

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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- Each According to His Measure
- In tractate Yoma, our Sages pose a difficulty: It is written: "When the dew descended on the camp at night, the manna descended upon it." This implies that the manna descended within the camp. But it is also written: "And the people will go out and gather [the manna]," from which we can infer that they had to leave the camp to gather the manna. And it is further written: "And the people spread out and collected the manna," indicating that they had to search far and wide. Our Sages offer the following explanation. The three verses refer to three types of Jews. For the righteous, the manna descended at the entrance to their dwelling. Those of intermediate spiritual stature had to go out of the camp to collect it, and the wicked had to search.
- In the same vein, our Sages note that the Torah refers to the manna as bread and cakes, yet also says it must be ground. The righteous, they explain, would receive baked bread. Those of intermediate spiritual stature would receive cakes ready to be baked. And the wicked would receive a substance that had to be ground.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- "Bread From Heaven"
- The Torah refers to the manna as "bread from heaven," or "grain from heaven." Therefore there are opinions among the *Rishonim* that the blessing recited over manna praised G-d who "brings forth bread from the heavens." The difference between "bread from heaven" and "bread from earth" is that "bread from earth" requires several types of labor before it can be eaten. Thus with regard to the labors forbidden on the Sabbath, the *Mishnah* includes the work necessary to prepare bread: ploughing, sowing, reaping, and the like. Moreover, even after these labors are performed, the baking of bread produces waste.
- "Bread from heaven" is different. All the different labors were not necessary to prepare it, nor did it produce waste. And this "bread from heaven" was the diet, not only of the righteous, but also of those of intermediate spiritual stature.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- "Bread From Heaven"
- (When referring to a person of intermediate spiritual stature, a *benoni*, the intent is not to speak of a *benoni* as defined in *Tanya*, but a *benoni* in the commonly accepted sense of the term -- one whose spiritual scales are equally balanced between merit and sin.)
- Moreover, the manna also sustained the wicked. And even then, it did not produce any waste. The fact that wicked people -- even those who carried the idol fashioned by Michah -- partook of the manna did not affect the level of the manna itself. Even as it was digested by them, becoming part of their flesh and blood, it retained all its qualities.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- "Bread From Heaven"
- And not only did the manna itself remain unchanged, it elevated those who partook of it. Thus our Sages said: "The Torah was given solely to those who partook of the manna," for the manna refined the Jews and made them worthy of the Torah.
- The manna had this effect on all 600,000 Jews, making them worthy of receiving the Torah in its entirety: its simple meaning, its allusions, its homilies, and its mystic concepts.
- Partaking of the manna did not change the nature of the wicked immediately; they did not turn to G-d in *teshuvah* at that time. For that reason, even after partaking of the manna several times, there were Jews who still had to grind and cook before eating. Moreover, several of the incidents referred to in the verse: "And you tried me these ten times" occurred after the Jews began partaking of the manna. Thus we see that the manna's effect was not complete. Nevertheless, in all instances it definitely had some influence.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- A Parallel Between Manna and Shabbos
- Based on the above, we can appreciate a ruling in *Sefer Hachinuch* quoted in the name of Rav Saadia Gaon: When a person finds himself in a distant community on *Shabbos*, and does not know which Torah portion should be read, he should recite the portion concerning manna. For this portion was related on *Shabbos*. On the surface, this ruling is difficult to understand; *many* portions in the Torah were related on *Shabbos*. For example, "everyone agrees that the Torah was given on *Shabbos*," and so the person could read the Ten Commandments. Why should he read the portion concerning manna?
- The above question can be resolved by clarifying the intrinsic connection between the manna and *Shabbos*. Just as the manna did not lose its spiritual quality despite the fact that it descended to very low levels, so too the *Shabbos* retains its essential quality even as it descends to very low levels.
- With regard to the verse, "And the heavens, the earth, and all their hosts were completed," the word *vayichulu* is associated with the word *kilayon*, meaning "expiration," i.e., it is as if the soul of the world expired with love for G-d.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- A Parallel Between Manna and Shabbos
- This does not mean that the world ceases to exist, but rather that the world *as it exists* became elevated. For that reason, it is a *mitzvah* to take pleasure in the *Shabbos* by eating and drinking.
- Nevertheless, the pleasure which a Jew derives from eating and drinking on *Shabbos* -- i.e., not only the deed, but the pleasure itself -- is a *mitzvah*. During the week, we should not eat or drink more than is necessary to maintain our bodies. And even then, one should not eat or drink for pleasure, but rather out of necessity, for pleasure makes one more materially oriented. On *Shabbos*, by contrast, not only does the pleasure not make a person materially oriented (as reflected in the *Zohar's* statement: "The verse mentions 'the waste of your festivals,' and not 'the waste of your *Shabbosos*'"), the pleasure itself becomes a *mitzvah*.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- A Parallel Between Manna and Shabbos
