



TorahActionLife

## COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

This week's edition is Dedicated  
Lirfuat Elisha Ben Ayala Betoach  
Shaar Cholei Yisrael

BESHALLACH  
TU BISHVAT

14<sup>th</sup> SHEVAT 5777  
Shabbat begins: 16:51  
Shabbat ends: 17:56



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL  
DIRECTOR, TAL

Torah Power!

Maimonides was the court physician for the Sultan Saladin in medieval Egypt. Reportedly the Sultan was hardly ever ill. Once he called Maimonides, and demanded of him proof that he was a good doctor. "I am never ill," said Saladin, "so how am I to know whether you in fact deserve the reputation that you have for being a great physician?"

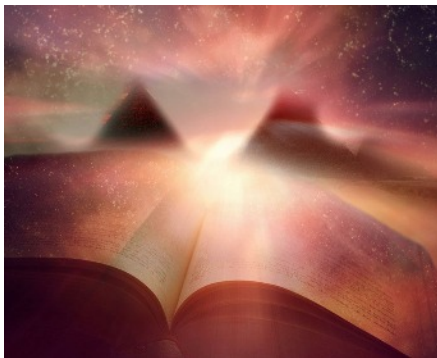
Maimonides answered: "The greatest of all physicians is the Lord, of Whom it is said 'I am the Lord thy physician'. As proof of this, it is written 'I will not place upon you the illnesses which I have placed upon ancient Egypt'. Who is truly the good doctor? Not the person who heals the sick from their diseases, but rather the one who helps the person from becoming sick and sees to it that he maintains his health."

As Maimonides writes in one of his medical works, Essay on Human Conduct, "Most of the illnesses which befall man are his own fault, resulting from his ignorance of how to preserve his health – like a blind man who stumbles and hurts himself and even injures others in the process due to not having a sense of vision."

Prevention is better than cure – so how can we ensure prevention?

In this weeks Parasha the Bnei Yisrael take their first steps on a long journey out of Egypt. They are finally free to go and make their way to the Yam Suf. There, Hashem performs even greater miracles than the ten plagues, and the Egyptian army is miraculously wiped out entirely. Consequently the Bnei Yisrael let out a song of praise sung till today.

Imagine the euphoria! The entire people had witnessed miracle after miracle culminating with the splitting of the sea. Now they were to head for their next event – the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.



If we pause here, what would we expect next? Perhaps another miracle to bring the Bnei Yisrael closer to Mount Sinai, some more wonders?

The Torah relates otherwise.

"And Moshe made Israel journey from the Sea of Reeds and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. And they went for three days in the wilderness and did not find water. And they came to Marah [bitter] and were not able to drink water from Marah, because they were bitter; therefore its name was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moshe,

saying "What shall we drink?" (Shemot 15:22-24).

What a rude awakening! From the highs of the splitting of the sea to no drinking water? Surely that's the basics, why was Hashem not supplying them with drinking water?

Moshe cries out to Hashem and "Hashem instructed him about a tree which he cast into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He established for it [the nation] law and justice, and there He tested it. And He said: If you will surely hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and will do that which is right in His eyes, and you will give ear to His commandments and you will keep all His laws, then all the maladies which I have put upon the Egyptians I will not put upon you, for I am Hashem your Healer" (25-26).

The waters of freedom are bitter! Freedom, it seems, is not the magical, trouble-free existence they may have once imagined. It is demanding, and fraught with disappointments.

As a servant, they were provided their daily rations, they were to do the set job and finish the day. They then entered a new phase, one of freedom and euphoria in the midst of great miracles. But now they were entering the real world one in which freedom is demanding as well as pleasing. They will have to fend for themselves in the real world.

Now is the time to teach them two essential lessons that will aid them manoeuvre through their new existence. The first is that Hashem has the power to transform something bitter (water) using something bitter (tree), into something sweet.

Up to now the Bnei Yisrael had witnessed how Hashem can destroy the



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enemy, but what about using something bad to transform an object to good?

The Ibn Ezra notes the symmetry of comparing this miracle with the first of the Ten Plagues. Then, Hashem changed sweet water into blood whereas now Hashem shows that He can also turn bitter water sweet. Of course, this demonstrates Hashem's mastery over the forces of nature. The Midrash (Mechilta Beshalach) says that the tree itself was bitter, and only Hashem can use a bitter agent to turn the bitter sweet.

