

whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

ה' - יא' שבט ה'תשע"ח

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Young Israel of Midwood

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Beshalach

בשלה

זמנים

Weekdays

Shachris	
Sunday	6:50 8 & 8:30
Weekdays	5:50, 6:50, 7:30 & 8:30
Weekday Rosh Chodesh	5:40, 6:40, 7:30 & 8:30
Sunday Rosh Chodesh	6:30, 8:00 & 8:30
Mincha	4:50
Maariv	after mincha

שבת בשלה

Candle Lighting	4:48 PM
Mincha	4:58 PM
Shachris	7:30, 8:50 & 9:00 AM
Mincha	1:45 & 4:45 PM
Maariv	5:55 PM
Shabos Ends	5:58 PM

Please refer to

YIMidwood.ORG

for all other zmanim

THESE ZMANIM ARE DETERMINED BY THE GABBOIM AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THEIR DISCRETION

Tu B'Shvat

Next week is the 15th of Shvat the new year for the trees

R' Yechiel Michel Tikochinski z"l

(1871-1955; editor for 51 years of an annual calendar documenting the customs of Eretz Yisrael and Yerushalayim) writes: Tu B'Shevat begins the new year for trees for purposes of terumah and ma'asrot / tithes, and for orlah / the prohibition on eating the fruits of a tree in its first three years. This day is the dividing line for determining whether one separates ma'aser sheni (which is taken in the first, second, fourth and fifth years of the shemittah cycle and eaten in Yerushalayim) or ma'aser ani (which is taken in the third and sixth years of the shemittah cycle and given to the poor). If, before Tu B'Shevat, fruits reached the stage of development where tithing is required, they are considered produce of the old year. But, fruits

that reach that stage after Tu B'Shevat are produce of the new year. For fruits, that defining stage is chanatah (approximately, when the blossom appears), except for the etrog, for which the defining stage is picking. One is forbidden to mix fruits of different years when tithing. R' Tikochinski writes further: In Eretz Yisrael, where these laws apply, Tu B'Shevat is observed as a minor holiday. The Ashkenazim are content to observe the day by eating the fruits of the Land and distributing fruit packages to children. In contrast, R' Tikochinski writes, the Sephardim gather to eat fruit in groups, amidst joy and song. Over every fruit, they recite chapters of Tehilim, poems, and songs that praise the Land and its fruit. The wise men of the Sephardim remain awake on the night of Tu B'Shevat and recite "Tikkunim" which are composed of verses from Torah and Ketuvim, and from the words of our Sages, especially from the Zohar, which relate to the fruits of the Land. They also take pains to eat many types of fruits, both tree fruits and produce of the ground. For kabbalistic reasons, they eat 30 types of fruits. They also honor each other with reciting the blessings over the fruit. (R' Tikochinski adds that the reason for these rituals is that each species of fruit has a different "root" in Heaven and requires a separate "tikkun.") (Ir Hakodesh Vehamikdash)

Honest truth

"ויראו מאדו יצעקו בני ישראל אל ד' - תנא דבי ר' ישמעאל: בשעה שיצאו בני ישראל ממצרים למה היו דומים? ליונה שברחה מפני הנץ ונכנסה לנקיף הסלע, ומצאה שם נחש מקנן, ולא היתה יכולה להכנס פנימה, שעדיין הנחש מקנן שם, ולחזור לאחוריה לא היתה יכולה, שהרי הנץ עומד בחוץ לתפשה. מה עשתה היונה? התחילה צווחת ומטפחת באגפיה, כדי שישמע לה בעל השוכך ויבוא ויצילה. כך היו ישראל דומים על הים: לירד לים לא היו יכולים, שעדיין לא נקרע להם הים, לחזור לאחוריהם לא היו יכולים, שכבר פרעה הקריב. מה עשו? "ויראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ד' - ומיד וישע ד' ביום ההוא את ישראל מיד מצרים (י"ד, ל.). (שיר השירים רבה ב', ל.).

