

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Bha'aloscha*





**copyright 2019**

For subscription & comments  
Email: [Mail@torahwellsprings.com](mailto:Mail@torahwellsprings.com)

## Parshas Beha'aloscha

The Torah says, ויהי העם כמתאוננים רע... "The nation were complaining bad... Hashem became angry and His fire burned them..." (11:1). What was their sin? What were they complaining about?

1] Rashi says they were complaining about their travels, since they traveled three days without stopping.

2] The Ibn Ezra says מתאוננים is from the word און, which means sin (in *Yirmiyahu* 4:14). According to this commentary, the *pasuk* is ambiguous, and doesn't specify which sin they committed. The Ramban disagrees with the Ibn Ezra because the Torah is always explicit, so why doesn't the Torah tell us what sin was committed here?

3] Therefore, the Ramban explains מתאוננים means to mourn, to complain. As in the *pasuk* מה יתאונו אדם חי... (*Eichah* 3:39).

Their moaning, complaining, and negativity was רע בעיני ה', bad in Hashem's eyes, because a Yid should always be happy with his lot, and accept the fate Hashem gives him with joy and gratitude.

The Ramban writes, "It states כמתאוננים, 'like mourners' because they were speaking bitterly, like people in pain. This was bad in Hashem's eyes, for they should have followed him with joy and with a good heart, for all the kindness Hashem gives them. They were acting

like they were being forced, and they were complaining about their plight..."

It isn't that they didn't have any worries. They had something to be concerned about. As the Ramban writes, "When they left Har Sinai, which was fairly close to civilization, and went deeper into the great and awesome desert, they were very worried. How would they survive in the desert? What would they eat and drink? How will they survive these conditions? And when would they leave it?"

They had what to be worried about, but it was רע בעיני ה', bad in Hashem's eyes, because they should have focused on all the good they have, trusted in Hashem, and followed Hashem's will joyously.

We should learn from this discussion the severity of complaining and of being worried. It isn't that there is nothing to worry about, but our focus should be on everything Hashem has given to us, trust in Him, and be happy.

The Imrei Emes adds that the mourning and complaining leads to many other sins. Therefore, after the מתאוננים the Torah states התאוו תאוה... מי יאכילנו בשר, the nation cried that they wanted to eat meat. That sin followed the מתאוננים, because complaining and being melancholy leads to several other sins.

When one focuses on the good that he has in his life, he will be happy with his

fate. The problem is that people tend to focus on what they lack, and to lose sight of what they do have.

To demonstrate this, we tell the following story:

A generous man found a young child crying in the bus station. "Why are you crying," the man asked.

"I don't have money to buy a bus ticket."

"Here is some money. Go buy yourself a ticket."

The child went to the clerk, paid money, and returned with the bus ticket, but he was still crying.

"Why are you crying now?" the man asked.

"When other people come to the clerk, he gives them a ticket, and he gives them some money as well. [The money was

the change.] But he only gave me a ticket." People are jealous of the good others have, and they lose sight of all the good that Hashem gives them. Instead, one should focus on the good that he has, and he will see that he has many reasons to be joyous in life.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, when one believes that everything comes from Hashem, everything will become good.

The Ben Ish Chai said: חוּב (hardships, problems) is *gematriya* 16, while טוֹב (goodness) is *gematriya* 17. The difference is one number. Troubles disappear and even become good when one believes that they came from the One Hashem.<sup>2</sup>

This week's *parashah* has the two upside down ויהי בנסוע, *pesukim* (10: 35-36), which discusses the travels of the Jewish

1. Everyone carries their own *peckel* (their baggage of problems). Tzaddikim said that if everyone would place their *peckel* on a table, and then be given the option to choose any package they desired, everyone would pick up their own bag. We should focus on the good we have, count our blessings, and be happy with our fate.

2. When a person is going through hard times, *chalilah*, he will commonly shout, *gevald!* And when good things happen, he says, *gevaldig!* It is essentially the same word (געוואלדיג), only with an additional י"ג at the end it has an entirely different meaning. י"ג is *gematriya* 13, the same as אחד. The געוואלדיג which represents strife, become געוואלדיג, wonderful and good, when one remembers that everything comes from ה' אחד.

A *mashal* is told about someone who was looking through a keyhole. He can't see everything is in the room, his field of vision is limited, but he does see a pen swiftly writing on paper. The man watched in amazement; it appeared to him that the pen was writing on its own because he couldnt see the a person holding the pen. When the door opened and his field of vision broadened, he saw that a man was writing with the pen.

The *nimshal* is, we look at life and we try to understand what's happening but our range of vision is very limited. One thinks, *He did that to me; why did he hurt me?* etc. because he doesnt see that everything is being orchestrated from Above. When one attains the true vision, all of his problems will disappear.

people. Rashi writes, "The Torah places signs before and after to show that this isn't the correct place [to write these *pesukim*. It should have been written in *perek* ב', where the pattern of the travels in the desert is discussed.] So why are these *pesukim* written here? כדי להפסיק בין פרענות לפרענות, "To separate between one castigation and the next." The *pasuk* before and the *pasuk* after speak about the sins and the punishments that the Jewish nation endured in the desert. It isn't good to read them together. To separate them, the Torah placed these two *pesukim* in between.

The *Gemara* says, the upside ג' show that these two *pesukim* are its own *sefer* (*Shabbos* 116).<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, we saw three concepts related to the upside ג'. (1) These *pesukim* are written out of order (2) They are inserted here to divide between one sin and another. (3) These two *pesukim* are an entire *sefer* in its own right.

