
THE GUTNICK EDITION

חמשה חומשי תורה
Chumash

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

ספר דברים

*With Rashi's commentary, Targum Onkelos,
Haftaros and commentary anthologized from
Classic Rabbinic Texts and the works of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe*

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Preface

We are delighted that *Sefer Devarim* of the *Kol Menachem* Chumash is now entering its third edition, which includes numerous amendments to both the Hebrew and English texts and commentary to the Haftaros.

We once again extend our thanks to **Rabbi Meyer Gutnick**, who has graciously accepted upon himself the labor and expense of publishing and distributing this work. May this merit be a source of eternal blessing for him and his family.

May we soon merit the true and complete redemption, with *Mashiach Tzidkeinu*, speedily in our days.

Kol Menachem

25th of Elul 5768

🌀 CANTILLATION MARKS / טעמי המקרא 🌀

פִּשְׁטָא מִנַּח זֶרְקָא מִנַּח סְגוּלָּה מִנַּח | מִנַּח רְבִיעִי
מֵהַפֶּךְ פִּשְׁטָא זֶרְקָא קִטְוֹן זֶרְקָא-גְדוּל מִרְכָּא טַפְחָא
מִנַּח אֶתְנַחְתָּא פִּזְרֵי תְּלִישָׁא-קִטְנָה
תְּלִישָׁא-גְדוּלָּה קְדָמָא וְאַזְלָא אֶזְלָא-גְרֵשׁ גְּרֵשִׁים
דְּרֵנָא תְּבִיר יְתִיב פְּסִיק | סוּף-פְּסוּק: שְׁלִשְׁתַּיִת
קִרְנֵי-פֶרֶה מִרְכָּא-כְּפוּלָּה יְרַח-בֶּן-יוֹמוֹ:

🌀 BLESSINGS ON READING THE TORAH 🌀

The person who is called to the Torah takes hold of the handles of the *Sefer Torah* with his *tallis*¹, unrolls the *Sefer Torah* and, with his *tallis* (or the belt of the Torah) touches the beginning and end² of the reading. The scroll is then closed, he turns slightly to the right and says:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבַרֵךְ.

The congregation responds:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבַרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The person called to the Torah continues:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבַרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ
מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

The person called to the Torah now reads along with the reader in an undertone.

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah touches the end and the beginning³ of the reading with his *tallis* (or belt of the *Sefer Torah*) and kisses it. He then closes the scroll, turns slightly to the right and says:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ
תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִשְׁע בְּתוֹכָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah stays at the *bimah* until the next reading is concluded (or, if it is the last reading, until the Torah is raised).

1. *Sefer Haminhagim*. According to the Rebbe's personal custom, the handles are held directly, without the *tallis* in between.

2. *Sefer Haminhagim*. According to the Rebbe's personal custom, the *tallis* is used to touch the beginning, the end and then the beginning of the reading again.

3. *Sefer Haminhagim*. According to the Rebbe's personal custom, the *tallis* is used to touch the end, the beginning and then the end of the reading again.

*In the early years of his leadership, the
Alter Rebbe declared publicly:*

"We have to live with the times!"

*Through his brother, the Maharil, the
senior chasidim discovered that the Rebbe
meant that one should live with the Parsha of
the week, and the particular Parsha of the
day. One should not only study the weekly
Parsha, but live with it.*

(HAYOM YOM, CHESHVAN 2)

parshas Devarim

פַּרְשַׁת דְּבָרִים

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

“Look at these!” are words that might be exclaimed upon encountering something new or different. Thus, the opening phrase of our *Parsha*, “**These** are the words which Moshe spoke to all the Jewish people,” comes to teach us that words of Torah should always be looked upon as something new and exciting—as our Sages said, “*they should be new in your eyes every day*” (see *Rashi* to *Devarim* 26:16).

However, to change the way we think (and act) to the extent that we have genuinely adopted a “new” approach is no less than a miracle. For if the definition of a miracle is an “unprecedented change in nature,” then a totally fresh outlook to Torah and Divine service also represents an unprecedented change in *our* nature—a personal miracle.

In order to help us perform this wonder on a daily basis, God gave us the gift of sleep. At first glance, sleep appears to be a total waste of time; for how is the purpose of creation advanced when we are lying in bed? Why did God charge us with a mission to improve and perfect the world, only to “handicap” us with the need to spend a significant portion of each day out of action?

In truth however, God made us need to sleep for a positive reason; for after a night’s sleep one feels like a new person who is able to break free from the limitations of yesterday. So, since God wanted the “words which Moshe spoke to all the Jewish people,” to be “new in your eyes every day,” He built into us a mechanism which makes the miracle of changing our nature a little bit easier.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5750)

א אֵלֶּיךָ פִּתְנָמְיָא דִּי מְלִיל מִשָּׁה עִם כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבְרָא דִּירְדְנָא אוּכְחָ יְתְהוּן עַל דְּחָבוּ
בְּמִדְבָּרָא וְעַל דְּאֶרְגִּיזוּ בְּמִישְׁרָא לְקַבֵּל
יָם סוּף בְּפִאָרְן דְּאֶתְפֹּלְוּ עַל מִנָּא וּבְחֻצְרוֹת
דְּאֶרְגִּיזוּ עַל בְּשִׂרָא וְעַל דְּעֵבְדוּ עִגְלָא דְדָהָב:

א אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר
הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּמִדְבַר בְּעַרְבֵהָ מִזֶּל סוּף בֵּין-פֶּאָרֶן וּבֵין-תְּפֹלָה וְלִבְנֵי
וַחֲצֵרֹת וְדִי זָהָב: ב אַחַד עֶשְׂרֵי יוֹם מִחֻזְבֵּי דֶרֶךְ הַר-שִׁעִיר עַד

כ"ט

שהוא לבן, שאמרו ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלוקל⁵, ועל מה שעשו צמדבר פארן על ידי המרגלים: וחצרות. במחלוקתו של קרח. דבר אחר אמר להם, היה לכם ללמוד ממה שעשיתם למרים בחצרות ששציל לשון הרע, ואתם נדצרתם צמקום⁶: ודי זהב. הוכיחן על העגל שעשו ששציל רוב זכב שביה להם, שנאמר⁷ וכסף הרציתי להם וזהב עשו לצעל⁸: (3) אחד עשר יום מחורב. אמר להם משה ראו מה גרמתם, אין לכם דרך קלרה מחורב לקדש צרנע כדרך הר שער ואף הוא מהלך אחד עשר יום, ואתם הלכתם אותו בשלשה ימים, שהרי צערים צאייר נסעו מחורב שנאמר ויהי צשנה השנית צחדש השני צערים צחדש גוי⁹ וצ"ט צסיון שלחו את המרגלים מקדש צרנע¹⁰, לא מהם שלשים יום שעשו צקצרות התאור, שאכלו הצשר חדש ימים, ושצעה ימים שעשו בחצרות להסגר שם מרים, נמאל צשלשה ימים הלכו כל אותו הדרך, וכל כך היתה שכינה מתלצנת¹¹ צשצילכם למחר ציאחכם לארץ, וצשציל

(ה) אלה הדברים. לפי שכן דברי תוכחות ומנה כאן כל המקומות שהכעיסו לפני המקום צבן, לפיכך סתם את הדברים והזכירם צרמז מפני כבודן של ישראל: אל כל ישראל. אלו הוכיח מקצתן, היו אלו שצשוק אומרים, אתם הייתם שומעים מצן עמרם ולא השיבותם דבר מכך וכך, אלו היינו שם היינו משיצים אותו, לכך כנסם כולם ואמר להם הרי כולכם כאן כל מי שיש לו תשובה ישיב! במדבר. לא צמדבר היו אלא צערצות מואצ, ומהו צמדבר, אלא צשציל מה שהכעיסוהו צמדבר שאמרו מי יתן מותנו וגו'²: בערבה. צשציל הערצה שחטאו צבעל פער צשטים צערצות מואצ: מול סוף. על מה שהמרו צים סוף, צצואס לים סוף שאמרו המצלי אין קצרים צמלרים³, וכן צנסעס מתוך הים, שנאמר וימרו על ים צים סוף, כדליאת צערקין⁴: בין פארן ובין תפל ולבן. אמר רבי יוחנן חזרנו על כל המקרא ולא מלינו מקום ששמו תופל ולצן, אלא הוכיחן על הדברים שחטלו על המן

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does the Book of *Devarim* differ from the previous Books of Moshe?

OHR HACHAYIM: Moshe was not commanded by God to say the Book of *Devarim*. Rather, he said it of his own initiative, as our Sages taught (*Megilah* 31b). Thus, the book begins, "These are the words which Moshe spoke," as if to say that from this point onwards, Moshe did not hear these words directly from God.

TOSFOS: They were nevertheless said with Divine Inspiration (*ibid*).

● What did Moshe say to the Jewish People? (v. 1)

RASHI: These are words of rebuke, since all the places where they angered God are listed here. But, out of respect for the Jewish people, Moshe was vague with his words and he only hinted [at their sins, by mentioning the places where the sins occurred, and not the sins themselves]:

"In the desert"—he rebuked them for angering God in the desert when they said, "If only we had died [in Egypt]" (*Shemos* 16:3), etc.

"In the plain"—the sin of *Ba'al-Pe'or* at Shitim, in the plains of Mo'av (*Bamidbar* 25:1-9).

"At the Sea of Reeds"—their rebellion at the Reed Sea (*Shemos* 14:11; *Psalms* 106:7).

"Paran"—what they did in the Desert of Paran through the spies.

"Between Tofel and Lavan"—Rabbi Yochanan said: We have searched the entire Torah, but we have found no place named Tofel or Lavan! However, this means that he rebuked them because of the foolish things they had said (תְּפֹלָה) about the manna, which was white (לָבָן), saying "We're disgusted by this insubstantial bread" (*Bamidbar* 21:5).

"Chatzairos"—with the rebellion of Korach. Another explanation: He said to them, "You should have learned from what I did to Miriam at Chatzairos because of slander. But you spoke against God."

"Di-Zahav" (lit., "enough gold")—He rebuked them for the calf they had made as a result of their abundance of gold.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕯 MOSHE'S SUBTLE REBUKE (v. 1)

Rashi's comments to verse 1 prompt the following questions:

a.) What problem at the literal level was troubling Rashi, leading him to conclude that the list of locations in verse 1 was a subtle rebuke of the Jewish people?

b.) Why did Rashi need to stress, "All the places where they angered God are listed here"? Surely it is obvious that Rashi is speaking about our verse? Rashi could simply have written, "These are words of rebuke, since all the places where they angered God are listed."

c.) Rashi writes, that "all the places where they angered God are listed here." However, this does not appear to be the case, since the verse does not refer to the rebellions at Marah (*Shemos* 15:24) and Refidim (*ibid*. 17:2).

THE EXPLANATION

a.) Rashi was troubled: Why does the verse state, "These are the words which Moshe spoke to all the Jewish people on the bank," without even mentioning what Moshe's "words" were?

Rashi concluded that our verse must contain the actual words that Moshe said to the Jewish people. Thus, the list of locations at the end of the verse is not, as it first appears, a description of where Moshe said his words, but rather, they are Moshe's words themselves.

This leaves us with the question: Why did Moshe list a series of locations to the Jewish people? Rashi explains that this was a form of subtle rebuke, in which Moshe admonished the Jewish people for their various past rebellions. But out of respect, he did not rebuke them directly, but indirectly, by mentioning the locations of their various rebellions.

1 ספרי 2 שמות טו, ג. 3 שם יד, יא. 4 טו. 5 במדבר כא, ה. 6 ספרי 7 הושע ב, י. 8 ברכות לב. 9 במדבר י, יא. 10 תענית כט. 11 לשון "סורד". ואין להקשות איך שייך לשון "סורד" בשכינה, כי מפורש בכתוב (בהעלותך י, יז) בעניינו "ובנוחה יאמר שובה ה' גו", ופרשי"י שם: "לשון מרגוע כו". וראה רש"י יתרו יט, יח ד"ה הכבשן (לקו"ש ד"ט, ע' 1).

🕍 MOSHE'S SUBTLE REBUKE TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE 🕍

I **T**hese are the words (of subtle rebuke) which Moshe spoke to all the Jewish people in (the Plains of Mo'av, on the East) bank of the Jordan. (He mentioned the places where they rebelled against God): “in the wilderness, in the plain(s) of Mo'av, at the Sea of Reeds, (in the wilderness) of Paran, between Tofel and Lavan, at Chatzairois and at Di-Zahav*.”

² “From Choraiv (where the Torah was given) to Kadaish-Barne'a, (where the spies were sent out), by way of Mount Se'ir (normally) takes eleven days, (but you took just three days, because God was speeding your entry into the Land).”

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

THE BOOK OF DEVARIM

The Book of *Devarim* arose from a different form of prophetic revelation than the previous four Books of Moshe. For unlike the preceding books which were “dictated” directly by God, the Book of *Devarim* was a Divine revelation which Moshe phrased in his own words (see *Ohr HaChayim* & *Tosfos*).

At first glance, this would appear to be a disadvantage, for words arranged by God Himself are surely superior to those composed by Moshe. However, in truth, the Book of *Devarim* has its own advantage: *that the words of God reached a higher level of compatibility with the human mind.*

Moshe's contribution to the Book of *Devarim* did not detract from the validity of the work, for *Devarim* remains part of the *Chumash* just as much as the other four books. But having passed through the “interface” of a human mind, the words of this book were fashioned in a manner that other human beings would find easier to absorb. Thus:

- The Book of *Devarim* was said to the generation which was about to enter the Land of Israel, where food would not be provided miraculously, and extensive interaction with the mundane world would be necessary. As a preparation for this, the Jewish people were given the Book of *Devarim*, which contained Godly wisdom that had been brought more “down to earth” by Moshe.
- As a Divinely inspired work of the human mind, the Book of *Devarim* sets the precedent for later prophetic works. It is also a form of precursor for Rabbinic law, which is humanly conceived and yet is an expression of the will of God.
- A *ba'al teshuvah* is one who returned to God through his own initiative, but God assists the *ba'al teshuvah* with Divine revelation to his subconscious soul. This is similar to the way the Book of *Devarim* was said: Consciously it was Moshe's own words, but on a deeper level it was a product of Divine revelation. This similarity between *teshuvah* and the Book of *Devarim* is the inner reason why the book is characterized by “rebuke” (see *Rashi*), a way of helping another to do *teshuvah*.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1087ff.; vol. 19, p. 9ff.; vol. 36, p. 41ff.)

b.) To stress the above point, *Rashi* writes, “All the places where they angered God are listed *here*,” i.e. the reader should not think that “the words which Moshe spoke” are recorded elsewhere. Rather, Moshe's words are cited “here” in our verse.

c.) With the phrase, “*He rebuked them for angering God in the desert when they said, 'If only we had died [in Egypt]' etc.,*” *Rashi* makes clear that he is not referring to one particular rebellion, but rather, to *all* the rebellions in the desert, *beginning* with the complaint in the Desert of Sin, “*If only we had died [in Egypt].*” I.e. *Rashi's* use of the word “etcetera” indicates that Moshe was alluding here also to the complaints of the Jewish people that followed this one. Therefore, *Rashi* wrote, “*All the places where they angered God are listed here.*”

However, this begs the question: If all the desert rebellions had already been indicated by the word “etcetera,” then why does *Rashi* continue to specify the complaints about the manna, the sin of the spies and the incident with Korach? Surely these are also “desert rebellions” which were already indicated by the word “etcetera”?

It would seem, therefore, that when *Rashi* refers to the rebellions “in the desert,” he does not mean those incidents which occurred *geographically* in the desert, but rather, he is referring to the rebellions which occurred as a *direct consequence of being in the desert*. Thus, while the word “etcetera” alludes to the complaint in Refidim about a lack of water—a problem associated with being in the desert—it does *not* allude to the incidents of the spies, Korach, and the Golden Calf, which were caused by *other factors*.**

One problem that remains with this explanation is that *Rashi's* “etcetera” was written after the verse which describes the Jewish people's

🕍 The Last Word 🕍

When rebuking the Jewish people here, Moshe did not mention, or even allude to their sins. Rather, in order to maintain their dignity, he merely mentioned *the places* where they had sinned (see *Rashi*). This teaches us how careful we should be not to cause distress to another person. If, on occasion, it proves necessary to rebuke another Jew—even for serious sins, such as the ones which Moshe indicated here—we should nevertheless do so subtly and gently, while at the same time drawing the person close with warmth and love.

(*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5725)

* See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5725 (*Sichos Kodesh* 5725 vol. 2, pp. 309-311), where it is explained that even according to *Rashi*, “Tofel,” “Lavan” and “Di-Zahav” are names of actual places. However, see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 1ff. for an alternative explanation. ** The complaint in the Desert of Sin was made because they had no food, which was a result of being in the desert. But the complaint about the manna itself (“*our souls are disgusted by this insubstantial bread*”) was not a *direct* consequence of desert life, but rather a complaint about the quality of the food which God was giving them. Therefore it was mentioned separately.

ב מהלך חד עשר יומין מהרב ארץ מורא דשעיר עד רקם גיא: ג ויהוה בארבעין שנין בחד עשר ירחא בחד לירחא מליל משה עם בני ישראל ככל די פקיד יי יתה לותהון: ד בַּתְּרַם יָרַח יָת סִיחֹן מִלְכָּא דְאַמֹּרָאָה דִּיתְבַּב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן וַיִּתְּ עֹג מִלְכָּא דְמִתְנָן דִּיתְבַּב בְּעֶשְׂתֵּרֶת בְּאַדְרָעִי: ה בְּעֶבְרָא דִּירְדְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְמוֹאָב שְׂרֵי מֹשֶׁה פְּרִישׁ יָת אוֹלְפָן אוֹרִיתָא הָדָא לְמִימְרֵי: ו יי אֱלֹהֵינָא מְלִיל עֲמָנָא בְּחַרְבַּב לְמִימְרֵי סִגִּי לְכוּן דִּיתְבְּתוּן בְּמוֹרָא הָרִי: ז אֲתַפְּנוּ וְטוּלוּ לְכוּן וְעוּלוּ לְמוֹרָא דְאַמֹּרָאָה וְלְכָל מְגִירוּהֵי בְּמִישְׁרָא

קָדֵשׁ בְּרִנֵּעַ: ג וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּעֶשְׂתֵּי־עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ דְּבַר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ אֲלֵהֶם: ד אַחֲרַי הִכְתוּ אֶת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן וְאֵת עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר־יוֹשֵׁב בְּעֶשְׂתֵּרֶת בְּאַדְרָעִי: ה בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאַרְיֵן מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בֵּאר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לְאָמֹר: ו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דְּבַר אֱלֵינוּ בְּחַרְבַּב לְאָמֹר רַב־לָכֶם שִׁבְתַּת בְּהַר הַזֶּה: ז פָּנּוּ | וְסַעְוּ לָכֶם וּבֵאוּ הָרַ הָאֲמֹרִי וְאֶל־כָּל־שִׁכְנֵי בְּעַרְבָה בְּהַר וּבְשַׁפְלָה וּבְגִבְגָב וּבְחוּף הַיָּם

רש"י

וכמה שהמלך קשה והמדינה קשה²: אשר יושב בעשתרות. המלך קשה והמדינה קשה²: עשתרות. הוא לשון לוקון וקושי, כמו עשתרות קרניים⁵, ועשתרות זה הוא עשתרות קרניים שהיו שם רפאים שהכה אמרפל, שנאמר ויכו את רפאים צעשתרות קרניים⁵, ועוג נמלט מהם, והוא שנאמר ויצא הפליט⁶, ואומר כי רק עוג מלך הצען נשאר מיתר הרפאים⁷: באדרעי. שם המלכות: (ה) הואיל. התחיל כמו הכה נא הואלתי⁸: באר את התורה. הצבעים לשון פירעה להם⁹: (ו) רב לכם שבת. כפשוטו. ויש מדרש אגדה, הרבה גדולה לכם ושכר¹⁰ על ישיבתכם צרה הזו, עשייתם משכן ממורה וכלים, קצלתם תורה, מנייתם לכם סוכדריין, שרי אלפים ושירי מאות: (ז) פנו וסעו לכם. זו דרך ערד וחרמה: ובאו הר האמרי. כמשמעו: ואל כל שכניו. עמון ומואב וחר שעי: בערבה. זה מישור של יער: בהר. זה הר המלך: ובשפלה. זו שפלת דרום: ובגב ובחוף הים. אשקלון ועזה וקסרי וכו' כדאיתא בספרי: עד הנהר הגדול. מפני שנזכר עם ארץ ישראל, קוראו גדול. משל הדיוט אומר עצד מלך מלך, הדצק לשחור וישתחוו לך, קרצ לגבי דכינא

שקלקלתם הסד אחכס סביבות הר שעיר ארבעים שנה¹: (ג) ויהי בארבעים שנה בעשתי עשר חודש באחד לחודש. מלמד שלא הוכיחו אלא סמוך למיתה. ממי למד, מיעקב שלא הוכיח את בניו אלא סמוך למיתה². אמר, ראובן בני, אני אומר לך מפני מה לא הוכחתיך כל השנים הללו, כדי שלא תניחני ותלך ותדבק צעשו אחי. ומפני ארבעה דברים אין מוכיחין את האדם אלא סמוך למיתה, כדי שלא יהא מוכיחו וחוזר ומוכיחו, ושלא יהא חצירו רואהו ומתבייש ממנו כוי כדאיתא בספרי. וכן יהושע לא הוכיח את ישראל אלא סמוך למיתה, וכן שמואל, שנאמר הנני ענו צי, וכן דוד את שלמה צנו³: (ד) אחרי הכותו. אמר משה אם אני מוכיחם קודם שיכנסו לקצת הארץ, יאמרו מה לזה עלינו, מה היטיב לנו, אינו צא אלא לקנתר ולמאוא עילב, שאין צו כה להכניסנו לארץ, לפיכך המתין עד שהפיל סיוחן ועוג לפניהם וחרישם את הארץ ואחר כך הוכיח⁴: סיוחן וגו' אשר יושב וגו'. חילו לא היה סיוחן קשה והיה שריו צחצחון, היה קשה, שהמדינה קשה, וחילו היה עיר אחרת וסיוחן שריו צחוכה, היה קשה, שהמלך קשה, על אחת כמה

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How did Moshe “explain the Torah”? (v. 5)

RASHI: He translated it into seventy languages.

LEVUSH HA’OHRAH: Moshe feared that perhaps not every person understood Hebrew.

IMRAY SHEFER: Moshe anticipated that the Jewish people would be exiled in the future, and he wanted to ensure that they could study Torah in any language that they might come to speak (27:8).

● How were the people living “a lot” by Mt. Sinai? (v. 6)

RASHI: This is to be interpreted literally [i.e. too much time].

The explanation of the *Midrash Agadah* is: I have given you much (רב) greatness and reward as a result of living at this mountain. You made the Tabernacle, the Menorah, and the [Tabernacle] objects. You received the Torah. You appointed for yourselves a *Sanhedrin* (Supreme Court), leaders over thousands and leaders over hundreds.

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rebellion in the Desert of Sin (in *Shemos* 16:3). However, the rebellion at Marah (regarding the bitter, undrinkable water) occurred *before* this point, and thus does not appear to be included by *Rashi's* “etcetera,” which only alludes to rebellions subsequent to that of the Desert of Sin. So how is the rebellion at Marah alluded to in Moshe’s words (in keeping with *Rashi's* statement that “All the places where they angered God are listed here”)?

Upon closer examination of *Rashi's* choice of words, this question fades away: *Rashi* writes, “All the places where they angered God are listed

here.” But in the Torah’s description of the rebellion at Marah, it says, “The people complained to Moshe” (ibid. 15:24), suggesting that this was not a direct rebellion against God, but rather, against Moshe.

Thus, when listing “All the places where they angered God,” Moshe did not mention Marah, since Marah was a rebellion against Moshe’s own leadership, and not directly against God. So, while Moshe felt it appropriate to admonish the Jewish people for their sins against God, Moshe did not seek to defend his own honor by rebuking the people for rebelling against *him*.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5725)

1 לכאורה רק ליט שנה. וראה פרש"י שלח יד, לג. ונצ"ע (לקוי"ש ח"ט, ע' 1, הנהר 7) 2 ראה שיחת ש"פ דברים תשמ"ז 3 מלכים-א ב, א 4 ספרי 5 בראשית יד, ה 6 שם יג 7 דברים ג, יא 8 בראשית יח, כו 9 תנחומא ב 10 כ"ה בדפוסים שלפנינו. ולכאורה תנאים יותר הנוסח בדפוס ראשון ושני (ובמכה כתי"ר ש"ש שבספריית ליובאוויטש): "הרבה לכם גדולה ושכר" (לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 12)

(However, the Jewish people forfeited this blessing, and were delayed in the desert for forty years, as will now be explained):

³ It happened that in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, Moshe spoke to the children of Israel (shortly before his passing, and rebuked them) about everything that God had commanded him on their behalf. ⁴ (Moshe waited to rebuke them until) after he had (proven his military might by) defeating (the powerful) Sichon, King of the Amorites, who lived in (the powerful city of) Cheshbon, and (the powerful) Og, King of the Bashan, who lived in (the powerful city of) Ashteros (Karnayim), in (the kingdom of) Edre'iy.

⁵ On the (East) bank of the Jordan, in the land of Mo'av, Moshe began to explain the Torah (translating it into seventy languages), saying:

⁶ God, our God, spoke to us in Choraiu, saying, "You have been living too much (time) by this mountain. ⁷ Redirect yourselves (towards Arad and Charmah) and travel until you come to the Amorite mountain, and through its neighboring territories (Amon, Mo'av and Mount Se'ir), through the (forested) plain, on the mountain (of the king), through the lowlands (of the South), through (Gaza and Ashkelon)

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🕯️ LEAVING MOUNT SINAI (v. 6)

Rashi's comments to verse 6 prompt the following questions:

- a.) What was troubling Rashi?
- b.) What was lacking with Rashi's first interpretation that led him to bring a second one, from the "Midrash Agadah"?
- c.) In his second interpretation, Rashi explains that the Jewish people became great at Mount Sinai, and he cites the examples of building the Tabernacle, receiving the Torah, and appointing leaders. But surely the unique type of "greatness" that the Jewish people gained at Mount Sinai was the fact that they heard God speak?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi was troubled why verse 6 states, "You have been living *too much* (בְּרַב) by this mountain," which seems to imply that the length of time that the Jewish people had spent at Mount Sinai was inappropriate, when in truth every moment by Mt. Sinai was certainly valuable and essential. Surely the Torah should have written, "You have been living *enough* by this mountain" and not "too much"?

Apparently, our verse cannot be rendered literally. Nevertheless, Rashi writes that, despite first appearances, "This is to be interpreted literally," and a simple explanation can be found to solve this problem.

Rashi did not inform us what this "simple explanation" is, since he presumed that the reader could work it out for himself, by looking

at the context of the verse and comparing it with one of Rashi's earlier comments.

In verse 2, above, Moshe makes a rather cryptic statement: "From Choraiu (where the Torah was given) to Kadaish-Barne'a, (where the spies were sent out) by way of Mount Se'ir (normally) takes eleven days."

Rashi clarifies: "Moshe was saying to them: 'See what you caused! There is no shorter route from Choraiu to Kadaish-Barne'a than by way of Mount Se'ir, and even that is a journey of eleven days. But you covered it in three days!...The Divine Presence exerted itself to such an extent to hasten your arrival at the land of Canaan, but because you ruined things, He made you travel around Mount Se'ir for forty years!'"

In verse 2 itself, Moshe only hinted at this point briefly and subtly. But here in verses 6-8 Moshe spells out in more detail how God's original plan was to bring them immediately into the land without delay.

In this context, the reader will understand why God said, "You have been living *too much* by this mountain," for God was expressing *the sense of urgency* with which He desired the Jewish people to enter the Land of Israel, to the extent that "the Divine Presence exerted itself (so to speak) to such an extent to hasten your arrival to the land."

RASHI'S SECOND INTERPRETATION

However, in the final analysis, the term, "living *too much* by this mountain," does suggest that the Jewish people had been doing something wrong in remaining in the same location. This is clearly not the case, since the camp only relocated under direct instructions from God (see Bamidbar 9:17-18).

Thus, Rashi felt it necessary to bring a second interpretation, from the Midrash Agadah, that our verse is to be rendered, "You have become great (בְּרַב) by living at this Mountain."

At first glance, the unique "greatness" that the Jewish people acquired at Mount Sinai was that they heard God speak. However, Rashi rejected that this was the "greatness" to which our verse refers, as it does not fit into the context here.

The current passage was supposed to be a message to the Jewish people right before they entered the Land. Therefore, we can presume that the "greatness" mentioned here is something connected with the challenges of living an observant life alongside the other nations that the Jewish people were soon to face. In order to overcome these challenges successfully, the Jewish people needed to internalize the message, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation" (Shemos 19:6).

🕯️ Sparks of Chasidus 🕯️

TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH (v. 5)

Why did Moshe bother the Jewish people to listen to the Torah being translated into seventy languages, when surely most of the people were not familiar with the majority of these languages? (See Rashi to v. 6)

Moshe did this not for the people's sake, but for the Torah's sake. For Moshe's translation broke the barrier between Hebrew and all the other languages, ensuring that the holiness of the Torah remains even when it is translated into another language.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 36, pp. 38-40)

בְּמוֹרָא וּבְשִׁפְלֹתָא וּבְקְרוּמָא וּבְסַפְרָא יִמָּא
אַרְעָא דְכַנְעַנְיָא וְלִבְנֵי עַד נְהָרָא רַבָּא נְהָרָא
פְּרַת: ה חוּי דִּיהֶבִית קְדָמִיכוּן יַת אַרְעָא עוּלוּ
וְאַחְסִינוּ יַת אַרְעָא דִּי קָם יִי לְאַבְהֶתְבוּן
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב לְמַתָּן לְהוּן
וְלִבְנֵיהוּן בְּתַרְיָהוּן: ט וְאַמְרִית לְכוּן בְּעַדְנָא
הֵהִיא לְמִימְרָא לִית אָנָּא יְכִיל בְּלַחוּדִי לְסוּבְרָא
יַתְכוּן: י יִי אֲלֶהְכוּן אֶסְגִּי יַתְכוּן וְהָא אִיתִיכוּן

אַרְצֵי הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַלְבָּנוֹן עַד־הַנְּהַר הַנָּהָל נְהַר־פְּרַת: ה רְאֵה
נָתַתִּי לְפָנֵיכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּאֵז וּרְשׁוֹ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק לְיַעֲקֹב לְתַת לָהֶם וּלְזַרְעָם
אַחֲרֵיהֶם: ט וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם בַּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא־אוּכַל לְבַדִּי
שָׂאת אֶתְכֶם: י יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֲרַבָּה אֶתְכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם

— רש"י —

אמר להם, ה' אלהיכם הרבה אתכם, הגדיל והרבים אתכם על דיינוכם, נטל את העושה מכם ונתנו על דיינו. וכן אמר שלמה כי מי יוכל לשפוט את עמך הכבד הזה,³ אפשר מי שכתוב צו ויחכם מכל האדם,⁴ אומר מי יוכל לשפוט, אלא כך אמר שלמה אין דייני אומה זו כדייני שאר האומות ע"א, שאם דן ובורג ומכה וחונק ומטה את דינו וגוזל אין צדק כלום, אני אם חייבתי ממון שלא כדן נפשות אני נחצע, שנאמר⁵ וקבע את קוצביהם נפש!¹ (י) והנכם היום בכובבי השמים.⁶ וכי ככוכבי השמים היו צאוחו היום, והלא לא היו אלא שישים רבוא, מהו והנכם היום, הנכם משולים כיום,

ואידכן!¹ (ח) ראה נתתי. צעיינו אתם רואים. איני אומר לכם מאומד ומשמוע!² באו ורשו. אין מערער בדבר² ואינכם צריכים למלחמה, אלו לא שלחו מרגלים לא היו צריכים לכלי זיון: לאבתיכם. למה הזכיר שוב לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב, אלא הזכירם כדי לעלמו, יצחק כדאי לעלמו, יעקב כדאי לעלמו: (ט) ואמר אליכם בעת ההוא לאמר. מהו לאמר, אמר להם משה, לא מעלמי אני אומר לכם, אלא מפי הקב"ה!¹ לא אוכל לבדי וגו'. אפשר שלא היה יכול לדון את ישראל, אדם שהוליא ממזרים וקרע להם את היס והוריד את המן והגיו את השליו לא היה יכול לדונם, אלא כך

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How could the Jewish people “see” that the Land was “in their hands”? (v. 8)

RASHI: [Moshe was saying]: “You can see this with your own eyes! I am not telling you this out of speculation or from hearsay.”

NACHALAS YA’AKOV: Perhaps Moshe’s statement, “You can see this with your own eyes,” refers to the defeat of Sichon and Og, which had proven to be easy, despite the fact that they were powerful.

BE’ER BASADEH: The solution of *Nachalas Ya’akov* is untenable, since here Moshe is recounting God’s words at Mt. Sinai *before* the defeat of Sichon and Og. Rather, *Rashi’s* statement, “You can see this

with your own eyes,” refers to the fact that God went ahead of the Jewish people to protect them, as is stated in *Devarim* 23:15.

PANE’ACH RAZA: God cast down the ministering angels of the nations and subjugated them before Moshe, as *Rashi* explains below (v. 8), that no weapons would be required for the conquest.

● How were the Jewish people to “come and take possession of the Land”? (v. 8)

RASHI: [God was saying]: “No one will contest the matter, and you will not need to go to war.” If they had not sent the spies, [and had trusted God] they would not have needed weapons.

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Thus, the sound of God speaking, which they could not take with them into the Land, would be of limited assistance to them. Rather, *Rashi* writes, what would assist the Jewish people after they had entered the Land of Israel was: The Tabernacle, which brought the Divine Presence to dwell *with them* in the Land; the *acceptance* of the Torah, i.e. the internalization and practical application of the Torah’s values into daily life that they had already achieved; and the appointment of leaders, to ensure that the Torah was observed among the communities of Israel.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 12ff.)

🔗 THE PROMISE OF MIRACULOUS CONQUEST (v. 8)

Verses 8-9 describe God’s promise to the Jewish people concerning the conquest of the Land of Israel, which was communicated by Moshe before the incident of the spies.

Rashi explains that God was promising a totally miraculous conquest, without the need for weapons, but this was forfeited by the Jewish people, due to the incident with the spies.

Rashi’s comments prompt the following questions:

a.) On the words, “See that I have put the Land before you” (v. 8), *Rashi* comments, “You can see this with your own eyes!” I.e. *Rashi* makes it clear that the Torah is not using a metaphor here, but that the verse refers to actual, physical sight. This begs the question: At this point, the Jewish people were still encamped by Mount Sinai (as stated in v. 6), so how would it be possible to *see* the Land of Israel and its conquest with their eyes?

b.) It is *obvious* that if one sees something with one’s own eyes, that no further confirmation is required. So why does *Rashi* add, “I am not telling you this out of speculation or from hearsay”?

c.) In his second comment to verse 8, *Rashi* writes, “If they had not sent the spies, they would not have needed weapons.” On what basis did *Rashi* conclude, at the literal level, that no weapons would be required?

THE EXPLANATION

In verse 7, the Jewish people are told the *details* concerning the conquest of the Land of Israel: “Redirect yourselves and travel until you

1 ספרי 2 היינו, ערעור בדין בעלות ארץ ישראל (לקו"ש חל"ד ע' 6) 3 מלכים-א ג, ט 4 שם ה, יא 5 משלי כב, כג 6 בדפוס שני ובכמה כתי"י שבספרייט ליובאוויטש הועתק גם "לדוב" בד"ה. אבל בדפוס ראשון דפרשיי דפוס יר"י הנפוצים ליתא. וכנראה כן היתה גירסת הראי"ם (לקו"ש חל"ס ע' 3, הערה 17).

in the south and (Caesarea) by the seashore, (conquering) the land of the Canaanites, and the Lebanon, all the way until the great river, the Euphrates River. ⁸ See that I have (already) put the Land (into your hands) before you! (All you have to do is) come and take possession of the Land which God swore to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya'akov, that He would give (the Land to) them and their descendants after them. (Nobody will even oppose you).”

REBUKE CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

1:9 **I** said to you at that time—saying (only that which I had been told by God)—“I cannot carry (the burden of judging) you on my own, ¹⁰ (for) God, your God, has made you great. You are (so great that you are everlasting like the sun which shines during) the day, and like (the moon and) the

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come to...the land of the Canaanites, and the Lebanon, all the way until the great river, the Euphrates River.” Verse 8 then appears to state the general instruction to “come and take possession of the Land, etc.”

So *Rashi* was troubled: Why are the Jewish people given the details concerning the conquest of the Land, in verse 7, before the general command to conquer it, in verse 8?

Rashi came to the conclusion that verse 8 is not merely an instruction to conquer the Land, but rather, that it is a further description to the Jewish people about how they would conquer the land (and the actual command is in verse 7).

Up to this point, the Jewish people were aware that they would eventually conquer the Land from two sources:

a.) They had heard from Moshe while they were still in Egypt, that “I will bring you...to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey” (*Shemos* 3:17), and “the people believed” (*ibid.* 4:31).

b.) After the miracles which occurred when leaving Egypt, and the splitting of the Reed Sea, where they sang about coming to the Land (*ibid.* 15:17).

Since the Jewish people were familiar with these two points, *Rashi* concluded that our verse must be confirming the conquest of the Land in an even more powerful manner. Thus *Rashi* stresses: *I am not telling you this out of speculation*—as you may have speculated yourselves after seeing God’s miracles when leaving Egypt—or from something I’ve heard—as I communicated to you God’s promises while you were still in Egypt. Rather: *You’ll see it with your own eyes!*, i.e. the Jewish people will see the proof themselves, with their very eyes, that the conquest of the Land was about to occur.

But what exactly were the Jewish people going to be able to see while still camped at Mount Sinai? And how did *Rashi* conclude that Moshe promised them a totally supernatural conquest?

Rashi did not address either of these points directly, since the matter is self-understood from one of *Rashi*’s earlier comments:

In verse 2, above, *Rashi* writes: “There is no shorter route from Choraiv to Kadaish-Barne’a than by way of Mount Se’ir, and even that is a journey of eleven days. But you covered it in three days!” (as *Rashi* continues to prove by a series of calculations). So, when reaching our verse—which was said by Moshe before the journey from Choraiv to Kadaish-Barne’a (see v. 6)—the reader knows that the Jewish people were about to witness a phenomenal miracle, of completing an eleven-day journey in just three days. Therefore, *Rashi* did not need to explain how the Jewish people would be given visual confirmation of their imminent conquest (“You’ll

see it with your own eyes!”), for the reader knows that the Jewish people were about to witness a miraculous beginning to their journey towards conquering the Land of Israel.

Similarly, *Rashi* did not need to bring any proof for his assertion, “No one will contest the matter, and you will not need to go to war,” to the extent that “they would not have needed weapons,” for the miraculous beginnings with which the conquest began suggested that the entire process would be totally supernatural.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

We can now explain a further difficulty with *Rashi*’s comment here:

Rashi writes, “If they had not sent the spies they would not have needed weapons.” Now, at first glance, the problem here was not the actual sending of the spies but the fiasco which followed, where the Jewish people lost faith in God’s promises after the spies’ negative reports. So why did *Rashi* not write, “If it were not for the sin of the spies...”?

However, based on the above we can understand why the sending of the spies alone was sufficient to forfeit God’s promises. For God had promised them (and had begun to show them) a totally supernatural conquest. Thus, as soon as they had sent out spies, which is a strategy only required for a natural conquest, the Jewish people had already demonstrated an open denial of the promise of supernatural conquest.

And this was Moshe’s rebuke here to the Jewish people forty years later, as they were about to enter the Land: the importance of absolute trust in God.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 1ff.)

The Last Word

Rashi stresses (v. 8) that if the Jewish people had trusted in God, nobody would have contested the Jewish people’s rights to the Land of Israel.

Likewise, in our times, when the Jewish people will trust in God, that the Land of Israel belongs unequivocally to them, and are willing to declare this openly to the nations of the world, then, “No one will contest the matter, and you will not need to go to war.” In fact, even weapons will prove unnecessary, as *Rashi* writes.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 8)

יִמָּא דִּין כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמִסְגֵי יָא יִי אֱלֹהֵא
 דְּאִבְהִתְּכוּן יוֹסֵף עֲלֵיכוּן כְּוַתְּכוּן אֱלָף זְמַנִּין
 וַיִּבְרַךְ יִתְכוּן כְּמָא דִּי מְלִיל לְכוּן יִי אִיבְרִין
 אֶסּוּבֵר בְּלִחוּדֵי מְרַחְכוּן וְעַסְקִיכוּן וְדִינְכוּן:
 יִי הִבּוּ לְכוּן גּוֹבְרִין חֲפִימִין וְסוֹכְלִתְגּוּן וּמְדַעֵן
 לְשִׁבְטֵיכוּן וְאַמְנָנּוּן רִישֵׁן עֲלֵיכוּן יִי וְאַתְבְּתוּן
 יְתִי וְאַמְרַתוּן תְּקִין פְּתַנְמָא דִּי מְלִלְתָא
 לְמַעַבְדֵּי: מו וְדְבָרֵי יִי רִישֵׁי שְׁבֻטֵיכוּן גּוֹבְרִין
 חֲפִימִין וּמְדַעֵן וּמִנִּיתִי יִתְהוּן רִישֵׁן עֲלֵיכוּן
 רְבַנֵי אֲלָפִין וְרַבְנֵי מְאֻתָא וְרַבְנֵי חֲמִשִּׁין וְרַבְנֵי

כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב: יא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתְכֶם יוֹסֵף עֲלֵיכֶם
 כְּכֶם אֱלָף פְּעָמִים וַיִּבְרַךְ אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם: [שני] יב אֵיכָה*
 אִשָּׂא לְבַדִּי טְרַחְתְּכֶם וּמִשְׁאַכְּם וְרִיבְכֶם: יג הֲבֹו לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים
 חֲכָמִים וְנִבְנִים וַיִּדְעִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאֲשִׁימָם בְּרִאשֵׁיכֶם:
 יד וְתַעֲנֵנוּ אֹתִי וְתֹאמְרוּ טוֹב־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:
 טו וְאָקַח אֶת־רֵאשֵׁי שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וַיִּדְעִים וְאֶתְּן
 אוֹתָם רֵאשִׁים עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְשְׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים

*אין מנהגנו להפסיק פסוק קודם כדי שלא להתחיל שני באיכה (ודלא כסי' המנהגים ס"ע 31).

רש"י

וכשאין מציאין לו הוא מחזר ומציא משלו: וידועים לשבטיכם. שם
 ניכרים לכם, שם צא לפני מעוטף בטליתו איני יודע מי הוא ומאחזה שצט
 הוא ואם הגון הוא, אצל אתם מכירין זו, שאתם גדלתם אותו, לכך נאמר
 וידועים לשבטיכם: בראשיכם. ראשים ומכודים עליכם שחיו נוגין
 בהם כבוד ויראה: ואשמה. חסר יו"ד, למד שאשמותיכם של ישראל תלויות
 בראשי דייניכם, שהיה להם למחות ולכוון אותם לדרך הישרה: (יד) ותענו
 אותי וגו'. החלטתם את הדבר להנחתכם, היה לכם להשיב, רצינו משה ממי
 נאה ללמוד ממך או מתלמידך, לא ממך שנלעטרת עליה. אלא ידעתי
 מחשבותיכם. הייתם אומרים, עכשיו יתמנו עלינו דיינין הרבה, אם אין
 מכירנו אנו מציאין לו דורון והוא נושא לנו פנים: לעשות. אם הייתי
 מתעלל, אתם אומרים עשה מהרה: (טו) ואקח את ראשי שבטיכם.
 משכתיים צדדים, אשריכם, על מי צאתם להתמנות, על צני אצרכם יחזק
 ויעקב, על צני אדם שנקראו אחים ורעים, חלק ונחלה וכל לשון חבה:
 אנשים חכמים וידועים. אצל נבונים לא מלאתי. זו אחת משבע מדות שאמר
 יתרו למשה, ולא מלא אלא שלשה, אנשים לדיקים, חכמים וידועים: ראשים
 עליכם. שתנהגו בהם כבוד. ראשים במקרה, ראשים בזממך, ראשים בזממך ומתן,
 כנס אחרון ויולא ראשון: שרי אלפים. אחד ממונה על אלף: שרי מאות.

קיימים לעולם כחמה וכלצנה וככוכבים: (יא) יוסף עליכם ככם אלה
 פעמים. מהו שזו ויברך אתכם כאשר דבר לכם, אלא אמרו לו משה אתה
 נותן קצבה לצרכתנו, כבר הצטיח הקצ"ה את אצרכם אשר אם יוכל איש
 למנות וגו', אמר להם זו משלי היא, אצל הוא יברך אתכם כאשר דבר לכם:
 (יב) איכה אשא לבדי. אם אומר לקבל שכר לא חולק, זו היא שאמרתי
 (ס"א שאמרנו) לכם לא מעלמי אני אומר לכם, אלא מפי הקדוש ברוך הוא:
 טרחכם. מלמד שהיו ישראל טרחנין. היה אחד מהם רואה את בעל דינו נוזח
 בדוין, אומר יש לי עדים להביא, יש לי ראיות להביא, מוסיף אני עליכם
 דיינין: ומשאבם. מלמד שהיו אפיקורסין. הקדים משה ללאת, אמרו, מה
 ראה בן עמרם שלא ללאת, שמה אינו שפוי בתוך ביתו. אחר ללאת, אמרו, מה
 ראה בן עמרם שלא ללאת, מה אתם סבורים, יושב ויועץ עליכם עלות רעות
 וחושב עליכם מחשבות (ס"א מלות והשזנות): וריבכם. מלמד שהיו רוגנים:
 (יג) הבו לכם. הזמינו עלמכם לדבר: אנשים. וכי תעלה על דעתך נשים,
 מה תלמוד לומר אנשים, לדיקים: חכמים³. כסופים⁴: נבונים. מצינים דבר
 מתוך דבר. זו היא ששאל אריוס את רבי יוסי, מה בין חכמים לנבונים. חכם
 דומה לשולחני עשיר, כשמציאין לו דיגין לראות רואה, וכשאין מציאין לו
 יושב ותוהא. נזון דומה לשולחני תגר, כשמציאין לו מעות לראות רואה,

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Who are "insightful" men? (v. 13)

RASHI: Those who can deduce one thing from another.

This is what Arius asked Rabbi Yosi: "What is the difference between wise men and insightful men?"

[Rabbi Yosi replied]: "A wise man is like a rich money changer. When people bring him coins to examine, he examines them; when they don't bring him anything, he sits and does nothing."

"An insightful man, however, is like an enterprising money changer. When they bring him coins to examine, he examines them; but when they don't bring him any, he goes out and does [business] with his own [money]."

● Why did Moshe not pick any "insightful" men? (v. 15)

RASHI: [He said]: "I couldn't find any insightful men."

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☞ "INSIGHTFUL" JUDGES (v. 13, 15)

In his commentary to verse 13, *Rashi* cites the analogy used by Rabbi Yosi, which explains the distinction between "wise" and "insightful" men.

This presents us with the following problems:

a.) In *Parshas Ki Sisa*, the Torah states, "See, I have appointed Betzalel the son of Uri the son of Chur...I have filled him with the spirit of God,

with wisdom, with insight etc." (*Shemos* 31:2-3). *Rashi* comments: "Wisdom"—that which a person hears from others, and learns. 'Insight'—independently derived ideas that are concluded from things that one has been taught."

So since *Rashi* has already informed us of the meaning of the term "insight," in *Parshas Ki Sisa*, why does he repeat himself here?

1 ספרי 2 בראשית יג, טו 3 הגירסה הנכונה ברש"י היא (ע"ד הספרי כאן, וכ"ה ברוב כתי" רש"י שבספריית ליובאוויטש) "אנשים צדיקים כסופים", בהשמטת תיבת "חכמים", או שתיבת "חכמים" צ"ל חלק מדיה "נבונים": חכמים נבונים... מה בין וכו'. היינו ש"כסופים" הוא פירושו של "אנשים" ולא "חכמים". ואכ"מ. (ע"פ לקו"ש חל"ד ע' 9, הערה 6, ובשוליו הגליון 8) 4 ראה פרש"י ויצא לא, ל: "נכספת - חמדת". וכאן הפירוש: אנשים שנכספים אליהם, להיות במחיצתם ולקבל מהם כו' (ע"פ שיחת ש"פ דברים תשמ"ו)

(individual*) stars of the heavens, (so you would be an awesome responsibility to judge even if you were few, all the more so that you are*) many. ¹¹ (In fact, in the future,) God, the God of your ancestors, will multiply your number a thousand times. He will bless you as He told you (He would, when He took Avraham outside his tent and showed him the stars).

SECOND
READING

¹² “(If you argue that I should judge you alone, despite the responsibility and risk of punishment, God has forbidden me from doing so. For) how could I bear singlehandedly your (tactical legal) maneuvers (in court, the) burden of your (slander against me), and your disputes (with each other)? ¹³ (So) prepare (righteous), wise and insightful men for yourselves, known among your tribes, and I will appoint them as your leaders.”

¹⁴ You answered me (disrespectfully) and said, “The thing which you have proposed to do is good (for us).”

¹⁵ I selected (and persuaded) wise and well known men from the leaders of your tribes, and I made them leaders over you—leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and police officers over your tribes.

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And if *Rashi* feared the reader might have forgotten this explanation, which was studied some time ago, and he felt it necessary to remind the reader, then he should have also reminded us here of the definition of “wisdom.”

b.) What is added by the analogy of the two money changers?

c.) Why does *Rashi* quote, “This is what Arius asked Rabbi Yosi”? Of what relevance is this at the literal level?

THE EXPLANATION

In his comment to verse 15, *Rashi* writes that Moshe did not actually appoint any “insightful” men as judges, because he simply was unable to find any.

But this seems to contradict what was stated earlier: It was possible to find “insightful men” for the construction of the Tabernacle—as the verse states, “Betzalel and Ohaliav should do (all the work) together with every wisehearted man into whom God had instilled wisdom and insight”—so why was Moshe unable to find any insightful men to appoint as judges?***

Obviously, there were insightful men among the Jewish people, but the type of insight required to construct the Tabernacle was different from that required to be a judge:

One level of insight is where a person is able to clarify additional details on his own, after being given a general overview. This would have been sufficient for constructing the Tabernacle, since after hearing the general instructions from Moshe, there would have been certain details that the engineers would have had to deduce by themselves.

A judge, however, requires a much deeper level of insight, akin to “lateral thinking.” With this talent, a person is not only capable of filling in further details *within* the information transmitted to him by his teacher, but he is able to *reapply* what he has learned in a variety of other situations, and derive innovative, independent conclusions.

In order to clarify *this* distinction, *Rashi* cited the analogy of the two money changers:

The rich money changer only works with the materials he is given, analogous to a person who can calculate *within* the parameters of the information he is given. However, the enterprising money changer “goes out and does business with his own money”—corresponding to one who is able to extrapolate beyond the context of the information at hand.

Thus, by citing this analogy, *Rashi* has explained to the reader why Moshe was unable to find any “insightful” men suitable to be judges, whereas he was able to find insightful individuals to construct the Tabernacle—for the insight required to be a judge is a much *rarer* talent, of truly innovative, independent thinking.

ARIUS CHALLENGES RABBI YOSI

After fully explaining a verse at the literal level, *Rashi* sometimes feared that the highly astute reader might be troubled by a more subtle question. Since problems such as these were only relevant to a small portion of *Rashi*’s readership, he did not address these issues directly, but he would often hint to a solution. *Rashi* chose to do this by expressly mentioning the original author of the teaching cited, as if to say: Your subtle question can be answered by bearing in mind who authored this teaching.

In our case, the more astute reader may be left with the following question: If there were no individuals blessed with a sufficient degree of insight that a judge requires, then why did God trouble Moshe to look for

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

When creating the forces of holiness and the forces of impurity, “God made one opposite the other” (Ecclesiastes 1:14), i.e. for each holy power, God made a diametrically opposed equivalent.

Arius (see *Rashi*) the Bishop (250-366 C.E.) embodied the wisdom (*chochmah*) of impurity—alluded to by the fact that the word Arius (אָרִיּוּס) in Hebrew contains within it the letters of the word אֹר, which means “light,” and “light is *chochmah*” (*Zohar* I 30b). Since *chochmah* is the ability to perceive the absolute unity of God, we find that even the *chochmah* of impurity—embodied by Arius—came close to the unity of God. For Arius was a bishop who rejected some aspects of his religion which are incompatible with the unity of God (for which he suffered excommunication).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 15)

* See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 39, pp. 4-5. **Particularly when we consider that these two series of appointments must have occurred at virtually the same time, since the instruction for both appointments was transmitted by Moshe on the same day—the day following *Yom Kippur*. See *Rashi* to *Shemos* 18:13; 30:16; 31:18; 33:11; 35:1. (*Maharik* answers that he found insightful men but they were lacking in other qualities required to be a judge. However, *Rashi* appears to write unequivocally, “I could not find any insightful men.”)

עשוריתא וסרכין לשבטיכון: טו ופקידית ית דיניכון בעדנא ההיא למימר שמעו בין אחיכון ותדונון קושטא בין גברא ובין אחוהי ובין גיורה: י לא תשתמודעון אפין בדינא מלי ועירא כרבא תשמעון לא תדחלון מן קדם גברא ארי דינא די הוא ופתגמא די יקשי מנכון תקרבון לותי ואשמענה: יח ופקידית יתכון בעדנא ההיא ית כל פתגמא די תעדון: יט ונטלנא מהרב והליכנא ית כל מדברא רבא ודחילא ההוא די חזיתון ארח טורא דאמוראה כמא די פקיד יי אלהנא יתנא ואתנא עד רקס גיאה: כ ואמרית לכון אתיתון עד טורא דאמוראה די אלהנא יתב לנא: כא חוי יתב יי אלהך קדמד ית ארעא סק אחסן כמא די מליל יי אלהא דאבהתך לך לא תדחל ולא תתבר: כב וקרבתון לותי פלכון ואמרתון נשלח גוברין קדמנא ויאילון לנא ית ארעא ויתיבון יתנא פתגמא ית ארעא די נסק בה וית קרויא די נעול לתן: כג ושפר בעיני פתגמא ודברית מנכון הרין עשר גברין גברא חד לשבטא: כד ואתפניו וסליקו לטורא ואתו עד נחלא דאתכלא ואלילו יתה: כה ונסיבו בדיהון מאבא דארעא ואחיתו לנא ואתיבו יתנא פתגמא ואמרו טבא ארעא די אלהנא

ושרי עשרות ושרים לשבטיכם: טו ואצוה את שפטיכם בעת ההוא לאמר שמע בין אחיכם ושפטתם לדק בין איש ובין אחיו ובין גרו: י לא תכירו פנים במשפט בקטן בגדל תשמעון לא תגורו מפני איש כי המשפט לאלהים הוא והדבר אשר יקשה מכם תקרבון אלי ושמעתיו: יח ואצוה אתכם בעת ההוא את כל הדברים אשר תעשון: יט ונסע מחרב וגלך את כל המדבר הגדול והגורא ההוא אשר ראיתם דרך הר האמרי כאשר צוה יהוה אלהינו אתנו ונבא עד קדש ברנע: כ ואמר אלכם באתם עדה הר האמרי אשר יהוה אלהינו נתן לנו: כא ראה נתן יהוה אלהיך לפניך את הארץ עליה רש כאשר דבר יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך אל תירא ואל תחת: [שלישין כב] ותקרבון אלי בלכם ותאמרו נשלחה אנשים לפנינו ויחפרו לנו את הארץ וישבו אתנו דבר את הדרך אשר נעלה בה ואת הערים אשר נבא אליהן: כג וייטב בעיני הדבר ואקח מכם שנים עשר אנשים איש אחד לשבט: כד ויפנו ויעלו ההרה ויבאו עד נחל אשכל וירגלו אתה: כה ויקחו בידם מפרי הארץ ויורדו אלינו וישבו אתנו דבר ויאמרו טובה הארץ אשר יהוה אלהינו נתן לנו:

כ"ט

מעלה אני על מי שמנכו כאילו הכיר פנים דיון: בקטן בגדול תשמעון. שיבא חזיב עליך דין של פרוטה כדון של מאה מנה, שאם קדם וצא לפניך לא תסלקנו לאחרון.⁵ דבר אחר כקטן בגדול תשמעון, כהרגומו, שלא תאמר, זה עני הוא וחזירו עשיר ומלווה לפרנסו, אזכר את העני ונמלא מתפרנס נקיות. דבר אחר שלא תאמר, היאך אני פוגס כבודו של עשיר זה בשביל דינר, אזכרו עכשיו, וכשיאל לחון אומר אני לו, תן לו שאתה חייב לו: לא תגורו מפני איש. לא תיראו. דבר אחר לא תגורו, לא תכניס דברך מפני איש.⁶ לשון אוגר בקין:⁷ כי המשפט לאלהים הוא. מה שאתה נוטל מזה שלא כדון, אתה מזיקני להחזיר לו, נמלא שבעית עלי המשפט: תקרבון אלי. על דבר זה נסתלק ממנו משפט צנות לפחד, וכן שמואל אמר לשאל אנכי הרואה,⁸ אמר לו הקצ"ה, חייך שאני מודיעך שאין אתה

אחד ממונה על מאה: ושטרים. מניתי עליכם לשבטיכם. אלו הכופתין והמכין ברעוה על פי דיינין: (טז) ואצוה את שפטיכם. אמרתי להם הוו מחויבים דיון, אם צא דין לפניך פעם אחת שמים ושלש, אל תאמר כבר צא דין זה לפני פעמים הרבה, אלא היו נושאים ונותנים ב: בעת ההוא. משמיתים אמרתי להם, אין עכשיו כלשעבר, לשעבר הייתם ברשות עלמכם, עכשיו הרי אתם משועבדים לזכור: שמוע. לשון הוה אודי"ט בלע"ז, כמו זכור² ושמור:³ ובין גרו. זה בעל דינו, שאוגר עליו דברים.⁴ דבר אחר וצין גרו, אף על עסקי דירה בין חלוקת אחים אפילו בין תנור לכירים:⁴ (יז) לא תכירו פנים במשפט. זה הממונה להושיב דיינין, שלא יאמר, איש פלוני נאה או גבור, אושיבו דיון, איש פלוני קרובי, אושיבו דיון בעיר, והוא אינו צקי דיינין, נמלא מחייב את הזכאי ומזכה את החייב.

TORAS MENACHEM

"insightful men" in the first place? Surely God knew that there were no sufficiently qualified candidates, and that He was thus commanding Moshe in vain!

In response to this question, Rashi writes that the above analogy was taught by Rabbi Yosi, who was blessed with an outstanding degree of insight, as our Sages testified: "When Rabbi Yosi died, insight ceased"

¹⁶ On that occasion, I instructed your judges, saying, “Listen (patiently) to your brothers’ (claims, even if you have heard a similar case before), and judge righteously between a man and his brother who disputes him. ¹⁷ Do not show favoritism (and appoint judges who are not qualified, who will err) in judgment. You should listen (with equal interest) to (a case involving) a small (amount of money as you do to a case involving) a large amount. Do not fear any man (and show him favoritism, for this is as if one has exacted money from) God, (Who must correct) the judgment (and restore the money to its rightful owner). If a case is too difficult for you, bring it to me, and I will hear it.” ¹⁸ And, on that occasion, I gave you instructions about all the things you should do (in a monetary case and in a capital case).

REBUKE FOR THE INCIDENT WITH THE SPIES

1:19

We journeyed from Choraiv and went through that entire great and fearful desert (filled with the giant snakes and scorpions) that you saw, towards the Amorite mountain as God, our God, commanded us—and we arrived at Kadaish-Barne’a.

²⁰ I said to you, “You have arrived at the Amorite mountain, which God, our God, is giving us!”

²¹ “Look! God, your God, has put the Land (into your hands) before you! (All you have to do is) go and take possession of it, as God, the God of your fathers, has told you! Don’t be afraid or demoralized!”

THIRD
READING

²² But you all approached me (in a rowdy mob) and said, “Let’s send men ahead of us who will search out the Land for us and bring us back (a report detailing which language the people use to speak their word(s), which route we should follow, and which cities we should come to (first, to conquer).”

²³ (I claimed that) it seemed like a good idea to me (hoping that this would convince you of the truth of my words, when you would see that I was ready to put them to the test, but you did not retract your demands). So I selected twelve men from (the finest among) you, one man for each tribe. ²⁴ They set off and went up the mountain, until they came to the valley of Eshkol. Then, they spied out (the entire land).

²⁵ They took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us. They brought us back a report and said, “The Land that God, our God, is giving us is good!”

רש"י

בעיני הדבר. צעיני ולא צעיני המקום. ואם צעיני משה היה טוב לצמח אמרה בתוכחות, משל לאדם שאומר להצירו מכור לי חמורך זה, אמר לו הן. ונתנו אתה לי לנסיון, אמר לו הן. צהרים וגבעות, אמר לו הן. כיון שראה שאין מעבדו כלום, אמר הלוקח בלבו, בטוח הוא זה שלא אמלא בו מום. מיד אמר לו, טול מעותיך ואיני מנסהו. מעתה אף אני הודיתי לדצריכם, שמה תחזרו צכס כשתראו שאיני מעבד, ואתם לא חזרתם צכס! ואקח מבם. מן הצרורים צכס מן המסולתים צכס! שנים עשר אנשים איש אחד לשבט. מגיד שלא היה שצט לוי עמהם! (כד) עד נחל אשבל. מגיד שנקרא על שם סופו! וירגלו אותה. מלמד שכלכו צה ארבעה אומנים שתי וערב! (כח) ויורדו אלינו. מגיד שארץ ישראל צבוכה מכל הארצות! ויאמרו טובה הארץ. מי הם שאמרו טובה, יחושע וכלב!

רוח. ואימתי הודיעו, כשצא למשוח את דוד וירא את אליאז ויאמר אך נגד ה' משיחו⁸, אמר לו הקצ"ה, ולא אמרת אנכי הרוח, אל תצט אל מראהו⁹: (יח) את כל הדברים אשר תעשון. אלו עשרת הדברים שצין דיני ממונות לדיני נפשות¹: (יט) המדבר הגדול והנורא. שהיו צו נחשים כקורות, ועקרבים כקשתות¹: (כג) ותקרבוני אלי כלכם. צערצוביא, ולהלן הוא אומר ותקרבוני אלי כל ראשי שבטיכם וזקניכם ותאמרו הן הראנו וגו'¹⁰, אותה קריבה היתה הוגנת, ילדים מכזדים את הזקנים ושלחום לפניכם, וזקנים מכזדים את הראשים ללכת לפניכם, אצל כאן, ותקרבוני אלי כולכם, צערצוביא, ילדים דוחפין את הזקנים וזקנים דוחפין את הראשים! וישבו אתנו דבר. צאיזה לשון הם מדצרים! את הדרך וגו'. אין דרך שאין צה עקמימות: ואת הערים אשר נבא אליהן. תחלה לכבוש: (כג) וייטב

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(Jerusalem Talmud, end of Tractate Sotah). Therefore, it is understandable that Rabbi Yosi himself would have stressed the need for insightful judges, and that this quality should be sought after to the greatest extent possible.

In addition to Rabbi Yosi’s authorship, Rashi stressed further that, “This is what Arius asked Rabbi Yosi.” With these words, Rashi was

hinting to his readership: “To accuse God of bothering Moshe in vain is not an entirely ‘kosher’ question, for it was one posed by Arius the bishop, to Rabbi Yosi!” Thus, even though Rabbi Yosi did endeavor to answer the question, and it was recorded in the Torah as an eternal teaching, Rashi nevertheless stressed to his more astute readership that questions of this nature are better not asked.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 34, p. 9ff.)

יָהֵב לָנֶאֱמָר: כִּי וְלֹא אָבִיתוֹן לְמַסַּךְ וְסָרְבַתוֹן עַל מִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהִיכוֹן: כִּי וְאַתְרַעַמְתוֹן בְּמִשְׁכְּנֵיכוֹן וְאַמְרַתוֹן בְּדַסְנֵי יְיָ יִתְנָא אִפְקַנְא מֵאַרְעָא דְמַצְרַיִם לְמַמְסַר יִתְנָא בִידָא דְאִמּוֹרָאָה לְשִׁיזְיוֹתָנָא: כִּי לָאן אֲנַחְנָא סְלָקוּן אֲתַנָּא תְּבָרוּ יֵת לְבָנָא לְמִימַר עִם סְגִי וְתַקְיֹף מִנְנָא קְרוּיִן רְבִרְבָן וְכִרְיָן עַד צִית שְׁמִיָּא וְאַף בְּנֵי גְבַרְאֵי חֻזְיָא תְּפוּן: כִּס וְאַמְרִית לְכוּן לֹא תִתְבָּרוּן וְלֹא תִדְחִלוּן מִנְהוּן: ל יְיָ אֱלֹהִיכוֹן דְּמַדְבֵּר קְדָמִיכוֹן הוּא יְגִיחַ לְכוּן כְּכֹל דִּי עֶבֶד עִמְכוֹן בְּמַצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיכוֹן: לֹא וּבְמַדְבְּרָא דִּי חֻזְיָא דִּי סוּבְרָךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵךְ פְּטָא דִּי מְסוּבֵר גְּבַר יֵת בְּרָה בְּכֹל אֲרָחָא דִּי תִלְכְּתוּן עַד מִיתִיכוֹן עַד אֲתַרָּא הֲדִין: לֵב וּבְפִתְנָמָא הֲדִין לִיתִיכוֹן מְהִימְנִין בְּמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהִיכוֹן: לֵג דְּמַדְבֵּר קְדָמִיכוֹן בְּאַרְחָא לְאַתְקַנְנָא לְכוּן אֲתַר בֵּית מִישְׁרֵי לְאַשְׁרִיזְתוּכוֹן בְּעִמּוּדָא דְאַשְׁתָּא בְּלִילִיא לְאַחֲזִיזְתוּכוֹן בְּאַרְחָא דִּי תִהְיוּן בָּהּ וּבְעִמּוּדָא דְעִנְנָא דְיִמְמָא: לִד וְשְׁמִיעַ קְדָם יְיָ יֵת קֶל פְּתַנְמִיכוֹן וְרִגּוּ וְקִיַּם לְמִימְרָא: לֵח אִם יִחְזוּ גְבַר בְּגוּבְרִיא הָאֵלִין דְרָא בִישָׂא הֲדִין יֵת אֲרַעָא טְבָתָא דִּי קְנִימִית לְמִתָּן לְאַבְהֶתְבוּן: לו אֱלֹהִין כְּלָב בַּר יִפְנָה הוּא יִחְזַנְהּ וְלֵה אֲתָנּוּ יֵת אֲרַעָא דִּי דְרָךְ בָּהּ וּלְבַנְהוּי חֶלֶף דִּי אֲשָׁלִים בְּתַר דְחִלְתָּא דִּי:

כִּי וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לְעֹלֹת וּתְמָרוּ אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: כז וְתִרְגְּמוּ בְּאֵהֳלֵיכֶם וּתְאֹמְרוּ בְּשִׁנְאֵת יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָתֵת אֲתָנוּ בְּיַד הָאֹמְרֵי לְהַשְׁמִידָנוּ: כח אָנָּה | אֲנַחְנוּ עֲלִים אֲחֵינוּ הִמְסוּ אֶת־לְבָבָנוּ לֵאמֹר עִם גְּדוֹל וְרֵם מִפְּנֵי עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצוּרֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְגַם־בְּנֵי עֲנָקִים רָאִינוּ שָׁם: כט וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם לֹא־תִעְרָצוּן וְלֹא־תִירָאוּן מֵהֶם: ל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם הוּא יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֲתֶכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיכֶם: לא וּבְמַדְבַּר אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאָדָּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׂאֵאֱאִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ בְּכָל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הִלְכְתֶם עַד־בְּאֵכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: לב וּבְדַבַּר הַזֶּה אֵינְכֶם מְאֵמִינִם בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: לג הֵהָלֵךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ לְתוֹר לָכֶם מְקוֹם לְחַנְתְּכֶם בְּאֵשׁ | לִילָה לְרֵאתְכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכוּ־בָּהּ וּבַעֲנַן יוֹמָם: לד וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל דְּבַרְיֶכֶם וַיִּקְצַף וַיִּשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר: לה אִם־יִרְאֶה אִישׁ בְּאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה הַדָּוָר הֲרַע הַזֶּה אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָתֵת לְאַבְתֵיכֶם: לו זוֹלָתִי כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה הוּא יִרְאֶנָּה וְלוֹ־אֲתָן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דִּרְבַּךְ־בָּהּ וּלְבָנָיו יַעַן אֲשֶׁר מֵלֹא אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה:

כש"י

(כט) לא תערצוּן. לשון שזירה כתרגומו, ודומה לו צערון נחלים לשכונ³, לשזור נחלים: (ל) ילחם לכם. שצילכס: (לא) ובמדבר אשר ראית. מוסב על מקרא שלמעלה הימנו, ככל אשר עשה חכם צמרים, ועשה אף צמדבר אשר ראית כי נשחך וגו': כאשר ישא איש את בנו. כמו שפירשתי אלל ויסע מלאך האלוקים הכולך לפני מחנה ישראל וגו'⁴. משל למהלך דרך וצנו לפניו, צלו לסטים לשצותו וכו': (לב) ובדבר הזה. שהוא מצניחכם לבציחכם אל הארץ, אינכם מאמינים בו: (לג) לראותכם. כמו לכראותכם. וכן נחוחס הדריך⁵, וכן לשמיע צקול חודה⁶, וכן ללכת לגיד ציזועאל: (לו) אשר דרך בה. חזרון, שנאמר ויבא עד חזרון⁷:

(כו) ותמרו. לשון התרסה, התרססת כנגד מאמרו: (כז) ותרגמו. לשון הרע, וכן דברי נרגן⁸, אדם המוליח דבש: בשנאת ה' אתנו. וכוא הכי אובצ חכס, אצל חס שונאים אותו. משל הדיוט אומר, מה דצלכך על רחמך מה דצלביכ עלך: בשנאת ה' אתנו הוציאנו מארץ מצרים. הולאתו לשנאה היכה. משל למלך צטר ודס, שהיו לו שני צנים ויש לו שתי שדות אחת של שקיא ואחת של צעל, למי שהוא אובצ נותן של שקיא, ולמי שהוא שונא נותן לו של צעל. ארץ מצרים של שקיא היא, שנילוס עולה ומשקא אותה, וארץ כנען של צעל, והוליאנו ממצרים לתת לנו את ארץ כנען: (כח) ערים גדולות ובצורות בשמים. דצרו הכחוצים לשון הצאז⁹:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- **What was Moshe's response to the claim that God "hated" the Jewish people? (v. 27)**
RASHI: He loved you, but you hated Him, as in the common saying: What is in your heart about your beloved, is in his heart about you.
BE'ER MAYIM CHAYIM: In other words, since the Jewish people hated God, they *imagined* that God hated them too.
NACHALAS YA'AKOV: Thus, the "common saying" ("What is in your heart etc.") is not in fact applicable to God, for He loved the Jewish people, even though they hated Him.

- **Why did the Jewish people speak slanderously in their tents and not in public? (v. 27)**
RAMBAN: When Yehoshua and Calev persisted in urging the people to go to war, the other spies met with the Jewish people in their tents to speak slanderously about the Land.
 These meetings were held secretly in the tents in order to hide what was happening from Moshe.

²⁶ But you did not want to go up (to the Land), and you rebelled against the word of God, your God.
²⁷ You spoke slanderously in your tents. You said, “God took us out of the land of Egypt because He hates us! (He wishes) to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites and destroy us! ²⁸ Where shall we go? Our brothers have demoralized us, saying, ‘(We saw) a people larger and taller than ourselves and enormous cities, fortified up to the heavens. And we have even seen giants there!’”

²⁹ I said to you, “Don’t (let your spirits) be broken! Don’t be afraid of them! ³⁰ God—your God, who goes ahead of you—will fight on your behalf, just as He did everything (on your behalf) in Egypt, before your eyes. ³¹ And as you have seen how God, your God, has carried you in the desert as a man carries his son, throughout your entire journey, until you arrived here. ³² But you do not believe God, your God about this statement (that He promised to bring you to the Land. ³³ Yet you see that God) goes along the route ahead of you, to search out a place for you in which to encamp, and (He provides a pillar of) fire at night, to enable you to see while you travel, and a cloud (of protection) by day!”

³⁴ God heard the sound of your comments and became angry. He swore, saying, ³⁵ “Not a single man from this evil generation will see the good Land, which I swore to give to your forefathers, ³⁶ except for Calev the son of Yefuneh. He will see it, and I will give the land (of Chevron) which he trod upon to him and his children, because he followed God loyally.”

TORAS MENACHEM

🕊️ THE JEWISH PEOPLE’S SLANDER (v. 27)

In verse 27, Moshe rebukes the Jewish people for saying, “God took us out of the land of Egypt because He hates us!” Rashi’s explanation prompts the following questions:

a.) What was troubling Rashi? **Devek Tov** argues that Rashi was troubled why the Jewish people would think that God hated them. However, this is difficult to accept, since the Torah explains the Jewish peoples logic: “God took us out of the land of Egypt because He hates us, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites and destroy us!”

Since the Torah itself explains why the Jewish people thought that God hated them, why did Rashi need to explain anything?

b.) **Be’er Mayim Chayim** and **Nachalas Ya’akov** explain that the Jewish people hated God, so they *imagined* that God hated them too. Thus, Rashi’s common saying (“What is in your heart about your beloved, is in his heart about you”) is not meant literally here, because God did not hate the Jewish people as a result of the fact that they hated Him.

However, if this is the case, why did Rashi not stress that his analogy was imaginary and not real? Surely Rashi should have written, “What is in your heart about your beloved, you think is in his heart about you”?

THE EXPLANATION

In *Parshas Shelach*, the Torah states explicitly that the spies spoke slanderously about the Land *in public* (see *Bamidbar* 13:32ff.). So, on reaching our verse, Rashi was troubled why the Torah states, “You spoke slanderously in your tents”? Rashi concluded that there must have been two types of slander spoken here. First, the spies disparaged the Land in public, and clearly the statements made in public had to be based on reality. In private, however, the people were prone to speak a type of slander which was totally untrue (cf. **Ramban**).

Thus, the slander which was spoken by the Jewish people in their tents was clearly *not* that which is expressed at the end of verse 27 (that God would “deliver us into the hands of the Amorites and destroy us!”), for this is an argument which did appear to have some basis to it, considering the formidable enemy that lay ahead.

Rather, the slander which they spoke in the tents was clearly limited to just the *first* half of the verse, “God took us out of the land of Egypt

because He hates us!”—a slanderous claim which has no substance to it at all (as Rashi stresses at the beginning of his comment, that in truth, “He loved you”). Nobody could make this claim in public, as it would be quickly refuted.

I.e. Rashi’s innovation here is that the two statements in verse 27 refer to two different types of slander said on different occasions, in different locations.

In order to stress further the content of Moshe’s rebuke here, Rashi cited the saying, “What is in your heart about your beloved, is in his heart about you.” Moshe was stressing that not only did the Jewish people’s private slander have no basis, it was in fact the very *opposite* of the truth.

If they recognized the fact that they hated God, they would have no reason to complain about how *He* treated them. Instead, they claimed that they genuinely loved God but they felt that God hated them, *despite* their love for Him. In truth, however, the reverse was true: God loved the Jewish people, but they hated Him.

So Moshe said, “What is in your heart about your beloved, is in his heart about you,” i.e. the *very same* complaint that you have about Him, He has about you. You claim that you love Him despite His hatred for you, but in truth, He loves you despite your hatred for Him!

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 17ff.)

🕊️ The Last Word 🕊️

Even when the Jewish people lost faith in God, to the extent that they felt God hated them, Rashi writes that, in truth, “He loved you.” This teaches us that however low a person falls spiritually, he should know that God continues to love Him. In fact, the very awareness that God still loves the person, despite his lowly state, provides the person with the inspiration to return to God, so he can begin to reciprocate the love which has always been extended to him.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 23)

לו אף עלי הנה רגז מן קדם יי גדילכון למימר אף את לא תעול לתמן: לה יהושע בר נון דקאם קדמד הוא יעול לתמן יתה תקף ארי הוא יחסנה לישראל: לט וטפלכון די אמרתון לבוא יהון ובניכון די לא ידעו יומא דין טב וביש אנון יעלון לתמן ולהון אהנה ואנון יירתנה: מ ואתון אתפניו לכון וטולו למדברא ארח ימא דסוף: מא ואתבתון ואמרתון לי חבנא קדם יי אנהא נסק ונגיח בה קרב ככל די פקדנא יי אלהנא וזרותון גבר ית מני קרבה ושריתון למסק לטורא: מב ואמר יי לי אמר להון לא תסקון ולא תגיחון קרב ארי לית שכנתי שריא בניכון ולא תתברון קדם בעלי דבניכון: מג ומלילית עמכון ולא קבלתון וסרבתון על גזרת מימרא דיי וארשעתון וסלקתון לטורא: מד ונפק אמורא דיתב בטורא הוא לקדמותכון ורדפו יתכון כמא די נתון דבריתא וטרדו יתכון בשעיר עד חרמה: מה ויתבתון ובכיתון קדם יי ולא קביל יי צלותכון ולא אצית למליכון: מו ויתבתון ברקם יומין סגיאין פיומיא די יתבתון: מז ואתפנינא ונטלנא למדברא ארח

לו גם-בלי התאנף יהוה בגללכם לאמר גם-אתה לא-תבא שם: לה יהושע בן-נון העמד לפניך הוא יבא שמה אתו חזק כי-הוא ינחלנה את-ישראל: ורביעין לט וטפכם אשר אמרתם לבו יהוה ובניכם אשר לא-ידעו היום טוב ורע המה יבאו שמה ולהם אתנה והם יירשוה: מ ואתם פנו לכם וסעו המדברא דרך ים-סוף: מא ותענו | ותאמרו אלי חטאנו ליהוה אנחנו נעלה ונלחמנו ככל אשר-עונו יהוה אלהינו ותחגרו איש את-כלי מלחמתו ותהינו לעלת ההרה: מב ויאמר יהוה אלי אמר להם לא תעלו ולא-תלחמו כי אינני בקרבכם ולא תנגפו לפני איביכם: מג ואדבר אליכם ולא שמעתם ותמרו את-פי יהוה ותזדו ותעלו ההרה: מד ויצא האמרי הישב בהר ההוא לקראתכם וירדפו אתכם כאשר תעשינה הדברים ויבתו אתכם בשעיר עד-חרמה: מה ותשבו ותבכו לפני יהוה ולא-שמע יהוה בקלכם ולא האזין אליכם: מו ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים פמים אשר ישבתם: ז א ונפן

כש"י

תעלו. לא עלייב תחא לכס, אלא ירידה: (מד) כאשר תעשינה הדבורים. מה הדבורה הזאת כשהיא מכה את האדם מיד מכה, אף הם כשהיו נוגעים צדס מיד מחיס: (מה) ולא שמע ה' בקלכם. כזיכול עשיתם מדה רחמיו כאלו אכזרי: (מו) ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים. י"ט שנה, שנאמר כימים אשר ישבתם בשאר המסעות, והם היו ל"ח שנה, י"ט מהם עשו צדקש וי"ט שנה הולכים ומטורפים וחזרו לקדש, כמו שנאמר וינעם צמדבר. כך מלאתי

(ל) התאנף. נתמלא רוגז: (מ) פנו לכם. אמרתי להעביר אתכם דרך רוחא ארץ אדום ללד פון ליכנס לארץ, קלקלתם וגרמתם לכס עכוז: פנו לכם. לאחריתכם ותלכו צמדבר ללד ים סוף. שהמדבר שהיו הולכים צו לדרומו של הר שעיר, היה מפסיק צין ים סוף להר שעיר, עתה המשכו ללד היס ותסצבו את הר שעיר כל דרומו מן המערב למזרח: (מא) ותהינו. לשון כנו ועלינו אל המקום, זה הלשון שאמרתם, לשון הן, כלומר נזדמנתם: (מב) לא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Was Moshe prevented from entering the Land due to the sin of the spies? (v. 37)

RAMBAN: No. Moshe was prevented from entering the Land for not sanctifying God's Name at the waters of Merivah (*Bamidbar* 20:12).

The reason why Moshe referred to this detail here is because he wished to list together all those individuals who had been prevented from entering the Land as a punishment.

Moshe also stressed that his own failure to sanctify God's Name at the waters of Merivah had been caused by the Jewish people themselves ("Because of you, God also became angry with me"), for the event transpired because of the quarrels of the Jewish people.

The fact that Moshe was not destined to enter the Land also serves as an introduction to the following verse (38), which states that Yehoshua will lead the Jewish people into the Land of Israel.

OHR HACHAYIM: *Ramban's* explanation, that in verse 37 Moshe is referring to the sin of the waters of Merivah, is unacceptable. For the entire discussion [from verse 22 until the end of the chapter] is about the sin of the spies, so why should verse 37 be an exception? Why would Moshe interrupt the discussion and change the subject for just one verse? *Ramban* suggests that Moshe wished to include together all those individuals who had been prevented from entering the Land as a punishment, but what would be the point of doing that?

Rather, Moshe was punished for the sin of the spies by being prevented from entering the Land.

ABARBANEL: Why was Moshe punished for the sin of the spies when he did not believe the evil reports of the spies, and he did not doubt God's ability to bring the people into the Land? Because by consenting to the sending of the spies, which God had not commanded, Moshe was responsible for the sin that resulted.

—³⁷ Because of you, God also became angry with me, saying, “You will not come there (to the Land) either!”—

³⁸ “Yehoshua, the son of Nun, who stands at your side, will go there. Support him, for he will lead the Jewish people to inherit it.”

FOURTH READING ³⁹ “(Also,) your small children, about whom you said that they will be taken as captives, and your children, who do not yet know (the difference between) good and evil—they will come there (to the Land) and I will give it to them to inherit.”

⁴⁰ “You, (on the other hand), should turn yourselves around (180 degrees) and journey (back) through the desert, towards the Reed Sea (and then circle the South side of Mount Se’ir).”

⁴¹ You responded and said to me, “We’ve sinned against God! We will go up and we will fight, in accordance with all the instructions of God, our God.”

Each of you then equipped yourself with weapons, and you prepared yourselves to go up to the mountain.

⁴² God said to me, “Say to them, ‘Do not go up and do not fight, so you will not be struck down by your enemies, for I am not with you.’”

⁴³ I spoke to you, but you did not listen. You rebelled against God’s command. You deliberately (ignored God) and went up to the mountain. ⁴⁴ The Amorites who lived in the mountain came out towards you and pursued you like bees. They struck you down from Se’ir to Charmah.

⁴⁵ You came back and wept before God, but God would not accept your prayers. He wouldn’t (even) listen to you.

⁴⁶ You stayed in Kadaish for a long time, as long as you stayed (in all the other desert encampments put together).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Nevertheless, since Moshe’s error here was unintentional, and the people’s sin was intentional, God did not punish Moshe with them.

Rather, when Moshe erred with the waters of Merivah, God punished him by preventing him from entering the Land, though really the punishment was a result of *both* the sin of the spies and the sin of the waters of Merivah.

MALBIM: The only two individuals from the generation that left Egypt to enter the Land of Israel were Calev and Yehoshua.

In reference to Calev the Torah states, “He will see” the Land (v. 36), whereas in reference to Yehoshua the Torah states, “He will lead the Jewish people to inherit it” (v. 38). Thus the reader will be troubled why Yehoshua was given a different role than Calev.

In order to preempt this question, the Torah included verse 37 (which states that Moshe was prevented from entering the Land) as a parenthetical statement, for it clarifies why Yehoshua was given the additional task of leading the Jewish people into the Land.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕯️ MOSHE’S PUNISHMENT (v. 37)

The commentators discuss at length why Moshe mentioned that he was prevented from entering the Land of Israel in the middle of describing the sin of the spies (v. 37). The Torah states explicitly that this decree was passed upon Moshe due to the sin of the waters of Merivah—which occurred almost forty years later—and *not* the sin of the spies. In fact, *Rashi* makes this point explicitly in his comments to *Bamidbar* 27:13-14, (thus rejecting the argument of **Abarbanel**, that Moshe’s punishment was given as a result of both sins).

Why did *Rashi*, who explains *every* problem that arises at the literal level, fail to address the above question?

THE EXPLANATION

At the literal level, **Malbim**’s explanation—that verse 37 is a parenthetical statement to explain why Yehoshua was rewarded more than Calev—is consistent with *Rashi*’s approach.*

Rashi did not feel the need to clarify this matter, since the reader is already familiar with the concept that the Torah will on occasion make a parenthetical statement, from a number of previous instances (such as above 1:16-17; *Shemos* 16:35, etc.). Thus, in cases such as these where *Rashi* felt the reader has enough information at hand to work out the solution with simple logic, *Rashi* chose not to “spoon-feed” the reader, but rather to challenge him to work out the solution for himself.**

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 8ff.)

*Not all of *Malbim*’s statements regarding this matter are compatible with *Rashi* here, for *Malbim* also writes that the decree against Moshe was primarily a result of the sin of the spies, which is inconsistent with *Rashi*, as explained above. ** For *Rashi* was not merely a “commentator,” but a teacher who aimed to broaden the minds of his students and train them towards independent study (See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz* 5747, par. 25; see also sources cited in *Klalei Rashi* (Kehos 1991), page 72, rules 6-7).

ימא דסוף כמא די מליל יי עמי ואקפנא
 ית טורא דשעיר יומין סגיאין: ב ואמר יי לי
 למימר: ג סגי לכון דאקפתון ית טורא הדין
 אתפניו לכון צפונא: ד וית עמא פקד למימר
 אתון עברין בתחום אחוכון בני עשו דיתבין
 בשעיר וידחלו מנכון ותסתמרון לחדא:
 ה לא תתגרון בהון ארי לא אתון לכון
 מארעהון עד מדרך פרסת רגלא ארי ירתא
 לעשו יהבית ית טורא דשעיר: ו עבורא
 תזבגון מנהון בכספא ותיכלון ואף מיא
 תכרון מנהון בכספא ותשתון: ז ארי יי אלהך
 ברכך בכל עובד ידך ספק לך צרפך במהכף
 למדברא רבא הדין דנן ארבעין שנין מימרא
 דיי אלהך בסעדה לא מנעתא (חסרתא) מדעם:
 ח ועברנא מקדם אחונא בני עשו דיתבין
 בשעיר מארה מישרא מאילת ומעצין נבר
 ואתפנינא ועברנא ארה מדברא דמואב:
 ט ואמר יי לי לא תצור על מואבאי ולא
 תתגרי למעפד עמהון קרב ארי לא אתון לך
 מארעה ירתא ארי לבני לוט יהבית
 ית לתית ירתא: י אימתני מלקדמין יתיבו בה
 עם רב וסגי ותקיף בגבראי: יא וגבראי
 מתחשבין אף אנון בגבראי ומואבאי קרן
 להון אימתני: יב ובשעיר יתיבו חוראי
 מלקדמין ובני עשו תרכנון ושצינון
 מקדמיהון ותיבו בארתיהון כמא די עבד
 ישראל לארעא ירתתה דיהב יי להון: יג כען
 קומו ועברו לכון ית נחלא דזרד ועברנא

ונסע המדברה דרך ים סוף כאשר דבר יהוה אלי ונסב את-
 הרשעיר ימים רבים: ס והמישין ב ויאמר יהוה אלי לאמר:
 ג רב-לכם סב את-ההר הזה פנו לכם צפנה: ד ואת-העם צו
 לאמר אתם עברים בגבול אחיכם בני-עשו הישבים בשעיר
 ויראו מכם ונשמרתם מאד: ה אל-תתגרו גם כי לא-אתן
 לכם מארצם עד מדרך כף-רגל פי-ירשה לעשו נתתי
 את-הר שעיר: ו אכל תשברו מאתם בכסף ואכלתם
 וגם-מים תכרו מאתם בכסף ושתייתם: ז כי יהוה אלהיך
 ברכך בכל מעשה ידך ידע לכתך את-המדבר הגדל הזה
 זח ארבעים שנה יהוה אלהיך עמך לא חסרת דבר:
 ח ונעבר מאת אחינו בני-עשו הישבים בשעיר מדרך הערבה
 מאילת ומעצין גבר ס * ונפן ונעבר דרך מדבר מואב:
 ט ויאמר יהוה אלי אל-תצר את-מואב ואל-תתגר גם
 מלחמה כי לא-אתן לך מארצו ירשה כי לבני-לוט נתתי
 את-ער ירשה: י האמים לפנים ישבו בה עם גדול ורב ורם
 בענקים: יא רפאים יחשבו אף-הם בענקים והמאבים יקראו
 להם אמים: יב ובשעיר ישבו החריים לפנים ובני עשו יירשום
 וישמידום מפניהם וישבו תחתם כאשר עשה ישראל לארץ
 ירשתו אשר-נתן יהוה להם: יג עתה קמו ועברו לכם

*9פסקא באמצע הפסוק.

כש"י

לי⁵, שכן זכרכי הים קורין למכירה כירה⁶: (ז) כי ה' אלהיך ברכך. לפיכך
 לא תכפו (ס"א תכפרו) את עוצתו להראות כאלו אתם עניים, אלא הראו
 עצמכם עשירים: (ח) ונפן ונעבור. לזד לפון הפכנו פניו להלוך רוח
 מזרחית: (ט) ואל תתגר וגו'. לא חסר להם על מואב אלא מלחמה, אבל
 מיראים היו אותם וגראים להם כשכס מזויינים, לפיכך כתיב ויגר מואב
 מפני העס⁷, שהיו שוליים וזוזים אותם. אבל צבני עמון נאמר ואל תתגר צס⁸,
 שום גרוי, בשכר לניעות אמת שלא פרסמה על אציה כמו שעשתה הזכירה,
 שקראה שם צנה, מואב⁹: ער. שם המדינה: (י) האמים לפנים וגו'. אתה
 סבור שזו ארץ רפאים שנתתי לו לאצרכם, לפי שהאמים שהם רפאים ישבו
 בה לפנים, אבל לא זו היא, כי אותם רפאים הורשתי מפני בני לוט והושבתים
 תחתם: (יא) רפאים יחשבו וגו'. רפאים היו נחשדים אותם אמים, כענקים
 הנקראים רפאים על שם שכל הרוואה אותם ידיו מתרפות: אמים. על שם
 שאימתם מוטלת על הזכירות, וכן וצשעיר ישבו החורים ונתתם לבני עשו:
 (יב) יירשום. לשון הווה, כלומר נתתי צבס כח שהיו מורשיים אותם

צסדר עולם¹: (ח) ונפן ונסע המדברה. אילו לא תטאו היו עוזרים דרך הר
 שעיר ליכנס לארץ מן דרומו לנפנו, וצשציל שקלקלו הפכו לזד המדבר שהוא
 צין ים סוף לדרומו של הר שעיר, והלכו אלל דרומו מן המערב למזרח דרך
 ים סוף. דרך ויאתן ממלרים שהוא צמקוט דרומית מערבית, משם היו
 הולכים לזד המזרח: ונסב את הר שעיר. כל דרומו עד ארץ מואב: (ג) פנו
 לבם צפנה. סובו לכם לרוח מזרחית מן הדרום לנפון, פניכם לנפון, נמאלו
 הולכין את רוח מזרחית. וזכו שנאמר ויבואו ממזרח שמש לארץ מואב²:
 (ד) ונשמרתם מאד. ומהו השמירה, אל תתגרו צס: (ה) עד מדרך כף
 רגל. אפילו מדרך כף רגל, כלומר אפילו דריסת הרגל איני מרשה לכם
 לעבור צארלס שלא צרשות. ומדרש אגדה, עד שיצא יום דריסת כף רגל על
 הר הזיתים, שנאמר ועמדו רגליו וגו'³: ירשה לעשו. מאצרכם, עשר עממים
 נתתי לו, שצעה לכם, וקניז וקניזי וקדמוני הן עמון ומואב ושעיר⁴, אחד מהם
 לעשו והשנים לבני לוט, צשכר שהלך אהו למלרים ושתק על מה שהיו אומרים
 על אשתו, אחותו היא, עשאו צבנו: (ו) תברו. לשון מקה. וכן אשר כריתי

🕎 PASSING THE LAND OF EDM 🕎

2 **W**e turned ourselves around (180 degrees) and journeyed into the desert towards the Reed Sea, as God told me, and we circled (the South side of) Mount Se'ir for a long time.

FIFTH
READING

² God spoke to me, saying, ³ "You have circled this mountain long enough! Turn northward!" ⁴ "Instruct the people, saying, 'You are about to pass by the border of your brothers, the children of Eisav who live in Se'ir, and they will be afraid of you. Be very careful ⁵ not to provoke them, because I will not give you any of their land—not even the right of passage (without their permission)—since I have given Mount Se'ir to Eisav as an inheritance. ⁶ You can purchase food from them with money, so you can eat. You can purchase water from them with money, so you can drink. ⁷ (Don't be afraid to show them you have money, since you should be proud) that God, your God, has blessed you in everything that you do while you were wandering through this great desert for the past forty years. God has been with you, (so) you have lacked nothing.'"

🕎 PASSING THE LAND OF MO'AV 🕎

2:8 **W**e departed from our brothers, the children of Eisav who lived in Se'ir, by way of the plain which runs from Eilat and from Etzyon-Gaver, directing ourselves (northward) and traveling toward the Mo'av Desert.

⁹ God said to me, "Do not besiege Mo'av, and do not incite them to war, because I will not give you any of their land as an inheritance, since I have given (the land of Mo'av, also known as) Ar, to the children of Lot as an inheritance. ¹⁰ Since the Aimim—a great and numerous people, tall like giants—lived there previously (before the Mo'avites, you might be under the impression that this is the land of the Refa'im, which I promised to Avraham, since the Aimim are also known as Refa'im. ¹¹ In truth, however, the Aimim that lived here are a totally different nation to the one promised to Avraham, and they are also called Refa'im, because they are giants, but the Mo'avites call them Aimim. ¹² (The Mo'avites drove out the Aimim who lived there previously, and settled in it as their God-given land, just as) the Chorites originally lived in Se'ir, and the children of Eisav (gradually) drove them out, eliminated them from their presence, and settled in their place—and just as the Jewish people (will) have done to the land of their inheritance, which God gave them."

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

At the Covenant of the Parts, Avraham was promised "the (land of) the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, the Chitites, the Perizites, the Refa'im, the Amorites, the Cana'anites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites" (Bereishis 15:19-21). Rashi explains, "There are ten nations listed here, but He gave them only seven nations. The other three, Edom, Mo'av, and Amon, which are the Kenites, the Kenizites, and the Kadmonites, are destined to be our heritage in the future."

Thus, here we read that the Jewish people were forced to circumvent these three lands, because, "I will not give you any of their land as an inheritance" (v. 9)—in the current era.

Why will the ownership of these three lands only take place in the future? The *Mitteler Rebbe* explains that the seven lands which the Jewish people already possess correspond to the seven emotional

attributes of the soul, and that the three lands which will be acquired in the future correspond to the three intellectual faculties of the soul.

In the current era, God commands us primarily to "conquer" our emotional attributes—to coerce and ultimately transform our "animalistic desires" toward the service of God.

In the future however, when this "conquest" is complete, the main occupation of the Jewish people will be to develop the intellectual bond between man and God—i.e. the three intellectual faculties, represented by the three lands of Edom, Mo'av, and Amon.

Thus, in the last moments of exile, *Chabad Chasidus* has emerged, which brings knowledge of God to the three intellectual faculties of *Chochmah, Binah and Da'as*—a "taste" of what is soon to come.

(Based on a public letter written by the Rebbe on the 3rd day of *Selichos* 5750)

ית נחלא דזרד: יד ויזמיא די הלכנא מרקם גיאה עד די עברנא ית נחלא דזרד תלתין ותמני שנין עד דספ כל דרא גוברי מגיחי קרבא מגו משריתא פמא די קיים יי להון: טו ואף מחא מן קדם יי הנת בהון לשציותהון מגו משריתא עד דשלימו: טז והנה כד שלימו כל גוברי מגיחי קרבא לממת מגו עמא: יז ומליל יי עמי למימרי: יח את עבר יזמא דין ית תחום מואב ית לחית: יט ותקרב לקבל בני עמון לא תצור עליהון ולא תתגרי למעבד עמהון קרב ארי לא אתן מארע בני עמון לך ירתא ארי לבני לוט יתבתה ירתא: כ ארע גבריא מתחשבא אף היא גבראי יתיבו בה מלקדמין ועמונאי קרן להון חושבני: כא עם רב וסגי ותקוף בגבריא ושיענון יי מלקדמיהון ותרכנון ויתיבו באתריהון: כב פמא די עבד לבני עשו דיתבין בשעיר די שיצי ית הוראי מלקדמיהון ותרכנון ויתיבו באתריהון עד יומא הדין: כג וענאי דיתבין בדפית עד עזה קפוטקאי דנפקו מקפוטקאי שיענון ויתיבו באתריהון: כד קומו טולו ועברו ית נחלא דארנון חוי דמסרית בידך ית סיחון מלכא דחשבון אמוראָה וית ארעה שרי לתרכותה ואתגרי למעבד עמה קרבא: כה יומא הדין אשרי למתן ועתד ודחלתך על אפי עממיא די תחות כל שמיא די ישמעון שמעך ויועון

את־נחל זָרַד ונַעֲבַר אֶת־נחל זָרַד: יד וְהִימִים אֲשֶׁר־הִלְכְנוּ | מִקְדָּשׁ בְּרִיעַ עַד אֲשֶׁר־עֲבַרְנוּ אֶת־נחל זָרַד שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה עֲדֹתָם כָּל־הַדֹּר אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה מִקְרֵב הַמַּחְנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לָהֶם: טו וְגַם יִדְ־יְהוָה הִיְתָה בָּם לְהַמֵּם מִקְרֵב הַמַּחְנֶה עַד תָּמָס: טז וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר־תָּמוּ כָּל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה לָמוּת מִקְרֵב הָעָם: ס יי וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: יח אַתָּה עֹבֵר הַיּוֹם אֶת־גְּבוּל מוֹאָב אֶת־עַר: יט וְקִרְבַּת מוֹל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל־תֵּצְרֵם וְאֶל־תִּתְנַר בָּם כִּי לֹא־אֶתֶּן מֵאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן לְךָ יִרְשָׁה כִּי לְבְנֵי־לוֹט נִתְּתִיהָ יִרְשָׁה: כ אֶרֶץ־רַפָּאִים תִּחְשַׁב אֶף־הוּא רַפָּאִים יִשְׁבוּ־בָהּ לְפָנִים וְהַעֲמָנִים יִקְרָאוּ לָהֶם וּמִזְמִים: כא עַם גָּדוֹל וְרַב וְרַם פְּעֻנְקִים וַיִּשְׁמִידֵם יְהוָה מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשָׁם וַיִּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם: כב כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְבְנֵי עִשׂוֹ הַיִּשְׁבִּים בְּשַׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד אֶת־הַחֲרִי מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשָׁם וַיִּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כג וְהָעַוִּים הַיִּשְׁבִּים בְּחֻצְרֵים עַד־עַזָּה פִּפְתָּרִים הַיִּצְאִים מִכְּפָתֵר הַשְּׁמִידֵם וַיִּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם: כד קומו סעו ועברו את־נחל ארנון ראה נתתי בידך את־סיחון מלך־חשבון האמרי ואת־ארצו החל רש והתנר בו מלחמה: כה היום הזה אחל תת פחדך ויראתך על־פני העמים תחת

— כש"י —

וגו'. מכאן שארץ עמון לזד לפון: (כ) ארץ רפאים תחשב. ארץ רפאים נחשבת אף היא לפי שהרפאים ישנו צב לפנים, אבל לא זו היא שנתתי לאצרכה: (כג) והעוים היושבים בחצרים וגו'. עוים מפלשתים הם, שעמכם הם נחשבים צספר יהושע, שנאמר חמשת סרני פלשתים העזתי וכאשדודי וכאשקלוני והגתי והעקרוני והעוים! ומפני השזועה שנשבע אצרכה לאצמלך² לא יכלו ישראל להוציא ארלס מידם, וכבצחתי עליכם כפתורים והשמידום וישנו תחסס, ועכשיו תחסס מותרים לקחתה מידם³:

והולכים: (טו) היתה במ. למחר ולהומס צתוך ארבעים שנה, שלא יגרמו לצנייהם עוד להחטכז צמדצר: (טז) ויהי כאשר תמו וגו'. (יז) וידבר ה' אלי וגו'. אבל משלוח המרגלים עד כאן לא נאמר צפרשה (ז), וידבר, אלא ויאמר, ללמדך, שכל ל"ח שנה שהיו ישראל נזופים, לא נתייחד עמו הדבור צלשון חצה פנים אל פנים וישוצ הדעת, ללמדך, שאין השכינה שורה על הנציאים אלא צצביל ישראל: אנשי המלחמה. מצן עשרים שנה היואחים צצצא: (יח) אתה עובר היום את גבול מואב וגו' וקרבת מול בני עמון

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Who are the "Avim"? (v. 23)

RASHI: The Avim are part of the Philistine people, for they are listed together with them in the Book of Yehoshua, as the verse states, "The five Philistine lords: The Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, the Ekronites, and the Avim" (13:3).

However, because of the oath which Avraham had sworn to Avimelech (*Bereishis* 21:23-24), the Jewish people were unable to take the land [of the Avim] away from them. So, I brought the Kaftorites against them, and they destroyed them and dwelt in their place. Now, you are permitted to take [the land of the Avim] from [the Kaftorites'] possession.

🕎 END OF THE GENERATION THAT LEFT EGYPT 🕎

2:13 **"N**ow get moving and cross the Zered Brook!"
 So we crossed the Zered Brook. ¹⁴ The time from when we left Kadaish-Barne'a until we crossed the Zered Brook was thirty-eight years, (sufficient time) for the entire generation of the men among the camp that were eligible for war to die out, as God had sworn to them. ¹⁵ (So as not to delay the entry into the Land of Israel), the hand of God came to eliminate those among the camp (who did not die naturally during this time), until they were all gone.

🕎 PASSING THE LAND OF AMON 🕎

2:16 **T**hen, when all the men among the people who were eligible for war had all died, ¹⁷ God spoke to me, saying, ¹⁸ "Today you are going to cross the border of Mo'av (which is also known as) Ar. ¹⁹ When you come near the Amonites, do not besiege them or incite them, for I will not give you any of the Amonites' land as an inheritance, since I have given it as an inheritance to the children of Lot."
²⁰ "(Even though) this is also considered the land of the Refa'im (it is not the land of Refaim that I promised to Avraham, but rather, its name comes from a different group of) Refa'im that lived there before (the Amonites), whom the Amonites call Zamzumim. ²¹ (They were) a great, numerous people, tall like giants, but God annihilated them before (the Amonites), who drove them out and settled in their place—²² just as He did for the children of Eisav, who live in Se'ir, when He destroyed the Chorites from before them, and (the children of Eisav) drove them out and settled in their place, (where they remain) to this day. ²³ The Avim, who lived in open cities as far as Azah (are descended from the Philistines whom the Jewish people are forbidden from conquering. However,) the Kaftorites came from Kaftor and destroyed them, and then settled in their place, (so the Jewish people may now conquer this land, as it no longer belongs to the Avim)."

🕎 THE WAR WITH SICHON, KING OF CHESHBON 🕎

2:24 **"G**et moving and travel, and cross the Arnon Brook!" (said God).
 "Look, I have delivered Sichon the Amorite, King of Cheshbon, and his land into your hand! Start driving him out, and provoke him to war! ²⁵ Today I am beginning to make all the

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

For a Jew, interaction with the physical world involves sifting out the sparks of goodness hidden within physicality (known as the process of *birurim*, or "refinement"), without becoming enticed and drawn in by physicality. Our daily interaction with the world is thus a form of "war" against the superficial, profane appearance of the world, in an attempt to "conquer" it for the side of holiness.

Some parts of this world, however, are simply too low to be "conquered" or spiritually refined, since their non-Godly veneer is too thick. Such things should be avoided by a Jew, as there is no chance of a successful conquest.

How then are these parts of the world to be refined?

Rashi teaches us: "The Jewish people were unable to take the land [of the Avim] away from them"—because the Avim were too spiritually debased for the Jewish people to refine—"So, I brought the Kaftorites against them....Now, you are permitted to take [the land of the Avim] from [the Kaftorites'] possession" (See *Classic Questions*).

In other words, when the Jewish people follow God's will, the non-Jewish world will assist in the task of global spiritual refinement, by preparing parts of the world for a spiritual conquest—parts that the Jewish people cannot elevate directly.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5744)

וידתלון מן קדמך: כי ושלחית אנגדין ממדברא קדמות לות סיחון מלכא דחשבון פתגמי שלמא למימר: כו אעבר בארעך בארעא בארעא אזל לא אסמי ימינא ושמאלא: כה עבורא בכספא תזבן לי ואיכול ומיא בכספא תתן לי ואשתי לחוד אעבר ברנלי: כט כמא די עבדו לי בני עשו דיתבין בשעיר ומואבא דיתבין בלחית עד דאעבר ית ירדנא לארעא די אלהנא יתב לנא: ל ולא אבא סיחון מלכא דחשבון למשבקנא למעבר בתחומה ארי אקשי יי אלהך ית רוחה ותקוף ית לבה בדיל למסרה בידך כיומא הדין: לא ואמר יי לי חוי שריתי למסר קדמך ית סיחון וית ארעה שרי לתרכותה למירת ית ארעה: לב ונפק סיחון לקדמותנא הוא וכל עמה לאנחא קרבא ליהין: לג ומסרה יי אלהנא קדמנא ומחינא יתה וית בנוהי וית כל עמה: לד וכבשנא ית כל קרווהי בעדנא ההיא ונמרנא ית כל קרוי גובריא ונשיא וטפלא

כָּל-הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן שְׁמֵעֶךָ וּרְגִזוּ וַחֲלוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ: כו וַאֲשַׁלַּח מַלְאָכַיִם מִמִּדְבַּר קְדֻמוֹת אֶל-סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבֹן דְּבַרִי שָׁלוֹם לֵאמֹר: כז אֶעְבְּרָה בְּאַרְצְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֵלֶיךָ לֹא אֶסּוּר יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל: כח אֲכַל בַּכֶּסֶף תִּשְׁבְּרֵנִי וְאֶכְלֹתִי וּמַיִם בַּכֶּסֶף תִּתֶן-לִי וְשִׁתִּיתִי רַק אֶעְבְּרָה בְּרַגְלִי: כט בְּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ-לִי בְּנֵי עָשׂוּ הַיִּשְׁבִּיִם בְּשַׁעִיר וְהַמּוֹאָבִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעַד אֲשֶׁר-אֶעְבֹּר אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ: ל וְלֹא אָבָה סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבֹן הָעֵבְרָנוּ בּוּ כִּי-הִקְשָׁה יְהוּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת-רוּחוֹ וְאִמְצָן אֶת-לִבּוֹ לְמַעַן תִּתּוּ בְיָדְךָ כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ם [ששי] לא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּה אֵלַי רְאֵה הִחַלְתִּי תֵת לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת-סִיחֹן וְאֶת-אַרְצוֹ הִחַל רֶשֶׁת לְרַשֵׁת אֶת-אַרְצוֹ: לב וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן לְקִרְאָתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל-עַמּוֹ לְמַלְחָמָה יְהֻעָה: לג וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ וַנִּדְ* אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-בָּנוּ [קן בניו] וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ: לד וַנִּלְכֹּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַנַּחֲרֵם אֶת-כָּל-עִיר מְתָם

*יש גורסים ד' רבתי.

כש"י

את עמי, צמחון? (כט) כאשר עשו לי בני עשו. לא לענין לעזור את ארסם אלא לענין מכר אוכל ומיס: עד אשר אעבור את הירדן. מוסב על לעזרה צהרנך: (לא) החלותי תת לפניך. כפה שר של אמוריים של מעלה תחת רגליו של משה וכדריכו על נוארו: (לב) ויצא סיחון. לא שלח צבזיל עוג לעזור לו, ללמדך שלא היו לריכוס זה לזה: (לג) ואת בניו. צנו כחיב, שכיב לו צן גבור כמותו: (לד) מתם. אנשים. צבזית סיחון נאמר צזנו לנו לשון ציזה, שכיחה חציבה עליהם וצזזים איש לו, וכשצזו לצבזית עוג כצר היו

(כה) תחת כל השמים. למד¹ שמעדה חמה למשה ציוס מלחמת עוג (ס"א סיחון) ונודע הדבר תחת כל השמים: (כו) ממדבר קדמות. אף על פי שלא זוני המקום לקרא לסיחון לשלום, למדתי ממדבר סיני מן החורה שקדמה לעולם. כשצח הקצ"ה ליתנה לישראל חזר אותה על עשו ושמעאל, וגלוי לפניו שלא יקבלוה ואף על פי כן פתח להם בשלום, אף אני קדמתי את סיחון בדברי שלום. דבר אחר ממדבר קדמות, ממך למדתי שקדמת לעולם. יכול היית לשלוח צרק אחד ולשרוף את המצריים, אלא שלחתי מן המדבר אל פרעה לאמר שלח

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Moshe send a “peaceful message” to Sichon (in v. 26) when God said to “provoke him to war” ? (v. 24)

RASHI: Even though God had not commanded me to make peace with Sichon, I learned to do so from what happened in the desert of Sinai, with the Torah that preceded the world. When God was about to give the Torah to Israel, He took it to Eisav and Yishma'el. Although it was clear to Him that they would not accept it, nevertheless, He started with them for the sake of peace. So too, I first called to Sichon with words of peace.

RAMBAN: The Torah states: “But from these (local) peoples’ cities, which God your God, is giving you as an inheritance, you may not allow any soul to live” (Devarim 20:16), which suggests that one is not allowed to make a peace treaty with the nations that occupied the Land. Nevertheless, Moshe would certainly not have transgressed this prohibition, and the fact that he sent a peaceful message here to Sichon indicates that it is a *mitzvah* to offer a peaceful settlement with the nations.

This point is proven from the fact that Yehoshua sent three letters to the Canaanite nations before entering the Land, one of which offered a peaceful settlement (*Devarim Rabah* 5;13). Clearly then, it is a *mitzvah* to offer a peaceful settlement even with those nations which God commanded us explicitly to attack.

The only distinction between an obligatory war (where it is a *mitzvah* to conquer) and a non-obligatory war, is that in the former case, if they refuse to make peace it is a *mitzvah* to obliterate them entirely (including the women and children). In the case of a non-obligatory war, however, one should not annihilate the women and children, even if the nation refuses to make peace (*Ramban* to 20:10. This concurs with the view of *Ramban* in *Laws of Kings*, 6:1-5).

GUR ARYEH: The case of Yehoshua’s three letters is not a valid proof for *Ramban’s* argument that one should attempt to make peace even with a nation which God has commanded us to eradicate. For Yehoshua offered a peace treaty *before* he crossed the Jordan, when the war had not yet begun. (This view is also expressed by *Ra’avad* *ibid.*)

nations under the skies fear and dread you. When they hear of your reputation they will tremble and shudder because of you.”

²⁶ I sent messengers from the Desert of Kedaimos to Sichon, King of Cheshbon, with a peaceful message, saying, ²⁷ “Allow me to pass through your land. I will only go along the main route. I will not veer to the right or the left. ²⁸ I will pay for food with money so I can eat, and I will pay for water with money so I can drink. I will only pass through on foot. ²⁹ (Similar terms to this were agreed upon) with me by the children of Eisav, who live in Se’ir, and the Mo’avites who live in Ar. (I only require to pass through your land) until I cross the Jordan, to the Land which God, our God, is giving us.”

³⁰ But Sichon, King of Cheshbon, did not wish to let us pass by his (land), for God your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, so that He could give (his land) into our hand, as it is today.

SIXTH READING ³¹ God said to me, “Look! I have begun to put (the ministering angel of) Sichon and his land (under) you! Start driving him out, so you can inherit his land!”

³² At Yahtzah, Sichon came out towards us to war. He was with all his people. ³³ But God, our God, gave him over to us. We destroyed him, his sons—(one of whom was as strong as him)—and all his people. ³⁴ On that occasion, we conquered all his cities, annihilating (the inhabitants of) each city, the

TORAS MENACHEM

🕊️ MOSHE’S PEACEFUL MESSAGE (V. 26)

While it is universally agreed that before initiating a war which was not explicitly commanded by God there is an obligation to try to make peace (see Devarim 20:10ff.), the question whether one should do so before an obligatory war is disputed by the commentators.

Rashi maintains that there is no obligation to make peace, but it is permitted to do so. (Thus Moshe attempted to make peace with Sichon here in verse 26, “even though God had not commanded me.”)

Ramban, however, maintains that there is *always* an obligation to try to make peace before going to war, regardless of whether the war is obligatory or not.

Ramban cites proof from the case of Yehoshua, who attempted to make peace with the Cana’anites before going to war—for the conquest of Cana’an was certainly an obligatory war, requested explicitly by God.

Gur Aryeh argues, in Rashi’s defense, that Yehoshua offered to make peace before crossing the Jordan. After crossing the Jordan, however, Yehoshua did not attempt to make peace with the enemy, indicating that there is no requirement to do so.

However, at the literal level of Torah interpretation (to which Rashi always adheres), there is no indication that crossing the Jordan altered the requirement to eradicate the Cana’anites, and not to make peace with them, in any way.

How then, would Rashi respond to the argument of Ramban?

THE EXPLANATION

In *Parshas Shoftim*, where the *mitzvah* of making peace with the enemy is recorded, the Torah states, “When you approach a city to wage war against it, you should (first) make a peaceful proposal to it” (Devarim 20:10). Rashi (ibid.), writes, “The verse is speaking of a non-obligatory war,” indicating his stance that a “peaceful proposal” is only required in the case of a non-obligatory war.

However, note that the verse stresses, “When you approach a city to wage war against it, you should (first) make a peaceful proposal to it.” This suggests that, at the literal level, a mandatory peace proposal is only

limited to the scenario of a non-obligatory war when one is actually in close proximity of the enemy. From a distance, however, a peace proposal would be permissible even in the case of an obligatory war, even according to Rashi.

And this explains why, in our case, Moshe was indeed permitted to propose peace to Sichon, since Moshe did not “approach a city to wage war against it,” but rather, he merely requested, “to pass through your land” (v. 27), without passing near any cities—“I will only go along the main route. I will not veer to the right or the left” (ibid.).

MOSHE’S HALACHIC REASONING

Having explained how it was *permissible* for Moshe to propose peace to Sichon, we can now address the question why he *wished* to do so, when no attempt at peace was requested by God.

Rashi writes that Moshe learned from the conduct of God, who first offered the Torah to the other nations, even though He knew they would reject it. So Moshe reasoned that he too should offer a gesture of peace to Sichon, even though he knew that God required the eventual annihilation of Sichon and his people.

In addition to this explanation, the following could be argued from a *halachic* perspective:

Rambam writes: “The lands which David conquered outside the Land of Cana’an...had an inferior status to the Land of Israel, because he conquered them before he conquered the Land of Israel...If he had seized the entire Land up to its borders and then afterwards conquered the other lands, then everything he conquered would have had the same status as the Land of Israel, in every respect” (*Laws of Terumos* 1:3).

Thus it could be argued that, likewise in our case, Moshe wished to conquer Cana’an *before* he conquered the lands ruled by Sichon and Og, so that these lands too would have the same *halachic* status as the Land of Israel. Therefore, he first requested merely to “pass through” Sichon’s territory, in order that the Land of Cana’an would be conquered first in its entirety, and then the Jewish people would return and conquer the Lands of Sichon and Og.*

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 82; *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 2, p. 546, note 68)

* Of course, this plan failed when Sichon refused to let the Jewish people through his land and “came out towards us to war” (v. 32). Nevertheless, it could be argued that the children of Re’uvain and Gad attempted to partially compensate for this failure, by requesting to inhabit the lands of Sichon and Og immediately (*Bamidbar* 32:5). For in this way the connection of these lands to the Jewish people would be emphasized (similar to Moshe’s original intention).

לֹא אֲשַׁאֲרֶנָּה מְשׁוּבָה: לֹא לְחֹד בְּעִירָא בְּזַנָּא
 לָנָא וְעַדִּי קְרוּנָא דִּי כְּבִשְׁנָא: לוּ מַעְרַעַר
 דִּי עַל בִּיחַ נַחְלָא דְאַרְנָן וְקִרְתָּא דִּי בְּנַחְלָא
 וְעַד גִּלְעָד לֹא הָיְתָה קִרְתָּא דִּי תְּקִיפַת מִנְּנָא יַת
 כּוּלָּא מִסַּר יִי אֱלֹהֵנָּא קְדָמָנָּא: לוּ לְחֹד
 לְאַרְעֵי בְּנֵי עַמּוּן לֹא קִרְבַּתָּא כָּל בִּיחַ נַחְלָא
 יוֹבְקָא וְקִרְוֵי טוּרָא וְכָל דִּי פִקִּיד יִי אֱלֹהֵנָּא:
 « וְאַתְּפִנִינָא וְסִלְקִנָּא אֲרַח דְּמַתְנָן וְנִפְק עוּג
 מִלְּקָא דְּמַתְנָן לְקִדְמוּתָנָּא הוּא וְכָל עִמָּה
 לְאַנְחָא קִרְבָּא אֲדָרְעֵי: ב וְאִמַּר יִי לִי לֹא
 תִּדְחַל יְתָה אֲרֵי בִידְךָ מְסָרִית יְתָה
 וְיַת כָּל עִמָּה וְיַת אֲרַעָה וְתַעֲבֹד לָהּ
 כְּמָא דִּי עֲבַדְתָּא לְסִיחֹן מִלְּקָא דְּאִמּוּרָאָה דִּי
 יַתְב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן: ג וְאִמַּר יִי אֱלֹהֵנָּא בִידְנָא אַף
 יַת עוּג מִלְּקָא דְּמַתְנָן וְיַת כָּל עִמָּה וְמַחְנוּהִי
 עַד דִּלָּא אֲשַׁתָּאֵר לָהּ מְשׁוּבָה: ד וְכִבְשִׁנָּא
 יַת כָּל קְרוּוֵהִי בְּעִדְנָא הֵיאָה לֹא הָיְתָה קִרְתָּא
 דִּי לֹא נְסִיבְנָא מִנְּהוֹן שְׁתֵּי קְרוּוִין כָּל בֵּית פֶּלֶךְ
 מְרַכְבוּנָא מִלְּפִתָּא דְּעוּג בְּמַתְנָן: ה כָּל אֱלִין
 קְרוּוִין פְּרִיכִין מִקְפָּן שׁוּר רַם דִּילְהֹן דְּשִׁין
 וְעִבְרִין בְּר מִקְרָוֵי פְּצִחָא סְגִי לְחִדָּא:
 ו וְנִמְרָנָּא יְתָהוֹן כְּמָא דִּי עֲבַדְנָא לְסִיחֹן
 מִלְּקָא דְּחֻשְׁבוֹן גִּמְר כָּל קְרוּוֵי גּוֹבְרָאִי נְשִׂיא
 וְסַפְלָא: ז וְכָל בְּעִירָא וְעַדִּי קְרוּנָא בְּזַנָּא לָנָּא:
 ח וְנְסִיבְנָא בְּעִדְנָא הֵיאָה יַת אֲרַעָא מִיַּד
 תְּרִין מְלָכֵי אִמּוּרָאָה דִּי בְּעִבְרָא דִּירְהָנָּא
 מִנְּחָלָא דְּאַרְנָן עַד טוּרָא דְּחֻרְמוֹן: ט צִידוּנָּאִי
 קְרוּוִין לְחֻרְמוֹן סְרִין וְאִמּוּרָאִי קְרוּוִין לָהּ שׁוּר
 תִּלְנָּא: י כָּל קְרוּוֵי מִישְׂרָא וְכָל גִּלְעָד וְכָל

וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף לֹא הִשְׁאֲרֵנוּ שְׂרִיד: לֹא רַק הַבְּהֵמָה בְּזוּנֵנוּ לָנוּ
 וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לְכַדְנוּ: לוּ מַעְרַעַר אֲשֶׁר עַל-שְׂפַת-נַחַל
 אֲרָנָן וְהָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּנַחַל וְעַד-הַגִּלְעָד לֹא הָיְתָה קְרִיָּה אֲשֶׁר
 שָׁגְבָה מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת-הַכָּל נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ: לז רַק אֶל-
 אֲרָץ בְּנֵי-עַמּוּן לֹא קִרְבַּת כָּל-יָד נַחַל יַבֵּק וְעָרֵי הַהָר וְכָל
 אֲשֶׁר-צוּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ג « וַנִּפֶן וַנַּעַל דֶּרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עוּג
 מִלְּדֵ-הַבָּשָׁן לְקִרְאֵתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל-עַמּוּ לְמַלְחָמָה אֲדָרְעֵי:
 ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל-תִּירָא אֲתוּ כִּי בִידְךָ נָתַתִּי אֲתוּ וְאֶת-
 כָּל-עַמּוּ וְאֶת-אֲרָצוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לְסִיחֹן מִלְּדֵ-
 הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן: ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיַדְנוּ גִּם
 אֶת-עוּג מִלְּדֵ-הַבָּשָׁן וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוּ וַנִּכְהוּ עַד-בְּלַתִּי הַשְּׂאִיר-
 לוֹ שְׂרִיד: ד וַנִּלְכַּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא הָיְתָה קְרִיָּה
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא-לָקַחְנוּ מֵאֲתָם שְׂשִׁים עִיר כָּל-חֶבֶל אֲרָגָב מִמְּלַכַת
 עוּג בַּבָּשָׁן: ה כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי עָרִים בְּצִרַת חוּמָה גְּבַהָה דִּלְתֵימ
 וּבְרִיחַ לְבַד מַעְרֵי הַפְּרָזִי הִרְבֵּה מְאֹד: ו וַנַּחֲרַם אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר
 עָשִׂינוּ לְסִיחֹן מִלְּדֵ חֻשְׁבוֹן הַחֲרָם כָּל-עִיר מִתְּמֵם הַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף:
 ז וְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים בְּזוּנֵנוּ לָנוּ: ח וַנִּקָּח בְּעֵת הַהוּא
 אֶת-הָאֲרָץ מִיַּד שְׁנֵי מְלָכֵי הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִנַּחַל
 אֲרָנָן עַד-הַר חֲרָמוֹן: ט צִידוּנִים יִקְרָאוּ לְחֻרְמוֹן שְׂרִין וְהָאֱמֹרִי
 יִקְרָאוּ-לוֹ שְׁנִיר: י כָּל א עָרֵי הַמִּישָׁר וְכָל-הַגִּלְעָד וְכָל-הַבָּשָׁן

כ"ט

ארגוב ומלחם והיתה צזויה צעניוהם ומקרעו ומשליכוין צהמה וצגדים
 ולא נטלו כי אם כסף וזהב. לכך נאמר צזונו לנו¹, לשון צזיון. כך נדרש
 בצפרי צפרשת ויש צעראל צעטיס²: (ז) כל יד נחל יבק. כל אלל נחל
 יצוק: וכל אשר צוה ה' אלהינו. שלל לכבוש, הנחמו: (ח) ונפן ונעל. כל
 זד לפון הוא עלייה: (צ) אל תירא אתו. וצסיוחון לא הולך לומר אל תירא
 אותו, אלא מתיירא הכי משה שלל תעמוד לו זכות שמשם לאצרהס שנאמר³
 ויצא הפליט, והוא עוג⁴: (ד) חבל ארגב. מתרגמין בית פלך טרכווא.
 ורואתי תרגום ירושלמי צמגילת אסתר קורא פלטיין טרכונין. למדתי חבל

ארגוב והפריכה, היכל מלך, כלומר שהמלכות נקראת על שמו. וכן את
 הארגוב דמלכיס⁵, אלל היכל מלך הרגו פקח צן רמליכו לפקחיה, למדתי
 שכן נקראת שם ההפריכה: (ה) מערי הפרזי. פרוזות ופתוחות צלל חומה,
 וכן פרוזת תשז ירושלים⁶: (ו) החרם. לשון כוה, הלוך וכלות: (ח) מיד.
 מרשות: (ט) צידנים יקראו לחרמון וגו'. וצמקוס אחר הוא אומר ועד
 הכ שיאון הוא חרמון⁷, הכי לו ארבעה שמות, למכ הולרכו ליכתב, להגיד
 שצח ארץ ישראל, שהיו ארבעה מלכויות מתפארות צכך, זו אומרת על שמי
 יקרא, וזו אומרת על שמי יקרא⁸: שניר. הוא שלג צלשון אשכנז וצלשון

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is אַרְגָּב ? (v. 4)
 RASHI: "The area of the royal palace," denoting that the area is called after its name.

TALMUD: [According to one opinion], the superior oil [for meal-offerings] is from Tekoa [in the southern half of the Land of Israel]. Abba Sha'ul said, "The second best is from Regev [אַרְגָּב = רֵגֵב] in the Transjordan." However, oil from all lands is valid (Menachos 85b).

men, women, and the young children. We left no survivors. ³⁵ We only plundered the cattle for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we had taken. ³⁶ (Throughout the entire land) from Aro'air, which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon, and the city in the valley, to Gilad, there was no populated city* too strong for us. God, our God, delivered them all before us.

³⁷ (The) only (places that) you did not approach (were): the Amonite's land, the entire area bordering the River Yabok, the cities of the mountain, and everywhere God, our God, commanded us (not to conquer).

🕎 THE WAR WITH OG, KING OF BASHAN 🕎

3 **W**e changed direction and went up (northward) toward Bashan. At Edre'iy, Og, the King of Bashan, came out toward us at war. He was with all his people.

² God said to me, "Do not fear him (even though he has the merit of having helped Avraham**), for I have given him, all his people, and his land into your hands. You will do the same to him as you did to Sichon, King of the Amorites, who lived in Cheshbon."

³ God, our God, also delivered Og, the King of Bashan and all his people into our hands. We struck his (people) down until no survivors remained. ⁴ On that occasion, we conquered all his cities. There was no populated city that we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the area of the royal palace—the (entire) kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ All these cities were fortified with high walls, double doors, and bolts, in addition to a large number of unwallied cities, ⁶ but we destroyed them, just as we did to (the people of) Sichon, King of Cheshbon, annihilating the men, women, and young children of every city. ⁷ We (reluctantly) took all the cattle and the spoils of the cities, as plunder for ourselves (since we already had plenty of plunder from the war with Sichon).

⁸ On that occasion we took over the land from the two Amorite kings who were on that side of the Jordan, from the Arnon Brook to Mount Chermon ⁹—the Tzidonites call Chermon, Siryon, and the Amorites call it Senir—¹⁰ all the cities of the plain, all of Gilad, and all of Bashan, up to Salchah and

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🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

"THERE WAS NO POPULATED CITY TOO STRONG" (v. 36)

Chasidic thought explains that even the forces of evil become stronger by virtue of being united together. Thus, we find that the "Generation of Dispersion," who rebelled against God, nevertheless understood the great power in being a totally harmonious community (See *Sparks of Chasidus* to *Bereishis* ch. 11).

Likewise, Sichon and Og were aware of the great spiritual power in communal harmony, which is why they specifically opposed the Jewish people entering the Land of Israel, where they would become a true Jewish community. Sichon and Og knew that their strongest force in opposing the Jewish people at war (from a spiritual perspective) was their own "populated cities," i.e. places of communal harmony. Thus, the Torah stresses, "There was no populated city too strong for us...there was no populated city that we did not take from them" (2:36, 3:4), for this represented the dismantling of the spiritual—and consequently the physical—strongholds of Sichon and Og.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 1ff.)

"THE AREA OF THE ROYAL PALACE" (v. 4)

Abba Sha'ul (in the *Talmud*) maintained that oil produced in Regev is second best to that produced in Tekoa in the Land of Israel. The first opinion, however, maintained that Regev cannot be called "second best." Since it is outside the Land of Israel it cannot be mentioned together with Tekoa—even to be called "second best." What was the underlying basis of their argument?

The first opinion viewed the holiness of the Land of Israel as being utterly unique, in that it is a Land in which God caused His Presence to dwell. To this, there can be no "second best," and all the other lands are equally inferior by comparison. Abba Sh'aul however, maintained that the Transjordan does have some of the special sanctity of the Land of Israel, in that it became the eternal inheritance of the children of Gad and Re'uvain (upon their request—see *Bamidbar* 32:5). And this is the inner reason why Regev is called the "royal palace," for it too has a glimmer of the Divine radiance of the Land of Israel.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, pp. 22-23)

* עיר "ערכי הכינויים" (מבעל סדר הדורות), מערכת עיר *

** He was the "runaway" mentioned in *Bereishis* 14:13 who informed Avraham of Lot's capture. See *Rashi* *ibid*.

דמתנן עד סלכה ואדרעי קרוי מלכותא דעוג
 דמתנן: יא ארי לחוד עוג מלכא דמתנן
 אשתאר משאר גבראי הא ערסה ערסא
 דפרזלא הלא היא ברבת בני עמון תשע
 אמין ארבה וארבע אמין פתיה באמת מלך:
 יב וית ארעא הקא יריתנא בעדנא תהיא
 מערער די על נחלא דארנן ופלגות טורא
 דגלעד וקרווי יקבית לשבטא דראובן
 ולשבטא דגד: יג ושאר גלעד וכל דמתנן
 מלכותא דעוג יקבית לפלגות שבטא דמנשה
 כל בית פלך טרכונא לכל מתנן תהיא
 מתקרי ארע גבראי: יד יאיר בר מנשה נסיב
 ית כל בית פלך טרכונא עד תחום גשורא
 ואפקירוס וקרא יתהון על שמה ית מתנן
 כפרני יאיר עד יומא דדין: טו ולמכיר יקבית
 ית גלעד: טז ולשבטא דראובן ולשבטא דגד
 יקבית מן גלעד ועד נחלא דארנן גו נחלא
 ותחום ועד יוקא דנחלא תחום בני עמון:
 יז ומישרא וירדנא ותחומה מגנוסר ועד ימא
 דמישרא ימא דמלחא תחות משפך מרמתא
 מדינהא: יח ופקירית יתבון בעדנא תהיא
 למימר יי אלהבון יתב לכו ית ארעא הקא
 למירתה מורזין תעברון קדם אחיבון בני
 ישראל כל מורזי חילא: יט לחוד גשיבון
 וספלבון ובעירבון ידענא ארי בעיר סגי לבון
 יתבון בקרויבון די יקבית לבון: כ עד די ינית
 יי לאחיבון בותבון וירתון אף אנון ית ארעא

עד-סלכה ואדרעי ערי ממלכת עוג בפשן: יא כי רק-עוג
 מלך הפשן נשאר מיתר הרפאים הנה ערשו ערש ברזל
 הלה הוא ברבת בני עמון תשע אמות ארבה וארבע אמות
 רחבה באמת-איש: יב ואת-הארץ הזאת ירשנו בעת ההוא
 מערער אשר-על-נחל ארנן וחצי הר-הגלעד ועריו נתתי
 לראובני ולגדי: יג ויתר הגלעד וכל-הפשן ממלכת עוג נתתי
 לחצי שבט המנשה כל חבל הארנב לכל-הפשן ההוא יקרא
 ארץ רפאים: יד יאיר בן-מנשה לקח את-חבל ארנב עד-
 גבול הגשורי והמעכתי ויקרא אתם על-שמו את-הפשן
 חות יאיר עד היום הזה: [שביעי] טו ולמכיר נתתי את-הגלעד:
 טז ולראובני ולגדי נתתי מן-הגלעד ועד-נחל ארנן תוך הנחל
 וגבול ועד יבק הנחל גבול בני עמון: יז והערבה והירדן וגבול
 מבגרת ועד ים הערבה ים הפלח תחת אשדת הפסגה
 מזרחה: יח ואצו אתכם בעת ההוא לאמר יהוה אלהיכם נתן
 לכם את-הארץ הזאת לרשתה חלוצים תעברו לפני אחיכם
 בני-ישראל כל-בני-חיל: יט רק נשיכם וטפכם ומקנכם
 ידעתי כי-מקנה רב לכם ישבו בעריכם אשר נתתי לכם:
 [מפמיר] כ עד אשר-יניח יהוה | לאחיכם ככם וירשו גם-הם
 את-הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיכם נתן להם בעבר הירדן

*יש גורסים ש רבתי.

כש"י

ויותר מכאן: (יז) בנרת. מעבר הירדן המערבי הוא, ונחלת בני גד מעבר
 הירדן המזרחי, ונפל צגורלס רוחב הירדן כנגדם, ועוד מעבר שפתו עד
 כנרת, וזכו שנאמר והירדן וגבול, הירדן ומעבר לו: (יח) ואצו אתכם. לבני
 ראובן וגד היה מדבר: לפני אחיכם. הם היו הולכים לפני ישראל למלחמה,
 לפי שהיו צבורים ואויזים נופלים לפניכם, שנאמר וטרף זרוע אף קדקד:
 חטלת פרשת אלה הדברים

כנען: (יא) מיתר הרפאים. שהרגו אמרפל וחזיריו צעשטרות קרנים וכו' ו
 פלט מן המלחמה שנאמר¹ ויצא הפליט זכו עוג? באמת איש. באמת עוג:
 (יב) ואת הארץ הזאת ירשנו בעת ההוא. האמורה למעלה, מנחל
 ארנון ועד הר חרמון: מערער אשר על נחל ארנון. אינו מחובר לראשו
 של מקרא אלא לסופו, על נחתי לראובני ולגדי. אצל לענין ירושה עד הר
 חרמון היה: (יג) ההוא יקרא ארץ רפאים. היא אותה שנחתי לאזרכס:
 (טז) תוך הנחל וגבול. כל הנחל ועוד מעבר לשפתו, כלומר עד ועד בכלל

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- Why were the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad told to go ahead of the other Jewish people into battle? (v. 18)
RASHI: They would go in front of the Jewish people to battle because they were mighty, and the enemies would fall before them, as the verse states, "He will tear off an arm (of his enemy in one blow, along) with the head" (Devarim 33:20).
GUR ARYEH: Rashi was troubled by the question: Why should the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad be required to lead the battle? It is understandable that they were required to *join* the battle, and not leave the rest of the Jewish people to fight while they relaxed in their newly acquired inheritance of land—but why should they be required to go *first* and put themselves in danger more than the others? Rashi answers this question by explaining that the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad went first, "because they were mighty."

Edre'iy, cities of Og's Kingdom in Bashan. ¹¹ For only Og, King of Bashan, remained from the rest of the Refa'im (that were killed by Amrafel and his colleagues*). His bed was a bed of iron, nine cubits long, and four cubits wide, according to the cubit of a (giant) man. It is found in the Amonite (city) of Rabah.

THE LANDS OF RE'UVAIN, GAD & HALF THE TRIBE OF MENASHEH

3:12 I gave this land, which we acquired on that occasion—from Aro'air, which is by the Arnon Brook, half of Mount Gilad and its cities—to the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad.

¹³ I gave the remainder of Gilad, and the whole of Bashan—Og's Kingdom—to half the tribe of Menasheh. (This included) the whole area of the royal palace and all of Bashan, which is called the land of Refa'im (which God gave to Avraham).

¹⁴ Ya'ir, the son of Menasheh, took the whole area of the royal palace until the Geshurite-Ma'achite border, and named (that part of) Bashan after himself: "Ya'ir's Villages," (a name that remains) to this day.

¹⁵ I gave Gilad to Machir.

¹⁶ I gave to the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad: from Gilad to the (area of the) Arnon Brook—including the middle of the brook and its bank, right up to the Yabok Brook on the Amonite border—¹⁷ the plain, the (width of the) Jordan and the area (beyond) its bank from Kineres to the Sea of the Plain, the Sea of Salt, under the waterfalls of Pishgah, eastward.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BATTLE WITH CANA'AN

3:18 On that occasion, I commanded (the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad) saying:

"God, your God, has given you this land to take possession of it. (When Israel goes to battle) those of you who are in the army (should) pass over (the land) armed, in front of your brothers, the children of Israel, (for you are the mightiest tribe)."

¹⁹ "Only your wives, your young children, and your cattle—for I know that you have a lot of cattle—may live in your cities, which I have given you, ²⁰ until God settles your brothers like you. Then they too will possess the land which God, your God, is giving them on the other side of the Jordan. (Only) then may each man return to (settle in) his inherited land, which I have given to you."

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THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP OF RE'UVAIN AND GAD (v. 18)

Even after the explanation of **Gur Aryeh**, Rashi's comment to verse 18 presents us with the following problems:

a.) It is commonly accepted that Yehudah (and not Re'uvain or Gad) is the strongest of the tribes. In *Parshas Vayechi*, Yehudah is described as a "lion," which is the strongest of the animals, and Ya'akov promised Yehudah, that, "Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies" (*Bereishis* 49:8).

So how can Rashi write here that the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad were required to lead the battle "because they were mighty," and not the tribe of Yehudah?

b.) In *Parshas Matos* (*Bamidbar* 32:17), Rashi writes that the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad were commanded to be "at the head of the invading armies," suggesting they would join together with the other tribes' armies at their head. However, here Rashi writes that they were required to "go in front of the Jewish people to battle," indicating that the entire armies of Re'uvain and Gad were to go first, followed by the armies of the other tribes. What caused this change of plan?

THE EXPLANATION

a.) To explain the verse, "Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies" (*Bereishis* 49:8), Rashi cites the parallel verse, "And of my enemies, you have given me the back of their necks" (*Sam. II* 22:41). This means that the enemy will "flee, so that I see the back of their necks" (*Metzudas David* *ibid.*). In other words, the unique might of the tribe of Yehudah is that they cause enemies to flee.

However, the conquest of the Land of Israel was an obligatory war in which the Jewish people were commanded, "You may not allow any soul to live" (*Devarim* 20:16, a verse already familiar to the reader from Rashi to *Vayikra* 25:44). So clearly in this case, where the Jewish people were required to obliterate the enemy, the ability to cause an enemy to flee was not ideal. Therefore Rashi writes that the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad were chosen because "enemies would fall before them, as the verse states, 'He will tear off an arm (of his enemy in one blow, along) with the head,'" i.e. they were effective in annihilating the enemy.


b.) If Moshe had led the Jewish people into the Land of Israel, we can presume that he would have enjoyed a totally miraculous victory,

* See *Bereishis* 14:1ff.

ד"י אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִחַב לְהוֹן בְּעִבְרָא דִּיִּהְוֵנָא
 וּתְתוּבֵנוּן גְּבַר לִירְתָתָהּ דִּי יְהֻבִית לְכוּן:
 כּא וַיֵּת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ פְּקִידִית בְּעִדְנָא הֵהוּא לְמִימַר
 עֵינִיד תּוֹאָה יֵת כָּל דִּי עֵבֵד וַיֵּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְתַרְוִין
 מְלָכִיא הָאֵלִין בְּן יַעֲבֵד וַיֵּי לְכָל מְלָכוֹתָא דִּי
 אֵת עֵבֵר לְתַמּוֹן: כּב לֹא תִדְחֲלוּן מִנְהוֹן אֲרִי וַיֵּי
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִימְרָה יְגִית לְכוּן: פ פ פ


וּשְׁבַתְתֶּם אִישׁ לִירְשָׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָכֶם: כּא וְאֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
 צִוִּיתִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר עֵינִיד הָרֵאֵת אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְשְׁנֵי הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּיַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לְכָל־
 הַמְּלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּה עִבֵּר שָׁמָּה: כּב לֹא תִירָאוּם בִּי יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא הַנִּלְחָם לָכֶם: ס ס ס

ק"ה פסוקים, מלבי"ה סימן.



Parshas Devarim contains 2 prohibitions

1. Not to appoint a judge who is not learned in the laws of the Torah, even though he is learned in other areas [1:17].
2. A judge should not fear an evil man at a trial [1:17].



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no different from all the other wars which Moshe fought that were won miraculously. Thus, the fact that Moshe did not merit to enter the Land with the Jewish people, and that they were led instead by Yehoshua, gave rise to the need to conquer the land within the natural order.

When Moshe instructed the tribes of Re'uvain and Gad in *Parshas Matos*, he was still confident that his prayers to enter the Land would eventually be accepted by God (see *Rashi to Bamidbar 27:12*), and that he would lead the Jewish people to a miraculous victory. Therefore he

²¹ I commanded Yehoshua at that time (since he would be leading the battle*), saying, “Your eyes have seen all that God, your God, has done to these two kings. God will do likewise to all the kingdoms through which you will pass.”

²² (To the tribes of Re’uvain and Gad*, I said,) “Do not fear them, for it is God, your God, Who is fighting for you.”

THE HAFTARAH FOR DEVARIM IS ON PAGE 274.

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instructed the tribes of Re’uvain and Gad merely to be “*at the head* of the invading armies.” Their presence was primarily symbolic, since their strength to fight a war within the natural order would not in fact be needed under Moshe’s miraculous leadership.

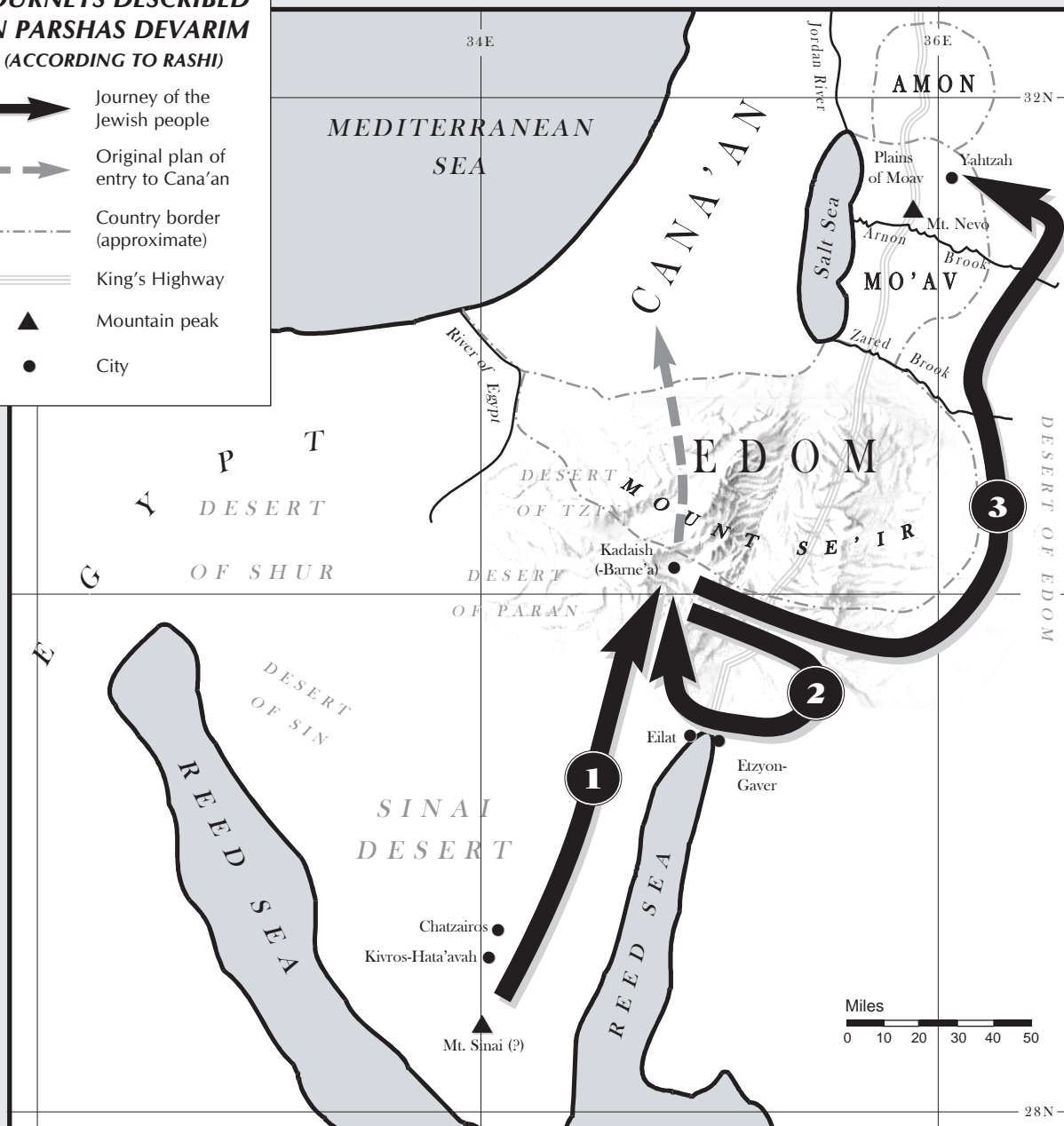
However, when speaking here in our *Parsha*, Moshe had already been told that his prayers to enter the Land had *not* been accepted (as Moshe

related below, 3:26), so he was aware that the conquest would have to take place *within* the natural order. Therefore, he instructed the tribes of Re’uvain and Gad to “*go in front of the Jewish people*,” i.e. in front of all of the Jewish people, to utilize their effectiveness to the maximum extent.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 1ff.)

**JOURNEYS DESCRIBED
IN PARSHAS DEVARIM
(ACCORDING TO RASHI)**

-  Journey of the Jewish people
-  Original plan of entry to Cana'an
-  Country border (approximate)
-  King's Highway
-  Mountain peak
-  City



1. SINAI TO KADAISH-BARNE'A—The Jewish people departed from their encampment at Mount Sinai on 20th Iyar 2449 (*Bamidbar* 10:11-12). They spent 30 days in Kivros Hata'avah (*ibid.* 11:34), and 7 days in Chatzairos, waiting for Miriam to recover (*ibid.* 12:15). The final leg of the journey to Kadaish-Barne'a—a distance of 11 days travel—was completed miraculously in just three days, as a sign that God wished to bring the Jewish people into the Land of Israel speedily (*Devarim* 1:2 and *Rashi ibid.*).

2. WANDERING IN THE DESERT—At this point the original plan was to cross over the remaining part of Mount Se'ir northwards and enter the Land. However, at Kadaish-Barne'a the sin of the

spies occurred, and it was decreed that the entire generation would die in the desert (*Devarim* 1:34-35). The people stayed in Kadaish-Barne'a for 19 years (*ibid.* v. 46 and *Rashi*). They then spent another 19 years circuiting the southern part of Mount Se'ir, camping at a series of locations (*Devarim* 2:1; *Bamidbar* 33:19-35), moving gradually eastwards across the entire southern border of Mount Se'ir as far east as Mo'av (*Rashi* to *Devarim* 2:1), before returning via Etzyon Gaver to Kadaish-Barne'a (*Bamidbar* 33:36; *Rashi* to *Devarim* 1:46).

3. JOURNEY TO THE PLAINS OF MO'AV—At this point, the Jewish people were ready to enter the Land of Israel, since the previous generation had died (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 20:22). Moshe requested per-

mission from the King of Edom to pass northwards through the Land of Edom into the Land of Israel, but his request was denied (*Bamidbar* 20:14-21). Thus, they were forced to retrace the steps of their parents along the southern side of Mount Se'ir, heading east (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 21:4), circumventing the Land of Edom until they reached Mo'av. They crossed the Zared Brook (*Devarim* 2:13), but the King of Mo'av also refused them passage, so they traveled up the eastern side of Mo'av (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 34:3). They crossed the Arnon Brook (*Devarim* 2:24), and defeated Sichon at war in Yahtzah (*ibid.* 32-33). After defeating Og at war (*ibid.* 3:1ff.—not shown on map), the Jewish people settled in the Plains of Mo'av, where the Book of *Devarim* was said (*Devarim* 1:1 and *Rashi ibid.*). [See Appendix]

parshas va'eschanan

פַּרְשַׁת וַאֲשַׁחֲנָן

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

The word *va'eschanan* means "I requested," referring to Moshe's requests to enter the Land of Israel: "*I requested from God...Please let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan*" (3:23-25).

Understandably, Moshe's prayers to enter the Land would have been heartfelt and persistent. In fact, the *Midrash* states that the Torah's use of the unusual term *va'eschanan*, which has the *gematria* (numerical value) of 515, alludes to the fact that Moshe made this petition no less than 515 times! (*Devarim Rabah* 11:10).

Eventually, however, "*God became angry with me... and He did not listen to me. God said to me, 'Enough of your (requests)! Do not speak to Me any more about this matter'*" (v. 26).

Everything in the Torah must convey a practical lesson for our lives. But this account seems merely to convey a historical event. What does it mean for us?

The common perception of this incident is that Moshe's prayers were not accepted by God, and that when God became angry, Moshe stopped his petition. However, we must keep in mind that Moshe was not only praying for himself, but for the entire Jewish people. Had

he been the one to lead them into the Land, it would have immediately ushered in the Messianic Age for all time.

Therefore, Moshe could have followed the Talmudic directive, "*Whatever the master of the house tells you, you must do, except [when he tells you to] leave*" (*Pesachim* 86b). When God (the true "Master") told Moshe to stop praying (i.e. to abandon the request for Mashiach, and to "leave" God's presence), he was not required to follow the instructions of his Host, according to Talmudic Law.

So, despite the fact that Moshe was angering God with his persistent prayers, it is highly unlikely that Moshe actually stopped petitioning God, even after God said, "*Do not speak to Me any more about this matter.*" For Moshe was not praying for himself, but on behalf of the Jewish people—the generation that he took out of Egypt. And, as a true leader and lover of Israel, Moshe would surely have been willing to put himself at risk (by angering God), to make every possible effort on behalf of his people.

And this is the lesson for us: To continue to pray for Mashiach again and again, until we are finally answered!

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5751)

כג וְאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־יְהוָה בְּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: כד אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה * אֶתְּךָ הַחַלּוֹת לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־גְּדֻלָּתְךָ וְאֶת־יְדֹת הַחֻזְקָה אֲשֶׁר מִי־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה כְּמַעֲשֵׂיךָ וּכְגִבּוֹרֹתֶיךָ: כה אָעֲבָרְהָנָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הָהָר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהִלְבַּנְנִי: כו וַיַּתְעִבֵר יְהוָה בְּלִמְעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי רַב־לָךְ אֶל־תּוֹסֵף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדְּבָר הַזֶּה: כז עָלָה רֹאשׁ הַפְּסָלָה וְשָׂא עֵינֶיךָ

*הקריאה אלהים

כ"ג

את גדלך. זו מדת עובדך, וכן הוא אומר ועתה יגדל נא כח כ"ג: ואת ידך. זו ימינך, שהיא פשוטה לכל צאי עולם³: החזקה. שאתה כונש צרחמים את מדת הדין החזקה³: אשר מי אל וגו'. אינך דומה למלך צר ודס, שיש לו יועלים וסנקטורין כממחין זידו כשרולח לעשות חסד ולעצור על מדותיו, אתה אין מי ימחה צידך אם תמחול לי תצטל גזירתך³. ולפי פשוטו אתה החלות להכרות את עבדך מלחמת סיוחן ועוג, כדכתיב ראה החלותי תה לפניך⁵, הראני מלחמת שלושים ואחד מלכים: (כה) אעברה נא. אין נא חלא לשון צקשה³: החר הטוב הזה. זו ירושלים⁶: והלבנון. זה בית המקדש⁶: (כו) ויתעבר ה'. נתמלא חמה³: למענכם. צעזילכם, אתם גרמתם לי. וכן הוא אומר ויקיפו על מי מריצה וירע למשה צעזורים⁷: רב לך. שלא יאמרו

(כג) ואתחנן. אין חנון בכל מקום חלא לשון מתנת חנם. אף על פי שיש להם לנדיקים חלות צמעשים הטובים, אין מצקשים מאת המקום חלא מתנת חנם. לפי שאמר לו וחנותי את אשר אחוץ¹, אמר לו צלשון ואתחנן. דבר אחר זה אחד מעשרה לשונות שנקראת תפלה, כדאיתא צספרי: בעת ההיא. לאחר שכצפתי ארץ סיוחן ועוג, דמיתי שמא הוטר הנדר: לאמר. זה אחד משלשה מקומות שאמר משה לפני המקום, איני מניחך עד שחודיעני אם תעשה שאלתי אם לאו: (כד) ה' אלהים. רחום צדין: אתה החלות להראות את עבדך. פתח להיות עומד ומתפלל, אף על פי שנגזרה גזירה. אמר לו ממך למדתי, שאמרת לי ועתה הניחה לי², וכי תופס בייתי צך, חלא לפתוח פתח, צדי תלוי להחפלה עליהם, כמו כן הייתי סצור לעשות עכשיו³:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What type of request does וְאֶתְחַנַּן signify? (v. 23)

RASHI: וְאֶתְחַנַּן is a derivative of the word חַנּוּן, which always signifies [the request for] an unearned (חֲנֻם) gift. Even though the righteous could justify their requests based on their good deeds, [in their humility] they only request “unearned” gifts from God...

Another explanation: This is one of ten terms which denote prayer, listed in *Sifri*.

MIDRASH: Rabbi Yochanan said, “There are ten terms which can denote prayer, and they are: בִּיצוּר, פְּגִיעָה, בִּיצוּר, נֶאֱקָה, רִנָּה, פְּגִיעָה, בִּיצוּר, וְחַנּוּנִים שׁוּעָה, וְחַנּוּנִים שׁוּעָה, נְפִיל, וְפִלּוּל, וְחַנּוּנִים שׁוּעָה, וְחַנּוּנִים שׁוּעָה, וְחַנּוּנִים שׁוּעָה....”Of all these expressions,

Moshe prayed only with the approach of תְּחִנּוּנִים [an appeal to God’s grace]. Rabbi Yochanan said, “From here you can learn that no creature has any worth to the Creator, for even Moshe only asked God with an expression that denotes asking for an act of grace.

● What was God’s response? (v. 26)

RASHI: [Request no more to enter the Land] so that people should not say, “How hard is the Master, and how obstinate and pressing is the disciple!” Another explanation: [God said], “More than this is reserved for you. Much is the goodness that is kept for you [in the World to Come].”

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🕯️ MOSHE’S REQUESTS (v. 23)

Rashi cites two opinions concerning the nature of Moshe’s requests to enter the Land of Israel:

a.) That while Moshe could have insisted that God allow him to enter the Land of Israel because of his good deeds, he nevertheless did not do so. Rather, he asked God to allow him to enter the Land as one asks for an unearned gift.

b.) That Moshe prayed to God.

What is the difference between these two explanations? And why did Rashi need to bring two explanations?

THE EXPLANATION

Scripture states that God is “merciful to all His creations” (Psalms 145:9), indicating God’s intention to provide for the needs of everything that He

created. A Jew has the further merit of being a descendant of the Patriarchs, through whom he has the rights to additional sustenance—as the Mishnah states, “Even if you prepare for them a meal like Shlomo’s banquet in his heyday, you will not have discharged your obligation to them, for they are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov” (Bava Metzia 83a). And by fulfilling God’s will, one has yet further rights to sustenance, as the verse states, “If you pursue (the study of) My laws (in order to) guard My commands and observe them, then I will give you rain at (a convenient) time, the Land will yield its produce etc.” (Vayikra 26:3-4).

Thus, in a normal situation when a person approaches God in prayer for his needs, he will be requesting something which he deserves, according to principles which God Himself has established.*

But even though one is deserving, one is nevertheless required to pray to God, since that which a person deserves according to Torah is not a

* Of course, a person may be extremely wicked and not deserving of any sustenance, in which case he may still pray to God to support him even though he is undeserving. Nevertheless, in the normal scheme of things, a person should deserve God’s sustenance, as explained above.

🕎 MOSHE'S REQUESTS TO ENTER THE LAND 🕎

3:23 **I** requested from God, at that time, saying,²⁴ “God Almighty (Who is merciful in judgment)! You have begun to show Your greatness and Your strong hand to Your servant (with our victory over Sichon and Og)! For who is like God in heaven or on earth who can perform deeds and mighty acts like You?²⁵ Please let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain (of Jerusalem) and the Levanon (i.e. the Holy Temple).”

²⁶ But God became angry with me because of you, and He did not listen to me. God said to me, “Enough of your (requests)! Do not speak to Me any more about this matter.²⁷ (If you want to see the

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debt owed to him by God. Rather, God chose to be merciful to His creations and He chose to give special treatment to the righteous etc. So, even that which a person deserves is ultimately given to him only because of God's kindness. Therefore he should ask (and not demand) for it from God, in prayer.*

RASHI'S TWO EXPLANATIONS

With the above in mind, we can now turn to *Rashi's* comments:

At first glance, the use of the unusual term *va'eschanan* in our verse seems to suggest that Moshe was not making a normal prayer or request. Therefore, *Rashi* explains that the term *va'eschanan* does not mean prayer at all, but rather that it “always signifies [the request for] an unearned gift.” I.e. Moshe did not pray to enter the Land of Israel, because the concept of prayer would indicate that he felt he deserved to enter (as explained above). Rather, “even though the righteous could justify their requests based on their good deeds, they only request ‘unearned’ gifts from God.”

However, this explanation is somewhat problematic at the literal level, because it does not appear to be consistent with other parts of the Torah. For we do not find that the righteous always request unearned gifts from God, but rather, we do find in a number of instances that they pray to God for their needs, as one prays for something that is deserved.

Therefore, *Rashi* brought a second interpretation that *va'eschanan* “is one of ten terms which denote prayer,” i.e. that Moshe actually prayed to God (because he felt that he deserved to enter the Land).

But *Rashi* considered this to be only a secondary interpretation, (even though it is more globally consistent) because:

- i.) It fails to answer the main question, why our verse used the unusual expression *va'eschanan* for an ordinary prayer.
- ii.) At the literal level, it is difficult to accept that Biblical Hebrew, the holy tongue used by God Himself, would have ten different words that mean the same thing.

THE VIEW OF R' YOCHANAN IN THE MIDRASH

In the *Midrash*, R' Yochanan appears to offer a third, intermediate opinion. On the one hand, R' Yochanan held, in accordance with *Rashi's* second interpretation, that *va'eschanan* is indeed an expression of prayer, indicating that Moshe felt that he deserved to enter the Land. Nevertheless, R' Yochanan maintained that outwardly, Moshe used “an expression that denotes asking for an act of grace,” rather than demanding that his request be granted based on his merits. This is because Moshe knew that “no creature has any worth to the Creator,” i.e. however great a person may be, his deeds are ultimately not needed by God.

According to the *Midrash*, Moshe felt he had many merits, but ultimately he was aware that his merits were not of any real value to God. In contrast, *Rashi's* first (and primary) opinion maintained that Moshe did not feel that he deserved to enter the Land, as in his great humility Moshe felt that his merits were of no true worth. Thus, his request to God was not a prayer at all, but rather, “the request of an unearned gift.”

GOD'S RESPONSE (V. 26)

Based on the above, it appears that *Rashi's* two explanations of God's response (in v. 26), correspond directly to his two interpretations of Moshe's request (in v. 23):

According to the first approach, that Moshe was requesting an “unearned gift,” there was no limit to how persistent Moshe could be, since in any case it was not dependent on him being deserving. God therefore responded, “[Request no more] so that people should not say, ‘How hard is the Master, and how obstinate and pressing is the disciple!’”

However, according to the second approach, that Moshe was asking to be rewarded with entry into the Land due to his merits, God replied that his merits would be rewarded, but in another way—“More than this is reserved for you. Much is the goodness that is kept for you [in the World to Come].”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 28ff; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan* 5748)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“Why did Moshe desire to enter the Land? Did he need to eat its fruit, or enjoy its delights? Moshe said, ‘The Jewish people have been commanded to observe many mitzvos which can only be observed in the Land of Israel. I will enter the Land so that all [the mitzvos] will be fulfilled through me’ (Sotah 14a).

Moshe knew that the work of his hands was eternal. He knew that if he had led the Jewish people into the Land, the Temple would not have been destroyed and the Jewish people would never have been exiled.

Thus, Moshe did not say, “I will enter the Land so I can observe all the mitzvos,” for his agenda was not a personal one. Rather, he wanted to enter the Land so that “[the mitzvos] will be fulfilled through me,” i.e. that the mitzvos observed in the Land of Israel would be a result of Moshe's leadership, and would thus be everlasting, without interruption or exile.

(Based on *Sicha* of the 4th night of *Chol Hamo'ed Succos* 5746)

*A person may wish to be rewarded with more than he deserves, in which case he must pray to God. Nevertheless, the concept of prayer in its normal context refers to a petition to God for one's needs which are deserved by him.

