



**Hechal Shalom**  
FOUNDED BY RABBI YOSEF OZIEL ZT"l

WEEKLY BULLETIN

This week we read the 6<sup>th</sup> Perek of Pirke Avot  
Birkat Halebana BH on Mosae Shabuot

**4TH OF SIVAN 5781**  
**MAY 15TH, 2021**  
**CANDLE LIGHTING 7:40PM**  
**SHABBAT ENDS 8:40PM**



**WE WON THE  
LOTTERY OF LIFE**

**ALL IS WELL  
THAT ENDS WELL**

**EMULATING  
THE DESERT**

# PARASHAT BAMIDBAR

## SHABBAT KALLAH/DERECH ERETZ

**Synagogue:** 310 - 95th Street, Surfside, FL 33154 **Website:** [www.hechalshalom.org](http://www.hechalshalom.org) **Tel:** (305) 867-6024  
**Mailing Address:** Ness 26 Inc P.O. Box 546632 Surfside, FL 33154 **E-mail:** [info@hechalshalom.org](mailto:info@hechalshalom.org) | [oroziel.bookkeeper@gmail.com](mailto:oroziel.bookkeeper@gmail.com)

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILUY NISHMAT  
שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל



May / June 2021	לילה לרבינו תם R' Tam's Nightfall	לילה Nightfall	שקיעת החמה Sun set	הדלקת נרות Candle Lighting	פגל המנחה Plag Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shachris	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema	הנץ החמה Sun rise	זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes	דף היומי Daf Yomi	סיון תשפ"א		
12 Wed	9:10	9:14	8:36	7:57	6:34	5:10	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:19	6:37	5:51	5:24	5:20	לא רביעי
13 Thu	9:11	9:14	8:36	7:58	6:34	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:18	6:36	5:51	5:23	5:20	לב חמישי
14 Fri	9:11	9:15	8:37	7:58	6:35	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:18	6:36	5:50	5:23	5:19	לג ששי
15 Sha	9:12	9:16	8:37	7:59	6:35	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:35	5:49	5:22	5:18	לד שבת
16 Sun	9:13	9:17	8:38	8:00	6:36	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:35	5:49	5:22	5:18	לה ראשון
17 Mon	9:13	9:17	8:39	8:00	6:36	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:34	5:48	5:21	5:17	לו שני
18 Tue	9:14	9:18	8:39	8:01	6:36	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:34	5:48	5:21	5:16	לז שלישי
19 Wed	9:14	9:19	8:40	8:01	6:37	5:13	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:33	5:47	5:20	5:16	לח רביעי
20 Thu	9:15	9:19	8:40	8:02	6:37	5:13	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:33	5:47	5:20	5:15	לט חמישי
21 Fri	9:15	9:20	8:41	8:02	6:38	5:13	1:52	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:32	5:46	5:19	5:15	מ ששי
22 Sha	9:16	9:21	8:42	8:03	6:38	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:32	5:46	5:19	5:14	מא שבת
23 Sun	9:16	9:22	8:42	8:03	6:39	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:32	5:45	5:19	5:14	מב ראשון
24 Mon	9:17	9:22	8:43	8:04	6:39	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:31	5:45	5:18	5:13	מג שני
25 Tue	9:17	9:23	8:43	8:04	6:39	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:31	5:44	5:18	5:13	מד שלישי
26 Wed	9:18	9:24	8:44	8:05	6:40	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:15	6:31	5:44	5:18	5:12	מה רביעי
27 Thu	9:18	9:24	8:44	8:05	6:40	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:15	6:30	5:44	5:17	5:12	מו חמישי
28 Fri	9:19	9:25	8:45	8:06	6:41	5:16	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	מז ששי
29 Sha	9:19	9:25	8:46	8:06	6:41	5:16	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	מח שבת
30 Sun	9:20	9:26	8:46	8:07	6:42	5:16	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	מט ראשון
31 Mon	9:20	9:27	8:47	8:07	6:42	5:17	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:42	5:17	5:10	נ שני
1 Tue	9:21	9:27	8:47	8:08	6:42	5:17	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:42	5:16	5:10	נא שלישי
2 Wed	9:21	9:28	8:48	8:08	6:43	5:17	1:53	1:18	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:42	5:16	5:10	נב רביעי
3 Thu	9:22	9:28	8:48	8:09	6:43	5:18	1:54	1:18	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:42	5:16	5:09	נג חמישי
4 Fri	9:22	9:29	8:49	8:09	6:43	5:18	1:54	1:19	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:42	5:16	5:09	נד ששי
5 Sha	9:22	9:29	8:49	8:09	6:44	5:18	1:54	1:19	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:09	נה שבת
6 Sun	9:23	9:30	8:50	8:10	6:44	5:19	1:54	1:19	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:09	נו ראשון
7 Mon	9:23	9:30	8:50	8:10	6:45	5:19	1:54	1:19	11:02	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:09	נז שני
8 Tue	9:24	9:31	8:50	8:11	6:45	5:19	1:55	1:19	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:09	נח שלישי
9 Wed	9:24	9:31	8:51	8:11	6:45	5:20	1:55	1:19	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:08	נט רביעי
10 Thu	9:24	9:32	8:51	8:11	6:46	5:20	1:55	1:20	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:14	6:29	5:41	5:16	5:08	ס חמישי

Thursday (Jun 10) 9:15 AM + 8 חלקים תמוז: חולד חודש תמוז: חלקים + 8 You text us, you get zmanim! > Send a text to (516) 261-6262

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**SHABBAT SCHEDULE**

Shir Hashirim: 6:05pm  
**Minha 6:20pm**  
 Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat & Arvit  
**Candle Lighting: 7:40pm**  
 Shaharit Netz Minyan: 5:40am  
**Shaharit: 8:30am**  
 Zeman Keriat Shema 9:17am  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Zeman Keriat Shema 9:55am  
 Shiur 6:15pm  
 Minha: 7:15pm  
 Followed by Seudat Shelishit in the Bet Hakeneset & Arvit  
**Shabbat Ends: 8:40pm**  
 Rabbenu Tam 9:12pm

*Shabuot BH this coming Sunday night, Monday & Tuesday.*

*Communal Luncheon at Cine Citta on Tuesday Lunch*

*The full Schedule for Shabuot look at the Shabuot Bulletin!*

*We are pleased to announce you can join a New shiur from one of our new Avrechim R. Yosef Basha from Mondays through Thursdays!*

*The Food for the Night of Shabuot has been Kindly Sponsored by Mr. David Shapiro for Refuah Shelema of David Ben Hanna Dvora. He should be Zoche to a Speedy Recovery Amen!*

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE SUNDAY**

Shaharit: 5:55am  
 Hodu approx.: 6:05am  
**Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:30am**  
 Minha 6:25pm  
 Followed by Arvit.

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

Shaharit 5:55am  
 Daf Yomi 7:20am  
**Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:00am**  
 Minha 6:25pm  
 Followed by Arvit  
 Shiurim 6:50pm

We would like to remind our Kahal Kadosh to please Donate wholeheartedly towards our Beautiful Kehila. Anyone interested in donating for any occasion, Avot Ubanim \$120, Kiddush \$350, Seudat Shelishit \$275, Weekly Bulletin \$150, Weekly Daf Yomi \$180, Daf Yomi Masechet \$2500, Yearly Daf Yomi \$5000, Weekly Breakfast \$150, Daily Learning \$180, Weekly Learning \$613, Monthly Rent \$3500, & Monthly Learning \$2000, Please contact the Board Thanking you in advance for your generous support. Tizke Lemitzvot!

## Donors Column

We Sincerely Thank you for your generous contributions this Week! We truly appreciate it! Hashem should Bless you all with Health, Happiness, Parnasah Tova, Success, & All the Berachot of the Torah Amen!

- **Mr. Jacob Bengio**
- **Mr. Isaac Nahon**
- **Mr. Binyamin Pikhadze**
- **Dr. Jean Paul Curchia**
- **Mr. Mordechai Saban**
- **Mrs. Giselle Bounnik**

If anyone would like to contact our Synagogue, please feel free to email [info@hechalshalom.org](mailto:info@hechalshalom.org)

### Torah Teasers (AISH)

1. A major census is recounted in the parsha. Where else in the book of Numbers is there a census of the Jews?
2. Which *nasi* (tribal leader) has the same first name as a *nasi* (national president) in the time of the second Temple?
3. In this parsha, with respect to which two people does the Torah explicitly state that he has no sons?
4. Which *nasi* (tribal leader) is the brother-in-law of Aharon the High Priest?
5. Which two people in this parsha are explicitly called a "firstborn"?
6. Whose death is mentioned in this parsha? (2 answers)
7. Which of the 10 plagues is mentioned in this parsha?
8. Which relative of Moshe shares the name of an ancient city in the land of Israel?
9. The name of which "mysterious" animal appears six times in this parsha?
10. Which five members of the same immediate family have names that begin with the same Hebrew letter?

### Answers

- 1) In parashat Pinchas, in the last year of the 40-year journey in the desert, another census is taken of the Jews (Numbers 26:1).
- 2) Gamliel ben Pedatzur, from the tribal of Menasheh (Numbers 1:10), shares a first name with the famous nasi and great sage of the second Temple era - Rabban Gamliel.
- 3) The Torah states that the eldest sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, have no sons of their own (Numbers 3:4).
- 4) Nachshon ben Aminadav, the tribal leader of Yehudah, is the brother-in-law of Aharon. Aharon is married to Elisheva, the sister of Nachshon (Exodus 6:23).
- 5) Reuven, the son of Yaakov (Numbers 1:20), and Nadav the son of Aharon (Numbers 3:2), are each called a firstborn.
- 6) The deaths of Nadav and Avihu are mentioned (Numbers 3:4).
- 7) The deaths of the Egyptian first born is referenced in the law of redemption of first born sons (Numbers 3:13).
- 8) Number 3:19 mentions Moshe's uncle Chevron (the brother of Moshe's father Amram), who shares the name of a well-known ancient city in the land of Israel where the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are buried (Genesis 23:19).
- 9) Before being transported, many of the Tabernacle vessels are covered with skins of the tachash animal (Numbers 4:6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14). The identity of this animal is not conclusively known (see Rashi - Exodus 25:5).
- 10) Five members of Aharon's family the High Priest all have names beginning with the letter alef: Aharon, his wife Elisheva, and their three sons: Avihu, Elazar and Itamar

## Community Announcements

*(It is YOUR Community, make the most of it!)*

### Miscellaneous Announcements:

- **This Week's Congregational Kiddush** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Dr. & Mrs. Ronny & Lisa Aquinin in Honor of their Dear Son Sady reading the 6<sup>th</sup> Perek of Pirke Avot! Hazak Ubaruch!**
- **This Week's Breakfast** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Barak Benchetrit for the Refuah Shelema of David Benichu Bar Aicha, Their Hatzlacha Baaretz, & Leiluy Nishmat Tzvi ben Reina Malka z"l & Malka Reina Bat Yael z"l.** Tihye Nishmatam Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- **This Week's Seudat Shelishit is available for Sponsorship!**
- **This Week's Daf Yomi is available for Sponsorship!**
- We are trying to update our **Congregant's contact information.** We would like to start sending texts about different Events and Shiurim. We would also like to start emailing the weekly bulletin. **We would like to start a list of Nahalot/Azkarot/Yahrzeits.** We would also like to make a **Refuah Shelema list.** Please send your contact information to the Board at info@hechalshalom.org

### Important Message!!!

**Eruv Update: Surfside:** The Eruv in Surfside now includes the walking paths along the beach. Pushing strollers and carrying is permitted on the paths, but not beyond the path or onto the beach.

**Bal Harbour:** The Eruv in Bal Harbour included the inner (western) walking path only. The pier at Haulover Cut is not included.

- Before hanging up anything anywhere in the Bet Hakeneset, please seek authorization from the Board. This includes flyers etc.
- Please be advised that prior to bringing any food or drinks for any occasion, you must first seek the authorization from the Board.

