

## The Oft-neglected Meal

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֲכַלְהוּ הַיּוֹם כִּי-שַׁבַּת הַיּוֹם לָךְ הַיּוֹם לֹא תִמְצָאֶהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה:

And we are not talking about breakfast. We are talking about the third Shabbat meal, a.k.a. SEUDA SH'LISHIT, a.k.a. SHALOSHUDES, which is corrupted Yiddish-ish for SHALOSH SEUDOT, literally, three meals, rather than (and significantly so) the third meal.

The mitzva to have three meals on Shabbat is Rabbinic (D'RABANAN) and it is linked to the more general mitzva of ONEG SHABBAT, Shabbat enjoyment. There is also a link to the above quoted pasuk in the Torah (this week's sedra) concerning the manna and Moshe's instructions to the people for Shabbat - Eat (the manna) TODAY, for TODAY is G-d's Shabbat, TODAY you will not find it in the field. The three-fold use of the word HAYOM is considered a REMEZ to the three meals of Shabbat.

(The gemara actually records another opinion that requires four meals on Shabbat - but we do not follow that opinion.)

According to most sources and authorities, SHALOSH SEUDOT is a requirement for men, women, and children. (One source says that women are exempt - this is included here, not to excuse women from this mitzva, but just to be a bit more thorough in this presentation.)

Preferably, Seuda Sh'lishit should also have LECHEM MISHNEH, the two loaves that are familiar from the two main Shabbat meals. This requirement seems to be a little lax for the third meal, with some sources not considering it as a requirement.

*cont. on page 4*

**Jerusalem** Shabbat in/out times for **B'SHALACH**

**4:21 pm / 5:37 pm** (see page 3 for other zmanim)

Checked, double checked, and triple checked for Parshat B'shalach - Shabbat Shira



**Word of the Month** First opportunities for Kiddush L'vana have already been taken - be it last Motza"Sh, Tuesday or Wednesday nights. Many people will wait for Motza'ei Shabbat Shira, which is the eve of the 11th of Sh'vat. This is not a wise thing to do during the winter-time, since it is getting closer to the last op and evenings are often cloudy at this time of the year. Therefore, if you get a shot at the Moon on Wednesday or Thursday night, take it - even by yourself. Otherwise, be on the lookout for the Moon on Motza'ei Shabbat. Last opportunity this month is all night Tuesday, January 18th until the pre-dawn setting of the Moon on Wed.



Candles	<b>B'SHALACH</b>	Havdala	next week
4:21pm	Yerushalayim	5:37pm	4:27 / 5:43
4:39pm	S'derot	5:40pm	4:45 / 5:46
4:36pm	Gush Etzion	5:37pm	4:43 / 5:43
4:36pm	Raanana	5:38pm	4:43 / 5:44
4:37pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:38pm	4:43 / 5:44
4:36pm	Netanya	5:37pm	4:42 / 5:43
4:37pm	Rehovot	5:38pm	4:44 / 5:44
4:37pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otniel)	5:39pm	4:43 / 5:45
4:36pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:38pm	4:43 / 5:43
4:21pm	Petach Tikva	5:38pm	4:27 / 5:44
4:21pm	Maale Adumim	5:37pm	4:27 / 5:42
4:36pm	GINOT Shomron	5:37pm	4:42 / 5:43
4:35pm	Gush Shiloh	5:36pm	4:41 / 5:42
4:37pm	K4 & Hevron	5:38pm	4:43 / 5:44
4:36pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:37pm	4:42 / 5:43
4:37pm	Yad Binyamin	5:38pm	4:44 / 5:44
4:39pm	Ashkelon	5:40pm	4:45 / 5:46
4:22pm	Tzfat	5:34pm	4:29 / 5:40
4:35pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:37pm	4:42 / 5:43

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - B'shalach-Shira 6:14pm

Ranges are 10 days, WED-FRI  
7-16 Shvat • January 12-21

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:46-5:45am
Sunrise	6:41-6:39am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:35-8:36am)	9:13-9:14am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:33-9:35am)	10:05-10:06am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:47¼-11:50¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:18-12:21pm
Plag Mincha	3:50½-3:57½pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:54-5:02pm)	5:00-5:07pm

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B'nana, VAnilla, and no topping

Sh'mot to Esther, a verbal connection between ancestor and descendant

The thousand p'sukim

Emperor Taizong of Song and Shabbat Shira?

GOSANGOSAN

Lavan, N'vayot, Nachshon, Aharon

☞ We have come to regard digression from the topic as something of a crime, so that one who attempts to change a topic in order to advance from a low to a high level of discussion is regarded in the most unfavorable light.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein  
A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World of Chazal by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein  
Now available at 054-209-9200

Same rule about a month later

From Trigona minima to Megachile pluto and the subject of fulminology

## LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

Based on some of the above, we can see an attitude problem surrounding Seuda Sh'lishit. Not its fault - ours. And that means we can do something about it.

First two Shabbat meals - women obligated with no other opinions. First two Shabbat meals - Lechem Mishneh, no second opinions. Kiddush precedes each of the first two Shabbat meals (with differences between them - but that's another story). No wine before Seuda Sh'lishit. (Recommendation in various sources to have wine during the Seuda Sh'lishit meal, but not Kiddush-like.) Forget R'TZEL in Birkat HaMazon for the first two Shabbat meals - REPEAT the benching. Seuda Sh'lishit? No, don't repeat.

Erroneous conclusion in the minds of many people - Seuda Sh'lishit isn't so important.

There's more. If one does not feel like a whole meal, he can suffice with a lot less. Mezonot - crackers, cake... qualifies. Not ideally, but practically. In the special situation of Erev Pesach that falls on Shabbat, we have a fruit or the like for Seuda Sh'lishit.

Seuda Sh'lishit time and you can't eat another thing. Big lunch, double dessert. Noshing in the afternoon. You're stuffed. It would be torture to eat now. Halacha: exempt. Reason: Shabbat meals are for ONEG SHABBAT, not TZAAR.

See? It isn't so important.

Wrong! It is. We (some of us) need a Reality and Attitude check.

Seuda Sh'lishit is one of the three required meals on Shabbat. Seuda Sh'lishit completes the set of Shabbat meals. Without it, you are just doing the weekday thing of two seudot. That's why Seuda Sh'lishit is also called Shalosh Seudot. Can't have three without a first and a second. Can't have three without the third one.

Being linked to the pasuk that started us off, means that Seuda Sh'lishit connects us to the manna. More, it is like an extension of the manna. That less than 40 years period of a daily and weekly display of G-d's concern for His people carries on in our custom, practice, and ritual via LECHEM MISHNEH, via covering the Challot, and via Shalosh Seudot.

In halachic presentations of Seuda Sh'lishit, we find a reminder (more - an imperative) to have in mind the Rabbinic mitzva of three Shabbat meals. We are not just feeding our bodies - we are feeding our souls. Divrei Torah and Zemirot help in that respect. Seuda Sh'lishit refreshes our awareness and appreciation of Chasdei HaShem.

With a little advanced planning, time management, and menu juggling, we can restore a meaningful and enjoyable Seuda Sh'lishit to our complete Shabbat experience for the whole family. (Practical suggestion: Mincha Gedola can break lunch into two meals.)

## B'shalach stats

16th of 54 sedras;  
4th of 11 in Shmot

Written on 215.33 lines in a Torah, ranks 17th

14 parshiot; 9 open, 5 closed

116 p'sukim - ranks 23rd (6th in Sh'mot)

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

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

Higher ranking for lines is definitely attributed to the format of the SHIRAT HAYAM column

## MITZVOT

B'SHALACH contains a single mitzva of the 613, the prohibition of leaving one's Shabbat boundary - T'CHUM SHABBAT (T'chum's membership in the family of Taryag is disputed, see MitzvaWatch)

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-counts of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition) - Rambam counts positives (248) and prohibitions (365) separately. X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva is counted.

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

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

**SDT:** *The Midrash tells us that Yosef's bones had been hidden by the Egyptians in the Nile in order to prevent the Israelites from leaving Egypt. Yosef's coffin miraculously surfaced just at the right time, so that the People could take it with them when they left. We are taught that Yosef merited being taken out of Egypt for burial in Eretz Yisrael because he had arranged for his father's burial there. Moshe, in turn, was accorded the highest honor - G-d Himself took care of Moshe's burial, in reward for the attention he paid to Yosef's remains.*

[FYI] The Gemara teaches us that a dead body itself - and certainly one who is defiled to a dead body - is allowed into the "Levite Camp", and is only banned from the Mikdash area (Machaneh Sh'china). This we learn from the fact that Moshe took Yosef's bones "with him". This halacha has significance today concerning the halachic permissibility to ascend Har HaBayit in those areas that are OUTSIDE the place where the Mikdash and its courtyards MIGHT have been. That part of Har HaBayit has the status of the Levite camp (at most), and one may go there following immersion in a

Mikve to rid oneself of "the defilement that comes from the body". (Defilement to a dead body cannot be removed without the Para Aduma potion and so today, one cannot go into the Mikdash part of Har HaBayit - except for security reasons.) - and with other restrictions. A person should consult a Rav with Har HaBayit experience before going there.

