

Teachings from *A Partner in Holiness* by Rabbi Jonathan Slater

All selections are from volume 1.

January 6 – Shemot (p. 140)

To accept what is in the moment – and not get caught in denial – is one way to be liberated from suffering. This is not to give up on easing pain, on confronting injustice. Rather, it is an invitation to do so out of a degree of acceptance of what is, without contention. A tool for remaining present to what is, even when it is painful, even when unjust, even when it makes us sad, is to respond with compassion. When we offer ourselves compassion for what causes us pain, we are able to see it more clearly, accepting it for what it is. Compassion eases our return to the moment, our reconnection with what is.

As you make your way through the day, notice the moments in which you feel construction, in which you are in contention with what is happening...take a breath. Reconnect with what is true and how you would like to interact with it.

January 13 – Va'eira (p. 151-152)

Rashi comments, "There are places (in the Torah) where Aaron precedes Moses and where Moses precedes Aaron. This is to tell us that they were equal, one to the other."

All human beings are not equal in their abilities, they are all equal in value. Yet, we frequently find ourselves comparing ourselves to other, finding ourselves lacking or seeing ourselves superior to them. What would it take to see the world on this model of Moses and Aaron?

January 20 – Bo (p. 175)

What do you sense is the difference between your speech in Torah and prayer and the rest of your talking? Do you think that there should be any connection between these two realms of expression? How might you make your secular expression into Torah and prayer – without becoming mute or unable to engage in normal conversation?

January 27 – Beshalach (p. 180)

"Then sang Moses and the Israelites this song to YHVH, they said to say: I will sing to YHVH, for God has triumphed gloriously, horse and driver God has hurled into the sea." (Exod. 15:1)

Singing seems to cover just about all aspects of a spiritual life: as the means to extend and make more manifest our spiritual awareness, as the expression of our joy, as a way to connect with God and thus affect the world; and as a method for responding to times of stress, anxiety, fear or imbalance.

February 3 – Yitro (p. 201)

When do you feel your speech most delights God? Why? Recognizing this, do you think that you might bring that awareness into other modes, other periods of speech? How might this help you understand some aspect of *devekut* (attachment or closeness to God)?