### Special Announcements

- We are pleased to announce that Ness 26 is part of the **Amazon Charity Program**, which would allow our community to collect 0.5% of all the orders made by any of you on Amazon.com. In order to register you need to log on smile.amazon.com and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.
- Anyone wishing to receive the **Daily Halacha** please send a whatsapp message to Simon Chocron 786-351-1573

### Community Calendar:

- **The program for Teenaged Boys** ages 13-18 Started again with Great Succes with Shiur & Supper on **Sunday Evenings After Arvit at around at 6:30 pm With Supper.** New Participants Welcome! Anyone wishing to sponsor this Shiur Please contact the Board. Tizke Lemitzvot! In Recess
- We have started the **Mishmar Program** Every other Thursday evening at 8:00 pm **with Chulent, Beer, & Snacks. Everyone is welcome!**

## Refuah Shelema List

### Men

### Women

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia,</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo</li> <li>• Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli,</li> <li>• Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana,</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Miriam,</li> <li>• Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde</li> <li>• Yaakov Ben Simha Alegria</li> <li>• Aviv Ben Luba Miriam</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Mercedes</li> <li>• Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria</li> <li>• Shalom Gibly Ben Fortuna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isaac Ben Mesoda,</li> <li>• Haim Ben Marcelle,</li> <li>• Yizhak Ben Simja</li> <li>• Reuben Ben Eta,</li> <li>• Michael Ben Aliza,</li> <li>• Avraham Ben Leah</li> <li>• Ruben Leib Ben Eta</li> <li>• David Benichu Bar Aicha</li> <li>• Menahem Ben Shira</li> <li>• Moshe Ben Rahel</li> <li>• David Ben Freha Rina</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simja Bat Esther,</li> <li>• Rachel Bat Sarah,</li> <li>• Nina Bat Rachel,</li> <li>• Gitel Rina Bat Yael,</li> <li>• Miriam Bat Sofy,</li> <li>• Rahma Bat Simha</li> <li>• Esther Bat Fortuna</li> <li>• Malka Bat Dina</li> <li>• Raizel Bat Miriam</li> <li>• Leah Bat Rivka</li> <li>• Sol Bat Perla</li> <li>• Chana Bat Bilha</li> <li>• Yael Bat Rut</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda,</li> <li>• Alegria Simha Bat Esther,</li> <li>• Naomie Bat Rarel Adda,</li> <li>• Malka Bat Joyce Simja,</li> <li>• Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit,</li> <li>• Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy,</li> <li>• Abigael Haya Bat Esther</li> <li>• Madeleine Bat Esther</li> <li>• Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel</li> <li>• Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria</li> <li>• Eva Bat Yael Khayat</li> <li>• Camouna Bat Fortuna</li> <li>• Esther Bat Cota</li> </ul>		

**Hechal Shalom / Or Oziel**

**We Would like to Wholeheartedly  
Thank our Dear Friends**

**Dr. Ronny Aquinin**

**For generously**

**Donating the Rent of**

**Sivan 5781**

**For the Refuah Shelema of**

**Tehilla Hadasa Bat Ilana.**

**Hashem should send her a speedy  
Recovery Amen!**

**We truly appreciate it.**

**In this Merit,**

**May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful  
Family with all the Berachot in the Torah Amen.**



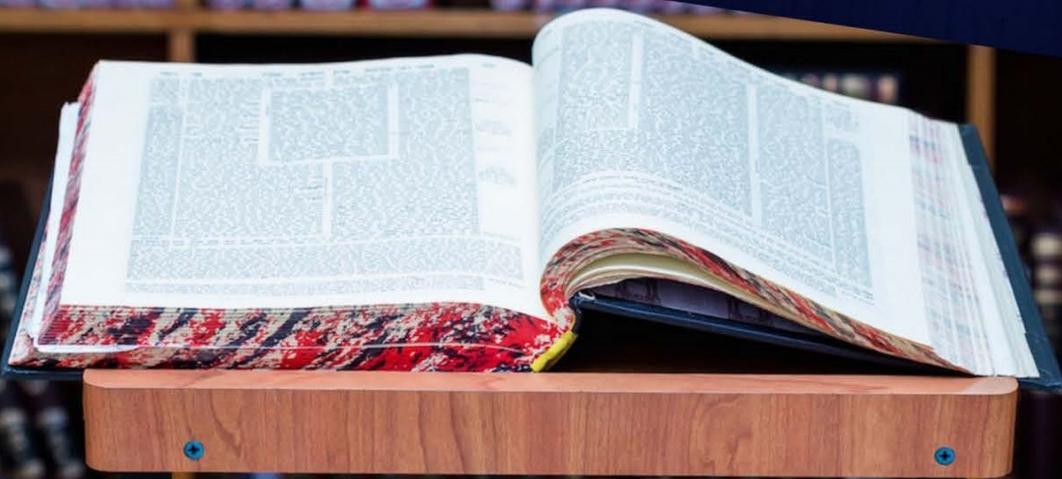
# DAF YOMI SPONSORS



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF YOMI  
IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

## THE KAMHAZI FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER  
SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L  
& FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE FAMILY.  
HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH  
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI IS  
GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

## THE AKKAD FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT

אברהם בן גרסי-ה ז"ל, שלמה בן תמם ז"ל, אליהו בן רחל  
ז"ל, ותמם בת אורו ז"ל תנצב"ה

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH  
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

**The Pinto Family**

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

**Sivan 5781**

**Leiluy Nishmat their Dear Father**

**Simon Pinto Bar Licita z”l**

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you & your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

**Happy Birthday To**

- Mrs. Luna Benhayoun – Shabb. May 15<sup>th</sup>,
- Mrs. Lilian Tapiero – Shabb. May 15<sup>th</sup>,
- Devorah Benmergui – Sun. May 16<sup>th</sup>,
- Mrs. Nicole Bouhadana – Tues. May 18<sup>th</sup>,
- Ori Michael – Tues. May 18<sup>th</sup>,
- Mrs. Regina Allouche – Wed. May 19<sup>th</sup>,
- Mr. Isaac Cohen – Wed. May 19<sup>th</sup>,
- Mr. Netanel Yizhak Perez – Thurs. May 20<sup>th</sup>,
- Dr. Ari Benmergui – Wed. May 26<sup>th</sup>,
- Mr. Daniel Cohen – Thurs. May 27<sup>th</sup>,
- Mrs. Silvia Cohen – Thurs. May 27<sup>th</sup>,
- Mr. Joseph Maya – Thurs. May 27<sup>th</sup>,

**Happy Anniversary To**

- Vidal & Raquel Benarroch May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Nahalot**

- Chana Bat Tammar Elmechly z”l the 4<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (Mother of Mr. Raphael Ammar)(Shabbat)
- Oro Belecen Bat Clara z”l the 5<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (Grandmother of Mr. Albert Belecen)
- Robert Houttou Bsiri Ben Esther Assous z”l the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (Grandfather of Mr. Stephane Bsiri)

**Next Shabbatot:**

- Feige Bat Perle z”l the 11<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (Aunt of Mr. Amichai Shoshan)
- Cota Cohen Bat Clara z”l the 13<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (Mother of Mr. David Cohen)

## WEEKLY INSPIRATION

### We Won the Lottery of Life

(Rabbi Eli Mansour itorah)

Shabuot is famously known, among other things, as the Yahrtzeit of King David. Less known is the fact that the second day of Shabuot marks the Yahrtzeit of another very important, and inspiring, Jewish figure.

A young man named Valentin belonged to the prominent Pototzki family in Poland, a fabulously wealthy family of devout Catholics who owned the spectacular Lancut Castle. Valentin traveled from Poland to Paris to study in a seminary, aspiring to become a minister. But while in Paris, he happened to come across an elderly Jew whose eyes were practically glued to the pages of a certain book. Valentin was struck by the man's devotion to his studies, and so he approached the man, inquired about what he was reading, and discovered, for the first time, the Jewish religion. This encounter triggered a lengthy, unlikely process which culminated – remarkably – in Valentin's conversion to Judaism.

His family, naturally, was shocked, and mortified, upon hearing the news. Valentin was summoned back to Poland, and sharply reprimanded by his family. They brought leading Catholic figures to speak to him and try to change his mind and return to Catholicism, but he refused. They offered him great wealth if he returned, and threatened to leave him with nothing if he remained a Jew.

"No matter what you offer me," Valentin said, "I am remaining a Jew. I have found the truth, and it is worth more than anything."

Finally, Valentin was threatened with death. He heroically accepted his fate, rather than give up his new belief and lifestyle.

On the second day of Shabuot, 5509 (1749), Valentin – whose name had been changed to Abraham – was tortured to death and burned.

The Hafetz Haim, who lived over a century later, reportedly said that if ten Jewish men had been

present at his execution and recited Kaddish, Mashiah would have come.

It is not coincidental that Abraham's execution occurred on Shabuot – the time when we read the story of another great person who gave up everything to become a Jew. Rut belonged to the family of the king of Moav, enjoying regal wealth, luxury and prestige, and she married into a wealthy, aristocratic Jewish family that had emigrated to Moab. After the tragic death of her husband and father-in-law, she could have very easily returned home to her life of royalty. But instead, she decided to join her mother-in-law, Naomi, and go to Eretz Yisrael and embrace Torah, even though this meant subjecting herself to abject poverty. Upon returning to Eretz Yisrael, Naomi and Rut did not even have food to eat, and Rut had to collect gleanings from Boaz's field just so that she and her mother-in-law would not starve to death. This is what Rut endured for the sake of joining Am Yisrael and committing herself to a life of Torah observance.

On Shabuot we also recall another famous convert. The Torah reading on the first day of Shabuot comes from Parashat Yitro – which is named after the priest of Midyan who sacrificed his life of wealth and fame in order to join Beneh Yisrael in the desert. Like Rut and Valentin Pototzki, he was willing to give up everything for the sake of Torah.

As we celebrate Matan Torah on Shabuot, we must stop to reflect upon the priceless treasure which we have been privileged to receive. The stories of Yitro, Rut and Valentin remind us of just how incalculably precious the Torah is, that nothing we can possibly have in this world will ever come anywhere close to the value of Torah.

Often, we complain about the difficulties entailed in religious observance. The prices of kosher food, the cost of Torah education, the loss of profit on Shabbat and Yom Tob, the inconvenience of praying three times a day – these, among many other things, make Torah life challenging. But the stories told above should put all these challenges in perspective, and reinforce our firm belief that what we gain

by learning and observing the Torah far outweighs the costs and inconveniences.

The Gemara (Shabbat 88b) relates that at the time the Torah was given, the angels in heaven protested, insisting that something as precious as the Torah must remain with them. But they were wrong. The Torah belongs to us, the Jewish People. We are so beloved by Hashem that He gave us this precious treasure – which even the heavenly angels want but cannot have.

One of my Rabbis in high school would tell the class, "Boys, you have won the lottery of life!" The Torah is more precious than anything we could ever have – and Shabuot is the time to reflect upon the great privilege we have been given, the ability to study and live by Hashem's Torah.

## **Is It Worth It?**

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

The Torah in Parashat Bamidbar tells of the role assigned to the Leviyim to transport the Mishkan (Tabernacle) when Beneh Yisrael traveled. We read how the Kohanim were responsible for designating the Leviyim for their individual roles, such that each and every Levi knew precisely which item he needed to carry during travel. The Midrash comments that this was necessary because the Leviyim would fight over the privilege of carrying the most sacred item – the Aron (ark). Each Levi vied for the opportunity to transport the Aron which contained the two tablets and upon which the Divine Presence resided. This resulted in violent and even fatal clashes among the Leviyim, and G-d therefore instructed the Kohanim to appoint each Levi to a particular role, so each one would know his job and the fighting would stop.

The Mesilat Yesharim (chapter 20) cites this Midrash amidst his discussion of "Mishkal Ha'hasidut" – the "scale of piety." He explains that there is certainly great value in "Hasidut," in going beyond the strict requirements of Halacha and taking upon oneself additional measures of piety. A child who truly loves his

father will not just obey his father's wishes, but also do what he feels will make his father happy. Similarly, if we are truly devoted to the Almighty, we will do not only what He demands of us, but even more. However, the Mesilat Yesharim warns, extreme care must be taken when accepting upon ourselves additional measures of "Hasidut" to ensure that these measures are indeed achieving their desired goal. Very often, such measures have adverse "side effects," and we need to think long and hard whether the pious act in question is truly worth the undesirable consequences. Of course, when it comes to our strict Halachic requirements, we must fulfill our obligations regardless of what this entails. But when it comes to "Hasidut," we must weight our actions on the "Mishkal Ha'hasidut"; we must weigh their value against the adverse effects they may cause, and then determine whether they are indeed "pious" and worth the consequences.

The Leviyim genuinely sought to fulfill the great Misva of transporting the Aron, but their desire for this privilege led them to fight with and harm other people. If this is the result of their attempts to carry the Aron, then this pious act fails the "Mishkal Ha'hasidut." Quite simply, it is not worth it. There is no question that we should not be taking upon ourselves voluntary measures of piety if this causes fighting and discord.

It is told that Rav Yisrael Salanter was once seen using a small amount of water for Netilat Yadayim, just enough to fulfill the strict Halachic requirement. The onlookers were puzzled, as the Gemara speaks of the value in using copious amounts of water, and how it brings wealth. (The word "Mayim" – "water" – has been viewed as an acrostic for "Maleh Yadenu Mi'birchotecha" – "fill our hands with Your blessings.") They asked the Rabbi why he used such a small amount of water for this Misva, and he explained that the water was brought to the meal by the elderly maid who carried water on her back.

"Is it right for me to earn blessings on this woman's back?" the Rabbi rhetorically asked.

Rav Yisrael understood that the concern not to overburden a hardworking housekeeper was far more important than using large amounts

water beyond that which Halacha strictly requires.

Another story is told of the Hafetz Haim, who once hosted guests for Friday night who were astonished to see the Rabbi begin Kiddush as soon as he returned from the synagogue, without singing "Shalom Alechem."

"The Rabbi does not sing 'Shalom Alechem' on Friday night?" they asked.

"I know that you have not eaten all day," the great Sage explained. "The angels don't need to eat, so they can wait for 'Shalom Alechem.' But I should not make you wait when you are hungry so I can sing."

There are many situations when we need to keep this perspective in mind, and ensure to maintain our priorities when measures that are not strictly required can harm other people. Although one brings great merit to a deceased parent's soul by leading the prayer services, one brings far greater merit to the soul by allowing somebody else to lead the service in the interest of avoiding conflict. Similarly, Rav Avraham Pam would instruct his students not to continue dancing after a wedding when the parents and other guests want to go home. As important as it is to dance with the groom, as the hour gets late it is more important to show sensitivity to those who need to leave.

As valuable as it is to "carry the Aron," to go beyond our strict obligations to get close to Hashem, we must always ensure that the extra measures are truly worth it, and do not cause more harm than good.

