



Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh Newsletter

Parshat Bo 5769

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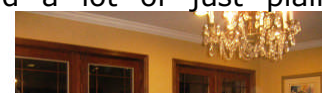
Rosh Chodesh with HaRav Bina

Constantly endeavoring to develop closer relationships with each and every student, Rav Bina hosted a Rosh Chodesh bash Monday afternoon. Thirty-five attendees crowded into his home dining room for a party that included divrei Torah and singing led by Shlomo Katz.



Keeping in Touch

Rav Ariel Cohen (5759-60), former member of the Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh staff, returned to the United States last year with his family. Although he may be physically distant from the Yeshiva, we can honestly say that he never really left Yeshiva. Although a large chunk of his time is spent teaching in Yeshivat Ohr HaChayim, he has not forgotten his many former *talmidim*. Rav Cohen not only keeps close contact with many of them, he also organizes get-togethers on a regular basis for alumni residing in the greater New York area. The most recent *chug* took place in the home of Rafael Basalely (5768) this past *Motzaei Shabbat*. The evening featured singing, dancing, *divrei Torah*, and a lot of just plain *schmoozing*. These *chugim* are open to all Netiv alumni. To contact Rav Cohen or to join the mailing list to find out



about any upcoming events, email cohen613@gmail.com.



Meron

By: David Lehmann, Shana Alef - Akiva Hebrew Day School in Detroit

"*Amar Rebbi Akiva, Amar Rebbi Akiva, Ashreichem Yisroel*" (Rabbi Akiva says, "You are fortunate Israel"), we shouted, jumping higher with each chant. Our dancing and singing drew the attention of delighted onlookers as our circle continued to expand. The time was 11 PM. By this time we would have expected Meron, lodged on a remote hilltop in northern Israel, to be peaceful and quiet. However, inside the building housing the *kever* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai the mood was bright and lively. This uplifting atmosphere persisted through Shabbat and the amazing experience will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

This was the Yeshiva's fifth annual outing to Meron. The advertising began with a few small signs, and by the time the deadline for registration arrived, sixty-five people had signed up - many encouraged by participants from previous years. Is it therefore surprising that Tali Nevies, a Netiv Aryeh alumnus (5767), flew in specially to participate in this special Shabbat in Meron with Rav Chizkiyah, Chanan, their families, and sixty five yeshivah *bocherim*?

The feeling of *achdus* was felt even before we boarded the bus, as the group worked together to organize the food for the trip. Upon arrival in Meron on Thursday night, Rav Chizkiyah reinforced this feeling of *achdus* by stressing that this trip was not only about achieving spiritual heights, but about bonding with each other. This feeling certainly was felt throughout the weekend as we danced and sang praises to HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the vicinity of the burial site of the holy *tanna*.

Another goal we set for ourselves was to simply relax and enjoy ourselves. The *kever* of R' Shimon bar Yochai is the gathering point of many *Chassidim* who stress joy in Avodat Hashem. The weekend began with resounding renditions of "Bar Yochai" and "Amar Rebbi Akiva" adjacent to the gravesite. We then moved on to the *kever* of Rebbi Yochanan HaSandlar for Ari Mermestein's *siyum* of *Mishnayot Seder Nashim*.



A group of us lit a bonfire and danced with a group of Breslovers who set up camp outside the building housing the *kever*, as their truck blasted Breslov techno music. If you already are impressed by the fullness of the trip, keep in mind that this was only the beginning. On Thursday night we all got a taste of some of the delicious

homemade Shabbos food prepared by the wives of Rav Chizkiya and Chana. We then embarked on a night hike in the woods which provided us with a chance for some *hitbodedut*, we sang by the rocky remains of a synagogue which existed during the period of the second Beit HaMikdash overlooking the misty valleys of deep green forests. I would say that it was the singing that gave us all a chance to connect, interspersing slow introspective tunes with fast and elated signing. The singing was truly a spiritually uplifting experience.



Friday morning many took part in activities such as zip-lining rappelling, and jeeping. Although physical fun was had, the trip's primary focus was the Chassidic idea of reaping joy from Mitzvot and other ways of increasing our Ahavat Hashem.

