

## CHEW THIS OVER

By Ozer Bergman

"And the rabble among them goaded themselves on to desire ... . The Israelites wept and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the free fish we ate in Egypt, with the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.\* Now ... all we have to look forward to is the manna'" (Numbers 11:4-6).

Don't eat like a glutton and don't devour your food. Instead, eat as if you were eating with a king. Blessing rests on the innards of a mensch, not of a chowhound. A chowhound is a spiritual relative of Esav, who said, "Let me gulp down this red red stuff" (Genesis 25:30). Why does such a person have no blessing in his belly? Because the evil Serpent lives there, denying him satisfaction. What's more, such a person is called a *rasha* (villain), as is written, "The stomach of villains is lacking" (Proverbs 13:25). Therefore one ought to eat unhurriedly, at the table, as if eating with a king (*Zohar Chadash, Ruth* 106a).

A person who eats only for the physical craving, without any longing for *kedushah* (holiness), fails to connect body and soul. As a result, when he dies, he is really dead—namely, his corpse is in an empty container, totally devoid of *kedushah* (may God spare us!). On the other hand, to the extent that one eats with conscious craving to be a part of holiness—Shabbat, Torah, prayer, giving charity, etc.—one generates more and stronger desire for *kedushah*.

If you're like most people, you probably don't pay much attention to *how* you eat. Yes, you pay attention to *what* you eat: only kosher food that you're careful to cook kosher. Undoubtedly, you make genuine effort to focus and concentrate when saying the *berakhot* (blessings) before and after eating. If you're more aware, you will remember that you are eating to stay healthy and have strength to serve God. You will also learn some Torah at some point during the meal, before saying the after-blessing. Sadly, however,

many of us, once we take that first bite, get swallowed alive by the food on our plate, whether it's organic tofu, genetically-engineered beef, or anything in between.

Eating is an opportunity not to be missed, but not because our stomachs are empty or our taste buds ache. When we eat, we are—or could be and should be—joining body and soul, Heaven and Earth, infusing creation with *kedushah*. How do we accomplish this? The first steps are really quite simple. Eat slowly, without wolfing down your food. Eat calmly and with proper etiquette (which may vary with local custom).

The effect is tremendous, much greater than you might have guessed. Your thinking becomes clearer and you are less taken in by foolishness. The converse is also true: if one *fresses* (eats gluttonously), foolish ideas take hold in his mind, crippling him, God forbid. Even though he learns Torah, he is unable to draw from it awe or love of God.

If you are privileged to be eating with a dignified person—someone so regal that he never "takes a time out" from being noble and dignified—you will automatically eat as a Jew should. Even if you sit down at the table by yourself,\*\* imagine that you are sitting with that quasi-royal person. If you are sitting with less-than-dignified others, *you* be the noble person.

\* In his commentary on the Pesach Haggadah, Rashba (student of Ramban) writes that it was a kindness of God to exile the Israelites specifically to Egypt, which was so wealthy that it provided all its inhabitants, even the slaves, with plenty of free food. Having a good diet, the Israelites were strong and healthy.

\*\* Many tzaddikim, famous and unknown, past and present, preferred to eat alone. It allowed them to more fully use mealtime as a way of communing with God, in the ways mentioned in this *dvar Torah*, and in many unmentioned ways.

*a gutn Shabbos!  
Shabbat Shalom!*

— Based on *Chayei Moharan (Tzaddik)* #515

## SIDEPATH

Even if you don't feel happy, you can fake it. Pretend to be happy. Who says that if you're feeling down, you can't smile? We fake a smile often enough when trying to be polite, why not now?

Try it. A smile, even a put-on smile, is contagious. Not only will it make others happy when they return your smile, but, as studies have shown, smiling relieves tension and really does make your outlook on life a lot brighter (cf. *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #43).

## PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

**8:2 When you light the lamps, seven lamps should shine towards the face of the Menorah**

***A Person Should Purify His Senses***

*Beha'alotkha* (when you light) literally means "when you raise up." When one kindles a flame, it rises up (Rashi).

The Menorah had seven lamps, or candles. A person's head corresponds to the Menorah—his "seven candles" are his two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and mouth. When he sanctifies his "seven candles"—sanctifying his mouth by refraining from speaking falsehood, his nose by inculcating fear of God, his ears by having faith in the sages, and his eyes by shutting them against evil—then the flame of his heart will rise and illumine his face with Godly light (LM I, 21).

***The Tzaddik's Teachings Illuminate All***

When you want the lamps to illumine, shine their light towards the "face of the Menorah"—i.e., towards the strength and teachings of the center column, the tzaddik (LH II, p. 126).

