



KINDER TORAH[®]

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table

Parshas Beha'alo-secha



Basic Training

"Here we are in the desert, packing up camp again, getting ready to travel. This is a lot of work, packing up all of our belongings and placing them onto our wagons, donkeys, and camels. The *anan* (cloud) lifted up from the top of the *Mishkan* (tabernacle). That is our sign from Hashem to break camp. We will keep traveling in the direction of the *anan* until it comes to rest upon the *Mishkan* again."

"We have arrived after a long journey. The *anan* has settled, signaling that this is our new encampment. Unpacking is a lot of work, but we will be able to rest when we are settled. This seems to be a very nice place to camp. Look at that, the *anan* has risen again after only one day! Time to pack up again. This is not easy. I was hoping that we would be staying for a longer time."

"We have reached our destination. This place is actually not so nice. I hope we do not stay too long. Should we unpack everything? Perhaps we are only going to stay for a short time."

"The *anan* has settled down. It has not moved for quite a long time. This traveling has taught me a lesson. Hashem is guiding us. We each have our own ideas about where and when we should travel. However, we travel according to Hashem's wishes."

The Torah (Bamidbar 9:15-23) tells us that the Jewish people traveled according to the word of Hashem. When Hashem said to travel, they traveled, and when He signaled them to stop, they encamped. Rav Dessler writes that this was not an easy situation. Why did Hashem guide them in this way, and not give them advance information about their travel schedule? To *mechanech* (train) them to follow Him. The travels in the *midbar* (desert) were a basic training course to learn to follow the words of Hashem.

Kinderlach . . .

Just as Hashem was training the Jewish people to listen to Him, so too our parents mechanech (train) us to listen to them. We may have our own ideas about when to come in the house, or when to go to sleep, or what to eat for dinner. However, we must listen to Abba and Imma. They love us so much and know what is best for us.

About Face

There is something very unusual about two verses in this week's parsha. If you look in the Sefer Torah or in the printed Chumashim you will see an upside-down backwards letter "nun" printed before and after verses 10:35-36. This is the only place in the Torah where such a letter appears. These two verses speak about the traveling of the *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark) and its coming to rest. We all know that the *Aron Kodesh* represents Torah. Before and after these verses are accounts of two shameful events in Jewish history. Verses 33 and 34 tell how the Jewish people fled from Har Sinai like children running away from school, for fear of receiving more mitzvos. Chapter 11 deals with their complaining for meat. Our sages explain that these two verses that are set off do not really belong in this place. Rather, Hashem moved them here to separate between these two events. Imagine that. Hashem uprooted two verses from their normal place in the Torah. That is pretty serious business.

The Keli Yakar has a beautiful drasha on these verses. The *Aron Kodesh* represents Torah. The last word of verse 34 (before the "nun") is *machaneh* (camp). The "nun" turned away from the Torah to face the camp. This represents Jews who turn away from pleasing Hashem by keeping His Torah, and instead turn towards pleasing other people in the camp. In the camp are found the worldly pleasures, and the honor and flattery that go along with them. What happens when we turn away from the Torah to pursue these things? Shameful events in Jewish history are the result.

Kinderlach . . .

Don't get confused. We all know that Hashem's Torah and mitzvos are the best. They give us happiness, peace, and reward. The Yetzer Hara tries to confuse us. He makes the other things look better to us. He's trying to get us to turn away. Kinderlach, keep your head straight and eyes forward. Keep your eyes on the Torah. Get the reward. Avoid the hardships.

Judgement

"Yes, gentlemen please step forward and present your claims."

"This is my wagon. He stole it."

"Absolutely not. It is my wagon. I bought it from you."

"I see. Do either of you have proof?"

"No."

"Then we will wait until tomorrow. Hashem will show us who is right."

That night, the mun fell by the home of the first man and not by the home of the second man. They returned to Moshe Rabbeinu the next day.

"The *mun* fell by my tent today."

"That is Hashem's sign that you are the rightful owner of the wagon."

The Gemora (Yuma 75a) relates several incidents like this one, where the *mun* revealed necessary information about people. For *tsaddikim*, the *mun* fell right by their doorsteps, baked cakes ready to eat. The *beinonim* (those who were neither completely righteous nor evil) had to gather the *mun* and bake it into cakes. The *reshoim* (evil ones) had to travel far to get their *mun*, grind it knead it and bake it. In those days, a person did not have to guess whether he was right or wrong. The *mun* was his judge.

Kinderlach . . .

Am I doing the right thing or not? How will I know? Today we do not have the *mun* to decide for us. But we do have parents and Rebbeim. Hashem gives them special *siyata dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) to make the right decisions. Yehoshua Ben Prachiya said (Pirkei Avos 1:6), "Appoint a Rav for yourself." When we have a Rav, we can ask him all of our questions. He will then guide us along the right path.

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