psukei Dzimrah, containing the sections starting with Tehila Ldavid and concluding with Kol Haneshama. We recite these chapters specifically to praise Hashem for the continuity of nature, not because Hashem breaks nature to perform what we call the supernatural.

Those that are familiar with the voice of Chazal (the Rav explained that this is a different level than simply knowing the Gemara, one must understand and appreciate the voice and intent behind what Chazal said) particularly the Rambam, understands that Chazal preferred the Hallel for the continuity of nature over the Hallel Hamitzri. The Gemara in Shabbos (118b) says that one who says Hallel daily is a blasphemer. The Gemara asks is that so? There is a statement by Rabbi Yosi that my portion should be with those that complete Hallel daily? The Gemara answers that it is laudable to recite Hallel Dpsukei Dzimrah daily, but not Hallel Hamitzri. (The Rav noted that this an issue for those that say all of Thillim daily and who come across the Hallel Hamitzri, should they skip it or recite it.) Man's religious experience is not dependent on witnessing miracles and supernatural events. Man can appreciate Hashem more simply by observing nature on a daily basis. In the growth of the organic world around him and in the consistency of mathematical formulae, one can see and appreciate the greatness of Hashem more than through the ten plagues visited on the Egyptians. After all, in comparison to the creation and maintenance of the universe and all of creation, the drowning of 600 Egyptian chariots was a tiny event.

Chazal felt that since Hashem imparted laws into nature, His resorting to any supernatural events for the benefit of someone is to be viewed as a deficiency on the part of the recipients. The will of Hashem is that the routine of nature should never be broken. If Hashem must resort to supernatural miracles to save man, it is the fault of man, for he has sunk to such a depth that he no longer can be saved by natural means. Chazal explain the verse Vayarad Lhatzilo as a Yeridah, degradation, Kavayachol, for

Hashem because He did save them without breaking the laws of nature. The Midrash compares the act of Hashem going down to Egypt, Kvatyachol, and rescuing the Jews through miracles to a Kohen whose Terumah was placed in a cemetery and the only way for the Kohen to retrieve it is to defile himself by entering the cemetery.

The overwhelming contacts that man has with Hashem are through the medium of nature. If one expects to find Hashem through supernatural events, he may never find Him. This is the deficiency of modern man who equates religious commitment with the witnessing of miracles and can't see Hashem in the everyday existence. That is why Chazal said that one should not say Hallel Hamitzri daily. For one who bases his praise and observance of Hashem on supernatural events will be incapable of appreciating the greatness of Hashem. However, Chazal said that one must say Psukei Dzimarah daily in order to appreciate His greatness through nature.

The Rav often mentioned the following principle that has a basis in the Moreh Nevuchim. Who was greater Moshe or Avraham? On the one hand we must say that Moshe was greater as he was the greatest of all prophets. Indeed, the Rambam codifies this in his 13 principles that Moshe was the greatest of all. However on the other hand we must say that Avraham was greater. When Moshe protested that Hashem did not rescue the people (at the end of Parshas Shemos), Hashem rebukes Moshe by comparing his actions to those of the Patriarchs. Rashi quotes the Midrash that Hashem said to Moshe that He recalls the relationship with the Patriarchs who did not question His directions, Chaval Al D'Avdan etc. This idea that the name of Hashem, Elokim, is bound to 3 people, Elokey Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, has become a principle in Judaism. Even though Moshe was the Bchir Min Enushi, the chosen of humankind, he did not attain the term of Elokey Moshe. Why not? From the Rambam one can deduce that Elokey Avraham means the possessive form, the G-d of Hashem. The possessive form implies a sense of ownership. Elokey Avraham means the G-d that belongs to Avraham. Avraham was the owner and Hashem, Kvatyachol, was Avraham's possession. Avraham was Zoche in Hashem, hence He was called Elokey Avraham.

A Jew can own many things, but apparently he also has the ability to own the greatest possible thing, Hashem. How can one make a Kinyan in Hashem? According to the same formula described in the Mishneh in Elu Mitzios for being Zoche in Hefker. Apparently Avraham was Zoche in Hashem because he found Him and He was ownerless. He was like those objects that lacked a sign of ownership, hence Avraham was able to claim Him. There is one difference: Mitziyos are things that one does not have to seek. If he comes across them, without any effort of searching for them, they belong to him. One gets ownership of Hashem through finding, but one must first seek Hashem before he can find and claim Him. Avraham did not find Hashem by chance. Rather he sought Hashem for many years. Only after many years of searching was he able to claim Him.

(The Rav remarked that we tend to know the least about the Chumash. We tend to look for all sorts of sources for interpretations of the Chumash. However the best way to study and appreciate Chumash is to read between the lines. The Chumash tells us more between the lines than is recorded.) Avraham was 75 years old when Hashem first contacts him and tells him to leave Charan. Avraham was either 3 or 43 years old (as the Rambam says) when he recognized that Hashem controls the world. Many years passed after Avraham recognized Hashem without any contact from Him. All this time Avraham was spreading word of Hashem. People would ask Avraham, "have you spoken with your G-d? Have you had any contact with Him?

Avraham would not be deterred from his mission, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable the situation was. He went on seeking Hashem. Because Avraham spent so much effort seeking Hashem, He became his. Batzar Lcha Umtzaucha: if one seeks Hashem despite all the questions that trouble him, despite a generation of technology and great difficulties and Holocaust, eventually you will find Him. However there is a caveat. One can't seek Hashem with his eyes alone. He must put his entire heart and soul into the search.

Avraham's path to Hashem was not through Hallel Hamitzri. He never witnessed Hayam Ra'ah Vayanos. He never saw the mountains trembling. Even the stories of the patriarchs do not describe extreme supernatural events. Even the story of Avraham and Sarah in Egypt was not that miraculous. Avraham sought G-d and found him through nature, through Batzar Lcha. At that point G-d became Elokey Avraham.

