

## Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim

### Behaaloscha 5775

#### The ups and downs of life

#### Introduction

In this week's parasha there appears to be an underlying theme throughout all the episodes that the Torah mentions. This theme is the idea of contrast. We find in the beginning of the parashah that Aharon is disturbed that he and the tribe of Levi were not involved in the dedication of the Mishkan, until HaShem consoles him by informing him that he will be the one who will light the Menorah. The Torah then discusses the purification process of the Leviim, and the Torah explains how the Leviim were chosen instead of the firstborns of the Israelites. We then encounter the instruction to the Jewish People to bring the Korban Pesach in the Wilderness, followed by the complaint of those who were ritually impure and were not allowed to offer the Korban Pesach. The Torah then contrasts how at times the cloud would linger over the Mishkan for many days, and other times the cloud would only linger over the Mishkan for a day and then the Jewish People would journey. We then learn about the commandment for Moshe to make for himself two silver trumpets, and these trumpets could only be used by Moshe in his lifetime and no other leader after Moshe was permitted to use these trumpets. The Torah then records how

Moshe implores Yisro to travel with the Jewish People and Yisro desists, explaining that he wishes to return to his homeland. This is then followed by the Jewish People complaining about only having manna to eat and nothing else. Hashem instructs Moshe to choose seventy men who will assist Moshe in bearing the burden of the people. Two elders, Eldad and Meidad, remain in the camp, and they prophesied without stop. The Torah concludes with the incident where Miriam spoke against Moshe, and HaShem explains to Miriam and Aharon how Moshe is different than all other prophets. Miriam is subsequently punished with Tzaraas, requiring that she be quarantined outside the camp and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in. What is the meaning of all these contrasts and distinctions that the Torah records?

#### Three parshiyos in one

In order to understand the lessons that the Torah is teaching us with regard to these contrasts, we must point out what should be the most obvious distinction in this week's parasha, but to the casual reader, it would not appear to be a distinction at all. Following Moshe's entreaty to Yisro to travel with the Jewish People, there are two verses that are preceded and followed by two upside down letters. The upside down letters are

the two nuns. The Gemara (Shabbos 116a) states that these two upside down nuns teach us that within this parasha there are really three parshiyos, and the nuns serve to separate between one parasha and the next, as there were two sections of rebuke and chastisements preceding and following the nuns. What are these two sections that the Gemara is referring to? Tosfos (Ibid) understands that preceding the first nun, it is said (Bamidbar 10:33) *vayisu meihar HaShem derech shiloshes yamim*, they journeyed from the mountain of HaShem a three-day distance, and the Medrash interprets this to mean that the Jewish People fled from Sinai like a child who flees from school. The rebuke and chastisements that follows the second nun is obvious, as the Torah records the punishment that was meted out to those who complained about the manna and requested meat. The Torah, by separating the two rebukes and chastisements, is teaching us a valuable lesson. Everyone has in his or her life ups and downs. The downs can be caused by seeing how others seem to have it good, as was the case with Aharon and the Nesiim. At times the downs can be a result of circumstances that are beyond one's control, as was the case regarding those who were not able to offer the Korban Pesach in its proper time. Furthermore, there are times when a person can be in an up mode for a while, and there are times when one will be up for only a short period, and this was reflected in the length of time that the cloud lingered over the Mishkan.

There are also people who seem to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth, as was the case with Moshe, who earned the status of being the master of all prophets, and only Moshe was allowed to use the silver trumpets, and only in his lifetime. Yisro, who forsook his pagan background and converted to Judaism, still insisted on returning to his homeland. In a similar vein, the Jewish People, were blessed with the manna, but they were not satisfied with this surreal existence, and they desired meat. Hashem then instructs Moshe to choose seventy elders who will be equal in sharing the burden with Moshe, and yet, Eldad and Meidad are noted for their distinction in being prophets who do not cease to prophesy. This contrast in greatness is highlighted further when HaShem informs Miriam and Aharon that Moshe is in a different league of prophecy than all other prophets. Thus, we see that everyone experience ups and downs in life and it is irrelevant whether he can control them. What is relevant, however, is that one should be cognizant that HaShem is the One Who is running the show, and jealousy and feelings of bitterness will not help one grow spiritually. Additionally, the Torah separates the rebuke and the chastisements to teach us that one should never view a series of "downs" as an excuse to avoid attempting to go back up. Perhaps it for this reason that between the two parshiyos of rebuke and chastisements, the Torah refers to the journeying and resting of the Aron, the Holy Ark. This reflects the idea that

there are times when Torah study and mitzvah performance can appear to us to be elusive, and we wonder what we have accomplished with our days on this earth. Yet, at other times, we feel that we can study Torah and perform mitzvos in a relaxed state, and this should encourage us to always maintain hope that, despite the downs we may encounter in life, there is always an “up” that is just around the bend.