- The light of *Shabbos* permeates creation, to the extent that even an utterly wicked person will not lie on *Shabbos*. The intent is not to say that the *Shabbos* prompts him to turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. On the contrary, the person remains the same. Nevertheless, he will not lie on *Shabbos* because the light of *Shabbos* permeates even the lowest levels.
- This explains why a person who does not know which Torah portion to read on a given *Shabbos* should read the one concerning manna. For every type of influence which is drawn down into the world is drawn down through the Torah. Thus the creation of the *Shabbos* atmosphere -- i.e., that the light of *Shabbos* should permeate the material realm -- is also dependent on the Torah. Accordingly, when we do not know the portion connected with any given *Shabbos*, we should read the one concerning manna, for it conveys the spiritual theme which characterizes the *Shabbos*.
- The Ten Commandments, and similarly other portions of the Torah, reflect elevated spiritual levels. They do not, however, reflect how these spiritual lights descend into this world without change.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Two Types of Spiritual Bread
- Everything which exists has its source in the Torah. The Torah is described with the analogy of bread. Accordingly, the two types of bread, "bread from heaven" and "bread from the earth" have their source in two different dimensions of "bread" within the Torah. *Nigleh*, the revealed teachings of Torah law, parallels "bread from the earth," while *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the Torah's mystic teachings, parallels "bread from heaven."
- *Nigleh* is comparable to "bread from the earth" because it is characterized by questions and differences of opinion, and its study involves effort. *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, by contrast, is compared to "bread from heaven," because within it, "there are neither unresolved questions... nor differences of opinion."
- One should not, however, surmise that because *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is comparable to "bread from heaven" it is intended for only a spiritual elite. The opposite is true; just as the manna was intended for every Jew, even the wicked, so too *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is intended for everyone.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Two Types of Spiritual Bread
- And their involvement with *P'nimiyus HaTorah* will not cause them any loss. On the contrary, since, as our Sages taught: "Study is great, because it leads to deed," the study of *Chassidus* will lead people to turn to G-d in *teshuvah*, and become students of the Torah and observers of the *mitzvos*. As our Sages promised: "the light [of the Torah; i.e., *P'nimiyus HaTorah*] will point them to the good."
- For this reason, we should not hold Jews back from the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. On the contrary, we must seek to involve every Jew in this study, for it will lead them to the ultimate truth, to a state in which "he does not lie." This involves exposing the shades of falsehood which characterize material existence. At that time, there will be no difference of opinion between the G-dly soul and the animal soul, nor will there be any unresolved questions. We will all follow the path of G-d, King of this Earth.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Not To Stand In Another Jew's Way
- There are those who claim that people who have not reached the rung of the righteous should not be allowed to study *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. This is a misguided approach, for bringing a Jew to the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* will motivate him to turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. Preventing him from studying, by contrast, causes him to sink even lower. Were we to ask the person who was rebuffed, why his spiritual state is so low, he could reply, quoting the verse: "I was driven away today from attachment to the heritage of G-d."
- The person who drove his colleague away will himself be subject to examination: How much better and more refined is he than the person he drove away? Moreover, his achievements will be assessed according to the potentials which he himself possesses, and not according to those of the person driven away.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Not To Stand In Another Jew's Way
- To cite a parallel, *Chassidus* explains that Moshe was "more humble than all the men on the face of the earth," because he made the following calculation: Were another person given the soul which he had been given, and were he to have been granted the same level of Divine assistance that he had been granted, surely that other person would have reached even higher levels.
- To clarify the matter with an analogy: When a person prevents another Jew from studying "the Torah of life," and particularly when he does not allow him to approach *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, "the tree of life,"<sup>30</sup> he can be considered a spiritual murderer. For he is severing his fellow Jew's attachment to the living G-d.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Glimmers of Dawn
- In general, we see that as we draw closer to *Mashiach's* coming, the controversy and accusations against *Chassidus* have abated. For example, in previous generations there were claims that *Chassidus* should not be studied at all. Such arguments are no longer advanced. There is, however, a new argument: *Chassidus* is relevant only to a spiritual elite. Every degree of concealment is motivated by a Divine intent; indeed, the intent is that the concealment itself lead to a greater revelation. Similarly, in the case at hand, not only shouldn't these statements lead to distress, they should encourage us to intensify our involvement in the study and dissemination of *Chassidus*.