Moshe on the other hand did not seek Hashem. He had no questions and problems. He was herding the sheep of his father in law. He shared Yisro's interests and concerns, nothing else bothered him. Suddenly he came across the burning bush and saw Hashem. However there was no Batzar Lcha nor was there any Ubikashetem Misham. Rather Hashem found Moshe and told Moshe to draw close. We see from the story that Moshe was not interested in accepting his mission. Hashem sought and found Moshe, not the reverse. In fact, instead of Hashem being the Kinyan of Moshe, Moshe was the Kinyan of Hashem, who sought him. That is why Moshe is called Eved Hashem. The difference between Elokey Avraham and Eved Hashem is that Hashem belonged to Avraham while Moshe belonged to Hashem. Moshe saw Hashem through Hallel Hamitzri, through Hayam Raah Vayanos. From his first encounter with Hashem at the Sneh, Moshe saw Hashem through supernatural events. Only later after destroying the first set of Luchos did Moshe realize that the only true way to find Hashem is to seek Him out, to search for Him. Moshe asks Hashem to show him His Shechina.

Moshe says that he already saw Hashem at Sinai though Hallel Hamitzri. At the receipt of the second Luchos Moshe says that he now, with the second Luchos, wants to seek Hashem the same way that Avraham did, through Batzar Lcha. At the second Luchos, Hashem did not reveal Himself to Moshe through fire. Rather, he revealed Himself to Moshe through the cloud of the nature process, through the long extended periods of exile and holocaust and disaster, through Batzar Lcha. But Hashem promised Moshe that if he truly seeks Hashem, ultimately he will find Hashem and become the greatest of prophets, which he ultimately became. However since in the beginning Hashem found Moshe and not the reverse, the term Elokey Moshe could no longer be applied to him, as his beginnings were through Hallel Hamitzri and not Hallel Psukei Dzimrah like Avraham. This is a characteristic of Judaism in general. When one comes and asks what is the essence of Judaism in 3 words or less (the Rav said that he agreed with Shamai's approach to the lout who wanted Shamai to teach him all of Torah "on one foot", where Shamai threw him down and walked away. If Shamai's approach was adopted, it would have been clear that all 613 Mitzvos are equivalent in their importance, and perhaps reform movements within Judaism would never have gotten off the ground.) Trying to distill Judaism into succinct principles is difficult at best. Even the Rambam, with his 13 principles of faith, left himself open to criticism from Gedolay Yisrael (e.g. the Chasam Sofer). Judaism always worked with Hallel Psukei Dzimrah and not Hallel Hamitzri.

Judaism always wanted man to understand that to rendezvous with Hashem, to comprehend the full beauty of Judaism and the relationship with Hashem, man must follow the path of Batzar

Lcha Umtzaucha. Judaism states that the rest of the nations of the world can approach Hashem much more readily than Bney Yisrael. Judaism is the most difficult and demanding religion. It carries so many demands and paradoxes that no other religion approaches. All, even psychologists, agree that religious experiences form the most complicated yet fulfilling existence. Take for example, a non-Jew who wants to understand the beauty of religious life. If he wants to come close to G-d in other religions, he must participate in all sorts of public religious acts. These religions do not control his personal life. He can enjoy life as much as he wants. But these religions do not require of their adherents great daily sacrifice in order to rendezvous with G-d in their everyday private lives. It is very easy to approach G-d. One finds G-d with a minimum of searching.

On the other hand Judaism requires that the Jew be a Shomer Mitzvos. This concept of Shmiras Hamitzvos is uniquely Jewish. It means Korbanos and Mesiras Nefesh, even if one lives in their own land and much more so when one lives in exile in a foreign land. The Midrash asks on the verse Galsa Yehuda M'Oni U'Me'rov Avoda, were the Jews the only nation to be exiled? Were none of the other nations of the world ever exiled? Why is it such a tragedy for the Jews? Chazal answer that for the nations of the world who eat the food of the lands they are exiled to and enjoy life there, they are not really in exile. But for Jews who do not eat their bread or drink their wine, it is exile. Take for example an American Jew who wants to keep Shabbos and wants to participate in American business and culture. A Jew must close his business on Shabbos, perhaps the best business day of the week. A Jew who attends a secular university must work around the problems of examinations that are given on Shabbos. (The Rav noted that in the 40s and early 50s it was almost impossible for Jewish students to get a proctor to administer an exam that was given on Shabbos. However over time and to the credit of the young Jewish students, the universities began to provide for their needs. The Rav felt that this was a manifestation of the law of supply and demand, in order to get good Jewish students that were observant, the universities had to provide for their religious needs.) Nowadays a Jew may want to attend a Shul but because he lives in suburbia and at a great distance from the Shul would have to travel by car to attend services. In such a situation, refraining from traveling to Shul and being Mchalel Shabbos is also a manifestation of BaTzar Lcha.

But the greatest example of Batzar Lcha is Jewish Education. Our notion of a Yeshiva or day school is very different from that of the Catholic school system. The curriculum is essentially the same between the Catholic Schools and the Public Schools. It is more an issue of environment and milieu. A Jewish day school on the other hand, requires a whole different language and vocabulary. Chumash, Rashi and ultimately Gemara. The Rav said that when compared to all the difficult disciplines, including mathematics, physics and chemistry, Gemara is more complex and difficult. The abstract thought processes of Halacha are uniquely difficult and exacting and require tremendous concentration. We have always been exoteric when it came to the study of Gemara. Jewish Education, where students spend one full schedule on Gemara and another on secular studies and homework for both, and work hard at both disciplines day after day, is the best example of Batzar Lcha.

