

INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA

Parashat Beha'alotekha

Flesh or Spirit?

by Rabbi Alex Israel

INTRODUCTION - The Book of Bemidbar.

If asked to summarize the theme of the book of Bemidbar (Numbers), I would say that it is essentially a description of the Israelites' journey from Mount Sinai to the border of the promised land. At first glance, it would not seem to be a particularly tortuous or lengthy voyage. The route on which they embarked was known to take only eleven days (see Devarim 1:2). But in reality, it took the Israelites forty years. What happened? Why did an eleven day journey take forty years? What stalled the process? A series of explosive incidents, rebellions against man and God (the episode of the spies, the revolt of Korach) transformed and reversed the process. Rather than marching swiftly and triumphantly from Sinai to Canaan, the journey to Canaan became protracted, lengthy and at times painful. The entry into the promised land was postponed. Only in the final, fortieth year in the wilderness did God finally command the Israelites to leave the desert and to make their way, a second time, to the border of Eretz Yisrael. So, let us redefine our definition. The Book of Bemidbar is not just an account of the voyage to the promised land. In truth it is a story about TWO journeys to Eretz Yisrael - the land of Israel. The first journey collapsed. The second succeeded and resulted in the Israelite conquest of Canaan. It is against this historical perspective that we might be able to chart - obviously in a rather simplistic way - the structure of the Book of Bemidbar: Ch. 1-10 The initial journey to the promised land (in the 2nd year).[1] Ch. 11-19 Crisis and rebellion in the camp. The failure of the journey. Ch. 20-36 The second voyage to Canaan (40th year) and preparations for entering the land.

Bemidbar describes the initial journey, its failure, and the second - successful - journey which resulted in the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. Between these two journeys, are ten chapters which tell us of the failures, the scandalous episodes which sabotaged the first expedition leading it to failure and collapse. In our class this week, we shall look at the first of these incidents. We shall study together the episode of the "lusting" of the Israelites for meat, examining the actions of the Israelites, Moses, and God, and of course, the implications of those actions.

CRAVING MEAT In our parasha, Chapter 10 witnesses the events as Israel leave Mt. Sinai and embark on their auspicious expedition to the Land of Israel. We are given full details of the signaling system - the trumpets and clouds of fire - which would initiate travel or encampment (9:15 - 10:10). Moses extends an invitation to his father-in-law to accompany them on their voyage "to the place of which the Lord has said, 'I will give it to you.'" (11:29). We watch the camp set off towards Eretz

Yisrael: "In the second year, on the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle... and the Israelites set out on their journey... They marched from the mountain of the Lord a distance of three days, the ark of the Lord travelling in front of them ... "(10:11,33) All would seem to be fine until, suddenly, unexpectedly, a cry erupts in the camp. The simple complaint spreads like wild-fire. As we shall see, one trouble generates another, until the whole thing escalates into a full scale crisis and begins to spin out of control.

The first installment in this episode is the people's desire for meat: "The rabble in their midst felt a gluttonous craving, and the Israelites wept and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic. Now our souls are dried out. There is nothing at all! Nothing but this manna to look to! Now the manna was like coriander seed... The people would go about and gather it, grind it... boil it in a pot or make it into cakes. It tasted like rich cream. When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall upon it. Moses heard the people weeping, every family apart, each person at the entrance of his tent. The Lord was very angry, and in Moses' eyes, it was evil." (11:4-10) Moses responds somewhat uncharacteristically with a collapse of self confidence. He hands in his resignation to God!

"Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you dealt ill with your servant ... that you have laid the burden of this people upon me? ... Where am I to give meat to all this people when they whine before me saying "Give us meat to eat!" I cannot carry this people by myself for it is too much for me. If you will deal thus with me, kill me rather, I beg you, and let me see no more of my wretchedness.'" (11:10-15) God has no plans to let Moses resign. Rather, he comes up with an alternative: "Then the Lord said to Moses,"

"Gather me seventy of Israel's elders... and bring them to the Tent of Meeting and let them take their place there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit that is on you and I shall put it upon them; they shall share the burden of the people with you, and you shall not bear it alone. And say to the people...

tomorrow you shall eat meat... You shall eat meat not one day, not two, not even five days, or ten or twenty, but an entire month until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. For you have rejected the Lord who is among you crying and saying 'Oh, why did we ever leave Egypt!'" (11:16- 20)

And then this is how it all happens: "Moses went out and reported God's words to the people. He gathered seventy of the people's elders and stationed them around the Tent. Then the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke to him; He drew upon the spirit that was on him (Moses) and put it upon the seventy elders. And when the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in prophecy and did not cease... Moses then re-entered the camp together with the seventy elders of Israel. A wind from the Lord started up and swept quail from the sea and strewed them over the camp, an area covering about a

day's journey in either direction, all around the camp and some two cubits deep on the ground. The people set to gathering quail all that day and night and all the next day - even he who gathered least had ten "omers" - and they spread them all around the camp. The meat was still between their teeth... when the anger of the Lord blazed forth against the people and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague. The place was called Kivrat Ha-ta'ava (the graves of the lusting) because the people who had a craving were buried there." (11:24-34)

SOME QUESTIONS Many questions shout to us from the text as we read exasperated, this incredible story of desire for meat, increased prophecy, Moses' desperation, God's anger. Maybe the first thing that we should note is the unusual joining of what might be considered to be two separate stories. On the one hand, we have a story about a mad craving for meat. The people are restless with only manna to eat and they want an alternative. God gives a solution by sending the quails and punishes them with a plague. This is the first "story." The next story, related but still distinct, is the crisis of leadership felt by Moses. In a very uncharacteristic mood of desperation, Moses, the great defender of Israel seems to crumble under the pressures of the leadership role that he has so ably held since before the great Exodus. He expresses a total rejection of his leadership position. The solution is to involve another seventy elders in the leadership. This is the second "story."

Now, these stories are connected but they are hardly a single narrative. One episode transpires in the heart of the Israelite "camp" and around its periphery. The other episode happens in the place of man-God communication - the Tent of Meeting. One is about the people. The other is an inleadership issue. There is no good reason to mix the stories, but strangely the Torah text chooses to intersperse the stories as if they were one. Why? Are these stories a single story, or are they indeed two separate and distinct happenings? However, there are other questions which might trouble us here. Why does Moses collapse at this point in such an extreme manner? As we have noted, Moses is the classic defender of his people, always deferring the wrath of God against his people and standing up for them [2]. What changed? Is there something about this sin in particular that makes Moses lose heart? Why does Moses act in such an uncharacteristic fashion? And for that matter, what prompts such an unbounded desire for meat on the part of the people. We see them collect huge mounds of meat. Why now? Why does this craving arrive at this particular juncture in the story of the journey to the promised land?

One final question. How did seventy prophesying elders assist Moses in his crisis of confidence? We do not see them take up leadership roles. They do not become a parliament, or a public committee. We simply see them bestowed with the gift of prophecy, or more accurately, they are bestowed with prophecy by virtue of Moses' exceptional spiritual power. How did this change Moses' feelings of leadership loneliness, desperation and inability to cope?

MEAT AND MANNA Let us begin with an examination of the people's complaint.

"The rabble in their midst felt a gluttonous craving, and the Israelites wept and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic. Now our souls are dried out. There is nothing at all! Nothing but this manna to look to!'"

The complaint raises a contrast or comparison between meat and manna. This is not simply a comparison between two foods. It is really a historical comparison too, for this episode reminds us of a similar story that occurred a year earlier when the Israelites were a month out of Egypt. There we read:

"The whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron... 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death!' And the Lord said, 'I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out each day to gather that day's portion... The house of Israel named it manna.'" (Exodus 17:1-4,31)

The stories are very similar. The story in Exodus talks about hunger and God's miraculous solution for that hunger. It also talks about quails [3]. But the differences are crucial. In the Exodus story, God doesn't get angry, and Moses doesn't lose his cool. In fact the entire episode is conducted in a calm manner, as if God was just waiting for the people to ask, to formally present them with their desert food, the manna. Why then, in our case - in the lusting for meat of the nation - does God get so furious? Why does Moses get so distressed? [4]

I think that it is precisely because we are now a year later that the second incident is seen as so serious. A year earlier, the Israelites were a slave nation fresh out of Egypt. They were used to being fed by their masters. They found it difficult to fend for themselves. Their plea for food was justified. But now, a year later, after the revelation of Sinai, after the miracles, after the Tabernacle, the people are very different. They have matured and grown. They now have national leaders and systems of government: princes of tribes, judges, and other systems of government. They have formed themselves into a nation. They should have more patience. They should have a more sophisticated way of coping with a problem of this sort.

