

THE KTM DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

In 1991, Canadian music artist Tom Cochrane released a song that would become legendary. "Life is a Highway" was released after Cochrane had visited the poverty-stricken areas of East Africa. He describes that the experience of travelling through the war-torn countryside, where he witnessed a person die of starvation before his eyes, left a deep impact on him – which kept him sleepless until he finished the song in a matter of just a few hours one early morning:

Sometimes you bend, sometimes you stand

Sometimes you turn your back to the wind

There's a world outside every darkened door...

Cochrane has said that the impetus of his releasing this song was to convey that there are matters in life we cannot control - we just have to "do the best we can".

Our parasha highlights the challenge of life as a highway. For over a year, the Jewish People encamped at the base of Sinai. They received the Torah. They built the Mishkan. Now it is time to journey to Eretz Yisrael (Bamidbar 10:11-12):

וְיִהְיֶה בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיטָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בְעָשְׂרִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ נִעְלָה הָעָנָן
מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת: וַיֵּסְעוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִסְעֵיהֶם מִמִּדְבָּר
סִינַי וַיֵּשְׁכּוּ הָעָנָן בְּמִדְבָּר פָּאָרָן:

In the second year, on the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle of the Pact. and the Israelites set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. The cloud came to rest in the wilderness of Paran.

This journey which was initially meant to bring them into Israel within the span of three days (Rashi, Bamidbar 10:29), ended up taking forty years – after the generation of the Sin of the Spies were sentenced to die in the desert. It is a long, perilous journey marked by failures and moral shortcomings, but also by growth and self-discovery.

A careful reading of our parasha highlights a keyword that frames the journey that Am Yisrael embark on. The opening words of our parasha are (Bamidbar 8:2):

דָּבַר אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאָמְרָם אֵלָיו בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת־הַנֶּגֶב אֶל־מִוֶּל פָּנֵי

הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאִירֵי שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת:

Speak to Aaron and say to him, "When you lift the lamps, let the seven lamps give light at the front of the lampstand."

The use of the word "beha'alotcha" - lift, or ascend - is bizarre, why doesn't the Torah use the word "light" or "ignite" - which is clearly the intention of what "lift" means in this context?

Rashi, basing his commentary on the Talmud, explains that this term is used deliberately to teach that "one must kindle them until the light ascends of itself". The Kohen mustn't pass over the wick quickly, which risks the newly ignited candle extinguishing quickly. Rather, he must light the candle deliberately until the flame catches onto the wick firmly and will remain after he removes his hand.

In this case, the word "לעלות", connotes stability and constancy.

We encounter this same term later-on in our parasha, yet in that context it takes on a whole new meaning: The signal for the Jews to depart from one place of encampment to the next is when the Cloud of Glory shifts from atop the Mishkan and relocates. The relocation of the cloud was an indicator that it was time to go, and in what direction to travel in. The Torah says (Bamidbar 9:17):

וְלִפִּי הַעֲלֹת הָעָנָן מֵעַל הָאֹהֶל וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יֵסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְמִקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכְּרֻשָּׁם הָעָנָן שָׁם יִחַנו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

And whenever the cloud lifted from the Tent, the Israelites would set out accordingly; and at the spot where the cloud settled, there the Israelites would make camp.

Once again the word "לעלות" is being used. But interestingly, in this context it actually takes on the exact opposite meaning from the beginning of the parasha! As Rashi points out:

Understand this as the Targum does: "to move away".

Whereas in one context "לעלות" implied stability, here the same word connotes dynamism and progress. Within this dialectic of the term "לעלות" is the basis of the nation's tensions during their journey through the wilderness. As the nation prepares for their departure from



TORAH תורה
מִצִּיּוֹן MITZION

KTM MONTREAL

PARASHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA
21 SIVAN 5786

JUNE 6, 2026

CANDLE LIGHTING: 8:21 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 9:38 P.M.

KTM WISHES BE'HATZLACHA TO ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BEGINNING FINAL EXAMS!

the base of Mount Sinai, an image of structure and order emerges: Where each tribe will encamp, how many Shofar blasts will sound, in what order the tribes will march. This will be an orderly procession, a "walk in the park".

But the reality is that life is not a walk in the park - it's a perilous journey through the wilderness. There are inevitably unforeseen variables, human error and curveballs thrown at us all the time. After just one day of travel (Rashi, Bamidbar 10:33) it is unclear to the people where they will rest for the night and they become agitated and begin complaining.

