BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **BEHA'ALOSCHA** - 5785

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From **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** ryfrand@torah.org ravfrand@torah.org
Date Jun 11, 2025, 11:34 PM
Subject Rav Frand - **The Ananei Hakavod Teach Us to Learn Torah and Do Miztvos in All Conditions**

There is a very interesting Ramban in this week's parsha. The Torah says that the pattern of the Jewish nation travelling and camping in the midbar (wilderness) was dependent upon the movement of the Ananei Hakavod (Clouds of Glory) that accompanied them. The Ramban comments that it was not uncommon for the Jews to arrive at an absolutely undesirable place in the midbar. At times, they wanted to leave a place immediately, but they would need to stay because the Ananei Hakavod stopped over the Mishkan (Tabernacle). At other times, they arrived at a lovely place, exhausted, and wishing to stay for a long time. Often, after only two or three days in such places, the Ananei Hakavod began to move and they continued their travels. The Ramban adds that sometimes they would come to a spot, the Ananei Hakavod would stop, and they would all unpack. Then, the next morning, after they finished unpacking all of their belongings, the Ananei Hakavod would move and they would need to repack and start travelling all over again.

Imagine such an experience! We know what is involved in going on a trip. Everything is loaded into the station wagon. With great effort, even more may be tied down on the roof. When we finally arrive at our destination, we want to stay at least for a couple of weeks!

This is the meaning of the pasuk (verse), "When the Ananei Hakavod lingered upon the Mishkan many days, the Children of Israel would maintain the charge of Hashem and would not journey" (Bamidbar 9:19). The travels were not easy. They were a tremendous test.

However, there is an obvious question. Hashem is not a capricious puppeteer who demands that people "jump" for no reason. What was the point of making the sojourn in the midbar so arbitrary and so burdensome?

Rav Dessler offers a very interesting insight in his sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu (Volume 4). Rav Dessler explains that the time in the midbar was the period during which the Jews received the Torah. Perhaps Hashem was trying to teach us the lesson that we must learn Torah and perform mitzvos in spite of any outside conditions. Many of us say, "If only we had a little more free time" or "If only we did not need to worry so much about making a living…" "If only we did not need to worry about our children" — "Oh boy, would we be able to sit and learn Torah and daven (pray) like we should daven, without rushing through!"

As a Rebbe in the yeshiva, I must, from time to time, chastise a bachur (young man) when he is not performing up to par. I often hear excuses like: "I am busy with school work" or "I am having trouble with shidduchim" (dating) — if only I had my shidduch and if only I had finished college — oh boy would I be able to sit and learn!" But life does not work like that. Life is always full of disturbances. We are not living in Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden). There are financial challenges. There are challenges with parents, challenges with children. There are always challenges!

That is what the Torah is teaching us through the travels in the midbar. Life in the midbar was not easy. It was no picnic. But life must continue. In other words, we must continue learning and living as honest and dignified Jews, in spite of the surrounding conditions.

Anyone who has ever read the history of the Mir Yeshiva during World War II is amazed. The Mir Yeshiva fled from Mir, Poland to Russia and across Russia to Kobe, Japan and from Kobe to Shanghai, China. They were young men — single and married — who did not know what the next day would bring. Bochrim (young men) were separated from their families. They did not know if their families were alive or dead. They did not know if they would ever get out of the morass; and if they would get out, if they would ever get married.

Any "Mirrer talmid" (student at the Mir Yeshiva) from that time period can tell you that in the worst days of Shanghai, the yeshiva continued; the sedarim (regular schedule of hours for learning Torah) were maintained, people learned and people wrote Torah sefarim. People learned Torah in the worst of conditions.

Baruch Hashem (thank G-d), we have relatively easy lives. Our parents lived through much more difficult conditions than we can ever imagine. They learned Torah and performed mitzvos, in spite of the tough conditions. This is the lesson of the Ananei Hakavod — even when everything not is provided on a silver platter, we must continue our lives. Torah and mitzvos must continue.

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https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/behaalotecha/the-duality-of-camp-and-congregation/
Covenant & Conversation
Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZTL
The Duality of Camp and Congregation
בהעלותך
Beha'alotecha • 5779
silver trumpets

The Duality of Camp and Congregation

The parsha of Beha'alotecha speaks about the silver trumpets – clarions – Moses was commanded to make:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [edah] and cause the camps [machanot] to journey." Num. 10:1–2

This apparently simple passage became a springboard for one of the most profound meditations of the late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik. It appears in his great essay Kol Dodi Dofek, on the Jewish approach to suffering.[1]

There are, says Rabbi Soloveitchik, two ways in which people become a group – a community, society, or nation. The first is when they face a common enemy. They band together for mutual protection. Like all animals who come together in herds or flocks to defend themselves against predators, we do this for our survival. Such a group is a machaneh – a camp, a defensive formation.

There is another, quite different, form of association. People can come together because they share a vision, an aspiration, a set of ideals. This is the meaning of edah, congregation. Edah is related to the word ed, witness. Edot (as opposed to chukim and mishpatim) are the commands that testify to

Jewish belief – as Shabbat testifies to creation, Passover to the Divine involvement in history, and so on. An edah is not a defensive formation but a creative one. People join together to do what none could achieve alone. A true congregation is a society built around a shared project, a vision of the common good, an edah.

Rabbi Soloveitchik says these are not just two types of group, but in the most profound sense, two different ways of existing and relating to the world. A camp is brought into being by what happens to it from the outside. A congregation comes into existence by internal decision. The former is reactive, the latter proactive. The first is a response to what has happened to the group in the past. The second represents what the group seeks to achieve in the future. Whereas camps exist even in the animal kingdom, congregations are uniquely human. They flow from the human ability to think, speak, communicate, envision a society different from any that has existed in the past, and to collaborate to bring it about.

Jews are a people in both of these two quite different ways. Our ancestors became a machaneh in Egypt, forged together by a crucible of slavery and suffering. They were different. They were not Egyptians. They were Hebrews – a word which probably means "on the other side," "an outsider." Ever since, Jews have known that we are thrown together by circumstance. We share a history all too often written in tears. Rabbi Soloveitchik calls this the covenant of fate (brit goral).

This is not a purely negative phenomenon. It gives rise to a powerful sense that we are part of a single story – that what we have in common is stronger than the things that separate us:

Our fate does not distinguish between rich and poor…[or] between the pietist and the assimilationist. Even though we speak a plethora of languages, even though we are inhabitants of different lands…we still share the same fate. If the Jew in the hovel is beaten, then the security of the Jew in the palace is endangered. "Do not think that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace" (Esther. 4:13).

Rosenberg, Theological and Halachic Reflections on the Holocaust, p. 84.

Our shared community's fate leads also to a sense of shared suffering. When we pray for the recovery of a sick person, we do so "among all the sick of Israel." When we comfort a mourner, we do so "among all the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." We weep together. We celebrate together. This in turn leads to shared responsibility: "All Israel are sureties for one another."[2] And this leads to collective action in the field of welfare, charity, and deeds of loving kindness. As Maimonides puts it:

All Israelites …are like brothers, as it is said, "You are children of the Lord your God" (Deut. 14:1). If brother shows no compassion to brother, who will? …Their eyes are therefore lifted to their brothers.[3]

All these are dimensions of the covenant of fate, born in the experience of slavery in Egypt. But there is an additional element of Jewish identity. Soloveitchik calls this the covenant of destiny (brit ye'ud) – entered into at Mount Sinai. This defines the people of Israel not as the object of persecution but the subject of a unique vocation, to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

Under this covenant, we became defined not by what others do to us but by the task we have undertaken, the role we have chosen to play in history. In Egypt we did not choose to become slaves, that was a fate thrust upon us by someone else. We did, however, choose to become God's people at Sinai when said, "We will do and obey" (Ex. 24:7). Destiny, call, vocation, purpose, task: these create not a machaneh but an edah, not a camp but a congregation.