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

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

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

**SDT:** *"And G-d did not allow them to go DERECH ERETZ P' LISHTIM. Literally, they did not take the straight route to the territory of the Philistines. One commentator suggests an interesting DRASH based on a play on words. G-d did not take the People out of Egypt in DERECH ERETZ, in the normal, natural way of things, but in a miraculous way. Normally, bread comes from the ground; for the People of Israel, G-d sent them bread from above. Normally, water comes from above; for the People of Israel, G-d provided water from below, from a rock*

*and from the miraculous Well that accompanied them on their journeys, in the merit of Miriam. Not taking us out in a natural manner, leaves us with no doubt that it was indeed G-d Who took us out of Egypt. This is a crucial foundation stone of Judaism. Not only did we get out of Mitzrayim, but it was G-d Who took us out. Not only did He take us out, but the people knew and know it well.*

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

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

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

## Shlishi - Third Aliya

### 11 p'sukim - 14:15-25

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

**SDT:** *Our Sages teach us that there are times that prayer is called for, and other times when action is the order of the day. Sometimes we must use long prayers and petitions; sometimes a quick prayer not only suffices, but saying more can be counter-productive. G-d says: MA TITZ'AK EILAI, why cry out to Me? MA is spelled MEM-HEI. MEM can represent the 40 days and 40 nights that Moshe was to spend in prayer on behalf of the People following the Sin of the Golden Calf. MEM represents long prayer. HEI can stand for the simple but eloquent 5-word prayer for Miriam's recovery from Tzora'at which she contracted in punishment for speaking disrespectfully of Moshe - KEIL NA R'FA NA LAH. And sometimes, neither short nor long prayer is appropriate. At this point of the Exodus, the order of the day was decisive action. Move it! There is another example later in the Torah of Moshe and Aharon springing into immediate action to stop a plague from killing the People. We must know when to pray and when to act first, and when to do both.*

G-d tells Moshe to raise his hand over the Sea and split it, so the People will be able to pass through it on dry land. G-d informs Moshe that He will again harden Egypt's heart so that they will continue their pursuit. The Egyptians will finally know G-d's Might. The guardian angel (pillar of cloud) that

was leading the People now was repositioned between the Jews and the pursuing Egyptian army, preventing contact.

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

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

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

**SDT:** *Why the strong wind blowing all night? Could not G-d have split the Sea with the proverbial snap of a finger? The answer is: Of course He could. But the night's preparation for the miracles of the day serve several purposes. Egypt is lulled into a false sense of security when something is happening that they can explain. They don't want to accept that the G-d of Israel is performing miracles for His people. No doubt, their wizards explained the desert winds and the effects it can have. Among the Jews, there are always individuals who would like not to admit to G-d's awesome powers. They too will have their "excuse" in the natural components of the miracle. Perhaps, most importantly, this wind (and the like) allows us to relate to and better*

*appreciate, the miracles themselves. A snap of the finger brings results too quickly for us to think about what is happening. A night to ponder what was going on, further enhanced the appreciation of the Children of Israel for what had happened, was happening, and was to happen - what and when!*

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya

### 32 p'sukim - 14:26-15:26

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

Rambam states that complete, solid, lasting faith in G-d was attained at Sinai. Here we must say that the belief was great, but not yet permanent. One telling hint towards the tenuousness of belief as a result of "flashy" miracles alone is the word UVMOSHE - they believed in G-d AND IN MOSHE His servant. The only other occurrence of that word UVMOSHE is in Bamidbar after Aharon dies and there was a battle against Emori, the people were disgusted with their wandering and spoke against G-d and Moshe. That's the other extreme of belief - same word triggers it.

[P> 15:1 (19)] Next comes the Song of the Sea. What makes the Song of the Sea so special is that it

is a direct quote of the People of Israel that G-d put into His Torah verbatim. In other words, the rest of the Torah is written by G-d; we composed this part. It is an inspiring passage that has been incorporated into our daily prayer.

**SDT:** *It is written in Sefer HaChareidim that "he who says the Song of the Sea aloud and with joy, it is as if he was leaving Egypt at that moment - and his sins will be forgiven." In the merit of the Song of the Sea, G-d split the Sea for the People and forgave their transgressions.*

This 19-pasuk parsha is unique in the way it is written in a Sefer Torah. The column that contains the Shira is wider than all the other columns in the Torah. It is a Tradition to start the column with 5 lines belonging to the previous parsha, beginning with the word HABA'IM. Then a line is skipped and then the first line of AZ YASHIR is written all the way across the column. The next line has one word, a blank space, a group of words (from 3-5), another blank space, and then a single word to end the line. Call this, line pattern A. The next line starts with a group of words (2-5), a space, and another group of words (3-5). Call this, line pattern B. After the first line, the rest of the Shira parsha consists of another 29 lines, alternating patterns A and B, ending with an A. Then a line is skipped. Five more "regular" lines of Torah text finish off the column. The column with the Shira has many blank spaces and two blank lines.

[P> 15:20 (2)] Following the Shira portion is a 2-pasuk parsha

describing Miriam's rallying of the women to join in the Shira in their own way.

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

**SDT:** *Aside from the literal meaning of the text, this episode is considered an allusion to the primacy of Torah in the life of a Jew. Both Torah and water sustain life - spiritual and physical. In the same vein, "three days without water" resulted in our reading the Torah on Monday and Thursday, so that in our wandering in the spiritual desert of life, we will not go 3 days without spiritual water. This is but one "use" of the analogy between Torah and water. This idea is not just a matter of DRASH. The last pasuk of this parsha tells that if we will harken to G-d's Voice and follow the Torah, keep the mitzvot... then all the ills that befell Egypt will not be put upon us...*

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

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

**[S> 16:4 (7)]** G-d tells Moshe about the manna (mahn, מן) which

He will soon provide for the People. Moshe tells the People that they will soon see how G-d hears and listens to their complaints. Mahn is not just the food that sustains the people, it is also a crucial test of the faith that the people should have in G-d. The Mahn was to fall daily except for Shabbat, and was not allowed to be left over night (except for what fell on Friday). This facilitated a constant strengthening of our faith in G-d - the need to "trust" Him every single day.

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

**[P> 16:11 (17)]** The account of the Mahn continues... Quail miraculously appear in the evening, and the people eat "meat". On the next morning, the Mahn - protected by a layer of dew above and below it - appears. The People are fascinated by it and when they question Moshe, he explains the rules and procedures set down by G-d. Nonetheless, there were some who left over Mahn from one day to the next, and this angered Moshe. And, despite being told that the Mahn will NOT fall on Shabbat, there were individuals who went out to search for it.

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

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

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

Included in the instructions about the Mahn is the command not to "leave our PLACE on the seventh day (to collect the Mahn)". This was not just a rule for that generation; it is a mitzva among the 613 - the mitzva of T'chum Shabbat [24, L321 16:29]. Briefly, the point of T'CHUM is not about how far we may walk on Shabbat. It is about how far AWAY FROM HOME we may go. This is obvious from the halachic details of T'CHUM. The weekdays are for going. Shabbat is for staying put (as defined by halacha) and being able to "relax", to ponder G-d's Creation and Mastery over all.

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

## **MitzvaWatch**

According to Rambam, the prohibition of T'CHUM SHABBAT has two levels. The Torah prohibits going outside a 12 MIL boundary, that distance being related to the size of the encampment of Bnei Yisrael in the Midbar. This is "logical" because it was in the context of the encampment that the prohibition was first commanded. The Sages drastically reduced the distance one may go outside his "place of dwelling", to a mere 1 MIL or 2000 AMOT (approx. 1 km). This measure was "borrowed" from the Torah's description of the Levite cities (the 6 cities of refuge and an additional 42 cities to be given to the Leviyim after conquest and settling of Eretz Yisrael) and their city-limits. This too has a "logic" to it.

Ramban holds that the whole topic of T'CHUM is Rabbinic; that the Torah does not have such a restriction, and that the pasuk in this week's sedra from which Rambam learns T'CHUM, is talking about other Shabbat matters.