וּלְצַפְנָא וּלְדְרוּמָא וּלְמַדִּינְחָא וְחַוֵּי בְעֵינֶיךָ אַרְי לֹא תַעֲבֹר ית יִרְדְנָא הַדִּין: כח וּפְקַד ית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְתַקְפְּהֵי וְאַלְמָהֵי אַרְי הוּא יַעֲבֹר קָדָם עִמָּא הַדִּין וְהוּא יִסְפֵּן וְתִהְיוּן ית אַרְעָא דִּי תַחְוֵי: כט וַיִּתְבַּנָּא בְּחִילְתָּא לְקַבֵּל בַּיִת פְּעוּר: א וַיִּכְעַן יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמַע לְקִימָא וּלְדִינָא דִּי אֲנָא מֵאַלְפָּא יִתְכוּן לְמַעֲבַד בְּדִיל דְתִיחֹן וְתִיתּוּן וְתִירְתּוּן ית אַרְעָא דִּי יי אֱלֹהָא דְאַבְהָתְכוּן יְהִי לְכוּן: ב לֹא תוֹסְפוּן עַל פְּתָנְמָא דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקַד יִתְכוּן וְלֹא תִמְנְעוּן מִנָּה לְמַטְר ית פְּקוּדֵי דִּי אֱלֹהֵיכוּן דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקַד יִתְכוּן: ג עֵינֵיכוּן חֲזוּן ית דִּי עֲבַד יי בְּכַעַל פְּעוּר אַרְי כָּל זָבָרָא דִּי אֶזֶל בְּתַר בְּעַל פְּעוּר שְׂצִימָא יי אֱלֹהֵךָ מִבְּיַד: ד וְאַתּוּן דְאַדְבַּקְתּוּן בְּדַחְלִילְתָּא דִּי אֱלֹהֵיכוּן קִימִין פְּלִכוּן יוֹמָא דִּין: ה חֲזוּ דְאַלְפִית יִתְכוּן קִימָא וְדִינָא כְּמָא דִּי פְקַדְנִי יי אֱלֹהֵי לְמַעֲבַד בְּן בְּגוּ אַרְעָא דִּי אַתּוּן עֲלוּן לְתַמָּן לְמִירְתָּהּ: ו וְתַטְרוּן וְתַעֲבְדוּן אַרְי הִיא חֲכַמְתְּכוּן וְסוּכְלַתְנֹתְכוּן לְעֵינֵי עַמְמֵי דִּי יִשְׁמְעוּן ית כָּל קִימָא הָאֵלִין וְיִמְרוּן לְחוּד עִם חֲכִים וְסוּכְלַתָּן עִמָּא רַבָּא הַדִּין: ז אַרְי מִן עַם רַב דִּי לֵה אֱלֹהָא קָרִיב לֵה לְקַבְּלָא צְלוֹתָהּ בְּעַדן עֲקָתָהּ כִּי אֱלֹהֵינָא בְּכַל עַדָּן דְאַנְחָנָא מְצַלִּין קְדָמוּהֵי: ח וּמִן עַם רַב דִּי לֵה קִימִין וְדִינִין קְשִׁישִׁין כְּכַל אֹרִיתָא דְקָדָא דִּי אֲנָא יְהִי קְדָמֵיכוּן יוֹמָא דִּין: ט לְחוּד אִסְתַּמַּר לְךָ וְטַר נַפְשֶׁךָ לְחַדָּא דִּלְמָא תִּנְשִׁי ית פְּתָנְמָא דִּי חֲזוּ עֵינֶיךָ וְדִלְמָא יַעֲדוּן מִלְבָּד כָּל יוֹמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְתִהְוֹדְעוּן לְבַנְיָךָ וְלְבַנֵּי בְנֵיךָ: י יוֹמָא דִּי קָמַתָּא קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֵךָ בְּחֹרֵב

יִמָּה וְצַפְנָה וְתִימְנָה וּמִזְרְחָהּ וּרְאָה בְעֵינֶיךָ כִּי־לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה: כח וְצוּ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְחִזְקֵהוּ וְאַמְצָהוּ כִּי־הוּא יַעֲבֹר לְפָנַי הָעַם הַזֶּה וְהוּא יִנְחִיל אוֹתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תֵּרְאֶה: כט וַיָּנֻשׁב בְּנֵי־אֵל מוֹל בַּיִת פְּעוּר: פ ד א וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע אֶל־הַחֲקִים וְאֶל־הַמְּשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תִּחְיוּ וּבֵאתֶם וִירְשֶׁתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נָתַן לָכֶם: ג לֹא תוֹסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם: ג עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאוֹת אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּכַעַל פְּעוּר כִּי כָל־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הִלֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בְּעַל־פְּעוּר הִשְׁמִידוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ מִקֶּרְבְּךָ: ד וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים כָּלְכֶם הַיּוֹם: [שנתי] ה רֵאָה א לְמַדְתִּי אֶתְכֶם חֲקִים וּמְשַׁפְּטִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת כִּן בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּאִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ו וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם וְעַשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא חֲכַמְתְּכֶם וּבִינְתְּכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל־הַחֲקִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם־חֲכֶם וּנְבֹן הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: ז כִּי מִי־גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרִבִים אֵלָיו בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל־קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו: ח וּמִי גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ חֲקִים וּמְשַׁפְּטִים צְדִיקִים כְּכָל־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי נָתַן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם: ט רַק הַשְּׁמֹר לְךָ וְשֹׁמֵר נַפְשֶׁךָ מְאֹד פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפְּנִי־סוּרוּ מִלְּבַבְךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתֶּם לְבַנְיָךָ וְלְבַנֵּי בְנֵיךָ: י יוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לְפָנַי יְהוָה

רש"י

עוֹבְרִין, וְאִם לֹא חֲזוּ עוֹבְרִין: (כט) וַיָּנֻשׁב בְּגִיָּא וְגו'. וְנִלְמַדְתָּ לְעֹבְדָה זָרָה וְאִף עַל פִּי כִן וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמַע אֶל הַחֲקִים וְהַכֵּל מַחֲוֹל לְךָ וְחֲזוּ לֹא זְכִיתִי לִימְחַל לִי: (ג) לֹא תוֹסְפוּ. כְּגוֹן חֲמֵשׁ פְּרָשׁוֹת בְּחַפְּלִין, חֲמֵשׁ מִינֵין בְּלוּבָב וְחֲמֵשׁ לִיּוֹת, וְכֵן וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ: (ו) וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם. זו מִשְׁכָּל: וְעַשִׂיתֶם. כְּמַשְׁמַעוּ: כִּי הוּא חֲכַמְתְּכֶם וּבִינְתְּכֶם וְגו'. בְּזֹאת תַּחֲשַׁבּוּ חֲכָמִים וְנִזְוִים לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים: (ח) חֲקִים וּמְשַׁפְּטִים צְדִיקִים. הַגּוֹנִים וּמְקוֹבְלִים: (ט) רַק הַשְּׁמֹר לְךָ וְגו' פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַדְּבָרִים. אִז כִּשְׁלֹא תִשְׁכַּח אוֹתָם וְתַעֲשׂוּם עַל אֲמַתְסָא, תַּחֲשַׁבּוּ חֲכָמִים וְנִזְוִים, וְאִם תַּעֲוּוּ אוֹתָם מִחוּךְ שְׂכָחָא, תַּחֲשַׁבּוּ, שׁוֹטִים: (י) יוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ. מוֹסַב עַל מִקְרָא שְׁלַמְעֵלָא מִמֶּנּוּ, אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ, יוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ בְּחֹרֵב אֶת הַקּוֹלוֹת וְאֶת הַלְּפִידִים:

כַּרֵּב כְּמָה קֶשֶׁה וְהַתְּלַמִּיד כְּמָה סוֹרֵב וּמִפְּלִי. דְּבַר אַחַר רַב לך, הַרְצֵב מִזֵּה שְׁמוֹר לך, רַב טוֹב הַלְּפוֹן לך: (כז) וְרָאָה בְעֵינֶיךָ. בְּקֶשֶׁת מִמֶּנִּי וְהִרְאָה אֶת הַאֲרֵץ הַטּוֹבָה, אֲנִי מִרְאָה לך אֶת כּוֹלָהּ, שְׂאֵמֵר וִירְאָהוּ כִּי אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ: (כח) וְצוּ אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. עַל הַטְּרַחוֹת וְעַל הַמַּשְׁאוֹת וְעַל הַמְּרִיצוֹת: וְחִזְקֵהוּ וְאַמְצָהוּ. דְּבַרֶּיךָ, שְׁלֹא יִרַךְ לְכוּ לומר כִּשֶׁם שֶׁנֶּעֱשֶׂה רַבִּי עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי סוֹפִי לִיעֲשֶׂה עֲלֵיהֶם, מְצַטִּיחוּ אֲנִי כִּי הוּא יַעֲבֹר וְהוּא יִנְחִיל: בִּי הוּא יַעֲבֹר. אִם יַעֲבֹר לְפָנֵיהֶם יִנְחִיל, וְאִם לֹא יִנְחִיל. וְכֵן אֶתְּמַר מוֹלָא כִּשְׁשַׁלַּח מִן הָעַם אֶל הָעַם וְהוּא יִשָּׁב, וְיִכּוּ מִכֶּס אֲנָשִׁי הָעַם וְגו':² וְכִיוֹן שֶׁנֶּפֶל עַל פְּנֵי אִמֵּר לוֹ קוֹם לך.³ קָם לך כְּחֵיב, אֶתְּמַר הוּא הָעוֹמֵד בְּמִקוּמֶךָ וּמִשְׁלַח אֶת צִנִּי לְמַלְחָמָה, לְמַה זֶה אֶתְּמַר נוֹפֵל עַל פְּנִיךָ, לֹא כִּי אֲמַרְתִּי לְמַשֶׁה רַבך אִם הוּא עוֹבֵר

1 ספרי. וראה לקמן בפרש"י יג, א 2 יהושע ז, ה 3 שם 109 וק י

Land), go up to the top of the hill and lift up your eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, and see (it from there) with your eyes, for you will not cross this (River) Jordan. ²⁸ Command Yehoshua (about the burdens of leadership). Strengthen him and encourage him (that he will not be punished because of the Jewish people, as you were), because (I assure you that) he will cross over (the Jordan) ahead of the people, and he will bring them to inherit the Land which you will see.”

²⁹ We were living (at that time) in the valley opposite Beis-Pe'or (where you had worshiped idols. Unlike me, you were forgiven by God and He allowed you to enter the Land).

🕎 MOSHE REITERATES PRINCIPLES OF THE FAITH 🕎

4 **N**ow Israel, listen to the suprarational commands and to the rational commands which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live. Come and possess the Land which God, the God of your forefathers, is giving you.

² Do not add (any additional clauses) to the word(s) of Torah law) which I am commanding you, nor take away (any clauses) from it*, in order to preserve the commandments of God, your God, which I am commanding you. ³ Your eyes have seen what God did at Ba'al Pe'or, for God, your God, has eliminated every man who went after Ba'al Pe'or from among you, ⁴ but you—who remain attached to God, your God—are all alive today.

SECOND
READING

⁵ Look! As God, my God, commanded me, I have taught you suprarational commands and rational commands to observe within the Land which you are going to enter and possess. ⁶ You should preserve (the laws by studying them) and perform them. For this is your (key to having) wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these laws and say, “Only this great nation is a (truly) wise and understanding people.” ⁷ Which (other) nation is so great that it has a god so close to it, as God our God is (near to us) whenever we call Him? For, whenever we call upon Him (in prayer He answers). ⁸ And which nation is so great that it has suprarational commands and rational commands which are fair, like all (the laws) in this Torah (of ours), which I am presenting before you today?

⁹ Just be careful and keep track of yourself well, so that you do not forget the things that your eyes saw (at Sinai). Do not let these things depart from your heart, all the days of your life. You should inform your children and your children's children about ¹⁰ the day you stood before God, your God, at Choraiu

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“NOW ISRAEL, LISTEN...” (4:1)

If a person hears that his country is ruled by a powerful king who is surrounded by ministers that tremble in his presence, then the person is likely to follow the king's orders. However, an individual who actually sees such a powerful king will be affected much more profoundly by the experience than merely hearing about him—for “seeing is incomparable to hearing” (*Mechilta, Yisro* 19:9).

Moshe's perception of Godliness was on the level of “seeing.” Therefore, he wanted to be the one to lead the Jewish people into the Land of Israel, to lift them to the level of “seeing” Godliness within the Land. Thus he said, “Please let me cross over and see the good land” (3:25).

However, God did not grant his request, so Moshe began to address the Jewish people with the words, “Now Israel, listen” (4:1). This was because Moshe recognized that he would only be able to

inspire the Jewish people towards an awareness of God on the level of “hearing” and not “seeing.”

However, with the coming of Mashiach, Moshe's request will be finally granted. For Mashiach will lift the Jewish people to an awareness of God at the level of “seeing”—as the verse states, “I will show you wonders” (*Micha* 7:15).

In fact, the Godly experience which Mashiach will show the Jewish people will be even more profound than that which Moshe had in mind. For then we will not only experience a metaphorical “seeing” of spirituality with the “eye” of the intellect. Rather, even our physical bodies will see Godliness—“the glory of God will be revealed and all flesh will see together” (*Isaiah* 40:5).

(Based on *Sefer Hama'amorim* 5711-3, pp. 78-9; *ibid.* 5732-3, p. 163ff.)

* See below 13:1.

כד אמר יי' לי בנוש קדמי ית עמא ואשמענו
 ית פתגמי די ילפון למדחל קדמי כל יומיא
 די אנון קימין על ארעא וית בגיהון ילפון:
 יא וקרבנותו וקמתו בשפולי טורא וטורא
 בער באשתא עד צית שמיא חשוכא עננא
 ואמיטתא: יב ומליל יי' עמכון מגו אשתא קל
 פתגמין אתון שמעין ודמות ליתיכון חזן
 אלתו קלא: יג וחוי לכוון ית קומה די פקיד
 יתכוון למעבד עשרא פתגמין וכתבנון על
 תרין לוחי אבניא: יד ויתי פקיד יי' בעדנא
 ההיא לאלפא יתכוון קימין ודיניו למעבדכוון
 יתהון בארעא די אתון עברין לתמן למירתה:
 טו ותסתמרון לחדא לנפשתיכון ארי לא
 חיותוון כל דמות ביומא די מליל יי' עמכון
 בהרב מגו אשתא: טז דלקא תחבלון
 ותעבדון לכוון צלם דמות כל צורא דמות
 דכר או נקבא: יז דמות כל בעירא די
 בארעא דמות כל צפר נדפא די פרח באור
 רקיע שמיא: יח דמות כל רחשא די בארעא
 דמות כל נוני די במיא מלרע לארעא:
 יט ודלקא תוקוף עיניך לשמיא ותחזי ית
 שמשא וית סיהרא וית כוכביא כל חילי
 שמיא ותשעי ותסגוד להון ותפלחנון די זמין
 יי' אלקה יתהון לכל עממיא תחות
 כל שמיא: כ ויתכוון קריב יי' לדחלתה ואפק
 יתכוון מפורא דפרזלא ממערים למהוי לה
 לעמא אחסנא ביומא הדין: כא ומן קדם יי'
 הוה רגז עלי על פתגמיכון וקיים בדיל דלא
 למעבר ית ירדנא ובדיל דלא למיעל
 לארעא טבא די יי' אלקה יתב לך אחסנא:
 כב ארי אנא מאית בארעא הדא לית אנא
 עבר ית ירדנא ואתון עברין ויתרתון ית

אלהיך בהרב באמר יהוה אלי הקהל לי את העם ואשמעם
 את דברי אשר ילמדון ליראה אתי כל הימים אשר הם
 חיים על האדמה ואת בנייהם ילמדון: יא ותקרבון ותעמדון
 תחת ההר וההר בער באש עד לב השמים השך ענן
 וערפל: יב וידבר יהוה אליכם מתוך האש קול דברים אתם
 שמעים ותמונה אינכם ראים זולתי קול: יג ויגד לכם את
 בריתו אשר צוה אתכם לעשות עשרת הדברים ויכתבם
 על שני לוחות אבנים: יד ואתי צוה יהוה בעת ההוא ללמד
 אתכם חקים ומשפטים לעשותכם אתם בארץ אשר אתם
 עברים שמה לרשתה: טו ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם כי לא
 ראיתם כל תמונה ביום דבר יהוה אליכם בהרב מתוך
 האש: טז פן תשחתון ועשיתם לכם פסל תמונת כל סמל
 תבנית זכר או נקבה: יז תבנית כל בהמה אשר בארץ
 תבנית כל צפור כנף אשר תעוף בשמים: יח תבנית כל
 רמש *באדמה תבנית כל דגה אשר במים מתחת לארץ:
 יט ופן תשא עיניך השמימה וראית את השמש ואת הירח
 ואת הכוכבים כל צבא השמים ונדחת והשתחווית להם
 ועבדתם אשר חלק יהוה אלהיך אתם לכל העמים תחת
 כל השמים: כ ואתכם לקח יהוה ויוצא אתכם מכור הברזל
 ממצרים להיות לו לעם נחלה ביום הזה: כא ויהוה
 התאנף בי על דבריכם וישבע לבלתי עברי את הירדן
 ולבלתי בא אליהארץ הטובה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך
 נחלה: כב כי אנכי מת בארץ הזאת אינני עבר את הירדן

*ס"א באדמה

כש"י

החליקס דדברי הצליכס לטרדם מן העולם. וכן הוא חומר כי החליק אליו
 צעינו למזא עונו לשווא! (כ) בור. הוא כלי שמזקקים צו את זהב:
 (כא) התאנף. נתמלא רוגז: על דבריכם. על אודותיכם, על עסקיכם:
 (כב) כי אנכי מת וגו' אינני עובר. מאחר שמת מביכן ועבור, אלא אף עלמתי

ילמדון. ילפון לעלמס: ילמדון. יאלפון לחריס: (יד) ואתי צוה ה' בעת
 ההוא ללמד אתכם. תורה שבעל פה: (טז) סמל. לורה: (יט) ופן תשא
 עיניך. להסתכל דבר ולתת לב לשזב לטעות אחריכם: אשר חלק וגו' לכל
 העמים. להאיר להם. דבר אחר לאלוהות. לא מנען מלטעות אחריכם, אלא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How should you “look after yourselves very well” ? (v. 15)

RAMBAM: Having a totally healthy body is among the paths of [serving] God, for it is impossible to have understanding or knowledge [of God] when one is sick. Therefore, a person must distance himself from things that harm the body (*Laws of Moral Conduct* 4:1).

(and saw the flames and the sounds. For) God said to me then: “Assemble the people for Me. I will let them hear My words, so that they will learn to fear Me all the days that they live on the earth, and so that they will teach their children (what they heard and saw).”¹¹ You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain was burning with fire up to the heart of the heavens (and there was) darkness, a cloud, and fog.¹² God spoke to you from the fire. You were hearing the sound of the words, but you did not see any image—only sound.

¹³ He told you His covenant, which He commanded you to observe—the Ten Commandments—and He wrote them on two stone tablets.¹⁴ On that occasion, God commanded me to teach you (the Oral Torah, which explains the) suprarational commands and rational commands, so that you would observe them in the Land to which you are (now) entering, to take possession of it.

¹⁵ Look after yourselves very well (and remember) that you did not see any image on the day God spoke to you at Choraiu from the fire,¹⁶ in order that you will not lapse and make a statue for yourselves, or an image of any form: the shape of a male or female,¹⁷ the shape of any animal that is on the earth, the shape of any winged bird that flies in the skies,¹⁸ the shape of anything that crawls on the ground, the shape of any fish that is in the waters, beneath the earth.¹⁹ (Be careful if you) lift up your eyes to the skies, and see the sun, the moon, the stars, and all the hosts of the skies—which God, your God has given (to provide illumination) under the skies for all the nations—not to be drawn astray to bow down to them and worship them.²⁰ God took you and brought you out of the iron melting pot, from Egypt, to be His heritage nation, as (you are) today.

²¹ God was angry with me, because of you(r actions), and He swore that I would not cross the Jordan and that I would not come into the good land that God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.²² For I

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

MEZRITCHER MAGID: A tiny hole in the body causes a big hole in the soul (*Hatamim* 7:28).

ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH: One may not strike one's fellow, even if he gives permission, because a person does not have rights over his body at all, whether in relation to hitting it, embarrassing it,

causing it any pain, or even withholding food or drink from it—unless this is done as part of the process of *teshuvah*, in which case it is for his benefit, to save his soul....Therefore it is permissible to fast for the sake of *teshuvah* (*Hilchos Nizkei Guf Venefesh*, law 4).

ZOHAR: The weakness of the body is the strength of the soul (I 180b).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“LOOK AFTER YOURSELVES VERY WELL” (v. 15)

- So much of physical health depends on spiritual health. If in olden days emphasis was placed on *'mens sana in corpore sano'* [a sound mind in a healthy body], in our days, it is a matter of general conviction that even a small defect spiritually causes a grievous defect physically; and the healthier the spirit and the greater its preponderance over the physical body—the greater its ability to correct or overcome physical shortcomings; so much so, that in many cases even physical treatments, prescriptions and drugs are considerably more effective if they are accompanied by the patient's strong will and determination to cooperate.
- Note that **Rambam** stresses how “having a totally healthy body is among the paths of [serving] God,” a point emphasized further by the **Mezritchler Magid** (see *Classic Questions*).
- Since physical health depends on spiritual health, a person who becomes ill, God forbid, should search his past deeds to try to identify what shortcoming may have caused the illness. However, this approach should be taken only regarding his own lack of physical health. When one sees that another person is sick, one should not think that this was caused by a spiritual shortcoming, since one is told, “Do not judge your fellow until you have stood in his place” (*Avos* 2:4; see *Tanya*, chap. 30). One's first reaction to a sick person should be, to the contrary, that his sickness may well have been caused by spiritual health, as he may have weakened his body through fasting, in the process of doing *teshuvah* (see **Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch**).
- The statement of the **Zohar**, that “the weakness of the body is the strength of the soul,” does not mean to say that a weakening of the body itself brings about spiritual growth. Rather, the intent of the **Zohar** is that the desire for physicality, for its own sake, is counterproductive to a person's spiritual growth.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol 6, p. 326; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz* 5739)

ואתם עבדים וירשיתם את הארץ הטובה הזאת: כג השמרו לכם פן תשכחו את ברית יהוה אלהיכם אשר כרת עמכם ועשיתם לכם פסל תמונת כל אשר צוה יהוה אלהיך: כד כי יהוה אלהיך אש אכלה הוא אל קנא: כה כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים ותתעסקו בארעא ותחבלו ותעבדו צלם דמות כלא ותעבדו דביש קדם יי אלהיך לארנוא קדמוהי: כו אסרתית ככון יומא דין ית שמיא ונת ארעא ארי מיבד תיבדו בפריע מעל ארעא די אתון עברין ית ירדנא לתמן למירתה לא תורכו יומין עלה ארי אשתצאה תשתצו: כז ויבדר יי יתכון בעממיא ותשתארו עס דמנין בעממיא די יבדר יי יתכון לתמן: כח ותפלחון תמן לעממיא פלחי טעותא עובר די אנשא אעא ואבנא די לא תון ולא שמעין ולא אכלין ולא מריחין: כט ותתבעון מתמן ית דחלתא דיי אלהיך ותשכח ארי תבעי מן קדמוהי בכל לבך ובכל נפשך: ל כד יעוק לך וישכחך כל פתנמיא האלין בסוף יומיא ותתוב לדחלתא דיי אלהיך ותקבל למימרה: לא ארי אלהא רחמנא יי אלהיך לא ישכחך ולא יחבלך ולא יתנשי ית קנא דאבהך די קיים להון: לב ארי שאל בען ליומיא קדמאי דהו קדמך למן יומא די ברא יי אדם על ארעא ולמסיפי שמיא ועד סיפי שמיא ההוה כפתנמא רבא דדין או האשתמע פותה: לד השמע עמא קל מימרא דיי ממלל מנו אשתא כמא די שמעת את ויתקום: לה או נסין די עבד יי לאתנלאה למפרק לה עם מנו עם בנסין באתין ובמופתין ובקרבא ובידא תקיפא ובדרעא מרממא ובחוננין רברבין ככל די

ואתם עבדים וירשיתם את הארץ הטובה הזאת: כג השמרו לכם פן תשכחו את ברית יהוה אלהיכם אשר כרת עמכם ועשיתם לכם פסל תמונת כל אשר צוה יהוה אלהיך: כד כי יהוה אלהיך אש אכלה הוא אל קנא: כה כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים ותתעסקו בארעא ותחבלו ותעבדו צלם דמות כלא ותעבדו דביש קדם יי אלהיך לארנוא קדמוהי: כו אסרתית ככון יומא דין ית שמיא ונת ארעא ארי מיבד תיבדו בפריע מעל ארעא די אתון עברין ית ירדנא לתמן למירתה לא תורכו יומין עלה ארי אשתצאה תשתצו: כז ויבדר יי יתכון בעממיא ותשתארו עס דמנין בעממיא די יבדר יי יתכון לתמן: כח ותפלחון תמן לעממיא פלחי טעותא עובר די אנשא אעא ואבנא די לא תון ולא שמעין ולא אכלין ולא מריחין: כט ותתבעון מתמן ית דחלתא דיי אלהיך ותשכח ארי תבעי מן קדמוהי בכל לבך ובכל נפשך: ל כד יעוק לך וישכחך כל פתנמיא האלין בסוף יומיא ותתוב לדחלתא דיי אלהיך ותקבל למימרה: לא ארי אלהא רחמנא יי אלהיך לא ישכחך ולא יחבלך ולא יתנשי ית קנא דאבהך די קיים להון: לב ארי שאל בען ליומיא קדמאי דהו קדמך למן יומא די ברא יי אדם על ארעא ולמסיפי שמיא ועד סיפי שמיא ההוה כפתנמא רבא דדין או האשתמע פותה: לד השמע עמא קל מימרא דיי ממלל מנו אשתא כמא די שמעת את ויתקום: לה או נסין די עבד יי לאתנלאה למפרק לה עם מנו עם בנסין באתין ובמופתין ובקרבא ובידא תקיפא ובדרעא מרממא ובחוננין רברבין ככל די

*בזמנא תר"ת מסומן כאן "תרי טעמי", וכתב בזמנא שי (במדבר יז, כג) שקריאת מליס כגון אלה אינה מלעיל גמור ולא מלדע גמור אלא בהעמדה מועשת בשני הטעמים.

רש"י

ה' אלכינו³, זקקה עשה עמנו שמכר להצואה שתי שנים לפני זמנא⁴: (כו) העידותי בכם. הנני מזמינס להיות עדים שכתריתי זכס: (כח) ועבדתם שם אלהים. כתרגומו. משתתס עובדים לעובדיכס, כאלו אתס עובדים להס: (לא) לא ירפך. מלכחזיק כך צידיו. ולשון לא ירפך לשון לא יפעיל הוא, לא יתן לך רפיון, לא יפריש אותך מאללו. וכן אחזתיו ולא חרפנו⁵, שלא נקד חרפנו. כל לשון רפיון מוסב על לשון מפעיל ומתפעל, כמו

אינס עוברין¹: (כג) תמונת כל. תמונת כל דכר: אשר צוך ה'. אשר לוך שלא לעשות: (כד) אל קנא. מקנא לנקוס אנפרדמני"ט זלע"ז, מתחרה על רוגזו להפרע מעכו"ס: (כה) ונושנתם. רמז להס שיגלו ממנח לסוף שמונה מאות וחמשים ושתיס שנה, כמנין ונושנתס. והוא הקדים והגלס לסוף שמונה מאות וחמשים והקדים שתי שנים לנושנתס, כדי שלא יתקיים זכס כי חצד תאצדון², וזהו שנאמר וישקוד ה' על הרעה ויצואה עלינו כי לדיק

will die in this land (and even my bones) will not cross the Jordan. You, however, will cross, and you will take possession of this good land.

²³ Be careful not to forget the covenant of God, your God, which He made with you, and make for yourselves a statue, an image of anything, which God, your God, has commanded you (not to make).

²⁴ For God, your God, is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Who settles His score against idol-worshippers).

²⁵ If you have children and grandchildren, and you grow old in the Land, and you lapse and make an idol, an image of anything, and (thereby) do evil in the eyes of God, your God, to provoke His anger,

²⁶ I call the skies and the earth to be witnesses against you today, that you will be eliminated speedily from the Land which you will (soon be) crossing the Jordan to take possession of. You will not live a long time upon it, for you will be utterly destroyed.

²⁷ God will scatter you among the nations, and you will remain few in number among the nations where God will lead you. ²⁸ (Through being subjugated to idol-worshippers) there (it will be as if) you are worshiping (their) gods—man's handiwork, wood and stone, that neither sees, hears, eats, nor smells.

²⁹ From there you will seek God, your God, and you will find Him—if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ At the end of days when you are in distress, and all these things (have) happened to you, then you will return to God, your God, and obey Him.

³¹ For God, your God, is a merciful God. He will not loosen (His connection with) you or destroy you. He will not forget the covenant of your fathers, which He swore to them.

³² (If you want proof of this*) inquire now about the earliest times that were before you, from the day that God created man on the earth! (Inquire from the creatures that are found) from one extremity of the skies to the other extremity of the skies! Was there ever such a great thing, or even a rumor like it, ³³ that a people should hear God's voice speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you heard, and survive?

³⁴ Or has any deity performed miracles, coming to a nation and taking it for himself out from another nation, with proofs (of true power), signs (of God's direct involvement), wondrous (plagues), with a war (fought by God Himself), a strong hand, an outstretched arm, and with awesome acts—like everything that God, your God, did for you in Egypt, before your eyes?

*ע"פ' הספורנו

רש"י

נכיס שום אלוה לזא לקחת לו גוי וגוי. כל הדין הללו תמיכות הן, לכך נקודות הן צחט"ף פת"ח, הנהיה, הנשמע, הנסה, השמע: במסות. על ידי נסיונות הודיעם גבורותיו, כגון התפאר עלי, אם אוכל לעשות כן, הרי זה נסיון: באותות. צסימין להאמין שהוא שלוחו של מקום, כגון מה זה צידק: ובמופתים. הם נפלאות, שהביא עליהם מכות מופלאות: ובמלחמה. ציס,

הרפה לה, תן לה רפיון, הרף ממני, התרפה ממני: (לצ) לימים ראשונים. על ימים ראשונים: ולמקצה השמים. וגם שאל לכל הצרואים אשר מקצה אל קצה זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו מלמד על קומתו של אדם שהיתה מן הארץ עד השמים והוא השיעור עלמו אשר מקצה אל קצה: הנהיה כדבר הגדול הזה. ומכו כדבר הגדול, השמע עם וגוי: (לד) הנסה אלהים. הכי עשה

TORAS MENACHEM

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

“FROM THERE YOU WILL SEEK GOD YOUR GOD, AND YOU WILL FIND HIM” (v. 29)

Chasidic thought teaches that in order for any entity to exist at all, God must renew it *continually*, by enlivening it with a spark of His own Existence. Without being connected to God—the True Existence—the entity is unable to exist. Thus, even the forces of evil must contain a Godly spark that enables them to exist.

But why, then, is it possible for the forces of evil to conceal this presence of Godliness within them? The answer is: To make possible

the amazing elevation that can be reached through *teshuvah*. When a person has regressed to a very low spiritual state, the Torah teaches us that “*from there* (i.e. from amid the forces of evil) *you will seek God.*” This teaches us that the Godly revelation which a person reaches through *teshuvah* is disproportionate to the effort involved, like “finding” a previously hidden treasure, as the verse states, “and you will *find* Him.”

(Based on Ma'amer s.v. Ani Ledodi, Shabbos Parshas Re'eh 5747)

עבד לבון יי אלהכון במצרים לעיניך: לה את אתחיותא למדע ארי יי הוא אלהים לית עוד בר מנה: לו מן שמיא אשמעך ית קל מימרה לאלפונך ועל ארעא אחונך ית אשתה רבתא ופתנמוהי שמעת מגו אשתא: לו וחלף ארי רחים ית אבקהך ואתרעי בכננהו בתרוהי ואפקך במימרה בחילה רבא ממצרים: לה לתרכא עממין רברבין ותקפין מנה מן קדמך לאעלותך למתן לך ית ארעהון אחסנא כיומא הדין: לה ותדע יומא דין ותתיב ללבך ארי יי הוא אלהא דשכנתה בשמיא מלעלא ושלים על ארעא מלרע לית עוד: מ ותטר ית קימוהי וית פקודוהי די אנא מפקדך יומא דין די ייטב לך ולבניך בתרך ובדיל דתוריד יומין על ארעא די יי אלהך יחב לך כל יומיא: מא בכון ופרש משה תלת קרוין בעברא דירדנא מנה שמשא: מב למעירוק לתמן קמולא די יקמול ית חברה בלא מנדעה והוא לא סגי לה מאתמלי ומדקמוהי ויערוק לתד מן קרויא האלון ויתקיים: מג ית בצר במדברא בארעא מישרא לשבטא דראובן

במצרים לעיניך: לה אתה הראת לדעת כי יהוה הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו: לו מן השמים השמיעך את קולו ליסרך ועל הארץ הראך את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעת מתוך האש: לו ותחת כי אהב את אבותיך ויבחר בזרעו אחריו ויוצאך בפניו בכחו הגדל במצרים: לה להוריש גוים גדלים ועצמים ממך מפניך להביאך לתת לך את ארעם נחלה כיום הזה: לה וידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך כי יהוה הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד: מ ושמרת את חקיו ואת מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום אשר ייטב לך ולבניך אחריך ולמען תאריך ימים על האדמה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך כל הימים: פ ושלישין מא אז יבדיל משה שלש ערים בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש: מב לנס שמה רוצח אשר ירצה את רעהו בבלי דעת והוא לא שגא לו מתמל שלשם ונס אל אחת מן הערים האל וחי: מג את בצר במדבר בארץ המישר לראובני ואת ראמת בגלעד

כ"ט

שזכירם בשלש יחיד, שכרי כחצם בשלש יחיד ויבחר זכרו אחריו: (לח) ממך מפניך. סרסכו ודרסכו, להוריש מפניך גוים גדולים ועלומים ממך: כיום הזה. כאשר אתה רואה כיום: (מא) אז יבדיל. נתן לך להיות חרד לדבר שיבדילם. ואף על פי שאינן קולטות עד שיבדלו אותן שזאנך כעון, אמר משה מלוא ש אפשר לקיימה אקיימנה: בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש. זלואת עבר שבזרעו של ירדן: מזרחה שמש. לפי שהוא זכור נקודה רי"ש בחטף, מזרח

שנאמר כי ה' נלחם להם: (לה) הראת. כתרומו אחזיתא. כשנתן הקב"ה את התורה פתח להם שבעה קריעים, וכשם שקרע את העליונים כך קרע את התחתונים. וראו שהוא יחיד, לכך נאמר אתה הראת לדעת: (לו) ותחת כי אהב. וכל זה תחת אשר אהב: ויוצאך בפניו. כחצם המנהיג צנו לפניו שנאמר² ויסע מלאך האלהים הכולך וגו' וילך מאחריהם³. דבר אחר ויויאך צפניו, צפני אבותיו, כמו שנאמר נגד אבותם עשה פלא⁴. ואל תתמה על

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Moshe separate three Cities of Refuge? (v. 41)

RASHI: Fearfully, Moshe set his heart to the matter of setting them aside. Even though they were not to serve as Cities of Refuge until those of the land of Canaan would be set aside, Moshe said, "Since it is possible to do a mitzvah, I will do it."

RAMBAM: The three [cities] in the Transjordan did not serve as a haven until the three in the land of Canaan were set aside.

Why then did [Moshe] set them aside? He said, "Since a mitzvah has come to my hand, I will do it" (*Laws of a Murderer and the Protection of Life* 8:3).

TORAS MENACHEM

☞ MOSHE'S THREE CITIES (v. 41)

The Cities of Refuge only became a haven for accidental murderers upon the Jewish people's entry into the Land of Canaan (as Rashi stresses here; see Bamidbar 35:10). Thus, so long as Moshe was hopeful that he would enter the Land, there was no need for him to begin setting aside these cities, as he would have expected to fulfill this mitzvah only when it would become relevant—i.e. after entering the Land of Canaan.

At the beginning of our Parsha, however, Moshe was told, "You will not cross this (River) Jordan" (3:27), which meant that Moshe would not be able to carry out the mitzvah of setting aside Cities of Refuge at its proper time. Notwithstanding this setback, the Torah informs us that Moshe set aside three cities—as Rashi and Rambam explain, that this may have appeared premature, but it was a form of participation in the mitzvah which would later come into force.

1 יש שצינו את המקור לפרש"י זה בפסיקתא רבתי פ' מ"ת ומדרש שה"ש על פסוק "שקני", אבל שם נזכר רק הענין ד"פתחת הרקיעים" בכללות (ולא הפרטים ד"קריעת העליונים ותחתונים" והראי' שהוא יחיד"). אמנם במדרש הובא בעקידה (פרשתנו, סוף שער פח) ובדברים רבה הוצאת ליברמן מכת"י (ירושלים ת"ש) על הפסוק שמע ישראל, גם ענינם אלו נמצאים (ע"פ לקויש כ"ח ע' 36, הערה 7).
2 שמות י"ד, י"ט 3 מכילתא 4 תהלים עז, יב 5 מכות י.

³⁵ (When the Torah was given) you were shown (the seven heavens), in order (for you) to know that God is God. There is none other besides Him. ³⁶ From the skies, He let you hear His voice, to educate you. He showed you His great fire upon the earth, and you heard His words from the fire.

³⁷ (He did all of this) because He loved your forefathers, and He chose their children after them. He brought you out of Egypt (like a father who leads his son) ahead of him, with His great strength. ³⁸ (His intention was) to clear nations that are greater and stronger than you out of your way, so as to bring you and give you their land as an inheritance—as (you see He is doing) today.

³⁹ Today, you should know and take to your heart, that God is God in heavens above, and on the earth below. There is no other. ⁴⁰ You should observe His suprarational commands and His (other) commandments, which I am commanding you today, so that He will be good to you and your children after you. Then you will remain for a long time in the land that God, your God, is giving you eternally.

🕎 SEPARATION OF CITIES OF REFUGE IN TRANSJORDAN 🕎

4:41
THIRD
READING

At that time, Moshe separated three cities on the (east) side of the Jordan where the sun rises, ⁴² so that (at a later time, when the cities would become active) a murderer might flee there. (If a person) murders his fellow unintentionally, provided he did not hate him yesterday or the day before, he may flee to one of these cities and live:

⁴³ Betzer in the desert, in the flatlands of (the tribe of) Re'uvain.

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Nevertheless, Rashi stresses that Moshe did so “fearfully,” since:

- a.) The *mitzvah* of setting aside the cities had not yet begun, so Moshe feared that his actions were premature; and,
- b.) This *mitzvah* might be *intrinsically* connected with entering the Land of Cana'an, and since God had decreed that Moshe was not permitted to enter the Land, Moshe feared that this *mitzvah* was not meant for him to observe.

However, we are still left with the question: What did Moshe accomplish by performing a *mitzvah* before its time?

THE EXPLANATION

Moshe's early separation of Cities of Refuge in the Transjordan could be approached in one of two ways:

- a.) It was merely a non-*halachic* preparation for the *mitzvah* which was to be performed at a later date; or,

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“THERE IS NONE OTHER BESIDES HIM”* (v. 35)

In truth, even the creations do not exist as entities in their own right, as it appears to our eyes. We perceive it that way because we do not see Godly energy. However, from the perspective of the Godly energy which enlivens us, our existence is totally nullified into absolute nothingness, like a ray of light inside the globe of the sun.... Thus it follows that there is no existence at all outside that of God.”

(Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Achdus Hashem ch. 3)

Even in the current period immediately preceding the true and complete redemption, the way a Jew acts in day-to-day life should resemble life as it will be during the actual Messianic Era.

“One of the most fundamental aspects of the future era is that there will be the fullest expression of the verse, ‘You were shown (the heavens), in order (for you) to know that God is God. There is none

other besides Him.’ I.e. it will be revealed throughout the entire world that ‘there is none other besides Him’—that there is no existence other than God.”

“It is this kind of feeling which is required too in one's daily lives now: A person should feel literally, in every part of his life, that ‘there is none other besides Him.’ In other words, not only should one's worldly pursuits be done for the sake of a Godly purpose—i.e. that one feels the dichotomy between the ‘worldly’ and the ‘Godly,’ but that one nevertheless dedicates his worldly activities to a higher purpose. Rather, one should feel the Godly identity of the worldly matters themselves. Consequently, he will not even become aware of any existence other than that of God, since he feels that ‘there is none other besides Him.’”

(Freely translated from Sichas Simchas Torah 5752)

* Concerning the difference between the two statements “There is none other besides Him” (v. 35) and “There is no other” (v. 39)—see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, pp. 1334-5; *ibid.* vol. 25, p. 202, note 84, and sources cited *loc cit*; *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, vol. 2, p. 349, note 46.

וַיִּתְּנָה רָאמוֹת בְּנִלְעָד לְשִׁבְטָא דְגַד וַיִּתְּנָה גֹלָן בְּמִתְנָן לְשִׁבְטָא דְמְנַשֶּׁה: מִדּוּרָא אֹרְיִתָא דִּי סַדְרָא מִשֶּׁה קְדָם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: מִה אֲלִין סְהִדוּתָא וְקִימָא וְדִינָא דִּי מְלִיל מִשֶּׁה עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִסְפָּקָהוֹן מִמְצָרִים: מוּ בְעֵבְרָא דִירְדְנָא בְחִילְתָא לְקַבֵּל בֵּית פְּעוֹר בְּאַרְעָא דְסִיחֹן מְלִכָא דְאַמּוֹרָאָה דִּי יִתְבּוּ בְחֻשְׁבוֹן דִּי מְחָא מִשֶּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִסְפָּקָהוֹן מִמְצָרִים: מוּ וִירִיתוּ יִתְ אַרְעָה וַיִּתְ אַרְעָא דְעוֹג מְלִכָא דְמִתְנָן תְּרִין מְלָכֵי אַמּוֹרָאָה דִּי בְעֵבְרָא דִירְדְנָא מְדִנַח שְׁמִשָּׂא: מִה מְעֵרְעֵר דִּי עַל בִּיחָ נְחֻלָא דְאַרְנֵן וְעַד טוֹרָא דְשִׂיאוֹן הוּא חֶרְמוֹן: מִט וְכֹל מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל עֵבְרָא דִירְדְנָא לְמִדִּינָתָא וְעַד יִמָּא דְמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל תְּחֹת מִשְׁפָּד מְרֻמָּתָא: א וְקִרָא מִשֶּׁה לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַר לְהוֹן שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתְ קִימָא וַיִּתְ דִּינָא דִּי אָנָּא מְמַלֵּל קְדָמִיכוֹן יִמָּא דִּין וְתִלְפוֹן יִתְהוֹן וְתִטְרוֹן לְמַעְבְּדְהוֹן: ב וַיִּתְ אֲלִתְנָא גֹר עִמָּנָא קָיִם בְּחֶרֶב: ג לֹא עִם אֲבִהְתְנָא גֹר וַיִּתְ קִימָא הָדָא אֲלֵהוֹן עִמָּנָא אֲנִתְנָא אֲלִין הָכָא יִמָּא דִּין בְּלָנָא קִימִין: ד מְמַלֵּל עִם מְמַלֵּל מְלִיל וַיִּתְ עִמְכוֹן בְּטוֹרָא מְגוּ אֲשֶׁתָּא: ה אָנָּא הוּיִתִּי קָאִם בֵּין מִימְרָא דִּי וּבִינִיכוֹן בְּעֵדְנָא הִהִיא לְחֻנְאָה לְכוֹן יִתְ פִתְנָמָא דִּי אֲרִי דְחִלְתוֹן מְקַדָּם אֲשֶׁתָּא וְלֹא סְלִקְתוֹן בְּטוֹרָא לְמִימְרָא: ו אָנָּא וַיִּתְ אֲלֵהוֹן דִּי אֲפִקְתָּד מֵאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבֹדוּתָא: ז לֹא יְהִי לְךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲחֵרִין בְּרַ מְנִי: ח לֹא תַעֲבִיד לְךָ צִילִם כָּל דְמוֹת דִּי בְשִׁמָּא מְלַעֲלֵא וְדִי בְאַרְעָא מְלַרַע

לְגִדִי וְאֶת־גֹּלָן בְּבִשְׁוֹן לְמְנַשֵּׁי: מִדּוּרָא וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: מִה אֱלֹהֵי הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵצְתָם מִמְצָרִים: מוּ בְעֵבֶר הִירְדֵן בְּנִיַּא מוֹל בֵּית פְּעוֹר בְּאַרְצֵן סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵצְתָם מִמְצָרִים: מוּ וַיִּירְשׁוּ אֶת־אַרְצוֹ וְאֶת־אַרְצֵן א עוֹג מֶלֶךְ־הַבְּשָׁן שְׁנֵי מְלָכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הִירְדֵן מִזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ: מִה מְעֵרְעֵר אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׁפַת־נְחַל אֲרְנֵן וְעַד־הַר שִׂיאוֹן הוּא חֶרְמוֹן: מִט וְכָל־הָעֲרָבָה עֵבֶר הִירְדֵן מִזְרַחָה וְעַד יָם הָעֲרָבָה תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־תְּהִי הַפְּסָגָה: פ וְרִבְעִין ה א וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַחֲקִים וְאֶת־הַמְשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי דֹבֵר בְּאָזְנוֹיְכֶם הַיּוֹם וְלִמְדֹתֶם אֹתָם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: ג יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ פָּרַת עִמָּנוּ בְּרִית בְּחֶרֶב: ג לֹא אֶת־אֲבֹתֵינוּ פָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת כִּי אֲתָנוּ אֲנִחְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי פֹה הַיּוֹם כָּלְנוּ חַיִּים: ד פָּנִים א בְּפָנִים דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בְּהַר מִתְּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ: ה אָנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין־יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לְהַגִּיד לְכֶם אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה כִּי יִרְאֶתֶם מִפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ וְלֹא־עֲלִיתֶם בְּהַר לֵאמֹר: ס ו אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאַרְצֵן מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: ז לֹא־יְהִי־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי: ח לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶּסֶל כָּל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצֵן

*בצבור קורין בטעם העליון תמצא בסוף הספר

כ"ש"י

כך אמר משה אל תאמרו אני מטעם אתכם על לא דבר, כדרך שהסכסוך עושה בין המוכר ללוקח, הרי המוכר עלמו מדבר עמכם: (כ) לאמר. מוסב על דבר כי עמכם זהר מתוך האש, לאמר אנכי כי וגו', ואנכי עומד בין כי וזניכס: (ז) על פני. ככל מקום אשר אני שם, וזהו כל העולם. דבר אחר כל זמן שאני קיים! עשרת הדברות כבר פירשתי:

של שמש, מקום זריחת השמש: (מז) וזאת התורה. זו שהוא עתיד לסדר אחר פרשה זו: (מה) אלה העדות וגו' אשר דבר. הם הם אשר דבר בלאתם ממלרים, חזר ושנאה לכם בערבות מואב: (מו) אשר בעבר הירדן. שהוא צמזרם, שהעצר השני היה צמערב: (ג) לא את אבתינו. בלכז כרת כי וגו', כי אחנו: (ד) פנים בפנים. אמר ר' זרכיה

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b.) Moshe performed the actual halachic designation of these cities. The cities were then "activated" as functional Cities of Refuge when the mitzvah became applicable, when the other cities were designated in the Land of Canaan.*
A practical difference between these two approaches would be whether the Transjordanian cities would have to be re-designated (by Yehoshua) after the three cities had been designated in the Land of Canaan.

According to the first approach 'a,' Moshe's designation was not halachically effective, so the cities would indeed have to be redesignated; but according to approach 'b' this had already taken place.
It appears that Rashi and Rambam differ over this matter: Rashi stresses that Moshe said, "Since it is possible to do a mitzvah, I will do it," suggesting that Moshe actually observed the mitzvah (halachic requirement) of separating the cities—i.e. approach 'b' above.

* Or, perhaps it could be argued that when the three cities were designated in the Land of Canaan, the three Transjordanian cities retroactively attained the status of fully fledged Cities of Refuge since the time when Moshe designated them (See Tzafnas Pane'ach al Hatorah to 3:25).

- Ramos in Gilad, which belongs to (the tribe of) Gad.
- Golan in the Bashan which belongs to (the tribe of) Menashe.

🌀 REVIEW OF THE LAWS OF THE TORAH 🌀

4:44 **T**he following is the law which Moshe put before the children of Israel. ⁴⁵ These are the (same) testimonies, suprarational commands and rational commands which Moshe told the children of Israel when they went out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ (and he repeated them now, while they were) on the (east) side of the Jordan area (in the plains of Mo'av), in the valley opposite Beis-Pe'or. (It was) the land of Sichon, King of the Amorites, who lived in Cheshbon, whom Moshe and the children of Israel defeated, after they left Egypt. ⁴⁷ They took possession of his land, and the land of Og, King of Bashan—the two Amorite kings, who were on the (east) side of the Jordan, where the sun rises—⁴⁸ from Aro'air, which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon, to Mount Siyon, which is (Mount) Chermon, ⁴⁹ and all the plain across the Jordan eastward as far as the Sea of the Plain, under the waterfalls of Pishgah.

🌀 REPETITION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS 🌀

5 **M**oshe called all Israel and said to them:
FOURTH READING Listen, Israel, to the suprarational commands and rational commands which I am speaking in your ears today! Learn them, and be careful to observe them!

² God our God made a covenant with us in Choraiu. ³ God did not make this covenant (only) with our ancestors, but with us, all of us who are here alive today. ⁴ At the mountain, God spoke with you from the fire face to face. ⁵ On that occasion, I stood between God and you, to tell you the word of God, since you were afraid of the fire, and you did not go up on the mountain.

(God spoke to you,) saying:

- ⁶ “I am God, (the) God (of every one*) of you, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”
- ⁷ “You shall not (possess an idol) of other deities (so long as I exist). ⁸ You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any picture of that which is in the heavens above, which is on the

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Rambam however, writes that Moshe only said, “Since a *mitzvah* has come to my hand, I will do it.” This suggests that it was not in fact possible to observe the *mitzvah* itself, and it is only that “the *mitzvah* has come to

my hand,” i.e. Moshe could participate in some way with the *mitzvah*, but that his action had no significance from a *halachic* point of view.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 39, p. 14ff.)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

The two approaches concerning Moshe's involvement in the designation of Cities of Refuge (see *Toras Menachem*) could be explained from a spiritual perspective, as follows:

The view of *Rambam*, that Moshe had no *halachic* involvement in this *mitzvah*, teaches us that Moshe was on such a high spiritual level, that even accidental sin (for which Cities of Refuge are built) was not compatible with his standing.

The view of *Rashi*, that Moshe did perform part of this *mitzvah*, comes to teach us that even though Moshe was, of course, well beyond the very notion of inadvertent sin, he nevertheless “set his heart to the matter,” for the sake of the Jewish people. Being a true leader, he catered to the needs of the people, even if this required him to “fearfully” extend himself to a spiritual domain which was beneath his own standing.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 39, pp. 20-21)

וְדִי בְמִצַּי מִלְרַע לְאַרְעָא: ט לֹא תִסְגֹּד לְהוֹן
 וְלֹא תִפְלַחְנוּן אַרְי אָנָּא יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קִנְיָא
 מִסְעֵר חוֹבֵי אֲבָהֶן עַל בְּנֵי מִרְדִּין עַל דֵּר
 תְּלִיתִי וְעַל דֵּר רַבִּיעִי לְשִׁנְאֵי פִד מְשֻׁלְמִין
 בְּנֵינָא לְמַחְסֵי בְּתֵר אֲבָהֵתְהוֹן: י וְעַבְד טִיבּוּ
 לְאַלְפֵי דְרִין לְרַחֲמֵי וְלִנְטְרֵי פִקּוּדֵי יי לֹא
 תִימִי יֵת שְׂמָא דִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמִנְנָא אַרְי לֹא יוֹכִי
 יי יֵת דִּי יָמִי בְּשִׁמְחָה לְשִׁקְרָא: יב טֵר יֵת יוֹמָא
 דְּשַׁבְּתָא לְקַדְשׁוּתָהּ כְּמָא דִּי פִקְדָּךְ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 יג שְׂתָא יוֹמִין תִּפְלַח וְתַעֲבִיד כָּל עַבְדְּתֶךָ:
 יד וְיוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָאָה שַׁבְּתָא קָדְשׁ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא
 תַעֲבִיד כָּל עַבְדֵיךָ אֶתְּ וּבִרְךָ וּבִרְתֶךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ
 וְאַמְתֶךָ וְתוֹרְךָ וְחִמְרֶךָ וְכָל בְּעִירְךָ וְנִיזְרְךָ דִּי
 בְּקִרְוֵיךָ בְּדִיל דִּי יְנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאַמְתֶךָ בְּיָדְךָ:
 טו וְתִדְבֵר אַרְי עַבְדָּא הוֹיָמָא בְּאַרְעָא
 דְּמִצְרַיִם וְאַפְקֹד יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִתַּמְן בִּידָא תְּקִיפָא
 וּבִדְרֵעָא מִרְמָמָא עַל בֶּן פִּקְדָּךְ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַבְד
 יֵת יוֹמָא דְּשַׁבְּתָא: טז יִקֵּר יֵת אַבוּךָ וְיֵת אִמְךָ
 כְּמָא דִּי פִקְדָּךְ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּדִיל דִּיִּירְכּוּן יוֹמֶיךָ
 וּבְדִיל דִּיִּיטִב לְךָ עַל אַרְעָא דִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִהְיֶה
 לְךָ: יז לֹא תִקְטוֹל נֶפֶשׁ: וְלֹא תִגְנוֹף: וְלֹא תִגְנוֹב
 (נִפְשָׁא): וְלֹא תִסְהֵד בְּחִבְרֶךָ סְהֵדוּתָא
 דְּשִׁקְרָא: יח וְלֹא תִחַמֵּד אֶתְּ חִבְרֶךָ וְלֹא
 תִרוּג בֵּית חִבְרֶךָ תִּקְלָה וְעַבְדָּהּ וְאַמְתָּה תוֹרָה
 וְחִמְרָה וְכָל דִּי לְחִבְרֶךָ: יט יֵת פְּתִיגְמֵיָא הָאֵלִין
 מְלִיל יי עִם כָּל קְהָלְכוֹן בְּטוֹרָא מִנּוּ אִשְׁתָּא
 עֲנָנָא וְאַמִּישְׁתָּא קָל רַב וְלֹא פִסַּק וּבְתִבְיָנוּן

מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בְּפִימִים מִתַּחַת לְאַרְי: ט לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא
 תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קִנְיָא פִּקְדָּךְ עֲוֹן אֲבוֹת עַל-
 בָּנִים וְעַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רַבְעִים לְשִׁנְאֵי: י וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֶלְפִים
 לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשִׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתוֹ וְקַן מִצְוֹתָיו: ס יי לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא כִּי לֹא יִנְקָה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִשָּׂא אֶת-
 שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוּא: ס יב שְׁמֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: יג שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֹאכְתֶךָ:
 יד וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלֹאכָה
 אַתָּה | וּבְנֶךְ-וּבִתֶךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאַמְתֶךָ וְשׁוֹרְךָ וְחִמְרֶךָ וְכָל-
 בְּהֵמְתֶךָ וְגִרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יְנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאַמְתֶךָ כַּמּוֹד:
 טו וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאַרְי מִצְרַיִם וַיִּצְאֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרַע נְטוּיָה עַל-כֵּן צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: ס טז כִּבֵּד אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ
 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַן | יֵאָרִיכוּן יָמֶיךָ וְלְמַעַן יִיטֵב לְךָ
 עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ: ס יז לֹא תִרְצַח ס
 וְלֹא תִנְאַף ס וְלֹא תִגְזֹב ס וְלֹא-תַעֲנֶנֶה בְּרַעְיָךְ עַד שׁוּא: ס
 יח וְלֹא תִחַמֵּד אִשְׁתְּ רַעְיָךְ ס וְלֹא תִתְאַוֶּה בֵּית רַעְיָךְ שְׂדֵהוּ
 וְעַבְדּוֹ וְאַמְתּוֹ שׁוֹרוֹ וְחִמְרוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְרַעְיָךְ: ס [חֲמִישִׁין] יט אֶת-
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵל-כָּל-קְהָלְכֶם בְּהַר מֹתוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ
 הָעֲנָן וְהָעֲרַפֵּל קוֹל גְּדוֹל וְלֹא יִסָּף וַיִּכְתַּבְּם עַל-שְׁנֵי לְחֵת

כ"ט

לו חוק ומשפט⁴: (יז) ולא תנאף. אין לשון ניאוף חלל זנות (יח) ולא תתאוה. לא תירוג, אף הוא לשון חמד, כמו נחמד למראס⁵, דמתרגמינן דמרגג למחזי: (יט) ולא יסף. מתרגמינן ולא פסק (לפי שמדת צו"ד אינו יכול לדבר כל דבריו בזמנה אחת ונריך להפסיק, ומדת הקצ"ב אינו כן, לא

(יב) שמור. וזכרונות הוא אומר זכור, שניהם דצור אחד וזכירה אחת נאמרו וזשמיטה אחת נשמעו¹: כאשר צוך. קודם מתן תורה זמרה²: (טו) וזכרת כי עבד היית וגו'. על מנת כן פדאך שחיה לו עצד וששמור מלוטיו: (פז) כאשר צוך. אף על כבוד אז ואס נלטו זמרה, שנאמר³ שס שס

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

“A GREAT VOICE, WHICH DID NOT STOP” (v. 19)

Our Sages learned from this verse that the voice of God, at the giving of the Torah, had no echo (*Shemos Rabah* ch. 28). An echo is caused when soundwaves encounter a hard substance that cannot absorb the sound, causing it to be deflected. Thus we would expect there to have been an echo at the giving of the Torah, especially since

it was a “great voice” which would bring a great echo. In truth, however, God gave the Torah in a manner that *it was absorbed even into our physical makeup*—and thus there was no substance from which to deflect, so there was no echo to be heard.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1092ff.)

earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. ⁹ You shall not bow down before them nor worship them, for I, God, your God, am a God Who is zealous (to exact punishment), Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who (continue in their fathers' ways to) hate Me. ¹⁰ But I act kindly to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments for two thousand generations.”

- ¹¹ “You shall not take the name of God, your God, in vain, for God will not absolve anyone who takes His name in vain.”
- ¹² “Guard the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as God commanded you (at Marah, before the giving of the Torah). ¹³ Six days may you work and perform all your labor, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. You shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your ox, your donkey, nor all your (other) animals, and your convert who is within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest like you. ¹⁵ You should remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that God, your God, took you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm (in order that you serve Him). Therefore, God, your God, has commanded you to make the Sabbath day.”
- ¹⁶ “Honor your father and your mother, as God commanded you (at Marah), in order that your days will be lengthened on the land that God, your God, is giving you.”
- ¹⁷ “You shall not murder.”
- “You shall not commit adultery.”
- “You shall not steal (people, i.e. kidnap).”
- “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”
- ¹⁸ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. You shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor.”

🕎 AFTERMATH OF THE REVELATION AT SINAI 🕎

5:19
FIFTH
READING

God spoke these words to your entire assembly at the mountain from the fire, the cloud, and the fog, with a great voice, which did not stop (for breath). He inscribed them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

THE REPETITION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Chasidic teachings elaborate upon God’s purpose in creating the world—that there should be a fusion of spirit and matter. Since God created the world in a manner that it is predominantly material, our task—generally speaking—is to infuse it with a higher purpose, and to reveal the inner, spiritual core which pulsates within every one of God’s creations.

There is, however, a danger in “overdosing” the world with *too much* spirit, beyond that which it can comfortably absorb. We must never forget that the goal is a *unity* of matter and spirit, where the physical world is “at home” with its Creator. We must invigorate and inspire our world, and not burn or blind it with a light that is too intense.

From where do we derive the strength and the sensitivity to achieve this difficult balance?

The answer is: from the two accounts of the Ten Commandments written in the Torah. The first account (in *Parshas Yisro*) where God’s voice shattered the heavens and the earth, gives us the ability to break through the barriers between spiritual and physical, and infuse the mundane world with Divinity. The repetition of the Ten Commandments, here in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, was said by Moshe, and was thus articulated in more *human terms*. This gives us the strength to bring Divine revelation to the world harmoniously, respecting the limitations that exist and yet gradually inspiring the world to overcome its limitations and become a “home for God below.”

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro* 5752)

על תרין לוחי אבניא ויהבונן לי: כ ויהוה כמשמעכו ית קלא מגו חשוכא וטורא בער באשתא וקרבתון לותי כל רישי שבטיכון וסביכון: כא ואמרתון הא אחוינא יי אלהנא ית יקרה וית רבותה וית קל מימרה שמענא מגו אשתא יומא הדין חוינא ארי ימלל יי עם אנשא ויתקיים: כב ובען למא נמות ארי תיכלננא אשתא רבתא הדא אם מוספין אנהנא למשמע ית קל מימרא דיי אלהנא עוד ופיתין אנהנא: כג ארי מן כל בשרא די שמע קל מימרא דיי קמא ממלל מגו אשתא כותנא ואתקיים: כד קרב את ושמע ית כל די יומר יי אלהנא ואת תמלל עמנא ית כל די ימלל יי אלהנא עמד ונקבל ונעבידי: כה ושמיע קדם יי ית קל פתגמיכון במלותכון עמי ואמר יי לי שמיע קדמי ית קל פתגמי עמא הדין די מלילו עמד אתקינו כל די מלילו: כו לוי די יהי לבא הדין להון למדחל קדמי ולמטר ית כל פקודי כל יומיא בדיל דייטב להון ולבניהון לעלם: כז אול אמר להון תובו לבון למשכניכון: כח ואת הקא קים קדמי ואמלל עמד ית כל תפקדתא וקמיא ודינא די תלפנון ונעבדון בארעא די אנא יחב להון למירתה: כט ותטרון למעבד כמא די פקיד יי אלהכון יתכון לא תסטון וימינא ושמאלא: ל בכל ארעא די פקיד יי אלהכון יתכון תהכון בדיל דתיחון וייטב לבון ותרכון יומין בארעא די תירתון: א ודא תפקדתא קמיא ודינא די פקיד יי אלהכון לאלפא יתכון למעבד בארעא די אתון עברין לתמן למירתה: ב בדיל דתדחל קדם יי אלהקד למטר ית כל קימוהי ופקודוהי די אנא מפקדך את וברך ובר בך כל יומי תיך ובדיל דיורכון יומיך: ג ותקבל ישראל ותטר למעבד די ייטב לך ודי תסגון לחדא כמא די מליל יי אלהא דאבהתך לך ארעא עבדא חלב ודבש: ד שמע

אבנים ויתנם אלי: כ ויהי כשמעכם את הקול מתוך החשך וההר בער באש ותקרבוני אלי כל ראשי שבטיכם וקניכם: כא ותאמרו הן הראנו יהוה אלהינו את פכדו ואת גדלו ואת קלו שמענו מתוך האש היום הזה ראינו פי ידבר אלהים את האדם וחי: כב ועתה למה נמות פי תאכלנו האש הגדלה הזאת אם יספיים | אנהנו לשמע את קול יהוה אלהינו עוד ומתנו: כג פי מי כל בשר אשר שמע קול אלהים חיים מדבר מתוך האש כמנו וחי: כד קרב אתה ושמע את כל אשר יאמר יהוה אלהינו ואת | תדבר אלינו את כל אשר ידבר יהוה אלהינו אליך ושמענו ועשינו: כה וישמע יהוה את קול דבריכם בדברכם אלי ויאמר יהוה אלי שמעתי את קול דברי העם הזה אשר דברו אליך היטיבו כל אשר דברו: כו מי יתן והיה לבכם זה להם ליראה אתי ולשמר את כל מצותי כל הימים למען ייטב להם ולבניהם לעלם: כז לך אמר להם שובו לכם לאהליכם: כח ואתה פה עמד עמדי ואדברה אליך את כל המצוה והחקים והמשפטים אשר תלמדם ועשו בארץ אשר אנכי נתן להם לרשתה: כט ושמרתם לעשות באשר צוה יהוה אלהיכם אתכם לא תסרו ימין ושמאל: ל בכל הדרך אשר צוה יהוה אלהיכם תלכו למען תחיון וטוב לכם והארכתם ימים בארץ אשר תירשון: ו וזאת המצוה החקים והמשפטים אשר צוה יהוה אלהיכם ללמד אתכם לעשות בארץ אשר אתם עברים שמה לרשתה: ז למען תירא את יהוה אלהיך לשמר את כל חקתי ומצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתה ובנך ובן בנך כל ימי חייך ולמען יארכן ימיה: ח ושמעת ישראל ושמרת לעשות אשר ייטב לך ואשר תרבוני מאד באשר דבר יהוה אלהי אבתיך לך ארץ זבת חלב ודבש: ט ושמע * ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד *

* ע' רבתי * ד' רבתי

היה פוסק, ומשלא היה פוסק לא היה מוסיק) כי קולו חזק וקיים לעולם. דבר אחר ולא יסף, לא הוסיף להראות צדו פומי: (כז) ואת תדבר אלינו. כשתס את כחי כנכבה, שנלעתי עליכם, ורפית את ידי כי ראיתי שאינכם חרדים להתקרב אליו מאהבה. וכי לא היה יפה לכם ללמוד מפי הכזובה ולא ללמוד ממני: (ד) ה' אלהינו ה' אחד. ה' שכול אלהינו עתה ולא אלהי עוזדי אלילים, הוא עתיד להיות ה' אחד, שנאמר כי אז

²⁰ Then, when you heard the voice from the darkness, and the mountain was burning with fire, all the heads of your tribes and your elders approached me ²¹ and said, "Look! God, our God, has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we heard His voice from the fire. We saw today that God speaks with man, and (yet) he can still live. ²² But why should we now die? For if we continue to hear the voice of God our God any longer this great fire will consume us and we will die! ²³ What (mortal of) flesh (and blood) has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the fire, as we have, and lived? ²⁴ You should approach (God) and listen to everything that God, our God says, and then you can tell us everything that God, our God, tells you. We will listen and obey."

²⁵ God heard what you said when you spoke to me. God said to me, "I have heard what the people said when they spoke to you. Everything that they said to you is good. ²⁶ If only their hearts would remain like this, fearing Me and keeping all My commandments eternally, so that things would be good for them and their children forever! ²⁷ Go and say to them, 'Return to your tents.' ²⁸ You, however, must remain here with Me, and I will tell you the entire body of commandments, the suprarational commands and the rational commands, which you will teach them, so that they can observe them in the Land which I am giving them to possess."

²⁹ Be careful about observing them, as God, your God, has commanded you. Do not deviate to the right or to the left. ³⁰ Follow along the complete path which God, your God, has commanded you, so that you will live and prosper, and your days will be lengthened in the land that you will possess.

6

¹ This is the body of commandments, the suprarational commands and the rational commands, that God, your God, commanded (me) to teach you, to be performed in the land which you are about to enter and possess.² (This is) so that you should fear God, your God, and keep all His suprarational commands and His commandments that I am commanding you, all the days of your life—(both) you, your son, and your son's son—in order that your days be lengthened. ³ You should listen, Israel, and be careful to do what is good for you, so that you will increase greatly, just as God, the God of your fathers told you (that He would give you) a land flowing with milk and honey.

🕎 FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THE SHEMA 🕎

SIXTH
READING

- ⁴ Hear, O Israel! (Right now) God is our God (and the nations have their own gods, but in the future all will realize that) God is one.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

"HEAR, O ISRAEL, GOD IS OUR GOD, GOD IS ONE" (v. 4)

Man possesses two apparently contradictory elements, no less incompatible than the incompatibility of matter and spirit, the counterpart of which in the physical world is matter and energy. I refer to the Divine soul and animal soul, or, on a lower level, the yetzer tov [impulse to righteousness] and yetzer hara [impulse to evil]. But this incompatibility is evident only in the infantile stage of progress in Divine service, comparable to the plurality of elements and forces which were presumed to exist in physical nature. But just as the appreciation of the underlying unity of Nature grew with the advancement of science, so does perfection in the Divine service lead to the realization of the essential unity in human nature, to the point where the yetzer tov and yetzer hara become one, through the

transformation of the yetzer hara by and into the yetzer tov, for otherwise, of course, there can be no unity and harmony, since all that is holy, positive, and creative could never make peace and be subservient to the unholy, negative and destructive. And in this attained unity the Jew proclaims, 'Hear, O Israel, God [is] our God, God is one.'

"This is also what our Sages meant when they succinctly said—as they often compress far-reaching ideas into a few concise words—that the words 'And you shall love God, your God, with all your heart (levavecha),' which immediately follow *Shema Yisra'el*, mean: with both your yetzarim, with the yetzer hara, as with the yetzer tov.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on 28 Adar 5721)

יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ מִדָּ: ה וְתִרְחַם
 ית יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לַבָּיָה וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְכָל
 נַכְסֶיךָ: ו ויהוֹן פִּתְנֵמֵימָה הָאֵלֵין דִּי אֲנָא מְפַקְדֶךָ
 יוֹמָא דִּין עַל לַבָּיָה: ז וְתִתְנַנֵּן לַבְּנֵיךָ וְתַמְלִל
 בְּהוֹן בְּמִתְבָּךְ בְּבִיתְךָ וּבְמִחְבֶּךָ בְּאֶלְתְּמִזְרְחָא
 וּבְמִשְׁבְּבֶךָ וּבְמִקְיָדְךָ: ח וְתַקְמַרְנֵן לְאֵת עַל

ה וְאֶהְבֵּתְךָ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְכָל־
 מְאֵדְךָ: ו וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־
 לְבָבְךָ: ז וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֵיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ
 בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: ח וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאֹזַת עַל־יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ

כ"ש"י

לשון חדוד הוא, שיהיו מחודדים צפיר, שאם ישאלך אדם דבר לא תהא לריק לגמגם בו, אלא אמור לו מיד: ³ לבניך. אלו התלמידים. מנינו בכל מקום שהתלמידים קרוים צנים, שנאמר צנים אתם לה' אלהיכם, ואומר בני הנביאים אשר צבית אל⁷, וכן צחוקיבו שלמד תורה לכל ישראל וקראם צנים שנאמר בני עתה אל תשלו⁸. וכשם שהתלמידים קרוים צנים, שנאמר צנים אתם לה' אלהיכם⁶, כך הרב קרוי אב, שנאמר⁹ אבי אבי רבב ישראל וגו': ³ ודברת בם. שלא יבא עיקר דבורך אלא צם. עשם עיקר ואל תעשם טפל: ³ ובשכבך¹⁰. יכול הפילו שכב צחאי היום, תלמוד לומר וצקומך. יכול הפילו עמד צחאי הלילה, תלמוד לומר שצצתך צביתך וצלכתך צדרך. דרך ארץ דברה תורה, זמן שכיבה וזמן קימה: ³ (ח) וקשרתם לאות על ירך. אלו תפילין שצזרוע: והיו לטטפת בין עיניך. אלו תפילין שצראש ועל שם מנין פשויותיהם נקראו טטפת, טט צכתפי שתיס, פת

הכפוך אל עמים שפה צרורה לקרוא כולם צםם ה', ונאמר ציום ההוא יכיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד: ² (כ) ואהבת. עשה דצרו ממהבה, אינו דומה עושה מהבה לעושה מיראה. העושה אל רבו מיראה, כשהוא מעריח עליו מניחו והולך לו: ³ בכל לבבך. צשני יריך. דבר אחר צכל לצצר, שלא יכיה לצך חלוק על המקום: ³ ובכל נפשך. הפילו הוא נוטל את נפשך: ובכל מאדך. צכל ממוך יש לך אדם שממונו צבי עליו מגופו, לך נאמר וצכל מאדך. דבר אחר וצכל מאדך, צכל מדה ומדה שמווד לך, צין צמדה טובה צין צמדת פורענות, וכן דוד הוא אומר כום ישועות אשך וגו' צרה ויגון אמלא וגו': ⁵ (ו) והיו הדברים וגו'. ומכו מהבה וכיו הדצרים האלה, שמתוך כך אתה מכיר צהקצ"ה ומדצק דצרכיו: ³ אשר אנבי מצוך היום. לא יכיו צעיניך כדיוטגמא ישנה שאין אדם סופנה, אלא כהדשה שהכל רצין לקראתה. דיוטגמא מנית המלך הצאה צמכתב: ³ (ז) ושגנתם.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Who are “your sons”? (v. 7)

RASHI: These are your students. We find universally that students are termed “sons.”

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: The requirement to teach one’s son has already been mentioned above: “(This is) so that you fear God, your God, and keep all His suprarational commands and His commandments that I am commanding you, all the days of your life—(both) you, your son, and your son’s son” (6:2). Our verse appears to be an unnecessary repetition of the requirement to teach one’s son. Therefore, *Rashi* concluded that it refers to students.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 YOUR SONS—YOUR STUDENTS (v. 7)

Rashi expounds verse 7 non-literally, explaining that the requirement to teach “your sons” actually refers to “your students.”

Sifsei Chachamim explains that *Rashi* was troubled as to why the Torah instructs us to teach our sons here in verse 7, when this precept was already taught in verse 2 above: “(This is) so that you fear God, your God, and keep all His suprarational commands and His commandments that I am commanding you, all the days of your life—(both) you, your son, and your son’s son.”

However this explanation is difficult to accept since verse 2 appears to be referring, not to a requirement resting upon the father towards his son, but rather, to an obligation resting on the children themselves. Furthermore, the verse does not refer to teaching Torah, but rather, the observance of *mitzvos* in general.

Thus, it would appear that *Rashi* was troubled by a different problem, arising from one of his earlier comments, in *Parshas Vayechi*:

On the verse, “I will separate them from Ya’akov, and I will scatter them throughout Israel” (49:7), *Rashi* writes: “There are no paupers, scribes, or

teachers of children except from the tribe of Shimon, so that they should be scattered.”

Now, if our verse here in *Parshas Va’eschanan* were taken literally—that a father is obligated to teach his own child Torah and he may not delegate this responsibility to another—then “teachers of children” would only be required for orphans, or for one whose father is totally ignorant and is unable to teach him. Clearly, these are minority cases, so the reader will be troubled: Why does the Torah indicate that an *entire tribe* will be devoted to teaching children (and to be scribes) when the need for teachers is so rare?

In fact, even disregarding the above, a child who is learning *Chumash* for the first time—for whom *Rashi* wrote his commentary—would be troubled by our verse, since he will be aware that both he and his friends are not taught exclusively by their fathers.

Thus, in response to these problems *Rashi* explained: “These are your students. We find universally that students are termed ‘sons.’”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 33ff.)

1 צפניה ג, ט 2 זכריה יד, ט 3 ספרי 4 תהלים קסז, יג 5 שם 6 דברים יד, א 7 מלכים ב, ג 8 דברי הימים ב, כט, א 9 מלכים ב, שם יב 10 אין רש"י מפרש שהכוונה לקריאת שמע כי זהו דבר הפשוט אפילו ל"בן חמש (למקרא), וגם למד כבר מצות ק"ש בפרש"י בלק כג, כד (ע"פ לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 49)

- ⁵ Love God, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.
- ⁶ (I.e.) these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be upon your heart.
- ⁷ Teach them thoroughly to your (students, who are like your) sons. Speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the way.
- (Recite the Shema) when you lie down (at night) and when you get up (in the morning).
- ⁸ Bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be “totafos” (tefilin) between your eyes.

 CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What will be “a sign upon your hand” ? (v. 8)

RASHI: These are the *tefilin* of the arm.

in Coptic means “two” and פת in Phrygian means “two” [making a total of four].

● What will be “totafos” between your eyes ? (v. 8)

RASHI: These are the *tefilin* of the head. They are called טטפת because of the number of scrolls [contained within them]: טט

RAMBAN: The *mitzvah* of *tefilin* has already been stated in *Parshas Bo* (*Shemos* 13:9). It is repeated here to stress that one must “bind them,” i.e. that *tefilin* must be secured tightly with a knot.

 TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 THE HEAD AND ARM TEFILIN (v. 8)

In *Parshas Bo*, where the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* is mentioned for the first time, *Rashi* explains: “they are called טטפת because they have four compartments—טט in Coptic means ‘two’ and פת in Phrygian means ‘two’” (*Shemos* 13:16).

Why does *Rashi* stress in *Parshas Bo* that the term *totafos* alludes to the number of compartments; whereas here, in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, *Rashi* writes, “They are called טטפת because of the number of scrolls [contained within them]”?*

THE EXPLANATION

The context in which *tefilin* is mentioned in *Parshas Bo* is different to that mentioned in *Parshas Va’eschanan*:

In *Parshas Bo*, the Torah states, “It (singular) should be for a sign upon your arm and *totafos* between your eyes.” The use of the singular here indicates that the *tefilin* are to be donned as a sign to commemorate a single event, the Exodus from Egypt, which is the context of the discussion in *Parshas Bo*.

Thus the word “*totafos*” (alluding to the number “four”) in *Parshas Bo* could not refer to the number of passages inside the *tefilin*, since only two of the four passages written inside the *tefilin*** mention the Exodus from Egypt.***

Thus *Rashi* concluded that, “They are called טטפת because they have four compartments,” i.e. having many compartments is an essential feature of the *tefilin* that magnifies the “sign” by which the Exodus is remembered.****

However, here in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, the *tefilin* are mentioned in a different context. The Torah states, “Bind them (plural) as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be *totafos* between your eyes.”

To what is the Torah referring, by the use of the plural (“them”)?

Clearly this is a reference to verse 6, “these words, which I am commanding you today, should be upon your heart,” i.e. with the *mitzvah* of *tefilin*, the Torah is instructing us to bind “these words,” the

scriptural passages, upon our head and arm (adjacent to the heart). Therefore, *Rashi* wrote here that the term *totafos* alludes to “the number of scrolls” which contain these scriptural passages.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 49ff.)

🕒 The Last Word 🕒

“LOVE GOD...” (v. 5-6)

“One of the best-known portions of the Torah, which Jews recite daily, both morning and evening, is the portion of *Shema*, in which the Torah tells us to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (v. 5). The Hebrew word *m’odecha* that is generally translated as “your might,” also conveys the meaning of *mida*—“measure” or “dimension,” as our Sages explain. This means that a Jew has to love God regardless of the kind of “deal” he thinks is meted out to him by Divine Providence. And this profound love has to express itself, as the text indicates there, in terms of studying the Torah and observing its *mitzvos*, particularly the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* which are mentioned specifically, since *tefilin* symbolizes all the *mitzvos*. Moreover, inasmuch as *tefilin* is put on the left hand facing the heart, the seat of the emotions, and on the head facing the brain, the seat of the intellect, it symbolizes that the totality of a Jew, both emotionally and intellectually, has to be involved in the service of God and the fulfillment of the *mitzvos*.”

“In other words, whatever happens in a Jew’s life, it must not in any way affect this love and devotion to God, or his everyday life and conduct in accordance with the Torah and *mitzvos*. (Needless to note, the *mitzvah* of reciting the *Shema* daily is not reserved for exceptional Jews, but is for each and every Jew.)”

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

* Both the head and arm *tefilin* contain the same four scriptural passages. In the head *tefilin* these four passages are written on four different scrolls which are housed in four different compartments. In the arm *tefilin* the four passages are written on a single scroll which is housed in a single compartment. ***Shemos* 13:1-10 and *ibid.* 11-17 mention the Exodus; *Devarim* 6:4-9 and *ibid.* 11:13-21 do not. ***Furthermore, if the verse in *Parshas Bo* did stipulate a requirement for four passages, then it would turn out that the Jewish people could not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* until forty years later, when the two passages in the Book of *Devarim* were given; and, from a literal reading of *Parshas Bo*, it appears that the Jewish people were being given a *mitzvah* that was to be performed immediately. ****Thus, according to this interpretation of *Rashi*, two compartments remained empty for the first forty years of the observance of this *mitzvah*.

יָדָה וַיְהוּן לְתַפְלִין בֵּין עֵינָיֶךָ: ט וַתִּכְתְּבוּן עַל מְזוּזוֹן וַתִּקְבְּעוּן בְּסָפֵי בֵיתְךָ וּבַתְּרֵעִי: י וַיְהִי אֲרִי יַעֲלֶנְךָ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאַרְעָא דִּי קִיָּים לְאַבְהָתֶיךָ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לְמַתָּן לְךָ קְרוֹיִן בְּרַבְרָן וְטָבָן דִּי לֹא בְּנֵי־תָא: יא וּבְתִין מְלָן כָּל טוֹב דִּי לֹא מְלִיתָא וְגַבִּין פְּסִילָן דִּי לֹא פְּסִילָא בְּרַמִּין וְוִיתִין דִּי לֹא נַצְבָּתָא וְתִיכּוּל וְתִשְׁבָּע: יב אֶסְתַּמַּר לְךָ דְּלִמָּא תַנְשִׁי ית (דְּחִלְתָּא ד)י דִּי אֶפְקֵד מֵאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדוּתָא: יג ית יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּדְחַל וּקְדֻמוּהִי תִפְלַח וּבִשְׂמֵחָה תִקְיָם: יד לֹא תִהְיוּן בְּתַר טַעוֹת עִמְמִיא מִטַּעוֹת עִמְמִיא דִּי בְּסַחְרֵיכּוֹן: טו אֲרִי אֵל קְנָא יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׂכֻנְתָּהּ בֵּינְךָ דְּלִמָּא יִתְקַף רְגָזָא דִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּדִ וַיִּשְׁפָּד מֵעַל אֶפְי אַרְעָא: טז לֹא תִנְסוּן קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיכּוֹן כְּמָא דִּי נִסְתָּן בְּנִסְיָתָא: יז מִטַּר תִּפְרוּן ית פְּקוּדֵי דִּי אֱלֹהֶיכּוֹן וּסְהַדוּתָהּ וּקְיֻמוּהִי דִּי פְּקֻדָּה: יח וְתַעֲבֹד דְּכֶשֶׁר וְדִתְקֹן קָדָם יי בְּדִיל דְּיִיטֵב לְךָ וְתַעֲוֹל וְתִירַת ית אַרְעָא טַבְתָּא דִּי קִיָּים יי לְאַבְהָתֶיךָ: יט לְמַתְּבַר ית כָּל בְּעָלֵי דְבִבְךָ מִקְדָּמְךָ

לְטַטַּפְתָּ בֵּין עֵינָיֶךָ: ט וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ: ס
 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִבְיֹאֵדְךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
 לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לְךָ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת
 וְטַבְתָּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בָנִיתָ: יא וּבָתִּים מְלֵאִים כָּל־טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
 מְלֵאתָ וּבִרְתֵּי הַצּוֹבִיִּים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הֲצַבְתָּ כְּרָמִים וְזֵיתִים אֲשֶׁר
 לֹא־נִטְעַתָּ וְאִכְלַתָּ וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ: יב הַשְּׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: יג אֶת־יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא וְאִתּוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבִשְׂמוֹ תִשְׁבַּע: יד לֹא תִלְכּוּן אַחֲרֵי
 אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים מֵאֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבוֹתֶיכֶם: טו כִּי אֵל
 קָנָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּקִרְבְּךָ פֶּן־יִחַרְהֶ אַף־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּךָ
 וְהִשְׁמִידְךָ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: ס לֹא תִנְסוּן אֶת־יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר נִסְיַתֶם בַּמִּסָּה: יז שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־מִצְוֹת
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְעֲדֹתָיו וְחֻקָּיו אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ: יח וְעָשִׂיתָ הַיֵּשֶׁר
 וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לְךָ וּבָאתָ וִירִשְׁתָּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
 הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם: יט לְהִרְקֹף אֶת־כָּל־אֲבֹתֶיךָ

כ"ט

זאפריקי שחיס': (ט) מזוזות ביתך. מזוזות כתיב, שאין לריך אלא אחת: ובשעריך. לרבות שערי חלרות ושערי מדינות ושערי עיירות?
 (יא) חצובים. לפי שהיו מקום טרשין וסלעים נופל צו לשון חליצה:
 (יב) מבית עבדים. כתרומתו מצית עזדוחא, ממקום שהייתם שם עבדים:
 (יג) ובשמו תשבוע. אם יש כך כל המדות הללו, שאתה ירא את שמו ועוד
 אותו, אז בשמו תשבוע, שמתוך שאתה ירא את שמו תהא זכיר בשבועתך,
 ואם לאו לא תשבוע: (יד) מאלהי העמים אשר סביבותיכם. הוא הדין
 לרחוקים, אלא לפי שאתה רואה את סביבותיך תועים אחריהם, כולך
 לזכור עליהם ציורת: (טז) במסח. כשילאו ממלרים שנסוכו צמים,
 שנאמר כיש כי בקרצו': (יח) הישר והטוב. זו פשרה, לפניו משורת

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is the importance of mezuzah? (v. 9)

RAMBAM: Every person is obligated to be extremely cautious about *mezuzah* since it is a universally binding obligation. Then, every time that a person enters or leaves he will encounter the Unity of God, the holy Name of God...Our Sages said that any person who wears *tefilin* on his head and arm, has *tzitzis* on his garment, and has a *mezuzah* on his door, is assured that he will not sin....” (End of *Laws of Mezuzah*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 THE MEZUZAH (v. 9)

How are we to understand the following:
 a.) Why does **Rambam** write here that, “Every person is obligated to be extremely cautious about *mezuzah*,” and not “...cautious about the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah*”? Indeed at the end of his *Laws of Tzitzis*, **Rambam** is particular to write, “A person should always be careful with the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*.”
 b.) The promise that “any person who wears *tefilin* on his head and arm, has *tzitzis* on his garment, and a *mezuzah* on his door, is assured that

he will not sin,” was taken by **Rambam** directly from the *Talmud* in *Tractate Menachos* (43b). However, the *Talmud* quotes an additional verse to prove this point: “a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (*Ecclesiastes* 4:12). Why did **Rambam** omit this verse?
 c.) In **Rambam’s** Halachic Code, the *Mishneh Torah*, the *Laws of Tefilin* precede the *Laws of Mezuzah*, and the *Laws of Tzitzis* follow later. Since the above assurance is the combined effect of all three *mitzvos*, why did **Rambam** not cite it after completing all three sets of laws, at the end of the *Laws of Tzitzis* (or, at the first opportunity—the *Laws of Tefilin*)?

- ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your (public) gates.

⚡ WARNING NOT TO FORGET GOD ⚡

6:10

When God, your God, will bring you to the Land He swore to your fathers—Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov—that He would give you, (you will find) great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things that you did not fill (them with), reservoirs (in the rock) that you did not carve out, vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and you will eat and be satisfied. ¹² But beware not to forget God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

¹³ You should fear God, your God, worship Him, and (only on this condition may you) swear by His Name.

¹⁴ Do not go after other gods, the gods of the nations who are around you, ¹⁵ so that the anger of God, your God, does not become kindled against you, leading Him to destroy you off the face of the earth. For God, your God Who is among you, is a jealous God.

- ¹⁶ Do not test God, your God, as you tested Him in Masah.

¹⁷ You should always be careful to observe the commands of God, your God, His testimonies and His suprarational commands, which He has commanded you. ¹⁸ You shall do what is proper and good in the eyes of God, in order that you prosper, and so that you will come and possess the good land which God swore to your forefathers, ¹⁹ driving out all your enemies from before you, as God has said.

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

There are two quite distinct *halachic* obligations concerning the *mezuzah*. First, there is the requirement to affix a *mezuzah* to any appropriate doorpost on one's property.

A second, entirely different obligation that one fulfills with the *mezuzah*, is not the consequence of an effect which the person has on the *mezuzah* (its affixment), but rather, an effect that the *mezuzah* has on him. Namely, that when the person passes in or out of a door upon which a *mezuzah* is affixed, the person becomes aroused to think about God whose holy Name is written inside.

It is this second aspect which *Rambam* is speaking of here at the end of *Hilchos Mezuzah*, as he states: "Every time that a person enters or leaves he will encounter the Unity of God, the Holy Name of God." Therefore, it would be incorrect to refer to this aspect of *mezuzah* as the "*mitzvah* of *mezuzah*," since, technically speaking, the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* is its affixment, and here we are speaking of the effect of the *mezuzah* on the person. So *Rambam* writes that one should be "extremely cautious about *mezuzah*" without any reference to it being a "*mitzvah*" at all.

Nevertheless, he writes that "a person is obligated to be extremely cautious about *mezuzah*," stressing that there is indeed a *halachic* obligation here for a person to make himself aware of the content of the *mezuzah* as he enters or leaves a room, allowing himself to be affected by it (see *Taz* to *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ah*, beg. ch. 285).

Based on the above we can now answer the other two questions posed earlier ('b' and 'c'):

Rambam mentioned the assurance against sinning (through observing the precepts of *tefilin*, *mezuzah* and *tzitzis*) specifically in his *Laws of*

Mezuzah for, of these three precepts, *mezuzah* makes the most powerful contribution to the assurance. This is because the effect that *tefilin* and *tzitzis* have of reminding a person about God (thus deterring him from sin) are secondary effects of these *mitzvos*, whereas in the case of *mezuzah*, it is the *mezuzah* object itself that arouses an awareness of God:

In the case of *tefilin*, *Rambam* writes: "The holiness of *tefilin* is great, and so long as a person has *tefilin* on his head and his arm, he will be humble and God-fearing" (*Laws of Tefilin* 4:25). I.e. it is not "encountering" the actual *tefilin* itself that deters a person from sin, but rather the holiness which the *tefilin* emanates (a secondary effect).

Likewise in the case of *tzitzis*, it is not "encountering" the *tzitzis* object itself that deters a person from sin, but rather, seeing the *tzitzis* (merely) reminds a person of the fact (by various allusions**) that "the Torah equated it to all the *mitzvos*" (end of *Laws of Tzitzis*). And this will lead a person not to sin.

However, in the case of *mezuzah*, it is the *mezuzah* itself that affects a person, and not merely the holiness it emanates or the message it projects (which are secondary qualities). And that is why *Rambam* chose to stress the assurance against sinning specifically in his *Laws of Mezuzah*.

For this same reason, *Rambam* also omitted the *Talmud's* reference to the verse, "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." For this verse stresses that the three *mitzvos* protect a person collectively, with each *mitzvah* having a similar effect; and the verse also indicates that it is the *mitzvos* themselves that provide the protection. So, since *Rambam* did not rule in favor of any of these points, he omitted the verse from the *Laws of Mezuzah*.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 61ff.)

* According to *Ramban*, this is one of the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah (see his glosses to *Sefer Hamitzvos* of *Rambam*). See also *Sefer Hamitzvos* of the *Tzemach Tzedek* (*Derech Mitzvosecha*) page 45b. **For example: a.) A person ties knots to remind him of things, so too the *tzitzis* are knotted to remind a person of the *mitzvos* (*Tur*, *Orach Chaim* 24);

b.) The Hebrew word *tzitzis* has the *gematria* (numerical value) of 600, which when added to its 5 knots and 8 strings alludes to the 613 Biblical *mitzvos* (*Rashi* to *Menachos* 43b);

c.) The *techailes* (blue coloring) in the *tzitzis* reminds a person of the sea, which resembles, the sky, which reminds a person of the Throne of Glory (*Menachos* *ibid*).

כָּמָא דִּי מַלִּיל יִי: כ אַרְבֵּי יִשְׁאֲלֶנְךָ בְּרַךְ מִחַר
 לְמִימְרָא מָא סְהַדוּתָא וְקִימָא וְדִינָא דִּי פְקִיד
 יִי אֱלֹהֵנָא וְתִכּוּן: כֵּא וְתִימְרָא לְבָרַךְ עֲבָדִין
 הוּיָא לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאַפְקֵנָא יִי מִמִּצְרַיִם
 בִּידָא תְּקִיפָא: כב וַיְהִי יִי אֶתִּין וּמוֹפְתִין
 רַבְרַבִּין וּבִישׁוּן בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּפָרְעָה וּבְכָל אֲנָשׁ
 בֵּיתָה לְעֵינָנָא: כג וַיִּתְּנָא אֶפְקֵ מִתַּמָּן בְּדִיל
 לְאַעְלָא יִתְנָא לְמַתָּן לְנָא ית אַרְעָא דִּי קִימִים
 לְאַבְהֵתָנָא: כד וּפְקִדְנָא יִי לְמַעְבַּד ית כָּל
 קִימָא דְאֵלִין לְמַדְחַל ית יִי אֱלֹהֵנָא לְטַב לְנָא
 כָּל יוֹמָא לְקִימוּתָנָא פִּיּוּמָא דְהִיּוּן: כה וְכּוּתָא
 תְּהִי לְנָא אַרְבֵּי נֶשֶׁר לְמַעְבַּד ית כָּל תְּפַקְדָּתָא
 דְּדָא קְדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵנָא כָּמָא דִּי פְקִדְנָא: א אַרְבֵּי
 יַעֲלֶנְךָ יִי אֱלֹהֵךָ לְאַרְעָא דִּי אַתָּה עָלַל לְתַמָּן
 לְמִירְתָהּ וַיִּתְרַךְ עַמְּמִין סְגִיאיִן מִן קְדָמְךָ
 חֲתָאי וְגִרְנָשָׁאי וְאַמוֹרָאי וּכְנַעֲנָאי וּפְרִזִּי
 וְהוּאי וּבִכּוּסָי שְׁבַע עַמְּמִין סְגִיאיִן וְתַקִּיפִין
 מְנַךְ: כ וַיִּמְסְרֵנּוּ יִי אֱלֹהֵךָ קְדָמְךָ וְתִמְחַנּוּן
 גְּמָרָא תִּגְמַר יִתְהוּן לֹא תִּגְזַר לְהוּן קָנִים וְלֹא
 תִּרְחַם עֲלֵיהוּן: ג וְלֹא תִתְחַתֵּן בְּהוּן בְּרַתְךָ לֹא
 תִתֵּן לְבָרָה וּבְרַתָּה לֹא תִסַּב לְבָרְךָ: ד אַרְבֵּי
 יִשְׁעֵי ית בְּרַךְ מִבְּתֵר פְּלַחְנֵי וַיִּפְלְחוּן לְמַעֲוֵת
 עַמְּמִיָּא וַיִּתְקַף רִגְוֹא דִּי בְּכוּן וַיִּשְׁעֶךָ בְּפָרְעֵי:
 ה אַרְבֵּי אִם כְּדִין תַּעֲבֹדוּן לְהוּן אֲגוּרֵיהוּן
 תִּתְרַעֲוּ וְקִמְתַּהוּן תִּתְבָּרוּן וְאַשְׁרֵיהוּן

מִפְּנֵיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: ס כ כִּי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּנֶךָ מִחַר לְאמֹר מַה
 הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם:
 כא וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבְנֶךָ עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה
 מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה: כב וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אוֹתוֹת וּמֹפְתִים גְּדֹלִים
 וְרָעִים א בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּפָרְעָה וּבְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְעֵינֵינוּ: כג וְאוֹתָנוּ
 הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן הָבִיא אֹתָנוּ לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
 נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתֵּינוּ: כד וַיִּצַּנְנוּ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַחֲקִים
 הָאֵלֶּה לְיִרְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְטוֹב לָנוּ כָּל־הַיָּמִים לְחַיֵּיתָנוּ
 בְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כה וְצַדִּיקָה תִּהְיֶה־לָּנוּ כִּי־נִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־
 הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוֵּנוּ: ס [שביעין] ז א כִּי
 יִבְיֹאֵךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה
 לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל גּוֹיִם־רַבִּים א מִפְּנֵיךָ הַחֲתִי וְהַגֵּרְנָשִׁי וְהָאֱמֹרִי
 וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי שְׁבַעַה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְעַצוּמִים
 מִמֶּךָ: ג וּנְתַתֶּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִפִּיתֶם הַחֶרֶם תַּחְרִים
 אֹתָם לֹא־תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית וְלֹא תִחַנְּם: ג וְלֹא תִתְחַתֵּן בָּם
 בְּרַתְךָ לֹא־תִתֵּן לְבָנוּ וּבָתוֹ לֹא־תִקַּח לְבְנֶךָ: ד כִּי־יִסִּיר אֶת־בְּנֶךָ
 מֵאַחֲרַי וְעָבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְחָרָה אַף־יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְהִשְׁמִידְךָ
 מֵהָרָ: ה כִּי אִם־כֹּה תַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם תִּתְּצוּ וּמִצְבֹּתָם

כ"ט

דקין: (יט) כאשר דבר. ויכין דבר, והמותי את כל העם וגו'': (כ) כי
 ישאלך בנך מחר. יש מחר שכואו אחר זמן': (ח) ונשל. לשון השלכה והתזה,
 וכן ונשל הצרזל': (ג) לא תחנמם. לא תתן להם חן. אסור לו לאדם לומר כמה
 נאה כותי זכ. דבר אחר אל תתן להם חנייה צאריך': (ד) כי יסיר את בנך
 מאחרי. יסיר את כשיש את צדק, יסיר את צדק אשר תלד לו צדק מאחרי.
 למדנו שכן צדק הכואו מן הכותי קרוי צדק, אבל צדק הכואו מן הכותית אינו
 קרוי צדק אלא צנה, שהרי לא נאמר על צדקו לא תקח את צדק מאחרי,
 אלא כי יסיר את צדק וגו'': (ה) מזבחתיהם. של בנין: מצבותם. אכן אחת:

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

“YOU MUST NOT INTERMARRY WITH THEM” (v. 3)

For a Jewish person to marry a non-Jew is one of the greatest calamities, and not only from the religious viewpoint. Nor is it entirely a personal matter affecting the person involved, for it concerns the whole Jewish people, and there are few transgressions which affect the whole Jewish people as an intermarriage, God forbid. It is a transgression also against one's elementary honesty, for it is exceedingly unfair to the other party, from the viewpoint of each,

and it is also unfair to the respective good friends, who wish to see their near and dear one lastingly happy, and not otherwise. It has often been pointed out that marriage in general, even between two persons of similar backgrounds, entails a certain risk as to eventual adjustment and compatibility. Even if the two had been acquainted for some time, it is not a sure criterion as to what the relationship will be when the acquaintance is turned into a marriage,

REMEMBERING THE EXODUS

6:20 **I**n the future, when your son asks you, saying, “What are the testimonies, the suprarational commands, and the rational commands, which God our God has commanded you?”
²¹ You should say to your son, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand. ²² God enacted great and terrifying signs and wonders upon Egypt, Pharaoh, and his entire household, before our eyes. ²³ He brought us out of there, in order that He might bring us to the Land which He swore to our fathers, and give it to us. ²⁴ God commanded us to perform all these suprarational commands, to fear God, our God, so (He could) give us good all the time, and keep us alive, as (we are) today. ²⁵ It is a merit for us that we are careful to observe all these commandments before God, our God, as He has commanded us.”

ENTERING THE LAND

7 **W**hen God, your God, brings you into the Land which you are going to enter and possess, He will drive away many nations from before you: the Chitites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Cana'anites, the Perizites, the Chivites, and the Jebusites—seven nations more numerous and powerful than you.

7
SEVENTH
READING

- ² God, your God, will deliver them to you, and you will defeat them. You must destroy them completely. Do not make a treaty with them. Do not admire them (in any way).
 - ³ You must not intermarry with them. You must not give your daughter to their sons, and you must not take their daughters for your son. ⁴ For (one of their sons) will turn away your (grand)son from following Me, and they will worship other gods. Then God's anger will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you.
- ⁵ This is what you should do to them: You should demolish their altars, smash their monuments, cut

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where the two will be thrown together under one roof for 24 hours a day, day after day, and week after week, etc. But when the backgrounds are entirely different, and where this difference dates back for scores of generations, and is consequently of a deep and lasting quality—the chances of adjustment and compatibility are so negligible as to be nonexistent. Especially, where the difference is of a definitely antagonistic and hostile nature, as has been evidenced by the pogroms and persecutions of Jews in every land where Jews sojourned in the past 2,000 years. Moreover, modern science has recognized the hereditary nature of character traits, particularly deep-rooted ones over generations.

Thus, if one is honest—in the plain sense of the word—one would not wish to drag another party into an alliance which is doomed from the start. And if one truly loves the other, and not in a selfish way, one would certainly not wish to involve the other in such a misfortune, and would readily forgo the prospect of immediate and short-lived pleasure in order to spare the other the inevitable result. Otherwise, the professed love is nothing but selfish and egoistic.

Should there be children from such a union, there is the added consideration of the tragedy of the children having to witness

constant friction, and worse, between their parents, which is bound to follow in the natural course of events.

There is no need to elaborate on this very painful subject.

Needless to say, I am aware of the “argument” that the percentage of intermarriage is a considerable one and many of them seem to last. But it is surely unnecessary to point out that married people try to put on the appearance of a “happy” marriage, being ashamed to confess failure, and to reveal the friction and indignities, etc., suffered at home. In an intermarriage the sense of shame is even greater, knowing that many friends had warned them against it, and they had maintained that their marriage would be different. But as a matter of fact and statistics, the percentage of separations and divorces are incomparably greater in intermarriages than in non-intermarriages.

In the vast majority of cases, those who enter into an intermarriage are emotionally involved. Were they themselves to be asked about others contemplating such a step, they would counsel against taking a step which would commit the two people to possible lifelong misery. Indeed, they would consider it irresponsible to take such a step in an emotional state of mind.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe*)

* See also *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 376.

תְּקוּצְצוּ וְצַלְמֵי טַעוֹתֵיהוֹן תּוֹקְדוּן בְּנוֹרָא: ו אָרִי עִם קְדִישׁ אֶתְּ קִדְּם יִי אֱלֹהֶךָ בְּךָ אֶתְרַעִי יִי אֱלֹהֶךָ לְמַהוּי לֵה לְעִם חֲבִיב מִכָּל עֲמִמֵּי דֵי עַל אִפִּי אֶרְעָא: ז לֹא מִדְּסִנְאִין אֶתוֹן מִכָּל עֲמִמֵּי צָבִי יִי בְּכוּן וְאֶתְרַעִי בְּכוּן אָרִי אֶתוֹן זְעִירִין מִכָּל עֲמִמֵּי: ח אָרִי מִדְּרַחִם יִי יִתְכוּן וּמִדְּנִטְר יִתְ קִימָא דֵי קִינִים לְאַבְהֵתְכוּן אִפְקִי יִי יִתְכוּן בִּידָא תְּקִיפָא וּפְרָקְךָ מִבֵּית עֲבֹדוֹתָא מִינָא דְּפִרְעָה מְלָכָא דְּמִצְרַיִם: ט וְתַדַּע אָרִי יִי אֱלֹהֶךָ הוּא אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהָא מְהִימְנָא נְטִר קִימָא וְחֶסֶדָא לְרַחֲמוּהִי וּלְנִטְרִי פְּקוּדוּהִי לְאַלְפֵי דְרִין: י וּמִשְׁלָם לְסִנְאוּהִי טְכוּן דֵי אֲנוּן עֲבָדִין קְדְמוּהִי בְּחִיּוּהוֹן לְאוּבְדִיהוֹן לֹא מְאַחַר עוֹבֵד טֵב לְסִנְאוּהִי טְכוּן דֵי אֲנוּן עֲבָדִין קְדְמוּהִי בְּחִיּוּהוֹן מִשְׁלָם לְהוּן: יא וְתַטֵּר יִתְ תְּפַקְדָּתָא וְיִתְ קִימָא וְיִתְ דִּינָא דֵי אָנָּא מִפְּקִדְךָ יוֹמָא דִּין לְמַעְבְּדוּן: פ פ פ

תְּשַׁבְּרוּ וְאֲשִׁירֵהֶם תְּגַדְעוּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרְפוּן בְּאֵשׁ: ו בִּי עִם קְדוֹשׁ אֶתָּה לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּךָ בְּתָר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְהִיּוֹת לּוֹ לְעִם סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: ז לֹא מִרְבַּבְּכֶם מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים חֲשַׁק יְהוָה בְּכֶם וַיִּבְחַר בְּכֶם כִּי-אַתֶּם הִמְעַט מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים: ח כִּי מֵאֲהַבֵּת יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם וּמִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת-הַשְּׁבָעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וַיַּפְדֶּךָ מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים מִיַּד פְּרַעֲה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם: (מִפְּסִיר) ט וַיִּדְעַתְּ כִּי-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֵל הַנִּצָּאֵן שִׁמְרֵ הַבְּרִית וְהַחֹסֵד לְאַהֲבָיו וּלְשִׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתוֹ [קַן מִצְוֹתָיו] לְאַלְפֵי דוֹר: י וּמִשְׁלָם לְשִׁנְאוּי אֶל-פְּנֵיו לְהֶאֱבִידוֹ לֹא יֵאָחֵר לְשִׁנְאוֹ אֶל-פְּנֵיו יִשְׁלָם-לוֹ: יא וְשִׁמְרַתְּ אֶת-הַמִּצְוָה וְאֶת-הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת-הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: פ פ פ

קי"ח פסוקים, עזיאל"ל סימן.

כ"ש"י

שמרו את השבועה: (ט) לאלף דור. ולהלן הוא אומר לאלפים⁸, כאן שהוא סמוך אל לשומרי מצותיו, העושים מיראה, הוא אומר לאלף, ולהלן שהוא סמוך אל לאוהביו, העושים מאהבה, ששכרם יותר גדול, הוא אומר לאלפים⁹: לאוהביו. אלו העושים מאהבה: ולשומרי מצותיו. אלו העושים מיראה: (י) ומשלם לשנאיו אל פניו. בחייו משלם לו גמולו הטוב כדי להאזינו מן העולם הבא: (יא) היום לעשותם. ולמחר לעולם הבא ליטול שכרם¹⁰: חסלת פרשת ואתחנן

ואשיריהם. חילנות שבזדין אותן: ופסיליהם. גלמים: (ז) לא מרבבם. כפשוטו. ומדרשו, לפי שאין חסם מגדילים עלמכס כשאני משפיע לכם טובה לפיכך חשקתי בכס²: כי אתם המעט. הממעטין עלמכס, כגון אברהם, שאמר ואנכי עפר ואפר³, וכגון משה ואהרן שאמרו ונחנו מה⁴, לא כנבוכדנצר שאמר אדמה לעליון⁵, וסנחריב שאמר מי בכל אלהי הארצות⁶, וחירם שאמר אני מושב אלהים ישבתי⁷: כי אתם המעט. הרי כי משמש בלשון דהא: (ח) כי מאהבת ה'. הרי כי משמש בלשון אלא. לא מרובכס חשק ה' בכס, אלא מאהבת ה' אתכם: ומשמרו את השבועה. מחמת

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- How does God pay a person who hates Him “to his face”? (v. 10)
RASHI: He rewards him in his lifetime for the good [he has done], so as to cause him to perish from the World to Come.
- Why does the verse stress that we should observe the mitzvos “today”? (v. 11)
RASHI: For “tomorrow,” in the World to Come, you will take the reward [for observing] them.

BE'ER MAYIM CHAYIM: Rashi's comments to verses 10 and 11 are connected. In verse 10, Rashi explains that God pays the wicked in this world for any good they have done, so as to keep them from the World to Come. Then, in verse 11, Rashi stresses that in the case of the righteous, the opposite is true: God does not give them their main reward in this world, so as to give them a full reward in the World to Come.

SEFER HAZIKARON: This is consistent with the Talmudic principle that “the reward for mitzvos is not given in this world” (Kidushin 39b).

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🕯️ REWARDS IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT (v. 10-11)
 In his commentary to verse 11, Rashi explains that in the World to Come, “you will take the reward,” for observing the mitzvos.
Be'er Mayim Chayim and **Sefer Hazikaron** explain that Rashi's comment here is a continuation of his explanation to the previous verse.

In verse 10, Rashi writes that God rewards the wicked in this world for any good they may have done, so as to ensure they do not have any reward in the World to Come. In the next verse Rashi continues that the reverse is true for the righteous. God does not reward them in this world, so as to save their reward for the World to Come.

down their idolatrous trees, and burn their statues in fire. ⁶ For you are a holy people to God, your God. God, your God, has chosen you from all the peoples upon the face of the earth to be His treasured people. ⁷ God did not desire you and choose you because you are more numerous than all the other nations, for you are (in fact) the smallest of all the nations. ⁸ Rather, God took you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, because of God's love for you, and because He is keeping the oath that He swore to your forefathers.

MAFTIR ⁹ You should know that God, your God, is the Almighty God, the faithful God, Who upholds the covenant and (rewards acts of) kindness to those who (observe) His (commands out of) love and (those who) keep His commandments (out of fear) for a thousand generations. ¹⁰ He causes (each of) those who hate Him to perish (in the World to Come) by paying (him fully in this world) to his face (for any good that he has done). He will not delay (payment to) the one who hates Him. He will repay him to his face.

¹¹ You should keep the body of commandments, the suprarational commands and the rational commands, which I am commanding you to observe today.

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However, at the literal level it is difficult to accept that there is no reward in this world for the observance of *mitzvos*, since we find numerous verses promising rewards for the observance of the *mitzvos* (including the *very next verse*, at the beginning of *Parshas Eikev*).

How then, is this to be reconciled with *Rashi's* statement that only “‘tomorrow,’ in the World to Come, you will take the reward [for observing] them”?

THE EXPLANATION

The key emphasis of *Rashi's* comment to verse 11 is that “‘tomorrow,’ in the World to Come, you will *take* the reward [for observing] them.”

I.e. in contrast to this world, where reward is merely *received* for observing the *mitzvos*, in the future the reward will be **taken**. In other words, a person does indeed “receive” reward for observing *mitzvos* in this world, but in the World to Come, the manner in which a person will obtain his rewards will change—he will “take” them.

The disadvantage of having to “receive” a payment is that, even when a reward is owing, the recipient is at the mercy of his debtor. Thus, it is feasible that the payment may be delayed due to a secondary reason, and the recipient simply has to wait until he is paid.

If however, he has the ability to “take” what is owed to him, then there need be no delay, since he can help himself.

Based on the above we can now explain the flow of logic between verses 10 and 11, according to *Rashi*:

In verse 10 we first learn that God pays the wicked in this world: “*He causes (each of) those who hate Him to perish (in the next world) by paying (him fully in this world) to his face (for any good that he has done).*” The verse then continues that this payment will not be delayed: “*He will not delay (payment to) the one who hates Him. He will repay him to his face.*”

From here the reader will understand that the wicked are always paid in this world; but that the reward to the righteous is sometimes delayed. The following verse therefore adds, “to observe today”—that “tomorrow, in

the World to Come, you will *take* the reward [for observing] them.” I.e. the notion of a person's reward being delayed is a phenomenon unique to this world, as in this world we merely “receive” our reward. However, in the World to Come, “you will *take* the reward,” without any delay at all.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 41ff.)

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

There are two ways of understanding the mechanism by which rewards are given for observing the *mitzvos*:

a.) That the reward comes “naturally,” i.e. God created the world in such a manner that the observance of a *mitzvah* will automatically open spiritual channels which will bring the person reward.

b.) That the reward comes “miraculously,” i.e. the *mitzvah* and its reward are not in a “cause and effect” relationship. Rather, the reward must be generated independently—rather like rewards from one human being to another, which are awarded willingly (and not automatically).

The first approach (‘a’) is the method by which we receive rewards in the current era. Since they come “automatically,” they are simply “received” by their recipients (see *Toras Menachem*).

However, the rewards of the future era will not be a natural consequence of our deeds, but rather, like a separate “miracle” that is generated by God. Thus, since the process of reward is an *additional* activity by God, it will require an additional act from ourselves, that of “taking” the reward (see *Rashi*).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, pp. 46-7)



Parshas Va'eschanan contains 8 positive *mitzvos* and 4 prohibitions

1. Not to desire what belongs to a fellow Jew [5:18].
2. [To believe in] the unity of God [6:4].
3. To love God [6:5].
4. To study Torah [6:7].
5. To recite the *Shema* every morning and evening [6:7].
6. To tie *tefilin* on the arm [6:8].
7. To place *tefilin* on the head [6:8].
8. To affix a *mezuzah* on the doorpost of our houses [6:9].
9. Not to test a true prophet unreasonably [6:16].
10. To kill the seven nations that occupied the Land of Israel [7:2].
11. Not to have positive feelings for idol-worshippers [7:2].
12. Not to marry non-Jews [7:3].



parshas Eikev

פרשת עקב

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

The word *Eikev* literally means “because” or “as a result of,” as in the opening verse of our *Parsha*: “As a result of your listening to these laws...”

A further meaning of the word *Eikev* is “heel.” In the context of our verse, this has two implications:

a.) That we should be careful in observing even the relatively “minor” commandments, which we might be tempted to “trample with one’s heels” (*Rashi* *ibid.*).

b.) Our Sages referred to the period immediately preceding the coming of *Mashiach* as “the ‘heel’ of *Mashiach*.” Thus, explained the *Tzemach Tzedek*, our verse alludes to the pre-Messianic period when the Jewish people will eventually “listen to these laws” and return to God (*Ohr Hatorah*).

What is the connection between these two interpretations?

The absence of the Holy Temple clearly has a detrimental effect on the spiritual “health” of the Jewish people. In Temple times, the spiritual core of Judaism was easily accessible, and people found it simple to maintain an inspired and meaningful connection to their Creator. In times of exile, however, it is a struggle

merely to sustain a basic observance of the *mitzvos*, never mind attaining a spiritual appreciation of them.

Nevertheless, there is actually a unique *advantage* to our relatively “uninspired” exile-Judaism which the spiritually nourished people of the Temple era did not possess. For ultimately, it is we who demonstrate true commitment to Jewish values, for we remain dedicated to God *despite* the fact that we are not easily inspired to love Him and fear Him. We do not see God, or feel God, for our generation is merely the “heel” of spiritual sensitivity. But that is also our advantage: We serve God, independent of our own feelings of inspiration—and that is the hallmark of *genuine* commitment.

Thus, having reached “the ‘heel’ of *Mashiach*,” we no longer wish to “trample” upon the minor commandments; for the distinction between “minor” and “major” is only significant *for those who appreciate and understand the true worth of the mitzvos*, like the Jews of the Temple era.

Our greatness, however, is our simple faith. Our unsophisticated approach to Judaism connects us to the very core of God’s Essence, which is simple and devoid of any multiplicity at all.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 71ff.)

יב וְהָיָה | עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמְּשַׁפְּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וּשְׁמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ לְךָ אֶת־הַבְּרִית וְאֶת־
הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתָּיִךְ: יג וְאַהֲבֵךְ וּבִרְכֵךְ וְהִרְבֵּךְ וּבִרְךְ
פְּרִי־בִטְנֶךָ וּפְרִי־אֲדָמָתְךָ הַגֵּנֶךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וַיַּצְהֲרֶךָ שְׁגַר־אֶלְפִיךָ
וַעֲשִׂיתָרְת צִאֲנֶךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתָּיִךְ לְתֵת לְךָ:
יד בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים לֹא־יְהִיֶּה בְךָ עֶקֶר וְעַקְרָה
וּבְבִהְמֹתֶיךָ: טו וְהִסִּיר יְהוָה מִפֶּךָ כָּל־חֲלִי וְכָל־מְדוּי מִצָּרִים
הָרָעִים אֲשֶׁר יִדְעַתָּ לֹא יִשְׁיִמֶם בְּךָ וּנְתַנֶּם בְּכָל־שְׁנָאִיךָ:
טז וְאִכְלַתְּ אֶת־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ לֹא־
תָּחוּם עֵינֶיךָ עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי־מוֹקֵשׁ הוּא
לְךָ: ס ז' כִּי תֹאמֶר בְּלִבְּךָ רַבִּים הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִמֶּנִּי אֵיכָּה
אוּכַל לְהוֹרִישָׁם: יח לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם זְכַר תִּזְכֹּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָרְעָה וּלְכָל־מִצְרָיִם: יט הַמִּסַּת הַגְּדֹלַת אֲשֶׁר־
רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וְהֵאֲתֵת וְהַמְּפֹתִים וְהַיָּד הַחֲזוּקָה וְהַזְרַע הַנְּטוּיָה
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְכָל־
הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה יָרָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם: כ וְגַם אֶת־הַצִּרְעָה יִשְׁלַח
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּם עַד־אֲבֹד הַנְּשֹׂאִרִים וְהַנְּסֹתָרִים מִפְּנֵיךָ:
כא לֹא תַעֲרֹץ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּקִרְבְּךָ אֵל גָּדוֹל
וְנוֹרָא: כב וְנִשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵל מִפְּנֵיךָ מְעַט
מְעַט לֹא תוּכַל כִּלְתֶּם מֵהָר פֶּן־תִּרְבֶּה עֲלֶיךָ חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה:
כג וּנְתַנֶּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהָמָּם מְהוּמָה גְּדֹלָה עַד
הַשְּׂמֹדִם: כד וְנָתַן מַלְכֵיהֶם בְּיָדְךָ וְהֵאֲבֹדְתָ אֶת־שְׂמֹם מִתַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא־יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ בְּפָנֶיךָ עַד הַשְּׂמֹדֶךָ אֹתָם: כה פְּסִילֵי

יב ויהי חלף די תקבלון ית דיניא האלין
ותטרו ונתעבדון ונתהון ויטר יי אלהך לך ית
קניא ונת חסדא די קניא לאביתך:
יג וירחמנך ויברכך ויסגנך ויברך ולך
דמך ואבא דארעך עבוקך ותמך ומשחך
בקרי תוריד ועדרי ענך על ארעא די קניא
לאביתך למתן לך: יד בריך תהי מכל
עממיא לא יחא בך עקר ועקרא ובכעירך:
טו ויעדי יי מנך כל מרעין וכל מכתשי
מצרים בישיא די ידעת לא ישונן בך ויתנגנן
בכל סנאיד: טז ונתמר ית כל עממיא די יי
אלהך יחב לך לא תחום עינך עליהון ולא
תפלה ית טעותהון ארי לתקלא הוא לך:
יז דלמא תימר בלבך סניאי עממיא האלין
מני אכדין אכול לתרכותהון: יח לא תדחל
מנהון מדכר תדכר ית די עבד יי אלהך
לפרעה ולכל מצרים: יט נסין רברבין
די חזאה עינך ואתיא ומופתיא וידא תקפתא
ודרעא מרממא די אפקך יי אלהך בן עבד יי
אלהך לכל עממיא די את דחל מקדמיהון:
כ ואף ית ערעיתא יגרי יי אלהך בהון עד
דיבדון דאשתארו ודאטמרו מקדמך: כא לא
תתבר מקדמיהון ארי יי אלהך שכנתה בינך
אלהא רבא ודחילא: כב ויתרך יי אלהך ית
עממיא האלין מקדמך ועיר ועיר לא תכול
לשעיותהון בפריע דלמא תסגי עלך חיות ברא:
כג וימסרונן יי אלהך קדמך וישגשגונן שגוש
רב עד דישתצון: כד וימסר מלכיהון בינך
ותוכד ית שמחון מתחות שמיא לא יתעתד
אנש (מ)קדמך עד דישתצי (ה)תשיצי ונתהון:
כה צלמי טעותהון תוקדון בגורא לא תחמד

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(יט) המסות. כסיונות: והאותות. כגון ויחי לנחש⁵, וכיו לסם ציבטת⁵: והמופתים. כמכות המופלאות: והיד החזקה. זכ הדבר: והזרוע הנטויה. זו החרב של מכת זכורות: (כ) הצרעה. מין שרץ העוף, שכיסה זורקת זכס מרה ומססתן ומסמאה את עיניהם בכל מקום שהיו נסתרים שם⁶: (כז) פן תרבה עליך חית השדה. והלא אם עושין רלונו של מקום אין מתיראין מן החיה, שנאמר וחית השדה כשלמה לך⁷, אלא גלוי כיח לפניו שעתידין לחטוא: (כג) והמם. נקוד קמ"ץ כולו, לפי שאין מ"ם אחרונה מן הכסוד, וכרי הוא כמו וחס אוחס. אצל וכמס גלגל עגלתו⁸, כולו יסוד, לפיכך

(יז) והיה עקב תשמעון. אם המלות קלות שאדם דש צעקצוי תשמעון: ושמר די וגו'. ישמור לך הכטחתו: (יג) שגור אלפיק. ולדי צקר, שהקצב משגרת ממטיח: ועשתרות צאנך. מנחס פירש אצירי זשן¹, מזחר לאן. כמו עשתרות קרניים², לשון חוזק. ואונקלוס תרגם ועדרי עק. ורבותינו אמרו³ למה נקרא שם עשתרות שמעשירות את צעליהן: (יד) עקר. שאינו מוליד: (יז) כי תאמר בלבבך. על כרחך לשון דילמא הוא, שמה תאמר בצדך מפני שהם רבים לא אוכל להורישם, אל תאמר כן, לא תירא מהם. ולא יתכן לפרשו דחטא משאר לשונות של כי, שיפול עליו שז לא תירא מהם:

🕒 REWARDS FOR OBSERVING THE MITZVOS 🕒

7:12 **A**nd what will happen is, as a result of your listening to (even the most neglected of) these laws, and your care in their observance, God, your God, will keep (His promise) to you: the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your fathers. ¹³ He will love you, bless you and multiply you. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your soil, your grain, your wine, your oil, your cattle's offspring and the best of your flocks, in the Land which He swore to your forefathers to give to you. ¹⁴ You will be blessed above all nations. There will be no sterile male or barren female among you or among your cattle. ¹⁵ God will keep every sickness away from you. He will not give you any of the diseases of Egypt which you experienced, (rather), He will give them to all your enemies. ¹⁶ You should annihilate all the nations which God, your God, delivers to you. Do not let your eye pity them, and do not worship their gods, for this is a tempting trap for you.

🕒 NOT TO FEAR THE NATIONS 🕒

7:17 **Y**ou might say to yourself, "These nations are more numerous than us! How will we be able to drive them out?" ¹⁸ Do not fear them! You should always remember what God, your God, did to Pharaoh and to the whole of Egypt: ¹⁹ the great proofs (of true power) that your eyes saw, the signs (of God's direct involvement), the wondrous (plagues), the mighty hand (of God that brought disease to Egyptian cattle), and the outstretched arm (that killed the firstborn), with which God, your God, brought you out. God, your God, will do likewise to all the nations whom you fear. ²⁰ God, your God, will also send hornet swarms upon them, until the survivors and those who hide from you are destroyed. ²¹ Do not be demoralized by them, because God, your God—a great and awesome God—is among you. ²² Little by little God, your God, will drive away those nations from before you. You will not be able to destroy them quickly, for then there might be too many wild animals for you to contend with. ²³ God, your God, will deliver them to you, and He will drive them crazy until they are destroyed. ²⁴ He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will eradicate their names from beneath the skies. Nobody will stand up against you, until you have destroyed them.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **Why does the Torah use the term *Eikev*, which can also mean "heel" ? (v. 12)**

RASHI: [The verse is suggesting]: If you will heed the minor commandments which a person tends to trample with his heels, [then "God will keep (His promise) to you"].

MIDRASH: David said, "Master of the Universe! I do not fear the important precepts of the Torah, because they are [obviously]

important. Rather, I fear the minor precepts, perhaps I was lax with them because they are minor, and you said: Be careful with a minor precept just like an important one."

Thus the verse says: "*In keeping them there is great reward (עֲקֵב רָב)*" (Psalms 19:12). And it is also written, "*Oh how great (רָב) is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you*" (ibid. 31:20). This refers to the reward for observing "minor" precepts (*Tanchuma, Eikev 1*).

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🕒 **THE REWARD FOR OBSERVING "MINOR" PRECEPTS (v. 12)**

The **Midrash** appears to suggest that observing the "minor" precepts of Judaism brings an even greater reward than that which is bestowed for observing the "important" precepts.

How is this to be reconciled with the principle, that "Be careful with a minor *mitzvah* as with a major one, for you do not know the reward given for the *mitzvos*" (*Avos 2:1*)?

THE EXPLANATION

The reward for *mitzvos* is of two kinds:

- a.) The reward for the very nature of the precept performed, where the relative importance of the various *mitzvos* is not accounted for; and
- b.) A special reward dependent upon specific conditions, i.e., the nature of the person performing the precept, the kind of performance, and the circumstances of time and place involved.

כספא ודקבא די עליהון ותסב לך דלמא תתקל בה ארי מרחקא דיין אלהיך הוא: כו ולא תעל דמרחק לביתך ותהי חרמא בותה שקצא תשקצנה ורחקא תרחקנה ארי חרמא הוא: א כל תפקדתא די אנא מפקדך יומא דין תפרון למעבד גדיל דתיחון ותסגון ותיתון ותירתון ית ארעא די קיים יי לאבחתכון: ב ותדבר ית כל ארמא די דברך יי אלהיך דגון ארבעין שנין במדברא גדיל לעניותך לנפיותך למדע ית די בלבך התטר פקודוהי אם לא: ג ועניך ואכפנה ואוכלך ית מנא די לא ידעתא ולא ידעון אבהתך גדיל

אלהיהם תשרפון באש לא תחמד פסח וזהב עליהם ולקחת לך פן תנקש בו כי תועבת יהוה אלהיך הוא: כו ולא תביא תועבה אל ביתך והיית חרם כמהו שקין | תשקצנו ותעב | תתעבנו כי חרם הוא: פ ח א כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוה היום תשמרון לעשות למען תחיון ורבייתם ובאתם וירשתם את הארץ אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם: ד וזכרת את כל הדרך אשר הוליכך יהוה אלהיך זה ארבעים שנה במדבר למען ענתך לנפתיך לדעת את אשר בלבבך התשמר מצותו [ק מצותיו] אם לא: ג ועניך וירעבך ויאכלך את המן אשר

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חליו קמ"ן וחליו פת"ת, כשאר פעל של שלש אותיות: (ח) כל המצוה. כפשוטו. ומדרש חגדה' אם התחלת צמלוח גמור אחת, שאינה נקראת ממלוח אלא על שם הגומרה, שנאמר ואת עלמות יוסף אשר העלו בני ישראל ממלכים קצרו צשכס², והלא משה לדו נתעסק צכס להעלותם, אלא לפי שלא הספיק לגומרה וגמרוה ישראל, נקראת על שם: (צ) התשמור מצותיו. שלא תנסכו ולא תכרכר אחרייו:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is meant by “all the commandment(s)” ? (v. 1)

RASHI: The term “all the commandment(s)” is to be taken literally.

[Another interpretation:] According to the *Midrash Agadah* [the verse is teaching]: If you have started a *mitzvah*, finish it, because only the one who completes it is credited with [the *mitzvah*]. As the verse states, “And they buried the bones of Yosef, which the Jewish people had brought up from Egypt, in Shechem” (Joshua 24:32). Was it not the case that Moshe alone took care of this [mitzvah of taking the bones, and not the Jewish people]?

However, since he did not complete it, it is accredited to the Jewish people, who did complete it.

BARTENURA: *Rashi* was troubled why the Torah states **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה** (literally: “all the commandment,” in the *singular*), rather than **כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת** (“all the commandments” in the plural).

Rashi answers that the verse can be interpreted literally—that the Torah uses the singular when it really means the plural—but since this is somewhat difficult to accept, *Rashi* adds an explanation from the *Midrash Agadah*. This explains how the term “all the commandment” can be taken literally, [i.e. one must fulfill a *mitzvah* in its entirety to receive credit for it.]

CHIZKUNI: The term **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה** (literally: “all the commandment”) is written in the singular because it refers to the previously mentioned command (7:25) not to covet idols.

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To illustrate point ‘b’:

Two people buy the same kind of *esrog*, pay the same amount of money, and make the same blessing. But one of them could less afford to pay the price. This person is performing the *mitzvah* at greater sacrifice. He is deserving of greater reward.

Or take the case of a heavy smoker who stops smoking before *Shabbos* and abstains from smoking throughout *Shabbos*. He is deserving of a greater reward than one who is less addicted to smoking.

Or the case of a “self-made” man, who never had occasion to take orders from anybody, and grew up with the idea of exceptional self-reliance. When such a person puts his own strong will aside and accepts the guidance and leadership of a spiritual leader in Israel, he is deserving of a greater reward than the person who has been brought up since childhood in the spirit of self-abrogation and submission to the wishes and guidance of the Rabbi.

Likewise, keeping even the “minor” precepts is in a way, a greater test of our devotion to the Torah, and therefore brings a greater reward.

(Based on a letter written by the Rebbe, dated August 26, 1948)

☞ “ALL THE COMMANDMENT(S)” (v. 1)

Rashi's comments to verse 1 prompt the following questions:

a.) What was troubling *Rashi*? **Bartenura** writes that *Rashi* was troubled as to why the Torah used the expression **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה** (“all the commandment”) in the singular, rather than the more appropriate **כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת** (“all the commandments”) in the plural.

However, it is difficult to accept that this is what prompted *Rashi*'s comment here, for in previous cases where the Torah used the expression **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה** (in the singular), such as 5:28 and 6:25 above, *Rashi* did not comment on the fact. So apparently, the use of the singular in such instances did not trouble *Rashi*.

ERADICATION OF IDOLATRY

²⁵ You should burn the statues of their gods in fire.

- Do not covet the silver or gold that is on them and take it for yourself, so that you are not tempted (to idolatry) by it, for it is an abomination to God, your God.
- ²⁶ Do not bring any abominable (idol) into your house, for then you will become liable to destruction, like it.

You should utterly detest it, and utterly abhor it, for it is something to be destroyed.

REMEMBERING THE FORTY YEARS IN THE DESERT

8 You should safeguard the observance of all the commandment(s) that I am commanding you today, so that you will live, multiply, and come to possess the Land that God swore to your forefathers. ² You should remember the entire path along which God, your God, led you these forty years in the desert, in order to afflict you. It was to test you, to find out what is in your heart: Would you keep His commandments (without questioning Him) or not? ³ He afflicted you and let you go

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b.) Why did Rashi bring two interpretations?

c.) Why did Rashi reject the interpretation of **Chizkuni** that our verse refers specifically to the preceding command, not to covet the gold and silver of idols? This would properly explain why the Torah used the singular (“all the commandment”), for we would in fact be speaking of one single precept.

THE EXPLANATION

At the time when Moshe said this *Parsha* to the Jewish people, as they were about to enter the Land of Israel, the prohibition against coveting idols was not yet practically relevant. For it is only *after* “He will deliver their kings into your hand” (7:24), that it would become possible to “covet the silver or gold that is on them and take it for yourself” (7:25).

On the other hand, our verse clearly refers to *mitzvos* that could be performed *before* the entry into the Land of Israel: “You should safeguard the observance of all the commandment(s) that I am commanding you today, so that you will live, multiply, and come to possess the Land that God swore to your forefathers.”

Therefore, Rashi rejected the interpretation of *Chizkuni*, that our verse refers to not coveting the idols of the non-Jewish nations (mentioned in 7:25 above), since, at the literal level, our verse *must* be speaking of a *mitzvah* (or *mitzvos*) that was (or were) possible for the Jewish people to observe while they were still in the desert, *before* entering the Land.

Thus, Rashi was faced with a problem: It was only possible to observe all the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah after the Jewish people had entered the Land, since many of the commandments depend on being in the Holy Land. So why does the Torah stress here, “You should safeguard the observance of *all* the commandment(s) that I am commanding you today, so that you will live, multiply, and come to possess the Land”? How could the Jewish people be told to keep *all* the *mitzvos* in order that they should enter the Land, when they could not possibly keep *all* the *mitzvos* until *after* they had already conquered it?

In answer to this question, Rashi brings two solutions:

“The term ‘all the commandment(s)’ is to be taken literally,” i.e. notwithstanding the above problem, the verse could still be understood literally. Moshe was telling the people that they should safeguard

“all the commandments” that they were in a position to observe *at that time*, and this would guarantee them a successful conquest of the Land.

However, since this interpretation is clearly not ideal (as the verse seems to suggest that they should observe all the commandments literally), Rashi cited a second interpretation:

“If you have started a *mitzvah*, finish it, because only the one who completes it is credited with [the *mitzvah*].”

In other words, the Torah’s use of the somewhat unusual term here, **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה**, is suggestive of the *Midrashic* teaching that the one who completes a *mitzvah* is credited with having performed the whole *mitzvah* (for **כָּל הַמִּצְוָה** could be translated “the whole *mitzvah*”).

Thus, Moshe was telling the Jewish people that even though *mitzvos* had been performed over the last forty years, there was a special significance to the *mitzvos* that the Jewish people were performing at that precise point. For these last few deeds would complete the entire body of commandments which the Jewish people had been performing in the desert, and in the merit of this “completion,” they would “live, multiply, and come to possess the Land that God swore to your forefathers.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 94ff.)

The Last Word

The lesson that one who completes a *mitzvah* is credited with it (see *Rashi*), is particularly apt for our generation. For according to all the signs which were given by our Sages, we are presently in the last generation of exile, which will become the first generation of redemption. Thus, it is greatly encouraging to know that, despite the fact that the Torah study and observance of *mitzvos* in previous generations greatly surpassed that of our more humble efforts, nevertheless, *one who completes a mitzvah is credited with it*. Mashiach will come in the merit of *our mitzvos*, which are performed in the last moments of exile.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, pp. 104-5)

לא־יִדְעֶתָ וְלֹא יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֶךָ כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלְחָם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-יְהוָה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם: וְשִׁמְלַתְךָ לֹא בָלְתָה מֵעַלְיָךְ וְרִגְלֶךָ לֹא בָצָקָה זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה: ה וַיִּדְעַתָּ עַם-לְבַבְךָ כִּי פֶּאֶשֶׁר יִיָּסֵר אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנֵוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִיִּסְרֶךָ: ו וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ אֶת-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָיו וּלְיִרְאָה אֹתוֹ: ז כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֶךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וּתְהַלְמַת יַעֲרִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר: ח אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשֹׁעֵרָה וְגִפְפוֹן וּתְאֵנָה וְרַמְמוֹן אֶרֶץ-זֵית שָׁמֶן וּדְבָשׁ: ט אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְּמַסְכַּנֹּת תֹּאכְלֶנָּה לֶחֶם לֹא-תַחֲסֹר כָּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבִנֶיהָ בְּרוֹז וּמִהַרְרִיָּה תַחֲצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת: י וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ וּבִרְכַתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ: [שני] יא הַשְּׁמֵר לָךְ פֶּן-תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתַי וּמִשְׁפָּטַי וּחְקוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מַצְוֶה הַיּוֹם: יב פֶּן-תֹּאכַל וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ וּבַתִּים טַבִּים תִּבְנֶה וַיִּשְׁבַּת: יג וּבְקִרְךָ וַעֲאֲנֶךָ יִרְבִּין וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבֶּה-לָּךְ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ יִרְבֶּה: יד וְרָם לְבַבְךָ וְשִׁכַחְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמוֹצִיאֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: טו הַמּוֹלִיכְךָ בַמִּדְבָּר | הַגִּדְלֹה וְהַנּוֹרָא נְחָשׁ | שָׂרָף וְעִקְרָב וַעֲמָאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-מָיִם הַמוֹצִיא לָךְ מֵיָם מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ: טז הַמַּאֲכִלְךָ מִן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עֲנֶתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נִסְתָּךְ לְהִיטִיבְךָ

לא־יִדְעֶתָ וְלֹא יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֶךָ כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלְחָם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-יְהוָה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם: וְשִׁמְלַתְךָ לֹא בָלְתָה מֵעַלְיָךְ וְרִגְלֶךָ לֹא בָצָקָה זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה: ה וַיִּדְעַתָּ עַם-לְבַבְךָ כִּי פֶּאֶשֶׁר יִיָּסֵר אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנֵוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִיִּסְרֶךָ: ו וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ אֶת-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָיו וּלְיִרְאָה אֹתוֹ: ז כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֶךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וּתְהַלְמַת יַעֲרִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר: ח אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשֹׁעֵרָה וְגִפְפוֹן וּתְאֵנָה וְרַמְמוֹן אֶרֶץ-זֵית שָׁמֶן וּדְבָשׁ: ט אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְּמַסְכַּנֹּת תֹּאכְלֶנָּה לֶחֶם לֹא-תַחֲסֹר כָּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבִנֶיהָ בְּרוֹז וּמִהַרְרִיָּה תַחֲצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת: י וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ וּבִרְכַתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ: [שני] יא הַשְּׁמֵר לָךְ פֶּן-תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתַי וּמִשְׁפָּטַי וּחְקוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מַצְוֶה הַיּוֹם: יב פֶּן-תֹּאכַל וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ וּבַתִּים טַבִּים תִּבְנֶה וַיִּשְׁבַּת: יג וּבְקִרְךָ וַעֲאֲנֶךָ יִרְבִּין וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבֶּה-לָּךְ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ יִרְבֶּה: יד וְרָם לְבַבְךָ וְשִׁכַחְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמוֹצִיאֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: טו הַמּוֹלִיכְךָ בַמִּדְבָּר | הַגִּדְלֹה וְהַנּוֹרָא נְחָשׁ | שָׂרָף וְעִקְרָב וַעֲמָאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-מָיִם הַמוֹצִיא לָךְ מֵיָם מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ: טז הַמַּאֲכִלְךָ מִן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עֲנֶתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נִסְתָּךְ לְהִיטִיבְךָ

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“THAT GREAT AND AWESOME DESERT...” (v. 15)

Wandering through the desert before entering the Land of Israel—“that great and awesome desert, where there were snakes, serpents and scorpions, and thirst but no water”—is comparable to the current exile, which precedes the final redemption. This spiritual “desert” has the following properties:

“Great”—A person’s spiritual decline begins when he thinks that the “desert” is “great,” i.e. that the secular world around him is large and powerful.

“Awesome desert”—This leads him to think that the secular world is so overpowering that it leaves no room for Jewish values.

“Where there were snakes”—The hot venom of the snake represents heat and enthusiasm in worldly matters.

“Serpents”—This leads to a state where a person’s enthusiasm for Torah and mitzvos is totally “burned” away, alluded to by the Hebrew term for serpent (שָׂרָף) which literally means “burnt.”

“Scorpions”—The cold poison of the scorpion alludes to a subsequent state of total coldness and apathy in spiritual matters.

“And thirst but no water”—The person is ultimately so far removed that even when his soul thirsts for Judaism, he does not realize what he needs.

To eliminate all these symptoms, we need to address the initial cause: A Jew should be proud of the greatness of the Torah, and not the apparent “greatness” of his non-Jewish, secular surroundings.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 371ff.)

hungry. He fed you with manna, which you had never experienced, nor had your fathers experienced, to make you realize that man does not live by bread alone, but rather, that man lives from all the utterances of God's mouth. ⁴ For these (past) forty years, your clothing (was kept miraculously and) did not become worn (with age) upon you, (and you always had shoes, so) your feet did not become swollen.

⁵ You should know in your heart that just as a person reprimands his son, so too God, your God, will reprimand you. ⁶ You should keep the commandments of God your God, to go in His ways, and to fear Him. ⁷ For God your God is bringing you to a good land, a land with streams of water, of springs and underground water that flows into valleys and mountains, ⁸ a land of wheat, barley, vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of oil-(producing) olives and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without poverty (and) you will lack nothing in it, a land whose stones are (rich in) iron, and from whose mountains you will quarry copper.

- ¹⁰ You will eat and be satisfied. You must (then) bless God, your God, for the good land He has given you.

🌀 NOT TO TAKE THE CREDIT FOR PROSPERITY 🌀

8:11
SECOND
READING

Be careful not to forget God*, your God, failing to keep His commandments, rational commands and suprarational commands, which I am commanding you today. ¹² You might then eat and be satisfied, build good houses and live in them, ¹³ as your herds and your flocks will increase, your silver and gold accumulate, and everything that you have prospers. ¹⁴ As your heart becomes arrogant you (might) forget God, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, ¹⁵ Who led you through that great and awesome desert, where there were snakes, serpents and scorpions, and thirst but no water; Who brought you water out of solid rock; ¹⁶ Who fed you with manna in the desert, which your forefathers never experienced, in order to afflict you and test you—though it

—רש"י—

(ד) שמלתך לא בלתה. ענני כבוד היו שפים זככותם ומגבאים אותם כדרך כולכי ירח שרגליהם נפוחות: (ח) זית שמן. זיתים העושים שמן: זמן כלים מגבאים, ואף קטניהם כמו שהיו גדלים היה גדל לבושן

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

“HE FED YOU WITH MANNA” (v. 3)

The *manna* failed to provide satisfaction, and it actually left people hungry. *Chasidic* thought explains that this was because, being a food permeated with spirituality, *manna* gave people a taste of the infinite. When consuming a finite food, such as “bread from the earth,” a person will eventually become satisfied, since it is impossible to develop an infinite appetite for a limited taste. *Manna*, on the other hand, cultivated a person's inner appetite for spirituality which can never be satisfied.

Eating the *manna* was thus an appropriate preparation for entering the Land, where the Jewish people would be challenged by various constraints—be they the trials of poverty, or (more preferably) the trials of wealth. Because our physical desires limit us; our spiritual desires—like those developed by the *manna*—liberate us.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1098ff.)

“YOU WILL EAT AND... BLESS GOD” (v. 10)

Why was the text of *Grace After Meals*, which was composed by Moshe, incorporated into the text that we use today (see *Brachos* 48b), when Moshe was thanking God for *manna*—bread from heaven—whereas we thank God for “bread from the earth”?

In truth however, Moshe's words are applicable now as well, because it is not the physical efforts of working the land *alone* that causes the land to yield produce. Rather, man's efforts merely create a “vehicle” into which God places His blessings, and it is the Divine blessing which provides us with sustenance. Therefore, even the food which grows from the ground is in fact “food from heaven,” so it is indeed appropriate—even nowadays—to thank God for our nourishment with a text which was composed in praise of “bread from heaven.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 16, pp. 178-9)

* According to *Smag*, this is one of the 613 mitzvos. See *Hisvaduyos* 5747, vol. 4, p. 204, note 85.

לנפיוותך לאוסבא לך בסופך: י ותימר בלבך חילי ותקף ידי קנו לי ית נכסאי האליו: יא ותדבר ית יי אלהך ארי הוא יחב לך עצה למקני נכסין בדיל לקימא ית קומה די קנים לאבחתך פיומא קדיו: יג ויהי אם מנשאה תנשי ית בחלתא די אלהך ותהך בטר טעות עממיא ותפלחנן ותסגוד להון אסהדית בכון יומא דין ארי מיבד תיבדון: כ פעממיא די יי מוביד מקדמכון פן תיבדון חלף דלא קבלתון במימרא די אלהכון: כג שמע ישראל את עבר יומא דין ית יהונא למשל למירת עממין רבדין ותקפין מנד קרוין רבדין וכריבן עד צית שממיא: כד עם רב ותקפין בני גבריאי די את ידעת ואת שמעת מן יכול למימס קדם בני גבריאי: כה ותדע יומא דין ארי יי אלהך הוא געבר קדמך מימרה אשא אכלא הוא ישיענן והוא יתרכנן (יתברנן) קדמך ותתרכנן ותוכדנן בפריע כמא די מליל יי לך: ד לא תימר בלבך בדיתבר יי אלהך יתהון מקדמך למימר בזכותי אעלני יי למירת ית ארעא קדא ובחובי עממיא האליו יי מתרד להון מקדמך: ה לא בזכותך ובקשימות לבך את עלל למירת ית ארעהון ארי בחובי עממיא האליו יי אלהך מתרכהון מקדמך ובדיל לאקמא ית פתנמא די קנים יי לאבחתך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב: ו ותדע ארי לא בזכותך יי אלהך יחב לך ית ארעא טבתא קדא למירתה ארי עם קשי קדל את: ז הוי דכיר לא תנשי ית די ארעהתא קדם יי אלהך במדברא למן יומא די נפקתא מארעא דמצרים עד מיתכון עד אתרא קדיו מסרבין הויתון קדם יי: ח ובחרב ארעהתון קדם יי ונהו קנו מן קדם יי בכון לשיעאה יתכון: ט במסקי למורא למסב לוחי אבניא לוחי קומא די גור יי עמכון ויתבית בסורא ארבעין וממין וארבעין לילון לחמא לא אכלית ומיאי לא אשתית:

בְּאַחֲרֵיתֶךָ: י וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ כְּחִילִי וְעַצְמִי יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת־חֲחִילִי הַזֶּה: יא וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הִנְתָּן לְךָ כַח לַעֲשׂוֹת חֲחִיל לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה: פ יג וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַדְתָּם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לָהֶם הִעֲדַתִּי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אָבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן: כ כַּגֹּזִים אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה מֵאֲבִיד מִפְּנֵיכֶם בֶּן תֵּאבְדוּן עַקֵּב לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּן בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: פ ט « שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְּהָ עֵבֶר הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַיְיָרֵן לְבֹא לְרִשְׁתָּ גֹזִים גְּדֹלִים וְעַצְמִים מִמֶּךָ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצֻרַת בְּשָׂמַיִם: כ עַם־גְּדוֹל וְרַם בְּנֵי עֲנָקִים אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּהָ יָדַעְתָּ וְאֶתְּהָ שָׁמַעְתָּ מִי יִתְיַצֵּב לִפְנֵי בְנֵי עֲנָק: ג וַיִּדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא־הָעֵבֶר לִפְנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָכְלָה הוּא יִשְׁמִידֶם וְהוּא יִכְנִיעֶם לִפְנֵיךָ וְהוֹרֶשְׁתָּם וְהֵאבַדְתָּם מֵחַר כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לְךָ: ד [שלישין] ה אֶל־תֹּאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ בַּהֲדַף יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַתֶּם א מִלִּפְנֵיךָ לֵאמֹר בְּעַדְקַתִּי הִבִּיאֲנִי יְהוָה לְרִשְׁתָּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבְרִשְׁעַת הַגֹּזִים הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה מוֹרִישָׁם מִפְּנֵיךָ: ה לֹא בְּעַדְקַתְךָ וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַבְּךָ אֶתְּהָ בֹא לְרִשְׁתָּ אֶת־אַרְצָם כִּי בְרִשְׁעַת א הַגֹּזִים הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹרִישָׁם מִפְּנֵיךָ וּלְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב: ו וַיִּדַעְתָּ כִּי לֹא בְּעַדְקַתְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה הַזֹּאת לְרִשְׁתָּהּ כִּי עַם־קָשָׁה־עֲרָף אֶתְּהָ: ז זָכַר אֶל־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הִקְצַפְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יָצֵאתָ א מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד־בְּאֲכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה מִמְרִים הֵייתָם עִם־יְהוָה: ח וּבַחֲרָב הִקְצַפְתָּם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּתְאַנֶּף יְהוָה בְּכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם: ט בַּעֲלַתִּי הַחֲרָבָה לְקַחַת לֹוּחַת הָאֲבָנִים לֹוּחַת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם וַאֲשֵׁב בָּהָר אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבַּעִים לַיְלָה לָחֶם לֹא

כש"י

(6) גדולים ועצומים ממך. אתה עלוס, וחס עלומים ממך: (ד) אל תאמר בלבבך. זקטתי ורשעת כגוים גרמו: (ה) לא בצדקתך וגו' אתה בא לרשת וגו' כי ברשעת הגוים. כרי כי משמש כלשון אלה: (ט) ואשב בהר. אין ישיבה אלא לשון עכזב: (י) לחת. לחת כתיב, ששתיכס שוות:

was for your benefit in the end—¹⁷ and you will say in your heart, “My own ability and the strength of my own hand has accumulated this wealth for me!”¹⁸ Then you must remember God, your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, to this day.

¹⁹ What will happen is, if you forget God, your God and follow other gods, and worship them, and prostrate yourself before them, I testify to you today, that you will be destroyed again and again.

²⁰ You will be destroyed just like the nations that God (is now going to) destroy before you, since you did not listen to the calling of God, your God.

🌀 NOT TO BE SELF-RIGHTEOUS 🌀

9 **H**ear, O Israel! Today, you are about to cross the Jordan to come and take control of nations that are (even) greater and stronger than you, great cities fortified up to the skies,² a great and tall people, the children of giants, whom you know and (about whom) you have heard (it said), “Who can stand against the children of a giant?”³ You should know today, that God, your God Who is passing (into the Land) before you is a consuming fire. He will destroy them, and He will subjugate them before you. You will evict them and destroy them quickly, just as God said to you.

THIRD
READING

⁴ When God, your God, has driven them from before you, do not say in your heart, “God has brought me to possess this land because of my righteousness,” and God (also) drove them out from before you because of the wickedness of these nations.⁵ It is not because of your righteousness or the integrity of your heart that you are coming to possess their land, but rather, it is because of the wickedness of these nations (alone) that God, your God is driving them out from before you. (It is also) in order to keep the word which God swore to your fathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov.⁶ You must realize that God, your God, is not giving you this land as a possession because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

🌀 REMEMBERING THE GOLDEN CALF 🌀

9:7 **R**emember—do not forget—how you angered God, your God, in the desert. From the day that you went out of the land of Egypt, until you came to this place, you have been rebels against God.

⁸ At Choraiu, you angered God, and God was furious with you and wanted to destroy you:

⁹ When* I went up the mountain to receive the stone Tablets—the Tablets of the testimony which God made with you—I was delayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. I did not eat bread or

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🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“MY OWN ABILITY...HAS ACCUMULATED THIS WEALTH FOR ME!” (8:17)

Society teaches our children that: “My own ability and the strength of my own hand has accumulated this wealth for me!” A child is led to believe that, being a clever boy, he should use his brain to obtain whatever he desires. If he desires his friend’s sandwich, he will steal it. And, being clever, he is unafraid of the authorities, for he will devise a way of concealing his theft. No one can tell him what to do!

One effective way to correct the present situation is to institute a “moment of silence” in every public school, devoted to thinking about God, at the beginning of the school day, before studies begin. This will help a student to utilize his studies for worthy purposes, for justice and righteousness. He will then act both on his own behalf and for the public good, and he will come to understand that the public benefit outweighs his personal benefit.

(Based on *Sichas 12 Tamuz* 5744)

* Concerning the following see *Shemos* 31:18ff.

י ויהב יי לי נת תרין לוחי אבניא כתיבין
 באצבעא דני ועליהון ככל פתגמא די מליל
 יי עמכון בטורא מגו אשתא ביומא דקקלא:
 יא והנה מסוף ארבעין ימין וארבעין לילון
 יהב יי לי נת תרין לוחי אבניא לוחי קימא:
 יב ואמר יי לי קום הות בפריע מכא ארי
 חביל עמד די אפקתא ממצרים סמו בפריע
 מן ארשא די פקדתנן עבדו להון מתכא:
 יג ואמר יי לי למימר גלי קדמי נת עמא הדין
 והא עם קשי קדל הוא: יד אנה בעותך
 מקדמי ואשיצנן ואמחי נת שמחון מתחות
 שמיא ואעבד יתך לעם תקיף וסגי מנהון:
 טו ואתפניתי ונתתית מן טורא וטורא בער
 באשתא ותרין לוחי קימא על תרתיני ידי:
 טז וחזיתי והא חבתון קדם יי אלקכון
 עבדתון לבון עיגל מתכא סמיתון בפריע מן
 ארשא די פקיד יי יתכון: יז ואחדית בתרין
 לוחיא ורמיתנן מעל תרתיני ידי ותרבתנן
 לעיניכון: יח ואשתטחית קדם יי כקדמיתא
 ארבעין ימין וארבעין לילון לחמא לא
 אכלתי ומיא לא אשתיתי על כל הוביכון די
 חבתון למעבד דביש קדם יי לארגזא
 קדמוהי: יט ארי דחלית מקדם רגזא וחימתא
 די רגז יי עליכון לשיצאה יתכון וקביל יי

אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי: ויתן יהוה אלי את-שני לוחות
 האבנים כתבים באצבע אלהים ועליהם ככל-הדברים אשר
 דבר יהוה עמכם בהר מתוך האש ביום הקהל: יא ויהי מקץ
 ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה נתן יהוה אלי את-שני לוחות
 האבנים לחות הברית: יב ויאמר יהוה אלי קום רד מהר מזה
 כי שחת עמך אשר הוצאת ממצרים סרו מהר מן-הדרך
 אשר צויתם עשו להם מסכה: יג ויאמר יהוה אלי לאמר
 ראיתי את-העם הזה והנה עם-קשה-עָרַף הוא: יד הרף
 מפני ואשמידם ואמחה את-שָׁמֶם מתחת השמים ואעשה
 אותך לגוי-עצום ורב ממנו: טו ואפן ואירד מן-ההר וההר
 בער באש ושני לוחות הברית על שתי ידי: טז וארא והנה
 חטאתם ליהוה אלהיכם עשיתם לכם עגל מסכה סרתם
 מהר מן-הדרך אשר-צוה יהוה אתכם: יז ואתפש בשני
 הלוחות ואשלכם מעל שתי ידי ואשברם לעיניכם: יח ואתנפל
 לפני יהוה כראשנה ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה לחם לא
 אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי על כל-חטאתכם אשר חטאתם
 לעשות הרע בעיני יהוה להכעיסו: יט כי יגרתני מפני האף
 והחמה אשר קצף יהוה עליכם להשמיד אתכם וישמע יהוה

כ"ט

כלים זיוס הכפורים. זו זיוס נתרצה הקצ"ה לישראל בשמחה ואמר לו
 למשה סלחתי כדצרך, לכך הוקצע למחילה ולסליחה. ומנין שנתרצה צרלון
 שלם, שנאמר בצרעים של לוחות אחרונות, ואנכי עמדתי צהר כימים
 הראשונים³, מה הראשונים צרלון אף אחרונים צרלון, אמור מעתה אמלעיים

(יח) ואתנפל לפני ה' כראשונה ארבעים יום. שנאמר¹ ועתה אעלה אל
 ה' אולי אכפרה. צוחתה עלייך נתעכצתי ארבעים יום, נמלאו כלים בכ"ט
 צאצ, שהוא עלה בשמונה עשר בתמוז זו זיוס נתרצה הקדוש צרוך הוא
 לישראל ואמר לו למשה פסל לך שני לוחות², עשה עוד ארבעים יום, נמלאו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Moshe “take hold” of the Tablets if he was already holding them? (v. 17)

OHR HACHAYIM: Until Moshe saw that the Jewish people had sinned, the Tablets hovered in the air above his hands (“upon my two hands”—v. 15). When he witnessed their sin, the Tablets lost their holiness, and he had to take hold of them and support them.

MIDRASH: The Tablets were a total of six *tefachim* (handbreadths) long. Moshe was holding two *tefachim* and God was holding two *tefachim* at the other end, leaving two *tefachim* unsupported. Moshe strengthened his grip, grabbed the Tablets and broke them....

Thus God said to Moshe, “It was you who broke them” (*Tanchuma* 11).

● Why did Moshe break the Tablets? (v. 17)

MIDRASH: What can this be compared to? To a nobleman who wished to marry a woman through an agent. The agent went and found that the woman had been promiscuous with another man. What did the agent—who was totally innocent—do? He took the marriage document that was given to him by the nobleman, and tore it up. He said, “It is better that this woman be judged as a single woman and not as a married woman!” And this is precisely what Moshe did. When he saw what the Jewish people had done, he took the Tablets and broke them, [so he could argue] that if the Jewish people had seen the punishment for idol worship [written there], they would not have sinned (*Shemos Rabah* 43:1).

drink water.¹⁰ God gave me two stone Tablets, written with the finger of God. On them were all the words that God said to you on the mountain, from the fire, on the Day of Assembly.

¹¹ What happened was, at the end of the forty days and forty nights, when God gave me the two stone Tablets, the Tablets of the testimony,¹² God said to me, “Get moving, and go down quickly from here, for your people, whom you have brought out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have rapidly abandoned the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molten statue!”

¹³ God then spoke to me, saying, “I have observed this people and—look!—they are a stiff-necked people (who do not like being rebuked).¹⁴ Leave Me, and I will destroy them. I will obliterate their name from beneath the skies, and I will make you into a mightier and more numerous nation than them.”

¹⁵ I turned and came down from the mountain. The mountain was burning with fire and the two Tablets of the testimony were upon my two hands.¹⁶ Then I saw—look!—you had sinned against God, your God, you had made yourselves a molten calf. You had rapidly abandoned the way which God had commanded you.¹⁷ So, I took hold of the two Tablets, cast them out of my two hands, and shattered them before your eyes.

¹⁸ I prayed to God about all your sins that you had committed—doing evil in the eyes of God to anger Him—for forty days and forty nights (on the mountain), as before. I did not eat bread or drink water.

¹⁹ For I was frightened of the anger and fury with which God had shown His discontent with you, wanting to destroy you, but God listened to me also on that occasion.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔊 TO WHOM DID THE TABLETS BELONG? (v. 17)

In addition to the solutions of **Ohr haChayim** and the **Midrash**, the reason why Moshe needed to “take hold” of the Tablets can be understood by first addressing the following question:

Presumably, the Tablets were public property, since they were given to Moshe in order to be placed into the Ark (which belonged to the public), together with all the other parts of the Tabernacle (see *Rosh Hashanah* 7a; *Yoma* 35b). This begs the question: How could Moshe break the Tablets if they did not belong to him. Surely, Moshe was vandalizing public property!

DID THE TABLETS HAVE ANY VALUE?

At first glance, we might argue that the Tablets were in fact worthless, since in the desert, stone has no market value, as houses are not built there. Therefore, Moshe was not guilty of causing any damage, since the Tablets were of no real value.

However this solution is clearly unacceptable, because:

- a.) Even if they are not used for building, stones do have *some* value, e.g. they can be used as simple furniture (cf. *Shemos* 17:12).
- b.) According to our Sages, the first Tablets were made of sapphire, which is tremendously valuable (*Tanchuma*, *Ki Sisa* 26).
- c.) In any case, since the first Tablets were formed by God Himself, they obviously had immense value.

“DAMAGE” FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Another possible approach to explain why Moshe was not guilty of damaging public property would be to argue that breaking the Tablets was actually for the public benefit. For, as the **Midrash** explains, Moshe broke the Tablets so as to reduce the punishment for which the Jewish people would be liable, due to worshiping the calf. Thus, it is only logical that the public would wish its own property to be damaged, for the sake of a public benefit.

Alternatively, we might argue that the public did not enjoy normal rights of ownership over the Tablets, since no person was allowed to use them or benefit from them in any way. Thus, in breaking the Tablets Moshe was not denying the public any *privileges* of ownership.

However, both of the above arguments fail to take into account that the breaking of the Tablets ultimately appears to have been an act of *theft*. For even if we accept the argument that Moshe did not *damage* public property because he acted for the sake of the public good, or that he did not deny the public any privileges of ownership, we are nevertheless left with the problem that the unauthorized use (or abuse) of another’s property is theft. And, in the case of theft, the law is that one may *not* steal another person’s object, *even if it is for the owner’s benefit* (e.g. one intends to replace it with a superior item—See *Shulchan Aruch*, *Choshen Mishpat* 359:2); and likewise, one may not steal another’s property even if the owner does not enjoy any privileges of ownership (See *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim*, *Kuntres Acharon* 435:2).*

Furthermore, the argument that the Jewish people had no privileges of ownership of the Tablets is simply not true, since the Tablets were given “to instruct” the Jewish people (*Shemos* 24:12), and Divine instruction is surely a tremendous privilege indeed.

JOINT OWNERSHIP OF THE TABLETS?

Clearly, the Tablets were not public property, otherwise Moshe would have had no right to break them.

Perhaps then it could be argued that they were in fact *private* property in which each member of the Jewish people had their own share. This notion would appear to be supported by the teaching that when saying the Ten Commandments, God addressed the Jewish people in the singular, rather than the plural, since He was speaking to every single Jew directly and personally (*Pesikta deRab Kahana*, end of *Parsha bachodesh hashlishi*; *Tanchuma* (*Buber*) *Yisro* par. 17). Thus, the Tablets themselves, which contained the Ten Commandments, likewise belonged to each and every Jew individually.

* The distinction between *damage* and *theft* is that *damage* means reducing the value of another person’s property, whereas *theft* is unlawful possession or use. Thus, one could be exempt from charges of damage if he could argue that he acted in the owner’s best interests, whereas the mere use of another’s property represents a transgression in itself, regardless of whether the owner benefits or not.

צלותי אף בזמנא ההיא: כ ועל אהרן הוה רגז מן קדם יי לחרא לשציותה וצליתי אף על אהרן בעדנא ההיא: כא וית חובתכון די עבדתון ית עגלא נסיבית ואוקידית יתה בנורא ושאית יתה בשופינא יאות עד די הוה דקיק לעפרא ורמית ית עפרה לנחלא דנחית מן טורא: כב ובדלקתא ובנסיאתא ובקברי דמשאלי מרגזון הויתון קדם יי: כג וכד שלח יי יתכון מרקם גיאה למימר סקו ואחסינו ית ארעא די יהבית לכון וסרביתון על גזרת מימרא די אלחכון ולא הימנתון לה ולא קבלתון למימרה: כד מסרבין הויתון קדם יי מיומא דידעית יתכון: כה ואשתתפחית קדם יי ית ארבעין יממין וית ארבעין לילון די אשתתפחית ארי אמר יי לשיצאה יתכון: כו וצליתי קדם יי ואמרית יי אלהים לא תחבל עמך ואחסנתך די פרקתא בתקפך די אפקתא ממצרים בידי תקיפא: כז אדכר לעבדיך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב לא תתפני לקשיות עמא דרין ולהוביהון ולהטאייהון: כח דלמא ימרון דיירי ארעא די אפקתנא מתפן מדלית יוכלא די לאעלותהון לארעא די מליל להון ומדסני יתהון אפקגון לקטלותהון במדברא: כט ואנון עמך ואחסנתך די אפקתא בחילך רבא ובדרעך מרממא: א בעדנא ההיא אמר יי לי פסל לך תרין לוחי אבניא כקדמאי וסק לקדמי לטורא ותעבד לך ארונא דאעא: ב ואכתוב על לוחיא ית פתנמאי די הוון על לוחיא קדמאי די תברתא ותשונון בארונא: ג ועבדית ארונא דאעני שטין ופסלית תרין לוחי אבניא

אלי גם בפעם ההוא: כ ובאהרן התאנף יהוה מאד להשמידו ואתפלל גם בעד אהרן בעת ההוא: כא ואתחטאתכם אשר עשיתם את העגל לקחתי ואשרף אתו | באש ואכת אתו טחון היטב עד אשר נק לעפר ואשליך את עפרו אל הנחל הירד מן ההר: כב ובתבערה ובמסה ובקברת התאוה מקצפים הייתם את יהוה: כג ובשלח יהוה אתכם מקדש ברנע לאמר עלו ורשו את הארץ אשר נתתי לכם ותמרו את פי יהוה אלהיכם ולא האמנתם לו ולא שמעתם בקלי: כד ממרים הייתם עם יהוה מיום דעתי אתכם: כה ואתנפל לפני יהוה את ארבעים היום ואת ארבעים הלילה אשר התנפלתי כי אמר יהוה להשמיד אתכם: כו ואתפלל אל יהוה ואמר אדני יהוה אל תשחת עמך ונחלתך אשר פדית בגדלך אשר הוצאת ממצרים ביד חזקה: כז זכר לעבדיך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב אל תפן אל קשי העם הזה ואל רשעו ואל חטאתו: כח פן יאמרו הארץ אשר הוצאתנו משם מבלי יכלת יהוה להביאם אל הארץ אשר דבר להם ומשנאתו אותם הוציאם להמתם במדבר: כט והם עמד ונחלתך אשר הוצאת בכחך הגדל ובזרעך הנטויה: פ ורביעין י « בעת ההוא אמר יהוה אלי פסל לך שני לוחות אבנים כראשנים ועלה אלי ההרה ועשית לך ארון עץ: ג ואכתוב על הלוחות את הדברים אשר היו על הלוחות הראשנים אשר שברת ושמיתם בארון: ג ואעש ארון עצי שטים ואפסל

*הקריאה אלהים

כש"י

האמורים למעלה, וכפלן כאן, לפי שכתוב כאן סדר תפלתו, שנאמר ה' אלהים אל תשחת עמך וגו': (ה) בעת ההוא. לסוף ארבעים יום נטרסה לי ואמר לי פסל לך, ואחר כך ועשית ארון, ואני עשיתי ארון תחלה⁵, שכשאזא וכלוחות צידי כיכן אתנס. ולא זה הוא הארון שעשה בצלאל, שכרי משכן לא

היו כזכעס¹: (כ) ובאהרן התאנף ה'. לפי שמעט לכס: להשמידו. זה כלוי כזיס. וכן הוא אומר² ואשמיד פרוי ממעל³: ואתפלל גם בעד אהרן. וכועילכ תפלתו לכפר מחלה, ומתו שנים וששחרו כשניס: (כא) טחון. לשון כוזה, כמו הלוך⁴ וכלות מולאניט צלע"י: (כה) ואתנפל וגו'. אלו הן עמס

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This opens a new argument in defense of Moshe's breaking of the Tablets. For, according to Torah law, the prohibition of theft only applies where the item stolen is worth more than a *prutah* (small coin). In our case, however, each person's individual share in the Tablets would surely have been negligible, so it could not be said that Moshe was guilty of theft, since in breaking the Tablets he did not misappropriate a *prutah* from any single person.

However, in the final analysis, this argument is untenable, because:

a.) According to the view (cited above) that the Tablets were made of sapphire, it is likely that there was at least a *prutah* of value for every Jewish person.

b.) In any case, the Torah forbids a person to steal even less than a *prutah*. It is only that the laws of *restitution* apply only if a *prutah* or more was stolen (*Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch*, beginning of *Laus of Robbery and Theft*).

²⁰ God was very angry with Aharon (whom you misled) and wanted to destroy his (children). So I prayed for Aharon too on that occasion (but only two of his children were saved).

²¹ I took your sinful object which you had made—the calf—and I burned it in fire. I crushed it, grinding it well, until it was fine dust, and I cast its dust into the brook that descends from the mountain.

— ²² (Since then) you (also) provoked God’s anger at Tavairah*, at Massah**, and at Kivros-Hata’avah***. ²³ (Furthermore), when God sent you from Kadesh Barne’a, saying, “Go up and possess the Land I have given you,” you defied the word of God, your God, and you did not believe Him, nor did you obey Him****. ²⁴ You have been rebels against God since the day I became acquainted with you! —

²⁵ So I prayed before God. I prayed for forty days and forty nights, because God said He would destroy you. ²⁶ In my prayers to God I said, “God Almighty! Do not destroy Your people, Your inheritance which in Your greatness You have redeemed and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand! ²⁷ Remember Your servants, Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov! Do not react to this people’s stubbornness, to their wickedness or to their sin, ²⁸ so that the nation from which you brought us out won’t say, ‘Because of God’s inability to bring them to the Land which He told them about, and because of His hatred toward them, He took them out to slaughter them in the desert.’ ²⁹ They are Your people and Your inheritance, which You brought out with Your great strength and with Your outstretched arm!”

🌀 THE SECOND TABLETS 🌀

IO
FOURTH
READING

At that time***** (after forty days), God (forgave the Jewish people, and) said to me, “Carve for yourself two stone Tablets like the first ones, and come up to Me onto the mountain. And make for yourself a wooden ark. ² On the Tablets I will write the words that were on the first Tablets, which you broke, and you should place them into the ark.”