In this week's parashah, Bnei Yisrael begin their journey through the desert and the mahn begins to fall to feed them. The midrash says that the amount of mahn which fell every day was enough to feed the entire nation for 2,000 years. Why so

לכבוד האי גברא ובי"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו שהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכת ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבנצב"ב

much? R' Yechezkel Abramsky z"l explains: Bnei Yisrael said (in the words of Tehilim 78:19-20), "Can G-d prepare a table in the wilderness? . . . Can He give bread also?" Therefore, Hashem had to show them that nothing is too difficult for Him, for the whole world is His. Hashem knew that the road that lay before Bnei Yisrael until they would come to their land was long. If they did not have complete faith in Hashem, who knows whether they would withstand the journey [as many did not]? We can appreciate how difficult those years were from the verse in Yirmiyahu (2:2), "Thus said Hashem, 'I recall for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me into the wilderness, into an unsown land.'" Here the prophet announces in the name of G-d that the Jewish people did a kindness for Hashem by trusting Him to lead them in the desert. This was even after Hashem had demonstrated His greatness through the plagues in Egypt. Why did Hashem provide enough food for 2,000 years (rather than some other number)? Chazal say that our world will exist for 6,000 years, of which the first 2,000 years (from Adam to Avraham) are the era of darkness and confusion, the next 2,000 years are the era of Torah, and the last 2,000 years are the era of [anticipating] mashiach. Hashem wished to allude to Bnei Yisrael that the falling mahn could instill faith, but only Torah study could make that faith last. (Chazon Yechezkel: Kovetz Ma'amarim)

ויהי בשלה פרעה את העם ולא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלשתים כי קרוב הוא כי אמר אלקים פן ינחם העם בראתם מלחמה ושוב מצרימה

Our parsha opens with the possuk (13:17), "And it came to pass (Vayehi) when Pharaoh sent the people out, Hashem did not lead them [by] way of the land of the Philistines for it was near, because Hashem said, 'the people might reconsider when they see war and return to Mitzrayim.'" The Medrash comments, "Who said 'vay' (a play

on the word, "vayehi"- in other word, who grieved?) Pharaoh said "vay"! **Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani** (1706-1779 in Modena and Mantua Italy) quotes the **Zera Beiraich** who asks how does this Medrash fit with the second half of the possuk that speaks of how Hashem didn't lead us on a straight route but rather on a winding one? What is the connection between Pharaoh's grieving and our leaving Mitzrayim on a winding route? Another question. Chazal teach us that Pharaoh didn't just send us out of Mitzrayim but he also escorted us. What was the purpose of escorting us? He answers in light of two halachos concerning slaves. Firstly the **Rambam** (Avodim 8.13) paskens, "...a slave who was imprisoned flees from jail. If his master gave up hope of regaining ownership of him, he is granted his freedom." The second halacha is (ibid halacha 10), "When a slave flees from the diaspora to Eretz Yisrael, he should not be returned to slavery." According to these two halachos Zera Shimshon answers the two questions. Pharaoh didn't escort Bnei Yisroel to help them on their journey but rather to show that he did not give up hope of ever regaining possession of them. If he didn't escort Bnei Yisroel he was afraid that they would go free. However when he saw that Hashem took them out on a winding path because Hashem was afraid that they would return to Mitzrayim he realized that Hashem intended to bring them to Eretz Yisroel. When he realized this he said, "Vay" because he knew the halacha that "a slave flees from the diaspora to Eretz Yisrael, he should not be returned to slavery." (Gooddvartorah.com)

ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תהיו שנים

"Hashem will do battle for you, and you shall remain silent." (14:14) **R' Chaim Halberstam z"l** (1793–1876; Sanzer Rebbe) asks: Why did Hashem command Bnei Yisrael to be silent; are we not taught that "Hashem desires the prayers of the righteous"?! He explains: Indeed, Hashem does desire the prayers of the righteous when their request is that the subject's suffering be relieved because G-d is, so-to-speak, suffering along with him. (See Yeshayah 63:9 — "In all their troubles, He is troubled.") But, that

was not Bnei Yisrael's concern at the Yam Suf, as we read (14:11), "They said to Moshe, 'Were there no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the Wilderness?'" Their focus was their own troubles. Thus, we read in Shir Ha'shirim (1:9), "To my horse, among the riders of Pharaoh, I silenced you, my beloved." Kabbalists say that "horse" is a reference to "speech," while "rider" is a reference to "thought." Here, the "rider," i.e., the thought behind the prayer, was the forces of Pharaoh who were chasing Bnei Yisrael; therefore, the prayers were not desired by Hashem, and He silenced them (in our verse). (Divrei Chaim)

Holy Bones

"ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף עמו" - תנו רבנן: בא וראה כמה חביבות מצוות על משה רבנו, שכל ישראל כולם נתעסקו בבזה והוא נתעסק במצוות. ומנין היה יודע משה רבנו היכן יוסף קבור? אמרו: סרח בת אשר נשתירה מאותו הדור. הלך משה אצלה ואמר לה: כלום את יודעת היכן יוסף קבור? אמרה לו: ארון של מתכת עשוי לו מצרים וקבעוהו בבנהר הנלוס, כדי שיתברכו מימיו. (ועוד שם שאמרנו החרטומים לפרעה: רצונך שלא תצא אומה זו מכאן לעולם - העצמות הללו של יוסף, אם לא ימצאו אותן, עד עולם אינם יכולים לצאת). (תנחומא). הלך משה ועמד על שפת הנלוס, ואמר יוסף, יוסף, הגיעה העת שנשבע הקב"ה שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה השבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך - מוטב, ואם לאו - הרי אנו מנוקים משבועתך. מיד צף ארונו של יוסף. רבי נתן אומר: בקברניט (קברים) של מלכים היה קבור. הלך משה ועמד על קברניט של מלכים ואמר: יוסף, הגיעה עת שנשבע הקב"ה שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה שבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך - מוטב, ואם לאו - הרי אנו מנוקים משבועתך. באותה שעה נזדעזע ארונו של יוסף. נטלו משה והביאו אצלו. וכל אותן השנים שהיו ישראל במדבר, היו שני ארונות הללו, אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה, מהלכין זה עם זה. והיו עוברים ושבים אומרים: מה טיבם של שני ארונות הללו? אמרו להם: אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה. אמרו: וכי מה דרכו של מת להלך עם שכינה? אמרו להם: קיים זה כל מה שכתוב בזה...

(סוטה י"ג, א - וגם כן תנחומא).

"G-d will fight for you, and you shall be silent." (14:14) The Midrash says: Continuously Hashem has an argument with Satan. Satan complains to Hashem that the Jewish people commit various crimes. Hashem tells Satan, "Instead of speaking evil about the Jewish people, let us compare their record with that of the Gentile world, and you will see how upright the Jewish people are." However, Hashem has a problem when Satan complains that the Jewish people speak in shul

during davening and the reading of the Torah. It is difficult for Him to defend them because in church the Gentiles are very quiet and well behaved. Moshe was alluding to this and told the Jews, "Do not worry about any problem Satan tries to create, because Hashem will fight him and defend you. However, the condition is "Ve'atem tacharishun" - "You should be silent in shul during davening and the Torah reading. Do not speak any devarim betteilim - idle talk - because Hashem finds it difficult to defend us from this complaint of Satan." (Vedibarta Bom)

ייסע מלאך האלקים ההלך לפני מחנה ישראל וילך מאחריהם ויסע עמו הענן מפניהם ויעמד מאחריהם