The *Imrei Emes* connects all of these ideas together: The first point is that these *pesukim* are written out of order. This resembles life, which often seems to be out of order. Things aren't working out the way we hoped and planned it. *Parnassah* is difficult, *shidduchim* aren't as we anticipated, and everything seems to be *out of order*.

Rashi writes that the two *pesukim* are כדי

להפסיק בין פרענות לפרענות "To separate between one punishment and the next." This means when one is going through hard times, one should stop and focus on *emunah* that everything is from Hashem. This acknowledgment separates and divides the castigations so they shouldn't happen.

The *Gemara* said that the two *pesukim* of *ויהי בנסוע* are its own *sefer*. Indeed, someone who can believe that everything is for the good, such a person is very precious to Hashem. He can be considered important like a *sefer*.

#### In Hashem's Embrace

One of the *melachos* of Shabbos is סותר (the opposite of בונה). בונה is to build, סותר is to dismantle or to demolish.

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 31:) explains (according to one opinion) that the prohibition of סותר is solely על מנת סותר במקומו לבנות to dismantle with the intention to rebuild *in the very same place*. If one demolishes a structure with the intention to rebuild it elsewhere, he hasn't transgressed the prohibition of סותר.

The *Gemara* asks, "All *melachos* are learned from the Mishkan. The Mishkan would be dismantled with the intention to rebuild it elsewhere." They would dismantle the Mishkan, travel to another locale, and rebuild it there. Since the *melachos* of Shabbos are the same *melachos* that were used to build the

3. According to this opinion, there aren't only five books in the Torah, there are seven. Because *Bamidbar* is divided into three *sefarim*: (1) From beginning of *Bamidbar* until *ויהי בנסוע*, (2) the two *pesukim* of *ויהי בנסוע*, (3) the rest of *Bamidbar*.

Mishkan, it seems that the transgression of סוּתַר should be even when one's intention is to dismantle in one place to rebuild it in another location.

The Gemara answers, it states (in this week's *parashah* 9:20), עַל פִּי ה' יִהְיוּ וְעַל פִּי ה' יִסְעוּ, "By Hashem's decree they would encamp, and by Hashem's decree they would travel." Consequently, it is as though they dismantled the Mishkan with intention to rebuild it in the very same place.

What is the Gemara answering?<sup>4</sup>

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l* (*Sichos Mussar* 5733, 22) explains that we can compare it to a mother who is holding her child as she travels. From the mother's perspective, she is traveling from one place to the other, but from the child's perspective, he hasn't gone anywhere. He began in his mother's arms, and he is still in his mother's arms. He is in the same place the entire time.

This is how the Yidden felt as they traveled through the desert. They were constantly under Hashem's protection and guidance. From their perspective, they dismantled and reassembled the Mishkan in the very same spot —

within Hashem's embrace. They didn't go anywhere.

About Moshe Rabbeinu, it states, תְּמוֹנֵת ה' (12:8). The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* explains, יְבִיט, wherever Moshe looked, ה' תְּמוֹנֵת he saw Hashem; he perceived that everything is Hashem's *hashgachah*.

It also states (in this week's *parashah*) וְהָיָה הַטּוֹב הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִטֵּב ה' עִמָּנוּ... (10:32). The Be'er Maim Chaim explains, וְהָיָה הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר, the primary good, ה' עִמָּנוּ, is that Hashem is with us.<sup>5</sup>

The Shlah Hakadosh (*Behaloscha, mussar* 12) teaches, "With everything you do, say ה' אִם יִרְצֶה ה' or בְּעֶזְרַת ה'. When traveling, say, 'I am traveling *be'ezras Hashem* (with Hashem's help) and I will arrive at such-and-such place *im yirtzeh Hashem* (if Hashem wills it) by (such-and-such time).' When you arrive at your destination, praise Hashem and say, '*be'ezras Hashem* (with Hashem's help) I arrived at my destination. And I plan to leave *im yirtzeh Hashem* (if Hashem wills it) by...' If you will do so, Hashem's name will always be on your lips, when you plan, and when you act. This is how you should do all your deeds."

4. Rabbeinu Chananel explains that if Hashem told them to rebuild in the very same place they would do so, therefore it is as though they dismantled to rebuild in the same location.

5. One Friday, *erev Shabbos Bahaloscha*, Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz *zy'a* said, "We should really be dancing with music today, because in this week's *parashah* it says (10:29) כִּי ד' דִּיבַר טוֹב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, "Hashem promised that He will do good for the Jewish people."

This is hinted at in the *pesukim* (9:18-20), על פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחנו... על פי ה', "By Hashem's word they traveled, and by Hashem's word they camped..." This means that when you travel, when you camp, and with everything you do say that it is על פי ה', *be'ezras Hashem*, and *im yirtzeh Hashem*, because you can't do anything without His aid.

### Yearning

If you contract someone to fix things around your home, but the handyman didn't fix anything, he doesn't deserve payment. He can shout from today 'till tomorrow, "I tried my best. I worked many hours" but he doesn't deserve to be paid. He didn't do his job. The same is for all hired workers; trying doesn't count. One has to fill a service to deserve payment.

The exception is *avodas Hashem*. In this realm, one receives reward for trying. In fact, the holy *sefarim* teach that trying and yearning to do Hashem's will is the primary part of *avodas Hashem*.

It states (*Tehillim* 105:3), ישמח לב מבקשי ה', "May the hearts of those who seek Hashem rejoice." Notice that it doesn't say ישמח לב עושי רצון ה', "Let the hearts of those who serve Hashem rejoice." The *pasuk* emphasizes מבקשי ה', "those who seek Hashem." The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* explains that this is because the primary service is to seek Hashem, to strive to do His will.