It is important to understand that the prohibition of T'CHUM, be it from the Torah or from the Sages, was not meant to put a limit on physical exertion or the distance a person may walk on Shabbat. A person who lives in a house in yenessvelt which is located on a small plot of land with a fence around it, is restricted to a distance of about a kilometer outside his fence. Another person who lives in a big city can walk from one end to the other -

from Gilo to Ramot and back again (or Washington Heights to the Bowery) - miles and miles - and not have a problem of T'CHUM at all. And even the first guy with the house near no others can walk around and around his property all Shabbat long. As long as he does not go outside his T'CHUM, he's okay. (Not really, because he has to figure out why he spends all Shabbat walking in circles around his home.) The topics of T'CHUM and EIRUV are complex. This only touched on a few points.

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

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

[P> 17:8 (6)] The final 9 p'sukim, which is also the Torah reading of Purim, tell of Amalek's attack on the fledgling nation of Israel. It is the arch-typical fight against those who would seek to destroy us. This battle repeats itself differently throughout Jewish History.

[P> 17:14 (3)] G-d tells Moshe to

write down and tell Yehoshua that I (G-d) will wipe out the memory of Amalek... This is not just Israel's battle, but G-d's as well.

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

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

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

## Divrei Menachem

When we contemplate the miracles of the Exodus and the amazing events that transpired as Bnei Yisrael crossed the Red Sea, we cannot but be transformed! For what other people in the world were the beneficiaries of G-d's outstretched arm as was the fledgling Jewish nation? For who else were performed supernatural miracles in the face of such terrifying and overwhelming odds?

Clearly, it was not all smooth sailing. The Torah reports of the people's panic induced in no small measure by G-d's purpose in drawing the people back towards Pi-Hachiot, between Migdol and the Sea, then to confront the massive and last remaining Egyptian edifice and idol, Baal-Zephon. All this succeeded in petrifying the fleeing slaves who felt trapped. But more so, this seeming retreat was designed so that Par'o might say that the people are, "Nevuchim", namely, locked in by the land.

Rashi tells us that the term "Nevuchim" is akin to the expression "Habacha", as in "Emek Habacha", the Valley of Dejection, referred to in the Book of Job. And how often have our people felt dejected and doomed! And how often have we felt that there is no hope? And how many times have our enemies assumed that we are easy prey so that they, like Par'o, might pursue us into the sea?

Those who followed the vicissitudes of the Yom Kippur War know of the treacherous but miraculous battle in Emek Habacha in the Golan Heights that saw a few embattled Israeli tanks defeat hordes of Syrian armor in what seemed like another last stand. So, for sure, even in our day, we need to maintain our faith in Hashem's "Outstretched Arm".

## VEBBE REBBE

**QUESTION:** *We have a friend who, when visiting from America, stops by for meals often when she is in our area. For the first time, last night, she slept over. It was, shall we say, a nightmare! She received several phone calls in the middle of the night, which woke us, and also, despite being warned, tripped the alarm. She now seems to want to stay for another night and perhaps return in the future. Are we permitted to refuse her request?*

**ANSWER:** This is a very hard question to answer, not just because it is hard to predict the likely potential scenarios, but because there is a conflict between values, as we will explain.

HACHNASAT ORCHIM (welcoming guests) is a rabbinically mandated application of the Torah command to love one's counterpart (Rambam, Avel 14:1). It applies both to poor and rich guests and, in theory, can be accomplished even when taking money for expenses (food, telephone calls, etc.) by providing a warm, welcoming place to be (Ahavat Chesed 3:1). Thus, even if someone can afford to stay in a hotel, (and, maybe, from her perspective, should do that) if she asks to stay at one's house or the situation is such that such an invitation is the normal nice thing to offer, the mitzva is normally a responsibility.

There is a general question about the obligation to fulfill a mitzva that has a large physical or emotional price, and this comes up in different contexts. In Living the Halachic Process (vol. II, D-15) we dealt with someone who can expect to have a moderate allergic reaction to eating matza on Pesach. The basic assumption is that one does not have to make himself sick in order to fulfill a mitzva, and while it is hard to do, one has to try to figure out what is a normal "price" one has to pay to fulfill a mitzva. In this case, when it is a matter of your needs against another person's needs and feelings, the matter is certainly not easy to determine, but one should try to consider this in an idealistic but realistic manner. The availability of alternative arrangements is a factor in this context (see Ahavat Chesed 3:2)

There is another element to the complex nature of this question. Just as a host is urged and, to a great extent, commanded to extend himself to make the guest happy and welcome (ibid. 1), so is the guest required to not take advantage or overdo her welcome (Halichot Bein Adam Lachveiro 8:28). If she is outright damaging to her hosts, they are not required to keep her (ibid. 6, in the name of Sefer Chasidim). We would certainly say that if she were stealing from her host, presumably even if the host is willing to spend similar amounts of money to feed her), she can be asked to leave. You could make the claim that GEZEL SHEINA (deprivation of sleep) would be equivalent. On the other hand, it is hard

to know where to draw the line on such a matter (otherwise, we would all be thieves at one time or another).

A final, related issue is that if your guest continues to grossly abuse her rights, she is seriously sinning. By letting her continue to do so, in some ways you are wrongly facilitating her sins. The Rambam (Sefer Hamitzvot, Aseh 205) says that rebuke, in addition to correcting "religious" sins and those affecting third persons, is intended for people who are being abused (as opposed to harboring resentment - see Vayikra 19:17). While we are cautious about the use of rebuke, having your guest continue to upset you is unlikely to be in her best interest.

All this being said, we think you should consider seriously the likelihood that your guest was not aware of how her behavior disturbed you. She is less likely to trip the alarm again, and you can probably unplug the phone or mention calmly how its ringing disturbs you greatly. Hopefully, your friend is a nice person who will be a much improved guest in the future. So, if you can put up with her for another night and see how it goes, you would probably be doing a big mitzva, even if you arguably can get out of it. Feel free to follow up as things develop.

## "OLEH CHADASH: 60 YEARS AGO" [1] by Dr. Meir Tamari

Robert Capa's album of photos of Israel in the 50's, shows an Israel different from that which I had seen making aliya some years previously. His photos show the poverty, the tents, maabarot and the refugees from the Holocaust together with the ingathered exiles from North Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq and everywhere else. It is true that food was rationed so there was no meat or ice cream, bananas and chocolates were only for children, and universally the humble eggplant miraculously changed into chopped liver plus whatever one could imagine. There was politicization of everything from housing to religion to job opportunity to schooling that severely limited the freedom of the individual. So there was place for the faces and body language recorded by Capa, and the universal Jewish ability to complain about everyone and everything.

However, he saw the downcast eyes, fearful faces, bewilderment and despair of refugees and lost people. I saw and heard of universal participation in national rebirth, in building of utopias, in redemption of the soil and wasteland; exiles with many different ideologies, customs and values, but all characterized by feeling of the unity of creating a state where none had existed for 2000 years. Everywhere I saw faces reflecting hard work mixed with optimism, excitement and achievement,

and heard the sounds of singing and dancing. There was a passion for involvement in everything and a common guideline of being of service in every walk of life. One may disagree with the ideologies and philosophies of that era but there was more idealism per square meter than anywhere else on earth. Drawbacks and all, I have always felt that in that generation, all the ordinary men and women had become great people.

Everything was geared to annihilating the golah so that "galuti" was the ultimate insult. The surnames that were given to us Ashkenazi Jews by gentile governments, were Hebraized, Yiddish the language of the galut was banned, the slogan of consensus was IVRI DABER IVRIT and our slang was in Arabic, the language of the Middle East. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook taught that possessing an Israeli passport was the realization of our prayers to remove the yoke of the gentiles; holding foreign citizenship was a sign of continued exile. A nation-wide attempt was made to transform the inverted triangle of the galut; sons and daughters of industrialists, landlords, bankers, scholars and luftgesheftmenschen would become Jewish farmers, soldiers, laborers, bricklayers and carpenters. The hunted Jew of years of pogrom, massacre and expulsion would become master of his own fate.

Simplicity in life-style and frugal living were considered Israeli ideals, contrary to the conspicuous consumption of the galut. This flowed primarily from the kibbutz and moshav movements

which provided political, cultural and spiritual leadership far in excess of their numerical strength. It was expressed in most circles in the dress codes of both sexes, in the average living quarters, vacations and social norms. Realistically, in part, this was due simply to the limitations of the overall economy, but was also the product of the norm of social thinking. Corruption was often defined as public figures overstepping these norms; it is good to remember that none of the founding fathers and mothers of Israel died rich people, irrespective of their political, religious or social ideologies.

The status of religious belief and observance was the big challenge. Basically the country's cultural and political leadership, heroes and role-models were secular. Paradoxically, consideration for the future of the Jews in their nation-state was accompanied by a fervent desire, even a sort of crusade, to free them from the yoke of religion and mitzvot. This created an atmosphere in which there was a sort of shame attached to being religious. Everybody wore caps or berets so religious men weren't easily distinguishable, new immigrant soldiers sometimes did not put on tefillin while they served although they did so when they came home, and many people carried membership cards of the irreligious histadrut to escape discrimination. Religious workers battled politically and organizationally for the right of employment, for equal participation in kupa cholim and for kashrut in the state and union institutions.