The people personally witnessed Hashem's Providence: Hashem is the same One Who not only punishes, but *rewards*;

He brings illness, but He is also the *Healer*; and He is the same One Who creates the bitter and then can make it *sweet*.

The second lesson being taught at Marah was the power of Torah.

There the Bnei Yisrael are taught some laws of Torah. (Sham Sam Loh Chok Umishpat...)

What is the connection between the sweetened water and Torah?

Our Sages explain that it is this Torah that gives power to make the bitter water sweet.

They must learn that it is only through the Torah – its commandments and laws – that their freedom will have meaning. Learning Torah isn't easy. As a beginner we look at the book with uncertainty and

it requires much effort at first to help us get on the right path.

The Torah at first is viewed with all its laws as bitter. It's tough keeping all the Mitzvot, it's tough learning. Yet once we start and attach ourselves to them, they become part of us, they help guide us in life and act as sweetener.

The soul contains elements of bitterness in the form of destructive passions, but the Torah, whose strictures often begin as bitter themselves, sweetens the waters of life. It provides a framework in which freedom can flourish responsibly, creatively and purposefully. When the Jewish people observe the Torah, Hashem enters into a partnership with them preventing troubles and showering them with healing blessings.



**RABBI YONI GOLKER**

Assistant Rabbi

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Sea Splitting Miracles...

In Everyday Life

Parashas B'shalach features the majestic story of the People of Israel crossing the Red Sea, and the great salvation of Israel from the Egyptians at the hands of the Al-mighty.

The ancient Israelites, who were on a spiritual high as they crossed through the sea on dry land, cry out to G-d (Exodus 15:11), "Who is like You, L-rd, among the mighty? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, inspiring in praises, doer of wonders?" They recognize G-d with clarity.

The verse reads: Israel saw the great Hand of Hashem. Rav Zilberstein explains in his masterful work Aleinu Leshabeach, that one way to enhance our children's faith and service of HaShem is to focus on all the miracles he does for us every moment, every day.

Rab Asher Weiss relates in his introduction to Maseches Pesachim the following story. One seder night, a father was explaining and describing to his family the 50 different miracles that occurred at the splitting at the sea, as described in the Meam Loez. His son turned to him and said, "Why are you so amazed by this? Isn't it obvious that the almighty who created the sea could split it?"

Like all good teachers, the father said "let me answer you with a parable". There was once an expert sculptor who sculpted a horse that was so lifelike no one could tell it wasn't a real horse! The sculptor put the horse on display for people to enjoy. The days went past and no one was stopping to admire his handiwork. Finally the sculptor approached a passer-by and asked him why is no one stopping to look at this beautiful piece of artwork? Isn't it breath-taking? So lifelike! The person responded "The horse looks so real, no one is interested in looking at it! it just looks like every other horse". A wise person then gave him an idea; cut your horse in half and then it will certainly draw people's attention!

Similarly explained the father, if we would be on the spiritual level to be moved by the very existence of the sea and all the miracles we witness on a daily basis, the rising sun, the birth of a child, a beautiful view, then Hashem would not have to had split the sea. Because we have become accustomed to take life's and its wonders for granted the Rambam explains, there was a need for the creator

of the world to show all of mankind who He is.

I remember, when I visited the Niagara Falls in Canada many years ago, I went on a trip on "the maid of the midst". It was a sensational boat ride around Niagara Falls to appreciate one of the world's most breath-taking natural wonders. I was with a group of friends and as we boarded, we noticed a blind woman on the tour too. I commented to a friend of mine, "Why would she pay for this? She can't even see anything!" As the trip progressed it became clear to me. She was enjoying it more than anyone else on board! She was listening to the crashing waves, feeling the cool mist over her body and the sheer delight on her face was obvious. Meanwhile I noticed a teenage boy sitting in the corner playing on his phone, missing one of the world's most amazing natural wonders! It was a real message to me. We all are guilty of behaving like that boy from time to time, not focusing on the wondrous world we live it and taking it all for granted.

In the period of the redemption we will all be on the level of this blind lady, we will clearly recognize the handiwork of Hashem and recognise each and every small miracle of life and understand that everything in this world is a masterful creation of Hashem as we read in Yeshayahu 11:9 "the earth will be as filled with knowledge of Hashem as water covering the seabed". May we merit it speedily in our days.