Our task as a people of destiny is to bear witness to the presence of God – through the way we lead our lives (Torah) and the path we chart as a people across the centuries (history).

G. K. Chesterton once wrote that "America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed."[4] Chesterton was notoriously antisemitic, and this evidently prevented him from recalling that the reason America was founded on a creed was that its founders, Puritans all, were steeped in what they called the Old Testament. They took as their model the covenant made between God and the Israelites at Sinai, and it was this that linked nationhood and the idea of a specific task or mission. Herman Melville gave this one of its classic expressions in his 1849 novel, White-Jacket:

We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people – the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world…. God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours.

Herman Melville, White-Jacket (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 153. [5]

It is the concept of covenant that gives Jewish (and American) identity this strange dual character. Nations are usually forged through long historical experience, through what happens to them – rather than what they consciously set themselves to do. They fall into the category of machaneh. Religions, on the other hand, are defined in terms of beliefs and a sense of mission. Each is constituted as an edah. What is unique about Judaism is the way it brings together these separate and quite distinct ideas. There are nations that contain many religions and there are religions that are spread over many nations, but only in the case of Judaism do religion and nation coincide.

This has had remarkable consequences. For almost two thousand years Jews were scattered throughout the world, yet they saw themselves (and were seen by others) as a nation – the world's first global nation. It was a nation held together not by geographical proximity or any other of the normal accompaniments of nationhood. Jews did not speak the same vernacular. Rashi spoke French, Maimonides Arabic. Rashi lived in a Christian culture, Maimonides in a Muslim one. Nor was their fate the same. While the Jews of Spain were enjoying their Golden Age, the Jews of northern Europe were being massacred in the Crusades. In the fifteenth century, when the Jews of Spain were being persecuted and expelled, those of Poland were enjoying a rare spring of tolerance.

What held Jews together during these centuries was shared faith. In the trauma that accompanied European Emancipation and the subsequent rise of racial antisemitism, many Jews lost that faith. Yet the events of the past century – persecution, pogroms, and the Holocaust, followed by the birth of the State of Israel and the constant fight to survive against war and terror – tended to bind Jews together in a covenant of fate in the face of the hostility of the world. So when Jews were divided by fate they were united by faith, and when they were divided by faith they were united again by fate. Such is the irony, or the providential nature, of Jewish history.

Judaism in the past two centuries has fissured and fractured into different edot: Orthodox and Reform, religious and secular, and the many subdivisions that continue to atomise Jewish life into non-communicating sects and subcultures. Yet in times of crisis we are still capable of heeding the call of collective responsibility, knowing as we do that Jewish fate tends to be indivisible. No Jew, to paraphrase John Donne, is an island, entirely to him- or herself. We are joined by the gossamer strands of collective memory, and these can sometimes lead us back to a sense of shared destiny.

So, a camp and a congregation. Judaism is both. This duality was given its first expression this week in Beha'alotecha, with the command: "Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [edah], and cause the camps [machanot] to journey." Sometimes the clarion call speaks to our sense of faith. We are God's people, His emissaries and ambassadors, charged with making His presence real in the world by healing deeds and holy lives. At other times the trumpet that sounds and summons us is the call of fate: Jewish lives endangered in Israel or the Diaspora by the unremitting hostility of those who call themselves children of Abraham yet claim that they, not we, are his true heirs.

Whichever sound the silver instruments make, they call on that duality that makes Jews and Judaism inseparable. However deep the divisions between us, we remain one family in fate and faith. When the trumpet sounds, it sounds for us.

[1] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Kol Dodi Dofek: Listen, My Beloved Knocks, trans. David Z. Gordon (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2006). A translation also appears in Bernhard H. Rosenberg (ed.), Theological and Halachic Reflections on the Holocaust (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992).
[2] Sanhedrin 27b; Shavuot 39a.
[3] Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Matanot LeEvyonim 10:2.
[4] G. K. Chesterton, What I Saw in America (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922), 7.
[5] Also see Jonathan Sacks, "The Universal Story", in Pesach Haggadah (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2013), 75–84.

Rabbi Michael Taubes <mtaubes@y..>
Thu, Jun 12, 9:05 PM ..
The Torah tells us in this week's parashah:
"וְכִי תָבֹאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם... וַהֲרֵעֹתֶם בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וּנְזְכַרְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶּם מֵאֹיְבֵיכֶם"
"When you go to war in your land… you shall sound the trumpets, and you shall be remembered before Hashem your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies." (Bamidbar 10:9)
Though we are geographically far away from the current battle in Eretz Yisrael, we nonetheless have a responsibility to daven (which in cases like this constitutes a Mitzvah MideOraisa according to all authorities in light of the above passuk).
I urge everyone to daven with heightened kavannah at this critical time and to recite extra Tehillim, either alone or with others. ..
May Hashem answer all of our Tefillos and protect our chayalin and all of our brothers and sisters. And may we merit hearing only Besoros Tovos be-karov. By'didus Rabbah, M. Taubes