Furthermore, the cries for food in Exodus are justified. A month out of Egypt, their food provisions fully spent, the people simply had no food. They were justified in their complaint. But here, a year later, they DO have food. They have the manna. The verses deliberately stress this. The verse tells us how the manna was a wonderful food that could be "baked" or "boiled." It tasted like "rich cream." Do the Israelites have a right to complain so bitterly, to weep and cry for meat? Are these the correct priorities? Is there no food, or is the problem that "our souls are dried out" as the verse indicates? Is the problem in their stomachs or their souls?

But, there is also the spiritual dimension. The people should be aware by now that God can provide for them. He has done so in the past. Do they have to wail and bemoan the fact that they left Egypt? Are they willing, after all this time, after Sinai, after receiving the Torah, to really return to Egypt for some meat?

REVERSING THE PROCESS In the text, the comparison between manna and meat becomes more acute, if we compare the way that the two are gathered.

"The people gathered quail all that day and night and all the next day - even he who gathered least had ten "omers" of quail." (11:32) In the text it is portrayed as an immensely powerful urge, compulsive and unstoppable. This extreme impression of the behavior of the nation when they get their meat - a landing of quails all around the camp precinct [6] - is clear from the text. They collect the meat in a crazed, obsessive manner, a frantic hysteria gripping the Israelite camp.

The food that they rejected however, was the manna. This food is also gathered and it too is measured by the "omer" measure. When we read of the gathering of the manna, it is described thus: "Gather as much of it as each of you requires to eat, an 'omer' measure per person.... The Israelites did so, some gathering much, some little, but when they measured it by the 'omer,' he who had gathered more had no excess and he who had gathered little had no deficiency: they had gathered as much as they needed to eat" (Ex. 16:16-18) The manna is the expression of a different mindset.

It is a mindset of control and limitation rather than frenzied passion. With the manna, somehow, everyone received according to his need. They gathered more or less and it always amounted to an "omer" measure. With the manna, everyone gathered only what they needed, not what they desired. And it was always enough. With the quails, nothing was enough, for they were propelled by an insatiable lusting. The desire for meat is a symptom of a way of thinking which is not Jewish.

It is a pagan expression of lust for physical gratification, a gratification which will never reach its fulfillment. This is a mindset alien to Judaism. Maybe, this is the reason why these bitter cries are viewed so harshly by the Torah. The people are on their way to Israel, marching to the promised land, and in the midst of all of that, they desire to return to Egypt! What are they requesting? They are requesting a reversal of the historical process! How have they lost the vision of the future? Through a simple desire. This lusting, en route to Eretz Yisrael, was a serious thing indeed. Maybe it is the timing which is the source of Moses' great frustration, and God's anger. If after the miracles of the Exodus, after Sinai, after Torah, after the Tabernacle, the people can be so drawn by a mad rush for sensual pleasure, halting the journey to the promised land to cry for meat, then are these people ever going to learn?

ONE STORY OR TWO? So far, we have examined the meat-manna connection.

We have also proposed an explanation for Moses' disillusionment and God's fury, but we still must explain the role of the elders in all this. Maybe the key to understanding the central message of the story is to solve the question that we raised earlier. Is this one story or is it two distinct episodes? When comparing the language of the two stories so neatly intertwined by the Biblical text, we note a number of words which run through both stories linking them together. A clear "connection" of this sort can be found in the following parallel usage of the word "sevivot" - around:

"He gathered seventy of the people's elders and stationed them AROUND (sevivot) the Tent." (v.24) With the quails, God, "strewed them over the camp, all AROUND (sevivot) the camp." (v.31) But this is just the beginning. One word seems to appear as a central word throughout both stories. It is the verb, "ASAF" - to gather. Let us see. v.16 "God said to Moses, 'GATHER me seventy elders.'" v.22 "Could all the fish in the sea be GATHERED for them to suffice them?" v.24 "He GATHERED seventy men of the elders of the community..." v.30 "Moses was GATHERED into the camp he and the elders of Israel..." v.32 "They GATHERED the quails... even he who GATHERED least had ten 'omers...'"

This word also appears in the opening line of the parsha. The "rabble" or "mixed multitude" who first "felt a lusting" are called the "ASAFSUF," also from the same Hebrew root, "ASAF." So here we have seven uses of the same word which span both stories indiscriminately. It would seem that the Torah, by choosing common words to describe the gathering and placing of meat and the gathering and placing of elders is trying to connect the two stories and draw certain lines of comparison.

But what comparison? How might the stories be connected? MEAT vs. SPIRIT

If the two stories are one narrative, then we might be able to explain the reason why they are intertwined with the following suggestion. Two other words recur throughout this narrative. They are the words "meat" and "spirit" (together, 14 times in total). The meat is brought by "ruach," the wind, and the spirit of God is also the "ruach." The meat craze stands in opposition to God's desire for "spirit." On a superficial level, we might suggest that the "expansion" of Moses' prophecy, his divine "spirit," is an attempt to magnify the "spirit" in the camp as a counterweight to the mad attraction to "meat."

In a way maybe this is not so superficial. The divine connection of Moses' prophecy is contrasted with the materialistic aspirations of the people. The question which is being asked in the Israelite camp is, "What will prevail, the spirit of God or the human desire for meat?" What are we "gathering" flesh or spirit? This is the question that lies in the balance for the month that the people eat their meat. God shows them the spiritual shallowness of their desire for meat. Even a powerful desire will die down if it is over-satisfied. They will eat "an entire month until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you." The people will reach a point at which they will lose their desire.

At the same time the prophecy of God is bestowed on seventy choice individuals. God wants to show that His spirit is not available to anyone no matter what level he is on. To connect with God, you must be a learned, upstanding member of the community. But when you get the prophecy, it never leaves you: "They spoke in prophecy and did not cease." (v.25) Indeed, Moses exclaims: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord put His spirit upon them all!" (v.30)

TIMING Maybe the timing is not incidental either. Is it coincidence that this craving, this pagan lusting, this desire for Egyptian materialism is aroused just now? After all, the Israelites have just completed the first leg of their journey to Canaan and to national fulfillment. Maybe some people are having second thoughts? Maybe the people are still dithering between meat and spirit, between Egypt and Israel. Now, when they are on their way, they make a final attempt, a final expression of their indecision. (It is of interest that the next parasha talks of a delegation of spies to investigate the promised land. Was this an expression of the insecurities of the Israelites too?) God intercedes, reinforcing spirit over flesh, but the journey

is still delayed. The Children of Israel stand between Egypt and Israel both in their geographical location and in their psychological-religious mindset. Which is going to prevail?

Shabbat Shalom.

FOOTNOTES [1] I see Chapters 1-8 which deal with the organizational structure of the Israelite camp as preparations for a camp and a society which is to be portable, moving to Eretz Yisrael. The verses in these chapters set up the exact locus of each group, its function in transit and in encampment and the relationships between the various elements of the Israelite camp. For more details see the shiur of Rav Menachem Liebtog on Parashat Naso. [2] See his passionate speech at the Golden Calf episode; Exodus 32:7-14, 3:1-34. See also Numbers 13:11-20, 15:20-22. [3] The stories are so similar that certain commentators have suggested that they are the selfsame event! See the Bechor Shor. Other parshiot are also mirrored here, e.g. the Yitro visit, the appointment of judges/elders. Not surprisingly, the Biblical critics see the stories as sharing a common basis (e.g. The literary Guide to the Bible. Ed. Alter and Kermode. pg.80), but their approach has a very different theological basis to that of Rav Yosef Bechor Shor. [4] For more detail on this comparison, see the articles of Nehama Leibowitz on our parasha in her "Studies in Bemidbar," especially the article "The Murmurings: a Repeat Performance."

