



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT BESHALACH

VOL. 15 NUM. 19 (#603) • 17 SHEVAT 5784 / JANUARY 27, 2024

Sponsored by Craig and Esther Guttmann for the yahrtzeit of Clara Berglas בריינדל בת ישעיהו ז"ל (Shevat 21)



DVAR TORAH BESHALACH RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Hashem has a Plan

It seems strange that Hashem brought the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt with the awesome miracles of the ten plagues and the splitting of the sea, which was so beyond nature that “a maid servant beheld at the sea what even the prophets never saw” (Rashi 15:2), and then led them in the desert to a point where they ran out of water—one of the most basic necessities to sustain life. It’s like planning and preparing an amazing event-filled vacation and realizing just as you exit the city that your car has no gas. It’s no wonder that the Jewish people began what would become a habitual tendency of complaining to their leader about what looked to be poor planning.

A more careful look at the text will reveal that, as is always the case, the fault did not lie with Hashem but rather with the people themselves. “The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Devarim 32:4).

Immediately after the splitting of the sea, the text says that, “Moshe caused Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds” (Shemot 15:22). The unusual phrasing of causing them to travel is noticed by Rashi and he explains that “[Moshe] made them journey against their own will, because the Egyptians had adorned their horses with ornaments of gold

and silver and with precious stones, and the Israelites were finding these in the sea ... On this account he was compelled to make them journey on against their will” (Rashi 15:22). Even though the Jewish people had left Egypt with great wealth they couldn’t pass on the opportunity to accumulate more precious metals and jewels, which delayed their departure. They were focused on acquiring wealth that had no intrinsic value and was worthless in the desert as they soon discovered that all the money in the world was unable to procure life-sustaining resources such as food and water.

The problem wasn’t His plan

If the Jewish people had continued without delay on their journey, following Hashem instead of spending time at the edge of the sea gathering trinkets, then perhaps they wouldn’t have reached the desperate situation they found themselves in of having run out of water. We are told that immediately after their stop at the bitter—initially undrinkable—waters of Marah they arrived at Elim where there were twelve springs of fresh water, one for each tribe. The description of this next stop on their journey strongly indicates that Hashem had a perfect route planned for them where

their needs would be fully taken care of. The problem wasn’t His plan but rather the fact that the Jewish people delayed and didn’t follow the plan. They gave into their temptations and focused on the acquisition of material wealth and failed to focus on the true value of receiving the Torah and entering the land of Israel. The unfortunate human mistake of misunderstanding true value and prioritizing physical wealth has caused many people to miss opportunities for real growth and to suffer real loss all the while not even realizing that they themselves had a hand in the difficulties that they faced.

Had the Jewish people followed the plan set out by Hashem they would perhaps have gained more trust in Him after their stop in Elim and realized that He took them out of Egypt with a clear timeline that would sustain them in the desert. Unfortunately, due to their misguided focus on jewels and their subsequent running out of water they falsely began to believe that there was no plan to sustain them and the rest, as they say, is history. Once they had experienced a lack that was only filled in response to their complaints, all future experiences of a lack of resources were quickly responded to with complaint instead of with a patient trust that Hashem would provide for their needs.



Yirmiyahu 7

The seventh chapter of Yirmiyahu is one of the best known in the book, as Hashem rebukes the Jews for putting their faith in the Beit HaMikdash to defend against punishment for their sins.

Hashem tells Yirmiyahu to position himself at the entrance of the Beit HaMikdash and tell the worshippers, "Improve your ways, and Hashem will reside here. Don't trust those who tell you, "This is the Sanctuary of Hashem!" Specifically, stop cheating the vulnerable, spilling innocent blood, and worshipping idols" (7:1-11).

If the Jews are skeptical that Hashem would destroy His own sanctuary, Hashem tells them to go to the ruins of Shiloh, where the Mishkan stood for 369 years (Zevachim 118b). When the Jews sinned, Hashem destroyed it, and Hashem would do the same again (7:12-15).