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from: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>
date: Jun 12, 2025, 10:04 PM
subject: Potomac Torah Study Center Devrei Torah for Shabbat Behaalotecha 5785
BS"D June 13, 2025.
Potomac Torah Study Center Vol. 12 #34, June 13-14, 2025;18 Sivan 5785; **Behaalotecha 5785**
Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) at www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.
May Hashem protect Israel and Jews everywhere during 5785. May Hashem's protection shine on all of Israel, the IDF, and Jews throughout the world. May the remaining hostages soon come home, hostilities cease, and a new era bring security and rebuilding for both Israel and all others who genuinely seek peace. May Hashem protect our brave IDF fighters as they seek to protect Israel and the world by destroying Iran's nuclear capability.
We also continue to mourn for Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, murdered May 21 outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC. For more, see the outstanding tribute by Bari Weiss: https://www.thefp.com/p/welcome-to-the-global-intifada
As I prepare to send out my material, I have learned that Israel started attacking Iran's nuclear facilities a few minutes ago. May this military action prove successful, with the help of Hashem.
Behaalotecha is a long, complex parsha with numerous incidents that at first seem not all to be related. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (the Rav) presented a brilliant Dvar Torah on the parsha 51 years ago this week. (Rabbi Yitz Etshalom transcribed this Dvar, and it is available in the archives of Mikra on Torah.org, as well as attached to the email version of this posting.) The Rav connected all the incidents in the parsha into one unified explanation that showed that they are all part of one story, which he summarized as a crisis in Moshe's leadership. As I read the various Devrei Torah in this compilation, I wonder why almost none of the authors deal with the Rav's insights. Rather, we read about Aharon's unhappiness at not being able to participate in giving a gift for installing the Mishkan, Hashem's promise of an even more important contribution (lighting the Menorah every morning), Yitro's meeting with Moshe, the inverted nuns setting off the beginning of the sixth aliyah, the meaning of the lights in the Menorah – all significant details. However, why are there so few discussions taking advantage of the Rav's insights about Moshe's depression, the meaning of the inverted nuns, the impact of the sixth aliyah on the coming doom of the generation of the Exodus, and Miriam's tzaraat?
Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Dov Linzer observes that it is easy to relate to faith in Hashem in an isolated desert, as B'Nai Yisrael have been, by the base of Har Sinai for more than a year, when the parsha opens. The real challenge is when the Jews leave the neighborhood of Har Sinai to travel to Canaan, going into unknown territory and encountering other tribes from time to time. Two million Jews who until recently had been slaves for many years need to learn to trust God and look to a better future rather than remembering the greater variety of food items available in Egypt. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, focuses on Moshe's crisis of faith and depression from the constant complaints of many of the Jews. Hashem instructs Moshe to appoint seventy elders to share the burden with him. God shares some of Moshe's spirit with these men, and the spirit of these men helps bring Moshe out of his depression. The Torah here relates that Moshe's humility, which others might interpret as weakness, is actually his greatest virtue and strength.
Rabbi Mordechai Rhine relates Aharon's craving to honor Hashem to remind us that we should honor and support those who contribute to the Torah. Positive cravings pave the way to greatness. Rabbi Marc Angel and Eran Rolls provide case history stories to demonstrate that Jewish institutions grow when they welcome people to emulate the welcoming that Aharon provides to the Jews of his time. These messages are relevant to the parsha and tikkun olam – however they do not incorporate the Rav's amazing insights on what I consider the key features of the parsha.
Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander, as usual, focuses on what I consider some of the key elements of the parsha. The sixth aliyah opens with the two short verses inside two inverted nuns (10:35-36) describing how the Aron miraculously leads the people to move, after more than a year at the base of Har Sinai. As the Rav explains, these verses symbolize the ideal of the people aligned with Hashem as the Ark leads the people forward to the land that Hashem promised to our ancestors. Immediately, however, some people start complaining – looking for a reason to complain. The people seem unable to trust in Hashem and follow His lead. Everything falls apart from this point. Moshe cannot control the people. Miriam and Aharon complain about Moshe and his wife, and Hashem reacts by giving Miriam tzaraat. The people ask for some leaders to view the land, and Moshe sends leaders from the tribes to view the land and bring back a report (more next week). Korach initiates a revolt. (Rabbi Yitzchok Magriso, an 18th Century author from Constantinople, studies the dates in the Torah carefully and discovers that the remaining events involving the generation of the Exodus all take place during a single week. Miriam's tzaraat (chapter 12), the departure of the Meraglim (chapter 13), and Korach's rebellion (chapter 16) all take place between 22 and 29 Sivan in the second year after the Exodus. (See Torah Anthology, 13.333-34.)) These are the final incidents for the generation of the Exodus. The Torah presents the laws of dealing with tumah from contact with a dead body (since there will soon be hundreds of thousands of deaths). There is a gap of thirty-eight years in the Torah, and we are suddenly in the final year before entering Canaan.
God reacts to the constant complaints of the people by ruling that the generation of the Exodus will all die out (with only two exceptions) over the next forty years, and that only the children of the current adults will survive to go into and take over the land (14:20-23). As Rabbi Brander states, the generation of the Exodus fails and must die out in the Midbar. However, the next generation, the children of the time, will renew the promise and inherit the land. Rabbi Brander relates this story to the Haftorah. Zechariah calls on the people of his time to return from exile, rebuild their spiritual identity, rebuild the Temple, and bring in a new period for B'Nai Yisrael in the land that Hashem had promised to our ancestors. In Zechariah/s vision, Yehoshua, the Kohen Gadol, stands before an angel, removes his filthy

garments (symbol of sin), washes, and puts on pure vestments. Hashem permits Yehoshua and the generation of Zechariah's time to reaffirm His promise to our ancestors.Rabbi Brander reminds us that our generation faces the same challenge and opportunity as that of Yehoshua, the Kohen Gadol. May we see a time when Israel, with the various segments of our people, unite so we can bring peace and move toward a new, golden age for Israel and Jews everywhere..

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan

From **RIETS Kollel Elyon** from RIETS Bella and Harry Wexner Kollel Elyon Substack <riets@substack.com>

Date Jun 10, 2025, 5:25 PM

subject **Behaalotekha: Humility and the Dangers of Virtue Signaling**

Rabbi Daniel Z. Feldman

It would not be false modesty to acknowledge that humility is a challenging concept. Moses is identified in this week's Torah reading as "the most humble (anav) of all men (Num. 12:3)", clearly a statement of praise, although its exact parameters, and relevance in this context, inserted in the middle of the recording of his siblings speaking negatively (lashon hara) about him, remain unclear.

One of the most baffling references is the statement of the Talmud (Sotah 49b), after declaring that with R. Yehudah HaNasi's death, 'anavah' disappeared from the world. R. Yosef objects: Do not say anavah has disappeared, as there is me ("ana")!

This passage has perplexed many; the idea of anyone proclaiming their own modesty certainly seems contradictory. Some have even suggested that there must have been a third person being referenced with the name 'Ana' (or Anna?).

At a minimum, this passage conveys that the true meaning of the term is elusive. In our parashah, we can assume that it did not require Moses to deny his uniqueness; in fact, the meaning may have been the opposite.

Rabbi Judah Lowe, known as the Maharal of Prague, posited a theory of lashon hara that excludes speech in front of the subject (Netivot Olam, Netiv HaLashon, ch. 7) which essentially is an extension of a Talmudic opinion that speech in front of the subject is not lashon hara. From a textual narrative perspective, the Chafetz Chaim (Klal 2, in n. 2.) and others challenged the Maharal's position by noting the central story of Miriam's lashon hara against her brother Moses. According to at least one midrashic opinion, Moses was present at the time. Apparently, this did not change the classification of the conversation as lashon hara.

Some suggest that the story of Moses is actually a proof to the Maharal's position. Their assumption is that the main factor is the ability of the victim to respond. However, since Moses is described by the Torah in this context as exceedingly humble, the implication is that this constitutes a unique situation where the victim would not respond, and therefore his presence does not mitigate the lashon hara, an exception to the general rule (R Dovid Kohn, Harchavat Gevul Ya'avetz, pp. 92-93).

Perhaps anavah as typified by Moses refers to a sense of self-awareness that does not require validation from any other human being. Some suggest, in this context, that Moses' humility was such that he did not need his closest relatives to know of his unique status and why their judgements regarding him were unfounded.

The Rabbis taught, "Say little and do much"; my grandfather noted an interpretation that combined the two: say little about the much that you do.

The phenomenon of "virtue signaling" is not only immodest; its harm is actually greater than that. First, it has a tendency to crowd out actual accomplishment, and thus reduce virtue in favor of signaling.

Second, and more egregiously, it often takes the easier path, i.e. that of condemning others, so that one can look superior in comparison. The Talmud calls this "mitkabbed b'klon chavro", honoring one's self through the disgrace of his fellow, and indicates variously great reward for avoiding this behavior or terrible punishment for engaging in it (Megillah 28a; Yerushalmi Chagigah 2:1; Gen. Rabbah 1:5; Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Deiot 6:3 and Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:14). That can be readily understood: as all the attention is comparative, there is no actual substantive merit to be found in the one utilizing this tool.

This desire for comparative glory is also one of the motivations for speaking lashon hara (see Divrei Yirmiyahu, Hil. Deiot 7:2. See also The Watercooler Effect, p. 69 and p. 101 for expansions on this theme). Social psychologists call this "downward social comparison", in contrast with upward comparisons, which are efforts to improve by following the practices of those perceived as being superior (see John D. Mayer, Personal Intelligence, p. 198).

This distinction is evocative of a story related about R. Yisrael (Lipkin) Salanter, the founder of the "mussar movement", devoted to personal introspection and improvement. The story describes the rabbi coming upon two children quarreling. The subject of their heated dispute was which of the two boys was the taller. In a final act of desperation, one child pushed the other to the ground, and, standing over him, proclaimed, "There, now I am the taller one!" R. Yisrael helped the defeated child to his feet and then said to the aggressor, "There was no need to push him to the ground to prove that you were taller—all you had to do was stand on a box!"