The Chofetz Chaim gives a *mashal*:

A venerated rabbi had a scholarly son

who reached the age of *shidduchim*. The *shadchanim* suggested girls from wealthy homes, and the daughters of *talmidei chachamim*. The rabbi and his *rebbeztin* weren't rushing. They sought and waited for the very best girl for their special son.

There was a simple person who lived near the rabbi. There was absolutely nothing spectacular about him. He was poor and he wasn't a scholar. But he hoped, against all odds, that the rabbi would choose his daughter. He sent *shadchanim* to suggest the *shidduch* and to convince the rabbi. Not surprisingly, the rabbi and his wife turned down the offer.

The simple person didn't give up; he kept on trying. He wanted his daughter to marry a *talmid chacham*. He also wanted the prestige of being the rabbi's *mechutan*. So he sent many *shadchanim* to speak with the rabbi and with the *rebbeztin* about the qualities of his daughter.

Eventually, the matter was settled when this special *bachur* became engaged to some other very special girl.

The rabbi invited everyone in city to the *chasunah*. The simple person came and sat down at the head table. When people came to give *mazal tov* to the *mechutanim*, he put out his hand to make sure everyone says *mazal tov* to him, too.

His friends asked him why he was sitting at the head table, accepting *mazal tov*-wishes from all the guests, when it wasn't his *chasunah*.

He replied, "I was *almost* a *mechutan* at this wedding."

His friends laughed.

The Chofetz Chaim explained that his friends laughed because "almost" doesn't count when it comes to such matters. One can be almost a *mechutan*, almost wealthy, almost a doctor, etc., but that is all meaningless in this world.

However, for *ruchniyos*, "almost" counts. If you strive for success in Torah and mitzvos, you will be awarded for doing the best you can. Your desire and your attempts are precious before Hashem.

Rashi at the beginning of the *parashah* writes, "Why does the *parashah* of the menorah follow the *parashah* of the *nesi'im*? When Aharon saw the *chanukas hanesi'im* (that the *nesi'im* donated *korbanos* to dedicate the Mishkan) he felt disappointed (חלשה אז דעתו) because he didn't participate in this inauguration, and neither did his tribe. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him, חייך 'I swear,' שלך שאתה גדולה משלהם your portion is greater, ומדליק את הנרות for you light and prepare the lamps [of the menorah]."

Rebbe Yitzchok of Vorke *zt'l* explained, HaKadosh Baruch Hu was saying, חייך, the fact that מ'גייט דיר אין לעבן, that it means so much to you, like your life is

dependent that you should have a share in the inauguration of the *mizbeiach*, שלך גדולה משלהם, that desire is even greater than their sacrifices." Because desire to serve Hashem is the ultimate level.

Shavuos has passed. Many people wish they had a better Shavuos, with more intense *tefillos*, more Torah, increased joy. Before Shavuos they strived for it, they prayed and hoped for it, but it didn't happen. Let them strengthen themselves with the awareness that Hashem wants their yearning. Although they failed (somewhat), their attempts and their yearnings are also very precious to Hashem.

But one shouldn't remain with desire alone. When someone desires to eat, he will not remain with his desire, alone. He will eat. Similarly, one shouldn't say "I want to serve Hashem" and feel that that is enough. Because if you want to serve Hashem, do so. Or at least, try your best to serve Hashem. The importance of desire and yearning shouldn't cause a person to be complacent and feel pleased that *he wants to*. If one truly tries and yet fails, only then can he comfort himself that a primary part of *avodas Hashem* is yearning to serve Him. <sup>6</sup>

The Ben Ish Chai (*Niflaim Maaseicha* 124) told the following story:

---

6. A wounded soldier will be aided by the country he fought for. They will pay his doctor bills, and send him a pension until he is well.

But that is solely if he was wounded while fighting for his country. If he wasn't doing anything at all, he doesn't deserve compensation. The same is regarding one who fails in *avodas Hashem*. He will be immensely rewarded for fighting the *yetzer hara* and for trying to achieve his goal. But if he doesn't try at all he doesn't deserve reward.

Tuvyah the Judge was revered and honored by the vast majority of the populace. All judicial matters were settled according to his judgment. But due to jealousy, he also had his share of enemies, who incessantly tried to bring about his downfall.

Eventually they succeeded. The king believed their slander — though all accusations were false — and gave an order to fire Tuvyah and to punish him for his alleged crimes.

Tuvyah caught on to what was about to happen, so he put on civilian clothing and escaped. People saw him passing through the dark streets that night, but didn't realize that he was the celebrated Tuvyah, who just a few hours ago, was the most powerful person in the government, next to the king.

Tuvyah exited the city, traversed a desert, and reached a river. He knew he had to cross the river to freedom. But how can he cross it without a boat or raft? He didn't know how to swim.

Time was a matter of essence, for soon the king will discover that Tuvyah escaped, and will pursue him. Tuvyah stood on the riverside, perplexed and worried.

Hashem had compassion on him. A peasant recognized Tuvyah the Judge. Tuvyah told him that he needs to cross the river. The villager was short and scrawny, and under normal circumstances wouldn't consider swimming across the river while

carrying a tall, heavy man. But the villager realized that this was his golden opportunity to find favor by this great judge. "Who knows, maybe one day I'll stand in court and Tuvyah will be beholden to me, because I did him this favor?"

He said, "Honored judge, hang on to my back. I will swim us across the river."

Thinking about the reward and wealth he might get for doing this, he almost didn't feel Tuvyah's weight.

When they were three quarters across the river, Tuvyah said, "If Hashem will be kind to me, and I become a judge again, I will reward you immensely..."

"You mean you're not the grand judge anymore?"