[5] In the previous section Moses had invited Moses to join them on their journey to Israel. His invitation is characterized by the constant repetition of the word "tov," "good." "We are travelling to the place of which the Lord has said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will be GOOD for you for the Lord has promised GOOD for Israel. ...when you come with us the GOODness that good will bestow (YETIV) on us will be GOOD for you as well." (11:29-30)

Now, in our section, we see a multiple repetition of the word "ra" or "evil." "The people complained, evil in the eyes of the Lord... and in the eyes of Moses it was evil... why have you dealt ill (HaREYota) with your servant.." (11, 10,11,15)

The good has turned to bad. [6] It is interesting to note that the swarm of quails has been substantiated by ornithologists: "It is well known that the quail, known to ornithologists as Coturnix coturnix, migrates in huge flocks from Europe to Central Africa in the autumn and returns in the spring. A short-tailed game bird of the pheasant family, it flies rapidly at very low altitudes. Due to the long distance involved, the migration is carried out in stages. The small quails twice each year land exhausted on the Mediterranean shore, where they can easily be captured by hand and by nets in great quantity. Their flesh and eggs are said to be delicious, and to this day they are a prized food among the local population and are exported as a delicacy to Europe. The season of the year in which the Israelites encountered the quails fits in precisely with the bird's migratory pattern." (Nahum Sarna, Exploring Exodus pg. 119) YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

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EHUD BARAK - A PROPHETIC PORTRAIT? by Reuven Doron "But when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man." [Judges 3:15]

While the liberal/secular majority in Israel is rejoicing at the changing of the guard, we find an interesting prospect in the biblical account of the Judge, Ehud, the left handed "secret weapon" of Israel. Acting to undo Israel's oppression, "... Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges, a cubit in length; and he bound it on his right thigh under his cloak. And Ehud came to him (Eglon, the king of Moab) while he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, 'I have a message from God for you...' And Ehud stretched out his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his belly. The handle also went in after the lade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out

of his belly; and the refuse came out." [Judges 3: 16-22] This biblical "lefty," Ehud, who also came to power in times of distress and national oppression, had a secret weapon concealed on his right side. Gaining private audience with the enemy's king, with his word successfully

obscured due to its unusual placement, Ehud employed both left and right for the deathblow. He threw the enemy camp into total confusion, led a swift and crushing military campaign against them, and delivered Israel for eighty

years. I found it very interesting and pleasing that Barak's main campaign slogan was "One Israel," as he passionately called both the Right and Left factions towards national healing and unity. After years of painful fragmentation, division, and deep wounds which reached an all time low after Rabin's assassination, his voice was the voice of wisdom. In a nation where names are realities and destinies for those who carry them, is this parallel of the Ehuds of any significance, or is it simply accidental? Still, even the most gifted of human deliverers are but human, and their deliverance temporary. They can change circumstances, but not the hearts of men. Valleys of shame and despair followed Israel's mountain top victories as the nation "relaxed" its devotion and worship of the God who had just delivered them, and fell time and again into spiritual aziness and consequent idolatry. This time, following the peaceful season that Ehud secured, God raised a cruel Canaanite king, Jabin, to oppress Israel heavily. And when they called for help, according to the divine script, "God spoke through the Prophetess/Judge Deborah and raised another deliverer, Barak, to follow Ehud. Funny, how the names fit... She (Deborah) "... sent and summoned Barak... and said to him, 'behold, the LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded, 'go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of aphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. And I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river ishon; and I will give him into your hand.'" [Judges 4: 6,7]

While Ehud's unique feature was his left-handedness which qualified him for the sneak attack on the unsuspecting evil power under the guise of a peaceful mission, Barak's reputation is marked with his hesitation and refusal to fully trust the prophetic message. "Then Barak said to her, 'if you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.' And she said, 'I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.' Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh." [Judges 4: 8-9] Should we follow

this prophetic trail in considering Israel's foreseeable future, the EHUD "Left/Right" anointing will be followed with a BARAK dependency upon a "female" prophetic judge/intercessory ministry. The same praying church which serves as a Ruth and intercedes as an Esther on behalf of the destiny of the Hebrew nation, is also called to exercise authority and prophesy as a Deborah to Israel's Barak. From her secure position under the shade of the Palm tree, the ultimate victory of her God, Deborah speaks to Barak, and then joins him in the battle. "And Deborah said to Barak, 'arise! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the LORD has gone out before you...' And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army, with the edge of the sword before Barak..." [Judges 4: 14-15] In the end, it was not Barak who became the hero of the story, but rather another woman secured the final victory. It was "... Jael, Heber's wife, (who) took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him (Sisera, Jabin's general) and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground; for he was sound asleep and exhausted. So he died." [Judges 4:21]

It was God who won that battle in His own way. As the account testifies, "The stars fought from heaven, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon." [Judges 5: 20-21] Heavy rains flooded the fertile plains of the Jezreel valley, turning Sisera's nine hundred formidable iron chariots into sluggish death traps. By grace, the Israeli forces did he rest.

Indeed, Barak was the chief of Israel's army, but it was a prophetess who called him into battle, and a courageous housewife who delivered the deathblow to his enemy. Is there a Deborah who will call for and prophesy over Israel's Barak? A fearless Jael to strike down his enemy with one blow? It seems that God's design of delivering Israel through the ministry of the interceding church will last a little longer as we continue to press ahead into the end times. Will you stand with us as we enter deeper into these uncharted waters, reaching together for the anointing and the authority to guide and protect our nation during the troublesome days ahead?

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***** From: Paul Jablonowski Subject: Israel's new leader EHUD BARAK To: "Hebraic Heritage Newsgroup" <heb_roots_chr@geocities.com>

PROPHETIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL Bob Jones, Nita Johnson and Keith Davis - May 20, 1999

Benjamin Netanyahu is a good man and a great leader. He has been publicly portrayed in the media as an enemy to peace because he has been unwilling to yield to the political pressure placed upon him to freely exchange the precious land of Israel for a pseudo-peace. He is not an enemy of peace nor the people of Israel. This new leader being allowed in Israel will not be the blessing that some may think. Nonetheless, the Lord has allowed his election to serve His purposes. EHUD BARAK, the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel, is leader of the Labor Party which has often been referred to as the "Union" party. Additionally, the name EHUD means "Union" or "Undivided". This seems to validate him as the leader being referred to in Nita's vision. The name BARAK means "lightning" which very often denotes judgment. (2 Sam 22:14-15 "The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice." And He sent out arrows, and scattered them, lightning, and routed {confused, discomfoted, troubled, consumed} them.) Barak has referred to his party as the "Union" party because it is his desire to bring a union to Israel between the Jews and Arabs, thereby producing peace. Though his purpose is to bring public security, it will only bring greater conflict and military confrontation ultimately leading to all out war.

The Lord has allowed him into office as a prophetic statement to Israel that war is coming, even imminent. Like his namesake in Scripture EHUD BARAK intends to unite Israel with her enemies in the pursuit of peace through an un-holy alliance. (Judges 3:12-30)

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P.O. Box 111 Auburn, WA 97071-0111 From: Temple Mount Faithfull - Gershon Solomon Subject: Update on the Water from the Temple Mount and Islamic Update on the Water from the Temple Mount

Islamic Diggings and Remains on the Temple Mount Important news about the water flowing from the Temple Mount comes from the Israeli newspaper, HaTsofer. In the 15th May edition of the Journal, (pg 5) Eliazer Sheffer states that his Arab neighbour, Mohammed shared with him very secretly, and very emotionally, that water had started to flow from the rock on the Temple Mount. Mohammed told him that he had not seen it himself, but that he had heard that the Islamic Mufti of Jerusalem is very concerned by this happening because, according to Islamic writings, this is a good sign for the Jews and a bad sign for the Muslims. People who we have

sent to check the situation could not see the water but the information that we have received and which was spread throughout Israel states that the Arabs on the Temple Mount have done everything possible to stop the flow of water, including by means of special pumps that they brought in for the purpose. As we know, and our people have checked this and even photographed it, the Arabs, with the help of hundreds of workers from the Islamic Movement in Israel are busy with very intensive excavations on the Temple Mount., the purpose of which is to destroy the last remains of the First and Second Temples and in this way to deny the Jewish identity of the Temple Mount. According to one account, during these diggings they broke into one of the water sources and that the water started to flow out of the rock and in trying to stop the flow, they temporarily diverted the water in another direction which is currently unknown. It is very well known that under the Temple Mount there are many water sources and it is not surprising that one or more of them started to flow out. This news which was spread all over Israel put joy and great hopes in the hearts of the Israelis as an important sign of redemption. One of the most damaging excavations is being undertaken under the Israeli police station on the Temple Mount which is not far from the location of the First and Second Temples and the Holy of Holies. The Arabs do not allow any Israeli to check these diggings and it may be that the source of the water is from here and perhaps the purpose of these diggings is to discover important hidden remains and vessels from the Temple.