R. Eliyahu Meir Bloch (Shiurei U'Pinenei Da'at), the Rosh Yeshiva of the Telz Yeshiva, commented that it is easy for one who does not want to overtly praise himself to instead claim that he is righteously bemoaning the failings of his surroundings, and thus to boost himself by comparison. This desire to inflate oneself at the expense of the other may be rooted in simple self-aggrandizement, or it may target the subject specifically, either because of a pre-existing antipathy, or, very commonly, because of jealousy (See R. Eliezer Geldzehler, Torat Eliezer, letter #1, p. 164, and R. Matisyahu Solomon in the journal Kol Torah, XL, pp. 112-115).

Paradoxically, all of this may have contributed to R. Yosef's need to "signal" his humility. Of course, there is apparent irony, almost humorously so, in the proclaiming of one's own humility; but a second statement is equally surprising: "R. Nachman said, do not say fear of sin [has disappeared], for there is me." Presumably, the righteous would not be expected to sing their own praises regarding any attribute. As the Maharsha suggests, this atypical behavior is perhaps driven by the need to correct the record on a crucial matter. To anyone who would say, there is no room for humility in the modern era; fear of sin, religious belief, is antiquated, incompatible with the contemporary ethos, it is vitally necessary to protest - there is still a place, a possibility for modesty, restraint, and quiet Godliness, and there are still role models to prove it so. We still may not completely understand what anavah is; we definitely know what it is not.

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Behaaloscha

Fatherly Rebuke

This week's portion ends with a disheartening story, one that Jews are reminded to recount every day of their lives. The great prophetess, Miriam, sister of Moshe and heroine to a nation, spoke lashon horah (gossip) about her brother Moshe, "regarding the Cushite woman he had married. And Hashem heard." (Numbers 12:3)

She was upset at Moshe's righteous reaction to his omnipresent Divine communication, which had him separate from an intimate matrimonial life. "(Miriam) said (to Ahron), 'Was it only to Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak to us, as well?"(ibid v.3)

After harsh rebuke from the Almighty for the audacity to speak against her brother Moshe, the world's greatest prophet and most humble man, Miriam

was punished with leprosy. Her skin turned white as snow. But Moshe was not daunted by her remarks. His unyielding concern for her welfare proved itself as he fervently prayed for her immediate recovery and looked for Divine direction for the next step of penitence.
"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Were her father to spit in her face, would she not be humiliated for seven days? Let her be quarantined outside the camp for seven days, and then she may be brought in."(ibid v.14)The Talmud in Tractate Bava Kama, infers a logical supposition: if a father's wrath would result in a seven-day quarantine, surely (kal v'chomer) G-d's wrath should effect a fourteen-day punishment. However, an integral component of Talmudic exegesis states that a law that is derived by a kal v'chomer (a fortiori conclusion) can be only as strict as the baseline law from which it is derived, and not go beyond it. Therefore, even as a consequence of G-d's reprimand, surely more potent than a father's rebuke, would also warrant only be a seven-day punishment.
For example, if assault warrants a 30-day prison sentence, the logic of kal v'chomer cannot help us deduce that the crime of murder would warrant the death penalty. It can only meet the level of the baseline premise. Thus, if assault warrants a 30-day prison sentence, surely, or kal v'chomer, murder would warrant a 30-day prison sentence. For a longer sentence you would need a direct command.
However, while Divine chastisement should warrant a harsher ban, nevertheless, since Hashem used a fatherly analogy, Miriam was spared and only excommunicated for seven days. The question is why did Hashem use the parental analogy and thus limit the punishment to seven days? If there was a slight to the Divinity, then why not immediately use the Divine analogy to inflict a harsher punishment? What did Hashem want in mitigating the reprimand by asking, "If her father would spit in her face, would she not be humiliated for seven days."?
William Howard Taft, the 27th President of the United States, did not have a record as chief executive without distinction, though it was beclouded by the bitter political factional quarrel that ended his presidency after one term.
He was sitting at the supper table with his family one evening, and, as children sometimes do, his son directed a disrespectful remark toward him. Mrs. Taft looked at her husband and exclaimed, "I am sure you will not let that pass unpunished!"
Taft replied, "If he directed the remark toward me as President of the United States, I will let it pass as his Constitutional right. However, as a father to his child, I will surely deal with this abuse!"
Perhaps Hashem, in reprimanding Miriam as a father and not the Divine Presence, sent us all a message about the pain of lashon horah. Lashon Horah is considered a terrible sin. The Torah has no less than 31 warnings concerning that crime, and it is incumbent upon Jews to remember the story of Miriam as a daily reminder of the difficult test we face in our encounters and our oral reactions to them.
However, Hashem did not want to rebuke Miriam as Master of the Universe. He did not use the severity of the rebuke of the Divine Presence to ban her from the camp for fourteen days. Instead, he used a parental analogy, "If her father would spit." His rebuke did not come as a King but rather as a Father, hurt and dismayed about how one of his children talked against a sibling.
If we fail to avoid speaking lashon horah because of the pain that it inflicts upon our fellow Jews, I will give you another reason. Worry about the pain we inflict upon our Father in Heaven when we talk ill of his children. Think about how a parent cries when he sees his children quibble, and then remember that it is also Our Father in Heaven who hears how we talk about our sisters and brothers.
Dedicated in memory of Irving I. Adelsberg by the Adelsberg Family — Reb Yitzchok Isaac ben R' Gedalia o"h 12 Sivan
Good Shabbos!

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fw from allen.klein@gmail.com
from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
B'halotcha
by Rabbi Berel Wein

The troubles, disappointments and disasters that visit the Jewish people on their trek through the Sinai desert begin in this week's parsha. Moshe announces that "we are traveling now to our ultimate destination – the Land of Israel."
But deep down in their hearts the people are not really that anxious to go there. They have in their minds and hearts two options, either to remain in the desert and live a life of supernatural miracles and there become the dor deah – the generation of exclusive intellect and Torah knowledge, or to return somehow to Egypt with all that that radical move would entail, physically and spiritually.
The Torah will soon detail for us that neither of these two options are satisfactory either. They will complain about the manna that falls from heaven daily and the seeming lack of variety in their meals. They don't like the water supply, which is never guaranteed to them. They remember the good food that they supposedly had in Egypt, but according to Midrash, only a small minority actually wishes to return to Egypt on a permanent basis. They will press forward with Moshe to reach the promised Land of Israel, but they will do so reluctantly and halfheartedly.
This will lead inexorably to further rebellion, tragedy and the death of an entire generation – notwithstanding its being a dor deah – in the desert of Sinai. This makes this week's parsha a sad and depressing one, for we already know the end of the story. We can already see that this generation has doomed itself to desolation and destruction.
Coming to the Land of Israel and its Jewish state, whether as a tourist and most certainly when someone immigrates, requires commitment and enthusiasm. There are many who came to Israel over the past one hundred years by default, but the country has truly been served and built by those who came with a sense of mission, purpose, happiness and expectation. Moshe's clarion call, "that we are traveling to the place" of our destiny, echoes throughout the Jewish ages. Not all such calls are heard and even fewer are followed. Nevertheless, the call has resonated within the Jewish people throughout its history. It is that call that appears in today's parsha and again it is that call that Moshe proclaimed millennia ago that was and is the guiding motive for the existence of the State of Israel today.
Just as then in the desert, there are options for Jews today present in our world. The many "Egypts" of the world beckon with their seeming allure but also with great underlying faults and dangers. And there are those who wish to continue to live in a desert that demands nothing from them and contemplate themselves somehow as being a dor deah. History has always arisen and smitten these options from the Jewish future. The long trek begun by Moshe and Israel in this week's parsha continues. We hope that we are witnessing, at last, its final successful conclusion.
Shabat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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fw from allen.klein@gmail.com
from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>
to: rav-kook-list@googlegroups.com
subject: [Rav Kook Torah]
Rav Kook Torah
Beha'alotecha: Great Dreams
Unlike the unique clarity of Moses' prophecy, ordinary prophecy is communicated through the medium of visions and dreams:
"If someone among you experiences Divine prophecy, I will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak to him in a dream." (Num. 12:6)
But why dreams?
The Power of Dreams
Dreams, Rav Kook wrote, perform a vital function in the world. Great dreams are the very foundation of the universe.
Dreams come in many forms. There are the prescient dreams of prophets. The conscious dreaming of poets. The idealistic dreams of great visionaries for a better world. And our national dreams of redemption — "When God will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers" (Psalms 126:1).

