



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

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TORAT

Parashat Behaalotecha

HAMELECH

We Want More

When Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim, some “mixed multitudes” – *eirev rav* – of other nations wanted to join them. Hashem disapproved, but Moshe said, “Why not?” Of course, Hashem knew better, but He let Moshe accept these tag alongs. They were the ones who initiated the *cheit ha'eigel*, and in this week's *parashah*, they initiated mass complaining. They were not satisfied with the *mon*. “We want meat!” was their cry. “We remember the fish which we ate in Mitzrayim – duty free! And the cucumbers, melons, onions, garlic and more! Now our souls are dry! We have nothing! All we have is *mon* all day, every day! How boring!”

Once they started asking for more food, they also began complaining about marriage restrictions, how the Torah did not allow them to wed their close relatives.

What is the connection? There are two types of people: the satisfied and the wanting. If you're satisfied, you're happy and content. If you're not, then you're not, and there's no end to your “want” list.

Freedom and Slavery

What is true freedom? Some think that freedom means: do whatever you want. He does not realize that his “wants” are dictated by an evil force from within called the “*yetzer horah*”. He thinks he is “free” but he is really in shackles. The real person is his mind, his “*neshamah*”. When his intellect has the reigns, he is then in control and free to choose which path to take.

People who develop addictions become slaves to their habits. Someone who drinks coffee daily has a hard time starting his day when coffee is not around. Someone who smokes regularly does not know what to do with himself when he runs out of his last cigarette.

The Poor Rich Fellow

Rav Yaakov Adis retells how a wealthy man once visited his father's home. He was served fine foods but seemed too perturbed to enjoy the meal. When asked what is bothering him, he explained: “Two weeks ago, two different friends each offered me to purchase ten percent of a certain type of stock. I bought from one of them but not the other. In the last two weeks, the price skyrocketed. Had I only bought the other ten percent! I can't forgive myself!”

Here was a rich man who just became so much wealthier. But is he happy? No! Because he is focusing on what he does *not* have instead of on what he has! With such an attitude, he'll never be happy!

The Difference Between...

Medrash Rabba (Parashat Toldot) explains the difference between *tzaddikim* and *reshaim*. The wicked are controlled by their hearts, while the *tzaddikim* control their hearts. This means to say that *tzaddikim* think before they act. They decide what makes sense to do and then only do they do it. The wicked act on impulse. If they are hungry or thirsty, they will simply find something to eat and drink without checking the *hechsher* or if they waited enough time between meat and



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dairy. If something upsets or disturbs them they will rant and rave and step on other people to get their way. They act without thinking and therefore are often filled with regret.

Who is truly free? Only someone who toils in Torah! (Avot 6:2)

To an unknowledgeable spectator, someone who toils in Torah seems to be like a workaholic. He just can't get enough of his studies. He's glued to his work. He's obsessed.

That's true. But there is nothing more rewarding, even in this world. He is attached to his source. He is a fish in water. The fox told the fish, "Come up to dry land and enjoy some fresh air."

The fish responded, "Are you crazy?! For me, that's certain death! I'm just fine, here in the water. I do not feel confined nor restrained. On the contrary, I feel alive."

I Have Enough

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was a big *tzaddik*. Hashem performed for him many miracles. For example, at his decree, vinegar served as fuel for the fire, goats overpowered wolves, and inanimate beams extended. He prayed for rain or for shine and received instant results. (Taanit 25a)

The entire world was sustained in his merit. Rabbi Chanina himself lived in dire straits. He didn't even have *challah* for Shabbat! He subsisted on a measured portion of carob (not so tasty), approximately 2½ kilograms per week. (Berachot 17b)

Why?! Why would Hashem have him suffer so? After all, we see that Hashem loved him and performed for him miracles?

The answer is that Rabbi Chanina did not feel lacking. He only ate 350 grams of carob a day, but that was enough for him. He wanted nothing more. "Dai lo" – it was enough for him.

Avot (6:4) teaches: This is the way of the Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink small amounts of water, sleep on the ground, endure a life of pain, and toil in Torah. If you do this, ... you are fortunate in this world and it will be great for you in the world to come.

All Good Days

A man once came to the Baal Shem Tov with his problems. The Besht sent him to ask for a brachah and an eitzah from R' Zusha of Anipoli. He came to R' Zusha and found him in abject poverty. When he asked for a brachah and an eitzah, R' Zusha wondered, out loud, "I don't know why he sent you to me. I never had a hard day in my life! Life's great, full of blessing!"

Take a look at Sarah Imeinu's life: years of infertility, two abductions, etc. We would say that she had a tough life. Even if we consider her joy at Yitzchak's birth etc, we would still say: Fine, she had some good times, but mostly difficulties.

But what was her attitude? "Kulan shoven letovah" – "all of her days were equally good and rewarding." It's all good. She said it and she meant it.

So it's your choice. Do you want to be happy or upset? Happiness is a decision, not a circumstance. You can chose to focus on what you have or what you don't. For your own good, I hope you make the right choice!

**Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka**