



## The River Flows

Rivers fascinate. And rivers are like thoughts. Not the other way around, as we'll discuss.

First, some facts about rivers: Rivers always flow downhill. They begin in mountains or, paradoxically, spring from underground. Rivers begin in hidden places.

And rivers flow in ways we don't usually consider. We see the river flowing in its channel, between its banks. What we don't see is the river flowing beneath the substrate, the bottom of the river. We don't see is the river flowing beneath the ground of its own banks. The area where the water flows between the crevices and rocks is called the hyporheic zone.

Sometimes rivers flow swiftly; sometimes they surge; sometimes they cascade; sometimes they run their course; and sometimes they drift in a lazy rhythm. Sometimes a river is rapid, sometimes it meanders.

Rivers collect rivulets. Rivers change constantly. They change the land through which they flow.

Rivers can erode the land, pulling rocks, soil or vegetation from its land channel and transporting them down stream. And as rivers change the land through which they flow, they change their own course, find new channels in which to flow.

And thoughts: They also flow. They flow "downward," from the inner resources of our minds, from our souls. Thoughts flow downward into speech, and then action. And there is much beneath the flowing thoughts that we don't "see," don't realize is there.

Where do our thoughts come from? For they exist in the "subconscious," in a mental - or spiritual "hyporheic zone" - and emerge into our awareness. Thoughts spring from hidden resources of mind and soul, cascading from the higher "mountains" or emerging from the underground "springs."

Sometimes thoughts flow swiftly, like rapids, chaotic. Sometimes, thoughts overwhelm us, so that we are awed by what has appeared in our minds - like watching a cascading waterfall. Our thoughts cut deep channels into the "landscape" of our being, creating the canyons and flood plains of our interactions and reactions.

And our thoughts can change course. They do find new channels. Sometimes the change is rapid; sometimes the change meanders. But our thoughts are redirected - by our experiences, yet also by our conscious choices: we can gather the rivulets and carve out the canyons - the deep commitments - and flood plains - the actions with which we engage and transform the world.

Rivers have long been a symbol of life. But when they overflow their banks, they can wipe out all that has flowed from and through them, all the life that depends on them. Thoughts, too, give life. But when they overflow their "banks," when our thoughts overflow with negative character traits and destructive emotions, our thoughts can destroy all that depends on us - all those who depend on us.

We can control our thoughts, re-channel them, give them a new course to follow. For Will - our soul-directed desire - is higher than thought. No, it's not easy. Rivers are stubborn things. They have their passages. They are conduits - and they narrow. After all, "narrows" refers to a channel connecting two bodies of water.

Still, just as G-d directs rivers, we direct our thoughts. And that's why rivers resemble thoughts, not the other way around - even though we make the analogy the other way around.

How flows your river?

*(by Dovid YB Kaufmann obm from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)*

## Emancipation

This week's Parashah opens with the Mitzvah of Shemittah/ the Sabbatical year, when the land of Eretz Yisrael may not be worked. The goal of this Mitzvah is not so much for the land to rest, as it is for the farmer to be free, as R' Moshe Zvi Neriah z"l (1913-1995; founder and Rosh Yeshiva of the Bnei Akiva yeshiva network) explains:

We read (Mishlei 12:11), "He who works ("Oved") the soil shall be satiated with bread." The Gemara (Sanhedrin 58b) comments: "If one 'enslaves' himself to the soil, he will be satiated with bread. If he does not, he will not be satiated with bread." And, yet, the Torah tells this "enslaved" person that he is emancipated for a full year, since he may not work the soil!

This emancipation is not for nothing, R' Neriah writes. It serves an important role. Just as a person can become a slave to his work during the six days of the workweek, so a person can become a part of the earth during six consecutive years of farming—i.e., he can become like the clump of earth that man was before G-d blew a spiritual soul into his nostrils. We read (Tehilim 115:17), "The earth, He has given to mankind." But, if a person has lost his soul and become reunited with the earth, he no longer qualifies as "mankind." What right, then, does he have to rule over the earth? This is the fear that the sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai expressed when he said (Berachot 35b), "If man plants in the planting season, harvests in the harvest season, threshes in the threshing season, etc., what will be with the Torah?" Therefore, we were given the Shemittah, an opportunity for man to detach himself from his enslavement to the earth and regain his humanity. (Ner La'maor)

*(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*



We wish a Mazel Tov to **Mendel Raskin**  
on the occasion of his **Bar Mitzvah**.  
We also wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Mendel's parents,  
**Rabbi Shimon and Mrs. Chanie Raskin**,  
and to all of Mendel's **Family and Friends**  
who are here with us celebrating this Simcha.

Rabbi and Mrs. Raskin are sponsoring Kiddush  
after davening this Shabbat in honor of Mendel's Bar Mitzvah.

### Yahrzeits This Week:

Sarah Leder	1 Sivan - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for husband	Elizer Yaakov Leder
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### SHUL DIRECTORY

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### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

**Friday, 5/23 — 25 Iyar**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Shabbat, 5/24 — 26 Iyar**  
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:22 a.m.  
Minchah — 7:45 p.m.  
Shiur — after Minchah  
Shkiah — 8:22 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 9:09 p.m.

**Sunday, 5/25 — 27 Iyar**  
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Maariv — 8:05 p.m.

**Monday — Memorial Day, 5/26 — 28 Iyar**  
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.

**Tuesday, 5/27 — 29 Iyar**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.

**Wednesday — Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5/28 — 1 Sivan**  
Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.  
Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud  
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation  
and the unity of Hashem — 8:45 p.m.

**Thursday, 5/29 — 2 Sivan**  
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.

**Friday, 5/30 — 3 Sivan**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles — 8:07 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.