

**SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE****BEMIDBAR****Haftarah: Hoshea 2:1-22****MAY 22-23, 2015 5 SIVAN 5775  
DAY 49 OF THE OMER**

Thanks to Dr. Bellehsen, Rabbi Dr. Meyer Abittan, Rabbi Asher Abittan and Rabbi Avraham BenHaim for such a beautiful Shabbat last week.

**SYNAGOGUE SCHEDULE – TENTATIVE****Friday, May 22nd****Shahrit 7:00 AM****Friends – We need assistance and a commitment for Friday nights and all evening services this weekend****Minha & Arbit 7:00 PM****Candle Lighting 7:53 PM****Shabbat Parashat Bemidbar, Saturday May 23rd****Class with Rav Aharon 8:00 AM****Shahrit 8:30 AM, Torah 9:45 and Musaf at 10:30**

The kiddush this Shabbat is being given by Barbara Levy in memory of Shlomo z'l and Yaacov z'l and by Elsa Farbiarz in memory of her parents, Albert and Sarah Arditti z'l

**Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer****Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/****Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!****Children's afternoon program with the Bach at Sephardic April and May at 5:00 PM****Class with Rav Aharon: 6:55 - Minha 7:25 PM - Seudat Shelishit 7:55 PM****Arbit 8:35 PM - Candle Lighting After 8:54 PM****Tikun LeI Shavuot - 11:30PM on Saturday night,****Shaharit 4:40AM on Sunday, Amidah at 5:30:57****First Day of Hag, Sunday May 24th****SECOND MINYAN Shahrit 9:15 AM with Uri Lemberger****REMEMBER EVERYONE SHOULD JOIN ON SHAVUOT AND BRING YOUR KIDS BACK TO HEAR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS WE DID ON HAR SINAI 3500 YEARS AGO****Kiddush with a Shavuot Ice Cream Bar**

Phyllis Wagner is hosting desserts after services on Sunday at her home at 348 West Beech Street.

**Azharot and Ruth 6:00 PM - Minha & Arbit 6:30 PM****This allows everyone to have an early dinner****Candle Lighting After 8:49 PM****Second Day of Hag, Monday May 25th****Shahrit 8:30 AM followed by Kiddush sponsored by the Sisterhood****YIZKOR AT 10:15 AM – Please be on time****Azharot and Ruth 7:30 PM****Minha 7:50 PM (Sunset 8:15)****Arbit 8:40 PM****Habdalah/End of Holiday 8:55 PM****Mazel Tov, Elliot and Dina Rose on the birth of a baby girl****DAILY MINYAN – Thursday 6:55, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:00AM**

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### Editors Notes

FROM THE ARCHIVE SHABUOT 2010

Well this week, MAY 2010 - I received a note from a dear friend, Rabbi Aaron Lankry, with a true story written by his wife Mindy. She titles it, "Miracle On 69th Street".

*In one minute everything changed; my whole perspective on life, my security, my carefree attitude. It was Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at 5:21 pm and it was the minute my little girl was hit by a car. It was a minute I will never forget, one that replays in my mind many times a day. The sky was blue the air clear and warm, spring after a long cold winter. The kids took advantage and rode Batyas' new scooter for the very first time. I could hear their shouts of glee through the open window, watched as Meiras' hair whipped in the wind her head thrown back with infectious giggles as Batya gave her a ride up and down the sidewalk. She waited, as patiently as her four year old body could, as Shlomo also got a ride from his sister, and then it was her turn again and she bubbled with laughter as she held on tightly and zipped down the sidewalk. The hour was getting late; I went to interrupt the fun so we could do all the boring stuff, like homework, and dinner. I stepped out onto the platform on top of my steps, that little space that became the balcony to the gruesome show that would play over many more times in my head. I called out "kids, its time to come inside now" and little Meira, so pleased to see me, so eager to listen, so obedient, just jumped off the sidewalk and ran across E 69th street. "STOP!! STOP" I am screaming and then a silver jeep hit my baby. Her hot pink sweater a blur of color as her tiny body flew up in the air and landed in a crumpled ball, a motionless rag doll. "NNNOOOOO" a scream, an unearthly roar of horrific pain tore from my throat as I ran to the crumpled little figure lying on the ground. I thought her life was over, and so was mine. A strange thought came speeding through my brain; "I would rather lose our job than lose our child" Somehow I am sitting on the black pavement and the motionless limp body of my baby is in my arms. In some conscience part of my brain I realize that I picked her up and that was the wrong thing to do, so I begin to lower her to the ground carefully and she stirs and begins to cry. I*

*cry too, I have never been so happy to hear her cry. My husband is sitting on the ground next to me, my children standing around us and hundreds of New Yorkers fill the sidewalk and street watching the drama unfold. The police arrive along with the ambulance and fire trucks. There is chaos, people calling commands and advice to me, but I cannot hear, the sounds are distant and muffled. I know I will never ever be alright if something should happen to my little girl. Please don't let her die, I sob inwardly to Hashem, please don't let us die. They try to put her on a board but she squirms, cries and refuses. Someone calls out, "she will be ok". How can they know, only five minutes ago she was ok how can we know anything? The driver is crying and apologizing, I tell him it's not his fault, but look at the silver machine a hundred times the size of the little body in my arms and start to shake. We get her in the ambulance she is crying bitterly and telling me she is ok and wants to go home. She sounds like herself; she never wants to go to the doctor and always tries to minimize her pain. I hold her hand and promise not to leave her for even a second. Her head is bleeding bumps are forming but she looks at me with pain fogged eyes and says "mommy I scared". I hold her little fragile hand and promise again that I will be with her the whole time and everything will be ok. I can't believe she is talking, and making sense. A whole team meets us as the ambulance doors open and she is wheeled quickly inside and evaluated. There are big bumps on the head and a scrape on the back but no other outer signs of injury. She is rushed for a cat scan and x-rays and I am by her side just as I promised. The Doctors surround her bed and recheck her again. She is resting calmly now and they are baffled. They prepare her for IV and possible surgery as they await the results of the test. The results come in and they are even more puzzled. There is no internal bleeding no brain damage not even one broken bone. Just a concussion, perhaps a hairline fracture of the skull, but there is nothing that needs to be done. No surgery, no stitches, no casts, nothing. My tiny little girl weighing 22 pounds is whole and unbroken after being hit by a 5000 pound SUV! The doctors are amazed, "You have someone upstairs watching over her" one says "what a fantastic miracle, we have patients with greater injuries from falling off their bikes" And so after seven hours of observation, at 1:00 am, we take her home. My little girl in one piece is in my bed with me and as she softly sleeps my tears flow as I try to grasp this awesome miracle that Hashem has preformed for us. I am overwhelmed with gratitude, I can't even comprehend how I can ever repay this gift, this miracle. I am so indebted to Hashem I cannot fathom where to begin to express my gratitude and love to Him. But I know with certainty I can never live my life*