³ I made an ark of acacia wood. I carved two stone Tablets, like the first ones, and I went up the

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THE EXPLANATION

It would seem therefore that the first Tablets must have been Moshe’s private property, otherwise he would have had no right to break them. In fact, this appears to be stated explicitly in scripture: “When He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moshe the two Tablets of the testimony” (*Shemos* 31:18), on which the *Talmud* comments (*Nedarim* 38a) that God gave them to Moshe “as a gift.”¹

Thus these Tablets must have been an exception to the general principle that all parts of the Tabernacle had to be public property,² a point stressed by the fact that the Tablets were given several months before the construction of the Tabernacle, indicating their existence as an independent entity.

Nevertheless, when Moshe received the Tablets from God as a personal gift to him, he intended to give them to the Jewish people, as an act of generosity (see *Nedarim* *ibid.*). But when Moshe saw the Jewish people worshipping the calf, he changed his mind and decided to break them instead. However, since Moshe had intended to give the Tablets to the

Jewish people, he feared that his *outright* ownership of the Tablets (and the accompanying right to break them) had become somewhat confused. So, before breaking the Tablets, Moshe “took hold” of them once again, in order to establish his ownership of them unequivocally.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 51ff.)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

Moshe “took hold of the two Tablets” (v. 17), acquiring them as his personal property, before he cast them out of his hands and broke them. For, being a true leader and lover of Israel, Moshe wanted to take sole responsibility for the breaking of the Tablets, without incriminating the Jewish people at all.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 56)

Bamidbar* 11:1-3. *Shemos* 17:1-7. ****Bamidbar* 11:4-34. ****See above 1:19ff. *****Concerning the following see *Shemos* 34:1-4.

1. The *Talmud* actually stresses that God gave Moshe the “words of Torah” as a gift. However, this included the Tablets themselves, on which the words of Torah were written, as the verse itself stresses, “He gave Moshe the two Tablets of testimony.” This point is further stressed in a number of places in scripture. See *Shemos*. 24:12, *Devarim* 5:19, *ibid.* 9:9-11. 2. In the case of the second Tablets we indeed find a view that they belonged to Moshe in their entirety (*Tanchuma*, *Eikev* 9), though there are dissenting opinions that only the waste chippings belonged to Moshe (*Nedarim* 38a, *Tanchuma* *ibid.*; Jerusalem *Talmud*, *Shekalim* 5:2; *Shemos Rabah* 46:2). The innovation here is that according to all opinions the first Tablets belonged to Moshe, in their entirety.

בְּקִדְמָאֵי וּסְלִיקִית לְטוֹרָא וּתְרִין לוּחֵיֵי בִידֵי:
 וּבְכַתֵּב עַל לוּחֵיֵי בְּכַתְּבָא קְדָמָאָה יַת
 עֲשָׂרָא פְתֻזְמֵיֵי דֵי מְלִיל יֵי עֲמֻכּוֹן בְּטוֹרָא מְגוֹ
 אֲשֶׁתָּא בְיוֹמָא דְקִהְלָא וַיְהִיבְנוּ יֵי לֵי:
 ה וְאַתְּפִנִיתִי וּנְחִיתִי מִן טוֹרָא וּשְׁוִיתִי
 יַת לוּחֵיֵי בְּאַרְוֵיֵי דֵי עֲבָדִית וְהוּוּ תִמְן
 כְּמָא דֵי פְקֻדְנֵי יֵי: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נָטְלוּ
 מִבְּאֵרֹת בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹן לְמוֹסְרָה תִמְן מִיַּת אֶהְרֹן
 וְאַתְקַבֵּר תִמְן וְשִׁמְשׁ אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַח תְּחוּתֵיהּ:
 וּמִתְמֵן נָטְלוּ לְגִדְגֹד וּמִן גִּדְגֹד לְיִטְבַּת אֶרְעָא
 נְגִדָא נְחִלִין דְּמִיִּין: ה בְּעֵת דְּהוּוּ אֶתְּ-שִׁבֵט

שְׁנֵי-לֶחֶת אֲבָנִים פְּרָאשְׁנִים וְאַעַל הָהָרָה וּשְׁנֵי הַלְּחֹת בְּיָדֵי:
 וּבְכַתֵּב עַל-הַלְּחֹת בְּכַתְּבָא הָרָאשׁוֹן אֶת עֲשָׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים
 אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקֹּהֵל וַיִּתְּנֶם
 יְהוָה אֵלֵי: ה וְאַפֵּן וְאַרְדּ מִן-הָהָר וְאַשֵׁם אֶת-הַלְּחֹת בְּאַרְוֹן
 אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי שֵׁם בְּאֲשֶׁר עָנְנִי יְהוָה: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נָסְעוּ
 מִבְּאֵרֹת בְּנֵי-יַעֲקֹן מוֹסְרָה שָׁם מִיַּת אֶהְרֹן וַיִּקְבֹּר שָׁם וַיִּכְתֹּן
 אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-יַעֲקֹן תְּחֻתָּיו: ז מִשָּׁם נָסְעוּ הַגִּדְגָּדָה וּמִן-הַגִּדְגָּדָה
 יִטְבַּתָּה אֶרֶץ נְחִלֵי-מַיִם: ה בְּעֵת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת-שִׁבֵט

רש"י

מלך ערד ונתתם ראש לחזור למצרים, וחזרתם לאחורכם שמונה מסעות עד
 בני יעקן ומשם למוסרה, שם נלחמו צבס בני לוי והרגו מכם ואתם מהם,
 עד שהחזירו אתכם צדך חזרתכם³, ומשם חזרתם הגדגדה הוא חור הגדגד:
 (ז) ומן הגדגדה וגו'⁴. ומוסרה עשיתם אבל כמד על מיתתו של אהרן
 שגרמה לכם זאת, וגדמה לכם כאלו מת שם. וסמך משה תוכחה זו לשבירת
 הלוחות, לומר שקשה מיתתן של לדיקים לפני הקב"ה, כיוס שנשתצרו צו
 הלוחות⁵. ולכודיעך שהקשה לו מה שאמרו נתנה ראש לפרוש ממנו, כיוס
 שעשו צו את העגל: (ח) בעת ההוא הבדיל ה' וגו'. מוסס לענין הראשון:
 בעת ההוא. צננה הראשונה ללאתכם ממצרים וטעיתם צעגל ובני לוי לא

נתעסקו צו עד לאחר יוס הכפורים, כי צדדתו מן ההר צוה להם על מלאת
 המשכן, ובצלל עשה משכן תחלה ואחר כך ארון וכלים, נמלל זה ארון אחר
 היה. וזהו שהיה יולל עמהם ללחמה, ואתו עשה צללל לא ילל ללחמה
 אלא צימי עלי, ונעשו עלי ונשצב¹: (ו) ובני ישראל נסעו מבארות בני
 יעקן מוסרה. מה ענין זה לכאן. ועוד, וכי מבארות בני יעקן נסעו
 למוסרה, והלא ממוסרות צלו לבני יעקן, שנאמר ויסעו ממוסרות וגו'².
 ועוד, שם מת אהרן, והלא צבר ההר מת, לא וחשוב ותמלל שמונה מסעות
 ממוסרה להר ההר, אלא אף זו מן התוכחה, ועוד עשיתם זאת כשמת אהרן
 צבר ההר לסוף ארצעים שנה ונסתלקו עניי צבוד, ויראתם לכם ממלחמת

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why is Aharon's passing—which occurred forty years after the breaking of the Tablets—mentioned here? (v. 6)

RASHI: Moshe juxtaposed this rebuke [about Aharon's passing] with the breaking of the Tablets to indicate that the death of the righteous is as difficult for God as the day the Tablets were broken.

DIVREI DAVID: The Talmud states, "No righteous man departs from this world before another like him is created, as the verse states, 'The sun goes up and then the sun goes down'" (Ecclesiastes 1:5; Yoma 38a). This is stressed by the Torah here, that after "Aharon died,"

immediately, "Elazar his son was appointed as priest in his place." Since Aharon was replaced by another righteous person, one would think that this minimizes the tragedy of his passing for the Jewish people.

Therefore, Rashi stresses that this does not soften the blow and "the death of the righteous is as difficult for God, as the day the Tablets were broken." For just as the breaking of the first Tablets remained a tragedy even after they were replaced by the second Tablets, so too, the passing of a righteous person is particularly tragic, even though God replaces him with another righteous person.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 AHARON'S PASSING (v. 6)

In his comment to verse 6, Rashi explains the reason why "Moshe juxtaposed this rebuke [about Aharon's passing] with the breaking of the Tablets."

But why, then, is the mention of Aharon's passing recorded here, amid the description of how the second Tablets were given, and not immediately after the breaking of the first Tablets?

THE EXPLANATION

The Torah records the passing of Aharon here, within the discussion of the second Tablets, because it only became clear that the breaking of the first Tablets was a genuine tragedy when the second Tablets were given. Until that point, there was a hope that the second Tablets would have been

a perfect replacement for the first Tablets, which would have minimized the earlier tragedy. The second Tablets, however, proved to be inferior to the first Tablets, since the first Tablets were made entirely by God, whereas the second Tablets were made by Moshe, and only written by God. Thus, only when the second Tablets were given did it become evident that the loss incurred through the breaking of the first Tablets was irreparable.

Consequently, the Torah chose to teach, "the death of the righteous is as difficult for God, as the day the Tablets were broken," here within the account of the second Tablets, for likewise, the genuine tragedy of Aharon's passing only became apparent when "Elazar his son was appointed as priest in his place," since Elazar could not fully replace his father, who was a much greater person than himself [cf. *Divrei David*].

1 ירושלמי שקלים פ"א ה"ה 2 במדבר לג, לא 3 ירושלמי סוטה פ"א ה"י 4 לכאורה יש טעות של ה"בחור-הועצער" כאן, ואין זה ד"ה חדש אלא המשך מדיה הקודם (ובני נסעו), וכ"ה בדפוס שני וברש"י כתי"ב ובלשון רש"י ברמב"ן כאן. ובפשוט צ"ל כן, שהרי א"ל שרש"י יתרוץ ("ונדמה לכם כאלו מת שם") בד"ה השני, שאלתו (שם מת אהרן וכי"י) בד"ה הקודם?! (ענין לקויש ח"ד, ע' 30) 5 ויק"ר כ, יב 6 במדבר יד, ד

mountain with the two Tablets in my hand. ⁴ He wrote on the Tablets the same thing that was written on the first ones: the Ten Commandments, which God said to you on the mountain, from the fire, on the Day of Assembly. God then gave them to me.

⁵ I turned around and came down from the mountain. I placed the Tablets in the ark which I had made, and they remained there, as God had commanded me.

REBELLION IN THE DESERT

— ⁶ (Later on you did another sin which, in my eyes, was as bad as the Golden Calf. It was when forty years later) Aharon died (in Hor Hahar) and he was buried there, and Elazar his son was appointed as priest in his place. (A rebellious group from) the children of Israel (arose, planning to lead the Jewish people back to Egypt). They journeyed (backwards from Hor Hahar, where Aharon died,) through the wells of Benay Ya'akan to Mosairah (at which point a group of Levites, who were chasing them, caught up with them and defeated them. After mourning Aharon's death while they were still) there (in Mosairah), ⁷ they journeyed from there (and returned to the camp at Hor Hahar, first passing) Gudgod, and from Gudgod to Yatvasah, an area with flowing brooks. —

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THE UNIQUENESS OF AHARON'S PASSING

One further problem with *Rashi's* comment is why the Torah chose to teach us that “the death of the righteous is as difficult for God *etc.*,” for the first time *here*, in connection with the passing of Aharon? The student of scripture has already learned about the passing of a number of righteous individuals (the Patriarchs, the fathers of the tribes, *etc.*), and yet it is only with Aharon's passing, forty years after the Exodus, that we are taught for the first time why the passing of a righteous man is so tragic!

THE EXPLANATION

In *Parshas Bereishis*, the Torah informs us that the ten generations between Adam and Noach lived extraordinarily long lives, but God then became angry with man and decreed that a normal lifespan would be 120 years (*Bereishis* 6:3).

The fact that we find the subsequent generations between Noach and Avraham also enjoyed lengthy lifespans, is due to the continued, but diminishing impact of the earlier generations. Thus, in the days of Avraham, the average lifespan decreased to around 120 years (see *Rashi, Bereishis* 17:17).

Still, we find that all of the Patriarchs lived much longer than 120 years*, but this is hardly inconsistent with the rest of their lives which were filled with numerous miraculous occurrences, (and even Yishma'el lived a long life of 137 years (*Bereishis* 25:17), in the merit of Avraham and Yitzchak, and through their blessings). Similarly we find that Levi, Kehos and Amram lived well in excess of 120 years (see *Shemos* 6:16, 18, 20), but again, this is not surprising when we consider their exceptional merits.

The *first*** righteous person to be recorded in the Torah as having passed away at the “normal” age of around 120 years is Aharon***. Therefore the Torah hints *here* that, “the death of the righteous is as difficult for God as the day the Tablets were broken.” For in the case of those righteous individuals who lived more than a normal lifespan, it is *obvious* that their passing is particularly tragic, since having broken free from God's decree of a 120-year lifespan, we would have expected them to live on indefinitely.**** In normal cases, however, we might think that

passing away at around 120 years is not especially tragic, as this is the age at which God had decreed man was to pass away. Thus, since Aharon was the first such “normal” case, it would appear at first glance that the tragedy was not as great as in the case of the Patriarchs, *etc.* Therefore, the Torah teaches us *here* that “the death of the righteous—at whatever age—is as difficult for God, as the day the Tablets were broken.”

However, this begs the question: If God Himself decreed that a person should pass away at 120 years, then why is it that the death of the righteous is as *difficult for God* as the breaking of the Tablets? Surely God should not be pained by something which He Himself orchestrates?

To answer this question, *Rashi* stresses, “The death of the righteous is as difficult for God, as *the day* the Tablets were broken.” In other words, while the *passing* of the righteous person was indeed decreed by God, the fact that it occurred on *this* particular day indicates that it is a “difficult” day for God.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev* 5730 & 5745)

Sparks of Chasidus

Why is a *tzadik* (righteous person) compared to the Tablets
(see *Rashi*)?

The writing on the Tablets represented the “soul” of the Tablets, and the Tablets themselves, their “body.” The fact that the Ten Commandments were *engraved* into the Tablets, and not merely written onto them, means that the words and the Tablets (“soul” and “body”) became one single, indivisible entity.

Likewise in the case of a *tzadik*, it is not merely that his soul interacts with his body, but that the *tzadik's* physical life is totally at peace with his soul such that “*the life of the tzadik is not a physical life, but a spiritual life*” (*Igeres Hakodesh* 27).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, pp. 32-34)

* Avraham lived 175 years (*Bereishis* 25:7), Yitzchak 180 years (*ibid.* 35:28), and Ya'akov 147 years (*ibid.* 47:28). **Miriam's death is recorded before Aharon's, but the Torah does not mention her age explicitly. ***Of course, it is not a question why Aharon and Moshe *did* pass away at the age of (or around) 120 years, since this was God's decree upon all mankind. The question is only regarding those individuals who lived to well over 120 years after the decree had been passed, as explained above. ****cf. *Toras Menachem* to 32:48, below.

את שבטא דלוי למטל את ארון קנמא די
 למקם קדם יי לשמשותה ולברכא בשמה עד
 יומא הדין: ט על בן לא הנה ללוי חלק
 ואחסנא עם אחוהי מתנן דיהב לה יי אנו
 אחסנתה כמא די מליל יי אלקה לה: י ואנא
 הויתי קאם בטורא כיומין קרמאין ארבעין
 יממין וארבעין לילון וקביל יי צלותי אף

הלוי לשאת את־ארון ברית־יהוה לעמוד לפני יהוה לשרתו
 ולברך בשמו עד היום הזה: ט על־בן לא־היה ללוי חלק
 ונחלה עם־אחיו יהוה הוא נחלתו כאשר דבר יהוה אלהיך
 לו: י ואנכי עמדתי בהר פימים הראשנים ארבעים יום
 וארבעים לילה וישמע יהוה אלי גם בפעם ההוא לא־אבה

רש"י

לחרוש ולזרוע: ה' הוא נחלתו. נוטל פרס מזומן מצית המלך: (י) ואנכי
 עמדתי בהר. לקבל הלוחות האחרונות. ולפי שלא פירש למעלה כמה עמד
 צהר בעליה אחרונה זו, חזר וכתחיל צה: כימים הראשונים. של לוחות
 הראשונות, מה הם צרלון אף אלו צרלון. אצל האמנטיים שעמדתי שם

טעו, הבדילם המקום מכס. וסמך מקרא זה לחזרת בני יעקן, לומר שאף צו
 לא טעו צה בני לוי, אלא עמדו בצאמנות: לשאת את ארון. הלויס:
 לעמוד לפני ה' לשרתו ולברך בשמו. הכהנים, והוא נשיאת כפיס:
 (ט) על בן לא היה ללוי חלק. לפי שהוצדלו לעבודת מזבח ואינן פנוין

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did the tribe of Levi not receive a portion of the Land? (v. 8-9)

RASHI: Because they were singled out for the service of the altar, and therefore were not free to plow and sow.

RAMBAM: Why did the tribe of Levi not merit part of the Land of Israel or its plunder?

Because they were singled out to work for God and serve as His ministers, and to teach the public about His morally upright ways and fair laws—as the verse states, “*They will teach your laws to Ya’akov and your Torah to Israel*” (*Devarim* 33:10). Therefore, they were separated from worldly matters: They do not join the army as the rest of the Jewish people, they do not inherit, and they cannot acquire things for themselves by a physical act. They are the army of God....

But this is not exclusive to the tribe of Levi. Rather, any type of person from among all the inhabitants of the world, whose spirit inspires him, and he resolves in his mind to set himself apart [from worldly pursuits], to stand before God and serve as His minister, to work for Him, and to know God; who [then acts upon his resolution and he] goes in a morally upright manner—following his inherent, God-given disposition, and he discards* all the numerous concerns that people are normally preoccupied with—then he will attain the holiness of the Holy of Holies, and God will be his portion and his inheritance for all eternity. Even in this world, he will merit to receive his material needs, in a similar manner to the priests and Levites, as we see that David [who was not from the tribe of Levi] said (*Psalms* 16:5), “*God is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup. You support my lot!*” (*Rambam*, end of *Laws of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 The Last Word 🕒

“GOD SEPARATED THE TRIBE OF LEVI” (v. 8)

Rambam appears to contradict himself (See *Classic Questions*). First he writes that the tribe of Levi was “*singled out to work for God and serve as His ministers,*” suggesting that this role is exclusive to the tribe of Levi. But then he continues, “*This is not exclusive to the tribe of Levi,*” and it is achievable by “*any type of person, from among all the inhabitants of the world?*”

Rambam’s point, however, is that the tribe of Levi was appointed *from above* by God to be His ministers, and was blessed with the *natural* ability to do so. The Torah, however, grants the power to any individual person who wishes to avail himself or herself of the challenge, to become a true servant and minister of God, by making the effort (*from below*) to be “*morally upright,*” despite social pressures in the opposite direction.

Rambam also stresses:

- This is achievable by “*any type of person from among all the inhabitants of the world,*” which clearly includes non-Jews.
- That any person who dedicates himself or herself properly to God “*will attain the holiness of the Holy of Holies,*” i.e. the exalted spiritual greatness of the High Priest (for only the High Priest is permitted to enter the Holy of Holies).
- Clearly, however, *Rambam’s* assertion is that such a person achieves an equivalent *spiritual* greatness, but that he or she would not have the actual legal status of a Levite or priest.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor* 5749 & *Korach* 5750, and *Sichas Acharon Shel Pesach* 5750; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 8, p. 325**)

* Literally “he casts the yoke off his neck.” See *Sichas* 12 *Tamuz* 5724, section 9.

** See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech* 5744, *Eikev* & *Ki Seitzei* 5751.

🕍 APPOINTMENT OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI* 🕍

10:8 **A**t that time (after the sin of the Golden Calf), God separated the tribe of Levi (who did not participate in the sin), to carry the Ark of the testimony of God. (He separated the priests) to stand before God and serve Him, and to (make the priestly) blessing in His Name, which continues to this day. ⁹ (Since they were set aside for holy service, and would not have time for agriculture) therefore, a (priest, who is from the tribe of) Levi, has no portion or inheritance (in the Land) with his brothers. His inheritance (comes directly from) God(’s house), as God, your God told him.

🕍 MOSHE’S THIRD PERIOD ON THE MOUNTAIN 🕍

10:10 **I** remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights (when I went to receive the second Tablets, and God was appeased) like the first (period of forty) days (when I was on the mountain), for God listened to me also at that time and God did not wish to destroy you.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **Why did Moshe remain on the mountain for forty days and forty nights? (v. 10)**

RASHI: To receive the second Tablets.

TARGUM YONASON: Moshe prayed for forty days and nights. God accepted his prayers that the Jewish people should not be destroyed.

● **How was the third forty-day period “like the first (period of forty) days”?** (v. 10)

RASHI: Just as those days were with [God’s] goodwill, so were these with [God’s] goodwill. But the middle [forty-day period], when I stood there to pray for you, was amid [God’s] anger.

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🕍 WHAT DID MOSHE DO FOR FORTY DAYS? (v. 10)

Moshe ascended Mount Sinai a total of three times. Initially, he went up for forty days and nights to receive the first Tablets (above 9:9-11), and then, after breaking the Tablets, Moshe ascended the mountain for a second time, when he prayed for the Jewish people to be forgiven (ibid. v. 18-19, 25-29).

Forty days later, God informed Moshe that the Jewish people were forgiven (10:1 and *Rashi* ibid.). He then instructed Moshe to carve out two replacement Tablets, and bring them back up the mountain (Moshe’s third ascent), following which God inscribed the Ten Commandments onto them (ibid. v. 2-4). Finally, we read that Moshe came down from the mountain with the two Tablets (v. 5).

One detail omitted from this account is how long Moshe’s third stay on the mountain lasted. Therefore, after digressing to discuss various other matters (in verses 6-9), the Torah returns here in verse 10 to inform us that Moshe’s third stay on the mountain also lasted forty days and nights.

However, this begs the question: Why was Moshe required to stay forty days and nights on the third occasion? The first occasion clearly required a lengthy stay, since Moshe was taught the entire Torah; and the second occasion required forty days and nights of intense prayer to secure God’s forgiveness for the Jewish people. But why were forty days and nights required merely for God to inscribe the Ten Commandments on the two Tablets? After all, even a human being would not need to take so long to engrave 620 letters onto two stones!

Targum Yonason explains that during Moshe’s third stay he prayed for the Jewish people not to be destroyed, which would also explain

why a long stay was required. However, *Rashi* clearly rejected this interpretation, since:

a.) He mentions only that Moshe’s third trip was “to receive the second Tablets,” and not to seek forgiveness.

b.) *Rashi* writes, “Just as those days were with [God’s] goodwill, so were these with [God’s] goodwill,” indicating that no appeasement was required during Moshe’s third stay.

So what is the reason, according to *Rashi*, that forty days and nights were required?***

THE EXPLANATION

Verse 10 stresses, “I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights *like the first (period of forty) days* (when I was on the mountain),” i.e. that Moshe’s first and third periods on the mountain *were the same in*

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

When the first Tablets were given, the Jewish people were on the level of *tzadikim* (righteous), whereas when the second Tablets were given, they were on the even higher level of *ba’alei teshuvah* (penitents). Thus, it follows that God’s “goodwill” (see *Rashi*) when Moshe received the second Tablets, was even greater than His goodwill at the time the first Tablets were given.

(Based on *Sichas Rosh Chodesh Elul* 5742)

* See below 18:1-6. ** One cannot argue that the forty days and nights were required to give Moshe the Torah “as a gift” for a second time, since God’s initial “gift” (see *Rashi* to *Shemos* 31:18) was presumably taken away when Moshe was “brought down from his exalted position” after the sin of the Golden Calf (see *Rashi* ibid. 32:7)—for why would forty days be required to give a gift? In fact, it could be argued that it is due to this problem that *Rashi* found it necessary to bring a second interpretation in his commentary to *Shemos* 31:18.

בזמנא ההוא לא אבי יי לחבלותה: יא ואמר יי לי קום אזיל למטול קדם עמא ויעלו ויירתון ית ארעא די קמיית לאבְהתהון למתן להון: יב וכען ישראל מא יי אלקה תבע מנד אלתו למדחל קדם יי אלקה למסה בכל ארחו דתקנו קדמוהי ולמרחם יתה ולמפלח קדם יי אלקה בכל לבך ובכל נפשך: יג למטר ית פקודיא דיין ונת קדמוהי דאנא מפקדך יומא דיין (לדייטב לך: יד הא דיין אלקה שמאי ושמי שמאי ארעא וכל די בה: טו לחוד באבְהתך צבי יי למרחם ותהון ואתרעי בבניהון בתריהון בכון מפל עממאי פיומא הדין: טז ותעדון ית טפשות לבכון וקדלכון לא תקשון עוד: יז ארי יי אלקה הוא אלקה דינין ומרי מלכין אלקה רבא גברא ודחילא די לית קדמוהי מסב אפינ ואף לא לקבלא שוחדא: יח עבד דיין יתם וארמלא ורחם גיורא למתן לה מזונא וכסו: יט ותרחמון ית גיורא ארי הדין היתון בארעא דמצרים: כ ית יי אלקה תדחל וקדמוהי תפלח

יהוה השחיתך: יא ויאמר יהוה אלי קום לך למסע לפני העם ויבאו ויירשו את הארץ אשר נשבעתי לאבתם לתת להם: פ (חמישין) יב ועתה ישראל מה יהוה אליהי שאל מעמד פי אם ליראה את יהוה אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולא־הבה אתו ולעבד את יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: יג לשמר את מצות יהוה ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום לטוב לך: יד הן ליהוה אלהיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה: טו רק באבְתיך חשק יהוה לא־הבה אותם ויבחר בזרעם אחריהם בכם מפל העמים ביום הזה: טז ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם וערפכם לא תקשו עוד: יז פי יהוה אלהיכם הוא אלהי האלהים ואדני האדנים האל הגדל הגבר והנורא אשר לא־ישא פנים ולא יקה שחר: יח עשה משפט יתום ואלמנה ואהב גר לתת לו לחם ושמלה: יט ואהבתם את הגר כ־גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים: כ את

כשׂי

אחכס) חשוקים מכל העמים היום הזה: (טז) ערלת לבבכם. אוטס לזכס וכסויו: (יז) ואדני האדנים. לא יוכל שום דון להניל אחכס מידו: לא ישא פנים. אס תפרקו עולו: ולא יקה שחר. לפייסו צממו: (יח) עשה משפט יתום ואלמנה. הרי גזורה, ואלל גזורתו אסח מולא ענותו: ואהב גר לתת לו לחם ושמלה. ודזר חסוז הוא זכ, שכל עלמו של יעקב אצינו על זכ תפלה, ונתן לי לחם לאכול וצגד ללבוש: (יט) כי גרים הייתם. מוס שזך אל תאמר לחצרך: (כ) את ה' אלהיך תירא. ותעבוד לו ותדבק

להתפלל עליכם היו זכעס: (יא) ויאמר ה' אלי וגו'. אף על פי שסרתס מאחריו וטעיתס זעגל, אמר לי לך נחח אס העס: (יב) ועתה ישראל. אף על פי שעשיתס כל זחס, עודנו רחמיו וחצחו עליכס, ומכל מה שחטאתס לפניו אינו שואל מכס כי אס ליראס וגו: כי אם ליראה וגו'. רבותינו דרשו מכאן ככל צידי שמים חון מירחס שמיס: (יג) לשמור את מצות ה'. ואף היא לא לחנס, אלא לטוב לך, שתקבלו שכר: (יד) הן לה' אלהיך. הכל, ואף על פי כן רק צאצותיך חשק ה' מן הכל: (טו) בכס. כמו שחטס (רואיס

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virtually every respect. Rashi explains: "Just as those days were with [God's] goodwill, so were these with [God's] goodwill," i.e. that God was not angry with the Jewish people at all during the last forty days.

Consequently, Rashi did not need to explain why forty days were required to receive the second Tablets, since he had already stressed that the second Tablets were received in *equally positive circumstances* to the first Tablets. And if Moshe were to have stayed any less than forty days, he would not have reached as high a spiritual level as the first time, and the second Tablets would have been received in an inferior manner. Therefore, forty days and nights were required for Moshe's third stay too.

However, this explanation presents us with another problem. Above, Rashi explained that it was only when Moshe came down from the mountain *after* his third stay, on Yom Kippur, that, "on that very day God was joyfully reconciled with the Jewish people...Therefore it was designated as a time of pardon and forgiveness" (Rashi to 9:18, above).

So how can Rashi write that the entire forty days and nights of Moshe's third stay on the mountain were "with [God's] goodwill," when God only became reconciled with the Jewish people when Moshe came down from the mountain?

In truth, however, God had completely forgiven the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf after Moshe's second stay on the mountain, and the third stay was genuinely "with [God's] goodwill." A further accomplishment which occurred on Yom Kippur was that "God was joyfully reconciled with the Jewish people." I.e. when Moshe finally presented the Tablets to the Jewish people, bequeathing them the Torah for all eternity, it was a particularly joyous time for God. For joy comes after passing over a hurdle; and since the relationship between the Jewish people and God had been in jeopardy, the moment when all obstacles had been overcome and the Jewish people finally received the Torah was a true moment of joy for the Almighty.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5733)

1 סדר עולם פ"ו 2 שמות לב, לד 3 בכמה דפוסים נשמסו תיבות אלו ("כי אם ליראה וגו") בטעות. (שיחות ש"פ עקב תשל"ז) 4 ברכות לג: 5 ראה לקו"ש חכ"ד ע"י 73 ואילך 6 מגילה לא. פסיקתא דרשא, ילקוט שמעוני רמז תתנ"ז 7 בראשית כז, כ. וראה בראשית רבה ע, ה 8 בבא מציעא נט, ב

¹¹ God said to me, “Get going! Lead the people in their journeys to come and take possession of the land I promised their forefathers to give them.”

🌀 MOSHE ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE TO SERVE GOD 🌀

10:12
FIFTH
READING

Now, O Israel, (even though you sinned) what does God, your God, demand of you? (Because He still has compassion on you and He still loves you, He does not punish you, but asks you) only to fear God, your God, to follow all His ways, to love Him, to serve God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of God and His suprarational commands, which I command you today—(and even this) is for your own benefit (because you will receive reward).

¹⁴ God, your God, (has the choice of everything in) the lower and upper skies, the earth and all that is on it. ¹⁵ But God desired only to love your forefathers, and He chose their descendants after them — (i.e.) you—out of all nations, (a choice which) remains until today.

¹⁶ You should “circumcise” the “foreskin” of your heart (which blocks you from serving God), and you should stop being stiff-necked. ¹⁷ For God, your God, is God of gods and the Master of masters, the great, mighty and awesome God, who does not show favor and will not accept a bribe. ¹⁸ (Yet) He (is sensitive) to enact judgment for the orphan and widow. And he loves the convert and gives him bread and clothing.

- ¹⁹ You should love the convert, because you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How could God possibly “accept a bribe” ? (v. 17)

MIDRASH: It is written in Your Torah, “Do not accept a bribe” (*Shemos* 23:8)...but You do accept bribes, as the verse states, “He will take a bribe from a wicked man’s bosom [to turn the roads of justice]” (*Proverbs* 17:23)? What is the “bribe” that God accepts? He accepts *teshuvah* (repentance) and good deeds from the wicked in this world. God says to the Jewish people, “My children! So long as the gates of *teshuvah* are open, I will accept bribes in this world. But when I sit in judgment in the World to Come, I will not accept bribes, as the verse states (*ibid.* 6:35), ‘He will not regard any ransom!’” (*Yalkut Shimoni, Psalms, Remez* 670).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 “BRIBING” GOD (v. 17)

Taking bribes is an explicit prohibition of the Torah (*Shemos* 23:8; *Devarim* 16:19), because it may cause a judge to make a ruling which is not in accordance with the law. So how could any person possibly think that God might take bribes, to the extent that the Torah needs to inform us here in verse 17 that, in fact, He does not?

Furthermore, our verse appears to contradict the statement in *Proverbs* that “He will take a bribe from a wicked man’s bosom, to turn the roads of justice” (17:23). *Rashi* (*ibid.*) comments, “The Holy One, blessed be He, accepts words of humility and appeasement from the bosom of the wicked [i.e. in secret, between Him and them,] to overturn His verdict from evil to good.”

The **Midrash** explains further that the “bribes” which God takes are the *teshuvah* and good deeds of the wicked who return to Him.

In this respect, we can understand that the verse, “God...will not accept a bribe,” must be speaking of *mitzvos* in general, which are *not* sufficient to “bribe” God to annul one of His decrees. *Teshuvah*, on the other hand, is capable of doing just that, so the verse in *Proverbs* states, “He will take a bribe from a wicked man’s bosom,” if He is bribed with *teshuvah*.

It nevertheless remains to be understood why the Torah compares *teshuvah* to bribery, which is a *perversion* of justice?

THE EXPLANATION

Rambam describes the process of *teshuvah* as follows:

“The following are part of [going on] the path of *teshuvah*: The repenter should cry out persistently to God with tears and supplications. He should give charity to the extent of his ability, and he should distance himself as much as possible from the matter with which he sinned. He should change his name, as if to say, ‘I am a different person. I am not the same person who did those things.’ He should change all of his actions for the better to follow an upright path. He should exile himself [from his hometown], since exile atones for sins, and it causes one to be submissive, humble and meek” (*Laws of Teshuvah* 2:4).

All these steps need to be carried out if a person wishes to be forgiven for his sins *completely*. Nevertheless, the basic principle of *teshuvah* is very simple indeed, as the *Alter Rebbe* writes:

“The commandment of *teshuvah*, as required by the Torah, is simply the [resolution of] abandonment of the sin” (*Igeres Hateshuvah*, ch. 1).

I.e. the mere resolution in a person’s mind not to perform the sin again is sufficient to fulfill “the commandment of *teshuvah*, as required by the Torah.”

Thus, even before a person has carried out the entire process mentioned by *Rambam* above, he is considered to have repented.

וּלְדַחַלְתָּהּ תִּקְרַב וּבִשְׂמֹחַת תִּקְנִים: כֹּה הוּא
 תּוֹשֵׁב־בְּחֶתְדָּךְ וְהוּא אֱלֹהֶיךָ דַּעֲבַד עִמָּךְ ית
 רַבְרַבְתָּא וְנִת חֲסִינְתָא הָאֵלִין דִּי חוּז עֵינֶיךָ:
 כב בְּשִׁבְעִין נִפְשָׁן נִחְתוּ אֲבָהֶתְךָ לְמַצְרַיִם
 וּכְעֹן שׁוּיָךְ יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי שָׁמַיָא לְמִסְגֵי:
 א וְתִרְחַם ית יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְתִטַּר מִטְרַת מִימְרָה
 וּקְנִימוּהִי וְדִינֵהּ וּפְקוּדוּהִי כָּל יוֹמֵיָא:
 ב וְתִדְעוּן יוֹמָא דִּין אַרְי לֹא ית בְּנִיכּוֹן דִּי
 לֹא יִדְעוּ וְדִי לֹא חוּז ית אוּלְפִנָּא דִּי אֱלֹהִיכּוֹן
 ית רְבוּתָהּ ית יְדָה תְּקִיפָא וְדַרְעָה מְרַמְמָא:
 ג וְיִת אֲתֻנְתִּיהָ וְיִת עוֹבְדוּהִי דִי עֲבַד בְּגוּ
 מַצְרַיִם לְפָרְעָה מֶלֶכָא דְּמַצְרַיִם וְלְכָל אַרְעָה:
 ד וְדִי עֲבַד לְמִשְׁרֵית מַצְרַיִם לְסוּסוֹתִיהָ
 וְלִרְתֻבּוּהִי דִי אַסִּיף ית מִי יִמָּא דְּסוּף
 עַל אִפְיֵהוֹן בְּמַרְדְּפָהוֹן בְּתִרְיִכּוֹן וְאוּבְדָנוּן יִי
 עַד יוֹמָא דִּדְיִן: ה וְדִי עֲבַד לְכוֹן בְּמַדְבְּרָא עַד
 מִיתִיכּוֹן עַד אֲתֵרָא דְּדִיִן: ו וְדִי עֲבַד לְדָתָן
 וְלֵאבִירָם בְּגִי אֵלִיאָב בַּר רְאוּבֵן דִּי פְתַחַת
 אַרְעָא ית פּוּמָה וּבְלַעְתָּנוּן וְיִת אַנְשׁ בְּתִיּוֹן
 וְיִת מִשְׁכְּנֵיהוֹן וְיִת כָּל יְקוּמָא דִּי עִמָּהוֹן בְּגוּ

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק וּבִשְׂמוֹת שִׁבְעָה:
 כֹּה הוּא תְהַלְתֶּךָ וְהוּא אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֶתְךָ אֶת-הַגְּדֹלָת
 וְאֶת-הַנּוֹרָאִת הָאֵלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ: כב בְּשִׁבְעִים נְפֹשׁ יִרְדּוּ
 אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם וְעַתָּה שָׂמְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 לְרֹב: יא א וְאֶהְבֵּת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשִׁמְרַת מִשְׁמֵרָתוֹ
 וְחֻקְתָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו כָּל-הַיָּמִים: ג וְיִדְעָתֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי לֹא
 אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-רָאוּ אֶת-מוֹסַר יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֶת-גְּדֹלוֹ אֶת-יָדוֹ הַחֲזָקָה וְזִרְעוֹ הַנְּטוּיָה: ד וְאֶת-
 אֲתֵנָיו וְאֶת-מַעֲשָׂיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעָה מֶלֶךְ-
 מִצְרַיִם וְלְכָל-אַרְצוֹ: ה וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְחֵיל מִצְרַיִם לְסוּסָיו
 וּלְרַכְבּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיף אֶת-מִי יַם-סוּף עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם בְּרִדְפָם
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיֹּאבְדֵם יְהוָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ה וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם
 בְּמַדְבַּר עַד-בְּאֵכֶם עַד-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: ו וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָתָן
 וְלֵאבִירָם בְּגִי אֵלִיאָב בֶּן-רְאוּבֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּצַתָּה הָאָרֶץ אֶת-פִּיהָ
 וַתִּבְלָעֵם וְאֶת-בְּתִיָּהֶם וְאֶת-אֶהֱלֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל-הַיְקוּם אֲשֶׁר

לש"י

יכוד. אמר לו רבי נחמיה, וכלא כבר נאמר ותפתח הארץ את פיה², ולא פיוחיה. אמר לו, ומה אני מקיים צקצק כל ישראל. אמר לו שנעשית הארץ מזרון כמשפך, וכל מקום שכיח אחד מהם, היה מתגלגל וצא עד מקום הצקיעה³. ואת כל היקום אשר ברגליהם. זה ממונו של אדם שמעמידו

זו, ולאחר שיהיו צד כל המדות הללו אז נשמו תשבע¹: (3) וידעתם היום. תנו לצדעת ולהצדק ולקבל תוכחתי: כי לא את בניכם. אני מדבר עכשיו שיוכלו לומר לנו לא ידענו ולא ראינו בכל זה: (1) בקרב כל ישראל. כל מקום שכיח אחד מהם צורה, הארץ נצקעת מתחתיו וצולעתו, אלו דברי רבי

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What, then, is the need to “cry out persistently to God with tears and supplications,” and, “change all of his actions for the better etc.,” if he has *already* fulfilled “the commandment of *teshuvah* as required by the Torah” by abandoning the sin?

This is because the moment he resolves to abandon the sin represents the mere “conception” of his *teshuvah*, but his new identity has not yet been “born.” From the moment of “conception” a lengthy process must occur, during which the person cries out to God persistently for forgiveness, gives large amounts of charity and changes his entire lifestyle for the better. Only at that point is the person “born” as a *tzadik* (righteous person).

Thus, “the commandment of *teshuvah* as required by the Torah,” (which the *Alter Rebbe* speaks of), which occurs in an instant, forms the core and the foundation from which the person’s *teshuvah* grows—in a similar way to the moment of conception of a child, which forms the basis for the nine months of development which follow. And it is this process of development which is described in the above passage of *Rambam*.

A further distinction between the “conception” and the “birth” of the repenting Jew is the difference between how God perceives the person, and how he perceives himself.

From the person’s perspective (and likewise, the perspective of a Jewish court), he cannot be considered free of sin until all of its effects, both on himself and his environment, are eradicated. Thus, it is not until he is “born” as a *tzadik* that he can be confident that his sin is atoned for.

However, from God’s perspective, as soon as the person resolves in his mind not to sin again, the seed of a potential *tzadik* is sown, and the key part of his repentance has already taken place. From this point on, it is only a matter of time until the genuine emotions that have surfaced will materialize into the changes of lifestyle that will eradicate the sin.

Thus, *from God’s perspective*, as soon as the sinner resolves in his mind not to sin again, God forgives him.* But this forgiveness is to a certain extent “unjust,” as the person has not yet completed the process of *teshuvah* and therefore, according to the letter of the law, he should not yet be forgiven. Nevertheless, as explained above, since the seed of his

* I.e. the *person* is forgiven because God perceives how the initial phases of remorse will eventually blossom into full repentance. The effects of the *sin itself* on the *world* cannot be atoned for, however, until a complete *teshuvah* is carried out. For further discussion of this distinction, see *Toras Menachem* to *Vayikra* 16:20-22.

1 תמורה ג. תנחומא ויקרא ז 2 במדבר טז, לב
 3 במדבר רבה יח, יג תנחומא (באבער) קרח הוספה ו, ילקוט שמעוני קרח, רמז תשנ"ב

- ²⁰ You must fear God, your God.
- You must serve Him.
- You must cleave to Him.
- (If you do all the above, then you may) swear by His Name.

²¹ He is your praise and He is your God, Who did these great and awesome things for you, which your eyes have seen. ²² Your forefathers went down to Egypt with seventy souls, and now God, your God, has made you as numerous as the stars of the skies.

🌀 MIRACLES WITNESSED BY THE JEWISH PEOPLE 🌀

II So you should love God, your God, keep what He has entrusted to you: His suprarational commands, His rational commands, and His commandments, for all time.

² You should now realize, (by focusing your heart to take my rebuke), that (I am) not (speaking) with your children, who (could claim that they) did not know and did not see God, your God, reprimand (us).

— (They did not see) His greatness, His mighty hand, His outstretched arm, ³ His signs (of Divine Providence), and His deeds, which He performed within Egypt, to Pharaoh, King of Egypt and to his entire land. ⁴ And what He did to Egypt's army, to its horses and chariots, how He swamped the waters of the Reed Sea upon them when they pursued you. God destroyed them (and they cease to exist) to this day. ⁵ (They did not see) what He did for you in the desert, until you arrived at this place, ⁶ and what He did to Dasan and Aviram, sons of Eliahu, Re'uvin's son, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up: them, their households, their tents, and all the possessions (that kept them on) their feet, in the presence of all Israel —

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How were Dasan and Aviram swallowed up? (v. 6)

RASHI: "Wherever one of them fled, the earth split under him and swallowed him up"—these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah.

Rabbi Nechemiah said to him: But is it not written above, "the earth opened its mouth" (*Bamidbar* 16:32), and not, "its mouths" [suggesting that the earth opened up in only one place]?

[Rabbi Yehudah] said to him: How, then, does one explain [the emphasis that this occurred]: "in the presence of all Israel," [suggesting that the earth opened up throughout the Jewish camp]?

[Rabbi Nechemiah] replied to him: The earth began to slope like a funnel, and wherever one of them would be, he rolled down until he reached the place where the earth was split.

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repentance (which is the basis of the entire *teshuvah* process) has been sown, from God's perspective he is forgiven.

And it is this scenario which the Torah depicts as "bribery": The *teshuvah* of the person is sufficient to "bribe" God to forgive him, even though he does not yet deserve to be forgiven.

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, God is not committing a "forbidden act," as in truth (from God's perspective) the person has changed for the better internally, and it is only a matter of time before this change manifests itself fully.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 59ff.)

🌀 RABBI YEHUDAH & RABBI NECHEMIAH (RASHI V. 6)

In his commentary to verse 6, *Rashi* cites a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah concerning the manner in which Dasan and Aviram were swallowed up by the ground.

At first glance, Rabbi Nechemiah's criticism of Rabbi Yehudah's argument seems to be valid, indicating that the interpretation of our verse, at the literal level, follows Rabbi Nechemiah.

However, if *Rashi* did indeed maintain that our verse is to be interpreted in accordance with Rabbi Nechemiah, and not Rabbi Yehudah, then he would have just cited Rabbi Nechemiah's opinion *alone*. For *Rashi*'s commentary is aimed at explaining the literal meaning of scripture as concisely as possible, so if Rabbi Yehudah's opinion were not valid at the literal level, *Rashi* would simply have omitted it. Rather, it appears that *Rashi* found both interpretations acceptable.

However, this leaves us with the following questions:

- Why did *Rashi* deem it necessary to bring two interpretations?
- Why did *Rashi* cite the names of the Sages who authored these interpretations—Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah? Of what relevance is this to understanding the verse at the literal level?
- According to *Rashi*, Rabbi Yehudah said, "Wherever one of them fled, the earth split under him and swallowed him up." However, this detail (of Dasan and Aviram fleeing) is not mentioned in any of the source texts from which *Rashi* may have cited this teaching (*Bamidbar Rabah* 18:13; *Tanchuma Buber*, addendum to *Korach* 4; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Korach*, *Remez* 752). What led *Rashi* to conclude that this was indeed Rabbi Yehudah's intention?

כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: ו אָרְבֵי עֵינֵיכֶם הִנְּאֹה ית כל
עֹבְדָא דִּי רַבָּא דִּי עֲבָד: ה וְתִטֵּר ית כל
תַּפְקִדְתָּא דִּי אֲנָא מִפְקִדְךָ יוֹמָא דִּין בְּדִיל
דְּתַתְּקִפוּן וְתַעֲלוּן וְתִירְתוּן ית אַרְעָא דִּי אֲתוּן
עֲבָרִין לְתַמְנָן לְמִירְתָּהּ: ט וּבְדִיל דְּתוֹרְכוּן יוֹמִין
עַל אַרְעָא דִּי קָיִים יי לְאַבְתְּכוּן לְמַתָּן לְהוּן
וְלִבְנֵיהוּן אַרְעָא עֲבָדָא חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: י אָרְבֵי
אַרְעָא דִּי אַתְּ עָלֵל לְתַמְנָן לְמִירְתָּהּ לֹא
כְּאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם הִיא דִּי נִפְקִתוּן מִתַּמְנָן דִּי
תּוֹרַע ית זַרְעֵךְ וּמִשְׁקַת לָהּ בְּרַגְלָךְ כְּנַגַת
זַרְקָא: יא וְאַרְעָא דִּי אֲתוּן עֲבָרִין לְתַמְנָן
לְמִירְתָּהּ אַרְעָא טוֹרִין וּבְקַעֲן לְמִטְרָ שְׁמַיָּא
תִּשְׁתִּי מִיָּא: יב אַרְעָא דִּי אֲלַהֵךְ תִּבְעֵי יְתָהּ
תְּדִירָא עֵינֵי יי אֲלַהֵךְ בְּהַ מְרִישָׁא דְּשִׁתָּא וְעַד

בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם בְּקָרֵב כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: ו בִּי עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאֵת אֵת
כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה הַגָּדֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: ה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-
הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לְמַעַן תִּחְזְקוּ וּבְאֵתֶם וִירִשְׁתֶּם
אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ט וּלְמַעַן
תִּזְכְּרוּ יָמִים עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר
לָהֶם וּלְזֶרְעָם אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: ט וְשִׁשִּׁי י בִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאֲתֶם
מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תּוֹרַע אֶת-זַרְעֵךְ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְּרַגְלָךְ כְּגֹן הִירְקָ:
יא וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶרֶץ הָרִים
וּבְקַעֲת לְמִטְרַת הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתַּה-מֵיָּם: יב אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה
אֲלַהֵיךְ דִּרְשָׁ אֶתָּה תִּמְיֵד עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֲלַהֵיךְ בְּהַ *מְרִישִׁית

*חזק א'

רש"י

אפילו ארץ רעמסס אשר ישצתם בה והיא צמיצ ארץ מלרים, שנאמר צמיצ
הארץ וגו'⁸, אף היא אינה כהארץ ישראל⁹: והשקית ברגלך. ארץ מלרים
היתה לריכה להציא מים מנילוס צרגלך ולהשקותה, ולריך אהה לנדד משנתך
ולעמול, והנמוך שותה ולא הצובה, ואהה מעלה המים מן הנמוך לגובה.
אצל זו למטר השמים תשתה מים, אהה ישן על מטתך, והקצ"ה משקה נמוך
וגובה, גלוי ושאינו גלוי, כאחת⁹: בגן הירק. שאין די לו בגשמים ומסקין
אותו צרגל וצכתך: (יא) ארץ הרים ובקעות. משוצה הכר מן המישור,
שהמישור, צצית כור אהה זורע כור, אצל הכר צית כור ממנו חמשת כורין,
ארבע מארבע שפועיו, ואחד צראשור⁹: ובקעות. כן מישור: (יב) אשר ה'
אלהיך דורש אותה. והלא כל הארצות הוא דורש, שנאמר להמטיר על
ארץ לא איש¹⁰, אלא כביכול אינו דורש אלא אותה, ועל ידי אותה דרישה
שדורשה דורש את כל הארצות עמה⁹: תמיד עיני ה' אלהיך בה. לראות
מה היא לריכה ולחדש בה גזרות, עתים לטובה עתים לרעה כו', כדאיחא
צראש השנה¹¹: מרשית השנה. מראש השנה נידון מה יאה צסופה¹²:

על רגליו: (ז) כי עיניכם הרואות. מוסב על מקרא האמור למעלה², כי
לא את צניכס אשר לא ידעו וגו' כי אם עמכס אשר עיניכס הרואות וגו':
(י) לא בארץ מצרים הוא. אלא טובה הימנה. ונאמרה הצטחה זו
לישראל צליחתם ממלרים, שהיו אומרים שמה לא נצוא אל ארץ טובה ויפה
כוז. יכול צגנותה הכתוב מדבר, וכך אמר להם, לא כהארץ מלרים היא, אלא
רעה הימנה, תלמוד לומר וחצרון שבע שנים נצתה וגו'³, אדם אחד צגלן,
וחס צנה לוען למלרים צנו, וחצרון לכנען. דרך ארץ אדם צונה את הנאה
ואחר כך צונה את הכעור (ס"א הגרוע), שפסולתו של ראשון הוא נותן
צשני, וצכל מקום הצציו קודם, הא למדת שחצרון יפה מלוען, ומלרים
משוצתת מכל הארצות, שנאמר כגן ה' כהארץ מלרים⁴, ולוען שצח מלרים
היא, שהיתה מקום מלכות, שכן הוא אומר כי היו צלוען שריו⁵, וחצרון
פסולתה של ארץ ישראל, לכך הקצוה לקצורת מתים, ואף על פי כן היא יפה
מלוען⁶. וצכתוצות⁷ דרשו צענין אחר, אפשר אדם צונה צית לצנו הקטן ואחר
כך לצנו הגדול, אלא שמצונה על אחד משצעה צלוען: אשר יצאתם משם.

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi was troubled by the following problem:

In the desert, each tribe camped separately (see Bamidbar 2:1ff.). Dasan and Aviram would have resided in the camp of the tribe of Re'uvain, to which they belonged (ibid. 16:1). Thus, when reading in our verse that Dasan and Aviram were swallowed up, "in the presence of all Israel," Rashi was troubled: How could all Israel have witnessed something that occurred in just one camp, the camp of Re'uvain?

To answer this question, Rashi cites the teaching of Rabbi Yehudah, that, "Wherever one of them fled, the earth split under him and swallowed him up." I.e. when the earth began to split under the feet of Dasan and Aviram in the camp of Re'uvain, they fled, running throughout all the camps, as they were chased by an expanding hole in the ground which

ultimately swallowed them up. Thus, by the time they were consumed, all of the Jewish people had witnessed the miracle.

(Consequently Rashi found it necessary to stress, that "Wherever one of them fled, the earth split under him and swallowed him up"—even though this detail is not stated explicitly in the source texts—since this clarifies how "all Israel" witnessed this miracle.)

Nevertheless, this interpretation is somewhat flawed, as Rabbi Nechemiah pointed out: "But is it not written above, 'the earth opened its mouth' (Bamidbar 16:32), and not, 'its mouths,'" suggesting that the earth opened up at only one place?

Thus, Rashi cited a second interpretation, from Rabbi Nechemiah: "The earth began to slope like a funnel, and wherever one of them would be, he rolled down until he reached the place where the earth was split."

⁷ But your eyes did see all the great acts of God, which He performed. ⁸ Therefore, you should keep all the commandments that I am commanding you today, so that:

- You will be strong to come and take possession of the Land, that you are crossing over to acquire.
- ⁹ And in order that you may prolong your days on the land that God swore to give to your forefathers—to them and to their descendants—a land flowing with milk and honey.

🌀 QUALITIES OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL 🌀

11:10
SIXTH
READING

For the land to which you are coming to take possession of is not (bad) like the land of Egypt, out of which you came, where you would plant your seed and (then have to) water (it by carrying buckets from the Nile) by foot, like (looking after) a vegetable garden. ¹¹ (No!) The land which you are (soon) crossing over to acquire, is a land of (arable) mountains and plains, and it is watered by rains from the skies, ¹² a land which God, your God, cares about. The eyes of God Almighty are continually upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

TORAS MENACHEM

This explains how there could have been just one opening in the earth, and yet the miracle was witnessed by the entire camp.

However, Rabbi Nechemiah's solution also has a drawback, since our verse appears to imply that all the Jewish people actually witnessed *the earth* open its mouth; whereas according to Rabbi Nechemiah's interpretation, most people would only have seen the "funnel."

Thus *Rashi* cited both opinions, of Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah, as each have their own respective advantages and disadvantages.

THE CRUX OF THE ARGUMENT

What underlying difference of approach led Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah to their conclusions?

Rabbi Yehudah took the approach that problems which arise in the *context* of a verse (among its adjacent verses) are the most important. Rabbi Nechemiah, on the other hand, prioritized problems that arise *within* a verse.

Thus, in our case, Rabbi Yehudah learned that the earth opened up throughout the entire camp, enabling all Israel to see the miracle, as this fits better in the context of our verse within a passage that lists various miracles that were witnessed by the entire Jewish people (v. 2-7). The drawback of this interpretation, that it renders the word "mouth" difficult to interpret *within* the verse itself, was of more concern to Rabbi Nechemiah. Therefore, Rabbi Nechemiah offered an alternative interpretation which solves this difficulty, but loses the contextual superiority of Rabbi Yehudah's interpretation.

In fact, these two approaches are commensurate with the respective lifestyles of these two Sages. For while they were both poor, Rabbi Nechemiah suffered from a much greater degree of poverty than Rabbi Yehudah.* Thus, it turns out that the "broader" approach to Torah study which looks at the *overall* context of a verse was—by Divine Providence—exemplified by the Sage who, comparatively speaking, had a "broader" and more comfortable lifestyle.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev* 5726**)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

"THE EYES OF GOD ALMIGHTY ARE CONTINUALLY UPON IT..." (v. 12)

Many Jews, including *frum* [observant] Jews, naturally tend to see all the good qualities of *Eretz Yisrael*, which is indeed 'a desirable and good land' (Text of Grace after Meals). However, one often overlooks the essential thing about *Eretz Yisrael*, which is that all its physical beauty is as nothing in comparison to its essential nature—that of being the Holy Land, a land of which the Torah says that 'the eyes of God Almighty are continually upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.' This essential nature of *Eretz Yisrael* should inspire in everyone a tremendous sense of reverence, which should be expressed in increased efforts to bring one's everyday conduct into accord with the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*. The impact must be strong enough to be of a lasting nature, so that a visit to the

Holy Land should have a permanent effect on one's whole outlook and the resulting daily conduct.

However, if a visit to *Eretz Yisrael* is confined to sightseeing and the taking of photographs and slides of the beautiful places and the landscape, etc., then *Eretz Yisrael* becomes no more than a tourist attraction, one land among many. Such a visit contributes little to the real future and destiny of *Eretz Yisrael*, of which we say in our prayers, 'Because of our sins we have been exiled from our land' (Text of Additional Prayer for Festivals). The immediate conclusion should be, therefore, to eliminate all those causes which have deprived us of *Eretz Yisrael*, and to strengthen all those factors which will firmly and permanently restore *Eretz Yisrael* to us."

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe in 5729 [1969])

* See the original *Sicha* (*Sichos Kodesh* 5726, pp. 583-4) where this assertion is substantiated with proofs from the Talmud. **For an explanation why the Torah mentions here only Dasan and Aviram and not Korach himself, nor his sons, nor the 250 leaders who were with him. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* 5726 (ibid., pp. 590-91)

סופא דשפתא: יי ויהי אם קבלא תקבלון
 לפקודי די אנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין
 למרתם ית יי אלקכון ולמפלח קדמוהי בכל
 לפכון ובכל נפשכון: יד ונתתי מטרי
 בעדנה בכיר ולקיש ותבגוש עבנדך ותמךך
 ומשחך: טו ונתתי עשב בחקלך לבעירך
 ותיכול ותשבוע: טז אסתמרו לבון דלמא
 יטעון לפכון ותסטון ותפלוחון למענות עממיא

השנה ועד אחרית שנה: ט ז והיה אם-שמע תשמעו
 אל-מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את-יהוה
 אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל-לבבכם ובכל-נפשכם: יד ונתתי מטר-
 ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגנך ותירשך ויצהרך:
 טו ונתתי עשב בשדך לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת: טז השמרו
 לכם פן-יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים

— כש״י —

ולשון מלקוש, דבר המאחר. כדמתרגמינן והיה העטופים ללזן¹¹, לקשיא. דבר
 אחר לכך נקראת מלקוש, שירדת על המלילות ועל הקשין¹²: ואספת דגנך.
 אתה תאספנו אל הבית ולא אויבך. כענין שנאמר¹³ אם אתן את דגנך וגוי' כי
 מאספיו יאכלוהו, ולא כענין שנאמר¹⁴ והיה אם זרע ישראל וגו'¹⁰:
 (טו) ונתתי עשב בשדך. שלא תטעך להוליכה למדבריות. דבר אחר שתהיה
 גוזז תבואתך כל ימות הגשמים ומשליך לפני בהמתך, ואתה מונע ידך ממנה
 שלשים יום קודם לקציר ואינה פוחתת מדגנה¹⁰: ואכלת ושבעת. הרי זו
 ברכה אחרת, שתהא צרכה מלויה צפת בתוך המעים. ואכלת ושבעת:
 (טז) השמרו לבם. כיון שתהיו אוכלים ושבעים, השמרו לכם שלא תבטו,
 שאין אדם מורד בבקצ"ה אלא מתוך שביעה, שנאמר¹⁵ פן תאכל ושבעת ובקרך
 ולאך ירבוין, מה הוא אומר אחריו, ורם לצבך ושכחת¹⁶: וסרתם. לפרוש מן
 התורה, ומתוך כך ועבדתם אלהים אחרים. שכיון שאדם פורש מן התורה
 הולך ומדבק בעבודה זרה. וכן דוד הוא אמר, כי גרשוני היום מהסתפח
 בנחלת ה' לאמר לך עבוד וגו'¹⁷, ומי אמר לו כן, אלא כיון שאני מגורש
 מלעסוק בתורה, הריני קרוב לעבוד אלהים אחרים: אלהים אחרים. שהם

(יג) והיה אם שמוע. והיה מוסב על האמור למעלה, למטר השמים תשחה
 מיס: והיה אם שמוע תשמעו. אם תשמע ציון תשמע צדוש¹. וכן והיה אם
 שכוה תשכח², אם התחלת לשכוח סופך שתשכח כולה, שכן כתיב במגלה אם
 תעזבני יום יומים אעזבך³: מצוה אתכם היום. שיהיו עליכם חדשים, כאלו
 שמעתם צו ציוס⁴: לאהבה את ה'. שלא תאמר הרי אני לומד בשביל שאתה
 עשיר, בשביל שאקרא רב, בשביל שאקבל שכר. אלא כל מה שתעשו עשו
 מאהבה, וסוף הכבוד לצא⁵: ולעבדו בכל לבבכם. עבודה שהיא בלב. וזו
 היא תפלה, שהתפלה קרויה עבודה, שנאמר אלהך די אנת פלח ליה בתדירא⁶,
 וכי יש פולחן בצבל, אלא על שהיה מתפלל, שנאמר וכיון פתחון ליה וגו'⁷. וכן
 צדוד הוא אומר⁸ תכון תפלתו קטרת לפניך⁹: בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם.
 והלא כבר הזכיר בכל לצבך ובכל נפשך, אלא, אזכרה ליחיד אזכרה ללזור¹⁰:
 (יד) ונתתי מטר ארצכם. עשיתם מה שעליכם, אף אני אעשה מה שעלי:
 בעתו. צלילות שלא יטריחו אתכם. דבר אחר צעתו, צלילי צעות שהכל מצויין
 בצתיכם¹⁰: יורה. היא רביעה הנופלת לאחר הזריעה שמרוה את הארץ ואת
 הזרעים¹⁰: ומלקוש. רביעה היורדת סמוך לקציר למלאות התבואה צקשיה.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is unique about God's promise, "I will grant...rains of your land at their proper time"? (v. 14)

RASHI: [God says:] "You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me."

MIZRACHI: *Rashi* was troubled by the question: Why does the Torah stress the reward for keeping *mitzvos* here more than in other places? For example, in *Parshas Bechukosai* the Torah states simply, "I will

give you rain (at a convenient) time" (*Vayikra* 26:4), without entering into details, whereas here the Torah specifies many additional blessings in verses 14-15.

Rashi answers that God is saying, "You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me." I.e. since the Jewish people have done everything that God could possibly have wanted, therefore God will respond with every possible blessing that they may need.

TORAS MENACHEM

☞ THE BLESSINGS OF RAIN (v. 14)

In the second paragraph of the *Shema*, the Torah promises "rains in their proper time," if, "you always listen to My commandments that I am commanding you etc." (v. 13-14).

Mizrachi comments that the promise of rain here is more substantial than the similar promise at the beginning of *Parshas Bechukosai*, since the Torah specifies here that there will be "early and late rains...grain, wine, and oil...grass in your field for your livestock...you will be satisfied."

Thus, according to *Mizrachi*, *Rashi* is explaining the unique quality of

the blessings recorded here: "You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me," as if to say: "Since you have fulfilled what is required of you in every detail, likewise I will reward you in every detail."

However, *Mizrachi's* argument—that the blessings here are superior to the blessings in *Parshas Bechukosai*—is difficult to accept. Since *Parshas Bechukosai* mentions the supernatural promise that "non-fruit bearing trees will bear fruit," which clearly exceeds any of the natural blessings offered here.

What, then, is the meaning of *Rashi's* comment?

1 יומא מו, ב 2 דברים ח, יט 3 ספרי. וראה שיחת ש"פ עקב תשמ"ז 4 ספרי (יא, כב) 5 נדרים טב. ילקו"ש רמז תתע"ג 6 דניאל ו, יז 7 שם יא 8 תהלים קמא, ב 9 ראה שיחת ש"פ עקב תשמ"ז 10 ספרי 11 בראשית ל, מב 12 תענית ו: ילקו"ש רמז תתס"ג 13 ישעי' טב, ח 14 שופטים ו, ג 15 דברים ח, יב 16 שם יד 17 ש"א כו, יט

🕎 SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE SHEMA 🕎

11:13

What will happen is:
—If you always listen to My commandments that I am commanding you, (regarding them as if you heard them) today.

- (And you keep them, not for personal gain, but rather out of) love for God, your God.
- And you serve Him (in prayer)
- (And, as a community, you serve Him) with all your heart and with all your soul.

¹⁴ Then I will grant the early and late rains of your land at their proper time, and you—(not your enemies)—will gather in your grain, wine, and oil. ¹⁵ I will provide grass in your field for your livestock (so you do not have to take them to pasture at a distance. When) you will eat, you will be satisfied.

¹⁶ (But when you are in a state of satisfaction) beware not to let your heart be lured away (from the Torah, causing you to) go astray and worship other (strange) gods, and prostrate yourselves before them.

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THE EXPLANATION

In *Parshas Bechukosai*, the Torah stresses “I will give you rain” (literally, “I will give your rains”), indicating that the blessing is being bestowed to the Jewish people. In contrast, the Torah states here, “I will grant the... rains of your land,” indicating that the blessing is being bestowed to the land itself.

The practical distinction between these two approaches is that if the rain is bestowed according to the Jewish people’s merits, then they will receive the rain that they deserve, regardless of whether or not this is possible within the natural order. But if the rain is bestowed to the land (as in our *Parsha*) then it will come according to the limitations of nature.

The reader will thus be troubled: Why is the Torah offering here a natural reward for keeping the *mitzvos* that is inferior to the supernatural

reward which has already been promised in *Parshas Bechukosai*? *Rashi* answers: “You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me.” The reason why an inferior reward is offered is because the Torah speaks here of a person who only did what was incumbent upon him, and no more. Therefore God responds in a similar fashion (“I will do what is incumbent upon Me”), blessing the Jewish people for their observance of the *mitzvos*, but without “extending” Himself to do so in a supernatural fashion.

By contrast, *Parshas Bechukosai* speaks of a person who “toils in the study of Torah” and the observance of *mitzvos* (*Rashi*, *Vayikra* 26:3), beyond his natural tendencies and abilities. Consequently, God responds to such a person (not merely with “what is incumbent upon Me,” but) with blessings that break through the limitations of nature.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 115ff.)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE SHEMA

While the second paragraph of the *Shema* appears to be little more than a repetition of the first paragraph (above 6:4-9), with various additions and changes, *Chasidic* thought explains that the two paragraphs are fundamentally different.

The first paragraph of the *Shema* is speaking from the realm where Godliness is visibly present. (Thus it is found in *Parshas Va'eschanan*, where Moshe requested, “Please let me cross over and see the good land”—3:25). The second paragraph, however, speaks to a Jew who is devoid of open Godly revelation from Above; (thus it is found in *Parshas Eikev*, which means “heel,” a particularly “uninspired” part of the human body).

Consequently:

- The first paragraph speaks of loving God (not only “with all your heart and with all your soul,” but) “with all your might” (6:3), alluding to an unlimited form of love, which is granted to a person by revelation from Above. In the second paragraph

however, one is commanded to serve God only “with all your heart and with all your soul,” since no further Divine assistance is available.

- At the level of the first paragraph, where Godliness is revealed, a person will fulfill the *mitzvos* naturally, without needing to be warned of the consequences of non-observance. In the second paragraph, however, where Godly revelation is absent, it is necessary to mention punishments (v. 16-17).
- Despite the apparent superiority of the first paragraph (Godly revelation), there is nevertheless an advantage to the second paragraph of the *Shema*. For the second paragraph represents the universal relevance of Torah to every time and circumstance, even when Godly revelation is absent. Thus, *Rashi* stresses here that Torah is relevant not only to those capable of studying it, but also: “As soon as the child knows how to speak, teach him Torah” (*Rashi* to v. 19).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 79ff.)

וְתִסְגְּדוּן לְהוֹן: י וְיִתְקוֹף הַגָּזַא דְּיִי בְכוּן וַיַּחֲדוּ
 ית שְׂמִינָא וְלֹא יְהִי מִטְרָא וְאַרְעָא לֹא תִתֵּן ית
 עַלְלִתָּהּ וְתִיבְדוּן בְּפָרִיעַ מֵעַל אַרְעָא מִבְּתָא
 דְּיִי יִהְיֶה לְכוּן: יי וְתִשׁוּנוּן ית פְּתִיגְמֵי אֱלִין עַל
 לְבָכוּן וְעַל נַפְשָׁכוּן וְתִקְטְרוּן יתְהוּן לְאַת עַל
 יִדְכוּן וַיְהוּן לְתַפְלִין בֵּין עֵינֵיכוּן: יט וְתִלְפוּן
 יתְהוּן ית בְּנִיבוּן לְמַלְלָא בְּהוּן בְּמַתְבָּךְ
 בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְמִהְבְּךָ בְּאַרְחָא וּבְמִשְׁבְּבְךָ וּבְמִקְיָמְךָ:

וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: י וְחָרָה אַפ־יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת־
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהִיאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ
 וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִהָרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבָחָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לְכֶם:
 יי וְשִׁמְתֶם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהַ עַל־לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם
 אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יְדֹכֶם וְהִיוּ לְטוֹשֶׁטֶת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: יט וְלִמְדֹתֶם
 אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בְּדַרְךָ

— רש"י —

שנאמר והיו ימיו מאה ועשרים שנה³, דור המצול לא היה להם ממי ללמוד
 ואחס ים לכם ממי ללמוד! (יח) ושמתם את דברי. אף לאחר שהגלו היו
 מזויינים צמאות, הניחו תפילין, עשו מזוזות, כדי שלא יהיו לכם חדשים
 כשתחזרו. וכן הוא אומר הליצי לך ליונים⁴: (טז) לדבר בם. משעה שהבין יודע
 לדבר, למדכו תורה טוב לנו משכ⁵, שיכא זה למוד דבורו. מכאן אמרו,
 כשהתינוק מתחיל לדבר חזיו מסיח עמו בלשון הקדש ומלמדו תורה, ואם לא
 עשה כן הרי הוא כאלו קוצרו, שנאמר ולמדתם אותם את בניכם לדבר צם וגו'⁶:

אחרים לעודדיכם, לועק אליו ואינו עונה, נמלא עשוי לו כנכרי¹: (יז) את
 יבולה. אף מה שאתה מוציל לה, כענין שנאמר² זרעתם הרצב וכבא מעט¹:
 ואבדתם מהרה. על כל שאר היסורין אגלה אתכם מן האדמה, שגרמה לכם
 לחטוא. משל למלך ששלח בנו לבית המסכה, והיה יושב ומפקידו אל תאכל יותר
 מלכך שחבא נקי לביתך, ולא השגיח בזן הכוא, אכל ושמה יותר מלכך והקיא
 וטקף את כל בני המסכה. נעלוכו זידיו וזרגליו וזרקוהו אחורי פלטרין¹:
 מהרה. איני נותן לכם ארכא. ואם תאמרו והלא נתנה ארכא לדור המצול,

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Are the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* obligatory at all times? (v. 18)

RASHI: Even after you go into exile, make yourselves distinctive with My commandments: Put on *tefilin* and make *mezuzos*, so that they will not be new [and unfamiliar] to you when you return—as the verse states, “Set up markers for yourself” (Jeremiah 31:20).

MIZRACHI: *Rashi* was troubled why the observance of these *mitzvos* is mentioned immediately after the threat of exile in verse 17.

GUR ARYEH: How can *Rashi* claim that this verse is required to teach us that the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* apply “even after you go

into exile,” when these are *personal* obligations which are not dependent on living in the Land of Israel?

The answer is, that during the exile one might think that the Jewish people would indeed be exempt from *tefilin* and *mezuzah*. The worries of the exile would exempt a person from *tefilin*, which require total concentration; and, as a wandering nation, the Jewish people would not purchase any property which would obligate them in *mezuzah*.

This verse teaches us that during exile a person should clear his mind of worry to ensure that he is obligated in *tefilin*, and purchase a house so that he will be obligated in *mezuzah*.

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🕒 OBSERVING THE MITZVOS WHILE IN EXILE (v. 18)

Rashi's comment to verse 18 prompts the following questions:

- What was troubling *Rashi*?
- Tefilin* and *mezuzah* are not *mitzvos* that are dependent on residing in the Land of Israel, so why does the verse need to tell us that even after being exiled, the Jewish people are still obligated in *tefilin* and *mezuzah* [as *Gur Aryeh* asks]?
- In addition to *tefilin* (v. 18) and *mezuzah* (v. 20), the current passage also mentions (between the above two verses) the *mitzvah* of teaching one's child Torah (v. 19). Why did *Rashi* mention only *tefilin* and *mezuzah*, and omit the *mitzvah* of teaching Torah?

THE EXPLANATION

a.) At first glance, it would appear that *Rashi* was troubled by the question: Why does the Torah repeat the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* here when they have already been commanded in the first paragraph of the *Shema* (6:8-9)?

However, if this problem *alone* was troubling *Rashi* he could have explained the repetition more simply, in a similar fashion to his comment

on verse 13 above: “Has scripture not already stated ‘with all your heart and with all your soul’ (Devarim 6:5)? That was addressed to the individual, and this is addressed to the community.”

Likewise, in our case, if *Rashi* was troubled by repetition alone, he could have answered that the *mitzvos* are repeated here as a warning to the community.

Therefore, it would appear that, *in addition* to the repetition, *Rashi* was troubled why the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* were written here immediately after the threat of exile [as *Mizrachi* writes].

Rashi thus answers, “Even after you go into exile, make yourselves distinctive with My commandments,” for this explains *both*, i.) The repetition of the *mitzvos* here; and ii.) The juxtaposition to the threat of exile.

b.) The reason why (at the literal level) we might imagine that *tefilin* and *mezuzah* would not be obligatory outside the Land of Israel is because: When introducing the first paragraph of the *Shema* (where the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* are commanded), the Torah states, “This is the body of commandments, the suprarational commands and the rational commands, that God, your God, commanded (me) to teach you,

¹⁷ Then the anger of God will be kindled against you! He will close up the skies, and there will be no rain. The ground will not yield its produce, and you will perish quickly from the good land that God is giving you.

¹⁸ (Even after you go into exile) you should (continue to) place these words of Mine upon your heart and upon your soul. You should bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they should be “totafos” between your eyes. ¹⁹ (From infancy) you should teach these (words) to your sons to (be accustomed to) speak of them, when you sit in your house and when you walk on the way, when you lie down (at night)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Is a woman obligated in Torah study? (v. 19)

TALMUD: How do we know that a woman is not obligated to teach herself Torah?

Because the verse states **וְלַמְדָתָם** (“you should teach”) [which is identical to the word] **וְלַמְדָתָם** (“you should study”—*Devarim* 5:1) [with different vocalization. From here we equate teaching with studying, indicating that] one whom others are commanded to teach is commanded to teach oneself, but one whom others are not commanded to teach, is not commanded to teach oneself.

And from where do we know that there is no obligation to teach a woman? From the verse: “You should teach these (words) to your sons,” which excludes teaching “your daughters” (*Kidushin* 29b).

ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH: Women are required to recite the blessings made on Torah study, for they are obligated to study the *mitzvos* which are incumbent upon them, in order to know how to perform them, and in order to [know how to] refrain from all the prohibitions [of the Torah] which they are warned against transgressing to the same extent as men (*Orach Chaim* 47:10, from *Sefer Ha’agur*, ch. 2).

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to be performed in the Land which you are about to enter and possess” (6:1). This might lead a person to think that the *mitzvos* of *tefilin* and *mezuzah* are only obligatory when the Jewish people possess the Land of Israel, but that when they are exiled, the obligation ceases. Therefore, our verse is required to confirm, “Even after you go into exile...put on *tefilin* and make *mezuzos*.”

c.) As for the question why *Rashi* did not mention the continued requirement of Torah study during exile, there are a number of possible explanations:

i.) The Torah is a guide as to how to observe the *mitzvos*. Thus, the continued requirement to observe the *mitzvos* in exile *logically includes* a requirement to study the Torah.

ii.) If the requirement to study Torah did indeed apply only in the Land of Israel, then it would not be productive to continue studying Torah in exile, so that the Torah “will not be new [and unfamiliar] to you when you return.” For human nature is such that new subject matter actually *enhances* study, since people generally find repetition and review tedious. So if there was no obligation to study Torah outside the Land of Israel it might be better to *stop* studying while in exile, so that upon returning to the Land, the Torah could be studied with fresh excitement.

In the case of practical *mitzvos*, however, such as *tefilin* and *mezuzah*, observance actually becomes easier by continued practice, without interruption.

iii.) The requirement to study Torah that is recorded here is *not* a repetition of the *mitzvah* written in the first paragraph of the *Shema*. For, the first paragraph teaches the requirement to teach our *students* (*Rashi* to 6:7), whereas here we are commanded to teach our *children* (*Rashi* to v. 19).

Thus, the fear that a person might think that teaching Torah does not apply outside the Diaspora does not apply in this case, as this fear only applies to *mitzvos* taught in the first paragraph of the *Shema* (which is

introduced with the words “This is the body of commandments...to be performed in the land”). The requirement to teach our children, however, was *not* taught in the first paragraph, and is thus being learned here for the first time. So there would be no reason to suspect that we would be exempt from teaching our children Torah outside the land, and consequently, *Rashi* omitted this case.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re’eh* 5729; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 80, notes 6 & 9)

🕯️ A WOMAN’S REQUIREMENT TO STUDY TORAH (v. 19)

Concerning the applicability of the *mitzvah* of Torah study to women, we find a seemingly paradoxical statement in Jewish Law:

On one hand, it is clearly ruled that a woman is not obligated in the *mitzvah* of Torah study*, based on the **Talmud**.

It is thus difficult to understand, on the other hand, why Jewish Law mandates that women *should* make the morning blessings on the study of Torah.

Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch explains (based on the commentary of *Sefer Ha’agur*) that a woman makes these blessings, despite her exemption from the *mitzvah* of Torah study, because women “are obligated to study about the *mitzvos* which are incumbent upon them.”

However:

a.) According to this logic, the study incumbent upon women is not a *mitzvah* in itself, but a *means to an end*. I.e. her study is not “Torah study” in its own right, but rather, a *preparatory phase* of her observance; being that a woman is required to observe many *mitzvos*, and refrain from prohibitions. The blessings on Torah study, however, are to thank God for the requirement of study for *its own sake***.

b.) According to the above logic, once a woman knows all the laws applicable to her, she no longer has a requirement to study Torah. So how can the *Alter Rebbe* write *unequivocally*, “Women are required to

* See also *Rambam, Laws of Torah Study* 1:1; *ibid.* 13; *Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De’ah* 246:6; *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Torah Study* 1:14. **It would appear that she could recite the first blessing on Torah study (“Blessed are You...who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us about the words of Torah”), since a woman is indeed “commanded” to study the laws applicable to her. The question concerns the second blessing recited daily (“Blessed are You...who has chosen us from among all the nations and given us His Torah. Blessed are you God Who gives the Torah”) for a woman was not “given” the privilege of Torah study as a *mitzvah* in its own right. (See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 150, note at foot of the page; *ibid.* p. 39, note 29).

כ ותכתבננו על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך: כא למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים על הארץ: ס [שבועי ומפמיר] כב כי אם שומר תשמרון את כל המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם לעשתה לאהבה את יהוה אלהיכם ללכת בכל דרכיו ולדבקה בו: כג והוריש יהוה את כל הגוים האלה מלפניכם וירשתם גוים גדלים ועצמים מכם: כד כל המקום אשר תדרוך פה רגלכם בו לכם יהיה מן המדבר והלבנון מן הנהר נהר פרת ועד הים האחרון יהיה גבולכם: כה לא יתיצב איש בפניכם פחדכם ומוראכם יתן | יהוה אלהיכם על פני כל הארץ אשר תדרכו בה כאשר

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דבר לכם: ס ס ס

ק"א פסוקים, אי"ק סימן. יעל"א סימן.

כ"ט

מכם. אחס גזורים, והס גזורים מכם, שאם לא שישראל גזורים, מה השבח הכהו שמשבח את האמוריים לומר ועלומים מכם, אלא אחס גזורים משאר האומות והס גזורים מכם: (כה) לא יתיצב איש וגו'. אין לי אלא איש, אומה ומשפחה ואשה זכשפיה מנין, תלמוד לומר לא יתיצב מכל מקום. אם כן מה תלמוד לומר איש, אפילו כעוג מלך הצען? פחדכם ומוראכם. והלא פחד הוא מורא, אלא פחדכם על הקרובים ומוראכם על הרחוקים: פחד. לשון צעיתת פחוס: מורא. לשון דאגה מימים רבים? כאשר דבר לכם. וכיכן דבר, את³ אימתי אשלח לפניך וגו'? חסלת פרשת עקב

(כא) למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם. אם עשיתם כן ירבו, ואם לאו לא ירבו, שדברי תורה נדרשין מכלל לאו הו, ומכלל הן לאו! לתת להם. לתת לכם אין כתיב כאן, אלא לתת להם, מכאן מנינו למדים תחיית המתים מן התורה! (כב) שמור תשמרון. אזכרת שמירות הרצה להזהר בתלמודו שלא ישתכח! ללכת בכל דרכיו. הוא רחוס ואתה תהא רחוס, הוא גומל חסדים ואתה גומל חסדים! ולדבקה בו. אפשר לומר כן, והלא אם אוכלת הוא, אלא הדבק בתלמידים וצחכמים ומעלה אני עליך כאלו נדצקת צו! (כג) והוריש ה'. עשיתם מה שעליכם, אף אני אעשה מה שעלי ועצמים

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recite the blessings made on Torah study," without qualifying precisely when this obligation applies?

THE EXPLANATION

The Mishnah teaches: "A sacrifice can be invalidated [through an error] in any one of the four procedures: 'slaughtering', 'receiving' [the blood in a sacred vessel], 'conveying' [it to the Altar] and 'throwing' [it onto the Altar]."

"Rabbi Shimon permits a sacrifice [if the error occurs] during 'conveying,' for he used to say: 'It is impossible to offer a sacrifice without slaughtering, receiving and throwing; but it is possible to offer one without conveying. For one could slaughter right next to the Altar and throw [the blood from there]'" (Zevachim 13a).

Rabbi Shimon's logic is that "conveying" the blood is not a full-fledged service in its own right, but merely a "means to an end." Therefore, an

error in this procedure would not render the sacrifice invalid, since it is a procedure which could have been dispensed with.

What, then, is the reason why the first opinion in the *mishnah* maintains that a sacrifice is invalidated by an error during "conveying," if the entire process of conveying is not really necessary?

The Rogatchover Ga'on writes that this teaches us a profound principle of Jewish law: That when *halachah* requires a procedure to take place, even if it appears to be no more than a means to an end, it becomes an end in itself.

Thus, in the above case, even though "conveying" the blood is not an "end" in itself (as is evidenced from the fact that it could be dispensed with), nevertheless, when the need for it arises, it becomes a full-fledged service in its own right, which can invalidate the entire sacrifice if performed incorrectly (see *Tzafnas Pane'ach al Hatorah, Bamidbar 33:2* and sources cited loc. cit; *Tzafnas Paneach leMoreh Nevuchim 1:72**).

* For the philosophical implications of this stance, and its connection with the Ba'al Shem Tov's conception of Divine Providence, see *Sicha* of the second day of Shavuot 5728, ch. 8 (*Sichos Kodesh 5728*, vol 2, p. 180ff.)

and when you get up (in the morning).²⁰ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your (public) gates.²¹ (All this is) in order that your days and your children's days will be prolonged upon the land which God swore to your forefathers to give them, so long as the skies will be above the earth.

🌀 MITZVOS: KEY TO CONQUEST OF THE LAND 🌀

11:22

SEVENTH
READING
& MAFTIR

For if you will always be careful to keep these commandments which I am commanding you to keep, to love God, your God, to follow all His ways, and to cleave to Him,²³ then God will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will take over nations that are greater and stronger than you.²⁴ Every place upon which the soles of your feet will tread will be yours. Your boundary will be from the desert and the Lebanon, and from the river, the Euphrates River, until the western sea.²⁵ No man will stand before you. God your God will cast the fear and dread of you upon all the land where you will tread, just as He said to you.

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A similar argument could be offered in our case:

Initially, the need for a woman to study Torah arose, not as an exercise in Torah study *per se*, but a necessary step towards observing the *mitzvos* in which she is obligated. However, *when halachah requires an activity to take place, even if it appears to be no more than a means to an end, it becomes an end in itself.* Therefore, the fact that Jewish Law now requires her to study Torah, (even though the need for her study arose initially as a “means to an end”), signifies that the Torah study of a woman has become a means of serving God in its own right; an “end” in itself.

Consequently, she is required to make the blessings on the Torah every morning, since whenever she studies, it is indeed an act of Torah study* through which she serves God, and not merely a preparatory phase towards the observance of a *mitzvah* at a later time. Likewise, even if a woman has already mastered the laws pertaining to all the *mitzvos* incumbent upon her, she still makes the blessings on Torah study, since her Torah study has value in its own right.

A TALMUDIC PRECEDENT

The above ruling, that a woman makes the blessings on the Torah since her Torah study has independent value, appears to be based on the Talmudic teaching, “*Even a non-Jew who busies himself with Torah study (i.e. those parts which pertain to the seven Noachide laws), is like a High Priest*” (*Bava Kama* 38a).

Tosfos (ibid.) connects this with the verse which describes Torah as being “*more precious than pearls* (פְּנִינִים),” on which the Talmud expounds, that the Torah is “*more precious*” than “*the High Priest who enters the innermost sanctum* (לְכַהֵן יִלְפָּנֵי יְיָ)” (*Sotah* 4b).**

From here we see that even though a non-Jew is not obligated in the *mitzvah* of Torah study for its own sake***, and he is required to study the Torah only as a means to an end (to know how to observe the Noachide Laws), nevertheless, through this exercise he can appreciate the

unique and precious qualities of the Torah. Thus, his Torah study becomes spiritually uplifting in its own right.

And certainly if this is true for a non-Jew (to whom the Torah was not given), then a Jewish woman can certainly appreciate that the Torah is “*more precious than pearls,*” and enjoy its study as a spiritually uplifting method of serving God.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 37ff.)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

While in times gone by, women and girls were not taught Torah at all (see *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13), nowadays it is not only *permissible* to teach women even the deepest parts of the Torah, but it is an absolute *necessity* to do so. For, in the modern world, women are no longer confined to the home and they are highly exposed to the “market-place” of secular ideas. Thus, if the policy of not teaching women Torah at an advanced level is upheld, the result will be that a girl's sophisticated worldly knowledge—which is likely to harbor many ideas that are antithetical to Torah—will be insubstantially compensated for by her rudimentary Torah knowledge.

Furthermore, it goes without saying that Chasidic teachings should be taught to women and girls, as this provides a person with the tools to “*know the God of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart*” (*Chronicles* I 28:9), in which their obligation is identical to men and boys.

(Based on *Sichos Kodesh* 5741 vol. 2, p. 809ff.;
Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750)

* Nevertheless, she does not fulfill the *mitzvah* of Torah study, since she is not commanded *directly* to study Torah. Rather, her obligation to study stems indirectly from her obligation to observe the *mitzvos*. However, she may still make the blessing, “*Blessed are You...who has given us His Torah,*” since women were indeed given the privilege of Torah study (indirectly), as an obligation which stems out of the *mitzvos* in which they are obligated. The woman is also enjoined to support her husband and sons in Torah study (See *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13), even though she can study Torah herself, since a man's (direct) obligation—and the accompanying merit—is greater, and thus by supporting them she shares some of this greater merit. ** For an explanation of this teaching, see *Likutei Sichos* vol 14, p. 44, note 57; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Naso* 5730. ***Indeed, if not related to the Noachide Laws, he is prohibited to study Torah (*Sanhedrin* 59a).



Parshas Eikev contains 6 positive *mitzvos* & 2 prohibitions

1. Not to derive benefit from the ornamentation of an idol [7:25].
2. Not to possess an object of idol-worship or to derive benefit from it [7:26].
3. To bless God after eating bread [8:10].
4. To love converts [10:19].
5. To fear God [10:20].
6. To pray to God [10:20].
7. To associate with and attach oneself to Torah scholars [10:20].
8. To swear by God's Name when taking an oath [10:20].



parshas Re'eh

פרשת ראה

☞ The Name of the Parsha ☞

Re'eh means "See!" as in the opening verse of our Parsha: "See! I am giving to you today a blessing and a curse."

What, exactly, is the Torah demanding, in asking us to "see" God's blessings and curses?

Broadly speaking, a person's observance of the precepts of Judaism could fall into one of three categories:

a.) *Plain obedience.* At this level, a person is willing to observe the *mitzvos* because he is aware of a Higher Authority. However, his observance is not inspired by an understanding or appreciation of the Torah; he simply "accepts the yoke of heaven."

b.) *Intellectual appreciation.* A higher level is where a person not only observes the precepts of the Torah out of deference to a Higher Authority, but he also has an intellectual appreciation of the importance of observing

the *mitzvos*, and he understands the rewards that *mitzvah*-observance brings.

However, even this person has not yet reached perfection. For intellectual conviction alone—while immensely powerful—still leaves room to explore other avenues, so it does not represent an *absolute* commitment.

Thus, the highest level of *mitzvah* observance is:

c.) *Vision.* At this level, one does not merely *appreciate* the value of keeping the Torah's precepts, one *sees* it. I.e. the necessity and positive results of observing the *mitzvos* become as clear and self-evident as seeing a physical object with one's eyes.

And it is this third level which our Parsha commands—and spiritually empowers—every Jew to reach, with the words: "See! I am giving to you today a blessing and a curse."

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh 5743)

כו תזי די יאנא זיב קדמיכון יומא דין ברבון ולוטיין: כו ית ברבון די תקבלוין לפקודיא דיין אלהיכון די יאנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין: כח ולוטיא אם לא תקבלוין לפקודיא דיין אלהיכון ותסמון מן ארמא די יאנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין למהך בטר טעות עממיא די לא ידעתון: כט ויהי ארי יעלנה יי אלהך לארעא די אתה על לתמן למירתה ותתן ית מברכיא על מורא דגרוים וית מלטיא על מורא דעיבל: ל הלא אנון בעברא דירדנא אחורי ארה מעלני שמשא בארע בנענאה דיתב במישרא לקבל נגללא בסטר מישרי מורה: לא ארי אתון עברין ית ירדנא למעל

כו ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה: כז את הברכה אשר תשמעו אל מצות יהוה אלהיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום: כח והקללה אם לא תשמעו אל מצות יהוה אלהיכם וסרתם מן הדרך אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ללכת אחרי אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעתם: ס כט והיה כי יביאך יהוה אלהיך אל הארץ אשר אתה בא שמה לרשתה ונתתה את הברכה על הר גרזים ואת הקללה על הר עיבל: ל הלא תמה בעבר הירדן אחרי דרך מבוא השמש בארץ הכנעני הישב בערבה מול הגלגל אצל אלוני מורה: לא כי אתם עברים את הירדן לבא לרשת את הארץ

— כש"י —

ופתחו צקללה! (ל) הלא המה. נתן כהן סימן³: אחרי. אחרי העצרת הירדן הרבה והלאה למרחוק. וזכו לשון אחרי. כל מקום שנאמר אחרי, מופלג הוא⁴: דרך מבוא השמש. להלן מן הירדן לנד מערב. וטעם המקרא מוכיח שם שני דברים, שנקודו בשני טעמים, אחרי נקוד בפשטא, ודרך נקוד במשפל והוא דגוש, ואם היה אחרי דרך דבור אחד, היה נקוד אחרי במשפט שזופר הפוך, ודרך בפשטא ורפה: מול הגלגל. רחוק מן הגלגל⁵: אלוני מורה. הוא שם, שנאמר⁶ עד מקום שם עד אלון מורה⁷: (לא) כי אתם עוברים את הירדן וגו'. נסים של ירדן יהיו סימן צידכס

(כו) ראה אנכי נתן. ברכה וקללה. האמורות זכר גריזים וזכר עיבל: (כז) את הברכה. על מנת אשר תשמעו: (כח) מן הדרך אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ללכת וגו'. הא למדת שכל הטוהר שזודה זרה הרי הוא סר מכל הדרך שנלטו ישראל. מכאן אמרו כל המודה שזודה זרה ככופר בכל החורה כולה: (כט) ונתתה את הברכה. כתרומתו ית מברכיא, את המברכים: על הר גרזים. כלפי הר גרזים הופכין פניהם ופתחו בצרכה, ברוך האיש אשר לא יעשה פסל ומסכה וגו'. כל הארורים שזפרשה² אמרו תחלה בלשון ברוך, ואחר כך הפכו פניהם כלפי הר עיבל

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is the blessing and curse mentioned here? (v. 26)

RASHI: Those [blessings and curses] which were said at Mount Gerizim and Mount Aival (See 27:15-26 below).

MIZRACHI: At first glance, the “blessing and curse” mentioned in our verse were given here, as the verse stresses, “I am giving to you today a blessing and curse.”

Rashi informs us, however, that the “blessing and curse” were not actually given here, but rather, that this refers to the later event detailed in *Parshas Ki Savo*, where blessings and curses were recited at Mount Gerizim and Mount Aival.

Thus, when our verse states that the “blessing and curse” were given “today,” it does not mean that the blessings and curses were actually given here in *Parshas Re’eh*. Rather, the verse is to be understood: “See! I am giving to you today the precise sequence of

blessings and curses which are later to be given at Mount Gerizim and Mount Aival.” (This sequence is then described in verses 29-30.)

If you still argue that perhaps the blessings and curses were indeed said by Moshe here, and that they were merely repeated at Mount Gerizim and Mount Aival—two responses could be given:

a.) It is unreasonable to suggest that the blessings and curses would have been repeated in such a short time of less than two months.

b.) The Torah makes no reference to Moshe issuing any specific blessings or curses here, and in *Parshas Ki Savo*, no indication is given that the blessings and curses are merely being repeated.

● What does ברכה וקללה mean? (v. 26)

ONKELOS: “A blessing and a Curse.”

TARGUM YONASON: “A blessing and its substitute.” (See “Sparks”)

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🔗 “A BLESSING AND A CURSE” (v. 26)

Upon reading the opening of our *Parsha*, *Rashi* was troubled why the verse states, “I am giving to you today a blessing and a curse,” when we do not find that any blessings or curses are given here at all.

Rashi answers that the blessings and curses were indeed given by God to the Jewish people here in *Parshas Re’eh*, but that they were not actually

“said [until a later date] at Mount Gerizim and Mount Aival.” At first glance it is somewhat perplexing that God should give a blessing and a curse here, when they were not actually uttered until a later date. However, *Rashi* felt that it was unnecessary to discuss this point, since the reader will already be familiar with the idea that precepts can be given well before they become applicable, as we find for example in the case of

A BLESSING AND A CURSE

11:26 **S**ee! I am giving to you today a blessing and a curse.

—²⁷ The blessing (is being given) on the basis* that you will listen to the commandments of God, your God, which I am commanding you today. ²⁸ And the curse (will come) if you do not listen to the commandments of God, your God, and go astray from the way I am commanding you today, to follow other gods, which are unacquainted to you—

²⁹ What will happen is, when God, your God, will bring you to the Land which you are going to come and take possession of, you should place (the people who will recite) the blessing (facing) towards Mount Gerizim, and (when they recite) the curse (they should turn so that they face) towards Mount Aival.**

³⁰ (These mountains) are to be found well beyond the other side of the Jordan, (to the west) where the sun sets, in the land of the Canaanites, who dwell in the plain, far from Gilgal, near (Shechem in) the plains of Moreh.

³¹ When you cross the Jordan (you will see miracles that will be a sign for you that you are going) to come and take possession of the Land which God, your God, is giving you. You will take possession of

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the many *mitzvos* that are dependent upon living in the Land of Israel, which were given well before the Jewish people entered the Land.

In the final analysis, we see that Rashi explains how our verse can be understood *literally*: “I am giving to you today a blessing and a curse,”

since the blessings and curses were indeed *given* to the Jewish people at this point.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* 5748)

The Last Word

“A BLESSING AND A CURSE...” (v. 26)

The Almighty did not want the soul to eat “bread of shame,” (i.e. sustenance given gratuitously, without having been earned by the recipient); He therefore made it possible for man to serve Him in a meaningful way with toil of body and soul. Through our endeavors in *avoda* [service of God] we are Divinely enabled to earn all manner of goodness...

The difficulties, trials, and tests of life are themselves the means by which we are to attain our ultimate objective—that the soul achieve the lofty spiritual level it once possessed before it descended into the body: “*The soul that you have given me is pure*” (*Text of Morning Prayer*). The purpose of life is for the soul to regain that level of original “purity” and even transcend it—for one hour of *teshuvah* [repentance] and good deeds in this world is worth more than all the lifetime of the spiritual World to Come.

So you see that life’s trials, tragedies and difficulties actually bring us closer to our goal, our *raison d’etre*; they are part of the divine system of toil and endeavor enabling us, finite mortals, to reach the highest levels of rewards and goodness—which can only be earned by meaningful “labor” and effort. It follows that one must not allow the difficulties of life’s trials (or even one’s failure from time to time) to overcome the double joy of being God’s children and of having received His promise, “*Your people are all righteous*” (Isaiah 60:21).

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

Sparks of Chasidus

How could God, who is the very essence of good, issue a curse (v. 26)? Are we not taught, “*No evil thing is issued from Above*” (*Bereishis Rabah* 51:3)?

In truth, however, God does not issue curses at all, and only blessings are “issued from Above.” The problem lies “below,” in our ability to receive God’s blessings. If a person is not a fitting receptacle for the goodness which God bestows upon him, he will simply be unable to accommodate God’s blessings. The result will be that after its downward path through the spiritual worlds, the blessing is received in a way that appears, to our human eyes, as a curse (See *Shaloh, Re’eh* 374b).

At least that is how it appears in the spiritually dampened moments of exile. Thus **Onkelos**, who authored his work amid the Babylonian exile, interpreted the word קללה as “curse” (See *Classic Questions*). However, **Targum Yonason** wrote his commentary in the Land of Israel during Temple times, when even the average person could easily appreciate that “*no evil thing is issued from Above*.” Thus, he rendered קללה as “substitute” (הילופא), indicating that God Himself only issues blessings, but that His blessings may later become “substituted” by something else.

And this also explains why, in the Messianic Era, we will not only *forgive* God for the sufferings of exile, but we will *thank* Him (see *Isaiah* 12:1), for then it will be *evident* how even God’s “curses” were in fact blessings in disguise.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 133ff.; vol. 4, p. 1091)

* See Rashi here, explained in *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, pp. 119-120.

** See 27:15-26 below.

למירת ית ארעא דיין אלהכון יחב לבון ותירתון יתה ותיתבון בה: לב ותטרון למעבד ית כל קמיא וית דיניא די אנא יחב קדמיכון יומא דיין: א אלין קמיא ודיניא די תטרון למעבד בארעא דיהב יי אלהא דאבהתך לך למירתה כל יומיא די אתון קימין על ארעא: ב אפדא תאבדון ית כל אתריא די פלחו תמן עמיא די אתון ירתין יתהון ית טענתהון על טוריא רמיא ועל רמתא ותחות כל אילן עבון: ג ותתצעון ית אגוריהון ותתברון ית קמתהון ואשיריהון תוקדון בניקא וצלמי טענתהון תקוצצון ותוקדון ית שמהון מן אתרא ההוא: ד לא תעבדון פן קדם יי אלהכון: ה אלהן לאתרא די יתרעי יי אלהכון מכל שבטיכון לאשראה שכנתה תמן לבית שכנתה תתצעון ותיתון לתמן: ו ותיתון לתמן עלותיכון ונקסת קודשיכון וית מעשרתיכון וית אפרשות ידכון ונדריכון ונדבתיכון ויכורי תורכון וענכון: ז ותיכלון תמן קדם יי אלהכון ותחדון בכל אושטות ידכון אתון ואנש פתיכון די ברבך יי אלהך: ח לא תעבדון ככל די אנתנא עבדין קאא יומא דיין גבר כל מן דבשר קדמוהי: ט ארי לא אתיתון עד פען לבית גיחא ולאחסנא דיין אלהך יחב לך: י ותעברון ית ירדנא ותיתבון בארעא דיין אלהכון מחסן יתכון ויניח לבון מכל בעלי דבביכון מסחור סחור ותיתבון לרחצון:

אשר יהוה אלהיכם נתן לכם וירשתם אתה וישבתם בה: לב ושמרתם לעשות את כל החקים ואת המשפטים אשר אנכי נתן לפניכם היום: יב א אלה החקים והמשפטים אשר תשמרון לעשות בארץ אשר נתן יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך לרשתה כל הימים אשר אתם חיים על האדמה: ב אבד תאבדון את כל המקומות אשר עבדו שם הגוים אשר אתם ירשים אתם את אלהיהם על ההרים הרמים ועל הגבעות ותחת כל עץ רענן: ג ונתעתם את מזבחתם ושמרתם את מצבתם ואשריהם תשרפון באש ופסילי אלהיהם תגדעון ואבדתם את שמם מן המקום ההוא: ד לא תעשון כן ליהוה אלהיכם: ה כי אם אל המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם מכל שבטיכם לשום את שמו שם לשכנו תדרשו ובאת שמה: ו והבאתם שמה עלתיכם וזבחיכם ואת מעשרתיכם ואת תרומת ידכם ונדריכם ונדבתיכם ובכרת בקרבם וצאנכם: ז ואכלתם שם לפני יהוה אלהיכם ושמחתם בכל משלה ידכם אתם ובתיכם אשר ברבך יהוה אלהיך: ח לא תעשון ככל אשר אנחנו עשים פה היום איש פלה הישר בעיניו: ט כי לא באתם עד עתה אל המנוחה ואל הנחלה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך: י ועברתם את הירדן וישבתם בארץ אשר יהוה אלהיכם מנחיל אתכם והניח לכם מכל

כש"י

הזכורים, שנאמר צהם ולקח הכהן הטנא מידך: ובבורות בקרבם. לתחס לכהן ויקריבם שם: (ז) אשר ברבך ה'. לפי הצרכה הצא: (ח) לא תעשון ככל אשר אנחנו עשים וגו'. מוסב למעלה על כי חסם עוצרים את הירדן וגו' כשתעברו את הירדן מיד מותרים חסם להקריב צבמה, כל ארבע עשרה שנה של כבוש וחלוק, וצבמה לא תקריבו כל מה שחסם מקריבים פה היום צבמשן, שהוא עמס ונמשח וכו' כשר להקריב צו טעלות ואשמות נדרים ונדבות, אבל צבמה אין קרב אלא הנידר והנידב. וזכו איש כל הישר בעיניו, נדרים ונדבות שחסם מתנדבים על ידי שישר בעיניכם להביאם ולא על ידי חובה, חותם תקריבו צבמה: (ט) בי לא באתם. כל חותן ארבע עשרה שנה: עד עתה. כמו עדיין: אל המנוחה. זו שילה: הנחלה. זו ירושלים: (י) ועברתם את הירדן וישבתם בארץ. שתחלקו, ויחא כל אחד מכיר את חלקו ואת שצטו: והניח לכם. לאחר כבוש וחלוק ומנוחה מן הגוים אשר הניח ה' לכם צם את ישראל: ואין זאת אלא צימי דוד, אז:

שתצאו ותירשו את הארץ: (ז) אבד תאבדון. אבד ואחר כך תאבדון, מכאן לעוקר עבודה זרה שצריך לשרש אחריה: את כל המקומות אשר עבדו שם וגו'. ומה תאבדון מהם, את אלהיהם אשר על הכרים: (ג) מזבח. של אבנים הרבה: מצבה. של אבן אחת, וכו' צימוס ששנויה צבמשנה, אבן שחצבה מתחלחה לצימוס: אשרה. אילן הנעצד: ואבדתם את שמם. לנכות להם שם לגנאי, בית גליא קורין לה בית כריא, עין כל עין קוד: (ד) לא תעשון כן. להקטיר לשמים בכל מקום, כי חס צמקום אשר יבחר. דבר אחר ונתלתם את מזבחותם ואבדתם את שמם לא תעשון כן, אזכרה למוחק את השם ולנותן אבן מן המזבח או מן העזרה. אמר רבי ישמעאל וכי תעלה על דעתך ישראל נותנין את המזבחות, אלא שלא תעשו כמעשיהם, ויגרמו עונותיכם למקדש אבותיכם שיחוצ: (ה) לשכנו תדרשו. זה משכן שילה: (ו) זבחיכם. שלמים של חובה: מעשרתיכם. מעשר צבמה ומעשר שני לאכול לפנים מן החומה: תרומת ידכם. אלו

it and settle in it. ³² So be careful about observing all the suprarational commands and rational commands that I am presenting before you today.

🌀 MITZVOS TO BE OBSERVED UPON ENTERING THE LAND 🌀

12 **T**hese are the suprarational commands and rational commands that you should be careful to perform in the Land which God, the God of your fathers, is giving you as a possession for all the days that you live on the earth:

- ² From all the places where the nations—that you will take over—performed acts of worship, upon the high mountains, the hills, and under every lush tree, you should progressively destroy their gods (until nothing remains of them). ³ You should demolish their altars, smash their monuments, burn their idolatrous trees with fire, cut down the graven images of their gods, and spoil the names (of their gods with ridicule, ensuring they have no respect) from that place.

🌀 THE UNIQUENESS OF SHILOH & JERUSALEM 🌀

12:4 **Y**ou should not do any (act of sacrificial worship) to God, your God, ⁵ other than at the site where God, your God, will choose, to place His Name there, from amongst all your tribes. You should seek out His dwelling (place in the Tabernacle at Shiloh) and come there. ⁶ You should bring there your burnt-offerings, and your (obligatory peace-)offerings, your tithes, (your first fruits—which are) lifted from your hand (by the priests)—your vows, your pledges, and the firstborn of your cattle and of your sheep (which are to be given to the priests). ⁷ It is there that you should eat (your sacrifices) before God, your God. Then you and your households will rejoice in all the work of your hands. (You should bring offerings according to the means with) which God, your God, blesses you.

⁸ (When you cross the Jordan, for the first fourteen years, before the Tabernacle at Shiloh is established) you should not (erect private altars to) carry out all the (obligatory sacrifices) that we are currently offering (in the Tabernacle. At that time, private altars will be permitted only for) all (the voluntary sacrifices) which each man sees fit (to offer). ⁹ Obligatory sacrifices will be prohibited at that time, for you will not yet have come to the resting place (at Shiloh) or to the eternal abode (in Jerusalem), which God, your God, is giving you.

¹⁰ You should cross the Jordan, (apportion) the Land that God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance (and) settle in it. Then, (after the conquest and apportionment), He will give you rest from

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● To which “chosen site” do verses 4-7 refer?

RASHI: The Tabernacle at Shiloh* (*Rashi* to v. 5; according to *Gur Aryeh*).

KLI YAKAR: How could the Torah possibly suggest that Shiloh is God’s chosen location, when we know that the site of the Temple in Jerusalem has always been revered as God’s chosen place? Avraham

carried out the *Akeida* there, and we even find that Adam offered his sacrifice there. So how could Shiloh be described as “the site where God, your God, will choose”?

Rather, I maintain that every reference to God’s chosen site here refers to the site of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

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🌀 GOD’S CHOICE OF SHILOH & JERUSALEM (v. 4ff.)

In contrast to the Tabernacle in the desert, which wandered from place to place, the Tabernacle at Shiloh was a *permanent* structure fashioned

from stone. Thus, at Shiloh, the Divine Presence which dwelt in the Tabernacle became associated with a *particular location* for the first time. So Shiloh is referred to by the Torah—according to *Rashi*—as God’s “chosen site.”

* When the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel in 2488, they erected a Tabernacle at Gilgal, which stood for fourteen years, until they had conquered and divided the Land. Then they built the Tabernacle at Shiloh, a stone structure with an animal-skin roof which stood for 369 years, until 2871. They then constructed a Tabernacle at Nov, which stood until Shmuel the prophet died in 2882. This was followed by another Tabernacle in Givon, which stood until the construction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in 2928.

יא ויהי אתקרא די יתרעי יי אלהקון בה לאשראה שכנתה תמן לתמן תיתון ית כל די אנא מפקד יתבון עלותיבון ונגסת קודשיבון מעשרתיבון ואפרשות ידבון וכל שפר נדריבון די תדרון קדם יי: יב ותדרון קדם יי אלהקון אתון ובניבון ובנותיבון ועבדיבון ואמהתיבון ולואה די בקרוביבון ארי לית לה חלק ואחסנא עמבון: יג אסתמר לה דלמא תסק עלותך בכל ארעא די תתוי: יד אלהן באתקרא די יתרעי יי בחד מן שבטיך תמן תסק עלותך ותמן תעבד כל די אנא מפקדך: טו לחוד בכל רעות נפשך תבוס ותיכול בשרא בברכתא די אלהך די יתב לה בכל קרויך מסאבא ודכיא ויכלגה בבשר טביא ואילא: טז לחוד דמא לא תיכלון על ארעא תשהגה כמיא: יז לית לה רשו למיכל בקרויך מעשר עבורך ותמרה ומשחך ובבורי תורה וענה וכל נדריך די תדר

אִיבֵיכֶם מִסְבִּיב וַיִּשְׁבַּתֶּם בְּטַח: [שני] יא וְהָיָה הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־ יבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְשַׁבֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם שָׁמָּה תָבִיאוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם עוֹלֹתֵיכֶם וּבְחִיכֶם מֵעֲשֻׂרְתֵיכֶם וּתְרִמַת יְדֹכֶם וְכֹל מִבְּחַר נְדָרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּרוּ לַיהוָה: יב וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אַתֶּם וּבְנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְעַבְדֵיכֶם וְאִמְהוֹתֵיכֶם וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם כִּי אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק וְנִחְלָה אֶתְכֶם: יג הַשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן־תַּעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ בְּכָל־מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה: יד כִּי אִם־בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יבְחַר יְהוָה בְּאַחַד שְׁבֻטֶיךָ שָׁם תַּעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ וְשָׁם תַּעֲשֶׂה כָּל אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה: טו רַק בְּכָל־אוֹת נִפְשֶׁךָ תִּזְבַּח | וְאִכְלַת בָּשָׂר בְּבִרְכַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ הַטָּמֵא וְהַטְּהוֹר יֵאכְלֶנּוּ בַצִּבִי וּכְאֵיל: טז רַק הַדָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶנּוּ בַמַּיִם: יז לֹא־תוֹכֵל לֶאֱכֹל בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ מֵעֵשֶׂר דְּגָנְךָ וְתִירֹשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ וּבְכִרַת בְּקֹרֶךָ וַצֹּאנֶךָ וְכֹל־נְדָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּר וְנִדְּבַתֶיךָ

רש"י

צדקים שנפל בהם מוס, שיפדו ויאכלו בכל מקום. יכול יפדו על מוס עובר, תלמוד לומר רק³: תזבח ואבלת. אין לך בהם היתר גיזה וחלצ, אלא חכילה על ידי זביחה: הטמא והטהור. לפי שזאו מכת קדשים, שנאמר בהם והשער אשר יגע בכל טמא לא יאכל⁶, הולך להחיר זו, שטמא וטכור אוכלין צקערה אחת: בצבי ובאיל. שאין קרבן זה מהם³: בצבי ובאיל. לפוטון מן הזרוע וכלחיים והקובה: (טז) רק הדם לא תאבלו. אף על פי שאמרתי שאין לך זו זריקת דם צמזמת, לא תאכלנו: תשפכנו במים. לומר לך שאין לריך כסוי. דבר אחר הכי הוא כמים להכשיר את הזרעים³: (יז) לא תוכל. זה הכתוב ליתן לא תעשה על הדבר: לא תוכל. רבי יחושע זן קרחה אומר יכול אתה, אבל אינך רשאי, כיוצא בו ואת היבוס יושבי ירושלים לא יכלו בני יהודה להוריש⁷, יכולים היו, אלא שאינן רשאים, לפי שכרת להם אברהם ברית כשלקח מהם מערת המכפלה. ולא יבוסים היו אלא חתיים היו, אלא על שם העיר ששמה יבוס. כך מפורש צפרקי דרבי אליעזר⁸. והוא שנאמר⁹ כי אם הסיך העורים והפסחים, ללמים שכתבו עליהם את השזועה: ובבורות

(יא) והיה המקום וגו'. צנו לכס צית הצחירה צירושלים. וכן הוא אומר צדוד ויהי כי יש המלך צציתו, וה' הניח לו מכל אוציו מסצבו, ויאמר המלך אל נתן הנביא ראה נא אנכי יושב צצית ארזים, וארון ה' יושב צחור היריעה¹: שמה תביאו וגו'. למעלה אמור לענין שילה וכאן אמור לענין ירושלים, ולכן חלקם הכתוב, ליתן היתר בין זו לזו, משחרצה שילה וצאו לנו, וחרצה נוצ וצאו לגבעון, היו צצמות מותרות, עד שצאו לירושלים²: מבחר נדריכם. מלמד שיצאו מן המוצחר³: (יג) השמר לך. ליתן לא תעשה על הדבר: בכל מקום אשר תראה. אשר יעלה בלך, אבל אתה מקריב על פי נביא, כגון אליהו צהר הכרמל³: (יד) באחד שבטיך. צחלקו של צנימין. ולמעלה הוא אומר מכל שצטיכס⁴. הא כילד, כשקנה דוד את הגורן מארונה היבוסים גצה הזהב מכל השצטים, ומכל מקום הגורן צחלקו של צנימין היה³: (טו) רק בכל אות נפשך. צמה הכתוב מדבר, אם צצער תאוב להחירה להם צלא הקרצת אימורים, הכי הוא אומר צמקום אחר כי ירחיב ה' אלהיך את צבולך וגו' ואמרת אוכלה צשר וגו'⁵, צמה זה מדבר,

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This, however, begs the question: Why do we find that the term, God's "chosen house" (בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה) is used only in reference to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and not the Tabernacle at Shiloh, if Shiloh is also God's "chosen site"?

THE EXPLANATION

There are two possible ways of understanding the concept that God "chose" a particular place to be the exclusive location where sacrifices are offered:

- That the emphasis is primarily on the negative: He does *not* want sacrifices to be offered in any place *other* than this; or
- That he *positively* desires this site, (and inevitably this precludes the use of any other site).

It could be argued that this is the distinction between God's choice of Shiloh, and His choice of Jerusalem:

When introducing the prohibition of offering a sacrifice outside Shiloh, the Torah stresses the negative (precluding other sites) *before* the positive

SECOND
READING

all your enemies surrounding you, and you will dwell securely. ¹¹ Then (you will build the Holy Temple) in the place in which God, your God, will choose to make His Name rest there.

- (Only) there should you bring everything that I am commanding you: your burnt-offerings, your (obligatory peace-)offerings, your tithes, (your first fruits—which are) lifted from your hand (by the priests)—and all your vow-offerings which you will vow to God (from your) choicest (quality produce).
- ¹² You should rejoice before God, your God: you, your sons, daughters, servants and maidservants, and the Levite who lives in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.
- ¹³ Be careful not to offer up your burnt-offerings in any place you see (fit to do so. ¹⁴ This must be done) only in the place God will choose in (the territory of) one of your tribes. (Only) there may you offer up your burnt-offerings, and there you should do everything that I am commanding you.
- ¹⁵ (If a blemish develops in a holy offering and you) desire with all your soul (to eat its meat):
 - You may slaughter (it in any place) and eat (its) meat in all your cities, for God, your God, is giving it to you as a blessing, (but you may not make use of its fleece or milk).
 - (You may) only (redeem it and slaughter it if it is a permanent blemish that will not heal).
 - (Even though the animal was originally a holy offering which may not become ritually impure, after it has been redeemed) a ritually impure person and a ritually pure person may eat it (together on the same plate).
 - (The foreleg, jaw and end-stomach do not need to be given to the priest), as if (you were slaughtering) a deer, or a gazelle.
 - ¹⁶ Even though (the blood of this animal is exempt from being thrown on the Altar) you may not eat the blood. You should spill it on the ground like water (and you do not have to cover it).
- ¹⁷ You may not eat (the following) within your (own) cities: your grain, wine, or oil tithes, the firstborn of your cattle or of your sheep, any of your vow-offerings that you will vow, your pledge-offerings, or (your first fruits—which are) lifted from your hand (by the priests). ¹⁸ Rather,

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(exclusivity of Shiloh): “[4] You should not do any (act of sacrificial worship) to God, your God, [5] other than at the site where God, your

God, will choose, to place His Name there.” This indicates that God’s intent in “choosing” Shiloh was primarily for the sake of excluding other locations, and not because God had an intrinsic “desire” that His sacrifices should be offered at Shiloh in particular.

However, in the case of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the Torah stresses the superiority of the site itself first: “Then (you will build the Holy Temple) in the place in which God, your God, will choose to make His Name rest there” (v. 11), before outlining the prohibition of offering elsewhere, “(Only) there should you bring everything that I am commanding you” (ibid.). This indicates that God positively desired Jerusalem as a place of sacrificial worship, not as a means to an end. The prohibition of offering a sacrifice in any other location thus follows as a secondary logical necessity.

And it is for this reason that only the Holy Temple in Jerusalem can truly be called God’s “Chosen House.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 79ff.)

🕯 Sparks of Chasidus 🕯

The Torah mentions only “the place which God, your God, will choose,” without making any explicit reference that this refers to Jerusalem. This hints to the fact that God “chooses” every place in which a Jew makes his personal “offering” of prayer to his Maker. For this reason, when a Jew prays he faces in the direction of Jerusalem, because spiritually speaking he is found in Jerusalem—“the place which God, your God, will choose”—at that very moment.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 2, pp. 617-9)

וּתְרוּמַת יָדְךָ: יֵה כִּי אִם־לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תֹאכְלֶנּוּ בַּמָּקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ אֶתָּה וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ
 וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְשִׁמְחֶתָּ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח
 יָדְךָ: יֵה הַשֶּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן־תַּעֲזֹב אֶת־הַלְוִי כָּל־יְמֶיךָ עַל־אֲדָמְתְּךָ:
 ס ב כִּי־יִרְחִיב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־גְּבֻלְךָ בְּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־לְךָ
 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲכַלָּה בָּשָׂר כִּי־תֵאָוֶה נַפְשֶׁךָ לְאֹכֵל בָּשָׂר בְּכָל־אֹת
 נַפְשֶׁךָ תֹאכַל בָּשָׂר: כֹּא כִּי־יִרְחַק מִמֶּךָ הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּם שְׂמוֹ שֵׁם וְנִבְחַתָּ מִבְּקָרְךָ וּמִצְאֲנָךְ אֲשֶׁר
 נָתַן יְהוָה לְךָ כְּבָאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתְךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ בְּכָל אֹת נַפְשֶׁךָ:
 כב אַךְ כְּבָאֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל אֶת־הַצְּבִי וְאֶת־הָאֵיל בֶּן תֹּאכְלֶנּוּ הַטְּמֵא
 וְהַתְּהוֹר יַחְדָּו וְאֲכַלְנֹו: כג רַק חֶזֶק לְבַלְתִּי אֹכֵל הַדָּם כִּי הַדָּם

וּנְדָבְתֶיךָ וְאִפְרָשׁוֹת יָדְךָ: יֵה אֱלֹהֵי קָדְשׁ יֵי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּיכַלְנָה בְּאֶתְרָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בַּה אֶת וּבְרָךְ וּבְרַתְךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְלֹאָה
 דִּי בְקִרְוֵיךָ וְתַחְדֵּי קָדְשׁ יֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל
 אוֹשְׁטוֹת יָדְךָ: יֵה אִסְתָּמַר לְךָ דְלִמָּא תִשְׁבּוּק
 ית לֹאָה כָּל יוֹמֶיךָ עַל אַרְעֵךָ: כ אַרְי יִפְתִּי יֵי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ ית תְּחוּמְךָ כְּמָא דִּי מְלִיל לְךָ וְתִימַר
 אֵיכּוּל בְּשָׂרָא אַרְי תִּתְרַעֵי נַפְשֶׁךָ לְמִיכַל
 בְּשָׂרָא בְּכָל רַעוּת נַפְשֶׁךָ תִּיכּוּל בְּשָׂרָא:
 כֹּא אַרְי וְתִרְחַק מִנֶּךָ אֶתְרָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יֵי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאִשְׂרָאֵה שְׂכַנְתָּה תִּמְן וְתִכּוּס מִתּוֹרְךָ
 וּמַעְנֵךָ דִּי יִהֵב יֵי לְךָ כְּמָא דִּי פְקַדְתָּךָ וְתִיכּוּל
 בְּקִרְוֵיךָ בְּכָל רַעוּת נַפְשֶׁךָ: כב בְּרַם כְּמָא דִּי
 מִתְּאֵכִיל בְּשָׂר טְבִיא וְאֵילָא בֶּן תִּיכַלְנָה
 מִסָּבְאָ וְדִכְיָא כְּחֵדָא יִיכַלְנָה: כג לְחוּד תִּקַּף

רש"י

עכשוו שהמשכן הולך עמכם: וזכות וגו' כאשר צויתך. למדנו שיש לזווי
 צזיחה היאך ישחוט, והן הלכות שחטיה שנאמרו למשה צזיני: (כז) אך
 כאשר יאכל את הצבי וגו'. איך מוזכר לאכלן צטכרה. אי מה לצי ואיל
 חלצן מותר, אף חולין חלצן מותר, תלמוד לומר אף: (כג) רק חזק לבלתי
 אבל הדם. ממה שנאמר חזק אתה למד שהיו שטופים צדס לאכלו, לפיכך
 הולרך לומר חזק, דברי רבי יהודה. רבי שמעון צן עזאי אומר, לא צא הכתוב
 אלא להזכירך וללמדך עד כמה אתה צריך להתחזק צמלות, אס הדס, שהוא
 קל להשמר ממנו, שאין אדם מתאוה לו, הולרך לחזקך צאזכרתו, קל וחומר

בקרך. אזכרה לכהנים: ותרומת ירך. אלו הצכורים: (יא) לפני ה'. לפניס
 מן החומה: והלוי אשר בשעריך. אס אין לך לתת לו מחלקו, כגון מעשר
 ראשון, תן לו מעשר עני. אין לך מעשר עני, הזמינה על שלמיך: (יט) השמר
 לך. ליתן לא תעשה על הדצר: על אדמתך. אצל צגולה איך מוזכר עליו
 יותר מעניי ישראל: (כ) כי ירחיב וגו'. למדה תורה דרך ארץ, שלא יתאוה
 אדם לאכול צשר, אלא מתוך רצנת ידים ועושר: בכל אות נפשך וגו'. אצל
 צמדצר נאסר להס צשר חולין, אלא אס כן מקדישה ומקריבה שלמיס!
 (כא) כי ירחק ממך המקום. ולא תוכל לצוא ולעשות שלמיס בכל יוס כמו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why is the requirement of ritual slaughter mentioned here, shortly before entering the Land? (v. 21)

TALMUD: Rabbi Yishma'el says: "Originally, it was prohibited to eat non-sacrificial meat. When they entered the Land of Israel, non-sacrificial meat was permitted to them." Rabbi Akiva says: "Originally, they were permitted to eat meat from an animal that was not ritually slaughtered. When they entered the Land, non-ritually slaughtered meat became forbidden to them" (Chullin 16b-17a).

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

When a Jewish person eats food and it subsequently becomes incorporated into his body, the food becomes "elevated" from its prior state—be it animal, vegetable or mineral—and it attains the special holiness of a Jewish person. In the case of meat, which is a material luxury, this spiritual elevation is more difficult, so the special procedure of *shechitah* (ritual slaughter) is required.

Thus, the precept of (non-sacrificial) *shechitah* was only given to the Jewish people as they entered the Land of Israel. For in the desert, they were removed from worldly matters, but upon entering the Land, the Jewish people were charged with the mission to interact with, and spiritually elevate, the material world.

Both Rabbi Yishma'el and Rabbi Akiva (in the *Talmud*, see *Classic Questions*) agreed with the above reasoning—that "elevation" of non-sacrificial meat was spiritually "irrelevant" to the unwordly mode of Divine service in the desert. Where they differed was regarding the practical implication of this spiritual "irrelevance":

Rabbi Yishma'el maintained that God would not have empowered the Jewish people to do something which is spiritually "irrelevant." Therefore, he maintained that non-sacrificial meat was forbidden.

But Rabbi Akiva maintained that, since eating meat was spiritually "irrelevant" to the Jewish people, the Torah would not have legislated any rules regarding its consumption. Thus it could be eaten freely.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1108ff.)

you should eat them before God, your God, in (Jerusalem, which is) the place God, your God, will choose. You (should eat them along with) your son, daughter, servant, maidservant, and the Levite who lives in your town, and you should rejoice before God, your God, in all the work of your hands.

- ¹⁹ Be careful not to abandon the Levite, all your days upon your Land.

🌀 CONSUMPTION OF NON-SACRIFICIAL MEAT 🌀

- ²⁰ When God, your God, extends your boundary, as He said to you, and you say, “I want to eat meat,” because your soul desires to eat meat, then you may eat as much meat as your soul desires. ²¹ If the place where God, your God, chooses to put His Name is far from you (so you cannot bring peace-offerings every day), you may (eat) from your cattle and sheep, which God has given you, (provided that you first) slaughter (them, as) I have commanded you (in the Oral Law). Then, you may eat (meat) in your (own) cities, as much as your soul desires.
- ²² You may eat them just as a deer or a gazelle is eaten, (i.e.) a ritually impure person may eat together with a ritually pure person. However, (unlike in the case of a deer or a gazelle, their sacrificial fats are not permitted).
- ²³ However, be strong not to eat the blood, for the blood is the soul, and you may not eat the soul with the flesh.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why must one be “strong not to eat the blood”? (v. 23)

RASHI: “From the statement ‘be strong,’ you can infer that [the Jewish people] used to eat blood excessively. Therefore, the Torah found it necessary to say, ‘be strong’—these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah.

Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai says: “This statement comes only to caution you and to teach you the extent to which you should strengthen your observance of the *mitzvos*. For if the Torah needed

to ‘strengthen’ you to observe the prohibition of eating blood—which is easy to guard oneself against, because a person has no desire for it—then how much more so [must one strengthen oneself to observe] all other commandments!”

RASHBAM: Blood becomes absorbed into all the organs of the body. Therefore, the Torah warns us to be especially careful not to eat it.

BACHAYE: Eating blood strengthens the body. Therefore, the Torah promises that a person will be strong even if he does not eat blood.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 “BE STRONG!” (v. 23)

In his comments to verse 23, *Rashi* explains why the Torah chose to stress, “Be strong not to eat the blood,” rather than stating simply, “Do not eat the blood.” However, *Rashi*’s comments prompt the following questions:

- Why did *Rashi* cite two explanations, and not deem one sufficient?
- Why did *Rashi* cite the authors of these comments, Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai, in contrast to his usual practice not to provide references?

THE EXPLANATION

The prohibition against eating blood does not appear for the first time here, in *Parshas Re’eh*. (Indeed, *Rambam* (*Sefer Hamitzvos, Shoresh 9*) maintains that this prohibition is mentioned no less than seven times in the Torah!) So *Rashi* was troubled: Why does the Torah stress *here* the additional need to be “strong” not to eat blood, rather than in one of the previous instances when the prohibition is mentioned? And since the Jewish people learned the practice of eating blood in *Egypt* (see *Rambam* cited in *Classic Questions to Vayikra 17:10-12*), why is the prohibition emphasized here again, *forty years* after the Jewish people left *Egypt*?

This led *Rashi* to conclude that even here, some forty years later, the Jewish people still “used to eat blood excessively,” and, “therefore, the Torah found it necessary to say, ‘be strong,’” here in *Parshas Re’eh*.

Nevertheless, *Rashi* was not satisfied with this answer alone, because:

- It still does not explain why the Torah failed to stress the need to “be strong” when mentioning the prohibition of blood on the first occasion (the primary source for this prohibition).
- It is unreasonable to suggest that the Jewish people ignored *repeated* warnings against eating blood, and that they still “used to eat blood excessively,” after forty years.
- Furthermore, at this point, the generation that left *Egypt* had already died. So why should their children, who were not directly influenced by *Egyptian* culture, have such a strong desire to eat blood and ignore God’s repeated warnings not to do so?

Due to these difficulties, *Rashi* brought an additional explanation, the teaching of Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai, that the Jewish people were not actually eating blood at this point at all, and, “This statement comes only to caution you and to teach you the extent to which you should strengthen your observance of the *mitzvos*.”

בדיל דלא למיכל דמא ארי דמא הוא נפשא ולא תיכול נפשא עם בשרא: כד לא תיכלנה על ארעא תשדנה במיא: כה לא תיכלנה בדיל דייטב לך ולבניך בתרך ארי תעבד דכשר קדם יי: כו לחוד מעשר קודשין דיהון לך ונדריך תמול ותימי לאתרא די יתרעי יי: כז ותעבד עלותך בשרא ודמא על מדבחה די אלהך ודם נכסת קודשין ושתפך על מדבחה די אלהך ובשרא תיכול: כח טר ותקבל ית פתגמיא האליו די אנא מפקדך בדיל דייטב לך ולבניך בתרך עד עלם ארי תעבד דתקן ודכשר קדם יי אלהך: כט ארי ישעי יי אלהך ית עממיא די את עלל לתמן לתרא (למירת) יתהון מפקדך ותיבת יתהון ותיבת בארעהון: ל אסתמר לך דלמא תתקל בתריהון בתר דישתצון מפקדך ודלמא

הוא הנפש ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר: כד לא תאכלנו על הארץ תשפכנו פמים: כה לא תאכלנו למען ייטב לך ולבניך אחריך כיתעשה הישר בעיני יהוה: כו רק קדשין אשר יהיו לך ונדריך תשא ונאת אל המקום אשר יבחר יהוה: כז ועשית עלתיך הבשר והדם על מזבח יהוה אלהיך ודם זבחיך ישפך על מזבח יהוה אלהיך והבשר תאכל: כח שמר ושמעת את כל הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך למען ייטב לך ולבניך אחריך עד עולם כי תעשה הטוב והישר בעיני יהוה אלהיך: כט [שלישין] כס כי יכרית יהוה אלהיך את הגוים אשר אתה בא שמה לרשת אותם מפניך וירשת אתם וישבת בארצם: ל השמר לך פן תנקש אחריהם אחרי השמדם מפניך ופן תדרש לאלהיהם לאמר איכה יעבדו

דש"י

הא כל שאינו בכלל משנה אינו בכלל מעשה: את כל הדברים. שתהא חציבה עליך מזה קלה כמזה חמורה: הטוב. צעניו השמים: והישר. צעניו אדם: (ל) פן תנקש. אונקלוס תרגם לשון מוקש. ואני אומר שלא חש לדקדק בלשון, שלא מלינו נו"ן בלשון יוקש ואפילו ליסוד הנופל ממנו, אבל בלשון טירוף וקשקוש מלינו נו"ן, וארכבתי דא לדא נקשן. ואף זה אני אומר, פן תנקש אחריהם, פן תטרף אחריהם להיות כרוך אחר מעשיהם, וכן ינקש נושה לכל אשר לו, מקלל את הרשע להיות עליו נושים רבים ויהיו מחזירין ומנקשין אחר ממנו: אחרי השמדם מפניך. אחר שתראה שאשמדים מפניך, יש לך לתת לב מפני מה נשמדו אלו, מפני מעשים מקולקלים שצדיהם, אף אהא לא תעשה כן שלא יבואו אחריהם וישמידוך: איכה יעבדו. לפי שלא עשה על עבודת אלילים אלא על צוה וקטור ונסוך והשתחואה, כמו שכתוב בלתי לבי לצדו, דצרים הנעשים לגבוה, צא ולמדך כאן, שאם דרכה של עבודת

לשאר מלות: ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר. אזכרה לאצר מן החי: (כד) לא תאכלנו. אזכרה לדם הממית: (כה) לא תאכלנו. אזכרה לדם האיברים: למען ייטב לך וגו'. לא ולמד מתן שכרן של מלות, אם הם שנפשו של אדם קלה ממנו, הפורש ממנו זוכה לו ולצניו אחריו, קל וחומר לגזל ועריות שנפשו של אדם מתאכזר להם: (כו) רק קדשין. אף על פי שאתה מותר לשחוט חולין, לא התרתי לך לשחוט את הקדשים ולאכלן בשעריך צלא הקרבה, אלא הביאם לבית הבחירה: (כז) ועשית עלתיך. אם עולות הם, תן הבשר והדם על גבי המזבח, ואם זבחי שלמים הם, דם זבחיך ישפך על המזבח תחלה ואחר כך ובבשר תאכל. ועוד דרשו רבותינו, רק קדשין, צא ללמד על הקדשים שצחובה לארץ וללמד על החמורות ועל ולדות קדשים שיקריבו: (כח) שמור. זו משנה שאתה צריך לשמרה בצטנך שלא תשכח. כענין שנאמר כי נעים כי תשמרם בצטנך, ואם שנית אפשר שתשמע ותקיים,

TORAS MENACHEM

However, *Rashi* cited this only as a secondary explanation, since it has an even greater drawback than Rabbi Yehudah's interpretation. For, at the literal level, it is difficult to accept that the very specific command to, "be strong not to eat the blood," is actually a universal principle that applies to all the *mitzvos* of the Torah.

Furthermore, the fact that the prohibition against eating blood is mentioned here in a passage which speaks about the "desire" to eat meat (see v. 20-21) suggests that the Jewish people did desire to eat blood—contrary to what Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai suggests.

RABBI YEHUDAH AND RABBI SHIMON BEN AZZAI

In order to indicate to the more advanced student why these two divergent opinions arose, *Rashi* cited their respective authors: Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai.

In contrast to some Rabbinic opinions that allow a "loose" rendering of scripture, where clauses and conditions may be extrapolated beyond the

precise case in which they are recorded, Rabbi Yehudah maintained that "the words of scripture are to be interpreted exactly as they are written." (*Pesachim* 21b). Consequently, we can appreciate why, in our case, Rabbi Yehudah rejected Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai's extrapolation of the clause "be strong" to apply to all the *mitzvos* of the Torah.

Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai, on the other hand, was famous for teaching, "Run to perform an easy mitzvah" (*Avos* 4:2). So we can appreciate why Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai was sympathetic to an interpretation of our verse which stressed how the prohibition of blood is an "easy mitzvah" ("because a person has no desire for it") and how nevertheless the Torah highlights its importance ("be strong not to eat the blood").

Furthermore, Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai used to say, "One mitzvah leads to another" (*ibid.*), which explains why he taught, in our case, that additional care with the prohibition of eating blood would lead to additional care in the case of other *mitzvos* too.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 45ff.)

- ²⁴ You may not eat (the blood which trickles out of an animal). Spill it on the ground, like water.
- ²⁵ You should not eat (the blood within internal organs), for your own benefit, and for your children after you, because you will be doing what is proper in the eyes of God.
- ²⁶ (Although I have permitted you to sacrifice non-sacred animals), however, your holy offerings and voluntary offerings which you will have should be carried and brought to (the Holy Temple), the place that God will choose. ²⁷ (If they are) burnt-offerings, the meat and the blood should go upon the Altar of God, your God. (If they are peace-)offerings, their blood should be poured upon the Altar of God, your God, and you should eat the meat.

²⁸ Safeguard and listen to all these words that I am commanding you, which are for your benefit and that of your children after you, for all time, because (God benefits you) when you have done what is good in the eyes of God, your God, and proper (in the eyes of man).

THIRD
READING

²⁹ When God, your God will cut off the nations (from the Land) where you are (soon) to come and drive them out from before you, and you (succeed) in driving them out, and settle in their Land, ³⁰ be careful not to be lured into following (their ways, especially) after (you witness how) they have been

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one “safeguard all these words”? (v. 28)

RASHI: This refers to study of the law, which you must guard in your heart*, so that it should not be forgotten, as the verse states: “For it is pleasant that you guard them in your heart” (Proverbs. 22:18).

● Why does the verse stress the need to safeguard “all these words”? (v. 28)

RASHI: This means that a minor *mitzvah* should be as precious to you as a major one.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 SAFEGUARDING THE TORAH (v. 28)

At first glance, verse 28 appears to be a straightforward reminder to safeguard all the *mitzvos*. Why did *Rashi* find it necessary to make any comment at all on this verse?

Furthermore:

a.) Why did *Rashi* need to cite a scriptural source to prove that Torah is forgotten if it is not studied? Surely, even the child studying *Chumash* for the first time understands this fact, without the need for proof?

🕒 The Last Word 🕒

“BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE LURED TO FOLLOW (THEIR WAYS)” (v. 30)

Finding themselves a small minority and encountering certain difficulties, which are largely unavoidable in all cases of resettlement, some parents had the mistaken notion, which they injected also into their children, that the way to overcome these difficulties is to become quickly assimilated with the new environment, by discarding the heritage of their forefathers and abandoning the Jewish way of life. Finding the ensuing process somewhat distasteful, as such a course is bound to be full of spiritual conflict, some parents were resolved that their children would be spared the conflict altogether. In order to justify their desertion and appease their injured conscience, it was necessary for them to devise some rationale, and they deluded themselves, and deluded their children, by the claim that in their new surroundings the Jewish way of life, with the observance of the Torah and *Mitzvos* did not fit. They looked for, and therefore also “found,” faults with the true Jewish way of life, while in their non Jewish environment everything seemed to them only good and attractive.

By this attitude the said parents hoped to assure their children's existence and survival in the new environment. But what kind of existence is it, if everything spiritual and holy is traded for the material? What kind of survival is it, if it means the sacrifice of the soul for the amenities of the body?

Moreover, in their retreat from *Yiddishkeit*, they turned what they thought was an “escape to freedom” into an escape to servitude, pathetically trying to imitate the non Jewish environment, failing to see that such imitation, by its caricature and inferiority complex, can only call forth mockery and derision, and can only offend the sensibilities of those whose respect and acceptance they are so desperately trying to win....

The dire consequences of this utterly false approach were that thousands upon thousands of Jews have been removed from their fountain of life, from their fellow Jews and from their true faith....

It is one of the vital tasks of our time to exert all possible effort to awaken in the young generation, as also in those who are advanced in years but still immature in deeper understanding, a fuller appreciation of the true Jewish values, of Torah-true *Yiddishkeit*, a full and genuine *Yiddishkeit*; not of that which goes under a false label of misrepresented, compromised, or watered-down “Judaism,” whatever the trademark. Together with this appreciation will come the realization that only true *Yiddishkeit* can guarantee the existence of the individual, of each and every Jew, at any time, in any place, and under any circumstances....

(Excerpt from a public letter written by the Rebbe on 11 Nissan 5717)

* Literally “in your innards.” See *Rashi* to *Proverbs* *ibid*.

תתבע לטענתהון למימר אכדין פלחין
 עממיא האלין ית טענתהון ואעבד בן
 אף אנא: לא לא תעבד בן קדם יי אלהך ארי
 כל דמרחק קדם יי די סני עבדו לטענתהון
 ארי אף ית בניהון וית בנתיהון יוקדון בנורא
 לטענתהון: א ית כל פתנמא די אנא מפקד
 יתכון ויתא תטרון למעבד לא תוספון עלוהי
 ולא תמנעון מנה: ב ארי יקום בינד נביא או

הגוים האלה את-אלהיהם ואעשה-בן גם-אני: לא לא-
 תעשה כן ליהוה אלהיך כי כל-תועבת יהוה אשר שניא
 עשו לאלהיהם כי גם את-בניהם ואת-בנותיהם ישרפו באש
 לאלהיהם: יג א את כל-הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אתו
 תשמרו לעשות לא-תסוף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו: פ ב כי-יקום

רש"י

ואכלו: (ח) את כל הדבר. קלה כמורה: תשמרו לעשות. ליתן
 לא תעשה על עשה האמורים צרשה. שכל השמר לשון לא תעשה
 הוא, אלא שאין לוקין על השמר של עשה: לא תסוף עליו. חמשה
 טוטפות צתפילין, חמשה מינין צלולב, ארבע צרכות צרכת ככניס:

חללים לעצדה צדור אחר, כגון פוער לפעור, זורק און למרקוליס,
 זו היא עבודתה וחייו. אבל צדור וקטור ונסוך וכשתחאה, אפילו שלא
 כדרכה חייב: (לא) כי גם את בנייהם. גם, לרבות את הצותיהם
 ואמותיהם. אמר ר' עקיבא אני ראיתי נכרי שכתחו לאזיו לפני כלבו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● “They also burned their sons and daughters in fire to their gods” Isn’t the word “also” superfluous? (v. 31)

RASHI: The word “also” (גם) alludes to their fathers and mothers [whom they burned also]. Rabbi Akiva said, “I saw a heathen who bound his father before his dog [which he worshiped as a god], which then devoured him.”

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b.) *Rashi* writes that our verse teaches us, “A minor mitzvah should be as precious to you as a major one.” But the distinction between a “minor” and “major” mitzvah does not appear to be indicated by our verse at all, nor is there any mention of mitzvos being “precious” to a person. What is *Rashi’s* basis for this comment, at the literal level?

THE EXPLANATION

When the reader reaches our verse, he will immediately be struck by the following question: The Torah has stressed the need to safeguard and observe its precepts on numerous occasions, so what is being added here with the words, “Safeguard and listen to all these words that I am commanding you”?

Rashi explains: “This refers to study of the law.” At first glance, *Rashi* is referring to Torah study in general, which helps a person safeguard the observance of mitzvos. But, if this is indeed the case, then we have not answered our question: What is being added here that the reader did not already know?

Therefore, it appears that *Rashi* is not referring to the general requirement to study all parts of the Torah, but rather, to the need to study the laws recorded in this chapter, in particular:

Chapter 12 begins: “These are the suprarational commands and rational commands that you should be careful to perform in the Land which God, the God of your fathers, is giving you.” I.e. we are introduced here to a series of mitzvos which only become incumbent on the Jewish people upon entering the Land of Israel: Destroying the idols found in the Land (v 2-3), to offer sacrifices only in Shiloh, and later, in Jerusalem (v. 4-19), and to bring *terumah*, agricultural gifts, etc. (v. 11).

Thus, when we read here at the conclusion of the chapter, “Safeguard and listen to all these words that I am commanding you,” the verse is referring specifically to the extra effort that is required to safeguard the mitzvos recorded in this chapter. And this, adds *Rashi*, is to be done through Torah study.

Why does the observance of these mitzvos require an extra effort?

Rashi answers this question by citing a verse, “For it is pleasant that you guard them in your heart.” I.e. since these mitzvos are connected with something especially “pleasant” to, and cherished by, the Jewish people (entering into the Land of Israel) their study and observance will need to be guarded with extra special care and devotion.

The result, continues *Rashi*, is that, “A minor mitzvah should be as precious to you as a major one” i.e. since these mitzvos are especially precious to the Jewish people, they will keep them with extra care.

Rashi mentions that this applies both to a “minor mitzvah” and “a major one,” since we find both of these cases in the current chapter. At the opening of the chapter we are commanded to “progressively destroy their gods,” i.e. the elimination of idolatry, one of the Ten Commandments, which is a “major” mitzvah. And near the end of the chapter we read of the prohibition against eating blood which is, as *Rashi* comments, “easy to guard oneself against, because a person has no desire for it.”

Thus, when our verse stresses, “Safeguard and listen to all these words that I am commanding you,” this means the words of the current chapter, and *Rashi* notes that this includes both “a minor mitzvah,” and “a major one.”

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* 5742)

🕯️ RABBI AKIVA’S TESTIMONY (v. 31)

In his comment to verse 31, *Rashi* explains the significance of the superfluous word “also,” which indicates that the idolatrous nations not only sacrificed their sons and daughters to their gods, but that they offered their fathers and mothers too.

Rashi then adds: “Rabbi Akiva said, ‘I saw a heathen who bound his father before his dog, which then devoured him.’”

What is the purpose of this addition? What does it add to our understanding of the verse at the literal level?

destroyed from before you (for their degenerate behavior). Be careful not to inquire about their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise!”

³¹ Do not do this to God, your God. For they worshiped their gods with all the abominable methods which God hates. They also burned their sons and daughters in fire to their gods.

🕎 PRESERVING THE PRECEPTS OF THE TORAH 🕎

13 **B**e careful to observe everything which I am commanding you (no matter how trivial it may seem):

- Do not add to it.
- Do not detract from it.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How might one add to the Torah? (v. 1)

RASHI: *Tefilin* with five “*totafof*,” five species for the *lulav*, or four blessings for the priestly blessing.

RAMBAN: *Rashi* limits the prohibition of adding to the Torah to adding a detail *within* a given *mitzvah*. However, in my opinion, the prohibition also forbids adding an entirely new *mitzvah* (4:2).

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At first glance, we might argue that *Rashi* added Rabbi Akiva’s testimony because he feared that the reader might simply not believe that any person could possibly sacrifice their father or mother to their god. However, it is difficult to accept that this was *Rashi*’s reasoning, for why would the reader find the notion of sacrificing parents any less credible than the sacrificing of children? Yet *Rashi* did not deem it necessary to prove that heathen people sacrificed their children (which could have been proven from scripture—see Kings II 16:3).

Why, then, did *Rashi* cite Rabbi Akiva’s testimony?

THE EXPLANATION

The concept of idol-worship has been mentioned in the Torah on numerous occasions prior to this point, including the idea that a person might use his child as a tool of idol-worship. Here, however, is the first instance where we learn that heathens would utilize even their parents in acts of idol-worship. Thus, the reader will be troubled: Why did the Torah only inform us of this important detail here, in *Parshas Re’eh*, and not on one of the earlier occasions when idol-worship was mentioned?

And why was this detail not mentioned explicitly in the Torah, but rather by means of adding the superfluous word “also”?

To answer these questions, *Rashi* cites the testimony of Rabbi Akiva: “I saw a heathen who bound his father before his dog, which then devoured him.” This indicates that such a practice must have been very rare indeed, and that even Rabbi Akiva (who traveled extensively throughout the world) only witnessed this once.

Thus, being a highly unusual practice, the reader will appreciate why the Torah never mentioned it up to this point, and only alluded to it here by the inclusion of a superfluous word.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re’eh* 5735)

🕎 “DO NOT ADD TO IT” (v. 1)

Rashi explains that the prohibition, “Do not add to it,” refers to adding details *within* one of the *mitzvos* of the Torah, such as “*Tefilin with five ‘totafof*,” rather than four, etc. This prompts the following questions:

a.) Why did *Rashi* reject the more simple explanation [of **Ramban**] that the Torah comes here to prohibit a person from adding an additional *mitzvah* (and not merely a detail *within* a particular *mitzvah*)? Surely, it

is a much more likely scenario that a person may, due to additional piety, want to add extra *precepts* to the Torah? The notion of corrupting one of the existing *mitzvos* by adding additional *details* seems much more remote.

b.) Why did *Rashi* bring *three* examples: *tefilin*, *lulav* and the priestly blessing?

c.) In *Parshas Va’eschanan*, on the words, “Do not add to the word(s) of Torah law” (4:2), *Rashi* comments, “For example, *tefilin with five scriptural passages, five species for the lulav, or five tzitzis*.” Yet here, in *Parshas Re’eh*, *Rashi* omits the example of *tzitzis*, swapping it instead for the priestly blessing. Furthermore, in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, *Rashi* writes, “*tefilin with five scriptural passages*,” whereas here he alters this to read, “*tefilin with five ‘totafof*.” What are the reasons for these changes?

THE EXPLANATION

Let us begin by addressing *Rashi*’s comments in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, and then we will proceed to clarify his explanation here, in *Parshas Re’eh*:

Rashi could not accept that the prohibition against adding to the Torah means that it is forbidden to add an additional *mitzvah*, because *Rashi*

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

Why does the Torah state first, “Do not add to it,” and only afterwards, “Do not detract from it” (13:1)? Surely, detracting from the Torah is the more serious crime, and should have been stated first?

The *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) knows that if it will tell a pious person to “detract from the Torah,” the person will simply not listen. Therefore, the *yetzer* deceptively encourages a person to “add” to Judaism, in the hope that this will begin to corrupt the person, eventually leading him to “detract” from observance. So, the Torah warns us of the *yetzer*’s ploy, by warning us first of all not to add to the Torah.

(Based on *Sicha* of the third of Tamuz 5742)

חלם חלמא ויתן לך את או מופתא: ג ונביא אתא ומופתא די מליל עמך למימר נהד בטר טעות עממיא די לא ידעתנו ונפלהנו: ד לא תקבל לפתגמי נביא הוא או לחלם חלמא הוא ארי מנסי יי אלהכון יתכון למדע האייתכון רחמין ית יי אלהכון בכל לפכון ובכל נפשכון: ה בטר דחלתא דיי אלהכון תהכון ויתה תדחלון וית פקודוהי תפרון ולמימרה תקבלון וקדמוהי תפלהון

בְּקִרְבְּךָ נָבִיא או חלם חלום ונתן אליך אות או מופת: ג ונביא האות והמופת אשר דבר אליך לאמר גלכה אחרי אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעתם ונעבדום: ד לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא שהוא או אל חולם החלום שהוא כי מנסה יהוה אלהיכם אתכם לדעת הישכם אהבים את יהוה אלהיכם בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם: ה אחרי יהוה אלהיכם תלכו ואתו תיראו ואת מצותיו תשמרו ובקלו תשמעו ואתו

כ"ש"י

יכי על הגזר (לדבר ועל כל הארץ חרצ) אף על פי כן לא שמע לו. ואם חאמר מפני מה נותן לו חרצ"ה ממשלה לעשות אות, כי מנסה ה' אליכם חתכס: (ה) ואת מצותיו תשמרו. תורת משכ"ב: ובקולו תשמעו. צקול

(3) ונתן אליך אות. צשמים, כענין שנאמר בגדעון ועשית לי אות, ואומר יכי נא חרצ אל הגזר וגו': או מופת. צארץ (ס"א ונתן אליך אות. צשמים, דכתיב והיו לאותות ולמועדים: או מופת. צארץ, דכתיב אם טל

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wrote his commentary primarily for the child who is studying *Chumash* for the first time, and:

a.) The child knows that the Sages *did* add additional *mitzvos*, such as the observance of Purim and Chanukah.*

b.) *Rashi* stated previously (*Bereishis* 26:5) that Avraham observed “precautionary measures on top of the prohibitions in the Torah, such as the prohibition to marry ‘second-degree’ relations and the Rabbinic prohibitions concerning Shabbos.” From this the reader will already be familiar with the idea that one may—and indeed should—add precautionary measures “on top of” the Torah’s precepts.

Therefore, *Rashi* concluded that our verse does not refer to an additional *mitzvah*, but to an addition *within* one of the *mitzvos* of the Torah.

TWO TYPES OF ADDITION

An added detail within a *mitzvah* could be either *relevant* or *irrelevant* to the overall theme of the *mitzvah*.

If we were simply told not to add details to a *mitzvah*, without being informed whether this refers to a prohibition against “irrelevant” or “relevant” details, we would presume that it is only forbidden to add irrelevant details and not relevant details. Thus, when the Torah prohibits adding details to a *mitzvah* for the first time, in *Parshas Va’eschanan*, the reader will presume that it is only forbidden to add “irrelevant” details within a *mitzvah*, because it makes sense that we should not introduce “alien” features into the *mitzvos*. However, we would not have any basis to assert that the Torah forbids the addition of details which are *relevant* to the theme of the *mitzvah*.

To illustrate this point, *Rashi* in *Parshas Va’eschanan* cites three examples of additions to a *mitzvah* which are *irrelevant* to the theme of the *mitzvah*:

“*Tefilin with five scriptural passages*”—There are only four passages in the Torah which mention *tefilin*. Thus, if a fifth passage was added, it would contain no mention of *tefilin* and would thus be “irrelevant.”

“*Five species for the lulav*”—The Torah specifies only four species which cause a person to “rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days” (*Vayikra* 23:40). Thus, adding another one will not cause further joy, so it would be irrelevant to the theme of the *mitzvah*.

“*Five tzitzis*”—In *Parshas Shelach*, *Rashi* writes: “On the four corners—but not on a garment with three, or with five. This corresponds to the four expressions of redemption which were stated in Egypt (*Shemos* 6:6-7): ‘I will take you out...I will save you...I will redeem you...I will take you’” (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 15:41). Since there are only “four expressions of redemption,” adding a fifth *tzitzis* would be irrelevant to the *mitzvah*.

RASHI’S COMMENT IN PARSHAS RE’EH

In our *Parsha*, the Torah repeats the prohibition against adding details to a *mitzvah*, “Do not add to it.” *Rashi* understood that this is an additional prohibition against adding even a thematically *relevant* detail to a *mitzvah*—and he cited three examples of such an addition:

Tefilin with five ‘totafos’—Earlier, *Rashi* explained that “*totafos*” refers to the compartments of the *tefilin* (*Rashi* to *Shemos* 13:16). The significance of the compartments is that, being externally visible, “*whoever sees them tied between the eyes will remember the miracle and speak about it*” (*ibid.*). Thus, adding compartments (“*totafos*”) to the *tefilin* would indeed be thematically relevant to the *mitzvah*, since it would magnify their impact when people would see them.

Five kinds for the lulav—Here, *Rashi* points out that even if we found a species that causes joy (and is therefore thematically relevant to the *mitzvah*), it would still be forbidden.

Four blessings for the priestly blessing—*Rashi* could not bring the example of *tzitzis* here, as there is no way of making a thematically relevant addition to this *mitzvah*. Rather, he cites the example of “*four blessings for priestly blessing*,” since there are numerous blessings in the Torah which could be added here. And clearly any such blessing would be a thematically relevant addition.

* Many commentators maintain that the verse in *Parshas Va’eschanan* does prohibit adding an extra *mitzvah*, and they explain why the additional *mitzvos* added by the Sages are not a contradiction. Nevertheless, these solutions are *halachic* in nature, and thus could not be employed here by *Rashi*, who limited his commentary to the interpretation of scripture at the *literal* level.

🕎 THE FALSE PROPHET 🕎

- ² If a prophet will arise from among you, or a person who has a vision in his dream, and he indicates to you a sign (in the heavens) or a miracle (upon the earth), ³ and then the sign or the miracle which he told you happens, (and he) says, “Let’s go after other gods which are unacquainted to you, and let’s worship them!” ⁴ You should not listen to the words of that prophet, or to the person, who had a vision in his dream, for God, your God, is testing you, to know whether you do in fact love God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁵ You should follow (only) God, your God, and fear Him. (You should) keep His commandments (that were given through Moshe), listen to His voice (through genuine prophets), worship Him (in the Holy Temple), and adhere to His (ways of kindness).

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WHY THREE EXAMPLES?

While all the *mitzvos* of the Torah were received by Moshe directly from God, the Torah may record a command in one of three ways:

- a.) *Moshe’s words alone.* A command given through Moshe, without specific mention that the command was issued by God.
- b.) *The words of God and Moshe.* The verse mentions explicitly that God told Moshe to transmit this instruction to the Jewish people.
- c.) *God’s words alone.* A command whose details we know from a record of God’s private conversation with Moshe.

Generally speaking, God’s words in the Torah are briefer than those of Moshe. Therefore, one might argue that in the case of a *mitzvah* which we learn from Moshe’s words, we cannot add any details, because Moshe

would have explained all the details thoroughly. But, we might argue, God *did* leave room for additions, since His words were so brief.

On the other hand, we could take the opposite point of view, that God’s words are absolutely precise and cannot be added to in any way; whereas Moshe’s words do not enjoy the same degree of precision, and additions could be made.

In order to refute both of these arguments, *Rashi* cited three examples of prohibited additions: *Tefilin*, which is given over in Moshe’s words (see *Devarim* 6:6; *ibid.* 11:13); *Lulav*—which stresses the words of God and Moshe (*Vayikra* 23:33); and the priestly blessing, which was said privately by God to Moshe (*Bamidbar* 6:22).

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re’eh* 5729; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 53, note 24)

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“GOD IS TESTING YOU, TO KNOW WHETHER YOU DO IN FACT LOVE GOD” (v. 4)

- “One of the basic teachings of the Torah is that God does not expect of a human being anything which is beyond the human capacity to carry out. This is quite understandable, for even a human being, who is very far from absolute perfection, would not expect of a tool that he has fashioned any more than he has put into it. Certainly God, the Creator of man, knows man’s capacities. From this, it immediately follows that when a Jew faces any kind of a test of faith, it is certain that he has been given the capacity to overcome it. And the more difficult the test, the greater are the individual’s capacities. The reason that an individual is tested is not because God wants to know how he will acquit himself, but in order that this person be afforded the opportunity to realize his potential, even that which is unknown to him. And when one’s potential capacities are released and activated, they become part and parcel of his or her arsenal, to be used for personal as well as communal benefit.”
 - “The stronger one’s faith in God remains even under adverse circumstances, the sooner it will become clear it was all a matter of a test. But this faith should not be merely a matter of lip service, but must have the full force of conviction.”
 - “Some Jews are born with greater natural capacities, and consequently they are faced with greater challenges and trials.
- Others are born with lesser capacities, and therefore the challenges and trials that God presents to them are also lesser, in keeping with their strength....If you truly have great trials, this in itself is proof that you possess a great capacity and strength to overcome them.”
- “If anyone may think that he or she should not be afraid to be exposed to a test or trial, suffice it to mention that our Sages of blessed memory who knew well human nature, strongly cautioned against such over-confidence. Indeed, every Jew, even a *Tzadik* [righteous person] who has spent scores of years in learning and practicing the Torah and *mitzvos*, also begins the day, like any other Jew, with the prayer at the beginning of the morning prayer: “Bring me not into the hands of temptation.” Moreover, our Sages point out that when King David, God’s anointed, in a moment of great spiritual elation said, “Test me, oh God, and try me,” it brought him into trouble.
 - “When it is seen Above, that one is strong in one’s faith in God, and one rises in the general observance of Torah and *mitzvos*... the test is nullified and there is an increase in blessing, salvation and success.”
- (Excerpts from letters written by the Rebbe on various occasions)

ובדחלתה תתקרבון: ו ונבניא ההוא או חלם חלמא ההוא יתקטיל ארי מליל סמיא על יי אלהכון די אפק יתכון מארעא דמצרים ודפרקד מביית עבדותא לאמעיותד מן ארחא די פקדד יי אלהד למיהד בה ותפלי עבד דביש מבינה: ז ארי ימלכנד אחוד בר אמד או ברד או ברתיד או אתת קנמד או חכרד די כנפשא בסתרא למימר נהד ונפלא למעות עממיא די לא ידעת את ואכהתד: ח מטעות עממיא די בסחרניכון דקריבין לד או דרתיקין מנד מסיפי ארעא ועד ספיפי ארעא: ט לא תיבי לה ולא תקבל מנה ולא תחוס עינד עלוהי ולא תרחם ולא תכסי עלוהי: י ארי מקטל תקטלנה ידך תהי בה כקדמיתא למקטלה וידא דכל עמא כבתריתא: יא ותרגמנה באבניא וימות ארי כעא לאמעיותד מדחלתא די אלהד די אפקד מארעא דמצרים מביית עבדותא: יב וכל ישראל ישמעו וידחלו ולא יוספון למעבד כפתגמא בישא הדין בינד: יג ארי תשמע בחדא מקרויד די יי אלהד יחב לד למתב תמן למימר: יד נפקו גוברין בני רשעא

תעבדו ובו תדבקון: ו ונהביא ההוא או חלם החלום ההוא יומת פי דבר סרה על-יהוה אלהיכם המוציא אתכם | מארץ מצרים והפדך מביית עבדים להדיחך מן-הדרך אשר צוה יהוה אלהיך ללכת בה ובערת הרע מקרבך: ס ז פי יסיתך אחיך בן-אמך או-בנד או-בתך או | אישת חיקך או רעה אשר כנפשה בסתר לאמר גלגה ונעבדה אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתיך: ח מאלהי העמים אשר סביבתיכם הקרבים אליך או הרחקים ממך מקצה הארץ ועד-קצה הארץ: ט לא-תאבה לו ולא תשמע אליו ולא-תחוס עינד עליו ולא-תחמל ולא-תכסה עליו: י פי הרג תהרגנו ידך תהייה-בו בראשונה להמיתו ונד פל-העם באחרונה: יא וסקלתו באבנים ומת פי בקש להדיחך מעל יהוה אלהיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מביית עבדים: יב וכל-ישראל ישמעו ויראון ולא-יוספו לעשות כדבר הרע הזה בקרבך: ס יג פי-תשמע באחת עריד אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לד לשבת שם לאמר: יד יצאו אנשים בני-בליעל מקרבך

כשׁי

מטיבין של קרובים אהב למד טיבן של רחוקים, כשם שאין ממש צקרוזים כך חין ממש צרוזים? מקצה הארץ. זו חמה ולזכה וזכא השמים שכן מהלכין מסוף העולם ועד סופו: (ט) לא תאבה לו. לא תהא תאב לו. לא תאכזבו. לפי שנאמר והאצת לרעך כמוד, את זה לא תאכזב? ולא תשמע אליו. כהתחננו על נפשו למחול לו, לפי שנאמר עזוב תעזוב עמו, לזה לא תעזוב? ולא תחוס עינד עליו. לפי שנאמר לא תעמוד על דם רעך, על זה לא תחוס? ולא תחמול. לא תהפוך צדקתו ולא תבסה עליו. אם אהב יודע לו חובה אינך רשאי לשחוק? (י) כי הרג תהרגנו. (אם ילא מצית דין זכאי, החזירכו לחובה) ילא מצית דין חייב, אל תחזירכו לזכות? ידך תהיה בו בראשונה. מלזכ זיד הניסת להמיתו. לא מת צידו, ימות ציד אחרים, שנאמר ויד כל העם וגו': (יג) לשבת שם. פרט לירושלים שלא יתנה לדירכ? כי תשמע וגו' לאמר. אומרים כן, ילאו וגו': (יד) בני בליעל. בני עול. שפרקו עולו של מקום? אנשים. ולא נשים?

הנביאים: ואתו תעבודו. צמקדשו: ובו תדבקון. הדצק דרכיו. גמול חסדים, קצור מחיס, צקר חוליס, כמו שעשה הכצ"ה: (ו) סרה. דבר המוסר מן העולם שלא היה ולא נברא ולא נותיו לדבר כן, דיטודר"א צלע"ז: והפדך מביית עבדים. אפילו אין לו עליך חלל שפדך, דיו"ז: (ז) בי יסיתך. אין הסתה חלל גרוי, שנאמר אם ה' הסיתך צי, חמיט"א צלע"ז, שמשילאו לעשות כן? אחיך. מאצ: או' בן אמך. מאס: חיקך. השוכבת בחיקך ומחוקה כך אפיקוט"א צלע"ז, וכן ומחיק הארץ, מיסוד התקוע צארץ: אשר כנפשה. זה אביד. פירש לך הכחוצ את החציצין לך, קל וחומר לאחרים: בסתר. דבר הכחוצ צכווכ, שאין דברי מסית חלל צסתר. וכן הוא אומר צנש צערצ יוס צזאישון לילה ואלה: אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבותיך. דבר זה גנאי גדול הוא לך, שאף האומות אין מניחין מה שמשרו להם צזותיכס, וזהו אומר לך עזוב מה שמשרו לך צזותיך: (ח) הקרובים אליך או הרחוקים. למע פרט קרובים ורחוקים, חלל כך אמר הכחוצ,

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- Why are several family members listed here? (v. 7)
RASHI: Scripture specifies those who are dear to you, and how much more so does this apply to others!
- Why is incitement described as being “in secret”? (v. 7)
RASHI: The Torah speaks of that which usually occurs, since an inciter speaks in secret.

1 סוטה יד. וראה לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 53 2 ספרי 3 ש"א כו, יט 4 אולי י"ל שטעות ה"בזור הזנענער" יש כאן, וצ"ל: "אחיך מאב או בן אמך, מאס" (ע"פ לקו"ש ח"י ע' 148, הערה 2) 5 יחזקאל מג, יד 6 משלי ז, ט 7 שמות כג, ה 8 יקרא יט, טז 9 ספרי. וראה שיחת ש"פ ראה תשמ"ה.

