

CONSOLATION PRIZE OF SALT

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 276, Is Theft Permitted To Save A Life?
Good Shabbos!*

Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R. Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs. Adele Frand

The Consolation Prize of Salt

In the Parsha [reading], the Torah says, "You shall salt your every meal-offering with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your G-d's covenant from upon your meal offering - on your every offering shall you offer salt." [Vayikra 2:13] Why salt? Rashi quotes a famous teaching of our Sages: "A covenant has been made with salt from the six days of creation that the 'Lower Waters' were promised that they would be offered on the Altar via the salt and via the water libations on the Festival (of Succos)."

On the first day of creation, when G-d split the waters, two categories of water were created - the Upper Waters (in G-d's Heavenly Abode) and the Lower Waters (down here in the oceans). The Medrash quotes the Lower Waters complaining to G-d (in perhaps the first recorded instance of a complaint that would echo throughout history): "It's not fair!"

The Lower Waters complained about the disparity of their fate: People will fish in us, they will swim in us, and they will dump in us. We are given an inferior lot in life to that of the "Upper Waters". According to the Medrash, G-d offered a consolation prize to the Lower Waters: The salt that is found in the Lower Waters of the ocean will have a special place. Eventually, that salt will be offered upon the Altar. "True, the Upper Waters are with Me in Heaven, but you Lower Waters are privileged

in that you contain the ingredient of salt!"

This consolation prize seems a bit hard to swallow (no pun intended). But even beyond that, it seems totally incommensurate with the complaint. When a child complains, "You gave "X" to the other child", we know very well that this child will not be consoled by telling him "Do not worry. I will give you "Y" - twenty-five years from now". Take it from me, this will not work.

But that seems to be exactly what G-d told the Lower Waters. "Although the Upper Waters are with Me right now, do not worry because 25 hundred years from now, when the Temple is built and sacrifices are offered - then your salt will be on the Mizbayach [Altar]." However, the Lower Waters apparently accepted this consolation prize. The knowledge that they were destined to be on the Mizbayach, albeit two and a half millennia later, was enough of a prize to mollify them.

The Shaarei Orah (Rav Bergman) quotes a Tosofos [Brochos 40a] that says that as a result of this Medrash, Rav Menachem was very meticulous about bringing salt to his table. (The table at which we eat is compared to the Mizbayach.) This remains a Jewish custom.

When Jews sit around the table waiting for the blessing of HaMotzi to be recited over bread, they cannot talk words of Torah (after having washed their hands). During that time, they are temporarily without any Mitzvos. The Medrash says that the Satan seizes the opportunity to begin prosecuting against them. But the Covenant of the Salt, which is sitting on the table, protects them from the words of the Satan.

Rav Bergman explains why specifically the salt protects them. G-d's answer to the Satan is "Yes, they are sitting around the table now, without saying anything, apparently wasting their time. But just wait a few minutes. In a few minutes they will be reciting blessings, they will speak words of Torah and they will be fulfilling Mitzvos - just give them some time, just wait!" It was salt which accepted the admonishment to "just wait". It was the salt who was able to consider something that would happen in the distant future as though it were happening right now. Therefore, specifically the salt - out of all the items in the creation -- protects us from the Satan when we are waiting out a period of non-participation in Mitzvos.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
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This write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah Portion. The halachic topics covered for the current week's portion in this series are:

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