### **The Shabbos connection**

Throughout the week we are subject to ups and downs, as the tumult of life rushes over us and at times threatens to leave us without energy to do battle with the forces of evil. Yet, we know that every week HaShem bestows upon us His Holy Shabbos, which is a life-saving gift that allows us to begin the following week on a high. Hashem should allow us to delight in His Holy Shabbos, and our proper observance of Shabbos should allow us to merit experiencing only elevation in our physical and spiritual lives.

## **Shabbos in the Zemiros**

### **Yom Zeh LiYisroel**

Some opinions attribute the authorship of this Zemer to the Arizal.

לְנִפְשׁוֹת נִכְאָבוֹת, נְשָׂמָה יִתְּרָה, for suffering people, an additional soul. The simple meaning of this passage is that on Shabbos, a Jew receives an additional soul, and this soul brings with it relief

from the suffering of the week. On a deeper level, whoever, the Gemara (Beitzah 16a) states that we derive the idea of an extra soul on Shabbos from the word וַיִּנְפֹשׁ, which literally means and He was refreshed. The Gemara interprets the word וַיִּנְפֹשׁ to be a contraction for the words וְוִי אֲבֵדָה נֶפֶשׁ, woe that the soul is lost. This means that on Shabbos one gains an extra soul and with the departure of Shabbos the soul is lost. We can suggest that the Gemara introduces to us the concept of an extra soul on Shabbos in the negative sense to teach us how lost we are without Shabbos. For this reason we declare here that for the suffering people, i.e. those without Shabbos, HaShem proffers us with an extra soul so that we can serve Him with love and joy.

## **Shabbos Stories**

### **Charity Is the Best Investment**

Rabbi Yissachar Frand writes: Rav Betzalel Zolty cites a true story regarding Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka, who came to the United States in 1924 to collect money. While he was here, he received a telegram from the “Alter” [Elder] of Slabodka that the Lithuanian government was going to draft all the Yeshivas students into the Lithuanian army. This would have been a death sentence for all of those students, if not in a physical sense, then certainly in a spiritual sense.

The “Alter” told Rav Moshe Mordechai that he was sending 150 students from

Slabodka to Palestine to start a Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael. For this massive undertaking, he needed 25,000 dollars – a huge sum in those days. Rav Epstein went to a wealthy Jew from a Manhattan banking family, named Schiff. Rav Epstein told Mr. Schiff about the situation and expected a nice donation. Mr. Schiff wrote a check for the entire sum.

In the depression (1929), Mr. Schiff lost his entire fortune. In the 1930s, Rav Moshe Mordechai was already not well and could not make the trip to America. He sent his son-in-law, Rav Chatzkel Sarna to come to New York to collect money for the Slabodka Yeshiva. Rav Sarna came to America in the early 1930s, the height of the depression. Mr. Schiff lost everything he had in the stock market and everything he had in the real estate market. Indeed, he was then living in the basement of a building he once owned.

However, Mr. Schiff came to speak at a parlor meeting held in New York on behalf of the Slabodka yeshiva. At the parlor meeting, Mr. Schiff said that of all the investments that he ever owned - the real estate, the stocks, everything - the only investment that he still had was the \$25,000 he gave 10 years earlier to the Slabodka yeshiva. Everything else he lost. He can only look at the Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael that had young Torah students learning and say, “That is my investment; that still delivers great dividends to me and my family.” He told the assembled parlor meeting that the

only money that one has that is guaranteed is the money that one gives to charity. ([www.Torah.org](http://www.Torah.org))

### **Reb Yaakov Yitzchak of Lublin - A story about the Chozeh**

The Chozeh of Lublin and his disciples had set out on a long journey. As the Shabbos quickly approached they found themselves at an unfamiliar crossroads. Dismounting from their wagons, they debated the question of which way to turn. The Chozeh interrupted the discussion, and advised them to let the horses' reins go free and let them go where they would. They did as he said, and they traveled quite a few miles on the road before meeting a peasant who told them that the town which they had reached was not the one they had been searching for.

