**Kol simcha torah gazette**

**For parshas Beshalach 5784**

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**Tu B’Shevat**



This coming Thursday is Tu B’Shevat, the Rosh Hashanah / New Year’s Day for trees. (This designation has Halachic consequences for tree owners and buyers of fruit.)

R’ Zvi Yehuda Kook z”l (1891-1982; Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav in Yerushalayim) writes about trees: The Gemara (Shabbat 88a) states, “Hashem created the world conditionally. If Bnei Yisrael will accept the Torah, Creation will endure. If not, Hashem will return the world to Tohu Va’vohu / astonishing emptiness.” [Until here from the Gemara.]

Thus, by studying and observing Torah, one becomes Hashem’s partner in the Creation of nature. For this reason, man, especially the righteous person, is likened to a tree (Devarim 20:19; Tehilim 92:13).

R’ Kook continues: We learn in Pirkei Avot (Ch.3), “One who walks on the road while reviewing a Torah lesson, but interrupts his review and exclaims, ‘How beautiful is this tree! How beautiful is this plowed field!’–Scripture considers it as if he has forfeited his soul.” [Until here from the Mishnah.]

**The Sin is to Detach the Beauty**

**of Nature from the Torah**

The Mishnah is not teaching us to ignore nature’s beauty, R’ Kook writes. Indeed, there is a Berachah to be said on a flowering tree. The Mishnah is speaking of someone who “interrupts” his learning, i.e., he detaches the beauty of nature from the Torah, seeing nature as a separate entity.

The sage who taught the just-quoted Mishnah, Rabbi Yaakov, teaches later in Pirkei Avot (ch.4), “This world is but a corridor leading to the main hall,” i.e., the World-to-Come. He is teaching: Do not see this world and nature as separate from Olam Ha’ba and Torah.

They are but a continuum, and the light of Olam Ha’ba and Torah can reflect back upon, and illuminate this world and nature so that we see Hashem in it. (Le’netivot Yisrael)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Beshalach 5784 email of R’ Yedidye Hirtenfeld’s parsha sheet for the Young Israel of Midwood in Brooklyn, NY.*

**Parsha Thoughts**

*And they were very fearful, and the Children of Israel cried out* (Ex. 14:10)

The reason the Children of Israel cried out was the fact that "they were fearful." It disturbed them greatly that they were afraid of the mortal Egyptians, rather than only of G-d. *(Ma'or VaShemesh)*

*And the people quarreled with Moses and they said*, "Give us water" (Ex. 17:2)

Why was it considered a sin to have asked for water? What else could the Jews in the desert have been expected to do when their supply ran out? However, the Torah states, "And there was no water for the people to drink, and the people quarreled with Moses"; only later are we informed "and the people thirsted there for water." From this we learn that they started arguing with Moses even before they became thirsty. *(Chidushei HaRim)*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Beshalach 5761/2001 edition of L’Chaim.*

**Rav Avigdor Miller on is it Wrong to Daven to Hashem For a Million Dollars**

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## QUESTION: Is there anything wrong with me davening to Hashem that He should give me a million dollars?

## ANSWER: It depends what you’ll do with a million dollars. Ordinarily it’s a nuisance to have a million dollars. Once you get a million dollars then your life is no longer a life. You’re a slave to your money. You have to take care of your property. You have no menuchah. A poor man goes to sleep at night and nobody bothers him. A rich man is always on the go.

However, if you want a million dollars in order to build a big yeshivah, then pray for a million dollars, yes. If that’s what you want it for, absolutely.

If you pray for other things, it’s surely good. הרחב פיך means you should open your mouth wide and ask for everything. Who says only a million dollars is good?  Open your mouth and say, “Ribono Shel Olam, help me know a whole mesichta. I would love to know Bava Kama from the beginning to the end.” Wouldn’t that be a glorious thing to know Bava Kama? And maybe Bava Metzia too? Maybe Bava Basra too? Do you know what a happiness it would be if you knew three mesichtas from the beginning to the end? You’re a real millionaire. Nobody could compare to you.