*the same, I will never see things as I have before. I can never take for granted each day, each child, each gift He has given .*

*It has taken some days as I walked around like a zombie reliving those terrifying moments of uncertainty, seeing the bouncing giggling girl in pink, and her sudden crumpled body on the floor. It takes just one moment and life can be altered so drastically. We get bogged down with details of life and things to be done that we lose sight of the big picture until in one flashing moment its changed. And we wonder why we didn't treasure it before why we didn't realize what we had. Take advantage of your gifts in life and may we never need a miracle.*

Miracles are happening to all of us all the time. We just need to open our eyes and see!

Shabbat Shalom Hag Sameyach,  
David Bibi

**The Immeasurable Value of a Fake Diamond Ring  
It's made of nickel and a piece of crystal. But it  
helped save Jews from the Nazis.  
By Jill Werman Harris  
TABLET MAGAZINE**

Inside a tiny box in a temperature-controlled, locked cabinet at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, there is a ring. It is not particularly beautiful, and in purely monetary terms, it is not particularly valuable. But behind this ring is a beautiful story of survival of Jews living under Nazi occupation—people for whom the ring's value proved incalculable.

When WWII broke out, Abraham “Bumek” Gruber was a cattle merchant and butcher in Drohobycz, a small town—now part of Ukraine, but then part of Poland—that was then home to some 14,000 Jews. The town, whose Jewish history dates back to at least the 15th century, fell under Soviet control in 1939. But two years later, the Nazis invaded; killing squads arrived, murdering 400 Jews on the streets in a pogrom. The rest of the Jews of Drohobycz were ultimately forced into a ghetto. While it was technically an open ghetto with no fences, Jews were not allowed to leave. May 21, 1943, marked the final liquidation of the ghetto; the Germans declared the town Judenrein, cleansed of Jews. But roughly 400 Jews hid in the forest or other hiding places and survived.

Bumek was one of them—thanks, in part, to the ring.

Handsome and likable, Bumek was known for his intelligence and resourcefulness. As a reservist in the

Polish cavalry, he was called up for active duty in 1939. But when his unit soon disbanded because of the German advancement, he walked the 250 miles back to Drohobycz, his hometown. According to his nephew, Marcel Drimer, Bumek survived on his quick wit as he pretended to be Polish or Ukrainian, working for food and shelter along the way, in order to make it back home to his extended and close-knit family, which in part included his parents, his sister Laura, her husband Jakub, and their children Marcel and Irena.

Bumek also had his own daughter, Liba, with his wife, Blimka. After the German invasion, they first lived under Nazi occupation and were then forced to live in the ghetto, where food was scarce and Jews were frequently targeted by Nazi “aktions,” where they were loaded onto freight trains bound for concentration or death camps. One day, during yet another brutal aktion—where Nazis would enter Jewish homes, sometimes looting or simply destroying anything belonging to Jews, before rounding them up for deportation—Bumek watched as German soldiers broke a chandelier. As the crystal pieces flew across the room and landed on the floor, Bumek had an idea. He gathered some of the broken pieces of the chandelier and asked a jeweler to make him a ring—a fake diamond ring, made out of nickel with a crystal cut like a diamond—just in case.

Bumek was considered lucky when, in 1943, he was moved from the ghetto to work as a butcher for the SS at the Galicia oil refinery camp, where he lived in a labor camp with Blimka and Liba. His sister Laura and her family were hiding in a nearby town, Mlynki Szkolnikowe, at the home of Jan and Zofia Sawinski—who had been friendly neighbors when Laura and Bumek were growing up—and their four children. Food was rationed but the Sawinskis' 12-year-old son, Tadek, would bring table scraps home for their livestock, secretly giving it to their guests, who included two other Jewish families—10 people in all—hidden in the attic under the thatched roof or in a small hole under the dirt floor. Marcel, who was 9 years old when he was in hiding at the Sawinskis' with his parents and 7-year-old sister Irena, told me: “Sometimes, Bumek secretly gave Tadek some meat or bread to bring to all of us, which was very dangerous.”

One day when Bumek was at work, someone informed him that his wife and child had been put on a truck with other Jews and taken to the forest. Because Bumek had befriended some German officers by giving them better cuts of meat, one of them took him by motorcycle to rescue Blimka and Liba; family members of “essential workers” like

Bumek were considered protected. But as they approached the forest, Bumek saw only the empty truck. When he looked inside, there was the clothing of the dead, among which he found Liba's little shoes. His wife and daughter had been executed.

Bumek lost his will to live. But a few weeks later he saw a little 4-year-old girl, Fela, who was about the same age as his beloved Liba, playing alone on the ground in the labor camp. He took her by the hand and asked, "Where is your mother?" Fela brought him to her mother, Tusia Schindler, who was a seamstress working for the Nazis at the camp. He yelled at Tusia, imploring her, "Never let your child stay alone! They will take her and murder her!" Bumek and Tusia began to talk and exchanged their stories. Tusia's husband, Gedalko, had been mobilized by the Soviet army but she heard he was taken prisoner by the Germans. Because it was widely reported that the Germans immediately killed Jewish POW's, Tusia assumed he was dead. Both presumably widowed, Tusia and Bumek became very close.

