

TAL TorahActionLife

COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

BESHALLACH

13th Shevat 5776

Shabbat begins: 16:17

Shabbat ends: 17:25

This week's edition is sponsored
Leiluy Nishmat Yedidya Ben
Chorshit Z'L. Tihyeh Nishmato
Betsurat Hachaim



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
DIRECTOR, TAL

Set Yourself A Reminder!

How is your schedule looking next week? Shouldn't really talk about it on Shabbat, but I am asking as this question has a specific lesson to teach.

We are grateful to be living in one of the most advanced nations in the world, at one of the most advanced times in history. So many luxuries out there ready for the take and yet we seem so busy.

Not so long ago we would rely on our memory, whether it was in school math exams, or with car directions. Nowadays we rely on digital calculators, mobile phones and electronic calendars with reminders to keep us afloat.

How many reminders have you set yourself this year in *your* calendar?

Have you ever forgotten a sibling's birthday? Need a reminder for an important meeting or Dr's appointment? It's all done now at the tip of your finger tips. You can even set yourself weekly or annual reminders.

We rely heavily on these reminders to keep us going.

There is a special day once a week for which our Sages advise that we should set a reminder.

The Gemara Shabbat (35b) describes a custom that was observed each week before Shabbat during Talmudic times. A person would climb onto the rooftop of a tall building in the town and blow six Shofar blasts. Specif-

ically, he would twice blow the series of Teki'a-Teru'a-Teki'a. The Gemara explains the significance of each Shofar blast. The first, served as a warning to the farmers working in the fields outside the city that they must put down their tools and start making their way back home to prepare for Shabbat. The second Shofar blast alerted the shopkeepers in the city that the time has come to close their stores, and the third indicated the time to light the Shabbat candles. The final Shofar blasts indicated the onset of Shabbat.

The person blowing the Shofar would then put down the Shofar and come down from the rooftop, as Shabbat begun.

Thus Shabbat was sanctified publicly by blowing the Shofar and privately by kindling lights (*Tanhuma Matot 2*).

though this custom does not appear to have any practical ramifications for the Shulhan Aruch's time, he nevertheless found it necessary to mention this custom.

The Kaf Ha'haim (Rav Yaakov Haim Sofer, Baghdad-Israel, 1870-1939) writes that this Halacha should be followed in places where Jews enjoy control over their



1. Who jumped first into the waters of the Yum Suf?
2. What is the special name given to Parshas Beshalach and what special minhag is associated with it?
3. What is a major lesson from the falling of the Mon?
4. When do we say each day parts from Parshas Beshalach?
5. How was the shira sung by the Jews?
6. What was the youngest age of people who sang the shira?
7. In many shuls the reader sings some of pesukim of the shira in a tune. What guides which verses are sung?

Answers On Page 3



Interestingly, the Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 256) records this practice, noting that it was observed during the times when the Jewish people lived securely under self-rule. Even

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communities and do not fear the local gentile population. Under such circumstances, a public proclamation of the onset of Shabbat should be made, if not with a Shofar, then with some other medium, such as a siren or a bell. Indeed, the Kaf Ha'haim records various customs that were practiced in several Jewish communities to announce the onset of Shabbat. He writes that in Jerusalem, the Rabbis would dispatch messengers just before Shabbat to instruct the storekeepers to close their shops, warning that they would not receive blessing from any profits earned from sales made after that point.

Today in many cities in Israel, loud Jewish music is played just before the onset of Shabbat to remind the people and get them into the mood of this auspicious day.

In fact there is a custom in Kabbalat Shabbat to recite six psalms of nature which correspond to the six days of Creation. These also signify the six Shofar blasts that were sounded on Erev Shabbat.

R Moshe Chorev Shlita observes that there is an interesting note that appears in this week's Parasha in one Pasuk six times.

The Torah relates that the spiritual food enjoyed by the Bnei Yisrael (Manna) fell daily,

except on Shabbat. To make up for this two portions fell on Friday signifying the preparation of Shabbat to be done the day before.

"See that *Hashem* has given you the *Shabbat*; therefore He gives you on the sixth day food for two days. You should remain – each man – in his place; let not any man go out from his place on the Seventh Day." (*Shemot* 16:29)

In Sephardic communities this note is called Shofar holech – literally - a horn going forward.

R Moshe explains that this is to hint to the six Shofar blasts that were sounded as a reminder and preparing the people every Erev Shabbat.

Even from the start of the week we already have an established relationship with Shabbat.

In *Shemot* (20:8) the Torah states: "Remember the Shabbat to keep it holy." Based on this, the Mekhilta comments that we are obligated to count the days of the week leading up to Shabbat. Accordingly, the Ramban comments that the verse teaches that we should remember Shabbat every day of the week. This is to ensure that we do not forget Shabbat and confuse it with another day. Additionally, this is also in order to remember the creation of the world and it's Creator daily.

Therefore, the Ramban writes, our method of counting the days of the week differs fundamentally from that of the non-Jews. The non-Jews use unique names for each day of the week, such as Sunday, Monday, etc. By contrast, we count the days of the week with an eye towards Shabbat, as seen in the "Shir Shel Yom:" "Today is the first day in (the count towards) Shabbat."

Shabbat is a day we remember and anticipate. In an ever increasingly busy society, the Torah has already laid down the way forward. Believe it or not, it could be forgotten!

So every single day we remember the Shabbat. Even more so on Friday, as we approach the Shabbat we are reminded by the six blasts hinted at in our six psalms of Kabbalat Shabbat (and music in certain cities in Israel).

Winter is upon us, Shabbat begins so early and Friday's are hectic. Yet we know that the enjoyment of a real exclusive Shabbat experience is dependent on prior preparation. Don't get lost in all that work, *remember* the Shabbat!