Another of the terrible excavations and destructions that the Arabs are undertaking on the Temple Mount is in the great and beautiful halls of the historic Hulda entrance to the Temple Mount through which millions of Jews used to enter the Temple Mount for pilgrimage and worship. We have recently written about this but people who were sent to again check the situation, were shocked to see that this barbaric work of destruction of one of the last remains of the Temple which has remained intact over the last 2000 years continues and even intensifies. More than this, during the diggings, the Arabs discovered other halls which had not previously been known about. These had also been part of the complex of the Second Temple. Our people also saw that covered trucks were going out from the diggings and we are very worried that they have discovered important vessels from the Temple that were hidden by the priests before the destruction of the Temple. The purpose of this work, on one hand, to destroy and cancel the Jewish identity of the Temple Mount and, instead, to build a fourth mosque on the Temple Mount in the Hulda halls and other secret rooms. This is the same as the did in the past few years in the so-called Solomon Stables on the Temple Mount which were not stables but another important part of the Second Temple complex where they built the third mosque. This is a terrible abomination on the most holy place of the Jewish people and all the world. It is a criminal action against G-d Himself, the Jewish people and all mankind for whom this is the holiest and most important place in all the earth. It is a crime against Israeli laws and the destruction of very holy and important remains that are irreplaceable. It breaks the heart of everyone in Israel, especially because the Israeli governments are too weak to immediately stop it and bring the perpetrators to court. They are frightened of the

Islamic and international reaction and we also blame the UN which so quickly reacts when Israel does something for her safety but agree with such a terrible, barbaric crime against mankind by keeping silent. Where is the President of the United States who, as a Christian, should know the holiness and importance of the Temple Mount and the remains of the Temple? Why does he react so quickly when Israel builds houses in Jerusalem for the honour of G-d and to glorify Him in His holy city, the capital of Israel and now he is silent? Such hypocrisy and joining with the enemies of G-d, Israel and the most important values of all mankind! This terrible news is breaking the hearts of all of us in The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement and we have contacted the authorities in Israel to stop this barbaric destruction, theft of holy vessels and the building of more mosques in the most holy place

of G-d, Israel and all mankind. If for any reason, this is not immediately stopped, we shall immediately make a petition to the Supreme Court of Israel. We are also going to send an urgent letter to the Security Council of the UN asking them to immediately stop this barbaric crime against all mankind, even though we don't expect that they will do anything as they are such good friends and supporters of the Arab enemies of Israel. But we shall do it nevertheless, because we want to show their hypocrisy to all the world. This terrible event occurs at a very critical time in Israel. On the one hand there is the major event of the godly redemption of Israel on the other hand there is the campaign and efforts of the enemies of Israel to stop this godly event and to destroy Israel and

her historical godly values. Again we feel the need to warn all of them that they have bitter delusions if they expect to succeed in their anti-Israeli activities. They have never learnt anything from history especially their own experiences with the G-d and people of Israel. They want to forget what the G-d of Israel showed them and everyone in the world again and again, that only He controls the history of Israel and He will not allow anyone to touch His people or to stop His determination to accomplish the

redemption of Israel. At the same time G-d is expecting us to undertake the battle for Him and for His prophetic plans with Israel and not to allow the

destruction of the most holy remains of His house; to trust in Him alone and not to fear any power which will try to attack Israel in such a situation. Everyone in the world is called on to immediately send letters and to contact their leaders and governments, the government of Israel, and the UN to protest this barbaric activities and to ask them to immediately stop it. G-d will never forgive us if we remain passive and silent. Gershon Solomon Temple Mount Faithful

***** From: Gary Collett
To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: Water from the Dome? Shalom to All!

For those that are interested concerning the story that is being circulated about "Water beginning to flow out from the Dome of the Rock" on Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Another couple, Lonnie and Coral Mings, and my wife, Debra, and I went to the Dome of the Rock to check out this story that we have been receiving many inquiries about.

Many friends from many places have reported to us that they have heard in the news that water began to flow out from the Rock several weeks ago and that pumps were required to handle the flow of water. Arriving at the Dome of the Rock we were required to take off our shoes and leave them outside. We slowly walked around the inside of the Dome. We looked for pumps, we felt with our feet for any "damp

areas" and found nothing. I even was smelling for any moldy smell usually associated with dampness...nothing. So we went down into the small cave grotto inside the Rock of the Dome....again nothing. As

Debra was completely barefooted, I had socks on, she deliberately was checking the rug on the floor for dampness...again nothing. She also looked around the outside of the Dome of the Rock for pumps or

evidences of water...nothing. We are sorry to report that the story of water beginning to flow from the Rock is a RUMOR. If the story got started because of the water seepage inside the cave called Solomon's Quarries it should be realized that the water there has been "flowing" or seeping for many, many years but is not under the Dome of the Rock. And it does not fulfill the prophecy or when

water will flow from another completely different area. In His Love, --Gary and Debra

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Feast of Tabernacles while hearing some of the BEST teachers and leaders of the Hebraic Roots of Christianity. Speakers include: Dr Brad Young Gospel Research Foundation Randy Felton Potter's Clay Ministries Dr John D. Garr .. Restoration Foundation Ken & Lenore Mullican ... HaKeshet Ministries

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speakers our expenses are quite high. If you would like to help us in this effort you can send a tax-deductible donation to: CRMI P.O. Box 111 Auburn, WA 97071-0111 >From John and Teresa Sicola To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com

Subject: New Moon Festival Dear Eddie :

>> Could you or someone in the newsgroup help me out. I want to do a study on > the festival of the new moon as it was originally observed as well as how it has been observed throughout the centuries. And also on a practical level how a Torah observant believer in the Messiah can observe it today. >> Thanks > John Sicola

> >From Eddie: *****

John, Orthodox Jews do not celebrate the New Moon Festival today because there is no Temple and no SanHedrin. However, there is a remembrance of the new moon Festival in the Jewish prayers as the new moon arrives. The new moon will be celebrated for all eternity. It will be celebrated during the days of the "new heavens and new earth" (Isaiah 66:22-23)

***** From: HaShalom

To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: The New Moon

NEW MOON - ROSH CHODESH In the Bible the beginning of each new month begins on the New Moon. The Biblical calendar is based on the moon and not the sun as is the case with our western calendar. The reason given by the rabbis for

this is that the sun was worshiped primarily by the pagans in the past whereas the moon was minor in comparison to the sun. So God said my people will not use what the heathens have made into a god. It is also forbidden to worship the moon.

19 And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars--all the heavenly array--do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all

the nations under heaven.

Devarim 4:19 (Deuteronomy) There are twelve or thirteen months in a Biblical year. They are Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei, Chesvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar and Adar II. The lunar year has 354 days as compared to the solar calendar which has 365 days. If an extra month was not added every so often the festivals like Passover would move backward every year. Instead of Passover being in the spring, in time it would move to the winter, fall, summer, and back to the spring again. In

order to avoid this problem an extra month called Adar II is added every so often. Modern Judaism adds the thirteenth month 7 times during a 19 year cycle: 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19. This is not how it

was accomplished in the first century. The extra month was added based upon agricultural conditions in the land of Israel. Sanhedrin 11b). The extra month would be added depending if the lambs were being born,

the almond trees blossoming and how the barley harvest was progressing. In this way God could affect the agriculture and adjust the calendar as He desired. If for some reason He wanted Passover to be early in the year there would be a short or mild winter. If He wanted Passover to arrive later, then winter would last longer.

The current Jewish calendar has its origin in the fourth century A.D. It is credited to Hillel II in the years 358/359. As had happened in the past the Romans decreed that the Jews were not to celebrate the New Moon or announce it. So Hillel II established a fixed calendar so the people would know when to celebrate the festivals. The current Jewish calendar was finalized no earlier than the 10th century A.D.

HOW THE NEW MOON WAS DETERMINED During the first centuries the New Moon was determined by witnesses

seeing the New Moon and traveling to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem to give their account. Something to keep in mind is that the biblical day begins at night when the sun goes down. This is from Bereishit

(Genesis) where it states: And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.

Bereishit 1:5b (Genesis) The witnesses would be questioned as to what they saw and from their testimony it would be determined if the New Moon had been seen. All the people that came to Jerusalem as witnesses would be fed so as to

encourage people to report the sighting of the New Moon. The importance of announcing the New Moon is seen by the fact that the people were allowed to violate the Sabbath to get to Jerusalem to report the sighting.. For example, they were permitted to ride a horse on the Sabbath to report the New Moon whereas normally this kind of activity was prohibited on the Sabbath. The reason

they questioned the witnesses is that the Sadducees and the Samaritans would deliberately lie when they had seen the New Moon in order to disrupt the calendar. Now you can see why the Sadducees and Samaritans were hated.