At one point, one of the Nazi wives for whom Tusia was sewing dresses told Tusia in a demanding tone that she had to finish by a certain date. It was a clear sign that the next aktion was coming. The Nazi wife's reductionist logic was indescribably sickening: How would the dresses be made if the seamstress was to be liquidated?

Bumek knew he, Tusia, and Fela had to leave immediately. At nighttime, Bumek brought Tusia and Fela to the Sawinskis' house in Mlynki Szkolnikowe. Jan Sawinski was expecting Bumek, but he was startled to see Tusia and refused to take an additional person; he didn't even know about little Fela, who was hidden in a wagon under a cover of hay. Bumek had already lost his wife and daughter. He was not going to allow something like that to happen again. It was at this critical point that Bumek said, "Listen, I have a diamond ring that I want to give you."

He pleaded with Jan, hoping he would take the ring in exchange for hiding them. But Jan wasn't convinced, saying only that he wanted to have something to eat and some vodka and that he would sleep on it.

The next morning Jan came to Bumek and said: "Last night I dreamed of Jesus Christ and he told me that I have to rescue you." Bumek was relieved and introduced him to Fela. Sawinski laughed and said, "Whatever it is, I'm going to take care of you." Sawinski also mentioned that his cow just died. "So

it's great that you gave me the ring," he told Bumek happily, "so I can sell it to buy a cow to feed you all!"

Bumek froze. He knew that if Jan tried to sell the ring, and it was discovered that the ring was made of nickel, the "stone" was made of glass, they might all be killed. Bumek just had to convince him not to sell it without letting him know it was a fake. Boldly he pleaded: "Please, you cannot sell it. This ring is an heirloom in my family for generations. Wait until after the war. I promise when the Russians come in—and they're not so far away—I will buy you the most beautiful new cow."

That winter, 13 Jews hid in the Sawinskis' safe house. The Soviet Army liberated the region on Aug. 7, 1944, and they were free. Bumek kept his word and bought Jan a beautiful cow, and Jan returned the ring to its clever owner.

Jan and Zofia Sawinski and their four children were all later honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for saving 13 Jewish lives.

Bumek and Tusia married. When she was several months pregnant with Bumek's child, Tusia's first husband Gedalko came to find her. Bumek and Tusia were shocked to find he had survived; he had in fact been captured by the Italians, not the Germans, which explained why he had not been killed. According to Marcel, Tusia loved both men, but together they decided that Tusia would stay with Bumek. There was no animosity and they were able to remain friends. Bumek and Tusia lived in Poland until 1957 and eventually moved to Israel.

After Tusia died in 1967, Bumek later married his third wife, Mania, to whom the ring passed. Bumek died in the early 1990s, and when Mania died a few years ago, Irena contacted the family. "When you take Mania's jewelry to be appraised," she said, "the one item that is worth nothing is the one I want."

The phony ring that saved them was donated to the Holocaust Museum in 2013 by siblings Marcel Drimer and Irena Wysoki, who lives in Israel.

Teresa A. Pollin, a Polish-born curator in the museum's arts and artifacts department, was instrumental in acquiring it. She has known Marcel and Irena for more than a decade. "I know how detail-oriented they are," Pollin told me, adding that "each time I had questions about any part of the story, historians came to the rescue" and backed up the family's tale. "There is not a shred of doubt in my mind regarding the veracity of the story," she concluded.

"The ring is important," Pollin explained, "because it's a symbol of ingenuity and a deep understanding of the horrid fate prepared by Germans for the Jews."

Today Marcel is in his 80s and lives in Virginia. He and his wife Ania are long-standing volunteers at the museum, where Marcel lectures regularly on his life and survival in Drohobycz. He is still in touch with the grandchildren of the Sawinski family.

"The ring saved us all. It was one of the many miracles that helped us survive," said Marcel. The ring, he added, "helps all people understand how tenuous life and survival was at that time."

Jill Werman Harris has written for the New York Times, The Forward, and other publications. She is the author of Remembrances and Celebrations: A Book of Eulogies, Elegies, Letters and Epitaphs. ( **She is also my sister in law ... David**)

### DAIRY ON SHABU'OT By Morris Arking

Many have the custom of eating dairy on Shabu'ot. What is the origin of this custom? Eating dairy on Shabu'ot is not mentioned by the Gemara or any of the Sephardic or Middle-Eastern Rishonim. In fact the only two Rishonim that mention it are the Kol Bo and MoHaRI Tyrna. The author of the Kol Bo is not known, but it closely resembles the Orhot Hayyim (by R Aharon Ben Ya'aqob HaKohen) that was compiled in Southern France in the late 13th century. The Kol Bo (Siman 52) wrote that it was customary to eat honey and milk on Shabu'ot because the Torah is compared to honey and milk, as the Pasuq in Shir HaShirim (4:11) says "D'bash V'Halab Tahat L'shonekh" ("Honey and milk under your tongue"). The commentators explain that this verse is allegorically referring to one who is speaking words of Torah. It's not clear from the Kol Bo when they ate honey and milk since normally Yom Tob meals are meat meals.

The MoHaRI Tyrna lived in 14th century Austria and he merely brings the acronym for milk in the Torah's instruction for the Shabu'ot offering as the pasuq (BaMidbar 28:26) describes it as a "Minhah Hadashah LaShem B'Shabu'otekhem" (a new offering to Hashem on your Shabu'ot). The acronym of Hadashah LaShem B'Shabu'otekhem is HaLaB (milk).

The next record of this custom is by R. Moshe Isrelish (16th century Poland), commonly known as the RaMA, in his notes on Shulhan 'Arukh (OH 494). He wrote that it is customary in several places to eat

dairy on the first day of Shabu'ot. And he continued that it seemed to him that the reason for this was in order to have two breads. First eat dairy with bread, and then eat meat with another bread, since you can't eat bread with meat, after that bread was served on the table with dairy. The two breads are reminiscent of the two breads that are brought on the altar in the Miqdash on Shabu'ot. Interestingly he makes no mention of honey like the Kol Bo, and here he specifies that it was served on the first day, prior to the meat meal. So we see from this early record of the custom, that dairy on Shabu'ot did not replace the meat that is ordinarily served on Yom Tob as part of the Misvah of Simhat Yom Tob.

