

Parshat Beshalach

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

PARSHAT BESHALACH

In this week's parshah, B'nei Yisrael are given the manna that fell from the heavens. It fell every day of the week except on Shabat. Because the Jews were not allowed to collect it on Shabat, a double portion fell from heaven on Friday.

"See that Hashem has given you the Sabbath; that is why He gives you on the sixth day a two-day portion of bread."

In addition the Torah Hakedoshah forbids the Jews from traveling distances on Shabat. "Let every man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day" (Shemot 16:29).

Rashi Hakadosh (a"h) explains that this refers to the techum Shabat, a Shabat ordinance that confines one's boundaries under certain settings to 2,000 cubits from the initial point of origin. One cannot walk farther than that distance on Shabat. Though this is not the forum for a discussion of the intricate laws of Shabat borders, including certain limitations to the restrictions, one basic question arises:

There are many intricate laws regarding Shabat activities. None were yet mentioned. Why discuss the concept of confinement to an approximate one-mile radius before the Jews learned about the most basic prohibitions of Shabat such as

lighting new fires or carrying in the public domain?

In fact, this law of techum does not carry the severe penalties associated with other transgression. Why, then, is this the first Shabat law that is introduced? The answer can be explained with a story.

Once a religious man approached the Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchok Zev Soleveitchik (a"h), and asked him whether he should join a certain organization comprised of people whose views were antithetical to Torah philosophy. Well intentioned, the man felt that his association would perhaps sway the opinions of the antagonists and create harmony among the groups. He would be able to attend meetings and raise his voice in support of Torah outlook.

The Rav advised him not to get involved. The man unfortunately decided to ignore the advice. Within a few months, he was in a dilemma, because policies and actions of the theologically-skewed organization were being linked to him, and were creating hostility toward him throughout the community. For some reason he could not back out of his commitments to the organization. He was torn. How could he regain his reputation as a Torah observing Jew and ingratiate himself to his former community?

He returned to the Brisker Rav and asked him once again for his advice. The Rav told him the following story.

There was a young man who aspired to become a wagon driver. He approached a seasoned wagon driver and began his training. After a few weeks, he was ready to be certified.

PARSHA

HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

JOKE

RIDDLE

QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya
Michael ben Yonah
Ro'ee ben Rachel
May bat Ilana
Ben Tzvi ben Ilana
Gidon ben Esther
Ruchamah bat Chanah
Esther bat Mazal
Yosef ben Devorah
Yaffa bat Rivka
Baruch Chai ben Zoya
Rivkah bat Malkah
Nissan ben Liza
Gavriel ben Toviyo
David ben Liza

Baila Chava
bat
Sorka

Freida Leah
bat
Pesha Rachel

Yehoshuah Mordechai
ben
Leah Gita

Chaim Yehudah
ben
Aidel

Before receiving an official certification the veteran decided to pose a few practical applications.

"Let's say," he asked his young charge, "that you decide to take a shortcut and deviate from the main highway. You cut through a forest on a very muddy trail. Your wheels become stuck in the mud and your two passengers become agitated. The horses are struggling to pull out of the mud. They can't seem to get out. What do you do?"

The young driver looked up in thought. "Well," he began, "First I would take some wooden planks and try to get them under the wheels."

"Ah!" sighed the old timer, "You made a terrible mistake!"

"Why?" retorted the novice driver, "I followed procedure in the precise manner! What did I do wrong?"

The old man sighed. "Your mistake was very simple. You don't take shortcuts into muddy forests!"

The activist understood the Brisker Rav's message. Rav Moshe Feinstein (a"h) explains that before the Jews were even given the laws of Shabat they were taught an even more important lesson in life.

Before you can embark on life's journeys and even approach the holy Shabat, you must know your boundaries. So before discussing the details of what you can or cannot do on Shabat, the Torah tells us where we can and cannot go on Shabat.

Sometimes, keeping within a proper environment is more primary than rules of order. Because it is worthless to attempt to venture into greatness when you are walking out of your domain.

HALACHAH CORNER

QUESTION: When choosing a partner for marriage, can one break off an engagement due to financial considerations?