Elkana stood on 2 hills, Ramasayim Tzofim, not on one. There was a huge canyon between them, yet he did not remove himself from one of the two hills for fear that he would fall into the abyss. Instead he built a bridge between them. One who wants to understand Gemara must also understand math and physics etc. Many have said that it is impossible to live on the 2 hills of Elkana,

on Ramasayim Tzofim. Many have tried but fell into the canyon. We drive our children to succeed in both disciplines, on the one hand to appreciate and absorb the full beauty and depth of the Gemara, on the other hand to succeed in the secular world as well. Yet, there is no other way, we can't go back [to the days where students were secluded from everything but Torah studies]. If we want to make sure that Judaism will not become relegated to sectism, (where morality and ethics and personal life are circumscribed and concurrence is sought after), and in order that Judaism does not become closed into the 4 cubits of Batlanus, we have to figure out how to live in Ramasayim Tzofim. This was the mission of Moshe at the second Kabbalas HaTorah, this is the mission of Batzar Lcha, Ubikashtem Misham, to work hard to succeed at both Torah and secular studies.

The Rambam says that the foundation of Judaism is knowledge of Hashem. Mitzva Layda. The Chovas Halevavos, who preceded the Rambam, said that Judaism is based on the concept of Hakaras HaTov, expressing thanks to Hashem for all He has done for us. Only the thankful person can be a real Jew. (The Rambam praised the Chovas Halevavos, saying that this book was always found on the table of his father.) Rabbeinu Bachaye says that the notion of thankfulness to Hashem is the climax of the idea. However it must begin with thankfulness between man and his fellow man. If one can't express thanks to another person, he can't express thanks to Hashem. And without the ability to express thanks to Hashem, it is impossible to experience a religious way of life.

In Bshalach it says that Moshe took the remains of Joseph with him. The Rav asked: on the night of redemption, didn't Moshe have anything more important to do than to search for the remains of a person who died hundreds of years beforehand? After all, Moshe was a busy man, why didn't he ask others to search for them? Also, Moshe had told Paroh that they were going out for three days to celebrate with Hashem. The act of taking Joseph's remains with them indicated that they were leaving permanently. So why did he insist on rocking the boat and demonstrating that they were leaving permanently and taking them with him? Because Hakaras HaTov for Joseph forced Moshe to act like this. Joseph always knew that the future of Jews and Judaism rests in Eretz Canan and not in Mitzrayim. Joseph showed them how to survive as Jews in exile. Moshe wanted to express Hakaras HaTov to Joseph on his own. He would not allow anyone else to take responsibility for fulfilling Joseph's request to take his remains with them when they are redeemed.

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: January 15, 2003 To: [weekly1@torahweb.org](mailto:weekly1@torahweb.org)

Subject: Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger - "Whatchamacallit":

Appreciating What We Are Given

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RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER

"WHATCHAMACALLIT": APPRECIATING WHAT WE ARE GIVEN

"And the benei yisrael saw [it] and they said to each other "man hu [.its food!. or .what is it!?.]" as they did not know what it was, and Moshe said this is the bread that Hashem has given you to eat. (Shemos 16:15)

"And the nation rested on the seventh day. And the House of Israel named it "man" and it was like a white gad seed, and it tasted like honey pastry." (16:30-31)

The "dor deah", the desert generation that is forever revered for the intimacy which they were privileged to have with Hashem, became entrusted with the task of naming their food, gifted daily from Hashem Himself. Surely you and I would have thought of something clever that would speak of the gift that it was, the love that it expressed, the parnassah that it assured or the nourishment that it provided. Yet this generation who had reached the highest levels of knowledge could find no more a creative label than "man". Despite its pearly presentation, honey like sweetness, and fresh as dew packaging, they called it "food" according to Rashi or "whatchamacallit" according to Rashbam and Ohr Hachayim.

Furthermore, the sequence of events requires comment as well. Why does the Torah choose to record the name of this desert food immediately after the Torah mentions that we observed shabbos?

Perhaps the "dor deah" understood that we can get used to almost anything, even food appearing out of thin air, every day, in time to feed each family and restock the empty shelves of all homes. Accordingly, in a possible attempt to protect us from taking the "man" for granted, they tried to capture for all times to come, the excitement of those first few moments when it was new and totally unexpected. It was just then that "they said to each other .man hu. ", which the K'sav sofer interprets as each one wanting so share his unique "man" experience, its singular taste and no doubt some personal insight as well. "Man" will forever remind us of "man hu" and those first few moments when they had no words to fully express or describe what they saw. It is also quite possible that only after they had lost the "man" for a shabbos, that they come to appreciate it anew and ponder life without it. They then may have felt the urgency to establish appropriate reminders to assure that we would never become jaded about all that Hashem provides for us.

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<http://www.yimidwood.org>  
RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN  
YOUNG ISRAEL OF MIDWOOD  
[Outline of drasha from last year]  
Parshas Beshalach 5762

1. We think of Kriyas Yam Suf as culmination of punishment of Egyptians. And this is true [as we say in the Hagada] Bimizrayim Laku Eser Makos ViAl Hayam Laku Chamishim Makos.

2. However, the Midrash tells us that the Egyptians at Kriyas Yam Suf also received a sichar a reward of sorts.

On the pasuk in the Shira - Natasa Yimincha Tivlaeimo Aretz Rashi quotes Chazal: Mikan ShaZachu LiKvura Bischar SheAmru Hashem Hatzadik. The Egyptian bodies should have been lost in the sea, food for the fishes. But because after the Makah of Barad Pharaoh said Hashem Hatzadik, the sea spit them up so that they could at least be buried.

3. Now the Midrash is difficult. First: What is the Midah Kineged Midah; why is this the appropriate reward. Probably if you would have asked them the Egyptians would have preferred a different reward, something they could actually enjoy.

4. Second: Rashi's version of the Midrash is that they rewarded for saying Hashem Hatzadik ViAni ViAmi Hareshaim. That, at least, had the virtue of being a confession, albeit under duress and albeit it didn't last long. But there is another version of this Midrash, cited by the Rashbam - Rashi's grandson - to Psachim 118. In his version the reward was not for saying Hashem Hatzadik; after all, only Pharaoh said, not the other Egyptians.