Youth movements, kibbutz idealism and religious soldiers made the knitted kipa the symbol of the confidence and pride that would combat all this. They showed that one could be religious and be a professional or a scientist or any of the myriad things that the modern world makes possible. Beyond this, it is necessary to show that being religious means being different, according to the unique and specific way of Torah. *More to come...* □

### Parsha Points to Ponder

## **B'SHALACH**

1) What does G-D mean when He says that the Jewish people will not suffer the diseases which the Egyptians experienced (15:26)? We know that even when the Jews have done G-D's will people became sick!

2) How could the manna be enough to satisfy each person, both old and young with their different levels of appetite while also being the same amount, an omer, for each person (16:16 and 16:18)?

3) Why does G-D have to remind Moshe that the staff was used to hit the Nile when commanding Moshe to take the staff to hit the rock (17:5)?

### Parsha Points to Ponder

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

## **B'SHALACH**

### **Horse and Rider**

Par'o was just the first.

One way of looking at Jewish history is as a series of encounters with evil rulers. Par'o, whom we have been reading about these past several weeks, was just the first tyrant who persecuted us. Over the millennia, he was followed by Nevuchadnetzar, Haman, Antiochus, Titus, Hitler, Stalin, and others too numerous to mention.

Each of those men, without exception, did not act alone. Rather, they represented an entire culture, a comprehensive ideology, which opposed the Jewish people and its religion. They enlisted the assistance of huge constituencies who believed in their teachings, and who followed their example. Without the support of the masses they led, they could not have wrought the havoc they did.

An excellent illustration of this is the book "Hitler's Willing Executioners" by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. In this book, the author demonstrates clearly that only because Hitler had the cooperation of so many of his followers, all of whom believed as he did in the need to exterminate our people, was he able to be so tragically successful.

Par'o, at the beginning of our history, and Hitler, in our more recent past,

were each able to create a culture, a belief system, which pervaded their societies and which enabled them to execute their heinous schemes.

Throughout our history, the enemy was not just one individual, king, or dictator. Rather, it was an entire culture that opposed each of us and everything we stood for.

One lesson of our history is that just as these individual leaders were vanquished, so too did their ideologies fall into oblivion. This is the meaning of the statement of our Sages, "The holy one, blessed be He, does not bring about the downfall of the enemy until He first defeats its gods."

The gods of a nation, and in some versions, the ministering angels of that nation, represent what we would call today a nation's culture, its weltanschauung.

Where is this idea expressed in this week's Torah portion, B'shalach? Long ago, I heard a lecture from the late Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik on B'shalach. He based it on the phrase near the very beginning of the Song of the Sea (Sh'mot 15:1):

"I will sing unto G-d, for He is highly exalted; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."

What is the significance of the horse being thrown into the sea? Why do the Israelites, led by Moshe, open their song of praise to G-d, the theme of Shabbat Shira which we celebrate this week, by singing of the horse's downfall?

Rabbi Soloveitchik answered that the horse was the symbol of the culture of Egypt. When the Israelites sang of the downfall of both horse and rider, they were expressing their appreciation of the fact that not only were Par'o and his slave masters being removed from the scene, but so too was the culture of Egypt coming to an end.

Throughout the Tanach, we find the culture of Egypt identified with the horse; the horse is a symbol of militarism, of the ideology that might makes right. The horse is also a symbol of arrogance and pride, fitting companions for militarism.

When G-d brought down Par'o and his cohorts, He was also in effect removing from the world stage a belief system which justified crushing and enslaving other human beings.

The removal, not only of the dictator but of his doctrine, and not only of the tyrant but of his theology, is part of the pattern of history from a Jewish perspective. On Purim, we do not just celebrate Haman's hanging, but rather the triumph over a culture that had arbitrarily planned to commit genocide. On Chanuka, we honor a victory over Hellenism and the Greek way of life, not just a victory over an alien occupier of our land.

In more modern times, the triumph over Nazism was not just the defeat of hordes of brutal and sadistic men and women. It was a triumph over a racist and bigoted worldview, and for a short while, many believed that that triumph was permanent.

An excellent example of the horse and the rider both being thrown into the sea is the fate of the ideology of Communism. True, the communist foe was personified in Joseph Stalin and his henchmen, and his several successors. But what eventually came about was the sudden and unexpected total abandonment of the communist approach to economics, to the organization of society, and to the religious and spiritual aspects of humankind.

It is so instructive to read the writings of men who were once avowed communists but later abandoned that philosophy when they realized how corrupt it really was. There is a book edited by Arthur Koestler, who had Jewish roots, entitled *The God that Failed*. He and the other famous thinkers who contributed essays to that book all saw Communism as a kind of god. Long before their god met his final defeat, they foresaw that defeat was not far away.

When our Sages say that the holy one, blessed be He, first brings about the downfall of the gods of our enemies, they are already using a term for a failed ideology that Arthur Koestler and others used centuries later.

Our Sages spoke of the downfall of the enemy and of its gods, and in this week's Torah portion, the Bible speaks of the downfall of the rider and of the horse. Different metaphors, but the same idea.

Today, we confront not only "evil kings" and "evil kingdoms" but evil

ideologies. Systems of belief, masquerading as sacred religion, which call for murder and mayhem, torture and genocide. We pray to be able to witness both the horse and the rider being cast into the depths of the sea.

**CHIZUK AND IDUD**  
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra  
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -  
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

The Mechilta describes the scenario and dialogue that took place among the tribes prior to the splitting of the sea. Bnei Yisrael were standing by the shores of the Red Sea with the Egyptian army literally breathing down their necks. Suddenly, they began to argue about who should go into the water first. Each tribe vied for the opportunity to be the first to enter. During the negotiations, Nachshon ben Aminadav, of the Tribe of Yehuda, jumped into the threatening waters. Each time we say Hallel, we pay tribute to Yehuda's decisiveness and alacrity in taking the first plunge for which he merited being crowned as king over Bnei Yisrael - HAY'TA YEHUDA L'KODSHO, YISRA'EL MAMSHILO-TAV, Yehuda became His Sanctuary, Israel His Dominions.

What can we learn from Nachson's behavior? Meetings are essential and a consensus of opinion is necessary to accomplish something. When Klal Yisrael is trapped between the forbidding waters of the Red Sea and the approaching Egyptian army, however, it is not a time to make speeches and convene meetings. It is a

time for action and commitment, not rhetoric or hyperbole. All too often when action on behalf of Torah causes is mandated, be it for organizational, communal or individual needs, we become bogged down with meetings, speeches and votes. The problem at hand festers and, in most cases, grows out of proportion. We must recognize that the Beit HaMikdash was built on Yehuda's portion due to his commitment to action and practice. Hopefully, Jews the world over will learn from Yehuda's example and 'take the plunge' by joining their brothers and sisters and helping fulfill the dream of our becoming an Eretz Yisrael, L'Am Yisrael, Al Pi Torat Yisrael.

Ronald Wachtel, Yerushalayim

**B'SHALACH** Adapted from  
**Unlocking the Torah Text**  
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

## A Culinary Crucible?

**Context:** Responding to the complaints of the Israelites concerning lack of food, God introduces the miraculous fare that will sustain the nation during their travels: "Behold! I will rain down for you food from heaven; and the people will go out and collect each day's portion on its day, that I may test them - will they follow My teaching or not?"

This refrain is repeated twice in the book of Devarim as Moshe, recalling the people's journey in the wilderness, states:

"And you shall remember the entire road

upon which HaShem your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to afflict you, to test you, to know what is in your heart - will you obey His commandments or not? And He afflicted you and let you hunger and He fed you the manna... in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of God does man live. [The God] Who fed you manna in the wilderness... in order to afflict you and in order to test you, to do good for you in the end."

**Questions:** Why does God associate the miracle of the manna with testing and affliction?

As the Abravanel asks, "What was the nature of the test administered by God through the bestowal of daily sustenance? This was a kindness, not a test!"

### Approaches:

**A.** Rashi, apparently unable to discern a test within the manna itself, contends that the trial actually emerges from an ancillary source. God grants miraculous sustenance to the Israelites and simultaneously tests them by determining "whether they will observe the commandments associated [with that sustenance]."

These commandments included the instruction to collect each day only the amount of manna necessary for that day, the prohibition of collection on the Shabbat, and the directive to collect a double portion on Friday in order to properly prepare for Shabbat.

**B.** Many other scholars, however, are unwilling to accept what they consider to be a somewhat facile solution to the

mysterious "test" of the manna. The Ramban, for example, emphatically declares, "But this [Rashi's explanation] is not correct... [The manna itself] was a trial to them."