Of course, not every dream falls under the category of a great dream. Most dreams are petty or pointless, as it says, “Dreams speak falsely” (Zechariah 10:2).
So what determines whether a dream is meaningless or prophetic?
True Dreams and False Dreams
It all depends on the dreamer.
Those who are truly servants of God concentrate their aspirations and efforts on rectifying the world. When one’s thoughts and actions are devoted exclusively to perfecting all of creation, then one’s imagination will only be stimulated by matters that relate to the universal reality. Their dreams will naturally be of great significance, reflecting the inner truth of reality, to its past, present, and future.
But the imaginative faculties of people preoccupied with self-serving pursuits will be limited — like their waking thoughts and actions — to personal matters. What great truth could be revealed in imaginings that never succeeded in rising above the vain thoughts and desires of a self-centered individual?
The Sages expressed this idea allegorically by explaining that angels bring prophetic dreams and demons bring false dreams (Berachot 55b). What does this mean?
Angels are constant forces in the universe, pre-arranged to perfect the world. True dreams relate to these underlying positive forces. Demons, on the other hand, are unholy forces rooted in private desires which are inconsistent with the overall universal order. False dreams are the resultant fantasies of such personal wishes.
The True Reality of Dreams
What would the world be like without dreams?
Life immersed solely in materialism is coarse and bleak. It lacks the inspiring grandeur of expansive horizons. Like a bird with clipped wings, it cannot rise above the bitter harshness of the present reality. We are only able to free ourselves from these shackles through the power of dreams.
Some foolishly pride themselves on being “realists.” They insist on taking into account only the present state of the world. But that’s a partial and fragmented view of reality. In fact, it is our dreams that liberate us from the limitations of the current reality. It is our dreams that accurately reveal the inner truth of the universe.
As that future reality is revealed, we merit an increasing clarity of vision. Our perception begins to approach the aspaklaria hame'irah, the clear vision of Moses, with whom God spoke “face to face, in a vision not containing allegory, so that he could see a true image of God” (Num. 12:8)

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fw from allen.klein@gmail.com
from: Ohr Torah Stone <ohrtorahstone@otsny.org>
subject: **Rabbi Riskin** on the Weekly Torah Portion

Parshat Behaalotcha: The Ram’s Horn and the Trumpet – The Secret of Jewish Music

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founder and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone

“Make yourself two silver trumpets. Make them out of beaten metal. They shall be used by you to assemble the community and for causing the camps to break camp for their journeys.” (Numbers 10:2)
Although the beginning of the book of Genesis records that Yuval was the inventor of the lyre and the pipe, when it comes to the performance of the commandments in the Torah, the only instruments which play any role are the shofar (ram’s horn) and the Chatzotzrot (silver trumpets). So, in a sense (at least from the Torah’s point of view), it is these latter two which are uniquely Jewish instruments, each with their specific, symbolic significance; the lyre and pipe are part of the heritage of humanity at large.
The shofar, as we know from Parashat Emor in Leviticus, is virtually synonymous with Rosh HaShana, resonating the creation of the world and intoning our dream of ultimate perfection of the world in the Kingship of God. The shofar next appears in Behar, the portion right after Emor, where we are commanded to sanctify the fiftieth year as a jubilee. With the completion of the forty-nine-year period of seven sabbatical cycles, the shofar proclaims the freedom of all slaves, and the return of the original owners to their ancestral homes and lands – the redemption of the land. And it was the shofar that was heard emanating from Mount Sinai during the divine revelation of the Torah (Exodus 19:19). Hence the shofar symbolizes creation, revelation, and redemption, the perfection of the world and humanity through the Torah’s commandments.
Indeed, the very word itself, shofar, literally means beauty – the majesty expressed in the horn that crowns the ram’s regal bearing, the beauty of the ram. Perhaps it’s no coincidence that one of the two Jewish midwives who defied Pharaoh’s edict to kill all male Jews at birth – in effect the first redeemers of the Jewish people – was named Shifra, from the same root as shofar. It is no surprise, then, that the instrument marking such important occasions as the giving of the Torah, the Kingship of God on the birthday of the creation of the world, as well as the redemption of the Land of Israel, are all served by an instrument whose essence is majestic beauty.
But what about the chatzotzra, the silver trumpet? Its name connotes the very antithesis of beauty: tz-a-r means pain, narrow straits, the same root from which we derive Mitzrayim (Egypt), the land which caused pain and oppression to the Jews. In fact, the Torah alludes to this idea when it uses the words hatzar hatzorer, “the adversary who oppresses you” (Numbers 10:9) in the next to last verse in the segment dealing with these “silver trumpets.”
The tenth chapter of Numbers in Behaalotcha opens with God commanding Moses to make two silver trumpets, chatzotzrot, and then, for ten verses, the Torah gives us the various occasions and requirements for the sounding of these “silver trumpets,” when the Israelites set out on their wanderings and when they had to assemble for war.
At this point, the chatzotzrot are very much in line with their name, expressing pain and angst, wanderings and war.
But is it all pain and angst? The same biblical section of silver trumpets also commands us to use this instrument to herald the festivals and new months, genuine occasions for joy. “And in the day of your gladness, and in your appointed seasons, and in your new moons, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings” (Numbers 10:10). Undoubtedly, even within a world of suffering, there are moments of victory and happiness. Moreover, we must also remember that our festivals and new months also reflect angst as well as exaltation, fear as well as freedom.
After all, on Pesach we recall the matza, which is “bread of affliction,” the food we ate as slaves in Egypt, as well as the “bread of faith” we took with us to the desert. And the Sukka recalls our wandering in an alien, dry desert as well as divine rays of protective splendor; similarly Rosh Chodesh reminds us that the essence of the moon lies both in its waxing as well as its waning nature, which expresses incompletion and imperfection at the same time that it holds out hope for ultimate wholeness and redemption. Might not the real lesson of the chatzotzra be that it is in the challenge of the angst and the pain, in our ability to overcome the limitations and rise above the evils of servitude and exile, that the highest joys of human accomplishment and success are found?
And indeed, it is important to note that the Torah, in the chatzotzrot segment, categorizes two kinds of occasions, and two kinds of sounds. One is perhaps the expected terua sound, a broken sigh-sob (ra’o’a, broken): “And when you go to war in your land against the adversary that oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm [terua] with the trumpets.” Terua is also sounded when the Jewish people must break camp, embarking on a long journey, wandering from place to place, the forty years in the desert being a prophetic foretaste of the thousands of years of exile and wandering the Jews would have to endure.
But in addition to the terua sound, the Torah also commands the chatzotzrot to blow a tekiya, a straight, exultant, expansive sound, demonstrating that even within this world of imperfection, and perhaps emanating from our empowerment to rise above and overcome that pain and suffering, the very chatzotzra can be employed to express a tekiya sound of joy and well-being, of eventual perfection and redemption. The dual nature of the festivals, the very dual nature of life in the world wherein the sweet may emerge from the bitter, the honey a by-product of the bee’s sting, is expressed by the two

interconnected sounds of the chatzotzra, the terua and tekiya which emanate from the silver trumpet: witness Naomi Shemer's song, "Concerning the honey and the sting, concerning the bitter and the sweet, concerning all these things, please guard them for me, my good God." Both are necessary, the bitter as well as the sweet, for the true challenge in this world is to turn the matza of slavery into the matza of freedom, to make sweet lemonade out of bitter lemons.