ANSWER: The Shulchan Aruch emphasizes the importance of ensuring to choose as a wife a woman who is "hagunah" (proper). This means that one must choose a wife who acts in a proper, dignified manner and not immodestly. One should also ensure that she comes from a family without any disqualifications. For example, one must see to it that there is no issue of "mamzerut" in the family (a person born of an illicit relationship). And if one is a Kohen, he must be certain that the family is free from "chalalut" (marriages forbidden for Kohanim, such as a divorcee).

The Shulchan Aruch warns that if a person marries a woman from a family with a pesul ("deficiency" in their lineage, that renders the woman disqualified for marriage), then "Eliyahu records it, Hashem seals it and declares, 'Woe unto him who disqualifies his offspring and puts a stain on his family.'" In the future, the Shulchan Aruch adds, "Eliyahu binds him and Hashem flogs him."

The Gemara similarly comments that if a person marries an unsuitable woman because of her beauty, or for her wealth, then he will beget children who act improperly, and he will not even be able to keep the money he had hoped to obtain through this improper marriage. This applies only if a person marries a woman who is not "Haguna" for these reasons. But if a person marries a proper woman for her appearance or for money, there is no transgression involved. Even if he would not have married her otherwise, this is considered a valid and appropriate marriage, since she is, after all, a proper, upstanding woman.

The Aruch Ha'shulchan (Rav Yechezkel Michel Epstein of Nevardok a"h) adds that to the contrary, a capable Torah student who aspires to be a Talmid Chacham, should try to marry a woman whose family can support him so he can devote his time to Torah learning.

Continued on page 3



HALACHAH CORNER

Continued

Indeed, the Aruch Ha'shulchan observes that it is customary for wealthy parents to choose a budding Torah scholar to marry their daughter and support him for several years to allow him to learn full-time free from the responsibility of supporting a family. The Aruch Ha'shulchan states however, that if a girl's parents promised the chatan (groom) a certain amount of support - and then, for whatever reason, they are unable to fulfill this commitment, it is improper for the chatan to break the engagement or demand the money that was promised. Even though the match was made on the assumption that the chatan would receive a certain amount of money, it is inappropriate for him to argue with the family, especially if, for example, their business or investments did not succeed and they cannot fulfill their commitment.

The Aruch Ha'shulchan also states that money obtained through this sort of quarreling and manipulation will not bring berachah or success, and this is not considered "kosher money." The chatan should rather accept the situation, and in the merit of his avoiding conflict, the marriage will succeed and Hashem will provide him with a livelihood. The Aruch Ha'shulchan goes so far as to say that if a chatan persists in his demands, then he is considered likened to someone who marries an unsuitable woman for money.

Clearly, however, it is strictly forbidden for a girl's parents to dishonestly make promises to a prospective match that they do not intend to keep. The Aruch Ha'shulchan decries the practice of those who, eager to find a good match for their daughter, offer large sums of money to a desirable young man, with the intention of then reneging on their promise after the engagement is announced. As great a Mitzvah as it is to marry off a daughter, it does not justify dishonesty. But from the chatan's perspective, even if he was promised support, and the girl's parents then inform him that they are unable to provide what they had promised, he should not break the engagement or create a conflict over money.



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MEMORIES

They say memories are golden,
well maybe that is true
But we never wanted memories,
we only wanted you.
A million times we've needed you,
a million times we've cried
If love alone could have saved you,
you never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still
In our hearts you hold a special place,
no one could ever fill.

If tears could build a staircase,
and heartache build a lane
We'd walk the path to heaven,
and bring you back again.

The family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same
But as Hashem calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.

QUOTES

** "There is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands." **

** "The authentic self is the soul made visible."

** "He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened." **

HASHEM ISH MILCHAMAH

After the Six-Day War, a soldier approached Rabbi Shabsi Yudelevitz and said, "Reb Shabsi, I would like you to speak to the soldiers and strengthen them in yirat shamayim."

He tried to disregard the request, but to no avail. The soldier persisted until the Rabbi consented. On his way to the army base, he speculated to himself that perhaps he would find a few dozen soldiers gathered to hear him speak. But when he entered the place he was shocked; thousands of soldiers were waiting.