# Behaalos'cha

Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

- Glimmers of Dawn
- This reinforced dedication will have a positive effect. When the *yetzer hora* sees that the concealment it brought about only caused the study and dissemination of *Chassidus* to be reinforced, it will see that its efforts were -- according to its conception -- counterproductive, and will remove that concealment.
- May G-d help that we not be distressed by the challenges, nor by the concealment of G-dliness which we face. Instead, may these challenges intensify the spreading of *Chassidus*. This increase in turn hastens the coming of the ultimate Redemption to be led by *Mashiach*. May it take place speedily, in our days.

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# **Chassidic Insights for Parshah Behaalotecha**

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# Chassidic Insights

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## ■ INNER DIMENSIONS

- **[35-36] Arise, O God:** These two verses are framed in the Hebrew text by two inverted letters (two *nun*'s). The sages point out that these two letters divide the Book of Numbers into three parts: (1) everything from the beginning of the book until the first *nun*, (2) the two verses between the two *nun*'s, and (3) everything from the second *nun* until the end of the book—effectively making the Torah into seven books, rather than the usual division into five.
- The number 7 signifies all seven emotions (*chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod, and malchut*), while the number 5 signifies only the first five of these. The seven emotions are divided into five and two because the first five constitute the real "content" of the emotions, while the latter two are the emotions' drives for actualization and expression. The first five emotions are the emotions *per se*, while the latter two emotions are the emotions' outward orientation toward others. As such, the latter two emotions represent an extension outside the self, a descent into a lower level of Divine consciousness in order to express the Divine emotions there. Relatively, then, the five primary emotions signify self-refinement while the latter two emotions represent refining the world.
- Seeing the Torah as *five* books is thus seeing the whole Torah as God's will and wisdom; dividing it into seven books emphasizes how the Torah includes the lower states of consciousness—the rebellions that occur after the second *nun* and Moses' rebuke in the Book of Deuteronomy.

# Chassidic Insights

Lubavitcher Rebbe

## ■ INNER DIMENSIONS

- The seven books of the Torah parallel the seven lamps of the menorah that Aaron is commanded to kindle at the beginning of this *parashah*. Seeing the Torah as including the less complimentary episodes of the sixth and seventh "books" parallels Aaron's charge to kindle all seven types of souls—even the lowest—with the light of the Torah and its commandments.
- The interface between the four initial "books" of intrinsic holiness and the two latter "books" of elevating lower consciousness is the fifth "book": the two verses describing how the Ark of the Covenant led the way in the desert and neutralized the forces of evil. By allowing ourselves to be guided by the Torah, we gain the power to overcome the dangers inherent in elevating the realms of lower consciousness and can safely transform them into holiness.

# Chassidic Insights

Lubavitcher Rebbe

- Chapter 12
- 1 The Cushite woman: According to some sources, Zipporah was dark-skinned, and is therefore referred to here as a "Cushite," even though she was from Midian. In the book of Proverbs, the Torah is depicted as man's wife (to whom he should remain loyal, not allowing himself to be enticed by other women/paths). In this allegorical context, the "dark-skinned woman that Moses married" alludes to the "dark" method of studying the Torah and deriving laws from it. This is the lengthy, complicated method of argumentative dialectics (*pilpul*), employed chiefly in the Babylonian Talmud, which keeps us in the "dark" until we reach the conclusion. In contrast, laws are derived in the Jerusalem Talmud in a relatively straightforward manner. For this reason, our sages apply the verse "He placed me in darkness" to the methodology of the Babylonian Talmud. Indeed, our sages say that God originally taught this analytical method of analyzing the Torah only to Moses, but Moses, in his generosity, later taught it to the rest of the people.
- 3 Moses was exceedingly humble, more so than any other person on earth: Humility is not the result of underestimating one's true worth. Moses understood very well that he was an extraordinary individual who had been chosen by God to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt and receive the Torah. As we have seen, his unique nature was evident to all when he was born and the house was filled with light. However, Moses also understood that his special character was a gift from God. He thought that had these lofty traits been given to someone else, they would have been able to reach an even higher level than he did.
- Humility is often misunderstood as simply the lack of boastfulness: we are humble if we feel superior to others but just don't tell anyone about it! True humility, however, is learned from Moses in our story. He is fully aware of his greatness, but attributes it not to himself but to God. Moreover, this allows him to respect others and see them in a positive light, as God has blessed them, too, with their own unique qualities.