"That's right" Tuvyah replied. "Corrupt people slandered me to the king. I'm escaping..."

The peasant dropped Tuvyah in the water and said, "When you become judge again, I will take you out of the water," and swam back to shore alone.

People rebuked the peasant. "If you were able to bring Tuvyah the Judge three quarters across the river, you should have brought him all the way."

The peasant replied, "I'm weak and feeble. I can't carry a heavy person like Tuvyah. As long as I was imagining the great honor and wealth, I would earn for helping Tuvyah, I had strength. I almost didn't feel his weight. But when Tuvyah told me that he was escaping, and that he

couldn't award me, suddenly, I felt his full weight and didn't have strength to bring him to shore..."

The Ben Ish Chai told this story to express that we must be cautious with our speech. If only Tuvyah had remained silent, his life would be saved. His problems came from speaking. Similarly, all forbidden speech, and even unnecessary talk, can result in heartache — to oneself and to others.

This story also teaches us that when one desires something immensely, he doesn't feel the hardships involved. One can carry great weight on his shoulders, and not feel it.

#### Working Hard

It states (*Shemos* 19:2), ויהן שם ישראל נגד, ההר, "Bnei Yisrael camped נגד ההר." Rashi writes, כל מקום שאתה מוצא נגד פנים למזרח, "Wherever it states נגד it means on the east side." The nation camped on the east side of the mountain.

The Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l* read this Rashi as follows, "Wherever there is נגד, opposition, hardships, פנים למזרח, it's an indication you are going on the right path," because *avodas Hashem* should be a struggle. When there's a struggle, it's a sign you are on the right path.

Do you find studying Torah difficult? Is it hard for you to daven with *kavanah*? Are practicing good *middos* also hard work? If the answers to the above questions are yes, it's a good sign, because *avodas Hashem* is meant to be hard. That's what brings out the light and joy in *avodas Hashem*.

Torah and mitzvos have an enormous, brilliant, spiritual light concealed in them. Fortunate are those who experience it! The pleasure is infinite. The light of the menorah represents that holy light. How does one tap in to the light of Torah and mitzvos? Through toil. When one works hard to do Hashem's will, he will pick up on the holiness that's there.

This week's *parashah* discusses the halachos of *lighting* the menorah. Then we are surprised to see the Torah mentioning laws of *building* the menorah. As it states, וזה מעשה המנורה, "This is how the menorah is made..." This is surprising, because making the menorah was taught in *parshiyos Terumah* and *Vayakhel*. Why is it repeated again here?

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that it's because this week's *parashah* discusses the light of the menorah, which represents the spiritual light found in *avodas Hashem*. The Torah hints that Moshe Rabbeinu worked hard to understand all the details pertaining to the menorah, and that toil became the root of the menorah's light — because hard work and toil in *avodas Hashem* is the root of its spiritual light.

About the menorah it states, מקשה זהב... מקשה היא... Rashi explains that מקשה means hammered, since the menorah was made from one piece of gold that was hammered into shape.

מקשה also means questions. As Chazal say, נתקשה משה במעשה המנורה, "Moshe didn't understand how the menorah should be made..." (*Bamidbar Rabba*

15:10). He toiled to understand, but didn't succeed. Hashem told Moshe to throw the block of gold into a fire and the menorah came out, ready-made. As Rashi writes (8:4), על ידי הקב"ה נעשית מעליה, "The menorah was made by itself, by Hakadosh Baruch Hu."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that Moshe's toil to understand the menorah brought out its light, because the light of *avodas Hashem* emerges from struggles and from toil.

Therefore, we shouldn't be frightened by the toil we find in *avodas Hashem*, because these hardships are the gateway to finding the unlimited pleasurable, spiritual light that's there.

The Torah says, ויהי העם כמתאוננים, "The nation was complaining..." (11:1) Rashi explains, the nation was saying, "Woe to us! We are going on this long journey for three days and we haven't yet rested from the tiresome travels.' Hashem became angry [and said] 'I intended for their good, so that the nation should come to Eretz Yisrael immediately...'"

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* asks, Hashem could have brought them to Eretz Yisrael without any hardship at all! [For example, He could have flown them to Eretz Yisrael on eagle's wings.] Why was this long difficult journey necessary?

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* answers that some amount of hardship was required. As Chazal (*Brachos* 5) tell us, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave three worthy gifts to the Jewish nation, and each gift was given with *yesurim*. They are: Torah,

Eretz Yisrael, and Olam HaBa." The three difficult days of traveling was for their benefit, but the nation thought it was bad and complained.

The Chidushei HaRim teaches had the Jewish nation believed that this long journey was for their benefit, it would have gotten rid of many of the hardships, and they would have entered Eretz Yisrael in an easier way.

There was a lively child who didn't have patience to study Torah. The *melamed* brought the child to the rav of the city, hoping that the rav could influence the boy to study Torah.

The rav told the child, "I had an interesting *din Torah*, and I want to hear your opinion. The *din Torah* was between a *sefer Torah* and a pair of shoes. The shoes said, 'We both used to be part of a cow, because we are both made from cow hide. We grew up on the same barn, ate the same fodder, and drank from the same trough. Why did it happen that a *sofer* bought you, turned your skins into parchment, and made you into a *sefer Torah*, while a shoemaker bought me, and turned me into a pair of shoes? Why do we have such divergent fates? When the *sofer* finished writing you, they placed a silver crown on your head and carried you to the beis medresh dancing with joy. When you are taken out of the *aron kodesh* people stand up for you, and they hug and kiss you. When you will be worn out, you will have a *levayah* and be buried in honor. But I'm just a pair of shoes. People bring me into the mud. They don't respect me.