Once two valid witnesses had been heard they would still listen to all those who arrived to testify in order to encourage people who saw the New Moon to ride to Jerusalem and report to the Sanhedrin. Once all the witnesses were heard the head of the court

would say, "Hallowed" and the people would respond with "Hallowed". Since the lunar month is either 29 or 30 days if they did not sight the New Moon or what ever reason by the 30th day the next day would automatically be the first

of the next month. After this the announcement of the New Moon had to be relayed to all the Jewish communities in the world. At one time they would light fires on specific hilltops in order to get the message to Babylon. However, the Samaritans would light other fires a day early and later to confuse the people in the out lying areas. The Samaritans were not loved by the Jews. It was

because of this that messengers were sent by horseback to deliver the message. Unfortunately it took up to 14 days to get the message to some places. Instead they established the custom for communities outside of Israel to celebrate most of the Festivals

for two days instead of one. This way they knew they celebrated the festival on at least one of the correct days. This custom still exists in Judaism today.

CELEBRATED IN THE PAST The following verses show that the New Moon was celebrated and the various activities that happened on that day. 28 The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the temple of the Lord: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. 29 They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the flour for the grain offerings, the unleavened wafers, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size. 30 They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening 31 and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the Lord on Sabbaths and at New Moon festivals and at appointed feasts. They were to serve before the Lord regularly in the proper number

and in the way prescribed for them. 1 Divery Hayamim 23:28-31 (Chronicles)

5 So David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow.

18 Then Jonathan said to David: "Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 24 So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat. 25 He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was

empty. 26 Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean--surely he is unclean." 27 But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son

Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"
Samuel).

Shmu'el 20:5, 18, 24-27

23 "Why go to him today?" he asked. "It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath." "It's all right," she said.

2

Melechim 4:23 (Kings) 5 After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred feasts of the Lord, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the Lord. Ezra 3:5 32 "We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel each year for the service of the house of our God: 33 for the bread set out on the table; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moon festivals and appointed feasts; for the holy offerings; for sin offerings to make atonement for Israel; and for all the duties of the house of our God.

Nechemiah 10:32-33 (Nehemiah)

CELEBRATED IN THE FUTURE

These following verses show that the New Moon and Sabbath will be observed in the Millennium and its Temple. >From one New Moon to another and one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says the Lord. Yeshayahu 66:23 (Isaiah) 17 It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings,

grain offerings and drink offerings at the festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths--at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings

and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel.

Yechezkel 45:17 (Ezekiel) 1 This is

what the Sovereign Lord says: The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the New Moon it is to be opened. 2The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the

gatepost. The priests are to sacrifice his burnt offering and his fellowship offering. He is to worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until evening. 3On the Sabbaths and New Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the Lord at the entrance to that gateway.

Yechezkel 46:1-3 (Ezekiel)

The New Moon is so important that there is a specific place in the Millennial Temple where it will be celebrated.

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To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: JUICE: Siddur

THE PRAYER BOOK: A WINDOW ON JEWISH THEOLOGY Instructors: Barbara and Reuven Sutnick

MOURNING IN PRAYER There was once a man standing outside the Jewish funeral home as a lengthy procession passed. He had the look of a mourner. His dear friend came up to him and asked: "Why so sad?" "Two weeks ago my uncle died," the bereaved man answered. "Oh dear," said his friend sincerely, "I'm so sorry." "But," the mourner added, "he left me \$20,000." "That's not bad," the second chimed in, "But why so sad?" "Well, last week my other uncle died." "Oh, I'm so sorry," his friend offered soothingly. "But," the first continued, "this uncle left me \$30,000." "Wow, that's pretty good!" But why so sad?" The mourner answered sheepishly, "This week

nobody died!" Now, some of you will see this as still another example of tasteless humor. However, at the risk of sounding crass, I would like to pursue the reasoning inherent in this joke. The joke does more than show that there is a silver lining to every cloud. It illustrates the emotional schizophrenia that plagues human existence. Poor us! Our parents (after 120 years) die and we inherit money and insurance. The first act

of re-entry into normative society after getting up from shiva (the seven-day morning period) is to probate the will before the out-of-towners return to their homes! The sense of dichotomy also exists for the Jewish ritualized side of mourning. On the one hand,

we are confronted with the overwhelming experience of loss and grief; on the other, we are responsible to a religious, devotional system which demands that we acknowledge any and all benefits that accrue to us at any time: It is forbidden for one to take benefit from this world without first [saying a] blessing, and anyone who BENEFITS from this world and does not say a blessing, has STOLEN (from Heaven)! (Talmud, Berachot 35a)

We find a remarkable discussion in the Talmud, in the Rif's precis: "A person must bless over the BAD just as he must bless over the GOOD" -- A person must bless on the bad "Blessed is the Righteous Judge" (baruch dayan ha-emet) and receive it (the bad) upon himself with joy, in the same manner as he accepts the good, as it is written "Justice and Mercy will I sing." [This means hat] if it is

mercy, I will sing; if it is [harsh] judgment, I will sing ... (Rif, ch. 9, 44b) Rabbeinu Yonah (on the Rif) is even more explicit. He tells us that one must bless on the bad with joy and a full heart, and should experience even the harsh judgment as expiation for one's sins. Before I start bringing some of these ideas into focus, I want to mention two other related texts that really belong in our discussion this week. After the "call to prayer" (Bor'chu) in the morning service, we recite the first blessing before the Shema (see Lecture 6):

Blessed is ... Who creates LIGHT and fashions DARKNESS, Who makes PEACE and creates EVERYTHING.

This blessing is an adaptation of a biblical phrase. We read in Isaiah 45:7: I am the Lord, and there is none else, I form the LIGHT and create DARKNESS; I make PEACE, and create EVIL: I, the Lord do all these things.

True to biblical poetry, we see here the use of parallel phrases. In each phrase, the first element is the positive; the second is its negative. Furthermore, light and darkness are opposites; peace and evil are opposites. The prophet tells us that the belief in total onotheism

brings with it the awful (and sophisticated) realization that God is the source of EVERYTHING -- even of opposite extremes. Returning now to the blessing from the siddur, we can see that the precise symmetry of language is not there. In the blessing peace is still parallel to light; but here EVERYTHING is placed in the position parallel to darkness. Instead of saying (as did Isaiah) Who creates

peace and evil;" we say in our prayers "Who creates peace and everything." Now, I see a common thread in all the texts quoted. Evil, suffering, discomfort, death, mourning are all part of the overall fabric of God's creation. There is no monotheism, no "I am the Lord, your God" if we don't attribute all that we experience as negative to the God who took us out of Egypt. Even our suffering bears the specific mark of the Divine. Therefore, for Isaiah and indeed for those who fashioned the blessing of the siddur based on Isaiah, "everything" deserves its proper

acknowledgment in ritual! Make no mistake about it, even though Isaiah's language has been smoothed over a bit in the siddur, ost students of the Bible hear very clearly the echo of his words in the prayer we recite. The upshot: amazingly, the blessing "Who forms light and creates darkness" is a general blessing which also lesses over evil!

I submit all of this to you because I think the Jewish religious philosophy is highly integrated. I furthermore think the rituals of the siddur display this integration in words and lead us to experience it in action. What do I mean by this? Think for a moment about the experience of bereavement. If we consider the elements in this experience which might occasion prayer, we would have to include: the immediate care for the person who has died, considerations of the afterlife, the needs of the survivors, and the expression of the community towards one of its bereaved members. At a later point, we would want to add to this list annual commemorative behavior. Now when I stated that the siddur leads us to experience in words and action the full integration of Jewish theology, I meant that:

a. Ritually, we affirm that the Source of our bereavement is God, the same Source of our greatest joys and successes; b. Ritually, we acknowledge the correctness of a judgment which we don't like, which runs contrary to our human concept of pleasure; c. Ritually, we acknowledge that the Source of our recovery, will be the same as the Source of our current misery, which is also the Source of our joys, etc.;

d. Ritually and publicly, we undertake to affirm at each daily prayer service the correctness of the judgment;

e. Ritually in tandem with our community, we reenact the acknowledgment that the judgment was correct, over a protracted period of time, the length of which depends on the relationship with the deceased;

f. Ritually, we acknowledge both in the funeral service and in the annual memorial service, the dual aspects of Judgment and Mercy which prevail in the situation of bereavement. Please don't miss my favorite word: RITUALLY. As has been pointed out many times before in this course, to understand the siddur's spin on Jewish philosophy, think RITUAL! To affirm the source of bereavement and acknowledge the correctness of judgment are connected ideas. As part of the burial service we recite the words "God has given, God has taken away -- may the great Name of God be blessed." This clearly acknowledges, no less explicitly than he

passage from Isaiah quoted above, the connection between our suffering and the Source of our joy: the God who takes is the same God who gives. However, there is another moment in the mourning service which expresses the same idea even more poignantly. At the time the mourners tear "k'riyah," (rend their garments, which is done just before the funeral service begins) they recite the blessing "Baruch Dayan ha-Emet" -- "Blessed is the Judge of Truth". This is a riveting moment, since the sound of a garment tearing in a quiet room shocks like no other sound. However, the moment of tearing k'riyah, which is combined with the blessing "Judge of Truth" is also significant in its uniquely ritual context. After a person dies, but before the funeral, the lost relatives of the deceased immediately attain the status of "anninut". This is the time period prior to burial when it is assumed that

the relatives will be attending to the needs of the deceased. Consequently, in Jewish law, these relatives are free from all positive commandments

