



Along the Journey

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ויהי בסעף הארץ ויאמר משה קומה ובנחה יאמר שובה יקוק
רבבות אלפי ישראל (פרק י, לה-ו)

The car was packed and the kids were dressed. All we needed to do was to fill up on gas. If we left on schedule we would avoid traffic and get home around noon. But it was not to be. Coming home from the service station, I noticed the right front light was out – again. I could not understand it. We had just replaced this light a month ago. I pulled into the mechanic that I frequent when I am in Detroit and saw the red sign indicating that there would be no one to help me. So I began looking for another place. I came across a shop that looked open and 15 minutes later the mechanic called me to the back to show me that a piece that held the light was broken. “Does your light go out frequently?” Mystery solved. He caught what the other experts did not. All we needed now was to wait until the part came in. A few hours later we were stuck in traffic. But since then, we have been able to see the road even in the darkest night.

In this week's *Parsha*, we are transported on a journey, not of cars on highways, but of clouds over sand. A year has passed from the giving of the *Torah* and the Jewish people were instructed to ready themselves for the journey toward their final destination. Each leg of the trip would commence with a gesture from a heavenly cloud and the trumpet blasts of their leader. The tents would be packed up, the *Mishkan* would be dismantled and together with the *Shechina*, it would accompany the Jewish people throughout their travels, stopping over forty times before reaching *Eretz Yisrael*.

The *Degel Machane Efrayim* relates from his grandfather, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, that this trek did not only occur on a national level but on an individual level as well. Every Jewish person leaves *Mitzrayim* at birth and travels through the wilderness of this world, experiencing forty-two different sojourns along the way.

It would seem then, that the *Mishkan* did not merely accompany the Jewish nation throughout its travels historically, but continues to accompany each Jewish individual through his own personal journey. Every Jewish person is surrounded by the special clouds that protect him; each Jew is led by a cloud in front of him guiding him as he walks and protecting him as he moves forward. And each Jew travels together with the *Shechina* from the moment he is born until the clouds disperse to allow him to enter into his final destination.

In the past, it was never known when the nation had accomplished, what was required of them, when it was time to push ahead to the next stop, or when they would be settling somewhere for a year. But regardless, Moshe would rejoice with the decision.

When the *Aron* would set forth, Moshe ordered it to start, and when it settled, Moshe instructed it to stop. Rav Hirsch points out that neither the starting nor the resting of the *Aron* occurred at Moshe's behest. Yet, these were both accompanied by Moshe's orders as if they were to happen in response to his demands. Moshe was expressing the complete and joyous acquiescence to the Will of *Hashem*, viewing every decision of *Hashem* as if it were his own choice. It was irrelevant if they had just camped the night before and the cloud began to rise, or if they had been in one place for months and were ready to move forward. Every time the trumpets were to be blown, Moshe demonstrated his readiness and delight in accepting the Will of his Creator.

Sometimes trips are delayed or require more stops. Sometimes we get stuck in traffic or seem to have taken the wrong road. But even in those moments we are being led by a cloud accompanied by the *Shechina*. It is simply one of the forty-two places that we need to stop at before continuing the odyssey.

The Shofar Would Not Blow

In the previous edition, R' Nechemia who served as the ba'al tokeah for the Ukrainian town, Dlinetz, was not able to blow his shofar as it had become pasul. Realizing how upset he was, the villagers raised money to purchase a large ram whose horns could be used to create a shofar. After slaughtering the ram, R' Nechemia began preparing the shofar. However, both horns became ruined. When the second horn cracked, R' Nechemia broke down in tears.

People like R' Nechemia however, don't waste their self-pity on self-pity; they turn it into energy and initiative to do serious and sincere *teshuva*. Privately, he spent the rest of the month of *Elul* fasting, depriving himself of certain things, and doing a lot of soul-searching and *davening*. He was not cloistered in his house though. He spoke rarely and only purposefully, but relentlessly pursued, 'grabbed' and performed with gusto, any and all *mitzvos* and *chasodim* that came his way. He was trying his best to do a full and comprehensive *teshuva*, and... Then one day, R' Nechemia was startled by a knock on his door. Putting aside his deep thoughts and introspection, he greeted the stranger warmly. Ushering him inside, he quickly put together some food and drink, and motioned to the man, whose name he found out was Boruch, to sit down to eat. As he ate, R' Nechemia raced into a spare bedroom to make up the guest bed, but the visitor called out to him, saying that he did not have time to rest - he was on an urgent mission and he had no time to waste.