## Why So Few Leviim?

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

The Torah records that after Moshe counted *Bnei Yisrael*, he counted the Tribe of Levi separately. The *Leviim* were counted from the age of one month and above, and they numbered 22,000. The Ramban asks a basic demographic question: The male population of the Tribe of Levi, which was counted from thirty days and up, numbered less than half of the next smallest Tribe, despite the fact that all the

rest of the tribes were counted only from the age of twenty years and above! The Ramban asks: Why were there so few *Leviim*?

The Ramban suggests an answer to this question. He says this corroborates *Chazal's* teaching on the *pasuk* "As they (the Egyptians) persecuted them (the Jews), so did they multiply and so did they expand..." [Shemot 1:12]. The more the Egyptians tried to minimize us through their bondage and persecution, the more *Hashem* blessed us and allowed the Jewish women to have multiple births, creating a population explosion amongst the Children of Israel. *Chazal* teach that the Tribe of Levi was not subjected to the bondage of slavery. They were free from the work and the persecution suffered by the other tribes. Therefore, since they were not part of the persecution, they also were not part of the blessing of the population explosion, and consequently their total population at the end of the period of Egyptian slavery was much smaller than that of the other tribes.

The Or Hahaim HaKadosh quotes this Ramban and is not happy with his suggestion. He offers his own unique — and in a sense, startling — answer: The Gemara says that Amram divorced his wife (after having only two children — Miriam and Aharon). His rationale for doing so was that given the grim situation of the Jews in Egypt (Jewish male children being thrown at birth into the Nile, at that time), he did not want to bring any more children into the world. Amram was the *gadol ha'dor* (the leader of the generation). He was also the head of the Tribe of Levi. When the rest of his tribesmen saw that Amram divorced his wife, they all got up and divorced their wives as well. Even though the Gemara says that Amram had second thoughts about the matter and remarried his wife Yocheved, the Or HaHaim suggests (this is speculation on his part) that the other Levites did not follow his lead in that action, and they remained separated from their wives.

The Or HaHaim supplies a rationale for their motivation: The Tribe of Levi had it relatively good in Egypt. They were not subject to the same horrors and unspeakable suffering that the rest of the Jews had to bear. Consequently, they appreciated the lives they led, and they

appreciated life in general. They simply could not bear the thought of bringing children into the world only to have them thrown into the Nile to be drowned or abandoned (as was the case with Amram's third child, Moshe).

Ironically, because the other Jews suffered so much, they appreciated life less and they somehow came to terms with the thought that their children may be taken away from them. Their lives were so oppressed, and they were so depressed that they felt that life was almost worthless. Consequently, the thought of having their children taken away from them seemed almost "par for the course" and therefore it did not stop them from bringing more Jewish souls into the world! They valued life so little, that they did not recoil in horror from the thought of what might happen to their to-be-born children as did the *Leviim*.

The only analogy I can think of is that in some countries in the world, life is not as valuable as it is in the United States. In America (and all the more so this is true in *Eretz Yisrael*), much of the general perception of the populace is that every life is of infinite value. The *Leviim* did not want to bring children into this world. We should father children who will suffer? We should bear children who will be murdered? We are not going to have such children!

The rest of the Israelites, who themselves lived unbearable lives, were not as frightened by the idea of bringing children into the world, who themselves would have a miserable lot in life. This is a startling idea, but if we think about it, I believe we can understand it.

As a result of this phenomenon, the Or HaHaim writes, the Tribe of Levi had significantly fewer children than the enslaved tribes.

## **A Cryptic Comment of the Baal HaTurim Explained by the Bach**

(Rabbi Frand)

The Talmud [Sotah 12a] sheds further light on the above-mentioned incident. When Amram divorced his wife (not wishing to bring more

Jewish children into the world under such dire circumstances), his young daughter Miriam told him, "Father, your decree is worse than Pharaoh's decree. Pharaoh's decree only affects the boys; your decree affects both male and female children!" The Talmud states that Amram accepted his daughter's critique, and this is the background to the *pasuk* "A man went (*va'yelech ish*) from the House of Levi and married the daughter of Levi" [Shemot 2:1] The Rabbis ask, "From where did he go?" And they answer, "He went from the counsel of his daughter (to remarry Yocheved)."

The Baal HaTurim points out that there are only two places in all of Tanach where we find the expression "*va'yelech ish*". One is the aforementioned *pasuk* "*va'yelech ish m'Bet Levi va'yikach et bat Levi*," and the other is in the Book of Rut; "*va'yelech ish m'Bet Lehem Yehudah...*" (And a man went from Bethlehem in Judea to dwell in the fields of Moab) [Rut 1:1].

The Baal HaTurim (who did not have a computer) is certainly not merely sharing an interesting word anomaly. He means something when he provides these insights. Unfortunately, the Baal HaTurim does not do us the favor of explaining the significance of the linkage between these two *pesukim*. But in a sense, he did do us a favor, because this gives all *darshanim* in every generation the opportunity to suggest their own insights explaining the connection between "*va'yelech ish m'Bet Levi...*" (which was a pious action—Amram took back his wife and wanted to bring children into the world) and "*va'yelech ish m'Bet Lehem Yehudah...*" (where Elimelech, the leader of his generation, abandoned his people by leaving *Eretz Yisrael* in a time of famine and fled to Moav, which apparently was a sinful action).

The Bah (Rav Yoel Sirkis [1561-1640]), in a sefer called Meshiv Nefesh, shares an interesting idea. He says that Elimelech did not perform a wicked act in the Book of Rut. He did not abandon his people. He acted for the Sake of Heaven (*I'Shem Shamayim*). Elimelech knew prophetically (*B'Ruah HaKodesh*) that the Mashiach must trace his lineage back to the daughters of Moav. Since he was aware, however, that there was a *halacha* that "Neither

an Ammonite nor a Moabite shall enter into the Congregation of Hashem..." [Devarim 23:4] (and at this point it was not known that this *halacha* only restricted male Moavites from marrying into Jewish families) and people therefore distanced themselves from any potential marriage with someone of Moavite lineage, Elimelech was perturbed that the Mashiah would never come into existence. Therefore, he took it upon himself to go with his family to the fields of Moav, because he sensed that over there, somehow, he would wind up with a woman in his family who would become the matriarch of the Messianic King.

This is the similarity the Baal HaTurim is pointing out between these two *pesukim*. "*Va'yelech ish m'Bet Levi va'yikah et bat Levi*" produced Moshe Rabbeinu, the Redeemer from Egypt, the first redeemer in Jewish history. And "*va'yelech ish m'Bet Lehem Yehudah...*" ultimately produced the final redeemer. Just as Amram's intent was to bring forth women (as Miriam pointed out to him, Pharaoh only decreed death on the Jewish males, but Amram's separation from his wife ruled out the possibility of women coming into the world as well), so too, Elimelech's intent in going to the fields of Moav was to bring forth women (i.e., Rut, the matriarch of the Davidic monarchy).

## All Is Well That Ends Well

(Rabbi Frand)

The last *pasuk* in Parashat Bamidbar is, "But they shall not come and look as the holy is inserted, **lest they die.**" [Bamidbar 4:20] When the Leviim were carrying the *Aron HaKodesh*, they needed to make sure it was covered, so as not to see it while it was uncovered. It was not an easy job being a Levi. It was a dangerous profession. If they looked at the *Aron* uncovered, they would die!

The problem is that we have a principle learned from a *pasuk* in Kohelet [8:3] "...*Lo ta'amod al davar rah...*" (literally – "Do not stand on a bad thing"), which teaches that it is inappropriate to end a parsha (or even an Aliyah) on a bad note. *Baal Korehs* and *Gabbaim* know that

when you need to insert an additional aliyah ("*hosafa*") in the *leining*, there are certain places where it is forbidden to stop. One of the rules is that you cannot stop on a *pasuk* with a "bad message."

And yet, Parashat Bamidbar ends with "*V'lo Yiroo k'valah et haKodesh, va'metu.*" And this is not the only occurrence of this phenomenon. Parashat Kedoshim ends with the *Pasuk* "...they shall be put to death; they shall pelt them with stones, **their blood shall be within them (d'mehem bam).**" [Vayikra 20:27]. This is a "beautiful ending?" "Their blood shall be within them!" How do we explain this? Kohelet says not to pause on a "*davar rah*". So how do we end on such frightening and somber notes as those at the end of Parashat Bamidbar and Parashat Kedoshim?

Rav Isaac Bernstein shared an interesting idea from the Teshuvat Rav Pe'alim. In Talmudic times, every person who received an *aliyah* did not make two *berachot* (one prior to his *aliyah* and one following it) as is the custom today. Rather, the first *olah* recited the beginning *beracha* (*asher bahar banu...*) and the final (usually the seventh) *oleh* made the final *beracha* (*asher natan lanu Torat emet...*). The Rav Pe'alim says that the result of this is that the last thing the congregation hears is not the final words of the last *pasuk*, but rather the last words of the final *bracha* "Who gave us the True Torah and Eternal Life He has implanted in our midst, Blessed Art Thou Who Gives Us the Torah!" That is not a bad note. We are not stopping at the words "They will die" or "their blood is within them." We are stopping at "Who Gives Us the Torah."

Now, in truth, this is the case, not only in Talmudic times, but in our day as well. So, I believe that the Rav Pe'alim is saying that the rule of not stopping on a "bad note" (*davar rah*) only applies to the intermediate *aliyahs* — namely all the section endings except the final one — which are not followed by the ending *beracha*. However, the rule of not ending on a "bad note" does not apply to the very end of a *Parasha*, because the last *aliyah* never ended with the Torah *pasuk* itself, but with the final Torah blessing.

What a better way could there be to end my final shiur before Shavuot than with the words "*Baruch Ata Hashem, Noten HaTorah*".

## **Emulating the Desert**

(Rabbi Zev Leff)

"And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert": Anyone who does not make himself ownerless like the desert cannot acquire wisdom or Torah, and therefore it says, "... in the Sinai desert" (Bamidbar Rabbah 1:7).

A hefker object is one of such little value to its owner that he formally abandons it and makes it available to all. Let us consider what is meant by making oneself hefker.

One must be prepared to forsake, if necessary, all worldly pleasures for the sake of Torah (see commentary of the Maharzav to the Midrash). "Torah can only be preserved in one who kills himself for it" (Sotah 21a). As the Mishnah says in Pirke Avot (6:4):

This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, and live a life of deprivation - but toil in the Torah! If you do this, "You are praiseworthy and all is well with you." You are "praiseworthy" in this world, "and all is well with you" - in the World to Come.

Material deprivation may not be a necessary condition for learning Torah, but only one who is prepared to forego every pleasure and comfort for his Torah learning will ever achieve a deep understanding of Torah.

The true student of Torah must be as obsessed with Torah, as the lover with his beloved (see commentary of Rashash to the above Midrash; Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 10:6). Just as the lover's thoughts are always of the beloved, so, too, one who truly wishes to plumb the depths of Torah cannot make his learning contingent on time, place or circumstance. Only when one feels that the Torah alone gives meaning to his life, will he be able to forego all other comforts and pleasures for its sake.

After relating that Bne Yisrael came to Sinai, the Torah repeats itself and says that they left

Refidim and came to Sinai. From this repetition, Chazal learn that just as they came to Sinai in repentance, so did they leave Refidim in repentance. Bne Yisrael were attacked by Amalek at Refidim precisely because of their weakness in Torah learning. After that attack, they might have reasoned that Refidim was not spiritually conducive to teshuvah and waited until they reached Sinai to strengthen themselves in repentance.

The Torah emphatically negates such an attitude. If a person waits for the perfect time or place to undertake a new course in Torah, that ideal moment or place will never materialise. Had they not done teshuvah in Refidim, they would not have done teshuvah in the Sinai desert either.

There is another aspect to the requirement of abandoning oneself to Torah that is even more difficult than the forfeiture of material comforts - the attainment of humility. One must both be humble enough to learn from every man and to teach everyone, regardless of status. Even more importantly, he must be prepared to divest himself of all his preconceived ideas and beliefs. Only if one is prepared to let the Torah possess him and guide him totally, will its secrets be revealed.

All are blind until HaKadosh Baruch Hu opens their eyes (Bereshit Rabbah 53). When we view the world through our own eyes, we are subject to our material desires and the distorting effects of passion and bias. Only when we let the Torah mold our thought processes can we view the world in its true perspective. There is no truer humility than subjugating one's most precious possession, his mind, to the Torah.

In order to serve on the Sanhedrin, one had to be able to prove that a sheretz does not cause ritual impurity, even though the Torah explicitly says that it does. The judges had to recognize that with their own great mental acuity they could convince themselves of almost anything, and therefore needed to subject their own thinking to that of the Torah. The Rogachover Gaon once gave a shiur to his students in which he proved that chametz is permitted on Pesach. He then asked his students to refute his proof. They tried in vain to do so. When they gave up, the Rogachover opened the Chumash and read

them "Do not eat chametz" (Shemot 13:3). That, he said, is the only refutation necessary. All the intellectual gymnastics in the world cannot alter one sentence in the Torah.

"The words of the wise are like prods" (Kohelet 12:11). just as the prod directs the ox to plow in a straight line, so, too, does Torah guide and condition one to think in the paths of life (Chagiga 3b). SMA (to Choshen Mishpat 3 §13) comments that the thinking of baalei batim is opposite to that of Torah thinking. The intention is not to denigrate the layman, but to point out that when we rely on our own reasoning, distortion is the inevitable result. When we seek the guidance of gedolei Torah, we are seeking a mind so steeped in Torah - to the exclusion of all personal biases - that everything that they say or do is solely a reflection of their understanding of the Torah, i.e., daas Torah. Only a mind conditioned to thinking from G-d's point of view, as revealed in the Torah, can view the world without distortion.