So first pray for one perek. Ask Hashem that He should help you to know one perek perfectly. Then you’ll know another perek and another one and little by little maybe you’ll become a millionaire in Torah.

You should pray to have good children too. Make sure to pray for everything. And if you pray for a million dollars too, it’s no cheit. Only you have to know that in case it happens it’s not such a simple matter. You have to expect a great deal of complications.

*Reprinted from a recent email of Toras Avigdor adapted from Tape #E-15 (June 1995))*

**Torah Thoughts that Count for Our Parsha**

*And the Children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt* (Ex. 13:18)

Nowhere in the Torah does it state that the Jews used weapons to defend themselves against the Egyptians. All we are told is that "the Children of Israel cried out to G-d." Concerning this, as the Chozeh of Lublin used to say that the Jewish people left Egypt armed with their traditional "weapon" of choice: their prayers and supplications to G-d.

And he made ready his chariot (Ex. 14:6)

Our Sages tell us that Pharaoh was so intent on pursuing the Jews that he readied his horse and chariot himself, even though it was considered beneath him to attend to such mundane matters. He was so consumed by the desire to bring them back that he was willing to forgo his honor as a king. Pharaoh realized that without the Jews he would no longer have any political power in Egypt; in fact, his authority was derived from subjugating and oppressing them, thereby bolstering his standing among his own people. Unfortunately, this has also been the tactic of other anti-Semitic leaders throughout history. *(Siftei Kohen)*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Beshalach 5761/2001 edition of L’Chaim.*

**The Lesson of Joseph and**

**Our Obligation to Help**

**“Other” Struggling Jews**

**From the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, we find the verse "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him." When the Jews left Egypt in the Exodus, they fulfilled the oath they had made to Joseph and brought his casket to the Land of Israel for reburial. "G-d will surely remember you," Joseph had made them promise, "and you shall carry up my bones from here."

**Seems Somewhat Odd and Even Unnecessarily Strident**

At first glance, the Torah's repeated use of the word "bones" (atzmot in Hebrew) in connection to a tzadik (righteous person) seems somewhat odd and even unnecessarily strident. Why doesn't the Torah refer more respectfully to Joseph's "remains" or his "coffin"? The answer, as will be explained, is that the Hebrew expression "atzmot" has special significance.

The word "atzmot" is an allusion to "atzmiyut," meaning "essence." In the same way that a person's bones constitute the strength of his physical body, the phrase "the bones of Joseph" refers to Joseph's unique and powerful character. When the Torah tells us that Moses carried the "bones" of Joseph, it means that he took the essence of Joseph with him into the desert.

This "essence of Joseph" is alluded to in his name, as his mother Rachel declared when he was born: "And she called his name Joseph, saying, G-d will add to me another son (acher)." The function of Joseph is to "add" Jewish sons, and not just any sons, but even those who have fallen to the level of "acher," meaning "other." This essence of Joseph can restore even the most estranged Jew into a son of the Holy One, blessed be He.

**The Indestructible Bond**

When the Children of Israel left Egypt they became a nation, acquiring the status of G-d's "sons." The bond between a father and son is indestructible; no matter how far the son may roam, he will always remain his father's child. When Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt, he utilized this special ability of Joseph to transform even an "other" into G-d's rightful "son."

We see this illustrated at the end of this week's portion, when the Torah describes how Amalek attacked the Jews at a place called Refidim. Amalek deliberately targeted those who were "weak" in faith and deed, and were "straggling behind" the rest of the Jewish camp. Nonetheless, Moses sent Joshua to fight Amalek, and even the weakest Jews were saved.

Indeed, we are promised that when Moshiach comes, not even one Jew will be left behind in exile. All Jews will be G-d's "sons," and together we will enter the Messianic era.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Beshalach 5761/2001 edition of L’Chaim. Adapted from Volume 26 of Likutei Sichot.*

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“Then Moshe and Bnei Yisrael sang . . .” (15:1) Midrash Mechilta states: Even nursing babies stopped feeding and sang along. [Until here from the Midrash] R’ Yitzchak Arieli z”l (1896-1974; Mashgiach of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; author of Enayim La’mishpat) explains:

Our Sages teach in several Midrashim that there are ten different levels of Shirah / song. The highest-level song will be sung at the time of the future redemption. What defined the song sung after the splitting of the Yam Suf?