R' Nechemia expressed his curiosity and Boruch explained. "I travel the countryside selling my merchandise. I arrived this morning in a small town near here, and was immediately accosted by a large group of gentiles. Without explanation, the gruff, unfriendly gang practically carried me to the house of none other than the local priest. I had no idea why this was happening, but I had good reason to fear the worst - Jews rarely

fares very well in these circumstances. The brutes all but threw me into the bedroom of the priest himself, and as I picked myself off of the floor, I saw him, from his bed, look me over thoughtfully. To my relief though, he unexpectedly ordered everyone else out of the room - he needed to speak with me privately. He told me that he had been laid up in bed, sick for a few days already, and that his condition was deteriorating rapidly. That morning, he had commanded his 'men' to go out into the street and grab the first Jew that they could find. Then, in hushed tone, he whispered to me that he needed me because he had a Jewish boy living with him in the monastery, and he now wanted to return him to his people - but he was not prepared to give the boy to just anyone - he would only hand him over to a great rabbi. I have come here," continued Boruch with increased enthusiasm, "because I have heard that you are the closest thing to a real rav in this area. Please, we have no time to lose before the priest either dies or changes his mind. Come with me and I will introduce you to the priest as a renowned rabbi - hopefully *Hashem* will grant us success in saving a Jewish soul!"

R' Nechemia, upon hearing the amazing story, didn't hesitate for one second. He quickly changed into his *Shabbos* clothing, donned his frock, dusted off his hat, grabbed the regal-looking cane he had received once as a gift, and he and Boruch jumped into the carriage waiting to take them back to the priest's village.

They were admitted into the house and found the priest breathing laboriously, fighting valiantly, the advances of the angel of death. Weakly, he motioned to them to close the door and approach the bed. Barely audible, he first thanked Boruch for bringing the Rabbi and told them the whole story.

To be continued...

How Can H.I.T. Help You?

The weather is beautiful outside and it is time for the cottage. *Shabbos* is the perfect opportunity to take the children to *Shul* or watch them play outside. Without a proper *Eruv*, though, a person may not carry outside on *Shabbos*.

To have your private, camp or community *Eruv* set up or checked please call (416) 535-8008 or email info@halachainstitute.com



Questions

from
the **H.I.T.**

HOTLINE

My friend told me a story which I thought that he had made up. I told him that I did not believe him and he insisted that it was a true story. To prove that it really happened he promised me 10 dollars if the story did not happen. Later on I found out that the he had made up the story and he told me that he was joking about giving me 10 dollars. Can I insist on him giving me the money?

When your friend told you that he will give you 10 dollars, he was essentially making a bet with you. He was saying that he bets you 10 dollars that you will not find out that the story did not happen. Such a bet is considered an *asmachta*, which essentially means that he was not serious. According to the *Mechaber* (*Siman* 370, 1-3) a person who takes money that he wins in a bet would transgress a rabbinic prohibition of stealing. Although the *Rema* (*Siman* 207, 13) disagrees with the *Mechaber*, he only does

so in a case where a number of conditions were met. Therefore, you would not be allowed to take the money that he “promised”.

My neighbour had a non-Jewish worker at his house and did not have money to pay. I wrote a cheque to the worker on behalf of my neighbour and a week later he paid me back. It has been six months and the worker never cashed the cheque. Do I need to return to my neighbour what he paid me?

If it is conceivable that the cheque was not lost and the worker may come back to demand his wages you certainly do not need to return the money. If, however, the cheque was lost and it is impossible to prove that there was a debt, it would seem that you would have to return the money to the neighbour.

**To have your question answered
call**

H.I.T. at (416) 535-8008

or email

info@halachainstitute.com





In this week's Parsha, Moshe is instructed to fashion trumpets for himself. Here are some interesting facts about trumpets:

- The largest playable trumpet was made by Mr. Benny J Mamot from Indonesia in 2009. It is 32m long with a bell 5.2m in diameter and can only be played with the help of an air compressor. (or nearly 5 feet long).
- Despite the trumpet having three valves it is capable of producing 45 different notes.
- In 2005, Toyota developed a trumpet playing robot complete with artificial flexible lips.
- When uncoiled, a trumpet stretches to around 140-150cm

RIDDLE



If a person is late to *Shul* in the morning, he is not supposed to skip *shema* in order to *daven shemona esrei* with the *tzibbur*. There is a situation though where a person should skip *shema* in order to start *shemona esrei* with the rest of the *minyan*. What is it?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: When would someone have to repeat *shemona esrei* on *Motzei Shabbos* if he said *havdala* (אֲתָרָה חֲנוּנְתָנִי), but if he did not do so, he would not have to repeat it?

ANSWER: A person who forgot to *daven mincha* on *Shabbos* and is required to *daven ma'ariv* twice must first *daven the shemona esrei* for *ma'ariv* and only then *daven the makeup tefilla* for *mincha*. If he did not say *havdala* in the first *shemona esrei* and did so in the second one he would have to repeat *shemona esrei* due to the fact that, by saying *havdala* in the second *shemona esrei*, he demonstrated that that was the *ma'ariv tefilla* and that he had davened the makeup *tefilla* first. Had he not said *havdala* then he would not have to repeat *shemon esrei*.

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

NO WINNER LAST WEEK

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Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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