With this understanding, let us revisit the Rosh HaShana shofar. The Bible calls the first day of the New Year "the day of the terua sound shall it be unto you" (Numbers 21:1), the day of the staccato, broken sound. Why a broken terua emanating from the beautiful majestic shofar, and on the day of our celebration of the creation of the world, no less?! The answer ought to be indubitably, if not painfully, clear. God created an imperfect, incomplete world – with evil as well as good, with chaos as well as order, with darkness as well as light (Isaiah 45:7). Our task is to complete it, to perfect and repair it, to mend it and make it whole. We must turn a broken terua into an exultant tekiya!

Shabbat Shalom

Fw From AllenKlein@gmail.com

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6917661/jewish/16-Facts-About-the-Jews-of-India.htm

16 Facts About the Jews of India

By Yehuda Altein

India isn't the first place that comes to mind when people think of Jewish communities around the world. But from the Cochin Jews on the Malabar Coast, to the Bene Israel in the Mumbai region, and the Baghdadi Jews of the bustling port cities, Jewish life in India goes back many centuries. Read on for 16 facts about the fascinating story of the Jews of India.

1. India Was a Safe Haven for Ancient Jewish Refugees

Cochin is a city in the state of Kerala along the Malabar coast in southwest India. Remarkably, this city was home to a Jewish community for over 600 years. According to a tradition preserved by Cochin's Jews, their ancestors fled to India after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, settling in a town called Shingly (modern-day Kodungallur). Around 1340, they began to move to nearby Cochin, where the community flourished for centuries.

2. They Were Welcomed by Local Rulers

India's rulers were historically tolerant of minority groups, including Jews, respecting them and encouraging them to uphold their practices and beliefs. When the Jews first arrived in Shingly, the local raja (prince) welcomed them warmly, and Cochin Jews continued to enjoy peaceful relations with the leaders of Kerala up until modern times.

3. There Were Malabaris and Paradesis

In the 1500s, the Portuguese took control of parts of India's coastline. Around the same time, Jews who had been expelled from Spain and Portugal arrived in the new colony. These newcomers—called Paradesis (meaning "foreigners" or "white ones")—settled alongside the local Cochin Jews, who were known as Malabaris, meaning "People of the Malabar Coast."

4. They Lived in "Jew Town"

In about 1565, the ruler of Cochin gave the Jews a plot of land right next to his palace. This area became known as "Jew Town." At its heart was "Synagogue Lane," home to many Jewish homes and three synagogues—including the famous Paradesi Synagogue, built in 1568, which is still in use today!

5. The Portuguese Brought the Inquisition to India

The only real case of antisemitism in Indian history prior to modern times came under Portuguese rule. In 1560, the Portuguese established an Inquisition in Goa, their main Indian stronghold. In the following decades, the Inquisition issued several discriminatory edicts against the Jews, restricting new Jewish arrivals and limiting their interactions with Christians. In 1662, the Portuguese burned the Cochin synagogue along with its Torah scrolls and holy books. For the most part, however, the Jews of India escaped the worst horrors of the Inquisition that ravaged Spain and Portugal.

6. They Maintained Ties With Jews Around the World

Despite their remote location, the Jews of Cochin stayed connected to global Jewry. They sent halachic questions to leading rabbis like Rabbi Dovid ibn Zimra in Egypt,1 and Jews joined them from Yemen—including Rabbi Eilyahu Adeni, a prolific poet whose works became part of Cochin's liturgy. Later, when Kerala became a Dutch colony, the Cochin Jews developed strong ties with the Jewish community in Amsterdam. For many years, they celebrated the 15th of Av to commemorate the arrival of gifts shipped by the Dutch Jews: Torah scrolls and books to replace those destroyed by the Portuguese.2

7. The Paradesi Synagogue Holds Priceless Artifacts

The historic Paradesi Synagogue holds several ancient artifacts that tell the story of Cochin's Jews. Two copper plates were given by an 11th-century raja to a Jewish leader named Joseph Rabban, granting the Jews rights and privileges. A solid-gold 22-carat goblet is kept there, which was used at Jewish weddings in Cochin for centuries. And a tablet on the outdoor wall is a remnant of Cochin's oldest synagogue, dating all the way back to 1344! These treasures, and more, can be seen today by visitors to the historic site.

8. The Bene Israel Held On to Their Jewish Practices

Further north along India's western coastline lived the Bene Israel, centered in villages near what is now Mumbai. Isolated from the rest of the Jewish world for centuries, they still held on to several core Jewish practices, such as observing Shabbat and saying the Shema. Many of them worked in oil pressing, earning the nickname Shanwar Teli, or "Saturday oil pressers," because they did not work on Shabbat.

9. Maimonides Mentioned the Jews of India

In a letter written around the year 1200, the great Jewish leader Maimonides mentioned Jews in India, saying, "They do not know the written Torah, and all they practice from our religion is Shabbat and circumcision."3 While he didn't specify which group he meant, many believe he was referring to the Bene Israel.

10. David Rahabi Revitalized Jewish Practice

While the details are fuzzy, it seems that a Cochin Jew named David Rahabi made contact with the Bene Israel and shared with them many practices and beliefs from the mainstream Jewish community that they were either unaware of or had forgotten. Interestingly, while all agree that he existed, there is a wide range of opinions regarding when he lived.

11. They Venerate Elijah the Prophet

Elijah the Prophet plays a prominent role in the culture and beliefs of the Bene Israel. In fact, there is a tradition in which he appeared to the community in a striking nighttime visit on the holiday of 15 Shevat, which they celebrate with an extra layer of meaning. Today in Israel, many of them visit Mount Carmel, the site of Elijah's showdown with the prophets of Baal, every year on that day.

12. Baghdadi Jews Built Thriving Communities

Under British colonial rule, Indian port cities like Mumbai (then Bombay), Calcutta, and Yangon (then Rangoon, in nearby Myanmar) became major trade hubs. Jews from Iraq and Syria—often referred to as Baghdadi Jews—settled in these cities and established flourishing communities with synagogues, schools, and vibrant Jewish life.

13. They Helped Shape the City of Mumbai

Baghdadi Jews, especially the influential Sassoon family, left a lasting mark on Mumbai. They funded the construction of hospitals, schools, libraries, and other institutions, as well as the famous Gateway of India landmark. And they didn't forget their own community: the Sassoons built synagogues and employed many Jews in their businesses, helping support Jewish life in the city and beyond.

14. Jewish Books Were Printed in India

Believe it or not, India was home to several Jewish printing presses. The first opened in Calcutta in 1840, followed by others in Mumbai, Pune, and Cochin. They printed everything from prayer books to halachic texts to newsletters—sometimes even translating them into local languages like Malayalam (spoken by Cochin Jews) and Marathi (spoken by the Bene Israel).4

15. Most Indian Jews Eventually Moved Elsewhere

After 1948, most of India's Jewish population immigrated. The Cochin Jews and Bene Israel primarily settled in Israel, while most Baghdadi Jews moved to English-speaking countries like the UK. Still, small Jewish communities remain in India—especially in Mumbai—continuing a Jewish presence that has lasted thousands of years.

16. The Holtzbergs Left a Lasting Legacy in Mumbai

In 2003, Rabbi Gabi and Rivky Holtzberg moved to Mumbai as Chabad emissaries to offer hospitality and Jewish awareness to Jewish tourists and backpackers and serve the local Jewish population. Tragically, they were killed in a brutal terrorist attack in 2008, along with four of their guests. But their memory lives on: Chabad activities have only increased in Mumbai, transforming tragedy and darkness into growth and light.

