



PARSHAS TERUMAH *PURIM*

SHALOSH SEUDOS TORAH

5772

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Bread of Life

The Shulchan was the Source of Livelihood

"וַיִּנְתֵּן עַל-הַשֻּׁלְחָן לֶחֶם פָּנִים לְפָנַי תָּמִיד"¹, "And upon the Shulchan (Table) you shall place the Lechem HaPanim (bread of countenance) before me, always.' The Lechem HaPanim had to be on the Shulchan continuously, it could not be removed from it for even a moment.

Each of the furnishings of the Mishkan (tabernacle) was a conduit for a specific sort of heavenly bounty. The Shulchan - the table which contained the bread - was the conduit of livelihood².

Through the Lechem HaPanim the heavenly blessing of sustenance flowed. Therefore, it had to always be upon the Shulchan so that the people should be sustained continuously.

Nowadays, when we have no Mishkan and no Shulchan, how do we receive all the bounty we need, specifically the blessing of livelihood?

The Zohar states that the Jewish home takes the place of the Mishkan. The Divine Presence dwells in every Jewish home, just as it did in the Mishkan. In fact, משכן is an acronym for מטה שולחן כסא נר bed, table, chair and lamp – the four basic components of a home.

The table, upon which the Jew conducts his meals in holiness, accomplishes what the Shulchan did in the Mishkan and is, today, the conduit through which the bounty of livelihood flows. The Arizal, in his Friday night zemiros (liturgy) mentions the 'Table with the Bread' that the Jew places in the northern part of his house, just as the Shulchan was positioned in the northern part of the Mishkan.

The Lechem HaPanim Remained Fresh

The Kohanim (priests) baked the Lechem HaPanim each Friday and placed it on the Shulchan on Shabbos. The following Shabbos, it was replaced with freshly baked bread and distributed to the Kohanim.

Remarkably, the Lechem HaPanim, after being exposed on the Shulchan for an entire week, remained warm and fresh as if it had just been removed from the oven; steam would rise from it as it was apportioned to the Kohanim.

When Adam and Chavah ate from the Forbidden Fruit, death was decreed upon them. From the earth they were created and to it they would be returned in death. Their bodies would decay and again become part of the mass of earth from where it originally came.

The decree of death encompassed not only their death and the demise of all animal species, but also of all vegetative life and all matter; everything eventually dies and/or decays. Bread molds, wood rots, metal rusts, paper yellows, materials disintegrate – and thereby they return to their basic organic components.

The bread of the Lechem HaPanim was exempt from the decree of death; it remained fresh. A week after it was removed from the Shulchan it had not even a tinge of staleness.

The Seven Advisors

Achashveirosh was in a quandary about how to judge Vashti for her refusal to listen to the king. He therefore called his seven advisors, כְּרִשְׁנָא שֵׁתֵּר אֲדַמְתָּא תִּרְשִׁישׁ מְרִס מְרִסָּא מְמוּכָן³. These men were rabid Jew haters and always sought to point out the shortcomings of the Jewish people.

Opposing them were seven holy angels - with the same names as these ministers - that always sought to highlight the greatness of Hashem's nation⁴.

As these seven advisors stepped forth to present their opinion - which was laced with prosecutions of the Jewish people - their heavenly counterparts presented a masterful defense.

The Gemara⁵ discusses what these angels were arguing before G-d on behalf of His people. For כַּרְשָׁנָא they said – “Master of the universe, did these [gentiles] sacrifice before you כָּרִים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה, calves in their first year, as the Jewish people did?”

Corresponding to שְׁתֵּי תוּרִין the angels said, “Did they sacrifice before you שְׁתֵּי תוּרִין, two bulls?”

For אֲדַמְתָּא they countered, “Did they build before you a מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה, earthen altar?” For each of the prosecuting ministers they countered with a defense.

The last and smallest advisor of Achashveirosh – Haman - is referred to here as מְמוּכָן, prepared. The angels countered his accusations with, “Have they *prepared* before you a table?” referring to the merit of the Lechem HaPanim.