R’ Arieli answers: This song resulted from a spiritual experience so powerful that all people–great and small–sang the same song, word-for-word. “Moshe and Bnei Yisrael sang,” says the verse, and Midrash Mechilta comments: “Moshe was equivalent to all of Yisrael, and all of Yisrael was equivalent to Moshe.” This song emanated from the soul, not from the intellect. Thus, even babies “sang.” (Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha’geulah)

*Reprinted from this week’s whY I Matter parsha sheet for the Young Israel of Midwood.*

**The Yissachar-Zevulun Partnership**

**By Rabbi Hillel Raskin**

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**Rabbi Hillel Raskin**

What are the rules for creating a Yissachar-Zevulun partnership? In Moshe Rabbeinu’s blessings to the shevatim, he said, “Rejoice, Zevulun, in your departure, and Yissachar, in your tents.” Rashi explains that these two shevatim formed a partnership — Zevulun would venture out into the sea to make money, and they would support Yissachar, who studied Torah.

This arrangement is not a form of tzedaka but rather a bona fide partnership. As the Midrash explains, they shared their livelihood and also shared the reward for the Torah study.

The Alter Rebbe rules that one who can’t learn full-time should learn as much as he can, and for the rest of the day, he should do business so he can support Torah scholars. In this way, it will be considered as if he learned the entire day, and the Torah study he enables is attributed to him.

The Luvavitcher Rebbe explains that each individual has his specific shlichus in the world, and Hashem ordained that one person should be involved in business and the other one be immersed in Torah study. Support earns shared merit specifically in the Torah study going forward, by enabling the study to happen. Conversely, the merit of past Torah study isn’t something that can be “sold.”

While some poskim require a stipulation to form the partnership, others hold the support itself is sufficient, and so is implied from the above Alter Rebbe. Though some poskim actually formulated a written contract, it isn’t really necessary. To reap the deal’s full benefits, some poskim require the arrangement to include providing the Torah scholars with fifty percent of all profits or at least supporting the Torah scholar with his financial needs.

But most poskim hold that partial support can still be considered a lower-ratio partnership. In any case, any form of support is a great mitzva, even if it doesn’t have the special advantage of the Yissachar-Zevulun partnership.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bo 5784 edition of The Weekly Farbrengen. Rabbi Raskin is Rov of Anash in Petach Tikva, Israel.*

**An Explanation of the**

**Yissachar - Zevulun Relationship**

**By Daniel Keren**



**Rabbi Eli Reisman**

One of the featured speakers at the recent December 25th Hakhel Legal Day Yarchei Kallah Event in Flatbush was Rabbi Eli Reisman, Rosh Chabura, Kollel Hora’ah of Torah Vodaas. The topic of his lecture was a look into “The Yissachar Zevulun Relationship.”

Rabbi Reisman began by noting that the inyan (the subject) of the Yissachar-Zevulun relationship or partnership can be found in Rambam’s Hilchos Talmud Torah. No matter where one positions oneself, there is an obligation for every Jewish man to fulfill the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, studying Hashem’s holy Torah.

**A Way to Fulfill One’s Obligation to Learn Torah**

But what if the person is incapable of learning Torah (either because he doesn’t know how to learn Torah or he is too busy to do so.) He can nevertheless fulfill his obligation for the mitzvah of Talmud Torah by financially supporting a Torah scholar, and thereby allowing this Torah scholar (Yissachar) to more easily learn without financial worries and thus become an even greater scholar, he becomes a Zevulun.

One cannot pay someone for the zechus (the merit) of Torah that was already learned. Rabbi Reisman said that you as a potential Zevulun can only get the mitzvah for supporting someone else to learn Torah as a Yissachar in the future. There is something unique in having a share in this type of Talmud Torah.