The awe-inspiring, majestic setting of the mountains in the Golan provided us with an opportunity for religious reflection. We spent most of the day in religiously inspiring

activities such as immersing in the AriZal's mikva in Tsfat; davening at Amuka - the gravesite of Yonatan ben Uziel known for its power to help those who pray there find *shidduchim*. Rav Chizkiya davened that we should all find our proper *zivug* at the proper time.

When I registered for the trip to Meron, I was unsure if it had anything else to offer outside of the gravesite of a great *tanna* where I would recite a few *prakim* of Tehillim. I must say that it was one of the most spiritually-uplifting experiences of my life. We were unable to tear ourselves away from the gravesite, as following *maariv* of *Motzaei Shabbat* we added one last round of singing and dancing.

The bus ride back to Jerusalem gave me an opportunity to reflect on this terrific experience. I understood the magic of Meron with its mystical beauty where the holiness could literally be felt. However, this was more than just a trip where a few pictures are all that remain. We bonded, we rejoiced, we reflected, we immersed, we were spiritually and emotionally rejuvenated. Each of us strengthened our *kesher* with Rav Chizkiyah and Chanan, and with each other. The memory of this experience will remain with us for a lifetime.

We would all like to express a special thank you to Rav Chizkiyah, Chanan, their families, and the entire Yeshivat Neitv Aryeh for making this fantastic program possible.

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Bo

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

"Take It Your Heart"

DO NOT DISTURB MY SLEEP!





"It was at midnight that Hashem smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt ... Pharaoh rose at midnight, he and all his servants and all Egypt" (Shmot 12:29). The Torah does not specify from where Pharaoh rose. Rashi comments that he rose "from his bed". Rashi is calling attention to the facet that, despite having already witnessed nine plagues, despite his being warned by Moshe Rabenu that precisely at midnight Egypt's firstborn were going to be slain, Pharaoh went off to bed!

At the very least we would have expected him to stay up to see if the terrible calamity would really take place. Any other king would have summoned his cabinet to discuss how to deal with the situation, organized ambulances and emergency personnel, and tried to find a safe haven for his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Pharaoh, however, went off to sleep, completely convinced that nothing drastic would take place, only to wake up in fright in the middle of the night. How could he not even have suspected that Moshe's words may prove true? Had Moshe not already proven himself? One would have thought that by this point Pharaoh would have noticed that whatever Moshe had warned of did indeed come to pass. Moshe had made a mark on the wall and told him that when the sun would reach that point, the hail would pour down. Just a moment previously the sun was shining, and then suddenly a downpour began: "very heavy such as had never been in the entire land of Egypt" (Shmot 9:24). The other plagues too also came about just as Moshe had said they would.

In the first two plagues we read how the sorcerers were able to emulate what Moshe did. By the third one they conceded "it is a finger of Hashem" (Shmot 8:15). The Torah describes the sorcerers' reaction to the plague of boils: "the sorcerers could not stand before Moshe because of the boils" (Shmot 9:11). Immediately prior to the plague of locusts, Pharaoh's servants told him: "How long will this be a snare for us? Send out the men that they may serve Hashem, their G-d! Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" (Shmot 10:7). It was clear to all that the entire kingdom was on the verge of collapse. The entire Egyptian nation by now had acknowledged the greatness of Moshe Rabenu: "the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people" (Shmot 11:4). Only Pharaoh went to sleep.

Shortly thereafter Moshe warned Pharaoh that the firstborn were about to be slain. Chazal tell us that the firstborn reacted in panic to this declaration by smiting some of their fellow Egyptians. It is for this reason that the *pasuk* states: "to Him Who smote Egypt through their firstborn" (*Tehillim* 136:10). Should it not have said that Hashem smote the firstborn? Rather, the firstborn feared dying at midnight and demanded that the Jewish people be sent out. They held a protest in front of the king's palace, yet Pharaoh ignored their protests. Even if Moshe would not succeed in killing all the firstborns, some would certainly die, should this threat not be taken seriously? Was Pharaoh not interested in protecting his firstborn? The least he could have done was to bring offerings to the Egyptian gods. Nothing! Pharaoh went to sleep! He refused to believe Moshe. Nothing was going to happen at midnight and all of his people were just driving him crazy.