(i.e. the "thou shall's" -- as opposed to the "thou shall not's!"). They do not pray with the community, wear the tallit (prayer shawl) or tefillin (phylacteries); nor do they count towards a minyan. They are, in essence, free from ritual and from community involvement. But, the act of tearing k'riyah and reciting the blessing affirming the judgment of the "Judge of Truth", draws the mourner immediately back into the world of ritual. In the same way that not eating matzah the day before Pesach intensifies the experience of eating matzah on seder night, so here the mourner's ritual deprivation makes his/her "acknowledgment of the correctness of the judgment" (Tzidduk HaDin) even more intense. After all, what ritual experience is there anywhere in Jewish life more theologically critical than a person's affirmation of Divine Judgment while his "dead lies before him?" To summarize briefly: the mourner's recitation of "Judge of Truth", particularly in the context of a ritual deprivation which temporarily removes him/her from the community, derives from the siddur's integrated theology. The mourner acknowledges the Source of bereavement, not unlike Isaiah; s/he affirms the judgment s/he has suffered as s/he reenters the ritual community.

The concept of a ritual community, particularly as it relates to prayers of mourning, features prominently in the final moments of the funeral service. As the mourners turn away from the now closed grave of their relative, they pass through two lines formed by embers of the

community. They are greeted with the words "May God grant you comfort along with all those who mourn of Zion and Jerusalem." These are the words traditionally used by members of the community to comfort mourners

during the shiva visit. They are also spoken to newly bereaved mourners by the community of pray-ers when the mourners enter the synagogue on Friday night. These words are a corollary to Tzidduk HaDin

(acknowledging that God is the Judge of Truth): the mourner affirms Divine Justice and the community reassures him that he will find comfort in God, like all those of the community of Zion who have suffered

bereavement before him. This ritualized "give and take" (i.e. responsive verbalizing) between the mourner and the community is also a central feature of the most well-known mourning prayer, the Kaddish. Please read the following excerpts from Kaddish:

May His great name grow exalted and sanctified in the world that He created as He willed. May He give reign to His kingship and cause His salvation to sprout and bring near His Messiah, in your lifetimes and in

your days, and in the lifetimes of the entire family of Israel, swiftly and soon. Now respond: Amen. (congregational

response) AMEN. Y'HEI SH'MEI RABBA M'VORACH, L'OLAM U'LOLMEI ALMAYA. (May His great Name be blessed forever and always.) We notice that within the text itself there is a directive to the

community to respond. Scholars of Jewish prayer have noted that the communal response is actually the most ancient part of the Kaddish text. They also note that these Aramaic words (the Kaddish is written

in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Jews of the Talmudic period) -Y'HEI SH'MEI RABBA M'VORACH, L'OLAM U'LOLMEI ALMAYA - is actually the same as those found in a classical Bible translation (Targum Yerushalmi) of the

verses Genesis 49:2 and Deut. 6:4: "Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and always." The Hebrew of this verse is cited throughout the Talmud and midrash as a community response to prayer (the

second line of the Shema, for example). Thus central to Kaddish, both practically and textually, we have the Aramaic version of our most significant Scriptural community response.

SIDDUR SEARCH The mourners' Kaddish may be found at the end of most services in most prayer books. *EUREKA* It is recommended that you read through it in English to fully absorb its meaning and style. Looking at the text the mourner recites, we can understand that it is ritually, psychologically and theologically reminiscent of his experience of bereavement. This is true, even though the Kaddish does not refer to the dead or to death at all. Its words acknowledge that God is responsible for EVERYTHING (remember Isaiah 45:7) according to

His will, and that this is a cause for sanctifying God's name. This is an acknowledgment of Divine Justice, the key religious element in the mourner's reentry to the ritual community. Here too, the community

answers. Please read the following statement about this community response, and see if you can explain why the Talmud finds it so significant:

R. Yehoshua b. Levi says: Whosoever answers "Amen. May His great Name be blessed forever and always" with all his might, the harsh decree is averted (i.e. he is forgiven for sins)... (Shabbat 119b)

It is because "Tzidduk HaDin" and its associate "Sanctification of the Name," are a great statement of faith and trust in God's justice. In addition, they achieve significant weight, since they are expressed PUBLICLY and in community dialogue. (Certainly to make a theological

statement publicly has more weight and accountability than to make it privately.) The community's response actually activates the process of public sanctification of God's name. As the verse says: "I will be

sanctified amongst the children (plural) of Israel". (Lev. 22:32) The relevance of a continued public acceptance of Divine Justice throughout the period of mourning is understandable. Think of the normal response an individual has when faced with the loss of a close

relative. He frames his rancor in the terminology of justice: "Why me?" "Why him/her?" "S/He was so good?" "Why did s/he have to suffer?" "Why do the good die young when there are so many rotten people

out there, who live to old age?" "THIS IS NOT FAIR!!!" In Jewish theology, the ritual of Kaddish is the mourner's publicly declared acknowledgement that IT IS FAIR (even if this is difficult to face.)

To this the community responds "Amen." Ritual and practical theology go hand-in-hand. There is one other prayer for the dead which I wish to touch on. Both at the funeral service and at the annual memorial (Yahrtzeit in Yiddish; Hazkarah in Hebrew), and during the holiday memorial service, we recite the Prayer for Mercy, E-l Maleh Rachamim: O God, Full of Mercy, Who dwells on high, grant proper rest on the wings of the Divine Presence ... for the soul of (mention name)...May his/her resting place be in the Garden of Eden...

Three elements are striking here: 1) there is specific mention of the deceased by name, 2) we pray on behalf of the dead for the repose of the soul in the Garden of Eden, and 3) God is represented in one attribute only, vis. as Full of Mercy. This conforms more closely to the pattern of request that we have seen before in petitionary prayer, than to the other prayers of bereavement we have discussed in this lecture. However, it is the last point which catches my attention. The entire experience of bereavement and the ritual affirmation of Divine Justice (Tziduk Hadin) is based on a recognition that God is the source of EVERYTHING. He is the Righteous Judge, even when His judgment does not fit our own concept of what is fair. We are directed to publicly acknowledge God's righteousness, specifically at that time when every fiber of our being screams that our suffering is not right. Yet here, we turn to God in the aspect of pure mercy! What's going on here? For me, the answer lies in the contrast and in the sequence. Both in the short term (the funeral service) and in the long term (the larger calendar year), the Prayer for Mercy follows Tziduk aDin. As for my

second point, in Geshet HaHayyim (an important work on Jewish mourning ritual by R. Tukachinsky, see vol. 1, ch. 33, 2:7), we learn that there are those communities in which the mourner does not recite Yizkor (including the Prayer for Mercy) during the first year after bereavement. While the author feels that this custom is inappropriate, he nevertheless acknowledges that it has its basis in traditional sources. I simply wish to note that refraining from reciting Yizkor/Mercy until after the full run of Kaddish has been completed, expresses important religious sensibilities: we can be prepared to see God in the aspect of Pure Mercy only when the year-long process of Tziduk HaDin has been completed. Likewise at the funeral. It has been a pleasure and a learning experience for me to teach this course, as I hope it has been for you out there in Cyberspace. At this time, I would like to thank my husband, Rabbi Reuven utnick, for the

copious research, original ideas, unique turns of phrase, and never-ending supply of jokes that he generously contributed to every lecture of this course. We have all been the beneficiaries! I would also like to thank the many students who participated in "Siddur Discussions" in Cyberspace, and to let you know that the gates of Cyberspace have not closed simply because the last lecture of the semester has gone out! Please keep your questions and comments coming. Barbara Sutnick

***** From: Kenneth Josselyn To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: Kinsman Redeemer

I would like to do a study on Y'shua's fulfillment of the laws of Kinsman Redeemer, leverite marriage and avendure of blood. I now the Christ has redeemed the earth, redeemed us from the bondage of slavery to sin and has taken us, His Church as His Bride. I am fairly versed on the book of Ruth, but was hoping that there may be a study available on the Role of the Kinsman Redeemer and Christ's fulfillment.

Hope you can help. Ken

***** From: "Hay Did Center For Learning" <shalom@haydid.org> To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: Kinsman Redeemer

Dear Ken: Got the encyclopedia article on GO'EL from 1903 Jewish Encyclopedia today and will share that article with you and the newsgroup: Next of kin, and, hence, redeemer. Owing to the solidarity of the family and the clan in ancient Israel, any duty which a man could not perform by himself had to be taken up by his next of kin. Any rights possessed by a man which lapsed through his inability to perform the duties attached to such rights, could be and should be resumed by the next of kin. This applied especially to parcels of land which any israelite found it necessary to sell. This his go'el, or kinsman, had to redeem (Lev. 25:25). From the leading case of Jeremiah's purchase of his cousin Hananeel's property in nathoth (Jer. 32:8-12) it would appear that in later Israel at any rate this injunction was taken to mean that a kinsman had the right of preemption. Similarly, in the Book of Ruth the next of kin was called up to purchase a parcel of land formerly belonging to Elimelech (Ruth 4:3). It would appear from the same example that another duty of the go'el was to raise offspring for his kinsman if he happened to die without any (ib.5). This would seem to be an extension of the principle of LEVIRATE MARRIAGE; HENCE THE PROCEDURE OF "halizah" was gone through in the case of Naomi's go'el, just as if he had been her brother-in-law. The relative nearness of kin is not very definitely determined in the Old Testament. The brother appears to be the nearest of all, after whom comes the uncle or nephew's son (Lev. 25:49).

Another duty of the go'el was to redeem his kinsman from slavery if sold to a stranger or sojourner (Lev. 25:47-55). In both cases much depended upon the nearness or remoteness of the year of jubilee, which would automatically release either the land or the person of the kinsman from

subjection to another. As the go'el had his duties, so he had his privileges and compensation. If an injured man had claim to damages and died before they were paid to him, his go'el would have the right to them (Lev. 5:21-26[A.V. vi.1-7]). The whole conception of the go'el was based on the solidarity of the interests of the tribe and the nation with those of the national God, and accordingly the notion of the go'el became spiritualized as applied to the relations between God and Israel. God was regarded as the go'el of Israel, and as having redeemed him for the bondage of Egypt (Ex. 6:6, 15:13). Especially in Deutero-Isaiah is this conception emphasized (Isa. xli.14; xliii. 14; xlv.6, 24, et passim). However, the chief of the go'el duties toward his kinsman was that of avenging him if he should happen to be slain by some one outside the clan or tribe. This custom is found in all early or primitive civilizations (com. Post, "Studien zur Entwicklungsgesch. des Familienrechts," pp. 113-137). Indeed, it is the only expedient by which any heck could be put upon the tendency to do injury to strangers. Here again to the family of the murderer, and the death of one member of a family would generally result in a vendetta. It would appear that this custom was usual in early Israel, for the crimes of a man were visited upon his family (Josh. vii.24; II Kings 9:26); but at a very early stage the Jewish code made an advance upon most Semitic codes, including that of Hammurabi, by distinguishing between homicide and murder (Ex. 21:13-14). It was in order to determine whether a case of manslaughter was accidental or deliberate that the CITIES OF REFUGE were instituted (Deut. 19; Num. 35). In a case where the elders of the city of refuge were satisfied that the homicide was intentional, the murderer was handed over to the blood-avenger ("go'el ha-dam") to take vengeance of him. Even if it was decided that it was a case of unintentional homicide, the man who committed the deed had to keep within the bounds of the city of refuge till the death of the high priest, as he go'el could kill the homicide with impunity if he found him trespassing beyond the bounds (Numbers 35:26-27). In other legislations grew the principle of commuting the penalty by a money fine, known among the Anglo-Saxons as "wegild," which varied in amount according to the rank of the person; but such a method was distinctly prohibited in the Israelite code (Num 35:31). It would appear that the custom of the blood-avenger still existed in the time of David, as the woman of Tekoah refers to it in her appeal to the king (II Sam. 14:11), but no further trace of it is found later the concentration of the population in cities gave fuller power to the courts of justice to punish cases of murder. Shalom, Cheryle Holeman

HaY'Did Ministries PO Box 804 Independence, KS 67301 <http://www.haydid.org>

***** To educate, train and equip for study both the Jew and Non-Jew in the Rich Hebraic Heritage of our Faith.

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1999 Feast of Tabernacles Celebration and
 Hebraic Roots of Christianity Conference September 24 - October 3, 1999 Ocean Shores, Washington

"... the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord ... and you shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute FOREVER in your generations: you shall celebrate it in the seventh month." (Leviticus 23:34,41)

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 Our target for 1999 is 500 attendees. The Feast of Tabernacles at Ocean Shores is a non-denominational, non-sectarian event sponsored by Christian Renewal Ministries International (CRMI). Attendance is open to all. There is no conference registration fee and no fee to attend workshops and seminar's during the festival celebration. It is paid for entirely by donations to CRMI. All contributions, to CRMI, pay for this event because our staff are all volunteers. Hotel discounts are available. More information about the 1999 Feast of Tabernacles at Ocean Shores, Washington is available at: <http://www.Shalom-CRMI.org/html/ftos.htm> E-mail: Rick@shalom-crmi.org Phone: 1-800-333-5208 P.S. Since CRMI provide's airfare and accomodations for our guest speakers our expenses are quite high. If you would like to help us in this effort you can send a tax-deductible donation to: CRMI P.O. Box 111 Auburn, WA 97071-0111

> > From: Sharon Luzzi > Subject: The Song of Moses > To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com

> > Greetings, > > What can anyone tell me about the "Song of Moses"?

> I would appreciate an extensive teaching on this. > > Shalom, > Sharon Luzzi

> From: Tony Valasek To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com

Subject: Re: The Song of Moses J.R. Church has written a book solely dedicated to the Song of Moses. You can obtain this book and three others free with a year subscription to his magazine "Prophecy in the News" which by the way is a pretty good magazine. It only cost about \$30 for the entire package. Their website is:

<<http://www.prophecy-news.com>> Getting the free sample should get you there. It will be offered in the magazine. May God bless you richly, Tony Valasek

***** From: Jim & Cheryl Puckett

To: heb_roots_chr@geocities.com Subject: Re: The Song of Moses

Dear Sharon, There is a book titled "Israel in the Plan of God" by David Baron. He was a Russian Jew Born in 1855 and died in 1926 in England. The book is 320 pages and goes into great detail showing the parallel between the Song of Moses and Israel's history. Two things make this book interesting. First, Mr. Baron was a believer in Yeshua and second, he wrote all of this well before the Holocaust. The book was reprinted by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mi. 49501. I found out about the book from Billye Brimm Ministries. Your friend in the Messiah,

Jim P. *****

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To: yhe-intparsha@vbm-torah.org Subject: INTPARSHA -31: Parashat Naso YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA

Parashat Naso The Power of Speech
by Rabbi Jonathan Mishkin

A recent discovery in the study of genetics reveals that a large majority of men claiming to be Kohanim - members of Israel's ancient priestly class - share a common set of markers on their Y chromosome. For some people, this represents scientific proof of a Jewish tradition of heritage. One of the duties of the Kohanim that continues to this day is the Priestly Blessing - the subject of this week's essay. "The Lord spoke to Moses: 'Speak to Aaron and

his sons: Thus shall you bless the people of Israel. Say to them: May the Lord bless you and protect you! May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you! May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace! Thus they shall link My name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them.'" (Numbers 6:22-27)