After their Exodus from Egypt, Bne Yisrael needed to follow G-d into a harsh, howling desert, and place themselves totally in His care, before they could receive the Torah. And after the gift of the Torah, they still needed to be chastised time and again, as we read throughout Sefer Bamidbar, until they molded their attitudes and opinions to a Torah perspective.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### What Motherhood has Taught Me

**Becoming a mother is the hardest choice I've ever made. And by far the best.**  
(By Debbie Gutfreund)

Despite counting my mom and my daughters as being amongst my closest friends, we once had a Mother's Day fiasco.

We were at a beautiful restaurant in Manhattan for brunch. It was a gorgeous day. But I had teenagers at the time who were unhappy and complaining about their phones, their schools, their clothes etc. My mom was sympathizing with them as any grandmother would. And then a few different arguments broke out at the table just as the waiter was approaching to take our order.

One adult made an insulting comment about another's career. One of the kids declared that he wasn't hungry and just wanted a soda; one of the grandparents told him he needed to order a meal anyway. Then another adult ordered a margarita even though it wasn't yet noon which earned him a look of disapproval from his parent across the table. "I'm an adult, I'll order a drink when I want a drink," he announced as the waiter stood helplessly by, not knowing what to write down.

Then one of the teenagers piped up, "And I'm almost an adult and should be able to buy the phone I want."

I apologized to the waiter. "Mother's Day brunch isn't usually like this. You must think we're crazy."

"No worries," the waiter said. "I've been seeing this all day today. Must be something in the air."

It took us a while to recover from that brunch, but we were fortunate because we had solid relationships that could withstand a stressful Sunday morning. Family was family even if it was sometimes challenging. And I didn't expect motherhood to be about bouquets of flowers and champagne brunches. I know that becoming a mother is the hardest choice I have ever made. But it's also by far the best choice that I have ever made.

At the worst times of the pandemic, there were days when I questioned almost everything. I questioned my career choice. I questioned where we lived. I questioned beliefs and ideas and assumptions that I had made long ago. But there is one thing I never questioned through the hardest of days and that was the love and gratitude I have for my children.

## **Watching all of my children playing and laughing in the kitchen after dinner wasn't something to take for granted.**

During quarantine I whispered a heartfelt thank You every morning that all of our children were home again. In a world full of so much uncertainty and pain, there was one thing I knew for sure. Watching all of my children playing and laughing in the kitchen after dinner was a miracle. It wasn't something to take for granted. And it has made me think about what motherhood has taught me over the years.

*Humility.* You can do everything right as a parent and still have everything go wrong. You can also do everything wrong as a parent and have everything go right.

Parenting has taught me the real meaning of humility. I make mistakes and I learn to admit when I am wrong. I learn to say I don't know when I don't know. I learn to let go when life can't meet my expectations. I learn that I can't control what happens, but I can control myself. I learn that I can't always make my children feel understood, but I can try my best to understand. I can't always make them happy, but I can always let them know that they are loved.

Humility is learning to cherish our relationships without needing them to be perfect.

*Endurance.* In the final miles of the Boston marathon, I didn't know how I was going to take another step. It had already been three hours of running in the freezing rain and the last of my energy was slipping away. But the inner strength that got me to the finish line wasn't from the months of training that I had gone through before the marathon or from the early mornings that began at 4am. Instead, I found myself thinking of the birth of each of my children.

The newborn wonder in their eyes. The awe I felt looking at their tiny fingers and toes. I had five miles left to go, and each remaining mile I dedicated to one of my children. To the babies they were and the amazing children they had become. To their first steps and first words. To their first days of schools and graduations and all the other milestones in between. For them I could endure a thousand sleepless nights and a thousand miles to reach any finish line. More

than anything, motherhood has taught me that when I think I cannot go on, I can.

*Gratitude.* Being a mother has taught me a very special kind of gratitude. It's gratitude when I first wake up in the morning and have the privilege of making a hot breakfast for my children. It's gratitude when I pick up the phone to hear my daughter's voice from college. It's gratitude for being able to create a home that isn't perfect, but that is safe and warm and full of love. Being a mother has taught me that these are not small things. Having your family all together is not a small thing. Having healthy, growing children is not a small thing. Having both the privilege and responsibility of raising children in this world is not a small thing. It's a miracle so astounding there are days I cannot even begin to grasp it.

I thank G-d for my mother, for my children, and for the miracle of motherhood. I thank G-d for the miracle of family, even if it means some crazy brunches, with or without flowers.

## **Perfecting Our Middot** **Through Parenting**

(Rabbi Eli Mansour from itorah)

The Torah in Parashat Bamidbar briefly recounts the death of Nadab and Abihu, Aharon's two older sons: "Nadab and Abihu died before G-d ...and they had no children" (3:4). The Gemara in Masechet Yebamot interprets this verse to mean that Nadav and Abihu died because they did not beget children. On this basis, the Gemara establishes that one who does not involve himself in *Periya Ve'ribya* – the *Misva* of begetting children – is liable to death, just as Nadab and Abihu died because of their refusal to have children.

The commentators raise the question as to how the Gemara can attribute Nadab and Abihu's death to their decision not to have children. After all, the Torah right here in this Pasuk states explicitly that they died on account of their irreverence toward the Mishkan, for bringing an unwarranted offering. And the Midrash gives other reasons for their untimely

death – drinking wine before entering the Mishkan, and acting disrespectfully toward Moshe and Aharon. How, then, are we to understand the Gemara's comment that Nadab and Abihu died because of their decision not to beget children?

The Hatam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) explained that Nadab and Abihu's refusal to have children is the root cause of their other sins, which all have to do with a lack of respect. The irreverence they showed toward Moshe and Aharon and toward the Mishkan was the result of their failure to cultivate proper Middot (character traits) – a failure which could have been averted if they had begotten children. Parenting, the Hatam Sofer says, is the most effective means of perfecting one's character. Children look to their parents as examples to follow, and thus parents have no choice but to be careful how they speak and act. Keenly aware of the effect our behavior has on our children's character development, we are forced to conduct ourselves in a dignified, respectful and becoming manner. Strange as it may seem, parenting is not only about building our children, but also about building ourselves. We perfect our characters by being parents, as the role forces us to conduct ourselves in the way we want our children to behave. And so, the Hatam Sofer says, Nadab and Abihu died because they did not have children. Being childless denied them the opportunity to develop their characters and their sense of humility and respect, and thus indirectly caused their untimely death.

On Shabuot we read the Aseret Hadibberot – the Ten Commandments that Beneh Yisrael heard at Sinai. The Midrash comments that the Ten Commandments are divided into two sets of five, and each commandment corresponds to the parallel commandment in the other set. Thus, for example, the first commandment – "I am Hashem your G-d" – corresponds to the sixth commandment – murder – because murder constitutes the destruction of the divine image. The second commandment – idolatry – corresponds to the seventh commandment – adultery – because worshipping a foreign deity is a betrayal of G-d comparable to marital infidelity. Interestingly enough, according to this

structure, the fifth commandment – honoring parents – corresponds to "Lo Tahmod," the prohibition against envy. The Midrash explains that somebody who is envious of other people will have children who disrespect him and will show respect to other people in their lives, instead, and this accounts for the implied link between these Misvot.

Why are disrespectful children the consequence of envy?

**If children grow up around envious parents, who frequently speak of their desire to have what others have, then they, the children, will naturally become envious people. And it is then likely that they will be envious of their friends' parents. If we cause our children to be jealous people, we may very well be causing them to disrespect us – because they will be jealous of their friends and show greater respect to their friends' parents than to their own parents.**

## What Men Really Want

### Three keys to a strong marriage.

(By Emuna Braverman)

It's not complicated. What men really want from their wives is appreciation, respect and love.

"He wants to be her hero. When she is disappointed and unhappy over anything, he feels like a failure," says relationship expert John Gray. "Many women today don't realize how vulnerable men are and how much they need love too."

This concept is echoed in Jewish tradition. Rabbi Yisrael Miller writes in his book, *In Search of the Jewish Woman*, about "three immensely practical secrets, secrets known to all men and almost no women. Here they are:

- A. Compliments a wife gives her husband hit home deeply.
- B. A wife's opinion of her husband is vitally important to him.
- C. A husband desires desperately that his wife should be happy."

Appreciation, respect and love. Does your husband get nagging, criticism and resentment instead?

## **APPRECIATION**

Do you welcome your husband at the end of the day, or greet him with a barrage of complaints? "You forgot to take out the garbage." "Take your children -- I can't stand it another minute."

Does he respond with "You didn't take my suit to the cleaners"? "Dinner isn't ready"?

It's not about who has what job; it's about attitude. "If you treat him like a king, he will treat you like a queen." (Menorat HaMaor)

How about this instead? "Thanks for bathing the kids tonight." Or: "Picking up dinner was a big help." Don't take for granted that these are his jobs, and he should just do them. And (this is the really difficult one!) try to focus on the tasks he did accomplish and not on the long list of the jobs left undone!

How many stories have I heard of stay-at-home moms whose husbands' hard work has permitted them to make that choice, but who frequently greet him with bitterness rather than gratitude? Are all the frustrations in our lives our husbands' faults?

Your husband is not an irritation, another demand on your already overbooked time. Appreciation means giving him the focus of your undivided attention at some point, every day, even if it's only for 20 minutes.

## **RESPECT**

Let your husband know you're proud of him. "You handled that client very skillfully," "You were so patient with Joey tonight" (when I was at my wits' end and ready to throw him in bed around 4:15!), "You dealt with that crisis at school so diplomatically" (sparing me from screaming at the principal, the administrator and a few choice teachers!).

So many men slog it out, day after day and it's never good enough. Their pain is palpable. They want that love and respect so badly that they keep trying despite the lack of positive reinforcement. They're acting like servants, but certainly not being treated like kings...

Yes, of course, there are situations where it's reversed. I know women who try with lack of response. I know women who are the victims of repeated criticisms and abuse. Don't get me wrong: I'm not diminishing that. But that is not the issue here. The issue here is what our responsibility is as married women and are we fulfilling it? As they say in every wise marriage class, marriage is not about give and take, it's not 50/50, it's not about equal division of labor (it's not Ford auto plant!); marriage is about each side giving and giving and giving 100%.

Respect is the foundation of love. You can start small ... by getting off the phone when he walks in the door, by not putting him down in public.

There's a simple rule on how to treat your spouse with dignity: just treat him the way you would like to be treated. (And it certainly includes treating your spouse with the same respect you show your boss, your hairdresser and the cashier at the local grocery store.)

## **LOVE**

Say those three simple words, often. And without prompting. Men need to hear them too.

Express it in actions too, just as we expect our husbands to do. We're so used to focusing on our own needs for love, it's easy to forget our reciprocal responsibility.

"If I do what you suggest," moaned my friend, "I'll become a Stepford wife."

"I'm not suggesting robotic behavior," I countered. "On the contrary. To behave appropriately and lovingly requires a lot more thought and effort than to nag and kvetch. Screaming at our husbands is the default position. Only intelligence and thought lead to a more reasoned and productive approach."

Marriage is about men and women working together. You both need each other. The saying "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle" made for cute T-shirts, but lousy marriages. Appreciating your spouse, giving him respect and showering him with love is the basis of a strong marriage.

## **Healing an Ancient Wound**

## The meaning of tikkun and its connection to Shavuot. (By Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks)

The word *tikkun*, as in *tikkun olam*, “mending the world,” and *tikkun leyl Shavuot*, the custom of staying up and studying Torah all night on the first night of the festival, has a curious history. In mishnaic Hebrew, that is, until the third century, it meant no more than social order, the rules that made society a safe and predictable place. In Jewish mysticism it came to mean something more metaphysical: mending the fractures in the universe that made life on earth so full of suffering and injustice, chief symbol of which was the Jewish condition in exile.

This had to do with the fact, according to Rabbi Isaac Luria, the great mystic of the sixteenth century, that something had gone wrong with creation itself. The divine light of the first day of creation had proved too intense for the physical vehicles meant to contain it. The vessels had shattered, leaving debris and fragments of light scattered everywhere. Ours is, said the mystics, a broken world, and the fractures are so deep that they affect the Divine being itself.

Exile is not just a human phenomenon. It represents a rift between G-d as He is in himself – the Infinite, the *Ein Sof*, the Without-End – and the *Shekhinah*, the Divine presence, G-d as he is among us. When Jews went into exile, the *Shekhinah* went with them. So we have, by our mystical endeavors, to help heal the fractures in the Divine. Every religious act if done with sufficient intensity of mind and soul, does something to reunite the Holy One, blessed be He, and His immanent Presence.

There is, though, a third sense of *tikkun* that is not mystical at all but makes powerful sense in terms of the Jewish vision of the world. Bad things happen between people. The innocent are harmed. There is envy, jealousy, anger, resentment. There is injustice, oppression, exploitation. The human world is full of tears. If you believe, as polytheists did in the ancient world and some atheists do today, that life is essentially conflict, a Darwinian struggle to survive, then there is nothing odd about a world full of pain. That is how it is. There is no right; only might. Justice is whatever serves the interests of the strong. History is written by the victors. The victims are mere collateral damage

of the fight to impose our will on the world or, in the language of the neo-Darwinians, to hand on our genes to the next generation.