Subsequent to the RaMA's note on Shulhan 'Arukh, we begin to see this custom documented in Sephardic sources as well. R Hayyim Benveniste (17th century Turkey), in his Shiyere' K'nesset HaG'dolah (Ot Gimal), wrote that his custom was to eat dairy with honey, make Birkat HaMazon, and then after an hour he would eat meat. Another Sephardic source is the P'ri Hadash, R. Hizqiyah DeSilva, from Italy and later in Jerusalem (he lived during the latter part of the 17th century). He does not state what his custom was, he just comments on the RaMA's reasoning for the custom (OH 494). He did not agree with the explanation of having two breads, so he attributed the custom to the Gemara's comparison of the Torah to milk. In Masekhet Ta'anit (7a/b) the Gemara stated that the Torah is compared to three liquids; to water, wine and milk. This is either because these liquids are stored in simple earthenware jugs just like the Torah that stays in humble people. Or because these liquids spoil if they are not attended to, like the Torah which is forgotten without constant study and review. The P'ri Hadash also cited the reason of "D'bash V'Halab Tahat L'Shonekh". And both the Shiyere' K'nesset HaG'dolah and the P'ri Hadash were quoted by R Yoseph Molkho (18th century Greece) in his Shulhan Gaboha (OH 494 Zayin/Het).

R Hayyim Palaji who was the Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Empire in the 19th century also discussed the custom of eating dairy on Shabu'ot (Mo'ed L'Kol Hai Siman Het Ot Mem). He explained that we eat dairy and then meat, to show that we are worthy of receiving the Torah, since we are careful not to eat dairy with or after meat (only before meat). This reason is based on the Midrash that said, that when the angels saw that Hashem was going to give the Torah to the Jewish people, they protested on the grounds that angels are more worthy of receiving the Torah. Hashem answered that they weren't, since they ate meat and milk when they went to visit Abraham Abinu! R Hayyim Palaji also added that it is

more important to have meat than dairy on Shabu'ot (if you're not going to have both.)

The reason, that they could not have meat after receiving the Torah because their dishes weren't kosher, and that meat required more preparations, such as a special slaughtering knife, a salting process etc. was not recorded until the 20th century by the Mishnah B'rurah (OH 494:12). His source is an anonymous Rabbi, meaning that there is no Midrashic source that indicates that reason.

R Abraham Hamway, who was born in Halab in the 19th century, quotes several of the sources cited above in his Mahzor Bet HaB'hirah for Pesah and Shabu'ot (pgs 281b/282a). But his last line on the subject was: "A man is obligated to rejoice on this holy holiday and there is no happiness unless there is meat, therefore after eating dairy foods, make Birkat HaMazon, and then the righteous should eat (meat) until they are satisfied!" (Ot Yod Tet) So we see from the RaMA, the Shiyere' K'nesset HaG'dolah, R Hayyim Palaji and H Abraham Hamway that dairy was only served before a meat meal, not instead of a meat meal on Shabu'ot. Likewise H 'Obadyah Yosef wrote, "Our custom is to eat dairy first, then eat something (parve) and drink something (parve to wash away the dairy) and then we have meat." (Hazon 'Obadyah-Yom Tob pg318)

What was the custom in Middle-Eastern communities? In the Keter Shem Tob's compendium of customs for Shabu'ot (by R Shem Tob Gaguine) he writes that the custom in the Land of Israel, Syria, Turkey and Egypt was to have cheese dishes and foods cooked with butter, milk and honey for breakfast as was the custom in Germany, but that the Sephardic communities in London and Amsterdam were not meticulous in that matter (volume 4 pgs 15/16 published in 1954). So again we see that in these communities the custom of eating dairy did not come at the expense of eating meat at any of the official Yom Tob meals, as they only had it for breakfast, not as a dinner or lunch.

Furthermore the Yemenites never adopted the custom of eating dairy at all on the holiday of Shabu'ot (see Halikhot Teman by R Yoseph Qafih and Halakhot and Minhagim of the Jewish People by R 'Obadyah Melamed). In fact the Gemara in Masekhet Pesahim (68b) states that Rab Yosef instructed the members of his household to prepare him a third-born calf for the Shabu'ot meal. He explained that if it wasn't for the Torah that was given on that day, "Kammah Yoseph Eeka B'Shuqa" (he would be one of many Joe's in the market place) Since the Torah elevated him to the special status of

being Rab Yoseph, it is fitting to celebrate Shabu'ot with a special meat meal!

So what about the Halabi custom of having an actual dairy meal on the holiday of Shabu'ot? In Halab some families would serve dairy on the first night of the holiday and others on the first day of the holiday. It was common to serve Rishta B'Kalsoiness, cheese Sombusak, Riz ib Halib (rice with milk) and Riz ib 'Assal (rice with honey). It was also customary to serve Krabeej which is a pastry with marshmallow fluff. The fluff is known as "Natef" in Arabic and it is reminiscent of the pasuq that is recited in the Mizmor for Shabu'ot ; "...Af Shamayim Nattefu MiP'ne' Elokim Zeh Sinai"(Tehilim 68:9). Those that serve dairy on the first night, feel that a lighter meal facilitates staying up all night. Eating dairy at night instead of the daytime is also consistent with the Rabbinic teaching regarding Shabbat and Yom Tob meals of, "K'bod Yom Ukhbod Laylah, K'bod Yom Qodem" (Pesahim 105a) which means that the daytime meal takes precedence over the nighttime meal. Maran brings that L'Halakhah in OH 271:3. Furthermore Hakham 'Obadyah Yosef wrote (Hazon 'Obadyah-Yom Tob pgs 96-98) that according to Maran and other posqim the Misvah of Simhat Yom Tob is MiD'Rabbanan on the first night of Yom Tob as opposed to the first day when it is D'Orayta. (See Masekhet Sukkah 48a where the word "Akh" in the pasuq "V'Hayita Akh Sameah" excludes the first night, and the Yerushalmi Sukkah 84:5 states "...Lel Yom Tob Rishon Patur MiSimhah".) Still in all some served a dairy meal for lunch.