Next week add this to your diary; set yourself a reminder for this valuable day. Perhaps you can even add an electronic voice of a Shofar to make it extra special!



RABBI MINO LABI
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SYNAGOGUE

Wake Up & Sing

This Shabbat is known as *Shabbat Shira*, the Shabbat of Song. This Shabbat gets its name from the fact that this week, we read the Song of the Sea in the Parasha and then Devorah's song in the Haftara. It's a Shabbat filled with singing songs of praises to God.

I would like to focus on one verse in the Song of Devorah. It is a verse that seems out of place. Devorah was singing a song of praise to God just after a miraculous victory against the army commanded by Sisera, who had been oppressing the nation of Israel. In the middle of her song Devorah cried out, "*Wake up, wake up, Devorah! Wake up, wake up, break out in song!*"

Wait a second - wasn't she already singing? According to Jewish tradition, Devorah had briefly lost her ability to prophesize and sing because a few verses earlier, she said, "... *they held back until I, Devorah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.*" This statement wasn't at all humble and so God spirit left Devorah. She corrected herself and God's spirit returned.

Awaken, awaken, utter a song, the glory of God is revealed upon you." This paragraph is a combination of our verse from Devorah's song with Isaiah 60:1, which reads, "*Arise, arise, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.*" Together, the message for us is to wake up and see the glory of God that is all around us.

Most people go through their lives like this: Wake up, dress, eat, go to work, work, come home, run errands, eat, watch television, and sleep. Repeat. And repeat and repeat and repeat. It's so easy for life to become mechanical. It's so easy to fall into a deep spiritual sleep. But on every Shabbat, and especially on this Shabbat, we are reminded to wake up and sing. Wake up and see the glory of God all around us! We live in an amazing world, filled with miracles, both hidden and revealed. We have so many blessings and things for which to be thankful.

This Shabbat, I encourage us all to wake up and recognize the glory of God in our lives. Wake up to the blessings. Wake up to the miracles. Break out in song and sing praises to the Al-Mighty.

Shabbat Shalom

It's so easy to fall into
a deep spiritual sleep
But on every Shabbat
and especially on this
Shabbat, we are re-
minded to wake up
and sing.

However, taken from a different angle, this verse has a message for us all. It's no wonder that it is borrowed and taken into our Erev Shabbat prayer service in a paragraph that reads, "Wake up! Wake up! For your light has come, rise up and shine;

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1. The Gemora in Sota 37a brings an argument. According to R' Meir it was the whole tribe of Binyomin while according to R' Yehuda it was Nachson Ben Aminodov from the tribe of Yehuda.

2. Shabbos Shira after the shira sung in our parsha. The minhag is to give food to the birds. This is because Moshe said no mon would fall on Shabbos. Dosson and Avirom planted early Shabbos morning mon to disprove Moshe. However, by the time the people came out to see nothing was left since the birds had already eaten it! To remember and thank the birds the minhag is to put out

food for them.

3. The Jews in the desert lived a miraculous life. The falling of the Mon was meant to only be enough for each day and was not allowed to be stored. It shows us our constant dependency on Hashem, especially our food and livelihood.

4. The Shira is said in Shachris and some people say after davening Parshas HaMon.

5. The Gemora (Sota 30b) brings three opinions what the Jews said in response to Moshe's words: R' Akiva says that they answered the Roshei Perokim. R' Yossi Hagleli says that they repeated each phrase as Moshe had said it. R' Nechemia says that they all joined in together after Moshe had started them off.

6. The Gemora in Sota 30b brings that even the nursing babies and R' Meir says that even babies in the womb sang!

7. I think the pattern is that only the pesukim that have Hashem's Name in are the ones sung.

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STORIES OF OUR
CHACHAMIM
BAAL SHEM TOV

Mesirut Nefesh

The son of the Rizhner Rebbe, R' Avraham Yaacov of Sadigora once told this story.

One *Erev Shabbos* the Baal Shem Tov appeared in a town unexpectedly. Declining invitations from all the locals, he elected to remain alone in the *Shul* after *Shabbos* evening davening. The wonder of the residents turned to alarm when they saw his fervent *Tefilla* and *Tehillim* continue the whole night long. Something

was surely the matter. But in the morning the Baal Shem Tov was relaxed and joyful, and he accepted the invitation of one of the locals for the morning *Shabbos* meal.

Naturally, all of the townspeople crowded into the house of the host to see the Holy Baal Shem Tov. As they were sitting at the table, a local peasant came around looking for a drink of vodka. They were about to drive him away when the Baal Shem Tov called out that he should be brought in, and provided with a generous glass of vodka. He asked him to tell what he had seen in the mansion of the Poritz (wealthy Polish estate owner) the previous night. The peasant's tongue, loosened by the vodka, related that the Poritz, believing that he had been cheated in a business deal by a Jewish merchant, assembled his peasants and armed them with knives and hatchets telling them to be on the ready to avenge themselves on the Jews at his command. They would then all be able to liberate their stolen riches from the Jews.

"The whole night we waited for the command, he continued, "But the Poritz had closeted himself in his office with an unexpected visitor, an old friend that he hadn't seen for 40 years! Finally, he emerged and told us all to go home, that the Jews were upright and honest people and nobody should dare lay a hand on them. We all went home and that's the whole story!"

"This old friend", explained the Sadigorer Rebbe, "Had been dead for decades. The Baal Shem Tov had dragged him from the grave to influence his friend the Poritz." "But I always wondered," queried the Rebbe, "Why did the Baal Shem Tov have to travel all the way to that town for *Shabbos* to avert the decree? Couldn't he just as well have remained in his hometown of Medzibuz?"

"But I understand now. The Baal Shem Tov said to himself, if I can succeed in saving the town, fine... but if not, then I will perish together with them!"

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