

# THE MISSING "SO"

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**Be'ha'alotecha**

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Today's Learning:

Shevi'it 4:7-8

Orach Chaim 114:4-6

Daf Yomi: Beitzah 10

Yerushalmi Megilah 18

This parashah contains approximately eight, apparently unrelated, sections. In truth, writes R' Asher Ben-Zion Buchman shlita, each section of the parashah teaches us something about the Torah's concept of leadership and how we should relate to our leaders.

The parashah begins with a command to Aharon regarding the kindling of the Menorah. According to Chazal, the Menorah represents the light of the Torah. It is the obligation of the leaders, and particularly, of the Kohanim, to spread this light and to raise Bnei Yisrael to a higher level. This is one reason why the Torah uses the word "Beha'alotecha"/"When you raise" instead of "Behadlakatcha"/"When you light" in its command to Aharon.

Having learned the purpose of leadership, we must now discover the way to lead. This is a message

of the "Pesach Sheni" story, in which several Jews who were ritually impure on Erev Pesach asked for a second chance to bring the Korban Pesach. Moshe's response to the Jews' request was the proper one: "Let me see what G-d and His Torah have to say about this."

The parashah relates further that Bnei Yisrael would travel whenever the Clouds of Glory rose from above the mishkan. Yet, Moshe was commanded to fashion trumpets to inform the nation of when they should travel. Why was this necessary? The Torah is teaching us that even when we receive and unmistakable divine sign, we should turn to our Torah sages to interpret it. (For further application of this theme to the parashah, see Bedibur Echod, pp. 89-92).

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"Aharon did so . . ." (8:3)

Rashi writes: "The verse speaks in praise of Aharon to teach us that he changed nothing."

Is it necessary to tell us that a tzaddik such as Aharon did not deviate from G-d's command? R' Chaim Hager of Kosov z"l (1795-1854; father of the first Vizhnitzer Rebbe) offers the following explanation:

Regarding each of Hashem's creations, the verses in the first chapter of Bereishit say, "G-d said, 'Let there be such-and-such,' and it was so." The only exception is the light, about which we read (Bereishit 1:3): "G-d said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Why does it the Torah not say, "and it was so," about the light? The Torah is alluding to Chazal's teaching that the light which we use today is not the first light that Hashem created. That first light, our Sages teach, was put away for tzaddikim to use in Olam Haba.

However, writes R' Hager, when Aharon lit the menorah in the Tabernacle, he brought out a little bit of the "unchanged" light from the first day of creation. He filled in the missing "so" from the verse "Let there be light." (Torat Chaim)

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"I alone cannot carry this entire nation, for it is too heavy for me." (11:14)

When Bnei Yisrael complained about eating nothing but mahn, Moshe responded by asking Hashem to appoint additional leaders to assist him. Why?

R' Yosef Shaul Nathanson z"l (died 1875; rabbi of L'vov and one of the leading halachic authorities of his time) explains based on a parable from real life. When a litigant loses a case before a bet din/rabbinical court, he frequently accuses the rabbis/judges of being biased against him. And, he immediately takes their written decision to the rabbis whom he considers to be authorities in order to get their opinion.

As rude as this is, rabbis who know their decisions to be correct do not mind this. They know that the

generation's great rabbis will affirm their decisions. And they look forward to receiving the approbation of those authorities.

Bnei Yisrael assumed that after Hashem had gone to the "trouble" of taking them out of Egypt, He would be pleased to fulfill their heart's desires. The only reason that they were "stuck" with the mahn, they thought, was that the intermediary, Moshe, stopped Hashem from granting their requests.

Therefore Moshe beseeched Hashem, "Give me assistants. Let there be other prophets, and let the people see that they still do not receive the luxuries that they seek." And so it was.

Based on this, we can understand as well why Moshe said (11:12), "Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it?" A parent is not afraid that people will question his motives for the way he raises his children. Even when he does not fulfill his children's requests, understanding people know that he desires what is best for his children.

"But I did not conceive them," Moshe said. I am nothing but a guardian, and people will question my motives. (Divrei Shaul: Mahadura Kamma, page 97c)

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"To the people you shall say, 'Prepare yourselves for tomorrow and you shall eat meat, for you have cried in the ears of Hashem, saying: Who will feed us meat?' (11:18)

R' Eliezer Papo z"l (1785-1828; author of the mussar work Pele Yo'etz) interprets this verse homiletically as follows:

"Prepare yourselves" - The word used for "prepare" has the root "kodesh." Sanctify yourselves . . .

"[F]or tomorrow" - so that you will enter the World-to-Come. However, there they will ask you, "Did you debate and discuss wisdom?" Therefore . . .

