

# WHAT TO MAKE OF MY SUMMER BREAK?!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel that went out of the Land of Egypt according to their legions under the hand of Moshe and Aaron." (Bamidbar 33:1)*

There are the journeys of: Why are these journeys recorded? This is to make known the kindnesses of the Omnipresent... (Rashi)

And they journeyed from Chashmonah and they camped in Mesorot. They journeyed from Mesorot and they camped in Yakan. (Bamidbar 33:30-31)

And He said to Avram, "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land, not their own-and they shall serve them and they will oppress them four hundred years. But also the nation that they will serve, I shall judge, and afterwards they will leave with great wealth." (Breishis 15:13-14)

What is the implied kindness of traveling from place to place? Why does the Chumash tell where they traveled from each time? Of course they traveled from the same place they last traveled to. Why is the record of the travel related to having left Egypt?

More than 25 years ago when I was still a youngish Yeshiva student we took a long journey from New York to Florida where we set up shop learning Torah in North Miami Beach for a week. For the long trip home we had four cars that traveled loosely together. We arranged to meet in Savanna, Georgia where we were all generously treated to a big Sunday brunch.

At that meal one of the senior students spoke up and delivered a most fascinating Dvar Torah. He spoke about the mystical notion that as we travel from one place to another learning, praying and doing acts of kindness we are like a magnet attracting and elevating hidden sparks of holiness that have been embedded in this dark and lowly realm of existence.

We may have little real idea of the impact of our deeds at the time but there are many sublime sparks that wait anxiously for some righteous individual or group to release them from the imprisonment of those husks that bind. It was certainly an interesting thesis and I'm sure I was not the only one who didn't understand completely what he was talking about at the time.

We made our after- blessings and got back on the road. We met at an agreed upon exit along the way to pray the afternoon service and then set our sights on the next meeting place where we would convene for the evening prayer service. All four cars in our caravan came together that evening within a few minutes of each other. We found a large empty parking lot where under a

concrete canopy we congregated briefly to pray. On the far side of the parking an ice cream shop was open and a small cluster of people and cars were gathered but we had no near contact with anyone there in that Virginia shopping mall, before getting back on our long and merry way home.

We arrived early in the morning and later that exhausted day it was discovered that a phone call was made to the Yeshiva outreach division and a message was left inquiring about Torah classes and believe it or not this call had come from, of all places on the planet, that small off the beaten path Virginia town where our modest group had stopped to pray just the night before.

To every place the Children of Israel traveled they brought an ever increasing treasure of holy sparks collected from the time of leaving Egypt. What's the ultimate value of all those gathered sparks? Writes the Ohaiv Yisroel, "When G-d sees portions of good and holiness are rescued from the hand of oppressors He has the greatest possible delight... These sparks rise from the deepest pit and are elevated to form a crown for G- d." All this makes we wonder, "What to make of my summer break?!" Text Copyright &copy 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.