Rather, the reward was for saying at the time of Kriyas Yam Suf itself: Anusah Hapaam Ki Hashem Nilcham Lahem Bimitrayim. 5. This is very difficult to understand. This isn't even a confession. Who could deny - with the sea having split and now crashing down on them - that Hashem was miraculously destroying the Egyptian host? Why should the Mitzrim have been entitled for saying - what anyone in their place would have said - let's get out of here, G-d's out to get us.

6. The Shaarei Orah explains beautifully:

The Mitzva of Kvura is connected with the fact that man is created Bitzelem Elokim. The Torah says in Parshas Ki Seitzei: Lo Salin Nivlaso Al Haetz ... Ki Kililas Elokim Talui; a human body cannot be allowed to remain unburied because it is, Kiviyachol, a disgrace to the One in whose image he is made.

7. What does it mean that man is Bitzelem Elokim? There are many interpretations: He has free will; he has intelligence; he has the capacity to create. In any event, in some essential way man is able to emulate the Ribono Shel Olam. We have a concept Vihalachta Bidrachav; we can emulate His ways. The more we do so, the more we rise to the level of Bitzelem Elokim. 8. The most fundamental Midah of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is Emes, truth. G-d is the ultimate truth. As the Rambam explains, that means He is the ultimate reality. A person who denies His reality is living without the most basic truth. His whole life is built on Sheker. And, therefore, in the deepest sense, he has failed to be a Tzelem Elokim.

9. The Egyptians lived their whole life in denial of Hashem's existence. Mi Hashem; Who is Hashem, Pharaoh had said. They worshiped the Nile and the sheep and the dog and the demons of the underworld. Their whole way of life, their whole existence, was built on Sheker, and therefore, they lacked any connection to being Bitzelem Elokim.

10. But in those final few seconds of their lives they were suddenly brought face to face with reality: Anusah Hapaam Ki Hashem Nilcham Lahem Bimitrayim. They suddenly were brought up to the truth, which was about to destroy them. And in those last few seconds they lived in reality, they caught a glimpse of the Emes of the world. And in those second they rose - in some small, infinitesimal degree - to the level - to the lowest level - of a Tzelem Elokim. And therefore human dignity - which is predicated on man's being Bitzelem Elokim - required thier burial.

11. The Egyptians were forced to this recognition with their deaths - as the Ribono Shel Olam had foretold: Viyadu Mitzrayim Ki Ani Hashem BiHichabdi Bifaroh Uvichol Cheiloh. For that the most they deserved was a decent burial.

It is for us, however, to infuse this recognition into our lives. To say each day Ani Hashem Elokeichem Emes, that the Ribono Shel Olam is the true ground of existence. And to recognize that Hashem Nilcham Lahem Bimitrayim, that it is He who fights against Mitzrayim, the Egyptians of each generation. He uses many intruments and we are required to have Hakaras Hatov toward them; but it is His battle. When a terrorist with Jewish blood on his hands is eliminated it is not only Israeli derring -do that we should applaud; but Hashem Hanilcham Lahem Bimitrayim When the thousand pound bombs fell in Afghanistan on the avowed enemies of our people it was only George W. who had our thanks; but Hashem Hanilcham Lahem Bimitrayim. Whenever the blood of innocents is avenged, as avenged it must be, it is Hashem Hanilcham Lahem Bimitrayim Until such time as evil shall be destroyed altogether, Ki Saavir Memsheles Zaton Min Haaretz, when the reign of evil shall pass from the earth, Bimiheirah Biyameinu Amen.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: January 15, 2003 To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas B'Shalach

This week's class is dedicated in loving memory of Rev Frederick Goldberg, L'zaycher nishmas Reb Efraim Fishel ben Yisroel. Everyone Needs Attention

The pasuk [verse] at the beginning of the parsha says, "Vayehi b'Shalach Pharaoh es ha'am" - "and it was when Pharaoh sent out the nation". The Medrash Rabbah comments on the word "Vayehi" - "and it was". The Medrash says that the expression "vayehi" is related to the word "vai" (as in 'oy vai'), which means to cry out. The Medrash asks, "Who cried out?" The Medrash answers that Pharaoh screamed in anguish when he had to send the Jewish people out.

What did Pharaoh cry about? The Medrash relates a parable. A King had a son who travelled away from home. The prince spent some time at the house of a wealthy person. When the King heard where the prince was staying, he corresponded with this person and asked him to send the prince home. The wealthy person ignored the letter. The King sent more letters, all of which were ignored. Finally the King went to the house of this person to take his son home himself.

When the King finally took his son home, the wealthy person started to cry out. The neighbors asked him, "Why are you crying?" He responded, "I had a great honor in hosting the prince in my home. The King corresponded with me and took an intense interest in what was happening in my home. Now, I no longer have the prince in my home, so the King will have no interest in me whatsoever. That is why I cry out."

That is how Pharaoh felt. As long as the Jews were in Egypt, G-d kept sending him messages. Now that the Jews left, Pharaoh would no longer have a 'correspondence' with the Master of the World. "Woe to me" (vay), says Pharaoh, "that I sent the Jews out and lost my dialog with G-d". That is why the pasuk begins "VAY-ehi b'Shalach..."

What conclusion must we arrive at from this Medrash? Was Pharaoh a masochist? Did he miss the 'correspondence' that G-d was sending to him: Blood, Frogs, Lice, etc., etc. Did he love getting beaten up. Why did he cry out when he was no longer 'hearing' from G-d in this fashion?

Pharaoh may have had deep psychological problems, but masochism was not one of them. Pharaoh was a very real human being. Human beings need to feel wanted. They need to feel "I am somebody. Somebody notices me." When a person is no longer noticed, he feels like less of a person.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe (one of the premier personalities in the mussar movement today, residing in Jerusalem) mentions in one of his books that a certain young man once stopped coming to prayer services at a Yeshiva. A friend asked him, "What happened? Don't you daven anymore?" The young man responded, "Heaven forbid, I daven at another minyan now. There is no shortage of minyanim in Jerusalem." His friend asked him, "Why don't you daven in the Yeshiva anymore?" The young man responded, "This way maybe the mashgiach [spiritual mentor of the students] will notice me."

