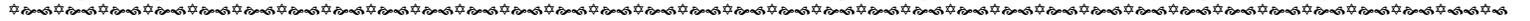


HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

ים במצרים - כל המחלה אשר שמתה במצרים - the Chassam Sofer says that it is referring to the sickness, the one that plagued Mitzrayim in the worst way; namely, that of הלב, the blocking of one's spiritual arteries to his heart. The Mitzrim were stubborn and refused to see the hand of Hashem; Bnai Yisrael, on the other hand, were cured from this sickness, which allows them to do *t'shuva* when they are presented with difficulties. ה - it the recognition of this that is the chief medicine of all. ר' חיים זעירא - R' Chaim Ozer noted, that when Hashem heals, it says ירפא only once, as opposed to when a human cures, it says ירפא twice, because he may need to fix that which he ruined the first time.

It is permitted to feed a pet on Shabbos, because it depends solely on its owner for food, but one is not permitted to feed birds or animals that are not his responsibility, even if his intention is to benefit Hashem's creatures (OC 324:11). Accordingly, it is not proper to feed the birds on Shabbos Shira itself (MB 31). To fulfill the *minhag* of feeding the birds on Shabbos Shira, one should put out the food before Shabbos. There is a second option: since it is permitted to shake a tablecloth to remove crumbs, one may do so outside on Shabbos even if the birds (and squirrels) are going to benefit from them. Any animal that cannot procure its own food and is hungry, it is permitted to feed it, and so too, it is permitted to feed a dog even if it does not depend on him for food (ibid). If an animal is not able to eat by itself, it is permitted to place the food into its mouth (OC 324:10), but he must be careful not to directly move the animal while feeding it. A person is not allowed to sit down to eat breakfast in the morning before he has fed the animals that depend on him for food. However, the Magen Avraham (OC 156) writes that one is allowed to drink before giving his animals to drink, as we see, that Rivkah offered water to Eliezer to drink before the camels. All live animals, fowl, and fish are *muktzah* on Shabbos, since they have no function, as one may not ride on them or use them in any way. Pets are included in this category as well, being that playing with them or looking at them is not considered a function; they are therefore totally *muktzah* (*machmas gufo*). Even though *chazal* didn't suspend the prohibition of *muktzah* because of בעלי חיים (animal suffering), there are certain leniencies that were made in these cases. For example, a pet that needs a leash around its neck for its own protection, is allowed to be walked with it even in a public domain where there is no *eruv*; however, one must be careful that the rope that is being held in one's hand should not extend out of his hand more than 3½ inches, and that the rope should also always be at least 3½ inches above the ground (OC 305:16, MB 51). When one puts the leash on, he must be careful not to lean on the pet (MB 14, 32). When one walks a dog in a public domain (without an *eruv*), one has to make sure that it is not wearing an ID tag around its neck (OC 305:12, 17). One may hold an animal around its neck, and walk it in order to prevent or alleviate its suffering, but care must be taken not to pick it up while holding on to it. Animals that have a tendency to pick themselves up while being grasped may not be moved in this way. Furthermore, this may be done only in a place where one may carry, but not in a public domain. In any event, one may not carry an animal even to prevent or alleviate its suffering, nor is it permitted to prevent monetary loss (שש"כ). Fish tanks and birdcages may not be moved during the whole Shabbos, and the same is true about a dog basket or cat bed if the dog or cat were in them during *bain hash'mashos* (the time between sunset and the beginning of the night) of Friday evening. One may add water to a fish tank on Shabbos or Yom Tov if it is needed, but one may not change the water, and if it must be changed so that the fish don't die, it may only be done by a goy (Chayai Adam 31:2). If an animal is causing damage, one may not pick it up; however, it is permitted to push it, or pull it by its leash, or move it using one's body (foot).



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

There are two fundamental connections between our *paresha* 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 *paresha* 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 *paresha*, 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 תהיו שוים", 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.



A GIGANTIC LITTLE SECRET" ... By Rabbi Yosef Schwab

מחוספס - The מָן is described as מְחֻסְפָּס, meaning exposed, or unwrapped. The *man* had no roughage, so that it was entirely absorbed into the 248 *eivarim* of the body, with no waste products. The *gematria* of מחוספס is precisely 248, alluding to this feature.