While the text supports the position that the manna itself was a trial, the question remains: exactly what was the test embodied in this miraculous food?

**C.** The scholars offer, with subtle variations, three global approaches. Each of these approaches carries overarching lessons that move well beyond the specific phenomenon of the manna.

1. God tested and developed the faith of the Israelites by depriving them of the usual forms of sustenance and survival.

The Ramban, among others, champions this position both in Parshat B'shalach and in the book of D'varim:

"[God] could easily have led them through the surrounding cities. He led them, instead, through a wilderness of snakes, fiery serpents and scorpions, where the only bread fell from the heaven each day."

And:

"This was a serious trial for them: to have no other option, to enter a great wilderness... to have no sustenance other than the manna which fell on a daily basis and which melted when the sun waxed hot... Nevertheless, they did all this in obedience to God's command... From this [God] would know that they would obey His commandments forever."

With this approach, the Ramban remains true to his general position concerning divine tests: God tests man to actualize man's inherent potential.

Through the trial of the manna, by severely rationing and circumscribing the sustenance of the Israelites, God actualizes their internal potential for faith. This faith, once realized, will sustain them not only in the wilderness but through their turbulent journey across the face of history.

2. By providing the Israelites with the manna, God confronts the fledgling nation with the plethora of challenges that emerge with a life of ease. Far from a test of deprivation, the manna actually constitutes a NISAYON HA'OSHER, a trial of wealth and plenty.

The Ohr HaChayim notes, for example, that the manna provides the Israelites with the unfamiliar phenomenon of leisure time. God, therefore, asks: "Will they walk in My ways?" Will they use their suddenly available time productively in the pursuit of Torah study and observance?

The S'forno, for his part, suggests that God wants to determine whether the Israelites will follow His dictates when "they are sustained without any pain." Man often turns to God in times of need but ignores Him in times of comfort. Through the manna, God challenges the Israelites: Will you turn to Me when your sustenance is attained with ease?

3. As the Israelites journey towards national independence, the manna sensitizes them to their dependence upon God.

This message, arguably the most basic "test" incorporated in the miracle of the manna, is reflected in the following Talmudic conversation:

"The students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asked: 'Why did the manna not

descend for Israel once annually?'

[Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] answered: '[In order that each Israelite] would worry - perhaps no manna will descend tomorrow... Thus they all turned their hearts to their Father in Heaven.'

Centuries later, the Rashbam, mirroring the position of numerous other commentaries, elaborates upon the statement of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: "Since each and every day their eyes will turn to Me for their sustenance, they will come to believe in Me and walk in the ways of My Torah."

The miracle of the manna thus emerges, with the first footfalls of our history, as a formative crucible conveying a lesson that, to this day, we forget at our own peril: Whether we are wandering in the wilderness or living in a highly urbanized society, we are dependent upon God for our sustenance each and every day. ❧

## Towards Better Torah Reading and Davening

### Who is mighty?

Much (most) of this column has been inspired by and guided by

the book EIM LAMIKRA HASHALEIM by Nissan Sharoni. One section of the book is called EIM LAMASORET and consists of "flags" on various words and phrases in the Torah - sedra by sedra. One of the longest entries in this section is on the pasuk (Sh'mot 15:10):

נְשַׁפֹּת בְּרוּיָזָה פִּסְמוֹ יָם זָלִלוֹ  
פְּלוֹפֶרֶת בְּמַיִם אֲדִירִים:

With two translations into English, you will see the "big dispute" about the final word in the pasuk.

The Stone Edition of the Chumash by Artscroll: "You (G-d) blew with Your wind - the sea enshrouded them (the Egyptians); the mighty (the Egyptians) sank like lead in the water."

The Complete Jewish Bible (from the Chabad.org website): "You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the powerful waters."

Here's a third translation - Living Torah by Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l: "You made Your wind blow; the sea covered them, they sank like lead in the mighty waters."

Seems to agree with the second translation, except in the footnote on "mighty waters", he gives the gemara's rendering: "the mighty sank like lead in the waters."

The question arises from - or is linked to - the Torah notes. If ADIRIM (mighty) describes (modifies) MAYIM, then we might have expected a MERCHA SOF PASUK rather than the TIPCHA, which breaks the MAYIM away from the ADIRIM. But the KATON on OFERET is a greater pause-maker than the TIPCHA, pushing MAYIM together with ADIRIM. The issue is debated without a clear resolution.

## *Praying with Passion*

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah  
One Week at a Time

*Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author*

### **P'sukei d'Zimra:**

#### **Hodu** Give Thanks

יְשַׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ... הוֹדוּ  
לֵה' כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ.

**Meaning:** translation...

The heavens will be glad... **Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, for His kindness endures forever.**

#### **Theme:**

An essential concept of the prayer

#### **Goodness Without Limits**

Hashem's goodness is complete and forever.

**Insight:** Deeper meanings...

#### **Wiping Out the Debts**

All that Hashem does is for man's good. However, in times of challenge and difficulty, a person may feel that the inflictions are painful and therefore he can only recite the blessing reserved for acceptance of G-d's judgment - "Blessed are You... the true Judge." In the future, however, when Mashiach arrives, the same person will be able to clearly see that all that occurred was for good. Then he will be able to make the blessing on

happy occurrences - "Blessed are You... Who is good and does good."

This notion is compared to bankruptcy, in which a bankrupt business pays just ten cents of each dollar he owes. As difficult as they may be, suffering and misfortune in this world are the easy payment plan enabling us to erase our debt in this world at a rate far more favorable than that which would apply in the next world.

That is why Yitzchak Avinu, who understood the gravity of punishment in the next world, preferred enduring the punishments in this world. G-d indeed caused Yitzchak to become blind in his final years, thereby granting his request for suffering during his lifetime in place of punishment in the World to Come.

#### **Visualize:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

#### **Who Knows What's Good?**

Sometimes in life, we are fortunate to see how "good" came out of something that at the time seemed "bad", as the following story illustrates:

In the 1930s, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky was Rav of a small, 60-family community in a town called Tzitevian. His family lived in dire poverty and could not even afford a suit for his son Binjamin's Bar Mitzva.

Unable to subsist on the income he earned, Rav Yaakov applied over the course of several years for rabbinical positions in larger towns. The last one

for which he applied was in Wilkomer, the third largest Jewish community in Lithuania. After several interviews, Rav Yaakov was offered the position. He returned home to tell his wife the great news, and the household erupted in jubilation; finally their crushing poverty would be alleviated.

Three weeks later, the jubilation turned to grief when Rav Yaakov received news that the position had gone to someone else. The Rebbetzin cried bitter tears over the loss of the rabbanut in Wilkomer, recognizing that it virtually ensured that Rav Yaakov would have to travel overseas to America by ship to seek some means of support.

"The failure to win that position, as well as the others profoundly affected Rav Yaakov's own strong sense of Divine Providence. The successful candidates and their families eventually [fell into the hands of] the Nazis. In counseling people undergoing difficult tests, Rav Yaakov would often point to his own experience as an example of how that which is perceived at the moment as the greatest tragedy may, with the passage of time, be revealed to be the greatest salvation." (*Paraphrased from Reb Yaakov, The Life and Times of HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky (Yonason Rosenblum, ArtScroll, p. 99)*).

#### **Word to the Wise:**

Meaning within the meaning

The root of the word L'OLAM (forever) is NE'ELAM, which means "hidden" (Rav Schwab on Prayer, page

142). In today's world, Hashem's goodness is sometimes hidden. As a result, giving thanks to Hashem for everything may be difficult, because we may not comprehend that all that occurs truly emanates from Hashem's eternal kindness. In the future, during the time of Mashiach, when all of Hashem's goodness is evident, G-d's creations will rejoice and the whole world will say HODU LASHEM KI TOV, KI L'OLAM CHASDO - "Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, for His kindness endures forever." ❧

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**WISDOM & WIT**  
by Shmuel Himelstein

We are told by our Sages that "against your will you are created and against your will you are born and against your will you live and against your will you die and against your will you must give an accounting" for your life. On this, the Gaon of Vilna asked: "If all of these are against a person's will, why is he then required to give an accounting?"

To answer this, he quoted a halacha, that if a person has a field which has no fence around it and another person puts up a fence around three sides of the field, the owner of the field does not have to pay for the fencing, as his field is still unprotected on the fourth side. However, if the other person then adds fencing on the last side, the owner of the field must pay for all four sides of the fencing, for now the fencing serves a purpose.

"The same thing applies to our lives," the Gaon concluded. "It is true that we are created and are born and live against our wills, but when it comes to dying, none of us wants to die. By the fact that we want to live, we indicate that we indeed wanted to be created, to be born, and to live, and therefore we are held accountable for our lives."