Nevertheless, as the Shabbos was quickly approaching, they had to stop over and find some lodging for the night. At that point the Chozeh announced to his Chasidim, “This Shabbos I am not to be known as a rebbe.” From this they understood that he wanted to be inconspicuous for some reason of his own. It was also understood that they would be on their own in finding appropriate accommodations. So, they entered the town and made their way to the synagogue, knowing that, according to time-honored custom, strangers always received an invitation from some villager for the Shabbos meal. Sure enough, they all received invitations, except for the Chozeh who, in his usual fashion prolonged his prayers until all

the other congregants had left. There was, however, one very old man who also remained in the synagogue and sat singing the traditional Shabbos tunes. The old man noticed the stranger and asked him, "Where will you be having your meal?" The Chozeh replied, "I don't know yet." "Well, I would suggest that you have your Shabbos meals in the local inn, and after the Shabbos ends, I will go around and collect the money to pay the bill." "No," replied the Chozeh. "In that inn, they don't even light the Shabbos candles. No, I won't make Kiddush in such a place." "Well," the man said, "I would invite you to my own home, but we really don't have much of anything to eat or drink." "Don't worry," the Chozeh said, "I don't eat very much, and I don't drink very much either." "All right, so you'll come home with me." said the old man, still sitting with his prayer book in his hand.

"Tell me, where do you come from?" the man asked. "I come from Lublin," the Chozeh responded. "You don't say!" said the man. "Why, you don't happen to know the tzaddik, the Chozeh, do you?" The Chozeh said, "It so happens that I know him very well. I spend all of my time with him." The old man's eyes lit up like a fire and he proclaimed, "I would like very much to be able to see him in his glory, but I don't know how it can be. I'm very poor and I've become weak in my old age, so it is impossible for me to make the journey to Lublin. Nevertheless, my desire is so strong, I fast one day a week that I should have the merit to see him with my own eyes.

Please, what can you tell me about him?" "Well, what kind of things do you want to know?" asked the Chozeh. The man sighed and said, "You see, many years ago, when he was just a little boy, I was his teacher. In those days he was a regular boy, just like all the rest, nothing special about him. But now, I hear he performs miracles and is a great tzaddik. Every day when his turn came to read from the prayer book, he would be missing. And when he would finally turn up, I would always spank him. Then, one day I decided to follow him. I was curious to see where he went all the time. So, I walked a little distance behind him, and followed him into the forest. There, he sat down and cried out from the depths of his heart, Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad (Devarim 6:4)! From that day on I never spanked him again."

The Chozeh was greatly moved by the old man's recitation, and it was clear to him why G-d had directed his path to this out-of-the-way little village. He revealed to the old man his real identity, and the old man fainted away. After he was revived, the old man told the Chozeh not to reveal to anyone else who he was. After the end of Shabbos the Chozeh and his followers continued on in the originally intended direction. They arrived at an inn and enjoyed the Melaveh Malka (post-Shabbos) meal. (A ritual meal at the end of the Shabbos bidding goodbye to the "Shabbos Queen"). When they had finished, the Chozeh told them, "Let's return to the village now, for it is time for us to pay

our last respects to the old man I stayed with. He has just departed from this world.” They returned and said the eulogy for the old man who had such a burning love for righteous people, that God granted him his greatest wish.

## Shabbos in Halacha

### לישה - Kneading

#### 3. Permitted Methods of Kneading

#### The Shinuim for the two steps of the Kneading Process

We have learned that there are two stages to the melacha of kneading, each of which is separately prohibited. These are (1) combining the ingredients; (2) stirring them together. The shinui necessary to permit the act is different for each of these procedures. There are therefore two types of shinuim:

1. שינוי בסדר – A shinui in the order [of combining the ingredients]; this modification is appropriate to the problem of adding together the food particles and liquid.
2. שינוי בלישה – A shinui in the [method of] kneading [or stirring]; this modification is appropriate to the problem of mixing the ingredients.

Modifying the order in which the ingredients are combined is deemed to be a sufficient shinui only with regard to a loose mixture. Ingredients forming a

thick mixture, however, may not be combined regardless of the order, except in certain extraordinary circumstances. In addition, certain modifications of the *method* of stirring or mixing are also effective only for loose mixtures, but not for thick ones. These exceptions will be explained next time.



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