The comparison with Shiloh is apt. At the end of the period of the Sho'fetim the Jews faced a war with the Philistines, and they brought the Aron out to war as a play for Divine protection. But there was no Divine command to do so, and they were not righteous enough to warrant a miracle. As a result, the Aron was taken and the Mishkan destroyed. In Yirmiyahu's day the people repeated the mistake of viewing the Beit HaMikdash as a protective totem.

Hashem then turns to Yirmiyahu and warns him not to pray on behalf of this nation. See how they collaborate to prepare offerings for idolatry! The Divine wrath they stoke will harm not Hashem, but themselves (7:16-20).

Then Hashem again turns to the nation, instructing them to bring shelamim offerings instead of the olah burnt offering. The

shelamim includes meat for those who bring it, so they will at least gain something from the sacrifice Hashem rejects. Shockingly, Hashem declares, "I never told your ancestors to bring offerings, on the day I took them from Egypt" (7:21-26). Of course, Hashem did tell us to bring sacrifices, including the night before we left Egypt! Rambam explains that Hashem told the Jews to bring sacrifices as a means toward the end of drawing closer to Hashem, but the Jews ignored the intended spiritual end and only pursued the sacrifices (Moreh haNevuchim 3:32).

Finally, Hashem warns Yirmiyahu that the Jews will not listen to his rebuke, and the result will be punishment for their sins. The sounds of joy, celebration and weddings will be removed from the land (7:27-34).



Week 1 • Ikkarim: Fundamentals of Faith

In the coming weeks, we will explore three versions of *ikkarei Emunah*, fundamentals of faith. We will explore the well-known enumeration (13) of the Rambam. We will further explore the presentations of Rabbi Yosef Albo and his teacher Rabbi Chasdai Crescas. To that end, we will attempt to define the concept of an *ikkar*, as well as which beliefs should be included. We will also survey some of the popularizations of Rambam's *ikkarim*. We have already introduced Rambam, but we will present the biographies of the other two scholars before we begin.

Rabbi Yosef Albo lived in Spain c. 1380-1444. He was a student of Rabbi Chasdai Crescas and was influenced by Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (Rashbatz). He was one of disputants at the Disputation at Tortosa, a public debate organized by a Jewish apostate to Christianity, Geronimo de Santa Fe (originally Yehoshua Lorki). Unlike the debate in which Ramban partook, where there was a level of freedom of speech, at Tortosa the Jews were heavily constrained, subject to accusations of heresy for

any attack on Christianity. The result of the debate was forced censorship of the Talmud, many conversions to Christianity, and a general hit to the morale of the Jewish people. It was in that context that Rabbi Albo published his influential, and highly readable, introduction to the fundamentals of Judaism, *Sefer HaIkkarim*. Among other goals, the book challenges Rambam's conception of *Ikkarei Emunah* and suggests three, rather than thirteen.

Historically, scholars mostly took Rabbi Albo to be a less significant philosopher than many of other well-known medieval thinkers, treating *Sefer HaIkkarim* as a more popular and thus less scholarly work. However, in recent years scholars have noted that the book includes a similar disclaimer to the *Moreh Nevuchim*, that the book is intended to be esoteric, hiding deeper ideas for the careful reader. Thus, scholars like Dr. Shira Weiss (YU) and Dr. Dror Erlich (Bar Ilan) have argued for a more serious treatment of his works.



The Custom of Feeding Birds on Shabbat Shirah

Question: My children came home from school on Friday of Parshat Beshalach (Shabbat Shirah) with a bird feeder intended for feeding birds. What is the meaning of this custom, and is it permissible to feed birds on Shabbat?