From "**OzTorah**"  
by **Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple**  
AO RFD, Emeritus Rabbi of  
the Great Synagogue, Sydney  
www.oztorah.com

**Q.** What is "ken einahora"?

**A.** Literally it means, "no evil eye" - i.e. may evil forces have no effect. The term "ayin ha-ra" (evil eye) has undergone a change of meaning. In the Mishna (Avot 2:2), Rabbi Yehoshua says, "The evil eye, the evil inclination and hatred of mankind put a person out of the world." "Evil eye" in this context does not mean an evil force but human selfishness or envy, the opposite is "ayin tova", a good eye - good will or generosity.

The Talmud and later writings have many references to the evil eye in a magical sense, though Rambam says that amulets that supposedly ward off the evil eye have no effect other than the psychological comfort they give the wearer. The late 19th century German authority, Rabbi David Hoffman, says one should not object to hanging

amulets in a room where a woman is in labour, adding that even those who do not believe in such things admit that the amulets can be of psychological benefit (Melamed L'ho'il, 2:63).

The evil eye has an interesting effect on synagogue practice. A reason for not calling two brothers or a father and son to the Torah one after the other is "ayin ha-ra", though this can be understood in terms that other members of the congregation might be envious at the one family apparently getting too many honours.

## Growing Up in the Desert

The different challenges and experiences for Bnei Yisrael described in Parshat B'shalach resemble in many ways the experiences children encounter as they mature from childhood to adulthood. Just as Bnei Yisrael go through "growing pains" as they transition from a nation in servitude to a nation ready to receive the Torah and follow Hashem, so, too, do children and adolescents on the path toward adulthood.

The realities of life without Egyptian domination include facing seemingly insurmountable natural obstacles such as Yam Suf and lack of food and water. Bnei Yisrael are also pursued by external enemies - the Egyptians in the beginning of the parsha and the nation of Amalek at the end.

Hashem appoints Moshe as a leader and guide for Bnei Yisrael in their journey toward becoming a nation. Bnei Yisrael continually complain to Moshe about their

circumstances, a reflection of their limited life experience beyond slavery and their limited vision of their own fortitude.

The transition from childhood to adulthood travels a similar path. Adolescents see some of the realities of the world around them, sometimes harsh realities that they must navigate and overcome to discover who they are as a person and who they will become as an adult. The physical, mental and emotional changes are difficult for them to understand and are often compounded by outside circumstances in school, at home, or in the larger community.

When Bnei Yisrael were faced with the Egyptians on one side and the Red Sea on the other, they turned to Moshe, someone whom they trusted and who not only validated their needs but also advocated on their behalf. When a child views himself as surrounded by challenges on all sides, to whom does he turn? Every child needs a Moshe!

**Kav L'Noar**, a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting Anglo teens with their families, has, for the past 6½ years filled this need for hundreds of families living in Israel. Its mission is to provide professional, comprehensive and culturally-sensitive services to families coping with the challenges of adolescence. Their goal is to reduce stress on the family and to empower them to successfully stand on their own as a fully-functioning family unit.

One of **Kav L'Noar's** most successful interventions has been its therapeutic mentoring program which matches a child with a carefully interviewed, screened and trained mentor. The bonds created in this relationship last a lifetime and give the

child space to experience the person he or she wants to be, regardless of the confusing or seemingly hopeless situation around them. With a mentor, each child crosses his or her own Red Sea.

**Kav L'Noar** looks forward to greeting parents, grandparents, teachers and mental health professionals at its 7th Annual Conference on Promoting Healthy Family Relationships scheduled for Monday evening, January 17th at The Ramada Hotel. The program will provide practical tools for connecting with our children and solutions for laying a smooth path on their way to adulthood. For more information contact Lisa at 050-410-3215.

## ParshaPix explanations

- 🔔 Upper-left are the Pillar of Cloud by day...
- 🔔 and the Pillar of Fire by night.
- 🔔 Below them is the Davka Judaica Clipart scene of the splitting of the sea.
- 🔔 The tambourine in the middle is TOF MIRIAM. The bullets of these ParshaPix explanations are a different kind of TOF, drum. No one knows for sure what kind of drums the women sang and danced with...
- 🔔 The tire with a blowout represents the wheels of the Egyptian chariots that fell off and caused the chariots to become bogged down in the sea bed. Part of the destruction of Egypt took place when their supreme arrogance turned to shock and panic at that moment. Soon thereafter, the waters of the Sea drowned them, but the demoral-

izing effect of their wheel-losing experience was part of their punishment.

- 🔔 Upper-middle is the water coming from a rock that Moshe struck with the Staff (this time - as he was told to do).
- 🔔 The bird under the stream of water is a quail, as in quail - S'LAV, that preceded the manna.
- 🔔 The two challot to the left of the quail is/are LECHEM MISHNEH, which commemorates the double portion of manna (it's hard to transliterate the Hebrew) that fell on Friday in order to provide for Shabbat. We not only USE double challot on Shabbat to remember the manna, but we cover them top and bottom to remind us of the two layers of dew that protected the manna. The manna was our introduction to Shabbat. We see this point made in DAYEINU: Had G-d just given us the Shabbat and not brought us close to Mount Sinai, DAYEINU, there would be sufficient cause to thank Him.
- 🔔 The Shabbat candle sticks (top-middle) acknowledge the introduction of Shabbat to the soon-to-be nation of Israel that is presented in Parshat B'shalach.
- 🔔 The worm ate the leftover manna - there should not have been any leftovers.
- 🔔 Three facets of the battle against Amalek (bottom-left): Moshe's


upraised hands, Yehoshua's sword, and the pen with which the account of the battle was written down.


- 🔔 Mid-bottom is the representations of the Haftara. The singing bee is Dvora.
- 🔔 Thunderbolt = BARAK, Devorah's associate.
- 🔔 Milk that Yael gave to Sisra...
- 🔔 and the tent peg with which she killed him when he fell asleep.
- 🔔 The piece of a brick wall represents the brick pattern of words in the Torah for AZ YASHIR.
- 🔔 The upside-down heart refers to the phrase VAYEIHAFEICH L'VAV ... Par'o had a change of heart... again (lit. overturned his heart).
- 🔔 The stop sign with the word Shabbat is found at the limit of one's T'chum Shabbat, Shabbat boundary, which according to Rambam is D'ORAITA (at a distance of 24,000 amot, rabbinic at 2000 amot) and according to Ram-ban is completely D'RABANAN.
- 🔔 The fellow pictured is Dan Quayle, one of the first Bush's vice presidents. Here's an example of his brilliant oratory: "A low voter turnout is an indication of fewer people going to the polls." For this Parsha-Pix, Quayle represents Quail.
- 🔔 Between the pillar of fire and the cloud is a lead sinker, the kind found


in a fisherman's tackle box. (There is no significance whatsoever in the location of the sinker in the ParshaPix. Its significance for B'shalach is the description in the Song of the Sea, referring to some of the Egyptians, ...TZA-L'LU KA-OFERET B'MAYIM (ADIRIM). "...they sank as lead in the (mighty) waters."

- 🔔 At the top-right is a toy soldier armed with a bazooka. Below it are four pale silhouettes of the same figure of the soldier. Together, they represent the description of the Jews coming out of Egypt, CHAMUSHIM, which, according to Rashi's main explanation means "armed" (hence the bazooka). However, Rashi also says DAVAR ACHEIR, another thing, another explanation to the word. CHAMUSHIM means a fifth - the fraction of the people that actually left Egypt - meaning that 4/5 of the Jewish population did not survive until the Exodus.
- 🔔 Reminder to you, reading these words. If you will be using the ParshaPix with your children (or grandchildren) and/or Shabbat guests, you might want to hold back the explanations and try to get the people around your Shabbat table to supply the explanations. Just give hints.
- 🔔 The shofar with a C coming out of it represents the 100 (C=100 in Roman numerals) blasts we traditionally blow on Rosh HaShana.

That number is connected to the lament of Sisra's mother in the haftara.

 Grogger for the Amalek parsha read on Purim morning.

 Challa cover for the layer of dew that protected the manna.

 The characters from the Wizard of Oz singing - AZ YASHIR.

 And one corny Unexplained.

## Why the Torah Compares a Human Being to a Tree

Guest article by

**Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher**

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

The source for TU BiShvat is the opening Mishna of Tractate Rosh Hashana: "The Academy of Hillel taught that the 15th of Sh'vat is the New Year for the Trees."

What does that mean, "New Year for the Trees"?

TU BiShvat is technically the day when trees stop absorbing water from the ground and instead draw nourishment from their sap. In halacha, this means that fruit which has blossomed prior to the 15th of Sh'vat could not be used as tithe for fruit which blossomed after that date.

So what relevance does this have for us in the 21st century, when most of us are not farmers?