This is an example of the fact that negative notice is better than no notice. "I want somebody to know that I exist." Apathy is worse than punishment.

Small children sometimes 'act out'. (Sometimes they don't have to be so small.) We may ask, "Why are they acting out? Why can't they behave? Why can't they just sit quietly at the Shabbos table? Why do they act out, only to be sent away to their rooms in the middle of the meal?"

The answer is that they, in fact, want to be sent away because that way they are at least noticed. We all have a choice. We can

either give our children or our spouses positive attention or we might have to give them negative attention. But we will need to give them attention, one way or another.

This is the lesson of the Medrash. Pharaoh would rather be beaten over the head and worse, than not be noticed by G-d at all. The worst thing for Pharaoh was the realization that after sending out the nation, G-d would become oblivious to him. Everyone needs attention.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD 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 # 359, Making Ice on Shabbos. 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 © 2003 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org)

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TorahWeb from last year

RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG  
TWO WOMEN, TWO SONGS

On Shabbos Shira we read the songs of two prophetesses, Miriam and Devorah. These great leaders were not merely giants in their times; they are paradigms for two different paths of avodas Hashem for Jewish women of all generations. Miriam personified the incredible devotion of Jewish women to the bearing and raising of children, ensuring the continuity of our people. She is first introduced to us as Pu'ah (Shmos 1:15), who coos to the child and soothes crying babies (Rashi). Later, Miriam convinces her father to remarry her mother despite Pharaoh's decree to kill all newborn males (Rashi 2:1). As a result, all of the Israelite men followed this example, and many more children were born (Sotah 12a).

Indeed, the redemption from Egypt was a reward to the righteous women. They, like Miriam, persuaded their exhausted and despondent husbands to have more children (Sotah 11b, Rashi 38:8). Logic may have been on the side of the men, and Miriam's father Amram, the Gadol Hador. But the intuition, courage, and emotional strength of the women, led by Miriam herself, ultimately prevailed.

Miriam practiced what she preached. She married Kalev and bore him a son, Chur (Rashi 17:10). In sum, Miriam was the prototype of a mother in Israel, enabling many others to have large families (1:20) despite threats, decrees, and privation.

Devorah, the subject of the Haftarah of Shabbos Shira, represents a totally different model of avodas Hashem. She was a judge (Shoftim 4:4), working outside the home in the public sphere. We read nothing about her children or family, but rather of her issuing military orders (ibid.4:6,7,14).

The songs of these illustrious personalities reflect their respective roles. Miriam sang with a tambourine, with music that inspired all the women to dance (15:20). She sang with heart and emotion, as befits a midwife who witnessed the miracle of birth countless times, and who now saw the open miracle of krias Yam Suf. Her text was brief and simple, "Sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant, having hurled horse with its rider into the sea" (Shmos 15:21). Apparently, this text was repeated over and over

again, in an emotional outpouring of song and dance, for women only.

Devorah, on the other hand, composed a lengthy and complex poem (5:2-31). It was probably read, and not sung musically, for men and women, together with Barak Ben Avinoam (5:1). As a cerebral leader, a judge and military strategist, this was the appropriate shira for her. A brilliant, poetic depiction, replete with nuance and imagery, was Devorah's way of praising Hashem. Even the introductions to these two songs indicate the differences between the authors. Miriam's tambourine evoked the joy necessary to experience the Divine Presence. The women whom she led overcame the pain of the bearing and raising of large families and felt divine inspiration through music (Kli Yakar 15:20).

These same women, noted for righteousness for convincing their husbands to have more children, are righteous for another reason as well. They had faith that Hashem would perform miracles for them, and, therefore, took tambourines from Egypt (Rashi 15:20). Indeed, it was the very same faith that enabled them to raise families, even when the logic of their husbands and Amram considered it futile and unwise.

Devorah begins her song "I, to Hashem Shall I sing" (5:3). Miriam needs no such introduction. Her role is clearly l'sheim shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. However, a public figure like Devorah might be suspected of ulterior motives, such as the pursuit of glory or egalitarianism. Therefore, Devorah must preface her shira by saying that her song, and her life's work, are lashem. Today, many more women work out of the home than in past generations. This provides an opportunity for kiddush Hashem. People observe Jewish women's honesty and politeness, their speech and dress which reflect Torah, not the pervasive vulgarity of modern society, and are moved to love Hashem (Yoma 86a). Many righteous women struggle to juggle the roles of Devorah and Miriam simultaneously. Some face scorn in a workplace which emphasizes a modern version of self-fulfillment to the exclusion of the Torah's emphasis on bearing and raising children. Fortunately, many experts in the secular world are now recognizing and publicizing the critical role of mothers and fathers in raising their own children, even at the expense of career advancement (U.S. News, Jan. 2002).

Many other equally righteous women devote the best years of their lives entirely to their families, in the spirit of Miriam. It is the duty of Torah society to encourage this unifocal devotion, which has enabled Am Yisrael to flourish through the generations. Especially when careers and opportunities are available, the traditional role of wife and mother must be strengthened. The lives and songs of Miriam and Devorah demonstrated that there are many ways for women to perform avodas Hashem – l'sheim shomayim. May the righteous women of today, as their ancestresses in Egypt, enable Am Yisrael to be rewarded with the geula shleima.

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From: RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG [tsc@bezeqint.net] Sent: January 15, 2003 4:19 PM Subject: [par-new]Beshalach - shiur #1 Mazel Tov to Ahava & Efraim Leibtag, upon the birth of a baby girl! to the grandparents - Rabbi David & Dassy Leibtag & to the great-grandmother Rebbetzen Florence Leibtag THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [http://www.tanach.org] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT BESHALACH - A Desert Seminar ALL  
ON THE WAY TO HAR SINAI

Bnei Yisrael's journey from Egypt to Har Sinai was certainly not a simple one. Instead of a cheerful 'three day journey', Bnei

Yisrael endured several weeks of life-threatening situations - including lack of food & water, and a military attack by Amalek.

