

Torah Weekly

June 12-18, 2022
13-19 Sivan, 5782

Torah Reading:
Behaalotecha: Numbers 8:1 - 12:16
Haftarah:
Zachariah 2:14 - 4:7

PARSHAT BEHAALOTECHA

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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Trumpets of War and Trumpets of Peace

“America is no different!” declared the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe— Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of righteous memory—upon his arrival to America in 1940.

In Soviet Russia, the Rebbe (known as the Previous Rebbe) had galvanized his Chassidim to continue teaching and spreading Judaism in the face of resistance and persecution. He built Jewish underground schools, *mikvahs*, and synagogues. Due to his heroic efforts, Judaism was kept alive even during the height of communist suppression.

Upon his arrival in the U.S., he declared that “America is no different.” What did the Rebbe mean? While the Rebbe was grateful for religious freedom in America, he understood the upcoming trials of keeping Judaism alive in this new, free world. “Though we are no longer in a life-threatening situation,” he urged his followers, “we must remain as vigilant as ever.”

Persecution and opposition have many negative consequences, but they can also be the fuel for the oppressed. In America though, the challenges would be different. The Previous Rebbe’s declaration was the vision and inspiration to fuel Jewish growth in this new world of freedom.

The Torah portion of Behaalotecha hints to these two eras:

While in your land, if you go

to war against an enemy that oppresses you, you should blow a long blast with the trumpets so as to be remembered before G-d, your G-d, and you will be saved from your enemies.¹

And on the days of your rejoicing ... You should blow the trumpets.²

The first verse refers to time when the people of Israel are physically threatened, when the trumpet blasts inspire the warriors and ignite the fire of victory. The sounding of the trumpets before battle encourages the people to face the enemy and be victorious. The second verse refers to sounding the trumpets in times of peace.

One may ask, what is the purpose of blasting battle cries after the war?

After the battle of opposition there may be a new battle of complacency. The blasting of trumpets during a time of peace serves as a reminder to keep the competitive forces alive to contend with the challenges that arise from complacency.

Faced with American Jews who were susceptible to apathy, ignorance and indifference, the Previous Rebbe issued the call of “America is no different.” Like the trumpets after the war, this was a clarion call to inspire the Jewish people to continue living a vibrant and meaningful Jewish life.

On a personal level, we are at times faced with doubts, insecurities, and opposition. To this, the first verse says, “Blast the trumpets of war,”—ignite the competitive spirit of battle, change, and growth. For many, our

proudest achievements come in the face of our greatest adversity.

Then, there’s the postwar challenge, when we must overcome the complacency and comfort that come from having achieved success. To this, the second verse says, “On the days of rejoicing ... blow on your trumpets.” There is still more to accomplish. Rejoice in your victories, but don’t stop sounding your trumpet of growth.³

By Yossi Winner

Miriam’s Message to the Powerless

A teenager was complaining because her school had punished her for a misdemeanor, while her partner in crime had escaped even a reprimand. “Since her father is on the school board, they won’t punish her! How can I respect such an unfair system when the principal has no real principles?!”

At the conclusion of the shacharit (morning) prayers, we recite the [Six Remembrances](#). These are six occurrences that happened at the birth of our nationhood. According to many authorities, we are obligated to remember them every day.

G-d commands us to remember our Exodus, the revelation at Sinai and sanctifying the Shabbat day because they are integral to who we are and our destiny as G-d’s people. Remembering Amalek’s G-dless attack and our obligation to obliterate them also provides the necessary reminder of the danger of evil

and how we must be on guard to eradicate it.

Even remembering our rebelliousness soon after receiving the Torah reminds us of the many times our nation erred and strayed, and to be careful not to repeat this pattern.

However, one of the remembrances has always struck me as odd: “Remember what G-d did to Miriam on the way when you went out of Egypt.”

Miriam loved her younger brother, Moses, and when she heard that he had separated from his wife (not realizing that G-d had instructed him to do so), she spoke to her brother Aaron about it. G-d punished her with leprosy.

This daily remembrance reminds us not to speak ill of others or jump to conclusions about their behavior, even if we have positive intentions. The temptation is so great that we need to be reminded daily!

Nevertheless, there are other instances of evil talk, some of which caused far greater harm than Miriam. Moreover, the wording is curious in that it doesn't remind us of what Miriam did, but rather “to remember what **G-d did to her** . . .”