We believe in hope, and hope has the power to defeat tragedy – as we have the power to mend what we or others have broken.

That, though, is not how Jews understand it. The natural condition of the world is harmony, like a well-ordered garden or a loving family or a gracious society. That is how it was in the beginning when G-d made the universe and saw that it was good. G-d, though, gave humans freedom, and humans often use that freedom to disobey Him. G-d creates order. We create chaos. That is, or would be, the human tragedy if Jews believed in tragedy. But we do not. We believe in hope, and hope has the power to defeat tragedy – as we have the power to mend what we or others have broken.

That is the philosophy that lies behind the central Jewish idea of *teshuvah*, meaning “repentance” or “return.” Through *teshuvah*, we can heal some of the pain we or others have created. Though the concept of *teshuvah* does not figure explicitly in the stories of Genesis, it is there nonetheless beneath the surface. Broken relationships are mended. Ishmael, Abraham’s child by the slave-woman Hagar, was sent away when he was young, yet we see him standing together with his half-brother Isaac at Abraham’s grave. Jacob and Esau, divided by Jacob’s act of taking Esau’s blessing, meet twenty-two years later and embrace with no trace of lingering resentment. Joseph forgives his brothers who sold him into slavery. Genesis ends on a note of reconciliation. There are wounds that can be healed.

Neither Tanakh nor the rabbis, nor even the mystics, called this *tikkun*, but that is what it is: the intensely human ability to repair damaged relationships and restore order to the social world. But what if the moment passes? What if those who did the damage and those who suffered it, are no longer alive? Can what we do in the present mend something broken long ago, before our time? That is one of the subtexts of the book of Ruth, and it applies to two people: Ruth herself, and Boaz...

Ruth, in her life and by her example, performs a *tikkun*. Though there is no element of *teshuva* involved, the verb *shuv*, in the sense of “return,” appears 13 times in the book. Something has been healed. By her conduct and character, she shows that not all Moabites lack kindness.

They, too, ultimately come from the same family, that of Teraḥ, as Abraham himself. Ruth has redeemed something of the past. Reuniting two long separated branches of the family, her great-grandson became the person who united the nation. That is *tikkun*. By our acts in the present we can heal some of the wounds in the past.

(For the full explanation about Ruth and Boaz, see the Koren Shavuot Mahzor.)

## DAILY HALACHA

### Halachot of Shabuot

(Daily Halacha)

#### ***Eating Meat and Dairy***

The holiday of Shabuot is one of the three “Regalim,” and, as such, the Misva of “Ve’samahta Be’hagecha” (rejoicing on the holidays) applies. In fact, the Gemara in Masechet Pesachim (68b) comments that with regard to the holiday of Shabuot, all opinions agree that the observance must include an element of “Lachem” – physical enjoyment – because this is the day when the Torah was given. The Gemara relates that Rav Yosef would prepare an “Iгла Tilta,” an especially scrumptious meat delicacy, in honor of Shabuot, because, in his words, “If not for this day, there are many Yosef’s in the marketplace.” Meaning, it is only because of the giving of the Torah on Shabuot that we are able to achieve spirituality, and this day therefore warrants festive celebration.

The Rambam writes in Hilchot Yom Tob (6:18) that the Misva of Simha (rejoicing) on Yom Tob requires partaking of meat and wine. In this context, “meat” refers specifically to red meat, and thus one must make a point of eating red

meat on Shabuot. The primary Misva of Simha applies during the day, so one should have wine and meat – at least a Ke’zayit – during the daytime meal on Shabuot. It is proper to drink wine at night, as well, though on the first night on Shabuot one should minimize his wine consumption so he would be able to remain awake throughout the night. The daytime meat meal should preferably be eaten before Hatzot (midday), which this time of year is approximately 1:20pm.

Of course, as we know, there is a time-honored custom to eat dairy products on Shabuot, and “Minhag Yisrael Torah” – established customs are to be regarded like Torah law. However, this custom should not prevent one from fulfilling the Misva of eating meat. Therefore, some people have a dairy meal at night and a meat meal for lunch the next day. It should be noted that having a dairy meal on the first night of Shabuot might be a good idea in any event as the men who remain awake throughout the night might want to drink coffee with milk, so it would be advisable not to eat a meat meal that night. One can also fulfill the custom by eating something dairy, like cheesecake, in the morning after the prayer service, before lunch. Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998) said that one can fulfill the custom with any dairy food, even an ice cream pop.

If one eats a dairy meal with bread in the morning, and then has a meat meal later, he must ensure not to use the same loaf of bread for both meals. If a loaf of bread was used at a dairy meal, there is a reasonable chance that it came in contact with dairy foods, in which case it may not be eaten with meat. One must therefore ensure to use a separate loaf for the meat meal. It should also be mentioned that when one buys Hallot in the supermarket, care should be taken to ensure they are wrapped in bags so that they do not come in direct contact with any dairy food. Sometimes, even packaged dairy foods such as yoghurt could have residue on the packaging, and if a Halla touches the packaging it might become dairy. One should therefore ensure that the Hallot are properly wrapped before they are placed in the cart.

In conclusion, Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul suggested a novel insight to explain the importance of eating meat on Shabuot. One of the reasons given for the custom to eat dairy foods on Shabuot (as cited by the Mishna Berura) is that Beneh Yisrael were unable to eat meat immediately after receiving the Torah. Once they received the Torah, they needed to learn all the rules for slaughtering animals and to prepare proper knives, and so on. They therefore had no choice but to eat dairy products, as they needed to eat before they were ready to prepare meat in accordance with Torah law. Hacham Ben Sion suggested that since that year Beneh Yisrael were unable to properly observe the Misva of Simhat Yom Tob, as they could not eat meat, we make a Tikkun (rectification) by ensuring to eat meat on Shabuot. Just as we remain awake throughout the night as a Tikkun for Beneh Yisrael's having slept until the morning of Matan Torah, when they should have been awake eagerly anticipating their receiving the Torah, we similarly make a Tikkun for their not having eaten meat on Shabuot that year.

**Summary:** Although there is a custom to eat dairy foods on Shabuot, there is also a strict Halachic obligation to eat meat and drink wine on Shabuot, at least during the day. Therefore, one should fulfill the custom either by eating a dairy meal at night or by eating some dairy product in the morning, before lunch. One must ensure not to use the same loaf of bread at both a dairy meal and a meat meal.

## DAF YOMI

### Daf Yomi Masechet Yoma

(Daf Notes)

#### ***Ketoret and Wealth***

We find in the Gemara that the Kohanim who offered the ketoret in the Bet HaMikdash were rewarded with great wealth. Yet ketoret carried a danger that if even one ingredient was missing from its mixture, it would incur death. R' Yisrael Salanter once said that the same

danger exists with wealth. When used improperly, it can destroy its owner.

#### ***Selichot***

Our Gemara states that we find that the Kohen who won the merit to perform terumat hadeshen, would also arrange the wood on the Mizbe'ah. The Gemara (22a) explains that terumat hadeshen was the first task of the day. The kohanim needed to wake up very early to participate in the lottery through which it was awarded. Even then they had only a small chance of winning this privilege. Furthermore, many kohanim considered terumat hadeshen a relatively less important task, since it was performed before daybreak. (Most of the important services of the Bet HaMikdash may only be performed by day). In order to encourage the kohanim to wake up on time to participate in the lottery, the privilege of arranging the wood was awarded together with terumas hadeshen.

***Encouraging the chazan:*** The Binyan Shlomo notes: Both reasons can be applied to davening selichot. The chazan must wake up early in the morning to daven. Furthermore, selichot is not considered as important as Shaharit, Mincha or Mussaf, which correspond to the korbanot offered in the Bet HaMikdash. Selichot does not correspond to any korban. For these reasons it is likely that people will be less interested in being chazan for selichot. In order to encourage the chazan to daven selichot, the custom developed to reward him with Shaharit, Mincha and the previous Maariv as well.

#### ***The Avot Kept the Mitzvot***

Our Gemara says that Avraham Avinu kept the entire Torah. This implies that all the Avot kept the Torah. The question the commentators ask is how Yaakov married two sisters when this is clearly in violation of the Torah.

The Ramban on Humash gives several answers to this question. One answer he suggests is that the Avot only kept the Torah in Eretz Yisrael. The Ramban bases himself on a Sifri which implies the main place to do Mitzvot is Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, the Ramban concludes the Avot only kept the Mitzvot in the environment which is most conducive for their performance. Another answer the Ramban

offers is the Avot only kept Shabbat. Shabbat, Chazal teach, is equal to all of the Mitzvot. Therefore, it is as if the Avos kept the entire Torah.

The Maharsha gives a different answer. He explains that Rachel and Leah had the status of converts. A convert is considered like a newborn and is not considered to be related to his previous family. It was therefore permitted for Yaakov to marry two sisters because they were not Halachically considered sisters.

There is a problem with this answer however. Although it is permissible from a Torah standpoint for a Jew to marry two sisters who are converts, it is rabbinically prohibited. This is in order to prevent converts from thinking that since things that used to be prohibited to them are now permitted, their level of kedusha actually decreased. Therefore, as a rule anything that was forbidden to them as idolaters remain forbidden even after they convert.

The Maharsha answers this problem by saying that Rachel and Leah were only half-sisters. They did not have the same mother. Gentiles are only considered related through their mother and not through their father. Consequently, even as gentiles, Rachel and Leah were not considered related.

## KIDZ CORNER

### INTERESTING MIDRASH

(from Torah Tots)

*Sefer* (the book [of]) *Bamidbar* is known in English as the "Book of Numbers," and with good reason. *Hashem* makes it a habit of counting the Jewish people over and over. And so, in this first *Parsha* of the "Book of Numbers," *Hashem* is back for the count as Moshe is commanded to count the Jewish people another time, and as *Rashi* explains, "*Hashem* counts the Jews because they are precious to Him."

Our sages also refer to *Sefer Bamidbar* as the '*Chumash Hapekudim*,' - 'the Book of Counting,' which can be loosely translated as the 'Book of Numbers.' It is called '*Chumash Hapekudim*' because *Klal Yisrael* is counted twice in this *Sefer*. Once, at the beginning of this *Parsha* - *Bamidbar*, and once again in *Parshat Pinchas*.

The first time the Jews were counted was when they traveled to *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) - the number given is 70. When they left *Mitzrayim* the number grew to 600,000. Once again, on the eleventh of *Tishri* 2448, after the sin of the *Egel Hazahav* (Golden Calf), *Hashem* counted them by means of a half shekel to determine how many were left after the sinners died.

This time, on the first of *Iyar*, 2449, it is seven months after the second count. *Hashem* commands Moshe to count all of the tribes except for the tribe of Levi. That's because this count was only for the people who were destined to die in the *Midbar* because of the sin of the Golden Calf. Since the *Leviyim* stood in opposition to the idol worship, *Hashem* considered them "the king's special legions." Levi was chosen to serve in the *Bait Hamikdash* in the place of the first-borns, who were originally designated to perform the service. *Hashem* declared, "The *Leviyim* made themselves close to me, and I will be close to them."

When *Hashem* finally commands Moshe to count the *Leviyim*, in the second count of this *Parsha*, the new criteria for counting is ".males from a month old upward."

The *Torah* says that, "Moshe numbered them according to the word of *Hashem*." Moshe asked *Hashem* how could he possibly go into tents to count the babies. "No problem," *Hashem* responded, "you do your part, and I'll do Mine." Every time Moshe approaches a tent, a heavenly voice calls out the number of male Levite infants inside. The count is 22,000.

That leads to a third count. This time, all the firstborns of *Bne Yisrael* one month old and up. Moshe comes up with 22,273 first-borns.

Now *Hashem* is ready to make the switch between firstborns and *Leviyim* official. There are 22, 273 firstborns. There are 22,000 *Leviyim*. *Hashem* makes an even switch, a

firstborn for a Levi. This leaves 273 firstborns to contend with.

*Hashem* tells Moshe that these 273 firstborns should each give five *shekalim* to redeem themselves from the service in the *Mishkan*. This money is to be given to Aharon and his sons.

Moshe is faced with a dilemma. "How do I do that? If I ask the remaining 273 first-born to give 5 *shekalim* each, they will say to me, 'How do you know that I am part of the group of 273 first-born? I was already redeemed by a Levi, and exempt from this levy (no pun intended) of 5 *shekalim*.' "

What did Moshe do?

He took 22,000 slips of paper, and on each one wrote the word "Levi." Then he took another 273 slips of paper, and on all of them wrote "five *shekalim*." The combined 22,273 lots were placed in a container, from which every first-born then drew one lot. Those whose lots read "Levi," were exempted from the 5 *shekalim*. The ones whose lots read "five *shekalim*," had to come up with 5 *shekalim* each.

All together, those 273 first-born paid up 1365 *shekalim*. As *Hashem* had instructed, Moshe passed this money on to Aaron and his sons.

This is where the law of "redeeming a first-born son" with 5 *Shekalim*, as discussed in *Shmot Parshat Bo*, originates. It is called "*Pidyon HaBen*."

### **Why 5 Shekalim?**

To atone for the sale of Yosef, Rachel's firstborn, who was sold by his brothers for 5 *shekalim* (20 pieces of silver).