One cannot obtain a share in the mitzvah of putting on tefillin or in waving a lulav and esrog by paying for a pair of expensive phylacteries or lulav set for another person to utilize and get a share in that person’s mitzvah and thereby exempt himself from performing that same mitzvah.

In Parshas Zos Berachos, Moshe Rabbeinu mentions Zevulon before Yissochar which appears to show the importance of the donor over the recipient. They share the reward of Yissochar’s Torah learning equally.

**Part Time Options to Support Torah Learning**

Rabbi Reisman brought up the question about whether someone can establish a Zevulon Yissachar relationship by offering to pay a Torah scholar for two hours a day of his Torah learning. Is this a worthwhile venture? Some poskim (Torah halachic scholars) say yes and others disagree. Rav Chaim Volozner strongly writes on the topic that for a Yissochar (Torah scholar) to refuse such a limited request of a Zevulun is emulating the evil middos (character trait) of the wicked citizens of Sodom.

The concept of the Zevulon-Yissochar partnership is not tzedokah (charity). You cannot become a Zevulon (Torah supporter) by paying out from your maisah money. It is rather a business deal. Similarly, a Zevulun-Yissochar relationship is not limited to chomesh (20%) of one’s income, because it is not a matter of tzedokah, but rather is in the realm of an actual business investment.

*Reprinted from the January 26, 2024 edition of The Jewish Connection.*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Beshalach 5784**



The centerpiece of this week's parsha is naturally the great song of Moses and of the Jewish people after their moment of deliverance from Pharaoh and the flooding sea. This song of Moses and of Israel is repeated daily throughout the centuries of Jewish life in our morning prayer service.

The exultation of the moment is still retained and felt many generations later in the unmatched prose and poetry written in the Torah. What makes this song unique is that there is no reference to human bravery, to the courage of the Jewish people in plunging into the sea or to the leadership of Moses and Aaron in shepherding the Jewish people through this crisis. Rather, the entire poem/song is a paean of praise and appreciation dedicated to the G-d of Israel.

G-d operates, so to speak, through human beings and world events. Many times, His presence is hidden from our sight. Sometimes it is even willfully ignored. In later victories and triumphs of the Jewish people and of Israel, it is the human element that helps fashion those victories and triumphs that is acknowledged and celebrated.

But here in the song of Moses and Israel we have an acknowledgement of G-d's great hand without ascribing any credit to human beings and natural and social forces. I think that this is perhaps the one facet that makes this song so unique. Compare it to the song of Deborah, which forms the haftora to this week's parsha. In that song the prophetess assigns a great deal of credit to the armed forces of Israel, to Barack its general, and even to Deborah herself, a fact that does not escape the notice of the rabbis of the Talmud. No such self-aggrandizement appears in the song of Moses and Israel at Yam Suf.

This is completely in line with the character of Moses who is described in the Torah as being the most humble and self-effacing of all human beings. There is no question that without Moses there would not have been an exodus from Egypt nor salvation of Israel on the shores of the Yam Suf. But it would be completely out of character for Moses to assign any of the credit for these enormous and miraculous achievements to himself or his actions and leadership.

Thus, the greatest of leaders and the most gifted of prophets attains that championship of leadership and prophecy by downplaying his role. Moses is well aware of his greatness and his unique relationship with the G-d of Israel. He is not naïve enough to think of himself as a plain ordinary human being. To do so would really be a form of ersatz humility. But he is wise enough to realize that this exalted status that he has attained is little more than a gift that G-d has bestowed upon him.

From the beginning of his leadership career, when he attempted to refuse becoming the leader of Israel till his last days on earth, he retains this innate humility, which allows him to be the strongest of leaders and most courageous of prophets. There is a lesson in this for all later generations and for all of us that aspire to positions of leadership and importance. That is why this song of Moses and Israel is repeated daily in Jewish life.

Shabbat shalom

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

**Why I Am Suing Harvard**

**By**[**Shabbos Kestenbaum**](https://aish.com/authors/486116431)

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**Shabbos Kestenbaum**

In a poignant moment captured in Helen Mirren's portrayal of Golda Meir, Israel's first female Prime Minister, Meir recounted to US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger the harrowing experiences of growing up Jewish in Ukraine:

“My father would board up the windows of our house to protect us from Cossacks who would get drunk and attack Jews. My father would hide us in the cellar… My father’s face, Henry, I will never forget that look. All he wanted to do was to protect his children. I am not that little girl hiding in the cellar!”

