



DVAR TORAH PARSHAS YISRO



By: Rabbi Aryeh
Gitlin

Start Where You Are

In this week's parsha Klal Yisroel travels from Rephidim to Har Sinai to receive the Torah. Rashi asks why the Torah needs to tell us that they left from Rephidim. That was already the last recorded encampment. We know where they left from!

Rashi quotes the Mechilta that the Torah is revealing an important lesson. Just as their arrival at Har Sinai was with teshuva, so too their departure from Rephidim was with teshuva.

Teshuva for what?

The Rai"m quotes another Mechilta that explains the name Rephidim as an acronym for רפו ידיהם מן התורה. This means that Klal Yisroel had weakened their grip on Torah learning. Their teshuva was a renewed commitment to diligent Torah study. The Torah is teaching that they already began this teshuva in Rephidim. It was not only when they reached Har Sinai.

The Netziy, in HaEmek Davar asks an obvious question. What difference does it make where Klal Yisroel did teshuva? The main point is that they did teshuva and prepared themselves to receive the Torah.

Rav Nissan Kaplan shlit"א explains that the Torah is teaching us a powerful lesson about teshuva. There are times when a person feels inspired and ready to improve. Still, they say they will start in the near future when the situation is more ideal. For example, someone becomes motivated to start Daf Yomi or Shnayim Mikra. It may already be in the middle of the masechta or several parshios into the year. They say they will start next masechta or after Simchas Torah.

The Torah warns us to do teshuva right now. Start where you are. If a person waits for the perfect moment, that moment may never come. The inspiration may be lost. Klal Yisroel did not wait until they arrived at Har Sinai to improve. They began their teshuva already in Rephidim. It was the very place where they had slipped.

With this idea we can answer a famous question asked by many commentators on a well-known Chazal. On the pasuk describing Klal Yisroel standing at the foot of Har Sinai, Chazal (Shabbos 88a) say that Hashem lifted the mountain over them. He said that if they accept the Torah it is good. If not, there will be their burial place. The question is clear. Shouldn't Hashem say here will be your burial place? Why say there? Perhaps the message is this.

We often say we want to accept the Torah and grow. Then we add "over there". Later when circumstances are more ideal. That attitude buries inspiration. If growth is always postponed for another time or place those good intentions will never become reality.

Start now. Grow now. Then it will be good. If everything is pushed off to later that later may become the grave of motivation. May we all seize inspiration when it comes and turn it into action immediately.



By Rabbi
Rabbi Roey Tal

HALACHA CORNER

ERASING ON SHABBOS



May one erase ink from one's skin or a wall on Shabbos?

May one separate letters from words while playing Scrabble on Shabbos?

Is it permitted to remove or destroy frosting letters or images on a cake on Shabbos?

One of the thirty-nine melachos forbidden on Shabbos is mocheik (erasing). Its source is in the Mishkan, where letters written on the planks were sometimes erased in order to correct mistakes and rewrite them properly.

Erasing is biblically forbidden when done in a constructive manner, meaning with intent to enable writing or improve the area, such as cleaning a wall in preparation for writing.¹

Rabbinically, erasing any letter, number, image, or blot of ink is prohibited even without intent to rewrite.² However, this applies only when erasing legible writing from any surface, or illegible marks from a surface commonly used for writing.

Erasing illegible marks from a surface not commonly used for writing is permitted. Therefore, one may wash off an ink stain from one's hand, since human skin is not a surface used for writing.³


Another application related to koseiv (writing) is that just as joining preexisting letters is not considered writing, so too separating preexisting letters is not considered erasing.⁴

Regarding cakes with letters or images, several methods are permitted:

- Cutting between the letters
- Cutting the cake before Shabbos and leaving the pieces in place⁵
- Eating the cake even though the letters will be destroyed⁶
- Cutting decorations that are not meaningful shapes, such as straight or curved lines
- Cutting figures that are part of the cake itself⁷
- Removing a letter together with a thin layer of cake or frosting on which it rests⁸
- Sephardim permit cutting through letters directly⁹

1. S.A. O.C. 340:3 and Biur Halacha
 2. S.A. Harav. O.C. 340:4
 3. Ketzos Hashulchan 144:10
 4. S.S.K. 9:fn. 48
 5. S.S.K. II: fn.30
 6. M.B. 340:17
 7. M.B. 340:15
 8. Shabbos Home pg. 50
 9. Yalkut Yosef 340:2 based on S.A. O.C. 314:1 who permits psik reisha delo nicha lei on derabonon

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DAILY SCHEDULE

Morning and Afternoon Kollel (M-T) Amud Yomi with Rabbi Smith 7:40am - 8:30am Open Beis Medrash and Chavrusa learning 7:40am - 8:30am 1:15pm - 1:35pm	Kollel Zmanim 9:30am - 10:00pm 3:30pm - 6:00pm	Night Seder (S-T) Open Beis Medrash and Chavrusa learning 8:30pm - 10:00pm Daf Yomi with Rabbi Smith 9:15pm - 10:00pm Kinyan Mesechta with Rabbi Eli May 8:20pm - 9:00pm MDY Daf Yomi 9:00pm (English) 2:00pm and 8:00pm (Hebrew)
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WEEKLY SHIURIM

Monday MNSGA with food & drinks 8:30pm - 10:00pm	Tuesday SCP with Rabbi Freeman 8:30pm - 10:00pm
Wednesday Rabbi Hassan on Chupa V'Kiddushin 8:30pm - 10:00pm Rabbi Peled on Sefer Yona 9:15pm - 10:00pm	Thursday Shovavim shiur from Rabbi Peled 9:00pm - 9:40pm Guest speaker 9:45pm - 10:00pm

Kids Programs
 Avos u'Banim and Sparks
 Motzei Shabbos
7:30pm - 8:15pm
 Mishna with Rabbi Altusky
 Tuesday Nights
6:15pm - 7:00pm

Contact Rabbi Freeman at 404-985-7365 for chavrusa
 Contact Shauly Roth at 786-948-5677 for sponsorships



Mens Taharas HaMishpacha Refresher

Throughout the 6 Weeks of Shovavim, Rabbi Noach Peled will review the primary topics in Hilchos Taharas HaMishpacha

SHOVAVIM

The group will meet
 Thursday Nights 9:00-9:45

A great opportunity to learn/sharpen your knowledge of these vital topics