When I'll be worn out, I will be unceremoniously tossed into the trash. Is it fair that we should share such opposing fates?"

The rav asked the boy for his opinion. The boy sided with the shoes. It didn't seem fair.

Then the rav explained that creating a *sefer Torah* requires many hours of hard labor. The *sofer* has to write letter after letter until the entire *sefer Torah* is finished. Making shoes, *lehavdil*, doesn't take long. No great toil is involved.

Upon hearing that side of the story, the boy agreed that the *sefer Torah* deserves more respect, because so much toil was put into making it.

The rav concluded, "My son, if you desire to attain the crown of Torah, and if you want people to honor you and admire your Torah knowledge, then you must toil diligently. You must invest a lot of effort. If you don't want to work hard, you will be like the shoes that have minimum value."

The boy in this story is one of the *gedolim* today. He told this story at a family *simchah*, and said that it happened to him. He was the child who didn't want to learn Torah. The rav told him about the "*din Torah*" to teach him that the crown of Torah is acquired with effort. The *gadol* says that after this discussion, he began putting his efforts into Torah study.

This week's *parashah* (see *Rashi* 9:18)

elaborates how Bnei Yisrael's traveled in the desert:

The ענני הכבוד, Clouds of Glory (which generally hovered over the Mishkan) would take on the form of a long beam, and hover over the tribe of Yehudah. The *cohanim* would blow the trumpets (תקיעה, תרועה, תקיעה). And then Moshe would say (10:35) קומה ה' ויפצו איביך וינסו משנאיך מפניך "Hashem, stand up. The nations will scatter from before You." After these steps (of the cloud, the trumpets, and Moshe's announcement) the Cloud began to move, and the Jewish nation followed the cloud.

When it was time to set up camp, the Cloud (which was in the form of a beam) would rise up like smoke, and come down over Yehudah's tribe like *schach* over a *succah*. Moshe would say (10:36) שובה ה' רבבות אלפי ישראל, "Return Hashem, and dwell among the thousands of Yidden" and the Cloud returned to its place above the Mishkan.

The *pasuk* (9:18-23) then adds some more details:

ויש אשר יהיה הענן ימים מספר על המשכן... ויש אשר יהיה הענן מערב עד בקר... או ימים או חדש או ימים, "Sometimes, the Cloud was over the Mishkan for a few days. Sometimes it was on the Mishkan for a night, two days, a month, or a year. על פי ה' יחנו ועל, "By Hashem's decree they camped and by Hashem's decree they traveled. They kept Hashem's command..."

Reb Yitzchak of Volozhin *zt'l* (son of Reb Chaim of Volozhin *zt'l*) explains that each location in the desert represented a different *yetzer hara*. One locale represented the *yetzer hara* of temptation; another place represented the *yetzer hara* for anger; from a third site emanated the *yetzer hara* for heresy, and so on. When the nation came to these places, they were tormented by those *yetzer haras*. When they overcame the *yetzer hara* of each place, the locale was purified.

The Leshem *zt'l* (*Leshem Shvo Va'achlamah* vol.2, *drush* 4:20:4) quoting Reb Yitzchok of Volozhin, elaborates some more:

"It was extremely hard for the Jewish nation when they came to these locations in the desert, because they immediately felt the *yetzer hara's* cloak of darkness, and immediately fell drastically from their *madreigos*. They wanted to flee, like from fire [but they obeyed Hashem's will, and they remained there until Hashem told them to travel]. After they were in a place for some time and purified the region, they wanted to remain there [because the *yetzer hara* wasn't after them anymore]. Therefore, the Torah writes, ועל פי ה' יסעו, they set up camp by Hashem's decree and traveled by Hashem's word.' They didn't do what they wanted; they did Hashem's will... The Torah says, ובהארץ, העני, 'when the Cloud was in one location for a long time,' and the reason for the prolonged stay was because of the great *tumah* over there. They were much

challenged then; it was very hard for them to overcome the *yetzer hara*. They wanted to run away. Nevertheless, ושמרו בני ישראל משמרת ה' ולא יסעו, 'Bnei Yisrael kept Hashem's decree, and they didn't travel.' There were places when the cloud only stayed מערב עד בקר, 'from nighttime until morning' because that place wasn't very impure. They wanted to stay there longer, nevertheless, in the morning, when the Cloud moved on, they moved on too. The *pasuk* praises the Jewish nation that they took on the task of overcoming the *yetzer hara*. Although it was very hard, את משמרת ה' שמרו, 'they kept to Hashem's decree.'"

#### Being Yourself

Hashem created each person different and He wants a different service from each person. The mitzvos are the same for everyone, but there should be an element of being yourself in the way one goes about Torah and mitzvos, and in the intentions one has.

It says in *Koheles*, הבל הבלים אמר קהלת הבל, "Futility of futilities, says Koheles. Futilities, everything is foolishness" (*Koheles* 1:2). The Midrash states, "The seven הבלים that *Koheles* mentions correspond to the seven stages of a person's life. When a child is one year old, he is like a king sitting on a throne. Everyone hugs him and kisses him. When he's two or three he's like a pig, which sticks out its feet in the dirt. When he's ten, he jumps like a goat. When he's twenty, he neighs like a horse...as he seeks to get married. After he's married, he's like a donkey [he must

work hard like a donkey, to bring home *parnassah*]. When he has children, he becomes brazen like a dog, [aggressive] to bring food home for the family. When he's old, he is like a monkey [because he doesn't have intelligence]. But that is only for the עמי הארץ, those who don't study Torah. But about Torah scholars it states (*Koheles* 1:3) ויהמלך דוד זקן; even when Dovid was old he was a king.”

The Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l* asks, why does the Midrash disgrace the elderly so much, to call them monkeys?

He answers that monkeys imitate others. When serving Hashem, one must be true to his personality, talents, and style. If he just copies what others do, he's like a monkey.

At the end of *parashas Naso*, the Torah lists the *korbanos* the *nesi'im* brought for the *chanukas hamizbeiach*. Each one of the *nesi'im* brought the same *korban*, and the Torah repeats the same set of *korbanos* twelve times.

It seems the Torah could have written the set of *korbanos* brought for *chanukas hamizbeiach* once, and then state, “All the other eleven tribes brought the same.” Why does the Torah list all the *korbanos*, for the twelve *nesi'im*?

The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 7:2-5) answers it was to honor each one of the *nesi'im*.

The Ramban's second answer is as follows:

“Each of the *nesi'im*, [on their own], thought to bring sacrifices for the *chanukas hamizbeiach*, and they all thought to bring the same amount. [They

weren't copying each other. Each *nasi* thought on his own to dedicate the Mishkan, and each *nasi* came up with exactly the same number of animals, incenses, meal-offerings, gold, silver, as the others did.] Only they differed in their reasons.

“Nachshon (the *nasi* of *shevet Yehudah*) thought to bring this amount for one reason, and similarly, each one of the *nesi'im* had their own reasons.

“The Midrash says that Nachshon brought a קערת כסף, silver dish, because the *gematriya* of קערת כסף is 930, corresponding to Adam who lived 930 years. Its weight was 130 shekel, corresponding to Adam who was 130 years-old when he had his child [שת]...

Nesanel ben Tzoar [the *nasi* of *shevet Yissachar*] also desired to bring the same amount for the *chanukas hamizbeiach*, but for a different reason. Yissachar's tribe is praised for Torah wisdom. The קערת כסף, silver dish represents Torah...

“Zevulan did business and supported Yissachar [who studied Torah]. Zevulan earned reward together with him. For Zevulan the קערה represents the sea [which he would travel for business].

“Similarly, the Midrash tells the individual reason each *shevet* had for their *korban* and for the size of their sacrifice. This is the reason the Torah lists each *nasi's* sacrifice separately... Then the Torah tallies them all together. This is hinting that they came up with the idea to bring *korbanos* for the *chanukas hamizbeiach* all at the same

time. It wasn't that one of them had the idea before the others."

Outwardly, it seemed that the twelve *nesi'im* brought the same *korbanos*, and they were copying each other. But the Torah lists them separately, because they were very different. They were individually inspired; each one had his own intentions. None of them imitated the others.

After listing the twelve *nesi'im*, this week's *parashah* begins with the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. The Torah testifies (8:3), ויעש בן אהרן אל מול פני, המנורה העלה גרתיה, "Aharon did so... He lit the lamps."

Rashi explains, להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה, "The *pasuk* is telling Aharon's praise that he didn't change [anything]. שינה can also mean "repeat." Aharon's praise is that although he lit the menorah every day for forty years, he never repeated the same deed. Each day he performed the mitzvah of lighting the menorah with new intentions. It was never the same mitzvah over again. Because one shouldn't imitate others, and one shouldn't imitate himself either.

#### "Hashem Heard..."

When the Yidden stood at the Yam Suf, with the sea in front of them and the Mitzrim pursuing them, the Torah (*Shemos* 14:10) says, ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה', "Bnei Yisrael shouted out to Hashem." Rashi writes, תפשו אומנות אבותם, "They grabbed on to the profession of their

forefathers [who prayed to Hashem in times of need]."

Rashi is implying that they were imitating their forefathers. When their forefathers were in need, they turned to Hashem in prayer, so they did the same. They considered *tefillah* to be something cultural, or a *segulah* for salvation, but not a desperate plea to Hashem who can save them. They were just imitating, and thus lacking an element of truth in their prayers.

Nevertheless, they were saved, for Hashem answers even such *tefillos*. But our ultimate goal is to be real in our *avodas Hashem*, and with everything we do.

In order to daven with sincerity, one must believe that Hashem listens to our prayers. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* teaches that the Jewish nation believed that Hashem sees everything, but they didn't believe that Hashem hears all. They believed in the concept of עיני ה' משוטטות בארץ, Hashem's eyes focus on the earth, but they didn't believe in אזני ה', Hashem's ability to hear all.

Therefore, it states in this week's *parashah* (11:1), ויהי העם כמתאוננים רע באזני ה', "The nation was complaining in Hashem's ears." The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* explains they were saying that the concept of אזני ה', Hashem's ears, doesn't apply.

Immediately Hashem corrected them, as it states, וישמע ה', "Hashem heard..."

Hashem showed them that He does hear. 'ויחר אפו ותבער בם אש ה' "and Hashem became angry and a fire burned them." Hashem was showing them that as He hears them when they sin, He surely hears them when they pray to Him.

We quote the Chasam Sofer:

"There is an attribute of עיני ה', which is Hashem's surveillance on all His creations... However, the concept of אזני ה', that Hashem listens to our prayers, and [that our *tefillos* can] change Hashem's decrees... they were doubtful. They said, 'Although Hashem's eyes are upon us to bestow goodness on us, nevertheless, He doesn't hear *tefillos*, to change His decree and to grant us our desires.' This is the definition of ויהי העם ויהי האזני ה'. כמתאוננים רע באזני ה'. The words אזני ה' means they didn't believe that Hashem hears them. 'וישמע ה', Hashem showed them that He listens to their complaints, thus, He will certainly hear our shouts, listen to our prayer, and fill all our desires."<sup>7</sup>

Towards the end of the *parashah* it states, 'ויצעק משה אל ה' לאמר אל-נא רפא נא לה, "Moshe shouted to Hashem saying, 'Please G-d, heal her now.'" The Chida writes that when Moshe was in heaven, he was told that when one says נא twice in his prayers his *tefillah* will be

answered. This is the reason Moshe said נא when he prayed for Miriam's recovery from *tzaraas*.

נא means please. Saying it twice indicates that one should plead, again and again, and then his *tefillos* will be answered.

### *Machlokes*

In this week's *parashah*, Hashem tells Moshe to make two silver trumpets (10:2-4), למקרא העדה ולמסע את המחנות, "To gather the community, and to tell the camp to travel..." ואם באחת יתקעו ונועדו אליך, "If only one trumpet is blown, the *nesi'im*, the heads of thousands of Yidden, will gather before you."

As Rashi writes, "If one is blown, that's a sign for the *nesi'im* to gather...in front of the Ohel Moed..."

The Ralba'g asks, there were only twelve *nesi'im*. Couldn't a courier be sent to gather twelve people? Why was it necessary to use the trumpet for all to hear?

The Ralba'g answers that this was to prevent disputes. If a messenger would be sent to summon the *nesi'im*, one of the *nesi'im* may feel slighted and ask, "Why did you call that *nasi* before me?"

---

7. There are people who believe that Hashem listens to the prayers of *tzaddikim*, but they think Hashem won't listen to their prayers. They feel they are too insignificant for their *tefillos* to make a difference. The Torah tells us that Hashem even hears the Yidden when they are sinning and complaining. If He hears our sins, He certainly listens to our prayers of every Yid. No one is too small to pray.

Why wasn't I called first? Do you think he's more important than me?" To prevent such disputes, Hashem said to call them all together by trumpet blasts.

One might ask, why should a *nasi* be upset if another *nasi* was called before him? Isn't it obvious that it is impossible to call all of them at once? To feel slighted over such a matter is certainly foolish and crooked thinking. Do I have to be concerned about the foolish things that might enter people's minds?

The answer is, we do. It states (also in this week's *parashah*, 12:3), האיש משה עניו, מאד מכל האדם, "the man Moshe was extremely humble, more than all men..." *Rashi* explains, שפל וסבלן, that Moshe was humble and he tolerated others.

The *Chidushei HaRim zt'l* reads *Rashi* like this: שפל וסבלן, Moshe was able to tolerate the שפלות, lowliness, of others. This level is even higher than humility.

Perhaps the *nesi'im* wouldn't have a valid reason to be upset if one *nasi* was summoned before them, nevertheless, we must tolerate everyone, and seek to prevent everyone from unnecessary *machlokes*.

### Speech

It states (9:20), על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו. This can be translated, על פי, if a person is cautious with his words, ה' יחנו, Hashem will dwell with him. ועל פי, but if someone isn't cautious with his speech, ה' יסעו, this causes Hashem to depart, *chas veshalom*.

The *Magen Avraham* (from the *Trisker Maggid zt'l*, beginning of *Lech Lecha*) writes, "The origin of diseases that come to the world is due to improper speech, for that pollutes the air, and destroys nature. Therefore, be cautious not to speak forbidden words. Sanctify your mouth through Torah and *tefillah* from the depths of your heart before Hashem."

Creation is comprised of four categories: דומם צומח חי מדבר, inanimate objects, plants, animals, and human beings. A dead animal is called נבילה. A dead plant is called עציץ נבל. A broken inanimate object is called גבלי הרם.

Based on this, we deduce that גיבול פה, profane speech, is the dead speech of humans. They are dead, contaminated words, and we must be cautious not to sully ourselves by speaking such words.

The *Kitzur Shlah* writes, "If you want your *tefillos* to be accepted by Hakadosh Baruch Hu, be cautious with your mouth, which is your utensil for prayer. Be cautious that you shouldn't speak profane language, curses, swears, *lashon hara*, and the like, because prayer is meant to give a gift to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and the mouth is the vessel that holds that gift, and it shouldn't be dirty... Otherwise, it is a disgrace for the King, and a disgrace for the gift. If a person wasn't careful with his mouth, he should correct that, and stop speaking in such a manner. He should speak Torah and *tefillah* and permitted speech, and nothing else."

***Bitachon***

For all worries and concerns, people should remember that they have a Father in heaven that cares for them. He bestowed His kindness on them until now, and He will continue to do so. When one has *bitachon*, הַבֹּטָה בַּד' חֶסֶד יְסֻבְבוּ, he will be enveloped within Hashem's kindness, and good things will certainly happen to him.

During the times of the Chofetz Chaim, there were different opinions among the rabbanim whether insurance (such as fire insurance) is a worthwhile investment or not. The Chofetz Chaim thought that it wasn't.

In year 5663 there was a fire in Radin, and two hundred houses burned down. The fire stopped just before the Chofetz Chaim's home. His house didn't catch fire, and neither did the twenty-six houses after his.

Insurance agents took advantage of this tragedy, and they went from house to house selling fire insurance policies. They also went to the Chofetz Chaim's house. The Chofetz Chaim wasn't home at that time, and his family bought a policy. When the Chofetz Chaim returned home and he heard that his home was insured, he wasn't pleased.

A year later, after Pesach of 5664, there was another fire in Radin. This time the Chofetz Chaim's home burned down, together with the homes of his married children. The family said, "It is a good thing we insured our homes. What

would have been had we not bought the insurance policy...?"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "If we hadn't insured the houses, they wouldn't have burned down. The proof is that last year we didn't insure the houses and nothing happened."