### **Inconsistency Resolved**

The *Talmud* relates the following story:

A king once challenged Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. He said, "The *Torah* says that the family of Gershon numbered 7500, Kehat numbered 8600, and Merari numbered 6200, which makes a total, for all three families, of 22,300. But Moshe recorded a total of only 22,000. Either Moshe was a bad mathematician, or he was a thief, for deliberately leaving out 300 from the true total so he could collect the extra *shekalim*.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai replied, "You're forgetting that the *Leviyim* also had firstborn children. Moshe came up with 300 of them. There was no reason to redeem the Levite firstborns, or to transfer the holiness, since they were already first-borns and *Leviyim* at once and possessed the holiness already!

Did you ever wonder why the *Shevet Levi* has by far the smallest population of the twelve *Shevatim*? At 22,000 members from the ages of one month and up, and a mere 8,000 members over the age of thirty, Levi was less than half the size of the next smallest *Shevet*. How could it be that the one *Shevet* that served the holiest functions of our nation and produced the special family of *Kohanim* for our most elevated service could wind up the least of all in numbers?

*Ramban* explains that *Shevet Levi* was the one tribe of *Bne Yisrael* that was never enslaved by the Egyptians. Since the tribe of Levi was constantly involved in Torah study, they merited special Divine protection, even in *Mitzrayim*.

But this protection had its price. *Hashem* gave special Divine assistance also to the majority of Jews who were subjugated and brutalized. As it says in *Parshat Shmot* (1:12): 'But the more (the Egyptians) oppressed them, the more (the Israelites) proliferated and spread. 'The other *Shevatim* increased at a miraculous birthrate; in direct proportion to the degree they were persecuted. But Levi, not affected by the miracle, grew at a natural rate corresponding to its more settled circumstances. Thus, Levi was the smallest *shevet* at the time of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt).

## **Kid'z Korner** (Revach)

### ***The Joy of the Wilderness***

(Adapted from *Mishlei Yaakov*, pp. 309-310)

The Midrash expresses a yearning for the special relationship that existed between G-d and the Jewish people during the forty years they traveled in the Sinai wilderness.

"If only I were in the wilderness! Now, where are all of those miracles that I performed for you? And so it is written, "Who will place Me in the wilderness?" (Jer. 9:1), where I was exalted, as it says, "The wilderness and the wasteland will rejoice over them; the desert will jubilate and blossom like a rose..." (Isaiah 35:1).

What is this like? A prince once entered a city. The townspeople saw him, and they ran away. He entered a second city, and once again, the people ran away. Then the prince arrived at a barren town. This time the people greeted him and praised him. The prince announced, "This town is the best. Here I will built a fine palace, and here I shall live."

So it was with the Holy One. He approached the sea, and the waters fled before Him - "The sea saw and fled" (Ps.114:3). The mountains also "skipped like deer." But when He came to the wilderness, it greeted Him and praised Him, as it says, "The wilderness and the wasteland will rejoice...." G-d announced: This is the best place. Here I will build a palace [the Tabernacle], and here I will dwell.

### **The Strong Man and the Dilapidated Town**

This Midrash is difficult to understand. What was so special about the wilderness? To explain the Midrash, the Maggid used the following parable:

There was once a man who was extraordinarily strong. He would travel all over, displaying acts of great strength. He would come to a large city, with high walls and formidable defenses, and the mayor would ask him to exhibit some of his strength. The strong man would stand next to a towering wall and lean on the wall until it tumbled down. Then he would blow hard, shattering all of the windows. The residents would be amazed at his incredible strength.

One day the strong man came across a small, broken-down village. The residents were poor and lived in rickety houses that had sunk unevenly into the earth. They did not have the means to raise up the walls and place their houses on firmer ground. When the strong man saw this, he lifted up the houses with his shoulders and placed them straight on firm ground.

Like the people in the big city, the residents in the poor town were amazed by the man's tremendous strength. But there was a big difference between the two cases. When he knocked down walls and shattered windows in the big city, the owners were upset at their loss of property. In the broken-down village, on the other hand, his acts of strength were greeted with joy and thanksgiving. They were amazed by his remarkable strength -- and also pleased that their homes had been fixed.

### **Making the Desert Bloom**

When G-d came to Egypt, a land of great wealth and abundance, G-d laid the land barren with ten terrible plagues. The Red Sea also was a scene of great destruction. But G-d does not take pleasure in destroying His world. As the Midrash says, G-d rebuked the angels, "My creatures are drowning in the sea, and you sing songs?"

However, when G-d led the Jewish people to the Sinai desert, the wilderness was elevated in His honor. The many miracles of the wilderness - the manna, the well of Miriam, the clouds of glory that protected the Israelites from the hot sun and the elements, the paths that were made straight and the dangerous snakes and scorpions that were scattered - all of these miraculous events made the wilderness a better, more viable place. The Jewish people were happy, and even the wilderness rejoiced, as it became a place of life and order.

### ***Kibbud Em Without Regrets***

Rav Yitzchak Weiss was a Holocaust survivor who passed away recently in Eretz Yisrael. When Rav Weiss was a young man living in Europe, World War II, broke out, and like all Jews, he quickly became aware of the dismal fate which awaited him at the hands of the Nazis. However, he was lucky enough to receive a visa which would enable him to escape to a safe country. As soon as possible, he hired a non-Jew with a wagon, who knew a safe route to the other side of the border.

The day arrived for his departure, and the clock was quickly ticking toward the hour that Rav Weiss would leave his house to meet the wagon driver. It was his last chance to escape his city which had become a valley of death, and to

escape Europe-where rivers of blood of his fellow Jews had already been spilled. He was about to leave, when suddenly, a voice stopped him - it was the voice of his mother. At the last moment, it had finally dawned on Yitzchak's mother what his departure meant - that she would remain alone. She began to weep, and speaking through her tears, she said, "Do you really intend to leave me alone at a time like this?"

Her question was enough to convince Yitzchak that he was not departing that day after all. He informed the non-Jew that he was not traveling with him, and he stayed in Europe. He suffered all of the travails of the Holocaust in the worst of the camps, Auschwitz, and all because of kibbud eim.

Throughout his life, Rav Weiss told his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren that despite all he endured during the Holocaust, he never once regretted fulfilling the great mitzvah of kibbud eim. (Barchi Nafshi)

### ***Rav Chaim Volozhin's Gold Watch***

Late one night, Rav Chaim of Volozhin was giving over a shiur to his talmidim on the subject of bitachon. "Does anyone know what time it is?" asked Rav Chaim. None of the talmidim answered since none of them owned a watch, so Rav Chaim continued his shiur.

Suddenly, Rav Chaim interrupted his shiur and said, "You should know that I feel as if we have not yet acquired true bitachon in our hearts. If we had the proper bitachon, Shamayim would have sent us a watch, even a gold watch."

Just then, a knock was heard on the door, and a Russian soldier entered the room. The soldier looked hesitantly around the room, and then turned to Rav Chaim and said, "Rebbi, I'm a Jew, a lone Jew among many non-Jewish soldiers. I'm afraid that the soldiers will steal my valuable watch which I received as a present from my father."

The soldier approached Rav Chaim, and handed him the watch. "I prefer to give my watch as a present to a Jewish Rav, rather than have it stolen by a non-Jew. (Ukarata LeShabbat Oneg)

### ***Rav Shlomo Zalman is Not Ashamed***

The author of the Sefer Shemirat Ha'Guf v'Hanefesh, R' Lerner, once approached Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, z'tl, to inquire about a source for a certain halacha included in his sefer. Rav Shlomo Zalman responded that he was not familiar with the source. When Rav Lerner was ready to print his sefer, he included this halacha, and he wrote that he had asked Rav Shlomo Zalman for the source, but he was not familiar with it. However, his peers in his kollel tried to persuade him that it would be disrespectful to the Gadol Hador to publicize this.

R' Lerner again approached Rav Shlomo Zalman, and Rav Shlomo Zalman told him that anyone who writes a sefer is regarded as the Gadol Hador on that topic, and if he wasn't embarrassed to admit that he didn't know the source, why should he? Instead, he should publicize in the sefer that he was not aware of the source, and it was possible that someone, either in Eretz Yisrael or Chutz Lea'Arezt, would be able to provide it. Sure enough, that's exactly what's happened, and after the sefer was published, someone wrote a letter to R' Lerner with the source. (Heard from R' Lerner)

## **PAR LA FRANCOPHONE**

(Rav Itshak Nabet)

### **Les Drapeaux des Bné Israël**

Nous débutons cette semaine le quatrième livre de la Thora intitulé Bamidbar, le livre des Nombres.

Celui-ci décrit les pérégrinations des bné Israël dans le désert depuis leur sortie d'Égypte jusqu'aux portes de la Terre d'Israël. La première paracha, Bamidbar, que nous lirons ce Chabat, nous décrit l'organisation des tribus au sein du campement ainsi que leur rôle respectif. Ainsi, chaque famille possédait un chef, une place et un drapeau. Le Midrach Raba (Bamidbar 2,3) nous dévoile la provenance de ces banderoles en ces termes :

"Lorsqu' Hachem se dévoila au mont Sinaï, 220 000 anges descendirent pour l'accompagner. Ceux-ci étaient réunis par groupes et ils brandissaient des drapeaux.

Lorsque les bné Israël virent cela, ils désirèrent eux aussi avoir des étendards ! "Si seulement on pouvait en avoir comme eux ! "implora le peuple. Alors Hachem leur répondit : Si vous en voulez, alors je satisferai votre requête !"

Il semble à première vue qu'Hachem n'avait pas prévu que les tribus portent des drapeaux, et ce n'est que pour leur faire plaisir qu'il leur permit d'en fabriquer. Or si c'est ainsi, pourquoi suscita-t-il l'envie du peuple en leur montrant ces anges agitant ces banderoles ? Et s'il voulait vraiment que les bné Israël portent des drapeaux, pourquoi ne pas leur avoir simplement ordonné de faire des étendards ?

Alors peut-être pouvons-nous expliquer qu'Hachem nous donne ici une leçon d'éducation. Les drapeaux représentent la matérialisation d'un amour intense. Ainsi, dans les stades, existe-t-il plusieurs sortes de supporters. Il y a les fans qui portent le maillot de leur équipe. Et une autre catégorie, encore plus dévouée. Ces fanatiques, comme on les appelle, sont cloîtrés dans une tribune spéciale, le kop, et préfèrent agiter pendant des heures leurs drapeaux plutôt que de voir le match qui se joue devant eux. Hachem voulait que les bné Israël possèdent ces signes d'amour et de dévotion. Cependant, nous pouvons comprendre qu'il n'aurait pas été noble qu'il nous ordonne d'en fabriquer. Il fallait que cette démarche vienne de nous. Alors, que fit notre Créateur ? Il montra au peuple les anges dans leur splendeur armés de bannières de mille couleurs ! Il créa ainsi en nous un désir, comme le font les marchands à l'aide des campagnes publicitaires.

Nos sages nous disent que le but de l'éducateur et des parents n'est pas que l'enfant accepte de faire ce que l'on veut de lui. Mais il faut arriver à faire naître chez lui un désir afin qu'il applique de lui-même. En outre, si cet acte ne provient pas d'une volonté personnelle, il est fort probable qu'il l'abandonnera dès qu'il ne sera plus sous le contrôle de ses parents. Pour réussir ce difficile défi, nous pouvons nous aider de l'enseignement de ce Midrach. Comme nous

l'avons vu, Hachem suscita notre volonté à l'aide de cette vision des anges munis de drapeaux. De là, nous pouvons prendre une grande leçon : les paroles et les explications ne suffisent pas pour inculquer une bonne éducation à nos enfants. Nous avons l'obligation de leur montrer des exemples concrets. Ce qui ne veut absolument pas dire que les parents doivent demander à leurs enfants de devenir comme un tel, ou de reprocher qu'un tel est meilleur dans tel domaine. L'exemple dont nous parlons ici, c'est l'image que nous-mêmes véhiculons à travers nos actions. En effet, nous ne pouvons pas exiger de nos enfants des actes que nous-mêmes n'accomplissons pas. C'est pourquoi il est très important de faire attention, le peu de temps que nous sommes avec eux, à être des modèles à tous les niveaux.

Nous devons également être vigilants et ne pas montrer à nos enfants des contre-exemples. C'est pour cela qu'il paraît évident que la télévision, les séries et les films représentent une très grande menace pour l'éducation parentale. Comment expliquer à un enfant que le vol, le meurtre, la drogue, les relations interdites...sont mauvais alors que les films montrent l'inverse et introduisent en lui le désir de faire ce qu'il voit ? De plus, nous savons que lorsque les paroles s'opposent à des exemples concrets, l'enfant retient ce qu'il voit et non pas ce qu'on lui enseigne.

C'est pourquoi nous devons essayer de les protéger des multiples turpitudes en vérifiant ce qu'ils regardent et en devenant nous-mêmes de bons exemples. Stimulons la création de désirs positifs à travers la lecture d'histoires de nos sages ou de contes porteurs de morale. En outre, en racontant des récits à nos enfants, nous avons la possibilité de resserrer les liens parentaux. Mais n'oublions pas que le moyen le plus efficace pour leur réussite réside encore dans la prière. Alors implorons chaque jour Hachem pour que nos enfants grandissent selon les valeurs de la Thora, en bonne santé et qu'ils soient toujours heureux, amen ken yéhi ratson.