While the circumstances faced by American Jewry today do not mirror the brutal pogroms of Eastern Europe, one thing has remained constant throughout Jewish history: experiencing antisemitism.

**An Onslaught of Antisemitic Incidents**

**in Institutions of Higher Learning**

Since Hamas’s brutal terror attack on October 7th, culminating in the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, there has been an onslaught of antisemitic incidents across the world, and in particular, in institutions of higher learning.

Rather than act as beacons of intellectual rigor and debate, too many universities have become engaged with, and have often promoted, vitriolic hatred towards Jewish people.

To that end, I, along with five other classmates, have filed a lawsuit against one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the United States – Harvard University. This legal action signifies a pivotal moment in the ongoing struggle against antisemitism, challenging its presence even within the hallowed halls of academia.

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***Harvard has allowed an atmosphere of antisemitism to fester within its academic community, creating an environment that is hostile to Jewish students.***

Our decision to pursue legal recourse against Harvard is not taken lightly. It is a response to a deeply ingrained issue that goes beyond mere disagreements or differences of opinion. The plaintiffs, me being one of them, argue that Harvard has allowed an atmosphere of antisemitism to fester within its academic community, creating an environment that is hostile to Jewish students.

[Former Harvard President Claudine Gay](https://aish.com/claudine-gays-resignation-and-the-increase-of-antisemitism-at-harvard/) exacerbated the already-existing climate of hatred towards Jews. Indeed, we plaintiffs are from a broad coalition, representing different schools, departments, and areas of study at Harvard, further underscoring how widespread the problem has become.

**Harvard’s Unwillingness to**

**Discipline Student Immersed in Hate**

Be it professors who cancel classes to encourage students to demand Palestine be freed “from the river to the sea,” being yelled to “globalize the intifada” on my way to classrooms, the drawing of swastikas across campus, Harvard’s unwillingness to discipline students immersed in hate or the many other offenses alleged in our [lawsuit](https://www.kasowitz.com/media/unxcnvpo/harvard-complaint.pdf), we hope that this lawsuit gives a voice to all those who have been on the receiving end of hatred, bigotry, and discrimination.

One striking example that stands out is the continued employment of Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz. Three Jewish Israeli students enrolled in his Organizing: People, Power, Change course, decided to create a presentation centered around uniting factions within Israeli society. The professor repeatedly insisted they change their presentation, taking issue with the phrase “Jewish democracy,” and compared the project to white supremacy. Ganz went even further and threatened unspecified “consequences” if the Jewish students would not acquiesce to his demands.

Although Professor Ganz was found to have intentionally discriminated against three Jewish Israeli students, he has not only retained a teaching position, but Harvard recently published a glowing online article, praising the professor’s work in organizing and civil rights.

**Urging Universities to Fulfill their Legal Obligations**

This lawsuit forces Harvard to not only be held to account for its actions, but also calls for introspection and action, urging universities to fulfill their legal obligations of equal protection, as well as actively foster an inclusive and respectful environment for all students, regardless of their religious or ethnic background.

Specifically, the lawsuit calls on Harvard to enforce its school policies in taking action against students who violate the school code of conduct and fulfill its legal obligations and federal mandates under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

**A Long and Painful History of Antisemitism**

Antisemitism, in its various forms, has a long and painful history. From the ghettos of medieval Europe to the horrors of the Holocaust, Jews have faced discrimination, persecution, and violence. The resilience of the Jewish people has been tested time and again, yet the fight against antisemitism continues to be an uphill battle.

Those of us taking a stand against Harvard's alleged antisemitism are a reminder that the fight for justice and equality is a collective effort, transcending individual experiences to create a better future for all.

As Jewish people, we must remain steadfast; we are not that little girl hiding in the cellar.

*Reprinted from the January 21, 2024 website of aish.com*