In various places, the Tanach compares

a person to a tree:

"A person is like the tree of a field..." (D'varim 20:19)

"For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people." (Yeshaya 65:22)

"He will be like a tree planted near water..." (Yirmiyahu 17:8)

Why the comparison?

A tree needs the four basic elements in order to survive - earth, water, air and fire (sunshine). Human beings also require the same basic elements. Let us see how by analyzing these four essential elements individually.

**Earth:** A tree needs to be planted firmly in the earth. The soil is not only the source through which nourishment is absorbed, but also provides room for the roots to grow.

This is true of a person as well. The Talmud explains; "A person whose wisdom exceeds his good deeds is likened to a tree whose branches are numerous, but whose roots are few. The wind comes and uproots it and turns it upside down. But a person whose good deeds exceed his wisdom is likened to a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are numerous. Even if all the winds of the world were to come and blow against it, they could not budge it from its place." (Avot 3:22)

A person can appear successful on the outside. "But if the roots are few" - if there is little connection to one's community and Torah heritage - then life can send challenges that are

impossible to withstand. "A strong wind can turn the tree upside down." A person alone is vulnerable to trends and fads that may lead to despair and destruction. But, if a person - irrespective of wealth and status - is connected to his community and Torah heritage, then "even if all the winds of the world were to come and blow against it, they could not budge it from its place."

People require a strong home base, where Judaism's values and morals are absorbed, and which provide a supportive spiritual growth environment.

**Water:** Rain-water is absorbed into the ground and - through an elaborate system of roots - is carried throughout the trunk, branches and leaves of the tree. Without water, the tree will wither and die. The Torah is compared to water, as Moshe proclaims: "May my teaching drop like the rain" (D'varim 32:2). Both rain and Torah descend from the heavens and provide relief to the thirsty and parched. The Torah flows down from G-d and has been absorbed by Jews in every generation. Torah gives zest and vitality to the human spirit. A life based on Torah will blossom with wisdom and good deeds.

Deprived of water, a person will become dehydrated and ultimately disoriented, even to the point where they may not be able to recognize their own father. So too, without Torah, a person becomes disoriented - to the extent that they may not even recognize their Father in Heaven.

**Air:** A tree needs air to survive. The air

contains oxygen that a tree needs for respiration, and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. In an imbalanced atmosphere, the tree would suffocate and die.

The Torah (B'reishit 2:7) states that "G-d breathed life into the form of Man." The Hebrew word for "breath" - NESHIMA - is the same as the word for "soul" - NESHAMA. Our spiritual life force comes, metaphorically, by way of air and respiration.

We use our senses of taste, touch and sight to perceive physical matter. (Even "hearing" involved the perception of sound waves). But "smelling" is the most spiritual of senses, since the least "physical matter" is involved. As the Talmud says (B'rachot 43b); "Smell is that which the soul benefits from and the body does not."

In the Holy Temple, the daily incense offering (sense of smell) was elevated to the once-a-year Yom Kippur offering in the Holy of Holies. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 93a) also says that when Mashiach comes, he will "smell and judge" - that is, he will use his spiritual sensitivity to determine the truth about complex matters.

**Fire:** A tree also needs fire - sunshine - to survive. The absorption of energy from the sunlight activates the process of photosynthesis, a chemical reaction that is essential for the growth and health of the tree.

People too need the physical warmth of fire and sunshine to survive. But we also need to absorb and reflect the

spiritual warmth and sunshine of friendship, which is the essence of Judaism. As the Torah states in Vayikra 19:18, "Love your friend as yourself." And Rabbi Akiva states that this verse is the greatest principle of the Torah (Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim, chapter 9.)

## The Puah Institute

*for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha*

### The Halacha of Ovarian Transplants - A further Piece of History

In last week's column, we read the fascinating story of a controversial case, recorded in 1906, of an ovarian transplant which supposedly resulted in pregnancy and a live birth. While never substantiated, it has also never really been disproven; it remains a medical mystery. However, the report did give rise to a halachic debate which has provided us with a number of sources relevant to our discussion.

In a Hungarian halachic journal, VAYELAKET YOSEF, published in 1907 [one year after Dr. Robert Tuttle Morris' case report], a Rabbi from England asked readers to comment on the halachic ramifications of the operation. He mistakenly claimed that the medical procedure had been performed in England, even though it was actually done in New York. The error most probably occurred because the case had become the talk of the day among medical professionals in many countries, in Britain as well as in

America; he had probably read about it in a British publication, and had therefore assumed the operation had taken place in England.

He sought opinions on three basic halachic questions:

Who is considered the child's mother - the donor, or the recipient?

Is the child considered a first-born?

Can such a procedure be performed on a mother and her daughter?

Several answers were published, but many seem to be relating to a different medical reality. Some of the respondents quoted the Gemara in Chulin which discusses a case of a fetus which moves from the uterus of one animal to another. This seems to indicate that they had understood that Morris had transplanted the uterus, or all of the reproductive organs.

Ovarian and uterine transplants are two very different procedures, with different halachic ramifications. The question that the Rabbi raised about the first-born status of the child would have been relevant had the procedure been a transplant of the uterus, but it is almost impossible to apply the answers published in Vayelaket Yosef to the actual question of ovarian transplants [there was much ambiguity concerning the question in a previous edition of the halachic journal, which may have given rise to the misunderstanding].

One of the responses published, however, has been used to explain certain current fertility treatments.

Next week we will see how it may be applied in order to determine the halachic status of 'motherhood' after a successful ovarian transplant.

## TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (BO) TTtriddles:

[1] How do you want your steak?  
Rare, with mint leaves, please - now

This is a good, fun TTtriddle. The Torah commands us to roast the Korban Pesach well, and not to eat it cooked in water or partially done. The term for "partially done", we are using is "rare". The Torah's term is NA, NUN-ALEF. That word is much more commonly used for "please". Very often, Targum Unkeles renders NA, not as "please", but as "now". To be specific, the word NA occurs 334 times in Tanach. Except the one in Parshat Bo as mentioned above - rare - it seems that the overwhelming majority of all the others can be read as please or now with either definition making sense. Occasionally, one definition or the other is the obvious one. Just for fun, we added mint leaves, known in Hebrew as NANA, so the solution of this TTtriddle is NA (with NANA, NA, NA. Of course, if it were someone's grandmother that asked the question about the steak, the answer might have been NA, NANA, NA, NA, NANA. And if she also asked what song you wanted to listen to while you eat, and if your choice would be the

Slovene entry in the 2003 Eurovision contest, you might have answered, NA, NANA, NA, NA, NANANA, NANA. Shall we stop now? (Why you would ask for that song is a mystery; it Nanana came in 26th (last place) that year. Perhaps you'd want to read Zola's novel or look at a photo of the Darling's dog?)

[2] first double the last, little one

First (letter) is ALEF. Last (letter) is TAV. Double that for TAV TAV. The little one (letter) is YUD. That gives us OTOTAL, My signs. The word occurs four times in the Torah (nowhere else in Tanach), including once in Va'eira, twice in the beginning of Bo, and once in Bamidbar. Personal note: in Bo, if you read it in Ashkenazic pronunciation, you get SHISI OSOSAI and V'ES OSOSAI in close proximity, which drives a couple of the Israelis in my shul to distraction at Mincha Gedola of the previous Shabbat.

[3] The canned goods are Kosher l'Pesach

This is a play on the word SHIMURIM. As in LEIL SHIMURIM, the name the Torah gave to the night of the Exodus - our name for the Seder night. In modern Hebrew, SHIMURIM are canned goods.

[4] My father, adults only, my servant

LO CHAIN (pronounced like CHRAIN, horseradish, without the R, which is KEIN with the DAGESH dropped from the KAF). Not so! Yosef said it to his father Yaakov when

Yaakov switched his hands, putting his right hand on Efrayim's head and his left hand on Menashe's. Par'o said it to Moshe and Aharon who asked that men, women, and children all be let out of Egypt for the spiritual encounter with G-d in the wilderness. Par'o said, no way! Take just the adults... G-d said it to Aharon and Miriam when He castigated them for speaking about Moshe. G-d described the way of all prophets, but added Not so My servant Moshe... What attracted the attention of the TTriddler was the juxtaposition of the contradictory words LO and KEIN, no and yes.

[5] One set of Unexplaineds from the ParshaPix

In the ParshaPix for Parshat Bo were a feather, candle, and wooden spoon - the "tools" for B'dikat Chameitz - used in fulfillment and/or preparation for the mitzva of getting rid of chameitz from one's home (possession).

Compared with recent weeks, this was a small list of TTriddles. That's the way it happens sometimes. TTriddles are usually created to fit a one line spot at the bottom of a column in order to make the text or ads on that particular page look better. That's why TTriddles are scattered throughout Torah Tidbits and are only collected in one place in the text file and the eXtra Lite pdf file.