The Alter of Novardok *zt'l* had a small hut in the forest, where he would study Torah and *mussar*. One night, he was studying Torah and *mussar*, when his candle blew out. He needed more oil. He focused on *bitachon*. He told himself, "If Hashem desires it, He can send me someone with oil. Everything is possible..." As one is obligated to do *hithadlus*, so he opened the door of his hut.

Just as he opened the door, he saw a man walking in the forest. "Do you have oil?"

He gave him oil and the Alter was able to study Torah and *mussar* for the rest of the night.

In the morning, the Alter took the leftover oil and stored it, so he could always remember the miracle that Hashem performed for him.

Once, there was a fire in his home and this jar of oil got destroyed in the fire. The Alter said that he was happy that this happened, because "Why should I remember this episode more than all the other miracles Hashem performs for me. Every moment of life is filled with miracles."

We say, תְּשׁוּעַת ד' כְּהַרְף עֵינַן. Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrivka *zt'l*

explained that when people have הרף עין, which means they stop looking to people to help them, that is when they receive Hashem's salvation.

Similarly, the Chazon Ish would often say, "Hashem helps the moment a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation." Because then he trusts in Hashem alone, and that's when he receives his salvation.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* writes, "I don't feel that it's important to ask help from people many times. I rely on the Chofetz Chaim who would often say, 'From a human, one doesn't ask too much.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 7) teaches that the *talmidei chachamim* do not need to participate in the communal tax that is designated towards the city's protection. For example, if the city is collecting money to build a protective wall or weapons, the Torah scholars in that city are exempt. They don't need to participate, "because the Torah scholars do not need protection."

The Chazon Ish explains, "Taxes (security tax) aren't collected from Torah scholars because their Torah protects them. They aren't affected by the rules of nature like most people are, because Hashem's providence over people is in accordance to their level of *bitachon* in Hashem..." The Chazon Ish is explaining that Torah scholars have more *bitachon*, therefore Hashem has a

special *hashgachah pratis* over them, to protect them.

The Kedushas Levi (*Beshalach*, ד"ה והנה ידוע) writes, "It is written, ד' צלך, 'Hashem is your shadow.' The Baal Shem Tov explained: just as a shadow copies everything the person does, similarly, *keviyachol*, the way a person acts below, that is how he is treated from Above. Therefore, if a person acts with *rachmanus*, Heaven will also bestow *rachmanus* on him.... And if a person trusts in Hashem, and he believes that Hashem will give him all his needs, Heaven will do so. But if a person is constantly worried about his *parnassah* and about the *parnassah* of his family, then Heaven will not give him *parnassah*. Therefore, fortunate are those who don't forget Hashem, and they place their trust in Him, because then Hashem will be his shadow, and He will prepare for him his *parnassah*...."

The Minchas Elazer *zy'a* would tell the following story, every time he visited the sick:

The Kedushas Levi was ill; he was about to leave the world. His students were in the next room, saying *Tehillim*. Suddenly they heard a loud sound. They go into the room of their Rebbe to see what happened and they found him lying on the floor. He had fallen off the bed. They raised him, and put him back onto the bed.

Some hours later, the Berditchever Rav called them in, and asked for a cup of

tea. The students saw that he appeared much better. It didn't take long, and the Berditchever Rav was standing on his feet, totally better.

He told his students, "As I was lying on my bed, I remembered what my Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch explained on the *pasuk*, הַבּוֹטָח בַּה' חַסְדוֹ יְסוּבֵנוּ, "Kindness surrounds the person who trusts in Hashem" (*Tehillim* 32). The Maggid said that this isn't a *segulah*, it is a rule of nature. Whoever trusts in Hashem, he will be enveloped in Hashem's kindness.

"So I strengthened myself with *bitachon*, until I felt confident that I could get off bed, and that Hashem would heal me. But I fell to the ground. I realized that my *bitachon* wasn't complete yet. So I began thinking about *emunah* and *bitachon* some more, until I became perfectly healthy."

### Beis Ahron

The 17th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of the Beis Ahron zt'l. The Rebbe of Kozmir (and other tzaddikim) would call him the *freilechen tzaddik* because he always exuded joy. People thought he was a happy person by nature, but the Yesod HaAvodah (of Slonim) zy'a testified that the Beis Aharon's happiness was the result of his *hischazkus*. He battled with his *yetzer hara* to be happy. It wasn't natural for him.

He also taught his chassidim to be happy. His *beis medresh* was always filled with joy.

There was one person, though, who was always depressed, always thinking

about his sins, and this disturbed the Beis Aharon.

The Beis Aharon told him the following *mashal*:

There was a family that was traveling with great joy to the wedding of one of their children/siblings. A pauper stood on the roadside at the outskirts of their city, and asked if he could join them for the ride.

They answered, "We are very happy, because we're traveling to a wedding. If you can be happy with us, you can join. But if you are going to be sad, you will ruin the atmosphere and you can't join us."

The sad man understood. His sad disposition mustn't ruin the happy atmosphere of the chassidim. If he wants to be with them, he must first be happy.

One Shabbos, a visiting rav heard the Beis Aharon begin *Baruch She'amar* but he didn't hear him finish it. The rav assumed the custom in this *beis medresh* was that the *chazan* didn't end each piece, so the rav continued to daven. When he reached *Yishtabach*, he heard the Rebbe shout, in the famous Karliner *niggun*, יחיד חי העולמים, the conclusion of *Baruch She'amer*. So slow and passionate were his *tefillos*.

When the Beis Aharon was *niftar*, his son-in-law, the Sadegura Rebbe said, "The יחיד חי העולמים [the one Hashem] has remained the same. But the way my father-in-law said it won't be heard again until Moshiach comes."