They all sat in their uniforms, proud of their military might after such a victory. The I.D.F. was filled with self-congratulations during that period. The Rabbi nearly turned back but he had no choice. He walked in. He sat down in the designated place they reserved for him. Naturally, he was preoccupied with his thoughts prior to his speech. At the same time he listened to the speech given by the senior commanding officer. He spoke smugly about various military matters, giving the



Rav a little time to prepare his speech.

Suddenly, as he was finishing up his speech, he straightened his back, stood silently for a moment, lifted his hand, turned to the Rav and said, "As everyone knows, the Israeli Airforce was a full participant in our recent military triumph. They took part on all fronts. Our infantry put their lives on the line and promoted the success in battle. Our great victory came about as a result of the contributions of our troops on the ground, air and on the sea. And now honored soldiers, A Rabbi from Yerushalayim has come here - perhaps from Meah Shearim or some other yeshivah to present to you the part that the yeshivah students contributed to our victory."

Thousands of troops applauded loudly as the officer ended his speech, "If you

please Rabbi," he said cynically and invited the Rabbi up to the podium,

The Rabbi stood up and began to speak inwardly trembling. "Honored soldiers, a question has been asked. What did we contribute to the victory? What percentage did the yeshivah boys render to the triumph? I will begin with a short answer that goes to the heart of this question, after which we will turn to other topics. "As you and I both know, the military leadership had a gloomy forecast for this war. Before it began, they spoke in terms of 60,000 casualties rachmana le'tzlan - to the point where the decision was made to designate large parts in various cities to be used as temporary burial sites at the height of the war.

"With such numbers of dead, may it never happen, who would have attended to the burials? The yeshiva boys. They are the ones who would have been recruited to serve as devoted Chevrah Kadishah in this holy mitzvah. In that case, the esteemed commander who just addressed you would have stood here and announced that the yeshivah students contributed mightily to the war effort.

"However, honored soldiers, Hashem, not wanting us to lose time from our Torah study, decreed in the Heavenly Court to pass on the 60,000 corpses. He decreed that the merit of our Torah study would protect them. In that case, I am here to let you know that we, the yeshivah population contributed 60,000 men.

"We also donated city parks in Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim. Did you really want to be in those graves? Do you mind that Hashem granted life to tens of thousands of soldiers - and in place of temporary graves, there are lush green parks? Stand up and thank Hashem."

A thunderous applause filled the hall. The Rabbi did not return to his seat. Instead, he decided to give it to them in the teeth, to help them understand that with the arrogance of kochi v'oztem yadi - it is possible to lose out on miracles.

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HASHEM ISH MILCHAMAH

Continued

Had the army triumphed? The Six-day war witnessed miracles that were decidedly strange. Who had anything to boast about? It is Hashem, as it were, Who decides the fate of all battles. "Hashem is Master of war." In other words, He alone conducts all wars and He orchestrates victory.

The Gemara of Avoda Zara relates that in the future, the gentile nations will step forward to demand their just reward claiming, "We waged many wars, and we did it all just for Israel, so that they might involve themselves in Torah."

Hashem will then respond saying, "I made the wars." As it states, "Hashem is the Master of war." Wars do not fall under man's dominion. People are only dragged into them. Wars are not the exclusive business of the military which thinks it can start one whenever it decides. Soldiers must not lift their noses into the air with arrogance. Hashem is the Master of war. Paroh's chariots and army, Hashem threw into the sea and the pick of his officers were mired in the Sea of Reeds." Let us conclude with a comment from Rashi, which highlights one of the differences between a flesh and blood general and Hashem, Master of war.

"Hashem, even when waging war and exacting vengeance on His enemies, continues to show compassion for His creations and to provide sustenance for everyone in the world - not like earthly kings who, when engaged in war, turn their attention away from all other interest and lack the ability to attend to other matters." (Rashi)

The merit of those Bnei Yeshivah is our hope. Were it not for Torah, the Arabs would long since have hurled us into the sea. May we speedily have a salvation with the redemption of Tzion and the building of Yerushalayim, amen.

RIDDLE

What two things can
you never eat for
breakfast?

Answer on page 9



JOKE

A retired pirate decided to go live with his brother. The pirate knocks on the door and his brother answers saying, "Oh my, what happened to your hand!?!"

The pirate said, "I lost it in a sword fight, but now I have a hook."

Then the brother said, "What about your leg?"

The pirate said, "A cannonball hit it, but now I have a wooden leg."

Then the brother said, "Well, what about your eye?"

The pirate said, "I got some dust in it."

The brother said, "How could you lose your eye by just getting some dust in it?"

The pirate said, "It was the first day I used my hook!"

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

When you have to decide whether to do something or to refrain, imagine that another person sought your advice on this matter. Usually people see clearly when advising another, without personal interest and prejudice to cloud the issue.

What you would advise another, is how you should behave yourself.

(Sefer Chasidim, Siman 155)

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Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking on the following dates:

Date: February 08, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: February 12, 2017
Time: 8:00pm
Place: 1175 East Laurelton Parkway
Teaneck, NJ
Special Tu Be'Shevat Program

Date: February 15, 2017 / **Time:** 4:15pm
Place: 4915 10th Ave - Brklyn, NY
Boro Park Center

Date: February 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: March 8, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: March 19, 2017 / **Time:** 7:45pm
Place: 148 Copley Ave - Teaneck NJ

Date: March 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 4, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 26, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 29, 2017 - Shabat
Time: 5:00pm
Place: 1364 E7th - Brklyn, NY

Date: April 30, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 1100 Trafalgar St. – Teaneck NJ

Date: May 10, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: May 21, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 275 Taft Court, Paramus NJ

Date: May 24, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June 07, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: Teaneck NJ

Date: July ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 1288 West Laurelton Parkway
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Date: August ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 115 Addison Rd.
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

INTRODUCING...

A SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR LADIES

The Rabanit will now be offering INDIVIDUAL, one-on-one classes on the phone for women who wish like to learn ONE topic in depth.

The advantage of the private classes is the ability to learn the subject of your choice in a deep and detailed manner - and the opportunity to ask questions and receive undivided attention.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:

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3. Depending on the topic you choose, an email with any materials you require for the lectures will be sent to you so you can follow along as you learn together with the Rabanit.
4. Payment for the series is made at the commencement of your classes.
5. You are now ready to begin your enlightening journey!!

Below is the list of topics:

SHABAT
EMUNAH & BITACHON
THE SECRET OF THE MIKVEH
SHALOM BAYIT
TEFILAH
WOMEN IN JEWISH HISTORY
THE PARSHAH IN DEPTH
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Shiur To Post Thursday, Feb 09

“Tu B'Shevat”
The Secret Of The Trees

Log on and enjoy the live
lectures and be inspired.

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY 11 SHEVAT

JEWS OF COLMAR EXPELLED (1510)

Three years after the request by the Council of Colmar, Emperor Maximilian I granted permission to expel the Jews of Colmar, Germany.

The community exerted every effort to secure the repeal of the decree of banishment. With the help of Rabbi Joselman of Rosheim, the leader of the Alsatian Jews, the enforcement of the decree was postponed until S. George's Day of 1512.



Q&A

Dear Rebetzin Cohen,

This week Tu B'Shevat is coming up and I was wondering what is so special about the 7 species of fruit with which Israel was blessed?

RESPONSE: Thank you so much for writing with such an amazing question that I'm certain is interesting to all our readers. I will try my best B'siyata Dishmaya to answer.

In describing the extraordinary beauty and uniqueness of Eretz Yisrael, the Torah in Sefer Devarim tells us, "For the Hashem your G-d is bringing you to a good land, a land with brooks of water... a land of **wheat** and **barley**, [grape] vines and **figs** and **pomegranates**, a land of oil-

producing **olives** and honey [from **dates**]..."

This isn't just a flowery pasuk. These seven species are specifically connected to Eretz Yisrael, and in fact there is a mitzvah to bring the first of these fruits to the Bet Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. Eretz Yisrael produces many other fruits but what is so significant about these seven species?