## Issakhar et Zévouloune

Cette semaine nous débuterons le quatrième livre de la Torah par la paracha Bamidbar. Il est décrit, en outre, l'organisation de chaque tribu au sein du campement et le recensement des hommes de plus de vingt ans. Nous pouvons constater que chaque tribu avait une place et un drapeau selon la tâche qu'elle devait accomplir. Le Baal Atourim remarque que lorsque la Torah enseigne la place de la tribu de Zévouloune, elle change étrangement son langage. En effet, pour introduire chaque nouvelle tribu la Torah utilise la conjonction de coordination "et", par exemple nous pouvons lire "et la tribu de Gad, ..., et la tribu de Binyamin... mais entre Issakhar et Zévouloune le "et" a été omis. Comme vous le savez dans la Torah chaque lettre est porteuse d'un message, il n'y a rien laissé au hasard. Alors quelle leçon est venue nous apprendre ce changement ?

La tribu de Issakhar avait pour occupation principale l'étude de la Torah. Or la tribu de Zévouloune s'était engagée à travailler et à combler tous les besoins de la tribu de Issakhar. Le Baal Atourim explique que la Torah n'a pas voulu séparer les tribus pour nous faire entendre que celles-ci avaient la même valeur. Et ce n'est pas parce que Zévouloune travaillait qu'elle était moins importante. Comme il est écrit "C'est un arbre de vie pour celui qui s'y accroche et heureux celui qui le soutient". C'est pourquoi la Torah les a réunis en une seule tribu.

Et plus encore, le Ben Ich Hai zal dans son livre Benaïou sur Méguila (6, a) nous enseigne qu'après 120 ans, celui qui a financé des étudiants en Torah sera considéré comme s'il avait lui-même étudié ce que "ses associés" ont étudié. Le Beth-Din d'en haut lui dira : "Viens récupérer ton salaire, voici le traité Chévouot, Ketubot... qu'un tel a étudié grâce à ton soutien. Saches qu'aux Yeux d'Hachem c'est comme si tu l'avais toi-même étudié." Comme il est écrit : "Heureux Zévouloune lorsque tu sors et Issakhar dans ta tente", c'est-à-dire : Ne t'inquiètes pas Zévouloune lorsque tu partiras de ce monde, car c'est par ton mérite que Issakhar peut étudier et sa tente, sa maison d'étude, est considérée comme la tienne

Nous voyons donc à quel point le mérite d'aider et de soutenir la Torah est important. Le Pélé Yoetz souligne que si cette mitsva est grande, il existe une obligation particulière sur celui qui a un proche ou de la famille qui étudie la Torah. Il faut tout faire, nous dit ce rav, pour le soutenir afin qu'il continue d'étudier la Torah et de pratiquer les mitsvot. Car c'est une louange pour des parents d'avoir des enfants érudits en Torah.

Après tout ce qu'on vient de dire, nous pourrions penser que finalement il semble plus simple d'être un Zévouloune. On peut travailler et vivre avec un certain confort, tout en finançant un peu les yéchivot et profiter des deux mondes ! Alors à quoi bon s'enfermer au Beth Amidrach toute la journée ?

Le rav Yéouda Itakh dans son commentaire sur la paracha de la semaine explique que si Issakhar et Zévouloune ont été considérés comme une seule tribu, elles possédaient chacun un drapeau différent. Celui d'Issakhar était noir alors que celui de Zévouloune était blanc. Il faut savoir que la couleur des drapeaux représentait la nature du rôle de chaque tribu. La couleur noire de Issakhar représente la difficulté de sa tâche. Comme l'ont dit les sages "Chez qui peux-tu trouver la Torah ? Chez celui qui a le visage noirci comme un corbeau à force de peiner dans la Torah". Car l'étude de la Torah n'est pas un métier, c'est un mode de vie. L'étudiant doit être dans son étude du matin jusqu'au soir sans interruption et doit se contenter de peu de matérialité... C'est pourquoi celui qui s'adonne à la Torah est appelé "un ben Torah" un fils de la Torah. Car de même qu'une personne est le fils de ses parents toute sa vie, de même le ben Torah doit être lié avec elle à chaque instant.

La couleur blanche est le symbole de la pureté. Ce drapeau nous avertit que le rôle de Zévouloune est d'être honnête dans son travail. Il doit parvenir à gagner sa vie sans combine, sans mentir, sans flatterie, sans crasse. Il doit aussi respecter la Torah malgré ses obligations, c'est à dire manger cacher, prier, respecter les fêtes, donner dix pourcents de ses revenus et être convaincu que tous ce qu'il gagne c'est grâce à Hachem et non grâce à la force de ses mains...C'est pourquoi les

épreuves de Zévouloune ne sont plus petites que celles d'Issakhar, elles sont juste différentes.

La paracha nous apprend que chaque tribu avait une fonction bien précise, une place dans le campement et un drapeau différent. Mais toutes les tribus partageaient le même objectif : être le plus performant pour le bien du peuple d'Israël. De nos jours, cette organisation a disparu, et chacun peut choisir son rôle dans la communauté. Cependant il est impératif de réfléchir individuellement sur les moyens de se parfaire. Car chaque juif qui s'élève et se réalise dans son domaine permet à tout le peuple de s'améliorer et de rapprocher d'Hachem. Alors nous devons tous essayer de nous surpasser afin de mériter la délivrance que nous attendons chaque jour, amen ken yéhi ratson.

## REFLEXION SEMANAL

(Rav Yonatan Gefen)

### Las dos Etapas del Servicio Divino

En el relato de la Torá sobre la tribu de Leví, repasa la trágica muerte de los rectos hijos de Aharón: Nadav y Avihú. En esta ocasión, la Torá agrega un detalle que no había dicho antes: murieron sin tener hijos (1). La Guemará extrapola de eso que, si hubieran tenido hijos, no hubieran muerto (2). El Jatam Sofer explica que Nadav y Avihú habían alcanzado un nivel tan alto de cercanía a Di-s, que habían materializado su potencial y que ya no tenían necesidad de vivir en este mundo. Sin embargo, si hubieran tenido hijos, hubieran necesitado seguir con vida para criarlos y proveerlos.

Aprendemos de aquí que incluso si una persona alcanza la perfección total en su servicio Divino, es mantenida con vida para que beneficie a sus hijos. Más aún, del comentario del Jatam Sofer se aprende que el servicio Divino tiene dos niveles: el desarrollo de la persona en Torá, personalidad y relación con

Di-s, y el segundo es su responsabilidad hacia sus hijos. El Jatam Sofer (3) agrega que un gran *tzadik* (persona recta) puede ser mantenido con vida para guiar a sus estudiantes y a sus hijos, implicando que la segunda etapa del servicio Divino de la persona no se limita a ayudar a sus hijos, sino también a sus estudiantes (4).

Encontramos un ejemplo de la naturaleza dual de servicio Divino en Parashat Vaishlaj. Después de emerger de los tremendos desafíos de vivir con Laván y enfrentar a su hostil hermano Esav, Yaakov es descrito por la Torá como *shalem*, completo. Las fuentes rabínicas interpretan que eso significa que estaba completo espiritualmente, que había superado las amenazas espirituales de Laván y Esav emergiendo completamente puro, sin carecer nada. Sin embargo, el resto de su vida estuvo plagado por las dificultades que atravesó como resultado de errores y falencias de personas cercanas a él: la falta de modestia de su hija al salir (5) desembocó en su secuestro por Shejem y la eventual destrucción causada por Shimón y Leví. Esto fue seguido por el incidente de Rubén mudando la cama de Bilá (6) y la venta de Iosef.

Es sorprendente que después de enfatizar la grandeza individual de Yaakov, la Torá pase a describir las imperfecciones del mundo que lo rodeaba. Esto nos muestra que, mientras que había completado su misión personal, permaneció en el mundo para ayudar a quienes lo rodeaban a rectificar sus falencias (7).

Muchos de los grandes líderes pasan gran parte de sus vidas enfocados principalmente en su misión personal, pero cuando llega el tiempo indicado, dedican gran parte de su energía para servirle al pueblo judío. Rav Shaj es un ejemplo perfecto de esto: estudió continuamente durante muchos años, pero cuando emergió como Gadol (gran líder de Torá), se dedicó por completo al pueblo judío, nunca dándole la espalda a personas que necesitaban su ayuda.

Las dos formas de servicio Divino requieren también dos actitudes y enfoques diferentes; esto se ve en la creación misma de la humanidad. Mientras que todos los animales fueron creados con una sola declaración Divina, el hombre y la mujer fueron creados con

dos declaraciones diferentes. Rav Itzjak Bérkovits explica que cada declaración representó una nueva etapa en la creación. La declaración de la creación del hombre representó el aspecto de la *avodá* como un individuo y su relación consigo mismo, mientras que la declaración de la creación de la mujer llevó a una nueva etapa de la creación, conocida como sociedad, en donde el hombre debe interactuar con quienes lo rodean.

Estas dos etapas requieren mentalidades muy diferentes. Respecto a la actitud hacia uno mismo, el hombre debe aplicar un cierto grado de rigor sobre sí, incluyendo el autoanálisis y el esfuerzo para mejorarse. Cuando atraviesa sufrimiento debería acentuar la necesidad de confiar en Di-s y esforzarse en mejorar. En cambio, en su relación con los demás, el hombre debe tener un enfoque muy diferente. Cuando alguien sufre, no debe decirle que todo viene de Hashem y que debe esforzarse para crecer, sino que debe enfocarse en preocuparse por la otra persona y actuar como si nadie los estuviera cuidando, ni siquiera Di-s.

Los grandes líderes de Torá demostraron también una actitud dual en sus vidas: con ellos mismos eran exigentes y críticos, huían del honor y se negaban a recibir ayuda de otras personas. Sin embargo, con los demás, eran amables, tolerantes, se preocupaban por ellos y los alababan mucho. Nadav y Avihú jamás tuvieron la responsabilidad de guiar a otros, por lo que su *avodá* se limitó a la auto perfección.

Que todos ameritemos perfeccionarnos en ambos niveles de servicio Divino, perfeccionándonos a nosotros mismos y al mundo que nos rodea.

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**Notas:** (1) *Bamidbar*, 3:4. (2) *Yevamot*, 64a. (3) El *Pitujei Jotam* fue escrito por el nieto del Jatam Sofer, pero está basado en las enseñanzas que aprendió de su abuelo. (4) Esta idea está apoyada por dos versículos anteriores, en los que la Torá describe a los estudiantes de Moshé como hijos de él. Rashi explica que dado que les enseñó, es como si les hubiera dado vida. Entonces, así como una persona tiene la responsabilidad de guiar a sus hijos físicos, debe hacer lo mismo por sus hijos espirituales. Parece claro que Nadav y Avihú no tuvieron ningún estudiante que hubiera podido causar que sus vidas fueran prolongadas. (5) Como siempre, debemos entender que la Torá nos habla en un nivel que podemos entender. Se enfoca en la falta de modestia de Dina para brindarnos una enseñanza, pero, en

realidad, su falencia en esa área hubiera sido inadvertible para nosotros. (6) Ver *Parashat Vaishlaj* para el relato de la Torá sobre ese incidente. (7) Oído de Rav Efraím Kramer.

## Los “Hijos” de Moshé

En su relato de la genealogía de las tribus de Israel, la Torá detalla la descendencia de Moshé y de Aharón, pero sin embargo menciona a los hijos de Aharón tanto en la descendencia de uno como del otro (1).

Rashi explica que los hijos de Aharón son mencionados como parte de la descendencia de Moshé porque él les enseñó Torá, y quien le enseña Torá al hijo de su amigo se considera como si fuera su propio padre. Por lo tanto, dado que Moshé fue maestro de los hijos de Aharón, entonces ellos también son considerados sus hijos (2).

Sin embargo, el Maharal pregunta: Moshé no sólo les enseñó Torá a los hijos de Aharón, sino que le enseñó a todo el pueblo judío, entonces, ¿por qué Moshé no es considerado el padre de todo el pueblo judío? Y responde que Di-s le ordenó a Moshé enseñarle al pueblo judío y que él les enseñó lo que le había sido comandado. Sin embargo, a los hijos de Aharón les enseñó mucho más de lo que le había sido comandado, y es precisamente esta Torá — aquella que les enseñó voluntariamente —, la que le otorgó a Moshé el mérito de ser considerado padre de los hijos de Aharón (3).

Rav Itzjak Berkovits prueba de otro episodio en *Bamidbar* que Di-s quería que Moshé entregara de sí por voluntad propia. En *parashat Pinjas*, Di-s le instruyó a Moshé que designase a Yehoshúa como su sucesor. Le dijo a Moshé que pusiera su mano sobre Yehoshúa, pero Moshé puso en cambio ambas manos sobre él. ¿Por qué Di-s le pidió a Moshé que pusiera sólo una mano y por qué Moshé usó ambas? Rav Berkovits responde que Di-s quería que Moshé pusiera por voluntad propia la segunda mano sobre Yehoshúa para que de esta forma una parte importante de la transmisión de Moshé a Yehoshúa fuera voluntaria (4). Moshé entendió

que esto era lo que quería Di-s y por lo tanto actuó consecuentemente.

Pero aún falta explicar por qué sólo quien enseña voluntariamente es considerado progenitor de alguien, pero no quien lo hace por obligación. Rav Berkovits explica que cuando una persona tiene un hijo le entrega una parte de sí mismo a aquella nueva progenie, ya que la genética constituye una gran parte de este nuevo ser. Cuando una persona le enseña Torá a alguien, le está dando parte de su propio ADN espiritual a su estudiante. De esta forma, el maestro se asimila a quien tiene hijos; la única diferencia es que el padre biológico da de su esencia física mientras que el maestro da de su esencia espiritual.