So is this custom of serving dairy for an actual Yom Tob meal problematic Halakhically? HaRambam wrote in MT Hilkhot Yom Tob (6:18): "The men eat meat and drink wine as there is no happiness unless there is meat and there is no happiness unless there is wine." However Maran did not rule like HaRambam in this matter, since it seems from the Gemara (Pesahim 108a) that meat was only a requirement in the times of the Bet HaMiqdash, when they ate the meat of the Qorban Sh'lamim, but now that we don't have the Bet HaMiqdash we fulfill the obligation of Simhat Yom Tob by drinking wine. In Shulhan 'Arukh Hilkhot Yom Tob (OH 529:1) Maran wrote; "And one is obligated to (make HaMossi) on two loaves of bread (for Lehem Mishneh) and establish every meal on the wine." He makes no mention of an obligation to have meat, which is consistent with his discussion in the Bet Yosef (OH 529 Dibbur HaMat-hil "Katab HaRambam") where he differs with HaRambam on this point, based on his understanding of the Gemara in Masekhet Pesahim.

So from a Halakhic perspective dairy may be served any time for a Yom Tob meal, provided that they also drink wine. However from all the sources cited above, we see that it was important to them to have meat for every Yom Tob meal. Therefore we must put the custom of eating dairy on Shabu'ot into proper perspective. It originated as an Ashkenazic custom, and after the RaMA's notes were printed with Shulhan 'Arukh it was adopted by Sepharadim in a limited way. Either as a prelude to a meat meal, or as a breakfast, or not at all in some Middle-Eastern communities. Our community adopted the custom of having one dairy meal, which is permissible according to Maran, but based on all of the above-mentioned sources it is not suggested to replace more than one meat meal with dairy.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading by NATHAN I DWECK

This week we begin Sefer Bamidbar. The first 5 parshiot take place in Benei Israel's 2nd year in the midbar while the next 5 parshiot skip directly to the 40th year in the midbar. A dominant theme in the sefer (particularly in the 1st half of the sefer) is the sins that Benei Israel did in the midbar including complaining about the traveling and the manna, Miriam speaking lashon hara, the sin of the spies, the mekoshesh etsim, Korach and his assembly rebelling against Moshe, Benei Israel complaining about the lack of water, Moshe hitting the rock, and Benei Israel sinning with the Midyanite women and baal peor.

The second half of the sefer largely discusses Benei Israel's path to entering Israel in the 40th year and the associated battles and division of land. Amalek attacks Benei Israel after Aharon's death. Benei Israel then battles with Sihon and Og on their way to Israel. Balak then tries to attack Benei Israel by hiring Bilaam to curse them. Benei Israel then attack Midyan. The sefer then ends by recapping the journies of Benei Israel throughout the 40yrs.

Bamidbar - Moshe counts Benei Israel (year 2 in the midbar)

- 1- Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to take a census. Leaders of each tribe are assigned
- 2- The count for each tribe is listed. Levi is not counted. The job of the Leviim by the mishkan
- 3- Discusses how Benei Israel camped around the mishkan (who camped next to who, leader of the tribe and number of people in each tribe) and how they traveled in the midbar
- 4- Tells about the sons of Aharon. The Leviim are appointed to take care of the mishkan

5- Moshe counts the Leviim. The parsha discusses the 3 children of levi individually including where they camped, who their nasi was, and what their job in the mishkan was.

6- Moshe counts the bechorim. The bechorim are redeemed by the Leviim.

7- The special responsibilities of benei Kehat

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Be ready for a three day period." (Shemot 19:15)

As the holiday of Shabuot approaches we prepare to celebrate the Jewish People receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman tells a great parable about the holiday.

Once there was a poor man who lived across the street from a very wealthy man. He would always watch the interesting activity that went on. Very important people came to visit, luxurious cars could come to pick him up, and festive meals were always taking place. The poor man yearned to live such a life.

One day the rich man came out and noticed the poor man watching him. He went over to him and asked why he was watching him, what does he find so interesting? The poor man said he watches his comings and goings and wishes he could live even for one day that type of life. The rich man was a sport, so he said that in three months he needs to go away for a day. He has some meetings scheduled for that day, but they really don't know him. If he wants, he could take his place and for one day he can live the life of a rich man.

The poor man was thrilled at the prospect of living the rich life and jumped at the opportunity, and agreed to impersonate the rich man. Three months went by and the poor man came to the rich man's mansion. The rich man welcomed him in, but was surprised that he was late and he was almost on his way to the airport. The poor man apologized, but he was not clean and needed a haircut and his clothes were torn. The rich man said he looks terrible; he can't take his place looking like that. The poor man said he lost track of the time and couldn't get ready. The rich man lent him a fancy suit and hat to make him look presentable.

That day there was a lunch scheduled with some businessmen in a restaurant. The poor man was taken there and they gave him a menu. He could hardly read it, and didn't know how to order, or who would pay. The meeting began and they started asking him what he thought about the current interest rates and where they were going. The poor man didn't know what they were talking about. The businessmen were amazed. Could this be the big tycoon they were supposed to meet? Next the poor

man was supposed to meet some bankers. They came to visit him. They questioned him about the loan structure he needed. The poor man was embarrassed again. That night they forgot to tell him that he was the guest of honor at a testimonial dinner, and he was scheduled to speak. He was brought to the dinner, at the head of the dais table and introduced to speak. He was completely tongue-tied and couldn't say one word. All the people began laughing.

The next day the rich man came home and asked the poor man how the day was. The poor man said it was the worst day of his life. He was humiliated and it is much easier to be poor. He could no longer understand why anyone wants to be rich. The rich man replied that it was all his fault. If he would have prepared himself properly, if he read up on some basic subjects he needed to know he would have had a great day.