Against Haman, the merit of the Lechem HaPanim was raised. What is the connection between Haman and the Lechem HaPanim?

Haman is in Opposition to the Lechem HaPanim

The first snake of creation personified the evil inclination. Haman was the successor of the first snake; he, too, embodied the Satan⁶.

The snake began its wicked career by seducing the mother of mankind to eat what Hashem had forbidden. It was Haman that advised Achashveirosh to get the Jewish people to partake of a meal that - although perhaps not technically forbidden to them – was against the spirit of everything that Judaism stands for.

The Gemara⁷ questions, "הֲמֵן מִן הַתּוֹרָה מִיָּנִי?", ‘Where is Haman [hinted to] in the Torah?’ The Gemara answers "[In the words] הֵמֶן הָעֵץ⁸", ‘From the Tree [of the forbidden fruits].’ Haman is hinted to in a reference to the Eitz Hadas (Tree of Forbidden Fruits) because he was the embodiment of the snake that seduced Chavah to eat from it.

There is a tree in the Garden of Eden diametrically opposed to the Eitz Hadas – which the eating of its fruits caused death. This is the ‘Eitz HaChaim’, tree of life.

The spiritual essence of the Lechem HaPanim was derived from the Eitz Hachaim. Therefore, the Lechem HaPanim defied the laws of atrophy and remained warm and fresh for an entire week.

When Haman/Memuchan arose to present his opinion to Achashveirosh - and simultaneously indict the Jewish people - the holy angel opposing him raised the merit of the Lechem HaPanim.

The accusation of the one who personifies the devil that seduced man to eat from the Eitz Hadas - which caused death - was nullified by the merit of the Lechem HaPanim whose source is in the Eitz HaChaim – the tree of life.

Every Mitzvah Requires Preparation

There is a Yiddish proverb – מִפֶּאֲלֵט נִישְׁט אַרײַן אַזױ וואוּ אַ יוֹן אײַן סוּכָה, one does not fall in (to a Mitzvah) as a Greek does in the Sukkah. A non-Jew is completely unready for the holiness of the Sukkah; without preparation we are also not ready to perform a Mitzvah.

Therefore, we engage in some sort of preparation before every mitzvah. Before the morning prayers, we prepare by washing our hands. For a better and for focused prayer experience, one would learn Torah and meditate about the greatness of Hashem beforehand.

Before reciting the blessing after a meal, we wash our hands and recite a small paragraph expressing our readiness for and intent to perform the Mitzvah of reciting a blessing after eating. The Mitzvah of blowing the Shofar, too, is preceded by intense prayer and focus. This is true by many Mitzvos.

The Lechem HaPanim and Haman – Another Link

The merits raised by the angels opposing the seven advisors of Achashveirosh were each based on an actual object used or a service performed in the Mishkan. Memuchan, prepared, refers not to an actual service of Hashem, but to a preparation for service.

How does the Gemara know that the preparation was for the Shulchan and Lechem HaPanim and not some other service in the Mishkan?

There is no service performed with the Shulchan itself. It merely serves as the place to hold the Lechem HaPanim until the Kohanim (priests) eat it. The entire 'service' of the Shulchan is that of 'preparation' for another mitzvah, i.e. the eating of the Lechem HaPanim.

Haman, the opposition of the Lechem HaPanim shared the characteristic of 'preparation' with the Shulchan. He was a man that prepared his own demise.

The advice he gave Achashveirosh to kill Vashti, led to Esther becoming the queen. It was she who caused his downfall. Furthermore, he was hung on the pole that he himself had prepared for Mordechai.

Appropriately, he is referred to as 'Memuchan-prepared' precisely as he was engaged in preparing his own demise; as he was giving the advice to Achashveirosh to kill Vashti.

A Puzzling Gemara

David departed from the world on Shabbos afternoon after he fell off stairs. Shlomo, the new successor, questioned the Sanhedrin; "My father's body is lying in the sun (a corpse quickly begins to rot under the sun, and we must protect the dignity of the deceased, yet a body is muktzah, it is forbidden to move it on Shabbos) and [secondly] my father's dogs are hungry, what shall I do?"

The Sanhedrin answered, "Cut meat for the dogs, and [as for transferring your father's body into the shade] place a loaf of bread or an infant on the body and move it⁹."

This Gemara is very difficult. First of all, why did King Shlomo refer to the dogs as 'the dogs of my father's house?' He was the heir and since his father died the dogs automatically belong to him. Furthermore, King David died suddenly on Shabbos. He must have had a set procedure by which he ensured that the dogs were fed every Shabbos, why was there no food for the dogs?

Also, Shlomo had learned Torah with his father and was quite proficient. How can it be that he did not know these simple laws of Shabbos that any minimally-learned Jew can easily find in the popular halachic (legal) texts?

Additionally, King Shlomo asked the two questions in one sentence and they seem to have no connection with each other.

Demonstrating the Righteousness of King David

The enemies of King David gossiped that he was a doomed man because of his sin with Bas-Sheba. In truth, he never sinned, it only appeared so.¹⁰ Even for his tiny error, he had long completely repented.

King David beseeched Hashem to demonstrate for all that he was pure and did not sin. Hashem said that he would do so, but not during his lifetime.

The punishment for slander and instigating dissension is to be reincarnated into a dog. This dog will hang around the house of the person he spoke against. The dogs of King David were reincarnations of those people who dared to instigate a scandal against the anointed of Hashem during their lifetimes.

The personality of a person extends into his possessions. Therefore we find stories in the Gemara of tzaddikim (righteous people) whose animals behaved in exemplary ways. Rabbi Pinchos Ben Yair's ass refused to eat from food upon which there was even a doubt if it was permissible. The cow of a righteous Jew refused to work on Shabbos¹¹. Of course, these animals were – of themselves - nothing special. However, the personality of their righteous owners extended into theirs.

"והכלבים עזי נפש הם לא ידעו שבעה", 'Dogs are insatiable; no matter how much they eat they are never satisfied'¹².

The dogs of King David – being that they were his possessions and contained an extension of his personality - were unlike the average dog; they were satisfied with little food and did not need to eat and eat like all other dogs. King David prepared a certain amount of food for them on Friday and it sufficed until the end of Shabbos.

However, when King David departed on Shabbos, these dogs ceased to belong to him and were transferred to the ownership of Shlomo. King Shlomo – great as he was - was then only twelve years old and was not one of the seven shepherds of the Jewish people. Therefore, the dogs returned to their natural state of always being hungry.

Shlomo intentionally forwarded this question to the Sanhedrin in order so they realize the greatness of his father, and be made aware that he never sinned. The dogs of David, the reincarnations of his enemies, were the testimony to his greatness.

King David's Body did not Decay

King Shlomo also asked if there was a need to move his father's body since it did not decompose in the sun. Just as he wished the Sanhedrin to be aware of his father's greatness through the fact that his animals behaved in an exemplary fashion, he wished for the Sanhedrin to be aware that King David's body remained intact after his death.

During his lifetime, King David had eaten from the Lechem HaPanim. He had been in danger due to starvation and the only food available was the Lechem HaPanim. Usually the Lechem HaPanim is forbidden to a non-Kohen (priest), but being that his life was in danger, it was permitted for him to eat it. However, Hashem would not have caused King David to eat from the Lechem HaPanim had he not had a connection to it.

Just as the decree of death did not touch the Lechem HaPanim, they did not become stale, ¹³דוד מלך ישראל חי וקיים, King David lives on forever – his body remained fresh and whole. His enemies saw and were ashamed.

The Sages Ruled that King David should be Moved

Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon was unable to be buried for twenty two years and was placed in an attic. His body remained completely whole to the extent that if a hair was pulled, blood spurted out.

Once his wife came upstairs and saw a worm come out of his ear and she worried that he would begin decaying. He came to his wife in a dream and told her not to worry, his body would not decompose. A worm only exited his ear as a one-time occurrence as a retribution for once hearing someone speak against a Torah Scholar and not protesting¹⁴.

There is a disagreement in the Gemara whether or not King David accepted lashon harah¹⁵ about Mefiboshes.

According to the opinion that King David did accept lashon harah, the sages were concerned that, even though his body would not decay, perhaps a worm would exit his ear and it would not befit his honor.

(According to the opinion that he did not accept lashon hara, it is possible that the sages did not wish to make an exception of the usual law, even though they knew that King David's body was an exception and would not decay.)

The Failing of Tzaddikim are Due to the Imperfect State of the World

The Gemara¹⁶ relates that because King David accepted lashon hara his kingdom was split in the days of his grandson and the exile was ultimately a result of this split.

How can it be that King David, the holy anointed one of Hashem sinned by accepting lashon hara as truth? Due to the imperfect state of the world, sometimes, even a perfect tzaddik can be trapped into a sin.

The exile was already decreed with the sin of the spies - many years prior to King David's accepting of the lashon hara. In truth, the exile was not a result of the sin of King David. Rather, because the world required the purification process of exile, David stumbled with what is - according to one opinion in the Gemara - a slight failure on his part.

The same was true for Moshe Rabbeinu. He, too, is accused in the Torah of sinning during the episode of the 'Mei Merivah.' His sin, too, had to occur in order that he would not be allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel and thereby ensure that the generation he led - the Generation of the Wilderness which died out in the desert - would eventually enter Eretz Yisroel together with him.

Preparing for Mashiach

The days when it will be revealed that neither King David, nor Moshe Rabbeinu, sinned in any way are at our doorsteps. With the coming of a perfect world, the perfection of our tzaddikim will be made known.

Harav Kanievsky Shlit"ra recently wrote a letter stating that we are certainly in the times of Ikvise DiMeshicha - we hear the footsteps of Mashiach. There is no doubt that we are living in times extremely close to the coming of Mashiach.

The final redemption will be soon. It just requires prayer and self-improvement on our part as many of the Gedolei Hador (great Torah leaders of the generation) have urged in the past week.

Each generation and individual has their unique task. It is incumbent upon each one of us to better ourselves according to our individual capacity. Hashem demands of us only what we are capable of, but we must do what we can.

The Tanya¹⁷ exhorts each person to perceive himself as if the whole world is dependent upon him; his repentance will tip the scales for the good.

The generation of Mordechai was aware of the danger they were in and were all aroused in repentance and prayer. They therefore merited the great everlasting light of Purim. We share the task of the generation of Mordechai; we have to be aware of the danger we are in and repent and pray.

The time now is very ripe for the redemption. Adar is the month adjacent to Nissan, the month of the original redemption from Egypt. It is a very auspicious time for the final and Ultimate Redemption.

We are confident that -

**לא יבושו ולא יכלמו לנצח כל החוסים בך ברוכים כל הצדיקים וכל ישראל בביאת 'וגם
חרבונא - זה אליהו זכור לטוב'**

Those that trust Hashem will not be ashamed! Blessed shall the righteous nation of Yisrael be with the coming of 'Charvonah' – the personification of Eliyahu Hanavi in the story of the Megilah – may he be remembered for the good!

¹ שמות כה:ל

² רבינו בחיי

³ אסתר א:יד

⁴ חת"ס

⁵ מגילה יב ע"ב

⁶ עיין קהילת יעקב ערך המן

⁷ חולין קל"ט ע"ב

⁸ בראשית ג:יא

⁹ שבת ל ע"ב

¹⁰ שבת נו ע"א

¹¹ ימזא ט' ע"א עיין תוס' ישנים שם

¹² ישעי' נו:יא

¹³ ר"ה כה ע"א

¹⁴ ב"מ פד ע"ב

¹⁵ שבת נו ע"א

¹⁶ שבת נו ע"ב

¹⁷ פרק מ"א