Miriam saved Moses as a baby; she was a prophet, a holy woman and a righteous leader who taught and guided. She also had “powerful connections” as the sister of Moses. One would imagine that G-d would overlook a minor misjudgment by a person of such stature!

Nevertheless, G-d didn't and commands us to remember this daily, so that we internalize that in G-d's book—because of her greatness—she needed to be an even better example.

We live in an imperfect world where it is easy to become cynical about justice, even among those meant to be our mentors or leaders. So often it feels like it's not what you know, but who you know; it's not about your personal integrity or effort, but your power or cunning.

And so, G-d reminds us daily that ultimately, there is true justice. In G-d's system, you are seen for what you are, for what you accomplish and for what you aspire to be.

And that's something worth remembering daily!

By Chana Weisberg

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Sunday, June 12, 2022 --- 13 Sivan, 5782

Moses Atop Mount Sinai (1313 BCE)

"Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain...for six days. On the seventh day G-d called to Moses from within the cloud... And Moses came within the cloud, and he went up to the top of the mountain, and Moses was upon the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:15-18).

On the morrow of the giving of the Ten Commandments Moses ascended Mount Sinai in order to receive from G-d the remainder of the Torah -- the remaining commandments and the Oral Law. After being "cleansed" by the cloud for six days, he was ushered into the presence of G-d on the 13th of Sivan.

Monday, June 13, 2022 --- 14 Sivan, 5782

Jewish Books Spared (1510)

In 1509, Emperor Maximilian of Germany ordered that all Jewish books in the cities of Cologne and Frankfurt am Main be destroyed. This followed the request of Pfefferkorn, a baptized Jew, who claimed that Jewish literature was insulting to Christianity. The Jews appealed to the Emperor to reconsider this edict, and Maximilian agreed to investigate the matter. He appointed Johann Reuchlin, a famed German scholar, to conduct the investigation. The report issued by Reuchlin was very positive. He demonstrated that the books openly insulting to Christianity were very few and viewed as worthless by most Jews themselves. The other books were needed for Jewish worship, and contained much value in the areas of theology and science. The Emperor rescinded his edict on the 14th of Sivan, 1510.

Tuesday, June 14, 2022 --- 15 Sivan, 5782

Birth and Passing of Judah (1565 and 1446 BCE)

Judah, the fourth son of Jacob and Leah, was born in Charan on the 15th of Sivan, of the year 2196 from creation (1565 BCE). He passed away on the same date 119 years later, in Egypt.

Judah took the leadership role both in selling Joseph into slavery and in the brothers' later attempts to find him and free him, and to protect Benjamin. On his deathbed, Jacob conferred the leadership of Israel upon Judah, proclaiming: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the legislator from between his feet, until Shiloh (the Mashiach) comes..." The royal house of David, as well as many of the great sages and leaders of Israel throughout the generations of Jewish history, trace their lineage to Judah.

Judah had five sons: Er and Onan, who died without children; Shelah; and his twins from Tamar, Peretz and Zerach. Their descendants formed the Tribe of Judah, the most populous and prestigious of the twelve tribes of Israel.

6th Lubavitcher Rebbe arrested (1927)

Shortly after midnight of the 15th of Sivan of 1927, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), was arrested by agents of the GPU (Soviet Secret Police) and Yevsketzia ("Jewish section" of the Communist Party) for leading the underground network of rabbis, teachers and emissaries working to preserve and disseminate Jewish learning and observance throughout the Soviet Empire.

Wednesday, June 15, 2022 --- 16 Sivan, 5782

Passing of Rebbetzin Freida (1813)

Rebbetzin Freida was the daughter of the Alter Rebbe, R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi. She was especially dear to her illustrious father, and he would frequently deliver chassidic discourses specifically for her. In fact, when her brother R. DovBer, who later became the Mittlerer Rebbe, wanted to hear Chassidut, he would sometimes ask her to make a request, whereupon he would hide and listen.

Rebbetzin Freida passed away a few months after her father, and was interred in Haditch, Ukraine, immediately adjacent to R. Schneur Zalman.

Thursday, June 16, 2022 --- 17 Sivan, 5782

Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat (2105 BCE)

Seven months after the beginning of the Great Flood, and 17 days after the waters covering the earth began to subside, the Ark sheltering Noah, his family, and members of all animal species came to rest on the (still submerged) summit of Mount Ararat.