Chacham Don Isaac Abarbanel (a"h) offers us several explanations. On a basic level, these fruits are unique in that they provide the necessary nutrients for sustenance. Some mefarshim add that Eretz Yisrael is the only place where all these very diverse species naturally grow in close proximity.

The Ari Ha'kadosh in his sefer, *Likutei Torah* explains that there is a much deeper significance to these fruits. Each corresponds to one of the seven Sefirot (Divine emotive attributes):

- **Wheat:** Chesed - Kindness
- **Barley:** Gevurah - Severity
- **Grapes:** Tiferet - Harmony
- **Figs:** Netzach - Perseverance
- **Pomegranates:** Hod - Humility
- **Olives:** Yesod - Foundation
- **Dates:** Malchut - Royalty

According to the holy Ari, every neshamah possesses all seven of these sefirot. But for each person, one of these traits is most dominant, shaping the individual neshamah's unique path to Hashem. Therefore, these seven fruits correspond to our serving Hashem with our personal attributes, as well as with all seven general modes of Divine service.

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The holy Mekubalim explain that just as the Divine blessings for the entire world flow through Eretz Yisrael, so too the Divine energy and blessings for all growing things flow via these seven special species of fruit that Eretz Yisrael is blessed with.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe (a"h) offered a deep insight into the seven species and their relation to the New Year for Trees on the 15th of Shevat. He states that in general, the seven species can be split into two types: 1) grain. 2) fruit from trees.

Grain is necessary for sustenance. Fruits, on the other hand, are not necessary, but they add pleasure to life. Both are important, and therefore both are included in the berachah for Eretz Yisrael. In a spiritual sense, the "Eretz Yisrael" of our neshamah also contains these two elements, necessity and pleasure. On the 15th of Shevat, the New Year for Trees, we customarily eat from all seven species, but we celebrate the five fruit that grow on trees (pleasure) even more than the grains (necessity).

The lesson for us is that even when a person is in the early stages of spiritual growth (just as the trees are beginning to blossom again), he must already have the goal of serving Hashem "with all his might," which includes the all-encompassing attributes of desire and pleasure. A Jew's avodat Hashem can't be purely mechanical or intellectual. Only when one's service of Hashem is truly pleasurable can it be truly complete.

The New Year for Trees teaches us that, from the start, we must set out to serve Hashem with all seven Divine attributes. Every morning as we start our day, we must resolve to serve Hashem not just out of rote and necessity, but with pleasure and joy.

ANSWER TO RIDDLE

Lunch & Dinner



SHABBAT SECRETS

A Series On Shabat & Its Holiness

Learning Torah After The Meal

Part 1

Rabbi Yaakov of Pshevorsk (a"h) write that Friday night was created for learning Chumash with Rashi. The holy Baal Ha'Tanya (a"h) instituted that women should study the translation of the weekly parshah after the Friday night meal. And the Chortkover Rebbe (a"h) learned the Ohr Ha'Chaim with his children on Friday night. He recommended that everyone study the Ohr Ha'chaim's commentary on the weekly parshah because it purifies one's neshamah.

There's a story told about Rabbi Eliezer of Paksh (a"h) who once spent a Shabat in the city of Sanz. To his surprise, absolutely nothing transpired for the first three hours of the Sanzer Rebbe's Tish Friday night. The Sanzer Rebbe was sitting with his eyes closed, seemingly dozing off into dreamland.

The Rabbi of Paksh could not help but wonder at this bizarre way of conducting the Shabat Tish. In his own home following the Friday night meal, he would sit down and learn as his father and his Rabanim had done. After all, he thought, "The study of Torah is equivalent to performing the mitzvot."

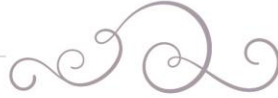
Suddenly, the Sanzer Rebbe opened his eyes and cried out, "Hey, Paksher Rav! I see you are questioning our ways and you're thinking that instead of dozing off we should be learning Chumash with Ramban or learning Hilchot Shabat. Let me explain what you witnessed here tonight."

To Be Continued Next Week...

Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



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