The holiday of Shabuot is a great day. People can attain great spiritual heights. However, there is no lulab and etrog, no matzah and no shofar, so the people don't see the importance. We need to prepare ourselves for this great day. Not like the poor man in the story. May we merit a great inspirational holiday, Amen. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The perashah that is always read before the holiday of Shabuot is Bemidbar, this week's reading. The word Midbar means wilderness, and indeed the Midrash points out clearly that the Torah was given only in a wilderness, not in an inhabited area.

The Rabbis tell us that a wilderness symbolizes simplicity - the sand, the sky and nothing else. So too the Torah can only be accepted with an attitude of simplicity. This does not only mean without being encumbered by materialism. It also means a simple faith and simple outlook on life. We have to believe that we are Jews only because of the Torah, and everything in the world revolves around the Torah. We also have to realize that if we want, we can create a life that is compatible with the Torah, no matter what the society or environment says. Simple faith is not usually simple to achieve. But the wilderness should remind us that certain things are integral for the acceptance of the Torah. Simplicity in all its forms will help us in receiving the Torah and living a life of Torah. Tizku Leshanim Rabot.

Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

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camp - So Shall They Travel

Parashat Bamidbar describes the formation in which Benei Yisrael traveled through the wilderness. The Torah emphasizes that Benei Yisrael were to maintain this formation both during their periods of encampment, and while they journeyed: "Ka'asher Yachanu Kein Yisa'u" – "Just as they encamp – so shall they travel" (2:17).

It has been suggested that this emphasis conveys an important message relevant even to contemporary life, particularly so in anticipation of the summer months. People often have a tendency to lower their religious standards when they travel or when they leave for the summer. There are Jews who would normally never even consider eating in a non-kosher restaurant, missing the prayers with a Minyan, or dressing improperly, but when they travel they are prepared to compromise their standards of religious observance. When people leave their normal routine they assume a more relaxed disposition which can easily lead to compromising spiritual standards. In fact, it is told that the Chafetz Chayim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Lithuania, 1839-1933) would carry shrouds with him when he traveled in order to remind him of his mortality. Recognizing the tendency to become less meticulous in one's observance during travel, this great sage found it necessary to take this drastic measure to ensure that he retained his strict standards away from home.

This, perhaps, is the underlying message of the verse, "Just as they encamp – so shall they travel." The Torah here emphasizes that one's level of observance must remain consistent during "encampment" and during "travel," when he is at home and when he is away from home.

Others derive a different lesson from this verse, one which relates to the particular Mitzva of Shabbat. Shabbat observance entails more than wearing our finest clothing and eating hearty, delicious meals (though certainly this is proper and required by Halacha). Shabbat is a day for spiritual rejuvenation, for Torah study, sharing words of Torah with our children, and singing the Pizmonim at the table. The spiritual charge that we receive over the course of Shabbat serves to protect us throughout the week from the negative influences that we confront. By devoting one day a week to Torah, we enhance our ability to withstand the religious challenges that we encounter over the course of the workweek.

The Torah alludes to this unique power of Shabbat observance in the verse, "Just as they encamp – so shall they travel." The degree to which we "encamp," we "rest" in the spiritual sense on Shabbat, and observe it as a day of religious rejuvenation, "so shall



they travel" – that is how successful we will be in maintaining proper religious standards as we go about our business during the week.

In our generation, more so than at any other time, we are bombarded throughout the week by the perverse values of the foreign culture within which we live. It is thus vitally important that we fortify ourselves through the proper observance of Shabbat in order to succeed in resisting these influences. Of course, one who makes no effort to resist the foreign influences will fall prey regardless of how he observes Shabbat. But if we do make the necessary effort, observing Shabbat as a day of spiritual engagement can go a long way in helping us maintain our standards during the workweek and overcome the pressures imposed upon us by the general society.

### Rabbi Wein

Fifty days pass quickly, especially if one counts them individually. It seems that it was just yesterday that we were preparing ourselves to sit down at the Pesach seder table and here it is Shavuot at the end of the week. Though the holiday has a number of other names associated with it – the Festival of Bikurim/First Fruits, the festival of the granting of the Torah – the proper name assigned to it is Shavuot – the Festival of Weeks.

The emphasis that the name gives us is that of the passage and counting of time. In its description of the festival itself, the Torah repeats, a number of times, this passage of weeks from the holiday of Pesach to the celebration of the holiday of Shavuot. It is apparent that this passage of time is deemed to be an important part of the significance of the holiday itself.

In the Talmud, as well as in the Bible itself, the holiday of Shavot is referred to as being atzeret - an adjunct and bookend, so to speak, to Pesach. Somehow it completes the process of redemption of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage. It illustrates for us the purpose of that redemption and the true goal that freedom points us to in our personal and national lives.

It is as though the revelation at Sinai and the granting of the Torah is the strategic goal of the entire story of the Jewish people in Egypt while the actual Exodus from Egypt is the necessary tactic to allow this strategic goal to be attained. Only by connecting Shavuot to Pesach with this seven-week counting does this message become clear and cogent to us.

The connection of Shavuot to the bounty and blessings of agricultural produce is also emphasized in the Torah and is the backdrop to the drama of the book of Ruth, which by custom is read publicly in the synagogue on Shavuot. Humans cannot live by bread alone but they cannot live without bread either. Therefore, we are reminded on Shavuot of the daily miracle of nature that provides food and sustenance for us all.

In our blessed current circumstances of plenty we often think that our food is from the supermarket and that we are somehow entitled to enjoy the quantities and varieties of food available to us. We always look for the hand of God, so to speak, in unusual and unforeseen circumstances. However, in the regular every day mundane activities that we are engaged in, we find it more difficult to sense the Divine Presence.