"The angel of G-d who had been going in front of the Children of Israel moved and went behind them..." (14:19) The word in hebrew, chaya, has two seemingly opposite meanings. A chaya is a wild animal, but it is also one of the names of the most elevated of the angels, as we say in our daily prayers: "And the Ofanim and the Chayot HaKodesh..." What possible connection could there be between a beast and a celestial being? Man is called a "walker". As it says in the Prophet Zecharia, "I will give you strides (mehalchim) amongst the 'standers' (here)." (3:7) An angel can only stand in its place; it cannot move up or down. It has no freedom to choose. Its perception of G-d is so overwhelming that it can do nothing other than the Will of G-d. A beast is the same. It too has no freedom of choice. It can only follow its instincts, which is the Will of G-d. Only man can choose between good and evil, and thus only man can move up or down. When the Jewish People elevate themselves, when they exercise their freedom to choose to do the Will of G-d, G-d shines his kindness upon them, and they can ascend to a level above even the holiest angels. Thus, "The angel of G-d which had been going in front of the Children of Israel" — i.e. preceding them in holiness — now "moved and went behind them", because they had elevated themselves higher even than the angels. (Kedushat Levi)

"The angel of G-d who had been going in front of Bnei Yisrael moved and went behind them; and

the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and went behind them. It came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Yisrael and there were cloud and darkness -- while it illuminated the night -- and one did not approach the other all night." (14:19-20) These verses seems repetitious, writes **R' Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald** z"l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and rosh yeshiva). Isn't the angel (messenger) of G-d who moved from in front of Bnei Yisrael to behind them the same as the pillar of cloud? He answers: We read (Tehilim 69:19-20), "Draw near to my soul, redeem it; because of my foes, deliver me. You know of my disgrace, my shame, and my humiliation; all my tormentors are before You." King David is saying that although there are occasions when we may not deserve to be redeemed, in comparison with our tormentors, we are righteous. "Because [of the unworthiness] of my foes, deliver me." When they stood on the shore of the Yam Suf, Bnei Yisrael were being judged. Some of the angels argued that Bnei Yisrael had also worshiped idols in Egypt; thus, it was not at all clear that they would be saved. The angel who moved from in front of Bnei Yisrael to behind them was their defense attorney, so-to-speak. Since he could think of nothing to say in Bnei Yisrael's favor, he moved closer to the Egyptians as if to highlight the contrast between the oppressors and the oppressed. And his strategy succeeded - for the Egyptians "there were cloud and darkness," while for Bnei Yisrael, "it illuminated the night." (Keren Le'Dovid)

**וירא ישראל את-ה' הגדלה אשר עשה ה'
במצרים ויראו העם את ה' ויאמינו בה'
ובמשה עבדו**

We read in our parashah, following the splitting of the Yam Suf and the drowning of the Egyptians, "**Yisrael saw the great hand that Hashem inflicted upon Egypt; and the people revered Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant.**" (14:31) The Midrash **Yalkut Shimoni** comments: In the merit of having faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant, they merited to inherit the Land. **R' Chaim Palagi** z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) writes: This indicates that the generation that entered the Land had

two merits—having faith in Hashem and having faith in Moshe. In contrast, Moshe, who did not enter the Land, had only one merit—that of having faith in Hashem. In that merit, he was able to die in Eretz Yisrael. How so? Although Moshe never crossed the border, Hashem miraculously folded the entire Land under the place where he stood, so that he did merit to die in Eretz Yisrael. This, R' Palagi continues, is alluded to in the verse (Tehilim 116:9-10—recited as part of Hallel), "I shall walk before Hashem in the land of the living. I have kept the faith, for I speak . . ." "I have kept the faith," is what Moshe Rabbeinu said of himself. Also, "I speak"—therefore others believed in You. In that merit, they entered the "the land of the living" (i.e., Eretz Yisrael). Seeming, Moshe did not enter the Land. However, the final letters of the four words, "Lifnei Hashem b'artzot ha'chaim" / "before Hashem in the land of the living" make up the letters of the word "Mitah" / "death." This hints that Moshe's end was in "the land of the living." (Artzot Ha'chaim)