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Fw From AllenKlein@gmail.com
from: Rabbi Efrem Goldberg <reg@rabbiefremgoldberg.com>
date: Jun 12, 2025, 7:05 AM
subject From Printing Press to X, When Instant Can Become Insidious, Anonymous Hero on Behind the Bima, Latest Shiurim, and More. . .

From Printing Press to X, When Instant Can Become Insidious
By Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

It was a clash between two respected and prolific people with elevated positions. Nobody knew what to expect next, and everybody was shocked by how intense and at times vicious this back-and-forth was.

Rav Yaakov Emden (1697-1776), also known as the Ya'avetz, was one of the greatest halachic decisors of his time, and his opinions continue to be quoted every day around the world. In 1728, he answered the call to serve as the Rabbi of Emden, the German city from which he ultimately took his surname. In an effort to preserve his independence and ability to speak freely, he resigned after only four years and moved back to his hometown of Altona, refusing to take another official rabbinic position ever again. Soon after, he obtained permission from the King of Denmark to own a printing press, which he established in his home and used to publish his countless writings.

Rav Yonasan Eibshutz (1690-1764) was a child prodigy and became the head of the Yeshiva of Prague at only twenty-one years old. He became well known for his brilliance, scholarship, and oratory ability and ultimately became the Chief Rabbi of the "Three Communities" of Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbek.

At the time, Rav Emden was dedicated to opposing and fighting the growing movement claiming that the recently deceased Shabtai Tzvi was the messiah. In the early 1750s, amulets prepared by Rav Eibshutz were presented to him with the claim that its author was secretly a Sabbatian and had embedded heretical messages in them. Rav Emden examined them and concluded that indeed, the author of the amulets was a follower of Shabtai Tzvi, a heretic who must be opposed. Rav Eibschutz denied the allegations and accused Rav Emden of misreading and misinterpreting the amulet.

An enormous controversy erupted throughout Germany and beyond, creating a major split, with the greatest rabbis of the generation taking sides. Rav Yaakov Emden wrote and published relentlessly, leveling suspicions and accusations against Rav Yonasan Eibshutz, not only about following Shabtai Tzvi but of other outrageous and deviant behavior. In addition to many letters and pamphlets, in 1753, he published Lema'an Da'as, a collection of letters and evidence about Sabbateans in general and Rav Eibshutz in particular. In 1755, he published a polemic called Vayakem Edus B'Yaakov. In 1759, he published Sheviras Luchos HaAven, a refutation of Rav Eibshutz's defense. (Our own Rabbi Yosef Kassorla once gave a wonderful class at BRS that delved into a detailed history of this famous episode, click here to listen to it.)

In the cemetery of Altona, Germany, only four headstones apart, are the graves of Rav Yaakov Emden and Rav Yonasan Eibshutz. Vicious public adversaries in their lifetime, these two Torah giants are buried for eternity, essentially side by side. It is said that before he passed away, members of the Chevra Kaddisha saw Rav Emden greeting his ancestors before he joined them in the Olam Ha'emes, the world of truth. And then, to the astonishment of the members of the Chevra Kaddish, he continued and said, "And Shalom Aleicha, Rav Yonasan Eibshutz." The man whom he had opposed so vocally and vociferously had passed away twelve years earlier and was now coming to greet him and welcome him into the next world. When he learned about this, the Noda B'Yehudah, Rav Yechezkel Landau, instrusted the Chevra Kaddish to find the closest grave possible so the two who had made up and reconciled in the next world, would forever lie together in this one.

While this controversy has a heartwarming end, it threatened to tear apart the Jewish community while it raged. The conflict had grown so intense, the Emperor Frederick of Denmark, the kingdom which controlled the relevant cities, got involved. At first, he sided with Rabbi Yaakov Emden and removed Rabbi Yonasan Eibschutz from his position, but he later reversed himself, and restored him. The controversy lasted for years and led to a series of excommunications and counter-excommunications.

Much of the controversy and conflict was the result of the published polemics that spread widely. It has been pointed out that if only Rav Yaakov Emden didn't have a printing press in his home, perhaps the harshness of the controversy could have been mitigated or avoided. If he had to enlist a publisher, have his works edited and taken time to publish, it is likely that the whole story wouldn't have been. Instead, each time Rav Emden had a thought, a reaction, something he wanted to say, he was able to write and share almost instantaneously. Time to think, reflect, and consider would have been helpful in avoiding a conflict that continues to reverberate until today.

To be clear, Rav Emden and Rav Eibshutz were Torah giants, leaders whose words we continue to study and whose lessons we continue to learn. Their machlokes was certainly l'shem Shomayim, sincerely driven, and their places in the cemetery testifies to how much more in common they had than that which separated them and their shared legacy and place among our people. We must not trivialize this episode or minimize their greatness with comparisons to others, particularly to those who shouldn't even be mentioned in the same sentence as them.

Yet, I thought about the particular observation of the role of the printing press as we all watched the unravelling of the partnership and bromance between the wealthiest man in the world and the most powerful man in the world in real time. Disagreeing with President Trump's "Big, Beautiful Bill," Elon Musk took to X to express his criticism. It didn't take long for their public spat to escalate with each side responding in real time with insults, accusations, and behavior that frankly we might expect more from dueling children than from the most high-profile people in the world.

For now, it seems the spat has simmered, with Musk publicly supporting President Trump's actions supporting ICE raids in Los Angeles. But the conflict brought us (and may still bring us again) dangerously close to impacting politics, policies, and the economy. As the tweets were flying, all I could think to myself was how this could have been avoided if they didn't each have keyboards, phones, and internet access at their fingertips. Imagine if they had to convene their public relations teams, work with their PR experts to decide if they should issue this statement and publish this response? Surely they would have been counseled to slow down, catch their breath, express themselves maturely and productively.

There is no question that technology, including AI, have brought enormous blessings and gifts in the dissemination of Torah, in connecting us, and in a variety of productive ways. This spat, however, is a startling reminder of how these innovations have a much darker side: they can be dangerous and damaging and wreak havoc. As they are developed and in choosing how to engage them, one must be tremendously judicious, careful, thoughtful, and guarded.

The Kotzker Rebbe was once asked, if Shlomo HaMelech was truly the wisest of all men, the most brilliant of all time, why didn't he invent the

train? The Kotzker's answer is penetrating and prescient. He said that surely Shlomo thought of the train and could have introduced it to the world but he understood the downside, the risk, how it could be used negatively, and he determined it wasn't worth it, better to keep it to himself.

AI can expedite efficiency and productivity, but it can also introduce endless deceptions and lies, leaving us all wondering which correspondence, image, and video are even real.

Of course this hypothetical is too late, but knowing what we know now about the negative impact of the internet and social media on mental illness and happiness, how it is used to spread hate, would we bring it to the world anyway or would we have concluded the world is better without it?

The conclusion is not clear or black and white. The answer is debatable but as we plow forward with technological innovation, the question must be asked and considered.

The Chafetz Chaim, R' Yisrael Meir HaKohen, (Shem Olam, Volume I) writes that while technology adds efficiency, ease, and comfort to our lives, its ultimate purpose is to serve as a metaphor that can strengthen our Emunah, our faith in Hashem and in His hashgacha, His providence in the world and in our lives.

Writing a century ago, and relating to the new inventions of his time, the Chafetz Chaim says they can help us understand and apply the Mishna (Avos 2:1), "Contemplate three things and you will not come to make mistakes: Know what is above you: a seeing eye, a listening ear, and all your deeds being inscribed in a book."

Earlier generations were stronger in their basic Emunah and didn't need these illustrations to bolster their faith but in the last few hundred years, he writes, when our faith has weakened and our doubt has increased, Hashem sends us these amazing technologies, each designed to help us connect with another aspect of living with Emunah.