"[E]at meat" - Study halachah, a subject which Chazal referred to as "choice meat on the coals." And, if your learning becomes too difficult for you . . .

"Cry in the ears of Hashem, saying: 'Who will feed us meat?'" - i.e., Torah. Thus the Arizal taught that one who tries to learn Torah but cannot understand should pour out his woes to G-d. (Eleph Ha'magen)

R' Gedaliah Silverstone z"l (1871-1944; rabbi in Belfast, Ireland and Washington, D.C.) offers a related interpretation of a Talmudic teaching which many people recite in the Friday Night prayers: "R' Chanina said, 'One is obligated to check his pockets on Erev Shabbat before darkness, lest he forget and go out.'"

Literally, this teaching instructs a person to check his pockets before Shabbat lest he inadvertently carry on Shabbat. R' Silverstone writes:

The World-to-Come is called "Shabbat" and this world is called "Erev Shabbat." Just as one must prepare on Friday if he wishes to eat on Shabbat, so one must prepare in this world if he hopes to have a portion in the World-to-Come.

Therefore, check your pockets on Erev Shabbat - examine what you have to take with you to the World-to-Come. Do this before the darkness comes. If you do not, you may forget to prepare, and then you will go out of this world with nothing. (Bet Meir Vol. II, p.24)

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## Pirkei Avot

*"And all of your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven . . ."* (Chapter 2, mishnah 12)

R' Baruch Epstein z"l (died 1940; author of Torah Temimah) writes: The gemara (Beitzah 16a) relates that this trait of always acting for the sake of Heaven was practiced by the sage Hillel. Whereas his colleague, Shammai, used to buy an animal for Shabbat on Sunday, and then, if he found a nicer animal later in the week, he would buy that animal instead, Hillel used to say, "Blessed is Hashem every day." Hillel trusted that Hashem would provide every day's needs on that day, and Shabbat's needs on Friday.

Certainly Shammai did not trust in Hashem less than Hillel did! Rather, there is a concept of taking actions to remind oneself to serve Hashem better (vhapb hzurzk). Shammai shopped for Shabbat every day in order to enhance his appreciation of that mitzvah. Hillel, on the other hand, felt that his observance was enhanced by increasing his level of trust in Hashem. (Baruch She'amar p.81)

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## Letters from Our Sages

This week we present excerpts from the will of R' Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa z"l (died 1832), best known by the names of two of his many works, Netivot Hamishpat (the "Nesivos") and Chavat Da'at. R' Lorberbaum's works cover the areas of Torah commentary, the five megillot, halachah, and Talmud commentary. He also served as rabbi in several Eastern European cities.

It is written in the Torah [about Avraham - Bereishit 18:19]: "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him to keep the way of Hashem . . ." If commanding one's children after him brings on G-d's love, it is proper and right for every person to have written before him things that relate to the ways of Hashem and awe of Him so that he may leave it for his children - maybe they will accept it from him, and he will merit thereby to be bound up in the bond of life. Therefore, I have applied my heart to write instructions that relate to the fear of G-d Who is Honored and Awesome.

1. My beloved sons! Man is first judged [in Heaven] with regard to his Torah study [Kiddushin 40a]. You should have a fixed quota of verses and mishnayot every day; even though Chazal said

[Sanhedrin 24a], "Talmud Bavli includes everything" [and therefore it is not necessary to study Tanach or Mishnah - see Tosfot to Kiddushin 30a], they [Chazal] had already filled their bellies with Tanach and Mishnah. While you never saw me do this [i.e., study these subjects], I did so in my youth. In my old age I was overwhelmed by my responsibilities and I could not fulfill my heart's desire.

2. If you merit to be among those who are capable of studying, establish for yourselves a simple quota of not less than one daf /folio of Talmud a day, following the order of the Talmud. This is besides your in depth study, and it should be like a law that is not broken. [Ed. Note: This was a century before the founding of the Daf Yomi movement.] If you are skilled in developing original interpretations of Torah, set aside one hour a day to study in depth, for the main question that man is asked [in Heaven] is: "Did you debate and discuss wisdom?" However, your in depth study of gemara should be directed at clarifying the halachah and not the pilpul/sophistry which is popular in this generation because of our great sins . . .

3. Study Tehillim several times, including the meanings of the words. It should be fluent on your lips, with Rashi's commentary, so that you will understand well when you recite it in supplication. Recite five chapters a day - no fewer - because it inspires the heart to serve Him, may His Name be blessed . . .

To Be Continued

Next Week: How to behave in one's business dealings.

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at [Project Genesis](#) start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page. Text archives from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.

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