The key to journeying through the wilderness of life successfully is to "לעלות": We must be prepared to embrace the setbacks along the road. The way to do that is to be firm in our beliefs and identity - to ensure we have steadfast beliefs that do not waver when our realities shift.

Life is a highway: Sometimes you bend, sometimes you stand, sometimes you turn your back to the wind. The challenge of wilderness living is to master both forms of עליה:

to cultivate a flame that burns steadily on its own, and to remain willing to move forward when the cloud no longer stays put. To be a person of עליה – resolute, resilient, and constantly growing.



SHABBAT'S GREATEST HITS: SHALOM ALEICHEM

BY EVYATAR KERNER

Imagine you could stop time for a few minutes, right at the moment when Shabbat begins.

Not in one synagogue. Not in one neighborhood. Everywhere.

To peek into a home in Montreal, an apartment in Jerusalem, a family in Melbourne, a community in London, and a small house in Ashdod. To see the set table, the glowing candles, the children trying to sit nicely for at least the first minute, and the parents trying to enjoy the moment before the discussions begin.

And then, to listen.

What would you hear?

At first, perhaps a mixture of sounds. Some families sing quickly, others slowly. Some use a joyful Hasidic melody, others a Moroccan tune, or an ancient melody passed down from grandfather to grandson for four generations.

But if you listen to the words, you discover something remarkable.

Everyone is singing the same song.

“Shalom Aleichem.”

There is something almost paradoxical about Shabbat songs. On one hand, they are among the clearest symbols of Jewish diversity. It is enough to hear one family singing “Yah Ribon Olam” and another singing “Dror Yikra” to realize that every community carries within it an entire world of tradition, history, and culture.

On the other hand, at the very moment

when Shabbat begins, we all meet at the same point.

The same words.

That is not something to take for granted.

The Jewish people are spread across continents, speak different languages, live within different cultures, and are sometimes divided on almost every issue imaginable. Yet when Friday night arrives, millions of Jews around the world begin Shabbat with the very same song.

Of course, not with the same melody.

And perhaps that is the most beautiful part.

If we all sang the same song with the exact same tune, that would be uniformity. But there is a great difference between uniformity and unity.

Uniformity means everyone must be the same.

Unity means people can be different and still be part of something shared.

“Shalom Aleichem” manages to hold both at once. It gives every community, every family, and even every individual the space to bring their unique voice, their memories, and the melody they grew up with. At the same time, it reminds us that we belong to a story greater than ourselves.

Perhaps that is why this song has endured for so many years.

Not because of the melody, since there is no single melody.

Not because of the performance, since every

home sings it differently.

It has endured because of the simple words that create a bridge between people who have never met.

Throughout the year, we tend to notice what separates us. The different communities, the different customs, the different opinions. Sometimes it seems as though those differences are the main story.

But then Friday night arrives.

And just before the meal, before the fish and the soup, before the Torah discussion and the conversations around the table, that familiar old song is heard once again.

And suddenly, we remember.

It is possible to sing in different melodies and still sing the same song.

It is possible to come from different places and still walk in the same direction.

It is possible to be very different from one another and still feel like one large family.

Perhaps that is the message I take with me from the columns about Shabbat songs that I have written over this past period. Beyond the beautiful melodies, beyond the nostalgia and memories they awaken, Shabbat songs teach us something deeper about ourselves.

The Jewish people are not a soloist singing alone, but are built like a choir in which everyone sings in millions of different voices.

And the great beauty is that when Shabbat arrives, they all manage to connect to the same song.





HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

Question: An expensive set of china dishes were not used for at least a decade.

The children who inherited them from their parents believe, to the best of their memory, that the dishes were dairy, but they are not certain. May they use the dishes for dairy without concern? (All parties involved are shomrei Torah u'mitzvot.)

Answer: There is an opinion of the Ya'avetz that the status of a vessel as meat or dairy expires after twelve months of non-use. This opinion is not accepted in practice. Nevertheless, in a case like this, where there is uncertainty regarding the status and the children are fairly certain that it is dairy, one may rely on the Ya'avetz and assume the dishes are dairy. If they prefer, they may also perform hagalah three times, relying on the opinion of the Ba'al Ha'Itur, who permits hagalah for an earthenware vessel that has not been used within twenty-four hours.