A HEART OF STONE

There is a dispute regarding what Scripture means when it says Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart. The Rambam is of the opinion that the *teshuva* option was removed from Pharaoh. Other commentaries claim that Pharaoh's free choice was left intact and he could have repented until the very last plague. How then do they

understand the meaning of Hashem hardening his heart? The average person after being smitten with plague after plague and having witnessed all the great miracles in Egypt, would see things so clearly that he would have no other option but to believe in Hashem. Until the very last plague, Pharaoh's heart was hardened so that, unlike others, he still retained the choice of whether or not to believe. Hashem simply took away the impression made on him by the first nine plagues. The Rambam, in fact, agrees that Pharaoh initially had a choice like everyone else, yet because of his continued wickedness, Hashem took his free choice away from him.

Immediately upon the execution of the tenth plague, Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon and ordered them "rise up, go out from among my people, even you, even the Children of Israel" (Shmot12:31). However, no long afterwards, Pharaoh and his servants began to regret what they had done, declaring: "what is this that we have done that we have sent away Israel from serving us?" (Shmot 14:5) - The impression of the tenth plague, as was the case with the previous nine, was not long-lasting. Finally, upon arriving at Yam Suf and witnessing the splitting of the sea, the Egyptians declared "I shall flee before Israel, for Hashem is waging war for them against Egypt" (ibid. 25).

Up until that point, however, Pharaoh refused to repent and insisted on trying to bring the Jewish people back to Egypt. How could it be that after all that Pharaoh had witnessed he still steadfastly refused to believe in Hashem?

A LACK OF EMUNAH

We can pose the same question regarding *Am Yisrael*. They too witnessed the ten plagues in Egypt, they also experienced eating manna which fell from Heaven, and were present at the Great Revelation at Har Sinai, yet when ten out of twelve spies returned from *Eretz Yisrael* with a negative report, they immediately believed that *Eretz Yisrael*, a land of giants and fortified cities, was unconquerable.

There are two points we can discern from the incident involving the spies: The first one is their lack of faith in Hashem's ability to bring them into *Eretz Yisrael*. They reasoned that Hashem's victory over Pharaoh did not necessarily indicate that He could overpower the thirty-one kings of Canaan as well as the fortified cities and giants. The second point is their lack of faith in Hashem's desire to provide good for us, they claimed: "Because of Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us" (*Devarim* 1:27). Rather than having gratitude for all the good that Hashem had done, they slandered Him claiming that He has no desire at all to provide for us. In vain did Yehoshua and Caleb attempt to convince the people that quite the opposite was true: "If Hashem desires us, He will bring us to this Land and give it to us" (*Bamidbar* 14:8) - it is not "Hashem's hatred for us" that is behind His desire to bring us to the Land of Israel, but His desire to provide us with good. Is *Eretz Yisrael* not the Land in which the Divine Presence resides? If so, then it is there that we can come closer to Him. The Jewish people however were not convinced and insisted that "because of Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us".

"HATRED DISRUPTS THE CORRECT ORDER OF THINGS"

How can we even begin to understand such a claim? After witnessing far less miracles than those experienced by the *Dor HaMidbar*, Manoach's wife responded to her husband's worry of "we shall surely die, for we have seen a G-dly angel"

(*Shoftim* 13:22), by reassuring him: "Had Hashem wanted to put us to death, He would not have accepted from our hand an elevation-offering and a meal-offering, nor would He have shown us all this, nor would He let us hear such tidings at this time" (ibid. 23). Hashem accepted the Olah and Mincha of the nation at Har Sinai, as well as the Korban Pesach they had offered in Egypt. Hashem not only showed them far more than Manoach and his wife saw, they actually heard the Ten Commandments from Hashem's mouth and they received the Torah at Har Sinai. Should the people not have at least understood as Manoach and his wife did, that had Hashem truly desired to kill us, He would not have bothered showing us all this? Rather than recognizing this, the people insisted that Hashem took us out of Egypt en route to *Eretz Yisrael* out of hatred. Rashi comments: "Yet He loved you but you hated Him, as the popular saying says 'that which is in your heart about your friend, is what you think is in his heart about you'" (Rashi on Devarim 1:27). When you suspect that someone you love hates you, it is only because you are the one who hates him. It was not Hashem who hated us, but it was the Jewish people, G-d forbid, who had a hatred for Hashem, and "hatred disrupts the correct order of things" (Rashi Bamidbar 22:21).

This hatred was so powerful that it caused them to totally lose their faculties of reason. How could they think for a minute that Hashem took us out of Egypt with great miracles, smote Pharaoh with ten plagues in Egypt and many more plagues at sea, fought the Amalekites for us, brought the manna down for us - all in order to hand us over to the Amorite!? Had Hashem wished to kill us, he would have had no need to take us out of Egypt and to allow us to hear His voice from heaven. He could have left us in Egypt, for the Egyptians would certainly have been willing to carry out the Creator's wishes to destroy the Jewish people. Their hatred resulted in actions that defy all logic!

Incredibly, after all that Hashem had done for the Jewish nation, not to mention all the terrible atrocities which the Egyptians had perpetrated against them, the people were still able to ask: "why did we leave Egypt?" (*Bamidbar* 11:20). Whatever logical explanation we may find for their behavior, one thing is clear - the Jewish people did not have faith in Hashem either - they refused to acknowledge His Guiding Hand.

At the conclusion of their forty year sojourn in the desert, Yehoshua brings them into *Eretz Yisrael*. There the people began worshipping the gods of Canaan. Hashem sent other nations to fight against them at which point *Am Yisrael* suddenly remembered to cry out to Hashem. Later on came the period of the *shoftim*, where we read "the Children of Israel did what was evil in the eyes of Hashem and they forgot Hashem, their G-d, and worshiped the Baalim and the Asherah trees" (*Shoftim* 3:7). Hashem became angry with them and He delivered them into the hands of Cushan-rishataim. Again they suddenly remembered to cry out to Hashem and "Hashem set up a savior for the Children of Israel and he saved them: Otniel ben Kenaz, Calev's younger brother" (ibid. 9).

Following the death of Otniel "the Children of Israel continued to do that which was evil in the eyes of Hashem and Hashem strengthened Eglon, king of Moav over Israel" (ibid. 12). Once again the people cried out to Hashem and "Hashem set up a savior for them: Ehud son of Gera" (ibid. 15) who subsequently killed Eglon. Not only did they witness the miracles in Egypt, as well as those in the sea and the desert, but whenever they needed a salvation, Hashem sent it them in the form of Yehoshua, Judges, or kings. Yet the Jewish people persisted in doing what was evil in the eyes of Hashem until finally the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed. Pharaoh was not the only one who did not take Hashem's presence to heart.

It seems that not until the End of Days will the Jewish nation and the world as a whole undergo a total repentance and the whole world will recognize Hashem's Presence, and the Jewish nation will truly become a *mamlechet Kohanim*.

"TAKE IT TO YOUR HEART"

Our task in this world is to try to feel Hashem in our midst. It is not enough to declare twice daily "*Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad*", we must have this ingrained in our hearts. It is not enough to fulfill "*veyadata hayom*" - "you shall know today", but we must try to fulfill "*vahashevota el levavecha*" - "take it to your heart" (*Devarim* 4:39) - the knowledge of Hashem's presence must not remain external and superficial. I believe that for most of us, there exists a vast distance between knowledge of this and taking it to heart. We all realize intellectually what Hashem has done for us, but that is not sufficient - it must be in our hearts as well. Our love for Hashem must be as we recite in the next *pasuk* of *Kriat Shema*: "You shall love Hashem, your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources" (*Devarim* 6:5).