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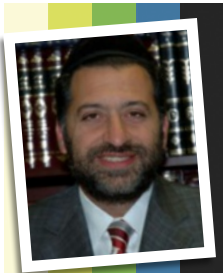
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Yona bat Esther | Shira Ilana bat Susan Shoshana Farha | Naomi bat Mazal | Sarah Chaya bat Blima Freida Myriam  
Leah bat Sarah | Rafael ben Rachel | Sarah Bat Rachel | Elisha Ben Ayala | Yoel ben Bracha



HALACHA  
RABBI ELI MANSOOR

### Is it Permissible to Move Utensils and Furniture Without a Reason on Shabbat?

In Hilchot Mukse, there is a category of objects classified as "Kli She'melachto L'heter"-utensils designated for permissible activity. A classic example would be plates, books and food, since the use of these items is permitted on Shabbat.

The Gemara states that these items may be used for a broad range of functions. Specifically, they may be handled and moved for three purposes:

1. "L'sorech Gufo"-their primary purpose. For example, using a cup for drinking.
2. "L'Sorech M'komo"-for its place. If the item is in the way, it may be moved to

make room for something else.

3. "Me'Hama L'Sel"-From sunlight to shade. That is, if the item was exposed to danger of being damaged or lost, it may be moved to safety.

Maran adds that within this category, food, drink and holy books are even more lenient and may be moved for no justification at all. The Poskim discuss what is the status of other items in this category, such as eating utensils, clothes and furniture. Is one permitted to randomly move a cup or chair, without one of the three purposes outlined by the Gemara? The Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 25:1), as understood by the Magged Mishna, rules that these other items, besides food and books, need a justification to be moved. This is indicated by Maran as well in Siman 308:4, and this is also the ruling of Hacham Ovadia and the Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909).

On the other side, the Shilteih Giborim does not make a distinction between the items and rules that these items may be moved without any need whatsoever. The Mishna Berura (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933), in his primary ruling, agrees with this. The Menuhat Ahaba (Rabbi Moshe Halevi, Israel, 1961-2001) is also lenient.

Halacha L'ma'aseh, the practical conclusion is that one should be stringent and not move utensil and furniture for no reason. Only food, drink and books may be moved without a justification.

It should be noted that the Poskim give expanded definitions of what is a justifiable purpose in moving these items. The Hazon Ish (Rav Abraham Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953) ruled that fidgeting with a fork to relieve nervous anxiety is also a valid justification. The Ben Ish Hai ruled that removing items from the table to make it more presentable is a valid justification, even though technically, the item was not in his way.

One can learn from this Halacha how serious the issue of Mukse is. Even "Kli She'melachto L'heter"-a utensil designated for permissible activity has restrictions on how it may be moved.

### SUMMARY

*Food, drink and holy books may be moved on Shabbat for no purpose whatsoever, whereas eating utensils and furniture may only be moved for a distinct purpose.*

*The Rabbi Jacob S. Kassin Memorial Halacha Series  
Authored by Rabbi Eli J. Mansour*



STORIES OF CHACHAMIM

### Rabbi Nathan David Rabinowitz The Rebbe Of Pertzover

The Rebbe Rabbi Nathan David Rabinowitz, from the Polish city of Pertzova, was a gaon in Torah and famous in his time. He was the son of the tzaddik Rabbi

Yitzchak Yaakov of Biala (from whom emerged the famous Biala dynasty, which exists to the present day), as well as the grandson of Rabbi Nathan David of Shidlovitz and the great-grandson of Rabbi Yerachmiel. He in turn was the firstborn son of the saintly Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak, the Yid HaKodesh (Holy Jew) of Pshischa, may his merit protect us all.

People could see that Rabbi Nathan David was from a noble line. From very early on in life, he spent many hours each day diligently studying Torah and Chassidut, completely separated from the vanities of this world. In fact it was said that he didn't even know what a coin looked like.

Rabbi Nathan David devoted himself not only to the revealed Torah. He also possessed an extensive and clear understanding of the hidden Torah, and many Kabbalists of his time came to study with him late at night. He wrote many books on Kabbalah, but unfortunately the world did not merit to see them. These books were lost forever, a fact that he bitterly regretted for his entire life. Rabbi Nathan David often described himself as being the root of the soul of the saintly Rabbi David of Lelov. As it turned out, Rabbi Nathan David passed away on Rabbi David's yahrtzeit, Shevat 7, dying in the prime of his life. May his merit protect us all.

MAZAL TOV TO: Stephane Abecassis & Sonia Benouaich on their engagement

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# SEDER TU BISHVAT

FRIDAY EVENING THE 10TH FEBRUARY & SHABBAT 11TH FEBRUARY 2017.