For example, the telescope enables us to understand that Hashem sees and observes everything we do here on Earth, even though He may be very far away. The wonder of the phone enriches our belief in prayer. Just like we can talk in the phone on one side of the world and be heard on the other, Hashem hears all our prayers, even though there is a great distance for them to travel. Says the Chafetz Chaim, the photograph is a recorded picture of someone who may not even be aware they are being watched or that their picture is being taken. It lasts long after the person is gone. One day, we will appear before our Creator, Who will review the recorded life we led that exists even after we are gone. The phonograph, which is the recording of a person's voice that can be captured and played back later, is a metaphor for how one day we will be accountable for all the ways we used our speech inappropriately to gossip, criticize, or slander.

In many ways we are beneficiaries of the printing press, the internet and AI but the controversies of the past and l'havdil, the present are reminders to be thoughtful and judicious in how we use them and to always ask ourselves how they can enhance our relationship with Hashem.

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https://www.jpost.com/judaism/torah-portion/article-709004

Parashat Beha'alotcha: Ark of the Covenant in a war zone?

By RABBI SHMUEL RABINOWITZ

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In this week's parasha, Beha'alotcha, we read a very mysterious verse that describes the journey of the Ark of the Covenant – the ark that contained the two tablets given on Mount Sinai – before the nation. From the Torah, it seems that the journey involved a war with an enemy, and the ark was taken to war at the head of the fighting army. The Torah quotes what Moses would say when the ark would go out to war ahead of the army:

"So it was, whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, 'Arise, O Lord, may Your enemies be scattered and may those who hate You flee from You.'" (Numbers 10:35)

The ark setting out to war before the army is also described in the Book of Samuel, where we read about a war between the tribes of Israel and the Philistines, the inhabitants of the land before the Children of Israel entered.

The Book of Samuel tells us about this war in a place called Afek (where the city of Rosh Ha'ayin is now located). In the first battle of the war, the Philistines were winning and about 4,000 soldiers from among the Children of Israel fell in battle. After the battle, the elders of the nation consulted with one another and decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the battlefield, saying: "Let us take to us from Shiloh the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and He will come in our midst, and save us from the hand of our enemies" (1 Samuel 4:3).

When the ark was brought into the camp, "all Israel shouted a great shout" (4:5). The nation was certain that the presence of the ark would bring them victory. The Philistines also saw the presence of the ark as a determining factor against them and called out anxiously, "Woe is unto us! Who will save us from the hand of this mighty God?!" (4:8). But despite this, in the second round of battles, the Philistines won again and the losses to Israel were great – 30,000 soldiers fell in battle! And if that wasn't enough, the Ark of the Covenant itself was taken into captivity by the Philistines!

This turn of events doesn't easily mesh with the verses we started with. From this week's parasha, it seemed that the presence of the ark would bring salvation to the nation and victory over its enemies. But the Book of Samuel tells us about a crushing defeat that was not prevented by the presence of the ark.

Some of the biblical commentators who dealt with this question focused on an important principle that arises from looking at these two stories. The presence of the ark in the war is not a magical means with power to bring about victory. The role of the ark in war is that the army carrying it will be influenced by it, that the army camp will be a holy place with the values and commandments of the Torah.

When the nation is not influenced by the ark, it becomes nothing more than pieces of wood coated in gold and the tablets become nothing more than pieces of stone etched with letters. The power of the Ark of the Covenant lies in people drawing from it the values of Torah, morality and derech eretz.

The Ark of the Covenant taken to war as described in the Book of Samuel had no influence on the nation. They continued to worship idols, to practice incest and other social immoralities. They wanted to use the ark as a magical means, and that is not its purpose. The purpose of the ark is to cause a person to transcend and repair his ways, and only then does the ark bring about victory in war.

We no longer have the Ark of the Covenant, but this discussion still applies to our lives. The mezuzah is an example – that piece of parchment with texts from the Torah that is covered and attached to our doorposts. Many see the mezuzah as a means of protecting the home. There are sources for this in the literature of Chazal. But we must remember that that is not its purpose. The Rambam, Maimonides, writes about this in his typical decisiveness:

They, however, who write names of angels, holy names, a biblical text… within the mezuzah, are among those who have no portion in the world to come. For these fools not only fail to fulfill the commandment but they treat an important precept that expresses the unity of God, the love of Him, and His worship, as if it were an amulet to promote their own personal interests… (Mishneh Torah, Mezuzah 5)

We put a mezuzah at the entrance to our home to remember the values written in it: the unity of God, the love of Him and keeping His commandments. If we remember that, the mezuzah indeed protects us from harm. But if we see the mezuzah as some sort of magical amulet, it loses its power.

The Torah and commandments are not magical means of attaining victory and success. They are meant to influence us and elevate us from the quagmire of materialism and egocentrism to lofty peaks of spirituality and morality. ■

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https://jewishlink.news/chalsha-daato-shel-aharon/

'Chalsha Daato Shel Aharon'

By Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

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Why was Aharon depressed?

The first Rashi in this week's parsha deals with this question as he explains the juxtaposition between the first topic in parshat Behaalotecha—for Aharon to light the Menorah (8:1–5), and the last topic in parshat Naso—the 12-day dedication ceremony of the mizbeach (7:1–88): "Why is the parsha of the Menorah juxtaposed to 'Chanukat haNesiim' (the special offering brought by the princes of each tribe)? When Aharon saw the daily dedication offering by the Nesiim, he became depressed, because neither he—nor his shevet—took part in this ceremony. God assured Aharon, saying: "Do not worry, your portion is greater than theirs, for you are to light and attend the menorah every morning and evening."

Considering that Aharon is, indeed, at the center of attention and very busy during each day of the dedication ceremony, why should he have become depressed?

To understand Aharon's reaction (according to the midrash) we must consider the political realities of his predicament. Bnei Yisrael are about to leave Har Sinai and begin their journey to conquer and inherit the land of Israel. Although Aharon is indeed a very key figure during Bnei Yisrael's short stay in the desert, he is apprehensive about what will most probably take place once Bnei Yisrael leave Har Sinai. The focus of national attention will shift to the excitement of military initiatives and political enterprise. Har Sinai, and maybe even the Mishkan, will soon be "long forgotten."

Once the conquest of Eretz Canaan begins, it will be the 12 Nesiim (the tribal leaders) who will hold the highest positions of national leadership. They will establish economic policy; they will make treaties with foreign dignitaries; they will make speeches at national gatherings; they will lead the nation in war.

Thus, it is quite understandable why Aharon becomes depressed. When he sees the attention that the 12 Nesiim receive, he realizes the insignificance of his position within the emerging national leadership. What ministry post will he receive? In his own eyes, he may have begun to view his job as merely the "shamash" (a beadle/attendant) taking care of the Mishkan. Indeed, a very technical job at best.

What is the significance of God's consolation—that he will light the Menorah?

Although the midrash is well aware of Aharon's numerous responsibilities in the Mishkan, it chooses specifically the menorah to symbolize an additional aspect of his national duties, i.e., teaching God's laws to the people.

Once Bnei Yisrael enters the land, teaching the laws of the Torah will become the primary duty of the Kohanim and Levi'im. Since their work is divided into 24-week shifts, the average Kohen or Levi would find himself working in the Mishkan only two weeks a year. Therefore, most of their time would be spent teaching and judging the people. It was for this reason that their cities are scattered throughout the 12 tribes of Israel.

Thus, the Menorah may symbolize specifically this duty of the Kohanim—"chinuch," teaching. If the purpose of the Menorah is to spread light, then the purpose of the Kohanim is to spread Torah to the entire nation. This understanding can explain why Aharon is consoled when told that it is his job to light the Menorah.

To read the full shiur, please go to tanach.org/bamidbar/bhal/shiur2.htm.

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