Did something go wrong, or did G-d 'plan' these events? Furthermore, if these events were planned - was G-d simply 'testing' their patience, or did G-d want them to complain? To answer these questions, this week's shiur analyzes the progressive nature of the events that occur from the time that Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt until they reach Har Sinai, while focusing on how they relate to the overall theme of Sefer Shmot. INTRODUCTION - THREE DAYS OR SEVEN WEEKS? According to what G-d had originally told Moshe Rabeinu at the burning bush, Bnei Yisrael were supposed to travel directly from Egypt to Eretz Canaan (see 3:16-17). That promise was not only congruent with what G-d had promised Avraham Avinu at "brit bein ha'tarim" (see Breishit 15:13-18), but it also seems to be exactly what G-d promised Bnei Yisrael once again at the beginning of Parshat Va'era (see Shmot 6:5- 8!). In fact, in all of His previous promises, there doesn't appear to be even a hint that G-d wanted Bnei Yisrael to dwell for any length of time in the desert (other than cross it) before their inheritance of the Promised Land. Furthermore, the opening pasuk of Parshat Beshalach implies that traveling directly to Eretz Canaan remained the primary goal of Yetziat Mitzraim, while the re-routing of that journey (to the southeast) was simply a 'maneuver' taken due to 'military considerations' (see 13:17, and 14:1-3).

On the other hand, we did find that Moshe had requested from Pharaoh to allow Bnei Yisrael a three-day journey into the desert to worship G-d (see 3:18 and 5:1-3). However, it was never quite clear if that request was simply part of 'ploy', or a true intention. However, there was never a mention of anything more than a short 'stop' at Har Sinai to worship (or thank) G-d. Certainly, no one ever told Bnei Yisrael to expect months or years of trials and tribulations.

In Parshat Beshalach, a very different set of events takes place. Instead of leading Bnei Yisrael directly to Israel or Har Sinai, G-d reroutes their journey towards the Red Sea. Then, after crossing the Red Sea, Bnei Yisrael do embark on a 'three-day journey' into the desert, but only to arrive at Mara, rather than Har Sinai. Then, over the course of their five-week excursion from Mara to Har Sinai, they run out of food at Midbar Sin, run out of water at Refidim and then face Amalek's unprovoked attack. Only after some seven weeks do they finally arrive at Har Sinai. In the following shiur we will attempt to find the purpose of this sequence of events - by considering the underlying reason for Bnei Yisrael's redemption from Egypt.

A SECOND CHANCE As we explained above, G-d must redeem Bnei Yisrael from Egypt - to fulfill His covenant with Avraham Avinu ("brit bein ha'tarim"). However, that covenant was more than just some 'technical' promise, for it also carried a divine purpose: - G-d chose Avraham Avinu to be the forefather of a model nation that would make His Name known to all nations. From this perspective, "brit bein ha'tarim" was only the first stage in a long historical process. After their redemption from Egypt, Bnei Yisrael would need to receive the special set of laws and guidelines (Matan Torah) that help them become that nation. Afterward, they would be 'spiritually' ready to inherit the Promised Land. For this reason, G-d found it necessary to first call upon Bnei Yisrael to perform 'teshuva' before the Exodus began. [See Yechezkel 20:4-10, and our shiur on Parshat Va'era.] Presumably, had Bnei Yisrael indeed obeyed that call, the redemption process could have proceeded as originally planned, i.e. the nation would have traveled directly to Har Sinai (in three days) - to thank G-d and receive the Torah. (See Seforno's introduction to Sefer Shmot; see also Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, and Ramban on 2:23-25.) Unfortunately, the nation did not repent.

As we explained in last week's shiur, the offering of the 'korban Pesach' may have rendered them worthy 'just enough' to survive the Tenth Plague; nevertheless, at the time of the Exodus Bnei Yisrael were far from being 'spiritually ready' for Matan Torah. Therefore, it becomes necessary for G-d to first challenge His people with a series of 'tests', to prepare them for Matan Torah - and hence the need for a 'change in plan'.

**THE NEW PLAN** The following table lists the key events that take place during Bnei Yisrael's journey from Egypt to Har Sinai:

LOCATION	EVENT
1) Yam Suf (14:11)	Am Yisrael is attacked by Mitzraim;
2) Mara (15:24)	the water is bitter;
3) Midbar Sin (15:2)	there is no food to eat;
4) Refidim I (17:3)	there is no water to drink;
5) Refidim II (17:8)	Am Yisrael is attacked by Amalek.

[Note the chiasmic structure: war-water-food-water-war.]

Despite the distinctive nature of each of these events, we posit that the purpose of each incident was to help prepare Bnei Yisrael for Matan Torah. In other words, G-d intentionally initiates these events in order to catalyze Bnei Yisrael's spiritual growth, to 'train' them to become His Nation! To appreciate the specific purpose of each individual event, we must first consider WHY Bnei Yisrael had not performed proper 'teshuva' in Egypt. **BREAKING SLAVE MENTALITY** It is extremely difficult for a slave, even after having gained his freedom, to act or think like a free man. As we explained in Parshat Va'era, Bnei Yisrael do not listen to G-d's original call because of their 'crushed spirits and hard labor': "v'e-lo sham'u el Moshe, mi-kotzer ruach u-meavoda kasha" (see 6:9). The strain of their prolonged bondage and the fatigue of their daily routine had drained them of all spirituality.

Specifically because of this bondage - Bnei Yisrael had grown instinctively dependent upon their Egyptian masters. Therefore, to facilitate their transformation - from Pharaoh's slaves to G-d's servants - they must change their instinctive physical dependence on Egypt to a cognitive spiritual dependence on G-d. We all know how difficult it is for an individual to change his character, all the more so for an entire nation. Therefore, the rebuilding of Am Yisrael's character becomes a very complex process. This background can help us understand the need for the variety of events that transpire from the time that Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt. To explain how, we will show how that a change of character occurs in one of two patterns - via: 1) A traumatic experience - which may facilitate a sudden change. 2) A change of daily routine - which affects instinctive behavior. As we will see, G-d employs both approaches.