The agricultural nature of the holiday of Shavuot comes to remind us of the constant presence of God in our lives every time we sit down to eat the food produced by our earth. There was a time in the world when not only Jews said blessings of thanksgiving before and after their meals. The modern world has swept that antiquated custom aside today. However in Jewish life it remains a vital part of our daily activity and a necessary reminder as to the blessings that God has bestowed upon the agricultural toils of man. Freedom without food is a calamity. Shavuot reminds us of this obvious but often neglected truth.

Finally, Shavuot comes to reinforce our belief in the primacy of Torah study and observance in our life, both individually and as a nation. Rav Saadyah Gaon's famous statement that "Our nation is a nation only by virtue of our Torah" has been proven true by the millennia of Jewish history and its events. Those who forsook any connection Torah, they and/or their descendants eventually fell away from the Jewish people.

It is the Torah and the revelation at Sinai that binds all of Israel together – Ashkenazi and Sephardy, Yemenite and Lithuanian, black and white and in all shades in between, politically liberal and conservative and old and young. It is the Torah that crosses all lines and groupings within Israel.

This is the idea that the Torah itself expresses that at Sinai we were all "of one heart and one being." Shavuot is the holiday of Jewish unity, of the acceptance of our individual differences within the framework of the goal of becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. There was a seven-week process that led from the slavery of Egypt to the glory of Sinai. We are also in the midst of a process of

rebuilding the Jewish people, strengthening the Jewish state, and revitalizing the actual Land of Israel. This process takes time and will not be accomplished in only seven weeks. But the example of the seven-week wait for Shavuot should stand us in good stead

### Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Law as Love

One of the most amusing scenes in Anglo-Jewish history occurred on 14 October 1663. A mere seven years had passed since Oliver Cromwell had found no legal bar to Jews living in England (hence the so-called "return" of 1656). A small synagogue was opened in Creechurch Lane in the City of London, forerunner of Bevis Marks (1701), the oldest still-extant place of Jewish worship in Britain.

The famous diarist Samuel Pepys decided to pay a visit to this new curiosity, to see how Jews conducted themselves at prayer. What he saw amazed and scandalised him. As chance or Providence had it, the day of his visit turned out to be Simchat Torah. This is how he described what he saw:

And anon their Laws that they take out of the press [i.e. the Ark] are carried by several men, four or five several burthens in all, and they do relieve one another; and whether it is that every one desires to have the carrying of it, I cannot tell, thus they carried it round about the room while such a service is singing ... But, Lord! to see the disorder, laughing, sporting, and no attention, but confusion in all their service, more like brutes than people knowing the true God, would make a man forswear ever seeing them more and indeed I never did see so much, or could have imagined there had been any religion in the whole world so absurdly performed as this.[1]

This was not the kind of behavior he was used to in a house of worship.

There is something unique about the relationship of Jews to the Torah, the way we stand in its presence as if it were a king, dance with it as if it were a bride, listen to it telling our story and study it, as we say in our prayers, as "our life and the length of our days." There are few more poignant lines of prayer than the one contained in a poem said at Neilah, at the end of Yom Kippur: Ein shiyur rak ha-Torah ha-zot: "Nothing remains," after the destruction of the Temple and the loss of the land, "but this Torah." A book, a scroll, was all that stood between Jews and despair.

What non-Jews (and sometimes Jews) fail to

appreciate is how, in Judaism, Torah represents law as love, and love as law. Torah is not just "revealed legislation" as Moses Mendelssohn described it in the eighteenth century.[2] It represents God's faith in our ancestors that He entrusted them with the creation of a society that would become a home for His presence and an example to the world.

One of the keys as to how this worked is contained in the parsha of Bemidbar, always read before Shavuot, the commemoration of the giving of the Torah. This reminds us how central is the idea of wilderness – the desert, no man's land – is to Judaism. It is midbar, wilderness, that gives our parsha and the book as a whole its name. It was in the desert that the Israelites made a covenant with God and received the Torah, their constitution as a nation under the sovereignty of God. It is the desert that provides the setting for four of the five books of the Torah, and it was there that the Israelites experienced their most intimate contact with God, who sent them water from a rock, manna from heaven and surrounded them with clouds of glory.

What story is being told here? The Torah is telling us three things fundamental to Jewish identity. First is the unique phenomenon that in Judaism the law preceded the land. For every other nation in history the reverse was the case. First came the land, then human settlements, first in small groups, then in villages, towns and cities. Then came forms of order and governance and a legal system: first the land, then the law.

The fact that in Judaism the Torah was given bemidbar, in the desert, before they had even entered the land, meant that uniquely Jews and Judaism were able to survive, their identity intact, even in exile. Because the law came before the land, even when Jews lost the land they still had the law. This meant that even in exile, Jews were still a nation. God remained their sovereign. The covenant was still in place. Even without a geography, they had an ongoing history. Even before they entered the land, Jews had been given the ability to survive outside the land.

Second, there is a tantalising connection between midbar, 'wilderness,' and davar, 'word.' Where other nations found the gods in nature – the rain, the earth, fertility and the seasons of the agricultural year – Jews discovered God in transcendence, beyond nature, a God who could not be seen but rather heard. In the desert, there is no nature. Instead there is emptiness and silence, a silence in which one can hear the unearthly voice of the One-beyond-the-world. As Edmond Jabès put it: "The word cannot

dwell except in the silence of other words. To speak is, accordingly, to lean on a metaphor of the desert.”[3]

The historian Eric Voegelin saw this as fundamental to the completely new form of spirituality born in the experience of the Israelites :

When we undertake the exodus and wander into the world, in order to found a new society elsewhere, we discover the world as the Desert. The flight leads nowhere, until we stop in order to find our bearings beyond the world. When the world has become Desert, man is at last in the solitude in which he can hear thunderingly the voice of the spirit that with its urgent whispering has already driven and rescued him from Sheol [the domain of death]. In the Desert God spoke to the leader and his tribes; in the desert, by listening to the voice, by accepting its offer, and by submitting to its command, they had at last reached life and became the people chosen by God.[4]

In the silence of the desert Israel became the people for whom the primary religious experience was not seeing but listening and hearing: Shema Yisrael. The God of Israel revealed Himself in speech. Judaism is a religion of holy words, in which the most sacred object is a book, a scroll, a text.