Question: Can a twelve-year-old who underwent surgery recite Birkat HaGomel?

Answer: He does not recite the berachah (Mishnah Berurah 219:3). However, he may say the text without Shem u'Malchut, or his father may recite it on his behalf, likewise without Shem u'Malchut.

Question: Is there a problem with taking empty bottles from collection bins? Is this considered stealing from recycling companies?

Answer: Apparently, these bottles do not halachically belong to the company. While the collection bin may be considered a chatzer, it is a chatzer that is not guarded. Furthermore, someone placing bottles there does not intend to transfer ownership to the

company; rather, the person simply intends to dispose of them in an environmentally preferable way. Therefore, it would seem that the company does not acquire the bottles when they are placed in the bin. Nevertheless, one should not take large quantities, as it is important not to cause the company financial loss. Ideally, one should take approximately the same amount as one contributed. This is only a brief overview of the topic; there are many additional details that could be discussed at length.

Question: I have leftover pareve rice, and I am unsure whether a fork that had been used for schnitzel was used with that rice. May I eat the rice and then eat dairy afterward?

Answer: The Rema writes (Yoreh De'ah 89:3) that if a pareve food was cooked in a meat pot, one does not need to wait afterward before eating dairy. Since this ruling appears obvious from another ruling of the Rema (see YD 95), the Shach concludes that the Rema in YD 89:3 was teaching a greater novelty: one does not need to wait after eating pareve food cooked in a meat pot even when the pot had not been thoroughly cleaned of meat residue. The Pitchei Teshuvah cites the Beit Lechem Yehudah, who argues that this is permitted only if there is sixty times the amount of food relative to the meat residue. Nevertheless, one may be lenient in a case of some need, because the Acharonim accepted the Shach's understanding of the Rema (Bach, Pri Megadim, Chochmat Adam, Aruch HaShulchan). In this case, one may certainly be lenient, because there is even doubt whether the fork touched the schnitzel at all.

Question: Is it permitted to use a nutcracker on Shabbat?

Answer: Removing the brown shell of nuts may be done using a nutcracker (Mishna 122b). This is not prohibited under the category of threshing, since it is not labor normally performed in the field, nor is it a problem of separating because the food remains inside the shell and there is no separation of food from waste.

Question: Is it permitted to remove the hard shell of peanuts on Shabbat?

Answer: Peanuts have a thin red casing beneath a hard brown shell. In the name of the Hazon Ish (Orehot Shabbat 4, note 7), it is cited that removing the hard shell is permitted, and this is also the ruling in Shemirat Shabbat Kehilkhata (4, note 92). However, present-day realities require reconsideration. In the past, peanuts were commonly sold in their hard shells; removing them was therefore considered a household action. Today, most people buy peanuts already without the hard shell, leaving only the thin red casing. Therefore, one should be stringent: remove the hard shell by hand rather than with a utensil, and crack shells one at a time (based on Gemara Beitza 13b). The thin red casing may be removed from many peanuts at once, provided this is done just before the meal.

PARNESS HAYOM :: SIVAN

- 1 Sivan | Manny Dalfen, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Morris Dalfen z"l
- 2 Sivan | Gerald Bernstein, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Phylis Bernstein z"l (Chaya Faiyge bas Yosef Halevi)
- 3 Sivan | Baila Aspler, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother-in-law, Rita Aspler z"l
- 17 Sivan | Yael Miller, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her father, Rabbi Abraham Wahrhaftig z"l
- 22 Sivan | Moshe Reiss, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, David Reiss z"l
- 23 Sivan | Kamal Gabbay, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Muzli Gabbay z"l



Reality Check



It's a beautiful day, but Simcha is getting annoyed by every little thing



This continues at lunch, when his pizza is too cheesy and his chair is not comfy



After recess, the students learn about the Mitonenim – who complained in the desert



This got Simcha thinking – maybe he can look at the positives



After school, he played a game with his friends to try and focus on the good things



The next day, even though there were still annoying things, Simcha focused on the positive – this made him feel really good

In Parashat Beha'alotcha, Bnei Yisrael receive miraculous manna — yet become obsessed by what they are missing instead of focusing on what they actually have.

The Torah reminds us that gratitude does not mean pretending life is perfect. It means not letting complaints become the only story we tell ourselves.