



## Triumphant Travels - Parshat Beha'alotcha

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

Parshat Beha'alotcha relates the beginning of Bnei Yisroel's journey to Eretz Yisroel after the completion of the mishkon. The Torah goes into great detail explaining the procedure for these travels. While they knew their final destination, the route was not clear to them, nor the timing for each leg of the travels. All Bnei Yisroel knew was that when the clouds of glory rose from above the mishkon, they were to pack their belongings, dismantle their tents, and start following the clouds until they stopped. This was their sign to unpack and pitch their tents anew.

Hashem also commanded Moshe to fashion chatzotzrot, silver trumpets that would be used to herald the impending travel, in addition to being sounded for other occasions such as war, festivals, and bringing the offerings to Hashem. The sounding of the trumpets, says the Torah, "shall be for you an eternal decree for your generations." How are we to understand the eternity of these trumpet blasts, when we obviously no longer have these trumpets?

It is important to understand the absolute faith of Bnei Yisroel in Hashem, and to realize that Bnei Yisroel followed Hashem's indirect instruction, through the clouds and the trumpets, unquestioningly. As the Ramban points out, sometimes their accommodations were uncomfortable, yet Hashem had them stay encamped there for extended times. There were other times when they had just barely pitched their tents in an inviting area but were then told to move on the next morning.

Rabbi Frand notes that in the journey of our lives, we also experience good times and bad times. We do not control the duration of either the sunny days of our lives or of the dark, cloud filled days. But in all circumstances, we must follow the will of Hashem and travel the road He has set for us.

The Netivot Shalom offers a different insight into the mishkon and the cloud that hovered

over it. Each of us must build a mishkon for Hashem's Presence within our own souls. But as soon as we have completed it, the clouds may begin to descend upon it. The clouds turn to fire at night, a fire that represents the yetzer hora. The evil inclination tries to consume us, presenting obstacles in our path, trials in faith and observance that every Jew faces in his lifetime. When the darkness envelops us and descends on our internal tabernacle, we cannot move forward. We must stop, remain committed to Hashem, and wait for the dark cloud to lift and bring us back to light.

These dark times, these trials, are our wake up calls from Hashem to seek Him out and return to Him. As Rabbi Wachtfogel points out in Leket Reshimot, during the difficult times in our lives, we must stop and search for the silver lined cloud of brightness, of Hashem's hashgocho, in every situation. We need to acknowledge that Hashem is leading our lives, and we must follow His lead, even if we're unsure where we are going, just as Bnei Yisrael did in the wilderness.

Rav Schachter in Venichtav Basefer makes a salient point. Even though we may not know why certain things happen to us, we must continue to attribute everything to Hashem's providence. Since we probably do not know exactly what we need to repair, our response needs to be only that we recognize this wake up call and make some positive resolution and action. In this way, says the Ohr Daniel, we reaffirm our faith that Hashem leads the world according to His plan.

How are the trumpets relevant to our journey? The trumpet blasts differed, signaling either joy or fear, much as different bugle blasts in an army would signal differing actions. To serve Hashem properly, Meirosh Tzurim suggests, one needs to approach the relationship with both joy and fear, and must adapt the response to the occasion.

The chatzotzrot, however, are far from ordinary trumpets. The Maggid of Mezerich explains

that the word can be reread as chatzi tzurah. Each trumpet was only half a form of the whole, as each of us is only half of the partnership we are supposed to be in with our Maker, in Whose form we were created. As such, says the Avodat Yisroel, we are incomplete unless we fashion ourselves after Him, as Hashem calls us in Shir Hashirim, "Yonoti, tamati," "My dove, My completion."

To reinforce this idea, the chatzotzrot were made of silver, kesef, which can also be translated as longing. Further, the Torah was given in the month of Sivan whose astrological sign is twins. Twins are known to have such a close relationship with each other that they almost seem to share one nervous system in two separate bodies, feeling each other's pain even when miles apart. So is Hashem's relationship to us as He feels our pain in exile.

Rabbi Pincus notes that the vehicle to making this connection is prayer. Our Sages agreed that prayer is a mitzvah from the Torah; a cry, like the trumpet blast, to our Maker. To fail to call on Him, especially in times of stress, is to deny His continuing presence in our lives.

Rabbi Nissel points out in Rigshei Lev that Hashem engineers the difficulties and complexities in our lives so that we will be moved to call out to Him and connect with Him. But in order to clearly understand His messages, we must establish a continuing relationship with Him in good times as well.