Answer: There is a custom in Israel to feed birds on Shabbat Parshat Beshalach, also known as Shabbat Shirah. Several reasons have been given for this custom:

1. Birds participated with us in singing the song at the splitting of the Red Sea, so as a reward, we provide them with food.
2. Datan and Aviram wanted to refute Moshe's claim that *mann* [manna] would not fall on Shabbat. Therefore, they scattered manna on Friday, and the birds ate the crumbs, causing Datan and Aviram to fail in their plan.
3. In the portion, we read about the *mann* [manna] and how G-d provided sustenance miraculously, drawing a parallel to

how birds are sustained miraculously without any effort.

4. There is a Talmudic story about Rebbi, who suffered from afflictions that ceased when he showed compassion towards mice and instructed his maidservant not to harm them. The verse "*Ani Hashem Rof'echa*" ["I am the Lord, your healer"] is mentioned in our parasha, suggesting that, like Rebbi, we show compassion towards G-d's creatures to merit healing.

However, there is a halachic issue with feeding birds on Shabbat. The *Shulchan Aruch* (Orach Chayim 324:11) states that it is forbidden to feed animals on Shabbat when you are not responsible for their sustenance, unlike animals raised in your home or courtyard. The *Mishnah Berurah* explains that the reason for the prohibition is the because of the unnecessary effort [*Tircha Yeteira*] involved in feeding animals for which you are not responsible.

However, several suggestions and solutions

have been offered for this Jewish custom:

1. Some advise to place the bird-feeder out before Shabbat or after Shabbat.
2. One is allowed to shake off the crumbs outside on Shabbat, as there is no special effort involved for the birds here.
3. The *Aruch Hashulchan* [Orach Chayim 324:3] explains the Jewish custom by stating that it is not an unnecessary effort, as it is an expression of gratitude to the birds and may even be considered a mitzvah. Thus, it is permitted.

In conclusion, while the custom of feeding birds on Shabbat carries significant messages of gratitude and faith in G-d, efforts should be made to observe the custom in a way that does not violate halachic prohibitions.

(This answer is based on an article written by my dear friend Rabbi Shabtai Yogel from Ra'anana, Israel. Responsa "*Besod Siach*")

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymanntorah.com.



Week 6: We Are What We Wear



Adjusting Sights
By Haim Sabato
The Toby Press, 2003

"לפיקך בכל השבוע היינו מחכים לשבת שתבוא, ובכל שעה שלא הוכרחנו בה לסייר או לשמור שהינו בצוהוא בדיבוק חברים ונתענגנו עליה ונשתעשענו בה. ביקשנו לכבד את השבת בכסותנו. ואף-על-פי שסרבל טנקים שלבשנו בימות החול הוא שלבשנו ביום השבת, יש מי שהיו שומרים להם כיפה לבנה ומשימים אותה רק בשבת, אחרים היו משתדלים לכבד את הסרבל בערב שבת, ויש שהיו מחליפים את כובע צמר שלהם לאחר ובלבד שייחזו בגד לשבת קודש. מן השמים סייעו ובתוך חבילת הבגדים שקיבלתי פעם מן האפסנטאות נשתרבה חגורה צבאית. בימים כתיקנם חוגרים בה חיילים מדי א' חגיגיים. שמרתי אותה והייתי חוגר אותה בשבת, ונדמה היה בעיני כאילו לבשתי חליפה נאה והתהדרתי בעניבה מהודרת." (תיאום כוונות, עמוד 154)

was lucky to find one day, in a package of fresh clothing received from the quartermaster, a brand new army belt of the kind ordinarily worn with dress uniforms. I kept it and used it only on the Sabbath. It made me feel as elegant as if I were wearing a fancy suit and tie." (Adjusting Sights, page 133)

In the above passage, Rabbi Sabato describes the Shabbat experience at war. In order to make the day unique, every soldier would wear something different or special. Whether it was a white kipa, clean clothes, or a belt from the dress uniform, the soldiers understood that we are impacted deeply by the clothing that we wear.

As we conclude our reading of *Adjusting Sights*, I invite you to join me in a special shiur inspired by Rabbi Sabato's book and the theme of clothing. This Sunday at 7pm at Yeshivat Or Chaim, we will explore the sanctity of the IDF uniform. The shiur is open to everyone, whether you read the book or not. I hope to see you there!