1) **KRIYAT YAM SUF - SPLITTING OLD TIES** Kriyat Yam Suf [the splitting of the Red Sea] may be understood as the traumatic experience that helps Bnei Yisrael break their instinctive dependence on Mitzraim. Recall that, at Kriyat Yam Suf, G-d inflicted His final punishment upon Pharaoh and his army (14:4). Were G-d's sole intention merely to punish the Egyptians, He could have done so during the Ten Plagues. The fact that Bnei Yisrael must witness this Egyptian defeat suggests that these events occur for the sake of Bnei Yisrael as well. This purpose becomes clearer in light of Bnei Yisrael's reaction to the imminent threat of the approaching Egyptian army: "And they complained to Moshe saying... What have you done to us by taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt: Let us be and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than die in the desert?!" (14:11-12) [See Ibn Ezra on 14:13 where he explains why Bnei Yisrael did not even consider confronting the Egyptians in battle.]

G-d responds to Bnei Yisrael's complaint by commanding them to break away from this instinctive dependence: "Do not fear, stand upright and watch G-d's salvation... for the manner in

which you see Mitzraim today - you will never see them again" ["lo tosifu lir'otam od ad olam"] (14:13).

Although G-d's reassurance appears to be a promise, for some reason Chazal interpret this statement as a commandment! According to Ramban (14:13), Chazal interpret this pasuk as follows: "In the manner by which you look at Mitzraim today - do not look at them this way ever again" (14:13).

G-d here does not promise His nation that they will never face an Egyptian army again. Rather, He commands them to 'never again' look to Egypt for their salvation. Although this interpretation of "lo tosifu lir'otam" does not appear to be the simple 'pshat' of this pasuk, it does find support in a parallel reference in the 'tochacha' in Parshat Ki Tavo (note Devarim 28:1-69). At the conclusion of that tochacha, G-d warns Bnei Yisrael that - should they disobey Him - they will be exiled and sold into slavery (see Devarim 28:62-67 / note "ki lo shama'ta be-kol Hashem..."). Their condition will deteriorate to such an extent, the Torah warns, that they will actually hope that someone will 'purchase them as slaves'. To emphasize this point, note how the end of the Tochacha uses a phrase very similar to the phrase used to describe G-d's command before "kriyat Yam Suf": "And G-d will return you to Egypt in ships, in the manner that I told you: 'lo tosif od lir'otah' [do not look at them this way again], and you will offer yourselves to your enemies for sale as slaves and maidservants, but no one will purchase you" (28:68). [The word 'ba-derech' - 'in the manner' - should not be understood as a description of the ship-route to Egypt, but rather as a description of the crisis Am Yisrael will face as they are exiled to Egypt in those ships.]

Ironically, the last stage of the 'tochacha' has Am Yisrael returning to the same state they were in before they left Egypt, where they yearn for total dependence on their human masters! Their only hope for survival is for an Egyptian to buy them to become his slave. [See also Devarim 17:16 & Yeshayahu 31:1-9 to support this interpretation of lo tosifu.]

After the miracle of "kriyat Yam Suf", it appears as though G-d's plan succeeded. Upon seeing the drowning of the Egyptians, Bnei Yisrael reach the 'proper' conclusion: "...and Yisrael recognized His great Hand.. and the people feared G-d and believed in G-d and Moshe His servant" (Shmot 14:30-31). Then, They instinctively respond with a song of praise to G-d: "Az yashir Moshe u-vnei Yisrael..." (see 15:1).

2) **MARA - A DESERT SEMINAR** After crossing the Red Sea, Bnei Yisrael set out on their 'three-day journey' into the desert. However, instead of arriving at Har Sinai, they arrive at Mara, where the only water they could find is bitter and hence undrinkable (see 15:22-23). As we'd expect, the people complain to Moshe, their leader; who in turns complains to G-d. As their complaints appear to be justified, G-d provides Moshe with a solution to 'sweeten' the water (see 15:24-25). Certainly G-d realized that the people could not survive without water, nonetheless He led them to a location without water - in order that the people would complain. In this manner, G-d teaches the nation not to take their water supply for granted; rather - it now becomes clear to them that their survival is dependent upon G-d.

Now, after these two traumatic events have shown the nation who their real 'master' is, G-d gives the people another chance to show their readiness to accept His laws: "And He said - im shamo'a tishma le-kol Hashem Elokecha - Should you listen to the voice of G-d, and do what is proper in His eyes, and listen to His commandments, then the affliction that I put on the Egyptians I will not put on you, for I am G-d your Healer" (15:26 / see shiur on Parshat Va'era.).

Note how Bnei Yisrael's acceptance of this offer can 'cure' their original 'attitude problem' reflected by "ve-lo sham'u el Moshe..." (see 6:9, and our shiur on Parshat Va'era). Furthermore, by linking the sweetness of the water to their readiness to obey His laws, G-d teaches Bnei Yisrael an important lesson of spiritual dependence. This connection between 'water' and 'following G-d' will emerge numerous times in Chumash, and forms the basis of the famous Midrash Chazal of 'ein mayim ela Torah' - that the term 'water' in Tanach symbolically refers to Torah. [The 'message' of the 'eitz' which G-d instructs Moshe to cast into the water (see 15:23-25) may also relate back to Gan Eden, itself a motif of an environment that demands obedience to G-d. See also Mishlei 3:18 and its context ("etz chayim hi la-machazikim bah...").]

At their next camp-site, at Eilim (see 15:27), G-d gives them a short 'rest' - as there is plenty of water and food. However, as soon as Bnei Yisrael arrive in Midbar Sin, G-d creates yet another crisis.