May we reach the level of feeling that which we recite weekly in *Nishmat*: "were our mouth as full of song as the sea, and our tongue as full of joyous song as its multitude of waves ... we still could not thank You sufficiently, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our forefathers, and to bless Your Name for even one of the thousand thousand, thousands of thousands and myriad myriads of favors that You performed for our ancestors and for us". When we reach that level then it will be easier for us to: "beware for yourselves lest your heart be seduced and your turn astray and serve gods of others" (*Devarim* 11:16). Unfortunately many do not want to believe. We should at least have the desire to allow this belief to penetrate our hearts and our souls. When we do so then Hashem will save us from all our troubles, especially here in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Staff Dvar Torah
by Rav Rafi Roness

Creating a Haven for Kedusha

The Torah prefaces the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people as a nation with "Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt" (*Shmot* 12:1). Rashi comments that this special rendezvous between Hashem and Moshe for the purpose of teaching the people Torah and mitzvot, may have taken place "in Egypt", yet it was "outside the city" - away from the impurities of Egypt's idols. Similarly, we read last week at the end of Parshat Vaera that Moshe prayed to Hashem only after having left the city (see *Shmot* 9:29).

Moshe in his capacity as leader of the nation spends a significant amount of time in the capital city, yet his Torah and *Tefillah* take place exclusively outside the city limits, away from the corrupt influences of Egyptian society.

We often find ourselves surrounded by a society devoid of holiness and sanctity. We therefore have a twofold obligation: 1) to create for ourselves a haven for our *ruchniyut*, and 2) to fortify and protect this haven from all negative outside influences. Creating a *makom kadosh* which allows penetration of negative ideas and influences can lead to disaster. Only by following Moshe's example can we hope to achieve any success in this endeavor.

Alumni Dvar Torah

by Oren Feder (5768) - University of Maryland

This week's *parsha* describes the final three *makkot* Hashem inflicted on the Egyptians. As we approach the climax of the ten plagues, as Hashem is about to slay the Egyptian firstborn, Moshe and the Jewish nation are given the Mitzvah of *Kiddush Hachodesh* - sanctifying the New Moon. Why is this mitzvah given specifically at this point and why is it the first mitzvah given to the Jewish nation?

I heard the following interesting explanation from the JLI Rabbi here at University of Maryland, Rabbi Eli Kohl. This explanation is especially relevant to someone who is no longer in Yeshiva. Rosh Chodesh defines the Jewish nation. By sanctifying the New Moon we are sanctifying time. We, human beings, decide when Rosh Chodesh is - two witnesses spot the New Moon and when Beis Din accepts their testimony, the new month is declared.

Why was this mitzvah given prior to the exodus? Before the Jews left Egypt and became a nation, before they were given other mitzvot, it was vital that they understood what it means to be a Jew. A Jew's time is crucial and every minute must be channeled for *Avodas Hashem*. Although many of us are in college or working and thus are unable to devote a full day to learning, we must strive to waste as little of our precious time as possible, to set aside times for learning and other activities that promote growth in Torah and *Yiras Shamayim*. When we learn and perform mitzvot we must be certain that we put our full heart and soul into it. This will bring us closer to Hashem - the ultimate goal of Torah and mitzvot.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Announcements from the Yeshiva

Mazal Tov

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- Daniel Mendelsohn (5767-68, Machal 5769) on his engagement to Shoshana Krug, daughter of Rabbi Dr. John and Phyllis Krug.
- Jan (5746) and Orit Wimpfheimer on the birth of a baby boy, Amitai Dvir.
- Brian (Shlomo) Weiss (5767-68) on his engagement to Jackie Fiedler.
- Shamshy (Steven) Schlager (5765-66) on his engagement to Hanna Sorkin.
- Shmully Ash (5766-67) on his engagement to Jamie Klein.
- Yossi (5760) and Annie Rabinowitz on the birth of a baby girl.
- Joshua (5756-57) and Aviva Swedarsky on the birth of a baby girl, Hannah Neima.

Visitors

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Gavin Horwich (5768)
- Rabbi Eric (Ariel) Cohen (5759-60 and former staff)
- Uri Schneider (5758-59)

Baruch Dayan Emet

The Yeshiva wishes condolences to the following people:

- Tzila Darmoni on the loss of her Father, Father-in-law to HaRav Yaakov Darmoni.

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Toiby Yehudit bat Tama Gaisa
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Yosef ben Latife
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Perla bat Miriam
- Rachel bat Sarah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Nachum Tzvi ben Ratza

- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly Bat Yaerah

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, let our office know so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - let us know! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh | Western Wall Plaza | One Hakotel Street | POB 32017 | Jerusalem | 91319 | Israel