- ⁶ *That prophet, or that person who had a vision in his dream should be put to death because he spoke falsehood about God, your God—who brought you out of the land of Egypt, who redeemed you from the house of bondage—to lead you astray from the path in which God, your God, commanded you to go. (By killing him) you will eliminate the evil from your midst.*

🕍 INCITEMENT TO IDOL WORSHIP 🕍

- ⁷ *If you are incited in secret by your (paternal) brother, (or) your mother's son, your son or your daughter, your wife who is one with you, your friend, (or your father) who is as (dear to you) as yourself, and are told, "Let us go and worship other gods!"—(gods) which are unacquainted to you and your ancestors, ⁸ from among the gods of the peoples around you, (whether) near to you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth:*
 - ⁹ *You should not feel affection for him.*
 - *You should not listen to him (when he pleads forgiveness for his life).*
 - *You should not pity him (if he is in a life-threatening situation).*
 - *You should not have mercy upon him (to turn justice in his favor).*
 - *You should not withhold evidence (that may lead to) his (conviction).*
 - ¹⁰ *Rather, you should (try his case) repeatedly (until he is sentenced) to be killed.*
 - *(The victim's) own hand should be the first against him, to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people.*
 - ¹¹ *You should pelt him with stones until he dies, because he sought to lead you astray from God, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

¹² *All Israel should hear (of it) and be afraid, so they should no longer do such an evil thing in your midst.*

🕍 A CITY OF IDOL WORSHIPERS 🕍

- ¹³ *If, in one of your cities which God, your God, is giving you as a place to live, you hear a report, ¹⁴ "Reckless men, from among you, have gone and led the inhabitants of their city astray, saying, 'Let's go and worship other gods, which are unacquainted to you!'"*

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 THE INCITER (v. 7)

When describing those who might incite a person to idol-worship, the Torah cites a series of close relatives. *Rashi* explains, "*Scripture specifies those who are dear to you, and how much more so does this apply to others!*"

Since the list appears to be comprehensive, why are the cases of mother and sister omitted?

THE EXPLANATION

On numerous occasions, *Rashi* repeats the principle, "the Torah speaks of that which usually occurs." (See *Rashi* to *Shemos* 21:28; 22:17, 21, 30. This principle is also cited by *Rashi* here, see *Classic Questions*.)

Thus when describing the "typical" victim of incitement to idol worship, the Torah depicts here an adult male, with a wife and children, since the very young are unlikely to have the intellectual maturity to see anything

tempting in idol worship, and the very old are not easily influenced by new ideas.

A married person is strongly influenced by his wife and children, with whom he lives on a daily basis and has a strong emotional bond. This close relationship between a man and his wife and children renders him susceptible to their influence.

Outside the home, a man's outlook tends to be influenced by his father and brothers even after he has married and has a family. Therefore they are also included by our verse as likely inciters.

However, after a man is married, his mother and sisters do not tend to be major contributors to his outlook and philosophy. And since he no longer lives under the same roof with them, it is also unlikely that the closeness of their relationship will be strong enough to sway him to idol worship. Therefore, the verse omitted the case of mother and sister, since "the Torah speaks of that which usually occurs."

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 148ff.)

מבינך ואמעיני ית יתבי קרתהון למימר נהד
ונפלה לטעות עממיא די לא ידעתון:
טו ותתבע ותבדוק ותשאל יאות והא קושטא
כון פתנמא אתעבידא תועבתא דרא בינך:
טז ממחא תמחי ית יתבי קרתא דהיא
לפתגם דחרב נמר יתה וית כל די בה וית
בעירה לפתגם דחרב: יז וית כל עדאה תכנוש
לגו פתיה ותוקיד בנורא ית קרתא וית
כל עדאה נמיר קדם יי אלהך ותחי תל חריב
לעלם לא תתבני עוד: יח ולא ידבק בידך
מדעם מן חרמא בדיל דיתוב יי מתקוף רגזה
ויהב לך רחמין וירחס עלך ויסגנד כמא די
קיים לאבתך: יט ארי תקבל למימרא די
אלהך למטר ית כל פקודיה די אנא מפקדך
יומא דיין למעבד דכשר קדם יי אלהך:

וידיהו את-ישבי עירם לאמר גלגה ונעבדה אלהים אחרים
אשר לא-ידעתם: טו ודרשת וחקרת ושאלת היטב והנה
אמת נכון הדבר נעשתה התועבה הזאת בקרבך: טז הנה
תכה את-ישבי העיר ההוא לפי-חרב החרם אתה
ואת-כל-אשר-בה ואת-בהמתה לפי-חרב: יז ואת-כל-
שללה תקבץ אל-תוך רחבה ושרפת באש את-העיר
ואת-כל-שללה כליל ליהוה אלהיך והיתה תל עולם לא
תבנה עוד: יח ולא ידבק בידך מאומה מן-החרם למען ישוב
יהוה מחרון אפו ונתן לך רחמים ורחמך והרבך באשר
נשבע לאבתך: יט כי תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמר
את-כל-מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום לעשות הישר בעיני

כש"י

ודרשו השופטים ביטב² ועוד במקום אחר הוא אומר ודרשת ביטב³. ולמדו
ביטב ביטב לגזירה שוכ, ליתן האמור של זה זה: (טז) הבה תבה. אם אינך
יכול להמיתם במיתה הכתובה בכם, המיתם באחרת⁴: (יז) לה' אלהיך.
לשמו ובשבלו: (יח) למען ישוב ה' מחרון אפו. שכל זמן שעבודה זרה

ישבי עירם. ולא יושבי עיר אחרת. מכאן אמרו אין נעשית עיר הנדחת עד
שידיוח אגשים, ועד שיכיו מדיחיה מתוכה¹: (טו) ודרשת וחקרת ושאלת
היטב. מכאן למדו שבע חקירות מצוין במקרא. כאן יש שלש, דרישה וחקירה
וכיטב. ושאלת, אינו מן המניין, וממנו למדו דיוקיות. ובמקום אחר הוא אומר

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● After the witnesses have been examined (v. 15) what is done before executing the inhabitants of the city? (v. 16)

RAMBAM: Two Torah scholars are sent to the city to warn them and to encourage them to do *teshuvah* (repent). If they do *teshuvah*, then all is well and good. But if they persist in their foolishness...then if the idol worshipers are found to be in a minority, they are stoned and the rest of the city is saved. If they are found to be a majority...then all the inhabitants of the city are killed by the sword, including children and women (*Laws of Idol Worship* 4:6).

RA'AVAD: *Teshuvah* cannot help [to annul the court's sentence] after a person has already been warned, and committed a sin (*ibid.*).

KESEF MISHNEH: In response to *Ra'avad's* criticism of *Rambam*: The general warning of the Torah scholars to the inhabitants of the city is not a full-fledged *halachic* warning, since it was not administered to each person individually. Therefore, the city can still be exonerated through *teshuvah* even after being "warned" by the Torah scholars.

TZAFNAS PANE'ACH: When *Rambam* writes that the city is exonerated through *teshuvah*, he does not mean to say that no punishment is administered at all. Rather, he means that the city is exonerated from being judged as a "city of idol-worshippers," but that the individual idol-worshippers would nevertheless be punished by stoning (*Tzafnas Pane'ach al Hatorah, Bereishis* 18:21).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 THE CITY OF IDOL WORSHIPERS (v. 13-19)

Ra'avad criticized *Rambam's* opinion that a city of idol-worshippers is exonerated if they do *teshuvah*, since the ruling of a *Beis Din* (Jewish Court) cannot be reversed even if the convicted person repents after his sentence has been passed.

Both *Kesef Mishneh* and *Tzafnas Pane'ach* defend *Rambam's* ruling, but with different solutions. *Kesef Mishneh* argues that in this case the sentence can be reversed, since the inhabitants of the city were not given a full-fledged *halachic* warning. On the other hand, *Tzafnas Pane'ach* suggests that the *teshuvah* does not annul the punishment

entirely, but rather that, it exonerates the "public crime" of a city of idol-worshippers, and replaces it instead with the "private crime," of personal idol worship.

However, both these solutions do not appear to address *Ra'avad's* main contention here. The primary reason why a court's sentence cannot be reversed through repentance is because there is no way that a court can evaluate whether or not *teshuvah* has actually taken place, since *teshuvah* is an internal/emotional conviction of the heart (see *Sha'alos Veteshuvos Noda Biyehudah, Orach Chaim, Mehadurah Kama, responsum* 35). So why is the case of a city of idol-worshippers an exception to this rule?

- ¹⁵ You should interrogate, probe, and question (the witnesses) thoroughly.

If indeed the matter is confirmed to be true, that this abomination has occurred in your midst:

- ¹⁶ (If possible) you should kill the inhabitants of that city by sword, (but otherwise just) kill (them by any means). Wipe out (the city) together with all that is in it, (killing) its livestock by sword.
- ¹⁷ You should gather all its spoil into its main square, and burn the city with all its spoil completely with fire, for (the sake of) God, your God. It should remain a heap of destruction forever, never to be rebuilt.
- ¹⁸ Nothing that is doomed to destruction should remain in your hands.

(The city must be destroyed) in order for God's anger to cease, and (only then) will He have mercy on you. (When) He will have mercy on you He will cause you to multiply, as He swore to your forefathers.

¹⁹ So you should listen to the voice of God your God, and keep all His commandments which I am commanding you today, so as to do that which is proper in the eyes of God, your God.

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

In order to resolve this problem, let us first pose another question:

The *Talmud* states that if a person commits an act which involves two different transgressions, rendering him liable for the death penalty twice over, and each punishment requires him to be executed by a different method, then we administer the more severe form of execution (*Sanhedrin* 81b; *Rambam, Laws of Sanhedrin* 14:4).

Now, an ordinary individual who worships idols is liable for death by stoning, whereas the punishment for a person who merely lives in a city of idol worshipers is decapitation by the sword (*Sanhedrin* 111b). Of these two punishments, death by stoning is the more severe.

So an inhabitant of a convicted city of idol-worshipers who worships idols, appears to be liable for the death penalty *twice over*: stoning for his personal idol worship, and decapitation for being a citizen of a city of idol worshipers. Why then is he not administered the more severe of these two punishments, that of stoning?

Or, to put it more graphically: A city of idol worshipers is only sentenced to execution by the sword if the *majority* of its inhabitants worship idols. Otherwise, the minority of idol-worshipers are executed by stoning, and the rest are not punished at all (see *Rambam* cited in *Classic Questions*). Now, picture the scenario where a city is one person short of a majority of idol worshipers, and one individual then proceeds to worship idols. He has now *reduced* the sentence of *all those* who were liable for stoning, and replaced it with the less severe sentence of death by the sword! How could this be the case?

In fact, however, he has not “reduced” the sentence at all. What has happened, is that the idol-worshipers have ceased to exist as *individuals*, and have now merged identities to become a *community* of idol worshipers. Thus, it is not the case that they are guilty of a private crime (personal idol worship) *and* a public crime (being a citizen of a city of idol worshipers). Rather, their new identity as a community of idol-worshipers has *replaced* their prior identity as private idol-worshipers. Therefore, they are only liable for *one* punishment: death by the sword.

(This also explains why all members of the city—even those who did not worship idols (v. 16)—are punished by death, and even their possessions are burned (v. 17), since the judgment is upon the entire community as a *single unit*.)

If the inhabitants of the city were then to do *teshuvah*, a very unusual phenomenon would occur. If we bear in mind that the “community of idol-worshipers” only became united as a single unit through their sins, then if the sins are wiped away through *teshuvah*, the cohesive force (of sin) that is responsible for forming the community’s very identity will no longer be present, and the “community” will cease to exist. Consequently, the death sentence on the community is annulled (not through a legal technicality, exemption or immunity, but rather) because the convicted party—the *community* of idol-worshipers—*no longer exists*.

Thus we have not violated the principle that a court’s sentence cannot be reversed through repentance, since it is not the case here that the sentence of the convicted party was *legally* reversed. Rather, the case was simply “thrown out of court,” since the convicted party was no longer to be found.

RAMBAM’S SOURCE

Based on the above, we can answer a problem concerning *Rambam’s* source for the ruling that (through *teshuvah*) a city of idol-worshipers is exonerated. According to *Tzafnas Pane’ach* (ibid.), *Rambam’s* source was from the case of Sodom, which God promised not to destroy if its inhabitants would repent (see *Onkelos to Bereishis* 18:21), because Sodom had the status of a “city of idol worshipers.”

This begs the question: There is a principle that “we cannot derive a law from events before the giving of the Torah” (*Jerusalem Talmud, Mo’ed Katan* 3:5, cited in *Tosfos, Mo’ed Katan* 20a). So how can *Tzafnas Pane’ach* assert that *Rambam’s* source is from the destruction of Sodom, an event that occurred before the Torah was given?

However, based on the above, we can appreciate that what *Rambam* derived from the case of Sodom was not a point of Jewish *Law*, but rather, the definition of what constitutes a community—when it comes into existence and when it is dissolved. (The law governing such a community is then derived from our *Parsha*, which was said after the giving of the Torah).

And certainly, the events recorded before the giving of the Torah can act as a source text for *factual* information, such as the definition of what constitutes a “community”—just as *Rambam* rules in our case.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 106ff.)

א בנין אתון קדם יי אלהכון לא תתחממו
 ולא תשונו מרמס בין עיניכם על מית: ב ארי
 עם קדיש את קדם יי אלהך וקד אתרעי יי
 למהוי לה לעם חביב מכל עממיא די
 על אפי ארעא: ג לא תיכול כל דמרתק:
 ד דין בעירא דתיכלון תורין אמרין דרתלון
 ונדון דעוין: ה אילא ומביא ויחמורא ויעלא
 ורימא ותורבלא ודיעא: ו וכל בעירא
 דסדיקא פרסתא ומסלפא טלפין תרתין
 פרסתא מסקא פשרא בבעירא יתה תיכלון:
 ז ברם ית דין לא תיכלון ממסקי פשרא
 וממסדיקי פרסתא מטלפי טלפיא ית גמלא
 וית ארנבא וית טפוא ארי מסקי פשרא אנון
 ופרסתהון לא סדיקא מסאבין אנון לבון:
 ח וית חזירא ארי מסדיק פרסתא הוא ולא
 פשר מסאב הוא לבון מבסרהון לא תיכלון

יהוה אלהיך: ס רביעין יד א בנינים אתם ליהוה אלהיכם לא
 תתגודדו ולא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת: ב כי עם קדוש
 אתה ליהוה אלהיך וקד בחר יהוה להיות לו לעם סגולה
 מכל העמים אשר על פני האדמה: ס ג לא תאכל כל-
 תועבה: ד זאת הבהמה אשר תאכלו שור שיה בשבים ושה
 עזים: ה איל וצבי ויחמור ואקו ודישן ותאו וזמר: ו וכל-
 בהמה מפרסת פרסה ושסעת שסע שתי פרסות מעלת גרה
 בבהמה אתה תאכלו: ז אך את-זה לא תאכלו ממעלי הגרה
 וממפריסי הפרסה השסועה את-הגמל ואת-הארנבת
 ואת-השפן כי-מעלה גרה המה ופרסה לא הפריסו ממאים
 הם לכם: ח ואת-החזיר כי-מפריס פרסה הוא ולא גרה ממא
 הוא לכם מפשרם לא תאכלו ובגבלתם לא תגעו: ס

רש"י

המוטע: ואקו. מתורגס ועל"א, יעלי סלע הוא אשטנצו"ק: ותאו. תורבלא,
 שור היער. זאלא יער זלשון ארמי: (ו) מפרסת. סדוקה כתרנומו: פרסה.
 פלאנט"ה: ושסעת. חלוקה זשתי לפרינס, שיש סדוקה ואינה חלוקה זלפרינס
 ויחא טמאה: בבהמה. משמע מה שנמלא זצבמה אכול, מכאן אמרו שהשלי
 יתיר זשחיתת אמר: (ז) השסועה. זריה היא שיש לה שני גזין ושני
 שדראות. אמרו זכותינו למה נשנו, זצבמות מפני השסועה, זצטופות מפני
 הראה, שלא נאמרו זתורת כהנים: (ח) ובגבלתם לא תגעו. זכותינו
 פירשו, זרגל. שאדם חייב לטהר את עצמו זרגל. יכול יהיו מזכרים זכל
 השנה, תלמוד לומר אמור אל הכהנים וגו', ומה טומאת המת חמורה,
 כהנים מזכרים ואין ישראל מזכרים, טומאת זבלה קלה לא כל שכן:

זעולם, חרון אף זעולם: (ב) לא תתגודדו. לא תתנו גדידה ושרט זצזרכס
 על מת כדרך שהאמריים עושין, לפי שאתם זניו של מקום ואתם ראוין
 להיות נאים ולא גדודים ומקורחים: בין עיניכם. אלל הפדחת. זבמקום אחר
 הוא אומר לא יקרחו קרחה זראשם, לעשות כל הראש זבין העינים: (ג) כי
 עם קדוש אתה. קדושת עולם מאזותיך. ועוד, זכך זחר הי: (ג) כל
 תועבה. כל שתעבתי לך, כגון לרס און זכור כדי לשוחטו זמדונה, הרי זכר
 שתעבתי לך כל מוס לא יהיה זו, זכא ולמד כאן שלא ישחט ויאכל על אותו
 המוס. זשל זשר זחלב הרי זכר שתעבתי לך, וזכור כאן על אכילתו:
 (ד) זאת הבהמה וגו': (ה) איל וצבי ויחמור. למדנו שהיה זכלל זבהמה
 ולמדנו זצבמה וזיה טמאה מזוכה מן הטורה, זצכל מקום פורט את

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● To which “abomination” does verse 3 refer?

RASHI: Anything that I have declared to be an abomination to you.
 [E.g.] if one made a cut in the ear of a firstborn [animal], in order to
 [be permitted to] slaughter it in the country, [outside the Temple].
 This is something that I have declared as an abomination for you—

“It should not have any blemish in it” (Vayikra 22:21). Here scripture
 teaches that one may not slaughter [the firstborn] and eat it because
 of that [deliberately made] blemish. [Another example is] if one
 cooked meat in milk, which is a thing that I have declared as an
 abomination to you. Here scripture warns against eating it.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 “YOU MAY NOT EAT ANY ABOMINATION” (v. 3)

Verse 3 prohibits the consumption of “any abomination.” *Rashi* gives
 two examples: i.) a firstborn animal which was intentionally mutilated in
 order to avoid slaughtering it in the Holy Temple. ii.) Cooked milk and
 meat. This prompts the following questions:

a.) Why did *Rashi* need to offer examples here of an “abomination”
 which is forbidden to eat? The reader is already familiar with many

forbidden foods which the Torah refers to as an abomination—such as
 forbidden fat, blood, *pigul* and *nosar*—so why is any comment from *Rashi*
 needed here?

b.) When citing an example of an abominable food, why did *Rashi* pick
 the *unusual* case of a mutilated firstborn animal, which only applies to
 those who own flocks that produce an unblemished firstborn male, in
 seeming defiance of the principle that “the Torah speaks of that which
 usually occurs” (above 13:7)?

🕎 THE HOLINESS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE 🕎

I4

FOURTH
READING

- ¹ You may not gash yourselves or make any baldness between your eyes (as a sign of mourning) for the dead (as the Amorites do, because) you are children of God, your God (and thus your appearance should be pleasant).

² For you are a(n inherently) holy people to God, your God, and (furthermore), God has chosen you to be a treasured people for Him, out of all the nations that are upon the earth.

🕎 LAWS OF FORBIDDEN FOODS* 🕎

- ³ You may not eat any abomination.
- ⁴ These are the animals that you may eat:
 - ox, sheep, goat, ⁵ gazelle, deer, and yachmor, ibex, antelope, buffalo, and giraffe.
- ⁶ You may eat any animal which has a split hoof which is completely split into two hooves, if it chews the cud; (and you may eat the fetus) inside the animal (once the animal is slaughtered).
- ⁷ But, among those that chew the cud and those that have a cloven hoof, you may not eat these:
 - The dromedary, the camel, the hare, and the hyrax, because they chew the cud, but do not have split hooves. They are impure for you.
 - ⁸ The pig, because it has a split hoof, but does not chew the cud. It is impure for you.
 - You may not eat their flesh. (When it comes to a festival, you must make yourself ritually pure to come to the Temple, so then) you may not touch their carcasses (which would render you impure).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

"YOU ARE CHILDREN OF GOD" (v. 1)

All creation is derived from "the word of God" which brings matter into being and sustains it every instant continuously. However, the parallel Godly force of contraction and concealment obscures the Divine creative force; as a result, all one can see is the external form of the physical. Service of God, aided by the simple belief that "there is nothing aside from Him," mandates an honest effort by each of us to "bring to the surface" the Godliness inherent in everything in our lives, and to remove as much as possible the mask of physical externality obscuring the inner Godliness.

The same applies to each individual; his inner "essence" is Godliness. "You are the children of God your God." It is explained in the *Tanya* [ch. 2] that just as the child is drawn from the mind of his father, so is the soul of every Jew drawn from the Almighty's wisdom and thought (which is synonymous with His Essence, for He and His Wisdom are one). The essential being of each and every Jew...is Godliness.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

c.) Eating milk cooked in meat is already prohibited by the verse, "Do not cook a tender young animal in its mother's milk," which "is written in three places in the Torah: One for the prohibition of eating meat with milk, one for the prohibition of deriving any benefit from meat with milk, and one for the prohibition of cooking meat with milk" (Rashi to Shemos 23:19).

What then is added by our verse?

THE EXPLANATION

When the verse states, "You may not eat any abomination," without specifying any further details, it appears that the Torah is referring to an abomination with which the reader is already familiar. However, this begs the question: If the reader is already aware that a certain thing is an "abomination," then surely he *already knows* not to eat it? Why does the Torah need to tell us, "You may not eat any abomination"?

Rashi answers that this refers to "anything that I have declared to be an abomination to you." I.e. this verse is referring to eating something which *in itself* has not yet been forbidden by the Torah, and it has only become forbidden to the person due to something "abominable" which that person has done—it is "an abomination to you."

In other words, the Torah can prohibit the consumption of a food substance in one of two ways: a.) By rendering the *food itself* an intrinsically abominable and forbidden substance; or b.) By prohibiting *the person* from eating this food, for whatever reason.

Rashi explains that our verse is speaking of the latter case, where a food that is intrinsically permitted became prohibited because of something a person did—it became an abomination, not in itself, but "to you."

* See Vayikra, chap. 11.

ובנבלתהוון לא תקרבון: ט ית דין תיכלון
 מכל די כמיא כל די לה ציציו וקלפין תיכלון:
 וכל די לית לה ציציו וקלפין לא תיכלון
 מסאב הוא לבון: יא כל צפר דכיאת תיכלון:
 יב ודין די לא תיכלון מנהון נשרא וער
 ועינא: יג ובת כנפא וטרפיתא ודיתא לונה:
 יד וית כל עורבא לונה: טו וית בת נעמיתא
 וציצא ועפר שחפא ונצא לונה: טז וקרניא
 וקופא ובותא: יז וקאתא וינקרא ושליונא:
 יח וחוריתא ואבו לונה ונגר טורא ועטלפא:
 יט וכל רחשא דעופא מסאב הוא לבון לא
 יתאכלון: כ כל עופא דכי תיכלון: כא לא
 תיכלון כל נבילא לתותב ערל די בקרויד
 תתננה וייכלנה או תובננה לבר עממין ארי
 עם קדיש את קדם יי אלהך לא תיכול בשר
 בחלב: כב עשרא תעשר ית כל עלת זרעך
 דיפוק חקלא שתא בשתא: כג ותיכול קדם יי
 אלהך די באתרא די יתרעי לאשראה
 שבתתה תמן מעשר עבורך חמך ומשחך
 ובבורי תורך וענך בדיל דתילף למדחל קדם

ט את־זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר־לו סנפיר
 וקשקשת תאכלו: י וכל אשר אין־לו סנפיר וקשקשת לא
 תאכלו טמא הוא לכם: ט יא כל־צפור טהרה תאכלו: יב וזה
 אשר לא־תאכלו מהם הנשר והפרס והעזניה: יג והראה
 ואת־האיה והדיה למינה: יד ואת כל־ערב למינו: טו ואת בת
 היענה ואת־התחמס ואת־השחף ואת־הגז למינהו: טז את־
 הכוס ואת־הינשוף והתנשמת: יז והקאת ואת־הרחמה ואת־
 השלף: יח והחסידה והאנפה למינה והדוכיפת והעטלף:
 יט וכל שרץ העוף טמא הוא לכם לא יאכלו: כ כל־עוף טהור
 תאכלו: כא לא תאכלו כל־נבלה לגר אשר־בשער־יד תתננה
 ואכלה או מכר לנכרי כי עם קדוש אתה ליהוה אלהיך לא־
 תבשל גדי בחלב אמו: פ [חמישי] כב עשר תעשר את כל־
 תבואת זרעך היצא השדה שנה שנה: כג ואכלת לפני | יהוה
 אלהיך במקום אשר־יבחר לשכן שמו שם מעשר דגנך
 תירשך ויצהרך ובכרת בקרך וצאנך למען תלמד ליראה

כ"ט

צבחה, אותה תאכלו³ ולא צבחה טמאה, לאו הצא מכלל עשה עשה, לעזור
 עליהם צעש ולא תעשה!⁴ (כא) לגר אשר בשעריך. גר תושב שקבל עליו
 שלא לעבוד עבודה זרה ואוכל נלות: בי עם קדוש אתה לה'. קדש את
 עצמך צמותך. דברים המותרים ואחרים נוכחים צבחה חסור, אל תחירם
 צפניהם: לא תבשל גדי. שלשה פעמים. פרט לחיה ולעופות ולצבחה
 טמאה: לא תבשל גדי וגו': (כב) עשר תעשר. מה ענין זה אלל זה, אמר
 להם הקב"ה לישראל, לא תגרמו לי לצלל גדיים של תצוה עד שהן צמעי
 אמותיהן, שאם אין אתם מעשרים מעשרות כראוי, כשהוא סמוך להצטלל
 אני מוציא רוח קדים והיא משדפתן. שנאמר ושדפה לפני קמח⁴, וכן לענין
 צבורים:⁵ שנה שנה. מכאן שאין מעשרין מן החדש על הישן:⁶ (כג) ואבלת
 וגו'. זה מעשר שני. שכבר למדנו ליתן מעשר ראשון ללוים, שנאמר כי תקחו

(יא) כל צפור טהורה תאכלו. להחיר משולחת שצמורע': (יב) וזה
 אשר לא תאכלו מהם. לאסור את השחוט: (יג) והראה ואת האיה
 וגו'. היא ראה היא איה היא דיה. ולמה נקרא שמה ראה, שרואה ציורה.
 ולמה הזכיר בכל שמותיה, שלא ליתן פתחון פה לבעל דין לחלוק, שלא יהא
 האוסר קורא אותה ראה, והצא להחיר חומר, זו דיה שמה או איה שמה,
 וזו לא אסר הכחוש. ובעופות פרט לך הטמאים, ללמד שהעופות הטמאים
 מרובים על הטמאים, לפיכך פרט את המועט:² (טז) והתנשמת. קלצ"ח
 שורי"ן: (יז) שלך. השולח דגים מן היס:² (יח) דוכיפת. הוא תרנגול הצר
 וצלע"ו הרופ"א וכרצלתו כפולה:² (יט) שרץ העוף. הם הנמוכים הרוחשים
 על הארץ, כגון צבזבין וזרעים וחגבים טמאים, הם קרויים שרץ: (כ) כל
 עוף טהור תאכלו. ולא את הטמא. צא ליתן עשה על לא תעשה. וכן

TORAS MENACHEM

To illustrate what this means, *Rashi* brings the unusual example of a person who mutilated a firstborn animal so as to avoid taking it to Jerusalem. Torah law normally permits the consumption of a firstborn animal which became blemished naturally, but in this case, since the person has committed a deceptive and abominable act, our verse prohibits *him* alone from eating the animal.

RASHI'S SECOND EXAMPLE

Rashi then cited a second example to teach us an even greater innovation of our verse:

Up to this point we have understood that a food substance can either be intrinsically forbidden (as in most cases), or alternatively, the Torah can decree against a person not to eat a particular food due to his actions (as in our verse).

Now, we might think that if a food is already intrinsically forbidden, then there would be no point in the Torah adding a prohibition on the person (even if he did something abominable with it), since the food is intrinsically abominable in any case.

Therefore, *Rashi* adds a further example which indicates that this is not

1 909 2 חז"ל: 3 לעיל פסוק 4 מ"ב י"ט, כ 5 ראה שיחת מוצש"ק ראה תשל"ט.

- ⁹ Among all (the creatures) that are in the water, you may eat these:
 - You may eat any (of) those (creatures) in the water that have fins and scales. ¹⁰ But you must not eat any that do not have fins and scales. They are impure for you.
- ¹¹ You may eat every bird from a ritually pure species (even the one which is sent off after the ritual purification of a tzara'as sufferer.*)
- ¹² Among (birds), you may not eat the following:
 - The griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the osprey, ¹³ the buzzard, the kite and the buzzard family, ¹⁴ the entire raven family, ¹⁵ the ostrich, the tachmas, the gull, the hawk family, ¹⁶ the kos-owl, the yanshuf-owl, the barn owl, ¹⁷ the ka'as-owl, the roller, the cormorant, ¹⁸ the stork, the heron family, the hoopoe and the bat.
- ¹⁹ Every flying insect is impure for you. They may not be eaten.
- ²⁰ You may eat any ritually pure species of clean fowl.
- ²¹ You may not eat any carcass. You can give it to the (non-Jewish resident) alien who is in your cities, and he may eat it, or you can sell it to a non-Jew.
- You are a holy people to God, your God, so (you should abstain even from things that are permitted).
- Do not cook a tender young animal in its mother's milk.

🕎 THE SECOND TITHE 🕎

FIFTH
READING

- ²² You should always take the (second) tithe from all the produce of the seed crop that the field produces.
- (Do not separate tithes for this) year from (last) year('s produce).
- ²³ You should eat the (second) tithes of your grain, your wine, and your oil—and the firstborn of your cattle and of your sheep—before God, your God, in (Jerusalem), the place where He will choose to make His Name rest. (Do this) in order that you will learn to fear God, your God, for all time.

TORAS MENACHEM

the case and that the Torah can prohibit a food-substance simultaneously for both reasons:

“[Another example is] if one cooked meat in milk, which is a thing that I have declared as an abomination to you. Here scripture warns against eating it.”

Meat cooked in milk is intrinsically forbidden as an abomination by the Torah, regardless of who cooked it. Our verse adds that if a person cooks meat in milk *himself*, then (in addition to the existing, intrinsic prohibition against eating this food substance) the Torah adds a further prohibition upon the *person* who did the abominable act of cooking this food, from eating it.

And from the negative, we can learn the positive: That God allowed the Jewish people to eat only the most spiritually refined food, since “you are a holy people to God, your God, and God has chosen you to be a treasured people for Him, out of all the nations that are upon the earth” (v. 2).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 29, p. 88ff.)

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“ASSER T’ASSER” (v. 22)

There is the Divine Promise: *Asser t’asser* (v. 22)...as explained by our Sages of blessed memory (*Ta’anis* 9a), that through giving tithes and *Tzedakah* [charity], a person will not only reduce what he has, but, on the contrary, it will be greatly increased, to the degree of riches. And although the *Mitzvos* in general (including *Tzedakah*) must be fulfilled not for the sake of reward, but because God, the Creator and Master of the world, commanded them, nevertheless God has given the assurance of a generous reward (*Asser t’asser*), both materially and spiritually.

(Excerpt from public letter of 6th *Tishrei* 5733—Free Translation)

* See *Vayikra* 14:7.

יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ כֹּל יוֹמָיָא: כִּד וְאֲרִי יִסְגִי מִנְךָ אֲרָחָא אֲרִי לֹא תִפּוּל לְמִטְלָה אֲרִי יִתְרַחֵק מִנְךָ אֲתָרָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאַשְׁרָאָה שְׂכַנְתָּהּ תִּמְן אֲרִי יִבְרַכְנֵךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כה וְתִמְן בְּכֶסֶף וְתַצְוֹר בְּכֶסֶף בִּידֶךָ וְתִהְיֶה לְאַתְרָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּה: כו וְתִמְן בְּכֶסֶף בְּכֹל דִּי יִתְרַעֵי נִפְשֶׁךָ בְּתוֹרֵי וּבַעֲנָא וּבְחִמְרֵי חֲדַת וְעֵתִיק וּבְכֹל דִּי תִשְׁאַלְנֵךְ נִפְשֶׁךָ וְתִיכּוּל תִּמְן קָדָם יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְתַחֲדֵי אֶת וְאֲנִשׁ בֵּיתְךָ: כז וְלוֹאָה דִּי בְקַרְוִיד לֹא תִרְחַקְנָה אֲרִי לִית לָהּ חֵלֶק וְאַחֲסָנָא עִמָּךְ: כח מִסּוּף תְּלַת שָׁנִין תִּפְסַק יֵת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂר עֲלֵלְתְךָ בְּשֶׂטָא הִיֵּא וְתַצְנַע בְּקַרְוִיד: כט וְיִיתִי לוֹאָה אֲרִי לִית לָהּ חֵלֶק וְאַחֲסָנָא עִמָּךְ וְגִירָא וְיִתְמָא וְאַרְמְלָא דִּי בְקַרְוִיד וְיִיכְלוּן וְיִשְׁבַּעוּן בְּדִיל דִּי יִבְרַכְנֵךְ יְיָ

אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־הַיָּמִים: כד וְכִי־יִרְבֶּה מִמֶּךָ הַדֶּרֶךְ כִּי לֹא תוּכַל שְׂאתוֹ כִּי־יִרְחַק מִמֶּךָ הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כה וְנִתְּתָה בְּכֶסֶף וְצָרָתְךָ הַכֶּסֶף בְּיָדְךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ: כו וְנִתְּתָה הַכֶּסֶף בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־תִּאֲוֶה נַפְשֶׁךָ בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן וּבַיִין וּבַשֶּׂכֶר וּבְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁאַלְךָ נַפְשֶׁךָ וְאַכְלַתְּ שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשִׂמַחְתָּ אִתָּה וּבֵיתְךָ: כז וְהִלּוּי אֲשֶׁר־בַּשְּׂעִרֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲזֹבְנּוּ כִּי אֵין לּוֹ חֵלֶק וְנִחְלָה עִמָּךְ: ס כה מִקְצֵהוּ שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים תּוֹצִיא אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂר תְּבוּאָתְךָ בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא וְהִנַּחְתָּ בַּשְּׂעִרֶיךָ: כט וּבֵא הִלּוּי כִּי אֵין־לוֹ חֵלֶק וְנִחְלָה עִמָּךְ וְהִגֵּר וְהִיתוּם וְהֵאֱלַמְנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשְּׂעִרֶיךָ וְאַכְלוּ וְשִׁבְעוּ לְמַעַן יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה: ס

כ"ט

שכחה ופאה והפקר, שאף הוא יש לו חלק עמך צהן כמון, ואינו חייבין צמעשר¹: (כה) מקצה שלש שנים. צא ולמד שאם השכה מעשרותיו של שנה ראשונה ושנייה לשמטה, שיצטרס מן הבית צשלישית: (כט) ובא הלוי. ויטול מעשר ראשון: והגר והיתום. ויטלו מעשר שני, שכוא של עני של שנה זו, ולא תאכלנו אה צירושלים כדרך שזקקת לאכול מעשר שני של שתי שנים: ואכלו ושבעו. תן להם כדי שציעה. מכאן אמרו אין פוחסין לעני צגורן

מאת צני ישראל וגו'¹, ונתן להם רשות לאכלו צכל מקום, שנאמר ואכלתם אותו צכל מקום, על כרחק זה מעשר אחר הוא: (כד) כי יברכך. שתהא הצצואה מרובה לשאת: (כו) בכל אשר תאווה נפשך. כלל: בבקר ובצאן וביין ובשכר. פרט: ובכל אשר תשאלך נפשך. חזר וכלל. מה הפרט מפורש ולד ולדות הארץ וראוי למאכל אדם וכו²: (כז) והלוי וגו' לא תעזבנו. מליתן לו מעשר ראשון: כי אין לו חלק ונחלה עמך. ילאו לקט

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What happens if a person exchanges his second tithe for money, and spends it on food *outside* Jerusalem? (v. 24-26)

RAMBAM: If second tithe is exchanged for money, and that money is used to buy fruits, they may not be exchanged back for money while one is still distant [from Jerusalem]...rather, the fruits themselves must be taken to Jerusalem and eaten there. This is an instance where we treat fruits bought with money exchanged for the second tithe *more stringently* [since they cannot be exchanged] than the second tithe itself, [which can be exchanged] (*Laws of Second Tithe* 7:1-2).

SHITAH MEKUBETZES: The Torah permitted a person to exchange his second tithe for money so as not to burden him with a heavy load on

his journey to Jerusalem: “If the journey is great for you...[and] you are unable to carry it, then you should exchange it for money” (v. 24-25). Thus, if a person purchases fruits with this money before reaching Jerusalem, he indicates that the burden of carrying them does not bother him. Therefore, the Torah does not permit him to exchange them again (*Zevachim* 49a).

TOSFOS: The second tithe may be exchanged for money at a distance from Jerusalem, in order to use that money to purchase produce in Jerusalem. But if the person used the money to buy fruits outside Jerusalem, he may not exchange them again for money, just as fruits bought *within* Jerusalem may not be exchanged once again for money (*ibid.*, s.v. *veharai ma’aser*).

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🔗 EXCHANGING THE SECOND TITHE FOR MONEY (v. 24-26)

After a person has separated the second tithe from his crops, he is required to take it to Jerusalem, and eat it there (v. 23). Since the produce may be quite heavy, and he may have some distance to travel, the Torah gives him the option to exchange the second tithe for money at home, take the money to Jerusalem, and use that money to purchase produce in Jerusalem (v. 24-26).

Rambam discusses the question of what happens if the person uses that money to purchase produce *before* he reaches Jerusalem. In such a case, “they may not be exchanged back for money while one is still distant [from Jerusalem]...rather, the fruits themselves must be taken to Jerusalem, and eaten there.”

Why may an exchange not be carried out for a second time? **Shitah Mekubetzes** explains that through using the exchange money, “he ind-

- ²⁴ *If the journey is great for you, because the place which God, your God, will choose to make His Name rest there, is too far from you and God has blessed you (with so much produce) that you are unable to carry it, ²⁵ then you should exchange it for money, bind up the money in your hand, and you should go to the place that God, your God, will choose. ²⁶ You should use the money to buy whatever your soul desires—cattle, sheep, wine or beer, or whatever your soul desires—and you should eat there before God, your God, and you should rejoice, (both) you and your household.*
- ²⁷ *Do not abandon the Levite who lives in your town (by failing to give him the first tithe), for he has no portion or inheritance with you.*

🕎 DISPOSAL OF UNDISTRIBUTED TITHES & TITHE FOR THE POOR 🕎

- ²⁸ *At the end of three years, you should take out all the (undistributed first and second) tithes from your crop, (before the end) of that year, and put it in a public place.*
- ²⁹ *The Levite (will come and take the first tithe) because he has no portion or inheritance with you.*
- *(That year you will not separate the second tithe and take it to Jerusalem. Instead, you will give the poor man's tithe, so that the destitute) converts, orphans, and widows, who are in your cities, will come and eat. (You must give them enough to) be satisfied.*

(Do this) in order that God, your God, will bless you in all the work of your hand that you will do.

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icates that the burden of carrying them does not bother him. Therefore, the Torah does not permit him to exchange them again.”

Tosfos offers a different explanation: “If the person used the money to buy fruits *outside* Jerusalem, he may not exchange them again for money, just as fruits bought *within* Jerusalem may not be exchanged once again for money.”

Rambam himself offers a further insight into this law: “This is an instance where we treat fruits bought with money exchanged for the second tithe more stringently than the second tithe itself.”

What is **Rambam** adding with this statement?

And did **Rambam** accept the logic of *Shitah Mekubetzes*? Or that of *Tosfos*? Or did he have a different reasoning?

THE EXPLANATION

The Torah’s “permission” to exchange the second tithe for money could be interpreted in three different ways:

a.) It is a *dispensation* for those who are unable to bring their actual second tithe fruits to Jerusalem, due to the burden of the load and the distance involved. However, the preferable way to observe this *mitzvah* is by carrying the produce itself to Jerusalem.

b.) It is not a dispensation at all. Rather, redeeming the second tithe produce for money, and using that money to purchase produce in Jerusalem, is an *equally acceptable* way of eating the second tithe in Jerusalem, as transporting the actual second tithe fruits themselves.

c.) Exchanging one’s second tithe for money is not merely a (totally acceptable) means of eating the second tithe in Jerusalem, but rather, it is an *independent precept in its own right*, which a person who lives outside Jerusalem may perform. When a person later takes the exchange money to Jerusalem to buy produce and eats it there, his eating is *distinct* from the precept of exchanging the second tithe for money.

Shitah Mekubetzes adopted the first approach (‘a’) that exchanging the second tithe for money is a *dispensation* granted to a person to relieve him of a burden. Consequently, “if a person purchases fruits with this money before reaching Jerusalem, he indicates that the burden of carrying them does not bother him,” i.e. he has shown that he does not need the dispensation, and, that “therefore, the Torah does not permit him to exchange them again.”

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

It is true, that man and his deeds are finite, and that God is the source of holiness and infinitude. But nevertheless, we are taught that, “He desires the work of *your hands*” (Job 14:15), i.e. the ultimate purpose of creation is that holiness and goodness should be brought into the world *via man’s efforts*, and not by God alone.

This principle is hinted to in the concept of the second tithe, and its exchange for money (see verses 24-26 & *Classic Questions*):

When the second tithe is separated, *God* confers holiness on the produce (and it must be eaten in Jerusalem).

However, when a person exchanges the second tithe into money, and then exchanges the money back into produce, it is *the person’s act* which renders the produce holy.

Rambam comments: “We treat fruits bought with money exchanged for the second tithe more stringently than the second tithe itself”—i.e. man’s actions (“fruits bought with money”) are cherished by God most, and are thus more central to the purpose of creation (more “stringent”) than something made holy by God alone (“the second tithe itself.”)

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 80)

אלהך בכל עובדי ידך די תעבד: א מסוף שבע שנין תעבד שמתא: ב ודין פתגם שמתא דתשמיט כל גבר מרי רשו די ורשי בחברה לא יתבע מן חברה ומן אחוהי ארי קרא שמתא קדם יי: ג מן בר עממין תתבע ודי יהי לך עם אחוד תשמיט ידך: ד להוד ארי לא יהי בך מסכנא ארי ברקא יברכך יי בארעא די יי אלהך יהי לך אחסנא למירתה: ה להוד אם קבל תקבל למיכרא די אלהך למטר למעבד ות כל תפקדתא קרא די אנא מפקדך יומא דין: ו ארי יי אלהך ברךך כמא די מליל לך ותזור לעממין סניאין ואת לא תזוף ותשלוט בעממין סניאין וברך לא ישלטון: ז ארי יהי בך מסכנא חד מאחוד בחדא מקרויך בארעך די אלהך יהי לך לא תתקוף ות לך ולא תקפון ות ידך מאחוד מסכנא: ח אלא (ארי) מפתח תפתח ות ידך לה ואזכא תזכנה במסת

[שני] טו א מקין שבע שנים תעשה שמטה: ב וזה דבר השמטה שמוט כל בעל משה ידו אשר ישה ברעהו לא יגש את רעהו ואת אחיו ביקרא שמטה ליהוה: ג את הנכרי תגש ואשר יהיה לך את אחיד תשמיט ידך: ד אפס כי לא יהיה בך אביון כי בך יברך יהוה בארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך נחלה לרשתה: ה רק אם שמוע תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמר לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה היום: ו כי יהוה אלהיך ברכך באשר דבר לך והעבטת גוים רבים ואתה לא תעבט ומשלת בגוים רבים וברך לא ימשלו: ז כי יהיה בך אביון מאחד אחיד באחד שעריך בארצך אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך לא תאמץ את לבבך ולא תקפיץ את ידך מאחיד האביון: ח כי פתח תפתח את ידך לו והעבט תעביטנו די מחסרו אשר יחסר

רשי

כשנפול על המלוח, נופל בלשון מפעיל. כגון והלוית, והעבטת. ואם כיכ אומר ועבטת כיכ נופל על הלוה, כמו ולוית: והעבטת גוים. יכול שתהא לוח מזה ומלוח לזה, תלמוד לומר ואתה לא תעבט: ומשלת בגוים רבים. יכול גויס אחרים מושלים עליך, תלמוד לומר וזך לא ימשלו: (ז) כי יהיה בך אביון. התאז תאז קודם: מאחד אחיד. אחיד מאזיך, קודם לאחיד מאמך: שעריך. עניי עירך קודמים לעניי עיר אחרת: לא תאמץ. יש לך אדם שמלטער אס יתן אס לא יתן, לכך נאמר לא תאמץ. יש לך אדם שפושט את ידו וקופלנה, לכך נאמר ולא תקפון: מאחיד האביון. אס לא תתן לו, סופך להיות אחיו של אביון: (ח) פתח תפתח. אפילו כמכ פעמים: כי פתח תפתח. כרי כי משמש בלשון אלא: והעבט תעביטנו. אס לא רכז במתנה, תן לו כהלואה: די מחסורו. ואי אס מלווה להעשירו: אשר יחסר לו. אפילו סוס לרכוב

וכו'. ואתה הולך לירושלים צמעט של שנה ראשונה ושנייה ששכית, ומתודה צעתי הקדש מן הבית? כמו שמפורש כזי תכלה לעשר: (א) מקין שבע שנים. יכול שבע שנים לכל מלוח ומלוח, תלמוד לומר קרבה שנת השבע. ואם אתה אומר שבע שנים לכל מלוח ומלוח להלוות כל אחד ואחד, היאך היא קרבה, הא למדת שבע שנים למנין השמיטות: (ב) שמוט כל בעל משה ידו. שמוט את ידו של כל בעל משה: (ד) אפס כי לא יהיה בך אביון. ולהלן הוא אומר כי לא יחדל אביון, אלא בזמן שאתם עושים ראונו של מקום, אביונים באחרים ולא בכס, וכשחין אתם עושים ראונו של מקום אביונים בכס. אביון דל מעני, ולשון אביון שהוא תאז לכל דבר: (ה) רק אם שמוע תשמע. אז לא יהיה בך אביון: שמוע תשמע. שמת קמעא משמיעין אותו הרבה: (ו) כאשר דבר לך. וכיון דבר, כיון אתה צעיר: והעבטת. כל לשון הלוואה

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Tosfos adopted the second approach ('b'), that the exchange of second tithe produce into money is an equally acceptable substitute for taking the second tithe produce itself. But, on the other hand, Tosfos maintained that exchanging the second tithe into money is (not a precept in its own right, but) only a means to an end, to "relocate" the produce to Jerusalem.

Thus, according to Tosfos, there is a single "process of exchange," which takes place in two phases: i.) Exchanging the second tithe for money (v. 25), and, ii.) "Use the money to buy whatever your soul desires" (v. 26), i.e. exchanging the money back into produce. Once the person has bought the produce, the whole process of "exchange" as described by the Torah is complete, and no further exchanges are allowed. Thus, "fruits bought within Jerusalem may not be exchanged once again for money," and likewise, the same law applies to fruits bought outside Jerusalem.

Rambam, however, took the third approach ('c'), that exchanging the second tithe for money is an independent precept in its own right.

Therefore, Rambam could not accept Tosfos's argument that exchanging the money back into fruits completes the "process of exchange," because, according to Rambam, the initial exchange of the second tithe into money is an independent process in its own right, which is not "completed" by a further act.

To clarify this point Rambam writes: "This is an instance where we treat fruits bought with money exchanged for the second tithe more stringently than the second tithe itself." For this stringency is in regard to the first precept—the exchange of produce for money, which can be done only with the second tithe itself. It is for this reason that Rambam adds this statement: By pointing out that there is a stringency in regard to the exchange of produce for money, he clarifies that it is not merely a "means to an end," but an independent precept.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 34, p. 75ff.)

🕎 ANNULMENT OF LOANS 🕎

15

SIXTH
READING

- ¹ At the end of (the) seven-year (cycle) you must annul (all loans). ² These are the terms of the annulment: Every creditor should release from his hand the debt which he can claim from his fellow. He may not demand payment from his friend or his brother, because the time of God's annulment has arrived.
- ³ You should demand payment from a gentile (who owes you money), but your hand should release whatever (claim) you have against your (Jewish) brother.

⁴ (So long as you perform the mitzvos), there will no longer be any destitute people among you, for God will bless you repeatedly in the Land God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance and a possession. ⁵ However, (this is only) if you listen to the voice of God, your God, and are careful to observe every commandment, which I am commanding you today. ⁶ For God, your God, has blessed you, as He has told you: You will lend to many nations, and you will not borrow. You will rule over many nations, and they will not rule over you.

🕎 CHARITY & LOANS TO THE POOR 🕎

- ⁷ If there will be a destitute person—(especially) from among one of your (own paternal) brothers, (or from) one (of the residents) in your (own) town—in the Land that God, your God, is giving you, you must not harden your heart or shut your hand from your destitute brother. ⁸ Rather, you must repeatedly open your hand to him, and give him (charity—and if he will not take a gift, then) give him a loan—sufficient to fulfill his requirements that he is lacking.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How many times should you “open your hand”? (v. 8)

RASHI: Even many times.

MIDRASH: “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening do not withhold your hand, for you do not know which will succeed—this one, or that one, or whether both of them will be equally good”

(Ecclesiastes 11:6). Rabbi Yehoshua says: “If a poor man comes to you in the morning, give to him. [If he comes again] in the evening, give to him. For you do not know on account of which one God will inscribe you for—this one, or that one; or if both are ‘equally good’” (Bereishis Rabah 61:3).

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🕎 “YOU MUST REPEATEDLY OPEN YOUR HAND” (v. 8)

On the verse, “You must repeatedly open your hand to him” (v. 8), Rashi comments: “even many times.”

However on the similar verse below, “You must give him repeatedly” (v. 10), Rashi writes (not “many times” but) “even a hundred times.”

What is the reason for this change?

THE EXPLANATION

The purpose of giving *tzedakah* (charity), could be viewed from two perspectives:

a.) *The goodwill of the giver*—That the person who gives the charity must overcome the emotional and psychological barriers that might prevent him from giving, and that he should give the money willingly.

b.) *The benefit to the recipient*—That the recipient should receive funds.

(A practical ramification between these approaches would be the question whether a person fulfills the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* in a case where the recipient refuses to accept the donation. If we accept that the main

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“YOU MUST ANNUL (ALL LOANS)” (v. 1)

When Hillel the Elder saw that people refrained from lending to the poor for fear of their debts being remitted by the Sabbatical year, he innovated the transfer of debts to the court, which may collect them despite the Sabbatical year (called *pruzbul*).

Since the requirement to annul one's loans is still in force, even in the diaspora, it is highly recommended for every person to make a *pruzbul* at the end of the sixth year of the Sabbatical cycle*, on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*. This can be done simply by declaring in front of three people: “I hereby transfer to you all debts that are owed to me so that I may collect them whenever I wish.”

(See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 316ff and sources cited loc. cit)

* See Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Loans*, 35-6. Some also have the custom to make a further *pruzbul* at the end of the seventh year on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*, in order to satisfy all *halachic* opinions. (This was the Rebbe's practice on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* 5748—See *Shvach Hamoadim* by Rabbi S. Hurwitz (1992), p. 10, note 11.)

הַסְרֹנָה דִּיחֲסִיר לָהּ: ט אִסְתַּמַּר לָךְ דְּלִמָּא יְהִי פְתֻנָם עִם לְפָךְ בְּרִשְׁעָא לְמִימַר קְרִיבָא שְׂתָא שְׂבִיעֵתָא שְׂתָא דְשִׁמְטָתָא וְתִבְאִישׁ עֵינְךָ בְּאַחִיךָ מִסְפְּנָא וְלֹא תִתֵּן לָהּ וְיִקְרִי עָלֶיךָ קָדָם יי וְיְהִי בְךָ חֹבָא: י מִתֵּן תִּתֵּן לָהּ וְלֹא יִבְאִישׁ לְפָךְ בְּמִתְנֶנְךָ לָהּ אֲרִי בְדִיל פְתֻנָמָא הָרִין יִבְרַכְנֶךָ יי אֲלֵיךָ בְּכֹל עֹבְדֶיךָ וּבְכֹל אוֹשְׁמוֹת יְדֶיךָ: יא אֲרִי לֹא יִפְסֹק מִסְפְּנָא מִגּוֹ אֲרַעָא עַל בֵּן אִנָּא מִפְּקֻדָּךְ לְמִימַר מִפְּתַח תְּפַתַּח ית יְדֶיךָ לְאַחִיךָ לְעֵנֶיךָ וְלִמְסַפְּנֶיךָ בְּאַרְעֶיךָ: יב אֲרִי יִזְבְּנוּ לָךְ אַחִיךָ בֶּרֶ יִשְׂרָאֵל אוּ בֵּת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִפְלְחֶנְךָ שִׂית שְׁנִין וּבְשִׂתָּא שְׂבִיעֵתָא תִּפְטַרְנָה בֶּר חוֹרִין מִעַמְּךָ: יג וְאֲרִי תִּפְטַרְנָה

לו: ט השמר לך פן יהיה דבר עם לבבך בליעל לאמר קרבה שנת השבע שנת השמטה ורעה עיניך באחיד האביון ולא תתן לו וקרא עליך אל יהוה והיה בך חטא: נתון תתן לו ולא ירע לבבך בתתך לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכה יהוה אלהיך בכל מעשך ובכל משלח ידך: כי לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ על פני אנכי מצוה לאמר פתח תפתח את ידך לאחיד לעניך ולאביון בארעך: כי ימכר לך אחיד העברי או העבריה ועבדך שש שנים ובשנה השביעת תשלחנו חפשי מעמך: וכי תשלחנו חפשי מעמך לא

כ"ט

משיאך: לאחיד לעניך. לחיוב חס, לעני: לעניך. ביו"ד אחד, לשון עני אחד הוא. אבל עניך צני יודי"ן, שני עניים: (יג) כי ימכר לך. על ידי אחרים, שמכרוהו בית דין בגזנתו הכחוז מדבר³. והרי כבר נאמר כי תקנה עבד עברי⁴, ובמכרוהו בית דין הכחוז מדבר⁵. אלא מפני שני דברים שנתחדשו כאן. אחד שכתוב או העבריה, אף היא תאל צעש. ולא שמכרוהו בית דין, שאין האשה נמכרת בגזנתה, שנאמר⁶ בגזנתו ולא בגזנתה⁷, אלא צקנה שמכרה

עליו ועבד לרון לפניו: לו. זו אשה. וכן הוא אומר אעשה לו עזר כנגדו: (ט) וקרא עליך. יכול מלוה, תלמוד לומר ולא יקרא: והיה בך חטא. מכל מקום, אפילו לא יקרא. אם כן למה נאמר וקרא עליך, ממחר אני ליפרע על ידי הקורא יותר ממי שאינו קורא? (י) נתון תתן לו. אפילו מאה פעמים: לו. זינו וזינך: כי בגלל הדבר. אפילו אמרת ליתן, אתה נוטל שכר האמירה עם שכר המעשה: (יא) על בן. מפני כן: לאמר. ענה לטובתך אני

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emphasis is that the recipient should actually receive the money, then clearly the person has not fulfilled the *mitzvah*.* But if the main emphasis is the goodwill of the giver, then perhaps it could be argued that the *mitzvah* was carried out.**

A further practical ramification would also appear to be the reverse case: where the recipient received funds, but there was no intended act of giving at all, e.g. if a person unwittingly dropped money on the floor, and it was found by a poor person.)

At the literal level, the Torah appears to stress *both* these elements.

First we read: "If there will be a destitute person...you must not harden your heart or shut your hand....Rather, you must repeatedly open your hand to him" (v. 7-8). Here the Torah stresses primarily the goodwill of the giver, and his need to overcome internal barriers ("you must not harden your heart...your hand...").

However in verses 9-10, the Torah stresses the second aspect discussed above, the actual transfer of funds to the poor man: "Be careful that a reckless thought should not enter your heart...and you look begrudgingly upon your destitute brother and do not give him....(Rather) you should give him repeatedly."

(The fact that the Torah stresses *first* (v. 7-8) the importance of goodwill on the part of the giver, implies that, at the literal level, this is the most important element of the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.*** However, since from these verses alone a person might be given the impression that goodwill alone is sufficient, the Torah also stresses that, "You should give him"—that one must actually give the money too).

Based on the above, we can explain the subtle difference between *Rashi's* comments to verses 8 and 10:

In verse 8, where the Torah is stressing the goodwill of the giver, ("you must not harden your heart or shut your hand...open your hand"), we are not speaking about the quantity of the gift, but the transformation of the giver. Therefore, *Rashi* did not write here, "even a hundred times," as this would give the mistaken impression that verse 8 is stressing the quantity of the donation. Rather, the requirement to "repeatedly open your hand to him," writes *Rashi*, means that one should overcome one's internal barriers "even many times," if necessary.

However in verse 10, where the main stress is upon the benefit to the recipient, *Rashi* emphasizes the importance of the quantity of one's donations: "even a hundred times."

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 82ff.)

* This concurs with the view that our Sages did not institute a blessing on the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* because if the recipient refused the donation, the blessing would have been made in vain (*Rashba, Sha'alos Veteshuvos*, 1:18; *Avudraham, Laws of Blessings Performed on Mitzvos*). **See *Beis Hillel to Yoreh De'ah* ch. 248 (cited by *Yad Avraham* *ibid.*), who rules that the *mitzvah* is fulfilled even if the poor person refuses to accept the donation.

***In contrast, it would appear that *Rambam* perceived the second aspect, the actual transfer of funds, to be primary, since: a.) He rules that the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* is valid even if it is carried out begrudgingly (*Laws of Gifts to the Poor* 10:14); b.) When *Rambam* initially defines the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, he makes no mention of the goodwill of the giver, and stresses only that the *mitzvah* is "to give charity to the poor, according to the needs of the poor." (*ibid.* 7:1). In fact, even when he later discusses the importance of goodwill, he describes this as one of the "virtues" of giving *tzedakah*, as opposed to an intrinsic element of the *mitzvah* itself. A practical ramification between the views of *Rashi* and *Rambam* would appear to be that, according to *Rambam*, the priority is to meet the poor person's requirements, even if this will cause one to give begrudgingly, whereas, according to *Rashi*, it is preferable to give less than the poor person requires, if this will enable one to give willingly. (However, this matter requires further clarification). [See also "The Rich Go to Heaven," by Eli M. Shear & Chaim Miller (Jason Aronson 1998), ch. 2].

- ⁹ *Be careful that a reckless thought should not enter your heart, saying, “The seventh year, the year of cancellation (of loans) is approaching,” and you look begrudgingly upon your destitute brother and do not give him—then he might cry out against you to God, and it will be an (even more serious) sin for you.* ¹⁰ *(Rather) you should give to him repeatedly, and your heart should not feel bad when you give to him. For God, your God, will bless all your work and everything you do, as a result of (the promises you made to the poor and the money you gave to them).* ¹¹ *There will never cease to be destitute people within the Land, and therefore I am commanding you, as follows: you should repeatedly open your hand to your poor brother and to your destitute (resident) in your Land.*

🕎 GIFTS TO JEWISH SLAVES UPON THEIR RELEASE 🕎

- ¹² *If one of your brethren—a Hebrew man or woman—is sold to you (by the courts), he should work for you for six years, and in the seventh year you should send him away, free from you.*

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🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

THE UNIQUE QUALITY OF *TZEDAKAH*

“By giving tzedakah a person’s mind and heart become refined one thousand times” (Torah Ohr, Bereishis 1b)

Our Sages praised the greatness of *tzedakah* considerably, equating it with all the other *mitzvos* together (*Bava Basra* 9a). Throughout the Jerusalem Talmud, charity is called simply “the Commandment,” since that used to be the normal way to refer to *tzedakah*—because charity is the most important of the practical *mitzvos*, and surpasses them all.

For the purpose of all the [*mitzvos*] is simply to elevate one’s vitalizing soul [which animates the physical body] to God, since it is this vitalizing soul alone that is responsible for performing them... and you will find no other *mitzvah* in which the vitalizing soul is elevated to the same extent as in the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.

For, in the case of all other *mitzvos* [which require action from just one part of the body] only one aspect of the vitalizing soul becomes involved, and even this one faculty is only involved in the *mitzvah* at the moment when the *mitzvah* is being performed. However, in the case of *tzedakah*, a man gives away “the toil of his hands,” and certainly all the faculties of his vitalizing soul were immersed in doing his manual work, or other business through which he earned this money. So when he gives it to charity, it turns out that his entire vitalizing soul is elevated to God.

And even one who does not earn a living from his “toil,” could nevertheless have used this money that he gave to *tzedakah* to buy life-sustaining necessities for his vitalizing soul, so [in giving *tzedakah*] he is actually giving his soul’s life to God.

Therefore, our Sages said that [*tzedakah*] brings the redemption nearer (*ibid.* 10a). For one act of charity brings about the elevation of so much of the vitalizing soul. The elevation of so many of its faculties and characteristics would not have been achieved through the observance of [even] numerous practical *mitzvos*.

(Free translation of *Tanya*, chapter 37)

MATERIAL & SPIRITUAL *TZEDAKAH*

Every Jew should be an “animator of living” (*Yoma* 71a)—to instill vitality into living Jews, and do so in a way that not merely adds more vitality (quantitatively), but also new life (qualitatively), as when breathing life into an inanimate object...

Inasmuch as the essential thing is the deed, the capacity of “animating the living” must express itself in concrete terms, beginning with the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* [charity]—for *tzedakah* is in effect an act of life-giving, by sustaining the life of the poor man and his family.

In *tzedakah* itself there is the ordinary aspect, namely, sustaining the life of the needy person, and also a higher level, that of resuscitation, as it were, when the poor man is in a desperate situation, not knowing “*whence shall my help come?*” (*Psalms* 121:1), and the benefactor helps him graciously, cheerfully, and wholeheartedly, which is in the category of instilling new life into the one who had despaired of hope.

And from material *tzedakah* to spiritual *tzedakah*, especially bearing in mind that, as is well known, every physical thing has its spiritual root and source from which it evolves and derives its existence and vitality (*Likutei Torah, Shelach, s.v. Inyan Hanesachim*).

Spiritual *tzedakah*, in the sense of “animating the living,” is exemplified in the teacher-disciple relationship, as our Sages say, “*He who teaches his friend’s son Torah is deemed as if he had given birth to him*” (*Sanhedrin* 19b), and “disciples” is synonymous with natural “children” (*Rashi* to 6:7, above).

Here “disciples” is not meant in terms of years, but includes also one who is mature in years but a disciple in the acquisition of his knowledge of Torah and *mitzvos*.

The *mitzvah* of spiritual *tzedakah* makes it the duty of every Jew, man or woman, to work for the creation of opportunities for all Jews—young and old—to learn Torah and fulfill its *mitzvos*.

Through the practices of *tzedakah* materially and (even more so) spiritually—and *tzedakah* is typical of all the *mitzvos*—a Jew becomes an “animator of living” in actual fact.

(Excerpt from public letter of “Days of Selichos,” 5736—Free Translation)

בר חורין מעמך לא תפטרנה ריקנון; יד אפרשא תפרש לה מענד ומאדקד וממעצרתך די וברכנד יי אלקה תתן לה: טו ותדבר ארי עבדא הוימא בארעא דמצרים ופרקד יי אלקה על בן אנא מפקדך ית פתנמא דרין יומא דין: טז ויהי ארי יומר לד לא אפוק מעמך ארי רחמך ונת אנש ביתך ארי טב לה עמך: יז ותסב ית מרעא ותתן באודנה ובדשא ויהי לד עבד פלח לעלם ואף לאמתך תעבד בן: יח לא יקשי בעינד במפטרך ותה בר חורין מעמך ארי על חד תרין באגר אנרא פלחך שית שנין ויברכנד יי אלקה בכל די תעבד: יט כל בוכרא די יתיליד בתוךך ובענד דוכרין תקדיש קדם יי אלקה לא תפלה בבוכרא

תשלחנו ריקם: יד העניק תעניק לו מצאנך ומגרנך ומיקבך אשר ברכך יהוה אלהיך תתן-לו: טו וזכרת כי עבד היית בארץ מצרים ויפדה יהוה אלהיך על-בן אנכי מצונך את-הדבר הזה היום: טז והיה כִּי-יאמר אליך לא אצא מעמך כי אהבך ואת-ביתך כִּי-טוב לו עמך: יז ולקחת את-המרצע ונתתה באזנו ובדלת והיה לך עבד עולם ואף לאמתך תעשה-בן: יח לא יקשה בעינד בשלחך אתו חפשי מעמך כי משנה שכר שכיר עבדך שש שנים וברכך יהוה אלהיך בכל אשר תעשה: טז (שביעי) יט כל-הבכור אשר יולד בבקרך ובצאנך הזכר תקדיש ליהוה אלהיך לא תעבד

— כש״י —

בן. העניק לה. יכול אף לרצעה השוכה הכחוז אותה, תלמוד לומר ואם אמור יאמר העבד⁶, עד נרצע, ואין אמה נרצעת⁷: (יח) כי משנה שכר שכיר. מכאן אמרו עד עברי עובד זין ציוס וצין צלילה, וזכו כפלים שצבדות שכירי יוס. ומכו עבודתו צלילה, רבו מוסר לו שפחה כנענית וכולדות לאדון⁸: (יט) כל הבכור וגו' תקדיש. וצמקוס אחר הוא אומר לא יקדיש⁹, שנאמר אך צבור אשר יצבר לבי וגו'¹⁰, הא כילד, אינו מקדישו לקרבן אחר, וכאן למד שמאזכר לומר הרי אתה קדוש לצבורה. דבר אחר אי אפשר לומר תקדיש שכבר נאמר לא יקדיש, ואי אפשר לומר לא יקדיש שהרי כבר נאמר תקדיש, הא כילד, מקדישו אתה הקדש עלוי, ונותן להקדש כפי עובת הנאה שבו¹¹: לא תעבוד בבכור שורך ולא תגוז וגו'. אף החלוק למדו רבותינו¹⁰ שאסור,

אזכה, ולמד כהן שאם ילאו שש שנים קודם שתצא סימנין תלא. ועוד חידש כהן העניק תעניק: (יד) העניק תעניק. לשון עדי צבובה וצמראית העין, דבר שיהא ניכר שהטיבות לו. ויש מפרשים לשון הטענה על לוארו: מצאנך ומגרנך ומיקבך. יכול אין לי אלא אלו צלצד, תלמוד לומר אשר ברכך, מכל מה שברכך צוראך. ולמה נאמרו אלו, מה אלו מיוחדים שהם כולל צרכה אף כל שהוא כולל צרכה, ילאו פרות¹. ולמדו רבותינו צמסכת קידושין² בגזרה שזה כמה נותן לו מכל מין ומין: (טו) זכרת כי עבד היית. והענקתי ושניתני לך מציות מלרים וציות הים, אף אתה הענק ושנה לו³: (יז) עבד עולם. יכול כמשמעו, תלמוד לומר ושצחם איש אל אחזתו ואיש אל משפחתו תשובו⁴, הא למדת שאין זה, אלא עולמו של יוצל⁵: ואף לאמתך תעשה

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● To whom is one obligated to give severance gifts? (v. 14)

TALMUD: "When a slave who sold himself [into slavery] goes free, he is not given severance gifts. But when a slave who was sold by the courts goes free, he is given severance gifts."

Rabbi Elazar says: "Both of them are given severance gifts."

What is the rationale of the first opinion, that a slave who sells himself is not given severance gifts? The Torah states, "[If one of your brethren...is sold to you (by the courts)...when you send him away] you should give him many gifts" (v. 12-14). This suggest that you should give only to "him" [who was sold by the courts], and not to one who sells himself.

The other opinion [Rabbi Elazar] interprets the word "him" as meaning "him and not his heirs" (Kidushin 14b-15a).

RAMBAM: One who sells himself is not given severance gifts. One who is sold by the courts is given severance gifts (Laws of Slaves 3:12).

● When is the mitzvah of giving severance gifts in force?

SEFER HACHINUCH: Only in Temple times, because the laws of Hebrew slaves are only practiced when the Jubilee year is observed. Nevertheless, even today, "Let the wise man hear and increase in

learning" (Proverbs 1:5)—if one hires a Jewish person who serves for a long period of time, or even a short period, he should be given gifts when he leaves him (Mitzvah 483).

MINCHAS CHINUCH: *Sefer Hachinuch* argues that, even today, a person should give severance gifts to one's employees out of a sense of decency. However, according to the first view in the *Talmud*, severance gifts are surely not given for reasons of decency, since decency would dictate that all of a person's staff should be given severance gifts, and the first view of the *Talmud* is selective in who should receive the gifts.

Since *Rambam* rules in favor of the first opinion in the *Talmud* (that the gifts are given selectively), it turns out that, according to *Rambam*, there is no basis to give severance gifts today.

However, in the final analysis, this is somewhat difficult to accept, since the *Sefer Hachinuch* rarely deviates from a ruling of *Rambam*, without stating so explicitly.

● Are severance gifts a type of earnings?

PNEI YEHOShUA: YES (Kidushin 16b, s.v. ve'iy iysa).

SHACH: No. The gifts are a form of charity (*Choshen Mishpat* 86:3).

- ¹³ When you send him away, free from you, you should not let him go empty-handed.
- ¹⁴ You should give him many gifts from your flock, your threshing floor, or from your wine vat, (or) you should give him from whatever God, your God, has blessed you with.

¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt, and that God, your God, redeemed you. Therefore, I am commanding you today to do this thing.

- ¹⁶ In the event that he says to you, “I will not leave you,” because he loves you and your household, since it suits him to be with you, ¹⁷ then you should take a pointed tool and put it through his ear and into the door, and he will then be a servant to you permanently (until the Jubilee year).
- You should give the same (adornment of gifts) to a maidservant.

¹⁸ Let it not seem difficult in your eyes when you send him away free from you, for he has served you (day and night) for six years, twice as many (hours) as a salaried worker (who only works by day). God, your God, will bless you in all that you do.

🕎 SANCTITY OF FIRSTBORN ANIMALS 🕎

SEVENTH
READING

- ¹⁹ You must sanctify every firstborn male, from your cattle or your flock, to God, your God (by declaring it sacred as a firstborn).
- You must not work the firstborn of your ox, or shear the firstborn of your flock (or vice-versa).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 SEVERANCE GIFTS IN THE CURRENT ERA (V. 14)

According to the first opinion in the *Talmud*, severance gifts are not given to a person who sells himself into slavery. The legal dynamics of this ruling could be understood in one of two ways:

a.) Logic dictates that there is no necessity to give severance gifts. The Torah prescribes that severance gifts should be given *only* to a slave sold by the courts. A person who sells himself into slavery is therefore not eligible for severance gifts; or

b.) In principle, *all* slaves should receive severance gifts, but the Torah made a specific *exception* in the case of the person who sells himself into slavery, and disqualified him from receiving them.

A practical difference between these two approaches (to this first opinion in the *Talmud*) is whether the concept of severance gifts of slaves

in the Temple era could act as a moral basis on which to recommend severance gifts today:

According to the first approach ('a'), the Torah only teaches us one isolated case that is eligible for severance gifts (that of a slave sold by the courts). Thus, we have no basis on which to extend the principle to other cases. However, according to the second approach ('b'), the concept of severance pay applies in principle to *all* cases (and it is only that the Torah made a special exception in the case of the slave who sells himself). Consequently, it could be argued that the principle is relevant today too.

Rambam rules in accordance with the first opinion of the *Talmud*. Therefore, if we can ascertain whether **Rambam** adopted approach 'a' or approach 'b,' we could clarify whether **Rambam** would concur with the view (of **Sefer Hachinuch**) that severance gifts are given even today.

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

- It would be wise to heed the advice of **Sefer Hachinuch** (see *Classic Questions*) that, even today, a person should offer severance gifts to a Jewish employee that is dismissed. This would apply even if he or she is dismissed due to unsatisfactory work.
- Generally speaking, the lesson from the *mitzvah* of severance gifts is that people should be given more than what is appropriate for them to receive. For example, a teacher should attempt to give his students, not only simplified ideas that the students are naturally capable of understanding, but the teacher should also try and convey some of *his own* deeper understanding of the subject matter. This will stimulate the student's growth such that he may eventually attain the knowledge and level of his teacher.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 19, pp. 155-6)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“GOD WILL BLESS YOU IN ALL THAT YOU DO” (V. 18)

The Torah view is clear: It rules that “one should not rely on a miracle” (*Jerusalem Talmud, Yoma 1:4*), but at the same time it requires every Jew to be permeated with complete faith that God acts through nature, and also “above” nature. This is also the plain meaning of the *posuk* [verse]: “And God, your God, will bless you in all that you do” (v. 18). It is necessary to *do* (not rely on miracles), yet ultimately the blessing comes from God. To think otherwise would also be contradictory to the three daily *tefilos* [prayers]. The blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei* [the standing prayer] are clearly based on the conviction that God can interfere with nature, e.g., heal the sick and bless the crops, etc., even where the natural factors are unfavorable.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

דְּתוֹרָךְ וְלֹא תִגְזוּ בְּכֹרַת דַּעְוָה: כ קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּיכַלְנָה שֶׁתָּא בְּשֵׁתָא בְּאַתְרָא דִּי יתְרַעֵי יי אֶתְ וְאַנְשׁ בֵּיתְךָ: כא וְאֲרִי יְהִי בַּהּ מוּמָא חֲגִיר אוּ עוֹיר בַּל מוּם בֵּישׁ לֹא תִכְסֶנְהָ קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כב בְּקִרְוִיךָ תִּיכַלְנָה מְסֻאָבָא וְדִכְיָא כְּחֵדָא כְּבֶסֶר טְבִיא וְאִילָא: כג לְחוֹד ית דְּמָה לֹא תִיכּוֹל עַל אֲרַעָא תִשְׁדַּנְהָ כְּמִיא: א טר ית יִרְחָא דְאַבִּיבָא וְתַעֲבַד פְּסָחָא קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרִי בִירְחָא דְאַבִּיבָא אִפְקֵךְ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמְצָרִים וְעַבְד לָךְ נָסִין בְּלִילְיָא: ב וְתִכּוּם פְּסָחָא קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִן בְּנֵי עֲנָא וְנִכְסֵת קוּדְשֵׁיָא מִן תּוֹרֵי בְּאַתְרָא דִּי יתְרַעֵי יי לְאַשְׁרָאָה שְׂכֻנְתָּהּ תִּמְוִן: ג לֹא תִיכּוֹל עֲלוּהִי חֲמִיעַ שְׂבַעָא יוֹמִין תִּיכּוֹל עֲלוּהִי פְטִיר לְחֵם עֲנֵי אֲרִי בְּבַהִילוֹ נִפְקֵתָא מֵאַרְעָא דְמְצָרִים בְּדִיל דְתִדְכַּר ית יוֹם מִפְקֵךְ מֵאַרְעָא

בְּבִכּוֹר שׁוֹרְךָ וְלֹא תִגְזוּ בְּכֹרַת צִאֲנֵךְ: כ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תֹאכְלֶנּוּ שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֶתְּךָ וּבֵיתְךָ: כא וְכִי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ מוּם פֶּסַח אוּ עוֹר כֹּל מוּם רָע לֹא תִזְבַּחְנּוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כב בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ תֹאכְלֶנּוּ הַטֶּמֶא וְהַטְּהוֹר יִחֲדּוּ בְּעַבְי וּבְאִיל: כג רַק אֶת־דָּמּוֹ לֹא תֹאכַל עַל־הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפֹּכְנּוּ בְּמַיִם: פ טז א שְׁמוֹר אֶת־חֲדָשׁ הָאָזִיב וְעֲשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי בְּחֲדָשׁ הָאָזִיב הוֹצִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם לִילָה: ג וּזְבַחַת פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ צֹאן וּבִקָּר בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה לְשַׁבֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: ג לֹא־תֹאכַל עָלָיו חֲמִיץ שְׂבַעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל־עָלָיו מִצּוֹת לָחֶם עֲנֵי כִי בַחֲפוּזִן יֵצֵאתָ מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי

— כש"י —

יכול יהא אף הדם מותר, תלמוד לומר רק את דמו לא תאכל: (ה) שמור את חדש האביב. מקודם צואו שמור, שיהא ראוי לאזיב להקריב בו את מנחת העומר, ואם לאו, עבר את השנה: ממצרים לילה. והלא ציוס ילאו, שנאמר⁶ ממחרת הפסח ילאו בני ישראל וגו', אלא לפי שזלילה נתן להם פריעה רשות ללאת, שנאמר⁷ ויקרא למשה ולאכהן לילה וגו':⁸ (ג) זבחת פסח לה' אלהיך צאן. שנאמר מן הכזשים ומן העזים תקחו: ובקר. תזבח לחגיגה⁹. שאם נמנו על הפסח חצורה מרובה מציאים עמו חגיגה כדי שיהא נאכל על השזבע⁹, ועוד למדו רבותינו דברים הרבה מפסוק זה: (ג) לחם עני. לחם שמזכיר את העוני שנתענו צמארים¹⁰: כי בחפזון יצאת. ולא הספיק צלק להחמין וזה יהיה לך לזכרון. וחפזון לא שלך היה אלא של מצרים, שכן הוא אומר¹⁰ ותחזק מצרים על העם וגו': למען תזכור. על ידי

אלא שדבר הכתוב צהווה: (כ) לפני ה' אלהיך תאכלנו. לכהן הוא אומר, שכבר מלינו שהוא ממתנות כהונה אחד חס ואחד צעל מוס, שנאמר¹ וזשרס יהיה לך וגו':² שנה בשנה. מכאן שאין משהין אותו יותר על שנתו. יכול יהא פסול משעברה שנתו, כבר הוקש למעשר, שנאמר³ ולאכלת לפני ה' אלהיך מעשר דגנך חירושיך וילכהך וזכורות צקרך ולאך, מה מעשר שני אינו נפסל משנה לחצתה, אף צבור אינו נפסל, אלא שמלוב תוך שנתו: שנה בשנה. אם שחטו צסוף שנתו אוכלו אותו היום ויום אחד משנה אחרת. למד שנאכל לשני ימים ולילה אחד⁴: (כא) מום. כלל: פסח או עור. פרת: כל מום רע. חזר וכלל. מה הפרט מפורש מוס הגלוי ואינו חוזר, אף כל מוס שצגלוי ואינו חוזר⁵: (כג) רק את דמו לא תאכל. שלא תאמר הואיל וכולו היתר הבא מכלל איסור הוא, שהרי קדוש ונשחט צחון צלא פדיון וגאכל,

TORAS MENACHEM

THE LEGAL BASIS OF SEVERANCE GIFTS

The legal basis on which severance gifts are granted could be understood in one of two ways:

1.) It is a type of *earnings* awarded to the worker as a bonus on his departure [as *Pnei Yehoshua* writes], over and above what he earned; or

2.) The severance gifts are given as a *charitable donation* (as *Shach* rules) and a display of kindness.

It could be argued that these two views are commensurate with the two approaches ('a' and 'b') above:

Approach 'a' understands that, in principle, nobody deserves to be given severance gifts. This corresponds to view '1,' that the gifts are given as a type of earnings, since a person cannot be said to deserve "earnings" after he has already been fully paid for his work. The Torah therefore teaches us, as an exception, that a slave sold by the courts is given gifts.

On the other hand, approach 'b' maintains that, on the contrary, everybody really deserves severance gifts. This corresponds to view '2', that severance gifts are a type of charity, and charity should be given to everyone. It is only that the Torah made a special exclusion in the case of a person who sells himself into slavery.

In his *Sefer Hamitzvos*, *Rambam* codifies the precept of severance gifts (not among the laws of slavery, but rather,) immediately adjacent to the *mitzvah* of giving charity (commands 195 & 196; prohibitions 222 & 223), which suggests that *Rambam* perceived severance gifts as a type of charity.

Thus, *Rambam* would have sympathized with approach 'b' (that, being a type of charity, everybody deserves severance gifts) which means that—according to the above logic—the precept of severance gifts is a model which can be extended, by the dictates of decency, to apply to all employees even today.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 153ff.)

- ²⁰ *In the same year (it is born) you should (give it to the priest who will) eat it before God, your God, in the place God will choose. You, (the priest, should eat it) with your household.*
- ²¹ *If there is any blemish in it, whether it is lame, blind, or has any defective blemish, you should not offer it to God, your God:*
 - ²² *You may eat it within your (own) cities.*
 - *(Even though the animal was originally a holy offering, after it has been redeemed) a ritually impure person and a ritually pure person may eat it (together on the same plate).*
 - *(The foreleg, jaw and end-stomach do not need to be given to the priest,) as if (you were slaughtering) a deer, or a gazelle.*
 - ²³ *Only, you may not eat its blood. You should spill it on the ground like water (and you do not have to cover it).*

🌀 PESACH 🌀

- I6**
- ¹ *Ensure that the month of (Nissan occurs in) springtime—(by declaring a leap-year if necessary, so that the produce will have ripened by Nissan, allowing the Omer offering to be brought)—and offer the Pesach sacrifice (then) to God, your God. For in the month of springtime, God, your God, brought you out of Egypt, at night.*
 - ² *You must slaughter the Pesach offering to God, your God, (from the) flock, and (the festival sacrifices from the) cattle, in the place where God will choose to place His Name.*
 - ³ *You may not eat leaven with it. (Rather,) because of it, eat matzos for seven days. (This is) a bread (which reminds you of) affliction since you went out of the land of Egypt in haste (and did*

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“YOU WENT OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT IN HASTE” (v. 3)

One of the important details of the exodus from Egypt is the haste with which the exodus took place. When the hour of liberation struck, the Jewish people left Egypt at once, losing not a moment, or, as our Sages express it—not even a wink of an eye (*Mechilta, Shemos 12:41-2*). They add, moreover, that if the Jewish people had tarried and missed that auspicious moment, the opportunity for liberation would have been lost forever.

This seems incomprehensible, for it was already after the ten plagues, which had prompted the Egyptians to virtually expel the Jews from their land. The situation was thus “well in hand.” Why, then, was the haste of the moment so important? And how is one to understand the statement of our Sages that if that moment had been missed, the whole liberation would have been in jeopardy?

The explanation is as follows: When the end of the road of exile is reached, and the moment of liberation from the “abomination of Egypt” arises, the opportunity must be seized at once. There must be no tarrying, even for an instant—not even for “the wink of an eye.”

The danger of forfeiting the opportunity lay not in the possibility of the Egyptians changing their minds, but in the possibility that some Jews might change their minds, being loath to leave their accustomed way of life in Egypt, to go out into the desert to receive the Torah.

The practical lesson for every Jew, man or woman, young or old, is that the exodus from Egypt, as it is to be experienced in day-to-day life, is the personal release from subservience to the dictates of the body and the animal in man. It is the release from the passions and habits within, as well as from the materialistic environment without....As at the time of the first liberation, true freedom is conditioned upon the acceptance of the Torah and *mitzvos*.

This call for freedom never ceases. The exodus from Egypt must be achieved every day; each day the opportunity beckons anew....

May God grant that every Jew and Jewess seize the extraordinary opportunity of the present moment, to achieve self-liberation and to help others in the same direction. And may they be liberated from all manner of bondage, internal and external, and above all, liberation from the most dismal bondage of all—the idea of “Let’s be like the rest.”

May they return to the way of the Torah and *mitzvos* in the fullest measure, and thus merit the fulfillment of the promise: When the Jewish people return, they are redeemed at once, with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Mashiach.

(Excerpt from a public letter written by the Rebbe on 11 Nissan 5723)

דמִצְרַיִם כָּל יוֹמֵי חַיָּיְךָ: ד וְלֹא יִתְחַזֵּי לְךָ חֲמִיר
 בְּכָל תְּחֻמֹּת שְׂבָעָא יוֹמִין וְלֹא יִבִּית מִן בְּסִרְא
 דִּי תְבוּס בְּרַמְשָׂא בְיוֹמָא קִדְמָאָה לְצַפְרָא:
 ה לִית לְךָ רִשׁוּ לְמַכּוּס ית פִּסְחָא בְחֻדָּא
 מִקְרִיבֵי דִי אֱלֹהִיךָ יִהֵב לְךָ: ו אֱלֹהִין לֹאֲתָרָא
 דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יי אֱלֹהִיךָ לְאַשְׁרָאָה שְׂכַנְתָּהּ תַּמּוּן
 תְבוּס ית פִּסְחָא בְרַמְשָׂא כְּמַעַל שְׂמָשָׂא זְמַן
 מִפְּקֻד מִמְצָרִים: ז וְתִבְשַׁל וְתִיכּוֹל בְּאַתְרָא דִּי
 יִתְרַעֵי יי אֱלֹהִיךָ בְּהַ וְתִתְפַּנֵּי בְּצַפְרָא וְתִתְקַד
 לְקַרְנֵךְ: ח שְׂתָא יוֹמִין תִּיכּוֹל פְּטִירָא וּבְיוֹמָא
 שְׂבִיעָאָה פְּנִישׁ קָדָם יי אֱלֹהִיךָ לֹא תַעֲבֵד
 עֲבִידָא: ט שְׂבָעָא שְׂבִיעִין תִּמְנִי לְךָ מִדְּשֵׁרִיּוֹת
 מְגֻלָּא בְּחֻדָּא עוֹמְרָא דְאַרְמוֹתָא תִּשְׁרִי לְמִמְנִי
 שְׂבָעָא שְׂבִיעִין: י וְתַעֲבֵד חֻגָּא דְשְׂבִיעִיָּא קָדָם

חַיָּיְךָ: ד וְלֹא־יִרְאֶה לְךָ שְׂאֵר בְּכָל־גְּבֻלְךָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
 וְלֹא־יִלִּין מִן־הַבָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר תִּזְבַּח בְּעֶרֶב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבָקֶר:
 ה לֹא תוּכַל לִזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּאַחַד שַׁעֲרֵי־יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִתֵּן לְךָ: ו כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם תִּזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּעֶרֶב כְּבֹוא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
 מוֹעֵד צִאתְךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם: ז וּבִשְׁלֹת וְאִכְלֹת בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ וּפְנִיתָ בְּבָקֶר וְהִלַּכְתָּ לְאַהֲלֶיךָ: ח שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים
 תֹּאכַל מִצֹּאת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי עֲצַרְתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה
 מְלָאכָה: ט שְׂבָעָה שָׁבַעַת תִּסְפְּרֶךָ לְךָ מֵהַחֵל חֲרַמְשׁ בְּקָמָה
 תַּחֲלֵל לְסִפּוֹר שְׂבָעָה שְׂבָעוֹת: י וְעֲשִׂיתָ חֻג שְׂבָעוֹת לַיהוָה

כ"ט

זמסכת פסחים²: (ו) בערב כבוא השמש מועד צאתך ממצרים. הרי
 שלשה זמנים חלוקים; בערב משש שעות ולמעלה זכחכו, וכזוא השמש
 תאכלכו, ומועד לאתך, אתה שורפכו. כלומר, נעשה נותר ויאל לבית השרפה³:
 (ז) ובשלת. זהו לני אש, שאף הוא קרוי בשול⁴: ופנית בבקר. לבקר של שני,
 מלמד שטעון לינה ליל מולאי יום טוב⁵: (ח) ששת ימים תאכל מצות.
 ובמקום אחר הוא אומר שבעת ימים⁶, שבעה מן הישן וששה מן החדש⁷. דבר
 אחר למד על אכילת מלכ שבועי, שאינה חובה, ומכאן אתה למד לששת
 ימים. שהרי שבועי בכלל היה ויאל מן הכלל ללמד, שאין אכילת מלכ זו חובה
 אלא רשות, ולא ללמד על עזמו יאל אלא ללמד על הכלל כולו יאל, מה שבועי
 רשות אף כולם רשות, חוץ מלינה הראשון שהכחוש קצבו חובה, שנאמר⁸
 בערב תאכלו מצות: עצרת לה' אלהיך. עור עזמך מן המלאכה. דבר אחר
 כנפיא של מאכל ומשחה, לשון נעלה נא אותך: (ט) מהחל חרמש בקמה.

אכילת הפסח והמלה, את יום לאתך: (ד) ולא ילין מן הבשר אשר תזבח
 בערב ביום הראשון לבקר. אזכרה למותיר צפסה דורות, לפי שלא נאמר
 אלא צפסה מלרים, ויום ראשון האמור כאן הוא י"ד בניסן, כמה דאת אמר¹
 אך ביום הראשון תשביחו שאור מצתיכם. ולפי שנסתלק הכחוש מעינו של
 פסח והתחיל לדבר בחקות שבעת ימים, כגון שבעת ימים תאכל עליו מצות
 ולא יראה לך שאור בכל גבולך, הולך לפרש באיזו זכיחה הוא מזכיר, שאם
 כתב ולא ילין מן הבשר אשר תזבח בערב לבקר, הייתי אומר שלמים הנשחטים
 כל שבעה כולן צבל תותירו ואינן נאכלין אלא ליום ולינה, לכך כתב בערב
 ביום הראשון. דבר אחר בחגיגת י"ד הכחוש מדבר, ולמד עליה שנאכלת לשני
 ימים. והראשון האמור כאן, ביום טוב הראשון הכחוש מדבר. וכן משמעות
 המקרא, בשר חגיגה אשר תזבח בערב, לא ילין ביום טוב הראשון עד בקרו
 של שני, אבל נאכלת היא בארבעה עשר ובחמשה עשר, וכך היא שנויה

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

THE PESACH OFFERING (v. 2-7)

The liberation from Egypt was not merely the liberation of numerous individuals; it was the liberation of a People. Accordingly, one would have expected that the *Korban Pesach* [Pesach Offering] would emphasize the "nation" motif, the idea of community. Actually the approach and instruction was exactly the reverse. True, all the "congregation" was enjoined to offer the *Korban Pesach*, but the instructions were explicit: each home had to have its own *Korban Pesach*; each Jew was individually singled out and counted for the purpose of sharing in it; each one had to be confined to his particular home or company for the duration of the *Korban Pesach* repast.

Herein the Torah teaches us that the way to accomplishment, even if it is intended for the community as a whole, and even if it concerns the very "liberation" of the community, must nevertheless begin with concentration on the self, and on the members of one's family and immediate circle, even though the call must necessarily go out to the whole community. Moreover, attention should be directed not towards general considerations and all-embracing resolutions, but towards applying the main concern and energy in the realization, in the daily life, of the various "small" duties. For it is precisely this approach that will eventually bring the deliverance of the individual as well as of the community as a whole.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

not have time for the bread to rise. Eat the matzah) in order to remember all the days of your life, the day when you went out of the land of Egypt.

- ⁴ *No leaven may be seen with you within all your borders for seven days.*
- *You may not leave over any of the flesh that you slaughtered on the preceding day, in the afternoon, (uneaten) until the morning.*
- ⁵ *You may not slaughter the Pesach offering in any of your cities, which God, your God, is giving you, ⁶ except in the place which God, your God, will choose to place His Name. You should slaughter the Pesach offering there, in the afternoon (after the sixth hour).*
- *(You must eat it after) the sun comes down, (and you must burn any meat that is left uneaten past) the precise time that you went out of Egypt.*
- ⁷ *You should cook it (by roasting) and eat it in (Jerusalem), the place which God, your God, will choose.*
- *(You must stay in Jerusalem the night following the festival) and in the morning you may depart and go to your homes.*
- ⁸ *For you should eat matzos six days, and on the seventh day there should be a holiday to God, your God, when you may not do any manual work.*

🌀 COUNTING THE OMER & SHAVUOS 🌀

- ⁹ *Count for yourself seven weeks. From when the sickle is first put to the standing crop (and the Omer is reaped), you should begin to count seven weeks.*
- ¹⁰ *And you should make the festival of Shavuos to God, your God. Offer as many gift-offerings (and invite as many guests) as you can afford, according to how God, your God, blesses you.*

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does the Torah not tell us to rejoice on Pesach (v. 1–8), as it does on Shavuos (v. 11) & Succos (v. 14-15)?

TZROR HAMOR: When the Jewish people came out of Egypt, on Pesach, the Torah had not yet been given. Therefore, the Torah does not stress the concept of rejoicing. Furthermore, the Jewish people did not see the Egyptians drown until the seventh day of their departure, and it was only at this point that they rejoiced.

BA'AL HATURIM: On Pesach, the crops have not yet been harvested, so the Torah does not mention rejoicing at all.

On Shavuos, the harvest has taken place, but the grapes have not yet been made into wine, so rejoicing is mentioned just once (v. 11).

But by Succos, all the harvest is ready to eat, so the Torah mentions rejoicing twice (v. 14 & v. 15).

YERE'IM: According to the *Talmud*, the Torah equates the laws of all three festivals together (*Shavuos* 10a). Thus, the fact that the Torah states explicitly that rejoicing is required on Shavuos and Succos provides us with the legal basis for a requirement to rejoice on Pesach (ch. 227).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 REJOICING ON PESACH (V. 1-8)

Rashi does not suggest any of the explanations offered by the commentators as to why the Torah does not command us explicitly to rejoice on the festival of Pesach.

However, since *Rashi* explains every difficulty that arises at the literal level, we can presume that *Rashi* was silent here, as he wanted the reader to work the answer out for himself, with simple logic and knowledge of *Rashi's* earlier comments. So what is *Rashi's* "explanation" of this matter?

A further question concerns the Torah's statement in verse 12, at the end of the section of Shavuos: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt." Since remembering the slavery in Egypt is the key motif of the

festival of Pesach, why does the Torah state, "You should remember that you were slaves in Egypt," in connection with Shavuos and *not* Pesach?

THE EXPLANATION

On the verse, "When you take the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain" (*Shemos* 3:12), *Rashi* writes, "As for what you asked: 'What merit do the Jewish people have that they should go out of Egypt?' I have a very good reason to bring them out, for they are going to receive the Torah on this mountain, three months after they go out of Egypt."

From here the reader will already be aware that the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah are two phases of a single process, because God took the Jewish people out of Egypt in order to receive the Torah.

יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִסֵּת נִדְבַת יָדְךָ דִּי תַתֵּן כְּמֵא דִּי
 יִבְרַכְנֶךָ יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ: יא וְתַחֲדֵי קָדְם יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 אֶת וּבְרַךְ וּבְרַכְתָּ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְלוֹאָה דִּי
 בְּקַרְוֵיךָ וְגִיזְרָא וְיִתְמָא וְאַרְמְלָא דִּי בִּינְךָ
 בְּאַתְרָא דִּי יִתְרְעֵי יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאַשְׂרָאָה
 שְׂכִנְתָּהּ תַּמּוּן יב וְתִדְכַּר אַרְי עַבְדָּא הַוִּיתָא
 בְּמִצְרַיִם וְתִטַּר וְתַעֲבֹד יִת קִימְיָא הַאֲלֵיךָ:
 יג חֲנָא דְמַטְלֵיָא תַעֲבֹד לְךָ שְׂבַעָא יוֹמִין
 בְּמִכְנָשׁוּךָ מֵאֲדָרְךָ וּמִמַּעֲצֵרְתָּךָ: יד וְתַחֲדֵי
 בְּחֻגְךָ אֶת וּבְרַךְ וּבְרַכְתָּ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְלוֹאָה
 וְגִיזְרָא וְיִתְמָא וְאַרְמְלָא דִּי בְּקַרְוֵיךָ: טו שְׂבַעָא
 יוֹמִין תַּחֲוֹג קָדְם יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאַתְרָא דִּי יִתְרְעֵי
 יִי אַרְי וּבְרַכְנֶךָ יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל עֲלֻלְתְּךָ וּבְכָל
 עוֹבְדֵי יָדְךָ וְתַחֲדֵי קָדְם חֲדָי: טז תִּלַּת וּמִנִּין
 בְּשִׂתָּא וְתַחֲוֵי כָּל דְּבוֹרְךָ קָדְם יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בְּאַתְרָא דִּי יִתְרְעֵי בְּחֻגְךָ דְּפִטְרֵיָא וּבְחֻגְךָ

אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִסֵּת נִדְבַת יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּתֵּן כַּאֲשֶׁר יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ: יא וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ לְפָנָי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ
 וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתָוּם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה
 אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁכְּן שְׁמוֹ
 שָׁם: יב וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי־עַבְדָּ הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְשִׂמַּרְתָּ וְעָשִׂיתָ
 אֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה: פ [מפסטר] יג חַג הַסֵּפֶת תַּעֲשֶׂה לְךָ שִׁבְעַת
 יָמִים בְּאַסְפֹּךְ מִגִּרְנֶךָ וּמִיִּקְבֶּךָ: יד וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ בְּחֻגְךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֶךָ
 וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתָוּם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר
 בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: טו שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּחֲוֹג לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמָקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל תְּבוּאֹתֶיךָ
 וּבְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ וְהִייתָ אֵת שְׂמִחָ: טז שְׁלוֹשׁ פַּעַמִּים | בַּשָּׁנָה
 יִרְאֶה* כָּל־זְכוּרְךָ אֶת־פָּנָי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר

*ס"א יראה כל-יבורך

רש"י

האלה: (יג) באספך. בזמן האסוף שאתה מכניס לבית פירות הקין. דבר אחר באספך מגרנך ומיקצך, למד שמסכנין את הסוכה בצפולת גורן ויקצ': (טו) והיית אך שמח. לפי פשוטו אין זה לשון זוויל אלא לשון בצטחה, ולפי תלמודו למדו מכאן לרבות לילי יום טוב לאחרון לשמחה: (טז) ולא יראה את פני ה' ריקם. אלא הצא עולות ראייה ושלמי חגיגה:

משנקלר העומר שהוא ראשית הקליר: (י) מסת נדבת ידך. די נדבת ידך, הכל לפי הצרכה, הצא שלמי שמחה, וקדש קרואים לאכול: (יא) והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה. ארבעה שלי כנגד ארבעה שלך, צנן וצתך ועבדך ואמתך, אם אתה משמח את שלי, אני משמח את שלך: (יב) וזכרת כי עבד היית וגו'. על מנת כן פדיתך, שתשמור ותעשה את החוקים

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How should one rejoice on a festival (v. 14)?

RAMBAM: Throughout the seven days of Pesach, the eight days of the festival [of Succos] and the other festival days...a person is obligated to be happy and of cheerful spirit, both he and his wife, his family, and all those who share his company, as the verse states, "Rejoice on your festival" (v. 14).

Despite the fact that the rejoicing mentioned in the verse refers to the peace-offering, as we explained in the *Laws of Festival Offerings*, nevertheless, included within that requirement to rejoice [with the peace-offering] is also the requirement for the person to rejoice himself, along with his children and family, making each person happy in a way that is suitable for them.

How is this carried out?

Children are given roasted grains, nuts and sweets. Women are bought new clothes and jewelry, according to the person's financial ability.

Men should eat meat and drink wine, for rejoicing can only be achieved with meat and wine (*Laws of Festivals* 6:17-18).

ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH: Throughout the seven days of Pesach, the eight days of the festival [of Succos] and the festival of Atzeres [Shavuos], a person is obligated to be happy and of cheerful spirit, both he and his wife, his family, and all those who share his company. This rejoicing is a Biblical requirement, as the verse states, "Rejoice on your festival—you, your son, your daughter etc." (v. 14).

TORAS MENACHEM

Thus, the reader will not be surprised here that the Torah only tells us to "rejoice before God, your God," and to "remember that you were slaves in Egypt," in connection with Shavuos, and not Pesach. For it is obvious that these commands apply to both Pesach and Shavuos, and that the Torah needed only to mention these concepts once—at the end of the passage dealing with both festivals—since the reader already knows that Pesach and Shavuos celebrate two phases of a single process.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* 5733)

🔗 REJOICING ON A FESTIVAL (v. 14)

Verse 14 states: "Rejoice on your festival—you, your son, your daughter, etc." One detail that is not clear in this verse, is what exactly the term "festival" refers to: Does it refer specifically to the "festival offering," i.e. the special peace-offering which was sacrificed in honor of the festival? Or, does it refer to the festival in general, suggesting that a person should carry out all sorts of activities that will bring him to a mood of rejoicing?

- ¹¹ *And you should rejoice before God, your God—you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your maidservant, the Levite who lives in your town, the convert, the orphan, and the widow among you—in the place which God, your God, will choose to place His Name there.*
- ¹² *Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and (that I took you out in order that) you should be careful to perform these statutes.*

🕎 SUCCOS 🕎

- MAFTIR
- ¹³ *When you gather in (the produce) from your threshing floor and your wine vat, make for yourself the festival of Succos, for a seven day period,*
 - ¹⁴ *Rejoice on your festival—you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your maidservant, the Levite, the convert, the orphan, and the widow who lives in your town.*
 - ¹⁵ *Celebrate the festival to God, your God, for seven days in the place which God will choose, because God, your God, will bless all your produce and all the work of your hands, and you will only be happy.*

🕎 PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM 🕎

- ¹⁶ *Every male among you must appear before God, your God, three times in the year, in the place He will choose: on the festival of Matzos, on the festival of Shavuos, and on the festival of Succos.*

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

How is this rejoicing carried out?

Children are given roasted grains and nuts. Women are bought new clothes and jewelry, according to the person's financial ability. As for men, at the time when the Holy Temple stood they would eat the meat of the peace-offering in order to rejoice. Now, that the Temple does not stand we are only able to fulfill our obligation through drinking wine—as the verse states, *"wine satisfies the heart*

of man" (Psalms 104:15)—since in the current era there is no legal requirement to eat meat, as we no longer have the peace-offering. Nevertheless, if one does eat meat on the festival one still performs a *mitzvah* since, after all, we are told to rejoice on the festival, and since we are unable to rejoice through the main method, through eating the meat of the peace-offering, we therefore use other methods of rejoicing (*Orach Chaim* 529:6-7).

TORAS MENACHEM

Two approaches could be taken:

a.) When the Torah uses the words *"rejoice on your festival,"* it is referring specifically to the spiritual joy of bringing and sacrificing the peace-offering. The requirement to rejoice with physical pleasures is *secondary*, and thus was not referred to by the Torah directly, to indicate its lesser importance.

This appears to be the view of **Rambam** who stresses, *"The rejoicing mentioned in the verse refers to the peace-offering."* Thus it is only *"included within that requirement...the requirement for the person to rejoice himself, along with his children and family, making each person happy in a way that is suitable for them."*

Consequently, according to **Rambam**, when the peace-offering cannot be brought (in the current era), we are unable to carry out the *primary mitzvah* of rejoicing on a festival *at all*. Nevertheless, the *secondary* (physical) aspect can be carried out even now, and it does not suffer from the destruction of the Temple.

b.) Alternatively, it could be argued that when the Torah uses the phrase *"rejoice on your festival,"* it is referring *generally* to *all* the rejoicing that is carried out during the period of the festival. Thus, there are not two separate requirements here (spiritual and physical), but one single

obligation to rejoice. This appears to be the view of the **Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch**, which makes no mention that verse 14 is speaking about the peace-offering in particular, indicating that, in his view, the

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

"REJOICE ON YOUR FESTIVAL!" (v. 14)

The Festival of *Succos*, *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah*, which are the Season of our Rejoicing, are not intended to bring true joy and inspiration only during these days, and when they are over they are forgotten. But their purpose and intent is that the Jew should draw from them stores of joy and inspiration to last him throughout the year and every day of the year. The nature of such joy and inspiration, being connected with the Torah and *mitzvos*, is such that it truly permeates one's whole being and is the wellspring of a harmonious and happy Jewish life.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on 25th of Tishrei, 5721)

דְּשִׁבוּעֵיָא וּבְחִנָּא דְּמִסְלֵיָא וְלֹא יִתְחַזֵּי קָדָם יי
 רִיקְנוּן: יי גִּבֵּר כְּמַתְנַת יְדָה כְּבִרְבֵּתָא דִּי
 אֱלֹהֵי דִי יִהְיֵב לָךְ: פ פ פ

בְּחִנּוֹת הַמִּצְוֹת וּבְחִנּוֹת הַשְּׂבָעוֹת וּבְחִנּוֹת הַסְּכוּת וְלֹא יִרְאֶה אֶת־פָּנָי
 יְהוָה רִיקָם: יי אִישׁ כְּמַתְנַת יָדוֹ כְּבִרְבֵּת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר
 נָתַן־לְךָ: ס ס ס

קכ"ו פסוקים, פליא"ה סימן.

רש"י

(יז) איש כמתנת ידו. מי שיש לו אוכלין הרבה ונכסים מרובין יביא עולות מרובות ושלמים מרובים! חסלת פרשת ראה

TORAS MENACHEM

requirement is that of *general rejoicing*. Therefore, he suggests that being of "cheerful spirit, both he and his wife, his family," is part of the Biblical requirement mentioned in the verse ("This rejoicing is a Biblical requirement, as the verse states, 'Rejoice on your festival'").

According to this view we are able to carry out the *mitzvah* of rejoicing on a festival as it is specified in the Torah even in the current era, after the destruction of the Temple. The only drawback is that the most effective method of carrying out the *mitzvah* (the peace-offering) is not available, but we are still able to use all the other methods (such as eating meat, etc.), which achieve the same effect, but to a lesser degree.

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTION TO THE PEACE-OFFERING

A further innovation that arises from this stance of the *Alter Rebbe* is that even in the current era, when we eat meat on a festival, we are observing a *mitzvah* which is actually connected with the sacrifices:

According to *Rambam*, the sacrificial part of the *mitzvah* (the primary element) and the physical rejoicing are totally separate. Therefore, in the current era, when the former element has ceased, there is no practical connection between our rejoicing and the sacrifice itself.

However, according to the *Alter Rebbe*, who perceived the spiritual and physical dimensions as one single precept, it turns out that even today, when we eat meat on *Yom Tov*, we perform an act which is *halachically* connected with the *mitzvah* of eating the peace-offering.

Nevertheless, both views agree that:

- 1.) We can observe at least some aspects of the Biblical requirement to rejoice on *Yom Tov*, even in the current era.
- 2.) This occurs on some level when men eat meat and drink wine, when women wear new clothes, and when children are given candies.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 33, p. 62ff.)

- *He may not appear before God empty-handed (without animals for the festival offerings).¹⁷ Each man (must bring sufficient animals to feed the people) that he supports, according to the blessing of God, your God, which He has given you.*

HAFTARAHs: RE'EH (& EREV ROSH CHODESH)—P. 281. ROSH CHODESH—P. 299.

Maftir: Rosh Chodesh—p. 302.

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🌀 *Sparks of Chasidus* 🌀

Every Jewish person possesses both a Godly soul, which yearns to be close to its Creator, and an Animal Soul, which is the source of physical desires. Both **Rambam** and the **Alter Rebbe** (see *Classic Questions*) agree that in order to be complete, rejoicing on a festival must involve not only the Godly soul but the Animal Soul too. Where they disagree is to *what extent* the Animal Soul is to be involved:

Rambam understood that rejoicing through the peace-offering (i.e. with the Godly soul) is primary, whereas eating meat and buying new clothes (to please the Animal Soul) is secondary (see *Toras Menachem*). This is because *Rambam* perceived the Animal Soul as an *obstacle* in Divine service, which needs to be “appeased” with food and clothes, to prevent it from disturbing the true rejoicing of the Godly Soul.

On the other hand, the *Alter Rebbe* maintained that the spiritual and physical celebrations take equal priority, for he perceived that the Animal Soul is not an obstacle, but a *tool* in the service of God. Thus, on a festival, the Animal Soul itself also rejoices equally in its Creator,

by means of things which the Animal Soul can appreciate—meat, wine, clothes and candies.

In fact, the difference of opinion between *Rambam* and the *Alter Rebbe* reflects their conflicting viewpoints about the future era:

Rambam maintained that, eventually, in the ultimate stage of existence (the World to Come) there will be nothing physical, for the most perfect form of existence is a soul *without* a body (*Laws of Teshuvah* 8:2). Consequently, he understood that on a festival, the main emphasis should be the rejoicing of the (Godly) soul, whereas the Animal Soul and body take second place.

The *Alter Rebbe*, however, ruled (in favor of *Ramban's* opinion in *Sha'ar Hagemul*) that the climax of spiritual perfection in the World to Come is existence as souls *within* bodies (*Likutei Torah, Tzav* 15b). Therefore, on a festival he perceived it to be *equally* important to rejoice with both the Godly *and* Animal Souls.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 33, pp. 69-70)



Parshas Re'eh contains 17 positive *mitzvos* and 38 prohibitions

1. To destroy places of idol-worship [12:2].
2. Not to erase holy writings, the written Names of God, or destroy places of worship which bear His Name [12:4].
3. To bring all obligatory offerings and voluntary offerings which a person has vowed, at the first pilgrim festival that occurs after the person's vow [12:5-6].
4. Not to sacrifice offerings outside the Temple [12:13].
5. To sacrifice all offerings in the Temple, and not anywhere outside it [12:4].
6. To redeem animals consecrated for offerings which have become blemished [12:15].
7. Not to eat the Second Tithe of grain outside Jerusalem [12:17].
8. Not to consume the Second Tithe of wine outside Jerusalem [12:17].
9. Not to consume the Second Tithe of oil outside Jerusalem [12:17].
10. Not to eat an unblemished firstborn animal outside Jerusalem [12:17].
11. Not to eat the meat of a sin-offering or a guilt-offering outside the Temple [12:17].
12. Not to eat the meat of a burnt-offering [12:17].
13. Not to eat the meat of offerings of lesser holiness before their blood is sprinkled on the Altar [12:17].
14. The priests should not eat first-fruits before they are placed down in the Temple Courtyard [12:17].
15. Not to neglect the Levites by failing to give them their due gifts, especially at the time of a festival [12:19].
16. To ritually slaughter an animal before eating its meat [12:21].
17. Not to eat a limb taken from a living animal [12:23].
18. To bring an animal offering that one is obligated to offer to the Temple, even from the Diaspora [12:26].
19. Not to add to the *mitzvos* of the Torah [13:1].
20. Not to detract from any of the *mitzvos* of the Torah [13:1].
21. Not to listen to anyone prophesying in the name of an idol [13:4].
22. Not to have affection for an inciter to idol-worship [13:9].
23. Not to lessen our hatred for an inciter to idol-worship [13:9].
24. Not to rescue an inciter to idol-worship from death [12:9].
25. A person who is incited should not speak in favor of an inciter to idol-worship [13:9].
26. A person who is incited should not refrain from criticizing an inciter to idol-worship [13:9].
27. Not to incite a Jew towards idol-worship [13:12].
28. To examine witnesses thoroughly [13:15].
29. To burn a city which has strayed and worshiped idols, together with all its contents [13:17].
30. Not to rebuild a city which has strayed and worshiped idols to its former condition [13:17].
31. Not to derive any benefit from the wealth of a city which has strayed and worshiped idols [13:17].
32. Not to gash oneself like idol-worshippers do [14:1].
33. Not to uproot the hair of the head in grief over the dead [14:1].
34. Not to eat holy animal offerings that became disqualified [14:3].
35. To examine the signs of a bird to see if it is kosher [14:11].
36. Not to eat non-kosher locusts, or any winged insects [14:19].
37. Not to eat the meat of any domestic or wild animal that died by itself [14:21].
38. The Second Tithe [14:22].
39. The Tithe for the Poor, given instead of the Second Tithe in the third year [14:28].
40. Not to demand payment of a loan over which the Sabbatical year has passed [15:2].
41. To collect full payment for a loan made to a non-Jew [15:3].
42. To relinquish debts owed in the Sabbatical Year [15:3].
43. Not to refrain from supporting a poor person and giving him what he needs [15:7].
44. To give charity [15:8].
45. Not to refrain from lending money to the poor because the Sabbatical Year will cancel the loan [15:9].
46. Not to send away a Hebrew slave empty-handed when he goes free [15:13].
47. To give a severance gift to a Hebrew slave when he goes free [15:14].
48. Not to work an animal which has been consecrated as an offering [15:19].
49. Not to shear an animal which has been consecrated as an offering [15:19].
50. Not to eat chametz (leavened bread) after midday on the day before Pesach (Passover) [16:3].
51. Not to leave over any flesh of the festival offering, slaughtered on the fourteenth day of Nisan, until the third day [16:4].
52. Not to offer up a Pesach offering on a private altar [16:5].
53. To rejoice on the pilgrim festivals [16:14].
54. To appear at the Temple on the pilgrim festivals [16:16].
55. Not to go up to Jerusalem for a pilgrimage festival without an animal offering [16:16].



parshas Shoftim

פַּרְשַׁת שׁוֹפְטִים

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

At the beginning of our *Parsha* there is a command to “appoint judges (*shoftim*) and police officers (*shotrim*) for yourself.”

The *Midrash* stresses the need for *both* of these roles: “Without the policeman, there is no judge. For if the court finds a person guilty, once he leaves [the courtroom,] the judge is powerless unless the policeman takes control” (*Tanchuma, Shoftim, 2*).

Why then is the *Parsha* simply called “Judges,” without any reference to the police, if “without the policeman, there is no judge”?

In his prophecy of the Messianic Era, Isaiah mentions judges, but not police: “I will restore your judges as they were at first, and your advisers as they were in the beginning” (*Isaiah 1:26*). This is because the Messianic Era will witness the disappearance of evil and selfishness (see *Zechariah 13:2*), so there will be no need for policemen who force people to be righteous. However, there will remain a requirement for judges who will pass laws, study Torah,

and provide practical direction to the Jewish people in matters of Torah and its commandments.

Thus, in truth, policemen are secondary assistants to the judges. Only in a case where the judge is incapable of enforcing justice, must one resort to policemen, who work with the “stick and the whip,” forcing the guilty party to accept the judge’s decision.

Therefore, our *Parsha* is simply entitled “Judges,” as the appointment of policemen is not a *separate* commandment, but a *subcategory within* the command to appoint judges. Policemen are not an *intrinsic* legal necessity, and in a time when people are respectful, such as the Messianic Era, they will be rendered redundant.

However, since all aspects of Torah are eternal, there will be a role for police even after the Redemption, only then it will be a positive one—to announce and make public the affairs of the Judges and to assist the people in fulfilling the directives of the courts.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751*)

יה דינין ופורענין תמנין לך בכל קהיך די יי
אלהך יתב לך לשבטיך וידוננו את עמא דין
דקשומי: יא לא תצלי דין לא תשתמודע אפיני
ולא תקבל שוחדא ארי שוחדא מעור עיני
חכימין ומקלקל פתגמין תריצין: כ קושטא
קושטא תהי רדיף בדיל דתיחי ותירת את
ארעא דיין אלהך יתב לך: כא לא תצוב לך

יה שופטים ושטרים תתן לך בכל שערך אשר יהוה אלהיך
נתן לך לשבטיך ושפטו את העם משפט צדק: יא לא תתנה
משפט לא תכיר פנים ולא תקח שחד כי השחד יעור עיני
חכמים ויסלף דברי צדיקם: כ צדק צדק תרדף למען תחיה
וירשת את הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך: ס כא לא תפטע

כש"י

יהא כך לזה וקשה לזה, אחד עומד ואחד יושב. לפי שכשרואה שהדיין מכבד את חזירו מסתמין טענותיו: ולא תקח שחד. אפילו לשפט לך: כי השחד יעור. משקבל שחד ממנו אי אפשר שלא את לכו אללו להפוך צדקותו: דברי צדיקים. דברים המולדקים, משפטי אמת: (כ) צדק צדק תרדוף. הלך אחר צדק דין יפה: למען תחיה וירשת. כדאי הוא מנוי הדיינים הכשרים להחיות את ישראל ולהושיבין על אדמתן: (כא) לא תטע לך אשרה. לחייבו עליה משעת נטיעתה, ואפילו לא עבדו עובר בלא תעשה

(יח) שופטים ושטרים. שופטים, דיינים הפוסקים את הדין: ושטרים.¹ הרודין את העם אחר מלות. שמכין וכופתין² במקל וזרועה עד שיקבל עליו את דין השופט: בכל שעריך. ככל עיר ועיר: לשבטיך. מוסב על תתן לך. שופטים ושטרים תתן לך לשבטיך ככל שערך אשר ה' אלהיך נתן לך: לשבטיך. מלמד שמושיבין דיינין לכל שבט ושבט ועיר ועיר: ושפטו את העם וגו'. מנה דיינין מומחים ולדיקים לשפט לך: (יט) לא תטה משפט. כמשמעו: ולא תכיר פנים. אף צעט הטעות. אזכרה לדיין שלא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is the difference between judges (שפטים) and police officers (שטרים)? (v. 18)

RASHI: שפטים are judges who decide the law, and שטרים are those who impose authority over the people in accordance with the judges' decision. They strike and bind people with sticks and whips, until they accept the judges' ruling.

GUR ARYEH: Rashi wished to explain why the Torah mentions the need for police officers. Therefore he stressed that judges "decide the law," as if to say, "they decide the law and nothing more than that." Consequently, police are required to enforce the law.

BARTENURA: Why did Rashi need to explain the words "judges" and "police officers," when their meaning is straightforward?

Because in *Parshas Devarim*, the Torah states that Moshe appointed, "police officers over your tribes" (1:15), but no mention is made of

judges. Therefore, one might think that if no judges are to be found, one should simply appoint police, without judges.

To counteract this notion the Torah stresses here that *both* judges and police officers are needed, as Rashi clarifies that the police officers serve only to enforce the rulings of the judges. Thus, if there were to be no judges, there would be no police either.

● How must judges be placed "in all your gates"? (v. 18)

RASHI: "In all your gates," means in every city.

SHACH AL HATORAH: The term "gates" here alludes to the "gates" of the body: the two eyes, the two ears, the nose, the mouth, etc. The verse teaches us that a person should place "judges" and "police" over all his bodily "gates" to ensure that only positive and kosher influences enter his body.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 JUDGES AND POLICE-OFFICERS (v. 18)

Why did Rashi deem it necessary to define the terms "judges" and "police officers"?

Gur Aryeh writes that Rashi wished to stress the unique role of police officers in law-enforcement, so he contrasted this with the role of judges, who merely "decide the law" without implementing it at all.

However, this is somewhat difficult to accept, because:

i.) If Rashi merely wished to inform us of the role of police officers, he could have done just that, without touching upon the issue of judges.

ii.) In his commentary to *Parshas Devarim*, Rashi has already explained the role of police officers as implementers of the law: "I appointed police officers over you, for your tribes. These are the ones who bind a person and strike him with a whip, at the judges' order" (Rashi to 1:15 above).

So why did Rashi need to clarify the role of police officers again here?

Bartenura argues that the Torah's innovation here is that police would be useless in the absence of judges, a point we would not have automatically deduced from *Parshas Devarim*, which does not mention judges.

However, this is difficult to accept, because *Parshas Devarim* does mention the appointment of judges: "I selected wise and well known men from the leaders of your tribes, and I made them leaders over you" (ibid.).

We are thus left with the question: What is the need for Rashi's comment here, when the meaning of "judges" is obvious, and the meaning of "police officers" has already been explained by Rashi in *Parshas Devarim*?

THE EXPLANATION

The process of law enforcement by the police contains two elements: a.) The execution of the law, i.e. ensuring that the appropriate punishments are administered; and b.) Deterring people from crime by

1 בדפוס רשי הנפוצים תיבת "ושטרים" היא באותיות גדולות - ד"ה חדש. אבל לכאורה הוא טה"ד, והד"ה שבפרש"י הוא "שופטים ושטרים", ואח"כ מפרש החילוק ביניהם - "שופטים דיינים כו' ושטרים הרודין כו'" (לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 98, הערה 1) 2 בדפוס אי"וב' וכל כתי"י שבספריית ליובאוויטש, ליתא תיבות אלו. וכן ליתא (ברש"י שהועתק ב)סמ"ג עש"ן צו בתחילתו. אבל בדפוס רשי הנפוצים הוא כבפנים. וגירסא זו היתה לפני הבאר מים חיים ונחלת יעקב, וכן משמע בגו"א (לקו"ש שם, הערה 11).

3 תנחומים ב 4 ספרי 5 סנהדרין טז: 6 כתובות קה:

🕎 APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES & POLICE 🕎

- 16:18
- ¹⁸ You should appoint judges and police officers for yourself—for each of your tribes—in all your (city) gates that God, your God, is giving you.
 - (Appoint expert judges so that) they should judge the people correctly.
 - ¹⁹ Do not pervert justice, do not show favoritism, and do not take a bribe (even to judge correctly), for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts legitimate words.
 - ²⁰ Pursue justice, (by seeking a high quality court of) justice.
- (In the merit of appointing judges) you will live and settle upon the land God, your God, is giving you.

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the active *promotion* of the law, i.e. applying pressure to a person to encourage him to act in accordance with the law.

In *Parshas Devarim*, *Rashi* is discussing the former case, administering punishments required by law. Therefore *Rashi* stresses the role of police as “the ones who bind a person and strike him with a whip, at the judges’ order.” In our *Parsha*, however, *Rashi* is discussing the second element of law enforcement, the active *promotion* of the law: “police officers are those who *impose authority over the people*...until they accept the judges’ ruling.” Note that *Rashi* does not write that they are doing this “at the judges’ order,” since we are speaking here of how the police encourage

the people to be law abiding, and not the direct implementation and execution of legally required punishments.*

THE BASIS OF RASHI’S TWO COMMENTS

What led *Rashi* to his respective conclusions in these two instances?

Two explanations could be offered:

1.) In *Parshas Balak*, Moshe instructed the “judges of Israel” to kill those who had worshiped the idol *Ba’al Pe’or* (*Bamidbar* 25:5). Here we see that, at the literal level, a judge is not one who merely decides the law, but he can be involved in administering the punishment too.

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“BRIBERY BLINDS THE EYES OF THE WISE” (v. 19)

The *Yetzer-hara* [Evil Inclination] is an expert in his trade, an extraordinary specialist, particularly when he injects a most effective “bribe”—the person’s natural self-love.

One of the accuser’s tricks is to delude a person into thinking that he is unavoidably prevented from performing a *mitzvah*, bolstering this delusion by various arguments and “proofs,” giving no respite.

And since a person tends to be partial to himself, and it is very difficult to be objective in a matter concerning his own self, a person must always be aware that what seems to him a case of being a victim of circumstances, is not necessarily so in actual fact.

Therefore, in order to clarify his true position, he must turn to a person** who is beyond such bribery and corruption...one who is permeated by the spirit of the Torah of Truth, and truth brooks no compromise.

For only such a person can evaluate the situation and determine whether it is indeed a case of unavoidable constraint, or delusions stemming from the *Yetzer-hara*....

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe in the “*Days of Teshuvah*” 5732)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“APPOINT JUDGES...IN ALL YOUR GATES” (v. 18)

A city gate is its opening, so the Torah is requesting here that even the incomprehensible and seemingly unacceptable rulings of the judges should penetrate “your gates,” that they should enter into your way of thinking. In other words, when a person learns a new Torah directive, it should penetrate all his faculties until he feels that it is good advice.

In light of the explanation of *Shach al Hatorah* (that “your gates” represent the organs which form the interface between a person and his environment), “*You should appoint judges...in your gates*,” means that the senses (one’s “gates”) should be controlled by judgment from the Godly soul.

As the *Alter Rebbe* writes in *Tanya* (ch. 13): “*The evil inclination is no more than, for example, a judge or advocate who offers his legal opinion, but nevertheless...it is challenged by the second ‘judge,’ which is the Godly Soul....The final verdict follows the ultimate arbitrator, God Himself, who assists the good inclination...by means of a Godly revelation to the Godly Soul, so that it may gain the upper hand....*”

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim* 5751)

* Based on this distinction, we can also explain a number of further subtle differences between *Rashi*’s two comments: a.) In our *Parsha*, *Rashi* writes, “they strike and bind [people],” mentioning the less aggressive method (striking) first, because when implementing a *deterrent*, one begins with softer methods and then progresses to harsher ones. In *Parshas Devarim*, however, where the issue is executing a prescribed punishment of the court, *Rashi* writes the order in which the punishment of lashes is administered—they “bind a person and strike him.” b.) In *Parshas Devarim*, *Rashi* mentions striking “with a whip,” as this is one of the specific prescribed punishments of the court. However, in our *Parsha*, which speaks of the police promoting the law, a variety of methods may be used, including even “sticks” if necessary. **In 5746 (1986) the Rebbe instituted a campaign for every Jewish person to appoint a “mentor” (in accordance with the *Mishnah*’s directive to “provide for yourself a teacher”—*Avos* 1:6) who could guide a person so as not to be influenced by the “bribery of self-love.” See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, pp. 246-8; *Sichas Purim* 5747, ch. 32-4; see also sources cited in *Sha’arey Limud Hachasidus* (by Rabbi M. Golomb, Kehos Publication Society 5754) pp. 17-8.

אשרת כל אילן בסטר מדבקה דיני אלהיך די תעבד לך: כב ולא תקים לך קמא די סני יי אלהיך: א לא תבוס קדם יי אלהיך תור ואמר די יהי בה מוקא כל מדעם ביש ארי מרחק קדם יי אלהיך הוא: ב ארי ישתכח בינד בחדא מקרויך דיני אלהיך יהב לך גבר או אתתא די יעבד ית דביש קדם יי אלהיך למעבר על קימה: ג ואזל ופלה למעות עממיא וסניד להון ולשמשא או לסיקרא או לכל חילי שממיא די לא פקדית: ד ויחונן לך ותשמע ותתבע יאות והא קושטא כון פתנמא אתעבידת תועבתא קרא בישראל: ה ותפק ית גברא ההוא או ית אתתא ההיא די עבדו ית פתנמא בישא קדין לתרע בית דינד (לקרויך) ית גברא או ית אתתא ותרגמנון באבניא וימותון: ו על מימר תרין סהדין או תלתא

לך אשרה כל-עין אצל מזבח יהוה אלהיך אשר תעשה לך: כב ולא תקים לך מצבה אשר שגא יהוה אלהיך: ס יז א לא תזבח ליהוה אלהיך שור ושה אשר יהיה בו מום כל דבר רע כי תועבת יהוה אלהיך הוא: ס ב פי-ימצא בקרבך באחד שעריך אשר-יהוה אלהיך נתן לך איש או-אשה אשר יעשה את-הרע בעיני יהוה-אלהיך לעבר בריתו: ג וילך ויעבד אלהים אחרים וישתחו להם ולשמש | או לזרה או לכל-צבא השמים אשר לא-צוית: ד והגד-לך ושמעת ודרשת היטב והנה אמת נכון הדבר נעשתה התועבה הזאת בישראל: ה והוצאת את-האיש ההוא או את-האשה ההוא אשר עשו את-הדבר הרע* הנה אל-שעריך את-האיש או את-האשה וסקלתם באבנים ומתו: ו על-פי | שנים עדים או

*ס"א הרע

רש"י

אחכס שלא לעזוב חלילים: (ג) אשר לא צוית. לעזבס: (ד) נכון. מכוון בעדות: (ה) והוצאת את האיש ההוא וגו' אל שעריך וגו'. המתרגם אל שעריך, לחרע בית דיך, טועה, שכן שנינו אל שעריך זה שער שעזד זו, או חינו אל שער שדון זו, נאמר שעריך למטה ונאמר שעריך למעלה, מה שעריך האמור למעלה שער שעזד זו אף שעריך האמור למטה שער שעזד זו. ותרגמו לקרויך: (ו) שנים עדים או שלשה. אם מתקיימת עדות שנים למע פרט לך בשלשה, להקיש שלשה לשנים, מה שנים עדות אחת, אף שלשה

על נטיעתה: לא תטע לך אשרה כל עין אצל מזבח ה' אלהיך. אזכרה לנוטע חינו ולזונה בית דבר הבית: (כז) ולא תקים לך מצבה. מלצת אכן אחת, להקריב עליה חפילו לשמים: אשר שגא. מוצח אבנים ומצח אדמה טוב לעשות, ואת זו שגא כי חק היתה לכנענים. ואף על פי שהיתה אבוצה לו דימי האצות עכשו שגא, מאחר שעשאוה חלו חק לעזובה זרה: (ח) לא תזבח וגו' כל דבר רע. אזכרה למפגל צקדשים על ידי דבור רע. ועוד דרשו זו שר דרשות בשחיטת קדשים: (צ) לעבר בריתו. אשר כרת ה'

TORAS MENACHEM

Thus in our *Parsha*, where the Torah refers explicitly to “judges,” *Rashi* could not describe the police as having *exclusive* rights to the execution of punishments, as this was a role shared by the judges. Consequently, *Rashi*

wrote that the police provide *additional* help to the judges, to enforce the law.

In *Parshas Devarim*, however, the Torah does not refer explicitly to judges (but to “wise and well known men”), so *Rashi* did not have the above limitation. Thus, he was able to describe the police officers as the exclusive administrators of justice, thus making a clearer distinction between the judges and police.

2.) At the literal level, there is a distinction between details cited in the course of a *narrative*, and instructions that are issued as a *direct command*. In the case of a narrative, there is no basis (at the literal level) to presume anything more than is implied by the narrative. But in the case of a *command*, which has a specific goal, one might logically include any detail that is necessary for the achievement of that goal.

Thus, when we read of the appointment of judges as a *narrative* in *Parshas Devarim*, *Rashi* was unable to suggest more than a minimal role for the police officers (as those who execute judgments of the court, and no more), since the Torah gives no indication of any additional role.

However, here in our *Parsha* where we read of the *command* to appoint police officers, *Rashi* was able to expand the role of the police to include the more general task of law-enforcement and promotion of the law.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 98ff.; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim* 5748)

The Last Word

At the literal level of Torah interpretation, a judge is not merely one who *decides* Torah law, but he also shares the responsibility of *enforcing* the law (see *Toras Menachem*).

This teaches us that genuine Torah study is not merely the accumulation of knowledge, but “*the purpose of wisdom is teshuvah and good deeds*” (*Brachos* 17a). Thus, if a person’s Torah study does not lead him to increase in good deeds, it proves that something was lacking in the *Torah study itself*.

That is why we are promised that in the future era, “*I will restore your judges*” (*Isaiah* 1:26), without any need for police—for then everybody’s Torah study will be of such a quality that it will automatically engender “*teshuvah and good deeds*.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 104-5)

🕍 PROHIBITED STRUCTURES & OFFERINGS 🕍

- ²¹ You should not (even) plant for yourself an idolatrous tree (let alone worship it).
 - (You should not plant) any tree (or build any house on the Temple Mount) near the Altar of God, your God, which you will make for yourself.
 - ²² You should not set up for yourself a monument (consisting of a single stone), which God, your God hates.
- I7** • ¹ You should not offer to God, your God, an ox or a sheep that has in it a blemish, or (one that is slaughtered with) any incorrect statement (of intention), for that is an abomination to God, your God.

🕍 PUNISHMENT FOR IDOL WORSHIP 🕍

17:2 **I**f there is found among you—in one of your cities which God, your God is giving you—a man or woman who does what is evil in the eyes of God, your God, and violates His covenant, ³ by going and worshiping other gods—or the sun, the moon, or any heavenly body which I have not commanded (you to worship)—and he prostrated himself before them. ⁴ Then when you are informed (by witnesses), and you hear (the case), investigating (them) thoroughly, you see that the(ir) statements (of testimony) are consistent and true, and that this abomination has occurred in Israel:

- ⁵ You should bring that man or that woman who has committed this evil thing, outside the (city) gates, and you should pelt them—the man or the woman—with stones, and they should die.
- ⁶ The one liable to death should be put to death only by the testimony of two witnesses, or three witnesses. He should not be put to death by the testimony of one witness.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Is a person executed if he admits guilt? (v. 6)

RAMBAM: It is a scriptural decree that the court does not execute a person or administer lashes to him as a result of his own admission, but only “by the testimony of two witnesses” (*Laws of Sanhedrin* 18:6).

RADVAZ: This “scriptural decree” is somewhat rational, because a person’s soul does not belong to him, but to God, as the verse states,

“all souls are Mine” (Ezekiel 18:4). Thus a person’s admission will not help to cause damage to something that is not his...A person’s money, however, does belong to him. Therefore, [in monetary cases] we rule that a defendant’s admission is equivalent to the testimony of a hundred witnesses (*Gittin* 40b) ...Nevertheless, I agree that this is a decree of God which we cannot fully fathom (*Laws of Sanhedrin* *ibid.*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

Radvaz writes that a person is not executed as a result of his own admission, “because a person’s soul does not belong to him, but to God” (see *Classic Questions*).

But surely, a person’s money also belongs to God, as the verse states, “The earth and everything in it belongs to God” (Psalms 24:1), and, “Silver is Mine and gold is Mine,” says God,” (*Haggai* 2:8). So why is there a difference between a person’s admission in criminal and financial cases?

A person’s soul is not his own possession, but rather, an article of value that was deposited with him by God for safekeeping. But in the case of money, while it is true that the Creator does maintain

the ultimate rights of ownership over “the earth and everything in it”; nevertheless, He does allow a person to possess his own property—“He gave the earth to man” (Psalms 115:16).

And while this is fundamentally a “decree of God,” nevertheless, it is “somewhat rational”: For while everything ultimately belongs to God, there exists from man’s perspective a difference between the soul, which is obviously sacred, and money, which does not openly reveal God’s presence. Consequently, the Torah allowed us to acquire that which appears to be ownerless because its True Owner remains hidden; but we were not granted the right to possess something which clearly belongs to an existing Owner.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 106ff.)

סֶהֲרִין יִתְקַטֵּיל דְּתִיב קָטוּל לֹא יִתְקַטֵּיל עַל מִימַר סֶהֲרִיד חֹד: ז יָדָא דְסֶהֲרִיא תְּהִי בַּהּ בְּקִדְמִיתָא לְמִקְטִילָהּ וְיָדָא דְכָל עֲמָא בְּבִתְרִיתָא וְתַפְלִי עֶבֶד דְּבִישׁ מִבִּינָה: ח אֲרִי יִתְכַפֵּי מִנְּךָ פִּתְנָמָא לְדִינָא בֵּין דְּמָא לְדְמָא בֵּין דִּינָא לְדִינָא וּבֵין מִכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוּ לְמִכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוּ פִּתְנָמִי פְּלַגְתָּ* דִּינָא בְּקִרְוִיד וְתַקּוּם וְתַסְק לְאַתְרָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יִי אֱלֹהֵךָ בְּהַ: ט וְתִיתִי לֹת בְּהִנָּא לְוָאִי וְלֹת דִּינָא דִּי יְהִי בִּימִיָּא הָאֲנֹן וְתִתְבַּע וְיִחֲוִין לְךָ יִת פִּתְנָמָא דְּדִינָא: י וְתַעֲבַד עַל מִימַר פִּתְנָמָא דִּי יִחֲוִין לְךָ מִן אַתְרָא הַהוּא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי יִי וְתַטַּר לְמַעֲבַד כְּכַל דִּי יִלְפְּנָה: יא עַל מִימַר אֲוִרִיתָא דִּי יִלְפְּנָה וְעַל דִּינָא דִּי יִמְרוּן לְךָ תַעֲבַד לֹא תִסְטִי מִן פִּתְנָמָא דִּי יִחֲוִין לְךָ יִמִּינָא וְשִׁמְאַלָּא: יב וְגַבְר דִּי יַעֲבַד בְּרִשְׁעָא בְּדִיל דְּלֹא לְקַבְּלָא מִן בְּהִנָּא דְקָאֵם לְשִׁמְשָׁא תְּמֹן קְדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךָ אוּ מִן דִּינָא וְיִתְקַטֵּיל גְּבַרָא הַהוּא וְתַפְלִי עֶבֶד דְּבִישׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: יג וְכָל עֲמָא

שְׁלֹשָׁה עֵדִים יֹכֵחַת הַמֶּת לֹא יֹכֵחַת עַל-פִּי עַד אֶחָד: ז יָד הָעֵדִים תִּהְיֶה-בּוּ בְּרֵאשִׁינָה לְהַמִּיתוֹ וְיָד כָּל-הָעָם בְּאַחֲרֶינָה וּבַעֲרַת הָרָע מִקִּרְבֶּךָ: פ הַ כִּי יִפְלֹא מִמֶּךָ דְבָר לְמִשְׁפָּט בֵּין-דָּם א לְדָם בֵּין-הֵינן לְדִין וּבֵין נֹנֵעַ לְנֹנֵעַ דְּבַרִּי רִיבֵת בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ וְקָמַת וְעֲלִית אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוּ: ט וּבֹאֲתָ אֶל-הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם וְאֶל-הַשֹּׁפֵט אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְדַרְשָׁתָּ וְהִגִּידוּ לְךָ אֵת דְּבַר הַמִּשְׁפָּט: י וְעֲשִׂיתָ עַל-פִּי הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לְךָ מִן-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה וְשִׁמְרַתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֹרֶד: יא עַל-פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יֹרֶד וְעַל-הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמְרוּ לְךָ תַעֲשֶׂה לֹא תִסּוּר מִן-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-יִגִּידוּ לְךָ יָמִין וְשִׁמְאַל: יב וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה בְּזִדּוֹן לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמַע אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן הָעֹמֵד לְשַׁרְתָּ שָׁם אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אוּ אֶל-הַשֹּׁפֵט וּמַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא וּבַעֲרַת הָרָע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: יג וְכָל-

כ"ט

מכל המקומות: (ט) הכהנים הלויים, הכהנים שילאו משפט לוי: ואל השופט אשר יהיה בימים ההם, ואפילו אינו כשאר שופטים שהיו לפניו אחת לריב לשמוע לו. אין לך אלא שופט שבימך: (יא) ימין ושמאל. אפילו אומר לך על ימין שהוא שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא ימין, וכל שכן כשאומר לך על ימין ימין ועל שמאל שמאל: (יג) וכל העם ישמעו. מאכן שממתינים לו עד

עדות אחת, ואין נעשין זוממין עד שיזמו כולם: (ח) כי יפלא. כל הפלא לשון הצדלה ופרישה, שדבר נדל ומכוסה ממך: בין דם לדם. בין דם עמא לדם עכו"ר: בין דין לדין. בין דין זכאי לדין חייב: בין נגע לנגע. בין נגע עמא לנגע עכו"ר: דברי ריבות. שיכיו חכמי העיר חולקים דבר, זה מעמא זה מטכר זה מחייב זה מזכה: וקמת ועלית. מלמד שצית המקדש גבוה

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- Surely it is self-evident that one can only consult the judges who “exist at that time”? (v. 9)
RASHI: Even if they are not like the other judges who preceded them, you must listen to them, for you have only the judges of your time.
TALMUD: The judge in each generation is like Shmuel in his generation...and like Moshe in his generation (*Rosh Hashanah* 20b).

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

“YOU SHOULD COME TO...THE JUDGES WHO EXIST AT THAT TIME” (v. 9)

It is axiomatic to Chasidic thought that the completeness of the redemption is “dependent on our actions and effort to serve God throughout the period of Exile, since the reward for a commandment is [the result] of the commandment itself” (*Tanya*, chap. 37). Everything that is bestowed from Heaven is carefully meted out according to the actions which elicit it, and therefore a person’s actions must be somewhat similar to the desired result.
 Thus, in order to reach and relate to the Messianic Era when “I will return your Judges as they were at first, and your advisors like they were in the beginning” (Isaiah 1:26), a Jew has to incorporate this

dimension in his life now. Judaism must have for him two dimensions: “Judges”—submission to the directives of Torah (even if they are not logically understood), and “Advisors”—the internalization and appreciation of these directives, (as he understands and appreciates receiving good advice).
 This preparation has been achieved throughout history, by following the “Judges” and “Advisors” of the generation. Therefore, we are taught: “You should come to...the judges that exist at that time. You should question them, and they will tell you words of judgment” (v. 9).

(Excerpt from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim* 5751—Free Translation)

1 מכות ה: 2 נדה יט. 3 ספרי 4 ר"ה כה: *בכמה דפוטים "פלגתא". וכן הובא ב' נתינה לגר (מהר"י אדלר). וכן הוא בחומש נתינה לגר. אבל בספר כתר תורה הנק' תאג' (ירושלים תרנ"ה), ועוד הוא "פלגתא" (לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 154 בשרה"ג)

- ⁷ *The hands of the witnesses should be against him first to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people—and you will eliminate this evil from among you.*

⌘ AUTHORITY OF THE HIGH COURT ⌘

17:8 **I**f a point of law eludes you (r local court)—be it the distinction between (pure) blood and (impure) blood, between a verdict (of innocence) and a verdict (of guilt), or between a (pure) lesion and an (impure) lesion, (resulting in) conflicting rulings (among the sages) in your city:

- You should make the journey up to (the Holy Temple), the place that God, your God, will choose. ⁹ You should come to the priests, (who are from) the (tribe) of Levites, and to the judges who exist at that time. You should question them, and they will tell you words of judgment.
- ¹⁰ You must obey the words that they will tell you—from the place God will choose. You should carefully obey everything they instruct you. ¹¹ You should act in accordance with the teachings that they instruct you, and according to the judgments they issue to you.
- You must not divert from the words they tell you, (even if they tell you that) right (is left) and left (is right).
- ¹² (If) any man intentionally disobeys and fails to listen to the priest who is standing and officiating there before God, your God, or to the judge, that man must die. Thus you will eliminate this evil from Israel.
- ¹³ (They should wait until the next festival to execute him, so that) all the people will hear (of it) and be afraid, so they will no longer disobey intentionally.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one fulfill the command not to “divert” from the words of the Sages? (v. 11)

RAMBAM: There are additional *mitzvos* which were introduced after the giving of the Torah, that were fixed [as Jewish law] by the Prophets and the Sages, and they were adopted by the entire Jewish

people, such as reading the *Megilah*, the *Chanukah* lights, the fast of *Tisha b’Av*, the principle of the *Eruv*, and the washing of the hands etc. All of these *mitzvos* that were introduced at a later date are obligatory for us to accept and observe, as the verse states: “*You must not divert from the words, etc.*” (Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*).

TORAS MENACHEM

⌘ THE NATURE OF RABBINIC LAW (v. 11)

The above statement of **Rambam** presents the following problem:

It is generally accepted that there are *seven* Rabbinic *mitzvos*, namely:

1. Washing of the hands (before eating bread), 2. The laws of *Eruv*, 3. Recital of *Brachos* (blessings), 4. Lighting *Shabbos* candles, 5. Reading the *Megilah*, 6. *Chanukah* lights, 7. Reciting *Hallel* (see *Sefer Hachinuch* end of listing of *mitzvos*; *Shaloh* 316a; *Toras Olah* of the *Rema* 3:38).

Of course, there are literally thousands of other Rabbinic laws, but all those apart from the above are *extensions* or *enhancements* of Torah law. The above seven *mitzvos* are unique among the vast body of Rabbinic law in that they are: 1.) *Mitzvos* in their own right, that require a blessing beforehand. 2.) They are all positive commands (and not prohibitions). 3.) They are not an extension of existing Torah law. Thus, the common consensus is that there are just seven Rabbinic “*mitzvos*,” and many thousands of additional Rabbinic enactments and decrees that serve to protect Torah law.

However, **Rambam** makes no mention here of the fact that there are *seven* Rabbinic *mitzvos*. Furthermore, of the five *mitzvos* that he *does* mention, one of them—the fast of *Tisha b’Av*—is not generally considered to be one of the seven Rabbinic *mitzvos*, for it is not a positive command, and it is not a *mitzvah* on which a blessing is made.

Why did **Rambam** not enumerate the Rabbinic *mitzvos* here, in his introduction to the *Mishneh Torah*, in the same way as he listed the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah? And why did he disregard the common consensus that there are seven Rabbinic *mitzvos*?

THE EXPLANATION

The number of Biblical *mitzvos* is an absolute, fixed sum. There are precisely 613 *mitzvos*, and it is categorically forbidden to add any further *mitzvos*, or annul any of the existing laws (as **Rambam** writes in his *Laws of Foundations of the Torah*, chap. 9).

However, according to the principles of Jewish law, Rabbinic *mitzvos* are not limited to any particular number, because the Sages are permitted to add *mitzvos*, enactments and decrees as they see fit. As time passes and new problems arise, they are charged with the task of adding further laws or, under certain circumstances, modifying or abolishing previously existing law. So, by its very nature, Rabbinic law is dynamic and constantly evolving with the times.

Of course, nowadays the Rabbis do not have sufficient authority to modify the existing Rabbinic law, so the number of Rabbinic *mitzvos* and decrees has become static. But this is purely a technical limitation. In essence, however, the body of Rabbinic law may be modified, provided there are Rabbis of sufficient authority (and in the Messianic era, we are

יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּדְחֲלוּ וְלֹא יִזְדוּן עוֹד: יד וְאִתְּךָ יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּדְחֲלוּ וְלֹא יִזְדוּן עוֹד: יד אָרִי תֵעוֹל לְאַרְעָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵךָ יִהְיֶה לְךָ וְתִירַתְּהָ וְתִיתֵב בָּהּ וְתִימַר אֲמִנִי עָלַי מִלְּפָא כְּכֹל עִמְמִיא דִּי בְּסַתְרֵנִי: טו מִנְּאָה תִּמְנִי עֲלֵךְ מִלְּפָא דִּי יִתְרַעֵי וְיִ אֱלֹהֵךָ בָּהּ מִגּוֹ אַחִיד תִּמְנִי עֲלֵךְ מִלְּפָא לִית לְךָ רְשׁוֹ לְמִנְּאָה עֲלֵךְ גְּבַר נִיבְרִי דִּי לֹא אַחִיד הוּא: טז לְחוּד לֹא יִסְגִי לָהּ סוּסָן וְלֹא יִתֵּיב ית עֲמָא לְמַצְרִים בְּדִיל לְאַסְגָּא (לה) סוּסָן וְיִ אֲמַר לְכוּן לֹא תוֹסְפוּן לְמִתּוֹב בְּאַרְחָא הָדָא עוֹד: יז וְלֹא יִסְגִי לָהּ גְּשׁוּן וְלֹא יִסְעִי לְבָהּ וְכִסְפָּא וְדִבְכָא לֹא יִסְגִי לָהּ לְחֵדָא: יח וְיִהִי כְּמִתְבָּהּ עַל פְּרָסִי מִלְּכוּתָהּ וְיִכְתוּב לָהּ ית פִּתְשָׁנָן אֹרִיתָא הָדָא עַל סְפָרָא מִן קְדָם כְּהִנְיָא לְוָא: יט וְתִהִי עִמָּה וְיִהִי קְרִי בָּהּ כֹּל יוֹמֵי חַיֵּיהּ בְּדִיל דְּיִלְחַף לְמִדְחַל קְדָם וְיִ אֱלֹהֵהּ לְמַטְרָא ית כֹּל פִּתְשָׁנִי אֹרִיתָא אֹרִיתָא הָדָא וְיִת קִימִיא הָאֲלִין לְמַעְבְּדֵהוּן: כ בְּדִיל דְּלֹא יָרִים לְבָהּ מִאַחֲדֵיהּ וּבְדִיל דְּלֹא יִסְטִי מִן תַּפְקֵדְתָּא יִמִּינָא וְשִׁמְאַלָּא בְּדִיל דְּיִוְרִידֵךְ יוֹמִין עַל מִלְּכוּתָהּ הוּא וּבְגוּהֵי בְּגוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

הָעָם יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ וְלֹא יִזְדוּן עוֹד: טו וְאִתְּךָ יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּדְחֲלוּ וְלֹא יִזְדוּן עוֹד: טו אָרִי תֵעוֹל לְאַרְעָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵיךָ נִתֵּן לְךָ וְיִרְשָׁתָּהּ וְיִשְׁבַּתָּהּ בָּהּ וְאִמְרַתְּ אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מִלְּךְ כְּכֹל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתַי: טז שׁוֹם תִּשָּׂים עָלֶיךָ מִלְּךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקִּרְבֵּי אַחֶיךָ תִּשָּׂים עָלֶיךָ מִלְּךְ לֹא תוֹכֵל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נִכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־ אַחֶיךָ הוּא: טז רַק לֹא־יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא־יִשִּׁיב אֶת־הָעָם מִצְרִימָה לְמַעַן הַרְבּוֹת סוּסִים וְיִהְיֶה אֲמַר לָכֶם לֹא תוֹסְפוּן לָשׁוּב בְּדִרְךָ הַזֶּה עוֹד: יז וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יִסּוֹר לְבָבוֹ וְכִסְף וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ מְאֹד: יח וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתוֹ עַל פֶּסֶא מִמְּלִכְתּוֹ וְכָתַב לוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר מִלְּפָנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם: יט וְהִיתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּיו לְמַעַן יִלְמַד לְיִרְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו לְשִׁמּוֹר אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: כ לְבַלְתִּי רוּם־לְבָבוֹ מֵאַחֶיו וּלְבַלְתִּי סוֹר מִן־הַמִּצְוָה יְמִין וּשְׁמֹאל לְמַעַן יֵאָרֶיךָ יוֹמִים עַל־מִמְּלִכְתּוֹ הוּא וּבְנָיו בְּקִרְבֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ט

כ"ט

צבית גנזיו וחתם שכנסת ויואלת עמו.⁶ ואוקלוס תרגם פתשגן, פתר משנה לשון שנון ודבור: (יע) דברי התורה. כמשמעו: (כ) ולבלתי סור מן המצוה. אפילו מלכ קלה של נביא: למען יאריך ימים. מכלל כן אתה שומע לאו. וכן מנינו בשאול שאמר לו שמואל שבעת ימים תחל עד זואי אליך להעלות עולה וגו'⁷ וכתיב ויחל שבעת ימים⁸ ולא שמר הצטחתו לשמור כל היום, ולא הספיק להעלות העולה עד שזא שמואל ואמר לו נסכלת כאשר לא שמרת וגו' ועתה ממלכתך לא תקום.⁹ הא למדת, שזשזל מלכ קלה של נביא נענש: הוא ובניו. מגיד שאם

הרגל וממיתין אותו כרגל: (עז) לא ירבה לו סוסים. אלא כדי מרכבתו, שלא ישיב את העם ממרימה, שכסוסים צאים משם. כמה שאמר בשלמה, ותעלה ותלך מרכבה ממלכים בשש מאות כסף וסוס צחמשים ומאה?² (יז) ולא ירבה לו נשים. אלא שמונה עשרה, שמנינו שהיו לו לדוד שש נשים, ונאמר לו³ ואם מעט ואוספיך לך כהנה וכנה: וחסף וזהב לא ירבה לו מאד. אלא כדי ליתן לאכסניא (ס"ח לאפסניא):⁴ (יח) והיה כשבתו. אם עשה כן כדאי הוא שתקיים מלכותו: את משנה התורה. שתי ספרי תורה. אחת שהיא מונחת

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What does "he and his sons" teach us? (v. 20)

RASHI: It teaches that if his son is worthy of becoming king, he is given preference over another person.

RAMBAM: Once a king is anointed, he and his descendants are granted the monarchy forever, since the monarchy is transferred by means of inheritance....Not only the monarchy, but all other positions of authority and appointments in Israel are transferred to

the children and grandchildren forever, provided the son's wisdom and fear of God equal that of the father.

Once David was anointed, he earned the rights to the "Crown of Kingship." Thus, the monarchy belongs to him and his male descendants forever....However, this right was only transferred to his righteous descendants....Nevertheless, God promised him that the monarchy would never cease from his descendants...." (Laws of Kings 1:7).

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promised that such a situation will return). Thus, from a conceptual point of view, Rabbinic law constantly remains flexible and dynamic.

For this reason, Rambam omitted any specific mention of the number of mitzvos when he introduced the concept of Rabbinic law in his Mishneh Torah, for he wished to stress that Rabbinic law is essentially dynamic in nature, and it is not limited to a specific number of mitzvos (unlike Biblical law).

RABBINIC LAW TODAY

Furthermore, it could be argued that, even today, new Rabbinic precepts may be introduced, even before the Sanhedrin is re-convened.

Rambam writes in his introduction to the Mishneh Torah: "All of that which is written in the Babylonian Talmud is legally binding on the whole Jewish people...since the entire content of the Talmud was agreed upon universally by the Jewish people."

🌀 APPOINTMENT OF A KING 🌀

17:14
SECOND
READING

When you come to the land God, your God, is giving you, and you take possession of it and settle in it, you will (eventually) say, “I will set a king over myself, like all the nations around me”:

- ¹⁵ You should always set a king over you, one whom God, your God, chooses.
- The king that you appoint over yourselves must be from among your (Jewish) brothers.
- You may not appoint a gentile over yourselves, one who is not your brother.
- ¹⁶ However, he may not acquire many horses for himself (more than he needs for his chariot).
- (This is) so that he will not bring the people back to Egypt, in order to get more horses, for God said to you: “You should never return on that road again!”
- ¹⁷ He should not take too many wives for himself, so his heart will not be led astray.
- He should not acquire an abundance of silver and gold for himself.
- ¹⁸ After he is already sitting upon his royal throne, he should write two copies of this Torah scroll for himself, in the presence of the priests, the sons of Levi.
- ¹⁹ (One copy should be placed in his treasury, and the other) should remain with him, and he should read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear God, his God, to carefully guard the observance of all the words of this Torah, and its suprarational commands. ²⁰ (This is) so that his heart will not be arrogant over his brothers, and he will not veer away from (even) the (smallest) commandment, either to the right or to the left, in order that he will reign for a long time over his kingdom—he and his sons—among Israel.

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Now, there are many Rabbinic laws in the *Talmud* which were introduced after the *Sanhedrin* ceased to function, and yet, *Rambam* writes that they are legally binding on the basis that these laws were “agreed upon universally by the Jewish people.”

Therefore, it would seem that, according to *Rambam*, any enactment or custom which becomes universally accepted among the entire Jewish people actually acquires the full legal status of a Rabbinic *mitzvah*, even in the current era.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 104ff.)

🌀 INHERITANCE OF THE MONARCHY (v. 20)

From *Rambam*'s words in the above law, the distinction between an ordinary Jewish king and one who is descended from King David is not immediately obvious. Both types of monarchy seem to be passed via inheritance (provided that the son is a worthy candidate), so why does *Rambam* write a separate law in reference to King David, repeating the same idea? And what does he mean with the words, “Once David was anointed, he earned the rights to the ‘Crown of Kingship’”?

THE EXPLANATION

There are two different ways of understanding the concept of a king:

- a.) He is a monarch by virtue of his *task* of ruling the nation and carrying out the duties appointed to him; or
- b.) The king is *naturally engendered* with the qualities of kingship. Such a person is inherently “cut out” for the job.

When *Rambam* writes that King David “earned the rights to the ‘Crown of Kingship’...for him and his male descendants forever...,” he is not

recording a Divine promise, but rather, he is defining the quality of Davidic Kingship. Namely, that King David and his descendants are not merely *functioning* as kings, but they are *essentially* ingrained with the qualities of nobility and illustriousness that a king must possess. It is thus guaranteed that monarchy will not cease from King David's descendants (not only due to the Divine promise, but) as a *natural consequence* of the fact that they are *born* with the attributes of sovereignty. Non-Davidic rulers must *acquire* the necessary talents that are needed to be a king, but in the house of David, they possess them *naturally*.

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

“The king is the heart of the entire congregation of Israel”

(Rambam, *Laws of Kings* 3:6)

The heart has no role unto itself, and it merely serves the rest of the body. It moves constantly, as its entire purpose is the service of the *other* limbs.

In contrast, the brain is “distant” from the rest of the body. It is the coordinator of all the energetic activity which occurs in the body, but it itself remains somewhat aloof. Therefore, it does not move (like the body), illustrating its quality of aloofness.

For this reason, a king is compared specifically to the heart, since he is totally devoted to the people and involved with their needs.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 165ff.)

א לא יהי לכהניא לואי כל שבטא דלוי חלק ואחסנא עם ישראל קורבניא דיי ואחסנתה ייכלון: ב ואחסנא לא יהי לה בגו אחוהי מתנן דיהב לה יי אגון אחסנתה כמא די מליל לה: ג ודין יהא דהוי לכהניא מן עמא מן נכסי נכסתא אם תור אם אמר ויתן לכהניא דרועא ולועא וקבתא: ד ריש עבנדך חמך ומשךך וריש גזא דענדך תתן לה: ה ארי בה אתרעי יי אלקך מכל שבטיך למקם לשמשא בשמא דיי הוא ובגוהי כל יומיא: ו וארי ייתי לואה מתרא מקרוד מכל ישראל די הוא דר תמן וייתי בכל רעות נפשה לאתרא די יתרעי יי וישמש בשמא

ישלישין יח א לא־יִהְיֶה לְכֹהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים כָּל־שֵׁבֶט לְוֵי חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה וְנַחֲלָתוֹ יֹאכְלוּ: ב וְנַחֲלָה לֹא־יִהְיֶה לּוֹ בְּקֶרֶב אָחָיו יְהוָה הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לוֹ: ס וְזֶה יִהְיֶה מִשְׁפַּט הַכֹּהֲנִים מֵאֵת הָעָם זִבְחֵי הַזֶּבַח אִם־שׁוֹר אִם־שֶׂה וְנָתַן לְבָהֵן הַזֹּרֵעַ וְהַלְחִיִּים וְהַקֹּבֵה: ד רֵאשִׁית דְּגַנְךָ תִּירֶשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ וְרֵאשִׁית גֵּז עֲאֲנֶךָ תִּתֵּן־לוֹ: ה כִּי בּוֹ בָתֵּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֶיךָ לְעֹמֵד לְשָׂרֵת בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה הוּא וּבָנָיו כָּל־הַיָּמִים: ס וּרְבִיעִין וּכְבִּי־בֹא הַלְוִי מֵאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא גֵר שָׁם וּבֹא בְּכָל־אֹתוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְתֵּר יְהוָה: ז וְשָׂרֵת בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיו כְּכָל־

כ"ט

והלחיים. עם הלשון. דורשי רשומות היו אומרים, זרוע, תחת יד, שנאמר ויקח רומח בידו. לחיים, תחת תפלה, שנאמר⁶ ויעמוד פינחס ויפלל: והקבה. תחת האשה אל קצתה: (ד) ראשית דגןך. זו תרומה, ולא פירש זה שיעור, אצל רבותינו נתנו זה שיעור, עין יפה אחד מארבעים, עין רעה אחד מששים, בינונית אחד מחמשים. וסמכו על המקרא שלא לפחות מאחד מששים⁸, שנאמר וששיתם האיפה מחומר השעורים⁹ ששית האיפה, חלי סאה. כשאתה גותן חלי סאה לבור, הרי אחד מששים, שכבור שלשים סאין: וראשית גז צאנך. כשאתה גוזז לאנך ככל שנה תן ממנה ראשית לכבן. ולא פירש זה שיעור. ורבותינו נתנו זה שיעור אחד מששים. וכמה לאן חייבות בראשית הגז, חמש רחלות, שנאמר וחמש לאן עשויות¹⁰. רבי עקיבא אומר ראשית גז שחיס, וגז לאנך ארבעה, תתן לו הרי חמשה: (ה) לעמוד לשרת. מכאן שאין שירות אלא מעומד: (ו) וכי יבא הלוי. יכול צבן לוי ודאי הכתוב מדבר, תלמוד לומר ושרת, יאלו לויס שאין ראוי לשירות: ובא בכל אות נפשו וגו'. (ז) ושרת. למד על הכהן שצא ומקריב קרבנות נדחתו או חוצתו ואפילו צמסמר שאינו שלו. דבר אחר עוד למד על הכהנים הצאים לרגל שמקריבין צמסמר ועוזבין בקרבנות הצאות מחמת הרגל, כגון מוספי

צנו בגון למלכות הוא קודם לכל אדם: (ח) כל שבט לוי. צין תמימין צין צעלי מומין: חלק. בציוה: ונחלה. בארץ: אשי ה'. קדשי המקדש (ס"א קדשי הקדשים): ונחלתו. אלו קדשי הגבול תרומות ומעשרות. אצל: (צ) נחלה. גמורה לא יכיר לו בקרב אחיו. ובספרי דרשו, ונחלה לא יכיר לו. זו נחלת שאר. בקרב אחיו. זו נחלת חמשה. ואינו יודע מה היא. ונראה לי שארץ כנען שמעבר בירדן ואילך נקראת ארץ חמשה עממין, ושל יסחון ועוג, שני עממין אמורי וכנעני. ונחלת שאר לרבות קיני וקנזי וקדמוני. וכן דורש בפרשת מתנות שנאמר לאהרן על כן לא היה ללוי וגו'² להזכיר על קיני וקנזי וקדמוני. שוב נמלא בדברי רבי קלונימוס הכי גרסינן בספרי ונחלה לא יכיר לו אלו נחלת חמשה. בקרב אחיו אלו נחלת שבעה. נחלת חמשה שצטים ונחלת שבעה שצטים. ומתוך שמשע ויחושע לא חלקו נחלה אלא לחמשה שצטים צלצד, שכן משה הנחיל לראובן וגד וחלי שצט מנשה, ויחושע הנחיל ליהודה ואפרים ולחלי שצט מנשה, ושבעה האחרים נטלו מאליהן אחרי מות יחושע, מתוך כך הזכיר חמשה לצד ושבעה לצד: באשר דבר לו. בארנס לא נחל וגו' חלי חלקך: (ג) מאת העם. ולא מאת הכהנים: אם שור אם שה. פרט לחיה: הזרוע. מן הפרק של ארכובה עד כף של יד שקרוין אשפלדוין:⁴

TORAS MENACHEM

This affects the way that monarchy is inherited. In non-Davidic lines, the son of a king inherits precedence to the throne, i.e. he is given the first opportunity to attempt to acquire the skills that are needed to be a king and make a success of the monarchy.

But with a child descended from King David there is no need to prove this point, as the suitability for kingship is a fact of birth. Thus, sovereignty is inherited automatically, forever. (Of course, it is only the potential for these royal qualities that is inherited. They must be nurtured and brought to expression in order for the son to be fit to rule. Thus Rambam stresses that "this right was only transferred to his righteous descendants.")

KING DAVID AND KING SHLOMO

Based on the above, we can explain the account in Kings (1 I:1-48), that Shlomo was anointed as king in the lifetime of King David. At first glance, this seems to contradict the Talmud's statement that God told King David:

"The time of your son Shlomo's monarchy has come, but one monarch will not overlap the other, even by a hairsbreadth" (Shabbos 30a); and in general, there is the rule that "two kings cannot use the same crown" (Chullin 60b). So, how are we to explain the fact that Shlomo was anointed as king in the lifetime of his father?

Based on the above, we can understand that in the case of ordinary (non-Davidic) kings, the monarchy merely represents the seat of power (not a natural quality). Since it is only possible for one person to be the final authority, it follows that there can only be one king at any given time, for the king has the final authority.

However, a king from the House of David possesses the "Crown of Kingship," as an inherent, personal quality. Therefore, the concept of kingship could be revealed in two people at the same time, even though only one of them is the practical ruling authority.

1 פסוקי 2 דברים י' יט 3 במדבר יח, כ 4 חולין קלד: 5 במדבר כה, ז 6 תהלים קז, ז 7 במדבר שס ז 8 תרומות פ"ד מ"ד 9 יחזקאל מה, יג 10 שמואל א כה, יח

🔱 RIGHTS OF THE PRIESTS & LEVITES 🔱

18

THIRD
READING

- ¹ *The priests (who are from) the (tribe of) Levites shall have no portion (from the spoils of war).*
- *Nor (shall they have any) inheritance (of the land) with the (rest of) the Jewish people.*
- *(This applies to) all (the priests who are from) the tribe of Levi (regardless of whether they are fit to serve in the Temple, or not).*
- *(Rather, the priest and Levite) will eat God's fire-offerings (terumah and tithes) that He bequeathed (to them).*
- ² *But (the priest) will have no (territorial) inheritance among his brothers. God is his inheritance, as He told (Aharon).*

³ *These are the priests' rights from the people:*

- *When any ox or sheep is slaughtered, the priest should be given the foreleg, the jaw (with the tongue), and the end-stomach.*
- ⁴ *You should give him (terumah, which is) the first portion of your grain, your wine, and your oil.*
- *You should give him the first (shearings) of the fleece of your sheep.*

⁵ *For God, your God, has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and serve in the Name of God—he and his sons—for all time.*

FOURTH
READING

- ⁶ *If a (priest, a member of the) Levite (tribe), comes from any one of your cities throughout Israel where he lives, he may come whenever his soul desires, to the place God will choose, ⁷ and he may minister in the Name of God, his God, just like all his (priestly) brothers, (from) the (tribe of) Levites, who stand there before God.*

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **“The priests, the Levites...all the tribe of Levi” refers to whom? (v. 1)**

RASHI: “The priests, the Levites” means the priests, who are members of the tribe of Levi (*Rashi* to 17:9, above). “All the tribe of Levi” means all *the* priests of the tribe of Levi, regardless of whether they are fit to serve in the Temple or not.