# Chassidic Insights

Lubavitcher Rebbe

## ■ Chapter 12

- **13 "Please God, please heal her":** Rabbi Dovber of Mezerich points out that the Name of God Moses used when praying for Miriam was *Kel*, the first of the thirteen attributes of God's mercy. In turn, God responded with an *a fortiori* argument, the first of the thirteen principles with which the Torah is expounded. This exemplifies the general rule that the insight we gain in studying the Torah is commensurate with the quality of our morning prayers, before studying.
- **15 The people did not travel until Miraim had returned:** This verse contains a message for all of Jewish history. Without "Miriam," without the Jewish woman, the Jewish people cannot travel on their journey toward their destiny. All the Moseses and Aarons in the world cannot replace Miriam. Women must therefore take an active role in all aspects of Jewish life, especially the education of the next generation, the means by which the Jewish people proceed further toward their destined goal. Without Miriam, neither the Jewish nation, the ark, nor the Clouds of Glory can proceed



# Shabbat Forshpeis

RABBI AVI WEISS

# Shabbat Forshpeis

RABBI AVI WEISS

- Complaining to Moshe (Moses), the Israelites cry out that they remember the fish served to them in Egypt that they received without price, "hinam." (Numbers 11:5)
- Could they really have received food with no strings attached? After all, these are the same Egyptians who refused to even give the Jewish slaves straw for bricks. As the Midrash asks: "If they wouldn't give them straw for naught, would they have given them fish for naught?"
- Nachmanides believes that this is certainly possible because at the riverside, the Jews would be given small fish that had no value in the eyes of the Egyptians.
- Ibn Ezra reflects this line of reasoning but adds that the term "hinam" should not be taken literally – it should be understood to mean inexpensive. They received fish at bargain basement prices.
- Rashi offers a most insightful answer to this question. "Hinam," says Rashi, means "free of mitzvot (commandments)." In Egypt, without the commandments the Jews felt unencumbered; as they were free to do as they pleased. Here, after the giving of the Torah at Sinai, with all of its prohibitive laws, the Jews felt that there were strings attached as they felt restricted by the commandments. This seems to make sense. Freedom and limitation are antithetical. If, for example, I'm not allowed to eat a particular food my options are severely narrowed and no longer am I feeling "hinam" or free.
- However, there is another way of understanding the presence of the commandments. The mitzvot, even the laws that seem to be the most restrictive, can often teach self-discipline. Self discipline is a passageway to freedom. Limitation is, therefore, a conduit to freedom.

# Shabbat Forshpeis

## RABBI AVI WEISS

- Additionally, we commonly associate freedom with the ability to do whatever we want, whenever we want. Freedom is not only the right to say yes, it is the ability to say no. If I cannot push away a particular food my physical urges may have unbridled freedom, but my mind is enslaved. What appears to be a clear green light, can sometimes turn out to be the greatest of burdens.
- The opposite is also true. What appears to be a burden, can often lead to unlimited freedom. A story illustrates this point. When G-d first created the world, the birds were formed without wings. They complained to G-d: "we're small, and feel overpowered by the larger animals." G-d responds: "Have patience, you'll see."
- In time, G-d gave the birds wings. The complaining even intensified. "It's worse than ever," cried the birds. "Until now we were all small, but still quick enough to elude the animals of prey. Now we have these appendages by our side and we feel weighed down.
- G-d gently took the birds and taught them how to fly high and then higher. They were able to reach above the clouds and escape all threats from their animal adversaries.
- The mitzvot are like the wings of the Jew. When not understood fully, they can make us feel stifled and weighed down. Yet, when explored deeply and given significance they give us new ways of looking at the world, and looking at our selves. They teach us meaning and self-discipline. With these gifts we then can truly fly high and far---we then can truly be free - "hinam."