"Yisrael saw the great hand that Hashem inflicted upon Egypt; and the people revered Hashem, *and they believed in Hashem* and in Moshe, His servant." (14:31) **R' Yisrael Meir Hakohen** z"l (the Chafetz Chaim; died 1933) asks: Didn't the Torah already say, when Moshe first spoke to Bnei Yisrael in Egypt (Shmot 4:31), "The people believed*, and they heard that Hashem had remembered Bnei Yisrael and that He saw their affliction, and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves"? He explains: In fact, although the Torah says that the people believed Moshe, the elders who agreed to go with Moshe and Aharon to Pharaoh slipped away one-by-one until Moshe and Aharon were left alone. This teaches that although a person has emunah, i.e., he "believes" in G-d, there is complete belief and incomplete belief. This is why the Ani Ma'amin declarations that many people recite after Shacharit every morning state: "I believe with *complete* faith . . ." (Zechor L'Miriam)

**אמר אויב ארדף אשיג אחלק של תמלאמו
נפשי אריק חרבי תורישמו ידי**

"The 'Oyev' / enemy declared, 'I

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in loving memory of
Sam & Helen Fuchs
(Shmuel Moshe & Chanah ל"ת)

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will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide plunder. I will satisfy my lust with them. I will unsheathe my sword; my hand will impoverish them'." (15:9) The Gemara (Bava Batra 16a) relates that, in the midst of his suffering, Iyov said to Hashem, "Perhaps You became confused between 'Iyov' and 'Oyev'." **R' Shmuel Eliezer Eidels** z"l (Maharsha; Poland; 1555-1631) explains Iyov's comment in light of the Gemara (Sotah 11a) which says that Pharaoh consulted three advisers regarding Bnei Yisrael: Bil'am, Iyov and Yitro. Bil'am advised Pharaoh to oppress Bnei Yisrael; therefore, Hashem killed him (Bemidbar 31:8). Iyov remained silent; therefore, he was punished with suffering. Yitro fled; therefore, he was rewarded that his descendants sat on the Sanhedrin. Iyov said to Hashem, writes Maharsha: Did You get confused? The Oyev / enemy was Pharaoh, as our verse indicates. I was not the enemy! Don't You remember that I did not support the enemy's plan?! Hashem responded

that, of course, He could never make a mistake. (See Bava Batra 16a-b for Hashem's arguments.) Why, then, did Iyov suffer as if he were the enemy? Maharsha explains: We read (Iyov 2:10), "Even so [despite his suffering], Iyov did not sin with his lips." The Sage Rava comments (Bava Batra 16a), "With his lips he did not sin, but in his heart he sinned." Maharsha explains: Although Iyov did not advise Pharaoh to harm Bnei Yisrael, in his heart, he hated them. And, our Sages teach that gentiles are judged for evil thoughts just as they are judged for their actions. Therefore, Iyov deserved to suffer. (Chiddushei Aggadot)

ותקה מרים הנביאה אחות אהרן אתהתף בידה ותצאן כל-הנשים אחריה בתפים ובמחלת

"Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took her drum in her hand and all the women went forth after her with drums and with dances. Miriam spoke up la'hem / to them, 'Sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant, having hurled horse with its rider into the sea'."

(15:20-21) **R' Yaakov Hagiz z"l** (Morocco and Eretz Yisrael; 1620-1672) asks: At first glance, Miriam was addressing the women. Why, then, does the verse use the masculine form of "to them" ("la'hem") rather than the feminine form ("la'hen")? R' Hagiz explains: The Gemara (Arachin 11a) records a dispute whether the Levi'im fulfilled their Mitzvah to "sing" in the Bet Hamikdash using their voices, while their musical instruments were mere "backup," or—the opposite—the primary Mitzvah was with musical instruments and the Levi'im's voices were "backup." At the Yam Suf, writes R' Hagiz, Bnei Yisrael sang with their voices, with no instruments, seemingly taking the side of the opinion that the primary mode of "singing" is with the voice. Disagreeing, "Miriam the prophetess . . . took her drum in her hand . . . spoke up lahem," to the men, telling them that they should have used instruments. This, concludes, R' Hagiz, is the meaning of the verse (Tehilim 68:26), "First went singers, then musicians." Why? The verse concludes, "In the midst (i.e., because) of timbrel-playing maidens." (Korban Mincha no.1)

The letter below was written by **R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l** (1895-1974). Reb Chatzkel, as he is popularly known, was mashgiach ruchani of the Mir yeshiva in pre-war Poland and in Shanghai, China during World War II. After the Holocaust, he

lived briefly in New York and then settled in Yerushalayim. In later years, he served as mashgiach ruchani of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. This letter is printed in Ohr Yechezkel - Michtavim, no. 7. Reb Chatzkel was particularly renowned for mining the story of the Exodus for lessons in emunah / faith. Third [day, of the week of Parashat] Eikev, 5709 [1949] My honorable friend, etc., After inquiring of your welfare, I remember the days of old, when I would reflect on the kindness which we received in the form of the Exodus, the splitting of the Yam Suf, and the conquering of the Land, and I would think, "If only I could be in the place [near] where these things happened, in our Holy Land! Then I could sense the reality of these events." I said then that the Diaspora is not a place where these events can make as much of an impression on my heart, for that requires feeling the reality, just as they were real to those who witnessed them. Now that, thank G-d, I have merited this, I say, "May Hashem give me the ability to strengthen myself constantly in these matters, for the early commentaries write that the verse (Devarim 4:9), "Take care for yourself and take care for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes beheld," is a negative commandment. (See [Sha'arei Teshuvah by] Rabbeinu Yonah [z"l], Section 3, paragraph 27.) Regarding what you wrote in your letter that you hope you merit to always dwell within the four cubits of halachah, it would be good to see the introduction of Rambam [z"l] to Seder Zera'im regarding the meaning of the expression, "the four cubits of halachah." [Ed. note: Rambam writes that a literal interpretation of our Sages' statement, "G-d takes no interest in this world except in the four cubits of halachah,"--i.e., that He cares only about those who sit and study halachah--would be very far from the truth, for that would mean that G-d was not found in all the generations before the Torah was given. Rather, this statement refers to a person who is well-rounded in knowledge of both his legal and moral duties, and who acts upon his knowledge. "The world exists for a person who is wise and good!" Rambam writes.]Your friend, *Yechezkel Levenstein*

R' Yehuda al-Barceloni z"l early 12th century Although R' Yehuda is not well known today, the 13th century sage, **R' Menachem Ha'meiri**, placed him alongside **Rashi, Rif** and **Ra'avad III**

as one of "the patriarchs of the Talmud . . . from whom the entire world [of Talmudic commentary] sprang."

Ramban wrote that R' Yehuda was expert in all Geonic works. Like Rif (i.e., R' Yitzchak Alfasi), R' Yehuda composed a work which offers the reader a clear halachic decision based upon the Talmud, citing only as much of the source as is necessary for the halachah. However, whereas Rif does not quote much Geonic data, R' Yehuda supplied not only the Geonic opinions but also quoted the commentators and codifiers who preceded him, including Rif. R' Yehuda's work had three parts: Sefer Ha'ittim, dealing with everyday laws such as prayers, tefilin, kashrut, Shabbat and yom tov; Sefer Yichus She'air Basar, dealing with marriage and divorce; and Sefer Ha'dinim, dealing with civil law. (The middle section has been lost.) He also wrote a commentary on the kabbalistic work Sefer Yetzirah, discussing that work from a scientific and philosophical point of view. This too has been lost. (The Artscroll Rishonim, p. 76)

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