RAMBAM: The entire tribe of Levi is prohibited from inheriting part of the land of Canaan, and they are also prohibited from taking a portion of the spoils of war, as the verse states: “*The priests, the Levites, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance*” (*Laws of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years* 13:10).

● **Who is the “Levite” that “may minister in the Name of God” in verses 6-7?**

RASHI: With the words, “*If a Levite comes,*” one might think that scripture is referring to an actual Levite [and not a priest]. To teach us otherwise the verse states, “*and he may minister*” (v. 7), which excludes Levites, who are not eligible to minister in the Temple.

RAMBAM: The verse states, “*and he may minister in the Name of God, his God, just like all his brothers, the Levites*” (v. 7).

Which service is “*in the Name of God*”?

It is the singing [of the Levites] (*Laws of Temple Apparatus* 3:2).

TORAS MENACHEM

The anointing of Shlomo in his father's lifetime was a process which catalyzed the fruition of Shlomo's inherent kingly qualities, so that his ingrained nobility should no longer remain latent and should be revealed in the form of actual sovereignty. Therefore, after the anointing had taken place, he could now be termed a king (despite the fact that he was not ruler), as the anointing had already brought out his royal attributes from “potential” to “actual.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 30, p. 97ff.)

🔱 **THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRIESTS & LEVITES (v. 1-8)**

According to *Rashi*, the current passage refers primarily to priests, and not Levites. When the Torah states, “the priests, the Levites” (v. 1) it means, “*the priests*, who are members of the tribe of Levi.” Similarly, *Rashi* writes that verse 6, which mentions “a Levite,” actually refers to a priest. On the other hand, **Rambam** maintains that these verses do refer to Levites.

What is the underlying basis of this dispute?

דיי אלהה ככל אחוהי לנאי המשמשין תמן
 בצלו קדם יי: ה חלק כחלק ייכלון בר
 ממשרתא דיייתי בשבתא בכון אתקיננו
 אבהתא: ט ארי את עלל לארעא דיי אלהה
 יהב לך לא תילף למעבד כטעות עממיא
 האנון: י לא ישתבח כך מעבר ברה וברתה
 בנורא קסם קוסמין מענן ומנחש וחרש:
 יא ורשין רשן ושאל בדין ודבורו ותבע מן
 מתניא: יב ארי מרחק (קדם) יי כל דיעבד אליו
 ובדיל תועבתא האליו יי אלהה מתברך יתהון
 מןקמך: יג שלים תהי בדתלתא דיי אלהה:
 יד ארי עממיא האליו די את ירת יתהון מן

אחיו הלויים העמרים שם לפני יהוה: ה חלק כחלק יאכלו
 לבד ממכריו עלהאבות: ט כי אתה בא אל-הארץ
 אשר-יהנה אלהיך נתן לך לא-תלמד לעשות כתועבת
 הגוים ההם: י לא-ימצא בך מעביר בנזובתו באש קסם
 קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף: יא וחבר חבר ושאל אוב וידעני
 ודרש אל-המתים: יב כיתועבת יהוה כל-עשה אלה ובגלל
 התועבת האלה יהוה אלהיך מוריש אותם מפניך: יג תמים
 תהיה עם יהוה אלהיך: [חמישי] יד כי הגוים האלה אשר אתה

רשי

אם לא חלק. וכן הוא אומר³, עמי צענו ישאל ומקלו יגיד לוי: מעונן. רבי
 עקיבא אומר אלו נותני עונות, שאומרים עונה פלונית יפה להחילו. והכמים
 אומרים אלו אוחזי העינים⁴: מנחש. פתו נפלה מפיו, לצי הפסיקו צדך,
 מקלו נפל מידו⁵: (יא) וחבר חבר. שמלך נחשים או עקרבים או שאר חיות
 למקום אחד⁶: ושאל אוב. זה מכשפות ששמו פיתוס ומדבר משחיו ומעלה
 את המת בצית השחי שלו⁷: וידעני. מכנים עלם חיה ששמה ידוע, לתוך פיו,
 ומדבר העלם על ידי מכשפות⁸: ודרש אל המתים. כגון המעלה בזכרותו
 והנשאל בגלגולת⁹: (יג) כל עושה אלה. עושה כל אלה לא נאמר אלא כל
 עושה אלה, אפילו אחת מהן¹⁰: (יג) תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך. התהלך

הרגל, ואף על פי שאין המשמר שלהם: (ח) חלק כחלק יאכלו. מלמד
 שחולקין צטורות וצצשר שיערי חטאות. יכול אף צדצרים הצאים שלא מחמת
 הרגל, כגון תמידין ומוספי צצת ונדרים ונדצות, תלמוד לומר לצד ממכריו
 על האצות, חוץ ממה שמכרו האצות צימי דוד ושמואל, שנקצבו המשמרות
 ומכרו זה לזה, טול אתה צצתך ואני אטול צצתי¹: (ט) לא תלמד לעשות.
 אצל אתה למד להצין ולהורות, כלומר להצין מעשיכם כמה הם מקולקלים,
 ולהורות לצניך לא תעשה כך וכך, שזה הוא חוק העכו"ס: (י) מעביר בנו
 ובתו באש. היא עבודת המולך. עושה מדורות אש מכאן ומכאן ומעצירו
 צין שתיכס²: קוסם קסמים. איזכו קוסם, האוחז את מקלו ואומר אם חלק

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

There are two ways of understanding the distinction between priests and Levites:

a.) *Priests and Levites are two independent classes.*

God separated the priests from the rest of the Jewish people to perform a specific task in His service, and likewise, He separated the Levites for their function. Each has their own unique status which is totally independent of the other.

b.) *Priests and Levites are different levels within the same class structure.*

God first separated the entire tribe of Levi from the rest of the Jewish people as an elite group which would be entirely devoted to His service. Then, from among the Levites themselves, He selected a further, super-elite group of priests, for an even higher level of service.

A difference that arises from these approaches is whether or not Levites are considered to be full-time ministers of God. If we adopted the first approach, that priests and Levites are totally separate classes, then it follows that Levites are not direct ministers of God, because it was the priests—and the priests alone—who were separated by God to perform His services in the Temple. Then, in order to provide assistance to the priests, God made a second, totally separate class of helpers, the Levites. However, if we adopted the second approach (that the entire tribe of Levi were separated first, and then an upper sub-class of priests were formed from among the Levites), then it turns out that all the Levites are actually ministers of God, since when God made that first separation, he was distinguishing the entire tribe of Levi as His personal servants, or ministers.

THE CONTENTION BETWEEN RASHI AND RAMBAM

At the literal level, scripture appears to stress the first approach (that the priests and Levites are two independent classes). First we read of the selection of priests in *Parshas Tetzaveh*: “You should draw Aharon your brother close to you together with his sons, (separating them) from the children of Israel, to serve Me as priests” (*Shemos* 28:1), and it is only much later that the Levites are appointed (see *Bamidbar* 3:6).

This suggests that, at the literal level (followed by *Rashi*), the entire tribe of Levi was not separated as ministers of God. Rather, the priests alone were selected, and the Levites were added later, as their assistants.

However, *Rambam* writes, “All the descendants of Levi were separated to serve in the Temple...The priests were separated out from among the Levites for the task of offering sacrifices” (*Laws of Temple Apparatus* 3:1, 4:1), which indicates that *Rambam* follows the second approach described above.

Based on this, we can now explain why *Rashi* and *Rambam* took different approaches to the current passage:

Verse 1 seems to equate the status of priests and Levites: “The priests, the Levites, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance.” This “equality” fits *Rambam*’s view, since he understood, “All the descendants of Levi were separated to serve in the Temple,” so priests and Levites are essentially members of the same class.

But *Rashi* perceived the priests as being the only true ministers of God (and Levites as being a supplementary group added at a later time), so he could not explain that our verse was “equating” priests and Levites. Consequently, *Rashi* explained that the verse is speaking of priest alone:

- ⁸ They should eat equal portions (of the hides and meat of the festival offerings), except for (the tamid offering, the additional offering of Shabbos and voluntary offerings, for which the priests) were (divided into “watches,” whose rights were) sold by their ancestors.

🌀 PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FORTUNE-TELLING 🌀

18:9 **W**hen you come to the land God, your God, is giving you, you must not learn to do the abominable practices of those nations. ¹⁰ There must not be found anyone among you who:

- Passes his son or daughter (between two) fires (to Molech),*
- Practices stick divination,
- Acts on the basis of fortuitous times,*
- Divines (on the basis of strange occurrences),*
- Practices sorcery,*
- ¹¹ Divines with animals,
- Turns to (the sorcery) of Ov or Yidoni,*
- (Raises and) consults with (spirits of) the dead.

¹² For whoever does these things is an abomination to God, and it is because of these abominations that God, your God is driving out these (nations) before you.

- ¹³ (Do not probe into the future, but) be simple-hearted with God, your God.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How is one to be תמים with God? (v. 13)

RASHI: Walk with Him simple-heartedly (בְּתַמִּימוּת) and look forward to what He has in store. Do not probe the future, but rather accept whatever happens to you simple-heartedly. Then, you will be with Him and His inheritance.

RAMBAN: The word תמים means “perfect.”

Thus, after the Torah warns us not to follow those who predict the future in verses 10-11, we are then told to be perfect in our faith that the future is in God’s hands, rather than seeking fortune-tellers who are not always correct.

TORAS MENACHEM

“the priests, the Levites means the priests, who are members of the tribe of Levi.”

Likewise in verses 6-7, *Rashi* could not accept that a “Levite” could “minister in the Name of God,” because he understood that Levites are only assistants to the priests, and not ministers. Therefore, *Rashi* wrote that the “Levite” of verse 6 is in fact a priest.

However, *Rambam* did not share this objection, as he understood, “All the descendants of Levi were separated to serve in the Temple.” Therefore, he took verse 6 at face value, that a Levite may indeed “minister in the Name of God,” through singing in the Holy Temple.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 28, p. 115ff.)

🌀 “BE SIMPLE-HEARTED” (v. 13)

The word תמים has appeared on numerous occasions in the Torah up to this point, and its translation is always “perfect.” For example we find in numerous instances that the Torah requires a sacrifice to be תמים,

which means perfect and without blemish (for example: *Vayikra* 1:3, 10; 3:1, 9; 4:3, 23; 5:15, 18, 28). Furthermore, we also find that the word תמים suggests a perfection of character: Noach is described as a תמים, one who was perfect in his dedication to God (*Bereishis* 6:9), and Avraham was told by God, “Come close to Me in worship and be perfect (תמים),” (*ibid.* 17:1).

Why, then, did *Rashi* veer from this interpretation in our verse (which is suggested by **Ramban**), and write instead that תמים means, “Walk with Him simple-heartedly”?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi could not accept that the meaning of תמים in verse 13 is “perfect,” as it is inconsistent with the context of the verse:

In verses 9-12 we read of various prohibitions of fortune-telling and divining. The Torah then concludes by saying that *instead* of doing “these abominations” (v. 12), we should be תמים with God. So being תמים is clearly a *specific* response to the desire to do *these particular sins* (“these abominations”). Thus, *Rashi* could not accept that תמים means “perfect”

* Passes his son or daughter (between two) fires—see *Vayikra* 18:21; acts on the basis of fortuitous times — *ibid.* 19:26; divines (on the basis of strange occurrences)—*ibid.*; practices sorcery—see *Shemos* 22:17; one who turns to (the sorcery) of Ov or Yidoni—see *Vayikra* 19:31.

מְעַנְנִיָּא וּמִן קַסְמִיָּא שְׁמַעִין וְאֵת לֹא בֶן יְהוֹב לְךָ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ: טו נְבִיא מְקַרְבֵּךְ מֵאַחֶיךָ כְּוֹתִי יָקִים לְךָ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִנְּהַ תִּקְבְּלוּן: טז כָּל דֵּי שְׂאֵלְתָא מִקֶּדֶם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֵרֵב בְּיוֹמָא דְקַהֲלָא לְמִימַר לֹא אוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁמַע יֵת קָל מִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי וְיֵת אֲשַׁתָּא רַבְתָּא דְדָא לֹא אֲחֵזִי עוֹד וְלֹא אֲמוֹת: יז וְאָמַר יי לִי אוֹסֵיבוּ דֵּי מְלִילֵי: יח נְבִיא אָקִים לְחוֹן מְגוֹ אֲחִיהוֹן כְּוֹתְךָ וְאֵתֵן פְּתָנְמִי נְבוֹאָתִי בְּפוּמָה וּיְמַלֵּל עִמְהוֹן יֵת כָּל דֵּי אֲפַקְדֵינָה: יט וְיַחֲזִי נְבִירָא דֵּי לֹא יִקְבֵּל לְפַתְנָמִי דֵּי יְמַלֵּל בְּשָׁמִי מִימְרֵי יִתְבַּע מְנַה: כ בְּרַם נְבִיא דֵּי יִרְשַׁע לְמַלְלָא פְּתָנְמָא בְּשָׁמִי

יִוְרֵשׁ אוֹתָם אֶל-מְעַנְנִים וְאֶל-קַסְמִים יִשְׁמָעוּ וְאֵתָהּ לֹא כֵן נָתַן לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: טו נְבִיא מִקְרִבְךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ כְּמִנֵּי יָקִים לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלָיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן: טז כָּל אֲשֶׁר-שְׂאֵלְתָּ מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֵרֵב בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל לֵאמֹר לֹא אוֹסֵף לִשְׁמַע אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶת-הָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת לֹא-אֶרְאֶה עוֹד וְלֹא אֲמוֹת: יז וְלֵאמֹר יְהוָה אֵלָי הִיטִיבוּ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְוּ: יח נְבִיא אָקִים לָהֶם מִקְרֵב אֲחִיהֶם כְּמוֹד וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרִי בְּפִיו וְדִבַּר אֵלֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּנּוּ: יט וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֶל-דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁמִי אֲנֹכִי אֶדְרֹשׁ מֵעַמּוֹ: כ אֵךְ הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִזְדַּ

דש"י

לשמוע אל מעוניים ואל קוסמים שרבי השרע שכינה על הנביאים ואורים ותומים: (טו) מקרבך מאחריך כמוני. כמו שאני מקרבך מאחריך יקום לך

עמו צתמימות ותלפכה לו ולא תחקור אחר העתידות, אלא כל מה שיבא עליך קבל צתמימות ואז! תביח עמו ולחלקו? (יד) לא כן נתן לך. הקצ"כ

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in this case, because “perfection” is a general term applying to all mitzvos, and not those specifically connected with fortune-telling.*

Therefore, *Rashi* argued that in this case **תָּמִים** means (not “perfection” but) “simple-heartedness.” This translation of the word is similar to the Torah’s description of Ya’akov as a **תָּם** (*Bereishis* 25:27), meaning a simple, honest person—“one who is not knowledgeable...whose mouth speaks what is in his heart, and who is not skillful in deceiving others” (*Rashi* *ibid.*).

Thus, the Torah is commanding us here: a.) Not to seek knowledge of the future (verses 9-12); but instead b.) To enjoy a complete sense of security in the faith and conviction that the future is safely in God’s hands (v. 13): “Walk with Him simple-heartedly and look forward to what He has in store. Do not probe the future, but rather accept whatever happens to you simple-heartedly.”

COULD FORTUNE-TELLING ACTUALLY WORK?

An interesting distinction that arises from the different approaches of *Rashi* and *Ramban* is the reason why the Torah forbade fortune-telling:

Ramban argues that the Torah forbade fortune-telling because only God knows the future, so the words of the fortune-tellers cannot be true. Thus, we should be perfect in our faith in God, and not rely on fortune-tellers.

However, *Rashi* argued that the Torah does not allow fortune-telling because a Jew should be “simple-hearted” and not even attempt to forecast future events. Thus, according to *Rashi*, it could be that some of the methods of fortune-telling mentioned here in the Torah would be effective. The reason why we may not utilize them is because God finds this kind of activity “abominable” (v. 9, 12).

IS PROPHECY NOT A FORM OF “FORTUNE-TELLING”?

An apparent problem with *Rashi*’s approach is that it appears to apply equally to prophecy:

According to *Ramban*, who saw fortune-telling as being false and unreliable, it makes sense why God gave us prophecy as a reliable alternative.

Sparks of Chasidus

TORAH & PROPHECY

Torah is superior to *prophecy* in that:

- *Torah* teaches the ultimate purpose of existence. *Prophecy* is a “means to an end,” to encourage people to observe the *Torah*.
- The *Torah* is constantly evolving and expanding through the innovative *Torah* ideas of the Jewish people. However, “a prophet may not make any innovations of his own,” in the prophecy that he receives (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 9:1).

However, *prophecy* is superior to *Torah* in that:

- The *Torah* is inherently an incomprehensible Godly wisdom (although it has been expressed in human terms). The prophet speaks to the people in a language to which they directly relate, so its immediate impact is greater.
- What a *Torah* scholar perceives in the spiritual realms through the *Torah* will not necessarily materialize in the physical world. However, what a prophet predicts will definitely come true, in the literal sense.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 182ff.; vol. 34, pp. 116ff.; “Short Ma’amarim” of the Alter Rebbe, p. 355)

* It appears that *Ramban* was also sensitive to this problem, and thus he argued that the Torah is demanding here, not a general perfection in all areas, but a specific perfection—one’s faith that the future is in God’s hands alone. However, such an interpretation was unsatisfactory to *Rashi*, since at the literal level “perfection” (when used in an unqualified sense, as in our verse) is general in scope, and the Torah would thus appear to be saying, “Do not do these 10 prohibitions, but rather, be perfect and keep all the 613 mitzvos”!

1 בדפוס א' וב' ובכת"י חסר טיוס זה, אבל כ"ה בשאר הדפוסים שראיתי. וראה רא"ם ובאר מים חיים (על פרש"י) כאן (לקו"ש חז"ל, ע' 64, הערה 4). 2 ספרי

🔮 TRUE & FALSE PROPHECY 🔮

18:14
FIFTH
READING

While* these nations, which you are about to take possession of, listen to diviners of fortuitous times and stick diviners, in your case however, God your God has not given you things like these, (but rather, genuine prophets and the Urim v'Tumim).

- ¹⁵ God, your God, will establish a prophet like me, from among you, from your brothers, and you must listen to him.

¹⁶ This is what you asked from God, your God, at Choraiv, on the Day of Assembly, saying, “I don’t want to hear the voice of God, my God any more, or see this great fire, so that I will not die!”

¹⁷ God said to me, “They have spoken well! ¹⁸ I will establish for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words into his mouth, and he will tell them everything that I command him.

¹⁹ And then, if anybody does not listen to My words that he speaks in My name, I will punish him (with death from heaven).”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does a person become a prophet? (v. 15)

TALMUD: God only allows His presence to rest on a person who is strong, wealthy, wise and humble. All of these requirements are derived from Moshe” (*Nedarim* 38a).

RAMBAM: It is one of the principles of faith to know that God communicates to man via prophecy. In order to receive prophecy a person must be extremely wise, a master of his emotions, and unperturbed by his evil inclination in worldly matters. He must constantly control his evil inclination with his mind, and he must have an extremely broad and fine mind (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah*, 7:1).

KESEF MISHNEH: Why did Rambam omit the requirements of strength, wealth and humility mentioned by the *Talmud*?

Rambam understood this passage of *Talmud* to be speaking about prophecy on a *permanent* basis, which requires these three additional criteria. However, here in the *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam was describing the qualities required for prophecy on a *temporary* basis, and for this, strength, wealth and humility are not required.

TUREI EVEN: Rambam was forced to reject the requirements of strength and wealth for a prophet, on the basis that we find that many of the prophets in history were neither wealthy nor strong.

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But *Rashi* deemed the *very* notion of looking into the future as undesirable, because a person should be “simple-hearted” and accept whatever God has in store for him. This seems to contradict the fact that God does indeed send prophets to warn the Jewish people of future events. Similarly, how does *Rashi* reconcile the practice of seeking a solution from the High Priest’s breastplate** with the requirement to “accept whatever happens to you simple-heartedly”?

Rashi answers this question by stressing: “Do not *probe* (תחקור) the future,” i.e. the Torah prohibits a person from making *intensive* efforts to investigate the future thoroughly (cf. 13:15 above, where this term is used to describe the thorough cross-examination given to witnesses in court). However, the Torah does permit a person to consult a prophet (or the High Priest’s breastplate), when there is a good reason to do so, but not as a means to probe extensively into one’s destiny. In this way, a person can use some knowledge of the future to assist his service of God, but still maintain a spirit of “simple-heartedness,” innocence and trust in God’s benevolent Providence.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 64ff.)

🔮 A PROPHET’S QUALIFICATIONS (v. 15)

Kesef Mishneh asks why **Rambam** omitted the requirement, mentioned in the **Talmud**, that a prophet must be “strong, wealthy...and humble.”

Kesef Mishneh answers that **Rambam** is speaking of a person who becomes a prophet temporarily, whereas the *Talmud* is listing the criteria required to become a prophet on a permanent basis.

However, this answer is difficult to understand, since:

a.) Why should the *spiritual* qualities of wisdom and self-control be required for a *lower* level of (temporary) prophecy; and yet to achieve a *higher* level of (permanent) prophecy, the more *physical* qualities of wealth and strength are needed?

b.) How could we accept the notion that **Rambam** limits himself to a discussion of temporary prophecy, *omitting* the phenomenon of permanent prophecy? Especially, when we consider that most instances of prophecy described in the Torah are of the permanent kind.

Turei Even suggests that **Rambam** was forced to reject some of the *Talmud*’s criteria, since we find that many of the prophets in history were neither wealthy nor strong.

* See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 68.

** Raised letters upon the gems of the High Priest’s breastplate which answered questions (See *Rashi* to *Shemos* 28:30; *Rambam*, *Laws of Temple Apparatus* 10:11-12).

ית די לא פקדנתה למללא ודי ימלל בשום משעות עממיא ויתקטיל נביא ההוא: כא וארי תימר בלבד איכדין נדע ית פתנמא די לא מללה יי: כב די ימלל נביא בשמא די ולא יהי פתנמא ולא יתקים הוא פתנמא די לא מללה יי ברשע מללה נביא לא תדחל מנה: א ארי ישעי יי אלקה ית עממיא די יי אלקה יתב לך ית ארעהון ותירתנון ותישב בקרויהון ובכתייהון: ב תלת קרוין תפרש לך בגו ארעה די יי אלקה יתב לך למירתה: ג תתקן לך ארתא ותתלת ית תחום ארעה די יחסננה יי אלקה ויהי למעירוק לתמן כל קטולא: ד ודין פתנם קטולא דיערוק לתמן ויתקים די יקטול ית חברה בלא מנהעה והוא לא סני לה מאתמלי ומדקמוהי: ה ודי יעול עם חברה בחורשא למקין אעין ותתמריג

לדבר דבר בשמי את אשר לא צויתיו לדבר ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים ומת הנביא ההוא: כא וכי תאמר בלבבך איכה נדע את הדבר אשר לא דברו יהוה: כב אשר ידבר הנביא בשם יהוה ולא יהיה הדבר ולא יבא הוא הדבר אשר לא דברו יהוה בזדון דברו הנביא לא תגור ממנו: ס יט א פי יכרית יהוה אלהיך את הגוים אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך את ארצם וירשתם וישבת בעריהם ובבתייהם: ב שלוש ערים תבדיל לך בתוך ארצה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך לרשתה: ג תכין לך תדרוך ושלשת את גבול ארצה אשר ינחילך יהוה אלהיך והיה לנום שמה פל רצה: ד וזה דבר הרצה אשר לנום שמה וחי אשר יכה את רעהו בבלי דעת והוא לא שנא לו מתמל שלשם: ה ואשר יבא את רעהו

כש"י

ויאמר דבר זה עתיד לבוא עליכם, ותראו שלא יבא, הוא הדבר אשר לא דברו ה' והרוג אותו. ואם תאמר זו צמתנא על העתידות, הרי שצא ואמר עשו כך וכך ומפי הקב"ה אני אומר, כבר נלטו שאם צא להדיחך מאחת מכל המצות לא תשמע לו⁶, אלא אם כן מומחה הוא לך שהוא לדיק גמור, כגון אליהו צהר הכרמל שהקריב צמח צבעת איסור הצמות כדי לגדור את ישראל. הכל לפי צורך השעה וסיוג הפרזה, לכן נאמר⁷ אליו תשמעו: לא תגור ממנו. לא תמנע עמך מללמד עליו חובה⁵ ולא תירא ליענש עליו: (ג) תכין לך הדרך. מקלט מקלט היב כחוב על פרשת דרכים⁸: ושלשת את גבול ארצך. שיכא מתחלת הגבול עד העיר הראשונה של עיר מקלט,

תחתי, וכן מנביא לנביא: (כ) אשר לא צויתיו לדבר. אבל צויתי לחזירי: ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים. אפילו כיון את הכלכה, לאסור את האסור ולהחיר את המותר: ומת. צחוק. שלשה מיתתן צידי אדם, המתנבא מה שלא שמע, ומה שלא נאמר לו ונאמר לחזירו, והמתנבא צמם עבודת אלילים. אבל הכובש את נבואתו והעובר על דברי נביא והעובר על דברי עלמו מיתתן צידי שמים, שנאמר² אנכי אדרוש מעמו¹: (כא) וכי תאמר בלבבך. עתידים אתם לומר, כשיבא חנוכה בן עזר ומתנבא הנה כלי בית ה' מושבים מצבלה עתה מהרה³, וירמיכו עומד ולווח על העומדים ועל היס ועל יתר הכלים שלא גלו עם יכניה, צבלה יוצאו⁴ עם גלות דקיהו⁵: (כב) אשר ידבר הנביא.

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However, this still does not explain why *Rambam* omitted the requirement of humility.

THE EXPLANATION

At first glance, we might have presumed that *Rambam's* intention here when codifying this law, was to list *all* of the qualities that a prophet requires.

But, at the very outset, *Rambam* makes clear that this was not his intention. He writes, "It is one of the principles of faith to know that God communicates to man via prophecy..." i.e. *Rambam* is codifying here *only* those details which are required knowledge for *every Jew*, as part of the principles of faith. He is not making a comprehensive list of all the criteria required for a budding prophet, but rather, the facts about prophecy that every person needs to know.

Rambam understood that there are two elements to the prophetic process:

a.) Factors which *establish* the phenomenon of prophecy. In order to receive prophecy, a person must have an extremely refined and pure intellect. Then God's prophecy is revealed and encloded within the prophet's mind, thereby uniting him with God.

b.) There must be no *disqualifying factors*. If a person is weak, poor or lacking in humility, despite the fact that he possesses an appropriate mind for prophecy, he is disqualified on other grounds.

When *Rambam* came to codify the facts which *every person* must know in order to understand the "principle of faith" known as prophecy, he only listed the factors which *establish* the phenomenon of prophecy, as these details are crucial to an understanding of the concept. The disqualifying factors, which render a person unfit to be a prophet, are irrelevant to *Rambam's* discussion here.

So, in the final analysis, it is not humility that makes a person *into* a prophet. A trace of arrogance would disqualify an otherwise suitable

1 טנהדרין 99. 2 פסוק יט 3 ירמיה כז, טז 4 שם יט-כב 5 פסוקי 6 דברים יג, ד 7 לעיל פסוק טו 8 מכות י:

- ²⁰ But if a prophet intentionally utters a word in My Name, which I did not command him to say, or he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must be (put to) death.
- ²¹ If you will say to yourself, “How will we know if a declaration was not said by God?” (The answer is):
- ²² If the prophet (claims to) speak in the name of God, and the thing does not occur and (you see that it will) never come about, then it is a declaration which God did not say. The prophet has spoken it (to deceive you) intentionally. Do not be afraid of him.

CITIES OF REFUGE

19 When God, your God, cuts off the nations, whose land God, your God, is giving you, and you inherit them, and settle in their cities and in their houses:

- ² You should separate three cities for yourself within your land, which God, your God, is giving you as a possession.
 - ³ Prepare (signs to indicate) for yourself the route (to these cities), and (position the) three (cities so that they) are equally spaced across the expanse of your land, which God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance. They will be (available) for every (accidental) murderer to flee there.
- ⁴ These are the terms upon which the murderer may flee there in order to live:
- Whoever gives a (fatal) blow to his fellow unintentionally, provided he did not hate him yesterday or the day before; ⁵ or if a man goes with his fellow into the forest to chop wood, and his hand

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prophet, since arrogance acts as a barrier between man and God. Similarly, a lack of health or wealth are mere disqualifying factors, as a prophet must represent the highest level of humanity, even in the physical

sense.* But the single, primary quality that makes prophecy possible is purity of mind alone.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 23, p. 82ff.)

Sparks of Chasidus

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CITIES OF REFUGE (19:1-3)

Any sin shares qualities with murder itself, since the abuse of energy for the purposes of evil is like the spilling of blood (*Likutei Torah, Bamidbar* 13c). However, a sin is only like accidental murder, since the true intention of every Jew is, as Rambam testifies, “To fulfill all the commandments and to avoid any sins” (*Laws of Divorce*, ch. 2). Furthermore, the act of sin is considered to have been done “unintentionally,” (v. 4) for “a person does not commit a sin unless he is possessed by a spirit of folly” (*Sotah* 3a).

The atonement for this is to study Torah, which is analogous to the escape to a city of refuge—because, “the words of Torah protect” (*Makos* 10a). In other words, just as a city of refuge is a haven to protect accidental murderers from “avengers of the blood,” (relatives of the deceased who seek revenge), so too, Torah is a refuge from one’s personal “avenger of the blood,” the evil inclination (*Bava Basra* 16a).

Furthermore, Torah study is effective in achieving atonement for the “spilled blood,” since one’s energies become re-devoted to holiness and Torah, which is described as the “Torah of life.”

However, in the Messianic Era, the Cities of Refuge will fulfill a different purpose altogether:

Despite the perfect global refinement which will occur in the future, the first stage of the Messianic Era will not witness a total elimination of evil, since the possibility of evil occurring will still remain. (Only afterwards, in the period of resurrection, will God completely eliminate the existence of evil from the world, when “I will cause the spirit of impurity to depart the earth,” *Zechariah* 13:2).

Consequently, Cities of Refuge will be required as a mechanism to eliminate even the possibility of sin, which will exist as a result of the residual evil within the world (similar to the state of the world before Adam’s sin, when there was no actual evil—just the potential for sin).

This prevention of the possibility of evil will be achieved by the introduction of a new type of city of refuge, the three new cities (v. 9)—which allude to a new dimension of mystical knowledge which will provide protection against even the possibility of evil.

(Based on *Sicha* of the 2nd Day of *Shavuot* 5751)

* In addition, strength and wealth are qualities that bring about people’s respect, and will thus cause the prophet’s words to be held in esteem (*Drashos Haran*).

יְדֵה בְּפְרוּזָא לְמִקְוֵי אֵעִין וַיִּשְׁתַּלַּף פְּרוּזָא מִן אֵעִא וַיִּשְׁכַּח יַת חֲבֵרָה וַיְמוּת הוּא יַעֲרוֹק לְחֵדָא מִן קְרוּנָא הָאֵלִין וַיִּתְקַיֵּם: ו דְלָמָּא יַרְדּוּף גָּאֵל דְמָא בְּתַר קְטוּלָא אַרְי יַחַם לְבַה וַיִּדְבְּקֵנָה אַרְי תְּסַנֵּי אַרְחָא וַיִּקְמַלְנָה נֶפֶשׁ וְלֵה לִית חוֹבַת דִּין דְקָטוּל אַרְי לֹא סְנֵי הוּא לֵה מֵאֲתַמְלֵי וּמְדַקְמוּהִי: ז עַל בֵּן אֲנָא מְפַקְדָּךְ לְמִימְר תְּלַת קְרוּיַן תְּפַרְשׁ לָךְ: ח וְאִם יִפְתִּי יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ יַת תְּחוּמֵךְ כְּמָא דִּי קָיִים לְאַבְהֵתְךָ וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ יַת כָּל אֲרַעָא דִּי מְלִיל לְמַתָּן לְאַבְהֵתְךָ: ט אַרְי תִּטֵּר יַת כָּל תְּפַקְדָּתָא דְחָדָא לְמַעֲבָדָה דִּי אֲנָא מְפַקְדָּךְ יוֹמָא דִּין לְמַרְחָם יַת יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ וְלִמְחָךְ בְּאַרְחֵן דְתַקְנָן קְדָמוּהִי כָּל יוֹמֵיָא וְתוֹסַף לָךְ עוֹד תְּלַת קְרוּיַן עַל תְּלַת אֵלִיַּין: י וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּפִּיד דָּם זָכִי בְּגוֹ אֲרַעָךְ דִּי יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ יִהְיֶה לָךְ אַחֲסָנָא וַיְהִי עֲלֵךְ חוֹבַת דִּין דְקָטוּל: יא וְאַרְי יְהִי גִבֵּר סְנֵי לְחֲבֵרָה וַיִּכְמֵן לֵה וַיְקוּם עֲלוּהִי וַיִּמְחַנֵּה נֶפֶשׁ וַיְמוּת וַיַּעֲרוֹק לְחֵדָא מִן קְרוּנָא הָאֵלִין: יב וַיִּשְׁלַחוּן סְבִי קְרַתָּה וַיִּדְבְּרוּן יַתְּהָ מִתְּמָן וַיִּתְּנוּן יַתְּהָ בְּיַד גָּאֵל דְמָא וַיְמוּת: יג לֹא תַחֹם

בְּיַעַר לְחֵטֵב עֵצִים וְנִדְחָה יָדוֹ בְּגִרְוֹן לְכָרֶת הָעֵץ וְנִשְׁלַח הַבְּרוּז לְמִן הָעֵץ וּמִצָּא אֶת־רַעְיוֹ וּמָת הוּא יָנוּם אֶל־אֶתֶת הָעָרִים־הָאֵלֶּה וְחָי: ו פֶּן־יִרְדֹּף גָּאֵל הַדָּם אַחֲרַי הַרְצִיחַ כִּי יַחֵם לְבָבוֹ וְהַשִּׁיגוּ כִּי־יִרְבֶּה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְהִכְהוּ נֶפֶשׁ וְלוֹ אִין מִשְׁפָּט־מָוֶת כִּי לֹא שִׁנָּא הוּא לֹא מִתְמוֹל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם: ז עַל־בֵּן אֲנָכִי מִצְוָה לֵאמֹר שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים תִּבְהִיל לָךְ: ח וְאִם־יִרְחִיב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־גְּבֻלְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתְּיךָ וְנָתַן לָךְ אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לְתַת לְאַבְתְּיךָ: ט כִּי־תִשְׁמַר אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנָכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְלָלַכְת בְּדַרְכָיו כָּל־הַיָּמִים וַיִּסְפַּת לָךְ עוֹד שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים עַל הַשְּׁלֹשׁ הָאֵלֶּה: י וְלֹא יִשְׁפֹךְ דָּם נָקִי בְּקֶרֶב אֲרַעְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וְתִיּה עֲלֶיךָ דָּמִים: פ יי וְכִי־יְהִיֶּה אִישׁ שִׁנָּא לְרַעְיוֹ וְאַרְב לֹא וְקָם עָלָיו וְהִכְהוּ נֶפֶשׁ וּמָת וְנָם אֶל־אֶתֶת הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: יב וְשִׁלְחוּ זְקֵנֵי עִירֹו וְלָקְחוּ אֹתוֹ מִשָּׁם וְנָתְנוּ אֹתוֹ בְּיַד גָּאֵל הַדָּם וּמָת: יג לֹא־תַחֹם עֵינֶיךָ עָלָיו

*ס"א דם

כ"ט

נשבע לחת לך ארץ קיני וקניזי וקדמוני! (ט) ויספת לך עוד שלש. הרי חשע. שלש שבעבר הירדן ושלש שבארץ כנען ושלש לעתיד לבא: (יא) ובי יהיה איש שונא לרעהו. על ידי שנאחו הוא צא לידי וארצ לו. מאכן אמרו עבר אדם על מצור קלה סופו לעבור על מצור חמורה. לפי שבער על לא חשנא, סופו לצא לידי שפכות דמים. לכך נאמר כי יהיה איש שונא לרעהו וגוי, שהיה לו לכתוב וכי יקום איש וארצ לרעהו והכחו נפש: (יג) לא תחוס עיניך. שלא תאמר הראשון כבר נהרג, למה לנו הורגים את זה

כשיעור מהלך שיש ממנה עד השניה, וכן משניה, לשלישית. וכן מן השלישית, עד הגבול השני של ארץ ישראל: (כ) ונדחה ידו. כשצא להפיל הגרזן על העץ, ותרגומו ותחמריג ידיה, לשון ונשמטה ידו להפיל מכת הגרזן על העץ. כי שמעו הצקק? תרגם ונתן ארי מרגובי תוריא: ונשל הברזל מן העץ. יש מרבותיו אומרים נשמט הצרזל מקחו, ויש מהם אומרים שישל הצרזל לחתיכה מן העץ המתצקט, והיא נתזת והרגה: (ו) פן ירדוף גואל הדם. לכך אני אומר להכין לך דרך, וערי מקלט רבים: (ח) ואם ירחיב. כאשר

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **Does the Torah suggest that the victim of an accidental murder should have his blood avenged? (v. 6)**
SIFRI: It is a *mitzvah* for the avenger of the blood to chase and kill the accidental murderer.
RAMBAM: If he [the accidental murderer] intentionally leaves the city of refuge he is allowing his own death, for the avenger of the blood is permitted to kill him” (*Laws of a Murderer and the Protection of Life* 5:10).

● **When will the three further cities be added? (v. 8-10)**
RAMBAM: In the days of King Mashiach, three additional [Cities of Refuge] will be added (*ibid.* 8:10).
MINCHAS CHINUCH: This is a scriptural decree. Logically there will not be a need for Cities of Refuge in the future, as then there will be only peace, truth and good (*mitzvah* 520).
ALSICH: The cities might be used to provide refuge for acts committed before the Redemption.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕊️ **CITIES OF REFUGE IN THE FUTURE (v. 8-10)**
 The Torah promises: “When God, your God, will expand your borders...and He gives you the entire land...You should add for yourself three more cities, in addition to these three, so that innocent blood will not be shed within your land which God, your God, is giving you for an inheritance, and you will be responsible for his blood” (v. 8-10).

But why should there be a need for Cities of Refuge in the Messianic Era at all? Surely, in that time, there will not be any murder, neither by Jew nor gentile, as the verse promises, “One nation will not lift a sword against another” (Isaiah 2:4)? True, the main function of these cities is to act as a refuge for accidental murderers, but even accidental murder will not occur in the future, as we are promised that evil will be eliminated.

swings with the ax to cut down the tree, and the iron flies off the handle, and it happens (to hit) his fellow, and he dies—he should flee to one of these cities in order to live.

- ⁶ (I instructed you to signpost these cities clearly and place them at equal distances) in case an avenger of the blood pursues the killer, while his heart is hot, and he (manages) to catch up with him, because of the long road, and he strikes him to death. (For) being that (the murderer) had not hated (the victim) yesterday or the day before, he did not deserve (to be punished) with death. ⁷ Therefore, I am commanding you, saying, “You should separate three cities for yourself.”

⁸ When God, your God, will expand your borders, as He swore to your forefathers, and He gives you the entire land which He told your forefathers He would give, ⁹ as a result of your safeguarding and observing all these commandments which I am commanding you today—to love God, your God, and to walk in His ways for all time:

- You should add for yourself three more cities, in addition to these three, ¹⁰ so that innocent blood will not be shed within your land which God, your God, is giving you for an inheritance, and you will be responsible for his blood.

¹¹ However, if a man hates his fellow, lies in wait for him, rises up against him, and issues him a fatal blow and he dies, and then (the murderer) flees to one of these cities:

- ¹² The elders of his city should send (representatives) and take him from there, and allow him to die at the hands of the avenger of the blood.
- ¹³ Do not have pity on him. You should eliminate from Israel (one who sheds) innocent blood, and you will benefit from it.

TORAS MENACHEM

Minchas Chinuch argues that this is a suprarational decree of scripture, but this explanation is difficult to accept since a “scriptural decree” would be written *without any rationale*. In our case, however, the Torah *does* give the reason for the three new cities: “so that innocent blood will not be shed within your land which God, your God, is giving you for an inheritance” (v. 10).

We could argue, as **Alshich** suggests, that the cities will function as a refuge for accidental murders that took place *prior to the redemption*, in the time of exile. And since these murderers might well be spread over an extended geographical area when the redemption begins, there will be a need for a large number of Cities of Refuge.

However, this only explains how there could be an accidental murderer. The problem still remains: how could there be a *vengeful relative*? Once evil desires cease to exist, the desire for revenge should also disappear, so there appears to be no purpose in providing Cities of Refuge in the future.

According to **Sifri**, this problem does not arise, since *Sifri* maintains that it is a *command* of the Torah to avenge the blood of the deceased. The relative’s motivation is then not revenge, but rather the desire to perform a *mitzvah*, which will certainly exist in the future.

Rambam, however, did not accept this argument, because he maintained that the relative’s vengeance is only an *option*, not an *obligation* (see *Classic Questions*). Therefore, in an era when there will be no jealousy and “the whole world will be occupied with the knowledge of God,” why should one man seek vengeance from another when there is no *mitzvah* to do so, even if it is permitted?

We might argue that the cities will exist in the future for a spiritual purpose, merely as an atonement, but that there will be no need for refuge

from avengers of the blood. However, this cannot be the case, since the Torah clearly states that the cities will exist to avoid *actual* spilling of blood (v. 10).

Furthermore, if the cities were only sites of atonement and did not provide actual havens of escape, then there would be no need for *additional* cities to make the escape route shorter.

THE EXPLANATION

When the Torah presents the possibility of avenging the blood of the deceased, it is not providing an outlet for man’s vicious nature. If the accidental murderer did not deserve the death penalty, the Torah would not permit his execution. Rather, the concept of “avenging the blood” provides a method by which the *Torah itself* exacts the death penalty.

In other words, the death penalty can be administered in one of three ways: a.) Capital punishment which is carried out by the court, with witnesses and a prior warning of the defendant; or b.) In certain cases, the Torah prescribes a punishment of “death at the hands of Heaven”; or c.) In our case, the death penalty of an accidental murderer is prescribed not by a court, or by Heaven, but by the relatives—similar to the case of Pinchas, who was not directly commanded to kill Zimri, but nevertheless, fulfilled God’s will by doing so (see *Rashi, Bamidbar 25:7*).

Therefore, even according to **Rambam**, who rules that avenging the blood is optional, the “vengeance” has a logic within the Torah system (of atonement), and is not mere personal vengeance. The relative’s act is therefore not incompatible with the Messianic Era, and creates the need for Cities of Refuge to protect those who killed accidentally before Mashiach arrived.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 107ff.)

עֵינֶךָ עֲלוּהִי וּתְפִלֵי אֲשֶׁר־יָדָם זָכִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּיטֵב לָךְ: יד לֹא תִשְׁנֶי תְּחֻמָּא דְחֻבְרָךְ דִּי תְּחִימוֹ קְדָמָי בְּאַחַסְנִתְךָ דִּי תַחֲסֵן בְּאַרְעָא דִּי יי אֶלְהֵךָ יִהְיֶה לָךְ לְמִיתְּתָה: טו לֹא יָקוּם סְהִיד חַד בְּגִבְרָה לְכָל עֵוִן וּלְכָל חֻבִּין בְּכָל חֲטָא דִּי יִחֲסִי עַל מִימְרֵ תְרִין סְהִדִין אוֹ עַל מִימְרֵ תְלָתָא סְהִדִין יִתְקִינֵם פְּתִנְמָא: טז אֲרִי יָקוּם סְהִיד שְׂקֵר בְּגִבְרָה לְאַסְהֵדָא בֵּיה סְמִיא: יז וַיִּקְוֹמוּן תְּרִין גּוֹבְרִין דִּי לְהוֹן דִּינָא קְדָם יי קְדָם בְּהִנְיָא וּדְיָנָא דִּי יְהוֹן בְּיוֹמָא הָאָנּוּן: יח וַיִּתְּבַעֲוֹן דְּיָנָא יָאוֹת וְהָא סְהִיד שְׂקֵר סְהֵדָא שְׂקֵרָא אֶסְהֵד בְּאַחוּהִי: יט וַתַּעֲבְדוּן לָהּ בְּמָא דִּי חֲשִׁיב לְמַעֲבַד לְאַחוּהִי וּתְפִלֵי עֵבֵד דְּבִישׁ מִבְּיַד: כ וַדִּישְׁתְּאָרוּן יִשְׁמַעוּן וַדְּחַלּוּן וְלֹא יוֹסְפוּן לְמַעֲבַד עוֹד בְּפִתְנָמָא בִּישְׁאָ דְּהִדִין

וּבַעֲרַת דָּם-הַנֶּקִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְטוֹב לָךְ: ס [שש"י] יד לֹא תִסְיֵג גְּבוּל רַעְךָ אֲשֶׁר גְּבָלוּ רְאשֵׁימֵ בְּנֵחֻלְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּנְחַל בְּאַרְצֵי אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ס טו לֹא-יָקוּם יַעַד אֶחָד בְּאִישׁ לְכָל-עוֹן וּלְכָל-חַטָּאת בְּכָל-חַטָּא אֲשֶׁר יִחַטָּא עַל-פִּי אֶשְׁנֵי עֵדִים אוֹ עַל-פִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה-עֵדִים יָקוּם דְּבָר: טז כִּי-יָקוּם עַד-חָמֵס בְּאִישׁ לְעֵנֹת בּוֹ סָרְהָ: יז וְעַמְדוֹ שְׁנֵי-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-לָהֶם הָרִיב לְפָנָי יִהְיֶה לְפָנָי הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַשֹּׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ בַיָּמִים הָהֵם: יח וְדַרְשׁוּ הַשֹּׁפְטִים הַיָּטִב וְהֵנָּה עַד-שְׂקֵר הָעֵד שְׂקֵר עָנָה בְּאֲחִיו: יט וְעִשִׂיתֶם לוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר זָמַם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאָחִיו וּבַעֲרַת הָרַע מִקְרַבְךָ: כ וְהַנְּשָׂאִים יִשְׁמַעוּ וִירָאוּ וְלֹא-יִסְפוּ

כ"ש"י

מעומד⁶: אשר להם הריב. אלו בעלי הדין¹: לפני ה'. יכי, דומה להם כאלו עומדין לפני המקום, שנאמר בקרב אלהים ישפוט⁷: אשר יהיו בימים ההם. יפתח דבורו כשמואל דבורו, לריך אתה לנכוג זו כדול⁸: (יח) והנה עד שקר. כל מקום שנאמר עד, בשנים הכתוב מדבר⁴: ודרשו השופטים היטב. על פי המזימין אותם, שזדקיס וחוקרים את הכזאים לכזימם דרישה וזכירה¹: (יט) כאשר זמם. ולא כאשר עשה. מכאן אמרו, הרגו, אין נכרגין²: לעשות לאחיו. מה תלמוד לומר לאחיו, למד על זוממי בת כהן נשואה שאינן צריפה, אלא כמיתת בעול שהוא צחנק, שנאמר היא צאש תשרף¹⁰ היא ולא צועלה. לכך נאמר כאן לאחיו, כאשר זמם לעשות לאחיו, ולא כאשר זמם לעשות לאחותו. אצל ככל שאר מיתות השוכה הכתוב אשה לאיש, וזוממי אשה נכרגין כזוממי איש. כגון שבעידוכ שהרגה את הנפש, שחללה את השבת, נכרגין במיתתה. שלא מיעט כאן אחותו אלא במקום שיש לקיים בהן הזמה במיתת בעול¹: (כ) ישמעו ויראו. מכאן שזריכין הכרזה, איש פלוני ופלוני נכרגין על שהזמו צבית

ונמלאו שני ישראלים הרוגים¹: (יד) לא תסיג גבול. לשון נסוגו אחר², שמחזיר סימן חלוקת הקרקע לאחור לתוך שדה חצירו למען הרחיב את שלו. והלא כבר נאמר לא תגזול³, מה תלמוד לומר לא תסיג, למד על העוקר תחום חצירו שעובר בשני לאוין. יכול אף צחולה לארץ, תלמוד לומר צחולתך אשר תנחל וגוי, צאריך ישראל עובר בשני לאוין, צחולה לארץ אינו עובר אלא משום לא תגזול¹: (טו) עד אחד. זה צנה אז כל עד שצחורה שנים, אלא אם כן פרט לך צו אחד⁴: לכל עון ולכל חטאת. לכוית חצירו נענש על עדותו, לא עונש גוף ולא עונש ממון, אצל קס הוא לשבעה. אמר לחצירו תן לי מנה שהלוייתך אמר לו אין לך צדי כלום ועד אחד מעידו שיש לו, חייב להשבע לו¹: על פי שני עדים. ולא שיכתבו עדותם צחגרת וישלחו לבית דין, ולא שיעמוד חורגמן צין העדים וצין דייניס: (טז) לענות בו סרה. דבר שאינו, שהוכר העד הזה מכל העדות הזאת, כילד, שאמרו להם והלא עמנו הייתם אותו היום במקום פלוני⁵: (יז) ועמדו שני האנשים. צעדים הכתוב מדבר, ולמד שאין עדות צנשים, ולמד שזריכין להעיד עדותן

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Is the testimony of a single witness ever accepted? (v. 15)

RAMBAM: A judgment is never issued based on the testimony of a single witness, neither in cases of financial law nor in cases of capital punishment, as the verse states: "A single witness cannot incriminate another person for any sin or for any type of fraud" (v. 15). Oral tradition teaches that [a single witness] is sufficient to obligate another to take an oath. The Torah accepts the testimony of one witness in two instances: In the case of a *sotah*, so she does not drink the bitter waters (see *Bamidbar* ch. 5); and in the case of a calf whose neck is broken (below ch. 21), to prevent its neck from being broken (*Laws of Witnesses* 5:1-2).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 THE SINGLE WITNESS (V. 15)

The reason why the Torah considers the testimony of a single witness to be invalid could be understood in one of two ways:

- a.) Because the testimony of two witnesses is in a different class altogether from that of one witness—it is of a completely different *quality*; or
- b.) One witness provides testimony of the same quality as two witnesses, but there is simply not enough of it; i.e. a lack of *quantity*.

These two approaches would also differ in their understanding why a single witness is sufficient to obligate a person to take an oath, but not to make him pay money (see **Rambam**). Take, for example, the case where

a single witness testifies that X owes Y money, but X denies the claim. Since there is only one witness, the law is that X does not have to pay Y, but he does have to swear an oath that he does not owe Y any money.

Now, if we will accept that a single witness cannot incriminate a person due to a *qualitative* deficiency in his testimony, then it turns out that the witness did not manage to establish that X owes any money to Y, since a single witness's testimony is not of sufficient quality to incur *any* financial obligation upon another person. All the witness has managed to achieve is the lesser obligation of an oath for X, as for this, the lesser quality of a single witness's testimony is sufficient.

🌀 TERRITORIAL FRAUD & LAWS RELATING TO WITNESSES 🌀

SIXTH
READING

- ¹⁴ You should not move back your neighbor's boundary (marker) that the initial (settlers) will fix as borders in your inherited (land), which you will inherit in the land that God, your God, is giving you as a possession.
 - ¹⁵ A single witness cannot incriminate another person for any sin (for which a person is liable for lashes or death) or for any type of fraud. An allegation must be confirmed by the verbal testimony of two witnesses, or three witnesses.
- ¹⁶ If a false witness attempts to incriminate a person (who has given testimony in court), by claiming that he was not present (to witness the act that he testified he had seen):
- ¹⁷ The two men should stand before God, before the priests and the judges who will exist in those days, together with (the litigants) who have the (original) dispute.
 - ¹⁸ The judges should cross-examine him thoroughly, and if the witness is (proven to be) a false witness who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹ then you should do to him as he plotted to do to his brother. You will thus eliminate this evil from among you.
 - ²⁰ (The court should announce the verdict publicly so that) those who remain will hear (what happened) and be afraid, and they will never commit any such evil thing in your midst again.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does the Torah stress, "You should do to him as he plotted to do to his brother"? (v. 19)

RASHI: [Do to him] as he plotted, but not as he did. From here our Sages derived that if they [the false witnesses] already caused the death of the defendant [by their false testimony, and are only exposed afterwards], they are not put to death.

RAMBAN: If, by Divine providence, the witnesses were found to be false before the defendant was executed, it proves that the defendant was genuinely innocent, so the witnesses deserve death for trying to kill an innocent person.

If however, by Divine Providence, the witnesses were only found to be false after the defendant's execution, then in truth the defendant must have been guilty. For God would certainly not have allowed the *Sanhedrin* to issue the death penalty unnecessarily. The false witnesses are therefore not punished.

● How will "those that remain hear and be afraid"? (v. 20)

RASHI: From here we derive the law that a public announcement is required: "Mr. X and Mr. Y are executed for having been discovered by the court to be false witnesses."

TORAS MENACHEM

On the other hand, if we were to understand that the single witness is only disqualified on the basis of a *quantitative* deficiency (that there is not enough evidence), then it turns out that a single witness can incriminate another person, but not to a sufficient degree that the Torah deems the matter to have been fully resolved. Thus, the single witness has, to a certain extent, made X liable to pay Y the money, and X is required to swear an oath to exempt himself from payment.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemos* 5747)

🌀 THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF FALSE WITNESSES (v. 20)

The crime of giving false testimony is deemed to be so serious by the Torah that not only are the false witnesses punished, but their crime has to be publicized by the court, so that "those who remain will hear and be afraid, and they will never commit any such evil thing in your midst again."

At first glance, making an effective public announcement appears to be a logistical impossibility. For how could the court effectively publicize this crime to every single Jew, in every Jewish community? In the days when the *Sanhedrin* was in existence, it was only viable to send messengers to larger communities and synagogues; so how could one be sure that all the

people who were actually contemplating giving false testimony "will hear and be afraid"?

THE EXPLANATION

Ramban explains that when the Jewish Court comes to a verdict, it does so under special Divine Providence that ensures that the punishment

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

The Torah considers false testimony to be a heinous crime, because God refers to the Jewish people as "My witnesses" (*Isaiah* 43:10), indicating that the very existence of the Jewish people "testifies" to the existence of God. As the *Talmud* explains, "The Name of Heaven should become loved through you...people will say... 'so-and-so studied Torah and look how fine are his ways, how correct his deeds are!'" (*Yoma* 86b). By bearing false witness, the person therefore contravenes the purpose of his existence.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 27, p. 258)

בינך: כא ולא תחוס עינך נפשא חלף נפשא
 עינא חלף עינא שנא חלף שנא ידא חלף ידא
 רגלא חלף רגלא: א ארי תפוק לאנחא קרבא
 על בעלי דבבך ותחזי סוסון ורתבין עם סני
 מנד לא תדחל מנהון ארי יי אלהך מימרה
 בםעךך דאסקך מארעא דמצרים: ב ויהי
 כמקרבכון לאנחא קרבא ויתקריב כהנא
 וימלל עם עמא: ג ויימר להון שמע ישראל
 אתון קריבין יומא דין לאנחא קרבא על
 בעלי דבבכון לא יזוע לבכון לא תדחלון
 ולא תתבבתון ולא תתברון מקדמיהון:
 ד ארי יי אלהכון דמדבר קדמיכון לאנחא
 לבון קרב עם בעלי דבבכון למפרק יתכון:
 ה וימללון סרכיאי קדם (עם) עמא למימר
 מן גברא די בנא ביתא חדתא ולא הנכה
 יחד ויתוב לביתה דלקא ימות באנחא
 קרבא ונבר אחרן יחנכנה: ו ומן גברא די
 נציב פרמא ולא אחלה יחד ויתוב לביתה
 דלקא ימות באנחא קרבא ונבר אחרן
 יחלנה: ז ומן גברא די ארס אתתא ולא
 נסבה יחד ויתוב לביתה דלקא ימות באנחא
 קרבא ונבר אחרן יסבנה: ח ויוספון סרכיאי
 למללא עם עמא ויימרון מן גברא דדחל
 ותיבר לבא יחד ויתוב לביתה ולא יתבר ית
 לבא דאחיהי פלבה: ט ויהי כד ישצון סרכיאי

לעשות עוד בדבר הרע הזה בקרבך: כא ולא תחוס עינך
 נפש בנפש עין בעין שן בשן יד ביד רגל ברגל: ס
 כ א כִּי־תֵצֵא לַמִּלְחָמָה עַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וַרְאִיתָ סוֹס וְרֹכֵב עִם רֶב
 מִמֶּךָ לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם כִּי־יְהוּהוּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ הַמַּעֲלֶךְ מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם: ב וְהָיָה בְּקִרְבְּכֶם אֱלֹהֵי־הַמִּלְחָמָה וְנִגַּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדַבֵּר
 אֶל־הָעָם: ג וְאָמַר אֱלֹהִים שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם קִרְבִּים הַיּוֹם
 לַמִּלְחָמָה עַל־אֹיְבֵיכֶם אֶל־יָרֵךְ לְבַבְכֶם אֶל־תִּירָאוּ וְאֶל־
 תַּחֲפוּזוּ וְאֶל־תַּעֲרִצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם: ד כִּי יְהוּהוּ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַחֲלֹךְ
 עִמָּכֶם לְהַלְחֵם לָכֶם עִם־אֹיְבֵיכֶם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם: ה וְדַבְּרוּ
 הַשְּׂטָרִים אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מִי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה בַּיַּת־חֹדֶשׁ
 וְלֹא חָנְכוּ יָלְדוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פְּנֵי־יְמוֹת בְּמִלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֵר
 יִחַנְכֵנוּ: ו וּמִי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר נָטַע כָּרֶם וְלֹא חָלְלוּ יָלְדוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב
 לְבֵיתוֹ פְּנֵי־יְמוֹת בְּמִלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֵר יִחַלְלֵנוּ: ז וּמִי־הָאִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר אָרַשׁ אִשָּׁה וְלֹא לָקָחָהּ יָלְדוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פְּנֵי־יְמוֹת
 בְּמִלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֵר יִקְחֶנָּה: ח וַיִּסְפְּנוּ הַשְּׂטָרִים לְדַבֵּר
 אֶל־הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ מִי־הָאִישׁ הַיָּרֵא וְרַךְ הַלֵּב יָלְדוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבֵיתוֹ
 וְלֹא יָמַס אֶת־לֵבָב אֲחִיו פְּלִבְבוֹ: ט וְהָיָה כְּכֹלֵת הַשְּׂטָרִים

כשׂי

להשמיע קול שיחפזו אלו שכנגדם וינוסו, ורומסים צוסיכס ומנהילין
 אותם להשמיע קול שעתה פרכות סוסיכס, ולוחין צקולס, ותוקעין
 בשופרות ומיני משמיעי קולי: אל ירך לבבכם. מנהלות סוסיכס: אל
 תיראו. מהכפת התריסין: ואל תחפזו. מקול הקרנות: ואל תערצו. מקול
 הלווחה: (ד) בי ה' אלהיכם וגו'. הם צאים בנלחונם של צטר ודס ואתס
 צאים בנלחונם של מקוס. פלשתיס צלו בנלחונם של גלית, מה היכ סופו, נפל
 ונפלו עמו: ההלך עמכם. זכ מחנה הארון: (ס) ולא חנכו. לא דר צו. חנוך
 לשון התחלה: ואיש אחר יחנכנו. ודבר של עגמת נפש הוא זה: (ו) ולא
 חללו. לא פדאו צשנה הרציעית, שהפירות טעונין לאכלן צירושלים או לחללן
 דמייס ולאכול הדמייס צירושלים: (ז) פן ימות במלחמה. ישו פן ימות,
 שאס לא ישמע לדברי הכהן כדאי הוא שימות: (ח) ויספו השוטרים. למה
 נאמר כאן ויספו, מוסיפין זה על דברי הכהן, שהכהן מדבר ומשמיע מן
 שמע ישראל עד להושיע אתכם, ומי האיש ושני ושלישי כהן מדבר ושטר
 משמיע, וזה שטר מדבר ושטר משמיע: הירא ורך הלבב. רצי עקיבא
 אומר כמשמעו, שאינו יכול לעמוד בקשרי המלחמה ולראות חרצ שלופה.
 רצי יוסבי בגלילי אומר הירא מעצירות שצידו, ולכך תלחה לו תורה לחזור
 על צית וכרס ואשה לכסות על החוזרים בצביל עצירות שצידם, שלא יצינו
 שהם צעלי עצירה, והרואהו חוזר אומר שמא צנה צית או נטע כרס או ארס

דין: (כא) עין בעין. ממון, וכן שן צשן וגו': (א) כי תצא למלחמה.
 סמך הכתוב יציאת מלחמה לכאן, לומר לך, שאין מחוסר אבר יולא למלחמה.
 דבר אחר לומר לך, אס עשית משפט דק אתה מוצטח שאס תלח למלחמה
 אתה גולח. וכן דוד הוא אומר³ עשיתי משפט ולדק צל תניחני לעושקי: על
 איבר. יהיו צעיניך כאויבים, אל תרחס עליכס כי לא ירחמו עליך: סוס
 ורכב. צעיני כוסם אחד, וכן הוא אומר והכית את מדין כאיש אחד.²
 וכן הוא אומר⁶ כי צא סוס פרעה: עם רב ממך. צעיניך הוא רצ, אצל צעיני
 אינו רצ: (צ) בקרבכם אל המלחמה. סמוך ללאתכם מן הספר מגבול
 ארצכם: ונגש הכהן. המשוח לכך. והוא הנקרא משוח מלחמה: ודבר אל
 העם. בלשון הקדש: (ג) שמע ישראל. אפילו אין צכס זכות חלח קריאת
 שמע בצבד, כדאי אתס שיושיע אתכם: על איביכם. אין חלו אחיכס, שאס
 תפלו צידס אינס מרחמיס עליכס, אין זו כמלחמת יהודה עם ישראל, שנאמר
 ויקומו האנשים אשר נקצו בשמות ויחזיקו בצציה, וכל מערומיכס הבלצישו
 מן השלל וילצישום וינעילום ויאכילום וישקום ויסיכום וינהלום צחמורים
 לכל כושל, ויציאום יריחו עיר התמרים אלל אחיכס, וישצו שומרון⁸, אלא
 על אויביכס אתס הולכים, לפיכך התחזקו למלחמה: אל ירך לבבכם אל
 תיראו ואל תחפזו ואל תערצו. ארצע אזכרות כנגד ארצעה דצרים
 שמלכי האומות עושים. מגיפוס צתריסיהס כדי להקישן זה לזה כדי

- ²¹ You should not have pity (on the false witness). He must (pay with his) life for (attempting to end a) life. (Or he must pay the value of) an eye for (a false testimony about) an eye, (the value of) a tooth for (false testimony about) a tooth, (the value of) a hand for (false testimony about) a hand, (and the value of) a foot for (false testimony about) a foot.

🕎 PREPARATION FOR A WAR 🕎

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- ¹ If you go out to war* against your enemies, and see a horse and chariot, a people (which appears to be) more numerous than you—you should not be afraid of them! For God is with you, your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
- ² Then, when you (have left your land and) are close to the battle, the (specially anointed) priest should approach and speak to the people (in Hebrew). ³ He should say to them:

“Hear, O Israel! Today you are coming close to the battle against your enemies. Do not let your hearts become faint (from the noise of their horses)! Do not be afraid (when they bang their shields together)! Do not panic (when they sound their trumpets), and do not be terrified of them (when you hear them shout)! ⁴ For (the Holy Ark of) God, your God, is going with you, to fight your enemies for you, (and) to save you!”

⁵ Then the officers should speak to the people and say:

“Is there any man who has built a new house and did not begin to live in it? Let him go back home, in case he dies at war and another man will begin to live in it!

⁶ “Is there any man who has planted a vineyard, and has not yet rendered it fit for ordinary use? Let him go back home, in case he dies at war, and another man will render it fit for use!”

⁷ “Is there any man who has betrothed a woman and has not yet taken her? Let him go back home, in case he dies at war, and another man will take her!”

⁸ The officers should speak to the people further and say:

“Is there any man who is fearful or fainthearted? Let him go back home, so he will not cause his brothers’ hearts to melt, like his heart (has melted)!”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What does “fearful” and “fainthearted” mean? (v. 8)

RASHI: Rabbi Akiva says: “This is to be taken literally, that he cannot stand at the front line of battle and look upon a drawn sword.”

Rabbi Yosi Hagalili says: “It means one who is afraid [to go to war] because of his sins. Therefore, the Torah gives a person the pretext of

returning home because of his house, vineyard, or wife (v. 5-7), so as to cover up for those who return because of their sins. For nobody will know that they are sinners, and anybody seeing such a person would say, ‘Perhaps he has built a house, or planted a vineyard, or betrothed a woman.’”

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will be just. Thus, even if the witnesses in a case were found to be false after the defendant had been executed, we can be sure that the defendant was in fact guilty, for God would not have “allowed” a person to be wrongly executed. (And thus, in such a case, the false witnesses are not punished, since, in spite of their intentions, they incriminated a guilty man).

Based on *Ramban’s* argument of special Divine Providence for the High Court, one could argue that this Providence extends to the public announcement of convicted false witnesses too. Even though it would be logistically impossible for the announcement to reach every Jewish person, the special Divine Providence on all matters of the court will

ensure that the announcement will reach those who are *actually* contemplating a false testimony—and then, “they will never commit any such evil thing in your midst again.”

(Based on *Sichas Purim Katan* 5746)

🕎 THE “FEARFUL OR FAINTHEARTED” (V. 8)

At the literal level, the meaning of “fearful” and “fainthearted” is self-understood. It is also obvious that any member of the army who is “fearful or fainthearted” should “go back home,” in order that he not “cause his brother’s hearts to melt, like his heart (has melted)” (v. 8). So why did *Rashi* need to make any comment at all on this verse?

**Sifri* and the *Talmud* (Sotah 44b) both maintain that this passage refers exclusively to a non-obligatory war. However, *Rashi’s* silence here suggests that, at the literal level, the Torah is speaking here of any type of war, be it obligatory or non-obligatory (see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 80 note 18). **See *Vayikra* 19:24-25.

למללא עם עמא וימנון רבני חילא כריש עמא: י ארי תקרב לקרבתא לאנהא (קרבתא) עלה ותקרי לה מלין דשלים: יא ויהי אם שלם תעננד ותפתח לך ויהי כל עמא דישתבח בה יהון לך מפקי מפין ויפלהנד: יב ואם לא תשלים עמך ותעביד עמך קרב ותצור עלה: יג וימסרנה יי אלהך בידך ותמחי ית כל דבורה לפתגם דתקרב: יד לחוד נשיא וטפלא ובעירא וכל די יהי בקרבתא כל עדאה תבוז לך ותיכול ית עדאה דסנאך די יחב יי אלהך לך: טו בן תעביד לכל קרניא די רחיקין מנד לחדא די לא מקרני עממיא האלין אנון: טז לחוד מקרני עממיא האלין די יי אלהך יחב לך אחסנא לא תקום כל נשמתא: יז ארי נמרא תנמרנון חתאי ואמוכאי בנענאי ופרזאי תואי ויבוסאי כמא די פקדך יי אלהך: יח בדיל די לא ילפון יתכון למעבד ככל תועבתהון די עבדו לטעותהון ותחובון קדם יי אלהכון: יט ארי תצור לקרבתא יומין סניאין לאנהא (קרבתא) עלה למכבשה לא תחבל ית אילנה לארמא

לדבר אל-העם ופקדו שרי צבאות בראש העם: ט [שבועין] כִּי־תִקְרַב אֶל־עִיר לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ וְקִרְאתָ אֵלֶיהָ לְשָׁלוֹם: יא וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁלוֹם תַּעֲנֶנּוּ וּפְתַחְתָּהּ לָךְ וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצָא־בָּהּ יֵהְיוּ לָךְ לְמַסַּ וְעַבְדוּךָ: יב וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁלִים עִמָּךְ וְעִשְׂתָּהּ עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה וְצָרְתָּ עָלֶיהָ: יג וּנְתַנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְיָדְךָ וְהִפִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־זְכוּרָהּ לְפִי־חָרֹב: יד רַק הַנְּשִׂים וְהַטַּף וְהַבְּהֵמָה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בְּעִיר כָּל־שָׁלָלָהּ תָּבֹז לָךְ וְאִכַּלְתָּ אֶת־שָׁלַל אֵיבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָךְ: טו בֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכָל־הָעָרִים הָרְחֹקוֹת מִמֶּךָ מֵאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מַעְרֵי הַגּוֹזִים־הָאֵלֶּה הֵנִּיחָה: טז רַק מַעְרֵי הָעַמִּים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה לֹא תַחֲיֶה כָּל־נִשְׁמָה: יז כִּי־הִתְחַרְמְתָּ תִּתְחַרְמֶם הַחֲתִי וְהָאֻמִּי הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרָזִי הַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: יח לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִלְמְדוּ אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל־תּוֹעֲבוֹתֵם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַחֲטֵאתֶם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: טט כִּי־תִצְוֹר אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ לֹא־תִשְׁחִית

רש"י

מלחמה. הכתוב מצריך שאם לא תשלים עמך, סופה להלחם כך אם תניחנה ותלך: וצרת עליה. אף להרעיבה ולהנמיחה ולהמיתה מיתת תחלואים? (יג) ונתנה ה' אלהיך בידך. אם עשית כל האמור צענין, סוף שבי' נותנה בידך: (יד) והטף. אף טף של זכרים. ומה אני מקיים והכית את כל זכורה, בגדולים? (יז) כאשר צוך. לרבות את הגרשני: (יח) למען אשר לא ילמדו. הא אם עשו תשובה והתגיירו, אחה רשאי לקבלם? (יט) ימים. שנים: רבים. שלשה. מכאן אמרו, אין לרין על עיירות של נכרים פחות משלשה ימים קודם לשבת. ולמד שפוחת שלוש שנים או שלשה ימים. וכן

אשה: (ט) שרי צבאות. שמעמידן זקפין, מלפניהם ומלאחריהם וכשילין של ברזל בדיהם וכל מי שרונה לחזור הרשות בידו לקפח את שוקיו. זקפין, בני אדם עומדים צקצה המערכה לזקוף את הנופלים ולחזקם דצברים, שבו אל המלחמה ולא תנוסו, שתחלת נפילה ניסה: (י) כי תקרב אל עיר. צמלחמת הרשות הכתוב מדבר, כמו שמפורש צענין, כן תעשה לכל הערים הרחוקות וגו': (יא) כל העם הנמצא בה. אפילו אחה מולא זה משצעה אומות שנלטיית להחרימם, אחה רשאי לקיימם: למס ועבדוך. עד שיקבלו עליהם מסים ושעבוד: (יב) ואם לא תשלים עמך ועשתה עמך

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THE EXPLANATION

At the literal level, the fear that a member of the army will not have the courage to fight, thus weakening the morale of the group, is an extremely serious concern. So Rashi was troubled: Why is this concern recorded last, after the exemptions for those who built houses, planted vineyards or betrothed a woman (v. 5-7), when this concern is the most serious of all? Surely, the announcement, "Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back home," should have been made immediately after the priest's words of encouragement in verses 3-4: "Do not let your hearts become faint. Do not panic...For (the Holy Ark of) God, your God, is going with you, to fight your enemies for you, (and) to save you"?

To answer this question, Rashi offered two explanations: Rabbi Akiva says: "This is to be taken literally, that he cannot stand at the front line of battle and look upon a drawn sword." I.e. this was not only an exemption for those members of the army who felt fainthearted at that moment, but rather, it was also for those who would be struck by terror later—"at the front line of battle," or after seeing, "a drawn sword." Since this was a case that would only arise much later, when the army reached the front line, it was mentioned last. However, Rashi was not satisfied with this answer alone, because leaving this warning until last would not have made any practical difference, since the army did not travel until all the announcements had been made. Thus, by leaving the warning about being fainthearted at the

⁹ Then, when the officials finish speaking to the people, they should appoint disciplinary officers for the troops at (both) ends of the people, (to ensure that nobody flees).

🌀 MAKING A PEACEFUL PROPOSAL * 🌀

SEVENTH
READING

¹⁰ If you approach a city to wage (a non-obligatory) war against it:

- You should (first) make a peaceful proposal to it.

¹¹ What will then happen is:

- If it responds to you peacefully, and it opens (its gates) up to you, then all the people found in it should give you a (monetary) tribute, and serve you.
- ¹² But if it does not make peace with you, it will (eventually) wage war against you. So you should besiege it, ¹³ and God, your God, will (eventually) deliver it into your hands.
- You should strike down all its males by the sword, ¹⁴ but you may take for yourself the women, the children, the livestock, and everything that is in the city, all its spoils. You should eat the spoils of your enemies, which God, your God, has given you.

¹⁵ That is what you should do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not among the cities of these (local) nations.

¹⁶ But from these (local) peoples' cities, which God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance:

- You may not allow any soul to live**. ¹⁷ Rather, you should utterly destroy them—the Chitites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Chivites, and the Jebusites—as God, your God, has commanded you, ¹⁸ so that they will not teach you to copy all their abominable acts that they have performed for their gods, causing you to sin against God, your God.

¹⁹ If you besiege a city for many days in order to wage (a non-obligatory) war against it, to capture it:

- You should not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them. You may eat from them, but you may not cut them down.

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front line until the end, nothing was really achieved, as the army was not closer to the front line at the end of the announcements than they were at the beginning.

Consequently, Rashi felt the need to offer an alternative interpretation:

Rabbi Yosi Hagalili says: "It means one who is afraid [to go to war] because of his sins."

The advantage of this interpretation is that it explains why there was a practical advantage to leaving this announcement until last:

"Therefore, the Torah gives a person the pretext of returning home because of his house, vineyard, or wife (earlier in verses 5-7), so as to cover up for those who return because of their sins. For nobody will know that they are sinners, since anybody seeing such a person [leaving] would say, 'Perhaps he has built a house, or planted a vineyard, or betrothed a woman.'""***

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 121ff.)

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

Why did Rabbi Akiva reject the notion that a person may exempt himself from the army since he is "afraid because of his sins"? (See *Classic Questions & Toras Menachem*)

Because Rabbi Akiva "consistently judged the Jewish people favorably" (*Rashi to Sanhedrin* 110b). Therefore, he felt that the very fact that a person is "afraid because of his sins" was a sign that the person truly regretted sinning, and thus (even if he had not yet changed his behavior, he) had already started the *teshuvah* (repentance) process—sufficiently at least, to ensure that God would not punish him for his sins during battle.

Thus having started to do *teshuvah*, a person would have nothing to fear from his former sins.

(*Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, pp. 128-9)

*See *Toras Menachem* to 2:26 above. **See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bo* 5747 (*Hisvadyos* 5747, vol. 2, pp. 369-70, 376-7. ***Even R' Yosi Hagalili would have to accept that a person who could not stand in the front line or could not look at a drawn sword would also be exempted from the army. However, according to R' Yosi Hagalili, this could be inferred from the priests warning not to be afraid (v. 3), and did not need to be stated explicitly.

עליו גרונא ארי מנה תיכול ונתה לא תקוין ארי לא באנשא אילן תקלא למעל מקדמך בצירא: ב לחוד אילן דתדע ארי לא אילן דמיכל הוא יתה תחבל ותקוין ותבני ברקומין על קרתא די היא עבדא עמך קרבא עד דתבכשה: א ארי ישתבח קטילא בארעא די יי אלהך יהב לך למירתה רמי בתקלא לא אתידע מן קמלה: ב ויפקון סביד ודיניד וימשחון לקרנא די סחרנות קטילא: ג ותהי קרתא דקריבא לקטילא וידברון סבי קרתא ההיא עגלת תורי די לא אתפלח בה די לא נגידת בגיר: ד ויחתון סבי קרתא ההיא ית עגלתא לנחלא ביר די לא אתפלח בה ולא יודרע וינקפון תמן ית עגלתא בגחלא:

את-עצה לנדח עליו גרונן כי ממנו תאכל ואתו לא תכרת כי האדם עץ השדה לבא מפניך במצור: ב רק עץ אשר תדע כי לא-עץ מאכל הוא אתו תשחית וכרת ובנית מצור על-העיר אשר-הוא עשה עמך מלחמה עד רדתה: פ כא א פי-ימצא חלל * באדמה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך לרשתה נפל בשדה לא נודע מי הכהו: ב ויצאו זקניה ושפטיה ומדדו אל-הערים אשר סביבת החלל: ג והיה העיר הקרבה אל-החלל ולקחו זקני העיר ההוא עגלת בקר אשר לא-עבד בה אשר לא-משכה בעל: ד והורדו זקני העיר ההוא את-העגלה אל-נחל איתן אשר לא-יעבד בו ולא יזרע וערפו-

*ס"א באדמה

רש"י

מיוחדים שזקניך, אלו סוכדרי גדולה: ומדדו. ממקום שחלל שוכב: אל הערים אשר סביבות החלל. לכל זד לידע איזו קרובה: (ד) אל נחל איתן. קשה שלא נעזב: וערפו. קולן ערפה זקופין. אמר הקב"ה תבא עגלה צת שנתה שלא עשתה פירות, ותערף בזמקום שאינו עושה פירות,

הוא חומר¹ ויש דוד צלקג ימים שנים, וצמלחמת הרשות הכתוב מדבר: כי האדם עץ השדה. הכי כי משמש בלשון דלמא. שמה האדם עץ השדה להכנס בתוך המצור מפניך להתיישר ביסורי רעב ולמא כאנשי העיר, למה תשחיתנו: (כ) עד רדתה. לשון רדוי, שחא כפופה לך: (ג) ויצאו זקניך.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● In what respect is man compared to a tree? (v. 19)

TALMUD: If a Torah scholar is respectable, one may “eat” [=study Torah] from him and one should not “cut” [=shun] him. But if he is not, one should “destroy” [= keep away from] him and “cut him down” [=shun him]” (*Ta’anis 7a.*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

“IS THE TREE OF THE FIELD A MAN...?” (v. 19)

What is the connection between man and a tree? (See *Talmud*)
The unique quality of a tree, which no animal possesses, is that it is firmly and deeply rooted in its source of life and energy, the ground. And due to this firm rooting, the tree grows taller and stronger than any member of the Animal Kingdom.

Thus, the “tree” within man is that part of his make-up which is: a.) the most deep-rooted in the soul; and consequently, b.) it is the most powerful. And this is: *his character and emotions.*

While at first glance, the intellect would appear to be a man’s most expressive and “personal” faculty, Chasidic thought teaches that one’s emotions and character are in fact more deep-rooted in the soul. For this reason our emotions tend to be powerful and uncompromising, like a tall tree, because their deep “roots” unleash the inner wellsprings of the soul directly into the conscious arena.

Intellect, on the other hand, has no fixed roots (rather like members of the Animal Kingdom which are not fixed to one particular place). So we are able to be intellectually involved in all sorts of matters with

which we have no personal connection, since the intellect is not so deeply rooted in the soul that it will passionately “take offense” to something which runs contrary to a person’s make-up.

Likewise, changing one’s *mind* is relatively easy, whereas changing one’s *personality*—from miserly to generous, or from evil to good—is no easier than uprooting a tree and planting it somewhere else.

Nevertheless, the Torah wishes us to do exactly that: to change our character and emotional traits for the good. In this way we bring perfection to even the innermost aspects of the soul, where the “roots” of our emotions reach.

And it is in this vein that the *Talmud* warns us only to study Torah from “a respectable Torah scholar” i.e. one whose knowledge “bore fruit” in the form of good deeds and fine character. For a person should seek a teacher who has both intellectual *and* emotional refinement, who will provide a living example of how to cultivate his “arborous” side.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 115ff.)

—(For why should you need to destroy it?) Is the tree of the field a man, that you should include it in the siege (and destroy it)? —

- ²⁰ However, if you know it is a (type of) tree which is not a fruit tree, you may destroy it by cutting it down. (Use it to) build a barricade against the city that is waging war with you, until it is conquered.

🕒 UNSOLVED MURDER 🕒

21 If a murder victim is found lying in the field in the land which God, your God, is giving you as a possession, (and) it is not known who killed him:

- ² Your senior judges should go out (from the Sanhedrin), and they should measure (the distance from where the corpse is lying) to the cities around the corpse (in each direction).
- ³ What will happen is, that (from) the city closest to the corpse:
 - The elders of that city should take a female calf which has never been used for work, one that has never drawn a yoke.
 - ⁴ The elders of that city should bring the calf down to a rock-hard valley, which was never tilled or sown, and there in the valley, they should break the (back of the) calf's neck.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why is the distance to the nearby cities measured? (v. 2)

RASHI: In order to find out which is the nearest.

MIZRACHI: *Rashi* is teaching us that measuring is not an absolute requirement, but rather a means to locate the nearest city. Thus, in a case where the corpse was found near one city, and it was obvious that this city was the closest, no measurement is required.

RAMBAM: Even if the corpse is found adjacent to a city such that it is clear that this city is the closest, it is nevertheless a *mitzvah* to measure (*Laws of a Murderer and the Protection of Life* 9:1).

● How is the calf's neck broken, and why? (v. 4)

RASHI: He breaks its neck with a hatchet. God says: "A calf which is in its first year, which has not yielded any fruit, should come and be decapitated in a place that does not yield fruit (see v. 4), to atone for the murder of this man, whom they did not allow to yield fruit."

RAMBAM: The city that is nearest to the victim brings the calf, and in most cases the murderer comes from that place....Generally speaking, the investigation, the procession of the elders, the measuring and the taking of the calf, become the subject of much talk, and by making the event public the murderer might be discovered....Furthermore, since the place where the neck of the calf is broken may never be cultivated or sown, the owner of the land will not cease in his investigations until he identifies the murderer, in order that the calf not be killed and his land not become forbidden to him forever (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3:40).

RAMBAN: This *mitzvah*, together with the scapegoat of Yom Kippur and the Red Heifer, are suparational decrees of scripture.

● Where is the calf's neck broken? (v. 4)

RASHI: In a hard valley (בְּחַל אִיתָן) that was never tilled.

RAMBAM: חַל אִיתָן means a river that flows strongly (ibid. 2).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 THE DECAPITATED CALF (21:1-9)

Rashi's commentary was written *exclusively* to explain the literal meaning of scripture, as *Rashi* himself declared, "I am coming *only* to explain the literal meaning of scripture" (*Rashi to Bereishis* 3:8). It is not *Rashi's* declared intention to explain the *reasons* behind all the *mitzvos* and how these themes take expression in the various procedures which any given *mitzvah* entails.

Why then did *Rashi* elaborate upon the reasons for the *mitzvah* of breaking a calf's neck?

A further peculiarity in *Rashi's* comment is his use of the unusual expression, "God says": Why did *Rashi* need to stress here that the

rationale for breaking a calf's neck was said by God? Surely, here is not the place to emphasize the basic tenet that the *mitzvos* were given directly by God?

THE EXPLANATION

Verse 8 states that the purpose of breaking the calf's neck is to "atone for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O God!" In all cases up to this point when the Torah has required an animal's life to be sacrificed in order to achieve atonement, there has *always* been a requirement for the animal to be offered: a.) by a priest; b.) in the Holy Temple*; and c.) via the specialized procedure of ritual slaughter and sprinkling the animal's blood on the altar, etc.

* An exception to this rule appears to be the scapegoat of Yom Kippur whose life is sacrificed by casting it off a mountain in the desert (see *Vayikra* 16:21). However, it could be argued that in this case atonement is actually achieved *in the Temple itself* when the High Priest "places" all the sins of the Jewish people upon it (ibid. 10), and recites the confession (ibid. v. 21), and the scapegoat is only cast into the desert to "dispose" of the sins which it is "carrying." The Red Heifer, which is sacrificed outside the Jewish Camp (*Bamidbar* 19:3), is of course *not* brought for purposes of atonement at the *literal* level, but rather, to ritually purify a person so that he may enter the Temple; (although according to the *Midrashic* interpretation of R' Moshe Hadarshan—cited by *Rashi* to *Vayikra* ibid. 22—the Red Heifer does atone).

ה וַיִּתְקַרְבוּן כַּהֲנָיִם בְּנֵי לְוִי אֲרִי כֹהֵן אֲתָרְעִי
 יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמּוֹשׁוֹתָהּ וּלְבִרְכָא בְשֵׁמָא דִּי וְעַל
 מִימְרָהוֹן יְהִי כָּל דִּין וְכָל מַכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוֹ: ו וְכָל
 סְבִי קִרְתָּא הֵהִיא דְקָרִיבִין לְקַמִּילָא יִסְחֹון ית
 יִדִּיהוֹן עַל עֲגֻלְתָּא דְנִקְפְתָּא בְּנַחְלָא: ז וַיִּתִּיבוּן
 וַיִּמְרוּן יִדְנָא לָא אֲשֶׁדוּ ית דְמָא דְדִין וְעֵינָא
 לָא תּוֹאָה: ה כַּהֲנָיִם יִמְרוּן כִּפּוּר לְעַמְּךָ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל דִּי פִרְקִתָּא יי וְלֹא תִתֵּן חֹבֶת דָּם וְכִי
 בְּגוּ עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְכַּפֵּר לָהֹן עַל דְמָא:
 ט וְאֵת תְּפִלֵי אֲשֶׁר־יִדְּם וְכִי מִבְּיַד אֲרִי תִעְבֵּד
 דְכִשְׁר קָדָם יי: ס ס ס

שָׁם אֶת־הָעֲגֻלָּה בְּנַחַל: ה וַנִּגְשׂוּ הַכַּהֲנָיִם בְּנֵי לְוִי כִּי זָם בָּחַר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׂרְתּוֹ וּלְבַרְכֶךָ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְעַל־פִּיהֶם יְהִי
 כָּל־רִיב וְכָל־נִגְעָה: ו וְכָל זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהִוא הַקְּרֹבִים אֶל־הַחֲלָל
 יִרְחֲצוּ אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־הָעֲגֻלָּה הָעֲרוּפָה בְּנַחַל: ז וְעָנוּ
 וְאָמְרוּ יָדִינוּ לָא שַׁפְכָה וְכִי שַׁפְכּוּ אֶת־הַדָּם הַזֶּה וְעֵינֵינוּ לָא
 רָאוּ: ה כִּפּוּר לְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־פָּדִיתָ יְהוָה וְאֶל־תִּתֵּן דָּם
 נָקִי בְּקֶרֶב עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם הַדָּם: ט וְאֵתָּה תִּבְעַר
 הַדָּם הַנָּקִי מִקֶּרְבֶּךָ כִּי־תַעֲשֶׂה הַיִּשָּׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: ס ס ס

צ"ז פסוקים, סלו"א סימן.

כ"ט

להם הדם. הכחוז מצטרם שמשעשו כן יכופר להם העון! (ט) ואתה
 תבער. מגיד שאם נמלא הכורג אחר שנתערפה העגלה הרי זה יכורג, וכוא
 הישר צעני ה': חסלת פרשת שופטים

לכפר על הריגתו של זה שלא הניחוהו לעשות פירות! (ז) ידינו לא שפכה.
 וכי עלתה על לז שזקני צית דין שופכי דמים הם, אלא לא ראינוהו ופטרנוהו
 בלא מזונות ובלא לוי'. וככהניס אומרים כפר לעמך ישראל: (ח) ונכפר

TORAS MENACHEM

So when *Rashi* read that a calf's life is sacrificed in order to atone for an unsolved murder, *outside* the Temple by a *non-priest breaking its neck*, *Rashi* was troubled: Surely this runs contrary to the procedure followed by all animal sacrifices that secure atonement?

Rashi came to the conclusion that the Torah is introducing us here to a totally unprecedented form of animal sacrifice. Therefore he began, "God says..." as if to say that in this passage we are hearing something new from the Almighty which we have not heard before.

THREE TYPES OF ATONEMENT

In order to appreciate *Rashi's* assertion here—that the novel procedure of this *mitzvah* indicates a totally different type of atonement—we first need to examine some of the explanations given for breaking a calf's neck (see *Classic Questions* on previous page):

Rambam writes that the unusual procedure of the delegation of elders serves to publicize the unsolved murder, thereby assisting the process of discovering the perpetrator of the crime.

According to **Ramban**, there is simply no reason for this *mitzvah*. It is a suprarational decree of scripture.*

Rashi, however, did offer a logical explanation: "A calf which is in its first year, which has not yielded any fruit, should come and be decapitated in a place that does not yield fruit, to atone for the murder of this man, whom they did not allow to yield fruit."

It could be argued that the underlying basis of the differing opinions of *Rambam* and *Ramban* revolves around the question of which *element* of

the murder is atoned for by breaking the calf's neck—the *agent*, the *act*, or the *effect* of the sin:

Rambam maintained that the *mitzvah* atones for the *agents* of the sin, in this case the people of the nearest city, who became associated with this crime. Consequently, *Rambam* emphasized that the matter becomes publicized through the involvement of the city's elders, who do everything within their power to help find the perpetrator of the crime, and this atones for the apparent connection between the city and the crime.

Ramban, however, understood that this *mitzvah* atones for the *act* of murder itself, like an animal sacrifice which atones for a sinful act. Consequently, *Ramban* perceived the *mitzvah* of breaking a calf's neck as being in the same category as the scapegoat of *Yom Kippur*, which defies logic.

Rashi took the third approach, that this *mitzvah* atones for the *effect* of the sin, i.e. the fact that the premature death of the victim has prevented him from "yielding fruit." Therefore: "A calf which is in its first year, which has not yielded any fruit, should come and be decapitated in a place that does not yield fruit."

Consequently, "God says," this is a totally unprecedented type of sacrifice, since all other animal sacrifices atone for the *agent* or *act* of a sin, whereas this one atones for its *effect*.

PRACTICAL RAMIFICATIONS

The above distinction between the opinions of *Rashi*, *Rambam* and *Ramban* has the following practical ramifications:

* This is also the view expressed by *Rambam* in his *Mishneh Torah* (end of *Laws of Misappropriation*). The above cited explanation of *Rambam* is found in his *Guide for the Perplexed* (3:40).

- MAFTIR
- ⁵ *The priests, the sons of Levi, should then draw near—for God, your God, has chosen them to serve Him, to issue blessings in the Name of God, and to pass judgment on every controversy and lesion.*
 - ⁶ *All the elders of that city, which is closest to the corpse, should wash their hands over the calf that was decapitated in the valley. ⁷ They should announce and proclaim, “Our hands did not (do anything that might have indirectly caused) this bloodshed, nor did our eyes see (this crime).”*
 - ⁸ *(The priests then say): “Atone for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O God! Do not place (the liability of) innocent blood among your people, Israel.”*

The blood will thus be atoned for them.

- ⁹ *(If the murderer is later found) you should (execute him and) eliminate the (shedding of) innocent blood from among you, and you will thus do what is proper in the eyes of God.*

THE HAFTARAH FOR SHOFTIM IS ON PAGE 282.

TORAS MENACHEM

a.) *Measuring the distance from the corpse.*

According to *Rashi* (as explained by **Mizrachi**—See *Classic Questions* to v. 2 above) the requirement to measure the distance from the corpse to its surrounding cities is purely a practical one, in order to ascertain which city is the closest. Therefore, in a case where it is obvious which city was the closest, no measuring would be required.

Rambam, however, maintained that the requirement of measuring is a Biblical requirement which cannot be dispensed with.

Again, this appears to be a reflection of the underlying difference between the views of *Rambam* and *Rashi*, whether this *mitzvah* serves primarily to atone for the agent of the crime or its effect:

According to *Rambam*, the *mitzvah* atones primarily for the agent of the crime (the people of the nearest city), by publicizing the crime to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, since the measuring of the corpse would add to this publicity, it cannot be dispensed with.

(Similarly, we would presume that according to *Ramban*, who perceived the *mitzvah* to be a suprarational decree of scripture, none of its details could be dispensed with).

However, according to *Rashi*, the key emphasis here is the atonement of the loss of life suffered by the victim (effect). Consequently, the measuring is not a crucial component of the atonement, and could be dispensed with if there was no logical need for it.

b.) *The location of the mitzvah.*

According to *Rambam*, the calf's neck is to be broken in a fertile valley that contains a river, whereas *Rashi* maintained that the location should be a hard, non-fertile valley that was never tilled (see *Classic Questions* to v. 4).

At first glance *Rambam* and *Rashi* are merely arguing over the translation of a scriptural term (נִחַל אֲרָמָה). However, based on the above explanation, it appears that their respective interpretations reflect their overall understanding of the atonement achieved via this *mitzvah*:

Rambam maintained that the main emphasis here was the atonement of the local city, which was achieved by doing everything possible to find the murderer. *Rambam* adds (see *Classic Questions* *ibid.*) that these attempts

were further enhanced by the efforts of the owner of the land where the *mitzvah* takes place, who would be most eager to identify the murderer so that the calf's neck would not be broken and his land would not be outlawed. Consequently, *Rambam* understood that the breaking of the neck took place on *extremely fertile* land, which explains why the owner would be so eager to ensure that his land not become prohibited.

But *Rashi*, who stressed the negative theme of this *mitzvah* (“A calf... which has not yielded any fruit, should come and be decapitated...to atone for the murder of this man, whom they did not allow to yield fruit”) likewise stressed the negative connotation of the location: “a place that does not yield fruit.” And this new concept (of offering a sacrifice in an inferior location, in contrast to all other sacrifices which were offered in the choicest of locations), was yet a further expression of *Rashi*'s innovative stance here, that this *mitzvah* provided a new method of atonement for the Jewish people.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 121ff.)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

The appointment of “judges and police” mentioned at the beginning of our *Parsha* is intended to prevent undesirable events from occurring, such as the case of a “corpse found in the field,” mentioned here at the end of the *Parsha*. If such an event does occur—even though it occurs in a field, beyond the boundary of their city—it is the “judges” of that city who must perform the service necessary to bring about atonement.

From here we learn that every Jew must take responsibility for his brethren who are lost spiritually “in the fields.” Even the great leaders and judges must go out of the city, into the field, in order to share the beauty of Judaism with others.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim* 5749; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 131)



Parshas Shoftim contains 14 *mitzvos* and 27 prohibitions

1. To appoint judges and officers in every Jewish community [16:18].
2. Not to plant a tree by the Altar [16:21].
3. Not to erect an idolatrous pillar [16:22].
4. Not to offer a blemished animal, even if it is a temporary blemish [17:1].
5. To listen to the Jewish Supreme Court in every generation [17:10].
6. Not to disobey the word of the Jewish Supreme Court [17:11].
7. To appoint a Jewish king [17:15].
8. Not to appoint a Jewish king who is not a native Israelite [17:15].
9. A king should not amass horses beyond his needs [17:16].
10. Not to live in the land of Egypt [17:16].
11. A king should not have too many wives [17:17].
12. A king should not amass excessive gold and silver [17:17].
13. A king should write a Torah scroll, in addition to the one which every Jew is required to write [17:18].
14. The Levites should not inherit land in the Land of Israel [18:1].
15. The Levites should not share of the booty during the conquest of the Land [18:1].
16. To give the shoulder, jaw and end-stomach of an animal-offering to the priest [18:3].
17. To separate *terumah* (the priest's portion) from produce [18:4].
18. To give the first shearing of the fleece to the priests [18:4].
19. Priests should work at the Temple in watches, and at festival times they should work in unison [18:6].
20. Not to practice divination [18:10].
21. Not to practice sorcery [18:10].
22. Not to use charms [18:10-11].
23. Not to consult a medium [18:10-11].
24. Not to consult a yidoni (wizard) [18:10-11].
25. Not to seek contact with the dead [18:10-11].
26. To listen to every prophet in the generation, provided he does not add or detract from the Torah [18:15].
27. Not to issue false prophecy [18:20].
28. Not to issue prophecy in the name of an idol [18:20].
29. Not to refrain from putting a false prophet to death, and not be afraid of him [18:22].
30. To prepare six Cities of Refuge [19:3, 6].
31. Not to have mercy on a person who inflicts mortal injury, in a capital trial [19:13, 21].
32. Not to falsely adjust one's boundary [19:14].
33. Not to pass judgment on the word of just one witness [19:15].
34. To do to false, scheming witnesses as they intended to do to their victim through their testimony [19:19].
35. Not to be afraid of an enemy in battle [20:3; 7:21].
36. To anoint a priest for war [20:5-7].
37. To act in an optional war according to the rules of the Torah [20:10ff.].
38. Not to allow any of the seven nations that inhabited the Land of Israel to live [20:16].
39. Not to destroy fruit-bearing trees during a siege, nor cause purposeless destruction [20:19].
40. To break the neck of the calf in a riverbed [21:1].
41. Not to plow or sow in the riverbed where the calf's neck was broken [21:4].



parshas • Ki Seitzei

פרשת כי תצא

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

Although the ideal of peace is so prominent in the Torah, God designed and created the world in such a way that it leaves man subject to an almost constant inner strife, having to wage relentless battle with his evil inclination.

In fact, the *Zohar* (III 188b) points out that the Hebrew word for bread—*lechem*—is derived from the same root that denotes “war.” This symbolizes the concept of the continuous struggle between the base and sublime natures of man, whether he eats his bread as a glutton, in the manner an animal eats its food, or on a higher level—to keep the body healthy in order to be able to do what is good and right in accordance with the Will of the Creator.

One source of inspiration to help a person succeed in overcoming these challenges, is to reflect upon the source of his soul. Our Sages taught that Jewish souls actually preceded the rest of creation (*Bereishis Rabah* 1:4), and were even “consulted” by God when the “decision” was being made whether or not to create the world—and the souls gave their full consent (*Rus Rabah* 2:1). Thus, from the elevated vantage point of the soul in its primary source, every aspect of this world was seen as conducive to serving God, for otherwise the soul would not have

consented to its creation. At that moment, the soul appreciated how things that we perceive now as a negative influence or an “enemy” (because they attempt to deter us from observing God’s Will) are in truth an *aid* to Divine Service—for they enable us to serve God out of our own *free choice*, rather than as mere robots. Therefore, even the creation of our “enemies” had the soul’s full consent.

A soul never forgets. Even after it comes down into a body, facing the ongoing struggle between the base and the sublime, the soul retains an unbreakable inner strength and imperviousness to anything that may deter it from its mission.

And this is the message of our *Parsha*: “If you go out (*Ki Seitzei*) to war”—when the soul “goes out” of its heavenly setting into a body, to fight a war between the material and the spiritual, it never loses sight of the fact that every obstacle is surmountable. Through meditating upon this point, we can always be “upon your enemies,” i.e. *transcending* every material “adversary,” and sanctifying this physical world with goodness and spirituality.

(Based on *Sichos* of 10th Elul and *Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5751; Letter of 26th Teves 5742)

י אַרְי תְּפֹק לְאַנְחָא קֶרְבָּא עַל בְּעַלֵי דְבְּבָד
וַיִּמְכְּרֵנוּן יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ בִּידְךָ וְתִשְׁבִּי שְׁבִי־הוּן:
יֵא וְתַחֲזִי בְּשִׁבְיָא אֶתְתָּא שְׁפִירַת חֲזוּ וְתִתְרַעֵי
בָּה וְתִסְבְּקָה לָךְ לְאַנְתּוּ: יב וְתַעֲלֶנָּה לְגוּ בֵיתְךָ
וְתִגְלַח יַת רִישָׁהּ וְתִרְבִּי יַת טוֹפְרָנְקָהּ:
יג וְתַעֲדִי יַת כְּסוּת שְׁבִיָּה מְנָה וְתִיתַב בְּבֵיתְךָ
וְתִכְפִּי יַת אַבּוּקָא וְיַת אִמָּה וְיַת יוֹמִין וְיַת
בֶּן תַּעוּל לְוַתָּה וְתִכְבְּעֶנָּה וְתַחֲזִי לָךְ לְאַנְתּוּ:
יד וַיְהִי אִם לֹא תִתְרַעֵי בָּה וְתִמְכְּרֶנָּה לְנַפְשָׁהּ
וְיִבְנָא לֹא תִזְבְּנָנָהּ בְּכִסְפָּא לֹא תִתְנֶר בָּה חֶלֶף

י כִּי־תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל־אִיבֶיךָ וְנִתְּנָוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בִּידְךָ
וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׁבִיּוֹ: יא וְרָאִיתָ בְּשִׁבְיָה אִשָּׁת יִפְת־תָּאֵר וְחִשְׁקָתָּ בָּהּ
וְלִקְחָתָּ לָךְ לְאִשָּׁה: יב וְהִבֵּאתָהּ אֶל־תּוֹךְ בֵּיתְךָ וְגִלְחָהּ אֶת־
רֹאשָׁהּ וְעָשְׂתָהּ אֶת־צַפְרָנֶיהָ: יג וְהִסִּירָהּ אֶת־שְׂמֹלֶת שְׁבִיָּהּ
מֵעַלֶיהָ וַיֵּשְׁבָהּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְכַתֶּךָ אֶת־אִבֶיהָ וְאֶת־אִמָּהּ יֵרַח
יָמִים וְאַחַר כֵּן תָּבֹא אֵלֶיהָ וּבְעֵלְתָהּ וְהִיְתָה לָךְ לְאִשָּׁה:
יד וְהָיָה אִם־לֹא חָפְצָתָּ בָּהּ וְשִׁלַּחְתָּהּ לְנַפְשָׁהּ וּמָכַר לֹא־
תִמְכְּרֶנָּה בְּכֶסֶף לְאֶת־תַּעֲמֹר בָּהּ תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עֲנִיתָהּ: ס

רש"י

פרשיות הללו: אשת. אפילו אשת איש⁵: (יב) ועשתה את צפרניה. תגדלם כדי שתנוול¹: (יג) והסירה את שמלת שביה. לפי שם נאום, שהנכרים צויתים מתקשות זמלמה בשביל להזנות אחרים עמהם²: וישבה בביתך. צבית שמתמש צו, נכנס ונתקל צה, יולא ונתקל צה, רואה צצכייתה, רואה צנוולה, כדי שתגנה עליו³: ובכתה את אביה. כל כך למה, כדי שתהא צת ישראל שמה וזו עלצב, צת ישראל מתקשת וזו

(י) כי תצא למלחמה. זמלמת הרשות הכחוז מדצר¹, שזמלמת ארץ ישראל אין לומר ושצית שציו, שכרי צצר נאמר לא תחיה כל נשמה²: ושביית שביו³. לרצות כנענים שצתוכה ואף על פי שם משצעה אומות: (יא) ולקחת לך לאשה. לא דצרה תורה אלא כנגד יצר הרע. שם אין הקצ"ה מתירה ישאנה צאוסור. אצל אם נשאה, סופו להיות שגאה, שנאמר אחריו כי תהיין לאיש וגו', וסופו להוליד ממנה צן סורר ומורה, לכך נסמכו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What kind of war does verse 10 refer to?

RASHI: The verse here is referring to a non-obligatory war, for in reference to the [obligatory] war of conquering the Land of Israel, the Torah would not stress, “and you seize their captives,” for it has already stated [regarding the Land’s inhabitants], “you may not allow any soul to live” (*Devarim* 20:16). The term וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׁבִיּוֹ (“and you seize their captives”) thus comes to permit [the capture of] Canaanites who are part of [a nation being fought through a non-obligatory war], even though they are from the seven nations [that inhabit the Land].

RAMBAM: A king may not wage other wars before obligatory wars. What constitutes an obligatory war? A war against the seven nations [who occupied the Land of Canaan], the war against Amalek, or a war fought in defense against an enemy that attacks Israel. Afterwards [when the obligatory wars have been won], he may wage a non-obligatory war, which is a war fought with other nations in order to expand the borders of Israel, and to magnify its greatness and reputation (*Laws of Kings* 5:1).

TORAS MENACHEM

☞ “If You Go Out To War”? (v. 10)

Rashi writes that verse 10, which introduces the laws of female captives of war, refers to “a non-obligatory war,” i.e. a war which is not required by Jewish law, but one that was fought to expand the borders of Israel.

Rashi proves this from the fact that our verse mentions the taking of captives (“and you seize their captives”), which surely would not arise in the case of an obligatory war, in which none of the enemy may be left alive, as the Torah commands, “you may not allow any soul to live” (*Devarim* 20:16).

However, *Rashi’s* assertion seems to be problematic for a number of reasons:

a.) The command not to “allow any soul to live,” refers to the conquest of the Land of Israel. However there is a type of *obligatory war* where it is *not* a *mitzvah* to annihilate the enemy completely, and that is a war

fought in defense against an enemy that attacks Israel (see **Rambam**). In such a war, it *would* be permissible to take captives*, so how can *Rashi* prove that our verse “is referring to a non-obligatory war,” merely because it mentions the taking of captives?

b.) At the literal level, our verse does not actually refer to the taking of captives from the enemy population, but rather, the seizure of those whom the enemy captured in a previous war (“and you seize their captives”). Thus, it appears that our verse could indeed be referring to a war against the seven nations that inhabited the Land of Canaan, because even though the seven nations themselves must be obliterated in their entirety (“you may not allow any soul to live”), people from *other* nations who were held captive by the seven nations would not have to be killed. So how can *Rashi* prove that our verse is referring to a non-obligatory war from the words “and you seize their captives”?

* While there is an obligation in Jewish law for an individual to kill any person who seeks his life (see *Rashi* to *Shemos* 22:1), which would mean that there would be a requirement to totally *obliterate* any attacking enemy, nevertheless, this would presumably not apply to the women and children of the enemy nation, who are not actively fighting (see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 88, note 16).

1 ספרי 2 לעיל כ, טז 3 התיבות 'ושבית שבייו' הם מדברי רש"י עצמו, ולא תיבות שמעתיך מהכתוב. אלא, שה"בחור-הזעזער" טעה והדפיסן באותיות גדולות כמו דבור המתחיל (שיחת ש"פ כי תצא תשמ"ח) 4 תנוזומא א 5 קידושין כא:

🕎 FEMALE CAPTIVES OF WAR 🕎

21:10 **I**f you go out to (wage a non-obligatory) war upon your enemies, and God, your God, delivers them into your hand, and you seize their captives,¹¹ and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire her:

- You may take her for yourself as a wife (even if she is married).
- ¹² You should bring her into your home. She should shave her head and let her nails grow (to make her repulsive), ¹³ and she should remove from herself the (attractive) clothing in which she was captured.
- She should stay in your house (so you see her at her worst), and weep for her father and her mother for a full month.
- After that, you may come to her and be intimate with her, and she will be your wife.
- ¹⁴ What will happen is, if you do not desire her, then you should send her away to do as she wishes. But you should not sell her for money, or keep her as a slave, because you have afflicted her.

TORAS MENACHEM

c.) Besides the fact that *Rashi* appears to have no conclusive proof that our verse refers to a non-obligatory war, it appears much more likely—at the literal level—that our verse would be speaking of an obligatory war. For, at the point in time when this passage was taught by Moshe, the Jewish people were about to fight the *obligatory* wars required to conquer the Land of Israel. So it is more logical that Moshe would be addressing a matter of immediate relevance to the Jewish people, rather than discussing the laws of a non-obligatory war, which would not be possible until many years later (see **Rambam**).

THE EXPLANATION

Verse 10 stresses, “If you go out to war,” referring to a situation where the Jewish people are settled in their homeland, and “go out” of that land for the purpose of conquering other nations. It could not refer to the Jewish people’s situation at that time, in the desert, which is not an inhabited land from which one “goes out” to war.

Therefore*, *Rashi* concluded, “The verse here is referring to a non-obligatory war.”

[Consequently, when *Rashi* continues to explain, “In reference to the [obligatory] war of conquering the Land of Israel, the Torah would not stress, ‘and you seize their captives,’ etc.” *Rashi* is not bringing a proof that our verse is speaking of a non-obligatory war—for the proof is from the verse itself (“If you go out to war”). Rather, *Rashi* is merely indicating that the Torah chose to stress the idea of taking captives here in the case of a non-obligatory war, where it is *most common*. There would, however, be some instances where captives could be taken even in an obligatory war against the seven nations, as explained above.]

However, this leaves us with another problem, that the words, “and you seize their captives” now seem to be superfluous. For it is *obvious* that we are speaking of a case when captives are taken, from the following verse, “and you see among the captives...”

[Beforehand we did not have this question, since we presumed that the words “and you seize their captives” were needed as *proof* that our verse

speaks of a non-obligatory war. Now, however, that it has been established that the proof is from the words, “if you go out,” the words, “you seize their captives,” appear to be redundant.]

Therefore, *Rashi* continues to explain that the extra words, “and you seize their captives,” come to permit the capture of Canaanites who are themselves captives of the nation that is being conquered during this non-obligatory war, even though they are from the seven nations which we are normally obligated to obliterate.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5748)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“SHE SHOULD WEEP...FOR A FULL MONTH” (v. 13)

Parshas *Ki Seitzei* is always read during the month of Elul, which is a time of *teshuvah* (repentance), when a person makes a spiritual stock-taking of the year that has passed, and resolves to come closer to God in the year to come.

The *Arizal* (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1534-1572) taught that this month of repentance is alluded to in our *Parsha*:

The “beautiful woman” of verse 11 alludes to the soul. Her capture from the enemy (v. 10-11) alludes to the release of the soul from the desires of the body (the “enemy”), at the outset of the month of Elul.

And then, “*She should...weep*,” i.e. return to God out of a spirit of remorse and contrition, “for a full month”—for the entire month of Elul.

(Likutei Torah of the *Arizal*, cited in *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* 5746)

* We could not prove that our verse is speaking of a non-obligatory war on the basis of the verse, “If you go out to war,” suggesting that such a war might not necessarily occur—because the term “if” could be referring to the second half of the verse, “you seize their captives,” i.e., if (when you go out to war) you seize their captives.

די ענייתה: טו ארי תהנין לגבר תרתין נשין
 חדא רחממא וחדא שניאתא ולידן לה גנין
 רחממא ושניאתא ויהי ברא בוכרא
 לשניאתא: טו ויהי ביומא דיתסן לבנוהי ית
 די יהי לה לית לה רשו לבכרא ית בר
 רחממא על אפי בר שניאתא בוכרא: יז ארי
 ית בוכרא בר שניאתא יפרש למתן לה
 תרתין חלקין בכל די ישתבח לה ארי הוא
 ריש תקפה לה חניא בכרותא: יח ארי יהי
 לגבר בר סטי ומרי ליתוהי מקבל למימר
 אבוהי ולמימר אמה ומלפין יתה ולא יקבל
 מנהון: יט ויחדון בה אבוהי ואמה ויפקון יתה
 לקדם סבי קרתה ולתרע בית דין אתרה:
 כ ויימרון לסבי קרתה בגנא דין סטי ומרי
 ליתוהי מקבל למימרנא ולל בסר וסבי חמר:
 כא וירגמנה כל גברי (אנשי) קרתה באבניא
 וימות ותפלי עבד דביש מבינד וכל ישראל
 ישמעון וידחלון: כב וארי יהי בגבר חובת
 דין דקטול ויתקטיל ותצלוב יתה על צליבא:
 כג לא תבית נבלתה על צליבא ארי מקבר

טו כִּי־תֵהֵינְךָ לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים הָאֶחָת אֲהוּבָה וְהָאֶחָת שְׁנוּאָה
 וַיִּלְדוּ־לוֹ בָנִים הָאֲהוּבָה וְהַשְּׁנוּאָה וְהָיָה הַבֵּן הַבְּכֹר לְשֵׁנִיָּאָה:
 טו וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַנִּחְלוֹ אֶת־בְּנָיו אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיָּה לוֹ לֹא יוּכַל
 לְבַכֵּר אֶת־בֶּן־הָאֲהוּבָה עַל־פְּנֵי בֶן־הַשְּׁנוּאָה הַבְּכֹר: יז כִּי
 אֶת־הַבְּכֹר בֶּן־הַשְּׁנוּאָה יִכִּיר לָתֵת לוֹ פִּי שְׁנַיִם בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־
 יִמְצָא לוֹ כִּי־הוּא רֵאשִׁית אֲנֹו לוֹ מִשְׁפֶּט הַבְּכֹרָה: ס יח כִּי־
 יְהִיָּה לְאִישׁ בֶּן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה אֵינָנּוּ שָׁמַע בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל
 אִמּוֹ וַיִּסְרוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם: יט וְתִפְּשׂוּ בּוֹ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ
 וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־זִקְנֵי עִירוֹ וְאֶל־שַׁעַר מִקְמוֹ: כ וְאָמְרוּ אֶל־
 זִקְנֵי עִירוֹ בְּגִנּוֹ זֶה סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה אֵינָנּוּ שָׁמַע בְּקִלְנוּ זוֹלָל וְסָבָא:
 כא וְרָגְמוּהוּ כָּל־אֲנָשֵׁי עִירוֹ בְּאֲבָנִים וְמָת וּבְעֶרְתָּ הָרַע מִקְרַבְךָ
 וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וִירָאוּ: ס [שני] כב וְכִי־יְהִיָּה בְּאִישׁ חֲטָא
 מִשְׁפֶּט־מוֹת וְהוֹמַת וְתִלִּית אֹתוֹ עַל־עֵץ: כג לֹא־תִלִּין נְבִלָתוֹ
 עַל־הָעֵץ כִּי־קָבֹר תִּקְבְּרֶנּוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי־קָלַלְתָּ אֱלֹהִים

דש"י

ממון אציו ומצקס לימודו ואינו מולא, ועומד צפרסת דרכים ומלסעס את
 הצריות, אמרה תורה ימות זכאי ואל ימות חייב: (כא) וכל ישראל ישמעו
 ויראו. מכאן שריך הכרזה צבית דין, פלוני נסקל על שהיה בן סורר ומורה:
 (כב) וכי יהיה באיש חטא משפט מות. סמיכות הפרשיות מגיד, שאס
 חסיד עליו אציו ואמו, סוף שילא לתרבות רעה ויעבור עזירות ויתחייב
 מיתה צבית דין: ותלית אותו על עץ. רבותינו אמרו, כל הנסקלין, נתלון,
 שנאמר כי קללת אלהים תלוי. והמצרך ה', צסקולה': (כג) כי קללת אלהים
 תלוי. זלולו של מלך הוא, שאדם עשוי צדמות דיוקנו וישראל הם צניו. משל
 לשני אחים תאומים שהיו דומין זה לזה, אחד נעשה מלך, ואחד נתפס

מתנוולת: (יד) והיה אם לא חפצת בה. הכתוב מצדך ססופך
 לשנאותה! לא תתעמר בה. לא תשתמש זה בלשון פרסי קורין לעצדות
 ושימוש, עימראה. מיסודו של רבי משה הדרשן למדתי כן: (יז) פי שנים.
 כנגד שני אחים! בכל אשר ימצא לו. מכאן שאין הצכור נוטל פי שנים
 צראוי לצא לאחר מיתת האב, כצמוחזק: (יח) סורר. סר מן הדרך: ומורה.
 מסרב צדצרי אציו, לשון ממרים: ויסרו אותו. מתרין צו צפני שלשה ומלקין
 אותו? בן סורר ומורה אינו חייב, עד שיגנוצ ויאכל תרטימר צטר וישתה חלי
 לוג יין. שנאמר זולל וסוצא, ונאמר³ אל תכי צסוצחי יין צזוללי צטר למו⁴.
 וצן סורר ומורה נהרג על שס סופו, הגיעה תורה לסוף דעתו, סוף שמכלה

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

“If a Man Commits a Sin...You Should Hang Him on a Gallows” (v. 22)

The Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1534-1572) used the above verse to eulogize Ramak (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, 1522-1570):
 והומת—Literally, this means, “when a man has a sin for which he is sentenced to death and he is put to death.” However since the word חטא (“sin”) can also mean “deficiency,” the Arizal rendered: “When a man is lacking any cause to be sentenced to death, then why is he put to death?”
 ותלית אותו על עץ—Literally this means, “you should hang him on the gallows.” However, the term “(ותלית)” can also be translated as “blame.” Thus the Arizal explained, when a person

devoid of sin, such as Ramak, passes away: “you should blame it on the עץ,” i.e. not on his own sins, which are lacking, but to the tree of knowledge (עץ הדעת), which caused death to be decreed upon the world.
 In other words, the passing of such a saintly person is devoid of any negative cause at all. In such a case, it is simply that God willed that death should occur in the world so that the righteous could enjoy the spiritual elevation that occurs when passing from one world to another.
 (See Likutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 132ff.)

🕎 RIGHTS OF A FIRSTBORN SON 🕎

21:15 **I**f a man has two wives, one whom he loves and the other whom he hates, and both the one whom he loves and the one whom he hates bear him sons, and the firstborn son is from the one whom he hates, ¹⁶ what will happen is:

- On the day (the father) bequeaths his property to his sons, he will not be able to give the son of the one whom he loves birthright precedence over the son of the one whom he hates, the firstborn son.
- ¹⁷ Rather, he must acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the one whom he hates, and give him a double share in all that he possesses, because he was (conceived) in his prime. He has the firstborn rights.

🕎 THE REBELLIOUS SON 🕎

21:18 **I**f a man has a deviant and rebellious son, who (steals, eats meat and drinks wine excessively and) does not listen to his father or mother's voice—and when they reprimand him (legally) he does not listen to them:

- ¹⁹ His father and his mother should take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gates (of justice) in his locality.
- ²⁰ They should say to the elders of his city, “This son of ours is deviant and rebellious! He does not listen to our voice! He is a binger and a boozier!”
- ²¹ All the people of his city should pelt him to death with stones, and you will eliminate the evil from among you.
- (The court should publicize what has happened so that) all Israel will hear (what happened) and be afraid.

🕎 HANGING & BURIAL 🕎

SECOND
READING

- ²² If a man commits a sin for which he is sentenced to death (by stoning), and he is put to death, you should hang him on a gallows (afterwards).
- ²³ You should not leave his body on the gallows overnight.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

THE RIGHTS OF THE FIRSTBORN (v. 15-17)

The Midrash teaches that God's initial choice to the appointment of priesthood, to serve as His ministers in the Holy Temple, were the firstborn. But when the firstborn sinned with the Golden Calf, God instead chose His priests from among the tribe of Levites who did not worship the calf (*Bamidbar Rabah* 6:2).

Thus, the *Tzemach Tzedek* (the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, 1789-1866) concluded that in the Messianic Era, when any remnant of the sin of the Golden Calf will finally be eradicated, the rights of priesthood will return to the firstborn (*Ohr haTorah, Mikeitz* p. 344a).

And this, explains the *Tzemach Tzedek*, is consistent with the kabalistic principle that in the future era, the “feminine” aspects of spirituality will transcend the “masculine aspects,” for then the firstborn (from the *mother's* womb) will become greater than the Levites (whose identity is determined by the *father*).

However, the *Arizal* (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1534-1572) differed on this matter, writing: “Those who are currently Levites will be the priests in the future era” (*Likutei Torah*, cited in *Tanya* ch. 50).

Thus, what will actually happen remains yet to be clarified....

(Based on *Sichas Erev Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5751, note 16; 20th Av, note 37)

תקברנה ביומא שהוא ארי על דהב קדם יי
 אצטלב ולא תסאב ית ארעך די יי אלהך
 ירב לך אחסנא: א לא תחזי ית תורא דאחוד
 או ית אמרה דטען ותתכבש מנהון אתבא
 תתיבנו לאחוד: ב ואם לא קריב אחוד לנתך
 ולא ידעת לה ותכנשנה לגו ביתך ויהי עמך
 עד דיתבע אחוד יתה ותתיבנה לה: ג וכן
 תעבד לחמרה וכן תעבד לבסותה וכן תעבד
 לכל אבדת אחוד די תיבד מנה ותשכחנה
 לית לך רשו לאתפסאה: ד לא תחזי ית
 חמרא דאחוד או תורה רמן בארמא
 ותתכבש מנהון אקמא תקים עמה: ה לא יהי
 תקון זין דגבר על אתתא ולא יתקן גבר
 בתקוני אתתא ארי מרחק קדם יי אלהך כל
 עבד אליו: ו ארי תערע קנא דצפרא קדמך
 בארמא בכל אילן או על ארעא אפרוחין או
 ביעין ואמא רבעא על אפרוחין או על ביעין
 לא תסב אמא על בנאי: ז שלחא תשלח ית
 אמא וית בנאי תסב לך בדיל דייטב לך

תלוי ולא תטמא את-אדמתך אשר יהנה אלהיך נתן לך
 נחלה: ס כב א לא-תראה את-שור אחיך או את-שיו
 נדחים והתעלמת מהם השב תשיבם לאחיד: ב ואם-לא
 קרוב אחיך אליך ולא ידעתו ואספתו אל-תוך ביתך והנה
 עמך עד דרש אחיך אתו והשבתו לו: ג וכן תעשה לחמרו
 וכן תעשה לשמלתו וכן תעשה לכל-אבדת אשר-
 תאבד ממנו ומצאתה לא תוכל להתעלם: ס ד לא-תראה
 את-חמור אחיך או שורו נפלים בדרך והתעלמת מהם הקם
 תקים עמו: ס ה לא-יהיה כלי-גבר על-אשה ולא-ילבש גבר
 שמלת אשה כי תועבת יהנה אלהיך כל-עשה אלה: פ
 ו כי יקרא *קן-צפור | לפניך בדרך בכל-עץ | או על-הארץ
 אפרחים או ביצים והאם רבצת על-האפרחים או על-
 הביצים לא-תקח האם על-הבנים: ז שלח תשלח את-האם
 ואת-הבנים תקח-לך למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים: ס ושליש

*יש גורסים ק' רבתי

רש"י

תקים. זו טעינה. לטעין משאוי שנפל מעליו: עמו. עס צעליו, אבל אם הלך
 וישב לו, ואמר לו הוֹאֵל ועליך מלוא אם רצית לטעון טעון, פטור: (ב) לא
 יהיה כלי גבר על אשה. שחכא דומה לאיש כדי שתלך זין האנשים, שאין
 זו אלא לשם ניאוף: ו לא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה. לילך ולישב זין הנשים.
 דבר אחר שלא ישיר שער הערוה ושער של צית השחי: כי תועבת. לא אסרה
 תורה אלא לזושה המציא לידי תועבה: (ו) כי יקרא. פרט למזומן: לא תקח
 האם. צעודה על צניה: (ז) למען ייטב לך. אם מלוא קלה שאין צה חסרון
 כים, אמרה תורה למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים, קל ומומר למתן שכרן של

לנשטיות ונתלכ, כל הרוחב אותו אומר המלך תלוי. כל קללה שבמקרא לשון
 הקל וזלזול, כמו וכוה קללני קללה נמרצת: (ח) והתעלמת. כוזב עין כאלו
 אינו רואה: לא תראה והתעלמת. לא תראה אותו שתעלם ממנו, זכו
 פשוטו. ורבותינו אמרו, פעמים שאתה מתעלם וכו': (ט) עד דרש אחיך.
 וכי תעלה על דעתך שיתנכו לו קודם שידרשהו, אלא דרשהו שלא יכא רמאי:
 והשבתו לו. שחכא צו השצה, שלא יאכל צציתך כדי דמיו ותצטעס ממנו.
 מכאן אמרו, כל דבר שעושה ואוכל ישעש ויאכל, ושאינו עושה ואוכל, ימכר:
 (ג) לא תוכל להתעלם. לכזוב עינך כאלו אינך רואה אותו: (ד) הקם

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

“AN ARTICLE OF MEN’S CLOTHING MAY NOT BE WORN BY A WOMAN” (v. 5)

The goal of the “Women’s Liberation” movement appears to be based on noble values: that a woman should not be given an inferior role to a man, for she too was created in the “image of God” (*Bereishis* 9:6), no less than man. In truth, however, “women’s lib” has brought about the *degradation* of women, by demeaning the unique talents and worth of women, suggesting that the only worthwhile choice is to act like someone else.

This is highlighted by the Torah’s commandment, “An article of men’s clothing may not be worn by a woman,” (and vice-versa). The significance of this concept extends well beyond the appropriateness of garments and clothing. The Torah is teaching us that a woman

cannot utilize her unique potential and enjoy the true satisfaction which that brings, by trying to be like a man.

A woman has the privileged task of imbuing her home with a truly Jewish atmosphere, and she alone has unique talents for rearing a family, thereby perpetuating the existence of the Jewish people.

After a woman has finished this task, there is no harm in her pursuing a career (amid the air of modesty, which is the hallmark of a Jewish woman). But her true pride and joy is surely not to be found by “liberating” herself from the talents unique to womanhood.

Femininity is not, God forbid, a weakness that needs to be “overcome,” but a Divine distinction to be nurtured and cherished.

(Based on *Sicha* of 6th Tishrei 5745)

- *Rather, you should bury him on that very day, for a hanging (corpse) is offensive to God (who created man in His image). Then you will not defile your land, which God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.*

🌀 CARE FOR ANOTHER'S PROPERTY 🌀

22

- ¹ *You should not watch your brother's ox or sheep straying, and turn a blind eye. You should return them to your brother.*
- ² *But if your brother is not near to you, or if you do not know him, you should bring it into your house and it should remain with you until your brother seeks it out. (If he proves to be the genuine owner) you should return it to him.*
- ³ *You should do the same with his donkey, you should do the same with his clothes, and you should do the same with any lost property of your brother which he has lost and you have found. You should not turn a blind eye to it.*
- ⁴ *You should not watch your brother's donkey or his ox fallen (under its load) on the road and turn a blind eye to him.*
- *(Rather,) you should pick up (the load) with him.*

🌀 CROSS-DRESSING 🌀

- ⁵ *An article of men's clothing may not be worn by a woman,*
- *A man may not wear an article of women's clothing.*

For whoever does these (things) is an abomination to God, your God.

🌀 SENDING AWAY THE MOTHER BIRD 🌀

22:6 **I**f you encounter a bird's nest in the street—on any tree, or on the ground—containing chicks or eggs, and the mother is sitting upon the chicks or upon the eggs:

- *You should not take the mother from upon the young.*
- ⁷ *You should always send away the mother, and then you may take the young for yourself.*

(This will be) for your own benefit, and you will live a long time.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **When may the mother bird not be taken? (v. 6)**

RASHI: While she is on her young.

● **What happens if the mother comes back? (v. 6)**

TALMUD: Even if the mother bird comes back four or five times before the young have been taken, one must send her away (*Chullin* 141a).

● **Why does the Torah promise that “you will live a long time” specifically in connection with this *mitzvah*? (v. 7)**

RASHI: If in the case of such an easy commandment, which involves no financial loss, the Torah states, “(This will be) for your own benefit and you will live a long time”—then how much more will one be rewarded for *mitzvos* that are more difficult [to observe].

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 **A VERY EASY MITZVAH (v. 6-7)**

Rashi writes (in his commentary to verse 7) that sending away the mother bird is a very easy *mitzvah* to perform, and it incurs no financial loss. However, this appears to be problematic, because:

a.) *Rashi* suggests that in sending away the mother bird no financial loss is incurred at all. But surely the value of the mother bird itself is lost? (In fact, the *Mishnah* states explicitly (*Chullin* 142a) that a small financial loss is incurred).

ותוריד יומין: ה ארי תבני ביתא חתא
 ותעבד תיקא לאנדך ולא תשוי חובת דין
 דקטול בביתך ארי יפל הנפל מנה: ט לא
 תזרע פרמך ערובין הלמא תסתאב דמעת
 זרעא די תזרע ועללת פרמא: י לא תרדי
 בתורא ובחמרא פחדא: יא לא תלבש
 שעטנא עמר וכתן מחבר פחדא:
 יב פרוספדין תעבד לך על ארבע פנפות

ה כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חֹדֶשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֵה לְנֹגֵד וְלֹא־תִשִּׂים דְּמַיִם
 בְּבֵיתְךָ כִּי־יִפֹּל הַנֶּפֶל מִמֶּנּוּ: ט לֹא־תִזְרַע כְּרֵמְךָ בְּלֵאִים פֶּן־
 תִּקְדָּשׁ הַמְּלֵאָה הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע וּתְבוֹאֵת הַפָּרֶם: ס י לֹא־
 תַחְרֹשׁ בְּשׂוֹרֶיךָ וּבַחֲמֵר יַחְדּוֹ: יא לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ שְׂעִטָּנוֹ צֶמֶר
 וּפְשָׁתָיִם יַחְדּוֹ: ס יב גְּדָלִים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ עַל־אַרְבַּע פְּנֵפוֹת

כ"ח

תקדש. כתרנומו חסחא. כל דבר הנחשב על האדם, בין לשבח כגון הקדש,
 בין לגנאי כגון איסור, נופל בו לשון קדש, כמו אל תגש בי כי קדשתך:
 המלאה. זה מילוי ותוספת שזרע מוסיף: (י) לא תחרוש בשור
 ובחמור. הוא הדין לכל שני מינים שזעולם, והוא הדין להנהיג יחד
 קשורים זוגים כהולכת שום משא: (יא) שעטנו. לשון עירוב. ורבותינו פירשו
 ששעטנא עמר וכתן מחבר פחדא: (יב) גדלים תעשה לך. אף מן הכלאים. לך סמך הכתוב:

מאות חמורות: (ח) כי תבנה בית חדש. אם קיימת מלוא שלוח הקן סופך
 לבנות בית חדש ותקיים מלוא מעקה, שמלוא גוררת מלוא, ותגיע לכרם
 ושדה ולצגדים נאים. לך נסמכו פרשיות הללו: מעקה. גדר סביב לגג,
 ואונקלוס תרגם תיקא, כעין תיק שמשמר מה שצחוכו: כי יפול הנופל. ראוי
 זה ליפול ואף על פי כן לא תתגלגל מיתחו על ידך, שמגלגלין זכות על ידי
 זכאי וחובה על ידי חייב: (ט) בלאים. חטא ושעורה וחרץ במפולת יד: פן

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does the *mitzvah* of guardrails follow after the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird? (v. 8)

RASHI: If you have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird, you will eventually build a new house and fulfill the *mitzvah* of constructing a guardrail, because one *mitzvah* leads to another. You will then come to possess a vineyard (v. 9), a field (v. 10), and fine clothes (v. 11). Therefore, these passages are juxtaposed.

TORAS MENACHEM

b.) How can *Rashi* maintain that sending away the mother bird is an example of one of the easiest of the *mitzvos* of the Torah, when ultimately some form of physical effort is required? Surely a *mitzvah* such as the recital of the *Shema*, which involves merely the uttering of words, is easier than the act of sending away the mother bird?

A further issue here concerns *Rashi's* explanation (v. 8) as to why the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird is followed in the Torah by the *mitzvos* of i.) constructing guardrails (v. 8), ii.) not mixing seeds in one's vineyard (v. 9), iii.) not plowing a field with two different types of animals (v. 10), and iv.) not wearing garments made of wool and linen (v. 11)—because “one *mitzvah* leads to another” (see *Classic Questions* to v. 8). For, while *Rashi* does indeed stress that the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird will lead to the *mitzvah* of constructing a guardrail, he then continues: “You will then come to possess a vineyard, a field, and fine clothes.” Why did *Rashi* not connect these acquisitions with the *mitzvos* they entail: the *mitzvah* of not planting mixed seeds, the *mitzvah* of avoiding mixed plowing and the *mitzvah* of avoiding *shatnez*?

THE EXPLANATION

a.) The **Talmud** maintained that it is a *mitzvah* to send the mother bird away repeatedly, if necessary, in order that she not see her young being taken away (see *Classic Questions* to v. 6, above). *Rashi*, however, who limited himself to a literal interpretation of scripture, rejected this idea. For the Torah states explicitly: “You should not take the mother from upon the young,” indicating that this prohibition only applies as long as the mother is upon her young.

Thus, according to *Rashi*, when the mother bird returns—as is extremely likely—it would be permissible to take the mother bird too, for at that point she would not be on her young.

(Even if one wishes to argue that according to *Rashi* this *mitzvah* is intended to prevent a person from being cruel [and that therefore the bird

would have to be sent away repeatedly], *Rashi* would maintain that the main cruelty is taking the young from a mother while she is roosting on them—and this is what the Torah wishes to avoid here.)

And this explains quite simply why *Rashi* wrote that this *mitzvah* involves no financial loss at all, because after sending away the mother bird and taking the chicks, the person would still be able to take the mother bird as well, when she returns a short while later.

b.) At the literal level, this *mitzvah* is easier than reciting the *Shema*. Reciting the *Shema* can sometimes be difficult to carry out, e.g. when one is busy with another matter and the time for *Shema* is passing. In contrast, sending away the mother bird is always related to what one is doing at that moment, namely, collecting birds and eggs. Therefore, this *mitzvah* is even easier than reciting the *Shema*, as it is not only simple and effortless to perform and incurs no financial loss, but furthermore, it always comes at a convenient time.

c.) In addition to the physical rewards that, generally speaking, every *mitzvah* brings, there is also the spiritual “reward” that “one *mitzvah* leads to another.” However, at the literal level, it is only logical that one *mitzvah* would lead to another if both the *mitzvos* are similar in nature.

The *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird is clearly similar to the *mitzvah* of erecting guardrails, since: i.) They are both *mitzvos* associated with the acquisition of property (new birds and new houses). ii.) Both *mitzvos* are aimed at saving another creature from pain.

Thus, *Rashi* writes (in his commentary to verse 8) that the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird not only brings the physical reward that “you will eventually build a new house,” but in addition, it brings the spiritual reward of the *mitzvah* of constructing a guardrail.

However, the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird is not similar to the laws of planting mixed seeds, plowing with different types of animals or wearing *shatnez*. Therefore, *Rashi* could not suggest that a person

🕍 CONSTRUCTING GUARDRAILS 🕍

THIRD
READING

- ⁸ When you build a new house, you must make a guardrail for your roof.
- Do not allow blood (to be spilled) in your house, when one (who is destined) to fall, falls from (your unprotected roof).

🕍 FORBIDDEN MIXTURES 🕍

- ⁹ You may not sow your vineyard with a mixture of seeds, for then the (seeds') growth and even the seed that you planted together with the (fruit) yield of the vineyard will become forbidden.
- ¹⁰ You may not plow with an ox and a donkey together.
- ¹¹ You may not wear *shatnez*, (which is) wool and linen together.
- ¹² You should make yourself twisted threads (*tzitzis*), on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself, (even from a mixture of wool and linen).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why may one not plow with an ox and a donkey? (v. 10)

RAMBAN: Because it would lead to the further prohibition of crossbreeding species (*Vayikra* 19:19). For the farmer will house the ox and the donkey together, and they will breed with each other.

● To what extent may wool and linen not be mixed? (v. 11)

RASHI: If wool and linen are combed together, and spun into thread and woven together into cloth, then it is Biblically forbidden [to wear

a garment that is made from this cloth] (as quoted in *Tur, Yoreh De'ah* ch. 300).

RABEINU TAM: Woolen thread and linen thread that were prepared separately will become Biblically prohibited if they are woven together as one cloth (*Tosfos* *ibid.*).

RAMBAM: When wool and linen are bound together in any way whatsoever, the product is prohibited by the Torah (*Laws of Forbidden Mixtures* 10:2).

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would come to observe these *mitzvos* as a result of sending away the mother bird. Nevertheless, the fact that the Torah placed these precepts alongside the others did indicate to *Rashi* that they are connected in terms of physical reward: "If you have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of sending away the mother bird...you will then come to possess a vineyard, a field, and fine clothes."

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 133ff.)

🕍 FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (v. 9-11)

The three prohibited mixtures mentioned in verses 9-11 share a similar theme, but a key distinction between them concerns the *extent* of the mixture. With the mixing of seeds (v. 9), the result is a new entity of a single, forbidden crop, which grows together and becomes harvested together as one. However, in the case of plowing with an ox and a donkey together (v. 10), no actual mixing results, for after the plowing is complete, the ox remains an ox and the donkey, a donkey.

We may therefore ask the question: Which of these two types of mixtures does the prohibition of *shatnez* (v. 11) most resemble?

Perhaps we could argue that this was the source of contention between **Rashi** and **Rabeinu Tam**. *Rashi* understood that *shatnez* most resembled the prohibition of mixed seeds, where two crops merge into one. Therefore, he wrote that, in order for a garment to become *shatnez*, the fibers must be totally mixed as one through all the stages: combing, spinning and weaving.

However, *Rabeinu Tam* understood that *shatnez* resembles the prohibition of plowing with an ox and a donkey together, where the two

elements retain their individual identity. Therefore, he ruled that woolen thread and linen thread that were prepared separately will become Biblically prohibited if they are woven together as one cloth.

Rabeinu Tam's reasoning appears to be the more obvious of the two, since the Torah actually places the prohibition of *shatnez* (v. 11) *directly after* the prohibition of plowing with an ox and donkey together (v. 10), suggesting that they are linked. Furthermore, these two verses constitute one single paragraph in the Hebrew text of the Torah, which stresses their connection further; whereas the prohibition of sowing mixed seeds (v. 9) is recorded separately, in the previous paragraph, suggesting that it is of a different nature.

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

"MAKE A GUARDRAIL FOR YOUR ROOF" (v. 8)

A roof, being the highest part of any structure, alludes to the ego, which gives a person an elevated impression of himself. Thus, in order to prevent a person from "falling off his roof," by allowing his feelings of swollen self-esteem to degenerate into selfishness, we are warned to "make a guardrail for your roof"—to carefully control and temper the ego with "guardrails"!

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 140)

בְּסוֹתֶךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּבְכְּסֶה-בָּהּ: ס יג כִּי-יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וּבָא אֵלֶיהָ וּשְׁנָאָהּ: יד וְשֵׁם לָהּ עֲלִילַת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹעֵצָא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע וְאָמַר אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת לָקַחְתִּי וְאֶקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא-מָצְאָתִי לָהּ בְּתוּלִים: טו וְלָקַח אָבִי הַנְּעֶרָ* וְאָמַר וְהוֹעֵצָאוּ אֶת-בְּתוּלֵי הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הָעִיר הַשְּׁעֵרָה: טז וְאָמַר אָבִי הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-הַזִּקְנָיִם אֶת-בְּתִי נָתַתִּי לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה לְאִשָּׁה וּשְׁנָאָהּ: יז וְהִנֵּה-הוּא שֵׁם עֲלִילַת דְּבָרִים יֹאמַר לֹא-מָצְאָתִי לְבַתְּךָ בְּתוּלִים וְאֵלֶּה בְּתוּלֵי בְּתִי וּפְרָשׁוּ הַשְּׂמֵלָה לְפָנַי וּזְקַנֵי הָעִיר: יח וְלָקְחוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר-הַהִוא אֶת-הָאִישׁ וְיִסְרוּ אוֹתוֹ: יט וְעָנְשׁוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵאֵה כֶּסֶף וְנָתַנּוּ לְאָבִי הַנְּעֶרָה כִּי הוֹעֵצָא שֵׁם רָע עַל בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלוֹ-תִהְיֶה לְאִשָּׁה לֹא-יֻכַל לְשַׁלְּחָהּ כָּל-יָמֶיהָ: ס כ וְאִם-אָמַת הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא-נִמְצְאוּ בְּתוּלִים לְנְעֶרָ*: כא וְהוֹעֵצָאוּ אֶת-הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-פֶּתַח בֵּית-אֲבִיהָ וּסְקְלוּהָ אַנְשֵׁי עִירָהּ בְּאֲבָנִים וּמָתָה כִּי-עָשְׂתָה נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזִנוּת בֵּית

בְּסוֹתֶךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּבְכְּסֶה-בָּהּ: ס יג כִּי-יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וּבָא אֵלֶיהָ וּשְׁנָאָהּ: יד וְשֵׁם לָהּ עֲלִילַת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹעֵצָא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע וְאָמַר אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת לָקַחְתִּי וְאֶקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא-מָצְאָתִי לָהּ בְּתוּלִים: טו וְלָקַח אָבִי הַנְּעֶרָ* וְאָמַר וְהוֹעֵצָאוּ אֶת-בְּתוּלֵי הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הָעִיר הַשְּׁעֵרָה: טז וְאָמַר אָבִי הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-הַזִּקְנָיִם אֶת-בְּתִי נָתַתִּי לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה לְאִשָּׁה וּשְׁנָאָהּ: יז וְהִנֵּה-הוּא שֵׁם עֲלִילַת דְּבָרִים יֹאמַר לֹא-מָצְאָתִי לְבַתְּךָ בְּתוּלִים וְאֵלֶּה בְּתוּלֵי בְּתִי וּפְרָשׁוּ הַשְּׂמֵלָה לְפָנַי וּזְקַנֵי הָעִיר: יח וְלָקְחוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר-הַהִוא אֶת-הָאִישׁ וְיִסְרוּ אוֹתוֹ: יט וְעָנְשׁוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵאֵה כֶּסֶף וְנָתַנּוּ לְאָבִי הַנְּעֶרָה כִּי הוֹעֵצָא שֵׁם רָע עַל בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלוֹ-תִהְיֶה לְאִשָּׁה לֹא-יֻכַל לְשַׁלְּחָהּ כָּל-יָמֶיהָ: ס כ וְאִם-אָמַת הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא-נִמְצְאוּ בְּתוּלִים לְנְעֶרָ*: כא וְהוֹעֵצָאוּ אֶת-הַנְּעֶרָ* אֶל-פֶּתַח בֵּית-אֲבִיהָ וּסְקְלוּהָ אַנְשֵׁי עִירָהּ בְּאֲבָנִים וּמָתָה כִּי-עָשְׂתָה נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזִנוּת בֵּית

*קרי הנערה **קרי לנערה

כ"ט

שחין רשות לאשה לדבר בפני האישה? (יז) ופרשו השמלה. כרי זה משל, מחורין הדברים כשמלה? (יח) ויסרו אותו. מלקות? (כ) ואם אמת היה הדבר. צעדים והתרחק שנתה לאחר איכוסין? (כא) אל פתח בית אביה. ראו גידולים שגדלם? לזנות בית אביה. כמו צצית אביה: וסקלחה אנשי

(יג) ובא אליה ושנאה. סופו: (יד) ושם לה עלילות דברים. עזירה גוררת עזירה, עזר על לא תשנא! סופו לזכר לידי לשון הרע? את האשה הזאת. מכאן שחין אומר דבר אלא בפני דין? (טו) אבי הנערה ואמה. מי שגדלו גידולים הרעים יצזו עליה: (טז) ואמר אבי הנערה. מלמד

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Rashi, however, agreed that the inclusion of the two prohibitions (shatnez and plowing with an ox and donkey) in one paragraph suggests that they are of a similar nature. However, where he differed with Rabeinu Tam was in his understanding of why plowing with two different animals

was prohibited. Rashi followed the reasoning of Ramban, that the Torah prohibited plowing with an ox and donkey together because it would lead to the further prohibition of crossbreeding species (Vayikra 19:19). Therefore, when Rashi saw that the Torah placed the two prohibitions of

	WOOL AND LINEN FIBERS COMBED TOGETHER	WOOL AND LINEN FIBERS SPUN TOGETHER	WOOL AND LINEN THREAD WOVEN TOGETHER	IS IT SHATNEZ, ACCORDING TO RASHI?	IS IT SHATNEZ, ACCORDING TO RABEINU TAM?	IS IT SHATNEZ, ACCORDING TO RAMBAM?
CASE 1	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
CASE 2	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
CASE 3	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
CASE 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

🕎 DEFAMATION OF A MARRIED WOMAN 🕎

22:13 **I**f a man takes a wife, is intimate with her and hates her,¹⁴ and he makes scandalous accusations against her and defames her name, saying, “I took this woman, and when I came to her, I did not find proof of her virginity.”¹⁵ Then the girl’s father and her mother should take proof of the girl’s virginity, and bring it out to the elders of the city, at the gate(s) of justice):

- ¹⁶ The girl’s father should say to the elders, “I gave my daughter to this man as a wife, and he hated her. ¹⁷ He has now made scandalous accusations, saying, ‘I did not find proof of your daughter’s virginity.’ But here is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity!”
- (If the facts are as clear) before the elders of the city, (like a) garment (which is) spread out:
 - ¹⁸ The elders of the city should take the man and reprimand him (with lashes).
 - ¹⁹ They should fine him one hundred silver (shekels), because he defamed the name of a Jewish virgin, and give it to the girl’s father.
 - She must remain as his wife. He may not send her away all the days of his life.
- ²⁰ But if these words (of the husband) were true, and it was proven that the girl was not a virgin (and she had committed adultery after she was betrothed):
 - ²¹ They should take the girl out to the entrance of her father’s house, and the people of her city should pelt her to death with stones—because she did a disgraceful act in Israel, committing adultery (in) her father’s house—and you will eliminate the evil from among you.

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shatnez and plowing with two different animals side by side in the same paragraph, he concluded that all forbidden mixtures are fundamentally based on the same idea—making a new entity from the mixture. And just as the Torah prohibits plowing with two species together, for fear they will merge into a new entity (through cross-breeding), so too, we are prohibited to wear a garment of wool and linen fibers that have merged into a new entity, i.e. bound together during *all three* processes of combing, spinning and weaving.

THE VIEW OF RAMBAM

Rambam ruled that if wool and linen are combined in any way, the result is *shatnez*. For example, if wool and linen raw fibers were only combed together (and not spun or woven) and then pressed into felt, it would be *shatnez* according to **Rambam**.

Thus, **Rambam** took a position which partially accepted the arguments of both **Rashi** and **Rabeinu Tam**. **Rashi** held that *shatnez* is the creation of a new entity, and that therefore the prohibition applies only when the wool and linen are combined at *all* stages of the process (combing, spinning and weaving). **Rabeinu Tam** prohibited only the act of combining wool and linen *after* they have been processed (combed, etc.) separately. **Rambam** (like **Rashi**) defined *shatnez* as a combination even in the formative stages, but deemed one act of combination sufficient (like **Rabeinu Tam**).*

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 123ff.)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“I GAVE MY DAUGHTER TO THIS MAN...” (v. 16)

Our Sages learned from the verse, “I gave my daughter to this man” (v. 16), that a father may betroth his daughter to a man while she is still a child (*Kidushin* 3b).

According to Chasidic teachings, the concept of marriage between a man and woman on earth is a physical manifestation of the union between God and the Jewish people.

The fact that a father may betroth his daughter while she is a child teaches us the power of God’s love for the Jewish people, that He wishes to “betroth” us with an eternal spiritual bond, even though we are but a “child” compared to Him.

Why was this concept recorded here, amid the laws of defamation? Defamation is an allusion to exile, as we find that the spies brought about the first “exile” through defaming the Land of Israel. So the Torah recorded the law of child betrothal here, to teach us that even amid the darkest moments of exile, God remains loyally betrothed to the Jewish people—and from this love the Redemption will blossom.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5745)

* **Rambam** shared the outlook of **Rashi** and **Rabeinu Tam**, that the prohibition of *shatnez* is learned from the “adjacent” prohibition of plowing with mixed species together. But, due to the fact that **Rambam** understood the latter prohibition differently, he therefore made a dissenting ruling with regard to *shatnez*. In his *Laws of Forbidden Mixtures* (9:2), **Rambam** writes, “It is permitted to place two different species in one enclosed area, and if one sees them mating, one is not required to separate them,” i.e. he saw no problem with the outcome of breeding two species together. Thus, it is not the creation of a new entity which **Rambam** perceived as problematic, but rather the act (alone) of causing two different species to mate. From this, he came to a similar conclusion about *shatnez*: that the Torah prohibits wearing a garment that has undergone any act of mixing wool and linen together (be it during the combing, spinning or weaving), even if they have not been completely combined into a new entity.

גבר דשכב עם אתתא אתת גבר ויתקמלון
 אף תרויהון גברא דשכב עם אתתא ואתתא
 ותפלי עבד דביש מישראל: כג ארי תהי
 עולמתא בתולתא דמארסא לגבר וישכבה
 גבר בקרתא וישכוב עמה: כד ותפקון ית
 תרויהון לתרע קרתא תהיא ותרגמון יתהון
 באבנאי וימותון ית עולמתא על עסק די
 לא צוחת בקרתא וית גברא על עסק דעני
 ית אתת חברה ותפלי עבד דביש מבינד:
 כה ואם בחקלא ישכח גבר ית עולמתא
 דמארסא ויתקף בה גברא וישכוב עמה
 ויתקמיל גברא דשכב עמה בלחודוהי:
 כו ולעולמתא לא תעבד מדעם לית
 לעולמתא חובת דין דקמול ארי כמא דיקום
 גברא על חברה ויקטלה נפש פן פתגמא
 הדין: כז ארי בחקלא אשכחה צוחת
 עולמתא דמארסא ולית דפריק לה: כח ארי
 ישכח גבר עולמתא בתולתא די לא מארסא
 ויתדנה וישכוב עמה וישתכחון: כט ויתן
 גברא דישכוב עמה לאבנהא דעולמתא
 חמשין סלעין דכסף ולה תהי לאנתו חלף די
 עניה לית לה רשו למפטרנה כל יומוהי:
 א לא יסב גבר ית אתת אבנהי ולא יגלי
 בנפא דאבנהי: ב לא ידפי דפסיק ודמחבל
 למעל בקהלא דיי: ג לא ידפי ממזרא למעל
 בקהלא דיי אף דרא עשיראה לא ידפי לה
 למעל בקהלא דיי: ד לא ידבון עמונאי
 ומואבאי למעל בקהלא דיי אף דרא
 עשיראה לא ידפי להון למעל בקהלא דיי
 עד עלם: ה על עסק די לא ערעו יתכון
 בלחמא ובמיא בארשא במפקבון ממצרים
 ודי אגר עלך ית בלעם בר בעור מפתור

אביה ובערת הרע מקרבך: ס כג כי ימצא איש שכב עם
 אשה בעלת בעל ומתו גם שניהם האיש השכב עם האשה
 והאשה ובערת הרע מישראל: ס כג כי יהיה נער בתולה
 מארשה לאיש ומצאה איש בעיר ושכב עמה: כד והוצאתם
 את שניהם אל שער העיר והוא וסקלתם אתם באבנים
 ומתו את הנער על דבר אשר לא צעקה בעיר ואת האיש
 על דבר אשר ענה את אשת רעהו ובערת הרע מקרבך: ס
 כה ואם בשדה ימצא האיש את הנער המארשה והחזיק
 בה האיש ושכב עמה ומת האיש אשר שכב עמה לבדו:
 כו ולנער לא תעשה דבר אין לנער חטא מות כי כאשר יקום
 איש על רעהו ורצחו נפש פן הדבר הזה: כז כי בשדה
 מצאה צעקה הנער המארשה ואין מושיע לה: ס כח כי
 ימצא איש נער בתולה אשר לא ארשה ותפשה ושכב עמה
 ונמצאו: כט ונתן האיש השכב עמה לאבי הנער חמשים כסף
 ולות תהיה לאשה תחת אשר ענה לא יוכל שלחה כל ימיו:
 ס כג א לא יקח איש את אשת אביו ולא יגלה בנה אביו: ס
 ד לא יבא פצוע דבא וברות שפכה בקהל יהוה: ס ג לא
 יבא ממזר בקהל יהוה גם דור עשירי לא יבא לו בקהל
 יהוה: ס ד לא יבא עמוני ומואבי בקהל יהוה גם דור עשירי
 לא יבא להם בקהל יהוה עד עולם: ה על דבר אשר לא
 קדמו אתכם בלחם ובמים בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים ואשר

*קרי נערה *הנערה *ולנערה *לנערה - **מחובתי וכותי לחזירי בכאן פסק הדין של רבנו הזקן, בעל התניא - פוסק בנסתר דתורה - והשוויע - פוסק בנגלה דתורה - לכתוב פצוע דכא באל"ף לבסוף, וכמו שהובא בשו"ת שארית יהודא סי' ט"ז לאחי רבנו הזקן (ונקבצו הידיעות בזה בס' משנת אברהם סי' ל"ב). ושמעתי מכ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע אשר בהיותו לפני מלחמה העולמית הראשונה בעיר ווארמס, ראה שם הס"ת שקבלה בידם שכתבה מהרי"ם מרוסנברג וכתוב שם כ"ל, וכן ראה ג"כ בס"ת בפראג שע"פ הקבלה בידם מדור דור שהגיהה עורא הסופר, גם באוצר הספרים וכת"י של מר ששון בלונדון נמצאים שם כתבי יד עתיקים (תנ"ך זכנדו של הרשב"א, תנ"ך בכת"י של תלמידי הרשב"א בעל המחבר סי' מגדל עור, חומש דמשק שנכתב לפני אלף ומאה שנה, חומש תנ"ך שנכתב לפני חמש מאות שנה, וכן תנ"ך שנכתב בערך חמש מאות שנה, וכן כת"י חומש תימני ג"כ מתקופה הרי"א וראה לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 454) ובכולם כתוב דכא באל"ף. ולא עוד, אלא שבכת"י תנ"ך של המחבר מגדל עור ה"י כתוב דכא בה"א ובעל הספר מגדל עור מחזק בעצמו וכתב ותיקן בידו באל"ף" (לקו"ש חכ"ס ע' 444. וראה גם בשו"ת דברי נחמיה דף נט, ג. הובאו בחוספות לרש"י אדה"ז חלק ה-ו עמ' 1898, וקצות השולחן, בבדי-השולחן טו"ס ע"א 19)

כ"ט

לקוחין ואין קידושין תופסין צב"ג: ולא יגלה בנה אביו. שומרת יצם של אציו
 הראוי לה אציו. והרי כבר הוזכר עליה משום ערות אחי אציו⁴, אלא לעזור על
 זו צני לכוין⁵, ולסמוך לה לא יצא ממזר, ללמד שאין ממזר אלא מחייבי כריתות
 וקל וחומר מחייבי מיתות בית דין, שאין צעירות מיתת בית דין שאין צב כרת⁶:
 (ג) פצוע דכה⁶. שנפלו או שנכחו ציזים שלו⁷: וברות שפכה. שנכרת הכי
 ושזו חינו יורה קילוח זרע אלא שופך ושותת ואינו מוליד⁷: (ג) לא יבא ממזר
 בקהל ה'. לא ישא ישראלית⁸: (ד) לא יבא עמוני. לא ישא ישראלית⁸: (ס) על

עירה. צמעמד כל אנשי עירה: (כז) ומתו גם שניהם. להוליא מעשה חדוסי¹
 שאין האשה נהנית מהם: גם. לרבות הצאים מאחריהם (ס"א מאחריהם). דבר
 אחר גם שניהם לרבות את הולד, שאם היתה מעוברת אין ממתנין לה עד
 שתלד²: (כג) ומצאה איש בעיר. לפיכך שכז עמה, פרצה קוראה, לגנז הא
 אלו ישצה צביתה לא אירע לה! (כו) כי כאשר יקום וגו'. לפי פשוטו זכו
 משמעו, כי אנוסה היא וצחקה עמד עליה כאדם העומד על חצרו להרגו.
 ורצותיו דרשו צו הכי זה צא ללמד ונמלא למד וכו': (ה) לא יקח. אין לו צב

❧ VIOLATIONS OF INTIMACY ❧

- ²² *If a man is found lying with a married woman, both of them must die—the man lying with the woman and the woman. Thus you will eliminate the evil from Israel.*
- ²³ *If there is a virgin girl betrothed to a man, and (another) man finds her (lurking) in the city, and lies with her, ²⁴ you should take them both out to the gate of that city, and you should pelt them both to death with stones—the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he violated his fellow's wife. Thus you will eliminate the evil from Israel.*
- ²⁵ *But if a man finds the betrothed girl in a field, and the man overpowers her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her should die. ²⁶ To the girl, you should do nothing. The girl did not commit a sin deserving of death, for in this case (the girl was forcibly coerced) like a man who assaults his fellow and murders him, ²⁷ and since he found her in a field, there was nobody to save the betrothed girl when she cried out.*
- ²⁸ *If a man finds a virgin girl who was not betrothed, takes hold of her and lies with her, and they are found:

 - ²⁹ *The man who lay with her must give fifty (shekels of) silver to the girl's father, because he violated her.*
 - *She must become his wife.*
 - *He may not send her away all the days of his life.**

❧ PROHIBITED MARRIAGES ❧

23

- ¹ *A man may not marry his father's wife.*
- *One may not uncover the clothing of (a woman destined for) his father (in Levirate marriage).*
- ² *(A man) with damaged testicles or whose phallus is severed, may not (marry a Jewish woman and) enter the congregation of God.*
- ³ *A mamzer* may not (marry a Jewish woman and) enter the congregation of God. Even his tenth generation may not enter the congregation of God.*
- ⁴ *An Amonite or Mo'abite may not (convert and marry a Jewish woman and) enter the congregation of God. Even their tenth generation may not enter the congregation of God, ⁵ because of the (persuasive) talk (of the Mo'abite women that led you to sin**, and because)*

TORAS MENACHEM

❧ The Last Word ❧

Surgical intervention for the treatment of an enlarged prostate gland, the lowering of an undescended testicle into the scrotum or scrotal hernia often involves explicit scriptural prohibitions against severing and disconnecting seminal organs (v. 2), even though alternative techniques may be permissible, without reservation. In any of these areas it is thus crucial that a Rabbi who is qualified to rule in these matters be consulted.

If there were surgeons who would be willing to testify publicly that they had successfully carried out prostate surgery without disconnecting the spermatic ducts, this would almost certainly influence other surgeons to do likewise. Publicity of this kind is worthwhile even if the possible results are limited.

(Based on Sefer Haminhagim p. 84)

*A person born of an adulterous or incestuous union (but not one born simply out of wedlock).

**See Bamidbar 25:1-2.

אָרַם הִי עַל פֶּרֶת לְלִפְיֹתֶיךָ: וְיִלְאָ אֲבָא יִי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְקַבְּלָא מִן בְּלִעַם וְחַפְּדָּי יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ
 ית לְוַסְיִין לְבִרְכֹן אֲרִי רַחֲמֶיךָ יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 וְלֹא תִתְבַּע שְׁלֹמֹהוֹן וְטַבְתְּהוֹן כֹּל יוֹמֶיךָ
 לְעַלְמִ: הִי לֹא תִרְחַק אֲדוּמָאָה אֲרִי אַחֲוֶיךָ הוּא
 לֹא תִרְחַק מִצְרָאָה אֲרִי דִיר הוּיִתָּא בְּאַרְעָה:
 ט בְּגִין דִּי יִתְּלִידוּ לְהוֹן דְּרָא תְּלִיתָאָה יִרְכִי
 לְהוֹן לְמַעַל בְּקַהְלָא דִּי: י אֲרִי תַפּוּק
 מִשְׁרִיתָא עַל בְּעֵלֵי דְבִבְךָ וְתַסְתַּמַּר מִכָּל
 מַדְעַם בִּישׁ: יא אֲרִי יְהִי כִּד גְּבַר דִּי לֹא יְהִי
 דְּכִי מְקַרְהָ לִילִיא וְנִפּוּק לְמַבְרָא לְמִשְׁרִיתָא
 לֹא יַעוּל לְגוּ מִשְׁרִיתָא: יב וְיְהִי לְמַפְנֵי רַמְשָׂא
 וְסָחִי בְּמִיא וְכַמְעַל שְׁמִשָּׂא יַעוּל לְגוּ
 מִשְׁרִיתָא: יג וְאַתֵּר מִתְקַן יְהִי לְךָ מְבָרָא
 לְמִשְׁרִיתָא וְתַפּוּק תַּמָּן לְבִרְא: יד וְסַבְתָּא תְּהִי
 לְךָ עַל וַיִּנְדָּ וְיְהִי בְּמַפְקָךָ לְבִרְא וְתַחֲפַר בְּהָ

שָׂכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת־בְּלִעַם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֲרַם נְהַרִים לְקַלְלָךָ:
 וְלֹא־אָבָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַ אֶל־בְּלִעַם וַיַּהֲפֹךְ יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת־הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָה כִּי אָהַבְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 וְלֹא־תִדְרָשׁ שְׁלָמָם וְטַבְתָּם כָּל־יְמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם: ט (ורביעי) ה לֹא־
 תִתְעַב אֲדָמִי כִּי אַחֲוֶיךָ הוּא לֹא־תִתְעַב מִצְרֵי כִּי־נָגַר הֵייתָ
 בְּאַרְצוֹ: ט בָּנִים אֲשֶׁר־יִוָּלְדוּ לָהֶם דּוֹר שְׁלִישִׁי יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקַהֲל
 יְהוָה: ט כִּי־תֵצֵא מִחֲנֶה עַל־אֵיבֶיךָ וְנִשְׁמַרְתָּ מִכָּל דְּבַר רָע:
 יא כִּי־יְהִיֶּה בְךָ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יְהִיֶּה טְהוֹר מְקַרְהֵ לִילָה וַיֵּצֵא
 אֶל־מַחֲוִין לְמַחֲנֶה לֹא יָבֹא אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה: יב וְהָיָה לְפָנֹת־
 עָרֵב יִרְחִין בְּמַיִם וְכָבֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָבֹא אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה: יג וְיָד
 תְּהִיֶּה לְךָ מַחֲוִין לְמַחֲנֶה וַיֵּצֵאתָ שָׁמָּה חוּץ: יד וַיִּתֵּד תְּהִיֶּה לְךָ

כש"י

וכמחטיאו מוֹיָאוּ מן העולם הזה ומן העולם הבא, לפיכך אדום שקדמס
 צהרצ לא נתעצ וכן מזרס טטצטוס, ואלו שהחטיאוֹס נתעצו: (י) בי תצא
 וגו' ונשמרת. שהטטן מקטרג טשטת הסכנה: (יא) מקרה לילה. דבר
 הכתוב טכוו: ויצא אל מחוץ למחנה. זו מלוא עשה: לא יבא אל
 תוך המחנה. זו מלוא לא תעשה. ואסור ליכנס למחנה לוי, וכל שכן
 למחנה טכני: (יב) והיה לפנות ערב. סמוך להערצ טשטו יטצול, טאינו
 טכור צלל הערצ טמש: (יג) ויד תהיה לך. כתרגומו, כמו איש על ידו:

דבר. על העלכ טיעלו אהכס להחטיאכס: בדרך. כשהייתס צטירוף:
 (ז) לא תדרוש שלומם. מכלל טנאמר² עמך ישצ צקרצך יכול אף זה כן,
 תלמוד לומר לא תדרוש שלומם: (ח) לא תתעב אדומי. לגמרי ואף על פי
 טראוי לך לתעצו טילא צהרצ לקראתך: לא תתעב מצרי. מכל וכל אף על
 פי טזרקו זכורכס ליאור. מה טעס, טהיו לכס אכסניא טשטת דחצק. לפיכך:
 (ט) בנים אשר יולדו להם דור שלישי. וטאר אומות מוטרין מיד. טא
 למדת טהמטיא לאדס קטש לו מן הבורגו, טהבורגו הורגו טעולס טזה,

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“WHEN YOU GO OUT AS A CAMP...” (v. 10)

What makes servicemen particularly receptive to the basic approach of Torah-true Judaism is, first of all, the very basic principle on which the military depends, namely obedience and discipline in the execution of an order by his commanding officer. Even though in civilian life a private may be superior to his C.O., the order must be executed promptly, whether or not the soldier understands its significance. This, of course, corresponds to the principle of *na'aseh v'nishma*, the condition on which Jews accepted the Torah and *mitzvos* from the Supreme Commander, the Giver of the Torah and *mitzvos*.

A further basic point in military life is the fact that a soldier cannot argue that his personal conduct and whether or not he obeys an order is his private affair, and he is prepared to suffer the consequences, etc. Whether he realizes it or not, his conduct may have implications for his entire unit and all the military. In case of an emergency or war, the personal conduct of a single soldier could very seriously affect his platoon and brigade and division and the entire military operation, the whole army and country. Thus it is not just a question of one

soldier's personal moral attitude; it is of vital importance to the whole army, sometimes even in time of peace.

Applying the analogy to Jewish life, it becomes quite evident how vitally important is every Jew's commitment to Torah and *mitzvos* in his personal life and in spreading *Yiddishkeit* to the fullest extent of his influence. It may be added that the Jewish people live in a state of emergency, what with the general atmosphere of trends and ideas which are inimical to the Torah way, and a Jew having to fight to overcome all and sundry alien forces which tend to undermine his spiritual, hence also physical, existence.