**8:4 The Menorah was made of hammered gold**

***One Must Be Stubborn In Serving God***

The design of the Menorah was *miKShah* (מִקְשָׁה, hammered out), implying that one

must be *aKShan* (אקשן, stubborn) in his service of God (LH II, p. 154).

### 10:2 Make for yourself two trumpets out of hammered silver

#### Hearing The "Wake-Up Calls"

The silver trumpets were sounded for several reasons: to gather the people for announcements or for study, to signal the start of a journey, to call the people to arms, and to commemorate the Festival offerings. On a symbolic level, the trumpet sounds were the hints and allusions that prod a person to return to God. Each sound contained a different hint, a different "wake-up call" to return to God (LH II, p. 40a).

### 10:25 The flag of the camp of Dan, the last of the camps

#### With Fear Of God, We Recover All That We Have Lost

*Me'aseif* (last) also means "gatherer." The members of the Tribe of Dan would pick up the articles dropped by the tribes that traveled ahead of them in formation, and return those lost objects (Rashi).

*Me'aSeif* (מאסף, last) is similar to *SoF* (סוף, end), which is associated with fear, as in "The end of the matter, when all is considered: Fear the Lord" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). One who attains the fear of God can gather in all that he had lost during the course of his lifetime (LM I, 56:5).

### 11:8 The people strolled about and gathered it

#### Faith Makes It Easier To Earn A Living

*ShaTu* (שט, they strolled about)—*be-ShTuta* (בשטותא, with foolishness) (*Zohar* II, 62b).

The manna fell right at the doorsteps of those Jews who had the *da'at* (higher perception) to know that God would provide their sustenance without any effort on their part. Those who doubted God and went out to search for the manna displayed a foolish lack of faith. Had they used their *da'at*, the manna would have fallen right next to them.

The smaller a person's *da'at*, the harder he must work to earn a living (LM I, 56:6).

### 11:12 Like a nursemaid carries an infant

#### The Tzaddik And The Jews Work Together To Rectify The World

The relationship between the tzaddik and the Community of Israel is encapsulated in the phrase *masa u-matan* (מסא ומטן, business activity), which literally means "carrying and giving."

The tzaddik is the *masa* (carrier) because he "carries" the world "like a nursemaid carries an infant," striving for its rectification. The Community of Israel is called *matan* (giver) because its business activity elevates the sparks of holiness and "gives" them to the tzaddik to be rectified (LM I, 54:3).

### 12:3 The man Moses was very humble, more so than any other man

#### True And False Humility

What is humility? One might think that he is humble when he is submissive towards others. However, that might be no more than flattery or servitude. And such false humility is often a form of pride—pride in one's humility (LM I, 11:8).

Moses was the most humble of men. Yet while he recognized his own insignificance, he also recognized the greatness and importance of the Jewish people (cf. *ibid.*, I, 79).

In order to attain true humility, Reb Noson writes, a person must beseech God to direct him on the proper path (*Likutey Tefilot* II, 20).

## KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

### 13 — "Happy is the nation that knows the shofar blast" (Psalms 89:16); Divine Providence (continued)

8. When a person craves the fulfillment of some physical desire, this craving blemishes and embitters the soul. At such a time, the soul is in a condition described by the verses, "She was bitter in her soul" (I Samuel 1:10) and, "Her soul is bitter" (II Kings 4:27). This is a state of "spiritual dispersion," and in such a state, the soul does not shine; rather, it is called "a hungry soul" (Psalms 107:9). To rectify this, it is necessary to come to the sage of the generation. He is the one who will rectify and elevate even these flawed desires, along with the good desires that the person possesses. By coming to the sage, the verses will then be fulfilled, "He has filled up a hungry soul with good" (*ibid.*) and, "He will

sate your soul amidst its thirst" (Isaiah 58:11). Furthermore, that person's "youth will be renewed as an eagle"—in other words, the days of his youth which passed in darkness will be filled with a new vitality and will be rectified. Then this person can be called "human." In addition to all this, by coming to the sage, the person's body will be elevated and rejuvenated.

9. Those people who come to the sage of the generation, whose souls—that is, their good desires—the sage gathers and elevates "as a fetus in the womb," renewing them for the good, and with whose souls this sage subsequently returns to this world and evokes with them Torah-revelations—these souls correspond to "the animals on the chariot" (Ezekiel 1), and their bodies correspond to the "wheel-angels." The soul of the sage himself and his holy knowledge correspond to "the throne" and to "the one who sits upon the throne," respectively. Similarly, within the Torah teachings that the sage brings down, there are also four parts—corresponding to "the animals," "the wheel-angels," "the throne" and "the one who sits upon the throne."



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