3) MIDBAR SIN - BASIC TRAINING After arriving in Midbar Sin, the food supply runs out, triggering yet another round of complaints (16:2-3). Even though Bnei Yisrael have the right to ask for food, the way in which they ask is inexcusable: "If only we had died by the Hand of G-d in Egypt, when we had plenty of meat and bread to eat! Now you have brought us out into this desert to die of famine" (16:3).

The tone of this complaint (and its content) indicates that Bnei Yisrael had retained their instinctive dependence upon Mitzraim. They react to hunger by reminiscing about the 'good old days' in Egypt. The trauma they had experienced heretofore was not sufficient to totally change their character. To rectify this, G-d will force them into a daily routine that will slowly change their instinctive behavior. The manna served this very purpose. It provided a daily routine that transformed their physical dependence on Mitzraim into a physical dependence on G-d. As explained in Sefer Devarim: "And He tormented you and starved you, then gave you 'manna' to eat... in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, rather, man lives by whatever G-d commands" (Devarim 8:3).

By allowing only enough food for one day at a time, Bnei Yisrael learn to become dependent solely on G-d. To emphasize this point, their food falls directly from heaven. Note how the Torah uses a key word - 'nisayon' (a test) in its description: "Behold I will rain down bread for you from the heavens, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion - lema'an anasenu (= 'nisayon') - in order that I may test them, to see whether or not they will follow my instructions..." (16:4).

The word 'nisayon' here should not be understood simply as a 'test' that will help G-d assess Bnei Yisrael's obedience. The purpose of this "nisayon" was to raise the nation to a higher level in their relationship with G-d. In a similar manner, we find that the Torah uses this same root in the story of the Akeida where G-d 'tests' Avraham ["ve-Hashem nisa et Avraham..."] /see Breishit 22:1] - not to find out if he is worthy, but rather to make him worthy. The manna served a similar purpose. G-d is not testing Bnei Yisrael to find out IF they will obey Him, rather He is training them in order that they learn how to obey Him.

4) REFIDIM - PREPARING FOR HAR SINAI The next stop on their journey (and the last stop before arriving at Har Sinai) is Refidim - where they can't find any water to drink (17:1-3). But why does G-d lead them to such a location? Certainly He realizes that Bnei Yisrael cannot survive without water. Once again, G-d wants Bnei Yisrael to complain! However, this time G-d's plan is more complex, as His scheme at Refidim will prepare Bnei Yisrael both physically and spiritually for Har Sinai. As you review the details of that story (see 17:1-6), note how G-d solves their

water shortage. As you probably remember, G-d instructs Moshe to hit the rock - and it would supply water. But we would expect that rock (and hence the water source) to be in Refidim - where the people are suffering from thirst. Instead, G-d instructs Moshe to gather some elders (see 17:5-6) and travel from Refidim to the rock at "Chorev" - the same site where G-d first appeared to him at the burning bush (see 3:1) - the same site that later becomes Har Sinai! [See Shmot 3:12 & Devarim 5:2.] But why not supply water in Refidim? It seems that G-d wants the nation to eagerly move from Refidim to Har Sinai. Consider the reality of the situation. After Moshe hits the rock, the water would gush forth from Chorev and flow into the desert. But to drink that water, Bnei Yisrael will need to travel from Refidim to Har Sinai, to their new source of water. [For proof that hitting the rock created a gushing river flowing down the mountain - see Devarim 9:21.] A rather exciting 'first experience' with the site that will become their source not only of water for the next year, but also their source of Torah - the core of their spiritual existence. Not only has heaven replaced earth as the source of bread (the manna food), but also Har Sinai has replaced the Nile as the constant source of water. In this manner, Bnei Yisrael's total dependence on Mitzraim has now been replaced by their total dependence on G-d. Significantly, Har Sinai becomes a source of water for Bnei Yisrael before it becomes the source of Torah! In order for them to appreciate Har Sinai as the source of spiritual life, they must first identify the mountain as the source of physical life.

5) THE WAR WITH AMALEK - LOOKING UP TO HAR SINAI As Bnei Yisrael begin their journey from Refidim to Har Sinai (to their new source of water), Amalek attacks. War breaks out, and G-d orders that Yehoshua lead Bnei Yisrael in battle. In contrast to the level of Bnei Yisrael's participation in battle at the splitting of the Red Sea, here Bnei Yisrael do the fighting themselves. But in order for the people to recognize that G-d Himself brings them victory - despite their own military efforts - G-d instructs Moshe to climb the hill and raise his staff heavenward. Upon which hill does Moshe stand? Based on the juxtaposition between this narrative and the incident at 'masa u-meriva', Ibn Ezra explains that Moshe stands with his hands raised high - on Har Sinai! Just as Har Sinai has become their source of water, it now becomes their source of military salvation, as well. For Yisrael to become victorious, Moshe must raise his hands (see 17:11) to show and teach the people to look to Hashem, to Har Sinai, for their salvation. [See Midrash in Rashi (17:11) & Rosh Hashana 29:1.]

FROM PESACH TO SHAVUOT We have shown that during the seven weeks from the Exodus to Har Sinai, Bnei Yisrael encounter several traumatic experiences and changes in their daily routine that helped prepare them for Matan Torah. During this 'training period' they have also become more active in the process of their redemption - they are now ready to take on the next stage of the redemption process: to receive the Torah in order to become G-d's special Nation in His land. Not only was this seven week time period significant for Bnei Yisrael at the time of Exodus, this same time period of the year remains no less significant for future generations as well. It is not by chance that Chazal identify a similar purpose in the seven weeks of the Sefirat ha-Omer, where we count the seven weeks from the celebration of our freedom from Egypt [on Pesach] in preparation for our commemoration of Matan Torah on Shavuot. Each year, after we thank G-d for our freedom, we prepare ourselves for seven weeks to be worthy of thanking Him once again for giving us the Torah.

shabbat shalom, menachem

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