In other words, every Jew must consider himself a "soldier" in God's Army (*Tzivos Hashem*) and be on a constant alert to spread the light of the Torah and *mitzvos*, until the time when "God's Glory will be revealed, and all flesh shall see" (Isaiah 40:5), and "all the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea" (ibid. 11:9)—which will come to pass with the appearance of Mashiach Tzidkeinu, may he come speedily in our time.

(Excerpt from a letter of the Rebbe dated 24 Adar, 5737)

they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were (exhausted after) leaving Egypt, and because (the people of Mo'av) hired Bilam—the son of Be'or, from Pesor in Aram Naharayim—against you, to curse you. ⁶ But God, your God, did not want to listen to Bilam, and God, your God, transformed the curse into a blessing for you, because God, your God, loves you.

- ⁷ You must never seek peace or anything good with them all your days.

FOURTH
READING

- ⁸ You should not (completely) despise an Edomite, for he is your brother, and you should not (completely) despise an Egyptian, for you were residents in his land. ⁹ Children who are born to them in the third generation may (convert and marry a Jewish woman and) enter the congregation of God.

🌀 SANCTITY OF THE CAMP 🌀

¹⁰ When you go out as a camp against your enemies, you should be careful to avoid anything evil (because, at a time of danger, prosecutions of the Heavenly Court are more severe).

- ¹¹ If there is a man among you who is ritually impure, (e.g.) due to a nocturnal emission:
 - He should go outside the camp.
 - He should not come within the (Levite) camp.
 - ¹² Then, towards evening he should immerse in (mikvah) water, and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.
- ¹³ You should have a designated place outside (the cloud surrounding) the camp, so that you can go out there (to use it as a toilet).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Does the prohibition of marrying an Amonite, Moabite, Edomite or Egyptian convert apply nowadays? (v. 4-9)

RAMBAM: When King Sancheriv, King of Assyria, rose to power, he confused the identity of all the nations and mixed them together, exiling them from their homelands. Those “Egyptians” who now inhabit Egypt are different people, and likewise the “Edomites” in the area of Edom.

Now that these four forbidden nations have become mixed with all the other nations of the world from whom it is permissible to marry their converts, every convert has become permitted. This is because when one of them separates himself out from the others by converting, we presume that he belongs to the majority* [of permitted nations].

Thus, nowadays, wherever a convert converts, regardless of whether he is an Edomite, Egyptian, Amonite, Moabite, Kushite, or of another nationality, whether male or female—that person is permitted to “enter the congregation” immediately (*Laws of Forbidden Relations* 12:25).

LEVUSH: Certainly a minority of the original Egyptian nation remained in Egypt. Thus while they are *clearly stationed in their original place* we cannot apply the principle that the identity of the minority is nullified.* However, when an individual converts and *separates himself out from them** we can presume that he is from the majority of permitted nations, and thus is fit to marry a Jew upon conversion (*Even Ha'ezer* ch. 4).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 THE EGYPTIAN CONVERT (v. 9)

Rambam rules that, nowadays, it is permissible to marry an Egyptian convert and that one does not have to wait for “*children who are born to them in the third generation*” (v. 9), because “*when one of them singles himself out from the others by converting, we presume that he belongs to the majority [of permitted nations].*”

Here Rambam has applied the Talmudic principle that *kol d'parish m'ruba parish*—“anything that becomes separated from a mixture is considered to have come from the majority of the mixture” (see note). Thus, even though a remnant of the original Egyptian nation still remains in Egypt (as **Levush** writes), nevertheless, when one person is separated from this population, we can presume that he belongs to the majority (of non-Egyptians).

*This discussion involves a number of Talmudic principles that are employed to resolve cases of uncertainty that arise when non-distinguishable items are mixed together. The most straightforward rule is that of following the majority (*rov*), based on which the *Talmud* concludes in many instances that *kol d'parish m'ruba parish*—“anything that becomes separated from a mixture is considered to have come from the majority of the mixture.” However, there are many exceptions to this rule, where we do not follow the majority, such as when the item is clearly identifiable, or when the item has the status of “an item of importance” (see *Tosfos to Chulin* 95a, s.v. *sfayko*; *ibid.* *Zevachim* 73b, s.v. *aileh*). The exception under discussion here is, *kol kavua k'mechtsah al mechtsah dami*, which means: “items that were clearly stationed within their original mixture are of an indeterminate status,”

ותתוב ותכפי ית מפקדת: טו ארי יי אלהך שכנתה מהלכא בגו משריתך לשבותרך ולממסר בעלי דבכד קדמך ותחי משריתך קדישא ולא יתחוי בך עברת פתגם ויתוב מימרה מלאוטבא לך: טו לא תמסר עבד עממין ליד רבונה דישתויב לותך מלות רבונה: יז עמך יתב בינך באתרא די יתריעי בחדא מן קרניך בדיטב לה לא תוננה: יח לא תחי אתתא מבנת ישראל לגבר עבד ולא יסב נבכא מבני ישראל אתתא אמא: יט לא תעל אגר וניתא וחולפן בלבא לבית מקדשא די אלהך לכל נדרא ארי מרחק קדם יי אלהך אף תרויהון: כ לא תרבי לאחור רבית בסף רבית עבור רבית

על-אונגה והיה בשבתך חוץ וחרפתה בזה ושבתך וכסיתך את-צאתך: טו כי יהוה אלהיך מתהלך | בקרב מחנהך להצילך ולתת איביך לפניך והיה מחנהך קדוש ולא-יראה בך ערות דבר ושב מאחריך: ס לא-תסגיר עבד אל-אדניו אשר-ינצל אליך מעם אדניו: יז עמך ישב בקרבך במקום אשר-יבחר באתך שעריך בטוב לו לא תוננה: ס יח לא-תהיה קדשה מבנות ישראל ולא-יהיה קדש מבני ישראל: יט לא-תביא אתנן זונה ומחיר פלב בית יהוה אלהיך לכל-גדר כי תועבת יהוה אלהיך גם-שניהם: ס כ לא-תשיך לאחריך נשך

כש"י

חופסין לו זה, שכרי הוקשו לחמור, שנאמר שזו לכם פה עם החמור³, עם הדומה לחמור⁴. ולא יסב גזרם מזני ישראל אחתה אמתא, שאף הוא נעשה קדש על יד, שכל צעילותיו צעילות זות, שאין קדושין חופסין לו זה: (יט) אתנן זונה. נתן לה טלה צאתה פסול להקדשה⁵: ומחיר בלב. החליף שם בכלל⁶: גם שניהם. לרבות שנייהם, כגון חמים ועשן סלת⁷: (כ) לא תשיך. אזכרה ללוב שלא יתן רבית ללוב, ואחר כך אזכרה ללוב אח

מחוץ למחנה. חוץ לענין: (יד) על אזנך. לזד משאר כלי תשמישך: אזנך. כמו כלי זיינך: (טו) ולא יראה בך. הקצ"ה ערות דבר: (טז) לא תסגיר עבד. כחרגומו. דבר אחר אפילו עבד כנעני של ישראל שזרח מחוזה לארץ לארץ ישראל¹: (יח) לא תהיה קדשה. מופקרת, מקודשת ומזומנת לזות: ולא יהיה קדש. מזומן למשכב זכור². ואונקלוס חרגס לא תהא אחתה מצנת ישראל לגבר עבדא, שאף זו מופקרת לבעילת זות היא, מאחר שאין קדושין

TORAS MENACHEM

At first glance however, there appears to be a problem with this argument:

The principle that an item is "considered to have come from the majority of the mixture" can only be employed when that item becomes separated from the mixture. However, before it is separated, we apply the rule that *kol kavua k'mechtsah al mechtsah dami* ("items which are clearly stationed within their original mixture are of an indeterminate status.")

Thus, *Rambam's* dispensation to marry a first-generation Egyptian convert would only appear to be valid *outside Egypt*, after the individual became separated from the mixed population of "real" Egyptians and others. For as long as the convert remains in the Land of Egypt he is "clearly stationed within the original mixture" and is thus "of an indeterminate status." Why then did *Rambam* not state explicitly that his dispensation applies only *outside Egypt*?**

We might argue that *Rambam* maintained that the tiny number of Egyptians remaining somewhere in Egypt are outweighed by the majority. But this is not the case, since *Rambam* rules that the prohibition against a Jew living in Egypt is still in force in the present age (see *Laws of Kings* 5:7).

And since *Rambam* understood that living in Egypt is prohibited due to the negative influence of the Egyptian people ("so we do not learn from their deeds," *Sefer Hamitzvos*, prohibition 46), it follows that he considered even the minority of original Egyptian people that exist today in Egypt as being sufficient to keep this prohibition in force.

From this we see that *Rambam did* accept the argument that when the minority of original Egyptians are stationed within their "original mixture" (i.e. in Egypt), their effect is not outweighed by the majority of non-Egyptians.***

This appears to further strengthen our previous question: Why did *Rambam* not rule that a convert from Egypt may not marry a Jew while the former is still found in Egypt ("clearly stationed" in his "original mixture")?

THE EXPLANATION

Rambam stresses that it is permissible to marry an Egyptian convert in the present age because when "one of them separates himself out from the others by converting, we presume that he belongs to the majority [of permitted nations]."

(Zevachim ibid.). The term, "kavua," is literally translated as "firmly established" and usually refers to an item after it was taken from its original location. If the item was "kavua," we do not follow the general principle of majority rule. For further discussion of this subject see *Sha'arei Yosher, Sha'ar Dalet, Ait Sofer* (by Rabbi Eliezer Zusman Sofer, 1888-92), *Sugyos Hashas, Klal Kavua*. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bo* 5751, note 42. (Editor's note) **cf. Yevamos 16b, Rashi s.v. *beduchta dekeviyi*. ***Furthermore, logically speaking, the minority of original Egyptians would not be insignificant, since: a.) The prohibition is motivated by the debased quality of the Egyptians' deeds, and not their quantity.

b.) The debased activities of the original Egyptians are not out of character from the rest of the population—they are merely debased to a greater degree. Thus it is likely that even a small number of Egyptians would succeed in pushing an already debased population to further extremes.

- ¹⁴ *In addition to your weapons, you should keep a shovel. Then, when you sit down outside (to relieve yourself), you should (first) dig a hole with it, and then you may sit down, (and afterwards) cover your excrement.*

¹⁵ *Since God, your God, is accompanying your camp, to save you and to place your enemies before you, your camp should be holy. Then He will not see any immorality in you and turn away from you.*

🕎 PROVIDING REFUGE FOR FLEEING SLAVES 🕎

- ¹⁶ *You should not hand over a slave to his master if he seeks refuge with you (in the Land of Israel) from his master. ¹⁷ He should (be allowed to) reside among you wherever he chooses, in one of your cities where it is good for him.*
- *You should not oppress him.*

🕎 MODESTY 🕎

- ¹⁸ *No Jewish girl may be promiscuous.*
- *No Jewish man may be promiscuous.*
- ¹⁹ *You should not bring an (animal that was used to) pay a harlot, (even if) it was exchanged for a dog, to the House of God, your God, to fulfill any (sacrificial) vow, because both (the animal and anything it is exchanged for) are an abomination to God, your God.*

TORAS MENACHEM

At first glance, this emphasis that the separation is “by converting” is difficult to understand. For even if a resident of Egypt singled himself out merely by leaving the geographical boundaries of Egypt he would cease to have any association with the original Egyptian nation, since *kol d’parish m’ruba parish*—“anything that becomes separated from a mixture is considered to have come from the majority of the mixture.” Why, then, did *Rambam* stress that “one of them separates himself out from the others by converting”?

However, it could be argued that with this phrase, *Rambam* is addressing our above-mentioned question. *Rambam* is teaching us that

the “separation” occurs, not via a geographic relocation, but rather, via a change in *halachic* status—by conversion itself. The resident of Egypt who converts to Judaism ceases to be part of the mixed population of Egypt, since the *conversion* “separates” him from the mixture. Therefore, we can safely apply the principle that *kol d’parish m’ruba parish*—“anything that becomes separated from a mixture is considered to have come from the majority of the mixture.” And since the majority of the inhabitants of modern-day Egypt are not members of the original Egyptian nation, therefore, “that person is permitted to convert and ‘enter the congregation’ immediately.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 171ff.)

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“YOUR CAMP SHOULD BE HOLY...” (v. 15)

Holiness, purity and modesty are the foundations of the indwelling of the Divine Presence among Jews in general, and within every Jew, man and woman, in particular.

The sanctity of the “camp,” the Jewish home, and of Jewish conduct, is clearly emphasized in the Torah: “Your camp—at home and outside the home—should be holy. Then He will not see any immorality in you, and turn away from you” (v. 15).

Our Sages explain that modesty and holiness must be observed in

every aspect of Jewish life, including speech and thought, and certainly in dress and general conduct.

In this area, especially, as in certain other areas of Jewish life, the Jewish woman and daughter set the tone and standard, as experience has shown. Our Sages often stressed that the future and happiness of children is largely tied in with the modest conduct of the mother [See *Yoma* 47a; *Zohar* 126a].

(Free translation of Letter to Women’s Convention, *Lag b’Omer* 5730)

כָּל מַדְעָם דְּמִתְרַבֵּי: כּא לְבַר עַמּוּי תְּרַבֵּי וְלֹא־חֹדֵד לֹא תְרַבֵּי בְדִיל דִּיבְרַכְנֵךְ יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל אוֹשְׁמוֹת יָדְךָ עַל אַרְעָא דִּי אַתְּ עִלְל לְתַמְּן לְמִירְתָּהּ: כּב אַרְי תְּדַר גְּדַר קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר לְשִׁלְמוֹתָהּ אַרְי מִתְּבַע יִתְבַּעְנָה יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִנְּךָ וַיְהִי בְּךָ חוֹבָא: כּג וְאַרְי תִּתְּנַע מִלְּמַנְדַּר לֹא יְהִי בְּךָ חוֹבָא: כּד אַפְקוֹת סְפוֹתְךָ תִּטַּר וְתַעֲבִיד כְּמָא דִּי גְדַרְתָּא קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ גְּדַרְתָּא דִּי מִלְּתָא בְּפוֹקֵךְ: כּה אַרְי תִּתְּנַר בְּכַרְמָא דְחִבְרָךְ וְתִיכּוּל עִנְבִין בְּנִפְשָׁךְ שְׂבַעְךָ וְלִמְאֵנָךְ לֹא תִתֵּן: כּו אַרְי תִּתְּנַר בְּקַמְתָּא דְחִבְרָךְ וְתַקְטוֹף דְּמִלִּין בִּידְךָ וּמִגְּלָא לֹא תִרִים עַל קַמְתָּא

בְּסֹפֶךָ נִשְׂךְ אֲכַל נִשְׂךְ כָּל-דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר יִשְׂךְ: כּא לְנֹכְרֵי תִשְׂךְ וְלֹא־תִיךְ לֹא תִשְׂךְ לְמַעַן יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ס כּב כִּי-תִדְרֹךְ גְּדַר לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר לְשִׁלְמוֹ בִּי-דְרִשׁ יְדִרְשְׁנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִעֲמֻךְ וְהָיָה בְּךָ חֵטָא: כּג וְכִי תַחֲדָל לְגְדַר לֹא-יְהִיָּה בְּךָ חֵטָא: כּד מוֹצֵא שְׂפַתְךָ תִּשְׁמַר וְעַשִׂיתָ בְּאֲשֶׁר נְדַרְתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ גְּדַרְתָּ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּפִיךָ: ס (חֲמִישִׁין) כּה כִּי תִבְאֵ בְּבָרִים רֶעֶךָ וְאִכְלַת עִנְבִים בְּנִפְשָׁךְ שְׂבַעְךָ וְאִל-כְּלִיךָ לֹא תִתֵּן: ס כּו כִּי תִבְאֵ בְּקַמַּת רֶעֶךָ וְקַטַּפְתָּ מְלִילַת בִּידְךָ וְחִרְמַשׁ

כ"ש"י

צפועל הכתוב מדבר⁴: ואל בליך לא תתן. מכאן שלא דברה תורה אלא בשעת הצורך, זמן שאתה נותן לכלוי של זעל הבית, אבל אם צא לעדור ולקשקש, אינו אוכל: בנפשך. כמה שחלש: שבעך. ולא אכילה גסה⁵: (כו) כי תבא בקמת רעך. אף זו צפועל הכתוב מדבר⁵:

כספק לא תתן לו צנעך¹: (כא) לנכרי תשיך. ולא לחיך. לאו הכא מכלל עשה, עשה, לעזור עליו צנעך²: (כב) לא תאחר לשלמו. שלשה רגלים. ולמדוכו רבותיו מן המקרא³: (כד) מוצא שפתיך תשמר. ליתן עשה על לא תעשה: (כה) כי תבא בברם רעך.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Should one charge interest to a gentile? (v. 21)

RAMBAM: It is a positive command to charge a gentile interest, as the verse states, “You should charge a gentile interest” (v. 21). We have received by oral tradition that this is a positive command (*Laws of Lending and Borrowing* 5:1).

● To whom are verses 25-26 addressed?

RASHI: To an employee.
JERUSALEM TALMUD: The verse states, “When you come in your fellow’s vineyard,” which you might think refers to any person. Therefore the Torah clarifies, “You may not put any into your container,” indicating that you are putting some into your fellow’s container. So who does this refer to? An employee (*Ma’aseros* 2:4).

BABYLONIAN TALMUD: This verse mentions “coming” (“When you come into your fellow’s vineyard”), and it is written below (24:15), “do not let the sun set (literally “come”) upon him.” [The use of the same term in both places teaches us that]: Just as there the verse is speaking of an employee, so too here the verse is speaking of an employee (*Bava Metzia* 87b).

RAMBAM: The Torah states, “When you come into your fellow’s vineyard....When you come into your fellow’s standing grain.” Oral tradition teaches us that scripture is referring specifically to an employee. For if he was not hired as an employee, how could he be allowed to come into his fellow’s vineyard or standing grain without permission? Rather, the verse means: When you come with the permission of the owner to work, you may eat (*Laws of Employment* 12:1).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 CHARGING INTEREST (v. 20-21)

What is the logic behind **Rambam’s** ruling that it is a *mitzvah* to charge interest to a non-Jew? We can appreciate that it might be *permissible* to do so, since it is commonplace among non-Jews to charge interest. But why should it be a positive *command*?

In principle, however, the Torah would *require* us to charge interest to any borrower, Jew or gentile. Being that it is an ethical, universally accepted practice to charge interest, failing to do so would be considered an unnecessary *wastage* of funds, which is *prohibited* by the Torah (see *Rambam, Laws of Kings* 6:8ff.).

It is only that in the case of a Jewish person, the Torah makes an *exception* to this rule and instructs: “You may not cause your brother to pay interest” (v. 20).

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev* 5747)

🕒 THE EMPLOYEE’S RIGHTS TO FOOD (v. 25-26)

The *Rogatchover Ga’on* taught that many laws of the Torah can be identified as a function of either the *agent*, the *action* or the *result* of what is being carried out, and that this distinction can often take expression in various practical ramifications. In this light, there are three ways of approaching the principle recorded in verses 25 and 26, that an employee is entitled to eat some of the crops which he is harvesting, while at work:

- a.) The *result* of the work is that, having harvested the crops, the employer *rewards* the employee. Thus, the fact that the employee is permitted to eat from the crops while at work could be perceived as a type of bonus payment given to the employee as a *result* of his work (in addition to his main payment for services rendered).
- b.) Alternatively, permission to eat from the crops could be perceived as a function of the *action* of work itself, regardless of what that work actually

🕎 INTEREST 🕎

- ²⁰ You may not cause your brother to pay interest—interest on money, interest on food or interest on any other item for which interest may be taken.
- ²¹ You should charge a gentile interest, but to your brother you may not pay interest, in order that God, your God, will bless all the work of your hands upon the land which you are coming to take possession.

🕎 FULFILLING PLEDGES 🕎

- ²² When you make a vow to God, your God, you should not delay in paying it (beyond three festivals), since God, your God, will be sure to exact it from you, and you will have sinned.
- ²³ It is not considered sinful for you to refrain from making vows.
- ²⁴ Be careful to carry out what is uttered by your lips—whatever you have pledged to God, your God, as a donation, which you have spoken with your mouth.

🕎 AN EMPLOYEE'S RIGHTS 🕎

FIFTH
READING

- ²⁵ When you come (to work during the harvest season) in your fellow's vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you desire until you are satisfied, but you may not put any into your container.
- ²⁶ When you come (to work) in your fellow's (field of) standing grain, you may pluck ears with your hand (to eat them), but you may not lift a sickle on your fellow's standing grain.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

Grapes are an expensive commodity, whereas grain is relatively cheap. Thus, after reading that a person may eat his employer's grapes (in v. 25) it is *obvious* that he would be allowed to eat his employer's less valuable grain (v. 26). Surely then, the Torah should have stated the more obvious case first?

The distinction between grapes and grain is that the former is a sweet and tasty food eaten for pleasure, whereas the grain is eaten as a necessary, staple food.

A person who serves God in the manner of "grain" is one who sees the *mitzvos* as a necessary chore, and fulfills the minimum requirement out of a sense of obligation. On the other hand, one who serves God in the manner of "grapes" sees the observance of *mitzvos* as a delight and a pleasure.

Thus, when our Supernal "Employer," provides us with comfortable "working conditions" in this world so we can perform the task of observing His *mitzvos*, it is *more obvious* that He will provide for those who work in His "vineyard," serving Him with the joy and delight characterized by grapes. Thus, being that this is the more obvious case, the Torah recorded it first.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 133-4)

accomplishes, i.e. the fact that the employee is working and toiling for his employer, gives him the right to eat from the crops as a *part* of what the Torah deems to be fair.

c.) A third approach would be to see this law as a privilege of the *agent* of the work, the employee himself. In other words, the Torah granted the right to every employee that he may eat from the crops of his employer, as an inalienable right that is not directly work-related (similar to the gifts granted by Torah to poor people).

It could be argued that these were the three approaches of the **Jerusalem Talmud**, **Babylonian Talmud**, and **Rambam**. Each of these texts came to the same conclusion, that verses 25 and 26 refer to an employee, but they reached this conclusion from different sources. This choice of sources reflects their underlying view whether the law is a function of the *agent*, the *action* or the *result* of the work:

a.) The *Jerusalem Talmud* understood that the law is a function of the *result* of the work (the work done). This is reflected in the *Jerusalem Talmud's* choice of source, which speaks of the *actual harvest* gathered by the employee, i.e. what is being put into the container.

b.) The *Babylonian Talmud* understood that the law is a function of toil exerted in the *action* of the work. Thus, the *Babylonian Talmud's* source is a verse which stresses the significant *efforts* of the employee: "You must give him his wage on the day it is due, and not let the sun set upon him, for he is poor, and *he endangers his life (to work for you).*"

c.) **Rambam** understood that the law is a function of the *agent* of the work (the employee), i.e. that we are speaking here of an employee's inherent right that is not directly connected with his work. Therefore

דמקרה: א ארי יסב גבר אתמא ויבעלה ויהי אם לא תשכח רחמין בעינהי ארי אשכח בה עברת פתגם ויכתוב לה גט פטורין ויהב (וייתן) בידה ויפטרנה מביתה: ב ותפוק מביתה ותהי ותהי לגבר אחר: ג ויסגנה גברא בתראה ויכתוב לה גט פטורין ויהב (וייתן) בידה ויפטרנה מביתה או ארי ימות גברא בתראה דנסכה לה לאנתו: ד לית לה רשו לבעלה קדמאה די פטרה למתוב למסכה למיהוי לה לאנתו בטר די אסתאבת ארי מרחקא היא קדם יי ולא תחביב ית ארעא די יי אלהי יחב לך אחסנא: ה ארי יסב גבר אתמא חדמא לא יפוק בחילא ולא יעבר עלוהי לכל מדעם פני יהי לביתה שתא חדא ויחדי ית אתמה די נסב: ו לא יסב משכונא רחיא ורכבא ארי בהון מתעבד מוזן לכל נפש: ז ארי ישתכח גבר ויגב נפשא מאחודי מבני ישראל ויתגר

לא תזיף על קמת רעה: ס כד א פי יקח איש אשה ובעלה והיה אם לא תמצאתן בעיניו פימצא בה ערות דבר וכתב לה ספר כריתת ונתן בידה ושלחה מביתו: ב ויצאה מביתו והלכה והיתה לאיש אחר: ג ושנאה האיש האחרון וכתב לה ספר כריתת ונתן בידה ושלחה מביתו או כי ימות האיש האחרון אשר לקחה לו לאשה: ד לא יוכל בעלה הראשון אשר שלחה לשוב לקחתה להיות לו לאשה אחרי אשר הפמאה פי תועבה הוא לפני יהוה ולא תחטיא את הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך נחלה: ה וששן ה פי יקח איש אשה חדשה לא יצא בעצא ולא יעבר עליו לכל דבר נקי יהיה לביתו שנה אחת ושמה את אשתו אשר לקח: ו לא יחבל רחים ורכב פי נפש הוא חבל: ס ז פי ימצא איש

רש"י

על פי כהן, כגון צנה צית ולא חנכו או ארס אשכ ולא לקחה, מספיקין מים ומזון ומתקנין את הדרכים: יהיה לביתה. אף שצביל ביתו, אם צנה צית וחנכו ואם נעט כרס וחללו, אינו זז מציתו שצביל לורכי המלחמה: לביתו. זה ביתו: יהיה. לרצות את כרמו: ושמה. ישמה את אשתו. ותרנומו ויחדי ית אתמה: והמתרגס ויחדי עם אתמה, טועה הוא, שאין זה תרגום של ושמה אלא של ושמה: (ו) רחים. הוא התחטוה: ורכב. הוא העליונה: לא יחבול. אם צל למשכנו על חוצו צנית דין, לא ימשכנו דצרים שעושים צהן אוכל נפש: (ז) בי ימצא. צעדים

(ח) כי מצא בה ערות דבר. מלוה עליו לגרשה שלא תמלא חן צעיוני'. (ס"א) מלוה שלא תמלא חן צעיוני: (צ) לאיש אחר. אין זה צן זוגו של ראשון, הוא הוליא רעבה מתוך ביתו וזה הכניסה: (ג) ושנאה האיש האחרון. הכחוב מנשרו שסופו לשנאותה, ואם לאו קוצרתו, שנאמר או כי ימות? (ד) אחרי אשר הטמאה. לרצות סועה שנסתרה: (ה) אשה חדשה. שהיא חדשה לו ואפילו אלמנה, פרט למחזיר גרושתו: ולא יעבור עליו. דבר הכזא: לכל דבר. שהוא זורח הכזא, לא לספק מים ומזון ולא לתקן דרכים, אצל החוזרים מעורכי המלחמה

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What constitutes grounds for divorce? (v. 1)

TALMUD: The School of Shammai says: "A man may not divorce his wife unless he discovers something immoral about her, as the verse states, 'because he has found something immoral about her.'"

The School of Hillel says: "[He may divorce her] even if she spoils

his food, as the verse [could be rendered]: "because he has found [something] immoral [or another] thing about her."

Rabbi Akiva says: "[He may divorce her] even if he finds another one who is more attractive, as the verse states, 'and it happens that she does not find favor in his eyes'" (Gittin 90a. See Sparks of Chasidus).

TORAS MENACHEM

Rambam derived the law from the words, "When you come into your fellow's vineyard," which describe the employee himself merely "coming into" the vineyard, and not actually working. (Though, in practice, he is obviously not permitted to start eating until work has begun).

A CONTRACTUAL OR RELIGIOUS DUTY?

A further distinction that arises out of the above discussion is whether the employer's requirement to permit his employee to eat from his crops is a contractual duty or a purely religious one:

According to the approach (of the *Jerusalem Talmud*,) that the law is a function of the *result* of the work and is thus a type of additional payment to the employee, it follows that this "payment" is part of the *contractual obligation* of the employer.

According to the approach (of *Rambam*) that we are speaking of an inherent right of the employee (the *agent*) which is non-work related, it follows that the employer is not paying a personal debt to the employee, but rather, granting him a God-given right to eat while at work. Thus, we are speaking here of a *religious duty*. (Indeed, *Rambam* states explicitly that the employee is eating "something granted from Heaven," *ibid.* 14).

According to the approach (of the *Babylonian Talmud*) that the law is a function of the *action* of the work, there appears to be room for both interpretations—as the *Talmud* itself asks: "Does he eat his own food, or is he eating food from Heaven?" For, perhaps the food that he is allowed to eat comes as a reward for his labor. Or it could be argued that we are speaking here of a gift directly from God to every hard-working employee.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 129ff.)

🕍 DIVORCE 🕍

24 If a man takes a wife and is intimate with her, and it happens that she does not find favor in his eyes because he has found something immoral about her:

- He must write a bill of divorce for her, place it into her hand, and send her away from his house.
- ² If she leaves his house and goes and marries another man, ³ and the latter husband hates her and writes her a bill of divorce, places it into her hand and sends her away from his house; or if the latter husband who took her as a wife dies—⁴ her first husband, who had sent her away, may not take her again as his wife, since she was defiled (to him), for that is an abomination before God, and you should not bring sin to the land God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.

🕍 NEWLYWEDS 🕍

SIXTH
READING

- ⁵ When a man takes a wife who is new (to him), he must not go out (to war) in the army, and no (military) duty may be imposed upon him.
- He must remain free for his (own) house for one year and make his wife whom he has taken happy.

🕍 DEBT COLLECTION 🕍

- ⁶ One may not take (things used to prepare food, such as) a lower or upper millstone, as security (for a loan), because that is taking a life-(sustaining entity) as security.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

BECOMING “DIVORCED” FROM ONE’S MISSION IN LIFE...AND “MARRYING” A NEW ONE (v. 1)

The place and circumstances in which a person finds himself are guided by Divine Providence, and in the vast majority of cases a person finds himself in an environment which is perfectly suited to his mission in life (*shlichus*). So, even when things become difficult, he should be loath to “divorce” himself from his current mission and become “married” to a new path in life.

Even in a case where a person does wish to do so, he must have sufficient grounds for “divorce”—and in this matter, there is a dispute among the Sages (see *Classic Questions*):

The School of Shammai maintained that, even if a person is facing seemingly insurmountable difficulties in his mission, he is forbidden to divorce himself from it unless “he discovers something immoral about her.” I.e. there is a *halachically* valid reason why he cannot continue. For only at this point can it be proven unequivocally that the soul’s current mission has to be changed for another.

However, the School of Hillel maintained that a person may become divorced, “even if she spoils his food.” I.e. if a person finds that his mission is not being successfully carried out that and even his prior spiritual achievements are being spoiled, then he may seek a “divorce” and seek out a new mission.

Rabbi Akiva maintained that a man may seek divorce “even if he finds another one who is more attractive,” i.e. even if there are no real shortcomings to his current situation, but “she does not find favor in his eyes”—he has lost enthusiasm in his current *shlichus* and has spotted another path which he prefers—then he may change.

The final ruling in Jewish law favors the opinion of the School of Hillel (*Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha'ezer* 119:3). However, this only means that according to the letter of the law a person could be justified in some cases to seek a new path in life. Nevertheless, our Sages taught, “Whenever a person divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears” (*Gittin* 90b), and even in a case where a person is *halachically* obliged to divorce his wife (even according to the School of Shammai), he should not hurry to do so (*Chelkas Mechokaik* 119:2).

If a person truly desires, even in the face of tremendous difficulties, he can uphold the view of the School of Shammai. Even if he has lost enthusiasm in his *shlichus* and he is not successful, and furthermore, if his Torah study and care in the observance of *mitzvah* enhancements has decreased—he should know that this is nothing but a test from above, and that God is with him to help him succeed.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 3, p. 1121ff.; *Sicha* of 20th Av 5719)

בה ויזכרנה ויתקטיל וינבא ההוא ותפלי עבד
 דביש מבינך: ה אסתמר במכתש סגירו
 למטר לחדא ולמעבד ככל די ילפון יתכון
 כהניא לואי כמא די פקדתנן תטרון
 למעבד: ט הוי דכיר ית די עבד יי אלקה
 למרים בארחה במפקכון ממצרים: י ארי
 תרשי בתבךך רשו מדעם לא תעול לביתה
 למסב משכונה: יא בכרא תקום ונכרא די
 את רשי בה יפק לוהך ית משכונא לכרא:
 יב ואם נכר מסבן הוא לא תשכוב
 במשכונה: יג אתקא תתיב לה משכונא
 כמעל שמשא וישכוב בכסותה ויברכך ויך
 תהי וכותא קדם יי אלקה: יד לא תעשוק
 אנרא עניא ומסכנא מאחיד או מגיורך די
 בארעה בקרויך: טו ביומה תתן אנרה ולא
 תעול עלוהי שמשא ארי עניא הוא ולה הוא
 מסר ית נפשה ולא יקרי עלך קדם יי ויהי בך
 חובא: טז לא ימותון אבקה על פום בנין ובנין
 לא ימותון על פום אבקה אנש בחובה
 ימותון: יז לא תצלי דין גיורא ויתמא ולא
 תסב משכונא לבוש ארמלא: יח ותדבר ארי
 עבדא הויאת במצרים ופרקך יי אלקה מתמן

גַּיֵב נַפְשׁ מֵאֲחִיו מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִתְעַמְר־בוּ וּמְכָרוּ וּמֵת הַגֵּיב
 הַהוּא וּבְעֵרַת הָרַע מִקִּרְבֶּךָ: ה הַשָּׁמֶר בְּנִגְעֵי הַצָּרַעַת לְשֹׁמֵר
 מֵאֵד וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-יִוְרוּ אֶתְכֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם כְּאֲשֶׁר
 צִוִּיתֶם תִּשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: ט זָכֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 לְמִרְיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם: ס כִּי-תֵשֶׁה בְרַעְךָ מִשְׂאֵת
 מְאוּמָה לֹא-תָבֵא אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ לַעֲבֹט עִבְטוֹ: יא בַּחוּץ תִּעְמָד
 וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּה נִשֶּׂה בוֹ יוֹצֵא אֵלֶיךָ אֶת-הָעֵבוֹט הַחוּצָה:
 יב וְאִם-אִישׁ עָנִי הוּא לֹא תִשָּׁכַב בְּעִבְטוֹ: יג הֲשִׁב תָּשִׁיב לוֹ
 אֶת-הָעֵבוֹט כִּבּוֹא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְשָׁכַב בְּשִׁלְמָתוֹ וּבִרְכֶךָ וְלֶךְ תִּהְיֶה
 עֲדָקָה לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ס [שביעין] יד לֹא-תִעְשֶׂק שָׂכִיר עָנִי
 וְאֲבִיוֹן מֵאֲחֶיךָ אוֹ מִגֵּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצֶךָ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ: טו בְּיוֹמוֹ תִתֵּן
 שָׂכָרוֹ וְלֹא-תָבֹא עָלָיו הַשָּׁמֶשׁ כִּי עָנִי הוּא וְאֵלָיו הוּא נִשְׂא
 אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ וְלֹא-יִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל-יְהוָה וְהָיָה בְּךָ חַטָּא: ס
 טז לֹא-יּוֹמְתוּ אָבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים וּבָנִים עַל-אָבוֹת אִישׁ
 בְּחַטָּאוֹ יּוֹמְתוֹ: ס יז לֹא תִפֶּה מִשֹּׁפֵט גֵּר יְתוֹם וְלֹא תַחַבֵּל בְּגַד
 אֶלְמָנָה: יח וּזְכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וּפִדְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

כ"ז

תעשוק שר שכיר שכוח עני ואציון, ועל העשיר כבר הוזכר לא תעשוק את
 רעך: אביון. התאז לכל דבר: מזרח. זה גר זקן! בשעריך. זה גר תושב
 האוכל בצלות! אשר בארצך. לרבות שר צהמה וכלים: (טו) ואליו הוא
 נושא את נפשו. אל השכר הזכ הוא נושא את נפשו למות, עלה בצבצ
 ונתלה בצילך: והיה בך חטא. מכל מקום, אלא שממכרין להפרע על ידי
 הקורא: (טז) לא יומתו אבות על בנים. בעדות צנים. ואם תאמר צעון
 צנים, כבר נאמר איש צחטאו יומתו, אצל מי שאינו איש מת צעון אציו,
 והקטנים מתים צעון אצותם צידי שמים: (יז) לא תטה משפט גר יתום.
 ועל העשיר כבר הוזכר לא תטה משפט, ושנה צעני לעצור עליו צעני לאוין,
 לפי שנקל להטות משפט עני יותר משל עשיר, לכך הזכיר ושנה עליו: ולא
 תחבול. שלא צענת כלואה: (יח) וזכרת. על מנת כן פדיתוך לשמור חקותי

והזכרת! וכן כל כי ימלא שזכורה: והתעמר בו. אינו חייב עד שישתמש
 זו: (ח) השומר בנגע הצרעת. שלא תחלוש סימני טומאה, ולא תקון את
 הצרעת? ככל אשר יורו אתכם. אם להסגיר אם להחליט אם לערה:
 (ט) זכור את אשר עשה ה' אלהיך למרים. אם צאת להזכר שלא תלקה
 צרעת, אל תספר לשון הרע. זכור העשוי למרים שדצרה צאחיה ולקחה
 צנגעים: (י) כי תשה ברעך. תחוב צחצך: משאת מאומה. חוב של
 כלום: (יז) לא תשכב בעבטו. לא תשכב ועצונו חללך: (יג) כבוא
 השמש. אם כסות לילה הוא, ואם כסות יום החזירכו בצקר, וכבר כתוב
 צואלה המשפטיס³ עד צה השמש תשיצו לו, כל היום תשיצו לו וכבוא השמש
 תקחנה: וברכך. ואם אינו מזכרך, מכל מקום ולך תהיה דקה: (יד) לא
 תעשק שכיר. והלא כבר כתוב, אלא לעצור על האציון צעני לאוין, לא

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

The Torah warns, "You may not take a widow's garment as security" (v. 17), even in reference to a widow who is wealthy (Sefer Hamitzvos prohibition 241). Now, it could be the case that the lender does not intend to pain the widow at all by taking her garment as security, and since she is wealthy it is extremely unlikely that she will become upset. Furthermore, by failing to take any security, the lender is actually endangering his own assets. Nevertheless, he "may

not take a widow's garment as security," for there is a remote possibility that, for a widow, this may be a distressing experience. From this we can learn that even in a situation where: a.) It appears unlikely that somebody will be hurt by one's actions; b.) There is no intention to hurt another's feelings; and c.) One suffers a personal loss—nevertheless, there remains an obligation to "love your fellow like (you love) yourself." (Based on Sicha of 5th night of Chanukah 5747)

☞ KIDNAPPING A JEWISH PERSON ☞

- ⁷ If a man is witnessed kidnapping any person from among his brothers, the children of Israel, and then he treats him as a slave and sells him—that kidnapper must die, and you will eliminate the evil from among you.

☞ CAUTION WITH TZARA'AS LESIONS* ☞

- ⁸ Be careful (not to interfere with) tzara'as lesions, and be very cautious about carrying out all the instructions of the priests, (who are from the tribe of) the Levites. Be careful to observe what I have commanded them.
- ⁹ Remember what God, your God, did to Miriam on your journey out of Egypt.

☞ SECURITY FOR LOANS ☞

- ¹⁰ When you hold any sort of debt against your fellow, you may not enter his home to take any of his property as security. ¹¹ You must stand outside, and the man to whom you are lending should bring the security to you, outside.
- ¹² If he is a poor man, you may not go to sleep while holding his security. ¹³ You must return the security to him by sunset, so that he can go to sleep in his garment, and he will bless you. (Even if he does not bless you), it will be considered as a righteous act for you, before God, your God.

☞ PAYING WAGES ON TIME** ☞

SEVENTH
READING

- ¹⁴ You must not withhold the wages of a poor or destitute hired worker, (regardless of whether he is) one of your brothers, one of your converts in your land, (or a resident alien) within your cities. ¹⁵ You must give him his wage on the day it is due, and not let the sun set upon him, for he is poor, and he endangers his life (to work for you). Do not cause him to cry out to God against you, for then (the punishment for) this sin will be upon you (more quickly).

☞ TESTIMONY OF RELATIVES ☞

- ¹⁶ Fathers may not be put to death by (the testimony) of sons, nor may sons be put to death by (the testimony) of fathers. A man should be put to death (only) for his own sin.

☞ THE CONVERT, WIDOW AND ORPHAN ☞

- ¹⁷ You must not pervert the judgment of a convert or an orphan,
 - You may not (come and) take a widow's garment as security (for a pre-existing loan).
- ¹⁸ Remember that you were once a slave in Egypt, and that God, your God, redeemed you from there (to observe his laws, even if they cause you to lose money). Therefore, I am commanding you to do this thing.

* See Vayikra ch 12ff. ** See Vayikra 19:13 and Sparks of Chasidus, ibid.

על כן אָנָּא מְפַקְדָּךְ לְמַעַבְדַּי ית פתגמא דדין: יט ארי תהצוד תצדך בחקלך ותנשי עמרא בחקלא לא תתוב למסבה לגיורא ליתמא ולארמלא יהי בדיל דיברכך יי אלהך בכל עובדי ידיך: כ ארי תחבוט ויתך לא תפלי בתרך לגיורא ליתמא ולארמלא יהי: כא ארי תקטוף פרמך לא תעלל בתרך לגיורא ליתמא ולארמלא יהי: כב ותדבר ארי עבדא הוימא בארעא דמצרים על כן אָנָּא מְפַקְדָּךְ לְמַעַבְדַּי ית פתגמא דדין: א ארי יהי דין בין גובריא ויתקרבון דלינא וידונגון ויזכון ית זכא ויחביבון ית חיבא: ב ויהי אם בר חיבא לאלקאה חיבא וירמנה דינא וילקנה קדמוהי כמסת חובתה במנין: ג ארבעין ילקנה לא יוסף דלמא יוסף לאלקויותה על אליו מחא

משם על-כֵּן אָנָּכִי מְצַוֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: ס יט כִּי תִקְצַר קְצִירְךָ בְּשָׂדֶךָ וְשָׂכַחְתָּ עִמָּר בְּשָׂדֶה לֹא תָשׁוּב לְקַחְתּוֹ לְגַר לִיתָם וְלֹא־לִמְנָה יִהְיֶה לְמַעַן יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ: ס ב כִּי תַחֲבֹט וַיִּתֶּךָ לֹא תִפְאַר אַחֲרֶיךָ לְגַר לִיתָם וְלֹא־לִמְנָה יִהְיֶה: כא כִּי תִבְצַר פְּרִמְךָ לֹא תַעֲוֹלֵל אַחֲרֶיךָ לְגַר לִיתָם וְלֹא־לִמְנָה יִהְיֶה: כב וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי־עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־כֵּן אָנָּכִי מְצַוֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: ס כה א כִּי־יִהְיֶה רֵיב בֵּין אֲנָשִׁים וְנִגְשׂוּ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּט וּשְׁפָטוּם וְהִצְדִּיקוּ אֶת־הַצְדִּיק וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ אֶת־הַרְשָׁע: ב וְהָיָה אִם־בֵּן הַכֹּהֵן הִרְשָׁע וְהִפִּילוּ הַשֹּׁפֵט וְהַכֹּהֵן לְפָנָיו כְּדֵי רִשְׁעוֹתָו בְּמִסְפָּר: ג ארבעים יכנו לא יוסף פן־יסיף להבתו על־אלה

רש"י

יהיה ריב. סופס להיות נגשים אל המשפט. אמור מעתה אין שלום יולא מתוך מריבה, מי גרם ללוט לפרוש מן הצדק, הוי אומר זו מריבא: והרשיעו את הרשע. יכול כל המתחייבין דדין לוקין, תלמוד לומר ויהי אם בן הכות הרשע, פעמים לוקה ופעמים אינו לוקה. ומי הוא הלוקה, למוד מן הענין, לא תחסום שור צדישו, לאו שלא נתק לעשה: (ג) והפילו השופט. מלמד שאין מלקין אותו לא עומד ולא יושב אלא מוטב: לפניו כדי רשעתו. ולאחריו כדי שמים. מכאן אמרו, מלקין אותו שתי ידות מלאחריו ושליש מלפניו: במספר. ואינו נקוד במספר, למד שהוא דזוק, לומר במספר ארבעים ולא ארבעים שלמים, אלא מנין שהוא סוכס ומשלים לארבעים, וכן ארבעים חסר אחת: (ג) לא יוסף. מכאן אזכרה למכה את חזרו: ונקלה

אפילו יש חסרון כים בדבר: (יט) ושכחת עומר. ולא גדיש! מכאן אמרו עומר שיש בו סאתים ושכחו אינו שכחה: בשדה. לרבות שכחת קמה שכחה מקלחה מלקאור: לא תשוב לקחתו. מכאן אמרו, שלאחריו שכחה, שלפניו אינו שכחה, שאינו צבל תשוב: למען יברכך. ואף על פי שזאת לידו שלא במתכוין, קל וחומר לעושה במתכוין. אמור מעתה, נפלה סלע מידו ומלאה עני ונתפרנס זה הרי הוא מתצרך עליה: (כ) לא תפאר. לא תטול תפארתו ממנו. מכאן שמניחין פאה לאילן: אחריך. זו שכחה: (כה) לא תעולל. אם מלאה בו עוללות לא תקחנה. ואיזו היא עוללות, כל שאין לה לא כסף ולא נטף. יש לה אחד מהם הרי הוא לבעל הבית: וראיתי בגמרא ירושלמית⁶ איזו היא כסף, פסיגין זה על גז זה. נטף, אלו התלויות בשדרה ויורדות: (ח) בי

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Does God give blessings for unintentional *mitzvos*? (v. 19)

RASHI: If someone dropped a coin, and a poor man found it and was sustained by it, then he [who lost the coin] will be blessed on its account.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

“WHEN YOU FORGET A BUNDLE...” (v. 19)

Why should a person be blessed for performing a *mitzvah* if he *unwittingly*—and even *unwillingly*—drops money on the floor, which is later found by a poor person? (see *Rashi* to v. 19)

Chasidic thought explains that every Jew, regardless of his status and station, is essentially willing to do all that he is commanded to do by our Torah. The fact that he might sometimes be influenced to do otherwise is because his conscious state can be affected by external pressures that induce states of mind and even behavior which is contrary to his essential nature (cf. *Rambam, Laws of Divorce* 2:20).

Therefore, if he performs a *mitzvah* which was not consciously intended, it is nevertheless an act that is consistent with his inner, subconscious desire. In fact, what has actually occurred here is that his subconscious mind has been able to influence his actions directly, without passing through the conscious state.

So, if a person drops money which is later found by a poor person, he has done an action which is commensurate with his true, inner desire to serve God, and therefore he is blessed because of it.

(Based on *Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat* vol. 5, p. 50)

- ¹⁹ When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a (single) bundle (behind you) in the field, you may not go back to take it.
- It must be left for the convert, the orphan, and the widow, so that God, your God, will bless you in everything you do.
- ²⁰ When you beat your olive tree (to shake off the olives), do not remove (all of) its best produce. This should remain for the convert, the orphan and the widow.
- ²¹ When you pick the grapes of your vineyard, do not harvest the young grapes. They should remain for the convert, the orphan and the widow.

²² Remember that you were once a slave in the land of Egypt. Therefore, I am commanding you to do this thing.

🌀 ADMINISTERING LASHES 🌀

25 **I**f there is a quarrel between (two) men, who come to court to be judged, the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.

- ² If the guilty person (from a court case) is liable for lashes, the judge should make him bend over, and flog him with (one third of) the (total) number (of thirty-nine lashes) he deserves on his front (and two thirds on his back).
- ³ He should flog him with (almost) forty (lashes), but he must not give more, for if he gives him a lot more lashes than this, your brother will be degraded before your eyes.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does the Torah need to explain the reason why two people might go to court? (25:1)

RASHI: “If there is a quarrel,” they will eventually go to court. We learn from this that a quarrel will not end in peace. What caused Lot to leave the righteous [Avraham]? It was a quarrel (See *Bereishis* 13:7-12).

GUR ARYEH: Rashi was troubled that the words, “If there is a quarrel,” are superfluous. The Torah could have simply stated, “If two men come to court to be judged....” Rashi answers that the words “If there is a quarrel” teach us that when a quarrel arises, “they will eventually go to court.”

At first glance, this is difficult to understand, for what is objectionable about going to court to solve a dispute? Surely this is more preferable than continuing to quarrel? It seems that Rashi means to say that they will eventually quarrel so much that the only solution will be to go to court.

MASKIL LE DAVID: Surely going to court is a method of “ending in peace” and not the opposite?

Rather, Rashi’s intention here is that when the case comes to court, it will escalate from a verbal dispute to the extent that one of the parties receives lashes, as the section continues (v. 2), “If the guilty person is liable for lashes.”

● Is it not obvious that “the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned”? (25:1)

SIFRI: Rabbi Shimon says: “‘The innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.’ This teaches us that one should attempt to acquit a person.”

SIFRI DEBAY RAV: Rabbi Shimon reached his conclusion from the fact that the verse stresses first, “The innocent one will be acquitted,” and only afterwards, “the guilty one will be condemned.”

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 THE QUARREL (v. 1)

On the words, “If there is a quarrel between (two) men” (v. 1), Rashi comments, “they will eventually go to court. We learn from this that a quarrel will not end in peace.”

At first glance this appears to be difficult to understand, as **Gur Aryeh** and **Maskil LeDavid** ask, for going to court is surely the most effective way of ending any quarrel in peace?

Gur Aryeh answers that Rashi’s statement, “they will eventually go to court,” means that they will eventually quarrel so much that the only

solution will be to go to court. However, Rashi’s statement, “They will eventually go to court,” seems to imply that going to court *itself* is the undesirable outcome here, and that this is worse than the quarrel itself.

Maskil LeDavid explains that Rashi means to say that going to court will lead to an escalation in the intensity of the quarrel, to the point of necessitating lashes. However, it is very difficult to accept that this was Rashi’s intention here, as he makes no reference *at all* to such a possible outcome. All Rashi says is, “They will eventually go to court.”

So we are left with the question: What is undesirable about going to court?

רָבָא וְנָקְלָה אַחִיךָ לְעֵינֶיךָ: ד לא תחוד פום תורא בדישעה: ה ארי יתבון אחין כחדא וימות חד מנהון ובר לית לה לא תהי אמת מיתנא לברא לגבר חלוני יבמה יעול עליה ויספדה לה לאנתו ויבמה: ו ויהי בוכרא די תליד יקום על שמא דאחיה מיתנא ולא יתמחי שמא מישראל: ז ואם לא יצבי נברא למסב ית יבמתה ותסק יבמתה לתרע בית דינא לקדם סביא ותימר לא צבי יבמי לאקמא לאחיה שמא בישראל לא אבי ליבמותי: ח ויקרון לה סבי קרתה וימללון עמה ויקום וימר לא רעינא למסבה: ט ותתקרב יבמתה לותה לקדם סביא ותשרי סינה מעל רגלה

מִכָּה רַבָּה וְנָקְלָה אַחִיךָ לְעֵינֶיךָ: ד לֹא־תַחֲסֹם שׁוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ: ה כִּי־יִשְׁבוּ אַחִים יַחְדָּו וַיִּתְּ אֶחָד מֵהֶם וַיִּבֶן אֵיזֶל לֹא־תִהְיֶה אִשְׁת־הַיֵּמָת הַחוּצָה לְאִישׁ זָר יִבְמָה יָבֵא עָלֶיהָ וּלְקַחְתָּהּ * לֹא לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְמָה: ו וְהָיָה הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד יִקּוּם עַל־שֵׁם אָחִיו הַיֵּמָת וְלֹא־יִמָּחֶה שְׁמוֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: ז וְאִם־לֹא יִחַפְּזֵן הָאִישׁ לְקַחַת אֶת־יְבִמְתּוֹ וְעַלְתָּהּ יְבִמְתּוֹ הַשְּׂעֵרָה אֶל־הַזִּקְנִים וְאָמְרָה מֵאֵן יְבָמִי לְהַקִּים לְאָחִיו שֵׁם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אָבָה יְבָמִי: ח וְקָרְאוּ־לוֹ וְקָנִי־עִירוֹ וְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וְעַמְד וְאָמַר לֹא חָפְצָתִי לְקַחְתָּהּ: ט וְנָגְשָׁה יְבִמְתּוֹ אֵלָיו לְעֵינָי הַזִּקְנִים וְחָלְצָה נַעֲלָו

* לוי' לאשה

כש"י

מלאכתו למעשר: (כ) כי ישבו אחים יחדו. שהיתה להם ישיבה אחת צעולם, פרט לאשת אחיו שלא היה צעולמו: יחדו. המיוחדים צנחלה, פרט לאחיו מן האס: ובן איז לו. עיין עליו זן או צת, או זן הצן, או צת הצן, (או זן הצת), או צת הצת: (ו) והיה הבכור. גדול האחים הוא מייבס אותה: אשר תלד. פרט לחילונית שאינה יולדת: יקום על שם אחיו. זה שייבס את אשתו יטול נחלת המת צנכסי צביו: ולא ימחה שמו. פרט לאשת סרים ששמו מחוי: (ז) השערה. כתרומתו לתרע בית דינא: (ח) ועמד. צעמידה: ואמר. צלשון

אחיו. כל היום קוראו רשע ומשלקה קראו אחיו: (ד) לא תחסום שור בדישו. דיצר הכחוש צכווה, והוא הדין לכל צהמה חיה ועוף העושים צמלאכה שהיא צדצר מאכל. אס כן למח נאמר שור, להוליא את האדם: בדישו. יכול יחסמנו מצחון, תלמוד לומר לא תחסום שור מכל מקום, ולמה נאמר דיש, לומר לך מה דיש מיוחד דצר שלא נגמרה מלאכתו (למעשר ולחלה) וגדולו מן הארץ, אף כל כיואל צו, יאל החולצ והמחצן שאין גדולו מן הארץ, יאל הלש והמקטף שנגמרה מלאכתו לחלה, יאל הצודל צתמרים וצגורוגרות שנגמרה

TORAS MENACHEM

A further problem with this verse concerns the statement, “The innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.” Surely these words are superfluous, and if so, why does *Rashi* not explain their significance, as he does in the case of all apparently superfluous phrases of scripture?

Rabbi Shimon in the *Sifri* (as clarified by *Sifri debay Rav*) explains that these words teach us that the court must always attempt to acquit a person before they incriminate them. However, at the literal level, this answer is difficult to accept, because the verse appears to be referring to two separate people: “the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.”

Presumably *Rashi* felt that the reader could work this matter out for himself with simple logic and a knowledge of *Rashi*'s prior comments. What, then, is the explanation of this matter, at the literal level?

THE EXPLANATION

In addition to the fact that the words, “If there is a quarrel between two men,” appear to be superfluous (as *Gur Aryeh* writes), *Rashi* was troubled in particular why the Torah chose to use the word “quarrel” (רִיב). For normally, when two disputants go to court, the matter is referred to as a (דְּבַר) (“claim” or “case” cf. *Shemos* 18:16, 19, 22, 26). The use of the term “quarrel” generally refers to a personal dispute which does not reach court,* as in: “A quarrel erupted between the herdsmen of Avram’s cattle (who rebuked) the herdsmen of Lot’s cattle” (*Bereishis* 13:7), “The shepherds of Gerar argued (וַיִּרְיבוּ) with Yitzchak’s shepherds” (*ibid.* 20:6), and, “If two men quarrel, and one strikes the other” (*Shemos* 21:18).

So, *Rashi* was troubled: Since our verse speaks of a dispute which came to court, the verse should have said, “If two men bring their case to court.”

Rashi answered that if their intention is to quarrel, then “they will eventually go to court,” but that all that will happen is “the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.” However, this will not help bring peace, since the disputants are not interested in resolving their dispute, but rather, in fighting with each other. Thus, “We learn from this that a quarrel will not end in peace,” because the initial intention of the disputants was not to seek peace, but to quarrel with each other. Thus, even when the court passes its judgment, the situation will not be alleviated, and the two disputants will continue to quarrel.

It follows from this that, according to *Rashi*, our verse is teaching an important law. If two disputants come to court and it appears obvious to the judges that either one or both of the men are not really interested in resolving their dispute, the court may be tempted not to judge the case. They might think it preferable to penalize one or both of the contentious parties, and perhaps in this manner the quarrel will finally end.

To contradict this notion, the Torah teaches us: “If there is a quarrel between (two) men who come to court to be judged, the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned.” Even if the court sees that a legal ruling will not bring two disputants to peace, it is nevertheless the duty of the court to decide the law and make the path of justice known for all those who wish to avail themselves of it.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 152ff.)* However, the Torah does use the term רִיב in reference to court cases too. See: *Shemos* 23:2, 3, 6. *Devarim* 17:8; 19:17; 21:5.

- ⁴ Do not muzzle an ox (or another animal) while it is threshing (or doing other agricultural work).

🌀 LEVIRATE MARRIAGE 🌀

25:5

If brothers (from the same father) live together (in the world at the same time) and one of them dies having no child (or grandchild):

- The wife of the deceased may not marry outside (the family) to a strange man. Her husband's brother must come to her, taking her as a wife for himself in Levirate marriage.
- ⁶ What should happen is that the eldest brother (will perform the Levirate marriage with her), provided she can bear (children), standing in the place of his deceased brother, so that his name should not be lost from Israel.

⁷ But if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife:

- The brother's wife should go up to the gates (of justice), to the elders, and say: "My brother-in-law has refused to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel. He does not wish to perform a Levirate marriage with me."
- ⁸ The elders of his city should call him and speak to him. He should stand up and say (in Hebrew), "I do not wish to take her."
- ⁹ His brother's wife should approach him, in the presence of the elders, and remove his shoe from

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What if a muzzled animal threshes *unintentionally*? (v. 4)

ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH: A person does not transgress the prohibition of "Do not muzzle," if he muzzles his cows when taking a shortcut over grain, even though the grain is inevitably threshed, because this is not his intention. The same applies in other such cases. (דיני שאלה ושכירות וחסימה, סעיף ג')

● Is it preferable for a person to perform Levirate marriage (v. 5-6) or to exempt himself by *chalitza*? (v. 7-10)

RAMBAM: The *mitzvah* of Levirate marriage takes precedence over the *mitzvah* of *chalitza* (*Laws of Levirate Marriage and Chalitzah* 1:2).

REMA: We do not permit a Levirate marriage unless it is clear that both parties are doing so for the sake of the *mitzvah* (*Even Ha'ezer* 165:1).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

"DO NOT MUZZLE AN OX..." (v. 4)

The *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch* rules that a person does not transgress the prohibition of muzzling an ox while threshing unless he does so intentionally—and that, "the same applies in other such cases" (see *Classic Questions*). *i.e.* in the case of other prohibitions. However, regarding positive *mitzvos*, the consensus of most authorities is that a lack of intention does *not* render the *mitzvah* invalid.

At first glance, we would think that the opposite would be the case. A positive *mitzvah* causes a total change of status, sanctifying a physical object that was previously devoid of holiness; but a transgression merely distances an *already* mundane object further from being holy. Why is intention necessary for the apparently easier task?

In truth, however, it could be argued that intention is crucial for *all* commands. In the case of a positive *mitzvah* though, the fact that a person praised God upon awakening, at the beginning of the day*, serves as a general "intention" for all the *mitzvos* throughout the day.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1127ff.)

LEVIRATE MARRIAGE VS. *CHALITZAH* (v. 5-10)

Generally speaking, the view of Sefardic Rabbinical authorities (such as **Rambam**—See *Classic Questions*) is to favor the process of Levirate marriage (v. 5-6), rather than the exemption process of *chalitza* (v. 7-10). On the other hand, we find that the vast majority of Ashkenazic authorities (such as **Rema**) strongly advocate *chalitza*.

This difference of opinion is a reflection of the different degrees of exile in which the Sefardic and Ashkenazic Jews have found themselves during history. Sefardic Jews have generally lived in countries which allowed Jews to practice the *mitzvos* amid a state of relative prosperity. Ashkenazic Jews however, have faced a much more bitter exile where poverty and persecution have been a fact of day-to-day life. Thus, due to the financial burdens of supporting a family, Ashkenazic Rabbis did not deem it wise for a person to carry out Levirate marriage unless he was absolutely committed to doing so. In Sefardic communities, this limitation was unnecessary.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzorah* 5747)

* By saying the prayer *Modeh Ani*. However, even one who does not do so still has a subconscious positive intent which suffices to validate the positive *mitzvos* that he or she performs. See *Sparks of Chasidus* to v. 19 above.

ותרוק באנפוחי ותתב ותימר פדיו ותעבד לנבר די לא יבני ית ביתא דאחוי: ויתקרי שמה בישראל בית שרי סינא: יא ארי ינצו גוברין פחדא גבר ואחוי ותתקרב אתת חד לשיובא ית בעלה מיד מחוהי ותושט ידה ותתקף בבית בהתתה: יב ותקוין ית ידה לא תחוס עינד: יג לא יהי לך בכיסך מתקל ומתקל רבתא ווערתא: יד לא יהי לך בביתך מכילא ומכילא רבתא ווערתא: טו מתקלין שלמין דקשוט יהון לך מכילן שלמין דקשוט יהון לך בדיל דיורכון יומיד על ארעא דיין אלקה יתב לך: טז ארי מרחק קדם יי אלקה כל עבד אליו כל עבד שקר: יז הוי דכיר ית די עבד לך עמלק בארחה במפקכון ממצרים: יח די ערעד בארחה וקטל לך כל דהון מתאחרין בתרד ואת משלהי ולאי ולא

מעל רגלו וירקה בפניו וענתה ואמרה ככה יעשה לאיש אשר לא יבנה את בית אחיו: ונקרא שמו בישראל בית חלוין הנעל: ט יא כי ינצו אנשים יחדו איש ואחיו וקרבה אשת האחד להציל את אישה מיד מכהו ושלחה ידה והחזיקה במבשיו: יב וקצתה את פפה לא תחוס עינד: ט יג לא יהיה לך בכיסך אבן ואבן גדולה וקטנה: יד לא יהיה לך בביתך איפה ואיפה גדולה וקטנה: טו אבן שלמה וצדק יהיה לך איפה שלמה וצדק יהיה לך למען יאריכו ימיה על האדמה אשר יהנה אלהיך נתן לך: טז כי תועבת יהנה אלהיך כל עשה אלה כל עשה עול: פ (מפטיר) יז זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים: יח אשר קרד בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריך ואתה עיף ויגע

דש"י

כן יהיה לך הכרזה: (יז) זכור את אשר עשה לך. אם שקרת צמדות וצמסקלות בוי דואג מגרוי האויב, שנאמר מאזני מרמח תועבת ה', וכתיב צתריה⁸ זא דזון ויבא קלון: (יח) אשר קרד בדרך. לשון מקרה. דבר אחר לשון קרי וטומאה, שכיב מטמאן צמשכז זכור¹⁰. דבר אחר לשון קור וחוס, לנגן והפשיך מרתיחתך, שהיו כל האומות יראים להלחם בכס וזא זה והתחיל והראה מקום לאחרים. משל לאמצעי רותחת שאין כל צריה יכולה לירד צתוכה, זא זן בליעל אחד קפץ וירד לתוכה. אף על פי שצוכה, הקרה אותה צפני אחרים¹⁰: ויזנב בך. מכת זכ, חותך מילות וזורק כלפי מעלה¹¹: כל הנחשלים אחריו. חסרי כח מחמת חטאם, שכיב הענן פולטן¹¹: ואתה עיף ויגע. עיף צמא, דכתיב¹² וילמא שם העס למיס, וכתיב אחריו¹³ ויבא עמלק¹¹: ויגע.

הקודש, ואף היא דצריה צלשון הקודש: (ט) וירקה בפניו. על גבי קרקע: אשר לא יבנה. מכאן למי שחלץ שלא יחזור וייבס, דלא כתיב אשר לא צנח, אלא אשר לא יבנה, כיון שלא צנח שוב לא יבנה: (י) ונקרא שמו וגו'. מלוא על כל העומדים שם לומר חלוין הנעל: (יא) כי ינצו אנשים. סופן לצא ליד מכות, כמו שנאמר מיד מכהו. אין שלום יולא מתוך ידי מלותא: (יב) וקצתה את כפה. ממון דמי צסתו. הכל לפי המצויש והמתצייש⁵. או אינו אלא ידה ממש, נאמר כאן לא תחוס, ונאמר להלן צעדים זוממין לא תחוס⁶, מה להלן ממון, אף כאן ממון⁴: (יג) גדולה וקטנה. גדולה שמכששת את הקטנה, שלא יבא נוטל בגדולה ומחזיר צקטנה⁴: (יד) לא יהיה לך. אם עשית כן לא יהיה לך כלום: אבן ואבן. משקלות: (טו) אבן שלמה וצדק יהיה לך. אם עשית

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“REMEMBER WHAT AMALEK DID TO YOU...” (v. 17)

A malek's unprovoked and stealthy attack was calculated to shake their [the Jewish people's] belief in God and dampen their enthusiasm for His Torah and mitzvos.

Haman, a direct descendant of Amalek, was driven by hatred of the Jews, because “their laws were different from those of any other people,” as the *Megilah* states (Esther 3:8). Likewise did all subsequent Amalekites and Hamans of all ages hate the Jews.

But “Amalek”—in a wider sense—represents all obstacles and hindrances which a Jew encounters on his, or her, way to receive and observe the Torah and mitzvos with enthusiasm and joy in the everyday life....

Why should a Jew be confronted with such trials and difficulties? The answer is, that every Jew has been given the necessary powers to

overcome all such “Amalekites,” and he is expected to use them, in order to demonstrate to himself and others that nothing will deter him, nor dampen his fervor, in the observance of the Torah and mitzvos in accordance with God’s Will.

And once he recognizes that whatever difficulty he encounters is really a test of his faith in God, and resolves firmly to meet the challenge, he will soon see that no “Amalek” of any kind is a match for the Divine powers of the Jewish soul.

Indeed, far from being insurmountable obstructions, they turn out to be helpers and catalysts for ever greater achievements, having been instrumental in mobilizing those inner powers which would have otherwise remained dormant.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5738)

his foot. She should spit before him (on the ground). She should respond to him, and say (in Hebrew), “That is what should be done to the man who will not build his brother’s household!”

- ¹⁰ His name in Israel will be called, “The household of the one whose shoe was removed.”

🕒 PENALTY FOR EMBARRASSMENT 🕒

- ¹¹ If (two) men, a man and his brother, are fighting together, and the wife of one of them comes close to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she stretches forth her hand and grabs hold of (the assailant’s) private parts, ¹² you should decide* (an appropriate penalty for her, for the embarrassment that she caused with) her hand. You should not look (upon her with) pity.

🕒 CORRECT WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ** 🕒

- ¹³ You must not keep in your pocket (two apparently identical) weights (and yet) one is a bigger weight and one is smaller.
 - ¹⁴ You must not keep in your house (two apparently identical) dry-measures, (and yet) one is a bigger dry-measure and one is smaller.
 - ¹⁵ You must have (only) perfect and correct weights, perfect and correct dry-measures, in order that your days will be prolonged on the land which God, your God, is giving you.
- ¹⁶ For anybody who does these things—anybody who acts dishonestly (with weights and measures)—is an abomination to God, your God .

🕒 REMEMBERING AMALEK 🕒

- MAFTIR • ¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how they surprised you on the road and cut off all the weak people at your rear, when you were parched and weary (from the journey), and they did not fear (retribution from) God (for hurting you).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How often does one have to remember “what Amalek did to you”? (v. 17)

RAMBAM: It is a positive command to constantly remember their evil deeds and ambush, to arouse hatred for them, as the verse states, “Remember what Amalek did to you” (v.17). According to Oral Tradition we are taught: “Remember’—with your mouths; ‘Do not forget’ (v. 19)—in your hearts,” for it is forbidden to forget the hatred we have for them (*Laws of Kings* 5:5).

SEFER HACHINUCH: It is sufficient for us to remember the matter once a year, or once in two or three years....If a person never mentioned it with his mouth once in his entire life, then he has transgressed (*Mitzvah* 603).

MINCHAS CHINUCH: Thus, according to the *Sefer Hachinuch*, it appears that mentioning what Amalek did once in a lifetime suffices.

SHALOH: It is a great *mitzvah* to say this passage (v. 17-19) every day to fulfill the *mitzvah* to “remember” (*Torah Shebiksav, Parshas Ki Seitzei*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 THE OBLIGATION TO REMEMBER AMALEK (V. 17)

We find a range of opinions concerning how often the *mitzvah* of remembering Amalek needs to be carried out. **Sefer Hachinuch** argues that once a year, or even once in a lifetime would suffice. **Shaloh** recommends the verbal remembering of Amalek daily, and **Rambam** states that the *mitzvah* is incumbent “constantly.”

In order to minimize the dispute, the following could be argued:

- Even according to *Sefer Hachinuch*, if one chose to remember Amalek verbally on a daily basis, one would perform a *mitzvah* daily.
- Furthermore, it could be argued that, according to all opinions, whenever one remembers Amalek, it has the status of a *halachically* “ongoing activity”**** until the next occasion that one performs this *mitzvah*.

*[Literally “cut (וְקָצַתָּהּ) her hand.” However, *Rashi* explains this to mean a process of evaluation. (וְקָצַתָּהּ is thus related to the term קָצוּב הַיָּמִים, meaning the “evaluation of funds.”) Thus we have translated the term here as “you should decide,” since the verb “to decide” in English also means “to cut off,” from the Latin *decidere*. (A “decision” is thus the “cutting off” point of an evaluation process, which appears to be *Rashi*’s intention here.)] ** See *Classic Questions* and *Toras Menachem* to *Vayikra* 19:35-36. ***See *Mefa’ane’ach Tzefunos* (Kasher, 1976), chapter 5.

דחיל מן קדם יי: יש ויהי פד יניח יי אלהך לך
מכל בעלי דבבך מסחור סחור בארעא די
יי אלהך יחב לך אחסנא למירתה תמחי ית
דוכרנא דעמלק מתחות שמיא לא תתנשי:

פ פ פ

וְלֹא יֵרָא אֱלֹהִים: יֵט וְהָיָה בְּהַנִּיחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל לְךָ מִכָּל־
אֲיָבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בְּאַרְצֵךְ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת־זִכְרָם * עִמְלֶק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

פ פ פ

ק"י פסוקים, על"י סימן.

* קוראים יִזְכַּר (בצירי), ואחד—כך יִזְכַּר (בסגול) הן בשביעי והן במפטיד (ספר-המונהגים עמ' 31, ושם עמ' 72)

רש"י

צדק: ולא ירא. עמלק, אלכיס, מלכרע לך²: (יט) תמחה את זכר עמלק. מאיש ועד אשה מעולל ועד יונק משור
ועד שה³. שלא יחא שם עמלק נזכר אפילו על הצבחה, לומר צבחה זו משל עמלק היחה⁴: חסלת פרשת תצא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one “erase any reminder of Amalek” (v. 19)?

RASHI: Eliminate both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, so that the name of Amalek should never again be mentioned, even regarding an animal, e.g. “This animal was from Amalek.”

RAMBAM: This *mitzvah* is incumbent on the community as a whole, not on every person individually (*Sefer Hamitzvos*, end of positive commands).

● What is the connection between the command to “remember what Amalek did” (v. 17) and “erase any reminder of Amalek” (v. 19)?

RAMBAM: It is a positive command to remember what Amalek did to us... at all times, and to verbally arouse people to fight them (*Sefer Hamitzvos*, positive command 189).

TORAS MENACHEM

However, this seems to present us with a problem when we compare the *mitzvah* of remembering Amalek (v. 17) with the *mitzvah* of erasing any reminder of Amalek (v. 19; see *Classic Questions*). In the present age, it is not possible to perform the *mitzvah* of erasing any reminder of Amalek because:

a.) This *mitzvah* is only incumbent when all the Jewish people are living in the Land of Israel, in a state of peace. As the verse states explicitly: “When God, your God, gives you relief from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which God, your God, is giving to you...you must erase any reminder of Amalek” (v. 19).

b.) Even if this were to be the case, the precise identity of the various nations (including Amalek) has become confused due to intermixing (see *Classic Questions* to 23:4-9, above). So it is impossible to eradicate Amalek nowadays, since it cannot be determined which people are actually descendants of the original nation of Amalek.

This begs the question: **Rambam** writes that the reason we are required to “remember what Amalek did,” is “to verbally arouse people to fight them,” i.e. in order to perform the *mitzvah* of eradicating Amalek. So, if we are no longer able to carry out the *mitzvah* of “eradicating,” why is the

mitzvah of “remembering” still required, (especially in light of the above explanation that remembering is required *constantly*)?

Of course, we could argue that since we impatiently await the arrival of Mashiach every day, there is a need to prepare for the elimination of Amalek, which may become relevant at any moment. But surely though, there must be some significance to this *mitzvah* today, even before the coming of Mashiach?

THE EXPLANATION

The *mitzvah* of remembering Amalek clearly has a broader scope than being just a direct preparation for the war to eradicate Amalek, since:

a.) If “remembering” was merely required to “verbally arouse people to fight them,” the two processes of “remembering” and “eradicating” would constitute one single *mitzvah*. As we find in the case of the other nations which the Jewish people are obligated to eradicate (the seven nations of Canaan—see 20:16 above), that one single *mitzvah* includes both the “arousal” to fight, and the fighting itself.

b.) While the requirement of eradicating Amalek is a *mitzvah* incumbent on the community as a whole, the *mitzvah* of remembering the deeds of

- ¹⁹ *Consequently, when God, your God, gives you relief from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which God, your God is giving to you as an inheritance to keep as a possession—you must (destroy every man, woman, child and animal belonging to Amalek, so that you) erase any reminder of Amalek from beneath the skies.*
- *Do not forget (what they did to you)!*

THE HAFTARAH FOR KI SEITZEI IS ON PAGE 284.

TORAS MENACHEM

Amalek is an obligation that rests on the individual. This indicates that remembering Amalek has a broad implication for all Jewish people, beyond the specific war effort to eradicate Amalek.

The reason why the *mitzvah* of remembering Amalek is of such universal significance is related to the specific threat which Amalek poses to the Jewish people:

We are commanded to totally obliterate any reminder of Amalek, because they are a nation whose outlook is *antithetical* to the practice of Judaism. Of course, the Torah identifies numerous nations that harbored heretical views, but the specific threat of Amalekite ideology is considered to be far more dangerous, because it is a *subtle* threat which does not appear, at first glance, to be true heresy. For this reason, the Torah feared that even a person who is a genuine believer in all the principles of our faith, and who meticulously observes all the *mitzvos*, may nevertheless be corrupted by the ideology of Amalek.

Therefore, the Torah required a greater level of vigilance, to ensure that Amalek does not influence us. We must constantly be aware of and “remember” the threat posed by the Amalekite ideology, and eliminate any member of the nation which attempts to perpetuate it.

What, precisely, is the subtle evil of Amalek which is so dangerous?

Our Sages explained: “*He knows his Master, and yet intentionally rebels against Him.*” In other words, we are not speaking here of a heretical belief which denies the existence of God (for Amalek “knows his Master”). If Amalek simply denied the existence of God, or advocated idol-worship, any believing Jew would find the matter easy to reject. It is precisely because the Amalekite philosophy *recognizes* the existence of God (“knows his Master”) that it poses a danger for a Jewish person, who may

easily become sympathetic to this outlook, eventually leading him to rebel against God, Heaven forbid.

Of course, this is unlikely to happen overnight, for Amalek does not “attack” by immediately telling a Jew to stop observing the *mitzvos*. The threat of Amalek lies in more subtle attempts to “disconnect” a person’s knowledge from his practical observance. For example, Amalek might initially tell a person not to become excited about observing the *mitzvos**, or to believe in God in general, but not with absolute certainty**. Thus, the fact that this “voice” is generally condoning the observance of *mitzvos* and belief in God could fool a person into thinking that it is “kosher.” In truth, however, such thoughts represent one of the biggest threats that an observant Jew might face.

Based on the above, we can understand why there are two separate *mitzvos* to “remember” and “eliminate” Amalek:

Due to its seemingly acceptable “front,” extra vigilance is required to ensure that a person does not sympathize with the Amalekite ideology in any way whatsoever. Thus, while in the case of other evil nations, the *mitzvah* to destroy them logically includes the requirement to arouse hatred for them, in the case of Amalek, the Torah deemed it necessary to make a special issue about arousing hatred for them, by designating this task as a separate *mitzvah*.

The practical offshoot of this is that, even though the command to “remember” Amalek only arose out of a need to eliminate them, nevertheless, even in a time when it is not possible to eliminate the actual nation of Amalek (such as in the present age), it still remains relevant to eliminate any sympathy for their ideology—and this is achieved today by the *mitzvah* of “remembering” Amalek.***

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 221; vol. 21, p. 191ff.)

*This is alluded to by verse 18, “*how they surprised you (קָרְרָךְ) on the road,*” since the word קָרְרָךְ is derived from the word קָרְרִית, meaning “coolness.” Thus the verse could be read, “they cooled you,” i.e. they cooled your enthusiasm. Furthermore, Amalek’s initial attack upon the Jewish people was just before the giving of the Torah when practical *mitzvos* were introduced, which stresses how their ideology is aimed at combatting *practical* observance. **Alluded to by the fact that the Hebrew word *Amalek* has the same numerical equivalent (*gematria*) as the word *safek*, which means “doubt.” ***For this reason, a special Torah reading was introduced, connected with this *mitzvah* (*Parshas Zachor*), since Torah has the ability to cleanse the soul from undesirable or heretical ideologies.



Parshas Ki Seitzei contains 27 positive mitzvos and 47 prohibitions

1. The law of a beautiful woman taken captive at war [21:11].
2. Not to sell a beautiful woman taken captive at war [21:14].
3. Not to make a beautiful woman taken captive at war work as a slave after one has been conjugally intimate with her [21:14].
4. To hang a person after his execution when it is required [21:22].
5. Not to leave a person who was hung overnight on the gallows, and not to leave a dead man overnight in his house, unless it is for his honor [21:23].
6. To bury a person put to death by court sentence, or any other deceased person, the same day that he dies [21:23].
7. To return lost property to its owner [22:1].
8. Not to turn a blind eye to a lost object [22:3].
9. Not to leave a fellow-man's animal lying under its burden [22:4].
10. To help lift up a heavy load for a Jew [22:4].
11. A woman should not wear men's clothing [22:5].
12. A man should not wear women's clothing [22:5].
13. Not to take the mother-bird while its eggs or young are in the nest [22:6].
14. To send away the mother-bird from its nest, when taking its eggs or young [22:7].
15. To build a parapet around a dangerous roof or pit [22:8].
16. Not to leave a dangerous roof or pit without a parapet [22:8].
17. Not to sow a mixture of seeds in a vineyard in the Land of Israel [22:9].
18. Not to eat the produce of mixed seeds grown in a vineyard in the Land of Israel [22:9].
19. Not to work with two kinds of animals together [22:10].
20. Not to wear cloth of wool and linen [22:11].
21. The mitzvah of kidushin (betrothing a woman) [22:13].
22. A man who spreads an evil report that his wife was immoral is to remain with her permanently [22:19].
23. A man who spreads an evil report that his wife was immoral may not divorce his wife [22:19].
24. The court should stone a person who is sentenced to stoning [22:24].
25. Not to punish a person who was forced to transgress [22:26].
26. A rapist must marry his victim [22:29].
27. A rapist may not divorce his victim [22:29].
28. A sterilized man may not marry a Jewish girl [23:3].
29. A bastard from an adulterous or incestuous union should not marry a Jewish girl [23:4].
30. A person from the nations of Amon or Mo'av may not marry a Jewish girl [23:6].
31. Not to make peace with the nations of Amon or Mo'av before a war [23:7].
32. A descendant of Eisav may not marry a Jewish person even after he has converted to Judaism, nor may his child [23:9].
33. An Egyptian may not marry a Jewish person even after he has converted to Judaism, nor may his child [23:8].
34. A ritually impure person may not enter the camp of the Levites (the Temple Mount) [23:11].
35. To prepare a lavatory outside the camp, when at war [23:13].
36. To prepare a shovel for each person in the army, so he can cover his excrement [23:14].
37. Not to return a slave who fled from his master in the Diaspora to the Land of Israel [23:16].
38. Not to oppress a slave who flees from his master in the Diaspora to the Land of Israel [23:18].
39. Not to be conjugally intimate with a woman out of wedlock [23:11].
40. Not to bring the wage of a harlot or the exchange-price of a dog as an offering in the Temple [23:19].
41. Not to borrow at interest from a Jew [23:20].
42. To charge a non-Jew interest [23:21].
43. Not to delay a vow to make an offering, or to delay the offering of a consecrated animal for three festivals [23:22].
44. To fulfill one's vows and oaths [23:24].
45. To permit a hired worker to eat certain types of produce while he is under hire [23:25].
46. A hired worker should not take more produce from his employer than he is allowed [23:25].
47. A hired worker should not eat from his employer's crops during his actual work [23:26].
48. One who wishes to divorce his wife must do so with a get (bill of divorce) [24:1].
49. A divorced man may not take back his ex-wife after she has married and divorced again, or widowed [24:4].
50. A bridegroom may not part from his wife during the first year of marriage [24:5].
51. A bridegroom must remain with his wife during the first year of marriage [24:5].
52. Not to pawn any objects with which sustaining food is prepared [24:6].
53. Not to pluck out signs of tzara'as [24:8].
54. Not to take an object in pledge from a debtor by force [24:10].
55. Not to withhold a pledged object from its owner when he needs it [24:12].
56. To return a pledged object to its owner when he needs it [24:13].
57. To pay the earnings of a hired worker on the day that he earned them [24:15].
58. A person may not give testimony of a close relative at trial [24:16].
59. Not to pervert justice in the case of a convert or an orphan [24:17].
60. Not to take anything in pledge from a widow [24:17].
61. To leave forgotten sheaves for the poor [24:19].
62. Not to take a forgotten sheaf of grain or forgotten fruit [24:19].
63. To administer lashes to a person who transgresses certain prohibitions [25:2].
64. Not to give additional lashes, or hit any Jew [25:3].
65. Not to muzzle a domestic animal during its work [25:4].
66. A childless widow should not marry any person other than her late husband's brother [25:5].
67. A childless widow should marry her late husband's brother (Levirate marriage) [25:5].
68. The mitzvah of chalitzah (releasing a woman from the obligation of Levirate marriage) [25:9].
69. To save a person pursued by a killer, by attacking the killer [25:12].
70. Not to have mercy on a pursuing killer [25:12].
71. Not to keep inaccurate scales or weights, even if they are not used [25:13].
72. To remember what Amalek did to the Jewish people when they came out of Egypt [25:17].
73. To eradicate the descendants of Amalek [25:19].
74. Not to forget what Amalek did to the Jewish people when they came out of Egypt [25:19].



parshas Ki Savo

פרשת כי תבוא

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

Ki Savo means “when you enter,” as in the verse, “When you enter the land which God...is giving you.”

At which point, according to Torah, does “entering” occur? Do we say that as soon as a person puts his hand in a room he has “entered” it? Or does he have to put most of his body inside? Or can he only be said to have “entered” when his whole body is in the room?

Similarly, at which point has a nation considered to have entered a land? When the first few people arrive? Or do they all have to arrive and settle before we can say they have truly entered?

The *Talmud* answers: “Partial entry is not considered entry” (*Chullin* 33b). Likewise, *Rashi* explains at the beginning of our *Parsha* that, “when you enter the land” refers to the time when “they conquered the land and divided it.”

This teaches us a powerful lesson in daily life: *that we should “enter” ourselves totally and wholeheartedly into everything that we do for God.*

When a person becomes fully immersed in what he is doing, there is not merely a *quantitative* improvement in his actions (*how much* he is involved), but a *qualitative* change, which radically affects the manner in which he is involved.

In order to reach a state of total immersion (“entering”), a person must temporarily relinquish any other cares or concerns, and dedicate himself unrestrainedly to the matter at hand with utter devotion and concentration. He must surrender himself and not allow any personal bias to interfere with the purity of this act.

In other words, even though a person has many “layers” through which he interfaces with the world and copes with day-to-day life, it is possible for him to “peel away” these layers and forge a direct soul-connection with what he is doing. If he succeeds in doing so, then he and the activity will become one *indistinguishable* entity.

By way of illustration: when the soul enters the body to bring it to life, there is a total “entering,” such that soul and body become one. Now, the body is alive too. It is not merely *enlivened* by the soul; it has actually become *alive* itself, because the soul has entered the body *totally*, such that the soul and body are truly one.

And that is the lesson from *Parshas Ki Savo*: We should “enter” into every *mitzvah* that we perform, and every act with which we serve God. Then our observance of Judaism will become *alive*—literally.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, pp. 245-7; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo* 5733)

א ויהי ארי תעול לארעא די יי אלהך יחב לך אחסנא ותרתה ותיתב בה: ב ותסב מריש כל אבא דארעא די תעל מארעך די יי אלהך יחב לך ותשוי בסלא ותהך לאתרא די יתרעי יי אלהך לאשראה שכנתה תמן: ג ותיתי לות כהנא די יחי ביומא האנון ותימר לה חויתי יומא רין קדם יי אלהך ארי עלית לארעא די קיים יי לאכהתנא למתן לנא: ד ויסב כהנא סלא מידך וינענה קדם

כו א וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה וַיִּרְשַׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּת בָּהּ: ב וּלְקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית א כָּל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְיֵא מֵאֲרָצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְשַׂמְתָּ בַסֵּנַא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁבְן שְׂמוֹ שָׁם: ג וּבָאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבֹתֵינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ: ד וּלְקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַסֵּנַא

כ"ט

צחוקי⁴: ודבש. הוא דבש תמרים⁵: מראשית. חס יורד לחוך שדכו ורוחא תאנה שבכרה, כורך עליה גמי לסימן ואומר רבי זו צכורים⁶: (ג) אשר יהיה בימים ההם. אין לך אלא ככן שזימין, כמו שהוא⁷: ואמרת אליו. שאינך כפוי טובה⁸: הגדתי היום. פעם אחת זשנה ולא שתי פעמים⁹: (ד) ולקח הכהן הטנא מידך. להניף אותו. ככן מניח ידו תחת יד הצעלים ומניף⁷:

(6) והיה כי תבוא. וירשתה וישבת בה. מגיד שלא נחייבו צכורים עד שכבשו את הארץ וחלקוה! (3) מראשית. ולא כל ראשית, שאין כל הפירות חייבין צכורים אלא שבעת המינין בלבד. נאמר כאן ארץ, ונאמר להלן² ארץ חטה ושעורה וגו', מה להלן משבעת המינים שנשתבחה בהם ארץ ישראל, אף כאן שבה ארץ ישראל שכן שבעת מינין³: זית שמן. זית אגורי ששמו אגור

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● When were firstfruits first brought? (v. 1-2)

RASHI: The words, “What will happen is, when you enter...you should take possession of it and settle in it,” teach us that they were not obligated to bring firstfruits until they conquered the land and divided it.

SIFRI: [The obligation to bring firstfruits] began immediately on entering the land.

MALBIM: How can *Sifri* argue that the obligation to bring firstfruits began immediately upon entering the Land of Israel, when the verse states explicitly that “you should take possession of it and settle in it,”

before bringing firstfruits? Rather, *Sifri's* intention here is that the *mitzvah* of firstfruits became obligatory immediately after conquering the land and dividing it. This is in contrast to the *mitzvah* of eliminating Amalek, recorded at the end of the previous *Parsha*, which did not become obligatory immediately after conquering the land and dividing it, but only later, “when God your God gives you relief from all your surrounding enemies” (25:19).

● What is the reason why firstfruits are brought ? (v. 3)

RASHI: [To show] that you are not ungrateful [to God].

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 WHEN DID THE MITZVAH OF FIRSTFRUITS BEGIN? (v. 1)

Rashi explains that the *mitzvah* of offering firstfruits did not become obligatory until the Jewish people had fully conquered and settled in the Land of Israel, a process which actually took fourteen years.

Sifri, however, is of the opinion that the obligation to bring firstfruits became obligatory immediately upon entering the Land of Israel.

One problem with the view of *Sifri* is that it appears to contradict that which is stated explicitly in verse 1, that the *mitzvah* of firstfruits only applies after the Jewish people “take possession” of the land “and settle in it”—as *Malbim* points out.

Malbim explains that *Sifri's* intention was not that the *mitzvah* became obligatory immediately upon entering the land, but rather, immediately upon settling in it. This is not indicated, however, in the wording of the *Sifri*.

THE EXPLANATION

The Torah stipulates that firstfruits are only to be brought after “you enter the land...take possession of it and settle in it” (v. 1). *Rashi*

understood that, like the vast majority of *mitzvos* connected with entering the Land of Israel, this *mitzvah* would only become obligatory after the entire land was conquered and settled by the Jewish people as a whole.

Sifri, however, understood that the above verse is speaking to the *individual*, i.e. when you *personally* enter the land, you have an obligation to bring firstfruits *immediately* upon settling on your own private property. Thus, you do not have to wait until the *entire* land has been conquered and settled.

At first glance, however, this does not fully solve our problem. For even according to *Sifri*, a person only brings firstfruits upon acquiring his *own* piece of land (when he can speak of the land “which you, God, have given to me,” v. 10), and the allocation of land only began after the conquest was complete, *seven* years after the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel. Thus, even according to *Sifri* it appears that the obligation to bring firstfruits did not begin immediately, but rather after seven years.

It could be argued though, that according to *Sifri*, it did in fact become obligatory for a person to bring firstfruits *immediately* upon entering the land, but until the person actually owned land, he was legally *exempt*

🌀 CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND 🌀

26

- ¹ What will happen is, when you enter the land which God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance, you should take possession of it and settle in it.*

🌀 FIRSTFRUITS 🌀

- ² Then (when the land is fully settled) you should take some of the first (to ripen) from every fruit of the ground, which you gather in from your land, that God, your God, is giving you.
- You should put it into a basket and go to the place which God, your God, will choose to make His Name rest there.
- ³ You should come to the priest who is present in (your times, whatever caliber he may be), and say to him:

“I am declaring today to God, your God, that I have come to the land which God swore to our fathers to give us.”
- ⁴ The priest will take the basket from your hand (and wave it together with you). He will then place it before the Altar of God, your God.

TORAS MENACHEM

from doing so.** According to *Rashi*, however, the obligation to offer firstfruits did not commence until the Jewish people as a whole had entered, conquered and settled the entire land.

THE RATIONALE OF RASHI AND SIFRI

At first glance, *Rashi*'s opinion also appears to be difficult to appreciate. *Rashi* himself writes that firstfruits are brought so as not to appear “ungrateful” to God (v. 3), so surely when a person has fruits growing from his own land, he should make an offering to God immediately, as *Sifri* argues? According to *Rashi*, a person who was one of the first to settle in the land would be enjoying fruits from his field for *seven years* before thanking God!

In truth, however, there are different approaches to expressing our gratitude to God, each having their own unique advantage. For example, according to Jewish custom, as soon as a person wakes in the morning he recites the prayer *Modeh Ani* as an expression of gratitude to God, while he is still in bed, even before his hands have been washed. Later in the

** Thus according to *Sifri*, the children of Yisro (who were allotted the “pastures of Jericho” by Moshe himself, prior to entering the land—see *Sifri*, quoted in *Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 10:32) would have offered firstfruits immediately upon entering the Land, for Jericho was conquered instantly, without the need to fight. Clearly though, these first fruits would have been: a.) On a private altar, which was permitted at this time since the Tabernacle at Shiloh—and certainly the Temple itself—had not yet been constructed. b.) From wheat or barley, to avoid the prohibition of *orlah* (prohibited fruits from the first three years of planting). Or alternatively, from orchards and vineyards planted by the previous inhabitants of the land, which were not subject to the prohibition of *orlah* (see *Devarim* 6:11; *Mishnah*, *Orlah* 1:2). At first glance, since the children of Yisro were

converts they would not have been able to recite the declaration upon bringing firstfruits, “since he [the convert] cannot say (v. 3): “[I have come to the land which God swore] to our fathers [to give us]” (*Rashi* to v. 11). However, in this case, it could be argued that the children of Yisro would have indeed made the declaration, since their father Yisro converted before the Land of Israel was conquered. (*Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 149-50; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo* 5744).

* בפשוטו של מקרא (שיטת רש"י) כיבוש וחלוקת הארץ בכתוב כאן אינם (רק) תנאי במצוות בכורים, אלא ציווי בפי"ע על כיבוש וחלוקה, "וירשתה וישבת בה". ולכן לא נחית רש"י לתרג' מדוע הוצרך הכתוב להקדים האריכות ע"ד ביאת וכיבוש הארץ, (דלכאורה הו"ל להזכיר רק ישיבת הארץ, ומובר מעצמה שהיינו לאחזר ביאה וכיבוש) - ע"פ לקו"ש חז"ל ע' 147. ראה גם שיחת ש"פ כי תבוא תשד"מ, ותשמ"ח.

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“YOU SHOULD PUT THEM INTO A BASKET” (v. 2)

Firstfruits represent the Jewish souls, as the *Midrash* teaches that the Divine Thought to create Jewish souls “preceded everything” (*Bereishis Rabah* 1:4). In this respect, Jewish souls are “first” and cherished in a way similar to firstfruits.

When the soul is in Heaven, before it enters a body, it enjoys an intense, ecstatic relationship with God. Nevertheless, the soul is sent down to earth in a body which conceals its relationship with God. This is not without profit since, through this descent, the soul is able to carry out a mission in the physical world, which can eventually result in an even more intense relationship with God. For God’s innermost “desire” is for His *mitzvos* to be carried out specifically in the physical world.

This is the lesson from the requirement of firstfruits being placed in a basket. Although the fruits are the finest and first of the crop, they cannot achieve perfection without a basket. Likewise, the Jewish soul, which is God’s highest priority, cannot achieve perfection without coming down into a physical body, in a world of concealment and temptation, because it is precisely through that descent that an even greater ascent is achieved.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 150ff.)

מִיָּדָה וְהִנִּיחוּ לְפָנַי מִזֶּבַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ה' וְעֲלִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְפָנַי |
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי אָבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם וַיִּגְרַע שָׁם בְּמַתֵּי
 מַעֲטָ וַיְהִי-שָׁם לְגֹי גְדֹל עַצוֹם וְרָב: ו וַיִּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם
 וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה: ז וּנְצַעֲקָ אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת-קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא אֶת-עַנְיָנוּ וְאֶת-עַמְלָנוּ
 וְאֶת-לַחְצָנוּ: ח וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה
 וּבְמַרְא גְדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּי: ט וַיְבֵאֵנוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
 וַיִּתֵּן-לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: י וְעַתָּה
 הִנֵּה הִבֵּאתִי אֶת-רֵאשִׁית פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתָּה לִי יְהוָה
 וְהִנְחֹתוּ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 יא וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ בְּכָל-הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתְךָ אֶתְּךָ
 וְהִלּוּי וְהִגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ: ס [שני] יב כִּי תִכְלֶה לְעֹשֶׂר אֶת-כָּל-

מִדְבָרָא דִּינִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ה' וְתִתִּיב וְתִימַר קְדָם יי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְכֹן אֲרַמְיָא בְּעָא לְאוֹבְדָא ית אבא
 וְנַחַת לְמִצְרַיִם וְדַר תְּמָן בְּעָם זְעַר וְהוּה תְּמָן
 לְעָם רַב תְּקִיף וְסָגִי: ו' וְאֲבָאִישׁוּ לְנָא מִצְרַיִם
 וְעַנְיָנוּ וַיְהִיבוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁיָא: ז' וְנִצְעֵקָנוּ
 קְדָם יי אֱלֹהָא דְאֲבֹהֵתָנוּ וְקָבִיל יי צְלוֹתָנוּ
 וְגַלִּי קְדָמוּהִי עַמְלָנוּ וְלְאוֹתָנוּ וְדוּחֵקָנוּ:
 ח' וְאֲפָקָנוּ יי מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַדָּא תְּקִיפָא וּבְדַרְעָא
 מְרַמְמָא וּבְחַזְוֹנָא רַבָּא וּבְאֹתֵינוּ וּבְמוֹפְתֵינוּ:
 ט' וְאִיתָנוּ לְאֶתְרָא דְדִין וַיְהִי לְנָא ית אֲרַעָא
 דְרָא אֲרַעָא עֲבָדָא חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: י' וְכַעַן הָא
 אִיתִיתִי ית רֵישׁ אבָא דְאֲרַעָא דִּיהִבְתָּ לִי יי
 וְתִצְנַעְנָה קְדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְתִסְגִּיד קְדָם יי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ: יא וְתִחַדִי בְּכָל טְבִתָּא דִּי יְהִיב לְךָ יי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְלֹאֲנֵשׁ בֵּיתְךָ אֶת וְלֹאֲהָ וְגִידָרָא דִּי
 בִּינְךָ: יב אֲרִי תִשְׁצִי לְעֹשְׂרָא ית כָּל מַעֲשֵׂר

כש"י

בזמן שמחה מעלרת ועד החג, שאדם מלקט תבואתו ופירותיו ויינו ושמונו, אזל מהחג ואלך מציא ואינו קורא: אתה והלוי. אף הלוי חייב בצבורים אס נטעו בחור עריכס: והגר אשר בקרבך. מציא ואינו קורא, שאינו יכול לומר לאצונוי: (יב) כי תכלה לעשר את כל מעשר תבואתך בשנה השלישית. כשתגמור להפריש מעשרות של שנה השלישית, קצט זמן כציעור וכיודיו עברז הפסח של שנה הרביעית, שנאמר מקלכ שלש שנים תוליא וגו'. נאמר כאן מקן, ונאמר להלן מקן שצט שנים⁷ לענין הקהל, מה להלן רגל אף כאן רגל, אי מה להלן חג הסוכות אף כאן חג הסוכות, תלמוד

(כ) וענית. לשון הרמת קול: ארמי אבד אבי. מזכיר חסדי המקום ארמי אוזד אזי, לכן צקס לעקור את הכל, כשרדף אחר יעקב. וצשזל שחשז לעשות, חשז לו המקום כאלו עשה, שאומות העולם עוזדי אלילים חושז להס קבצ"ה מחשזבז כמעשה: וירד מצרימה. ועוד אחרים צאו עלינו ללכותנו, שאחרי זאת ירד יעקב למצרים: במתי מעט. צשצטיס נפש: (ט) אל המקום הזה. זכ צית המקדש: ויתן לנו את הארץ. כמשמעו: (י) והנחתו. מגיד שנטלו אחר הנפת (ס"א הנחת) כהכן ואוחזו צידו כשהוא קורא, וחוזר ומניף: (יא) ושמחת בכל הטוב. מכאן אמרו אין קורין מקרא צבורים אלא

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day, he will pray more at length to God, at which time he will obviously be in a more fit state of mind to praise his Creator.

Nevertheless, each of these types of praise possesses a unique advantage: His recital of the *Modeh Ani* prayer in the morning is immediate and spontaneous, demonstrating a deep-rooted commitment to serving God, to the extent that the very first thing a person does upon awakening is to recite a prayer. On the other hand, his praises to God later in the day are more meaningful, because they arise from a fuller and more conscious appreciation of God's kindness.

Sifri perceived the firstfruits to be a form of thanksgiving to God of the former type (comparable to *Modeh Ani*), where a person offers fruits to God *immediately* on acquiring his field.

Rashi, however, understood that the firstfruits are a form of praise which comes after a person *fully* appreciates the fact that God gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish people (comparable to one's prayers later in the day that arise from a fuller appreciation of God's kindness). So until the point has been reached where every Jewish person has received his portion in the land, one's praise to God cannot be complete—for how can one Jew rejoice in receiving his portion when another Jew is still lacking? Thus,

Rashi maintained that firstfruits are only brought after "they conquered the land and divided it."

WHEN RASHI & SIFRI WOULD AGREE

It could be argued that the positions of *Rashi* and *Sifri* are not mutually exclusive. For while the conquest and division of the Land of Israel did actually take fourteen years, if the sin of the spies had not occurred, it would have happened instantaneously (for the spies themselves would have conquered the land—see *Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 21:32). Thus, in such an instance, firstfruits would have been brought *immediately* upon entering the land, even according to *Rashi*.

And this will indeed occur with the true and complete Redemption, when not only will the conquest of all the ten promised lands be instantaneous, but the fruits will grow instantly too, as the verse states, "the plowman will meet the reaper, and the treader of grapes the one who carries the seed" (*Amos* 9:13). Thus, at that time, both *Rashi* and *Sifri* will concur that firstfruits are to be brought immediately.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 145ff.; vol. 9, pp. 155-6; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo* 5744; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan* 5751)

- ⁵ You should (hold the basket and) say out loud before God, your God:

“(Lavan the) Aramean (wanted to) destroy my father (Ya’akov. And his sorrows did not stop there, because) he went down to Egypt and lived there in a small (family) group (of seventy souls). But he became a great, powerful, and populous nation there. ⁶ The Egyptians treated us cruelly and afflicted us, and they imposed hard labor on us.

⁷ “We cried out to God, God of our fathers, and God heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ God brought us out from Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awe, and with signs and wonders.

⁹ “He brought us to this site (of the Holy Temple), and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

¹⁰ “I have now brought here the first fruit of the ground which you, God, have given to me.”
- You should (wave the basket once again, and) place it before God, your God.
- Then prostrate yourself before God, your God.
- ¹¹ Then you will rejoice with all the good that God, your God, has granted you and your household—(both) you, the Levite, and the convert who is among you.

 CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What is the connection between Ya’akov’s difficulties with Lavan and the bringing of firstfruits? (v. 5)

RASHI: One mentions the kindness of the Omnipresent [by stating]: “(Lavan the) Aramean (wanted to) destroy my father.”

TORAH TEMIMAH: One brings firstfruits to thank God for His kindness in giving the Land of Israel to the Jewish people. Normally, a nation can only acquire a land when they themselves are settled, and in a position of strength. The Jewish people, however, were lacking any strength at all, spending all their time wandering from place to place, and yet thanks to God’s kindness, they managed to take possession of the Land of Israel miraculously. For this reason, when a person brings firstfruits to the Temple, he describes how from the moment Ya’akov left his father’s house, Ya’akov was unsettled and in a position of strategic weakness which continued throughout the Egyptian exile. And nevertheless, God’s kindness ensured that the Jewish people came to possess the land, despite all odds.

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🗨️ THE DECLARATION UPON BRINGING FIRSTFRUITS (v. 5-10)

In addition to the *mitzvah* of bringing firstfruits to the Temple, there is a further *mitzvah* to make a verbal declaration (v. 5-10) in which “one mentions the kindness of the Omnipresent,” as *Rashi* writes.

However, one detail which *Rashi* does not explain is why this declaration only mentions two events in the history of the Jewish people: Lavan’s attempt to “destroy” Ya’akov, and the Egyptian exile.

Why, for example, does the declaration omit major occurrences such as the salvation of Ya’akov from Eisav, the splitting of the Reed Sea, the miracles of the war with Amalek, the *manna*, and the supply of water in the desert, *etc.*?

Torah Temimah explains that the two events mentioned in the declaration, bring to light how the Jewish people managed to acquire a homeland despite the fact that they were strategically weak, being a people wandering from place to place.

However, this only magnifies the question why the declaration fails to mention Ya’akov’s fleeing from Eisav, which was the initial cause of Ya’akov’s wandering. Also, it would have been appropriate to mention how the Jewish people were wandering in the desert for forty years.

Since this is a matter which is difficult to understand at the literal level, *Rashi* should surely have addressed this matter. We can only presume that *Rashi* felt that the reader could discern the matter for himself with simple logic, from one of *Rashi*’s earlier comments.

THE EXPLANATION

The declaration made on bringing firstfruits to the Holy Temple, thanking God for His kindness, must clearly be connected with the firstfruits themselves. I.e. we mention only acts of kindness of God which resemble the kindness that led to the bringing of firstfruits.

The Jewish people were only obligated to bring firstfruits after the Land of Israel had been divided among the Tribes (see *Rashi* to v. 1, above). Consequently, this *mitzvah* is not merely a thanksgiving for acquiring the actual land, but for its *complete settlement*, since only at that point could one truly “rejoice with all the good” (v. 11).

Consequently, the salvation of Ya’akov from Eisav and the splitting of the Reed Sea are not directly relevant here, since these events occurred while on a journey, and not at a time of settlement. Similarly, the miracles that occurred to our ancestors in the desert, such as the war with Amalek and the *manna*, were not associated with a fixed place.

Thus, the only events mentioned in the declaration are times when God helped the Jewish people while they were settled: a.) the salvation of Ya’akov from Lavan, since Ya’akov lived with Lavan for twenty years, and, b.) the period in Egypt, which lasted 210 years, since these were both times when our ancestors benefitted from acts of God’s kindness during long-term settlements. And this resembles God’s kindness in helping a person to be settled in his homeland, and bring firstfruits.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 93ff.)

על־לִתְּהוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ תְּלִיתֶיךָ שְׁנַת מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְתִתֵּן
 לְלוֹאֵה לְגִיזְרָא לִיתְמָא וְלֵאֲרַמְלָא וְיִיבְלוּ
 בְּקַרְוֵיךָ וְיִשְׁבְּעוּ: יג וְתִמְרָא קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 פְּלִיתִי קוֹדֵשׁ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ מִן בֵּיתָא וְאַף יְהִבְתָּה
 לְלוֹאֵה וְלְגִיזְרָא לִיתְמָא וְלֵאֲרַמְלָא כְּכֹל פְּקוּדֵיךָ
 דִּי פְּקֻדְתָּנִי לֹא עֲבָרִית מִפְּקוּדֵיךָ וְלֹא
 אֶתְנִישִׁיתִי יד לֹא אֲכַלִּית בְּאֶבְלֵי מִנְהָ וְלֹא
 פְּלִיתִי מִנְהָ בְּדַמְסָאב וְלֹא יְהִבִית מִנְהָ לְמִית
 קְבִלִית לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי עֲבָדִית כְּכֹל דִּי
 פְּקֻדְתָּנִי: טו אֶסְתַּבֵּי מִמְדוֹר קוֹדֵשְׁךָ מִן שְׂמַיָּא
 וּבְרַךְ יְת עַמְּךָ יִתְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִת אֲרַעָא דִּי יְהִבְתָּ
 לְנָא כְּמָא דִּי קִנְיַתָּא לְאַבְהֶתְנָא אֲרַעָא עֲבָדָא

מַעֲשֵׂיךָ תְּבוֹאֲתֶיךָ בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁלִישִׁת שְׁנַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂיךָ וְנִתְּתָה לְלוֹי
 לְגַר לִיתוּם וְלֵאֲלַמְנָה וְאֶכְלוּ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ וְשָׁבְעוּ: יג וְאִמְרַתָּ לְפָנַי
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּיִת וְגַם נְתַתִּיו לְלוֹי וְלְגַר
 לִיתוּם וְלֵאֲלַמְנָה כְּכֹל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי לֹא־עֲבָרְתִּי
 מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי: יד לֹא־אֲכַלְתִּי בְּאֶנְי מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא־בְעֶרְתִּי
 מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטָמֵא וְלֹא־נְתַתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמִת שְׂמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
 עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי: טו *הַשְׁקִיפָה מִמְּעוֹן קֹדֶשְׁךָ מִן־
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְרַךְ אֶת־עַמְּךָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר
 נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: ס

* מנהג הקוראים בתורה להגייה את קולס בפסוק זה.

כ"ט

ולגר ליתום ולא־למננה. זה מעשר עני: ככל מצותך. נחמס כסדון ולא
 הקדמתי תרומה לזכורים, ולא מעשר לתרומה, ולא שני לראשון, שהתרומה
 קרויה ראשית, שהיא ראשונה משנעשה דגן, וכתב מלאחך דומעך לא תאחר⁵,
 לא תשנה את הסדר: לא עברתי ממצותיך. לא הפרשתי ממין על שאינו
 מינו, ומן החדש על הישן (ולא מן החלוש על המחוזר, ולא מן המחוזר על
 החלוש): ולא שכחתי. מלכך על הפרשת מעשרות: (יד) לא אכלתי באני
 ממנו. מכאן שאסור לחונק: ולא בערתי ממנו בטמא. זין שאני טמא וכו' ו
 טהור, זין שאני טהור וכו' טמא! והיכן הוזכר על כך, לא תוכל לאכול
 בשעריך⁶, זו אכילת טומאה, כמו שנאמר בפסולי המקודשים בשעריך תאכלנו
 הטמא והטהור וגו'⁷, אזל זה לא תוכל לאכול דרך אכילת שעריך האמור
 במקום אחר⁸: ולא נתתי ממנו למת. לעשות לו ארון ותכריכין: שמעתי
 בקול ה' אלהי. הביאותיו לבית הצחירה: עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני.
 שמחתי ושימחתי זו: (טו) השקיפה ממעון קדשך. עשינו מה שגזרת עלינו,
 עשה אהב מה שעליך לעשות, שאמרת אם צחקתי תלכו ונתתי גשמיכם
 צחצח¹⁰: אשר נתת לנו כאשר נשבעת לאבותינו. לתת לנו וקיימת,

לומר כי תכלה לעשר מעשרות של שנה השלישית, רגל שהמעשרות כלין זו,
 וזכו פסח, שהרבה אילנות יש שנלקטין אחר הסוכות, נמלאו מעשרות של
 שלישית כלין צפסח של רביעית, וכל מי ששהב מעשרותיו הריכו הכתוב
 לזכרו מן הבית: שנת המעשר. שנה שאין נובג זה אלא מעשר אחד משני
 מעשרות שנהגו צשתי שנים שלפניה, ששנה ראשונה ושניה של שמיטה נובג זה
 מעשר ראשון, כמו שנאמר כי תקחו מאת בני ישראל את המעשר², ומעשר שני,
 שנאמר ואכלת לפני ה' אלהיך מעשר דגך תירושך ויִלְהַרֵךְ³, הרי שני מעשרות,
 וזא ולמדך כאן בשנה השלישית שאין נובג מאותן שני מעשרות אלא האחד
 ואיזה, זה מעשר ראשון. ותחת מעשר שני יתן מעשר עני, שנאמר כאן ונתת ללוי,
 את אשר לו, הרי מעשר ראשון. לגר ליתום ולאלמנה, זה מעשר עני: ואבלו
 בשעריך ושבועו. תן להם כדי שצטן. מכאן אמרו אין פוחתין לעני בגורן פחות
 מחלי קצ חטים וכו': (יג) ואמרת לפני ה' אלהיך. החודה שנתת
 מעשרותיך: בערתי הקדש מן הבית. זה מעשר שני ונטע רבעי, ולמדך
 שאם שהב מעשרותיו של שתי שנים ולא העלם לירושלים, שצריך להעלותם
 עכשיו: וגם נתתיו ללוי. זה מעשר ראשון. וגם, לרבות תרומה וזכורים⁴:

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🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

“LOOK DOWN FROM YOUR HOLY ABODE IN HEAVEN, AND BLESS YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL” (v. 15)

Why does the verse use the repetitive phrase, “bless Your people Israel”? Surely “Your people” and “Israel” are one and the same? And why are “Your people” mentioned before “Israel”?

“Israel” refers to Torah scholars, and “Your people” to ordinary Jews, who observe the mitzvos loyally. In the Talmud, a debate is recorded whether Torah study or mitzvah observance is greater, and the conclusion is: “Torah study is greater, since it leads to practical observance” (Kidushin 40b). I.e. even according to the opinion that Torah study is superior, this is only because it leads to practical observance. Consequently, our verse places “Your people,” the observant Jew, before “Israel,” the scholar, to emphasize that, overall, observance is more important.

However, while the Talmud appears to stress that practical observance is more important, it nevertheless employs the expression, “Torah is greater.” So why are “Your people” placed before “Israel,” suggesting that observance is unequivocally superior?

The answer lies in a comment of the Jerusalem Talmud on our verse: “Come and behold the greatness of those who observe the mitzvos! For every time the term ‘look down’ is mentioned in the Torah, it refers to a curse, but here it refers to a blessing” (Ma’aser Sheni 5:5), i.e. the unique quality of practical observance is brought to light by the fact that it transforms curses into blessings. And since this is the message conveyed by our verse, “Your people” are placed first.

(Based on Sefer Hama’amarim Melukat vol. 4, pp. 371-2)

THE TITHE DECLARATION

26:12
SECOND
READING

When you have reached (Erev Pesach of the fourth year of the tithing cycle, which is) the end (of the period when you may) separate all the tithes of your produce for the third year—the year when (only) the (first) tithe (is separated which) you give to the Levite. (And instead of separating the second tithe, which is eaten in Jerusalem, you shall separate the tithe for the poor, which you shall give) to the convert, the orphan, and the widow, so that they can eat to their satisfaction in your cities—

- ¹³ Then you say before God, your God, (the following declaration):

“I have removed the holy (second tithe and fourth-year fruits*) from the house.

“I have also (separated terumah and firstfruits).

“(I have) given (the first tithe) to the Levite.

“(I have given the tithe for the poor to) the convert, the orphan, and the widow.

“(I did all this) in accordance with Your command which You have commanded me (about the precise order of separation).

“I have not transgressed Your commands (about cross-separation).

“I have not forgotten (to bless You).

¹⁴ “I did not eat any (second tithe) while I was in a state of mourning.

“I did not consume any of it while in a state of ritual impurity.

“I did not give any of it (for making a coffin or shrouds) for the dead.

“I listened to the voice of God, my God, (and brought these offerings to the Temple).

“I did everything that You commanded me. (I rejoiced and brought joy to others).

¹⁵ “(We have done what is incumbent upon us. Now do what you promised and) look down from Your holy abode in heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given to us—as (You fulfilled the oath that) You swore to our fathers (and gave us) a land flowing with milk and honey.”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● When is the tithe declaration to be made? (v. 12)

RASHI: When you finish separating the tithes of the third year [i.e. in the fourth year of the seven-year cycle].

RAMBAM: At the time of *minchah* (afternoon service) on the *Yom Tov* of the last day of *Pesach* of the fourth year....The declaration may only be made during the day (*Laws of the Second Tithe* 11:3-4).

● Are women obligated to make the tithe declaration?

SEFER HACHINUCH: Only males are obligated (*mitzvah* 607).

MINCHAS CHINUCH: *Sefer Hachinuch* ruled that women are exempt from making a tithe declaration, because: a.) They were not given a portion in the Land of Israel, so they cannot say the words “the Land which you have given to us” (v. 15). And, b.) Women are exempt from *mitzvos* that are bound to a specific time.

R’ ELIJAHU OF LONDON: Women are obligated in this *mitzvah*. Even though they were not given a portion of the land, they can inherit land like the daughters of *Tzlafchad*. Therefore they can say the words, “the Land which you have given to us” (*Piskei R’ Eliyahu Milondrish leMa’aser Shenii*).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕯 THE TITHE DECLARATION—A WOMAN’S OBLIGATION

Sefer Hachinuch and *R’ Eliyahu of London* dispute whether women are obligated to make the tithe declaration (v. 12-15).

Rambam does not mention this issue, from which it appears that *Rambam* maintained that women are obligated to make the declaration,

for otherwise he would have mentioned their exemption explicitly (as he did in the case of the firstfruits declaration—*Laws of Firstfruits* 4:2).

However, this leaves us with the problem posed by *Minchas Chinuch*. Since *Rambam* states explicitly that the tithe declaration is a *mitzvah* bound to a specific time (“*minchah on the Yom Tov of the last day of Pesach*”), surely women should be exempt?

* See *Vayikra* 19:24; 27:30.

חלב ודבש: זו יומא הדיון יי אלהך מפקדך למעבד ית קמיא האליו וית דיניא ותטר ותעביד יתהון בכל לבך ובכל נפשך: יי ית יי המביתא יומא דין למחוי לך לאלה ולמחוי בארחהו דתקנון קדמוהי ולמטר קימוהי ופקודוהי ודינהי ולקבלא במימרה: יי ויי חטבך יומא דין למחוי לה לעם חביב כמא די מליל לך ולמטר כל פקודוהי: יי ולמחנה עלאה על כל עממיא די עבד לתושבחה ולשום ולרבו ולמחנה עם קדיש קדם יי אלהך כמא די מליל: א ופקוד משה וסבי ישראל ית עמא למימר טר ית כל תפקדמא די אנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין: ב ויהי ביומא די תעברון ית ירדנא לארעא דיי אלהך יחב לך ויתקים לך אבנין ברבין ותסוד יתהון בסידא: ג ותכתוב עליהון ית כל פתגמי אורייתא הדא במעברך בדיל די תעול

וְשְׁלִישֵׁי טו הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְצוֹנָךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְשִׁמְרַתְּ וְעָשִׂיתָ אוֹתָם בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: יי אֶת־יְהוָה הָאֱמֵרַתְּ הַיּוֹם לְהִיּוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָיו וּלְשָׁמֵר חֻקָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּלְשָׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹלוֹ: יי וַיְהִי הָאֱמִירָה הַיּוֹם לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סֹגְלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לְךָ וּלְשָׁמֵר כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו: יט וְלִתְתֶנָּה עֲלֵיוֹן עַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְתַהַלְלָהּ וּלְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרַת וּלְהִיתָךְ עִם־קִדְשׁ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: פ רביעי כז א וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָעָם לֵאמֹר שָׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם: ג וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֵרוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְהִקְמַתָּ לְךָ אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת וְשִׁדַּתְּ אֹתָם בְּשִׁיר: ג וּכְתַבְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶן אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּעֵבְרֶךָ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר תָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה

כש"י

לו לעם סגולה, ומלאתי להם עד וכו' לשון תפארת, כמו יתאמרו כל פועלי און? (יח) כאשר דבר לך. והיית לי סגולה? (יט) ולהיותך עם קדוש כאשר דבר. והיית לי קדושים? (ח) שמור את כל המצוה. לשון כוה נרדני"ט זלע"ז: (ג) והקמות לך. צירוף ואחר כך תוליאו משם אחרות ותצנו מכן מזבח זכר עיזב, ומלאת אתה אומר ג' מיני אבנים היו, שנים עשר צירוף

ארץ זבת חלב ודבש: (טז) היום הזה ה' אלהיך מצוך. בכל יום יהיו צעייך חדשים, כאלו צו ציוס נלטיית עליהם: ושמרת ועשית אותם. צת קול מזכרתו, הצאת צכורים ביום, תשנה לשנה הצאה: (יז) האמרת והאמירך. אין להם עד מוכיח צמקרא, ולי נראה שהוא לשון הפרשה וכצדלה, הצדלתי לך מאלכי הנכר להיות לך לאלהים, והוא הפרישך אליו מעמי הארץ להיות

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

If a *mitzvah* is not observed at a particular time, it could be for one of two reasons:

- a.) There is no obligation in Jewish law to observe the *mitzvah* at this precise time.
- b.) In principle, one would observe the *mitzvah* at this time, but it is impossible to perform it for some other reason.

The former category, 'a,' represents a true "time-bound" *mitzvah*, from which women are exempt. The latter case 'b', however, is not a *mitzvah* that is bound to a particular time, but rather, a *mitzvah* which *applies at all times*, and is not observed at certain times due to practical considerations. Thus, women would be obligated in this type of *mitzvah*.

In our case, it could perhaps be argued that the *mitzvah* of making a declaration at the end of the tithing season falls into the latter category. For the Torah simply instructs us to make a declaration when tithing is complete. The fact that this occurs at a particular time of the year is due to the fact that, until then, there are simply no crops to tithe (because of the *natural phenomenon* of seasons which regulate the agricultural cycle), and not because the Torah made this *mitzvah* obligatory at this time in particular. Therefore, *Rambam* was of the opinion that women are obligated to make a tithe declaration, just like men.

At first glance, however, there seems to be a further difficulty here. For in addition to the fact that the tithe declaration is made, "At the time of *minchah* (afternoon service) on the *Yom Tov* of the last day of *Pesach*," (which is a circumstantial limitation and not a true limitation of time, as explained above), *Rambam* also writes, "The declaration may only be made during the day." Apparently, the requirement to perform this *mitzvah* during the day is a pure limitation of time that did not arise due to any circumstantial factor. So why does this not render a woman exempt from this *mitzvah*?

In truth, however, the limitation that this *mitzvah* may only be performed during the day is not considered to be a "limitation of time" which is sufficient to render a woman exempt. We see this explicitly from the case of sacrifices which "may only be offered during the day" (*Rambam, Laws of Sacrificial Procedure* 4:1), and yet we do not find that women are exempt from personal sacrifices due to this time limitation. (Only in the case of festival sacrifices, which are limited to a specific time of the year, are women exempt.)

The above brings to light even further the importance of women in so many areas of Judaism, which is all the more stressed in our generation immediately prior to the redemption, which will come "in the merit of the righteous women of the generation" (*Yalkut Shimoni, Rus, remez* 606).

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim* 5749, note 87, and *hashlamos* *ibid.*)

🕍 CONCLUSION OF MOSHE'S ADDRESS 🕍

THIRD
READING

¹⁶ (It should always appear in your eyes that) today God, your God, is commanding you to fulfill these suprarational commands and rational commands (for the first time). Be careful to observe them, with all your heart and all your soul.

¹⁷ (It should always appear in your eyes that) today you have selected God (from all the foreign gods), to be your God (for the first time)—to go in His ways, and to observe His suprarational commands, His (other) commandments and His rational commands, and to listen to His voice.

¹⁸ And (it should always appear in your eyes that) today God has selected you (from all the nations of the earth) to be His treasured people (for the first time)—as He told you—and to observe all His commandments, ¹⁹ and to make you elite above all the nations that He made, in acclaim, renown and splendor, being that you are a holy people to God, your God, as He said.

🕍 INSTRUCTIONS UPON CROSSING THE JORDAN 🕍

27

FOURTH
READING

Moshe and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “You are to be keeping all of the commandment(s) that I am commanding you today!”

² “What will happen is, on the day that you cross the Jordan to the land God, your God, is giving you, you should set up (at the Jordan) huge stones for yourself, and plaster them with lime. ³ When you cross over, you should write on them all the words of this Torah, so that you may come into the land which God, your God, is giving you a land flowing with milk and honey, as God, the God of your forefathers, has told you.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How is God commanding you “today”? (v. 16)

RASHI: [This means:] Every day they shall be new in your eyes, as though you have been commanded them today.

● What do the words **הַאֲמַרְתָּ** and **הַאֲמַרְךָ** mean? (v. 17-18)

RASHI: There is no conclusive proof in scripture as to what **הַאֲמַרְתָּ** and **הַאֲמַרְךָ** mean, and it appears to me that they mean “separation” and “distinction.” [The meaning here is:] You have separated God for yourself from all the foreign gods to be your God, and He

distinguished you for Himself from all the nations on earth to be His treasured people.

[Alternatively] these words could be understood as being similar to the term for “glory” (**תְּפִאָּרָה**), as in the verse “all workers of violence glorify themselves (**יִתְאָמְרוּ**)” (Psalms 94:4).

IBN EZRA: **הַאֲמַרְתָּ** means “exalted.” Rabbi Yehudah Halevi Hasefardi understood it as meaning “speech”: “Today, you have caused God to say that He is your God....And today God has caused you to say that you are His treasured people.”

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 RASHI & IBN EZRA (v. 17-18)

Why did Rashi reject the simple interpretation cited by **Ibn Ezra** that **הַאֲמַרְתָּ** and **הַאֲמַרְךָ** are from the Hebrew word **אָמַר** meaning “speech,” and opt instead for an interpretation that “has no conclusive proof in scripture”?

THE EXPLANATION

In his commentary to verse 16, Rashi explains that the word “today” comes to stress, “Every day they shall be new in your eyes, as though you have been commanded them today.” Thus, when verses 17 and 18 continue to stress something which is happening “today,” Rashi understood that the subject here must be something that happens every day. Since there may be times, God forbid, that the Jewish people do not follow God’s Will, Rashi could not accept the (second) interpretation of **Ibn Ezra** that our actions cause God to happily affirm that he is the God of the Jewish people every single day. Similarly, it is difficult to accept that

God would glorify (Rashi’s second explanation) or exalt (**Ibn Ezra**’s first explanation) the Jewish people on a daily basis, for the same reason. Therefore, Rashi accepted that the primary interpretation here is that God separates the Jewish people on a daily basis, even though this interpretation “has no conclusive proof in scripture,” because the context of this verse dictates such an interpretation. For even when the Jewish people do not follow His Will, God forbid, they still remain distinct as *His people* every day (even if God is not openly proud at that particular time).

Nevertheless, since this is an unprecedented interpretation, Rashi deemed it necessary to offer a secondary interpretation which has some scriptural basis: that God is *glorifying* the Jewish people daily. Of course, this will leave us with the above question—how are we causing God to glorify His people when we are not acting in accordance with His Will? So since this is a less acceptable explanation at the literal level, Rashi left it as his secondary interpretation.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 162ff.)

לִאֲרָעָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵךְ יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֲרָעָא עֲבָדָא חֲלָב וּדְבַשׁ כְּמָא דִּי מְלִיל יִי אֱלֹהֵא דְאֶבְהַתְּךָ לְךָ: ד וַיְהִי כַּמְעַבְרְכוֹן יַת יִרְדְנָא תְּקִימוֹן יַת אֲבָנֵיִא הָאֵלֵין דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקָד יִתְכוּן יוֹמָא דִּין כְּטוּרָא דְעֵיבַל וְתַסּוּד וְתַהוֹן בְּסִידָא: ה וְתִבְנֵי תַפְּן מִדְּבָחָא קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ מִדְּבַח אֲבָנֵין לֹא תֵרִים עֲלֵיהוֹן פְּרוֹזְלָא: ו אֲבָנֵין שְׁלָמִין תִּבְנֵי יַת מִדְּבָחָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵךְ וְתַסְק עֲלוּהֵי עֲלוֹן קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ: ז וְתַבּוּס נְכַסַּת קוּדְשֵׁין וְתִיכּוּל תַּפְּן וְתַחְדֵי קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ: ח וְתַכְתּוּב עַל אֲבָנֵיִא יַת כָּל פְּתַנְמֵי אֹרְיָתָא הָדָא פְּרַשׁ יֵאוּת: ט וּמְלִיל מוֹשֶׁה וּכְהֵנֵיא לְוָאֵי לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִימְרָא אַצִּית וְשָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹמָא הַדִּין הַזֶּה וַיִּוֹתָא לְעַמָּא קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ: י וְתַקְבַּל לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵךְ וְתַעֲבֹד יַת פְּקוּדוּהֵי וַיַּת קִימוּהֵי דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקָדֵךְ יוֹמָא דִּין: יא וּפְקִיד מוֹשֶׁה יַת עַמָּא בְּיוֹמָא הַהוּא לְמִימְרָא: יב אֵלֵין יְקוּמוֹן לְבָרְכָא יַת עַמָּא עַל טוּרָא דְגֵרְזִים כַּמְעַבְרְכוֹן יַת יִרְדְנָא שְׁמַעוֹן וְלוֹי וַיְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׁשַׁכֵּר וַיּוֹסֵף וּבְנֵימִין: יג וְאֵלֵין יְקוּמוֹן עַל לְוִטֵיא כְּטוּרָא דְעֵיבַל רְאוּבֵן גָּד וְאֲשֶׁר וּזְבוּלֹן דִּן וּנְפֹתָלַי: יד וַיְתִיבוֹן לְוָאֵי וַיִּימְרוּן לְכָל אַנְשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל קָלָא רָמָא: טו לִיט גְּבָרָא דִּי עֵבֵיד צֵלָם וּמִתְקָא מִרְחָקָא קָדָם יִי עוֹבֵד יְדֵי אֲמֹן וַיִּשׁוּי בְּסִתְרָא וַיְתִיבוֹן כָּל עַמָּא וַיִּימְרוּן אֲמֹן: טז לִיט דִּיקְלֵי אֲבוּהֵי וְאִמָּה וַיִּימְרָא כָּל עַמָּא אֲמֹן: יז לִיט דִּישְׁנֵי תַחֲוּמָא דְחִבְרָה וַיִּימְרָא כָּל עַמָּא אֲמֹן: יח לִיט דִּימְעֵי עוּיָרָא בְּאַרְחָא

אֱלֹהֵיךָ | נָתַן לְךָ אֲרָץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבַשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְךָ: ד וְהָיָה בְּעִבְרַכֶּם אֶת־הִירְדֵן תִּקְיִמוּ אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּהַר עֵיבַל וְשָׂדֶת אוֹתָם בְּשִׂיד: ה וּבְנִיתָ שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים לֹא־תִנִּיף עֲלֵיהֶם בְּרוֹזֶל: ו אֲבָנִים שְׁלֵמוֹת תִּבְנֶה אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהָעֲלִיתָ עָלָיו עֹלֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ז וּזְבַחַת שְׁלָמִים וְאִכַּלְתָּ שֵׁם וְשִׁמַּחְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ח וְכַתַּבְתָּ עַל־הָאֲבָנִים אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּאֵר הַיַּיִטֵּב: ט וַיְדַבֵּר מוֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הִסְכַּת | וְשָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְהִייתָ לְעַם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: י וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־מְצֻוֹתָיו וְאֶת־חֻקָּיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה הַיּוֹם: יא וַיֵּצֵא מוֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: יב אֵלֶּה יַעֲמְדוּ לְבָרַךְ אֶת־הָעָם עַל־הַר גֵּרְזִים בְּעִבְרַכֶּם אֶת־הִירְדֵן שְׁמַעוּן וְלוֹי וַיְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׁשַׁכֵּר וַיּוֹסֵף וּבְנֵימִין: יג וְאֵלֶּה יַעֲמְדוּ עַל־הַקְּלָלָה בְּהַר עֵיבַל רְאוּבֵן גָּד וְאֲשֶׁר וּזְבוּלֹן דִּן וּנְפֹתָלַי: יד וְעַנּוּ הַלְוִיִּם וְאָמְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹל רֶם: טו אַרְוֹר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶסֶל וּמִסַּכָּה תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי חָרָשׁ וְשֵׁם בַּסֵּתֶר וְעַנּוּ כָּל־הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אֲמֹן: טז אַרְוֹר מִקְלָה אָבִיו וְאָמוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אֲמֹן: טז אַרְוֹר מִסִּיג גְּבוּל רַעְהוּ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אֲמֹן: טז אַרְוֹר מִשְׁנָה עֵנַר בְּדַרְךְ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אֲמֹן: טז

*מצותיו קרי

כ"ז

ופתחו בצרכה, צרוך האיז אשר לא יעשה פסל ומסכה וגוי, ואלו ואלו עווין אמן. חזרו והפכו פניהם כלפי כר עיבל ופתחו בקללה ואומרים, ארוך האיז אשר יעשה פסל וגוי, וכן כולם, עד ארוך אשר לא יקום: (טז) מקלה אביו. מזלזל, לשון ונקלה אחיד: (יז) מסיג גבול. מחזירו לחזרויו וגונז את הקרקע לשון וכוסג אחור: (יח) משגה עור. הסומא דדבר ומשיאו עלה רעה:

וכנגדן צנגלל וכנגדן צכר עיבל, כדאיחא צמסכת סוטה¹: (ח) באר היטב. שצעים לשון²: (ט) הסכת. כתרגומו: היום הזה נהיית לעם. כל יוס יהיו צעינד כאלו היום צלח עמו צצריית³: (יז) לברך את העם. כדאיחא צמסכת סוטה² ששה שצעים עלו לראש הר גריזים, וששה לראש הר עיבל וככהנים והלוים והארוץ למטה צאמלע, הפכו לויס פניהם כלפי הר גריזים

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why are eleven curses mentioned here? (v. 15-25)
RASHI: I saw in the treatise of Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan that there are eleven curses here, corresponding to eleven of the [twelve] tribes. But in connection with Shimon, [Moshe] did not write "Cursed be the man...", because he did not have it in his heart to bless him before

his passing, when he blessed the other tribes. Therefore, he did not wish to curse him (*Rashi* to v. 24).
RASHBAM: The sins listed here are things done in private. Two sins — idol worship (v. 15) and hurting one's fellow (v. 24)—are sometimes done in public too, so in these cases the Torah adds: "...in secret."

⁴ “Then, when you cross the Jordan, you should set up (a further set of) these stones, which I am commanding you about today, on Mount Aival, and you should plaster them with lime. ⁵ You should build there an Altar to God your God, (by making these stones into) an Altar of stones. You should not use any iron (tool) on them. ⁶ You should build the Altar of God, your God, out of whole stones, and you should offer up burnt-offerings on it to God, your God. ⁷ You should slaughter peace-offerings, and eat there, rejoicing before God, your God. ⁸ You should write upon the stones all the words of this Torah, very clearly (rendered into seventy languages).”

⁹ Moshe and the priests (from the tribe of) Levi spoke to all of Israel, saying, “Pay attention and listen, O Israel! (It should always be in your eyes as if) today, you have become a people to God, your God (for the first time). ¹⁰ Listen to the voice of God, your God. Perform His commandments and His supra-rational commands, which I am commanding you today.”

BLESSINGS & CURSES AT MOUNT GERIZIM & MOUNT AIVAL

27:11
FIFTH
READING

Moshe commanded the people on that day, saying, ¹² “When you cross the Jordan, the following should stand on Mount Gerizim (where the priests and Levites will face) to bless the people: Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, Yosef, and Binyamin. ¹³ The following should stand on Mount Aival (where the priests and Levites will face) for the curse: Re’uvain, Gad, Asher, Zevulun, Dan, and Naftali.

¹⁴ The Levites should speak up, saying to every Jewish person, in a loud voice:

¹⁵ “Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image—an abomination to God—the handiwork of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret!” Then all the people should respond, and say, “Amen!”

¹⁶ “Cursed be the one who disgraces his father and mother!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

¹⁷ “Cursed be the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

¹⁸ “Cursed be the one who misdirects the path of a person who is blind (to a certain matter)! Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

TORAS MENACHEM

THE ELEVEN CURSES (v. 15-25)

What is the reason why these eleven specific sins in verses 15-25 were singled out to be the subject of the curses? The vast majority of the topics chosen here are not of a general nature, which begs the question why they were singled out in particular?

Since *Rashi* does not appear to address this question, which requires explanation at the literal level, we can presume that *Rashi* felt that the reader could work the matter out for himself with simple logic and knowledge of *Rashi*’s previous comments.

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi explains that the eleven curses listed here correspond to eleven of the twelve tribes (with the exclusion of Shimon). At first glance, *Rashi* appears to be indicating only why the number eleven was chosen, and not offering any explanation about the content of the curses.

In fact, however, *Rashi* is also indicating the solution to our above problem: The reason why these eleven sins were picked is because each sin has a connection with one of the tribes. *Rashi* did not explain the matter any further, since he has already provided sufficient information in his prior comments:

- ❖ “Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image...” (v. 15). Which tribe is associated in particular with idol worship? In *Parshas*

Lech Lecha, on the verse, “Avraham...pursued them as far as Dan” (*Bereishis* 14:14), *Rashi* writes: “There he became weak, seeing prophetically that his children were destined to erect a [golden] calf there.” Thus the tribe of Dan is associated with “a graven or molten image.”

- ❖ “Cursed be the one who disgraces his father and mother!” (v. 16). In *Parshas Ki Seitzei* the reader learned of the rebellious son who disgraces his parents by being “a binger and a boozier” (*Devarim* 21:20), indicating that the child’s rebellion arose from physical luxuries. Which tribe was blessed with the greatest abundance of luxuries? “From Asher’s land) will come rich food, and he will provide royal delicacies.” (*Bereishis* 49:20). Therefore the tribe of Asher needed to be warned especially about honoring parents.
- ❖ “Cursed be the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark!” (v. 17). Who would be suspected of moving landmarks? One who is frequently found at the borders. Thus, this is a warning addressed to the tribe of Yissachar, who were “(Like a donkey that journeys day and night,) resting (temporarily) between the city borders,” (*ibid.* 49:14).
- ❖ Cursed be the one who misdirects the path of a person who is blind (to a certain matter)! (v. 18). In *Parshas Pinchas*, *Rashi* relates that there was a plot by a group of seven families to return to Egypt. Of these seven, five families belonged to the tribe of Binyamin (*Rashi*

וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: יט לִיט דְּנִצְלֵי דִין
 דִּיר יִתְמָא וְאַרְמְלָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן:
 כ לִיט דְּיִשְׁכּוּב עִם אֶתְת אַבּוּהִי אַרְי גְּלִי
 כַּנְפָא דְאַבּוּהִי וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: כא לִיט
 דְּיִשְׁכּוּב עִם כָּל בְּעִירָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן:
 כב לִיט דְּיִשְׁכּוּב עִם אַחְתָּה בַת אַבּוּהִי אוּ בַת
 אִמָּה וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: כג לִיט דְּיִשְׁכּוּב
 עִם חֲמוּתָה וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: כד לִיט
 דְּיִמְחִי לַחֲבֵרָה בְּסַתְרָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן:
 כה לִיט דִּי יִקְבֵּל שׁוֹחֲדָא לְמַקְטֵל נַפְשׁ דָּם זָכִי
 וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: כו לִיט דִּי לֹא יִקְיָם יַת
 פִּתְגָמֵי אוּרִיתָא הָדָא לְמַעַבְדַּד יַתְהוֹן וַיִּימַר כָּל
 עַמָּא אָמֵן: א וַיְהִי אִם קִבְּלָא תִקְבֵּל לְמִימְרָא
 דִּי אֱלֹהִי לְמַטְר לְמַעַבְדַּד יַת כָּל פְּקוּדוּהִי דִּי
 אֲנָא מְפַקְדֵּךְ יוֹמָא דִּין וַיִּתְנַגֵּד יי אֱלֹהִי עֲלֵי
 עַל כָּל עַמְמֵי אֲרֵעָא: ב וַיִּיתוּן עֲלֵךְ כָּל
 בְּרַכְתָּא הָאֲלִין וַיְדַבְּקֵךְ אַרְי תִּקְבֵּל לְמִימְרָא
 דִּי אֱלֹהִי: ג בְּרִיד אַתְּ בְּקִרְתָּא וּבְרִיד אַתְּ
 בְּחַקְלָא: ד בְּרִיד וּלְדָא דְמַעַד וְאֲבָא דְאַרְעֵךְ
 וּלְדָא דְבְּעִירֵךְ בְּקִרְי תוֹרִיד וְעִדְרֵי עֲנֵךְ:
 ה בְּרִיד סֵלֶךְ וְאַצְוֹתֵךְ: ו בְּרִיד אַתְּ בְּמַעֲלָךְ
 וּבְרִיד אַתְּ בְּמַפְקָךְ: ז יִתּוּן יי יַת פִּעְלֵי דְבִקְךָ
 דְקִימִין עֲלֵךְ תְּבִירִין גְּדִמְךָ בְּאַרְחָא חַד וּפְקוּן

יט אָרוּר מַטֵּה מְשַׁפֵּט גְּרֵי-יְתוּם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן:
 כ אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם-אִשְׁת אָבִיו כִּי גִלָּה כְּנָף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל-
 הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כא אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם
 אָמֵן: ס כב אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם-אֶחְתּוֹ בַּת-אָבִיו אוּ בַת-אִמּוֹ וְאָמַר
 כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כג אָרוּר שֹ�כֵב עִם-חֲתַנְתּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם
 אָמֵן: ס כד אָרוּר מְבַה רְעֵהוּ בְּסַתֵּר וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס
 כה אָרוּר לֹקֵחַ לְחַד לְהַפּוֹת נַפְשׁ *דָּם נָקִי וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן:
 ס כו אָרוּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִקְיָם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה-הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת
 אוֹתָם וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: פ כח « וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע
 בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר
 אֲנִי מְצַוֶּךְ הַיּוֹם וּנְתַנֶּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲלִיזוֹן עַל כָּל-גּוֹיֵי
 הָאָרֶץ: ג וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשִּׁיגְךָ כִּי תִשְׁמַע
 בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ג בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בָּעִיר וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בַּשָּׂדֶה:
 ד בְּרוּךְ פְּרִי-בְּטֶנֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמְתֶךָ וּפְרִי בְּהֵמְתֶךָ שֹׁגֵר אֲלֶפֶיךָ
 וְעִשְׂתָּרוֹת צֹאנֶיךָ: ה בְּרוּךְ טִבְאֶךָ וּמִשְׁאֲרֵתֶךָ: ו בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
 בְּבֵאֶרְךָ וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצִאתֶךָ: [ששׁ] ** ז יִתּוּן יְהוָה אֶת-אֲלֵיכֶיךָ

*ס"א דם **לששי עולה הבעל קורא, ומעצמו - בלא קריאה בשמו, ומבדל לפני ולאחריו.

כ"ט

ועשרתרות צאנך. כתרגומו. ורבותיו אמרו למה נקרא שם עשרתרות שמעשירות את בעליהן? ומחזיקות אותם כעשרתרות הללו שהן סלעים חזקים: (ס) ברוך טנאך. פירושיך. דבר אחר טנאך, דבר לח שאחכ מסנן צסלים³: ומשאררתך. דבר יבש שנשאר צכלי ואינו זצ³: (ו) ברוך אתה בבאך וברוך אתה בצאתך. שחכא יואחך מן העולם צלא חטא כביאתך לעולם⁴:

(כד) מכה רעהו בסתר. על לשון רעהו הוא אומר¹. ראיתי ציסודו של רצי משה דרשן, י"א ארויס יש כאן כנגד י"א שצטיס, וכנגד שמעון לא כחז ארוור לפי שלח היה צלצו לצרכו לפני מוחו כשצרך שאר השצטיס, לכך לא רכח לקללו: (כו) אשר לא יקים. כאן כלל את כל התורה כולה וקצלוה עליהם צלח וצצצועה: (ד) שגר אלפיך. ולדות צקך שהצכמה משגרת ממעי:

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to Bamidbar 26:13). Here we see that the tribe of Binyamin in particular needed to be warned about misleading others.

- ❖ "Cursed be the one who perverts the judgment of the convert, the orphan, or the widow!" (v. 19). This is addressed to the tribe of Yehudah, who provided the vast majority of judges for the Jewish people.
- ❖ "Cursed be the one who lies with his father's wife, uncovering the robe of his father!" (v. 20). This is addressed to the tribe of Re'uvain, who sinned by moving his father's bed: "You interfered with your father's bed" (Bereishis 49:4).
- ❖ "Cursed be the one who lies with any animal!" (v. 21). This is addressed to the tribe who possessed a large number of animals. This could be either Re'uvain or Gad (see Bamidbar 32:1), and since the

previous curse was addressed to the tribe of Re'uvain, it follows that this one corresponds to the tribe of Gad.

- ❖ "Cursed be the one who lies with his sister...." (v. 22). This is addressed to the tribe of Naftali, as indicated by the verse said upon Naftali's birth, "I have become connected with my sister" (Rashi, Bereishis 30:8).
- ❖ "Cursed be the one who lies with his mother-in-law!" (v. 23). This is addressed to the tribe of Yosef, since the wife of Potifar (who later became Yosef's mother-in-law) attempted to lie with him (Bereishis 39:7ff.; ibid 41:45 and Rashi).
- ❖ "Cursed be the one who hurts his fellow (by maligning him) in secret!" (v. 24). This refers to the sin of Shimon and Levi, who misused their powers of speech (see Bereishis 49:5). And since Rashi writes that there is no curse corresponding to Shimon, it follows that this must be addressed to the tribe of Levi.

¹⁹ “Cursed be the one who perverts the judgment of the convert, the orphan, or the widow!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²⁰ “Cursed be the one who lies with his father’s wife, uncovering the robe of his father!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²¹ “Cursed be the one who lies with any animal!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²² “Cursed be the one who lies with his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²³ “Cursed be the one who lies with his mother-in-law!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²⁴ “Cursed be the one who hurts his fellow (by maligning him) in secret!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²⁵ “Cursed be the one who takes a bribe to put an innocent person to death!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

²⁶ “Cursed be the one who does not uphold the words of this Torah and observe them!” Then all the people should say, “Amen!”

🌀 BLESSINGS FOR OBSERVING THE MITZVOS 🌀

28 **W**hat will happen is, if you always listen to the voice of God, your God, and are careful to observe all His commandments which I am commanding you today, then God, your God, will make you an elite (nation), above all the nations of the earth. ² All the following blessings will come upon you and overtake you, if you listen to the voice of God, your God:

³ You will be blessed in the city, and blessed in the field. ⁴ The fruit of your womb, the fruit of your soil, the fruit of your livestock, the offspring of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep will be blessed.

⁵ Your fruits and your dough will be blessed. ⁶ (Just as) you were blessed (and without sin) when you arrived (in this world, so too), you will be blessed (and without sin) when you depart.

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❖ “Cursed be the one who takes a bribe to put an innocent person to death!” (v. 25). Such an act is most likely to be done by a businessman. Thus this is addressed to the tribe of Zevulun, who were businessmen (See Rashi to Bereishis 49:13).

Here we see, once again, how Rashi’s commentary is a comprehensive study of scripture at the literal level, which is neither lacking in necessary information, nor superfluous in any detail.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo 5733)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

BLESSINGS FOR OBSERVING THE MITZVOS (28:1-14)

“In order to receive God’s blessings it is necessary to prepare ‘receptacles.’ It would have been impossible for us to know the receptacles, but for God’s mercy and infinite kindness, having given us the Torah and having revealed to us that Torah and *mitzvos* are the proper receptacles for us to receive His blessings....”

“The daily life and conduct in accordance with the will of God, namely in accordance with the Jewish way of Torah and *mitzvos*, in addition to being a must for its own sake, is also the channel to receive God’s blessings in all needs. Therefore, every additional effort in this direction is bound to bring additional Divine blessings, and there is always room for advancement in all matters of

goodness and holiness, Torah and *mitzvos*, which are infinite, being derived from, and connected with, the Infinite.”

“Every Jew, man or woman, young or old, must always have complete faith in God, Whose benevolent Providence extends to everyone individually, and our Sages have taught us, ‘Everything that the Merciful One does is for the good’ (*Brachos* 60a). Of course, a human being cannot always understand the ways of God, but nevertheless he should be unshaken in his trust in God, and this very faith is in itself a channel and vessel to receive God’s blessings, as all matters connected with the Torah and *mitzvos* experienced in the daily life.”

(Excerpts from letters written by the Rebbe on 4th of Shevat, 5713, 16th of Adar I, 5738, and 5th of Iyar, 5721)

הקמים עליך נגפים לפניך בדרך אחד יצאו אליך ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך: ה יצו יהוה אתך את-הברכה באסמך ובכל משלח ידך וברכך בארץ אשר-יהוה אלהיך נתן לך: ט יקימך יהוה לו לעם קדוש כאשר נשבע-לך כי תשמר את-מצות יהוה אלהיך והלכת בדרךיו: י וראו כל-עמי הארץ כי שם יהוה נקרא עליך ויראו מנך: יא והותרך יהוה למוכה בפרי בטנה ובפרי בהמתך ובפרי אדמתך על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיך לתת לך: יב יפתח יהוה לך את-אוצרו הטוב את-השמים לתת מטר-ארצך בעתו ולברך את כל-מעשה ידך והלוית גוים רבים ואתה לא תלוה: יג ונתנה יהוה לראש ולא לזנב והיית רק למעלה ולא תהיה למטה כי-תשמע אל-מצות יהוה אלהיך אשר אנכי מצוה היום לשמר ולעשות: יד ולא תסור מכל-הדברים אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ימין ושמאל ללכת אחרי אלהים אחרים לעבדם: פ * טו והיה אם-לא תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמר לעשות את-כל-מצותיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום ובאו עליך כל-הקלות האלה והשיגוך: טז ארור אתה בעיר וארור אתה בשדה: יז ארור טנאך ומשארתך: יח ארור פרי-בטנה ופרי אדמתך שגר אלפיך ועשתרת צאנך: יט ארור אתה בבאך וארור אתה בצאתך: כ ישלח יהוה א בך את-המארה את-המהומה ואת-המגערת בכל-משלח ידך אשר תעשה עד השמדך ועד-אבדך מהר מפני רע מעלליך אשר עזבתני: כא ידבק יהוה בך את-הדבר עד פלתו אתך מעל האדמה אשר-אתה בא-שמה לרשתה: כב יכבה יהוה בשחפת ובקדחת ובדלקת ובחרחר ובחרב ובשדפון ובירקון וירדפוך עד אבדך: כג והיו שמיך אשר

לותרך ובשבעה ארחו יערכו מקדמך: ה יפקד יי עמך ית ברכתא באוצרך ובכל אושטות ידך ויברכך בארעא דינ אלהך יהב לך: ט יקימך יי לה לעם קדוש כמא די קיים לך ארי תטר ית פקודיא דינ אלהך ותהיך בארחו דתקנו קדמויה: י ויחזון כל עממי ארעא ארי שמא דינ אתקרי עלך וידחלון מנך: יא ויותרך יי לטבא בולדא דמעך ובולדא דבעירך ובאפא דארעך על ארעא די קיים יי לאכהתך למתן לך: יב יפתח יי לך ית אוצרה טבא ית שמיא למתן מטר ארעך בעדנה ולברכא ית כל עובדי ידך ותוור לעממין סגיאין ואת לא תוור: יג ויתנהך יי לתקוף ולא לחלש ותהי ברם לעלא ולא תהי לתחתא ארי תקבל לפקודיא דינ אלהך די אנא מפקדך יומא דינ למטר ולמעבד: יד ולא תסנון מכל פתגמא די אנא מפקד ותבון יומא דינ ימינא ושמאלא למתך בטר טעות עממיא למפלחונן: טו ויהי אם לא תקבל במימרא דינ אלהך למטר למעבד ית כל פקודויה וקמויה די אנא מפקדך יומא דינ ויתון עלך כל לוטיא האלין וידבקך: טז ליט את בקרתא וליט את בחקלא: יז ליט סלך ואצותך: יח ליט ולדא דמעך ואבא דארעך בקרי תוריד ועדרי ענך: יט ליט את במעלך וליט את במפקדך: כ יגרי יי בך ית מארתא וית שגושיא וית מזופיתא בכל אושטות ידך די תעביד עד דתשתיצי ועד דתיבד בפריע מן קדם בישות עובדיך דשבקתא דחלתי: כא ידבק יי בך ית מותא עד דישיצי יתך מעל ארעא די את עלל לתמן למירתה: כב ימתך יי בשחפתא ובקדחתא ובדלקתא ובחרחרא ובחרבא ובשדפונא ובירקונא וירדפך עד דתיבד: כג ויהון שמיך די עלוי רישך חסינין בנחשא

*קוראים את פסוקי התוכחה בקול נמוך, אך באופן שישמע הקהל היטיב את הקריאה

כ"ט

תמיד למים וזלע"ז אשרינמני"ט, לשון ועלמי חרה מני חרצ"ב, נחר מפוח מאש':
 ובחרב. יציא עליך גייסות: שדפון וירקון. מכות תזואכ שזדות: שדפון.
 רוח קדים אשילד"ה זלע"ז: ירקון. יוצב ופני התזואכ מכסיפין ונכפכין
 לירקון קמי"א זלע"ז: עד אבדך. תרגום עד דסיבד, כלומר עד אבד אומר,
 שתכלה מאלריך: (כג) והיו שמיך אשר על ראשך נחשת. קללות הללו

(f) ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך. כן דרך הנצבלים לצרוח להיות מתפזרין
 לכל זד: (ג) המארה. חסרון כמו זרעט ממארתי: המהומה. שגוש קול
 צבלות: (כז) בשחפת. שזשטו נשחף ונפוח: ובקדחת. לשון כי אש קדחה
 צאפי', וכיא אש של חולי מלווי זלע"ז שיהא חמה מאד: ובדלקת. חמה
 יותר מקדחת, ומיני חלאים הס: ובחרחר. חולי המחממו טוך הגוף ומא

SIXTH READING ⁷ God will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be beaten before you. They will come out against you in one direction, and flee from you (in a panic) in seven directions.

⁸ God will direct (His) blessing to be with you in your granaries, and with everything to which you put your hand. He will bless you in the land which God, your God, is giving you.

⁹ God will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if you observe the commandments of God, your God, and walk in His ways. ¹⁰ Then all the nations of the earth will see that the Name of God is upon you, and they will fear you.

¹¹ God will grant you a good surplus in the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your livestock, and the fruit of your soil, on the land which God swore to your forefathers to give you. ¹² God will open up for you His good treasury, the skies, to give your land its rain in the (right) time, and to bless everything you put your hand to. You will lend to many nations, but you will not (need to) borrow.

¹³ God will put you at the head, and not at the tail. You will be only at the top, and not at the bottom.

(All this is) if you listen to the commandments of God, your God, which I am commanding you today, being careful to observe (them). ¹⁴ You must not deviate, right or left, from all of the words I am commanding you today, to follow other gods and worship them.

🌀 CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO OBSERVE THE MITZVOS 🌀

28:15 **W**hat will happen is, if you do not listen to God, your God, to be careful to observe all His commandments and suprarational commands which I am commanding you this day, then the following curses will come upon you and overtake you:

¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city, and cursed in the field. ¹⁷ Your fruits and your dough will be cursed.

¹⁸ The fruit of your womb, the fruit of your soil, and the fruit of your livestock—those born from your cattle and the flock of your sheep—will be cursed. ¹⁹ You will be cursed when you arrive, and cursed when you depart.

²⁰ God will send you shortages, confusion, and turmoil in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and quickly vanish, because of your evil deeds in forsaking Me. ²¹ God will make a plague cleave to you until it has consumed you from upon the land of which you are coming to take possession.

²² God will strike you with inflammation, illnesses, burning fevers, unquenchable thirst, with the sword (of invading armies), with blasting and withering (of the crops), and this will pursue you until you perish.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one “walk in His ways”? (v. 9)

RAMBAM: We are commanded to emulate the Almighty as much as possible, as the verse states “walk in his ways”.... Just as God is referred to [in scripture] as being gracious, likewise you are to be gracious. Just as He is referred to as being compassionate, likewise you are to be compassionate. Just as He is referred to as being benevolent, likewise you are to be benevolent (*Sefer Hamitzvos*, positive command 8).

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🌀 The Last Word 🌀

What does the *mitzvah* of “walking in His ways” (v. 9) teach us that we do not *already* know from the requirement to “love your fellow as (you love) yourself” (*Vayikra* 19:18)?

Rambam explains that the key focus here is that “we are commanded to emulate the Almighty as much as possible.” I.e. when we act in a manner of graciousness, compassion or benevolence, it should not be merely out of an ethical imperative, or for the general benefit of society, but rather, in an attempt to

resemble God—“Just as God is referred to as being...likewise you are to be...”

Practically speaking, this will ensure that a person will not allow himself to become emotionally “carried away” to an extreme. For in attempting to emulate God, one will always be conscious of the need to balance one’s attributes—like God, whose qualities of kindness and severity are in perfect harmony.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 153ff.)

מלאכתה מטרא וארעא די תחותך תקיפא כפר ולא מלמעבד פירין; כד יתן יי נת מטרא ארעך אבקא ועפרא מן שמיא יחות עלך עד דתשתציי: כה יתנגד יי תביר קדם סנאיך בארעהא חדא תפוק לותה ובשבטא ארעך תערוק מקדמוהי ותהי לזיע לכל מלכות ארעא: כו ותהי נבלתך משגרא למיכל לכל עופא דשמיא ולבעירת ארעא ולית דמניד: כז ימחנה יי בשחנא דמצרים ובטהורין ובגרבא ובחרים יבייש די לא תכול לאתסאה: כח ימחנה יי בטפשותא ובסמיותא ובשעממות לבא: כט ותהי ממשש בטרהא כמא דימשש עורא בקבלא ולא תצלה ית ארחתך ותהי ברם עשיק ואנים כל יומיא ולית דפריקי: ל אתתא תירוס ובגר אחרן ישכבנה ביתא תבני ולא תיתב בה פרמא תצוב ולא תחלנה: לא תורך יהי נכס לעיניך ולא תיכול מנה חמרך יהי אנים מקדמך ולא יתוב לך ענך מסירין לבעלי דבבך ולית לך פריקי: לב בניך ובנותך מסירין לעמא אחרן ועיניך חזן ויספן בגללהו כל יומא ולית חילא בידך: לד אבא דארעך וכל לאותך ייכול עמא די לא ידעת ותהי ברם עשיק ורעיע כל יומיא: לה ותהי משתפי מחזו עיניך די תחזי: לה ימחנה יי בשחנא בישא על רכוביא ועל שקניא די לא תכול לאתסאה מפרסת רגלך ועד מוחך: לו יגלי יי יתך וית מלכך די תקים עלך לעם די לא ידעת את ואבדהך ותפלח תמן לעממיא פלחי טעותא אעא ואבנא: לו ותהי לצדו למתל ולשועי בכל עממיא די ידרבנד יי לתמן: לה בר זרע סגי תפק לתקלא וזער תכנוש ארי יחסלנה גובא: לט פרמין תצוב ותפלח ותמרא לא תשתי

על ראשה נחשת והארץ אשר תחתיך ברזל: כד יתן יהוה את מטר ארצה אבק ועפר מן השמים ירד עליך עד השמדך: כה יתנד יהוה | נגף לפני איביך בדרך אחד תצא אליו ובשבעה דרכים תנוס לפניו והיית לזעוה לכל ממלכות הארץ: כו והייתה נבלתך למאכל לכל עוף השמים ולבהמת הארץ ואין מחריד: כז יככה יהוה בשחין מצרים ובעפלים [ק' ובטהורים] ובגרב ובחרם אשר לא תוכל להרפא: כח יככה יהוה בשגעון ובעורון ובתמהון לבב: כט והיית ממשש בצרהים כאשר ימשש העור באפלה ולא תצליח את דרכיך והיית אך עשוק וגזול פלתימים ואין מושיע: ל אשה תארש ואיש אחר ישגלנה [ק' ישכבנה] בית תבנה ולא תשב בו ברם תטע ולא תחללנו: לא שורך טבוח לעיניך ולא תאכל ממנו חמרך גזול מלפניך ולא ישוב לך צאנך נתנות לאיביך ואין לך מושיע: לב בניך ובנותיך נתנים לעם אחר ועיניך ראות וכלות אליהם כל היום ואין לאל ידך: לד פרי אדמתך וכל יגיעך יאכל עם אשר לא ידעת והיית רק עשוק ורצוץ פלתימים: לה והיית משגע ממראה עיניך אשר תראה: לה יככה יהוה בשחין רע על הברבים ועל השקים אשר לא תוכל להרפא מבר רגלך ועד קדקדך: לו יולך יהוה אתך ואת מלכך אשר תקים עליך אל גוי אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתך ועבדת שם אלהים אחרים עץ ואבן: לו והיית לשמה למשל ולשנינה בכל העמים אשר ינהגך יהוה שמה: לה זרע רב תוציא השדה ומעט תאסף פי יחסלנו הארבה: לט ברמים תטע ועבדת ויין לא תשתה ולא

כש"י

מטר, מכל מקום לא יהיה חורב של אצדון צעולם, והארץ לא תהא מזיעה כדרך שאין בצרזל מזיע, ואין הפירות מרקיצין. ומכל מקום קללה היא, צין שהיא כנחשת צין שהיא כצרזל, לא תוציא פירות, וכן השמים לא יריקו מטר: (כד) מטר ארצך אבק ועפר. יזקא דצת מטר⁸, מטר יורד ולא כל לרכו ואין צו כדי להכרין את העפר, והרוח צאה ומעלה את האבק ומכסה את עשב הזרעים שהן לחים מן המים, ומדבק בהם ונעשה טיט ומחביש ומרקיצין: (כה) לזעוה. לאימה ולזיע, שיזעו כל שומעי מכותיך ממך ויאמרו אוי לנו

משה מפי עלמו אמרן, ושצהר סיני מפי הקב"ה אמרן כמשמעה¹, וכן נאמר ואם לא תשמעו לי², ואם תלכו עמי קרי³ וכאן הוא אומר לקול ה' אלהיך⁴, ידבק ה' צדק⁵, וככה ה'⁶. הקל משה צקלותיו לאמרן בלשון יחיד וגם כן צקללה זו הקל שצראשונות הוא אומר את שמיכס כצרזל ואת ארנכס כנחושה⁷, שלא יהיו השמים מזיעין כדרך שאין בצרזל מזיע, ומתוך כך יכה חורב צעולם, והארץ תהא מזיעה כדרך שהנחשת מזיע, והיא מרקצת פירותיה, וכאן הוא אומר שמיך נחשת ורלך צרזל, שיהיו שמים מזיעין, אף על פי שלא יריקו

²³ Your skies above you will (not rain, but merely exude moisture like) copper, and the earth below you (will be dry like) iron. ²⁴ God will make the rain of your land (insufficient, causing the wind that follows to blow) dust and dirt (onto your sprouting crops). It will come down upon you from the skies until you are destroyed. ²⁵ God will cause you to be struck down before your enemy. You will come out against them in one direction, but you will flee from them (in panic) in seven directions. You will become a (cause of) dread to all the kingdoms on earth (when they hear what has happened to you). ²⁶ Your corpses will be food for every bird of the skies and for the beasts of the earth, and no one will frighten them (away). ²⁷ God will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with hemorrhoids, with oozing sores, and with dry lesions, from which you will not be able to be cured. ²⁸ God will strike you with insanity, with blindness, and with bewilderment. ²⁹ You will grope around at midday, as the blind man gropes in the dark, and you will be unsuccessful in your ways. You will be nothing but oppressed and robbed all the time, and no one will save you. ³⁰ You will betroth a woman, but another man will lie with her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will not render it fit (for use). ³¹ Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat from it. Your donkey will be robbed right in front of you, and it will never come back to you. Your flocks will be given over to your enemies, and you will have no savior. ³² Your sons and daughters will be given over to another people, and your eyes will see (what happened), and yearn for them all day long, but you will be powerless. ³³ The fruit of your soil and all your hard work will be eaten up by a people unknown to you. You will be nothing but wronged and downtrodden all the time. ³⁴ You will go insane from the things that your eyes will see. ³⁵ God will strike you on the knees and on the legs with severe boils from which you will not be able to be cured, (spreading out) from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. ³⁶ God will lead you, and your king whom you will have appointed over you, to a nation unknown to you or your fathers, and there you will serve other gods of wood and stone. ³⁷ Among all the nations to whom God will lead you, you will become a (source of) astonishment, an example (of persecution), and a topic of discussion. ³⁸ You will take a lot of seed out to the field, but you will gather in little, for the locusts will consume it. ³⁹ You will plant vineyards and work them, but you will neither drink their wine, nor gather their grapes,

כ"ט

פרי: (כ) ובלות אליהם. מלפוח אליהם שיצבו ואינם שבים. כל תוחלת שאינה צאה קרויה כליון עינים: (ל) לשמה. אש"ו אשטורדישו"ן כל הרואה אותך ישום עליך: למשל. כשתצא מכה רעה על אדם, יאמרו זו דומה למכת פלוגי: ולשנינה. לשון ושגנתם¹⁰, ידברו בך, וכן תרגומו ולשוני, לשון ספור, ואשתעי: (מ) יחסלנו. ועל שם כך נקרא חסיל, שמכלה את הכל:

שלא יצוא עלינו כדרך שצא על אלו: (כז) בשחין מצרים. רע היה מאד, לח מצפנים ויבש מצחון, כדאיתא בצכורות⁹: גרב. שחין לח: חרס. שחין יבש כחרס: (כח) ובתמהון לבב. ארטס הלז אשטורדישו"ן צלע"ז: (כט) עשוק. בכל מעשיך יהיה ערעור: (ל) ישגלגלה. לשון שגל, פלגש, והכתוב כנחו לשבח ישכננה ותקון סופרים הוא זה: תחללנו. צננה הרביעית לאכול

TORAS MENACHEM

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

The admonition here in *Parshas Ki Savo* contains ninety eight curses, whereas the admonition in *Parshas Bechukosai* contains half that amount, forty nine curses.

The inner reason for this distinction lies in the fact that the curses of the admonition are not intended as mere punishments, but rather as "blessings in disguise," which spiritually purge and refine a person, making him a fitting receptacle for even greater blessings from God.

The admonition of *Parshas Bechukosai*, which is read before *Shavuos*, is a spiritual preparation which enables a person to embrace the giving of the Torah anew, which occurs every *Shavuos*.