THE MISHNA RELATES 4 NEW YEARS:

THE 1ST OF NISSAN: THE NEW YEAR OF KINGS AND FESTIVALS,  
THE 1ST OF ELLUL : THE NEW YEAR FOR THE TITHING OF CATTLE  
THE 1ST OF TISHRI : ROSH HASHANA

THE 15TH OF SHEVAT: ROSH HASHANAH LAILANOT (THE NEW YEAR FOR TREES).

THIS IS WHEN THE SAP OF THE TREES BEGINS TO RISE SYMBOLISING A FRESH START AND GROWTH.

THERE IS A CUSTOM TO HAVE 15 FRUITS. THERE IS A SPECIAL ORDER IN SAYING THE BLESSINGS FOR THE FRUIT AND WE START BY EMPHASISING THE SEDER WITH THE SEVEN FRUITS (SHEVA MINIM) WHICH THE TORAH PRAISES THE LAND OF ISRAEL FOR.

"ERETZ CHITAH, USEORAH, VEGEFEN UTEANAH, VERIMON, ERETZ ZEIT SHEMEN UDEVASH - A LAND OF WHEAT, BARLEY, GRAPES, FIGS, POMEGRANATES, A LAND OF OLIVE OIL AND HONEY [DATES]" (DEUTERONOMY 8:8).



## 1 WHEAT חיטה

We start with cakes made with wheat flower.  
Wheat appears 30 times in the Torah. Wheat has always been the main food for human beings.  
Before eating we say:  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני מזונות  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Minei Mezonot



## 2 WINE י"י

This blessing can be made on grape juice or wine.  
Wine features at every Jewish simcha, be it a wedding, Brit Mila, Yom Tov or Shabbat Kiddush. Wine represents wisdom, the older the wine the more valuable. We become wise over time due to the Torah and experiences we have accumulated in our lives.  
Before drinking wine or grape juice, we recite:  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Peri Hagefen



## 3 OLIVE זית

Olives were crushed to extract the olive oil that was used to light the Menorah (in the Temple) and consecration of Kings and High Priests. It is the purest of oils and burns brightest. Mix oil with another substance and it will float to the top. The Jewish nation is connected to the other nations of the world, yet we are separate and when we follow G-d's command, we can reach the top.  
Before saying the blessing over the olives have in mind all other fruits that grow on trees. This insures no further Ha'etz need be said.  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Peri Ha'etz



## 4 DATE תמר

Dates are special in that sweet honey can be made from them. The honey in the Biblical reference of "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Shemot 3:8) is date honey, not bees honey!



## 5 GRAPES גפן

Grapes were used mainly for the production of wine, although they were also eaten fresh and dried. Grapes represent fertility. Invei Hagefen Veinvei Hagefen.



## 6 FIG תאנה

The Midrash says figs leaves were used to cover the nakedness of Adam and Chava after their sin.



## 7 POMEGRANATE רימון

At the bottom of the Kohen Gadol's robe were intermittent decorative "Pomegranates" with golden bells placed in between.  
"Its sound shall be heard when he enters into the Holy area before G-d". The Song of Songs twice uses pomegranate imagery [4:3, 6:7]. Pomegranates represent Torah & (613) Mitzvot.



## 8 VEGETABLES

Now it's time to enjoy any fruit you like. Before eating a vegetable grown from the ground as opposed to a fruit from a tree, we say:  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Peri Ha'adama



## 9 BARLEY שעורה

Eating barley products would normally come after Wheat above.  
Since it may not feature as part of your 15 fruits, some have the custom to drink beer produced from fermented barley. If the blessing over wine (Hagefen) has not been recited then we would recite the following:  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שהכל נהיה בדברו  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Shehakol Nihyah Bidvaro



## 10 FOR A NEW FRUIT

If a new fruit of the harvest of the year is to be tasted, we recite the blessing: She'Hecheyanu  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שהכניסנו ונקיטנו לזמן הזה  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- She-heche-yanu, Ve-ki-y'manu, Ve-higi-yanu La-z'man Ha-zeh.



## 11 SMELLING FRAGRANT FRUITS

When taking a fruit (e.g Etrog not on Sukkot) in order to benefit from its smell and not to eat, then if it's edible and gives off a strong smell (from the fruit and not from the peel) we recite the blessing:  
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם הנותן ריח טוב בפירות  
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Hanoten Reich Tov Baperot

TAL wishes you Chag Tu Bishvat Sameach