In a synagogue practice performed daily in Israel, and on festivals outside of Israel, Kohanim face the congregation and repeat the original hebrew text of these blessings in the belief that their words will somehow bestow goodness on the people. What are the dynamics of such blessings? Do Kohanim, by virtue of descent, possess some magical or mystical power to somehow affect the lives of the rest of us merely by speaking? To be sure, the ceremony of the Kohanim is not the only instance in our culture where the speech of one person is felt to hold some influence over another. Some parents (whether the family are Kohanim or not) bless their children on Friday night by repeating the text of Numbers 6. Participants at a brit mila bless the baby by exclaiming "Just as he has entered into the covenant, so may he enter into the Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds." How does such a statement guarantee success for the child? Will I live long and prosper because some Kohen says I should? In short, what is the power of a blessing between people? Let us turn to a curious episode recounted in Numbers 22-24, the story of Bilaam appearing in Parashat Balak. In the tale, Bilaam the prophet or wizard, is hired by Balak, King of Moav to curse the nation of Israel. Initially Bilaam is reluctant to take on the job sensing that wishing ill on the people opposes God's desires. He says, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, big or little, contrary to the command of the Lord my God" (22:18). Eventually Bilaam is persuaded to give the cursing a shot and sets out on his mission. On the road he gets into an argument with his donkey to whom God remarkably grants the power of speech. An angel appears who warns him to "say nothing except what I tell you" (22:35). And then the drama starts. Three times Bilaam attempts to damn Israel but each time God's words fill his mouth and blessings issue instead: "No harm is in sight for Jacob, No woe in view for Israel" (23:21). "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!" (24:5). Balak is naturally upset at Bilaam's defiance, but in his defense Bilaam claims "How can I damn who God has not damned, How doom when the Lord has not doomed?" (23:8) Several lessons emerge from this story. Firstly,

that Bilaam possessed some sort of force is not challenged. Were he merely some insignificant desert nomad, Balak would not have enlisted him, God would have paid him no heed, and the entire thing would have been ignored by the Torah. Rabbinic tradition contrasts Bilaam with the patriarch Abraham, the former representing evil, the latter the paradigm of good (Pirkei Avot 5:22). Consequently, we must conclude that effectiveness of curses or blessings uttered by people is linked to the character of the speaker. The second moral of the Bilaam tale is that while the one who blesses is important, ultimately God Himself is the source of all blessings. As the Torah makes clear in the struggles between Bilaam and Balak, what people want is really secondary or even irrelevant in the face of God's intentions. The power of the speaker can at any time be overshadowed by the fact that his message is either congruous with the desires of God or not. Thus it seems that when people bless or curse other people, the spoken words do not directly determine the fate of the beneficiary or victim, they merely suggest to God a course of action. Put another way, a blessing is a prayer to God on behalf of somebody else; a curse is a plea to God to strike one's enemy. It is not the speech itself that does the trick, but God's response to man's requests.

Combining the two lessons it seems that, although God's own decisions can override any human desires, God is reluctant to ignore the claims of a powerful or persuasive man. Indeed, why does God tell Bilaam not to curse Israel? Would the Torah's point not have been made had Bilaam been allowed to say what he wanted, followed by God declaring his words meaningless? Maybe Bilaam possesses some power to sway God which might be why God preempts his curses. On the other hand, the fact that God takes over Bilaam's voice is a dramatic way of illustrating that His will reigns supreme - the faculty of speech is worthless unless God gives it worth, an idea underlined by the miracle of the talking donkey.

How do we adapt these ideas to the Birkat Kohanim - the blessings of the priests? Firstly, the Torah instructs the holiest class of people to pray on behalf of the Jews. The Kohanim are holy because they were chosen to serve in the Tabernacle. Their lifestyle demands they follow more restrictions than the rest of the nation, and that they maintain a higher level of spiritual purity. Designated the teachers of the nation, Kohanim are required to devote most of their lives to Torah. It would seem, therefore, that their heightened holiness allows them greater access to God, giving their prayers a better chance of being heard. This would explain why the Torah gives them the job of blessing the people.

(In modern times, when Kohanim no longer serve in the Temple, we might well ask what elevates them above the common folk. The explanation I have offered suggests we might be better off having scholars or other holy people bless the people. But, besides being a break from tradition, such a change in procedure would inevitably lead to arguments about who is worthy to bless and who is not). Nevertheless, I believe that from the Torah's perspective the utterances of the Kohanim only hold indirect power to affect the lives of those they bless. Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir 12th century) explains Numbers 6 as follows: "Thus shall you bless the people of Israel: Do not

bless them with your own words, as someone blessing a friend would say 'may such and such be granted to so and so;' rather, pray to Me that I shall bless them as it says 'May the Lord bless you and protect you.' I will then heed your words as it says 'and I will bless Israel.' And it says 'Thus they shall link My name with the people of Israel' meaning that when the Kohanim bless Israel in My name - and not in their names, I will in turn bless Israel."

The obvious question related to this whole issue is, if blessing people is really an appeal to God to treat another person well, why does God tell the Kohanim to ask Him to be good to Israel? Why not just lavish goodness on us without using an intermediary? This paradox is posed by the Sefer Ha-Chinukh (Rabbi Aharon HaLevi 13th century) in his interpretation to our passage (see Mitzva #378) who explains that God opens His hand to whoever turns to Him. This, of course explains the institution of prayer, the philosophy of which seems to be that recognition of the existence of God and of His power and willingness to act in this world, are prerequisites to God's intervention. As Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 13th century) writes, the power of prayer is that God listens when we speak to Him, but complaints must be formulated in order to be answered. The story of Bilaam is significant to the Torah precisely because it shows that God cares or is somehow influenced by what man wants. Bilaam's strength was such that had he cursed Israel, his wishes would have been difficult to dismiss.

In contrast to my theory of the limited power of human speech, it is possible to understand our topic in simpler, more direct terms. When a person speaks, the words, once uttered, have the potency to alter another's life. Bilaam was dangerous because a curse passing his lips would bypass the will of God and unleash terrible damage on Israel. The goodness brought by words of a Kohen perhaps parallel the promise offered in an earlier Biblical tale. When Joseph favorably interprets the wine steward's dream in Genesis 40:16, the baker is impressed and eagerly tells the Hebrew his own dream. Did Joseph's cellmates believe in the power of Joseph's words to bring good or ill fortune? The Talmud states that "all dreams follow the mouth (interpretation)" (Berakhot 56a) and suggests the opinion that "a dream that is not interpreted is like a letter which is not read" (ibid. 55a). But, I will stand by my interpretation and offer two

more stories as support. In an episode representing a turning point in Jacob's life, he struggles with an angel who during the course of the encounter renames the patriarch - Israel. "Then he (the angel) said 'Let me go, for dawn is breaking.' But he answered, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' Said the other 'What is your name?' He replied, 'Jacob.' Said he, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.' Jacob asked 'Pray tell me your name.' But he said 'You must not ask me my name!' And he blessed him there." (Genesis 32:25-30) What blessing did the angel confer on Jacob? Was the name change itself the blessing? Do the words of an angel hold any meaning? Based on our interpretation of blessings, we must

say that the angel was only asking God to bless Jacob, which in this case means changing his name. And lo and behold! Three chapters later, God confirms the name change in His own blessing: "God appeared again to Jacob on his arrival from Paddan-

aram, and He blessed him. God said to him 'You whose name is Jacob, You shall be called Jacob no more, But Israel shall be your name.' Thus He named him Israel." (35:9-10) Thus, the angel's speech was a prayer, a request to God, the source of all blessings to bless Jacob. At the end of his life, it is Jacob's turn to bless his children and grandchildren and he appeals to the angel once again. "And he blessed Joseph, saying, 'The God in whose ways my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all harm - bless the lads. In them may my name be recalled, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, And may they be teeming multitudes upon the earth.'" The Netziv (Rabbi Naphtali Zvi Yehudah Berlin 19th century) is puzzled about why the Hebrew verb "bless" is in the singular form - YEVAREKH, although Jacob asks both God and the angel to bless his grandchildren. The commentator's resolution fits our theory nicely: although the angel may offer his own blessing, an angel's will is subordinate to that of God's and has no affect unless God heeds it.

In conclusion, I would like to mention two halakhic details related to the practice of the priestly blessing. The first is that the three verses comprising the prayer must be recited in the original Hebrew. Although nearly every part of the traditional services can be translated and read in any language (including the Shema and Amida prayers) Birkat Kohanim must be repeated exactly as it appears in Numbers 6. The Talmud explains that this rule is learned from the Torah's instruction of "Thus shall you bless the people of Israel" (Sotah 38a). Secondly, in discussing the prohibition of adding new details to the Torah's commandments (BAL TOSIF), the Talmud brings Birkat Kohanim as an illustration. "Rabbi Shaman bar Abba said: Whence do we learn that a priest who mounts the platform should not say 'Because the Torah has given me permission to bless Israel, I will add a blessing of my own, as for instance: The Lord, the God of your fathers, add unto you? Because it says, 'You shall not add unto the word'" (Deuteronomy 4:2). Both these clauses in the performance of the mitzva point to the same understanding of the nature of the blessing. At its root the priestly benediction is God's blessing to the nation. It must be recited exactly as God formulated it in the Torah - no creativity or deviation from the text is allowed because it is not the Kohen's message to the people, but God's. The Kohanim serve merely as conduits, pronouncing the goodness that God wants to bring to His people. YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH ALON SHEVUT, GUSH ETZION 90433
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