## Portion from the Portion

### Moshe took Yosef's bones with him

In all the details of the Exodus from Egypt, the Torah doesn't forget to tell us that Moshe took Yosef's bones with him - VAYIKACH MOSHE ET ATZMOT YOSEF IMO.

The verse tells us that Yosef had bound the Children of Israel by an oath that they should take his bones out from Egypt when they would be redeemed. IBN EZRA in his commentary on the third commandment (Sh'mot 20:7) says that this shows us the importance of a vow. He is very strong in admonishing people from taking vows lightly and randomly making too many that they might inadvertently not keep. If one makes a vow then they must keep it. That is what Moshe did.

And maybe the Torah also wants to teach us that great leaders don't only worry about the multitude - they are able to deal with the needs of the individual as well. Moshe didn't only concern himself with the big details of getting the whole nation out of Egypt - he himself dealt with taking the bones of Yosef along.

Rav Chanan Porat (may the learning from these words bring him a Refu'ah Sh'leima - Chanan Ben Shlomit) in his book ME'AT MIN HA'OR wants to add a deeper understanding to this verse from which we already learned so much. He bases himself on a Ramban (Vayikra 23:28-30) on the phrase BETZEM HAYOM HAZEH - on this very day, that is said three times

regarding Yom Kippur. The word ETZEM used there seems superfluous - but Ramban teaches that the bones, ETZEM, are the foundation and strength of the body - the main essence of the body. The word ETZEM is used in connection to Yom Kippur as we say ITZUMO SHEL YOM MECHAEIR - the essence of the day itself is Atonement.

So back to our verse - Moshe took ATZMOT Yosef IMO - "along with him" - because at this turning point in his life he wanted to incorporate into himself the essence of Yosef and acquire his special qualities of leadership. Yosef was a Tzadik, with unusual organizational skills who could even deal with Kings and KOL ASHER HU OSEH HASHEM MATZLIACH B'YADO - G-d granted success to everything he did (B'reishit 39:3). Moshe wanted these qualities in order to lead Israel to the Holy Land.

Yosef is buried in Sh'chem, which is currently under "Palestinian" Authority control. I was told by some friends who recently visited KEVER YOSEF that the IDF sometimes allows groups to enter in the evenings after midnight. One must register in advance if they want to go and may be notified at the last minute when a bus has been cleared for entrance. For more information email [shechem1@gmail.com](mailto:shechem1@gmail.com)

## The Jerusalem Institute of Jewish Law

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 547

### Theft of Intellectual Property

The halacha recognizes theft of intellectual property, such as copyrights; patents; music cassettes; the work of artists; musicians; composers; teachers; recorded lectures and concerts; and all other types of endeavors where an author, musician, performer, writer, inventor, or any other person has contributed his intellect to create a work.

As stated in the Ethics of the Fathers (6:6), "Whoever repeats a thing in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world, as it is said, 'and Esther said to the king in the name of Mordechai' (Esther 2:22)."

Conversely, if one makes a statement without proper attribution, he is considered a thief. Generally, the protection afforded by the law of the land will govern, since the laws of the land are generally not in conflict with halacha in this area. Most countries have laws protecting intellectual property and many countries belong to international conventions in these areas. Such laws are part of halacha, especially when they afford protection to authors of Torah works. The halacha recognizes that authors have the right to protection; their works cannot be republished by others. However, while

this protection generally was held to protect the author for the time that the first edition of the work was still being sold, there is also minority authority that the protection lasted for a reasonable time, such as the author's lifetime and that of his heirs.

This was especially true if the author himself did not live to have his work published and it was the heirs who published it. They would be granted the same protection that the author would have, had he lived and published the work.

Most of the cases dealing with authors were about Torah publications and books. The author would be able to obtain from a prominent rabbi a ban in the book's approbation, which would usually state that the ban was in effect until the first edition was sold out or for a specific number of years. It was generally held that the failure to publish such a ban with the work enabled anyone to copy the work. The ban was generally universal during that period. There is also authority that the ban extends only to the jurisdiction of the rabbi issuing the ban. The purpose of the ban was to promote the publication of Torah works; without the ban publishers would be reluctant to invest money in the publication. However to make the ban permanent might stifle the dissemination of Torah. The halacha in each case sought to find an equitable solution between the rights of the author and his publisher and the rights of the public to obtain Torah works at the cheapest possible cost; the copier would have a much smaller investment since the type was already

set and there were no royalties to the author. There are decisions in certain European Jewish communities that issued permanent edicts protecting the rights of the author and his publisher.

*IYH, next lesson: theft of intellectual property, continued...*

## *More on* HACHODESH HAZEH **LACHEM...**

To clarify (or at least try) a point made last week about the rarity of Rosh Chodesh being on the same day whether we have a Sanhedrin (Plan A) or not (Plan B)...

Let's take Rosh HaShana as an example. In our fixed calendar, Rosh HaShana is fixed on the day of the molad of Tishrei, or is pushed a day or two based on four factors (known as D'CHIYOT).

In the time of Sanhedrin (past and future), Rosh HaShana would not be on the day of the molad of Tishrei, because it takes 20-24 hours (or so) after the molad before it is visible to the naked eye of an observer in the evening. Even when RH is pushed a day because of Molad Zakein or Lo ADU, it is unlikely to be declared on that same day of the week when based on eye-witness testimony.

If it happens that RH is double pushed from Tuesday to Thursday, for example, then RH might match with or w/o Sanhedrin. But for the rest of the months, not necessarily so.

## **Maharal on the Sedra Water Splitting**

**Sh'mot 14:22** - ... and the waters split.

**Rashi:** All the waters in the world.

**Gur Arye:** The sea is to water as the heart is to the body. When the heart is stricken, the rest of the body is stricken, for the heart is the foundation of the whole body. In the sense that the body gets its power from the heart, the sea is the foundation of the water, for all waters flow to the sea from whence it returns. When Hashem splits the sea, all the waters are stricken along with it, even the waters of the small tributaries. The proof is that the power of the waters was canceled, as we know from [14:27] "the sea returned to face morning at full strength," meaning that before, it was not at full strength. King David discusses this event: "The sea saw it and fled, the Jordan turned backward" [T'hilim 114:3]. The Midrash there explains that when the general flees, all the officers flee and when the mistress is stricken, all the maidservants are stricken along with her.

The splitting of all the waters of the world signaled a seminal moment in Jewish history. From that moment became holy to Hashem, elevated and separated. They came to rule over and above all the water, which represents physicality. This is the meaning of the splitting of the waters rather than the splitting of the sea.

*Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr*

The objection to standing specially for the Aseret HaDibrot does not SEEM to be applicable to SHIRAT HAYAM. There is no danger of someone saying that only AZ YASHIR is from G-d and the rest of the Torah is Moshe's work. The same goes for the last pasuk of each book. No problem with standing at those places.

## **HAKARAT HATOV**

Well-known custom to feed birds on (Erev) Shabbat Shira to show our appreciation to them for protecting G-d's and Moshe's words (so to speak) by eating the manna that had been spread around the camp on Shabbat... with intention of discrediting Moshe's word to the people.

(Culled from the Internet)

Birds (class Aves) are winged, bipedal, endothermic (warm-blooded), egg-laying, vertebrate animals (with feathers, beaks with no teeth)... There are around 10,000 living species (about 1200 of which are endangered)... range in size from 5cm (bee humming-bird) to 2.75m (ostrich)... Red-billed Quelea is the most abundant wild species... Only about 40 species of birds are flightless, incl. ostrich, emu, cassowary, rhea, kiwi, penguin... greatest wingspan: wandering albatross (up to 12 ft.), greatest number of feathers: whistling swan at 25,216... keenest sense of smell: kiwis... crows and parrots are among the most intelligent of all animals... largest egg: ostrich, largest egg relative to body weight: kiwi,

smallest egg: hummingbird, smallest egg relative to body weight: ostrich... quails reach breeding maturity at 5 weeks, some albatrosses take 6-10 years...

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### Suggested answers

1) The Malbim explains that when G-D afflicted the Egyptians, it was purely punitive and not in an attempt to make them better. G-D promises that the Jews will not experience illness or affliction in that manner. Rather, I AM G-D YOUR DOCTOR, which teaches that just like a doctor has to do damage sometimes in order to heal a greater problem, so, too, G-D will bring affliction on Jews, not to be punitive but to help them get spiritually better through this suffering and atonement.

2) The Netziv explains that the manna arrived in a shell type substance which was the size of an omer. Adults received shells which were completely full of a food substance, those with medium appetites received shells with less substance, and smaller children were satisfied simply eating the empty but edible shell.

3) The Ohr HaChayim answers that G-D was explaining to Moshe why using that staff was so important. Using a staff which had turned water into blood, effectively ruining water and preventing people from drinking, to now create a mechanism for people to drink water through hitting the rock would magnify the miracle.