

**HALACHA V'HALICHA...** By Rav Chaim Schabes

*ERUV UPDATE:* כ"ט we were able to reduce the area of the golf course that until now was part of the קרפף that we were not able to carry in, and it is now limited to the south side after the golf course. In practical terms this means that one is allowed to carry on Brick Church Rd. and into the golf course; on all of Union Rd. and on Hempstead Rd. until Flint Dr. The only streets to avoid carrying in are Hempstead Rd. from Williams Ave. till Eckerson Rd. and Eckerson Rd. between Hempstead Rd. and Zuba Dr. A big ישר כח to all the individuals who helped in creating this improvement, and the ברכה of קודש שבת should be extended unto them.

Yeshaya Hanavi compares our nation to the life of a tree כִּימֵי הָאָרֶץ יָמֵי עֵמִי (14:22). When one looks at a tree during the winter months, it will be dried out and frozen, and one will not notice any leaves or greenery. The arrows of the frost have beaten it mercilessly, and many winds have tried to uproot it, one could almost give up hope, as it would seem like there is no trace of life to it. The superficial onlooker would be ready to declare it as a dead tree; nevertheless, we know that in the inner workings of the tree, hidden from the eye, the tree is already getting its life nourishment from the depth of the ground, and the sap is already running through its veins; this is what is commemorated on Tu Bishvat. So too, B'nai Yisrael, who have been beaten by the nations of the world during the length of the cold galus, our spiritual stature weakened as if whole branches have been cut off from the trunk of our tree. To the onlooker it would seem like one should give up hope, but, remarkably, from within all this, the light of the geulah is being produced internally, and in reality, the sap is already risen inside the "tree".

There are three basic rules to be followed in order to be able to say shehecheyanu over a fruit. 1) The fruit must grow only one or two times per season, but if it is grown through technology at all times of the year, and can be found in the stores all year, even though at times it will be expensive and not as accessible, one does not say shehecheyanu (v'zos hab'racha 18 in the name of Rav Elyashiv Shli"ta). This does not apply to a fruit that may be found only in exclusive establishments, or for a very high price. 2) Fruits, vegetables or legumes that grow only during the season, but are maintained by refrigeration, and one is able to get them a whole year round, and the difference in taste between these and the fresh ones is negligible, do not receive the b'racha of shehecheyanu; but if the difference in taste is easily recognized, one would say shehecheyanu. 3) We say shehecheyanu only over seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables and legumes, but not on those that have been preserved either in vinegar or salt, or are roasted, fried, dried, turned into jelly, canned or otherwise preserved, (Butshacher); nevertheless, if one ate a dried or preserved fruit, and shortly after that he got the fresh seasonal fruit, one could say shehecheyanu over the fresh one, even though he just consumed the same fruit in the preserved version. Based on the above, we will not say shehecheyanu nowadays over legumes and almost all vegetables, nor over canned produce, even if we know that they are from a seasonal fruit from this year; the same is true about dried fruit. So too, many fruits that can be gotten year round, like bananas, apples, pears, dates, nuts and almonds, grapefruits and lemons will not require a shehecheyanu. On oranges, although accessible year round, since there is a clear the difference between the stored and the fresh, one would say shehecheyanu. The only other fruits that remain on which one would say shehecheyanu would be summer fruits like peaches, plums, mangoes, guavas, grapes and fresh cherries, fresh dates, pomegranates, watermelon and cantaloupe, berries and strawberries and the like. Those who have the minhag to say shehecheyanu on Tu Bishvat, could say it over fresh pineapple, kiwi, fresh papaya, litchi or the like, but not over esrog (not eatable without processing), carob (boxer), or coconut (it stays on the tree year round), nor on chestnuts. Avocado, since it is not eaten as a fruit by itself, rather as a spread on bread, does not receive the b'racha of shehecheyanu (Ktzos Hashulchan 63:11). One would be able to say a shehecheyanu over imported fruits from places that have a different season than the local one, if he hasn't eaten the local fruit for thirty days (Tshuvos Vehanhagos 1:201); however, if the importing is steady, we already mentioned that one would not be able to say shehecheyanu.

**THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ...** By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (Shofetim 4:4-5:31)

There are two fundamental connections between our p'arasha and our Haftara. The more prominent of them is of course that both contain one of the few portions of Tanach designated as a "shira", which is a most lofty designation, as we've discussed in the past. But in addition to the fact that both the p'arasha and the Haftara contain this rare occurrence there is also a similarity between the events that led up to the singing of each Shira. As in our p'arasha, the Jews at the time of our Haftara found themselves under subjugation of a world power. For more than 20 years they suffered the physical and spiritual oppression of an evil king who seemed impossible to defeat until out of desperation they cried out to Hashem to save them. Ultimately, the nation is miraculously saved through the actions of D'vora the prophetess, the Judge of the time, and Barak, who most commentaries say was her husband. But despite these similarities there are also some curious differences. For example, in Mitzrayim there were over 600,000 men of army age confronted by an Egyptian force demoralized by close to a year of plagues, yet despite their disadvantage, we don't find the Jewish people preparing for battle. In fact Hashem tells them, "ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחרישון", and the Jewish people are saved without lifting a finger. By contrast, Hashem commands Barak, through D'vora, to put together a fighting army ready to physically encounter the enemy and to limit the army to only 10,000 men. While it is true that in both instances only Hashem's miraculous intervention saved the Jewish people there is a great distinction between their statuses as a nation. The Ibn Ezra explains that at the time of Y'tzias Mitzrayim the Jews were confronting a force that up until a short while prior had been their masters for many generations. They were in no position on a 'Basar V'dam' level to fight them, nor any other nation for that matter, as evidenced by the need for Moshe's special tefilah to help them defeat the small army of Amalek. On the other hand, during Barak's time when they needed to confront Yavin and Sisra it was over 200 years since the Jewish nation had left the bondage of Mitzrayim and they were already quite used to being a free people. It was therefore not necessary for the miracle to be so blatant and so it was blended in with the natural course of events.

