

Before Baal Tzfoan (14:2) – Rashi explains that Baal Tzfoan was the only remaining idol in Mitzrayim and was there to trick the Mitzriim. **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explains that when one is predetermined to sin, Hashem gives the person the opportunity. There are always alternative explanations available to the one who wants to deny Hashem's hand in the world. This also explains the concepts of how Kinah, Taava and Kavod remove one from the world. There are times where each (Kinas Sofrim, Taava to raise children, Kavod Talmid Chacham) has an appropriate use as a tool to a greater purpose but when each is an end – not a means – it destroys the person.

And they did not come close to one another all night (14:20) – The Gemara (Sanhedrin 39b) notes that at that point the Malachim wanted to sing Shirah. Hashem declared “Maaseh Yadai Toivim BaYam V’Atem Omrim Shira?”. Why then does Hashem allow Bnei Yisrael to sing Shirah when their enemies fall? **Rav Gedaliah Silverstone (of Washington)** notes that those who were not “There” cannot properly express the Shirah on redemption – Their entire Shirah is on the death of the enemy. This does not make Hashem happy (See Megillah 10b). The real Shirah is on our saving – Geulaseinu U’Peduus Nafsheinu. Azi V’Zimras Kah VaYehe LEE L’yishua -- the show of strength is a jumpstart for me and what I choose to do with it.

And the waters split (14:21) – Why is Kriyas Yam Suf such an incredible miracle? After all, Hashem CREATED the ocean – certainly he can SPLIT it! What is added by the miracle of Kriyas Yam Suf? **HaGaon Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** answers with the story of a master sculptor who once fashioned a sculpture of a horse whose detail was so magnificent that he wanted the community to see it and praise his sculpting ability. The Sculptor took the horse and brought it to town and tied it among the other horses. He sat by it for a full day and no one paid any attention to it. When he came home, he was dejected. His children and wife tried to cheer him up by explaining to him that the work was SOOO exquisite, everyone took it for granted that it was indeed a REAL horse – not just a wonderous sculpture and that this proved just how gifted a sculptor he truly was. The man decided to put his family's theory to the test and cut the sculpture in half in the town's square in order to see if the people would notice. Rav Asher Shlita explains that the same is true for Kriyas Yam Suf – sometimes we become so used to nature that it is the disruption of nature that reminds how amazing nature is.

They came to Marah and could not drink the water there since they were bitter (15:23) – **The Kotzker Rebbe** would note that the bitterness refers to the people, not the water. For when someone is bitter himself, everything tastes bitter.

There he established Chok U'Mishpat (15:25) – Rashi cites the gemara that Hashem taught them certain mitzvos – Shabbos, Parah Adumah and Dinim. The **Torah Temimah** already challenges the idea that Parah Adumah was the intention here and suggests that it is a printer's error and should read Kibbud Av. But where does one find Chok AND Mishpat in these concepts? **Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger Shlita** explains that Shabbos is both Zecher LBerashis and “LYetziat Mitzrayim – as part of Berashis it is a Chok preceding any reason to rest. As a Zecher to the slavery – it is a clear reminder – and a mishpat. As far as Kibbud Av is concerned – there is Chok and Mishpat – Sefer HaChinuch notes that it is an obligation of Hakaras HaTov while the gemara in noting its reward for Dama Ben Nisina suggests that it is merely a Chok. Even Dinim have both aspects to it: Rashi to Sanhedrin (56) – notes that knasos appeared in Marah as a Chok – since it is not mishpat. All 3 lessons of Marah share the duality.

Today you shall not find it in the field (16:25) – The Beis Yisrael of Ger would often stop his Chassidim and ask them “Where did you eat today?” It was incumbent for the Chossid to understand his words. The Rebbe wanted his Chassidim to understand that Shabbos HaYom L’Hashem – today is totally Kadosh and on a day like today with such Kedusha, you need to grab every ounce you can because you will not find such an experience in the Sadeh – the days of the week.

The battle of Amalek (17:8-13) – Rav Chaim Sabato Shlita notes the incredible breadth of the Parsha that rests upon the hands. The beginning of the Parsha begins with the Yad HaGedolah but the end ends with Parshas HaMan and the battle of Amalek. Rav Sabato notes that the battle of Amalek teaches a valuable lesson in the way that Bnei Yisrael go to war. While Moshe’s hands are lifted, they are not miraculously the hands that win or lose the war. Battle still had to be waged down below by Yehoshua and the army. Rather, in the new reality, Hashem wanted to fight in the midst of the Jewish people not instead of them. The hands of Moshe alone would not make or break the battle (as in the future, taking the Aron into battle alone also would not make or break the war – the aron could be seized) but would serve as inspiration for the soldiers to remember for whom they fought and to be aware that Hashem was to be with them. The new reality involved taking personal Achrayos together WITH the involvement of Hashem.

Haftorah – Yivchar Elokim Chadashim When the Jews chose new Gods () – The Yalkut Shimoni explains that this is Elokim – a Shem Kodesh that Hashem loves new Chiddushei Torah. **Rav Schachter Shlita** quotes **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** who explains that there is a difference between a Chiddush and a Shinui. Sometimes one needs to be careful not to overstep boundaries of the religion through Chiddush. Rav Soloveitchik noted that like Rosh Chodesh which also involves something new, we need to ask the Sanhedrin. This will help determine if we are making a Chiddush or a Shinui.