Third, and most remarkable, is the interpretation the prophets gave to those formative years in which the Israelites, having left Egypt and not yet entered the land, were alone with God. Hosea, predicting a second exodus, says in God’s name:

. . . I will lead her into the wilderness [says God about the Israelites] and speak tenderly to her . . . There she will respond as in the days of her youth, As in the day she came out of Egypt.

Jeremiah says in God’s name: “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown.” Shir ha-Shirim, The Song of Songs, contains the line, “Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?” (8: 5).

Common to each of these texts is the idea of the desert as a honeymoon in which God and the people, imagined as bridegroom and bride, were alone together, consummating their union in love. To be sure, in the Torah itself we see the Israelites as a recalcitrant, obstinate people complaining and rebelling against the God. Yet the prophets in retrospect saw things differently. The wilderness was a kind of yichud, an alone-togetherness, in which the people and God bonded in love.

Most instructive in this context is the work of anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep who focused attention on the importance of rites of passage.[5] Societies develop rituals to mark the transition from one state to the next – from childhood to adulthood, for example, or from being single to being married – and they involve three stages. The first is separation, a symbolic break with the past. The last is incorporation, re-entering society with a new identity. Between the two comes the crucial stage of transition when, having cast off one identity but not yet donned another, you are remade, reborn, refashioned.

Van Gennep used the term liminal, from the Latin word for “threshold,” to describe this transitional state when you are in a kind of no-man’s-land between the old and the new. That is what the wilderness signifies for Israel: liminal space between slavery and freedom, past and future, exile and return, Egypt and the Promised Land. The desert was the space that made transition and transformation possible. There, in no-man’s-land, the Israelites, alone with God and with one another, could cast off one identity and assume another. There they could be reborn, no longer slaves to Pharaoh, instead servants of God, summoned to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Seeing the wilderness as the space-between helps us to see the connection between the Israelites in the days of Moses and the ancestor whose name they bore. For it was Jacob among the patriarchs who had his most intense experiences of God in liminal space, between the place he was leaving and the one he was travelling to, alone and at night.

It was there, fleeing from his brother Esau but not yet arrived at the house of Laban, that he saw a vision of a ladder stretching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending, and there on his return that he fought with a stranger from night until dawn and was given the name Israel. These episodes can now be seen to be prefigurations of what would later happen to his descendants (maaseh avot siman lebanim, “the acts of the fathers are a sign of what would later happen to the children”).[6]

The desert thus became the birthplace of a wholly new relationship between God and humankind, a relationship built on covenant, speech and love as concretized in the Torah. Distant from the great centres of civilization, a people found themselves alone with God and there consummated a bond that neither exile nor tragedy could break. That is the moral truth at the beating heart of our faith: that it is not power or politics that link us to God, but love.

Joy in the celebration of that love led King David to "leap and dance" when the ark was brought into Jerusalem, earning the disapproval of King Saul's daughter Michal (2 Sam. 6: 16), and many centuries later led the Anglo-Jews of Creechchurch Lane to dance on Simchat Torah to the disapproval of Samuel Pepys. When love defeats dignity, faith is alive and well.

[1] The Diary of Samuel Pepys, 14 October 1663.

[2] In his book Jerusalem, 1783.

[3] Edmond Jabès, *Du Desert au Libre*, Paris, Pierre Belford, 1980, 101.

[4] Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, Louisiana State University Press, 1956, 153.

[5] Gennep, Arnold Van. *The Rites of Passage*. [Chicago]: University of Chicago, 1960.

[6] See Ramban, Commentary to Gen. 12: 6.

### AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

As we approach the subject of the Dor Hamidbar (the generation of the Wilderness), also known as the Dor Deah (the generation of True Knowledge), let us keep constantly before our eyes that this era was the time when Hashem's love was strongest. These men were chosen as witnesses of the most wondrous spectacles and demonstrations of Hashem's Presence among His people. At the same time, they were subject to the most severe chastisement, because "The one that Hashem loves, He rebukes, as a father to the son that He favors" (Mishle 3:12). The harshest punishments were bestowed upon this generation, as well as the greatest expressions of Hashem's love and the most sublime encomium and encouragement. All the chastisements and castigations of this period were because of Hashem's especial love: "to afflict you in order to test (or, to elevate) you, to do benefit to you in your end" (Devarim 8:16).

Rabbi Yochanan (Sanhedrin 110B) upholds the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer that the generation of the Wilderness is very highly regarded by Hashem, who declared: "I remember for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, when you followed me into the wilderness, a land unsown. (Therefore) Israel is holy to Hashem" (Yirmiyah 2:2-3)

"Gedolah Deah!" "How great is True Knowledge!" (Berachot 33A).

The greatest revelation of Hashem for all time was at Har Sinai. And we can look back and see that the purpose of Yosef being sold by the brothers was to bring Jacob and his family to Egypt. The exile in Egypt and the Nation's witnessing of the 10 Plagues and the splitting of Yam Suf were all to prepare us for the great and fearsome day when we were going to meet and hear Hashem. In fact the purpose of the

Creation of heaven and earth was only to bestow the Torah upon the Nation of Yisrael.

The Rambam says, regarding the Revelation at Har Sinai, "We must Exhalt it over all others" (Igerret Teman). This means that we must build this scene in the edifice of our minds. Picture that there were 600,000 men between the ages of 20 and 60, along with women, children and converts. Total over 2 million people. The thick cloud of Shechina was on the top of Har Sinai. Thunder and lightning and the strong sound of Shofar.

The Voice is heard, "Anochi Hashem Elokecha", speaking directly to the Nation. The Nation was overwhelmed with the very greatest fear and the greatest love.

The revelation at Har Sinai was the greatest injection of 'Deah', the acquiring of True Knowledge combined with actual sensory perception, which has remained an integral part of the Jewish Nation until today.

Adapted from "Journey into Greatness" by Rabbi Miller ZT'L

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