

"Therefore, say: 'Behold I give him My covenant of peace. And it should be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood.'" (25:12,13)

If one were to look in a *Sefer Torah* or even in many *Chumash* texts, it would be noticeable that the vov, (u), of the word **ouka**, peace, is somewhat broken. This is referred to as a broken vov. What is signified by the break in the vov of *shalom*?

Horav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, z.l., offers the following novel insight. There are two forms of unity. The first one is mechanical, perfunctory or automatic unity. This is an external consolidation of different parts, merged together to create the appearance of wholeness. The second form of unity is the organic, natural, living synthesis of various parts joined together by an internal force creating the essence of harmony.

The four walls of a house are joined together to appear as one entity, but, in reality, this is merely an external fabrication. No internal force holds the four different walls together. Conversely, the human body is an amalgamation by virtue of the life-force which generates through its entire midst. This life-force creates an entity which is unified in its essence, perfectly whole in appearance and substance. This, suggests *Horav Zevin*, is the difference between the word *oka* without a "vov" and *ouka* with a "vov". Something which is *ouka* reflects external unity.

When one creates peaceful coexistence between two people, he makes *ouka* with a "vov" since this unity is manifest only in appearance. After all, they are two distinct individuals. This is the manner in which *Am Yisrael* distinguishes itself from the other nations of the world. Their's is merely a mechanical peace dependent upon their individual whim and fancy. Their personal vested interests determine the longevity of the coexistence. *Am Yisrael* is called a *sjt hudw* one nation, unified through a unique Divine life-force, the *Torah*, which is the *neshamah*, soul, of our People. We are fused together as one body, since we all share the same sustaining life-force.

We can now understand the disparity in the two references to the *Bais Ha'Mikdash*. At times, it is referred to as *oka* ,*fxw* without the vov, and also as *ouka* ,*fux* with the vov. *Klal Yisrael* came together for their pilgrimage three times each year. On those occasions, the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* functioned as a central focus for the *Torah*. The presence of the *Sanhedrin* and the *avodah* with constant offering of *korbanos*, rendered *Klal Yisrael* *oka*, unified in total harmony.

The building was in total consonance with its occupants. The *neshamah* of *Klal Yisrael* permeated the seemingly lifeless edifice of wood and stone. When the internal unity of the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* was lacking, when the spiritual level of *Klal Yisrael* declined and the people no longer turned to the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* as a source of *kedushah*, it became *ouka*. It was merely an external edifice held together by its "four walls."

The obligation of the *kohanim* to serve *Klal Yisrael* was twofold. Their function was to establish harmony among Jews. They were to follow in the footsteps of their exalted Patriarch, Aharon *Ha'Kohen*, the paragon of "ouka ;suru ouka cvut", one who loved and pursued peace. This harmony, however, is only an external manifestation of real unity. The *kohanim* are charged with engendering yet another form of peace in *Klal Yisrael*. The *kohanim* are instructed to teach *Torah* to the masses, thereby providing them with their eternal lifeblood. The *kohanim* provide *Klal Yisrael* with two forms of peace: external and internal. These two forms of peace are represented by the broken vov which can be read as ouka or oka.