La explicación del Maharal demuestra también que un maestro sólo amerita estar en ese nivel de dar de sí mismo cuando actúa exclusivamente por el deseo de enseñarle a esa persona y no por obligación. Esto se debe a que cuando una persona le enseña a otra por obligación no puede entregarse por completo ya que su intención no es puramente influenciar a la otra persona en el plano espiritual, sino que también es cumplir con su obligación. Como resultado, hay una carencia cualitativa en el proceso de transmisión, a tal punto que la Torá del maestro no es internalizada completamente por el estudiante. Por lo tanto, el estudiante no se considera parte de la descendencia del maestro. Sin embargo, cuando uno enseña por un deseo de compartir las maravillas espirituales de la Torá con otras personas, entonces estará compartiendo su esencia espiritual, la cual será transmitida al estudiante y convertirá al maestro en el equivalente al padre del niño.

El principio de que hay una diferencia cualitativa entre la Torá que se enseña por obligación y la que se enseña voluntariamente aplica a una amplia gama de situaciones; por ejemplo, un padre está obligado a enseñarle Torá a su hijo, pero si actúa sólo por obligación entonces el niño lo sentirá y el proceso de transmisión se dificultará.

Esta lección no se limita sólo a padres y maestros. Todos vivimos situaciones en las cuales necesitamos enseñarle a otra persona alguna lección determinada, y los factores

motivadores para hacerlo juegan un rol clave en la efectividad de la lección a transmitir. Segundo, el principio aplica a todas las formas de dar, no sólo a la enseñanza de Torá. Dar por obligación es mucho menos loable que dar por el deseo de ayudar al prójimo. El receptor del acto de bondad por lo general advierte la existencia de sentimientos de compulsión en el dador y sentirá incomodidad por poner al dador en una situación en que preferiría no estar (5).

Es más, pareciera claro que el gran beneficio de dar —el aumento del amor por el receptor— se limitaría sólo a los casos en que uno da voluntariamente y no por obligación. De hecho, dar porque uno no tiene otra opción suele causar resentimiento.

Vemos de esta forma cómo Moshé ameritó que la Torá lo considerara el progenitor de los hijos de Aharón por haberles enseñado más de lo que estaba obligado a enseñar. Espero que todos ameritemos emular a Moshé y podamos transmitir voluntariamente nuestra Torá y entregarnos a nosotros mismos.

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Notas: (1) Bamidbar 2:1. (2) Rashi, Bamidbar 2:1. (3) Gur Arie, Bamidbar 2:1, os 1. (4) Es evidente que la acción de Moshé de poner Moshé la mano sobre lehoshúa representó la transmisión de una gran cantidad de conocimiento; al poner dos manos Moshé dio aún más de lo que se le había ordenado. (5) Ver mi ensayo sobre Parashat Reé: El Valor de la amistad, en donde analizo extensamente este tema.

## NAHALOT

### Nahala of the Kaf Hachaim Sofer zt"l Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sivan

Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer, author of Kaf Hachaim, (1870-1939). Born in Baghdad and studied there under the Ben Ish Chai and Rav Abdalah Somech. In 1904, he embarked to Eretz Yisrael. Once in Yerushalayim, he began to study in the kabbalistic Bet Kel yeshiva in the Old City. This yeshiva, founded by Rav Gedalya Chayon, attracted many of the city's great kabbalistic sages, among them the Rashash, who eventually became its rosh yeshiva. In 1909, Rav Yaakov Chaim transferred to the newly founded Shoshanim leDovid yeshiva, located in the Bet

Yisrael section of Yerushalayim. In addition to the Kaf Hachaim, he authored Kol Yaakov (on the laws of writing sifrei Torah, tefillin, and mezuzos, as well as various kavanos required for the writing and the donning of tefillin), Yagel Yaakov (a compendium of the Shabbat drashos he delivered while he was in aveilus for his father), and Yismach Yisrael (other chiddushim on the parsha).

## **Nahala of the “Minhat Yizhak” zt”l Shabbat the 11<sup>th</sup> of Sivan**

Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss (1902-1989) author of Minchas Yitzchak; av Bet din in Grosswardein, Romania before WW2, then in Manchester, England (1949-1969), and av Bet din of The Eidah Chareidis in Yerushalayim (1972-1989). As a young child he learned under the Zhiditchover Rebbe of Delina, Reb Yehuda Zvi Eichenstein. He also had a daily 3 hour chavrusa with his father for many years, during which he learned the derech that his father had acquired from his Rebbe, the Arugas Habosem. For 13 years Reb Yitzchak Yaakov lived in Delina, until the First World War broke out in 1914. The family sought refuge in Munkatch, Hungary. In Adar 1944, the Nazis invaded Hungary and immediately started to erect ghettos. Rav Weiss recorded his harrowing trials and tribulations that he experienced in the war in the first volume of his sefer Minchas Yitzchak in a special section called "Pirsumei Nissa."

## **Man Plans and G-d Laughs**

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

Parashat Bamidbar contains one of several instances in the Torah where the Jewish people are enumerated by *shevet* [Tribe]. In addition to this census at the beginning of the Wilderness sojourn, there is another census towards the end of Sefer Bamidbar, at the conclusion of the 40 years of desert “wandering.” For this reason, in Rabbinic literature, the Book of Bamidbar is referred to as the “*Chumash HaPikudim*” [the Chumash dealing with enumerations]. It is for the same reason that in English (which most likely comes from the Latin), Bamidbar is called

“Numbers” — because it begins and ends with counting.

The Jewish people, as a whole, were counted from the ages of twenty to sixty. However, the Tribe of Levi was not included in this tally. The Levites were counted separately, from when they were one month old. The Ramban notes that even though Levi was counted from thirty days and up, rather than from the age of twenty years and up (as were the other tribes), there were only 22,000 Levites. If you would limit the age range of the Levites to the ages of thirty years to fifty years, there were only 8,500 of them! [See Rashi to Bamidbar 4:49]

The Ramban wonders how it was that even with counting the Levites from the age of one month old, their numbers did not reach even half of the size of the next smallest tribe (who was counted from the age of twenty years and above). The Ramban says the explanation cannot be that the Levites had a “dangerous profession,” being that it was their job to carry the Aron [Holy Ark] and other *kelim* of the *mishkan* [Tabernacle Vessels]. Granted that a person in that profession who did not have the right intentions when carrying out his sacred duties would be smitten by Heaven, however, at the time of this counting, the Levites were not yet assigned to those potentially dangerous tasks.

The Ramban speculates that this discrepancy in the population of the Tribe of Levi compared to the other Tribes, provides support for the Rabbinic tradition that the Levi was not subjected to the bitter experience of Egyptian bondage. The rest of the Jewish people, who were subjected to “back breaking labor and embittered lives,” were compensated by Heaven with the blessing mentioned at the beginning of the Book of Shemot: “But as much as they (the Egyptians) would afflict it (the Jewish nation), so it would increase and so it would spread out...” [Shemot 1:12]. The miraculous phenomenon of “six births at one time” accounts for the unnatural population boom within the rest of the Jewish people. This miracle was performed for the tribes who were tortured by the Egyptian bondage. Hashem said to the Egyptians, as it were, “You think you can destroy the Jewish people — let’s see how successful you will be in that endeavor.” This

miracle did not apply to the tribe of Levi who were not enslaved and who increased in number strictly based on natural fertility rates.

We see one of the great truths of life from the Ramban: As the Yiddish expression goes – *A mensch tracht, un G-t lacht* [man thinks and G-d laughs]. If a statistician or a census taker were to estimate who is going to be the most populous tribe — the tribe that endures terrible enslavement and persecution, or the tribe that lives in peace and does not need to work or suffer — clearly the tribe that lives in peace will be projected to be by far the most populous tribe three or four generations later. For sure, they would say, *Shevet Levi* will be the most populous! However, it does not work like that. Hashem has His plans. That which we think should happen — based on natural and logical projections — is not necessarily going to be what actually occurs.

Rav Chaztkal Levenstein [1895-1974] writes that the biggest proof to this is that the second most populous tribe (after Yehudah) was Dan. Dan had a population of 62,700 people in the census. Dan himself had only one son (Chushim ben Dan), who was deaf. Binyomin had 10 sons. So anyone can do the math: One tribal patriarch had 10 sons and another had a single son who was hearing-impaired. Who is going to be more populous? "The plan of Hashem will be established." [Mishle 19:21] Dan turns out to be the second most populous tribe, and the Tribe of Binyomin turns out to be just somewhere in the middle.

Man plans and G-d laughs. That is what we see from *Shevet Levi*, and that is what we see from *Shevet Dan*.

David. Megilat Rut, of course, tells the story of Rut, a native of the nation of Moab, who decided to join the Jewish Nation, despite the great sacrifices this entailed. She ended up marrying a prominent man from the tribe of Yehuda, Boaz, and their son – Obed – was the grandfather of King David.

The Gemara in Masechet Yebaot (76b-77a) tells a fascinating story about how David, well before he became king, was almost declared to be unfit to marry a Jewish woman – let alone to become a king. The scholars in the Bet Midrash were discussing David's eligibility to be king, when one scholar, Do'eg, came along and determined that as a descendant of Rut, a woman from the nation of Moab, David was forbidden to even marry a Jew. The Torah (Debarim 23:4-5) explicitly commands that no person from Moab, or even a descendant of a person from Moab, may marry a Jew, because the nation of Moab did not bring Beneh Yisrael provisions of food and water after they left Egypt, as they were expected to. As such, Rut was not permitted to marry Boaz, and her descendants were not permitted to marry Jews.

Ultimately, it was reported that an ancient tradition taught that this prohibition forbids only the men of Moab from marrying into our nation, because only the men were expected to come out to bring Beneh Yisrael provisions. Women, in accordance with the foundational value of *Seni'ut* (modesty), are encouraged to stay at home, as the verse in Tehillim (45:14), cited by the Gemara, states, "Kol Kebuda Bat Melech Penima" – "all the honor of a princess is inward." Therefore, Rut – a woman from Moab – was permitted to join the Jewish People and marry Boaz. This landmark Halachic ruling is what enabled David to eventually become king, as otherwise, he would not have even been allowed to marry a Jewish woman.

This background sheds light on the ancient roots of Moab – which can be traced all the way back to the Book of Bereshit, and the story of the three angels who visited Abraham and then proceeded to Sedom.

Two of the three angels that had visited Abraham proceeded from Abraham's tent to Sedom. One of these two angels destroyed the city, and the other rescued Lot. After Lot's

## **Sara Imenu and the Roots of the Jewish Monarchy**

(Rabbi Eli Mansour iitorah)

It is customary on Shabuot to read Megilat Rut, and one of the reasons given for this custom is that Shabuot marks the Yahrtzeit of King David, and Megilat Rut concludes with the birth of King

rescue, he fathered a child – Moab – who became the founder of the nation of Moab. It thus turns out that if Lot had not been rescued, King David would never have been born, because he descended from Moab, a nation produced by Lot after he was taken out of Sedom.

The Gemara in Masechet Baba Mesia (86b) teaches that these two angels were Michael and Gabriel. Gabriel was assigned the task of destroying Sedom, and Michael was charged with the mission of rescuing Lot. Beforehand, these two angels had visited Abraham's tent, together with the angel Rafael. The Gemara explains that Rafael's job was to cure Abraham, who was reeling from his Berit Mila, which he had performed three days earlier, and Michael's job was to inform Abraham that Sara would be conceiving and delivering a child. The Gemara does not, however, explain why Gabriel joined the other two angels at Abraham's home. It seems from the Gemara that his only task was to destroy Sedom. For what purpose, then, did he go to Abraham's tent with the other two angels? Why didn't he just meet Michael in Sedom afterward?

The answer emerges from a brief but seemingly peculiar exchange between one of the angels and Abraham during the visit. The angel asked Abraham where his wife, Sara, was, and Abraham replied that she was in the tent. Rashi explains that the angel asked this question to point out Sara's modesty, that she stayed inside her tent, out of public view. We must wonder, however, why this point needed to be made. And besides, is it not inappropriate when visiting someone where his wife is?

The Hiddushei Ha'Rim (Rav Yishak Meir Alter of Ger, Poland, 1799-1866) explains that this question was asked by Gabriel – and that this question is precisely why Gabriel had visited Abraham. Gabriel went to Abraham to determine whether or not Lot should be rescued from Sedom. Lot did not deserve to be rescued, but his descendant – Rut – would eventually join the Jewish Nation and produce King David. In that merit, Lot deserved to be saved. However, it was still uncertain whether or not Rut's marriage to Boaz would be considered acceptable. If it was deemed forbidden, such

that David could not become king, then Lot would not be worthy of being rescued. And this question depended on whether or not the women of Moab were expected to go out to offer food and water to Beneh Yisrael in the desert. Gabriel therefore asked Abraham where his wife was – to see whether women are expected to remain indoors, or are encouraged to be outside. When Abraham replied that Sara was in the tent, this determined that women are encouraged to remain out of public view – and this meant that the women of Moab were not included in the prohibition which forbids marrying Moabites. Once this was established, Gabriel determined that Lot should be rescued from Sedom, so that he could produce Moab, from whom Rut would descend, ultimately leading to the birth of King David.

In the merit of our adhering to our cherished principles of Seni'ut, may we be worthy of seeing the restoration of King David's dynasty with the arrival of Mashiah, speedily and in our days, Amen.