Adjusting Sights can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code *TorontoTorah* for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Shemot 15:1

Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang this song to Hashem, and they said, "Let me sing to Hashem for He has triumphed gloriously; a horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea."

Rashi:

So, also, ישיר here signifies: his heart told him that he should sing, and thus did he actually do

Questions to Discuss

- What circumstances trigger a desire to sing?
- When might a person's heart tell them to sing and yet they don't sing?
- What is necessary to allow the person's actions to line up with their heart?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a \$15 voucher for Tova's Bakery!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Shabbat | Halacha from the Parasha | Clanton Park | After Hashkama Minyan | Rabbi Mann |
| | Gemara | BAYT | Between Mincha & Maariv | Rabbi Gutenberg |
| Sunday | Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 8:30 AM | Rabbi Shor |
| | Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot | Clanton Park | 9:00 AM | Rabbi Spitz & Rabbi Mann |
| | Shiur b'Ivrit | BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi) | 9:00 AM | Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Lax |
| | Sefer Shemot | Yeshivat Or Chaim | NEW at 8 PM | David Koschitzky |
| Monday | The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach | Zoom: tiny.cc/idanrak | 2:00 PM | R' Rakovsky |
| | Men's Halacha | Shomrai Shabbos | 8:30 PM | Rabbi Mann |
| | University Women's Beit Midrash | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 7:45 PM | Rabbi Anstandig |
| | Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 8:00 PM | Rabbi Sonenberg |
| Tuesday | Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach | Zoom | 1:30 PM | Rabbi Horovitz |
| | Women's Gemara Shiur | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 8:00 PM | Rabbi Anstandig |
| | Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur | Clanton Park | 8:15 PM | Rabbi Mann |
| Wednesday | Morality, Ethics and Religion | Zoom | 10:00 AM | Rabbi Sonenberg |
| | Men's Contemporary Halacha | Clanton Park | 8:00 PM | Rabbi Mann |
| | Men's Gemara Bekiut | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 8:00 PM | Rabbi Sonenberg |
| | Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water | Shaarei Tefillah | 8:00 PM | R' Rakovsky |
| Thursday | Tanach: Sefer Shmuel | Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDTanach | 1:30 PM | Rabbi Horovitz |
| | Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan | Yeshivat Or Chaim | 8:00 PM | Rabbi Turtel |
| | Men's Gemara Iyun | BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi) | 8:00 PM | R' Diena |
| Sun-Thu | Men's Community Night Seder | Yeshivat Or Chaim | New Time 8:00–9:00 PM | |
| | Pre-Maariv Shiur | Yeshivat Or Chaim | New Time 8:45–9:00 PM | Rabbi Sonenberg |

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Rabbi Anstandig and Rina Deutsch: Midreshet Yom Rishon | Mishkan Avraham | January 28, 2024 | 10:00–11:30 AM |
| Rabbi Anstandig: <i>Adjusting Sights</i> - The sanctity of the IDF uniform | Yeshivat Or Chaim | January 28, 2024 | 7:00 PM |
| BMZD Shabbaton | Clanton Park | February 2-3, 2024 | |
| Rabbi Toczyner: Medical Ethics | Zoom | February 12, 2024 | 7:30–9:00 PM |

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

Rabbi Yehuda Mann
ymann@torontotorah.com

Dean

Rabbi Noah Sonenberg
nsonenberg@torontotorah.com

Sponsorships & Dedications

Ronit Bendayan • (416) 630-6772 x 243
rbendayan@torontotorah.com

Maggidei Shiur Rabbi Mordechai Toczyner • Rabbi Jared Anstandig • R' Ezer Diena • Rabbi Josh Gutenberg • Rabbi Hillel Horovitz
R' Idan Rakovsky • Rabbi Bentzi Shor • Rabbi Jeff Turtel