The admonition of our *Parsha*, which is read shortly before *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, prepares us for the High Holidays.

This is the inner reason why there are more curses here in *Parshas Ki Savo*—for on *Shavuos*, when the Jewish people receive the Torah, they are on the level of *tzadikim* (righteous people). But on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, where the key emphasis is on *man's effort* to return to God, we reach the level of *ba'alei teshuvah* (penitents). And since the *ba'al teshuvah* is so much higher than the *tzadik*, many more curses ("blessings in disguise") are read in this *Parsha* so as to provide the greater spiritual preparation required to reach this sublime level.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 2, pp. 392-3)

ולא תכנוש ארי תכלנה תולעתא: מ זיתין יהון לך בכל תחומך ומשחא לא תסוך ארי ותרזן זיתך: מא בנין ובגן תוליד ולא יהון לך ארי יחבון בשבאי: מב כל אילנך ואבא דארעך יחסנה סקאה: מג תותב ערל די בינך יהי סליק עיל מנך לעלא לעלא ואת תהי נחת לתחתא לתחתא: מד הוא יזופנך ואת לא תופנה הוא יהי לתקוף ואת תהי לחלש: מה וייתון ערך כל לומיא האלון וירדפנך וירדפנך עד דתשתיצי ארי לא קבלתא למימרא די אלהך למטר פקודוהי וקמזוהי די פקדך: מו ויהון בך לאת ולמופת ובבניך עד עלם: מז חלף די לא פלחתא קדם יי אלהך בחדוא ובשפירות לבא מסני בלא: מח ותפלח ית בעלי דבבך די זרנה יי בך בכפנא ובצחותא ובערמלינתא ובחסירות בלא ויתן גיר פרזלא על צורך עד דישיצי יתך: מט יתי יי ערך עם מרחיק מספי ארעא כמא די משתדי נשרא עמא די לא תשמע לישנה: נ עם תקוף אפיז די לא יסב אפיז לסבא ועל ינקא לא מרחם: נא ויכול ולדא דבערך ואבא דארעך עד דתשתצי די לא ישאר לך עבוקא חמרא ומשחא בקרי תוריד ועדרי ענך עד דיובד יתך: נב ויעק לך בכל קרויך עד דייכבש שוריד קמיא וכריכיא די את רחין לאשתובא בהן בכל ארעך ויעק לך בכל קרויך בכל ארעך די יחב יי אלהך לך: נג ותיכול ולדא דמעך בשר בניך ובנתך די יחב לך יי אלהך בצירא ובקתא דיעק לך סנאד: נד גברא דרביך בך ודמפנך לחרא תבאש עינה באחוהי ובאתת קימה ובשאר בנהוי די ישאר: נה מלמתן לחד מנהון מבשר בנהוי די ייכול מדלא אשתאר לה בלא בצירא

תאנר כי תאכלנו התלעת: מ זיתים יהיו לך בכל גבולך ושמן לא תסוך כי ישל זיתך: מא בנים ובנות תוליד ולא יהיו לך כי ילכו בשבי: מב כל עצה ופרי אדמתך יירש הצלצל: מג הגר אשר בקרבך יעלה עליך מעלה מעלה ואתה תרד מטה מטה: מד הוא ילוך ואתה לא תלוננו הוא יהיה לראש ואתה תהיה לזנב: מה ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה ורדפוך והשיגוך עד השמדך כי לא שמעת בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמור מצותיו וחקתיו אשר צוה: מו והיו בך לאות ולמופת ובזרעה עד-עולם: מז תחת אשר לא-עבדת את-יהוה אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל: מח ועבדת את-איביך אשר ישלחנו יהוה בך ברעב ובצמא ובעירם ובחסר כל ונתן על ברזל על-צואריך עד השמידו אתך: מט ישא יהוה עליך גוי מרחק מקצה הארץ כאשר ידאה הגשר גוי אשר לא-תשמע לשנו: נ גוי עז פנים אשר לא-ישא פנים לזקן ונער לא יחן: נא ואכל פרי בהמתך ופרי-אדמתך עד השמדך אשר לא-ישאיר לך דגן תירוש ויצהר שגר אלפיה ועשתרת צאנך עד האבידו אתך: נב והצר לך בכל-שעריך עד רדת חמתך הגבהת והבצרות אשר אתה בטח בהן בכל-ארעך והצר לך בכל-שעריך בכל-ארעך אשר נתן יהוה אלהיך לך: נג ואכלת פרי-בטנך בשר בניך ובנתך אשר נתן לך יהוה אלהיך במצור ובמצוק אשר יציק לך איבך: נד האיטל הרך בך והענג מאד תרע עינו באחיו ובאשת חיקו וביתר בניו אשר יותיר: נה מתת | לאחד מהם מבשר בניו אשר יאכל מבלי השאיר-לו כל במצור ובמצוק אשר יציק לך

כש"י

לע"ז: (נב) עד רדת חמתך. לשון רדוי וכזוש: (נג) ואכלת פרי בטנך בשר בניך וגו' במצור. מחמת שיהיו לרין על העיר ויהיה שם מזלוק עקת רעבון: (נד) הרך בך והענג. הוא הרך הוא הענוג, לשון פיגוק. ומתענג ומרד מוכיח עליהם שניכס אחד, אף על פי שהוא מפונק ודעתו קלה דבר מאוס, ימתק לו לרעבון שר בניו וצנותיו, עד כי תרע עינו צניו הנותרים מתת לאחד מהם מצער בניו אחיכם אשר יאכל. דבר אחר הרך בך, הכחמי

(מ) כי ישל. ישיר פירותיו, לשון וגשל בצרזל¹: (מב) יירש הצלצל. יעשו הארצה רש מן הפרי: יירש. יעני: צלצל. מין ארצה. ואי אפשר לפרש יירש לשון ירושה, שאם כן היה לו לכתוב יירש, ולא לשון הורשה וגירושין, שאם כן היה לו לכתוב יוריש: (מז) מרב כל. צטוד שהיה לך כל טוב: (מט) כאשר ידאה הנשר. פתאום ודרך מללחת ויקלו סוסיו: לא תשמוע לשונו. לא תכיר לשונו, וכן תשמע חלוס לפתור אותו². וכן כי שומע יוסף³ אינוגינדר"י

because the worms will devour them. ⁴⁰ You will have olive trees throughout all your borders, but you will not anoint with their oil, because your olive trees will shed (their fruit). ⁴¹ You will bear sons and daughters, but they will not be yours, because they will go into captivity. ⁴² The locusts will deplete all your trees and all the fruit of your soil. ⁴³ The foreigner who is among you will arise above you, higher and higher, while you will descend lower and lower. ⁴⁴ He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. He will be at the head, while you will be at the tail.

⁴⁵ All these curses will befall you, pursuing you, overtaking you until they destroy you because you did not listen to God, your God, and observe His commandments and suprarational commands which He commanded you. ⁴⁶ They will be as a sign and a wonder, upon you and your children forever, ⁴⁷ because you did not serve God, your God, with joy and with gladness of heart, when (you had an) abundance of everything.

⁴⁸ Therefore, you will serve your enemies, whom God will send against you, amid hunger, thirst, nakedness and total destitution. He will place an iron yoke on your neck, until He has destroyed you. ⁴⁹ God will bring upon you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth, (suddenly) as the eagle swoops down—a nation whose language you will not recognize, ⁵⁰ an arrogant nation, which will not respect the elderly, or be kind to the young. ⁵¹ They will devour the fruit of your livestock and the fruit of your soil, destroying you. They will not leave over anything for you from the grain, the wine, the oil, the offspring of your cattle or the flocks of your sheep, until they destroy you. ⁵² They will besiege you in all your cities, until your tall and fortified walls in which you trust are conquered, throughout your entire land. They will besiege you in all your cities throughout your entire land, which God, your God, has given you. ⁵³ During the siege and the distress which your enemies will bring upon you, (you will be so hungry that) you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom God, your God, has given you. ⁵⁴ The most sensitive and squeamish man among you (will be so hungry for his own children's flesh that he) will be selfish to his own brother, his darling wife and the rest of his children whom he has allowed to remain ⁵⁵ (refusing) to give any one of them of his children's flesh that he is eating. For not a thing will remain for him in the siege and distress which your enemies will bring upon you, in all your cities.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“BECAUSE YOU DID NOT SERVE GOD, YOUR GOD, WITH JOY AND WITH GLADNESS OF HEART” (v. 47)

Simchah (joy) breaks through all barriers. This is also the unique quality of Mashiach, who is a descendant of Peretz, and is referred to as “the one who breaks through (haporetz).”

I therefore offer the following suggestion and request: *that we increase in joy with the intent of actually bringing Mashiach and the true and complete Redemption.*

Throughout the years of exile, the Jewish people have longed for the Redemption and prayed for it sincerely every day. In earlier generations, the main emphasis of the Chasidic movement was on spreading the wellsprings of Chasidus outward and not (so strongly) on the goal of this process, that of bringing Mashiach. It was known that the object of these endeavors was to bring Mashiach, and from time to time this goal was spoken about, but this point was not the focus of attention.

After the Previous Rebbe issued the call, “Immediately to teshuvah, immediately to Redemption,” the emphasis has been placed on actually bringing Mashiach, to the extent that every phase of our efforts in our Divine service (including the efforts to spread the

wellsprings of Chasidus) need to be permeated consciously with the goal to bring Mashiach. For this is the mission of our generation: to actually bring the Redemption.

Many decades have passed since the time of the Previous Rebbe's announcement, and the tumultuous activities which arose from it to bring Mashiach. Nevertheless, Mashiach has not yet come.

There is no way to explain this. Our Sages stated, “All the appointed times for Mashiach's coming have already passed.” And surely, there is not a single Jew who has not had several thoughts of teshuvah.

What is there left to do?

In reply, I am suggesting, as above, that the approach that is required is the expression of joy for the sake of bringing Mashiach.

Joy breaks through barriers, including the barriers of exile, and joy has a unique potential to bring about the Redemption.

This joy will surely lead to the ultimate joy, the rejoicing of the Redemption, when “our mouths will be filled with joy” (Psalms 126:2).

(Excerpted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5748—Free Translation)

ובעקתא די זעק לך סנאך בקל קרויך: נו דרביכא בך ודמפנקא די לא נסיאת פרסת רגלה לאחתא על ארעא ממפנקו ומרביכו תבאש עינה בנבר קימה ובברה ובברתה: נו ובזער בנהא דיפקון מנה ובבנהא די תליד ארי תיכלנון בחסירות פלא בסתרא בצירא ובעקתא די זעק לך סנאך בקרויך: נה אם לא תטר למעבר ית כל פתגמי אורייתא קדא דכתיבינן בספרא הרין למדחל ית שמא יקרא ודחילא הרין ית יי אלהיך: נט ויפרש יי ית מחתך וית מחת בניך מחן רכרכו ומחיימנו ומכתשין בישין ומחיימנין: ס ויתביב בך ית כל מכתשי מצרים די דחלתא מקדמיהון וידבקו בך: סא אף כל מרע וכל מחא די לא כתיבין בספרא דאורייתא קדא יתנון יי עלך עד דתשתציי: סב ותשתארונו בעם זער חלף די הויתנון ככוכבי שמיא למסגי ארי לא קבלתא למימרא די אלהיך: סג ויהי כמא דחדי יי עליכון לאוטבא יתכון ולאסנאה יתכון פן יחדי יי עליכון לאובדא יתכון ולשיצאה יתכון ותטלטלון מעל ארעא דאת עלל לתמן למירתה: סד ויבדרנך יי בכל עממיא מספי ארעא ועד סיפי ארעא ותפלח תמן לעממיא פלחי טענותא די לא ידעת את ואברהך אעא ואבנא: סה ובעממיא האנון לא תנוח ולא יהא מנה לפרסת רגלך ויתן יי לך תמן לב דחל וחשכת עיניו ומפתן נפש: סו ויהוון חייך תלן לך מקבל ותחי תוה ליליא ויממא ולא תהימין בחייד: סז בצפרא תימר פן יתן רמשא וברמשא תימר פן יתן צפרא מתוהות לבך די תחי תוה ומחזו עיניך די תחי חזי: סח ויתביבך יי מצרים בספינן בארעהא די אמרית לך לא תוסף עוד למחזוה

איבך בכל־שעריך: נו הרפה בך והעננה אשר לא־נסתה כפי־רגלה העג על־הארץ מהתענג ומרד תרע עינה באיש חיקה ובבנה ובבתה: נו ובשליטה היוצת* | מבין רגליה ובבניה אשר תלד פיתאכלם בחסר־כל פסתר במצור ובמצוק אשר יציק לך איבך בשעריך: נה אם־לא תשמר לעשות את־כל־דברי התורה הזאת הפתבים בספר הזה *ליראה את־השם*** הנכבד והנורא הזה את יהוה אלהיך: נט והפלא יהוה את־מפתך ואת מכות זרעך מכות גדלת ונאמנות וחלים רעים ונאמנים: ס והשיב בך את כל־מדה מצרים אשר יגרת מפניהם ודבקו בך: סא גם כל־חלי וכל־מכה אשר לא כתוב בספר התורה הזאת יעלם יהוה עליך עד השמדך: סב ונשארתם במתי מעט תחת אשר הייתם בכוכבי השמים לרב כי־לא שמעת בקול יהוה אלהיך: סג והיה כאשר־שש יהוה עליכם להיטיב אתכם ולהרבות אתכם פן ישיש יהוה עליכם להאביד אתכם ולהשמיד אתכם ונסחתם מעל האדמה אשר־אתה בא־שמה לרשתה: סד והפיצך יהוה בכל־העמים מקצה הארץ ועד־קצה הארץ ועבדת שם אלהים אחרים אשר לא־ידעת אתה ואבתיך עץ ואבן: סה ובגוים ההם לא תרניע ולא־יהיה מנוח לכפי־רגלך ונתן יהוה לך שם לב רגז וכליון עינים ודאבון נפש: סז והיו חייך תלאים לך מנגד ופחדת לילה ויומם ולא תאמין בחייד: סח בבקר תאמר מי־יתן ערב ובערב תאמר מי־יתן בקר מפתח לבבך אשר תפתח וממראה עיניך אשר תראה: סח והשיבך יהוה | מצרים באניות בדרךך אשר אמרתי לך לא־תסיף עוד לראתה

* חסר א' **מכאן עד סוף הפסוק יש לומר בקול רם (קיצור ש"ע עח, ג). ***ס"א הנכבד

כש"י

וגו' כל המחלכ אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך¹, אין מיראין את האדם אלא דדבר שהוא יגור ממנו: (סא) יעלם. לשון עלייה: (סב) ונשארתם במתי מעט תחת וגו'. מועטין חלוק מרובין: (סג) בן ישיש ה'. את אויביכם עליכם להאביד וגו': ונסחתם. לשון עקירה, וכן בית גאים יסח כ"י: (סד) ועבדת שם אלהים אחרים. כתרנומו, לא עבודת אלכות ממש, אלא מעלים מס וגולגולות לכומרי עבודת אלילים: (סה) לא תרגיע. לא תנוח, כמו וזאת המרעב²: לב רגז. לב חרד, כתרנומו דחיל, כמו שאלו מתחת רגז

ורך הלצצ, מרכז רעצותם, יתאכזרו ולא יתנו מצער צניכם השחוטים לצניכם הנותרים: (נו) תרע עינה באיש חיקה ובבנה ובבתה. הגדולים: (נז) ובשליטה. צניח הקטנים. צנון תכא עינה ארכ כשתאכל את האחד מליתן לאשר אכלה מן הצשר: (נט) והפלא ה' את מכתך. מופלאות ומוזללות משאר מכות: ונאמנות. ליסרך לקיים שליחותי: (ס) אשר יגרת מפניהם. מפני המכות, כשהיו ישראל רואים מכות משונות הצאות על מצרים היו יראים מהם שלא יוצאו גם עליהם, תדע שכן כתיב ויהי אם שמוע

⁵⁶ (Even) the most sensitive and squeamish woman among you, who had never dared to place her foot upon the ground because of (her) sensitivity and squeamishness, will begrudge (giving flesh to) her darling husband, her (adult) sons and daughters, ⁵⁷ the infants who came from between her legs, and her own children whom she will bear—for she will (slaughter them and) eat them in secret, in destitution, amid the siege and distress which your enemies will inflict upon you in your cities.

⁵⁸ If you are not careful to observe all the words of this Torah, which are written in this scroll, to fear this glorious and awesome name of God, your God, ⁵⁹ then God will distinguish your plagues and your children's plagues, (to be) powerful and effective plagues, with sicknesses that are nasty and effective. ⁶⁰ He will bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt which you were terrified of (when you saw the Egyptians suffer from them), and they will cling to you. ⁶¹ God will also bring upon you every disease and plague that is not written in this Torah scroll, to destroy you.

⁶² You will remain few in number, instead of being as numerous as the stars of the heavens as you once were, because you did not listen to God, your God. ⁶³ Then, just as God rejoiced over you to do good for you and to increase you, God will likewise make (your enemies) rejoice over you, annihilating you and destroying you. You will be uprooted from the land of which you are now entering to take possession. ⁶⁴ God will scatter you among all the nations, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you(r taxes) will (be used to) serve other gods unknown to you or your fathers, (gods of) wood and stone. ⁶⁵ You will not be at ease among those nations, nor will your foot find rest. There, God will give you a trembling heart, dashed hopes, and a suffering soul. ⁶⁶ Your life will hang in suspense before you. You will be frightened night and day, and you will not be certain of your life. ⁶⁷ (Things will constantly get worse, so) in the morning, you will say, “If only it were (yesterday) evening!” and in the evening, you will say, “If only it were (this) morning!”—because of the fear in your heart which you will experience and because of the things that you will see. ⁶⁸ God will return you to Egypt (in captivity) in ships, through the route about which I had said to you, “You will never see it again.” There, you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as slaves and handmaids, but there will be no buyer.

רש"י

לך, שמעו עמים ירגזון⁵, מוסדות השמים ירגזו⁶: ובליון עינים. מלפני יתן ערב. ויהיה הערב של אמש⁷: ובערב תאמר מי יתן בקר. של שחרית, שאלות מתחזקות תמיד וכל שעה מרובה קללתה משלפניה: (סח) באניות.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

The ultimate purpose of the admonition is to lead the Jewish people to *teshuvah* (repentance; return). This is alluded to in the concluding curse, “God will return you to Egypt” (v. 68). To explain the unique quality of *teshuvah*, the verse continues:

There, you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies— Through observing the *mitzvos*, we can only sanctify and spiritually elevate those parts of the physical world which the Torah permits us to interact with. In contrast, the *ba'al teshuvah* (penitent) elevates all his prior forbidden interactions with the physical world, and his “intentional sins are transformed to merits” (*Yoma* 86b). This is alluded to by the verse: “there (i.e. in the realms of the forbidden) you will offer yourselves for sale to (i.e. spiritually elevate) your enemies (i.e. the forbidden entities that the *ba'al teshuvah* had interactions with).

As slaves and handmaids—In addition to elevating the parts of the physical world which he came into contact with, the *ba'al teshuvah* also enjoys a substantial spiritual elevation himself, as a result of conquering his strong desires. Being a master of self-control, the *ba'al teshuvah* is compared to a “slave,” who does not initially find his allotted tasks easy, but does them nonetheless with utmost dedication.

But there will be no buyer—Rashi explains: “Because they will decree death and expiration upon you,” i.e. the *ba'al teshuvah* manages to “kill” his obsession with the pleasures of the world, and instead he yearns to “expire”—to become free from the shackles of physical existence and become one with God.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 239ff.)

וְתִזְכְּרוּן תִּמְנֵן לְבַעֲלֵי דְבַבְדִּין וְלִאֲמָקֵן
 וְלִיַּת דְּקִנְיִ: סט אֵלֵין פִּתְנָמִי קִנְיָא דִּי פִקִּיד
 יִי יַת מִשָּׁה לְמַגְזֹר עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַרְעָא
 דְּמוֹאָב בְּרִי מִקְנִיָא דִּי גֹזֵר עִמְהוֹן בְּחוּרְבִי:
 « וְקִרְא מִשָּׁה לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַר לְהוֹן אַתּוֹן
 חֲזִיתוֹן יַת כָּל דִּי עֲבַד יִי לְעֵינִיכֹן בְּאַרְעָא
 דְּמִצְרַיִם לְפִרְעָה וְלְכָל עֲבֹדוֹהִי וְלְכָל אֲרַעְיָה:
 ב נִסִּי רַבְרַבִּיא דִּי חֲזָאָה עֵינִידָא אֲתִיָא
 וּמוֹפְתִיָא רַבְרַבִּיא הָאֲנוּן: ג וְלֹא יִהְיֶה יִי לְכוֹן
 לְבָא לְמַדְעָא וְעֵינִין לְמַחֲזִי וְאוֹדְגִין לְמִשְׁמַע עַד
 יוֹמָא דְדִין: ד וְדִבְרִית יִתְכוֹן אֲרַבְעִין שָׁנִין
 בְּמִדְבָרָא לֹא בְלִיאַת כְּסוּתְכוֹן מִכְּכוֹן וּמִסְכָּדָא
 לֹא עָדוּ (בְּלוֹ) מַעַל רִגְלָדָ: ה לְחִמָּא לֹא אֲכַלְתוֹן
 וְחִמְרָא חֲדַת וְעִתִּיק לֹא שְׁתִּיתוֹן בְּדִיל דְּתַדְעוֹן
 אֲרִי אֲנָא יִי אֱלֹהִיכֹן: ו וְאַתִּיתוֹן לְאַתְרָא דְדִין
 וּנְפַק סִיחֹן מִלְּבָא דְחֻשְׁבוֹן וְעוֹג מִלְּבָא דְמִתְנָן
 לְקַדְמוֹתָנָא לְאַנְחָא קִרְבָּא וּמְחוֹנוֹן: ז וּגְסִיבְנָא
 יַת אֲרַעְהוֹן וּיְהַבְנָה לְאַחְסָנָא לְשִׁבְטָא דְרְאוּבֵן
 וּלְשִׁבְטָא דְגַד וּלְפִלְגֹת שִׁבְטָא דְמְנַשֶּׁה:
 ח וְתִשְׂרוֹן יַת פִּתְנָמִי קִנְיָא דְקָא וְתַעְבְּדוֹן
 יַתְהוֹן בְּדִיל דְּתַצְלַחוֹן יַת כָּל דִּי תַעְבְּדוֹן:

פ פ פ

*וְהַתְּמַכְרְתֶם שֵׁם לְאִיבִיד לְעִבְדִים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת וְאִין קִנְיָה: ס
 סט** אֵלֶּה דְבַרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה לְכַרֵּת אֶת־
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִלְּבַד הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת אַתֶּם
 בְּחוּרְבִי: פ [שביעי] כט « וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה לְעֵינֵיכֶם
 בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפִרְעֹה וּלְכָל־עֲבָדָיו וּלְכָל־אֲרָצוֹ: ב הַמַּסּוֹת
 הַגְּדֹלֹת אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ הָאֵתֶת וְהַמִּפְתֵּיִם הַגְּדֹלִים הָהֵם:
 ג וְלֹא־נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֵב לְדַעַת וְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת וְאָזְנִים לִשְׁמָע
 עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ד וְאוֹלַךְ אַתְכֶם אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּמִדְבָר לֹא־בָלוּ
 שְׁלֹמֹתֵיכֶם מֵעֲלֵיכֶם וְנִעְלָדָ לֹא־בָלְתָה מֵעַל רִגְלָדָ: ה לָחֶם לֹא
 אֲכַלְתֶּם וַיִּזֵּן וְשִׁכַר לֹא שְׁתִּיתֶם לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ו [מפסיר] ו וַתָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן
 מִלְּד־חֻשְׁבוֹן וְעוֹג מִלְּד־הַבְּשָׁן לְקַרְאֲתָנוּ לְמַלְחָמָה וַנִּגְפֹּם:
 ז וַנִּקַּח אֶת־אֲרָצָם וְנִתְּנָה לְנַחֲלָה לְרְאוּבֵנִי וּלְגַדִּי וּלְחֻצֵי שִׁבְט
 הַמְנַשִּׁי: ח וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבַרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם
 לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכַּלּוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן: פ פ פ

קכ"ב פסוקים, לעבדי"ו סימן.

* יש גורסים כי רבתי. ** כאן חוזרים לקרוא בקול רגיל

כ"ט

את התורה ונתנה לנו, ומכ אתה משליט את בני שבטך עליה, ויאמרו לנו
 יום מחר לא לכם נתנה, לנו נתנה. ושמה משה על הדבר, ועל זאת אמר להם
 היום הזה נהיית לעם וגו',² היום הזה הכניתי שאתם דבקים וחפלים
 במקום: (ז) ותבאו אל המקום הזה. עתה אתם רואים עלמכם צדולה
 וכבוד, אל תצטוו במקום ואל ירום לצדכם, ושמתם את דברי הצרית
 הזאת. דבר אחר ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת, שאין אדם עומד על סוף דעתו
 של רבו וחכמת משנתו עד ארבעים שנה,³ ולפיכך לא הקפיד עליכם המקום
 עד היום הזה, אבל מכאן ואילך יקפיד. ולפיכך: (ח) ושמתם את דברי
 הברית הזאת וגו': חסלת פרשת כי תבוא

צספניות צשציה: והתמכרתם שם לאיביר. אתם מצקשים להיות נמכרים
 להם לעבדים ולשפחות: ואין קנה. כי יגזרו עליך הרג וכליון: והתמכרתם.
 בלע"ז איפירוונדרי"ץ ווי"ש. ולא יתכן לפרש והתמכרתם בלשון ונמכרתם
 על ידי מוכרים אחרים, מפני שנאמר אחריו ואין קונה: (ט) לברית את
 בני ישראל. שיקבלו עליהם את התורה באלה וצשצועה: מלבד הברית.
 קללות שצחורת כהנים שנאמרו צסיני: (ג) ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת.
 להכיר את חסדי הקב"ה ולהדבק בו: עד היום הזה. שמעתי שאותו היום
 שנתן משה ספר התורה לבני לוי, כמו שכתוב ויתנה אל הכהנים בני לוי,⁴
 צאו כל ישראל לפני משה ואמרו לו, משה רבינו אף אנו עמדנו צסיני וקבלנו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- What extra understanding was added on "this day"? (v. 3)
 RASHI: No person can appreciate the depths of his teacher's mind or the profundity of his teachings before forty years. Thus, the Omnipresent was not strict with you until this day, but from now on, He will be strict with you. Therefore, "guard the words of this covenant...." (v. 8; Rashi to v. 6).

⁶⁹ *These are the words of the covenant, which God commanded Moshe to make with the children of Israel in the land of Mo'au, besides the covenant of (curses*) which He made with them in Choraiu.*

🌀 MOSHE'S FINAL ADDRESS 🌀

29 **M**oshe called all of Israel and said to them, “You have seen all that God did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land, ² the great tests (of faith) which your eyes saw and those great signs (of God’s direct involvement) and wondrous (plagues).

SEVENTH
READING

³ *Until this day, God has not yet given you a heart to recognize (His true kindness), eyes to see (it) or ears to hear (it).* ⁴ *I led you through the desert for forty years, but your garments did not wear out from your (using them), nor did your shoes wear out from (being used by) your feet.* ⁵ *You did not eat bread, nor drink new wine or old wine, in order that you would know that I am God, your God.*

MAFTIR ⁶ *When you arrived at this place, Sichon, the King of Cheshbon, and Og, the King of Bashan, came out towards us in battle, and we annihilated them.* ⁷ *We took their land, and we gave it as an inheritance to the tribes of Re’uvin and Gad, and to half the tribe of Menasheh.*

⁸ *(Since you have witnessed God’s greatness), guard the words of this covenant and observe them, in order that you succeed in everything that you do.*

THE HAFTARAH FOR KI SAVO IS ON PAGE 286.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 UNDERSTANDING ONE’S TEACHER (v. 3)

Rashi writes that in the current passage, Moshe was telling the Jewish people that now they should be especially careful to “guard the words of this covenant and observe them” (v. 8), because, “No person can fathom the depths of his teacher’s mind or the profundity of his teachings before forty years. Thus, the Omnipresent was not strict with you until this day, but from now on, He will be strict with you.”

However, this begs the question:

The “words of this covenant” refers to the *entire* body of Torah and *mitzvos*, which includes *mitzvos* that were only communicated by Moshe at the *end* of his forty-year leadership. So surely God should only have been “strict” with the Jewish people in those areas in which they had been given a *full* forty years to internalize, and not with *all* “the words of this covenant”?

Another fundamental difficulty here is how a *fixed* time could be given to the process of fathoming one’s teacher’s mind and the profundity of his teachings. Surely a bright student will take less time to understand his teacher’s wisdom, and a weak student will take more time?

THE EXPLANATION

When a student learns Torah from his teacher, he is being educated at two levels: a.) He learns specific teachings, i.e. laws, subjects and passages. b.) He learns how to think, i.e. how to conceptualize and analyze the subject matter.

The rate at which one fully understands the specific teachings (‘a’) will vary significantly from person to person, depending on the aptitude of each individual student. But with regard to learning how to think like one’s teacher does, if the teacher is truly of a superior intellectual caliber to his students, then his intellectual approach will not be quickly internalized, even by his most adept students.

Nevertheless, God fashioned the human mind** in such a manner that after *prolonged* exposure even this is absorbed by the students. For since all a teacher’s ideas are, ultimately, a direct expression of his genius, it follows that through absorbing his teacher’s ideas a student is gradually and indirectly absorbing his teacher’s way of thinking too. But since this occurs via a process of passive “absorption” (rather than through critical analysis) it is simply a matter of time (rather than aptitude) until this point is reached. Therefore, “No person can appreciate either the depths of his teacher’s mind or the profundity of his teachings before forty years,” if his teacher is truly of a different intellectual caliber to his students.

Nevertheless, once a person has internalized his teacher’s way of thinking (after forty years), he is able to see all his teacher’s teachings in the same light—even those teachings which have been studied over the latter part of the past forty years.*** Therefore, Moshe told the Jewish people that, since they had now reached the fortieth year of having “witnessed God’s greatness,” their minds understood things from God’s perspective, so to speak. This enabled them to understand even those things they had witnessed in the recent past.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, pp. 163-5)

* I.e. the curses in *Parshas Bechukosai—Vayikra 26:14ff.* **Thus the verse stresses: “Until this day, God has not yet given you....” (v. 3). ***From this it would appear that those who were children at the beginning of Moshe’s leadership, or those that were born afterwards, did not appreciate the depths of Moshe’s mind even at this point, since they had not been his students for forty years. However, it could be argued that as long as one person had come to truly appreciate Moshe’s genius (and of course, there were many more than that), he would be able to impart that appreciation to others (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bo 5749*, note 23).



Parshas Ki Savo contains 3 positive *mitzvos* and 3 prohibitions

1. To recite a declaration when bringing firstfruits to the Temple [26:5].
2. To recite a declaration when bringing tithes to the Temple [26:13].
3. Not to eat the Second Tithe while in a state of mourning [26:14].
4. Not to eat the Second Tithe while in a state of ritual impurity [26:14].
5. Not to spend the money for which the Second Tithe was exchanged on anything other than food or drink [26:14].
6. To emulate the good attributes of God [28:9].



parshas Nitzaḅim

פרשת נצבים

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

The Parsha begins with the declaration: “You are standing firmly (*nitzavim*) today, all of you together, before God, your God—the heads of your tribes...to your water-drawers—in order to bring you into the covenant of God, your God...”

At first glance, this declaration appears to contain a contradiction: It begins by saying, “You are standing firmly...all of you together” (without distinction); yet, it proceeds immediately to divide them into various and separate categories. Besides, what is the purpose of enumerating the various classes of Jews, from the highest to the lowest, after they had already been all included in the general term “all of you” (כולכם).

But—herein precisely is to be found a basic “rule,” namely, that both go together: (a) “all of you”, meaning *all as one*, and (b) at the same time, however, each individual, man or woman, has his or her specific task and mission, each one according to his or her status and station in life.

Yet, the question begs to be asked: Since such a division is necessary, indeed such an extreme diversity—from “your heads” down to your “water-drawer”—how can

they be so completely unified and merged to become “all as one”?

The answer is: “You are standing firmly this day, all of you—before God, your God.” The Hebrew verb נצבים is stronger than עומדים, and means a firm stand, being deeply conscious of standing in the presence of God, Who is “your God”—your strength and your whole essence. In this—all Jews are equal, and this is what makes them all—one...

And the Torah goes on to explain: “All of you together” are divided into “the heads of your tribes”...down to your “water-drawer,” and each of them, with his *distinct* capacity (and his *special* endeavors) is brought into the covenant with God. Each individual endeavor, whether by one who belongs in the category of your heads and acts like a head, or in the category of water-drawer and acts as such, is an expression of the total covenant of all of you with God, your God. Each one has his special Divine assignment according to his status and station in life, and in this way—when each and every one carries out his assignment—the complete unity of the Jewish people—all as one—is achieved.

(Excerpt from public letter written “In the Days of Selichos” 5731)

ט אתון קנימין יומא דין קלבון קדם יי אלהכון רישיכון שבטיכון סביכון וסרביכון כל אנש ישראל: טפלבון נשיכון וניורד די בגו משריתך מלקט אעיד עד מלי מניד: יא לאעלותך בקימא די אלהך ובמומתה די יי אלהך גור עמד יומא דין: יב בריל לאקמא יתך יומא דין קדמויה לעמא והוא יהי לך לאלה במא די מליל לך ובמא די קיים לאבתך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב: יג ולא עמכון בלחודיכון אנא גור ית קימא הדא וית מומתא הדא: יד ארי ית מן דאיתוהי קבא עמנא קאם יומא דין קדם יי אלהנא וית

ט אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני יהוה אלהיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם וקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל: טפכם נשיכם וגרד אשר בקרב מחנהך מחטב עציד עד שאב מימך: יא לעברך בברית יהוה אלהיך ובאלתו אשר יהוה אלהיך כרת עמך היום: ויגיד לך למען הקים אתך היום | לו לעם והוא יהיה לך לאלהים כאשר דבר לך וכאשר נשבע לאבתך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב: יג ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי כרת את הברית הזאת ואת האלה הזאת: יד כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד היום לפני יהוה אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה

כט"י

שבעות הללו, שלא תקיטוהו אחר שהוא אינו יכול להבדל מכס. עד כאן פירשתי לפי פשוטו של פרה. ומדע אגדה למה נסמכה פרשת אחס נצבים לקלות, לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קלות חסר שחיס, חזן ממ"ט שצורת כהנים, הוריקו פניהם ואמרו מי יוכל לעמוד צלול, החחיל משה לפייסם אחס נצבים היום, הרצה הכעסתם למקום ולא עשה אתכם כלייה וברי אחס קיימין לפניו: היום. כיום הזה שהוא קיים והוא מפיל ומאיר, כך האיר לכם וכך עתיד להאיר לכם, והקלות והיסורין מקיימין אתכם ומליצין אתכם לפניו. ואף הפרשה שלמעלה מזו פיוסין הם, אחס ראיסם את כל וגו'. דבר אחר אחס נצבים, לפי שהיו ישראל יואלץ מפרנס לעמם ממש ליחוש, לפיכך עשה אותם מצבה כדי לזרזם, וכן עשה יחוש, וכן שמואל, החיננו ואשפתה אתכם⁸, כשילאו מידו ונכנסו לידו של שאלו: (יד) ואת אשר איננו

(ט) אתם נצבים¹. מלמד שכנס משה לפני הקב"ה כיום מוחו להכניסם בצרית: ראשיכם שבטיכם. ראשיכם לשבטיכם: זקניכם ושטריכם. החשוב חשוב קודם ואחר כך כל איש ישראל: (י) מחטב עציר. מלמד שצאו כעניים להכתייר זימי משה, כדרך שצאו גבעונים זימי יחוש, וזכו האמור בגבעונים ויעשו גם המה בערמה², ונתנס משה חוטזי עלים ושואזי מיס: (יא) לעברך. להיותך עוזר בצרית. ולא יתכן לפרשו כמו להעצירך, אלא כמו לעשותכם אחס: לעברך בברית. דרך העצרה, כך היו כורתי צריתות עושין מחינה מכאן ומחינה מכאן ועוזרים צינתים, כמו שנאמר העגל אשר כרתו לשנים ויעצרו זין צרתי: (יב) למען הקים אותך היום לו לעם. כל כך הוא נכנס לערוח למען קיים אותך לפני לעס: והוא יהיה לך לאלהים. לפי שדבר לך ונשבע לאבותיך שלא להחליף את זרעם בצומה אחרת, לכן הוא אומר אתכם

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why were the people “standing firmly today”? (v. 9)

RASHI: This teaches us that on the day he died, Moshe assembled the Jewish people before God, to bring them into a covenant.

The Midrashic explanation is as follows. Why is Parshas Nitzavim juxtaposed with the admonition [the curses in Parshas Ki Savo]? Because when the Jewish people heard these ninety eight curses, besides the forty nine curses in the Book of Leviticus (26:14-39), their faces turned pale, and they said, “Who could withstand all these?” So

Moshe began to appease them, saying: “You are standing firmly today”—You have angered God many times, but He has not destroyed you. And you see that you continue to exist before Him, “today”—just as this day exists....

Another explanation of “You are standing firmly”: Since the Jewish people were now passing from leader to leader, from Moshe to Yehoshua, Moshe brought them to a standing assembly, in order to encourage them.... (Rashi to v. 9 & v. 12).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 “STANDING FIRMLY TODAY” (v. 9)

To explain the words “You are standing firmly today” (v. 9), Rashi cites three different interpretations. This begs the following questions:

a.) Rashi’s commentary was written *exclusively* to explain difficulties with scripture at the *literal level*, as Rashi himself writes: “I come *only* to explain the literal meaning of scripture” (Rashi to Bereishis 3:8). What problem was troubling Rashi here, at the literal level?

b.) When Rashi gives more than one interpretation, it is because he does not find any of the interpretations totally satisfactory as they remain alone, and by offering several solutions, the shortcomings of one interpretation are compensated for by another.

In our case, we need to explain the difficulties posed by each one of Rashi’s three interpretations, and how they are solved by the other two interpretations?

c.) The sequence of Rashi’s interpretations is also arranged with precision. The first interpretation is the most appropriate *overall* at the literal level, followed by the second and then the third interpretation. How is this to be explained in our case?

RASHI’S PROBLEMS

The opening of our Parsha prompts the following questions:

a.) Why do words of introduction appear in the middle of a speech? Parshas Nitzavim opens in the middle of a speech which Moshe began at

1 במה דפוסיים נעתקו בפרש"י רק התיבות "אתם נצבים" — בדפוס ראשון (בסיום פרשת תבוא) א"י פרשת אתם נצבים (ובר"פ מתחיל) היום מלמד כ"י, בדפוס שני נעתק בתחלת פרש"י "אתם נצבים היום כולכם". וברוב הכתי" דפרש"י "אתם נצבים היום" (לקר"ש ח"י ע"י 258 הערה 1). 2 יהושע ט, ד 3 יבמות עט. 4 דברים ד, יד 5 ירמ"י לד, יח 6 תנחומא 7 יהושע כד, א 8 ש"א יב, ז

🕎 THE ETERNAL COVENANT WITH GOD 🕎

29:9 **Y**ou are standing firmly today, all of you together, before God, your God—the heads of your tribes, your elders, your police officers (standing in front of) every Jewish person: ¹⁰ your young children, your women, and the converts within your camp (who were assigned positions ranging) from your woodcutters to your water-drawers— ¹¹ in order to bring you into the covenant of God, your God, and His oath which God, your God, is making with you today.

SECOND
READING

¹² (This is) in order to establish you today as His people, that He will be your God, as He told you, and as He swore to your forefathers, to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov (that He would never swap you for another nation).

¹³ I am not only making this covenant and this oath with you, ¹⁴ but with (both) those standing here with us today before God our God, and with those (in future generations) who are not here with us today.

TORAS MENACHEM

the end of Parshas Ki Savo: “Moshe called all of Israel and said to them, ‘You have seen all that God did before your eyes, etc.’” (29:1). After this introduction, follow another seven verses where Moshe describes God’s kindness over the previous forty years, until reaching our verse, “You are standing firmly today, all of you together, before God, your God.”

This begs the question: Our verse sounds like part of the introduction to Moshe’s speech. Why did Moshe decide to stress that “you are standing firmly today, etc.” in the middle of his speech?

b.) Why did Moshe say these words on the day of his passing?

The verse stresses, “You are standing firmly today,” which refers to the day of Moshe’s passing. What is the relevance of this point, at the literal level?

c.) Why were these not Moshe’s very last words?

On the one hand, the verse stresses that this passage was said on the day of his passing*; yet, on the other hand, these were by no means Moshe’s last words, for several chapters of Moshe’s “last speech” follow after this. So, if it is significant that these words were said on Moshe’s very last day, why were they not chosen as his very last words?

d.) Why did Moshe speak to the children too?

The Torah does not usually imply that the public gatherings made by Moshe included children. Why did this gathering include “your young children” (v. 10)?

e.) Why does the verse use the unusual term נִצְבִּים (“standing firmly”)?

The common word in scripture for standing is עֹמְדִים. Why did verse 9 employ the more unusual term נִצְבִּים, which means standing firmly?

RASHI’S FIRST SOLUTION

Rashi’s first solution solves the first four of these problems:

a.) Rashi stresses: “Moshe assembled the Jewish people before God, to bring them into a covenant,” i.e. the reason why Moshe assembled the Jewish people at the end of Parshas Ki Savo was not merely to convey the eight verses at the end of that Parsha, but it was primarily to “enter them into a covenant,” with the words of our Parsha. The eight verses at the end of Parshas Ki Savo are thus a form of introduction, before reaching the main topic of Moshe’s speech which is found here. So in v. 9, Moshe stressed, “You are standing firmly today, all of you together before God your God, etc.” because he was coming to the primary content of his speech, for which he gathered the people in the first place.

b.) Moshe waited until the day of his passing to make this covenantal declaration, so that it would be as close as possible to the time when the

Jewish people would enter the Land of Israel, when the covenant would actually begin (as Rashi writes below, v. 28).

c.) Nevertheless, since these words would not be immediately relevant in any case for a number of days, until the Jewish people actually entered the land, there was no need for these to be Moshe’s very last words.

d.) Since Moshe was entering the Jewish people into a covenant for all future generations, the children were included too.

However, Rashi’s first solution leaves problem ‘e’ (why the word *nitzavim* is used) unanswered. In fact “standing firmly” appears to be an inappropriate word, since the Jewish people would surely have been in a state of *submission* at the thought of entering the covenant, and not standing firmly?

RASHI’S SECOND AND THIRD SOLUTIONS

Therefore Rashi cited a second solution, which addresses problem ‘e’ directly: “When the Jewish people heard these ninety eight curses... their

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“YOU ARE STANDING FIRMLY...” (v. 9)

You stand firmly today, all of you together, before God, Your God.” Jews must stand firm and unshakable, though they are “the smallest among all the nations.”

This can be only when they are bound and united together—*“All of you.”*

How is it possible to form a true and enduring union of different individuals with different ideas, different interests, and different aspirations?

The answer is: “Before God, your God.” The union of all Jews is possible because, as a matter of fact, they are already united by virtue of their souls, the Divine soul, which is actually a part of God above, and which is found in every Jew without exception. And the profound reflection that you stand “Before God”, who is “Your God”—your strength and your life—must bring forth and actualize the union of one Jew with another, and of the individual with the community of our people, in the fullest measure.

(Excerpt from public letter written on Erev Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim 5721)

* See Gur Aryeh here for an explanation as to why this must be the case, at the literal level.

די ליתוהי הקא עמנא יומא דין: טו ארי אתון ידעתון ית דיתבנא בארעא דמצרים וית די עברנא בגו עממיא די עברתון: טז ותזיתון ית שקוציהון וית טעותהון אעא ואבנא כספא ונדבא די עמהון: יז דלמא אית בכון גבר או אתתא או זרעית או שבטא די לבה פני יומא דין מדחלתא דיין אלהנא למחד למפלח ית טעות עממיא האנון דלמא אית בכון גבר מהרהר חטאין או זדון: יח ויהי במשמעה ית פתגמי מומתא הדא ויחשב בלבה למימר שלמא יהי לי ארי בהרהור לפי אנא אול בדיל לאוספא לה חטאי שלותא על זדנותא: יט לא ייבי יי למשבק לה ארי בכון יתקף רגוא דיין וחמתה בגברא החיא וידבקון בה כל לומיא דכתיבין בספרא הדין וימחי יי ית שמה מתחות שמייא: כ ויפרשנה יי לבישא מכל שבטיא דישראל ככל לומי קומא דכתיבין בספרא דאורייתא דדין: כא וימר דרא בתראא בגיכון די יקומון מבתריכון ובר עממין דיייתי מארעא רחיקא ויחיוון ית מחתא דארעא החיא וית מרעהא די אמרע יי בה: כב גפרתא ומלחא יקידת כל ארעה לא תודרע ולא תצמח ולא יסק בה כל עסבא כמהפכתא דסדם ועמרה אדמה די הפד יי ברגזה ובחמתה: כג וימרון כל עממיא על מא עבר יי בדיון לארעא הדא מא תקוף רגוא רבא דדין: כד וימרון על דשבקו

עמנו היום: [שלישי] טו כי אתם ידעתם את אשר ישבנו בארץ מצרים ואת אשר עברנו בקרב הגוים אשר עברתם: טז ותראו את שקוציהם ואת גלליהם עץ ואבן כסף וזהב אשר עמם: יז פנייש בכם איש או אשה או משפחה או שבט אשר לבבו פנה היום מעם יהוה אלהינו ללכת לעבד את אלהי הגוים ההם פנייש בכם שרש פרה ראש ולענה: יח והיה בשמעו את דברי האלה הזאת והתברך בלבבו לאמר שלום יהיה לי כי בשררות לבי אלך למען ספות הרעה את הצמאה: יט לא יאבה יהוה סלח לו כי אז יעשן אפי יהוה וקנאתו באיש ההוא ורבעה בו כל האלה הכתובה בספר הזה ומחה יהוה את שמו מתחת השמים: כ והבדילו יהוה לרעה מכל שבטי ישראל ככל אלות הברית הכתובה בספר התורה הזה: כא ואמר הדור האחרון בניכם אשר יקומו מאחריכם והנכרי אשר יבא מארץ רחוקה וראו את מכות הארץ ההוא ואת תחלואיה אשר חלה יהוה בה: כב גפרית ומלח שרפה כל ארעה לא תזרע ולא תצמח ולא יעלה בה כל עשב כמהפכת סדם ועמרה אדמה וצביים וקו וצבאים אשר הפך יהוה באפו ובהמתו: כג ואמרו כל הגוים על מה עשה יהוה ככה לארץ הזאת מה חרי האף הגדול הזה: כד ואמרו על אשר עזבו את ברית יהוה

כש"י

שאוסף לו פורענות על מה שעשה עד הכה צעוג וחייתי מעביר עליהם, וגורם עתה שארפס עם המזיד ואפרע ממנו ככל. וכן תרגם אונוקלוס בדיל לאוספא ליה חטאי שלותא על זדנותא, שאוסף לו אני השגגות על הזדונות: הרעה. שוגג, שהוא עושה כדאם שכור עושה שלא מדעת: הצמאה. שהוא עושה מדעת וצתאווה: (יט) יעשן אף ה'. על ידי כעס הגוף מתחמם והעשן יואל מן האף, וכן עלה עשן צאפו⁵, ואף על פי שאין זו לפני המקום, הכחוז משמיע את החוזן כדרך שהיא רגילה ויכולה לשמוע, כפי דרך הארץ: וקנאתו. לשון חמה אנפרטמני"ט אחיזת לבישת נקמה, ואינו מעביר על המדה: (כ) הכתובה בספר התורה הזה. ולמעלה הוא אומר צספר החורה הזאת⁶, גם כל חלי וכל מכה וגוי, הזאת לשון נקבה מוסב על החורה, הזכר לשון זכר מוסב על הספר, ועל ידי פיסוק הטעמים הן נחלקים לשתי לשונות, צפרשת הקללות הטפחה נתונה תחת צספר, והחורה הזאת דצוקיס זה לזה, לכך אמר הזאת, וכאן הטפחה נתונה תחת החורה, נמלא ספר

פה. ואף עס דורות העתידים לכוות¹: (טו) כי אתם ידעתם וגו' ותראו את שקוציהם. לפי שראיתם האומות עובדי אלילים ושמה השיא לב אחד מכס אותו ללכת אחריהם: (טז) ותראו את שקוציהם. על שם שהם מאוסים כשקלים: גלליהם. שמוסרחים ומאוסין כגללי: עץ ואבן. אותן של עלים ושל צביים רחיים צגלוי, לפי שאין העובדי אלילים יראים שמה יגנבו, אבל של כסף וזהב עממם צחדרי משכיתם הם, לפי שהם יראים שמה יגנבו²: (יז) פן יש בכם וגו'. לפיכך אני נריך להשזיעכם: פן יש בכם. שמה יש צכס: אשר לבבו פנה היום. מלקבל עליו הצרית: שרש פרה ראש ולענה. שרש מגדל עשז מר כגידיו, שהם מרים, כלומר מפרה ומרצה רשע צקרצכס: (יח) והתברך בלבבו. לשון צרכה, יחשוד צלצו צרכת שלום לעלמו לאמר, לא יצאוני קללות הללו, אך שלום יהיה לי: והתברך. צנדיר"א שוי"א צלע"י, כמו ותחגלח³ והתפלל³: בשררות לבי אלך. צמררית לבי, כמו שאורנו ולא קרוי⁴, כלומר מה שלצי רואה לעשות: למען ספות הרעה. לפי

THIRD
READING

¹⁵ For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we went among the nations, (and) as you went on your way, ¹⁶ you saw their disgusting and repugnant (idols of) wood and stone (in their streets, and their idols of) silver and gold which were (hidden in their houses) with them. ¹⁷ So perhaps there is among you a man, a woman, a family, or a tribe, whose heart is straying today from God our God, (and does not want to enter into the covenant with Him, but would rather) go and worship the gods of those nations. Perhaps there is among you (a person growing in wickedness like) a root that is sprouting (bitter herbs, like) hemlock and wormwood, ¹⁸ such that when he hears the words of this oath, (he will think that they do not apply to him) and he will convince himself in his heart, saying, “I will be okay, even if I follow my heart’s desires.” (To such a person) I will add (to the punishment for his sins which were done inadvertently, as if) in a drunken stupor, (a further punishment for his sins done intentionally, out of a conscious) thirsting. ¹⁹ God will not be willing to forgive him! Rather, God’s fury and His zeal will then fume against that man, and the entire curse written in this book will come down upon him, and God will obliterate his name from beneath the skies. ²⁰ God will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for severe treatment, according to all the curses of the covenant, written in this Book of the Torah.

²¹ The later generation— your descendants, who will come after you, along with the foreigner who comes from a distant land—will say upon seeing the plagues of that land and the diseases with which God afflicted it: ²² Sulfur and salt have burned up their entire land! It cannot be sown. It is infertile, and not even grass will sprout upon it. It is like the overturning of Sodom, Amorah, Admah and Tzevoyim, (the cities) which God overturned in His fury and rage. ²³ All the nations will say, “Why did God do such a thing to this land? What caused this great rage of fury?” ²⁴ Then they will say, “It is because they

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faces turned pale...so Moshe began to appease them, saying, ‘You are standing firmly today.’”

According to this interpretation, the Torah’s use of the term “standing firmly” is understood, since Moshe’s intention was to re-establish the strength of the Jewish people after they were emotionally debilitated from hearing the curses: “You have angered God many times, but He has not destroyed you. And you see that you continue to exist before Him.”

Problems ‘b’ & ‘c’ are also answered according to this explanation. Because here the word “today” refers, not to the day of Moshe’s passing, but rather, it is interpreted non-literally: “you see that you continue to exist before Him “today”—just as this day exists.”*

However, the drawback of this interpretation is that it does not solve problems ‘a’ or ‘d.’

a.) Why was Moshe’s attempt to console the Jewish people after the curses made in the middle of his speech? Surely this should have been done immediately after the curses were said?

d.) The curses describe the result of failing to observe the mitzvos. This is clearly not directly relevant to children, who are not obligated to observe the mitzvos. Thus, according to Rashi’s second solution we are left with the question why Moshe gathered the children too.

Due to these problems, Rashi cited a third solution: “the Jewish people were now passing from leader to leader, from Moshe to Yehoshua, therefore Moshe brought them to a standing assembly, in order to encourage them.”

This explains:

a. & b.) Why Moshe said these words on the day he passed away, and why he did not say them at the very beginning of his last day (in *Parshas Ki Savo*), so the words would be nearer to his actual passing.

d.) Why Moshe addressed the children, for they too were “passing from leader to leader.”

e.) Why the Torah uses the word נִצְבִּים (“standing firmly”) because: “Moshe brought them to a standing assembly (מִצְבֵּה),” and the purpose of this was “in order to encourage them” to accept Yehoshua’s leadership wholeheartedly.

However, we are left with one problem:

c.) Since these words were meant as a transition into the leadership of Yehoshua, surely they should have been Moshe’s very last words?

THE SEQUENCE OF RASHI’S SOLUTIONS

Why does Rashi write this explanation last, when it seems to have fewer problems than the previous one? Because, in the final analysis, Rashi’s second solution preserves a thematic continuity between *Parshas Ki Savo* and *Parshas Nitzavim* (which the third solution does not) and in this respect it resembles Rashi’s first, primary interpretation. Therefore, of the second and third solutions, Rashi deemed the second interpretation to be more acceptable, at the literal level.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 258ff.)

* According to the second interpretation, Rashi was forced to explain the word “today” non-literally (i.e. that it does not refer to the day of Moshe’s passing) for the following reason: Even if Moshe’s words of consolation here were not said immediately after the curses, they clearly must have been said soon after the curses. Thus, if the current passage was said on the day of Moshe’s passing, it would follow that the curses too were said on, or shortly before, that day. This is difficult to accept at the literal level, since: The curses were intended to inspire the Jewish people to strengthen their observance of the mitzvos, so why should this be left until the last day of Moshe’s life? Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that Moshe would have rebuked the Jewish people on his last day. (In fact, we find that he blessed them on his last day.)

ית קומא דיי אלקהא דאכחתיחון די גזר עמהון
באפקותיה יתהון מארעא דמצרים: כה ואזלו
ופלחו לטעות עממיא וסגידו להון דחלן
די לא ידענון ולא אוטיבא להון: כו ותקף
רגזא דיי בארעא ההיא לאיתאחא עלה ית כל
לוטיא דכתיבין בספרא הדיו: כז וטלטלנון יי
מעל ארעהון ברנו ובחמא ובתקוף רגז
ואגלנון לארעא אחרי פיומא הדיו:
כח דמטמרון קדם יי אלהנא ודמגלנון לנא
ולבננא עד עלם למעפד ית כל פתגמי
אורייתא דהא: א ויהי ארי יתון עלך כל
פתגמיא האליון ברכו ולוטין די יהבית קדמך
ותתוב ללך בכל עממיא די אנלך יי אלקך
לתמן: ב ותתוב לדחלתא דיי אלקך ותקבל
למימרה ככל די אנא מפקדך יומא דין את
ובניך בכל לך ובכל נפשך: ג ויתוב יי
אלקך ית שבי גלותך וירחם עלך ויתוב
ויכנסנך מקל עממיא די יבדרנך יי אלקך

אלהי אבתם אשר פרת עמם בהוציאו אתם מארץ מצרים:
כה וילכו ויעבדו אלהים אחרים וישתחוו להם אלהים אשר
לא ידעו ולא חלק להם: כו ויחר אף יהוה בארץ ההוא
להביא עליה את כל הקללה הכתובה בספר הזה: כז ויתשם
יהוה מעל אדמתם באף ובהמה ובקצף גדול *וישלבם
אל-ארץ אחרת פיוס הזה: כח הנסתר ליהוה אלהינו
והנגלת *לנו ולבנינו ער-עולם לעשות את-כל-דברי התורה
הזאת: ס [רביעי] [שני כשהן מחוברין] ל א והיה כי-יבאו עליך
כל-הדברים האלה הברכה והקללה אשר נתתי לפניך
והשבת אל-לבבך בכל-הגוים אשר הדיחך יהוה אלהיך
שמה: ב ושבת ער-יהוה אלהיך ושמעת בקלו בכל
אשר-אנכי מצוה היום אתה ובניך בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך:
ג ושב יהוה אלהיך את-שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבעך מכל-

*ל' רבתי **אחת עשרה נקודות, על "לנו ולבנינו" ו"ע" של עד.

כ"ט

את מכות הארץ היא, והלא אין אדם יודע ממנויותיו של חצירו, אין אנו
מעניש אחכס על הנסחרות, שהן לה' אלהינו וכו' יפרע מאותו יחיד, אבל
הנגלות, לנו ולבנינו לצער הרע מקרצנו, ואם לא נעשה דין צהם יעושה את
הרצים. נקוד על לנו ולבנינו, לדרוש, שאף על הנגלות לא עשה את הרצים עד
שעברו את הירדן, משקצלו עליהם את השצועה צהר גרזים וצהר עיבל ונעשו
ערצים זה לזה: (ג) ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך. היה לו לכתוב ושבש את
שבותך, רצותינו למדו מכאן כזיכול שהשכינה שרויה עם ישראל צרת

התורה דוקים זה לזה, לפיכך לשון זכר נופל אחריו, שהלשון נופל על הספר:
(כה) לא ידעום. לא ידעו צהם גצורת אלהות: ולא חלק להם. לא נתנס
לחלקם. ואונקלוס תרגם ולא אוטיבא להון, לא הטיצו להם שום טובה, ולשון
לא חלק אותו אלוה שצחרו להם, לא חלק להם שום נחלה ושום חלק:
(כז) ויתשם ה'. כתרגמו וטלטלנון, וכן הנני נותשם מעל אדמתם!
(כח) הנסתר לה' אלהינו. ואם תאמרו מה צדינו לעשות, אתה מעניש
את הרצים על הרהורי היחיד, שנאמר פן יש צכס איש וגוי, ואחר כך וראו

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why would God’s blessings lead a person to return to Him? Surely this is caused by the curses? (30:1)

Ohr HaChayim: So long as the Jewish people had not sinned, they did not attribute the blessings in their lives to their observance of the mitzvos, and they only began to recognize the source of their blessings after they sinned and were punished. Thus, in order to return to God, a person had to contemplate both “the blessing and the curse which I have set before you.”

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☞ BLESSINGS THAT LEAD TO TESHUVAH (v. 1)

Ohr HaChayim addresses the question why a person needs to take to heart both “the blessing and the curse which I have set before you,” in order to return to God. Surely it is the curses alone that inspire a person to teshuvah? How can the blessings lead him to teshuvah?

Since this appears to be a question at the literal level, why does Rashi not address it?

THE EXPLANATION

The current passage describes the feelings of disress that lead to profound remorse and teshuvah, “with all your heart and with all your

soul.” (v. 2). Logically speaking, a more profound teshuvah will arise if the cause—the feeling of distress—is more intense, and this will result in the teshuvah reaching deeper into the depths of the heart and the soul.

When is a person most distressed? “When all these things come upon you...the blessing and the curse” (v. 1), i.e. when a person first has blessings, and then he loses them, the feeling of pain is more profound than if he would never have had the blessings in the first place. Thus, in order to return to God, “with all your heart and with all your soul,” it is necessary that “all these things come upon you...the blessing and the curse.”

Rashi did not feel it necessary to clarify this point, because:

abandoned the covenant of God, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He took them out of the land of Egypt, ²⁵ For they went and served other gods, prostrating themselves to them—gods which they knew were devoid (of Divine power), and which He had not apportioned to them. ²⁶ God’s fury raged against that land, bringing upon it the entire curse written in this book. ²⁷ God uprooted them from upon their land, with fury, anger and great wrath, and He cast them to another land, (where they are) to this day.”

²⁸ (If you will say, “Since this punishment will come on us even if an individual is harboring thoughts of idolatry, what hope is there for us?” My response is:) the hidden things (in a person’s mind) are for God, our God, (to deal with privately), but the revealed things (where people’s sins are known) are for us and for our children forever (to deal with, and enact justice), to fulfill all the words of this Torah.

🕎 INGATHERING OF THE EXILES 🕎

30
FOURTH
READING
(2ND WHEN
JOINED)

What will happen is, when all these things come upon you (while you are) among all the nations where God, your God, has banished you—the blessing and the curse which I have set before you—you will take it to your heart, ² and you will return to God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul. You will listen to His voice, to everything that I am commanding you today, you and your children. ³ Then, God, your God, will return your captives (from exile), and He will have mercy upon you. He will gather you again from all the nations, where God, your God, had dispersed you.

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a.) It is an observable fact of human nature which should not have to be explained.

b.) The reader is already familiar with this concept from Rashi in Parshas Re’eh. Concerning the amount of charity that a person is required to give, Rashi writes, “You are not required to make him wealthy (Rashi to 15:8). Nevertheless, one is required to give a person “what he is lacking—even

a horse to ride on and a servant to run before him” (ibid.), if the person had become accustomed to such a lifestyle. Clearly then, the reader will already have understood that, at the literal level, losing one’s previous blessings is a very painful matter to such an extent that restoring a man to his previously luxurious lifestyle is considered charity.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 118ff.)

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“HE WILL GATHER YOU AGAIN FROM ALL THE NATIONS” (v. 3)

The true test of events, to see if they herald the *Geulah* [redemption] or not, is to see whether there has been an essential change in the causes which have brought about the *Galus* [exile] in the first place, namely, a new tendency in the direction of stronger adherence to the Torah and *Mitzvos*....It has been amply explained in the Written and Oral Torah that the *Geulah* will come through the *Melech Hamoshiach* (Messianic King), and as the *Rambam* also declares....

“And when a king of the House of David will arrive, dedicated to the study of the Torah and observance of the *Mitzvos* like his father David, according to the Torah *Shebiksav* [written law] and *Shebeal-Peh* [oral law], and he will compel all the Jewish people to walk in it and strengthen its fences, and he will fight the wars of God, he is assumed to be the *Moshiach*. (Note that this is not yet a certain sign of the *Geulah*, for all this can still take place in a state of *Galus*. However) If he did so and has succeeded (in the above matters, namely having won all battles and impelled all the Jewish people to study the Torah and to mend its fences, we are still not sure and require a further sign, namely), and built the *Beis Hamikdash* [Holy

Temple] in its place (clearly in the holy city of Jerusalem, indicating that there would be a large Jewish population in that city, yet we are still not certain of the end of the *Galus*, so a further factor must be fulfilled, namely), and he gathers in the dispersed ones of Israel—then he is certainly the *Moshiach*.... (Laws of Kings, 11:4).

It is clear from the above *Psak Din* [ruling] of the *Rambam* that before there can be a *Kibbutz Galuyos* [ingathering of the exiles] and the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash* in its place, there has to be a full and complete return to the Torah and *Mitzvos* while Jews are still in the *Galus*, and it is this that is the prelude and preparation for the *Geulah*....

May God grant that each and all of us in the midst of all Israel, should be inspired with true Heavenly inspiration to walk in the way of the Torah and to mend its fences, for it is this that will prepare the way for *Moshiach* to implement all the conditions necessary to bring about the truly full and complete *Geulah*.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on 21st Menachem Av, 5728)

לְתַמּוֹן ד אִם יְהִי גְלוּתְךָ בְּסִיפֵי שְׂמֵינָא מִתַּמּוֹן יְכַנְשֵׁנְךָ יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ וּמִתַּמּוֹן יְקַרְבְּנְךָ: ה וַיַּעֲלֶנְךָ יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ לְאַרְעָא דִּירִיתוּ אֲבֹהֶיךָ וּתְיַרְתְּהָ וַיּוֹטֵב לְךָ וַיְסַנְנֵךָ מֵאֲבֹהֶיךָ: ו וַיַּעֲדֵי יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ ית טַפְשׁוֹת לְבָבְךָ וַיִּת טַפְשׁוֹת לְבָבָא דְבְנֶיךָ לְמַרְתָּם ית יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ בְּדִל תְּיִיד: ז וַיִּתֵּן יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ ית כָּל לְוִטְיָא הַאֲלִין עַל בְּעֲלֵי דְבְבְךָ וְעַל סְנָאֵךָ דִּי רְדָפוּךָ: ח וְאַתָּה תִּתּוּב וּתְקַבֵּל בְּמִימְרָא דִּי וְתַעֲבַד ית כָּל פְּקוּדוֹהֵי דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקֻדָּךָ יוֹמָא דִּין: ט וַיּוֹתְרֶנְךָ יי אֲלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל עוֹבְדֵי יָדְךָ בְּגוֹלְדָא דְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ בְּפָרִי בְטָנְךָ וּבְפָרִי בְהֶמְתָּךְ וּבְפָרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ

הַעֲמִים אֲשֶׁר הִפְיַצְתָּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: ד אִם־יִהְיֶה נְדַחְךָ בְּקִצֵּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ: ה וְהִבִּיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְרִשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וַיְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְהִיטַבְתָּ וְהִרְבֵּתָ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ: ו וְכָל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לְבָבְךָ וְאֶת־לְבַב זְרַעֲךָ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן תְּיִיד: [חמישי] [שלישי כשהן מחוברין] ז וְנָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל־הָאֱלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל־אֵיבֶיךָ וְעַל־שֹׁנְאֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר רְדָפוּךָ: ח וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְנֶךָ הַיּוֹם: ט וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ בְּפָרִי בְטָנְךָ וּבְפָרִי בְהֶמְתָּךְ וּבְפָרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What does it mean that “God will circumcise your heart”? (v. 6)

ONKELOS: He will remove the foolishness from your heart.
KLI YAKAR: God will enable the Jewish people to serve Him, not only out of fear, but out of love, as the verse stresses, “God, your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children, (enabling you) to love God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.” Since one can only serve God out of love and joy when not threatened by one’s enemies, the Torah continues: “God, your God, will place all these curses upon your enemies and upon those that hate you, who have pursued you” (v. 7).
RAMBAN: In the future era, to which this verse refers, God will totally eliminate the existence of impurity and evil, and consequently, the evil inclination will cease to exist. This is the meaning of the statement, “God will circumcise your heart.”

● Why does verse 8 state, “You will return to...God,” when verse 2 already stated, “You will return to God”?

TZROR HAMOR: The first *teshuvah*, in verse 2, is not a complete *teshuvah*, because it is inspired by the difficult circumstances of pain and suffering. Thus, in verse 8 the Jewish people do *teshuvah* again, for God’s sake, and not merely to relieve their suffering.

KLI YAKAR: The expression “You will return to God,” in verse 8, does not refer to actual *teshuvah*, since the previous verses already described how the Jewish people will return to God. Rather, verse 8 indicates the Jewish people will reach a state of *teshuvah* which they are doing completely on their own, without having to rely on any of the merits of their forefathers.

OHR HACHAYIM: What is the need for the Jewish people’s hearts to be “circumcised” in verse 6, after they have already done *teshuvah*, in verse 2? And why does verse 8 repeat that the Jewish people will do *teshuvah* again?

There are three phases to the Jewish people’s *teshuvah* described here:

- a.) “You will return to God your God, with all your heart and with all your soul. You will listen to His voice” (v. 2). This refers to Torah study (“His voice”), which is the beginning of *teshuvah*.
- b.) “God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children, (enabling you) to love God,” (v. 6), i.e. they will stop transgressing the prohibitions of the Torah.
- c.) You will return and listen to the voice of God, and fulfill all His commandments,” (v. 8), i.e. they will observe all the positive commands too (“all His commandments”).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 “CIRCUMCISING” THE HEART (v. 6)

What does it mean to “circumcise” a heart? If the verse spoke of “circumcising” the *foreskin* of the heart (as written above 10:16), we would understand that this refers to the removal of undesirable qualities that had crept into a person’s emotional make-up, which “block” a person’s heart from loving and fearing God (see *Rashi* *ibid.*). But our verse does not mention circumcising the “foreskin” of the heart, but rather, the heart itself. What does this mean, and why does *Rashi* not clarify this matter?

The question why *Rashi* is silent here is strengthened by the fact that **Onkelos**, whose translation of the Torah into Aramaic also aims to

explain scripture at the literal level, does deal with the matter. *Onkelos* explains that the “circumcision” referred to here is to “remove the foolishness from your heart.”

Since *Rashi* explains every difficulty that arises at the literal level, we can presume that *Rashi* did not address this matter since he felt that the reader would be able to clarify the matter for himself with simple logic and a knowledge of *Rashi*’s prior comments.

THE EXPLANATION

When addressing any problem, the answers that are offered might be of varying quality: a poor answer, an acceptable answer or even an excellent

⁴ Even if your exiles will be (on mountains reaching*) the extremities of the skies, God, your God, will gather you from there, and He will take you from there.

⁵ God, your God, will bring you to the land which your forefathers possessed, and you will take possession of it. He will be good to you, and He will make you more numerous than your forefathers.

⁶ God, your God, will “circumcise” your heart and the heart of your children, (enabling you) to love God your God with all your heart and with all your soul, for the sake of your life.

⁷ God, your God, will place all these curses upon your enemies and upon those who hate you, who have pursued you. ⁸ You will return and listen to the voice of God, and fulfill all His commandments, which I am commanding you today. ⁹ God, your God, will give you prosperity in all the work of your hands, the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your livestock, and the fruit of your soil—for God will, once

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answer. However, the best answer of all is to prove that the question itself was unfounded.

In our case: Not only is it of no concern as to why our verse omits “circumcising *the foreskin* of the heart”; on the contrary, if the verse had mentioned “circumcising *the foreskin* of the heart,” then we would have a legitimate question. For our verse is referring to the Jewish people after “you will return to God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul” (v. 2), i.e. after the Jewish people have repented and subsequently eradicated their rebellious traits (“foreskin”) from their hearts (cf. question of *Ohr HaChayim*).

On the other hand, when the Torah speaks on earlier occasions about the “foreskin” of the heart, this refers to traits which *obstruct* a person from serving God, *concealing* a person’s love and fear of God (*Rashi* to 10:16, above), and cause a person to “*treat My (commands) offhandedly*” (see *Vayikra* 26:21, and *ibid.* 40).

Thus, if our verse had stated that “God will circumcise *the foreskin* of your heart,” then we would have a legitimate question: Why is it necessary to remove a person’s emotional barriers to Divine service, after they have already been removed (in v. 2), through *teshuvah*?

Clearly, our verse refers to a further, much higher level of emotional attachment to God that occurs *after* a person has already done *teshuvah*; an attachment that leads a person “to love God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.”

🕯 Sparks of Chasidus 🕯

Ba'al Haturim writes that the first letters of the words אֵת לְבַבְךָ וְאֵת לְבַב בְּנֵי (“[God will circumcise] your heart and the heart of [your children]”—v. 6) spells אֶלּוּל, the final month of the Jewish year during which one rises early in the morning to recite *selichos* (penitential prayers). From this it follows that according to Ba'al Haturim, the predominant theme of the month of Elul is *teshuvah*.

However, according to *Chasidic* thought, the predominant theme of Elul is *love*—how God projects His deep-rooted love for the Jewish people which they, in turn, reciprocate (*Likutei Torah, Re'eh* 32b). This is stressed by the conclusion of the above-mentioned verse, “God your God will circumcise your heart... to love God your God with all your heart and with all your soul”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 170)

However, this leaves us with the following questions:

a.) If we are only speaking here of a *higher level* of love of God, why does the verse use a negative expression, “circumcise,” which suggests the removal of something undesirable?

b.) Why does the verse state that this refinement will be brought about by God (“God will circumcise your heart”—see *Ramban*), and not through further efforts by man?

THE BROADER CONTEXT OF VERSE 6

In order to answer these questions, we need to examine the broader context of verse 6, which is the climax of a long sequence of events that began earlier in chapter 29, verse 15. There, Moshe began to warn the Jewish people of the dire consequence of their actions if they choose to sin, a description that continues to the end of the chapter. Chapter 30 then opens with the promise that the Jewish people will eventually return to God, Who will gather in the exiles.

On closer examination, Moshe’s warning (in chapter 29) is divided into two distinct sections: a.) The *causes* which lead a person to sin (verses 15-18); and b.) The *consequences* when a person sins (verses 18-27).

From this it follows that even after the Jewish people eventually do *teshuvah*, uprooting their sins and the consequences that these sins bring, there needs to be a *further* stage of refinement, to uproot the *causes* which led the person on a path towards sin in the first place.

What, precisely, are these causes? The Torah explains, “You saw their disgusting and repugnant (idols of) wood and stone...So perhaps there is among you a man...whose heart is *straying* today from God our God” (29:16-17), i.e. we are dealing here with a case of “*the eye sees and the heart desires*” (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 15:39), and this causes the heart to “stray.”

Therefore, even after the Jewish people have done *teshuvah* and uprooted all their sins (described here in chapter 30:1-2), they are then required to eliminate the *cause* of sin—the problem that if “the eye sees, the heart desires.”

But surely, this is a fact of human nature? It does not appear to be within the ability of the average person to refine himself to the extent that he will not desire what he sees.

Therefore, the Torah continues, in verse 6, “God will circumcise your heart,” i.e. after the person has done *teshuvah* with all his heart and all his soul and returned to God, (thus removing the “foreskin” of his heart), God will reciprocate and circumcise the person’s heart *itself*—changing man’s *innate* nature to desire what he sees (by severing this automatic connection between the eyes and the heart), thus enabling the person to serve God with a total purity of spirit.**

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 29, p. 167ff.; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim* 5743)

* See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim* 5745. **Verse 6 is thus the climax of the entire sequence of events that began in chapter 29, verse 15. Therefore, at the literal level, we can presume that in verses 7-9, the Torah is merely recapping to explain in further detail the general statement in verse 5 that “God will be good to you.”

אָרִי יָתוּב יי לְמַחְדֵי עֶלְיָה לְטֹב כְּמֵא דֵי חֲדֵי
עַל אֲבִהֶתֶד: י אָרִי תְקַבֵּל בְּמִימְרָא דֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ
לְמִשְׁר פְּקוּדוֹהֵי וּקְמוּהֵי דְכְּתִיבִין בְּסִפְרָא
דְּאוּרִיתָא הָרִין אָרִי תְתוּב קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֵיךָ
בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ: יא אָרִי תִפְקֹדְתָא הָרֵא
דֵי אָנָּא מִפְּקֹדֶיךָ יוֹמָא דִּין לָא מִפְּרָשָׂא הִיא
מִנְדָּךְ וְלָא רְחִיקָא הִיא: יב לָא בְּשָׁמַיָא הִיא
לְמִימַר מִן יִסְק לְנָא לְשָׁמַיָא וְיִסְבָּה לְנָא
וְיִשְׁמַעְנָנָא יְתָה וְנַעֲבֹדְנָה: יג וְלָא מַעֲבָרָא
לְיִמָּא הִיא לְמִימַר מִן יַעֲבֹר לְנָא לְעֵבְרָא
דִּימָא וְיִסְבָּה לְנָא וְיִשְׁמַעְנָנָא יְתָה וְנַעֲבֹדְנָה:
יד אָרִי קָרִיב לְךָ פְּתִנְמָא לְחֲדָא בְּפוּמְךָ

לְטֹבָה כִּי | יָשׁוּב יְהוָה לְשׁוֹשׁ עֲלֶיךָ לְטֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁשׁ עַל-
אֲבֹתֶיךָ: י כִּי תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו
וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַבְּתוּבָה בְּסִפְר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּה כִּי תָשׁוּב אֶל-יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: ס [ששׁ] יא כִּי הַמְצִינָה הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצִינָה הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאת הוּא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא-רְחֹקָה
הוּא: יב לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לְאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקְחֶהָ
לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנֵנו אַתָּה וְנַעֲשֶׂנָה: יג וְלֹא-מַעֲבָר לָיִם הוּא לְאמֹר מִי
יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנֵנו אַתָּה וְנַעֲשֶׂנָה:
יד כִּי-קָרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדְּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְבְּךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: ס

כשׁ

יח) לא נפלאות היא ממך. לא מכוסה היא ממך, כמו שנאמר כי
יפלא³ ארי יתכסי, ותרו פלאים⁴, ותרו צמטמוניות, מכוסה חזושה
צטמון: יג) לא בשמים היא. שאלו היתה צמטים היית לריך לעלות
אחריה וללמד⁵: יד) כי קרוב אליך. התורה נתנה לכם צכתצ ועל פה:

גלותם, וכשנגאלין הכתיב גאלה לעלמו, שהיא ישו עמכם. ועוד יש
לומר, שגדול יוס קצון גליות ובקושי, כאלו הוא עלמו לריך להיות אוחז
צידיו ממש איש ממקומו, כענין שנאמר ואתם תלקטו לאחד אחד בני
ישראל¹, ואף בגליות שאר האומות מלינו כן, ושצתי את שבות מלרים²:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What does it mean that the Torah is not in שמים? (v. 12)

RASHI: It is not in the skies*, for if it were in the skies, you would have to climb up after it [in order] to learn it.

RAMBAM: It is clearly explained in the Torah that its commandments are eternal and cannot be changed....The verse, "It is not in Heaven," teaches us that it is no longer the prerogative of any prophet to introduce a new part of the Torah (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 9:1).

● Will new parts of Torah ever be revealed by God?

RASHI: We have a promise from Him that He will once again appear to us and reveal the secrets of its reasons and concealed facts (commentary to *Song of Songs* 1:2).

MIDRASH: How will the [Leviathan fish and the giant beast (*Shor Habor*)] be slaughtered? The beast will gore the fish with its horns,

and tear it up, and the Leviathan will slaughter the beast with its fin. The Sages say: How could that be a kosher form of slaughter? Are we not taught in the *Mishnah*, "Any person may slaughter, and any [hard, smooth] substance may be used for slaughter; and slaughter may be done at any time; except a sickle, saw, teeth, or nails are prohibited since they are not smooth and cause tearing" (Chullin 15b)?

R' Avin bar Kahana says: "A new Torah will emerge from Me. New laws will emerge from Me!" says God (*Vayikra Rabah* 13:3).

YALKUT SHIMONI: In the future, God will sit...and expound a new Torah which will be given through Mashiach (*Isaiah remez* 429).

RAMBAM: The king who will arise from the seed of David (Mashiach), will be a greater genius than Shlomo, and a great prophet approaching the greatness of Moshe. Therefore, he will teach all humanity, and show them the way of God (*Laws of Teshuvah* 9:2).

TORAS MENACHEM

🔊 THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE TORAH (v. 12)

The *Midrash* and *Yalkut Shimoni* describe the "new Torah" that is destined to be given by Mashiach in the future. **Rambam** appears to hint to this point, by stating that Mashiach "will be a greater genius than Shlomo, and a great prophet...therefore he will teach all humanity," i.e. since he will be a "great prophet," therefore the "new" Torah will be revealed through him, and he will teach all humanity.

How is this to be reconciled with the fundamental principle, which **Rambam** himself writes, that the Torah "is not in Heaven," and, "it is no longer the prerogative of a prophet to introduce a new part of Torah"?

THE EXPLANATION

Our Sages taught: "Every insight that an advanced student was destined to innovate, was already given to Moshe at Sinai" (*Megilah* 19b). At first glance, this appears to be a contradiction: On the one hand, the insight is termed a genuine "innovation," implying that it has never existed before, and yet, "it was already given to Moshe at Sinai"?

However, the explanation is that at the "Giving of the Torah," Moshe was given the *principles* through which we may innovate new laws through "suggesting the logic behind laws, analyzing them with questions and refutations, delving deeply into the rationale behind and the reasons

* See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34 pp. 170-1, that according to *Rashi* שמים is to be translated "skies." 1 ישעיה כז, יב 2 יחזקאל כט, יד 3 דברים יז, יז 4 איכה א, ט 5 עירובין נה.

again, rejoice over you, being good (to you), as He rejoiced over (being good to) your fathers. ¹⁰ For then you will listen to the voice of God your God, to observe His commandments and His suprarational commands written in this Torah scroll, (and) you will then return to God your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.

🌀 CLOSENESS OF THE TORAH 🌀

30:11 **F**or this (body of) commandment(s) which I am commanding you this day, is not concealed from you, nor is it far away. ¹² It is not in the skies, that you should say, “Who will go up to the skies for us and take it for us, to tell it to us, so that we can keep it?” ¹³ Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, “Who will cross the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to tell it to us, so that we can keep it?” ¹⁴ Rather, this thing is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.

TORAS MENACHEM

given for the laws, understanding one thing from another” (*Laws of Torah Study of the Alter Rebbe 2:2; see Shemos Rabah 41:6*). Therefore, when an “advanced student” toils to find an undiscovered insight which is consistent with the principles of analysis, it can be rightly termed (according to the rules of Torah) as *his* innovation. Nevertheless, since this “insight” was derived through the application of the pre-existing principles given to Moshe at Sinai, he has merely identified a concept that was present, but remained as yet undiscovered.

A similar process could be argued for the introduction of the “new Torah,” in the Messianic Era. At Sinai, the entire Torah was given (which was a “one-time” event, never to occur again), including all the secrets of the “new Torah” which will be revealed by Mashiach. All of this was included, hidden within the Torah of Moshe.

But there is a fundamental difference between the innovative insights of “advanced students,” throughout history, and the impending “new Torah”:

Since the innovations of today are discovered via human intellect, (which is limited), it follows, that even before they are found, these insights were hidden within the Torah in a way that is possible for man to discover (by novel application of the pre-existing principles).

However, the ingenuity necessary to discover the “new Torah” is so profound that it is beyond mortal imagination. Therefore, God Himself will have to demonstrate its presence, (hence, “a new Torah will emerge from Me”), since these insights are so well hidden that it is impossible for any human mind to find them. With the advent of the Messianic Era, they will be “revealed” by God in the form of “innovative Torah thoughts,” ideas that are incomparably more profound than our present Torah—as the Sages said, “*The Torah that a person learns in this world is empty compared to the Torah of Mashiach*” (*Koheles Rabah 11:7*).

According to this approach, it is clear that the “new Torah” revealed by Mashiach is, in fact, *part of the pre-existing Torah* given to Moshe at Sinai, which has “no possibility of change and “*is not in Heaven*.” Even though the ideas which will be revealed by God (“from Me”) are so deep that no man could possibly discover them, nevertheless, they will be brought down into a comprehensible form. Consequently, it is stressed that, “A new Torah will emerge from Me,” i.e. it will depart the Heavenly realm and come into *earthly terms*.

The route by which the new Torah will escape its heavenly garb and come into human comprehension is via Mashiach himself. *Rambam* stresses that the Mashiach is *both* a “great prophet” and “a greater genius...than Shlomo...therefore he will teach all humanity.” This indicates that “New Torah” will first be revealed to him in the form of

prophecy and then, through his great genius, Mashiach will be capable of articulating these complex ideas in a way that makes them accessible to the normal human intellect, so that “*he will teach all humanity*.”

The reason why Godly revelation of new legislature will not be a breach of the tenet that the Torah “*is not in heaven*,” is because Mashiach (being a greater genius than Shlomo) will explain the new innovations to the newly reconvened High Court in Jerusalem in a *rational* way that *meets their approval* (according to the existing principles and logic of Torah). This will then become fixed as Jewish Law, since the High Court Judges are “*the bastion of Oral Law and the pillar of guidance. From them, comes the Law for the entire Jewish People*” (*Rambam, Laws of Rebellious Individuals 1:1*).

In this manner, the “new Torah” will become like “*laws learned through tradition...laws learned through the intellectual application of one of the principles of Torah exposition, and it will appear in their eyes that this is indeed the case*” (*ibid. 2*).

(Based on *Sicha* of second day of *Shavuos* 5751)

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

“THIS THING IS VERY NEAR TO YOU...” (v. 14)

At first glance, the statement that “this thing is very near to you...in your heart,” appears to be contrary to our experience (and yet the Torah is eternally relevant), that it is simply not a “very near thing” to transform one’s heart’s desires from wanting worldly pleasures to a sincere love of God.

However, the words “to observe it” [at the end of the verse qualify what is written at the beginning of the verse]: that we are speaking here merely of a love which is sufficient to bring about the *practical observance* of the commandments...even if it is not palpable in his heart, like a burning fire.

And this is indeed “very near” and easy for any person who has a brain inside his skull, since a person’s mind is under his control, and he is free to think about whatever he pleases, on any subject. So when he will use it to think about the greatness of God, he will inevitably generate—in his mind, at least—a love of God, [sufficient to make a person want] to cleave to Him through the performance of His commandments and the study of His Torah.

(Excerpt from *Tanya*, chapter 17—Free Translation)

ובלִבְךָ לְמַעַבְדָּהּ: טו תִּזְי דִּיקְבִּית קְדָמְךָ יִזְמָא דִּין ית תַּי וְיַת טַבְתָּא וְיַת מוֹתָא וְיַת בִּישָׂא: טז די אָנָא מִפְּקֻדָּךְ יִזְמָא דִּין לְמַרְחָם ית יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַחְדָּ בְּאַרְחֹן דְּתַקְנֹן קְדָמוּהִי וְלִמְשַׁר פְּקוּדוּהִי וְקִימוּהִי וְדִינוּהִי וְתִיחִי וְתִסְגִּי וְיִבְרַכְנֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאַרְעָא דִּי אַתָּה עֲלָל לְתַמְּן לְמִירְתָּהּ: יז וְאִם יִפְנִי לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִקְבַּל וְתִטְעִי וְתִסְגֹּד לְטַעוֹת עַמְּמִיָּא וְתִפְלַחְנֹן: יח תְּחִינִי לְכוּן יִזְמָא דִּין אַרִי מִיבַד תִּיבְדֹן לֹא תוֹרְכוּן יוֹמִין עַל אַרְעָא דִּי אַתָּה עֵבֶר ית יִרְדְּנָא לְמַעַל לְתַמְּן לְמִירְתָּהּ: יט אִסְחֵדִית בְּכוּן יִזְמָא דִּין ית שְׁמִיָּא וְיַת אַרְעָא תַּי וּמוֹתָא יְהִיבִית קְדָמְךָ בְּרַכּוֹן וְלוֹטִין וְתִתְרַעִי בְּחִי בְּדִיל דְּתִיחִי אַתָּה וּבְנִיָּךְ: כ לְמַרְחָם ית יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְקַבְּלָא לְמִימְרָה וְלֹא תִקְרָבָא לְדַחֲלִתָּהּ אַרִי הוּא תִיִּיד וְאוֹרְכוֹת יוֹמִיָּךְ לְמַתֵּב עַל אַרְעָא דִּי קִיִּים יי לְאַבְרָהָם לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב לְמַתָּן לְחוּן: פ פ פ

וְשִׁבְעִי וּמִפְּטִירָא וְרִבְעִי כִשְׁחָן מַחֻבְרִין טו רְאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַפְּטוֹת וְאֶת־הָרַע: טז אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצּוֹר הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּיתָ וּרְבִיתָ וּבִרְכָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: יז וְאִם־יִפְנֶה לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמָע וְנִדְחַתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַּדְתָּם: יח הַגִּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבַד תֵּאבְדוּן לְאֶת־אֲרִיכּוֹן יָמַיִם עַל־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לָבוֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: יט הָעֵדוּתִי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַפְּטוֹת נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבַחֲרַתָּ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תִּתְּחִיה אֶתָּה וְזָרַעְךָ: כ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקִלּוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָה־בּוֹ כִּי הוּא תִיִּיד וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ לְשִׁבַת עַל־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב לְתַת לָהֶם: פ פ פ

מ' פטוקים, לבב"ו סימן.

דש"י

הסתכלו בארץ שבראחי לשמש אחכס, שמה שנתה מדתה, שמה זרעתה אותה ולא נמחה, או שמה זרעתה חטים והעלתה שעורים, ומה אלו שנעשו לא לשכר ולא להפסד אם זוכין אין מקבלין שכר ואם חוטאין אין מקבלין פורענות, לא שנו את מדתם, אחס שאם זכיתם תקבלו שכר ואם חטאתם תקבלו פורענות, על אחת כמה וכמה? ובחרת בחיים. אני מורה לכם שתצטרו בחלק החיים, כאדם האומר לבנו בחר לך חלק יפה בנחלתי ומעמידו על חלק היפה ואומר לו את זה צור לך, ועל זה נאמר ה' מנת חלקי וכוכי אתה תומיך גורלי³, הנחת ידי על גורל הטוב לומר את זה קח לך:

חסלת פרשת נצבים

(טו) את החיים ואת הטוב. זה תלוי בזה, אם תעשה טוב הרי לך חיים, ואם תעשה רע הרי לך המות. והכתוב מפרש והולך היאך: (טז) אשר אנכי מצורך היום לאהבה. הרי הטוב, וזו תלוי: וחייית ורביית. הרי החיים: (יז) ואם יפנה לבבך. הרי הרע: (יח) כי אבד תאבדון. הרי המות: (יט) העדתי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ. שהם קיימים לעולם וכאשר תקרה אחכס הרעה יהיו עדים שאני התריתי בכם ככל זאת. דבר אחר העידתי בכם היום את השמים וגו', אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל, הסתכלו בשמים שבראחי לשמש אחכס, שמה שנו את מדתם שמה לא עלה לגגל חמה מן המזרח והאיר לכל העולם, כענין שנאמר וזרח השמש וזא השמש¹,

🕎 CHOOSING GOOD 🕎

30:15 SEVENTH READING & MAFTIR (4TH WHEN JOINED) **S**ee! I have given you today (a choice of) life and good, or death and evil! ¹⁶ For I am commanding you today to love God, your God, to walk in His ways, and to observe His commandments, His suprarational commands, and His rational commands, so that you will live and prosper. God, your God, will then bless you in the land of which you are coming to take possession.

¹⁷ But if your heart strays and you do not listen, and you turn away and prostrate yourself to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I am declaring to you today, that you will definitely perish! You will not live a long time on the land, of which you are crossing via the Jordan to come and take possession.

¹⁹ I am calling upon the heaven and the earth (which are eternal) as witnesses against you! I have set before you (a choice of) life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life! Then you and your children will live, ²⁰ to love God, your God, to listen to His voice, and to cleave to Him—for He is your life and the length of your days—to live on the land which God swore to your fathers to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, to give to them.

THE HAFTARAH FOR NITZAVIM IS ON PAGE 288.

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 The Last Word 🕎

“LOOK, I HAVE GIVEN YOU (A CHOICE)...CHOOSE LIFE!” (v. 15, 19)

How can man have free will if God already knows beforehand what he is going to do? The answer to this is simple enough, as can be seen on the basis of two illustrations:

1. Suppose there is a human being who can foretell what will happen to a person in the future. This does not mean that this knowledge deprives that person from acting freely as before. It only means that the knowledge of the forecaster is such, that he knows how the person will choose to act freely and of his own volition. Similarly, God's knowledge of human actions is such that it does not deprive humans of their free choice; it only means that God knows how the person will choose to act in a certain situation. To formulate this in scientific terms, we can say that the opposite of free choice is not pre-knowledge but compulsion, for there is such knowledge which does not entail compulsion at all, for example, knowledge of the past.

2. Every believer in God, and not only Jews, believes that for God, the past, present and future are all the same, since He is above time and space. Just as in the case of human affairs, the fact that Mr. X knows all that happened to Mr. Y in the past, did not affect Mr. Y's actions in the past. So God's knowledge of the future, which is the same as His knowledge of the past, does not affect the free choice of human action.

From the simple solution to the above question, you can draw an analogy in regard to all similar questions and be sure that there is an answer to them, and very often a simple one. But the proper Jewish way is to fulfill the Torah and *mitzvos* without question, and then to try and find out anything that you wish to find out about the Torah and *mitzvos*, but not, God forbid, to make human understanding a prerequisite condition for the performance of God's commandments.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on 25th Adar 5721)

parshas Vayeilech

פרשת וילך

🌀 The Name of the Parsha 🌀

R' Sa'adia Ga'on writes that *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech* actually constitute one single *Parsha*, and it is only that in some years the *Parsha* is *split* into two (as opposed to other instances, where two separate *Parshiyos* will be *combined* together). Thus, even when *Vayeilech* is read separately, we can derive a lesson from the reading of *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech* together.

At first glance, the two terms *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech* appear to be diametrically opposed. *Nitzavim* means “standing firmly” in the same position, whereas *Vayeilech*, which means “he went,” indicates movement. So what is the lesson to be learned from *combining* together “standing firmly” and “moving,” a feat which does not appear to be at all possible?

Standing firmly represents stability, reliability and strength. A king, for example, remains stationary on his throne, and those who wish to see him must come from afar. *Moving*, on the other hand, is a sign of growth and expansion.

Thus, the combination of simultaneously “standing firmly” and “moving” (*Nitzavim-Vayeilech*) represents: *the ability to grow without compromising one's prior position of strength.*

Some practical examples: When a person grows in his knowledge of Torah, there is a danger that his newly found sophistication may negatively affect his prior quality of simple faith and dedication. The lesson of our *Parsha* is the need to *retain* one's strong foundation of simple faith—which is “reliable” under all circumstances, even when the intellect fails—and not allow it to become tarnished by one's understanding.

Another example concerns the wealthy businessman who enjoys substantial growth in his financial affairs. Such a person may be tempted to feel that this growth came as a result of his good judgment and business acumen; so when somebody asks him for a donation to charity, he may think to himself, “I earned this money through *my* business skills and hard work, so why should I give it away?” Of course, the less successful businessman does not have this “problem,” and he regularly prays that if only God would bless him with riches, he would gladly give much of it to charity....

The lesson here is obvious: Our challenge is to harmonize *Nitzavim* with *Vayeilech*—the stability of simple faith, together with constant growth and expansion.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech* 5742;
Likutei Sichos vol. 19, p. 298)

א וַאֲזַל מֹשֶׁה וּמְלִיל יַת פְּתֻמָּיָא הָאֵלִין עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב וַאֲמַר לְהוֹן בַּר מָאָה וְעֶשְׂרִין שָׁנִין אָנָּה יוֹמָא דִּין לִית אָנָּה יְכִיל עוֹד לְמַפְק וּלְמַעַל וַיֵּן אָמַר לִי לֹא תַעֲבַר יַת יִרְדְּנָא הַדִּין: ג יֵן אֱלֹהִי מִיִּמְרָה יַעֲבַר קְדָמָךְ הוּא וְשִׂיזִי יַת עֲמֻמָּיָא הָאֵלִין מִקְדָּמָךְ וְתִירְתַנּוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הוּא עֲבַר קְדָמָךְ כְּמָא דִּי מְלִיל יֵן: ד וַיַּעֲבַד יֵן לְהוֹן כְּמָא דִּי עֲבַד לְסִיחוֹן וְלַעֲוֹג מַלְכֵי אַמּוֹרָאָה וְלֹאֲרַעְהוֹן דִּי שִׂיזִי יַתְהוֹן: ה וַיִּמְסְרֵנּוּן יֵן קְדָמִיכוֹן וְתַעֲבְדוֹן לְהוֹן כְּכָל תַּפְקָדְתָּא דִּי פַקְדִית וְתַכּוֹן: ו תְּקִיפוּ וְאֵלִימוּ לֹא תִדְחִלוּן וְלֹא תִתְבַּרְוּן מִקְדָּמִיהוֹן אֲרִי יֵן אֱלֹהִי הוּא דְמַדְבֵּר קְדָמָךְ לֹא יִשְׁבַּקְנֶךָ וְלֹא יִרְטֹשְׁנֶךָ: ז וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ וַאֲמַר לֵה לְעֵינֵי כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּקְרָא וְאֵלִים אֲרִי אֶת תַּעוֹל עִם עֲמָא הַדִּין לְאַרְעָא דִּי קָיִים יֵן לְאַבְהִתְהוֹן לְמַתָּן לְהוֹן וְאַתָּה

לא א וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים בֶּן־מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אָנֹכִי הַיּוֹם לֹא־אוּכַל עוֹד לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא וַיְהוּה אָמַר אֵלָי לֹא תַעֲבַר אֶת־תִּירְדֵּן הַזֶּה: ג יְהוּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא | עֲבַר לְפָנֶיךָ הוּא־יִשְׁמִיד אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וַיִּרְשָׁתֶם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הוּא עֲבַר לְפָנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוּה: [שני] ד וַעֲשֵׂה יְהוּה לָהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְסִיחוֹן וְלַעֲוֹג מַלְכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי וּלְאַרְצָם אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד אֹתָם: ה וּנְתַנֶּם יְהוּה לְפָנֵיכֶם וְעֲשִׂיתֶם לָהֶם כְּכָל־הַמְצָוָה אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֹתְכֶם: ו חֲזַקוּ וְאַמְצֹו אֶל־תִּירְאוּ וְאֶל־תַּעֲרָצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי | יְהוּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ עִמָּךְ לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבְךָ: ס [שלישי] [חמישי כשהן מחוברין] ז וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לְעֵינֵי כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲזַק וְאַמְצֵן כִּי אֵתְהָ תְּבֹא אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ

כ"ש"י

דבדרי תורה, מלמד שנסתמו ממנו מסורות ומעיונות החכמה^{1:3}: (ו) לא ירפך. לא יתן לך רפיון להיות נעזב ממנו: (ז) כי אתה תבוא את העם הזה. ארי את תיעול עם עמא דדין. משה אמר ליהושע, זקנים שדדור יהיו עמך, הכל לפי דעתן ועלון, אבל הקדוש ברוך הוא אמר ליהושע, כי אתה תביא את בני ישראל אל הארץ אשר נשבעתי להם⁴,

(ח) וילך משה וגו':¹ (3) לא אוכל עוד לצאת ולבוא. יכול שמש כחו, תלמוד לומר לא ככתב עינו ולא נס לחכ². אלא מכו לא אוכל, איני רשאי, שנטלה ממני כרשות וניתנה ליהושע: וה' אמר אלי. זהו פירוש לא אוכל עוד ללכת ולבוא, לפי ש' אמר אלי: אנכי היום. היום מלאו ימי ושנותי, זיוס זה נולדתי וזיוס זה אמות³. דבר אחר, ללכת ולבוא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● “Moshe went..” (v. 1). Where did he go?
IBN EZRA: He went to the camp of each tribe individually.
TARGUM YONASON: He went to the House of Study.
RAMBAN: When Moshe finished relating *Parshas Nitzavim*, the people would have gone home, because this gathering was made in order to bring the Jewish people into a covenant with God (“You are standing firmly today, all of you together...in order to bring you into the covenant of God, your God,” 29:9-11), so when the covenant had been established, the gathering would have fulfilled its purpose and consequently dispersed. Our verse continues to explain that, afterwards, Moshe left the Levite camp and went over to the Israelite

camp, like a person who wishes to depart from his friend, and comes to ask permission from him.
KLI YAKAR: Moshe went quickly throughout the entire Jewish camp to prove that his leadership was not ending because he was physically weak, but rather, because he had not been permitted by God to continue.
OHR HACHAYIM: Before a person passes away, his spirit leaves him. The verse is thus teaching us that “the spirit of Moshe went.”
BA’AL HATURIM: “Moshe went” to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, who are mentioned in the previous verse, to inform them that God was fulfilling His promise to bring the Jewish people to the Land.

TORAS MENACHEM

🗨️ WHERE DID MOSHE GO? (v. 1)
 At the literal level, it appears to be unclear where “Moshe went” in verse 1.
Ibn Ezra suggests that Moshe went to the camp of each tribe individually. However, this does not appear to be a *literal* interpretation, since:
 a.) Each tribe was of a very different character. For example, the tribe of Yissachar were Torah scholars, the tribe of Zevulun were business people, and the tribe of Levi were priests and ministers. So if Moshe had

gone separately to each camp and spoken to them individually, he would have addressed them each in a different manner that befitted the character of that particular tribe (even if the general content of his words was the same). The fact that the verse stresses that Moshe spoke “the following words to all Israel” suggests that he spoke to them as a group, and not as individual tribes.
 b.) The entire camp measured 3 *parsa* by 3 *parsa* (See *Rashi to Bamidbar* 21:35, 10:25, 33:39), which would mean that in order to visit each tribe individually Moshe would need to have walked 12 *parsa*. * This is difficult

* Equivalent to 46,000 meters or 28.6 miles.

THE APPOINTMENT OF YEHOSHUA

31 **M**oshe went, and he spoke the following words to all Israel. ² He said to them, “Today I am one hundred and twenty years old. I am no longer (permitted by God) to lead (you) out (to war*) and bring (you) back (safely again, even though I am physically capable of doing so, because) God said to me, “You may not cross this (River) Jordan.”

SECOND
READING

³ It is God, your God, Who will take you across the Jordan. He will destroy these nations before you so that you will take possession of their (lands. And) it is Yehoshua who will lead you across, as God has said. ⁴ God will do to them what He did to the Amorite kings, Sichon and Og, and to their land when He destroyed them. ⁵ God will deliver them to you, and you should do to them in accordance with all the commandment(s) that I have instructed you.

THIRD
READING
(5TH WHEN
JOINED)

⁶ Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or dismayed because of them! For God, your God, is the One Who is going with you. He will not loosen (his hold on) you and forsake you!”

⁷ Moshe called Yehoshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous! For you will come with this people to the land which God swore to their fathers to give them, and you

TORAS MENACHEM

to accept at the literal level, since: 1) An average person can walk only 10 *parsa* a day (*Pesachim* 94a). 2) On this day—the last of his life—Moshe did many other things too, as detailed in *Parshiyos Nitzavim, Vayeilech, Ha'azinu* and *Vezeos Habrachah*, which would not have left him time to do a lot of walking.

According to **Targum Yonason** Moshe went to the house of study and all the Jewish people were gathered there.

However, gathering the entire Jewish nation would, practically speaking, be an extremely difficult task, and if such a major undertaking would have occurred we would expect some mention of it (at the literal level). In fact, we find later on in the *Parsha*, that the gathering of just the elders and leaders of Israel required a special request from Moshe: “Gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers” (v. 28).

So what is the explanation, at the literal level, where “Moshe went,” and how he was able to address “all of Israel!” at once? And why did *Rashi* not explain this matter?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi's did not address this issue directly, as he felt the reader would be capable of deducing it for himself from one of *Rashi*'s earlier comments.

In *Parshas Beha'aloscha* the Torah describes that when the Levites were inaugurated into service, Moshe was commanded to gather the entire congregation of Israel in order that they all rest their hands on the Levites (*Bamidbar* 8:9-10). *Rashi* explains the reason for this instruction: “Since the Levites were being given as an atonement offering in their [i.e. the congregation's**] stead, let them come and stand by their offerings [i.e. the Levites] and rest their hands upon them.”

From here the reader will have learned a rule, that when a communal sacrifice is offered, the entire community needs to be present.***

Thus, we can presume that, at the literal level, when “Moshe went, and he spoke the following words to all Israel,” he did not need to make a special gathering since he would have found “all Israel” already gathered together when one of the communal sacrifices was offered.

Sparks of Chasidus

At first glance, the transfer of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua represented a weakening of the strength of the Jewish people, as our Sages taught: “Moshe's face was like that of the sun. Yehoshua's face was like that of the moon” (*Bava Basra* 75a). If the Jewish people had merited to enter the Land of Israel under Moshe's leadership, the conquest would have been instant and miraculous. Under Yehoshua, however, the Jewish people were required to conquer the land within the confines of nature, with the tremendous courage and self-sacrifice which that involves.

Nevertheless, *Chasidic* thought explains that this was not in fact a disadvantage, but to the contrary, it was for the overall good. The purpose of creation is to make, “a home for God in the lowest realms,” i.e. by human effort within an everyday setting. Miracles are generally counterproductive to this goal, as they serve to impose spirituality on the world, rather than letting the “lowest realms” develop a spiritual sensitivity for themselves.

So, ultimately, the non-miraculous entry into the land via Yehoshua fulfilled the purpose of Creation to a greater extent.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p.56ff.)

* See *Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 27:17; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech* 5726. ** [Originally, it was intended that ministers of God be appointed from the firstborn of the entire congregation. However, when the firstborn participated in the sin of the Golden Calf, this privilege was passed to the tribe of Levi. Thus here, the tribe of Levi was acting as an “atonement sacrifice” for the rest of Israel.] *** Later, in the times of *Shmuel* and King David, the system of *Anshei Ma'amad* was introduced, where a group representing the entire Jewish people was present at the communal sacrifices (see *Ta'anis* 26a). However, it would be difficult to accept, at the literal level, that this practice had already been introduced here, because: a.) *Rashi* makes no mention of it; and, b.) Above, in *Parshas Re'eh*, the reader learned that non-sacrificial meat only became permitted upon entering the Land of Israel, because at that point in time it was no longer convenient for every person who desired to eat meat to come to the Temple (12:21 and *Rashi*). From this it appears that the *Anshei Ma'amad* system was likewise only introduced after entering the Land, when it became difficult for everybody to be present at communal offerings. At this point, however, while still in the desert, there was no need for this dispensation, (and “it is preferable for a person to perform a *mitzvah* in person, rather than via an agent” *Kidushin* 41a).

תחשבה ותהו: ה וני הוא המדבר קדמך מימרה ימי בסעך לא ישקנך ולא ירחקנך לא תדחל ולא תתבר: ט וכתב משה ית אורייתא קדא ויהבה לכהניא בני לוי הנטלין ית ארון קניא די ולכל סבי ישראל: י ופקיד משה יתהוין למימר מסוף שבע שנין בזמן שתא דשמטתא בנהא דמטליא: יא במיתי כל ישראל לאתחזאה קדם יי אלהך באתרא די יתרעי תקרי ית אורייתא קדא קדם כל ישראל ותשמעו: יב כגוש ית עמא גובריא ונשיא וטפלא וגיורך די בקרוך גדיל דישמעון ובדיל דילפון (יא דילפון) וידחלון מקדם יי אלהכון ויטרון למעבד ית כל פתגמי אורייתא קדא: יג ובגיהוין די לא ידעון ישמעון וילפון (יא וילפון) למדחל ית יי אלהכון כל יומיא די אתון קימין על ארעא די אתון עברין ית ירדנא לתמן למירתה:

אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותם לתת להם ואתה תנחילנה אותם: ה ויהוה הוא | ההלך לפניך הוא יהיה עמך לא ירפך ולא יעזבך לא תירא ולא תחת: ט וכתב משה את התורה הזאת ויתנה אל הכהנים בני לוי הנשאים את ארון ברית יהוה ואל כל יקני ישראל: רביעין י ויצו משה אותם לאמר מקין | שבע שנים במעד שנת השמטה בתג הספות: יא בבוא כל ישראל לראות את פני יהוה אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר תקרא את התורה הזאת נגד כל ישראל באזניהם: יב הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף ונגרך אשר בשעריך למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו ויראו את יהוה אלהיכם ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת: יג ובניהם אשר לא ידעו ישמעו ולמדו ליראה את יהוה אלהיכם כל הימים אשר אתם חיים על האדמה אשר אתם עברים את הירדן

רש"י

נוכח זכר, בקציר של שביעית היוצא למוצאי שביעית³: (יא) תקרא את התורה הזאת. המלך היה קורא מחללת אלה הדברים, כדאיחא דמסכת סוטה, על צימח של עץ שחיו עושין צעזע: (יג) האנשים. ללמוד: והנשים. לשמוע: והטף. למה זכו, לתת שכר למצוייכם⁴:

תצא על כרחם, הכל תלוי בך, טול מקל וכך על קדקדן. דבר אחד לדור, ולא שני דברים לדור¹: (ט) וכתוב משה וגו' ויתנה. כשגמר כולה, נתנה לפני שצטו: (י) מקין שבע שנים. צעזע ראשונה של שמטה, שחיו שנה שמינית². ולמה קורא אותה שנת השמטה, שעדיין שביעית

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why are men, women and children required to be present at the *Hakhel* gathering (v. 12)?

TALMUD (TRACTATE CHAGIGAH): Men come “to learn” and women come “to hear.” Why do children come? In order to reward those who bring them along (*Chagigah* 3a).

MAHARSHA: Verse 13 states explicitly the reason why children are brought to the *Hakhel* gathering: “Their children, who do not understand, will hear and learn to fear God, your God.” Why then

does the *Talmud* offer a different reason, “In order to reward those who bring them along”?

The answer is that verses 12 and 13 are speaking of different types of children. Verse 13 refers to a child who has reached the age when his education has begun, and thus his father has an obligation to bring him to the gathering, to educate him. Verse 12, however, refers to very small children (“minors”).

TALMUD (TRACTATE KIDUSHIN): Children are obligated [in the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*] (*Kidushin* 34b).

TORAS MENACHEM

But this begs the question: Why did Moshe instruct, later in the *Parsha*, to “gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers” (v. 28), when he could have addressed them during one of the communal sacrifices, without having to make a special gathering?

There is, however, a clear distinction between these two cases. Moshe gathered the elders and leaders in order to fulfill *God’s instruction* to teach them the Song of *Ha’azinu* (v. 19). And, for this, it was only appropriate to have a gathering specifically for that purpose, so as not to fulfill the Divine command *ad hoc*, while the Jewish people had gathered for another reason.

In the opening of our *Parsha*, however, where Moshe chose to offer words of encouragement to the Jewish people of his own volition, and not as a direct command from God, Moshe did not want to bother the Jewish people to make a special gathering. Rather, he addressed them when they had gathered in any case, to offer a communal sacrifice.

(Based on *Sichas Motzoi Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech* 5739)

☞ ASSEMBLING ALL THE PEOPLE (V. 12-13)

The explanations of *Hakhel* in the *Talmud* (see *Classic Questions*) present us with a number of difficulties:

will apportion it to them as an inheritance. ⁸ It is God Who will lead you forward. He will be with you. He will not loosen (His hold on) you and forsake you. Do not be afraid or dismayed.”

⁹ Then Moshe wrote down this (entire) Torah, and gave it to the priests, (on behalf of) the descendants of Levi, who carry the Ark of God’s covenant, and to all the elders of the Jewish people (on behalf of the Jewish people).

🌀 THE MITZVAH OF HAKHEL 🌀

31:10
FOURTH
READING

Moshe commanded them, saying: “At the end of seven years (in the year following) the sabbatical year, during the festival on the holiday of Succos, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before God, your God, in the place that He will choose:

- (The king) should read this Torah before all of Israel, in their ears.
- ¹² Assemble the people—the men, the women, and the minors, and the convert in your cities—in order that they will hear, and in order that they will learn and fear God, your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this Torah. ¹³ Their children, who do not understand, will hear and learn to fear God, your God, all the days that you live on the land, of which you are crossing the Jordan to take possession.

TORAS MENACHEM

1.) Tractate *Chagigah* states that the role of children in *Hakhel* is “to reward those who bring them along,” implying that the children themselves have no real part in the *mitzvah*. Tractate *Kidushin*, however, states explicitly that “children are obligated.”

2.) What prompted Tractate *Chagigah* to explain that “men come ‘to learn,’ and women come ‘to hear,’” when this is stated explicitly in v. 12: “Assemble the people—the men, the women...in order that they will hear, and in order that they will learn”?

3.) The statement in Tractate *Kidushin* that, “children are obligated,” is also difficult to understand, since we do not find anywhere in the Torah that children before *bar-mitzvah* or *bas-mitzvah* are obligated in *mitzvos*.

Maharsha explains that verses 12 and 13 are addressed to two different types of children: Verse 12 refers to very small children (“minors”) who are too young to begin their education, and the only reason that they are brought is “to reward those who bring them along.” On the other hand, verse 13 refers to children who are mature enough to be educated, and thus they will “learn to fear God.” This appears to resolve the apparent contradiction between the two tractates, whether children are obligated or not (question ‘1’), since Tractate *Chagigah* (which states that children are not obligated) could be speaking of younger children, and Tractate *Kidushin* (which states that children are obligated), about older children.

However, this is somewhat difficult to accept, since the question remains: How can a *child* be obligated, even if he is older?*

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

“(THE KING) SHOULD READ THIS TORAH...” (v. 11)

The Torah was given to us in order that it permeate and vitalize each and every Jew without exception—man, woman, child and stranger—so thoroughly, and to such an extent and degree, that one’s entire being, in all its aspects, senses and feelings, will become a “Torah and *mitzvos* being.”

And in order to attain this end, most deeply and fully, the Torah was read on that occasion by the king, whose awe-inspiring quality filled the audience with an overwhelming sense of awe and subservience, to the extent of complete *bitul*—self-effacement....

It is the duty of everyone who is a “king,” a leader, in his circle—the spiritual leader in his congregation, the teacher in his classroom, the father in his family—to raise the voice of the Torah and *mitzvos*, forcefully and earnestly, so that it produces a profound impression and an abiding influence in the audience... an influence that should be translated into daily life, into conduct governed by the Torah and *mitzvos*, with fear of Heaven, and, at the same time, with gladness of heart.

(Excerpt from a public letter written in the Days of *Selichos*, 5726)

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

Hakhel is a rare case where the Torah specifies that even small children are obligated to observe a Biblical command. For *Hakhel* is a *mitzvah* which arouses and strengthens the inner faith of a Jew—and in this area, men, women and children are equal.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 369)

*Even Maharsha’s distinction is in itself difficult to accept. One is only required to educate a child in those *mitzvos* in which he will later become obligated as an adult. Thus, according to *Maharsha*, verse 13, which speaks of an older child, would *not* obligate a father to bring a child who was, for example, blind or mentally handicapped, since there is no requirement to educate a child in a *mitzvah* which he would not be required to observe as an adult. However, verse 12 require *all* minors (below the age of education) to be brought to the *Hakhel* gathering, since at this age the child is not being brought for the purposes of education but “in order to reward those who bring them along.” Thus, according to *Maharsha*’s interpretation, we would come to the bizarre conclusion that a blind or mentally handicapped child would be brought to a *Hakhel* gathering *before* reaching the age of education, but *not* afterwards!

יד ויאמר יי למשה הא קריבו יומיד לממת קרא ית יהושע ואתעטדו במשכן ומנא ואפקדנה ואול משה ויהושע ואתעטדו במשכן ומנא: 10 ואתגלי יי במשכנא בעמודא דעננא וקם עמודא דעננא על תרע משכנא: 11 ויאמר יי למשה הא את שוב עם אבהתך ויקום עמא הדין ויטעי בתר טעות עממי ארעא די הוא עלל לתמן ביניהון וישקנו דחלתי וישננו ית קימי די גזרית עמהון: 12 ויתקופ רגזי בהון בעדנא ההיא וארחקנו ואסלק שכנתי מנהון ויהון למבו וערעו ויהון בישן סגיאן ועקו וימר בעדנא ההיא הלא מדלית שכינת אלהי ביני ערעוני בישא האלון: 13 ואנא סלקא אסלק שכנתי מנהון ביומא ההוא על כל בישא די עבדו ארי אתפניו למטעות עממיא: 14 וכען כתיבו לכון ית תשבחתא הדא ואלפה לבני ישראל שניה בפומהון בדיל דתחי קדמי תשבחתא הדא לסהיד בכני ישראל: 15 ארי אעלנון לארעא די קימית לאבהתהון עבדא חלב ודבש ויכלון וישבעו ויתפנקו ויתפנו בתר טעות עממיא ויפלחנו וירגזו קדמי וישננו ית קימי:

שְׁמַחַה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: פ [חמישי] וששי כשהן מחוברין יד ויאמר יהוה אל- משה הן קרבו ימיו למות קרא את-יהושע והתיצבו באהל מועד ואצונו וילך משה ויהושע ויתיצבו באהל מועד: 10 וירא יהוה באהל בעמוד ענן ויעמד עמוד הענן על-פתח האהל: 11 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה הנך שוב עם-אבתך וקם העם הזה וזנה | אחרי | אלהי גבר-הארץ אשר הוא בא- שְׁמַחַה בְּקִרְבוֹ וְעִזְבוֹנִי וְהִפֵּר אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אִתּוֹ: 12 וְחָרָה אַפִּי בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם-הַהוּא וְעִזְבוֹתַיִם וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פְּנֵי מַהֵם וְהָיָה לֶאֱכֹל וּמִצְאָהוּ רָעוֹת רַבּוֹת וְצָרוֹת וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הֲלֹא עַל כִּי-אֵין אֱלֹהֵי בְּקִרְבִּי מִצְאוֹנֵי הָרָעוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: 13 וְאֲנֹכִי הִסְתַּר אַסְתִּיר פְּנֵי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עַל כֹּל-הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה כִּי פָּנָה אֶל-אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: 14 וְעַתָּה כְּתִבוּ לָכֶם אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְלַמָּדָה אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימָה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה-לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְעֵד בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: [ששי] ושביעי כשהן מחוברין כ כִּי- אֲבִיאֲנוּ אֶל-הָאָדָמָה | אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבֹתָיו וְזֵבֶת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ וְאָכְלוּ וְשָׂבְעוּ וְדָשְׁנוּ וּפְנָה אֶל-אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבְדוּם

כ"ט

(יד) ואצונו. ואזרזנו: (טז) נבר הארץ. גויי הארץ: (יז) והסתרתני פני. כמו שאיני רואה זלזלתי: (יט) את השירה הזאת. כאזינו השמים עד וכפר אדמתו עמו:

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

There are two legal dimensions to the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*: a.) the obligation resting on the king; and b.) the obligation resting on the people:

a.) The basic requirement of *Hakhel*, as it is recorded in the Torah, is an obligation upon the king to “assemble the people.” The people themselves, on the other hand, have no *direct* command to attend the gathering, and they do so merely in order to enable the king to fulfill his own, personal obligation. In other words, since the observance of any *mitzvah* involves taking an “entity” and doing a certain act with it, the king needs an “entity” that he can inspire to “learn and fear,” in order to fulfill his *mitzvah*—and the people are that entity.

b.) As a result of their central role in the assembly, the people themselves are *indirectly* obligated too. This could be compared to the *mitzvah* of having children, which, according to Jewish Law, rests upon the man and not the woman. But since it is clearly impossible for a man to father children on his own, it follows that his wife also shares the obligation of having children *indirectly* (*Ran to Kidushin* beg. chap. 2). Likewise in our case, it is impossible for a king to discharge his obligation of

gathering and inspiring the people without their co-operation, so it follows that they share the obligation too, indirectly.*

Based on this distinction we can now explain the apparent contradiction between Tractates *Kidushin* and *Chagigah*:

The king’s *direct* obligation (‘a’) requires him to gather the *entire* nation, including the children. This is the meaning of the statement in Tractate *Kidushin* that “children are obligated,” because in terms of constituting an “entity” with which the king can perform his *mitzvah* (and thus sharing the obligation *indirectly*), children are equal to adults.

But when we speak of the obligation resting on the people (‘b’), which is a personal obligation, the question arises, “Why do minors come?” They cannot be personally obligated in *mitzvos*, and they are too young to be inspired to “learn and fear God.”

In response to this question, Tractate *Chagigah* explains that yes, it is true that when we speak of the personal obligation resting on the people themselves, children cannot be obligated; but even then, they are not just part of an “entity” with which the king fulfills his *mitzvah*, but furthermore, they are brought “in order to reward those who bring them along.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 363ff.)

*With the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel* there is more sharing of obligation than with the *mitzvah* of having children. For in the case of *Hakhel* it is *intrinsic* to the *mitzvah* itself that the people become inspired, as the Torah stresses, “Assemble the people...in order that they will learn and fear God, your God etc.” So the people do not merely share the obligation with the king by virtue of a practical technicality—that he could not do the *mitzvah* without them—but rather, because the very *purpose* of this *mitzvah* is to inspire the people.

🕎 MOSHE IS INFORMED OF THE EVENTS AFTER HIS PASSING 🕎

31:14
FIFTH
READING
(6TH WHEN
JOINED)

God said to Moshe, “The time is now approaching for you to die. Call Yehoshua and stand in the Tent of Meeting, and I will encourage him.”

Moshe and Yehoshua went, and stood in the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁵ God appeared in the Tent, in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the entrance to the Tent.

¹⁶ God said to Moshe, “You are soon to lie with your fathers. This nation will rise up and desire to follow the gods of the people of the land into which they are coming. They will forsake Me and violate My covenant which I made with them. ¹⁷ On that day, I will become very angry with them. I will forsake them and hide My face from them, (appearing as if I do not see their distress). They will be consumed, and many misfortunes and traumas will happen to them. On that day, they will say, ‘Is it surely because our God is no longer among us, that these evils have befallen us.’ ¹⁸ I will surely hide My face on that day, because of all the evil they have committed, when they turned to other gods.”

🕎 GOD’S TESTIMONY FOR THE FUTURE 🕎

- ¹⁹ “Now, write for yourselves this song (in Parshas Ha’azinu), and teach it to the Children of Israel.”

“Place it into their mouths, so that this song will be for Me as a witness to the children of Israel.”

SIXTH
READING
(7TH WHEN
JOINED)

²⁰ “When I bring them to the land which I have sworn to their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey, they will eat, be satisfied, and become fat. Then they will turn to other gods and serve them, angering Me and violating My covenant.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What law is derived from verse 19?

RAMBAM: It is a positive command for every Jewish man to write a Torah scroll for himself, as the verse states, “Now, write for yourselves this song,” meaning to say, “write for yourselves a Torah which contains this song,” for a Torah is invalid if it consists of separate scrolls.... If a person writes one with his own hand, it is as if he received it from Mount Sinai (*Laws of a Torah Scroll* 7:1).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

THE FINAL TWO MITZVOS OF THE TORAH

Parshas Vayeilech contains two *mitzvos*: 1.) *Hakhel*—Gathering the entire people in Jerusalem after the Sabbatical year to hear the King read from the Torah (v. 10-13). And, 2.) The *mitzvah* of writing a Torah scroll (v. 19—see *Classic Questions*).

What is the significance of the fact that these are the last two *mitzvos* recorded in the Torah, both transmitted by Moshe on the day of his passing?

As long as the Jewish people were in the desert, memories of the experience at Sinai remained fresh. Even those members of the next generation who had not seen the giving of the Torah with their eyes, had nevertheless grown up in a spiritual oasis where the effects of Sinai were still palpable.

But at this junction in time, the Jewish people were leaving that oasis and embarking on the formidable challenge of living a life dominated by earning one’s physical needs—and this was to be

without the leadership of Moshe. To help overcome these hurdles, the Jewish people were given two *mitzvos* whose purpose was to enable them to recreate the experience of Sinai in their new setting.

Thus *Rambam* writes that, at a *Hakhel* gathering: “They must prepare their hearts and alert their ears to listen with dread and awe and with trembling joy, like the day it was given on Sinai...as though the Torah was being commanded to him now, and he was hearing it from the mouth of the Almighty, for the king is an agent to make the words of God heard” (*Laws of Festival Offerings* 3:6).

However, this only recreates the experience of being commanded by God as a *nation* to observe the *mitzvos*. In order to re-enact the experience of being given the Torah *personally* by God to study, a further *mitzvah* was given—to write a Torah scroll. For when: “a person writes one with his own hand, it is as if he received it from Mount Sinai” (see *Classic Questions*).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 189ff.)

כא ויהי ארי יערען יתה בישן סניאן ועקן ותתב תשפחתא הקא קדמוהי לסהיד ארי לא תתנשי מפום בניהון ארי גלי קדמי ית יצרהון די אנון עבדין יומא דין עד לא אעלנון לארעא די קמיית: כב וכתב משה ית תשפחתא הקא ביומא ההוא ואלפנה לבני ישראל: כג ופקיד ית יהושע בר נון ואמר תקף ואלים ארי את תעל ית בני ישראל לארעא די קמיית להון ומימרי יהי בסעדה: כד והוה בד שיצי משה למכתב ית פתגמי אורייתא הקא על ספרא עד השלימו: כה ופקיד משה ית לואי נמלי ארון קומא דין למימר: כו סיבו ית ספרא דאורייתא הדין ותשוון יתה מסמר ארנא קומא דין אלהכון ויהי תמן כך לסהיד: כז ארי אנא ידענא ית סרבנותך וית קדלך דקשיא הא בעד אנא קים עמכון יומא דין מסרבין הויתון קדם יי ואף ארי בתר דאמות:

ונאצוני והפר את-בריתי: כא והיה ביי-תמצאן אתו רעות רבות וצרות וענתה השירה הזאת לפניו לעד כי לא תשכח מפני זרעו כי ידעתי את-יצרו אשר הוא עשה היום בטרם אביאנו אל-הארץ אשר נשבעתי: כב ויכתב משה את-השירה הזאת ביום ההוא וילמדה את-בני ישראל: כג ויצו את-יהושע בן-נון ויאמר חזק ואמץ כי אתה תביא את-בני ישראל אל-הארץ אשר-נשבעתי להם ואנכי אהיה עמך: כד ויהי | בכלות משה לכתב את-דברי התורה-הזאת על-ספר עד תמם: (שביעי) כה ויצו משה את-הלויים נשאי ארון ברית-יהוה לאמר: כו לקח את ספר התורה הזו ושמתם אתו מצד ארון ברית-יהוה אלהיכם והיה-שם כך לעד: כז כי אנכי ידעתי את-מרידך ואת-ערפך הקשה הן בעודני חי עמכם היום ממרים היתם עם-יהוה ואף ביי-אחרי מותי:

כש"י

לגמרי: (כג) ויצו את יהושע בן נון. מוסב למעלה כלפי שנייה, כמו שמפורש אל הארץ אשר נשבעתי להם: (כו) לקח. כמו זכור², שמור³, הלך⁴: מצד ארון ברית ה'. נחלקו זו חכמי ישראל צצצא צתרא⁵, יש מהם אומרים

(כ) ונאצוני. והכעיסוני, וכן כל נאון לשון כעס: (כח) וענתה השירה הזאת לפניו לעד. שהתירתי זו צתוכה על כל המולאות אותו: כי לא תשכח מפני זרעו. כרי זו הצטחה לישראל, שאין תורה משתכח מזרעם

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Where was the Torah scroll placed? (v. 26)

RASHI: In [Tractate] *Bava Basra*, the Sages of Israel were divided over this matter. Some maintained that there was a shelf protruding from the Ark, where it was put. Others maintained that it was put next to the tablets, inside the Ark.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 MOSHE'S TORAH SCROLL (v. 26)

Rashi cites two views of “the Sages of Israel” concerning where the Torah scroll that Moshe wrote was placed: i.) On a shelf protruding from the Ark; or ii.) Inside the Ark.

This prompts the following questions:

a.) Since *Rashi's* commentary is devoted exclusively to explaining scripture at the *literal level*, how could he accept the notion that the Torah was placed *inside* the Ark, when the Torah states unambiguously that it was placed “*beside* the Ark”?

b.) *Rashi's* first interpretation is also difficult to accept at the literal level, since the detailed description of the Ark's design in *Parshas Terumah* makes no mention of “*a shelf protruding from the Ark,*” on which a Torah scroll could be placed. Why did *Rashi* not conclude more simply that the Torah was kept next to the Ark, without the Ark having a special feature to accommodate it?

THE EXPLANATION

While verse 26 states clearly that Moshe's Torah scroll was to be placed *beside* the Ark, the verse does not state explicitly whether the Torah was required to remain in this place at *all times*, even when the Ark was in transit.

However, from the context of the verse, it is quite clear that the Torah was required to remain next to the Ark during transit, because:

a.) Verse 26 was an instruction given to “the Levites, who carried the Ark of God's Covenant” (v. 25).

b.) In a much broader context, the verse is part of Moshe's instructions to Yehoshua in preparation for their imminent entrance into the Land of Israel. They were going to begin traveling very soon, and during this time, the Tabernacle would have to be *dismantled*. So if we were to accept that the command in our verse (to place Moshe's Torah next to the Ark) only applied when the Tabernacle was erected, then it would turn out that

²¹ “What will happen is, when numerous misfortunes and traumas will happen to them, this song (which warns them of the consequences of their actions) will speak out to them as a witness, for it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their children; for I know their inclination that they (are planning) to do today, (even) before I bring them into the land which I swore (to give them).”

²² On that day, Moshe wrote down this song, and taught it to the children of Israel.

²³ (God) commanded Yehoshua, the son of Nun, and said:

“Be strong and courageous! For you will bring the children of Israel to the land that I have sworn to them, and I will be with you.”

🌀 MOSHE'S TORAH SCROLL IS PLACED WITH THE ARK 🌀

31:24
SEVENTH
READING

Then, when Moshe finished writing the words of this Torah, until its very end, in a scroll, ²⁵ Moshe commanded the Levites, who carried the Ark of God's Covenant, saying: ²⁶ “Take this Torah scroll and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of God, your God, and it will be there as a witness. ²⁷ For I know your rebellious spirit and your stubbornness. Look!—even while I am alive with you today you have been rebels against God, surely (you will be) after my death (too)!”

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

Is a teacher forced to dilute his understanding of a subject in order to transmit it to his students? Or, is it possible for the teacher to take an idea as *he understands it* and “reconstruct” that very concept in class, so that it retains the same level of brilliance and profundity that it possessed within his own mind?

Or, to phrase it differently: The teacher sees the *general* perspective of an idea, but he can only communicate it through a series of *details*. Is it possible for a teacher to infuse those details with the same energy and vision which the general idea possesses? Or will the student inevitably be left with a series of disjointed details which he cannot “re-assemble” to capture the general perspective that existed in the teacher's mind?

This question was disputed between “the Sages of Israel” (see *Rashi*): The Tablets *inside* the Ark contained the Ten Commandments which represent the laws of the Torah *in general*. Moshe's Torah scroll (v. 24), contained the laws of the Torah specified *in detail*.

Moshe's Torah scroll had to be placed “*beside the Ark*” (v. 26), indicating that the details should always be “close to” and representative of the general perspective. But how close?

One view maintained that the Torah was kept on a shelf *outside* the Ark, but *connected* to it, i.e. that the details will never truly represent the general perspective (they are “outside”), but that they will be loyal and “connected to” it.

A second view, however, maintained that the Torah scroll was placed *inside* the Ark—i.e. that a very talented teacher *is* capable of communicating ideas in a way that they retain the same brilliance and profundity that existed in the teacher's own mind.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, pp. 202-3)

Moshe's instructions here did not apply to the immediate future, and were therefore out of context with the rest of his words to Yehoshua, which did concern the immediate future.

c.) In any case, the verse stresses that the Torah was placed “as a witness,” which would presumably apply at all times.

This requirement for the Torah scroll to be with the Ark at all times, presented *Rashi* with a problem: The Ark was protected with no less than three coverings while in transit (*Bamidbar* 4:5-6), so how could Moshe's Torah scroll remain “beside the Ark” when the coverings intervened?

To solve this problem, *Rashi* offered two solutions (from “*the Sages of Israel*”):

That the Ark had a shelf protruding from it, on which the Torah scroll was placed; and clearly, the coverings must have been placed over the Ark and its shelf (and scroll).

As for the fact that this shelf was not mentioned in *Parshas Terumah*, we could argue that since the command to “*take this Torah scroll and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant*” was surely an instruction which Moshe had heard from God, it follows that the requirement to make the shelf is derived *from this verse itself*—as a logical extension of the requirement to keep the Torah scroll next to the Ark at all times.

However, in the final analysis it is difficult to accept that at this time, some forty years after the Ark was made, a shelf was suddenly added. Therefore *Rashi* cited a second interpretation, that the Torah scroll was placed *inside* the Ark.

However, this too is difficult to accept, because the verse states that the Torah scroll was placed “*beside the Ark*” and not *in* the Ark.

Thus *Rashi* was forced to bring two interpretations, since each is problematic at the literal level.

Ultimately, *Rashi* was equally dissatisfied with both interpretations, so he prefaced his explanation with the phrase: “the Sages of Israel were divided over this matter,” as if to say: “neither of these interpretations are preferable at the literal level, and they differ only according to the personal approaches of the Sages.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 196ff.)

כח כְּנִישׁוּ לְוָתֵי יִתְּ כָּל סְבִי שְׂבָטֵיכֶם וְסָרְכִיבֹן וְאֶמְלֵל קְדְמֵיהוֹן יִתְּ פִתְּנֵמִיָּא הָאֲלִין וְאֶסְהַר בְּהוֹן יִתְּ שְׂמִיָּא וְיִתְּ אֶרְעָא: כט אַרְי יִדְעָנָא בְּתֵר דְּאֶמּוֹת אַרְי חֲבָלָא תַחֲבָלוֹן וְתַסְטוֹן מִן אֶרְחָא דִּי פִקְדִית יִתְּבוֹן וְתַעֲרַע יִתְּבוֹן בְּשִׂתָּא בְּסוּף יוֹמִיָּא אַרְי תַּעֲבָדוֹן יִתְּ דְּבִישׁ קָדָם יִי לְאֶרְגוּא קְדְמוּהִי בְּעוֹבְדֵי יִדִּיכוֹן: ל וּמְלִיל מוֹשֶׁה קָדָם כָּל קְהָלָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל יִתְּ פִתְּנֵמִיָּא תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא הָדָא עַד דְּשְׁלִימוֹ: פ פ פ

[מפמיר] כח הִקְהִילוּ אֵלַי אֶת־כָּל־זְקֵנֵי שְׂבָטֵיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם וְאִדְבַּרְהָ בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה *וְאֶעֱיֶדְהָ בָּם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ: כט כִּי יֵדְעֵתִי אַחֲרַי מוֹתִי כִּי־הִשְׁחַתְתָּ תִּשְׁחַתּוּן וְסַרְתָּם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְקִרְאתָ אֶתְכֶם הָרָעָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים כִּי־תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הָרָע בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיסוֹ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם: ל וַיְדַבֵּר מוֹשֶׁה בְּאָזְנֵי כָּל־קְהָל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עַד תִּמָּוֹ: פ פ פ

ע' פסוקים**, אדני"ה סימן.

*ואעידה בראש עמוד בס"ה ב"ה שמו"ו סימן. **זהו המספר של נציבים וילך יחז. (ראה לקו"ש חז"ט ע' 298, הערה 3)

רש"י

העיד למעלה העידותי זכס היום וגו'⁴, הם לישראל אמר, אזל לשמים ולארץ לא אמר, ועכשיו זא לומר האזינו השמים וגו': (כט) אחרי מותי בי השחת תשחתון. והרי כל ימי יבושע לא השחיתו, שנאמר ויעזבו העם את ה' כל ימי יבושע⁵, מכאן שתלמידו של אדם חזיב עליו כגופו, שכל זמן שיבושע חי היה נראה למשה כאלו הוא חי⁶: חסלת פרשת וילך

דף היה בזלט מן הארון מצחון ושם היה מונח ויש אומרים מלד הלוחות היה מונח צחון הארון: (כח) הקהילו אלי. ולא תקעו אותו היום צחונות להקהיל את הקהל, לפי שנאמר עשה לך¹, ולא השליט יבושע עליהם. ואף צחיוו נגזרו קודם יום מותו (ס"א זיום מותו), לקיים מה שנאמר² ואין שלטון זיום המות³: ואעידה במ את השמים ואת הארץ. ואם תאמר הרי כבר

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why were the elders and police officers picked for this gathering? (v. 28)

ABARBANEL: Because they were the leaders of the people, who listened to Moshe's words on behalf of the people.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 THE PRESENCE OF POLICE OFFICERS (v. 28)

In Verse 28, Moshe requested a gathering of the elders, to whom he would transmit the Song of *Ha'azinu* on behalf of the Jewish people.

However, with this gathering we find a totally unprecedented detail, that in addition to the elders of the Jewish people, Moshe also requested the police officers to be present. Since the role of the police officers is simply to enforce the law, what was the need for their presence here, when Moshe was transmitting the Torah?

THE EXPLANATION

The purpose of this gathering was an attempt to avert the spiritual decline of the Jewish people after Moshe's passing, as verse 29 continues: "I know that long after my (disciple Yehoshua's) death you will surely become corrupted (with idol worship), and depart from the way which I commanded you. Misfortune will inevitably come upon you in the end, etc."

At first glance, these efforts to avert spiritual decline would appear to have been totally futile, according to Moshe's own admission, as he exclaimed in verse 27: "even while I am alive with you today you have been rebels against God, surely (you will be) after my death (too)!" How could Moshe possibly expect the Jewish people to listen to the elders, if they had not listened properly to Moshe himself?

To address this problem, Moshe added police officers to the gathering, thereby setting a precedent: that whenever the elders would gather in the future to transmit the Torah's commands to the people, they would do so in the presence of the police officers. In this way, the elders' declarations would be taken more seriously by the people, since the threat of law-enforcement would be real and obvious.

Of course, this had not been done in the past, but on the day of his passing, Moshe understood that it would be required in the future, at least as a deterrent.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech* 5746)

🌀 GATHERING OF THE ELDERS TO HEAR THE SONG OF HA'AZINU 🌀

31:28 **G**ather to me all the elders of your tribes and your police officers, and I will speak these words (of the song of Ha'azinu) into their ears. I will call upon the heavens and the earth as witnesses against them,²⁹ for I know that long after* my (disciple Yehoshua's) death you will surely become corrupted (with idol worship**), and depart from the way which I commanded you. Misfortune will inevitably come upon you in the end, because you did evil in the eyes of God, to provoke His anger through your actions.”

MAFTIR

³⁰ Then Moshe spoke the words of the following song, into the ears of the entire assembly of Israel, until their completion.

HAFTARAHs: NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH—P. 288. SHABBOS SHUVAH—P. 290.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

Parshas Vayeilech is read on the Shabbos preceding Yom Kippur (in years when it is read separately), whereas Parshas Nitzavim is always read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah.

The High Holidays are a time of Jewish unity, when we stand before God as one. Nevertheless, there is a subtle, but significant difference between the unity of Rosh Hashanah and the unity of Yom Kippur, which takes expression in the two Parshiyos which are connected with these dates: Nitzavim and Vayeilech.

Rosh Hashanah is a time of unity of all Jewish souls, as they exist in their spiritual source. Yom Kippur, on the other hand, represents the unity of the Jewish souls even as they exist down below, in physical bodies.

Thus, on Rosh Hashanah we do not make confessions to God or openly mention our sins, for this holy day stresses the soul as it is in its source, where it transcends the concept of sin. On the other hand, on Rosh Hashanah we do eat food—an experience which each person enjoys in a different way, indicating that the unity and equality among the souls that occurs on Rosh Hashanah is not experienced by the body.

True unity comes about when there is a potential for differences and divisiveness (due to the body), and yet we nevertheless come together—and this occurs on Yom Kippur. Thus, the theme of Yom Kippur is atonement for sins, for this stresses how our physical existence lends the possibility for sin (and hence divisiveness), but how we are nevertheless cleansed from sin, and come together as

one. Likewise, even in our physical lives we stand united and equal on Yom Kippur, for each person equally denies himself or herself any food or drink at all.

Thus, Parshas Nitzavim, which is always read before Rosh Hashanah, stresses the unity of the Jewish souls: “You are standing firmly today, all of you together, before God, your God”—i.e. the reason why “you are all together” is because we are speaking here of the Jewish souls as they exist “before God, your God,” in their source.

Parshas Vayeilech, however, which is connected with Yom Kippur, stresses the unity of the Jewish people as they exist down here in this world, on their own level. Thus the Parsha begins, “Moshe went, and he spoke the following words to all Israel,” i.e. Moshe “went” from his exalted spiritual standing and lowered himself to the level at which “all Israel” found themselves.

And similarly here, at the end of the Parsha, the Torah stresses the same theme again: “Then Moshe spoke the words of the following song, into the ears of the entire assembly of Israel, until their completion” (v. 30). Literally, the words, “until their completion” refer to the end of “the words of the song.” However, Chasidic thought explains that “their completion” also refers to the “completion” and spiritual perfection of the Jewish people. Thus, the verse is informing us that Moshe did not only address the souls of the Jewish people, but he uplifted “the entire assembly of Israel” until their bodies and souls together reached “completion” and perfection, here in this world.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 19, p. 298ff.)

*כ"ל מקום שנאמר אחרי מופלג הוא - רש"י, דברים יא, ג. (עי"פ שיחת ש"פ וילך תשכ"ו) **פ"י תיבת "השחתה" היינו מה שעוקר הדבר משרשו ומקורו לגמרי באופן שאינו לתועלת, וע"ד מ"ש "לא תשחית את עצה" (דברים כ, יט). וזו הענין דעבודה זרה. (שם)



Parshas Vayeilech contains 2 positive *mitzvos*

1. To assemble the entire people to hear the Torah being read, after the Sabbatical year [31:12].
2. Every Jew should write a Torah scroll for himself [31:19].



parshas Ha'azinu

פַּרְשַׁת הָאֲזִינוּ

☞ The Name of the Parsha ☞

Parshas Ha'azinu begins with the words, "Listen, O heavens, for I will speak! Let the earth hear the words of my mouth!" The Midrash explains that Moshe was "close to the heavens," so he told them to "listen"—a term which suggests a closeness between speaker and listener. But since he was "distant from the earth," he told it to "hear," from afar (*Sifri*, beginning of Ha'azinu).

A fundamental principle of *Chasidic* thought is that every Jew has a spark of Moshe within his soul, which enables him to attain, to some small extent, the spiritual greatness of Moshe (*Tanya* ch. 42). Thus, it is practically relevant to all of us, to some degree, to appreciate that spiritual matters are more important than physical things—to be "close to the heavens and distant from the earth."

At first glance, however, this appears to be somewhat absurd. How is it possible for an ordinary person, who lives a normal, bodily existence, to feel "close to the heavens and distant from the earth"?

Furthermore, are we not taught that the ultimate purpose of creation is to be found here *on earth* by making a "home for God *below*" (*Tanchuma*, Naso 16)? What is to be gained, then, from feeling "distant from the earth"?

There is a very big difference between *acquiring* a new talent and *uncovering* an existing one. *Acquiring* a talent involves learning totally new skills, that are alien to one's existing personality traits. And even after the person has fully mastered the skill, it will always remain as an *acquired* trait.

On the other hand, if a person has an *intrinsic* talent in a certain area from the time he was born, when he uncovers that talent it will be: a.) much easier to learn than acquiring a new one, and, b.) after he has perfected this "new" skill, it will be a statement of *who he really is*, rather than something he has tried to become.

The Jewish soul is "*literally* a part of God Above" (*Tanya* ch. 2). So, for a Jew, the feeling of being "close to the heavens" is not something that needs to be acquired, but merely uncovered. Thus, in some way, it is relatively easy and *natural* for us to feel "close to the heavens and distant from the earth," because our souls, which sustain our very lives, are truly "distant from the earth."

But nevertheless, after being born into a body, we are firmly rooted in this world too, enabling us to bring our natural affinity with "the heavens" down to the earth—thus making "a home for God below."

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu* 5750)

א אֲצִיְתוּ שְׁמִי וְאֶמְלֵל וְתִשְׁמַע אֶרְעָא אִמְרֵי פוּמִי: ב יְבַסֵּם בְּמִטְרָא אֶלְפָנֵי יִתְקַבֵּל בְּטֵלָא מִימְרֵי בְרוּחֵי מִטְרָא דְנִשְׁבִּין עַל דְּתַאָּה וּבְרִסִּי מְלֻקְוֵשָׁא דִּי עַל עֲשָׂבָא: ג אָרִי בְשָׁמָא דִּי אָנָּא מְצַלִּי הֲבוּ רְבוּתָא קָדָם אֱלֹהֵנָּא: ד תְּקִיפָא דְשְׁלָמִין עוּבְדוּהִי אָרִי כֹּל אֹרְחֵתִיָּה דִּינָא אֱלֹהָא מְהִימְנָא

לב א הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי-פִי: ב יַעֲרַף בְּמִטְרִי לְקַחֵי תִזְלַל בְּטֵל אִמְרֵתִי בְּשַׁעֲרֵיהֶם עַל־יְדֵשָׁא וּבְרִבִיבִים עַל־יַעֲשָׁב: ג כִּי יֵשׁ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא הֲבוּ גֹדֶל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ: ד *הַצֹּר תָּמִים פָּעֲלוּ כִּי כָל־דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפֹּט אֵל

*יש גורסים צ' רבתי

רש"י

יעיף וכן ירעפון דשן⁴, יערפו טל: תזל בטל. שהכל שמחים בו, לפי שהמטר יש בו ענבים לזריות (ס"א יש ענבים בו), כגון הולכי דרכים ומי שהיה צורו מלא יין³: בשעירם. לשון רוח סערה⁶, כהרגומו כרוחי מטרא. מה הרוחות הללו מחזיקים את העשבים ומגדלן אותם, אף דברי תורה מגדלן את לומדיהן³: וברביבים. טיפי מטר. ונראה לי על שם שורה כחץ נקרא רביב, כמה דאח אמר רובי קשת⁷: דשא. ארצרי"ן, עטיפת הארץ מכוסה בירק: עשב. קלח אחד קרוי עשב, וכל מין ומין לעלמו קרוי עשב: (ג) בי שם ה' אקרא. הרי כי משמש בלשון כאשר, כמו כי תבאו אל הארץ, כשאקרא ואזכיר שם ה' אתם הבו גודל לאלהינו⁸ וזרכו שמו⁹. מכאן אמרו שעונין ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו אחר זרכה שמקדש¹⁰: (ד) הצור תמים

(ח) האזינו השמים. שאני מתרה בהם בישראל ותהיו אתם עדים לדבר שכך אמרתי להם שאתם תהיו עדים, וכן ותשמע הארץ. ולמה העיד בהם שמים וארץ, אמר משה אני צר ודם למחר אני מת, אם יאמרו ישראל לא קבלנו עלינו הצרית מי צא ומכחישם, לפיכך העיד בהם שמים וארץ, עדים שהם קיימים לעולם. ועוד, שאם יזכו, יבואו העדים ויתנו שכרם, הגפן תתן פריה, והארץ תתן יבולה, והשמים יתנו טלם¹. ואם יתחייבו, תהיה בהם יד העדים תחלה, ועלך את השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה, ואחר כך ואזתם מהרה² על ידי האומות³: (ז) יערף במטר לקחי. זו היא העדות שתעידו שאני אומר בפניכם תורה שנתי לישראל שהיא חיים לעולם כמטר הזה שהוא חיים לעולם, כאשר יערפו השמים טל ומטר³: יערף. לשון

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one “ascribe greatness to our God”? (v. 3)

RASHI: “When I call out the Name of God”—When I call out and mention God’s Name, you should “ascribe greatness to our God”—and bless His Name. From here, they derived that after a blessing recited in the Temple, one responds: “Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom!” [and not “Amen”].

SIFRI: From where do we derive that one must answer “Amen” after a blessing is made? From the words, “ascribe greatness to our God.”

GUR ARYEH: The verse cannot refer to answering “Amen,” since Amen is not a phrase with which one praises the greatness of God, and the verse stresses: “ascribe greatness to our God.”

TORAS MENACHEM

Ascribing Greatness To God (v. 3)

What forced Rashi to conclude that, at the literal level, the words “ascribe greatness to our God,” refer to responding, “Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom!” after a blessing recited in the Holy Temple? Why did Rashi reject the apparently more straightforward and simple explanation of Sifri that the verse is referring to the answering of “Amen” when any blessing is recited?

Gur Aryeh argues that the words “ascribe greatness to our God” could not be referring to the response of “Amen,” which is not a description of greatness.

However, this still does not explain why, at the literal level, Moshe would now be telling the Jewish people a law about blessings in the Holy Temple, which appears to be entirely out of context here, in *Parshas Ha’azinu*.

THE EXPLANATION

In *Parshas Ha’azinu*, Moshe was addressing the Jewish people on the very last day of his life, after leading them for some forty years in the desert.

So, on reaching our verse, Rashi was troubled: Why is Moshe teaching the Jewish people now such a basic principle: “When I call out and mention God’s Name, you should ascribe greatness to our God and bless

His Name”? Moshe had mentioned God’s Name on numerous occasions before this point, so why would he be teaching them how to respond now?

Due to this question, Rashi understood that our verse cannot be referring to an ordinary response made when hearing God’s Name (such as reciting “Amen,” as Sifri suggests), but rather, that it must be referring to a more special and unusual response.

From an earlier comment of Rashi, the reader will already be familiar with the concept that God’s Name was pronounced in a special manner in the Holy Temple: “permission was only granted to mention the Explicit Name in the place where the Divine Presence comes, which is in the Temple in Jerusalem” (Rashi to Shemos 20:21).

So, since we have a precedent here (at the literal level) for an unusual manner in which God’s Name may be mentioned, Rashi concluded that our verse must be referring to the principle that: “After a blessing recited in the Temple, one responds, ‘Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom!’”

And this also explains why Moshe made this statement at the end of his life, for it was only at this point that the Jewish people were poised to enter the Land of Israel and build the “Temple in Jerusalem,” where this law would become relevant, for the first time.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha’azinu* 5742)

1 זכרי"ן, יב 2 דברים יא, יז 3 ספרי 4 תהלים טה, יב 5 דברים לג, כח 6 שם קמז, ח 7 בראשית כא, כ 8 התיבות "הבו גודל לאלהינו" אינם פירושו של רש"י כ"א העתקת הפסוק, וצריכים להיות באותיות גדולות. ועפ"י מתורצת בפשטות השאלה מדוע מעתיק רש"י רק התחלת הפסוק בלבד ("כי שם ה' אקרא") אע"פ שמפרש את כל הפסוק (ע"פ שיחת שי"פ האזינו תשמ"ז). 9 יומא לו. 10 תענית טז.

🕍 THE SONG OF HA'AZINU 🕍

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¹ Listen, O heavens (and be my witness), for I will speak!

Let the earth hear (and witness) the (following) words of my mouth!

² Let my (Torah) teaching drip like rain (and give life to the world).

Let my words flow like dew;

Like storm winds (that bring rain) on vegetation (to make them grow),

And like raindrops on grass.

³ When I call out (and mention) the Name of God,

(Respond and) ascribe greatness to our God.

⁴ (Though He is powerful, like a) rock,

His acts (of retribution) are perfect(ly balanced),

For all His ways are just;

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 The Last Word 🕍

THE SONG OF HA'AZINU

The Maharal of Prague and the Mezritcher Maggid stressed the importance of reciting the Song of *Ha'azinu* and knowing it by heart (with its cantillation notes), for it purifies the mind and heart, and leads to longevity and success in business affairs. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch added: "If businessmen realized what benefit this would actually bring, they would be more careful about doing it!" (*Memoirs* ch. 29; *Sefer Hasichos* 5701, p. 56; *ibid.* 5696, p. 149).

This general relevance of the Song of *Ha'azinu* is stressed further by the fact that:

- The Song of *Ha'azinu* was chanted by the Levites *throughout the year* in the Holy Temple, when the additional offering of *Shabbos* was brought (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a).
- The *mitzvah* of writing a *complete* Torah scroll is derived from the verse, "write for yourselves *this song*" (*Devarim* 31:19; See Rambam cited in *Classic Questions* *ibid.*), alluding to the fact that the Song of *Ha'azinu* is connected with the *entire* Torah.
- *Ha'azinu* is the last *Parsha* of the Torah that is read on *Shabbos* (since *Parshas Vezos Habrachah* is read on *Simchas Torah*, which never occurs on *Shabbos*). Thus *Ha'azinu* is, effectively, the "conclusion" of the *Shabbos* Torah-reading cycle, which stresses its connection to the entire Torah.
- At the literal level, the Song was said with the intention that "you will command your children to be careful to observe *all the words of this Torah*" (v. 46).
- *Parshas Ha'azinu* spans the whole of chapter 32 (ל"ב) of the Book of *Devarim*. This alludes to the fact that *Ha'azinu* is connected to the whole Torah, for the Torah begins with the letter א, and ends with the letter ל.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu* 5735, 5741 & 5747)

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

"LET MY TEACHING DRIP LIKE RAIN..." (v. 2)

In the song of *Ha'azinu*, Torah is described as both "rain" and "dew" (v. 2). Physically speaking, rain and dew are both sources of nourishment, but the causes which bring them about differ significantly. Rain is formed from water which is lost to the atmosphere as vapor from the earth, then condenses and precipitates back—as the verse states: "*a mist ascended from the earth, and then soaked the entire surface of the ground*" (*Bereishis* 2:6). The precipitation of rain is thus *dependent* on prior evaporation from the earth.

Dew, by contrast, "never ceases" (*Ta'anis* 3b), and appears spontaneously, regardless of the amount of water which is being evaporated from the earth.

Rain thus represents the influx of Godliness which is bestowed from above, in *direct response* to the *efforts* of Man (on earth). Dew, on the other hand, alludes to that which God bestows *unconditionally*, disproportionately to man's efforts.

So, since "rain" and "dew" in this verse both refer to Torah, it follows that "rain" represents the parts of Torah which are dependent on the degree of effort on the part of man to master them—namely, the extensive *legal* discussions of the Torah. The comparatively effortless "dew" alludes to the *mystical* parts of the Torah, which transcend the limitation of the human mind, since they "flow" directly from their Divine source (as the verse states, "Let my words flow like dew").

Consequently, we find it is the "dew" of Torah with which God will ultimately revive the dead (and not the "rain"), since "*all Jews*" will enjoy resurrection and "*have a portion in the world to come*" (*Sanhedrin* 90a). And clearly, something that is bestowed upon *all* Jews, regardless of their spiritual standing, must be given from Above, like dew, regardless of the efforts made to elicit it.

(Based on *Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat* vol. 1, p. 458ff.)

דָּמְנוּ לְדַמְיוֹהֵי עוֹלָה לֹא נָפַק דָּמֵן קָדָם זָכִי וְקָשִׁיט הוּא: ה' תְּבִילוּ לְהוֹן לֹא לָהּ בְּנֵיָא דִּי פְלָחוּ לְטַעֲנָתָא דְרָא דְאִשְׁנִי עוֹבְדוּהֵי וְאִשְׁתַּנְיִי: וְהָא קָדָם יְיָ אֲתוֹן גְּמִלִין דְּאָ עָמָא דְקָבִילוּ אוֹרְיָתָא וְלֹא תְּכִימוּ הִלָּא הוּא אָבוּד וְאֵת דִּילָהּ הוּא עֲבָדָד וְאִתְקַנְדָּ: ז' אֲדַכְרַר יוֹמִין דָּמֵן עֲלָמָא אִסְתַּכַּל בְּשַׁנְי דֵּר וְדֵר שְׂאֵל אָבוּד וִיחִי לָךְ סְבִיב וְיִימְרוּן לָךְ: ה' בְּאִתְחַסְנָא עֲלָהּ עֲמִמְיָא בְּפִרְשׁוּתָהּ בְּנֵי אֲנִשָּׂא קִיִּים תְּחוּמֵי עֲמִמְיָא

אֲמוֹנָה וְאִין עוֹל צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוּא: ה' שְׁחַת לּוֹ לֹא בְּנֵי מוֹמֵם דוֹר עֲקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתֵּל: ו* ה' לִי הוּהוּ תְּגַמְלוּ אֵת עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכֵם הֲלוֹא הוּא אָבִיךָ קִנְיָךְ הוּא עֲשֵׂךְ וּכְנִנְךָ: [שני] ז' זְכֹר יְמוֹת עוֹלָם בְּנֵינוּ שְׁנוֹת דְּרִי-וֹדֵר שְׂאֵל אָבִיךָ וְיִגְדֵךְ זְקִינְךָ וְיִאמְרוּ לָךְ: ה' בְּהִנְחַל עֲלִיוֹן גּוֹלִים בְּהִפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יַעֲבֹ גְבֻלַת עַמּוּם

*ה' רבתי והיא תיבה לעצמה (לענין הכתיבה), אבל לענין הקריאה קורין ה' בנפרד והלמיד בשבא נח, ואח"כ שם הוי"ו כרגיל. עיין מנחת שי כ"ט

זכר הטובות: עם נבל. ששכחו את העשוי להם: ולא חכם. להבין את הנוגדות שיש בידי להיטיב ולהרע: הלא הוא אביך קנך. שקנאך שקנך זקן הסלעים וזרחן חזקה, שתקנך זכר מיני תקנה: הוא עשך. אומה זלומות: ויבנך. אחרי כן זכר מיני צסים וכן. מכס כהנים מכס נביאים ומכס מלכים, כך שכל תלוי זכר: (ז) זכר ימות עולם. מה עשה זרעושים שהעיסו לפניו: בינו שנות דר ודר. דור אנוש שהלף עליהם מי אוקינוס ודור המבול ששטפו. דבר אחר לא נתתם לזכרם על שעבר, זינו שנות דור ודור, להכיר להבא שיש בידי להיטיב לכם ולהנחיל לכם ימות המשיח והעולם הבא: שאל אביך. אלו הנביאים שנקראים אבות, כמו שנאמר בצליחו אבי אבי וישראל: זקניך. אלו החכמים: ויאמרו לך. הראשונות: (ח) בהנחל עליון גויים. כשהנחיל הקדוש ברוך הוא למעיסו את חלק נחלתן הוי"ס ושטפו: בהפרידו בני אדם. כשהפיץ דור הפלגה היה בידי להעבירם מן העולם

פעלו. אף על פי שהוא חזק, כשמציא פורענות על עוברי רגונו, לא בשטף הוא מציא, כי אם זדין כי תמים פעלו: אל אמונה. לשלם ללדיקים זקתם לעולם הבא. ואף על פי שמאחר את תגמולם, סופו לאמך את דבריו: ואין עול. אף לרשעים משלם שכר זקתם בעולם הזה: צדיק וישר הוא. הכל מלדיקים עליהם את דינו, וכך ראוי וישר להם. לדיק מפי דבריות. וישר הוא וראוי להלדיקו: (ה) שחת לו וגו'. כהרגומו חזילו להון ולא ליה: בניו מומם. בניו היו והשחתה שהשחיתו היא מומם: בניו מומם. מומם של בניו היה ולא מומם: דור עקש. עקום ומעוקל, כמו ואת הישרה יעקשו, וזלשו משה חולדה ששייכה עקומות ועקושות: ופתלתל. אנטורטיליי"ש כפתיל הזה שגודליו אותו ומקיפין אותו סביבות הגדיל. פתלתל מן התיבות הכפולות, כמו ירקרק, אדמדמ, סחרחר, סגלגל: (ו) הלה' תגמלו זאת. לשון תימה, וכי לפניו אדם מעליזין, שיש בידי להיפרע מכס ושהיטיב לכם

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How does one “Remember the days gone by, [and] reflect upon the years of one generation and another”? (v. 7)

RASHI: “Remember the days gone by”—what God did to past generations who provoked Him to anger. “Reflect upon the years of one generation and another”—the generation of Enosh, upon whom He inundated the waters of the Okyanus [Ocean], and the generation of the Flood, whom He washed away.

Another explanation is: If you did not [“remember the days gone by” and] set your attention to the past, then, “reflect upon the years of one generation and another”—to recognize the future, that He has the power to bestow good upon you and to give you the days of the Mashiach and the World to Come as an inheritance. “Ask your father”—these are the prophets, who are called “fathers,” as Scripture states regarding Elijah, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel!” (Kings II 2:12). “Your elders”—these are the sages.

TORAS MENACHEM

🔗 “DAYS GONE BY...” (v. 7)

Rashi’s comments to verse 7 prompt the following questions:

- a.) What forced Rashi to conclude that, at the literal level, “one generation and another,” refers specifically to the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood, rather than to previous wicked generations in general?
- b.) Why did Rashi bring a second interpretation, that “one generation and another,” refers to “the days of the Mashiach and the World to Come”?
- c.) Why did Rashi reject the simple meaning of “fathers” and “elders,” and write instead that they refer to “prophets” and “sages”?

THE EXPLANATION

In Parshas Vayeilech, the song of Ha’azinu is given a lengthy introduction, stressing the unique quality of this song: “Now, write for yourselves this song...so that this song will be for Me as a witness to the children of Israel...this song will speak out to them as a witness, for it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their children” (Devarim 31:19, 21).

The Torah then relates how a special gathering was made for this purpose: “Gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your police officers, and I will speak these words (of the song of Ha’azinu) into their ears...Then Moshe spoke the words of the following song into the ears of the entire assembly of Israel, until their completion” (ibid. 28, 30).

From this elaborate introduction, the reader will have understood that the song of Ha’azinu contains a unique message, which had not been heard up to this point; a message that would protect the integrity of the Jewish people for future generations.

Thus, on reaching our verse, the reader will immediately be struck by the fact that this verse appears to be nothing more than the repetition of an old message. Moshe had warned the Jewish people on numerous occasions previously, especially in the Book of Devarim, that they should remember the wicked deeds of the previous generations and the punishments that resulted. For example: “Your eyes have seen what God did at Ba’al Pe’or, for God, your God, has eliminated every man who went after Ba’al Pe’or from among you,” (Devarim 4:3). “What He did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and chariots, how He swamped the waters of

*God is faithful (to reward his righteous ones),
(He even rewards the wicked) without injustice;
(All acknowledge that) He is righteous and upright (in judgment).*

⁵ *Corruption (is theirs), not His!*

*It is His children's defect,
A crooked and twisted generation!*

⁶ *Is this how you repay God,*

*You disgraceful, unwise people?
Is He not your Father, your Master?
He has made you (a special nation),
And established you (to be self-sufficient).*

SECOND
READING

⁷ *Remember the days gone by (when God punished the wicked).*

*Reflect upon the years of one generation and another.
Ask your father, and he will tell you (about days gone by),
(Ask) your elders, and they will inform you (what the early generations did).*

⁸ *When the Supernal One gave nations their lot (with the Flood),*

*When He separated the sons of man (after the Tower of Bavel),
He (allowed them to exist by) establishing (seventy) distinct nations,*

T O R A S M E N A C H E M

the Reed Sea upon them when they pursued you....What He did to Dasan and Aviram, sons of Eliav, Re'uvain's son, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up." (ibid. 11:4-6).

So Rashi was troubled: After a lengthy introduction about the unprecedented qualities of the song of *Ha'azinu*, the command to "remember days gone by," appears to be nothing new at all.

Rashi concluded that the innovative quality of our verse is that it represents a warning to the Jewish people of unprecedented severity. In the past, when contemplating the consequences of disobeying God, the Jewish people had been reminded by Moshe about the punishments received by those who worshiped Ba'al Pe'or, by the Egyptian people and by Dasan and Aviram, etc. But here, they were informed of incomparably more severe punishments:

"The generation of Enosh, whom He inundated with the waters of the Okyanus"—lived in close proximity to the garden of Eden, since the nations were only scattered after the Tower of Bavel was built (see Bereishis 11:9). Yet we find that God chose to punish them with a flood from the waters of the Okyanus, "the largest of all oceans" (Rashi to Bereishis 1:9), which was clearly a tremendous distance from the garden of Eden. This indicates what a major cataclysmic event this punishment must have been.

So by referring to the generation of Enosh, and certainly "the generation of the Flood," Moshe was giving a warning that was incomparably more ominous than anything he had said in the past.

RASHI'S SECOND INTERPRETATION

Rashi was not entirely satisfied with the above solution (that Moshe was speaking of global punishments to *entire generations*), because the Torah stresses that the Song of *Ha'azinu* was addressed to each person *individually*—"into the ears of the entire assembly" (*Devarim* 31:30). So Rashi looked for another explanation which explained how Moshe was

talking to each member of the Jewish community, on a personal level: "If you have not set your attention to the past, then, 'reflect upon the years of one generation and another'—to recognize the future, that He has the

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

The Torah teaches a person to "ask your father" about "one generation and another" (v. 7), i.e. about "the days of the Mashiach and the World to Come" (Rashi *ibid.*, see *Classic Questions*), and, "he will tell you." Here we see that a father should educate his child about the concept of Mashiach, and not leave the child to "pick up" knowledge of the matter by himself.

Even though the concept of Mashiach is a lofty one, with immense mystical significance which can only be fully appreciated by an adult, nevertheless, it remains one of the *principles* of our faith which needs to be taught to children even at a young age.

Obviously, the educational approach will be different in the case of children than with adults. For example, with a child we might stress the fact that with the coming of Mashiach "*delicacies will be as plentiful as dust*" (Rambam, end of *Laws of Kings*), as this is something which the child can relate to easily (and it is, of course, totally true). Naturally, when the child matures, so will his perception of Mashiach, but we cannot wait for children to grow up before teaching them about a major principle of our faith. Rather, when still very young, a child should be taught to cry out earnestly and enthusiastically: "We want Mashiach now!"

(Based on *Sichas Motzoi Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu* 5739; *Terumah* 5741)

לְמַסְפֵּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ט כִּי חָלַק יְהוָה עִמּוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבְלֵי נַחֲלָתוֹ:
 י יִמְצְאוּהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתָהוּ יִלָּל יִשְׁמֹן יִסְבְּבֵהוּ יְבוֹנְנֵהוּ
 יצַרְנֵהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו: יא כְּנֹשֶׁר יַעִיר קָנּוֹ עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחַף
 יפְרֹשׁ כְּנָפָיו יִקְחֵהוּ יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל-אֲבָרְתוֹ: יב יְהוָה בְּדָד יִנְחֵנוּ
 וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר: [שלישין] יג יִרְבְּבֵהוּ עַל-בְּמוֹתָי* אֶרֶץ וַיֵּאבֵל
 תְּנוּבַת שָׂדֵי וַיִּנְקְהוּ דָבֶשׁ מִסֻּלַע וְשִׁמְן מִחֲלָמִישׁ צוּר: יד חֲמַמַת
 בָּקָר וַחֲלָב צֵאן עַם-חֵלֶב כָּרִים וְאֵילִים בְּנֵי-בֶשֶׁן וְעֵתוּדִים
 עַם-חֵלֶב כִּלְיוֹת חֲטָה וְדָם-עַנְבִּי תִשְׁתַּדֵּחַ הַחֹמֶר: טו וַיִּשְׁמֹן יִשְׂרָוֶן
 וַיִּבְעֹט שְׂמֵנָתָ עֲבִיתָ כְּשִׂיתָ וַיִּטַּשׁ אֱלוֹהַ עֲשָׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר

למנן בני ישראל: ט ארי חלקא בני עמה
 יעקב ערב אחסנתה: י ספיק צרפיהון בארעא
 מדברא ובית צחונא אתר די לית מיא
 אשרנון סחור סחור לשכנתה אלפנון פתגמי
 אוריתא נטרנון ככבת עיניהון: יא כנשרא
 דמחיש לקנה על בנוהי מתחופף פרים
 נדפוהי מקבלהון מנשלהון על תקוף
 אברהי: יב יי בלהודוהי עתיד לאשרייתהון
 בעלמא דהוא עתיד לאתחדתא ולא יתקם
 קדמוהי פלתן טעון: יג אשרנון על תקפי
 ארעא ואוכלנון בזה סנאיהון ויהב להון
 בזה שלישי קרוין נכסי יתבי כרבין תקיפין:
 יד יהב להון בזה מלכיהון ושלטייהון
 עם עותר כרביהון ותקיפהון עמא דארעהון
 ואחסנתהון עם בזה חיליהון ומשריהון
 ודם נפריהון ותשר כמיא: טו ועתר ישראל
 ובעט אצלח תקוף קנא נכסין ושבק

*תיב ר'

כ"ט

ולא עשה כן, אלא יצא גזלות עמים, קיימם ולא אדום: למספר בני ישראל.
 בשביל מספר בני ישראל שעתידיים ללאת מצני שם, ולמספר שבטים נפש של
 בני ישראל שירדו למצרים, הליצ גזלות עמים שבטים לשון: (ט) כי חלק ה'
 עמו. למה כל זאת, לפי שחיה חלקו כבזש ציניהם ועחיד ללאת. ומי הוא חלקו,
 עמו. ומי הוא עמו: יעקב חבל נחלתו. והוא השלישי צבאות, המשולש בשלש
 זכויות, זכות אבי אבות וזכות אבות, הרי שלשה, כחבל הזה שהוא עשוי
 בשלשה גדילים והוא זכינו היו לו לנחלה, ולא ישמעאל בן אברהם, ולא עשו
 בנו של יחזקאל: (י) ימצאהו בארץ מדבר. אותם מלא לו נאמיים בארץ
 מדבר, שקבלו עליהם תורתו ומלכותו ועולו מה שלא עשו ישמעאל ועשו,
 שנאמר² זרה משעיר למו הופיע מהר פארן: ובתהו ילל ישימוך. ארץ ליה
 ושממה מקום יללת תנינים וזנות יענה אף שם נמשכו אחר האמונה, ולא
 אמרו למשה האין גלא למדצרות מקום ליה ושמוון, כענין שנאמר לכתך
 אחרי צמדבר: יסבבנהו. שם סבבם והקיפם צעננים וסבבם דגלים לארבע
 רוחות וסבבם צחחיתיה הבר, שכפאו עליהם כגיגית: יבוננהו. שם צחורה
 וציה: יצרנהו. מנחש שרף ועקרצ ומן האומות: כאישון עינו. הוא
 השחור שבטין, שהמאור יולא הימנו. ואונקלוס תרגם ימלאהו יספיקהו כל
 לרכו צמדבר, כמו ומלא להם⁶, לא ימלא לנו הבר⁷. יסבבנהו. אשרינון סחור
 סחור לשכיניה, אהב מועד באמצע וארבעה דגלים לארבע רוחות:
 (יא) בנושר יעיר קנו. והגם צרחמים וצחמלה כנשר הזה רחמני על בני
 ואינו נכנס לקנו פתאום עד שהוא מקשקש ומטרף על בניו בכנפיו בין חילן
 לחילן בין שוכה לחצרה, כדי שיעורו בניו, ויהא בהם כח לקבלו: יעיר קנו.
 יעורר בניו: על גוזליו ירחף. אינו מכבד עלמו עליהם אלא מחופף, נוגע
 ואינו נוגע, אף הקצ"ה שדי לא מלאוהו שגיא כח⁸, כשצא ליתן תורה לא
 נגלה עליהם מרוח אחת אלא מארבע רוחות, שנאמר ה' מסיני צא זרה
 משעיר למו הופיע מהר פארן ותהי מרצבות קודש⁹, אלוה מתימן יצא¹⁰ זו
 רוח רביעית¹¹: יפרוש כנפיו יקחהו. כשצא ליעלן ממקום למקום אינו נוטלן
 צרגליו כשאר עופות, לפי ששאר עופות יראים מן הגשר, שהוא מגדיה לעוף
 ופורה עליהם, לפיכך נושאן צרגליו מפני הגשר, אצל הגשר אינו ירא אלא מן
 החץ לפיכך נושאן על כנפיו. אומר מוטב שיכנס החץ צי ולא יכנס צבני, אף
 הקצ"ה ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים¹², כשנסעו מצרים אחרים והשיגום

חונים) על הים היו זורקים בהם חצים ואזני זליסטרות, מיד ויסע מלאך
 האלהים וגו' ויצא צין מחנה מצרים וגו'¹³: (יב) ה' בדד ינחנו. ה' דד וצטח
 והגם צמדבר: ואין עמו אל נבר. לא היה כח צאחד מכל אלהי הגוים
 להראות כמו ולהלחם עמם. ורבותינו דרשוהו על העמיד, וכן תרגם
 אונקלוס. ואינו אומר דצרי תוכחה הם, להעיד השמים והארץ ותהא השירה
 להם לעד שסופן לצגוד, ולא יזכרו הראשונות שעשה להם ולא הנולדות שהוא
 עתיד לעשות להם, לפיכך נריך ליישב הדבר לכאן ולכאן. וכל הענין מוסב על
 זכור ימות עולם צינו שנות דור ודור, כן עשה להם וכן עתיד לעשות, כל זה
 היה להם לזכור: (יג) ירכבהו על במתי ארץ. כל המקרא כתרנומו¹⁴:
 ירכבהו וגו'. על שם שארץ ישראל גבוה מכל הארצות¹⁵: ויאבל תנובת
 שדי. אלו פירות ארץ ישראל שקלים לנוז ולהתצטל מכל פירות הארצות¹⁶:
 וינקהו דבש מסלע. מעשה צאחד שאמר לצנו צסיכני הצא לי קליעות מן
 החצית. הלך ומלא הדבש אף על פיה. אמר לו זו של דבש היא. אמר לו השקע
 ידך לתוכה ותהי מעלה קליעות מתוכה¹⁵: ושמן מחלמיש צור. אלו זיתים
 של גוש חלב¹¹: במותי ארץ. לשון גבוה: שדי. לשון שדה: חלמיש צור.
 תקפו וחזקו של סלע. כשאינו דבוק לתיבה שלאחריו נקוד חלמיש, וכשהוא
 דבוק נקוד חלמיש: (יד) חמאת בקר וחלב צאן. זה היה צימי שלמה,
 שנאמר¹⁶ עשרה צקר צריאים ועשרים צקר רעו ומאה כאן¹⁵: עם חלב ברים.
 זה היה צימי עשרת השבטים, שנאמר ואוכלים כרים מלאן¹⁷: חלב כליות
 חטה. זה היה צימי שלמה, שנאמר ויהי לחם שלמה וגו'¹⁸: ודם ענב תשתה
 חמר. צימי עשרת השבטים, השותים צמרקו יין¹⁹: חמאת בקר. הוא שומן
 הנקלט מעל גבי החלב: וחלב צאן. חלב של כאן, וכשהוא דבוק נקוד חלב כמו
 חלב אמר²⁰: ברים. כבשים: ואילים. כמשמעו: בני בשן. שמים היו: כליות
 חטה. חטים שמים חלב כליות וגסין ככוליא: ודם ענב. תהיה שותה טוב
 (ז"ל ענב) ועוטה יין חסוב: חמר. יין בלשון ארמי: חמר. אין זה שם דבר, אלא
 לשון משובה בטעם וויי"ש בלע"ז. ועוד יש לפרש שני מקראות הללו אחר תרגום
 של אונקלוס אשרינון על תוקפי ארעא וגו': (טו) עבית. לשון עוזי: בשית.
 כמו כסית, לשון כי כסה פניו צחלצו, כאדם ששמן מצפנים וכסליו וכפלים
 מצחוץ, וכן הוא אומר ויעש פימה עלי כסל: בשית. יש לשון קל צלשון כסוי,
 כמו וכוסה קלון ערום²¹, ואם כתב כשית דגוש היה נשמע כסית את אחרים,

1 דאה שיחת ש"פ האזינו ותשמח. 2 דברים לג, ב 3 דאה לקריש חל"ד עי' 206 ואילך 4 רמי"ב, ב 5 דאה שיחת ש"פ האזינו תשל"ז 6 מדבר יא, כב 7 יהושע יז, טז
 8 איוב לז, כג 9 דברים לג, ב 10 ובתק"ג, ג 11 ספרי 12 שמות ט"ז, ד 13 שם יד, יט 14 לכאורה פירוש התרגום שונה לגמרי מפירוש רש"י. שתרגום אונקלוס מפרש שפסוק זה קאי
 על עצם הכיבוש דארץ ישראל, ואילו רש"י מפרש דקאי על פירות א"י ו"ל שכאשר רש"י כותב "כתרגומו" סתם (ואינו מעתיק את פירושו של אונקלוס) אין כוונתו לפירוש הנקרא "תרגום" כי אם

*(For the sake of) the children of Israel (who would later arise),
(And) number (seventy souls).*

⁹ *(He saved all the nations) because of God's portion, His people, (hidden among them),
Ya'akov (and his sons were) His inheritance,
(For Ya'akov's merit was threefold, like the strands of) a rope*

¹⁰ *He found them (faithful to Him, accepting the Torah) in a desert land,
(Following Moshe) into a desolate, howling wasteland.*

*He encompassed them (with clouds),
And bestowed understanding upon them (through the Torah);
He protected them (from snakes and scorpions) like the pupil of His eye.*

¹¹ *(He guided them with compassion) like an eagle (that) wakens its nest (gently),
Hovering over its young (without touching them);
It spreads its wings, taking them,
Carrying them (safely) on its upper side.*

¹² *God alone guided them,
And there was no strange god (able to attack) them.*

¹³ *He settled them on (the Land of Israel), the peak of the earth,
So they could eat (its fast-growing) produce of the field.
He let them suck honey from (its figs, which grow) from a rock(y, hard crust),
And oil from the (olives that grow at the) hard, rock(y ground of Gush Chalav).*

¹⁴ *The cream of cattle and the milk of sheep,
With the fat of lambs,
Fattened rams from Bashan and he-goats,
With fat kernels of wheat.
You will drink the blood of grapes, delicious (wine).*

¹⁵ *But Yeshurun became fat and rebelled;
You grew fat, rotund and obese;
(Israel) forsook the God Who made them,
And disgraced the Rock of their salvation.*

THIRD
READING

TORAS MENACHEM

power to bestow good upon you and to give you the days of the Mashiach and the World to Come as an inheritance."

According to this interpretation we see clearly that each individual was addressed personally, as Moshe was referring to each person's individually earned "inheritance" in the future.

However, according to this interpretation, we are left with the question: How would "your father" or "your elders" possibly be able to describe the Messianic Era which they know very little about? Therefore, Rashi explained that (according to this interpretation) the term "fathers" and "elders" refer to "prophets" and "sages," who would clearly be knowledgeable about future events, and they would be able to "tell you" about "the days of the Mashiach and the World to Come."

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5748)

 Sparks of Chasidus 

"GOD'S PORTION, HIS PEOPLE" (v. 9)

The Ba'al Shem Tov taught: "The quality of 'essence' is such that as soon as one grasps a tiny part of the essence, one grasps the whole of it." Thus it follows, that since all Jews ("His people") have a Godly soul which is "literally, a portion of God above," (Tanya ch. 2)—"God's portion"—then even when that soul undergoes the long journey downwards to this world, it remains inseparably bound with the Essence of God.

(Based on Sefer Hama'amarim 5735 p. 243)

פִּלְתֹן אֱלֹהִים דַּעְבֵּדְתָהּ וְאַרְגִּיזוּ גִדְמֵי תַקְיָפָא
 דְּפִרְקָהּ: טו אֲקִיָּאֵי גִדְמוּהֵי בְּפִלְתֹן טַעֲנִין
 בְּתוֹעֲבָתָא אֲרַגְזִיזוּ גִדְמוּהֵי: יז דְּבַחוּ לְשִׁדְדִין
 דְּלִית בְּהוֹן צְרוּף דְּחַלְדָּא דְּלֵא יְדַעְנִין חֲדָתִין
 דֵּי מִקְרִיב אֲתַעְבִּידָא לָא אֲתַעֲפְקוּ בְּהוֹן
 אֲבַהֲתְכוּן: יח דְּחַלְדָּא תַקְיָפָא דְּבִרְאָד
 אֲתַנְשִׂיתָא שְׂבַקְתָּא פִּלְתֹן אֱלֹהִים דַּעְבֵּדְדָּ:
 יט וְגַלִּי גִדְמֵי יְיָ וְתַקְרָף רִגְזָהּ מִדְּאֲרַגְזִיזוּ גִדְמוּהֵי
 בְּגִזֵּי וּבְגִזֵּי: כ וְאָמַר אֶסְלַק שְׂבַגְתִּי מִגְּהוֹן גְּלִי
 גִדְמֵי מָא יְהִי בְּסוֹפִיָּהוֹן אֲרִי דְּרָא דְּאֲשִׁנִּי
 אֲנִין בְּנִיָּא דְּלִית בְּהוֹן הִימְנִי: כא אֲנִין אֲקִיָּאֵי
 גִדְמֵי בְּלֵא דְּחַלְדָּא אֲרַגְזִיזוּ גִדְמֵי בְּפִלְתֹן טַעֲנִין
 וְאֲנִי אֲקִיָּנִין בְּלֵא עִם בְּעִמָּא טַפְשָׂא אֲרַגְזִיזִין:
 כב אֲרִי קְדוּם תַּקְיָפָא בְּאֲשָׂא נַפְק מִגִּדְמֵי בְּרִגְזֵי
 וְשִׁיזִי עַד שְׂאוּל אֲרַעֲיָת וְאֶסִּיף אֲרַעֲא
 וְעַלְלַתְתָּהּ וְשִׁיזִי עַד סִיפֵי טוֹרְיָא: כג אֶסֶף
 עֲלִיהוֹן בִּישׁוּן מִכְתָּשֵׁי אֲשִׁיזִי בְּהוֹן: כד נְפִיחִי
 כְּפֹן וְאֶכּוּלִי עוֹף וּכְתִישִׁי רוּחִין בִּישׁוּן
 וְשֹׁן חִיּוֹת בְּרָא אֲנִי בְּהוֹן עִם חַמַּת תְּנִינִיא
 דְּזֻחְלִין בְּעַפְרָא: כה מִבְּרָא תִּתְּבַל חֲרָבָא
 וּמִתְּנִינִיא חֲרָבַת מוֹתָא אֶף עוֹלְמִיָּהוֹן
 אֶף עוֹלְמִתְהוֹן יִנְקִיָּהוֹן עִם אֲנַשׁ סְבִיָּהוֹן:
 כו אֶמְרִית יְחוּל רְגִזִי עֲלִיהוֹן וְאֲשִׁיזְנִין

ישעתי: טו יקנאהו בזרים בתועבת יכעיסהו: יז יזבחו לשדים
 לא *אלה *אלהים לא ידעום חדשים מקרב פאו לא שערום
 אבתיכם: יח צור ילדה תשי* ותשפת אל מחללה: וכיעין יט וירא
 יהוה וינאץ מפעם בניו ובנתיו: כ ויאמר אסתירה פני מהם
 אראה מה אחריתם כי דור תהפכת המה בנים לא-אמן בם:
 כא הם קנאוני בלא-אל* בעסוני בהבליהם ואני אקניאם
 בלא-עם בגוי נבל אכעיסם: כב כי-אש קדחה באפי ותיקד
 עד-שאול תחתית ותאכל ארץ ויבלה ותלהט מוסדי הרים:
 כג אספה עלימו רעות חצי אכלה-בם: כד מזי רעב ולחמי
 רשף וקטב מרירי ושון-בהמת אשלה-בם עם-חמת זחלי
 עפר: כה מחוץ תשפל-חרב ומחדרים אימה גם-בחור גם-
 בתולה יונק עם-איש שיבה: כו אמרתי אפאיהם אשביתה

*שם חזק ** זעירא

רש"י

בלע"ז. דבר אחר אמון לשון אמונה, כתרוממו. אמרו צדיקי נעשה ונשמע,
 ולשעה קלה צעלו בצנחחם ועשו העגל:³ (כא) קנאוני. הצעירו חמתו: בלא
 אל. בדבר שאינו אלוה: בלא עם. צאומה שאין לה שם, שנאמר הן ארץ
 כשדים זה העם לא היה,⁶ וצעשו הוא אומר צזוי אחה מאד:⁷ בגוי נבל
 אבעיסם. אלו הכופרים, וכן הוא אומר אמר נבל צלבו אין אלהים:⁸
 (כב) קדחה. צערה: ותיקד. צכס עד היסוד: ותאכל ארץ ויבלה. ארלכס
 ויזולה: ותלהט. ירושלים המיוסדת על הכרים, שנאמר⁹ ירושלים הרים
 סביב לה:⁹ (כג) אספה עלימו רעות. אחזיר רעה על רעה, לשון ספו שנה
 על שנה:¹⁰ ספות הרוכ¹¹, עולותיכם ספו על זנחוכים¹². דבר אחר אספה
 אכלה, כמו פן חספה¹³: חצי אכלה בם. כל חצי אשלים צכס. וקללה זו לפי
 הפורענות לצרכה היא, חצי כלים והם אינם כלים: (כד) מזי רעב. אונקלוס
 חרגס, נפיחי כפן, ואין לי עד מוכיח עליו. ומשמו של רבי משה דרשן
 מטולושא שמעתי שעירי רעב, אדם כחוש מגדל שער על צשרו: מזי. לשון
 ארמי שער מזיא, דכור מהפך צמזיא⁴: ולחמי רשף. השדים נלחמו צכס,

כמו כי כסה פניו¹: וינבל צור ישעתו. גנכו וזיכו, כמו שנאמר אחוריים
 אל היכל ה' וגוי, אין נבול גדול מזה: (טז) יקנאהו. הצעירו חמתו וקנאחו:
 בתועבות. צמעשים תעווצים, כגון משכב זכור וכשפים, שנאמר צכס
 תועבה: (יז) לא אלה. כתרוממו דלית צכון נרוך, אלו היה צכס נרוך לא
 היתה קנאה כפולה כמו עכשיו: חדשים מקרוב באו. אפילו האומות לא
 היו רגילים צכס. נכרי שחיה רואה אותם, היה אומר זה אלס יהודי: לא
 שערום אבתיכם. לא יראו מהם לא עמדה שערחם מפניהם. דרך שערות
 האדם לעמוד מחמת יראה, כך נדרש צספרי. ויש לפרש עוד שערות לשון
 ושעירים ירקדו שם², שעירים הם שדים. לא עשו אצותיכם שעירים הללו:
 (יח) תשי. תשכח. ורצותינו דרשו, כשצא להיעיב לכס אדם מכעיסין לפניו
 ומתעיס כחו מלהיעיב לכס³: אל מחוללך. מויליך מרחס, לשון יחולל
 אילות⁴, חיל כיולדה⁵: (כ) מה אחריתם. מה תעלה צכס צסופס: בי דור
 תהפוכות המה. מהפכין ראוני לכעס: לא אמן בם. אין גדולי נכרים צכס,
 כי הוריתם דרך טובה וסרו ממנה: אמן. לשון ויהי אומן⁶, נודרטיורי⁷

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

Seder Hadoros relates that Ramban once confronted his former student, named Avner, and asked him why he had strayed from the path of observant Judaism. Avner replied that Ramban had once taught that "everything is to be found in the Song of Ha'azinu," and Avner found the idea so utterly preposterous that it led him to lose faith. When Ramban stated that he still held by his assertion, Avner challenged him, "If so, where is my name to be found in the song?" Ramban turned to the wall, praying to God, and it soon occurred to

him that the third letter of each word in verse 26 spelled Avner's name: (רִי אַבְנֵר) אֶמְרִיתִי אֶפְאִיהֶם אֲשַׁבִּיתָהּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ זִכְרָם. On hearing this, Avner repented and mended his ways.

Even though Avner had strayed far from the path of observance, his name was nevertheless recorded in the Torah with his title, **Reb** Avner, referring to his status as a fully observant Jew, after he had returned—for this was indeed his true essence.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5742)

FOURTH
READING

- ¹⁶ *They made him furious with alien (worship);
They made Him angry with abominable acts.*
- ¹⁷ *They sacrificed to demons, which have no power,
Deities with which they were not acquainted,
New (idols) that just arrived (and were not even known by idolaters themselves),
Which your fathers did not fear.*
- ¹⁸ *You forgot the Rock Who gave birth to you;
You forgot the God Who delivered you (from the womb).*
- ¹⁹ *God saw this and became angry,
Provoked by His sons and daughters.*
- ²⁰ *He said: I will hide My face from them;
I will see what their end will be.
For they are a generation that changes (My goodwill into anger);
Children that have no (signs of My good) upbringing.*
- ²¹ *They have made Me furious with something that is not a god,
Provoked My anger with their nonsense.
So I will make them furious by a nation devoid (of a name),
I will provoke their anger with a vile (heretical) nation.*
- ²² *For a fire burned in My nostrils,
And it will blaze (in you) to the lowest depths (of your foundations).
It will consume (your) land and its produce,
Setting aflame (Jerusalem which is), founded upon mountains.*
- ²³ *I will heap misfortunes upon them.
I will use up My arrows on them.*
- ²⁴ *They will sprout hair from famine, be attacked by flying (demons),
And be cut down by (the Demon) Meriri.
I will send animal's teeth upon them,
With the venom of those (snakes) that slither in the dust.*
- ²⁵ *From outside (the city), the sword (of invading armies) will bereave (them),
And terror (will destroy) the chambers (of the heart),
(Of even) young men and maidens,
Suckling babes with old men.*
- ²⁶ *I said (in My heart) that I would scatter them,
Causing their memory to cease from mankind.*

רש"י

ונמלט מן החרב חדרי לבו נוקפים עליו מחמת אימה וכו' מת וכולך צב.
דבר אחר, ומחדרים אימה, שצבית תהיה אימת דבר, כמו שנאמר כי עלה
מות בחלוניו¹⁸, וכן תרגם אוגולוס. דבר אחר, מחוץ תשכל חרב, על מה
שעשו בחולות, שנאמר ומספר חולות ירושלים שמתם מזבחות לבושת¹⁹;
ומחדרים אימה. על מה שעשו בחדרי חדרים, שנאמר אשר זקני ישראל
עושים איש בחדרי משכיתו²⁰: (כו) אמרתי אפאימהם. אמרתי כלבי אפאה

שנאמר וזני רשף יגזיבו עוף¹⁵, והם שדים: וקטב מרירי. וכריתות שד
שמו מרירי¹⁶. קטב. כריתה, כמו אהי קטבך שאל¹⁷: ושן בהמות. מעשה
היה והיו הרחלים נושכין וממיתין: חמת זוחלי עפר. ארס נחשים
המהלכים על גחונם על העפר, כמים הזוחלים על הארץ. זחילה לשון מרוצת
המים על העפר, וכן כל מרוצת דבר המשפסף על העפר וכולך: (כז) מחוץ
תשכל חרב. מחוץ לעיר תשכלם חרב גייסות: ומחדרים אימה. כשזורה

אֲכַבֵּל מִבְּנֵי אֲנָשָׁא הוֹכֵרְנִיהוּן: כו אלוֹלֶפוֹן רְגָזָא דְסִנְאָה בְּנִישׁ דְלָמָא יִתְרַבְּרַב בְּעַל דְבָבָא דְלָמָא יִמְרוּן וְדִנְאָ תְקִיפַת לְנָא וְלֹא מִן קְרָם וְיִ הִוֵּת כָּל דָּא: כז אַרְי עִם מֵאֲבָדֵי עֵיזָה אֲנִין וְלִית בְּהוֹן סוֹבְלִתְנִין: כט אֵלו חֲכִימוֹ אֲסַתְכְּלוּ בְדָא סְבָרוּ מָא יְהִי בְסוֹפִיהוּן: ל אֵיבְדִין יְרֻדוּף חַד אֲלָפָא וְתַבְרִין יְעַרְקוּן לְרַבּוּתָא אֲלָהוּן (אַרְי) תְקִיפְהוֹן מְסַרְנִין וְיִ אֲשַׁלְמִנוּן: לא אַרְי לֹא כְתַקְפָּנָא תְקַפְהוֹן וּבְעֵלֵי דְבְבָנָא הוּוּ דִנְנָא: לב אַרְי כְּפּוֹרְעָנוּת עֵמָא דְסָרוּם פּוֹרְעָנוּתְהוֹן וְלִקּוּתְהוֹן בְּעֵם עֵמוּרָה מְחַתְהוֹן בִּישִׁין פְּרִישִׁי חֲוִין וְתַשְׁלַמַת עוֹבְדִיהוֹן בְּמַרְוֹתְהוֹן: לד הָא כְּמַרְתַּ תְּנִינָא כֶּס פּוֹרְעָנוּתְהוֹן וְכִרִישׁ פְּתִי חֲוִין אֲכּוּרָאִין: לה הָלֹא כֹל עוֹבְדִיהוֹן נִלְוִן קְרָמֵי נְגִיזִין לְיוֹם דִּינָא בְּאוּצְרֵי: לח קְרָמֵי פּוֹרְעָנוּתָא וְאַנָּא אֲשַׁלְם לְעַדְן דִּינְלָוִן מֵאֲרֵהוֹן אַרְי קָרִיב יוֹם תְּבַרְהוֹן וּמִבְּעַ דְעֵתִיד לְהוּן: לו אַרְי דִּין וְיִ

מֵאֲנוּשׁ וְזָכְרָם: כו לֹוִלִי בְּעֵם אוֹיֵב אֲגוּר פֶּן־יִנְכְּרוּ צָרִימוּ פֶן־ יֵאָמְרוּ יִדְנִו רָמָה וְלֹא יְהוּה פֶּעַל כָּל־זֹאת: כז כִּי־גוֹי אֲבָד עֲצוֹת הִמָּה וְאִין בָּהֶם תְּבוּנָה: (חמישי) כט לו חֲכָמוֹ יִשְׁכִּילוּ זֹאת יִבְיִנו לְאַחֲרֵיתָם: ל אֵיכָה יִרְדֶּף אַחַד אֶלְפָּ וּשְׁנַיִם יִגִּיסוּ רַבְבָּה אִם־לֹא כִי־צוּרִם מְכָרִם וַיְהוּה הַסְּגִירָם: לא כִּי לֹא כְּצוּרְנוּ צוּרִם וְאֵיבִינוּ פְּלִילִים: לב כִּי־מִגְּפָן סָדֵם נִפְגְּם וּמִשְׁדָּמַת עֵמָרָה עֲנִבְמוּ עֲנִבֵי־רוּשׁ אֲשַׁבְּלַת מִרְרַת לָמוּ: לד חַמַּת תְּנִינָם יִיגְם וְרֹאשׁ פְּתָנִים אֲכּוּר: לה הֲלֹא־הוּא פָּמָם עֵמָדֵי חֲתוּם בְּאוּצְרֵיתִי: לח לִי נָקָם וְשָׁלֵם לְעֵת תַּמוּט רַגְלָם כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֵיזָם וְחָשׁ עֲתִדַת לָמוּ: לו כִּי־יִדִין יְהוּה עִמּוֹ וְעַל־עֲבָדָיו

ש"י

מורכב למעלה. אמרתי בלבי אפאיכס ואשצית זכרם, לפי שמעשיכס מעשה סדום ועמורה: שדמות. שדה תצואה, כמו ושדמות לא עשה אוכל, צדמות קדונו: ענבי רוש. עשז מר: אשבלת מררת למו. משקה מר ראוי להם, לפי מעשיכס פורענות. וכן תרגם אונקלוס ותושלמת עובדיהו כמרותהו: (ג) חמת תנינים יינם. כתרגומו הא כמרת תניניא כס פורענותהו, הנה כמיריות נחשים כוס משתה פורענות: וראש פתנים. כוסס, שהוא אכזר לשוך. אויב אכזרי יצא ויפרע מהס: (ד) הלא הוא במוס עמדי. כתרגומו כסצורים הס ששכחתי מעשיכס, כולס גנוזים ושמורים לפני: הלא הוא. פרי גפנס ותצואת שדמותס כמוס עמדי: (ה) לי נקם ושלם. עמי נכון ומזומן פורענות נקס וישלם להם כמעשיכס הנקס ישלם להם גמולס. ויש מפרשים ושלם שס דבר, כמו ושלוס, והוא מגרסת והדבר אין צהס, כמו והדבור. ואימתי אשלם להם. לעת תמוט רגלם. כשתחוס זכות אבותס שהן סמוכין עליו: כי קרוב יום אידם. כשארלה להביא עליהס יום אידס קרוב ומזומן לפני להביא על ידי שלוחים הרבה: וחש עתדות למו. ומכר יצואו העתידות להס: וחש. כמו ימכר ויחש. עד כאן העיד עליהס משה דברי תוכחה להיות השירה הזאת לעד כשתצא עליהס הפורענות. ידעו שאני הודעתים מראש. מכאן ואילך העיד עליהס דברי תנחומין שיצואו עליהס ככלות הפורענות ככל אשר אמר למעלה⁷ והיה כי יצואו עליך כל הדברים האלה בצרכה והקללה וגו' ושז ה' אלכיד את שבותך וגו': (ו) בי ידיך ה'

אותם. ויש לפרש אפאיכס אשיתס פאה להשליכס מעלי הפקר. ודוגמתו מלינו צעזרא ותתן להס ארץ ממלכות ועממים ותחלקס לפאה¹, להפקר. וכן חזרו מנחס. ויש פותרים אותו כתרגומו יחול רוגזי עליהו, ולא יתכן, שאס כן היה לו לכתוב אפאיכס אחת לשמוש ואחת ליסוד, כמו אצור², אשמילכס צמו פי³, והא' התיכונה אינה ראוייה צו כלל. ואונקלוס תרגם אחר לשון הצרייתא השנוייה צספרי החולקת תיבה זו לשלש תיבות אמרתי אף אי הס, אמרתי צאפי אתנס כאילו אינס, שיאמרו רואיכס עליכס איה הס: (ז) לולי בעס אויב אגור. אס לא שכעס האויב כנוס עליהס להשחית ואס יוכל להס וישחיתס יתלה הגדולה צו וצאלהיו ולא יתלה הגדולה צו, וזהו שנאמר פן ינכרו לרימו, ינכרו הדבר לתלות גבורתי צנכרי, שאין הגדולה שלו: פן יאמרו ידנו רמה וגו'. כי אותו גוי אצוד עזות המה: (ח) ואין בהם תבונה. שאילו היו חכמים ישכילו זאת, איכה ירדוף וגו': (ט) יבינו לאחריהם. יתנו לצ להתצונן לכוף פורענותס של ישראל: (י) איבה ירדף אחד. ממנו אלף מישראל: אם לא כי צורם מכרם וה' הסגירם. מכרס ומסרס צידנו. דילצר⁴ צלע⁵: (יא) כי לא בצורנו צורם. כל זה היה להס לאויבים להציון שהסס הסגירס ולא להס ולא להיכס הנלחון, שהרי עד הנה לא יכלו כלום אלהיכס כנגד זורנו, כי לא כסלענו סלעס. כל זר שצמקרא לשון סלע: ואיבינו פלילים. ועכשיו אויביו שופטים אותנו, שהרי זורנו מכרנו להס (ס"א הרי שזורנו מכרנו להס): (יב) בי מגפן סדום גפנם.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Is the ratio of one member of the enemy chasing one thousand of Israel a fair punishment? (v. 30)

Tosfos: When speaking of God's "measure of retribution" (the enemy chasing away the Jewish people), there is a ratio of 1:1000, "How can one (of us) pursue a thousand (of Israel)." Yet, when speaking of God's corresponding "measure of benevolence," the Torah states (in Parshas Bechukosai), "Five of you will be able to chase away a hundred" (Vayikra 26:8), a ratio of just 1:20. How is this to be reconciled with the principle that "God's measure of benevolence always exceeds His measure of retribution"?

In truth, however, one cannot compare these two cases. For the verse in Parshas Bechukosai is referring to the annihilation of the enemy, "Five of you will be able to chase away a hundred....They will fall by the sword before you" (ibid.), whereas the verse here is speaking only of chasing away the enemy. Thus, it would be unreasonable to compare the two cases (Sotah 11a).

MASKIL LEDAVID: Alternatively, one could argue that the verse in Parshas Bechukosai is referring to five of the weakest members of the Jewish army, chasing away a hundred members of the enemy, as Rashi writes there explicitly. Whereas here, the verse is speaking of one of the strongest members of the enemy army.

FIFTH
READING

- ²⁷ *If it were not for the enemy's anger heaped up (against them),
Lest their adversaries misconstrue (their power) to a foreign (power);
Lest they claim, 'Our hand was triumphant!'
And, 'It was not God who did all of this!'*
- ²⁸ *For (the enemy of Israel) is a nation devoid of good advice,
And they have no understanding (to see that their victory would come from God).*
- ²⁹ *If they were wise, they would understand this;
they would reflect upon (Israel's) demise.*
- ³⁰ *(They would have thought): How can one (of us) pursue a thousand (of Israel),
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock has sold them out,
And God has delivered them (into our hands)?*
- ³¹ *For their rock is not (a true power) like our Rock.
(If) our enemies judge (and defeat us it is because our Rock has decreed so).*
- ³² *(God says: I wish to scatter Israel) because their vine is of the vine of Sodom,
and of the (grain) fields of Amorah;
Their grapes are grapes of bitterness,
They (deserve) clusters (with) bitter juice.*
- ³³ *Their (cup of punishing) wine (will be like) the bitter venom of serpents,
and the cruel poison of cobras.*
- ³⁴ *Is not (the evidence of all their wicked actions) stored away with Me,
Sealed up in My treasuries?*
- ³⁵ *Within Me vengeance is (prepared), and it will repay,
At the moment their foothold (of merit of their fathers) falters.
(As soon as I decide to punish them) the day of their reckoning (will be) close,
And what is destined for them will happen quickly."*
- ³⁶ *When God will judge His people (and bring these sufferings upon them),
He will (then) change His mind about His servants,*

TORAS MENACHEM

ONE VERSUS A THOUSAND (v. 30)

Tosfos notes verse 30 appears to contradict the principle, "God's measure of benevolence always exceeds His measure of retribution." For here, when the Jewish people are being punished, we see that they are defeated by the enemy in a ratio of 1:1000; whereas in *Parshas Bechukosai*, where "God's measure of benevolence" is described, the ratio is just 1:20.

While the concept that "God's measure of benevolence always exceeds His measure of retribution," is not mentioned by *Rashi* in his commentary to the Torah, it is nevertheless an easily understood principle which even a child might come to unaided. Why, then, did *Rashi* not address *Tosfos'* question, seeing that *Rashi's* wrote his commentary to address every difficulty that arises at the literal level?

Tosfos answers that it is not fair to compare the two verses, here and in *Parshas Bechukosai*, since the former is speaking of one army chasing another, whereas the latter discusses one army destroying another.

However this still does not appear to fully clarify the matter at the literal level, for it only leaves us with a further question: Is it a greater accomplishment to kill a few soldiers, or to chase away a larger number? Since *Rashi* does not attempt to clarify this matter, we can presume that he did not accept the solution of *Tosfos*.

Another solution [offered by **Maskil leDavid**] is that the differing ratios arise from the fact that our verse speaks of strong soldiers, whereas the verse in *Parshas Bechukosai* speaks of weak soldiers. However this again leaves us with a similar unresolved question: Is it a greater accomplishment for weak soldiers to defeat a small army, or for strong soldiers to defeat a larger army?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi did not address this issue, as he deemed it to be self-evident from the verse itself. The verse states, "(They would have thought): How can one (of us) pursue a thousand (of Israel), and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock has sold them out, and God has delivered them

דינא דעמיה ופורהנות עבדוהי צדיקא
 יתפרע ארי גלי גדמוהי דבעדן דתתקף
 עליהון מחת סנאה יהון מטלטלין ושביקין:
 לו וימר אן דחלתהון תקיפא דהון רחיצין
 בה: לה די תרב נקסתהון הון אכלין שתן
 חמר נספיהון יקומון כען ויסעדונכון יהון
 עליכון מגן: לט חיו כען ארי אנא אנא הוא
 ולית אלה בר מני אנא ממת ומחה מחינא
 ואף מסינא ולית מן ידי משינב: מ ארי
 אתקנית בשמיא בית שכתתי ואמרת קום
 אנא לעלמין: מא אם על חד תרין כחיו

יִתְנַחֵם כִּי יִרְאֶה כִּי־אָזַלְתָּ יָד וְאָפַס עֲצוּר וְעִזּוּב: לו וְאָמַר אֲנִי
 אֱלֹהֵימוֹ צוּר חֲסִיוֹ בּוֹ: לה אֲשֶׁר תִּלָּב זְבַחֵימוֹ יֹאכְלוּ יִשְׁתּוּ יִין
 נְסִיכָם יִקְוּמוּ וְיַעֲזֹרְכֶם יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה: לט רְאוּ אֶתְהָה כִּי
 אָנֹכִי אָנֹכִי הוּא וְאִין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי אָנֹכִי אֲמִית וְאֲחִיָּה מְחַצְתִּי
 וְאִנִּי אֲרַפָּא וְאִין מִיָּדִי מִצִּיל: [ששין] מ כִּי־אֲשָׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדִי
 וְאֲמַרְתִּי הִי אֲנֹכִי לְעֵלָם: מא אִם־שְׁנוֹתַי בִּרְקַח חֲרָבִי וְתֹאחֲזוּ

כ"ש"י

החמה והלנה, כלומר שהיו צטוחין צו להגן עליהם מן הרעה: (לח) אשר חלב
 זבחימו. היו אותן אלהות אוכלים שהיו מקריבין לפנייהם ושוחין יין נסיכס:
 יהי עליכם סתרה. אותה האור יהיה לכם מחסה ומסתור: (לט) ראו עתה.
 הבינו מן הפורענות שהצאתי עליכם ואין לכם מושע ומן החשועה שאושעכם
 ואין מוחה ביד: אני אני הוא. אני להשפיל ואני להרים: ואין אלהים עמדי.
 עומד כנגדי למחות: עמדי. דוגמתי וכמוני: ואין מידי מציל. הפושעים צי:
 (מ) כי אשא אל שמים ידי. כי צהרון חפי אשא ידי אל עלמי שצועה:
 ואמרת חי אנכי. לשון שצועה הוא [כמו חי אני נאס ה' אס לא כאשר דצרתס
 בצאנטי⁵ אף כאן] אני נשבע חי אנכי: (מא) אם שנותי ברק חרבי. אס אשנן
 את לבב חרבי, כמו למען היות לה צרק פלגדו"ר: ותאחז במשפט ידי. להניח
 מדת רחמים בצויצי שהרעו לכם, אשר אני קלפתי מעט והמכ עזרו לרעה⁵.

עמו. כשישפוט אותם ציסורין הללו האמורות עליהם, כמו כי צס ידיו
 עמים¹. כי זה חינו משמש בלשון דהא, לתת טעם לדברים של מעלה, אלא לשון
 תחלת דבור, כמו כי תצואו אל הארץ², כשיצואו עליהם משפטים הללו ויתגחס
 הקצ"ה על עצדיו לשוצ ולרחס עליהם: יתנחם. לשון הפך מחשבה להיטיב או
 להרע: כי יראה כי אזלת יד. כשיראה כי יד החויצ הולכת וחוקת מאד
 עליהם ואפס זהס עזור ועוצ: עצור. נושע על ידי עולר ומושל שיעולר זהס:
 עזוב. על ידי עוזב. עולר הוא המושל העולר צעס שלא ילכו מפחרים בלאחס
 ללצח על החויצ. בלשון לע"ז מיינטוגדו"ר. עולר, הוא הנושע צמעולר המושל.
 עזוב, מחוזק, כמו ויעזבו את ירושלים עד החומה³, איך לא עזבה עיר תהלה⁴.
 עולר מיינטוגדו"ר. עזוב אינפורלי"ד: (לו) ואמר. הקצ"ה עליהם: אי
 אלהימו. עזודת אלילים שעצדו: צור חסיו בו. הסלט שהיו מתכסין צו מפני

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does "I injure and I heal" come after "I cause death and I bring to life" ? (v. 39)

TALMUD: Rava noted an inconsistency between two statements. The verse states, "I cause death and I bring to life," and then it states, "I injure and I heal." If He can bring to life, does it not go without saying that He can heal?

Rather, God is saying: To the same person that I bring death, I will bring life, just as I heal the same person that I injure. [Likewise,] our Sages taught: When the verse states, "I cause death and I bring to

life," you might think that it is speaking of the natural phenomenon that one person dies and another comes to life. Therefore, the verse states, "I strike and I injure," to teach you that just as one person is injured and then healed, so too, this same person who dies, is brought to life. From here we have a proof from the Torah that the dead will be revived.

Another interpretation: First, I will bring to life those that I caused to die [and the injuries that they had when they died, will temporarily persist]. Then I will heal the injuries that I caused (Pesachim 68a).

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(into our hands)?" I.e. we are not speaking here about a simple war between Israel and its enemies, but rather, a case where the enemy was attacking Israel through God's direct intervention.

At the literal level, the principle that, "God's measure of benevolence always exceeds His measure of retribution," only applies in a case where Israel is fighting its enemies without the direct intervention of God. Then we would argue that the Jewish people do not deserve to be punished at war for their sins (1:1000) to a greater degree than they are rewarded at war for their merits (1:20).

However, in an exceptional case where "their Rock has sold them out, and God has delivered them," the above logic clearly does not apply.

In fact, when God intervenes, not even one soldier is required to secure a defeat of even a thousand soldiers, as we find in the case of the Egyptian army, which numbered many thousands and yet drowned at sea, without the need to be fought at all.

Thus, the fact that even one soldier is required here is an expression of God's kindness, because in truth, not even that one is required.

However, in Parshas Bechukosai, the Torah is speaking of the usual scenario, where God does not make any direct intervention. And in such a case we are promised, "If you pursue (the study of) My laws (in order to) guard My commands and observe them...Five of you will be able to chase away a hundred...They will fall by the sword before you."

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5733)

🔗 "I CAUSE DEATH AND I BRING TO LIFE" (v. 39)

The Talmud raises the question as to why the Torah states "I injure and I heal," which would seem to be an obvious fact, having just read, "I cause death and I bring to life."

At first glance this appears to be a question at the literal level. Why then does Rashi not address it?

When He sees that the power (of the enemy) is increasing,
And no one (among Israel has a source of) salvation or help.

³⁷ Then He will say: Where is their deity (that they worshiped),
The rock in which they trusted?

³⁸ Which ate the fat of their sacrifices,
And drank the wine of their libations?
Let them stand up and help you!
Let them be your shelter!

³⁹ See now that it is Me! I am the One!
There is no god (to stand against) Me.
I cause death and I bring to life.
I injure and I heal.
And no one can rescue from My Hand (those who sin against Me)!

SIXTH
READING

⁴⁰ For (when the Jewish people repent, I will turn My anger upon the nations!*)
I (will) raise up My Hand to (Myself in) heaven,
And say: Just as I live forever,

⁴¹ (I swear that) when I sharpen the blade of My sword,
And My hand grasps judgment (to punish the enemies of Israel),

T O R A S M E N A C H E M

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi did not find it necessary to address the *Talmud's* question here, as with a knowledge of *Rashi's* prior comments, the matter can be worked out with simple logic.

In *Parshas Mishpatim*, the Torah states, "If two men quarrel, and one strikes the other...he must (pay all) his medical (fees)." (*Shemos* 21:18-19, according to *Rashi*). From here the reader will have gathered that, at the literal level of scriptural interpretation, God does not heal the sick directly, but rather, through the agency of a doctor.

Thus our verse, "I injure and I heal," is not superfluous, for it teaches us a new piece of information: that, in some cases, God heals an injury directly, without the intervention of a doctor.

And the distinction between these two cases is made clear by scripture. When the injury is caused by man ("two men quarrel, and one strikes the other"), then the cure comes (from God, but) via the agency of man, i.e. a doctor.

But when the injury is caused by God ("I injure"), as a punishment for sin, then the cure also comes directly from God ("I heal").

PROOF FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD

In clarifying *Rashi's* approach here, we appear to have created another problem. For in rejecting the *Talmud's* interpretation, we also appear to have rejected the *Talmud's* conclusion, "From here we have a proof from the Torah that the dead will be revived."

Is it now the case that, at the literal level of scriptural interpretation (adhered to by *Rashi*,) our verse does *not* provide proof that the dead will ultimately be revived?

In truth, however, at the literal level, our verse *must* be speaking of the death and subsequent life of the *same* person, for otherwise the verse would not be teaching the reader anything new. The reader already knows that God created the heavens and the earth (*Bereishis* 1:1), and that "there is none other besides Him," (*Devarim* 4:35), so if the verse "I bring to life," simply means that God causes new people to be born in this world, then the verse is not teaching the reader something that he did not know already. Clearly then, the verse, "I cause death and I bring to life," must be referring to the same person, who first dies and then comes back to life.

So, in the final analysis we do indeed "have a proof from the Torah," at the literal level, "that the dead will be revived."

But we are now left with a further problem. For having proved that it is *self-evident*, at the literal level, that our verse refers to the revival of the dead, why did the *Talmud* need to devise an elaborate proof for this point?

The answer lies in the fact that the *Talmud* was written for a readership which was familiar with Talmudic teachings, whereas *Rashi's* commentary was written for those who were beginning their studies. Thus, the *Talmud* found it necessary to *prove* that our verse indicates that the dead will be revived, despite the fact that the matter appears to be obvious at the literal

* At first glance, verse 40 represents a sudden change of topic which appears to be out of context with the verses that precede it. For the previous verses describe the sins of the Jewish people, whereas from verse 40, the topic switches to describe God's punishment of the *nations* who harmed Israel. Furthermore, the two passages are connected by the word **כִּי** (meaning "for," or "because") at the beginning of verse 40, suggesting that the reason why God will punish the nations is *because* the Jewish people will sin! *Rashi* addresses this matter by explaining that the use of the word **כִּי** here suggests: "For in My anger, I will raise up My hand to Myself, making an oath." Where do we see God's anger being mentioned? In *Parshas Nitzavim* it is written that when the Jewish people will repent, "God will place all these curses upon your enemies" (*Devarim* 30:7), which includes the curse that "I will become very angry with them" (ibid. 31:17). Thus, according to *Rashi* the verse is suggesting that *after* the Jewish people repent, God will *redirect* His anger towards the nations (Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu* 5736).

בְּרָקָא מִסּוּף שְׁמַיָא וְעַד סוּף שְׁמַיָא תְּתַגְלִי
 חֲרָבִי וְתִתְקַף בְּדִינָא יְדֵי אֲתִיב פּוֹרְעָנוּתָא
 לְסַנְאֵי וְלִבְעָלֵי דְבָבֵי אֲשֵׁלָם: מִבְּ אֲרָוֵי גִירֵי
 מִדְּמָא וְחֲרָבֵי תִקְטוּלָא בְּעַמְמַיָא מִדָּם קַמִּילָן
 וְשִׁבְזִין לְאַעְדָּאָה כְּתַרְזִין מְרִישׁ סְנָאָה
 וּבְעַל דְּבָבָא: מִגְ שִׁבְחוּ עַמְמַיָא עִמָּה אֲרֵי
 פּוֹרְעָנוּתָא עֲבָדוּהִי צִדִיקָא יִתְפָּרַע וּפּוֹרְעָנוּתָא
 יִתִּיב לְסַנְאוּדֵי וּיְכַפֵּר עַל אֲרַעָה וְעַל עִמָּה:
 מִדּ וְאַתָּא מוֹשֶׁה וּמְלִיל יֵת כָּל פְּתָנְמֵי

בְּמִשְׁפֵּט יְדֵי אָשִׁיב נֶקֶם לְצָרֵי וְלִמְשַׁנְאֵי אֲשֵׁלָם: מִבְּ אֲשִׁכִּיר
 חֲצִי מִדָּם וְחֲרָבֵי תִאֲכַל בְּשָׂר מִדָּם חָלָל וְשִׁבְיָה מִרְאֵשׁ
 פְּרַעוֹת אוֹיֵב: מִגְ הֲרַגְנוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ כִּי דַם-עֲבָדְתוּ יִקּוּם וְנֶקֶם
 יִשָּׁיב לְצָרֵי וְכִפֵּר אֲדָמְתוֹ עִמּוֹ: פ [שביעין] מִדּ וְיִבֵּא מוֹשֶׁה וְיִדְבֹר
 אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה-הַזֹּאת בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם הוּא וְהוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן-נּוֹן:

רש"י

כלפי האומות כי גוי אצד עלות המה, כמו שפירשתי תחלה עד ואויבנו פלילים: (לג) כי מגפן סדום גפנם. של אומות: ומשדמת עמורה וגוי. ולא ישימו לבם לתלות הגדולה זי: ענבמו ענבי רוש. הוא שאמר לולי כעס אויב אגור על ישראל להרעילם ולהמרירם, לפיכך אשכלות מרורות למו להלטיט אותם על מה שעשו לבני: (לג) חמת תנינם יינם. מוכן להשקותם על מה שעשוין להם: (לד) במוס עמודי. אותו הכוס, שנאמר כי כוס ציד ה' וגוי⁴: (לה) לעת תמוט רגלם. כענין שנאמר תרמסנה רגל⁵: (לו) בי ידין ה' עמו. בלשון זה משמש כי ידין בלשון דהא, ואין ידין לשון יסורין, אלא כמו כי יריב את ריבם מיד עושקיהם: בי יראה בי אזלת יד וגוי. (לז) ואמר אי אלהימו. האויב יאמר אי אלהימו של ישראל, כמו שאמר טיטוס הרשע כשגדר את הפרכה⁶, כענין שנאמר ותר ארצתי ותכסה בזה האומה אלי אוי ה' אלהיך⁷: (לט) ראו עתה בי אני וגוי. אז יגלה הקצ"ה ישועתו ויאמר ראו עתה כי אני הוא מאתי זאת עליהם הרעה ומאתי תבא עליהם הטובה: ואין מידי מצייל. מי שיליל אתכם מן הרעה אשר אביא עליכם: (מ) בי אשא אל שמים ידי. כמו כי נשאתי, תמיד אני משרה מקום שכינתי בשמים, כהרגומו אפילו חלש למעלה וגבור למטה, אימת העליון על התחתון, וכל שכן שגבור למעלה וחלש למטה: ידי. מקום שכינתי, כמו איש על ידו⁸, והיה צידי להפרע מכם, אבל אמרתי שחי אנכי לעולם, איני ממנה לפרוע, לפי שיש לי שבות בצדק, כי אני חי לעולם, ובדורות אחרונים אני נפרע מהם והיכולת צידי להפרע מן המתים ומן החיים. מלך בשר ודם שהוא הולך למות ממנה נקמתו להפרע בחייו, כי שמת ימות הוא או אויבו ונמלא שלא ראה נקמתו ממנו, אבל אני חי לעולם ואם ימותו הם ואיני נפרע בחייהם, אפרע במותם: (מא) אם שנותי ברק חרבי. הרבה אם יש שאינם תלויין, כשאשנן ברק חרבי ותאחז במשפט ידי וכו', כמו שפירשתי למעלה: (מד) הוא והושע בן נון. שצת⁹

דבר אחר ותאחז ידי את מדת המשפט להחזיק בה ולנקום נקם: אשיב נקם וגוי. למדו רבותינו באגדה מתוך לשון המקרא שאמר ותאחז במשפט ידי, לא כמדת בשר ודם מדת הקצ"ה, מדת בשר ודם זורק חץ ואינו יכול להשיבו, והקצ"ה זורק חליו ויש צידו להשיבו, כאלו אוחזין צידו, שהרי ברק הוא חלו, שנאמר כאן ברק חרבי ותאחז במשפט ידי, והמשפט הזה לשון פורענות הוא בלע"ז יושטיאל"ה: (מב) אשכיר חצי מדם. האויב: וחרבי תאכל בשר. בשר: מדם חלל ושיביה. זאת תהיה להם מעון דם חללי (ס"א חללי דם) ישראל ושיביה שצבו מהם: מראש פרעות אויב. מפשע תחלת פרעות האויב, כי כשהקצ"ה נפרע מן האומות פוקד עליהם עונם ועונות אבותיהם מראשית פרעה שפרעו בישראל: (מג) הרגיבו גוים עמו. לאותו הזמן ישצחו האומות את ישראל ראו מה שצחה של אומה זו שדצקו בהקצ"ה בכל התלחות שעברו עליהם ולא עזבוהו, יודעים היו צטובו וצשצחו: בי דם עבדיו יקום. שפכות דמיהם כמשמעה: ונקם ישיב לצריו. על הגזל ועל החמס, כענין שנאמר מזרים לשמה תהיה ואדום למדבר שממה מחמם בני יהודה, ואומר מחמם אחיך יעקב וגוי¹: ובפר אדמתו עמו. ויפייס אדמתו ועמו על החרות שעברו עליהם ושעשה להם האויב: ובפר. לשון רצוי ופיוס, כמו אכפרה פניו² אנחינה לרוגזיה: ובפר אדמתו. ומה היא אדמתו עמו. כשעמו מתנחמים ארצו מתנחמת, וכן הוא אומר רצית ה' ארץ³, במה רצית ארץ, שצת שצות יעקב. פנינים אחרים היא נדרשת בספרי, ונחלקו בה ר' יהודה ור' נחמיה. ר' יהודה דורש כולה כנגד ישראל, ור' נחמיה דורש כולה כנגד האומות. רבי יהודה דורש כלפי ישראל אמרתי אפאיכם, כמו שפירשתי עד ולא ה' פעל כל זאת. כי גוי אוצד עלות המה אצדו תורתי שהיא להם ענה נכונה. ואין צהם תצונה להתצונן איכה ירדוף אחד מן האומות אלף מהם אם לא כי לורם מכרם, כי לא כלורנו לורם, הכל כמו שפירשתי עד תכליתו. ור' נחמיה דורש

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level, because there is another Talmudic teaching that might lead a person to think otherwise.

The Talmud states, "There are three keys in God's hand that He will not place into the hand of any agent. And they are: the key to rain, the key to bearing children, and the key to revive the dead" (Ta'anis 2a). Thus, the student of the Talmud might come to the conclusion that our verse comes to extend this teaching to the causes of death and continued life—that rather than handing these matters to an agent, God says, "I cause death and I bring to life," directly. Consequently, if our verse has already been used to provide proof that God does these directly without an agent, then it can no longer be used to prove another point, that the revival of the dead has a basis in the Torah.

Therefore, the Talmud was forced to contradict this notion and show (through an elaborate proof) that, to the contrary, our verse does provide support for the revival of the dead.

However, Rashi presumed that his readership would not yet be familiar with the Talmudic teaching, "There are three keys in God's hand etc.," so Rashi did not need to prove that our verse could have any other meaning than its literal interpretation—that the same person to whom "I cause death, I will bring to life."

Thus, in the final analysis, "We have a proof from the Torah that the dead will be revived," both at the literal level of scripture, and according to Talmudic logic.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5740)

1 עובדי' א, י 2 באשית לב, כא 3 תהלים פה, ב 4 שם עה, ט 5 ישעיהו כו, ו 6 גיטין נו: 7 מיכה ז, י 8 במדבר ב, יז 9 לכאורה איך אפ"ל שהי' יום השבת והרי (בפשוט"ם) ביום מותו גמר לכתוב הסי' (כידוע השקו"ס גם ע"ד ההלכה ע"ז). ואולי הי' כתוב ברש"י "ש" של דיווגי", והכוונה "שררה" או "שלטון" של דיווגי, של שניהם, והמתיק שלא הבין כוונת רש"י ב"ש"י" פיענחו כבש"ס (סוטה יג): - "שבת" (ע"פ לקו"ש חכ"ס ע' 198 הערה 21, עיי"ש).

I will bring vengeance upon (them, for they are) My enemies (too).

I will repay those who hate Me.

⁴² *I will make My arrows drunk with (enemy) blood,*

And My sword will consume (their) flesh;

On account of the blood of the slain (of Israel) and the captives (seized),

From (even) the first attacks of the enemy.

⁴³ *(At that time) the nations will sing praises for His people!*

When (they see how) He will avenge the blood of His servants (that they spilled),

Inflict revenge upon His enemies (for the robberies and losses they caused),

And appease His land (and) His people (for their distress).

SEVENTH READING ⁴⁴ *Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song into the ears of the people, he and Hoshe'a the son of Nun.*

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why will the nations praise Israel? (v. 43)

RASHI: At that time, the nations will praise Israel, saying: "See how praiseworthy this nation is, that they remained attached to God throughout all the hardships that they suffered and they did not forsake Him!"

● Why are both Moshe and Yehoshua mentioned? (v. 44)

RASHI: It was a rulership of two pairs, [two leaders each with their own spokesman through whom they lectured. For complete]

authority had been taken from one and given to [be shared with] the other. Moshe appointed a spokesman for Yehoshua, for Yehoshua to lecture in Moshe's lifetime, so that the Jewish people would not say, "During your teacher's lifetime you did not dare to raise your head!"

Why does Scripture here call him [here, with his prior name] "Hoshe'a"? To indicate that Yehoshua did not become arrogant, for although he was given high status, he humbled himself to be as he was at the beginning [when he was still called Hoshe'a].

TORAS MENACHEM

🕒 THE NATIONS' PRAISE OF ISRAEL (v. 43)

Verse 43 states that the nations will praise the Jewish people when they witness how God avenges those who harmed "His servants." *Rashi* adds that the content of this praise will be how "they remained attached to God throughout all the hardships that they suffered and they did not forsake Him!"

At first glance, however, *Rashi's* words seem to have no basis at the literal level. Where is there an indication in the verse itself that the nations will praise Israel because "they remained attached to God throughout all the hardships that they suffered, etc.?"

THE EXPLANATION

On reading that the nations will "sing praises" for the Jewish people, *Rashi* was troubled by an apparent inconsistency between this verse and an earlier statement made in the song of *Ha'azinu*. In verse 6, Moshe said, "Is this how you repay God, you disgraceful, unwise people? Is He not your Father, your Master? He has made you (a special nation), and established you (to be self-sufficient)." Consequently, upon reading in our verse that the nations will praise the Jewish people, *Rashi* was troubled: How is it possible that the nations will praise the Jewish people when Moshe himself spoke in the most unflattering terms about Israel?

Clearly, *Rashi* concluded, the two verses must be speaking of two very different times. Therefore *Rashi* wrote, "At that time, the nations will praise Israel," indicating that Moshe was speaking here of distant, future events.

What could possibly bring about this transformation, from a "disgraceful, unwise people," to one that even the nations of the world will praise?

Rashi concluded that this must be the effect of the Jewish people's remarkable stamina to withstand a long and difficult exile, i.e. "that they

remained attached to God throughout all the hardships that they suffered, and they did not forsake Him!"

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu* 5741)

🕒 MOSHE & YEHOSHUA (v. 44)

Rashi's self-declared task is to explain the literal meaning of scripture, and not to cite *Talmudic* and *Midrashic* teachings which are not connected with a verse at the literal level. But in his commentary to verse 44, he cites no less than three apparently non-literal teachings of the Sages: a.) About the "rulership of two pairs," from the *Talmud* (*Sotah* 13b); b.) The appointment of Yehoshua's "spokesman" (*Sifri*, near beginning of *Vayeilech*); and, c.) The reason why our verse uses the name Hoshe'a, and not Yehoshua (*Sifri* to this verse). Why are these three teachings necessary to understand our verse at the literal level?

A further problem here, is that our verse is not the first occasion that the Torah refers to the joint role of Moshe and Yehoshua on the last day of Moshe's life. In *Parshas Vayeilech*, the Torah also states: "Moshe and Yehoshua went, and stood in the Tent of Meeting" (31:14). Furthermore, at the very beginning of *Parshas Vayeilech*, Moshe also touched on this matter, when he said "I am no longer (permitted by God) to lead (you)" (*ibid.* v. 2). So why did *Rashi* not address this issue of the joint leadership when the matter first arose, rather than here?

THE EXPLANATION

Even though Moshe declared at the beginning of *Parshas Vayeilech* that his leadership was ending, he immediately clarified that this was because "God said to me, 'You may not cross this (River) Jordan,'" (*ibid.*), suggesting that his leadership was actually going to continue until the Jewish people had crossed the Jordan. So from *Parshas Vayeilech*, there is no proof, at the literal level, that Yehoshua had yet been given any leadership position at all.

תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּהּ הָיָה קָדָם עָמָּה הוּא וְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּר נון: מה וְשִׁיעֵי מוֹשֶׁה לְמִלְלָא ית כָּל פְּתֻמָּיָא הָאֵלִין עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: מו וְאָמַר לְהוֹן שׁוּן לְכַבּוֹן לְכָל פְּתֻמָּיָא דִּי אָנָּה מִסְּחָד בְּכוּן יוֹמָא דִּין דִּי תִּפְקֻדְנֹן ית בְּנִיבּוֹן לְמַטְר לְמַעְבַּד ית כָּל פְּתֻמָּי אורִיתָא הָרָא: מו אָרִי לָא פְתֻנָם רִיקָא הוּא מְבִכּוֹן אָרִי הוּא תִּיבּוֹן וּבְפְתֻמָּיָא דִּין תּוֹרְכוּן יוֹמִין עַל אֲרַעָא דִּי אַתּוֹן עֲבָרִין ית יִרְדְנָא לְתַמְּן לְמִיתְרָתָה: מה ומִלִּיל יי עִם מוֹשֶׁה בְּכַרְן יוֹמָא דִּין לְמִימְרָ: מט סָק לְטוֹרָא דְעֲבָרָא דִּין טוֹרָא דְנָבו דִּי בְּאֲרַעָא דְמוֹאָב דִּי עַל אִפִּי יִרְחוּ וְחוּי ית אֲרַעָא דְכְנַעַן דִּי אָנָּה יְהִב לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַחְסָנָא: נ וּמוֹת בְּטוֹרָא דִּי אַתְּ סָלַק לְתַמְּן וְאַתְּכֻנַשׁ לְעַמְּךָ בְּמָא דְמִית אַהֲרֹן אַהֲרֹן בְּהוֹר טוֹרָא וְאַתְּכֻנַשׁ לְעַמְּךָ: נא עַל דִּי

מה וַיְכַל מוֹשֶׁה לְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: מו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְכָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מַעֲיֵד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲוֹם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: מו כִּי לֹא־דָבַר רַק הוּא מִכֶּם כִּי־הוּא תִּיַיְכֶם וּבְדָבַר הַזֶּה תִּאָּרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: פ [מפסטר] מה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מוֹשֶׁה בְּעֵצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר: מט עֲלֶה אֶל־הַר הָעֵבְרָיִם הַזֶּה הֶרֶם־נָבוּ אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יִרְחוֹ וּרְאֵה אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַחֲזָוָה: נ וּמַת בְּהַר אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסַף אֶל־עַמְּיָךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר־כִּמְת אַהֲרֹן אֶחֱיָךְ בְּהַר הָהָר וַיֶּאֱסַף אֶל־עַמּוּי: נא עַל אֲשֶׁר

רש"י

בשלושה מקומות⁶ נאמר בעלם היום הזה, נאמר בנח בעלם היום הזה בא נח וגו'⁷, במראית אורו של יוס, לפי שהיו בני דורו אומרים בכך וכך אם אנו מרגישים צו אין אנו מניחין אותו ליכנס בחיבה, ולא עוד אלא אנו נוטלין כשילין וקרדומות ומצקעין את החיבה. אמר הקצ"ה הריני מכניסו בחני היום, וכל מי שיש צידו כח למחות יבא וימחה. במלרים נאמר בעלם היום הזה הוליא ה'י⁸, לפי שהיו מלרים אומרים בכך וכך אם אנו מרגישים זהם אין אנו מניחים אותם ללאת, ולא עוד אלא אנו נוטלין סייפות וכלי זיין וכוורגין זהם. אמר הקצ"ה הריני מוליאן בחני היום וכל מי שיש צו כח למחות יבא וימחה. אף כאן במיתתו של משה נאמר בעלם היום הזה, לפי שהיו ישראל אומרים בכך וכך אם אנו מרגישים צו אין אנו מניחין אותו, אדם שהוליאנו ממלרים וקרע לנו את היס וכווריד לנו את המן והגיו לנו את השליו והעלה לנו את הבאר ונתן לנו את התורה אין אנו מניחין אותו. אמר הקצ"ה הריני מכניסו בחני היום וכו'²: (ג) כאשר מת אהרן אחיך. בצארת מיתת שראית וחמדת אותה, שהפשיט משה את אהרן בגד ראשון

של דיוציגי היחה, נעלה רשות מזה ונחנה לזה¹, העמיד לו משה מחורגמן ליהושע, שיבא דורש בחייו, כדי שלא יאמרו ישראל בחיי רבך לא היה לך להרים ראש². ולמה קוראו כאן הושע, לומר שלא זכה דעתו עליו, שאף על פי שנתנה לו גדולה, השפיל עצמו כאשר מתחלתו²: (מו) שימו לבבכם. לריך אדם שהיו עיניו ולבו ואזניו מכוונים לדברי תורה, וכן הוא אומר בן אדם ראה צעיניך ובאזניך שמע ושים לבך וגו'³, הרי דברים קל וחומר, ומה חבנית חבית שהוא נראה לעינים ונמדד בקנה לריך אדם שהיו עיניו ואזניו ולבו מכוונים להבין, דברי תורה שהן כהררין התלוין בשערה על אחת כמה וכמה⁴: (מז) כי לא דבר רק הוא מכב. לא לחס אתם יעשים זה, כי הרבה שכן תלוי זה, כי הוא חייבם. דבר אחר אין לך דבר ריקן בחורה שאם תדרשנו שאין צו מתן שכן, תדע לך שכן אמרו ואחות לוטן תמנע⁴, ותמנע היחה פלגש וגו'⁵, לפי שאמרה איני כדאי להיות לו לאשה הלואי ואהיה פילגשו, וכל כך למה, להודיע שצחו של אצרכם שהיו שלטונים ומלכים מתאווים להדבק בצרעו²: (מח) וידבר ה' אל משה בעצם היום הזה.

TORAS MENACHEM

Likewise, the fact that "Moshe and Yehoshua went, and stood in the Tent of Meeting" (31:14), does not prove that Yehoshua had begun a new leadership position, for at the literal level, they were merely following orders from God: "Call Yehoshua and stand in the Tent of Meeting" (ibid.).

It is only upon reading in our verse, "Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song into the ears of the people, he and Hoshe'a the son of Nun," that we have clear proof of Yehoshua actually beginning a leadership role alongside Moshe.

Therefore Rashi explained, "It was a rulership of two pairs...Moshe appointed a spokesman for Yehoshua," for addressing the people by means of a spokesman was the privilege of the leader of the Jewish people, a role which Moshe and Yehoshua now shared.

However, this begs the question: Usually, a new leader begins office only after the passing of the previous leader. Why should Yehoshua's leadership have started before Moshe passed away?

To explain this, Rashi continues: "So that the Jewish people would not say, 'During your teacher's lifetime you did not dare to raise your head!'"

But the question then arises: if the whole purpose of this transfer of power is to "raise the head," of Yehoshua, why then is he called by his prior name, Hoshe'a? Rashi answers: "To indicate that Yehoshua did not become arrogant, for although he was given high status, he humbled himself as he was at the beginning"—a powerful lesson for all those who are appointed to positions of authority.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 29, p. 195ff.)

1 סוטה יג: 2 טורי 3 יחזקאל מ, ד 4 בראשית לו, כב 5 שם יב 6 משינ באברהם (לך יך, כג) "וימל ג' בעצם היום הזה" ופרש"י "לא נתיירא כו" — אינו שייך לנדוד, שהרי שם המדובר (בגזולת מדד) אברהם (ד"ב) ביום שנצטווה כו' ולא נתיירא כו", משא"כ בנדוד ד"בעצם גו" הוא מענה הקב"ה לאמירה ד"אין אנו מניחין כו". וראה בארוכה מפרשי רש"י כאן. — וי"ל שזהו שמפרט רש"י המניין ג' מקומות — למעוטי הנ"ל. וראה בארוכה שיחת ש"פ האיזני תשמ"א (לקו"ש ח"י"ט ע' 339, הערה 2). 7 שם ז, יג 8 שמות יב, נא

🕎 MOSHE'S CONCLUDING WORDS 🕎

32:45 **W**hen Moshe finished speaking all these words to all of Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “Turn your hearts to all of the words which I am bearing witness for you today, so that you will command your children to be careful to observe all the words of this Torah. ⁴⁷ For it is not an empty thing for you (for which you will not be rewarded). Rather, it is your life! Through this thing, you will lengthen your days upon the land of which you are crossing over the Jordan, to take possession.”

🕎 MOSHE IS TOLD TO ASCEND MOUNT NEVO 🕎

32:48 **G**od spoke to Moshe on that very day, saying, ⁴⁹ “Climb up the Avarite mountains here, (at) Mount Nevo—which is in the land of Mo'av that is facing Jericho—and see the Land of Cana'an, which I am giving to the children of Israel as a possession. ⁵⁰ Then die on the mountain upon which you are climbing and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aharon

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Aren't the words “on that very day” superfluous? (v. 48)

RASHI: Scripture uses the phrase “on that very day,” in three places [that have the same implication]:

[1.] Concerning Noah it is written, “On that very day...Noah came into [the Ark]...” (Bereishis 7:13), indicating that daylight was shining [when he came in]. For the people of his generation were saying, “We swear that we will not allow him to enter the Ark if we notice him! Furthermore, we will take axes [to hold back Noah] and sledgehammers to smash the ark!”

But God said, “I will have him enter in broad daylight! If anybody's hand is able to resist, let him come and resist!”

[2.] Concerning Egypt it is written, “[It happened] on that very day that God took [the children of Israel] out [of the land of Egypt]”

(Shemos 12:51). For the Egyptians were saying, “We swear that we will not allow them to leave if we notice them! Furthermore, we will take swords and weapons [of self-defense], and kill them [if need be]!”

But God said: “I will bring them out in broad daylight! If anyone is able to resist, let him come and resist!”

[3.] Likewise here, concerning Moshe's death, it is written, “on that very day.” For the Jewish people were saying, “We swear, that if we notice Moshe [is going to die], we will not let him! He is the man who brought us out of Egypt! He split the Reed Sea for us! He brought the *manna* down for us! He made flocks of quails fly over to us! He brought up the well for us! And he gave us the Torah! We will not let him [die]!”

But God said, “I will take him in broad daylight!”

TORAS MENACHEM

🕎 MOSHE'S PASSING ON THE MOUNTAIN (v. 48)

Rashi's comments to verse 48 prompt the following questions:

a.) Rashi writes, “The Jewish people were saying, ‘We swear, that if we notice Moshe [is going to die], we will not let him!’” At first glance, this appears to be utterly absurd. Life and death is something that is in the hands of God and cannot be decided by man. How could the Jewish people possibly “not let” Moshe die?

b.) Is it really necessary to know that, “Scripture uses the phrase, ‘on that very day,’ in three places, etc.”? Why was it not sufficient for Rashi to explain our verse alone?

c.) Rashi does not explain why Noah's contemporaries wished to stop him from entering the Ark, nor does he explain why the Egyptians did not want the Jewish people to leave Egypt, because the reason is obvious. So why did Rashi explain that the Jewish people did not want Moshe to die because “he is the man who brought us out of Egypt! etc.”? Surely this is obvious too?

THE EXPLANATION

In our verse, the phrase “on that very day” appears to be superfluous. Since no word in the Torah can be devoid of meaning, Rashi searched for a teaching that would explain why the Torah used this extra phrase.

Rashi concluded that the words “on that very day” allude to the Midrashic teaching that “God said, ‘I will take him in broad daylight!’” in response to the efforts of the Jewish people to avert Moshe's death.

However, at the literal level, this account is difficult to accept. For we are speaking here of the generation that entered the Land of Israel, who—unlike their parents—did not rebel against God and “remained attached to God, your God” (Devarim 4:4). So why would a righteous generation attempt to defy God's explicit wish that Moshe die at this time?

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

When the Jewish people sought to annul the decree against Moshe's passing, God did *not* reply, “If anyone is able to resist, let him come and resist!” (see *Classic Questions*). The inner reason for this is because if the Jewish people had actually resisted, they would have *indeed* reversed the Divine decree against Moshe's passing. For when the Jewish community is united, they have the power to nullify a Divine decree, even after the decree is sealed (See *Rosh Hashanah* 18a).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 346)

שקרתון במימרי בְּנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִי מִצֻּוֹת
 רָקִים מִדְּבַרְא דָּצֵן עַל דֵּי לֹא קִדְשִׁתּוֹן יְתִי בְּנוּ
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: נב אָרִי מִקְבֵּל תַּחֲזִי ית אַרְעָא
 וּלְתַמְן לֹא תַעֲוֹל לְאַרְעָא דֵּי אָנָּא יְהֵב לְבְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: פ פ פ

מְעַלְתֶּם בִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִי-מְרִיבֵת קָדֵשׁ מִדְּבַר-צֵן
 עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-קִדְשִׁתֶּם אוֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: נב כִּי מִנְּגִד
 תִּרְאֶה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי נֹתֵן
 לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: פ פ פ

נ"ב פסוקים, כל"ב סימן.

רש"י

מתקדש שם שמים, שהיו ישראל אומרים ומה הסלע הזה שאינו לשכר ולא
 לפורענות אם זכה אין לו מתן שכר ואם חטא אינו לוקה כך מקיים מלות
 זוראו אנו לא כל שכן: (נב) בי מנגד. מרחוק: תראה וגו'. כי אם לא
 תראה עכשיו לא תראה עוד בחיך: ושמה לא תבוא. וידעתי כי חזיבה
 היא לך על כן אני אומר לך עלה וראה: חסלת פרשת האזינו

והלזישו לאלעזר וכן שני וכן שלישי וראה בנו בכבודו. אמר לו משה אהרן
 אחי עלה למטה, ועלה. פשוט ידיך, ופשוט. פשוט רגליך, ופשוט. עלום עיניך,
 ועלום. קמוץ פיך, וקמוץ, והלך לו. אמר משה אשרי מי שמת צמיחה ז':
 (נא) על אשר מעלתם בי. גרמתם למעול זי: על אשר לא קדשתם
 אותי. גרמתם לי שלא אתקדש, אמרתי לכם ודברתם אל הסלע² והם הכוהו
 והולכו להכותו פעמים, וחילו דברו עמו ונתן מימיו בלא הכאה היה

TORAS MENACHEM

In order to answer this question, *Rashi* cited the fact that, "Scripture uses the phrase, "on that very day," in three places...." For by demonstrating that this phrase consistently has the connotation of a rebellion against God, *Rashi* strengthens his assertion that this too is the meaning of the phrase here.

How, indeed, did the Jewish people intend to rebel against God and avert Moshe's death? *Rashi* stresses that this case is, "likewise here..." i.e., similar in nature to the previous two cases that he cited, about Noah and the Egyptian people. Both these two cases involved a rebellious group which plotted to prevent the relocation of another party: Noah's

contemporaries wished to stop him from relocating into the Ark, and the Egyptian people planned to stop the Jewish people from leaving Egypt.

So, "likewise here," it follows that the Jewish people wished to avert Moshe's death by preventing him from relocating to another place, namely, to Mount Nevo. For God had said, "Climb up the Avarite mountains here, (at) Mount Nevo...Then die on the mountain" (v. 49-50), indicating that Moshe's death was to be the result of a Divine decree (not from natural causes), which would occur after ascending the mountain. So the people figured: If Moshe does not "climb up Mount Nevo," then the decree will not take effect, and he will not die.

died on the double mountain and was gathered to his people. ⁵¹ For, in the presence of the children of Israel, you (caused people to) betray Me at the waters of Merivas-Kadaish, in the desert of Tzin, for you did not (allow) My (Name) to be sanctified in the presence of the children of Israel. ⁵² While you will see the land from afar, you will not come there, to the land I am giving to the children of Israel.

HAFTARAHs: HA'AZINU—P. 293. SHABBOS SHUVAH—P. 290.

TORAS MENACHEM

However, the question still remains: How could a righteous generation of Jewish people attempt to *defy* God's Will and prevent Moshe from dying by Divine decree?

THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S ARGUMENT

If a person helps you, there is a Torah obligation not to be ungrateful to that person. We see this, at the literal level, from the example of first-fruits which must be taken to the Temple from one's portion of the Land of Israel, "[To show] that you are not ungrateful [to God]" (*Rashi to Devarim 26:3*).

Moshe had helped the Jewish people in so many ways: "*He is the man who brought us out of Egypt! He split the Reed Sea for us! He brought the manna down for us! He made flocks of quails fly over to us! He brought up the well for us! And he gave us the Torah!*" So the Jewish people had a Torah obligation to show gratitude to Moshe, and help him, in any way possible. Thus, when Moshe faced a decree of death, the Jewish people were obliged to help Moshe, by restraining him from going on the mountain where the decree was to be enacted.

So there were two conflicting obligations here: On the one hand, Moshe was required by the Torah to ascend the mountain. But, on the other

hand, the Jewish people were required by the Torah to ensure that Moshe did not ascend the mountain!

In the final analysis the Jewish people decided that their obligation superseded that of Moshe's, for the following reason:

The Torah states, "God spoke to Moshe on that very day, saying... 'Climb up...Mount Nevo...Then die on the mountain,'" indicating that the requirement to ascend the mountain was incumbent on Moshe *alone*. As far as the Jewish people were concerned, they had one single obligation resting upon them which they were required to carry out: to save Moshe. Even though this would, in turn, prevent Moshe from carrying out his obligation, this would nevertheless not be considered a *transgression* on Moshe's part, but rather, Moshe would be *exempt* due to circumstances beyond his control (cf. *Devarim 22:26* and *Rashi ibid.*). And this, reasoned the Jewish people, would be less of a problem than failing to discharge their own Torah obligation to save Moshe, which constituted circumstances *within* their control.

Furthermore, the very fact that God had put it within the control of the Jewish people to nullify the decree was taken as a hint by them from God that they should do everything in their power to keep Moshe alive.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 339ff.)

parshas Vezos Habrachah

פַּרְשַׁת וְזֵאת הַבְּרָכָה

☞ The Name of the Parsha ☞

Parshas Vezos Habracha (“And this is the blessing”) is the concluding Parsha of the entire Torah. It is not read on Shabbos, but on the festival of Simchas Torah. This has the following significance:

- The Torah begins with Parshas Bereishis (“In the beginning”), which teaches us the general principle that “God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called, ‘the beginning of His way,’” (Rashi to Bereishis 1:1). The subsequent parshiyos continue to discuss various details concerning how the Torah’s plan is to be enacted, but on reaching the end of the Torah we return again to the general theme and purpose of the Torah: “This is the blessing,” i.e. that God’s blessings are brought into the world via the observance of Torah.
- The blessings mentioned here by Moshe in this Parsha are considerably greater than any of the blessings given earlier in the Torah, such as those given by Yitzchak and Ya’akov. And yet, in contrast to all the other Parshiyos of the Torah, this Parsha is not read amid the

spiritually uplifting atmosphere of Shabbos, but on a weekday. (And while it is a festival day, it is nevertheless of a lower sanctity than Shabbos, as evidenced by the fact that many acts that are forbidden on Shabbos are permitted on a festival). So with Parshas Vezos Habrachah we witness two extremes: It is the Parsha which contains the most blessings, and yet it is read on a day which is of lesser holiness. This indicates that the blessings read here are very powerful, for the ability to penetrate through to a lower sphere (a weekday, as opposed to Shabbos) indicates that the blessings come from a higher source.

- Furthermore, the Parsha is called, “And this is (vezos) the blessing,” indicating that we are speaking here about blessings whose benefits are visible and apparent, to the extent that one can actually “point to it with one’s finger” (cf. Rashi to Shemos 15:2), and say, “This is the blessing!”

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Balak 5740, Sichas of 6th of Tishrei 5734 and Sichas of 6th night of Succos 5742)

א וְדַא בְּרַבְתָּא דִּי בְּרִיד מִשָּׁה נְכִינָא דִּי יַת
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קָדָם מוֹתָה: ב וְאָמַר יְיָ מְסִינִי
 אֲתַגְלִי וְזָהוּר יִקְרָה מִשְׁעִיר אֲתַחְזִי לְנָא
 אֲתַגְלִי בְּגִבְרַתָּהּ מִטּוֹרָא דְפֶאֶרְזֵן וְעִמָּה רִבְבַת
 קִדְשִׁין כְּתַב יִמְיִנָה מִגּוֹ אֲשַׁתָּא אִוְרִיתָא
 יִהְיֵב לְנָא: ג אַף חֲבִיבִינוּן לְשִׁבְטֵיָא כֹּל
 קִדְשִׁוּהִי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָא אִפְקִינוּן
 מִמְצָרִים וְאִנּוּן מִדְּבָרִין תְּחוֹת עֲנַנְךָ נְטִלִין
 עַל מִימְרָךָ: ד אִוְרִיתָא יִהְיֵב לְנָא מִשָּׁה מְסַרְהָ
 יִרְתָּא לְכַנְשַׁת יַעֲקֹב: ה וְהוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל מְלִכָא
 בְּאַתְכַּנְשׁוֹת רִישֵׁי עַמָּא כְּתִידָא שְׁבַטֵיָא
 דִּישְׂרָאֵל: ו יְחִי רְאוּבֵן לְחַיֵּי עַלְמָא וּמוֹתָא
 תְּנִינָא לֹא יָמוּת וּיִקְבְּלוּן בְּגוֹהֵי אַחְסָנְתָּהוּן
 בְּמִנְיָנְהוּן: ז וְדַא לִיהוּדָה וְאָמַר קִבֵּל יְיָ צְלוֹתָהּ
 דִּיהוּדָה בְּמִפְקָה לְקַרְבָּא (לְאַתְחָא קְרָבָא)
 וּלְעַמָּה תְּתִיבְנָה לְשִׁלָּם יְדוּהִי יַעֲבֹדן לָהּ
 פּוֹרְעֵנוּתָא מִסְנָאוּהִי וְסַעֲיֵד מִבְּעִלֵּי דְבִבּוּהִי
 הוּי לָהּ: ח וּלְלוּי אָמַר תְּנַמְיָא וְאוֹרִיָא
 אֲלִבְשַׁתָּא לְגַבְרָא דְאַשְׁתַּכַּח חֲסִידָא קְדָמְךָ דִּי
 נְסִיתוּהִי בְּנִסְתָּא וְהוּדָה שְׁלִים בְּתַנְתוּהִי
 עַל מִי מְצוֹתָא וְאַשְׁתַּכַּח מְהִימָן: ט דַּעַל
 אֲבוּהִי וְעַל אִמָּהּ לֹא רַחֵם כִּד חֲבוּ מִן דִּינָא
 וְאַפִּי אַחוּהִי וּבְגוֹהִי לֹא נְסִיב אֲרִי נְטִרוּ

לג א וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנָי מוֹתוֹ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מְסִינִי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לָמוֹ
 הוֹפִיעַ מֵהָר פְּאָרְזֵן וְאַתָּה מְרַבֶּבֶת קִדְשׁ מִימִינִי *אֲשַׁדֶּת לָמוֹ:
 ג אַף חֲבֵב עַמִּים כָּל־קִדְשָׁיו בְּיָדְךָ וְהֵם תִּכּוּ לְרִגְלֶךָ יִשָּׂא
 מִדְּבַרְתֶּיךָ: ד תּוֹרָה צִוְּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרְשָׁה קְהֵלֶת יַעֲקֹב:
 ה וַיְהִי בְיִשְׂרוּן מֶלֶךְ בְּהַתְאַסֵּף רָאשֵׁי עָם יַחַד שְׁבַטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 ו יְחִי רְאוּבֵן וְאַל־יָמֹת וַיְהִי מוֹתִיו מְסַפֵּר: ס ז וְזֹאת לִיהוּדָה
 וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־עַמּוֹ תְּבִיאֵנוּ יָדָיו רַב לֹא
 וְעִזֹר מְצַרָיו תִּתְּיָהּ: פ וְשִׁנִּין ח וּלְלוּי אָמַר תְּמִידָא וְאוֹרִיָא לְאִישׁ
 חֲסִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר נָסִיתוֹ בְּמִפְסָה תְּרִיבְהוּ עַל־מִי מְרִיבָה: ט הָאֲמִיר
 לְאֲבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רְאִיתִיו וְאֶת־אָחָיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת־בְּנָיו** לֹא

* קרי אש דת ** קרי בניו

רש"י

יעקב, אחזנוה ולא נעזבנו¹²: (ה) והיו. הקצ"כ: בישרון מלך. תמיד עול
 מלכותו עליהם: בהתאסף. ככל התאסף ראשי חשבון אסיפתם: ראשי. כמו
 כי תשא את ראש¹³ ראויין אלו שאזכרם. דבר אחר בהתאסף בהתאספם יחד
 באגודה אחת ושלוש זנייכם הוא מלכם, ולא כשיש מחלוקת זנייכם¹⁴: (ו) יחי
 ראוּבֵן. בעולם הזה: ואל ימות. לעולם הבא, שלא יזכר לו מעשה זבלה¹⁵:
 ויהי מתיו מספר. נמנין בזמנין שאר אחיו, דוגמא היא זו כענין שנאמר
 וישכב את זבלה ויחיו בני יעקב שנים עשר¹⁶, שלא ילא מן המנין: (ז) וזאת
 ליהודה. סמך יודעה לראובן, מפני שנייכם הודו על קלקול צדיכם, שנאמר
 אשר חכמים יגידו וגו' להם לצדס וגו' ולא עבר זר בחוכם¹⁷. ועוד פירשו
 רבותינו, שכל ארבעים שנה שהיו ישראל צמדבר היו עלמות יודעה מתגלגלים
 בצרון מפני גדו שקבל עליו, שנאמר¹⁸ וחתטתי לאזני כל הימים, אמר משה
 מי גרם לראובן שיודה יודעה וכו'¹⁹: שמע ה' קול יהודה. תפלת דוד
 ושלמה ואסא מפני הכושים, ויושפט מפני העמונים, וחזקיה מפני סחריב:
 ואל עמו תביאנו. לשלום מפני המלחמה (ס"א מן המלחמה): ידיו רב לו.
 יריבו ריבו וינקמו נקמתו: ועזר מצריו תהיה. על יושפט התפלל על
 מלחמת רמות גלעד, ויזעק יושפט וכו' עזרו¹⁸. דבר אחר שמע ה' קול יהודה
 כאן רמז צרכה לשמעון מתוך זכותיו של יהודה, ואף כשחלקו ארץ ישראל
 נעל שמעון מתוך גורלו של יהודה שנאמר מחבל בני יהודה נחלת בני
 שמעון¹⁹. (ומפני מה לא ייחד לו זכרה בפני עצמו, שהיה זבלו עליו על מה
 שעשה בשערים, כן כתוב באגדת תהלים): (ח) וללוי אמר. ועל לוי אמר:
 תמיר ואוריר. כלפי שכינה הוא מדבר: אשר נסיתו במסה. שלא נתלוננו
 עס שאר המליונים: תריבהו וגו'. כתרומתו. דבר אחר תריבהו על מי מריבה
 נסתקפת לו לצוא זעלילה, אס משה אמר שמעו נא המורים²⁰, אהרן ומרים
 מה עשו¹: (ט) האומר לאביו ולאמו לא ראיתיו. כשחטאו זעגל ואמרתיו
 מי לכה²¹, נאספו אלו כל בני לוי ולויתים להרוג את אבי אמו והוא
 מישראל, או את אחיו מאמו, או את בן צתו, וכן עשו. ואי אפשר לפרש אציו

(א) וזאת הברכה. לפני מותו. סמוך למיתתו¹ שאס לא עכשיו אימתי:
 (ב) ויאמר ה' מסיני בא. פתח תחלה נשצחו של מקום ואחר כך פתח
 בצרכיהם של ישראל². ונשצח שפתח צו יש צו הזכרת זכות לישראל וכל זה
 דרך ריטוי הוא, כלומר כדאי הם אלו שתחול עליהם צרכה: מסיני בא. ילא
 לקראתם כשצאו להתיצב בתחתית הכר כחתן היולא להקציל פני כלה, שנאמר
 לקראת האלהים², למדנו שילא כנגדס³: וזרח משעיר למו. שפתח לבני עשו
 שיקבלו את התורה ולא ראו: הופיע. להם: מהר פארן. שחלך עס ופתח לבני
 ישמעאל שיקבלוהו, ולא ראו⁴: ואתה. לישראל: מרבבת קדש. ועמו מקלח
 רבבות מלאכי קדש, ולא כולם ולא רובם, ולא כדרך צער ודס שמראה כל כבוד
 עשרו ותפארתו ציוס חופתו⁵: אש דת. שהיתה כתובה מאז לפניו זאש
 שחורה על צב אש זבלה⁶, נתן להם זבלות כח צד יד ימינו. דבר אחר אש דת
 כתרומתו, שנחנה להם מתוך האש: (ג) אף חבב עמים. גס חנה יחירכה חצב
 את השצטים. כל אחד ואחד קרוי עס, שהרי צנימין לצדו היה עתיד להוולד
 כשאמר הקצ"כ ליעקב⁶ גוי וקבל גוים יהיה ממך⁷: כל קדשיו בידך. נפשות
 הלידיקים גנוזות אהו, כענין שנאמר והיתה נפש אדוני לרורה זלרור החיים
 את ה' אלהיך⁸: והם תבו לרגלך. והם ראויים לכך, שהרי תכו עלמן לתוך
 תחתית הכר לרגלך צסוי. תכו לשון פועלו, הוואוכו לתוך מרגלותיך: ישא
 מדברתיך. נשאו עליהם עול תורתך: מדברתיך. המ"ס צו קרוצ ליסוד, כמו
 וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו⁹, ואשמע קול מדבר אלי¹⁰, כמו מתדבר אלי, אף
 זה מדברותיך מה שהיית מדבר להשמיעני לאמר להם. טישפוט"ר פלידור"ש
 זלע"י. ואונקלוס תרגס שהיו נוסעים על פי דבריך, והמ"ס צו שמוס משמשת
 לשון מן. דבר אחר אף חבב עמים אף בשעת חתנם של אומות העולם שהראית
 להם פנים שוחקות ומסרת את ישראל צידס: כל קדשיו בידך. כל לדיקהם
 וטוביהם דצקו צך ולא משו מאחריך וחתה שומרם¹¹: והם תבו לרגלך. והם
 מתמלעים ומתכנסים לתחת ללך: ישא מדברתיך. מקבלים גזרותיך ודעותיך
 צשמחה. ואלה דצרכיהם: (ד) תורה. אשר לוכ לנו משה מורשה היא לקבלת

1 ספרי 2 שמות יט, יז 3 מכילתא יט, יז 4 עבודה זרה ב: 5 תנחומא, בראשית א 6 בראשית לה, יא 7 בראשית רבה פב, ד 8 שמואל א כה, כט 9 במדבר ז, פט 10 יחזקאל ב, ב 11 בבא בתרא ח. 12 ראה לקר"ש זכ"ע ע"ש 229 ואילך 13 שמות ל, יב 14 בראשית לה, כב 15 איוב טו, יח-יט 16 בראשית מג, ט 17 סוטה ז: 18 דברי הימים ב-יח, לג 19 יהושע יט, ט 20 במדבר כ, י 21 שמות זב, כו

🕍 MOSHE'S FINAL BLESSINGS 🕍

33 **A**nd this is the blessing which Moshe, a man of God, gave to the children of Israel, (shortly) before his death.

² He (first) said (words of praise about God): “God came (out) from Sinai (to meet the Jewish people), and He shined His glory to them (after coming) from Se’ir, (where the children of Eisav had declined to accept the Torah). He appeared (to them after coming) from Mount Paran (where the children of Yishma’el had declined to accept the Torah). He came (to the Jewish people along) with some of the holy myriads. (Then He gave) them a fiery Law, (written with) His right Hand.

³ He also showed affection for the (tribes, who are all) nations (unto themselves). All the holy (souls of the righteous) are in Your hand (a privilege which they deserve), for they let themselves be placed at Your feet (at Mount Sinai), bearing (the yoke of) Your utterances (and decrees with joy).

⁴ The Torah (which) Moshe commanded us is an inheritance for the congregation of Ya’akov, (which will never be abandoned).

⁵ Whenever the people gathered as a numerous group, with the tribes of Israel together, (they always accepted God’s rulership), so He was King in Yeshurun (and He wished to bless them).

🕍 MOSHE BLESSES THE TRIBES 🕍

33:6 **“M**ay Re’uvain live (in this world), and (when he reaches the World to Come, may he) not “die” (because of the incident with Bilhah*). May his people be counted in the (official) number (of the tribes, and not be punished for his sin by being excluded).”

⁷ The following was (said) about Yehudah. He said, “Listen, God, to Yehudah’s voice (when he prays to You), and bring him (in peace) to his people (back from war). May his hands do battle for him (successfully), and may You be a help against his enemies.”

SECOND READING ⁸ About Levi he said: “(God!) Your Tumim and Urim belong to Your pious man, (Levi), who (remained faithful when) you tested him at Massah, (and when) you tried him at the waters of Merivah.

⁹ He said about his (non-Levite grand-)father (from) his mother(’s side, who was guilty of perpetrating the sin of the Golden Calf), ‘I do not see him (as my grandfather any more),’ neither did he recognize

TORAS MENACHEM

🕍 Sparks of Chasidus 🕍

“WHENEVER THE PEOPLE GATHERED...THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL TOGETHER” (v. 5)

Verse 5 speaks of Jewish unity (*achdus*), “the tribes of Israel together,” a level which is in fact *higher* than Jewish brotherly love (*ahavas yisra’el*). For even when you fulfill the command to “love your fellow like (you love) yourself” (*Vayikra* 19:18), there nevertheless remains two separate entities: “your fellow” and “yourself.” But when *achdus* is achieved, all Jewish people come together as one single entity (“the tribes of Israel together”).

Nevertheless, the Torah did not mandate an explicit command that the Jewish people reach the state of *achdus*, because *achdus* is a direct consequence and an *inevitable progression* from loving one’s fellow as one loves oneself. In fact, these two stages are indicated by

the *Alter Rebbe* in *Tanya* (ch. 32). First he writes that one should love every Jew *individually* by virtue of the souls they all possess, since, “Who knows their greatness and exaltedness in their root and source in the living God?” And then, one progresses to appreciate how all Jews are *united* as one single entity, since “they all have one Father.”

This theme of Jewish unity is especially stressed on *Simchas Torah*, when this *Parsha* is read, a time when all Jews express their connection to Torah, not through study (in which everyone is on a different level), but rather, by dancing with their feet, in which all Jews are equal.

(Based on *Sicha* of the night of *Simchas Torah* 5743)

* See *Bereishis* 35:22 and *Rashi* *ibid*.

מפאת מימרה וקומה לא אשני, כשרין אליו דילפון דיניד ליעקב ואורייתך לישראל ישוין קמורת בוסמין קדמה ונמר לרעוא על מדבחה: יא ברה יי נכסוהי וקרבן ידוהי תקבל ברעוא תבר הרעא דסנאוהי ודבעלי דבבוהי דלא יקומו: יב לבנימן אמר רחיקא דיי ישרי לרחצן עלוהי יהי סגן עלוהי כל יומא ובארעה תשרי שכנתא: יג וליוסף אמר מברכא מן קדם יי ארעה עבדא מנדגין מפלא דשמיא מלעלא ומבובעי עיגון ותהומין דנגדן מפעמקי ארעא מלרע: יד ועבדא מנדגין ועללן מיבול שמשא ועבדא מנדגין מריש רח בירה: טו ומריש מוריא בפיריא ומטוב רמן דלא פסקון: טז ומטוב ארעא ומלאה רעי לה דשכנתה בשמיא ועל משה אתגלי באסנא ייתין כל אליו לרישא דיוסף נברא פרישא דאחיה: יז בפא דבגוהי זינא לה ונבורן דאתעבדא לה מקדם תקפא ורומא דילה בגבורתה עממיא יקטל כחדא עד ספי ארעא ואנון רבותא דבית אפרים ואנון אלפיא דבית מנשה: יח ולזבולן אמר חדי זבולן במפקד לאנהא קרבא על בעלי דבבד ויששכר במפקד למעבד זמני מועדיא

ידע כי שמרו אמרתך ובריתך ינצרו: י יורו משפטך ליעקב ותורתך לישראל ישימו קטורה באפך וכליל על מזבחה: יא ברה יהוה חילו ופעל ידיו תרעה מחץ מתנים קמיו ומשנאיו מן יקומו: ס יב לבנימן אמר יד יד יהוה ישכן לבטח עליו חפף עליו כל היום ובין כתפיו שכן: ס ושלישין יג וליוסף אמר מברכת יהוה ארצו ממגד שמים מטל ומתהום רבצת תחת: יד וממגד תבואת שמש וממגד גרש ירחים: טו ומראש הררי קדם וממגד גבעות עולם: טז וממגד ארץ ומלאה ורצון שכן סנה תבואתה לראש יוסף ולקדקד נזיר אחיו: יז בכור שורו הדר לו וקרני ראם קרניו בהם עמים ינגח יחדו אפסי ארץ והם רבבות אפרים והם אלפי מנשה: ס רביעין יח ולזבולן אמר שמה זבולן בצאתך ויששכר באהליך: יט עמים

רש"י

ממש ואחיו מאזיו וכן בניו ממש, שהרי לויס הם ומשצט לוי לא חטא אחד מהם שנאמר¹ כל בני לוי: בי שמרו אמרתך. לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים?² ובריתך ינצרו. ברית מילה³, שאותם שנולדו צמדצר של ישראל לא מלו את זניהם והם היו מולין ומלין את זניהם (ס"א אותם שנולדו צמדצר שישראל לא מלו את זניהם והם היו מולין): (י) יורו משפטך. ראויין אלו לכך: וכליל. עולה:⁴ (יא) מחץ מתנים קמיו. מחץ קמיו מכת מתנים, כענין שנאמר ומתניהם תמיד המעד, ועל המעוררין על הכהונה אמר כן. דבר אחר ראה שעתידין חשמונאי וזניו להלחם עם היוונים והתפלל עליהם לפי שהיו מועטים ו"צ בני חשמונאי ואלעזר כנגד כמה רבבות, לכך נאמר בך ה' חילו ופעל ידיו תרעה: ומשנאיו מן יקומו. מחץ קמיו ומשנאיו מהיות להם תקומה: (יב) לבנימן אמר. לפי שזכרת לוי בעבודת הקדשות ושל צנימין צנין בית המקדש בחלקו סמכן זה לזה וסמך יוסף אחריו, שאף הוא משכן שילה היה צנוי בחלקו, שנאמר וימאס צהאל יוסף וגו'⁴. ולפי שצית עולמים חצי משילה לכך הקדים צנימין ליוסף: חפף עליו. מכסה אותו ומגין עליו: כל היום. לעולם משנצח ירושלים לא שרתה שכינה צמקוס אחר: ובין כתפיו שכן. בגובה ארצו היה בית המקדש צנוי אלא שנמוך עשרים ושלוש אמה מעין עיטס⁵ ושם היה דעתו של דוד לבנותו, כדאיתא בשחיטת קדשים⁶ אמרי נחתי ציה פורתא משום דכתיב וצין כתפיו שכן אין לך נאה צשור יותר מכתפיו: (יג) מברכת ה' ארצו. שלא היתה נחלת השבטים ארץ מלאה כל טוב כארצו של יוסף?² ממגד. לשון עדינים ומתק: ומתהום. שבהם עולה ומלחלח אותה מלמטה אהה מולא צכל השבטים צרכתו של משה מעין צרכתו של יעקב: (יד) (ד"א) וממגד תבואת שמש. שהיתה ארצו פתוחה לחמה וממתקת הפירות:² גרש ירחים. יש פירות שהלצנה מצשלתן ואלו הן קשואין ודלוטין. דבר אחר גרש ירחים. שהארץ מגרשת ומוליאה מחדש לחדש: (טו) ומראש הררי קדם. ומזכרת מראשית צשול הפירות שהכריה מקדימין לצכר צשול פירותיהם. דבר אחר

מגיד שקדמה צריחתן לשאר הרים:² גבעות עולם. גבעות העושות פירות לעולם ואינן פוסקות מעולד הגשמים: (טז) ורצון שכני סנה. כמו שזכר סנה ותהא ארצו מזכרת מרלנו ונחת רוחו של הקצ"ח הנגלה עלי תחלה צנסה: רצון. נחת רוח ופיוס וכן כל רלון צצמקרא: תבואתה. צרכה זו לראש יוסף: נזיר אחיו. שהופרש מאחיו צמכירתו: (יז) בכור שורו. יש צכור שהוא לשון גדולה ומלכות, שנאמר אף אני צכור אתנכו⁷, וכן צני צכורי ישראל:⁸ בכור. מלך היואל ממנו והוא יהושע: שורו. שכחו קשה כשור לכצוש כמה מלכים: הדר לו. נתון לו שנאמר ונתתה מהודך עליו: וקרני ראם קרניו. שור כמו קשה ואין קרניו נאות, אצל ראם קרניו נאות, ואין כמו קשה, נתן ליהושע כמו של שור ויפיו קרני ראם:² אפסי ארץ. שלושים אחד מלכים אפשר שכולם מארץ ישראל היו אלא אין לך כל מלך ושלטון שלא קנה לו פלטרין ואחוזת צארץ ישראל, שחצובה לכולם היא, שנאמר נחלת צני לצלות גוים:⁹ והם רבבות אפרים. אותם המנוגחים הם הרבצות שהרג יהושע, צבא מאפרים: והם אלפי מנשה. הם האלפים שהרג גדעון צמדון, שנאמר וצח וללמוע צקרקר וגו'¹⁰: (יח) ולזבולן אמר. אלו חמשה שבטים צצירך צאחרונה צזולן גד דן נפתלי ואשר כפל צמותיהם לחזקם ולהצצרים, לפי שהיו חלשים צצכל השבטים, הם הם שהולך יוסף לפני פרעה, שנאמר ומקלה אחיו לקח חמשה אנשים¹¹, לפי שנראים חלשים ולא ישים אותם לו שרי מלחמתו:¹² שמח זבולן בצאתך ויששכר באהליך. צזולן ויששכר עשו שותפות, צזולן לחוף ימים ישכון¹² ויולא לפרקמטיא צספיונות ומשכר, ונותן לחוף פיו של יששכר והם יושבים ועוסקים צצורה, לפיכך הקדים צזולן ליששכר שצורתו של יששכר על ידי צזולן היתה:¹³ שמח זבולן בצאתך. הללח צצאתך לסחורה: ויששכר. הללח צישיבת אהליך לתורה ליצז ולעצז שנים ולקצוע חדשים, כמו שנאמר ומצני יששכר יודעי צינה לעתים ראשיהם מאתים¹⁴ ראשי סנהדרות היו עוסקים צכך¹⁵. ועל פי קציעות עתיהם ועצוריהם: (יט) עמים. של שבטי ישראל:

1 שמות לב, כו 2 ספרי 3 יומא כו. 4 תהלים עז, טו 5 יומא לא. 6 זבחים נד: 7 תהלים פט, כח 8 שמות ד, כב 9 ירמ"ג, ט 10 שופטים ח, י 11 בראשית מז, ב 12 בבא קמא צב. 12* בראשית מט, יג 13 בראשית רבה צט, ט 14 דברי הימים א יב, לג 15 בראשית רבה עב, ה

his (guilty, non-Levite half-)brothers, nor did he know his (guilty non-Levite grand-)children, (and he loyally followed God's orders to kill them. But none of the Levites were guilty), because they kept Your word (never worshiping idols) and kept Your covenant (of circumcision, when others lapsed). ¹⁰ They will teach Your laws to Ya'akov, and Your Torah to Israel (because they are fit to do so). They will place incense before You, and burnt-offerings upon Your Altar. ¹¹ May God bless him with his possessions, and may You favor the work of his hands. May You smash the loins of his foes and his enemies, so that they will never recover."

¹² About Binyamin he said, "May God's beloved dwell securely with Him, (when the Holy Temple will be built in Binyamin's portion. May the Divine presence) cover him (and protect him) forever, and dwell among (the high places of Binyamin's territory, which are likened to) his shoulders."

THIRD READING ¹³ About Yosef he said: "May his land be blessed by God, with delicacies (nourished by rains) from the skies, from dew, and (from underground waters that rise) from the depths that lie below. ¹⁴ (May it be blessed with) the delicacies of produce (sweetened by) the sun, and with delicacies from crops (ripened) by moon(light. ¹⁵ May it be blessed) with crops (that ripen) early (on its) mountains, and with delicacies from its hills, all year round. ¹⁶ (May it be blessed) with the abundant delicacies of the (low)lands, through the goodwill (of God, who was first revealed to Me) dwelling in the thornbush. May (all this) come upon Yosef's head, upon the crown of the one (who was) separated from his brothers (when they sold him. ¹⁷ Yehoshua, a descendant of Yosef, is like) his firstborn ox (for he is to be a powerful king, and) glory will be (given to) him. His horns are (beautiful like the) horns of an oryx. With them, he will gore (thirty-one) nations together, (as far as) the ends of the Land (of Israel). These (nations will number) tens of thousands (all killed by Yehoshua, a descendant) of Efrayim, (besides) the thousands (to be killed in Midian by Gideon, a descendent) of Menasheh."

FOURTH READING ¹⁸ About Zevulun he said: "Succeed, Zevulun, when you go out (to work), and Yissachar, in your tents (of Torah, where you will establish the calendar. ¹⁹ Then, when the festivals arrive), they will call (all the

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why is Zevulun mentioned before Yissachar ? (v. 18)

RASHI: Zevulun and Yissachar entered into a partnership: "Zevulun will live by the sea coast" (*Bereishis* 49:13), and go out in ships to trade. He would make a profit and feed Yissachar's mouth, while they would sit and occupy themselves with Torah. Therefore, Moshe mentioned Zevulun before Yissachar [even though the latter was older], because Yissachar's Torah was supported by Zevulun.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

The purpose of Creation, according to the *Midrash (Tanchuma Naso* 16), is that man should make, "a home for God below," in this physical world. While the fulltime Torah scholar (Yissachar) achieves this goal through his devoted study and observance of *mitzvos*, he nevertheless remains somewhat withdrawn from interaction with the world, and consequently, he only transforms a relatively small part of this world into "a home for God." On the other hand, the businessman (Zevulun) sanctifies his entire working environment, through observing the laws of business ethics, being attuned to acts of Divine providence that he witnesses, and donating generously to charity. Thus, the Torah mentions Zevulun before Yissachar (see *Classic Questions*), because Zevulun furthers the goal of Creation to a greater extent. (In fact, this is the inner reason why God made the world in such a manner that most Jews are businessmen, and not Torah scholars).

At first glance, however, this appears to be difficult to accept. For the approach of Zevulun is a temporary one which will cease after the coming of Mashiach, when all Jews will become Torah scholars. How then could it be suggested that the purpose of Creation is furthered to a greater extent by Zevulun?

The answer is that a true "home for God below" can only be made amid the Torah and the Jewish people, which are *eternal*. The businessman makes a "home for God below" to a greater extent, not due to his involvement with the physical world *per se*, but due to the effect that this involvement has on his soul. For when the businessman learns Torah, devotes himself to *mitzvos* and lengthy prayer, and retains his Jewish values in the alien environment of the workplace, he reveals the powers of his soul to a greater extent. And this makes his bond with God, down here in this world, eternal and lasting under *all* circumstances.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 30, p. 134ff.)

בירושלם: יט שבטנא דישראל לטור בית
מקדשא יתבנשון תמן זכסון נכסת קודשין
לרענא ארי נכסי עממיא ייכלון וסימא דמסמרא
בחלא מתנגליא להון: כ ולנד אמר בריד
(ד)אפתי לנד בליתא שרי וקטול שלטונין
עם מלכין: כא ואתקבל בקדמיתא דילה ארי
תמן באחסנתה משה ספרא רבא דישראל
קביר והוא נפק ועל בריש עמא זכון קדם יי
עבד ודינתי עם ישראל: כב ולנד אמר דן
תקוף בגור ארנון ארעה שתניא מן נחליא
דנגדן מן מתנן: כג ולנפתלי אמר נפתלי
שבע רענא ומלי ברבן מן קדם יי מערב
ים נגוסר ודרומא ירת: כד ולאשר אמר
בריד מברכת בניא אשר יהי רענא לאחיה
ויתרבי בתפנוקי מלכין: כה תקוף כפרולא
ונחשא מותבד וביומי עולמתך תקפד: כו לית
אלה כאלהא דישראל דשכנתה בשמיא
כסעךד ותקפה בשמי שמיא: כז מדור אלהא
די מלקדמין במימרה אתעבד עלמא ותריד
מקדמך סנאה ואמר שיצי: כח וישרא ישראל

הריקראו שם יזכחו וזכתי צדק כי שפע ימים ייזקו ושפני
טמוני חול: ס כ ולנד אמר ברוך מרחיב גוד בלביא שכן וטרף
זרוע אף קדקד: כא וירא ראשית לו כי שם חלקת מתקק
ספון *ויתא ראשי עם צדקת יהוה עשה ומשפטיו
עם ישראל: ס (חמישין) כב ולנד אמר דן גור אריה יזנק
מן הבשן: כג ולנפתלי אמר נפתלי שבע רצון ומלא ברבת
יהוה ים ודרום ירשה: ס כד ולאשר אמר ברוך מבנים אשר
יהי רצוי אחיו וטבל בשמן רגלו: כה ברזל ונחשת מנעלך
וכימך דבאך: כו אין כאל ישראל רכב שמים בעזרך ובגאותו
שחקים: (ששין) כז מענה אלהי קדם ומתחת זרעת עולם ויגרש
מפניך אויב ויאמר השמר: כח וישכן ישראל בטח בך עין

*ס"א ו'תא

רש"י

זינוק זה יולא ממקום אחד ונחלק לשני מקומות, כך שצטו של דן נטלו חלק
בשני מקומות. תחלה נטלו צלפונית מערבית עקרון וסביבותיה, ולא ספקו
להם וזכו ונלחמו עם לשם שהיא פמיאס והיא צלפונית מזרחית, שהרי
הירדן יולא ממערת פמיאס והוא צמזרח של ארץ ישראל וזא מהצפון
לדרום וכלה בצקא ים המלח, שהוא צמזרח יודעה, שנטל צדרומה של ארץ
ישראל, כמו שמפורש בספר יהושע, והוא שנאמר ויולא גבול בני דן מהם ויעלו
בני דן וילחמו עם לשם וגו'¹¹, ילא גבולם מכל אותו הרוח שהתחילו לנחול
צו': (כג) שבע רצון. שהיתה ארלו שצעה כל רלון יושביה: ים ודרום
ירשה. ים כנרת נפלה בחלקו ונטל מלא חבל חרס צדרומה לפרוש חרמים
ומכמורות¹²: ירשה. לשון לווי, כמו עלה רש'¹³, והטעם שלמעלה צרי"ש
מוכיח, כמו ירש, ידע, לקח, שמע, כשמוסיף צו ה"א יהיה הטעם למעלה
שמעה, ידעה, סלחה, לקחה אף כאן ירשה לשון לווי. ובמסורת הגדולה מנינו
באלפא ביתא לשון לווי דטעמיהון מלעיל: (כד) ברוך מבנים אשר. ראיתי
בספרי אין לך בכל השצטים שנחצרך צנים כאשר, ואינו יודע כולל: יהי
רצוי אחיו. שהיה מתרצה לאחיו בשמן אנפיקונו ובקפלאות והם מרלין לו
בצבואה. דבר אחר יהי רצוי אחיו שהיו צנותיו נאות והוא שנאמר הוא אבי
צריט'¹⁴, שהיו צנותיו נשואות לכהנים גדולים הנמשחים בשמן זית¹⁵: וטובל
בשמן רגלו. שהיתה ארלו מושכת שמן כמעין. ומעשה שלטרכו אנשי לודקיא
לשמן מנו להם פולמוסטוס אחד וכו', כדאיחא צמנחות¹⁶: (כה) ברזל
ונחשת מנעלך. עכשיו הוא מדבר נגד כל ישראל, שהיו גבוריהם יושבים
צערי הספר ונועלים אותה שלא יוכלו האויבים ליכנס בה כאלו היא סגורה
צמנעולים וצריחים של ברזל ונחשת. דבר אחר ברזל ונחשת מנעלך ארלכס
נעולה צהרים שחוצין מהם ברזל ונחשת, וארלו של אשר היתה מנעולה של
ארץ ישראל¹⁷: ובימך דבאך. וכימים שהם טובים לך, שהן ימי תחלתך ימי
עוריק כן יהיו ימי זקנתך, שהם דואצים צים ומתמוטטים. דבר אחר וכימך
דצחק וכימך שהם טובים לך כמנין ימך, כל הימים אשר אתם עושים רלנו
של מקום, יהיו דצחק שכל הארלות יהיו דוצאות כסף וזכב לארץ ישראל,
שהתא מצורכת צפירות, וכל הארלות מתפרנסות הימנה וממשיכות לה כספס

הר יקראו. לבר המוריה יאספו כל אסיפה על ידי קריאה היא ושם יזכחו
צרגלים זכחי לך: כי שפע ימים יינקו. יששכר וזבולן ויהא להם פנאי
לעסוק צחורה: ושפני טמוני חול. כסויי טמוני חול ערית וחלזון וחוכית
לזנה היואלים מן הים ומן החול וצחלקו של יששכר וזבולן היה, כמו שאמרו
צמסכת מגילה¹ זבולן עם חרף נפשו למות² משום דנפתלי על מרומי שד²,
שהיה מתרעס זבולן על חלקו לאחי נחת שדות וכרמים וכו': ושפני. לשון
כסוי, כמו שנאמר ויספון את הצית³, וספון צארז⁴, ותרגומו ומטלל צכיורי
(ס"א צכסוי) ארזא. דבר אחר עמים הר יקראו על ידי פרקמטיא של זבולן,
תגרי אומות העולם צאים אל ארלו, והוא עומד על הספר והם אומרים
הואיל ונטעטרו עד כאן נלך עד ירושלים ונראה מה יראה של אומה זו ומה
מעשה, והם רואים כל ישראל עובדים לאלוה אחד ואוכלים מאכל אחד לפי
שהגוים אלוהות של זה לא כאלוהות של זה, ומאכלו של זה לא כמאכלו של
זה, והם אומרים אין אומה כשרה כזו ומתגייירין עם, שנאמר עם יזכחו זכחי
לך: כי שפע ימים יינקו. זבולן ויששכר הים נתן להם ממון צשפט:
(כ) ברוך מרחיב גד. מלמד שהיה תחומו של גד מרחיב והולך כלפי מזרח⁵:
בלביא שבך. לפי שהיה סמוך לספר לפיכך נמשל כאריות שכל הסמוכים
לספר רכיכים להיות גבורים⁶: וטרף זרוע אף קדקד. הרוגיכה היו נכרין,
וחתכים הראש עם הזרוע צמכה אחת: (כא) וירא ראשית לו. ראה ליעול
לו חלק צארן סיוון ועוג, שהיא ראשית כצוש הארץ: כי שם חלקת מחקק.
כי ידע אשר שם צנחלתו חלקת שדה קצורת מחוקק והוא משה⁶: ספון. אותה
חלקה ספונה וטמונה מכל צריה, שנאמר ולא ידע איש את קצורת⁷: ויתא.
גד: ראשי עם. הם היו הולכים לפני החלון צכצוש הארץ לפי שהיו גבורים,
וכן הוא אומר ואתם תעצרו חלוצים לפני אחיכם וגו'⁸: צדקת ה' עשה.
שהאמינו דצריהם ושמרו הצטחתם לעצור את הירדן עד שכצשו וחלקו. דבר
אחר ויתא משה ראשי עם. דקת ה' עשה. על משה אמור⁹: (כצ) דן גור
אריה. אף הוא היה סמוך לספר לפיכך מושלו צאריות⁹: יזנק מן הבשן.
כתרגומו שהיה הירדן יולא מחלקו ממערת פמיאס והוא לשם שהיא צחלקו
של דן, שנאמר⁹ ויקראו ללשם דן¹⁰ וזינוקו וקילונו מן הבשן. דבר אחר מה

1 דף 1. 2 שופטים ה, יח 3 מלכים א, ט 4 שם ז, ג 5 ספרי 6 טוטה יג: 7 דברים ד, 1 8 דברים ג, יח 9 יהושע יט, מז 10 בכורות נה. 11 יהושע יט, מז 12 ב"ק פא: 13 דברים א, כא 14 דברי הימים א, ז, לא 15 בראשית רבה עא, י 16 דף תפא:

Jewish) people to mount (Moriah, and) there, they will slaughter offerings of righteousness. For (Zevulun—and Yissachar, whom they support)—will be nourished by the abundance of the seas, and by the valuable things hidden in the sand.”

²⁰ About Gad he said: “Blessed is He Who grants an expanding (territory) to Gad, who lives (in a territorial stronghold) like a lion. He will tear off an arm (of his enemy in one blow, along) with the head.

²¹ He saw (fit to take) the first portion (of the land that was conquered) for himself (in the territory of Sichon and Og), because there the (burial) plot of (Moshe) the lawgiver is hidden. (Gad) came (out to war) at the head of the people (even after he had acquired his own portion), doing what was right for God, and what is lawful with Israel.”

FIFTH READING ²² About Dan he said: “Dan is a young lion (for he, too, has a territorial stronghold. His land drinks from a) stream that runs from Bashan.”

²³ About Naftali he said: “Naftali (‘s land brings) satisfaction (to its inhabitants) and is filled with God’s blessing. Take possession of (part of) the south of the (Kineret) Sea (to spread your fishing nets).”

²⁴ About Asher he said: “May Asher be blessed with sons. He will be pleasing to his brothers (through producing special oils), and he will (have so much) oil (that he will be able to) immerse his foot.”

🌀 MOSHE BLESSES ALL ISRAEL 🌀

33:25 **M**ay your locks (on your border towns) be (strong like) iron and copper. May the days of your old age be like the days of your youth.

²⁶ “Yeshurun, there is none like God! (God), Who rides the heavens is at your assistance! (He rides) the heavens in His majesty!”

CHASAN TORAH (6TH READING) ²⁷ “(The heavens) are the abode for God, Who precedes all. The mighty ones of the world are found (only) below. He expelled the enemy from before you, and said, ‘Destroy!’ ²⁸ Israel will live safely and (it

רש"י

וזהבם אשקולג"ט. הכסף וזהב כלה מהם, שהן מזיבות אותם לארצכם:
(כו) אין באל ישראל. דע לך ישראל שחין כאל ככל אלהי העמים ולא כגורן
לורס: רבב שמים. הוא אלהי אלוה שצערך וצגארותו הוא רובב שחקים:
(כז) מענה אלהי קדם. למעון הם השחקים לאלהי קדם, שקדם לכל אלהים
ובירר לו שחקים לשבתו ומענותו, ומתחת מענותו כל בעלי זרוע שוכנים:
זרעת עולם. סיוחן ועוג ומלכי כנען, שהיו תקפו וגבורתו של עולם, לפיכך
על כרחם יחרדו ויזועו וכחם חלש מפניו. לעולם אימת הגבורה על הגמור,
והוא שהכח והגבורה שלו צעזק: ויגרש מפניך אויב. ואמר לך השמד
אותם: מענה. כל תיבה שזריכה למ"ד בתחלתה הטיל לה ה"א צפופה¹⁷:
(כח) בטח בדרך. כל יחיד ויחיד איש תחת גפנו ותחת תלגתו מפוזרין ואין
לריכים להתאסף ולישב יחד מפני האויב: עין יעקב. כמו ועינו כעין
הבדולה¹⁸, כעין הצרכה שצרכם יעקב, לא כדד שאמר ירמיה דד ישצתי¹⁹,

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What did Moshe promise in verse 28? Was it fulfilled?

TALMUD: Moshe, our teacher, decreed four decrees on the Jewish people, and then four prophets came and annulled them.

[One of the decrees was that] Moshe said: “Israel will live safely and alone, like Ya’akov” (v. 28)—as if to say: “When will the Jewish people live safely? When they will be righteous like Ya’akov.”

Amos came and annulled this decree, as the verse states: “Please refrain! How will Ya’akov survive [for he is small]?” (Amos 7:5)—as if to say: “Who could be as righteous as Ya’akov? Such people are very small in number!”

And the verse continues (ibid. 6): “God changed His mind about this...,” [and canceled the decree]. (Makos 24a, according to Rivan).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 MOSHE’S DECREE (v. 28)

The **Talmud’s** statement, that verse 28 was a decree of Moshe which was later annulled by Amos, prompts the following questions:

a.) How could Amos annul Moshe’s decree, when according to Jewish law, a decree can only be annulled by a *Beis Din* (court of law) and not by a prophet? (see Rambam, *Laws of Rebellious Individuals* 2:2)

b.) Furthermore, a decree may only be annulled by a *Beis Din* which is “greater than the first in size and wisdom” (ibid). So how could Moshe’s decree be annulled at all, since Moshe was the greatest sage of all?

THE EXPLANATION

In order to answer these problems, let us first pose another question. The *Talmud* states, “Moshe was a lover of the Jewish people,” (*Menachos* 65a).

will be safe for each person to live) alone—as Ya’akov (blessed them)—in a land of grain and wine, with skies that drip dew, (as Yitzchak blessed them).

²⁹ Fortunate are you, O Israel! Who is like you, O people saved by God, the Shield Who helps you, your majestic Sword! Your enemies will lie to you, but you will trample upon their exalted ones.”

🕎 MOSHE’S PASSING 🕎

34
(7TH READING
IN LAND OF
ISRAEL ON
SHABBOS)

Moshe went up from the plains of Mo’av to Mount Nevo, (to the) top of the summit facing Jericho. God showed him the Land (and visions of what was to happen there in the future): (The events at) the Gilead as far as Dan, ² all (the land of) Naftali, the land of Efrayim and Menasheh, all the land of Yehudah until the western sea, ³ the Negev, and the plain, (including) the valley of Jericho, and the city of palm trees as far as Tzoar. ⁴ God said to him, “This is the Land I swore to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya’akov, saying, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you should not cross over there.”

TORAS MENACHEM

principle that a decree may only be annulled by a *Beis Din* which is “greater than the first in size and wisdom,” only applies to a decree which, “became universally accepted by the Jewish people” (Rambam *ibid.*). However if, “they made a decree, and they believed that it had become universally accepted by the Jewish people, and this state of affairs continued for many years, but after a long period, another *Beis Din* was established which conducted a survey among the entire Jewish people and discovered that the decree had never been universally accepted—then they may annul the decree, even if they are less in number and wisdom than the first *Beis Din*” (*ibid.* 2:7).

Likewise in our case, Amos annulled Moshe’s decree because he “discovered that the decree had not been universally accepted.” He indicated this by arguing, “Who could be as righteous as Ya’akov? Such people are very small in number!”

(In a typical case, the non-acceptance of a decree would be verified by a survey of the court; whereas in Amos’ case, he verified the matter using his powers of prophecy.)

The reason why it was Amos in particular who annulled the decree, can be understood from another of Amos’ prophecies: “For three sins (I could forgive) Israel, but for four sins I will not forgive” (Amos 2:6). The *Talmud* explains: “If a person sins once, he is forgiven; twice, he is forgiven; three times, he is forgiven—but the fourth time, he is not forgiven” (*Yoma* 86b).

Now, clearly, Amos’ statement here refers to the *Heavenly court*, for an earthly court would not pardon a person even for one violation of the law, never mind three. His prophecy therefore confirmed that sins were indeed being committed, and he realized that Moshe’s “decree,” that everyone should be as righteous as Ya’akov, “had not been universally accepted.”

Moshe’s original intention in making the decree was to lift the Jewish people to the level where they would always be connected to God by not sinning in the first place, and would thus not need to be forgiven for their sins. But when Amos saw that Moshe’s “decree” had simply not been accepted, he annulled it.

In the final analysis, Moshe’s enactment of the decree and Amos’ annulment of it were actually in the best interests of the Jewish people, because:

a.) Amos did not annul the *positive effects* of Moshe’s decree, but only the *limitations* that it imposed. The fact that Moshe said in the Torah that

the Jewish people “will be righteous like Ya’akov” gives us the strength, even today, to refrain from sin, because all Moshe’s words and actions are eternal. Amos only waived the *limitation* of Moshe’s decree, that the Jewish people cannot continue to exist if they sin even once.

b.) Moshe’s decree only allowed the Jewish people to exist as *tzadikim* (pious individuals). Amos, however, made it possible for the Jewish people to exist as *ba’alei teshuvah* (penitents). And since *ba’alei teshuvah* are spiritually superior to *tzadikim*—to the extent that, “even complete *tzadikim* cannot stand in the place of *ba’alei teshuvah*” (*Brachos* 34b)—it turns out the Amos acted in the best interests of the Jewish people.

(Based on *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5728)

🕎 Sparks of Chasidus 🕎

“MOSHE WENT UP...TO MOUNT NEVO” (v. 1)

Our Sages taught: “The world was created with fifty gates of understanding, and they were all given to Moshe except for the fiftieth, as the verse states (*Psalms* 8:6), ‘You have made him slightly less than the angels,’” (*Rosh Hashanah* 21b).

The *Mezritcher Maggid* added that, on the very last day of his life, Moshe was granted access to the elusive “fiftieth gate.” This is hinted to by the verse, “Moshe went up...to Mount Nevo,” since the word נֶבֹו (Nevo) can be read נִ' בִּ' meaning, “the fiftieth is in him” (see *Likutei Torah, Bamidbar* 12a).

According to Chasidic teachings, every Jew possesses a spark of Moshe within his or her soul. So the fact that Moshe reached the fiftieth gate of understanding is of practical relevance to us, since our own spark of “Moshe” gives us the power to experience the fiftieth gate too.

And while Moshe had to wait until the last day of his life to reach this level, we do not. For Moshe paved the way which now remains open to all Jews who choose to avail themselves of it immediately, in their lifetimes.

(Based on *Sicha* of 3rd night of *Succos* 5744;
Sefer Hasichos 5749, vol. 2, p. 756)

אתגנה אחיזתך בעיניך ולתמן לא תעבר: ה ומית תמן משה עבדא דני בארעא דמואב על מימרא דני: ו וקבר יתה בחילתא בארעא דמואב לקבל בית פעור ולא ידע אנש ית קבורתה עד יומא הרין: ז ומשה בר מאה ועשרין שנין כד מית לא כהת עינוהי ולא שניא זיו יקרא דאפוהי: ח ויבכו בני ישראל ית משה במישריא דמואב תלתין יומין ושליו יומי בכיתא אבלא דמשה: ט ויהושע בר נון מלי (אתמלי) רוח חכמתא ארי סמד משה ית ידוהי עלוהי וקבילו מנה בני ישראל ועבדו כמא די פקיד יי ית משה: י ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה די

תעבר: ה וימת שם משה עבד-יהוה בארץ מואב על-פי יהוה: ו ויקבר אתו בני בארץ מואב מול בית פעור ולא ידע איש את-קברתו עד היום הזה: ז ומשה בן-מאה ועשרים שנה במתו לא-כהתה עינו ולא-נס לחה: ח ויבכו בני ישראל את-משה בערבית מואב שלשים יום ויתמו ימי בכי אבל משה: ט ויהושע בן-נון מלא רוח חכמה כי-סמד משה את-ידיו עליו וישמעו אליו בני-ישראל ויעשו כאשר צוה יהוה את-משה: י ולא-קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו יהוה פנים אל-פנים: יא לכל-האמת והמופתים אשר

כ"ש

מציא את עלמנו. כיונא צו וכושאו אותם עון אשמה⁶, וכי אחרים משיאים אותם, אלא הם משיאים את עלמם⁷: מול בית פעור. קברו כי מוכן שם מששת ימי צראשית לכפר על מעשה פעור⁸, וזה אחד מן הדברים שנצטוו צערי שצטו בן השמשות⁹: (ז) לא כהתה עינו. אף משמת: ולא נס לחה. לחלוות שצו לא שלט צו רקצון ולא נכפך תואר פניו: (ח) בני ישראל. הזכרים, אבל צאכרן מתוך שהיה רודף שלום ונותן שלום ציו איש לרעבו וציו אשכ לצעלה נאמר כל בית ישראל¹⁰, זכרים ונקבות¹¹: (י) אשר ידעו

שאלו כי הייתי מקיימך עד שתראה אותם נטועים וקצועים צו ותלך ותגיד להם: (כ) וימת שם משה. אפשר משה מת וכתב וימת שם משה, אלא עד כאן כתב משה, מכאן ואילך כתב יהושע. ר' מאיר אומר אפשר ספר התורה חסר כלום, והוא אומר לקוח את ספר התורה הזכ¹, אלא הקצ"ה אומר ומשה כותב דממע²: על פי ה'. צנשיקה³: (ו) ויקבר אותו. הקצ"ה צכודו⁴. רבי ישמעאל אומר הוא קבר את עלמו, וזהו אחד משלשה אתין שהיה רבי ישמעאל דורש כן. כיונא צו ציום מלאת ימי נזרו יציא אותו⁵, הוא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Who wrote the words “Moshe...died there”? (v. 5)

RASHI: Is it possible that Moshe died, and then wrote, “Moshe...died there”? Rather, Moshe wrote up to this point, and Yehoshua wrote from here on.

Rabbi Meir says: “Is it possible that the Torah Scroll [which Moshe gave to the Levites] would be lacking something? The verse states

[before Moshe’s passing], “Take this Torah Scroll” (Devarim 31:26). Rather, God said this section, and Moshe wrote it with tears.

IYUN YA’AKOV: Moshe was not crying because of the thought that he was about to die, but rather, because he was being denied the opportunity to observe the *mitzvos* which can only be carried out in the Land of Israel (Kesubos 103b).

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

Rashi explains (in his second interpretation) how it is possible that Moshe could have written the words, “Moshe...died there,” but he does not explain the purpose of this disheartening event. Why did God command Moshe to write about his own passing?

It could be argued, however, that Moshe actually wrote these words with tears of *determination* and *optimism*. Moshe was not poetically depicting his own death amid a spirit of resignation and surrender, as it may at first seem. Rather, he was using these last moments in a further, practical attempt to *avert* the looming decree of his death, by motivating the Jewish people to beseech God on his behalf. For Moshe knew that when the Jewish people would read of his death written down in black and white, it would provoke an uproar. The people would surely respond: “We will not allow this to happen! We will pray, beg and demand from God that Moshe lead us into the Land!” and the decree would thus be annulled.

But this begs the question: Surely, when something is written in the Torah it *must* happen? So by writing “Moshe...died there,” Moshe appears to have been guaranteeing his own death.

In truth, however, Moshe’s “death” could have occurred in many different ways, and not necessarily in the literal sense. For example, the *Zohar* teaches, “One who falls to a lower spiritual level is called ‘dead’” (*Zohar* III 135b). We even find that a spiritual migration to a higher plane is also sometimes referred to as “death” or “departure” (*Mikdash Melech* to *Zohar* III 158a). So Moshe hoped that the prayers of the Jewish people would transform the decree of his actual death, to a spiritual equivalent.

The Jewish people did not merit for this to occur *at that time*. But when Moshe does return, with the revival of the dead, the words, “Moshe died there,” will then adopt their spiritual meaning *alone*.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech* 5749)

⁵ Moshe, the servant of God, died there, in the land of Mo'au, by (a kiss from) the mouth of God.
⁶ (God) buried him in the valley, in the land of Mo'au, opposite Bais-Pe'or. No person knows the place of his burial, to this day.

⁷ Moshe was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eye never dimmed, nor did moisture leave his (body, even after he died).

⁸ The men of Israel wept for Moshe in the plains of Mo'au for thirty days, and then the days of weeping over the mourning for Moshe came to an end.

⁹ Yehoshua, the son of Nun was filled with a spirit of wisdom, because Moshe had laid his hands upon him. The children of Israel obeyed him, and they did as God had commanded Moshe.

¹⁰ No other prophet ever arose in Israel like Moshe, whom God knew face to face, ¹¹ as manifested by all the signs and wonders, which God had sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and all

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **Why did only the “men of Israel,” and not the entire house of Israel, mourn Moshe’s passing? (v. 8)**

PANE’ACH RAZA: When Aharon died, Moshe’s intense mourning inspired the whole of the Jewish people to mourn too. However, when Moshe passed away, there was no person as great as Moshe to inspire all the people to mourn, so only the men participated.

RASHI: [Here Moshe was only mourned by some of] the males. But concerning Aharon, the Torah states, “The entire house of Israel” [wept for him] (*Bamidbar* 20:29), meaning both males and females, because he used to pursue peace and bring peace between a man and his fellow, and between a woman and her husband.

AVOS D’RABBI NASAN: When Aharon was walking in the street and met a wicked person, Aharon would greet him. The next day, when the man wanted to commit a sin, he would say, “Dear me! How will I lift up my eyes afterwards and look at my friend [Aharon]? I am

ashamed, because he greeted me.” In this way, the man would refrain from sinning.

Likewise, when two people quarreled Aharon went and sat down with one of them and said to him, “My son! Do you know what your friend is saying? His heart is in a turmoil and he is tearing his clothes saying, ‘Dear me! How can I lift up my eyes and look at my friend? I am ashamed because I have wronged him.’” [Aharon] would then sit with him until he had dispelled the grudge from his heart.

Then Aharon would go and sit with the other one, and say to him, “Do you know what your friend is saying? His heart is in a turmoil and he is tearing his clothes saying, ‘Dear me! How can I lift up my eyes and look at my friend? I am ashamed because I have wronged him.’” [Aharon] would then sit with him until he had dispelled the grudge from his heart. When the two of them would then meet, they hugged and kissed each other (*Avos d’Rabbi Nasan* 12:3).

TORAS MENACHEM

☞ **THE PUBLIC MOURNING OF MOSHE’S PASSING (v. 8)**

In his commentary to verse 8, *Rashi* explains a subtle distinction between the Torah’s description of Aharon’s passing, and that of Moshe’s passing. In the former case, the Torah states that Aharon was mourned by “the entire house of Israel,” a phrase which clearly refers to men women (and even the children—see *Zohar* III 183a). In Moshe’s case however, an open display of mourning only occurred with “the men of Israel,” indicating that: i.) The women were not involved at all; and ii.) Only some of the men participated (since the verse does not stress that “all the men of Israel” mourned).

Rashi explains that Aharon’s passing grieved the Jewish people to a greater extent, “because he used to pursue peace and bring peace between a man and his fellow, and between a woman and her husband.”

This prompts the following questions:

a.) Since the current passage relates the passing of Moshe, we would expect the Torah to stress Moshe’s greatness. Why then did *Rashi* choose an interpretation which indicates Aharon’s superiority over Moshe, rather than one which indicates the greatness of Moshe, such as the explanation of **Pane’ach Raza**?

b.) How could we possibly accept the notion that Moshe did not “pursue peace and bring peace between a man and his fellow, and between a woman and her husband”? Does the *Talmud* not testify that “Moshe was a lover of the Jewish people” (*Menachos* 65a)?

THE EXPLANATION

Our Sages taught that Moshe personified the quality of truth (*Shemos Rabah* 5:10; *Sanhedrin* 111a). Therefore, while Moshe would certainly have made great efforts to “pursue peace and bring peace,” during his lifetime, he found himself unable to go to the same lengths as Aharon in the pursuit of peace. For Aharon followed the principle, “It is permissible to modify the facts for the sake of peace” (*Yevamos* 65b), and thus he would bring quarreling parties together by saying that the opposing party really wished to make peace (as described in **Avos d’Rabbi Nasan**).

Moshe, however, was unable to do so—not because he disagreed with the principle that “it is permissible to modify,” since, after all, this was part of the Torah which Moshe himself had taught the Jewish people. Rather, Moshe could simply not utilize this “permission” to “modify the facts” even “for the sake of peace,” since he embodied the attribute of truth.

Nevertheless, on the last day of his life, Moshe was able to reflect on his life’s work (something he would have been far too busy to do before), and at this point, he came to attain the additional advantage of Aharon’s approach which succeeded in reaching more people than Moshe.

Therefore, in an act of true *ahavas yisra’el* (love of one’s fellow), Moshe recorded the events of his own passing in a way that brought to light Aharon’s greatness, which Moshe only attained at this point in his life.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 253ff.)

אתגלי לה יי אפינ באפינ: יא לְכַל אֲתִיָּא
 וּמוֹפְתִיָּא דִּי שְׁלַחָה יי לְמַעַבְד בְּאַרְעָא
 דְּמִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעָה וּלְכַל עֲבָדֶיהּ וּלְכַל אַרְעָה:
 יב וּלְכַל יִדְא תִּקְפְּתָא וּלְכַל חֲזוֹנָא רַבָּא דִּי
 עֲבַד מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינַי כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: חֹזֵק

שְׁלַחוּ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאַרְצֵי מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעָה וּלְכָל-עַבְדֵּי
 וּלְכָל-אַרְצוֹ: יב וּלְכָל הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה וּלְכָל הַמּוֹרָא הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר
 עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינַי כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל:

חֹזֵק חֲזָק וְנִתְחַזַּק

מ"א פסוקים. גאוא"ל סימן. אלי סימן.

סכום פסוקים של ספר דברים תשע מאות וחמישים וחמשה הנ"ץ סימן. וחציו ועשית על פי הדבר אשר יגידו לך. ופרשיותיו י"א, אסרו ח"ג בעבותים סימן. וסדריו כ"ז, יפיח אמונה יגיד צדק סימן. ופרקיו ל"ד, אודה ה' בכל לב"ב סימן. מנין הפתוחות ל"ד. והסתומות קכ"ד. סך הכל קנ"ח פרשיות, וכסא כבוד ינחילם סימן.

סדרי תורה נ"ד, למען יזמרך כבוד ולא יד"ם סימן. מנין הפרשיות הפתוחות של כל התורה ר"ץ, יבא דודי לגנו ויאכל פרי מגדיו סימן. והסתומות שע"ט, או אסרה אסר על נפשה בשבע"ה סימן. נמצאו מנין כל הפרשיות פתוחות וסתומות תרס"ט, לא תחסר כל בה סימן.

סכום הפסוקים של כל התורה ה' אלפים תתמ"ה, ואור החמ"ה יהיה שבעתיים סימן. וחציו וישם עליו את החשן ויתן אל החשן את האורים ואת התומים.

מנין תיבות של כל התורה ע"ט אלף ותתקע"ו, עט סופר מהיר יפיפית מבני אדם סימן. מנין אותיות של כל התורה ד"ש אלף ותת"ה, וסימנו ארצה בו ואכבדה אמר ה' גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן הראשון. שיבנה במהרה בימינו אמן כן יהי רצון.

רש"י

הלוחות לעיניהם, שנאמר ואשזרס לעיניכם⁴, והסכימה דעת הקצ"ה לדעתו, שנאמר אשר שזרת⁵, יישר כחך ששזרת⁶:

חסלת פרשת וזאת הברכה

ה' פנים אל פנים. שהיה לבו גם בו ומדבר אליו בכל עת שרואה, כענין שנאמר ועתה אעלה אל ה'¹, עמדו ואשמעה מה יאמר ה' לכם²: (יב) ולכל היד החזקה. שקבל את התורה כלוחות זידי: ולכל המורא הגדול. נסיס וגזרות שצמדבר הגדול והגורא³: לעיני כל ישראל. שנשאו לבו לשזור

his servants, and to all his land,¹² and all the strength (he needed to receive the Torah with his) hand, and all the (miracles that occurred in the) great, awe(some, wilderness), which Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel.

The congregation*, followed by the reader, proclaim:

Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!

THE HAFTARAH FOR VEZOS HABRACHAH (SIMCHAS TORAH) IS ON PAGE 295.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What did Moshe perform “before the eyes of all Israel”? (v. 12)

RASHI: His heart inspired him to smash the Tablets before their eyes, as the verse states, “I shattered them before your eyes” (*Devarim* 9:17). God gave His approval...[saying] “Well done that you broke them!”

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

THE CONCLUSION OF THE TORAH

How can *Rashi* conclude his commentary to the entire Torah with a reference to Moshe’s breaking of the Tablets, in contradiction, it would seem, to the principle of always ending on a positive note? (see *Brachos* 31a; *Rashi* to end of Lamentations)

Furthermore, if the Jewish people were not fit to receive the Tablets, having sinned with the Golden Calf, why did Moshe need to *destroy* them? Surely, it would have been preferable to put the Tablets aside, protecting these precious items that were fashioned by the Almighty, until the time came when the Jewish people were fit to receive them?

In truth, however, the breaking of the Tablets brings to light Moshe’s greatness as a true leader of Israel.

Rashi explains (in his commentary to *Shemos* 34:1**), that Moshe’s breaking of the Tablets was like tearing up a contract, to ensure that the Jewish people would not be in “breach of contract” for worshipping the calf.

So the breaking of the Tablets brings to light Moshe’s true dedication as a protector and defender of the Jewish people, that when faced with a dilemma between saving the holy Tablets of Torah fashioned by God, and saving the Jewish people from being liable for breach of contract, he chose the latter.

However, this has not fully solved our problem. For while we have explained that the Torah does indeed end on a positive note for the Jewish people and their faithful shepherd Moshe, it reflects negatively on the Torah itself. For when faced with a choice between protecting the Torah and protecting the Jewish people, Moshe chose *not* to protect the Torah!

The answer to this problem is clarified by the following *Midrash*:

“There are two things in the world and I love them totally with all my heart: the Torah and the Jewish people. But I do not know which comes first?”

“People say that the Torah comes first...but since the Torah states, “Command the children of Israel. Speak to the children of Israel,” I say that the Jewish people come first” (*Tanna debey Eliyahu Rabah* ch. 14).

So when Moshe broke the Tablets he was making a very similar statement, that, “the Jewish people come first.” And this is indeed a fitting conclusion for the Torah, for having completed the Torah we should come to the realization that the purpose of the Torah is to bring the greatness of the Jewish people to light.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 34, p. 217)

*According to *Chabad* custom, the person called to the Torah also recites *chazak chazak venischazeik*, in contrast to those authorities who deem this to be an interruption before the blessing which is said after reading the Torah (*Sefer Haminhagim*, p. 31; See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 411; *ibid.* vol. 25, p. 474ff. See also *Chikrei Minhagim* by Rabbi Eliyahu Yochanan Gurary (*Oholei Shem, Lubavitch* 5759), p. 126ff.). **Cited above in *Classic Questions to Devarim* 9:17, from *Rashi’s* source text, the *Midrash*.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WITH NOTES USED BY THE READER
FOR PUBLIC TORAH READING

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית
עַבְדִּים לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ
פֶסֶל | כָּל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם | מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאֶרֶץ מִתַּחַת
וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם | מִתַּחַת לָאֶרֶץ לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם
כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֶקֶד עֵינָי אֲבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים
וְעַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רַבְעִים לְשִׁנָּי וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים לְאֹהֲבֵי
וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי (קרי מִצְוֹתַי) : ׀ לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׂוֹא כִּי לֹא יִנְקָה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִשָּׂא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ
לְשׂוֹא: ׀ שָׁמֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה | יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּךָ וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
שַׁבָּת | לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלֶאכֶה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ
וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ וְשׂוֹרְךָ וְחֹמְרֶךָ וְכָל-בְּהֵמְתֶךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ כַּמּוֹד וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי-עַבְדְּ הָיִיתָ |
בָּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּצְאֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְעַ
נְטוּיָה עַל-כֵּן צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: ׀
כִּבְדֵּךָ אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַן |
יָרִיכֶן יָמֶיךָ וְלִמְעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
נָתַן לָךְ: ׀ לֹא תִרְצַח: ׀ וְלֹא תִנְאַף: ׀ וְלֹא תִגְנֹב: ׀
וְלֹא-תַעֲנֶה בְרֵעֶךָ עַד שׂוֹא: ׀ וְלֹא תַחְמֹד אִשְׁתְּ רֵעֶךָ ׀
וְלֹא תִתְאַוֶּה בֵּית רֵעֶךָ שָׂדֵהוּ וְעַבְדּוֹ וְאִמְתּוֹ שׂוֹרוֹ וְחֹמְרוֹ וְכָל
אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: ׀

Haftaros

הַפְּטָרוֹת

🕍 BLESSINGS ON READING THE HAFTARAH 🕍

The person who was called up for *Maftir* says the following before reading the *Haftarah*:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר
בְּנְבִיאִים טוֹבִים וְרָצָה בְּדְבָרֵיהֶם הַנְּאֻמִּים
בְּאַמֶּת בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַבוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְמִשְׁנֵה
עַבְדּוֹ וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ וּבְנְבִיאֵי הָאַמֶּת וְצַדִּיק:

After the *Haftarah* the following blessings are recited:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, צוֹר כָּל
הָעוֹלָמִים, צַדִּיק בְּכָל הַדּוֹרוֹת, הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן
הַאֹמֵר וַעֲשֵׂה, הַמְדַבֵּר וּמְקַיֵּם, שֶׁכָּל דְּבָרָיו אִמֶּת וְצַדִּיק:
נְאֻמָּן אַתָּה הוּא יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְנְאֻמָּנִים דְּבָרֶיךָ, וְדָבַר
אַחַד מִדְּבָרֶיךָ אַחֲזוֹר לֹא יִשׁוּב רִיקָם, כִּי אֵל
מֶלֶךְ נְאֻמָּן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן
בְּכָל דְּבָרָיו:

רַחֵם עַל צִיּוֹן כִּי הִיא בֵּית חַיֵּינוּ, וְלַעֲלוּבַת נַפְשׁ
תּוֹשִׁיעַ וְתִשְׁמַח בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיַמֵּינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
מְשַׁמֵּחַ צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָהּ:

שְׂמֹחֵנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּאַלְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא עַבְדְּךָ, וּבְמַלְכוּת
בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֲךָ, בְּמַהֲרָה יָבֹא וַיְגַל לְבַנּוֹ,
עַל כִּסְאוֹ לֹא יֵשֵׁב זָר, וְלֹא יִנְחֲלוּ עוֹד אַחֲרָיִם אֶת
כְּבוֹדוֹ, כִּי בְשֵׁם קֹדֶשְׁךָ נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לוֹ, שְׁלֹא יִכְבֶּה נֵרוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מִגֵּן דָּוִד:

On fast days end here. On Shabbos (including Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed) continue°:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְעַל
יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה, שְׁנַתֶּתָּ לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְקַדְּשָׁה
וּלְמַנוּחָה, לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת:

עַל הַכֹּל, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ,
יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ

אַתָּה יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת (On Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed Succos add — וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים):

°On a Festival, and Shabbos that coincides with a Festival continue here:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים (On Shabbos) —וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה) וְעַל יוֹם

Shemini Atzeres / Simchas Torah	Succos	Shavuos	Pesach
שְׁמִינִי עֶצְרַת הַחַג	חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת	חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת	חַג הַמִּצּוֹת

הַזֶּה, וְעַל-יוֹם טוֹב מְקַרָּא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה, שְׁנַתֶּתָּ לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ (On Shabbos) —לְקַדְּשָׁה
וּלְמַנוּחָה) לְשִׁשּׁוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה, לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת. עַל הַכֹּל, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ
מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ (On Shabbos) —הַשַּׁבָּת וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

°On Rosh Hashanah continue here:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים (On Shabbos) —וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה) וְעַל יוֹם
הַזְּכָרוֹן הַזֶּה, וְעַל-יוֹם טוֹב מְקַרָּא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה, שְׁנַתֶּתָּ לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ (On Shabbos) —
לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנוּחָה) לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת. עַל הַכֹּל, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ,
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, וּדְבָרְךָ מְלַבְּנוּ
אִמַּת וְקָיָם לְעַד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מְלַךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ, מְקַדֵּשׁ (On Shabbos) —הַשַּׁבָּת
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזְּכָרוֹן:

°On Yom Kippur continue here:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים (On Shabbos) —וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה) וְעַל יוֹם
הַכַּפּוּרִים הַזֶּה, וְעַל-יוֹם סְלִיחַת הָעוֹן הַזֶּה, וְעַל יוֹם מְקַרָּא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה, שְׁנַתֶּתָּ
לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ (On Shabbos) —לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנוּחָה) לְסְלִיחָה וּלְמַחִילָה וּלְכַפְרָה, לְכָבוֹד
וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת. עַל הַכֹּל יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרֵךְ
שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, וּדְבָרְךָ מְלַבְּנוּ אִמַּת וְקָיָם לְעַד. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יי, מְלַךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ, וְלְעוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמַעֲבִיר
אֲשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכַל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה, מְלַךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ, מְקַדֵּשׁ (On Shabbos) —הַשַּׁבָּת
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים:

DEVARIM / דברים

(Isaiah 1:1-27)

א « חֲזוֹן יִשְׁעֵיהוּ בֶן-אֲמוּזַן אֲשֶׁר תָּהָה עַל-יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם בְּיָמֵי עֲזִיָּהוּ יוֹתָם אָתּוֹ יְחֻקֵיהוּ מִלְּבֵי יְהוּדָה: ב שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר בָּנִים גִּדְּלָתִי וְרוֹמְמָתִי וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי: ד יָדַע שׁוֹר קִנְהוֹ וְחִמּוֹר אִבּוֹם בַּעֲלָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדַע עַמִּי לֹא הִתְבּוֹנֵן: ה הוּא גּוֹי הַטָּא עִם כְּבֹד עֹז וְרַע מְרָעִים בָּנִים מִשְׁחִיתִים עֲזָבוּ אֶת-יְהוָה נֶאֱצַו אֶת-קְרוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל נָזְרוּ אַחֲזֹר: ו עַל מָה תָּבוּ עוֹד תּוֹסִיפוּ סָרָה כָּל-רֹאשׁ לַחֲלִי וְכָל-לֵבָב דָּוִי: ז מִכַּף-רֶגֶל וְעַד-רֹאשׁ אֵינְבוּ מֵתָם פָּצַע וְחַבּוּרָה וּמִכָּה מָרִיהָ לֹא-זָרוּ וְלֹא חָפְשׁוּ וְלֹא רִכְבָּה בְּשִׁמּוֹן: ח אֲרַעְכֶם שְׁמָמָה עֲרִיכֶם שְׂרָפוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֲדַמְתֶּם לְנַגְדְכֶם זָרִים אֲכָלִים אֹתָהּ וּשְׁמָמָה כְּמַהֲפַכֶת זָרִים: ט וְנוֹתַרְהָ בַת-צִיּוֹן כְּסִפָּה בְּכָרֶם כְּמִלּוּנָה בְּמִקְשָׁה כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה: י לֹלֵל יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוֹתִיר לָנוּ שָׂרִיד כְּמַעֵט כֶּסֶדִם הָיִינוּ לְעַמְרָה דְּמִינוּ: יא שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר-יְהוָה קְצִינֵי סָדֶם הָאֲזִינוּ תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִם עַמְרָה:

1:1 (This is) the prophetic vision of Yeshayahu son of Amotz.

(The following) was prophesied about Yehudah and Jerusalem in the days of Uziyahu, Yosam, Achaz, and Chizkiyahu, Kings of Yehudah.

² Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth, for (it is) God (and not I who) has spoken (these words):

"I have reared and raised (my) children, (the Jewish people, above all the nations), and they have rebelled against Me! ³ (Even) an ox recognizes its owner and a donkey its master's trough, (but) Israel does not (want to) know (me)! My people (whom I have helped) do not try to understand (what is good for them)!"

Rebellious people

⁴ Oh you sinful nation! A people (who were once holy and are now) heavy with sin! (Holy) offspring (who became) wicked! Corrupt children! They have abandoned God, disgraced the Holy One of Israel, and separated themselves (from Him)! ⁵ Why do you (allow yourselves to commit the same sins repeatedly, continuing to) turn astray and be stricken again and again? (From being stricken so many times) every head is heavy and every heart is pained. ⁶ From the sole of the feet to the head nothing is sound—(only) wounds, bruises, and open sores, untreated, unbandaged, not softened with oil, (yet you continue to sin, and incur yet more lashes).

Judgments

⁷ (Therefore) your land is waste, your cities burned down. Strangers eat your farmland before you (r eyes). It is desolate, as if destroyed by foreign (enemies, from

afar). ⁸ (The city of) Tziyon is left (uninhabited) like a(n obsolete) hut in a vineyard, like a(n abandoned) night-hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. ⁹ If the God of Hosts had not left us a small remnant (in His kindness), we would be (destroyed) like Sodom and like Amorah!

¹⁰ Hear God's Word, you (who resemble the) nobles of Sodom! Listen to the teachings of our God, you (who resemble the) people of Amorah!

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS DEVARIM

This is the third of three "Haftaros of punishment" which are read between the 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av, when we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple. The Haftarah is taken from the opening of the Book of Yeshayah (Isaiah), though it is unclear whether this was in fact his first prophecy.

At first glance, the harsh tone of Yeshayah's words—the most condemning of all three "Haftaros of Punishment"—is difficult to understand in the light of the Talmud's statement that "Yeshayah speaks entirely of consolation" (Bava Basra 14b). Maharsha answers, "This is not meant literally, that the entire book of Yeshayah is consolation, as we find many prophecies of destruction there. Rather, the overwhelming majority of the book is consolatory."

However, according to Kabbalistic teachings, the Talmud's statement could, in fact, be taken literally. Kehilas Ya'akov writes that Yeshayah did not speak words of pure *gevurah* (harshness; judgments), but rather, *chesed shb'gevurah* (sweetened judgments), and this spiritually empowered the Jewish people to bring the redemption, which will come through sweetening the judgments of exile. Therefore, it could truly be said that "Yeshayah speaks entirely of consolation," for even his words of criticism are charged and sweetened with redemptive undercurrents (Likutei Sichos vol. 18, p. 344, note 22).

After the Haftarah's opening words which introduce Yeshayah as a prophet (1:1), he laments the sinfulness and rebelliousness of the Jewish people and their consequent punishments (2-9). He rebukes them for insincere confession when bringing sacrifices (10-15), because God desires ethical behavior and repentance (16-20). In his final lament, the

¹¹ “Why do I need all your numerous sacrifices (when your accompanying confessions are insincere)?” says God. “I had enough of your burnt-offering rams and fattened cattle, and I do not desire the blood of cattle, sheep, and goats (since they do not bring you to repent).”

Insincere confession

¹² When you appear before Me (at a festival, I will say), ‘Who asked you to do this, trampling My (Temple) courtyards?’ ¹³ Do not bring anymore meal offerings (for they will be) in vain, (for the three-finger fistful that) is burned (on the Altar) is offensive to Me! (When) groups of you (bring the sacrifices of Rosh) Chodesh, Shabbos, and festivals I cannot bear the falsehood (in your hearts)! ¹⁴ I hate your (Rosh) Chodesh and festival (offerings). They are (like) a burden to Me, and I cannot bear them! ¹⁵ When you spread your hands (in prayer), I will turn My eyes away from you. As much as you pray, I will not listen, (because) your hands are full of blood!”

Need for repentance

¹⁶ “Cleanse and purify yourselves (by repenting). Remove your evil deeds from My sight, and refrain from doing evil. ¹⁷ Learn (to do) good, seek justice, and support the oppressed. Demand justice for the orphan and plead the cause of the widow!”

¹⁸ “Come, now, and let us clarify (who has offended whom),” says God. “If your sins are like scarlet thread (and you return to Me), they will become white like snow. If they are as red as crimson, they will become like wool.”

¹⁹ “If you desire to listen, you will eat the best of the land. ²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, you will be eaten by the sword,” for God has spoken.

Decadence of Jerusalem

²¹ How the (faithful) city (of Jerusalem) has become (unfaithful like) a harlot! (Once) it was full of justice, and righteousness was always there, but now (it has become a city of) murderers! ²² (In your business dealings) your silver has become dross and your strong drinks diluted with water. ²³ Your rulers are corrupt and are friendly with thieves. They all love bribes and run after favors. They do not judge the orphan, and the widow’s case does not reach them.

²⁴ Therefore, the Master of Israel, the God of Hosts says: “Oh! I will appease Myself (of anger against) My rivals and take

לָמָּה לִּי רַב־זְבַּחֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה שְׁבַעְתִּי עֲלוֹת אֵילִים וְחֵלֶב מְרִיאִים וְדָם פָּרִים וּכְבָשִׁים וְעִתוּדִים לֹא חָפְצָתִי: כִּי תִבְאוּ לִרְאוֹת פָּנָי מִי־בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיְדַכֶּם רֶמֶס חֲצָרָי: י לא תוֹסִיפוּ הֵבִיא מִנְחַת־שׁוּא קְטֹרֶת תּוֹעֵבָה הִיא לִי הַדָּשׁ וְשֶׁבֶת קָרָא מִקְרָא לֹא־אוּכַל אֹזֶן וְעֵצָרָה: יד הַדְּשִׁיכֶם וּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם שְׁנֵאָה נַפְשֵׁי הָיוּ עָלַי לְטָרַח נְלֹאִיתִי נִשְׂאָ: טו וּבְפָרְשֵׁכֶם כְּפִיכֶם אֲעֲלִים עֵינַי מִכֶּם גַּם כִּי־תִרְבוּ תִפְלָה אֵינְנִי שֹׁמֵעַ יְדֵיכֶם דְּמַיִם מְלֹאוּ: טז רַחֲצוּ הַזְּכוֹ הַסִּירוּ רַע מֵעַלְיֵכֶם מִנְגִיד עֵינַי חֲדָלוּ הֲרַע: יז לְמַדּוּ הַיִּטֵּב דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁרוֹ חָמוּץ שִׁפְטוּ יְתוֹם רִיבוֹ אֲלֻמְנָה: יח לְכוּ־נָא וְנִוְכַחְתָּה יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אִם־יְהִיו חֲטָאֵיכֶם כְּשָׁנִים כְּשֶׁלֶג יִלְפִינוּ אִם־יֹאדִימוּ כְּתוֹלָע כְּצֹמֶר יְהִיו: יט אִם־תֹּאבְדוּ וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם טוֹב הָאָרֶץ תֹּאכְלוּ: כ ואִם־תִּמְאֲנוּ וּמְרִיתֶם חָרֵב תֹּאכְלוּ כִּי פִי יְהוָה דֹּבֵר: כא אֵיכָה הִיְתָה לְזוֹנָה קָרְיָה נְאֻמְנָה מְלֹאֲתֵי מִשְׁפָּט צֶדֶק יִלִּין בָּהּ וְעֵתָה מְרַצְחִים: כב כִּסְפָד הָיָה לְסִיגִים סִבְאָד מְהוּל בְּמַיִם: כג שְׂרִיד סוּרְרִים וְחִבְרֵי גִנְזִים כָּלוּ אֶהֱב שִׁחַד וְרִדָף שְׁלֹמָנִים יְתוֹם לֹא יִשְׁפְטוּ וְרִיב אֲלֻמְנָה לֹא־יִבּוּא אֲלֵיהֶם: כד לָכֵן נָאִם הָאָדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲבִיר

prophet grieves over the corrupt state of Jerusalem (21-25), and envisions a future time of restoration (26-27).

1. תְּזִיּוֹן יִשְׁעָיָהוּ—The prophetic vision of Yeshayahu. The Shabbos when this Haftarah is read is commonly known as *Shabbos Chazon* (“Shabbos of the prophetic vision”), after the opening words of the *Haftarah*. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev taught a further significance to this term, that on this day, “Everybody is shown a distant vision of the future Temple.” And, even though most people do not claim to actually see this vision, it nevertheless is felt by the more sublime, subconscious levels of each person’s soul which subsequently influence the conscious mind.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak explained the purpose of this vision with a parable: A father had a valuable garment made for his son, but the son was irresponsible, and soon the garment was ripped into pieces. So the father

had a second garment made for his son, but the son also allowed it to be ripped. When the father prepared a third garment he did not give it to his son to wear, but instead he showed it to him from time to time, telling him that if he would behave himself the garment would be his to wear.

Likewise, the vision which we experience on *Shabbos Chazon* is intended to arouse a desire for the Third Temple to be built, a feeling which will inevitably lead a person to be more careful in the observance of *mitzvos* (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5749, note 3).

2. שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהִאֲזִינִי אָרֶץ—Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth. Moshe used the opposite expression to Yeshayah. Instead of saying, “Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth,” he declared, “Listen, O heavens...Let the earth hear” (*Devarim* 32:1). The Midrash explains that Moshe was “close to the heavens,” so he told them to “listen”—a term which suggests a closeness between speaker and listener. But since

יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא אֲנַתְחָם מִצְרֵי וְאֲנַקְמָה מֵאוֹיְבָיו:
 כה וְאֲשִׁיבָה יָדִי עָלֶיךָ וְאֶצְרֹף כִּבְר סִיגֶיךָ וְאֶסְרֶה
 כָּל-בְּדִילֶיךָ: כו וְאֲשִׁיבָה שְׁפָטֶיךָ כִּבְרֵאשׁוֹנָה וְיַעֲצֶיךָ
 כִּבְתִּחְלָה אֲחֵרֵי-כֵן יִקְרָא לְךָ עִיר הַצְּדָק קִרְיָה
 נְאֻמָּנָה: כז צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדָּה וְשָׁבִיָּה בְּצְדָקָה:

observance of) law, and those who return there (will come) due to (their acts of) righteousness.

revenge on My enemies! ²⁵I will pass My hand over you (to strike you with one blow after another). I will smelt your impurities as (if cleaning them) with soap, and I will remove all your (impurities) of tin.”

²⁶ “I will restore your judges (to be righteous) as they were at first, and your advisers as they were in the beginning. Afterwards you will be called ‘city of righteousness—faithful city.’”

²⁷ (The city of) Tziyon will be redeemed through (the

Restoration

⌘ VA'ESCHANAN / ואתחנן ⌘

(Isaiah 40:1-26)

ב ׀ נְחַמְנוּ נְחַמְנוּ עַמִּי יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ד דַּבְּרוּ עַל-
 לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם וְקִרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי מְלֵאָה צְבָאוֹת כִּי נִרְצָה
 עֲוֹנֶיהָ כִּי לָקַחְתָּ מִיַּד יְהוָה כְּפָלִים בְּכָל-חַטָּאתