

# OHRNET

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*\*In Israel: Beha'alotcha is read this week and Shlach Lecha next week*

*\*Outside of Israel: Nasso is read this week and Beha'alotcha next week*

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### Skill Sets

*“When you kindle the Menorah, towards the face of the Menorah the seven lamps will cast light.” (1:2)*

Sometimes you have something looking at you in the face and you don't even see it. I have a degree in English, which helped me acquire the skill to write passably, *baruch Hashem*, and for many years I have written “Torah Weekly,” a publication of Ohr Somayach of insights based on the weekly Torah portion. I also have a degree in Drama, Radio, Film and Television, which gave me experience on both sides of the camera. I had a successful career as a music producer so I understand something about music and sound recording. I was always a keen photographer. (A few years ago Ohr Somayach published “Seasons of the Moon,” an adventure in fine art black and white photography, poetry and Torah essays, and now sold out.) But I never put it all together until very recently. One day the penny dropped.

I had a bunch of lighting equipment left over from the heyday of my photographic obsession: a backdrop, a good camera that shot video as well as stills, over twenty-five years of short essays on the *parsha* and the realization that the Internet was the new frontier in Jewish outreach. Why not make short *parsha* videos with music and visuals? One of the things that kept me back was that I wanted the narration to be very precise and smooth. To memorize the monologue just wasn't in the cards. And then I found an inexpensive teleprompter that allowed me to read the script or the notes while still looking straight into the camera. Bingo! The last piece of the puzzle.

*“G-d said to Moshe, ‘One leader each day, one leader each day, shall they bring their offering for the dedication of the Altar.’” (Bam. 7:11)*

After this verse the Torah goes on to list the offerings of each of the leaders of the tribes. They are all identical. Why did the Torah need to repeat over and over again the exact same list of offerings? Why didn't it suffice to list the offerings once and then say that each leader brought exactly the same thing?

We all have skill sets that G-d gives us. We look at what we can do and say, “Well that's me. That's what I can do. This is my box.” Even though all those offerings were identical – they all came from the same box – each one of the leaders, however, put his own imprint on his Divine Service. Each one used those pieces in a different and unique way.

We see the same idea in this week's Torah portion.

*“When you kindle the Menorah, towards the face of the Menorah the seven lamps will cast light.” (Bam. 1:2)*

The light that came from each of those wicks would constantly wax and wane. The light that emanated from the Menorah was a continuously changing blend of seven different lights. Each one of those wicks had only one job: to shine its light on the center. But the combination was continually changing. Seven different lights, seven different identities, seven different skill sets – all constantly blending in different ways.

With a little bit of imagination maybe we could look at the lights in our own box of skills and put them together in a slightly different way, coming up with something new and exciting that might energize ourselves and be good for the Jewish People and for all of Mankind? Just maybe...

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# TALMUD TIPS

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by Rabbi Moshe Newman

## Beha'alotcha: Bechorot 56-61

### The Carrotless Mother

We learn in a *beraita*, “The mothers of the young animals would be placed outside the gate of the corral, and their offspring would yearn for their mothers and exit through the gate on their own.”

This is the correct manner described in our *sugya* for enticing the animals to move in order to be counted when the owner is fulfilling the mitzvah of *ma'aser beheima*.

The Torah states: “Any tithe of cattle or of the flock; all that pass under the rod – the tenth shall be holy to G-d.” (Vayikra 27:32) This verse teaches the command for a person to count and separate a tenth of the new additions of his new sheep, goats and cattle each year. Each tenth animal is sanctified and is called *ma'aser beheima*, meaning a tithe of the animals. Just as in the agricultural realm a person tithes his new crops each year, so too must he likewise do so with his yearly “animal harvest.” He takes this tenth to the Beit Hamikdash and its blood and sacrificial parts are put on the Altar. Afterwards, all of the meat of the animal is eaten by the owner in ritual purity in Jerusalem. Just like the mitzvah of *ma'aser sheini* for his grain and fruits. However, if the tenth animal – the *ma'aser beheima* – is blemished and unfit to be brought as an offering, it may be eaten in any place and even in ritual impurity.

We are taught in a *beraita* on our *daf* how to correctly perform the procedure of how to count and designate each animal that is considered *ma'aser beheima*. All of the new animal candidates for that year are put into a corral with a narrow exit passage in order to prevent more than one animal from going out at a time. As each one exits the owner counts it. When he reaches the number ten he takes his rod and marks that animal with a streak of vermillion (a red dye). In this manner it is clearly recognizable which ones are *ma'aser beheima*. These are holy and to be offered as sacrifices in the proper manner.

Since the Torah states “all that *pass*,” we are taught that that the animal must pass through the exit on its own and not be driven out by the owner. Our *gemara* discusses the preferred and correct manner to ensure that the animal passes and is not driven out.

One method that is entertained is to place some food for the animal on the outside of the gate, which would spark their interest and appetite to pass through the gate without being forced out. However, Rav Huna teaches that this technique is not acceptable due to a Rabbinical decree. Food would also attract “undesirables” – i.e. animals that are exempt from tithing – such as ones whose mothers had died before they were born or those that were purchased after the age of seven days.

The correct method which our Sages insisted be followed was to position the mothers of the recently born animals outside of the corral. In this way their offspring would be drawn to them and pass of their own volition through the gate to be counted. The mother served as a type of maternal magnet for their children. And why is this method better than dangling a carrot outside of the gate? Using this maternal method would help ensure that the owner would not include any offspring which never had a mother in his counting. In addition, the owner would remember not to wrongly include purchased animals when he would tithe his young animals (since the majority of young animals which are purchased are purchased without their mothers – *Rashi's manuscript*).

▪ *Bechorot 58b*

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# PARSHA Q & A

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## Questions

1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the Menorah burn, and why?
2. From what material and in what manner was the Menorah made?
3. Moshe was commanded to cleanse the *Levi'im* by sprinkling on them "*mei chatat*." What is "*mei chatat*"?
4. Which three "*t'nufot*" (wavings) are in the *parsha*?
5. Why did G-d claim the first-born of the Jewish People as His possession?
6. Why are the words "Bnei Yisrael" repeated five times in verse 8:19?
7. When a *Levi* reaches age 50, which functions may he still perform?
8. Why was the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini not commanded directly to Moshe?
9. What similarity is there between the Menorah and the trumpets?
10. What three purposes did trumpet signals serve?
11. How many tribes marched between the Gershon-Merari detachment and that of Kehat? How was the time differential used?
12. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called "the gatherer of all the camps." What did they gather?
13. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?
14. Which Aron is referred to in verse 10:33?
15. Which two topics are out of chronological order in the *parsha*?
16. Which tastes did the manna not offer, and why not?
17. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?
18. Whom did Moshe choose as elders?
19. What was the prophecy of Eldad and Medad?
20. Why did Miriam merit to have the people wait for her?

*All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.*

## Answers

1. 8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so people wouldn't say that the Menorah was lit for its light.
2. 8:4 - It was made from one solid piece of hammered gold.
3. 8:7 - Water containing ashes of the *para aduma*.
4. 8:11 - The wavings of Kehat, Gershon and Merari.
5. 8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makat bechorot*.
6. 8:19 - To show G-d's love for them.
7. 8:25 - Closing the courtyard gates of the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash; singing during the *avoda*; loading the wagons to transport the Mishkan.
8. 9:7 - The people who asked about it were rewarded by being the catalyst for the teaching of this mitzvah.
9. 8:4, 10:2 - They were each made from a single, solid block.
10. 10:2-7 - Announcement of the gathering of Bnei Yisrael, the gathering of the *nesi'im*, and the beginning of a move of the encampment.
11. 10:17-21 - Three: Reuven, Shimon and Gad. In the meantime Gershon and Merari set up the Mishkan.
12. 10:25 - They gathered and returned things lost by the other tribes.
13. 10:32 - The children of Yitro.
14. 10:33 - The Aron which held the broken pieces of the first Tablets, that was taken to the battlefield.
15. 9:1, 10:35, 36 - The Pesach sacrifice, and the traveling of the Aron.
16. 11:5 - Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic - these are harmful to nursing women.
17. 11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at Taverah (**11:3**).
18. 11:16 - People who were supervisors in Egypt and had pity on Bnei Yisrael at risk to themselves.
19. 11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."
20. 12:15 - Because she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the river.

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# ASK!

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By Rabbi Yirmiyahu Ullman

## The Marranos: Part 1 of 2

From: Marta

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Who were the Marranos? What does that term mean?*

*Are there Marranos anywhere in the world nowadays?*

*Are they considered to be Jewish?*

Dear Marta,

This is one of the most fascinating and unfortunate episodes in Jewish History. Due to the complexity of the subject I'll address your questions in two installments. The first will cover who the Marranos were and possible sources and meanings of the term. The second installment will cover whether there are Marranos nowadays and their status as Jews.

"Marranos" is generally a derogatory term referring to Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages who chose or were forced to convert to Christianity, yet continued to practice Judaism in secret. The more neutral and academic term for the clandestine worship of these secret Jews is "Crypto-Judaism." The Hebrew term used for these outward converts who privately practiced Judaism is the more sympathetic word "*Anusim*," meaning "forced ones."

"Converso," Latin for converted, was a more general term used for these baptized Jews and their descendants, whether they were suspected of secret adherence to Judaism or not. "New Christians" was a similar such term, but with a more explicit reference to a theological agenda. However, as suspicions, accusations, and the Inquisition became more forceful and widespread, these terms also came to have a derogatory connotation as part of the program to eradicate Jews and Judaism from Spanish lands.

A less known aspect of the Inquisition is that it was preceded by a century of intense persecution and massacres, resulting in a large percentage of

conversions. These included the riots, burnings, and massacres of 1391 in Seville; of 1449 and 1467 in Toledo; and of 1473 in Cordoba and other widespread areas. It is estimated that 200,000 Jews saved their lives during this period by converting to Christianity in the wake of these persecutions. Other Jews left the country altogether, and around 100,000 remained in Spain as openly-practicing Jews.

Thus, by the time of the Castilian Alhambra Decree of 1492 (spurred by Inquisitor Torquemada, himself from a converso family) that prohibited the practice of Judaism in Spain and required all remaining Jews to convert or leave, the large majority of Jews in Spain had already converted to Catholicism and conversos numbered hundreds of thousands. This culminated in the baptizing of tens of thousands of Jews in the three months before the deadline for expulsion, most of these undoubtedly to avoid expulsion rather than as a sincere change of faith. Through this century-long preemptive conversion, over half of the Jews in the Iberian Peninsula avoided the Decree of Expulsion which affected Spain's remaining openly Jewish population in 1492.

While it was the openly Jewish population who was subject to the Expulsion, it was the conversos who were the principal concern of the subsequent Inquisition, being suspected of continuing to practice Judaism while remaining in Spain. And it was they who were monitored by the Inquisition and subject to suspicions by Catholics of the secret practice of Judaism, also known as "Marranism."

The numbers who converted and the effects of various migrations in and out of the area have been the subject of historical debate. A phylogeographic study in 2008 of 1,150 Spanish Y-chromosome DNA haplogroups appeared to support the idea that the number of forced

conversions has been significantly underestimated, since 20% of the tested Iberian population had haplogroups consistent with Sephardi Jewish ancestry. This high percentage of modern-day Spaniards with Jewish genetic ancestry would thus indicate the proportion of Jews in the population at the time of mass conversions in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Regarding the source and meaning of the term Marrano, many suggestions have been offered. The most probable is from the Spanish word meaning swine or pig. While it has been suggested that this is based on the Jewish prohibition against eating pork, it is rather more likely intended to convey loathing toward these secret Jews. Interestingly, Jewish sources describe the pig as displaying outward signs of being kosher (cloven hooves) while nevertheless remaining internally non-kosher (being a non-ruminant). As such, it is possible that non-Jews adopted this term to indicate the Marranos' purely external display of conversion while privately maintaining their "impure" Jewish ways. Alternatively, it's interesting to consider whether loyal Jews might have coined this phrase as a criticism of their brethren who, through a facade of conversion, attempted to appear "kosher" to the non-Jews but who inwardly maintained "unkosher" Jewish ways to their oppressors.