Halekach VeHalebuv explains how the chatzotzrot point the way to the ultimate prayer and connection to Hashem. The chatzotzrot are musical instruments, and we can forge an intimate connection to Hashem through song. Song is the inner call of the soul as the chatzotzrot were the outer call for festival or danger. Each change in our routine, whether a joy or a trial, should arouse us to sing, to attempt to connect our soul to Hashem, to complete our "half form" that longs for its other half, its Twin.



## Parshat Beha'alotcha: Ultimate Eternity

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Avishai David

In this week's parsha, the Torah records a dialogue between Moshe and Yitro. Moshe invites Yitro to join the Jewish people on their journey to Israel. He assures him that only good will come of it. However, Yitro categorically rejects the offer. Moshe implores him again, "If you will accompany us, you too will receive the good that Hashem has promised for us." The Torah does not tell us Yitro's second response. There is a disagreement among the sages whether he acquiesced or not. Assuming he did, which is the position of

the Rambam and other commentaries, why was offer one summarily dismissed and offer number two accepted?

The Rambam notes that the first time Moshe promised Yitro material possessions: gold, silver, and cattle, but he rejected them. The second time he offered him a portion in Eretz Yisrael. The Rambam derives this from the additional language the Torah uses, "Vayaha hatov hahu asher heitiv Hashem." Moshe assures Yitro that he too will acquire a portion

in Israel. Yitro fully understood the value of the holy land. Moshe wasn't offering him something transient but ultimate eternity.

This should be our perspective too. Undoubtedly all of us have a need for sustenance, but that shouldn't be our focus. Our goal should be to tap into spirituality and infinity that the land of Israel represents.

## The Mitzvah of Prayer

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

There is a disagreement between the Rambam and the Ramban concerning whether the mitzvah of prayer is a Torah or a Rabbinic commandment. It's not explicitly spelled out in the Torah that one must pray three times a day as it does clearly state that one must eat matzot or put on tefilin.

The Rambam in Mishne Torah writes that there's a positive commandment to pray daily as it says, "V'avadata l'Hashem Elokeichem, you shall serve Hashem." We interpret this to mean prayer which is service of the heart as it says, "U'levodo b'chol levavchem-And you shall serve Him with all your heart."

According to the Rambam there is a positive commandment which Hashem gave us through Moshe to pray every day. The number of times we must pray daily and the precise words are not mandated by the Torah. One needs to pray at least once a day because one needs Hashem's mercy. This is applicable to both men and women. Although it is a daily mitzvah, prayer is not a mitzvat aseil she'hazman grama (dependent on time).

The Ramban disagrees with the Rambam. He

writes that the mitzvah to pray daily is only a Rabbinic ordinance. The Torah obligation is only during times of trouble. This is based on the verse, "Batzor hatzor eschem b'haroso b'chatzotzrot-When your enemies attack, blow the trumpets." Trumpets were a part of prayer in ancient times when songs of prayer were accompanied with musical instruments.

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik pointed out that the interpretation of the Rambam is not very different from the Ramban. The Rambam agrees with the Ramban that the purpose of prayer is to reach out to Hashem in times of crisis. We all have profound needs which are referred to as bakashot. These are the requests which we ask of the Almighty in our prayers.

The Rambam maintains that the human being is by definition always in crisis. We always have needs which are critical such as health, food, clothing, sustenance, shelter, and peace. We cannot take anything for granted. A person's situation can change in an instant. Crisis can strike at any time.

Hashem has given every one of us so much in

order to exist. We are in crisis if we lose any of it. The fact that the Almighty lets us live and sustains us so that all is under control means He's taking us out of a situation of crisis.

According to Chassidic teachings without Hashem's involvement, the world could revert to tohu-chaos, but Hashem ordained seder-order and continues to sustain it. All levels of creation continually receive existence from Hashem who involves Himself in our daily lives. We are continuously being saved from crisis and from imminent annihilation.

Therefore, says the Rambam, we must speak to the Almighty daily and thank Him for our past and present gifts while beseeching Him to continue to share His munificence.

In summary, the Torah mandate of tefilah according to the Rambam is a daily mitzvah while according to the Ramban it only applies in a time of crisis. On the Rabbinic level, the Anshei Kneseth Hagedolah instituted that every Jew must pray three times daily. Let us merit that all our prayers be mindful and potent and may they always be answered for the good.