

When the Ark would travel, Moshe would say, “Arise Hashem, and let Your foes be scattered, let those who hate You flee from You.” (10:35)

Did you ever wonder why, once the *Sefer Torah* has been removed from the *Aron HaKodesh* and the reading of the Torah is about to commence, spiritual intensity in the *shul* seems to be lifted. It is almost as if *Krias HaTorah*, the reading of the Torah, is a break in the service. We have finished *Shacharis*; we are now taking a break for a conversation, for a walk outside, early *Kiddush*, etc. Does *Krias HaTorah* signal a relaxation period, a time to socialize and catch up on the past week's events?

In *Chochmas Chaim*, a novel idea is quoted from **Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl**, which rationalizes our change of pace during *Krias HaTorah*. *Rav* Yosef Chaim spoke in 1936 at the dedication of *Yeshivas Sfas Emes* in Yerushalayim. He explained why we recite the *pasuk*, *Vayehi binsoa ha'Aron*, when we open the doors of the Ark. He quoted from the *Zohar HaKadosh*, “Rabbi Shimon says: ‘When the *Sefer Torah* is removed (from the Ark) with the intention of reading from it, the Heavenly Gates of Mercy are opened and Hashem's love for *Klal Yisrael* is aroused. Therefore, this is an auspicious moment for the recital of the prayer *Brich Shmei*, Blessed is the Name, which entreats for Hashem's compassion and pleads that He display His salvation by finally having the *Bais Hamikdash* rebuilt. We declare our faith in Him and His Torah, and we ask that He make us receptive to its wisdom.’”

Brich Shmei is a beautiful and meaningful prayer which is recited during the opening of the Ark, a time when we ask Hashem for arousal in all things spiritual. As a “rule,” whenever an opportunity for spiritual ascendancy is present, it is almost certainly to be countered by the forces of spiritual impurity, which will employ any medium for deflecting and impeding the Heavenly spiritual inspiration that is descending at that moment. We pray to Hashem to scatter the foes of spirituality and cause the forces that undermine holiness to flee from us, so that the sparks of *kedushah*, holiness, that sanctify us will be allowed to do their work.

Having said this, we now understand why, for some of us, *Krias HaTorah* is a difficult time during which to remain captivated by the intensity of the preceding prayer service. The forces that seek to deter us are working overtime, and, in many cases, they are successful.