Other less likely suggestions are that the term Marrano is derived from: 1] The Spanish verb "marrar" meaning "to deviate" or "to err," in the sense that they deviated from their newly adopted faith by secretly continuing to practice Judaism. 2] Galician-Portuguese, where "marrar" means "to force" and marrano would mean "forced one," indicating the compulsory nature of the conversions. 3] The Hebrew "marit ayin" ("external appearance"), referring to the fact that the Marranos were ostensibly Christian but actually Jews. 4] The Hebrew "mohoram" ("excommunicated") and Arabic "muharram" ("forbidden, anathematized"). 5] Aramaic-Hebrew "mar anous" ("a forced person"). 6] Hebrew "mumar" ("apostate") with the Spanish ending *ano*. 7] Arabic "mura'in" ("hypocrite"). 8] The Ecclesiastical term "maranatha" associated with excommunication as in "anathema maranatha."

Stay tuned for the next installment in which we'll explore what ultimately happened to the Marranos and their status as Jews.

Sources:

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# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

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*Synonyms in the Hebrew Language*  
by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

## On Clouds

The word *anan* (“cloud”) and its various forms appear in the Bible close to one-hundred times. In no other *parsha* is the word *anan* found as many times as it does in the Torah portion of Beha’alotcha (the *parsha* read this week in Israel this year), where it appears no less than seventeen times! It is therefore quite appropriate that we dedicate this week’s column to discussion of the word *anan* and its ostensible synonyms. The Talmud Yerushalmi (*Taanit* 3:3) and various Midrashim (*Midrash Tehillim* §135 and *Bereishet Rabbah* §12:12) assert that there are five words in Hebrew for “clouds”: *avim*, *eidim*, *ananim*, *nesiim*, and *chazizim*. Our job this week is to unpackage that assertion and explain each word.

The above sources explain that a cloud is called an *av* (e.g., in Ex. 19:9, Judges 5:4, and II Sam. 22:12) because heavy clouds “darken” (*m’avev*) the sky’s or land’s ambiance by blocking out the sun. (See Rashi to Ex. 19:9, 20:18 for the exact definition of *arafel* and how it relates to *avim*.)

The second term, *eid* (ALEPH-DALET), is taken by the Yerushalmi and Midrashim as a word that can have a dual meaning. In some contexts, however, the word *eid* refers to “breaking” or “wrecking” (see Targum to Deut. 32:35). In other contexts the word *eid* refers to a “holiday” (see *Avodah Zarah* 1:1). Putting two and two together, these sources explain that clouds are called *eidim* (Gen. 2:6) because clouds “break” the “holiday” of price-gougers. This is because clouds signify the onset of rain, which will cause the market to be flooded with produce. The high supply will cause the prices to fall, ending price-gouging.

Similarly, the Yerushalmi and Midrashim explain that clouds can also be called by a third name, *ananim*, because rain-bearing clouds make people “humble” (*anavim*) in their interpersonal relationships. This is because when there is a surplus (brought on by ample rain), people tend to treat each other more fairly and are at peace with one another. In times of austerity and famine, however, people compete with each other for limited resources.

Alternatively, clouds are called *ananim* because they make people “poor” (*aniim*). Meaning, the uneven distribution of rain results in some people having a surplus of one type of product, but still needing to barter with others to get the other things they need. In that type of market, each person is considered “poor” because he is not entirely self-sufficient.

The fourth term for “clouds” is *nesiim* (literally, “princes”). Clouds have a sort of majestic “kingmaker” role, because they create class differences by bringing rain. Some people’s fields get rain and thus generate crops – and in turn wealth – while others’ fields do not. Because it appears as though the clouds determine which people will become successful “princes,” the Bible sometimes calls them *nesiim* (see Ps. 137:7 and Prov. 25:14).

The fifth and final term mentioned by the Yerushalmi and Midrashim is *chaziz* (see Iyov 28:26 and Zech. 10:1). This is because clouds create “visions” or “sights” (*chizyonot/chazon*), i.e. the different types of flora that grow from the rain might be colored differently. Others explain that this term is used when G-d brings clouds as Heavenly signs for man to interpret. The Zohar similarly connects the downpour of rain, which is a *physical* Divine influx, to prophecy, which is a *spiritual* Divine influx.

*Sefer HaChochma* (a work printed with *Peirush HaRokeach* ascribed to Rabbi Elazar Rokeach of Worms) differs slightly from the above. Its author contends that *ananim* refer to clouds which block sunlight, *eidim* are clouds that come with thunder, *chazizim* are colorful clouds (!), and *avim* refer to clouds that are thick and full of water. Ibn Ezra writes that *eid* refers to a “smoky” cloud.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Brelsau (1740-1814) provides us with the roots of each of these words, giving us the etymological bases for their respective connection to “clouds.” Rabbi Pappenheim writes that the root of the word *anan* is the letter AYIN, which denotes “movement.” In the case of clouds it denotes the fact that clouds, which are in some ways created by the movement of the wind, are put into motion by the powers of the wind.

The root of the word *avim* is AYIN-BET (*av*), which denotes something “especially thick” (see Rashi to *Ta’anit* 6b). It refers to a cloud that is especially thick due to a high concentration of water, such that it blocks sunlight. (This is similar to the English expression “thick clouds.”) Rabbi Pappenheim writes that the root of the word *eid* is the letter DALET, which denotes “extraction” and “separation.” It thus refers to clouds forming from water which had evaporated — a process of “extraction” or “separation” from a larger body of water. This approach complements Rabbeinu Bachaya’s explanation that “*eid*” means water vapor. Although the Yerushalmi and Midrashim assert that *eid* is a word for “cloud,” in Rabbinic Hebrew (not to mention Modern Hebrew) it does indeed mean water vapor or steam.

Interestingly, *Midrash Lekach Tov* (also known as *Pesikta Zutrata*) connects the word *eid* to the Hebrew word *nod* (“flask”), explaining that clouds carry water like a flask carries liquid. Although Rabbi Pappenheim does not link *eid* with *nod*, he does mention the word *nod* when discussing the various derivatives of the letter DALET. He explains that the two-letter core-root NUN-DALET (*nad*), like in *nadud* (“moving” or “traveling”), is derived from DALET because it too involves “separation” (in this

case the separation from one’s home), and that the word *nod* as “flask” refers to the equipment one might bring along on such a trip.

Rabbi Pappenheim also writes that the root of *nesiim* is SIN-ALEPH (*sa*), which refers to “carrying” or “lifting.” This is relevant to clouds which “carry” rainwater from place to place. Alternatively, clouds are called *nesiim* because they are so light that they naturally tend to rise upwards as though being “lifted” into the sky (as opposed to thick, heavy clouds, which tend to come downward like fog).

In Rabbi Pappenheim’s estimation, the root of *chaziz* is CHET-ZAYIN, which denotes comprehension via the sense of sight or imagination. We find this root in the word *chazon* — prophetic vision (per above). Rabbi Pappenheim understands that *chazizim* are specifically the clouds which accompany thunder. They are related to the sense of sight because they also bring about flashes of light, i.e. lightning.

While the Yerushalmi and Midrashim cited above assert that there are five Hebrew words for clouds, Rabbi Shlomo of Urbino (a 16th century Italian scholar) writes in *Ohel Moed* (a lexicon of Hebrew synonyms) that there are two more. He adds a sixth term, *nivlei shamayim* (Iyov 38:37), which is explained by Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and others as referring to “clouds.” Menachem Ibn Saruk (920-970) in his famous *Machaberet* connects this phrase to the word *neivel* (“flask” or “jug”). In the generation after him, Rabbi Yonah Ibn Janach (990-1055) in his *Sefer HaShorashim*, and Rabbi Yehudah Ibn Balaam (1000-1070) in *Sefer HaTzimud*, explain the connection by writing that clouds are like flasks which pour out water. Hence, *neivel* is another word that could be added to our list.

The seventh possible term is *kapayim* (Iyov 36:32 and Lam. 3:41), which is understood by many commentators, including Rashi, to refer to clouds. Indeed, *Midrash Chuppat Eliyahu Rabbah* actually lists six synonyms for “clouds,” adding the word *kaf* to what we have above. The *Metzudat Tzion* explains the connection by noting that clouds are like a *kippah* (“covering”) over people’s head. So we see that *kapayim* can be another word for “clouds.” However,

Rabbi Pappenheim and others disagree, positing that *kapayim* does not specifically refer to “clouds” but to the sky as a whole.

Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Kaf HaChaim in Jerusalem) points to an eighth possible synonym. When Yaakov blessed Yosef on his deathbed, he said: “From the G-d of your father you shall be helped, and from Sha-dai you shall be blessed, Heavenly blessings from Above, bottomless blessings crouching below, blessings of breasts and the womb” (Gen. 49:25). *Peirush HaRokeach* explains that *shadayim* (“breasts”) in this context refers to clouds that empty out water, as nursing breasts empty out milk. Accordingly, the word *shadayim* can also refer to “clouds.”

To summarize, we discussed the five Hebrew words for “clouds” which appear in the Yerushalmi and Midrashim, plus another three possible synonyms. It’s a pity we couldn’t find one more word to discuss, for then we would have reached cloud nine.

- For questions, comments, or to propose ideas for a future article, please contact the author at [rcklein@ohr.edu](mailto:rcklein@ohr.edu)

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**A**haron is taught the method for kindling the Menorah. Moshe sanctifies the *Levi'im* to serve in the Mishkan. They replace the first-born, who were disqualified after sinning at the golden calf. The *Levi'im* are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50. Afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work.

One year after the Exodus from Egypt, G-d commands Moshe concerning the *korban* Pesach. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of *Pesach Sheini*, allowing a “second chance” to offer the *korban* Pesach one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified.

Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the *eruv rav* – the mixed Egyptian

multitude who joined the Jewish People in the Exodus – some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. G-d tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders relate prophecy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. G-d sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained.

Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon, which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. G-d explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with *tzara'at* as if she had gossiped about her brother. (Because Miriam is so righteous she is held to an incredibly high standard.) Moshe prays for her and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

# LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch  
by Rabbi Yosef Herschman

## A Guide to Endurance

**T**hroughout the forty-year sojourn in the wilderness, the cloud was the shepherd's staff, by means of which G-d revealed to His flock where and when to camp, and when and in which direction they were to journey forth. The description of this guidance is presented in this week's *parsha*, even before the people were condemned to forty years in the wilderness.

The text emphasizes that this guidance was unpredictable. There were times when the people had to stay in one place for a long period and there were times when they were to remain at rest for only a few days. Some of these rest periods lasted only a single night and there were times when they remained encamped for an entire year.

Ramban (Nachmanides) explains that since they never had advance indication of how long each rest period would be, whenever the cloud would give the signal to encamp they would have to make all the arrangements for prolonged stay, knowing that in a few hours they may have to pack up and travel again.

There was great purpose and training in this *ad hoc* travel guidance. We learned to follow G-d's guidance with devotion and trust, no matter how incomprehensible it may seem to us. At times He instructs us to leave what we have just now begun to love, and at times He requires of us to remain steadfast in an undesirable situation. Nevertheless, we accept and fulfill with joy whatever He commands us. Beneath the shepherd's staff of His Guidance we will always be happy, and it is our faithfulness to G-d

that will bring us happiness. The forty years in the desert trained us to be prepared to put all our trust in G-d and to follow Him to unknown destinations, along mysterious paths, to wait for Him patiently or to follow him boldly – all according to the direction of His guidance.

A close look at the text reveals that the most challenging aspect of this unpredictable guidance was the waiting at the lengthy stops. Nothing is said of the duration of the journeys, but the prolonged waiting is mentioned several times in these verses. The people were aware of their destination – the Land of Israel – and had not yet been condemned to forty years in the wilderness. The waiting was particularly agonizing because they understood that every stop delayed their arrival at the destination.

So it is with our individual journeys and Israel's journey as a nation: the test of our endurance and patience, in waiting for direction to advance is the most significant challenge. When G-d's Hand guides us to new uncharted territory we may be scared, and called upon to exercise our trust, but the movement itself whispers promise. But the waiting – with all its concomitant inertia and despair – calls us to a different level of trust. This virtue first learned in the wilderness echoes in our personal and national consciousness, with Hava-kuk's call: *if he shall tarry, wait for him.*

- Sources: Commentary, Bamidbar 9:16-22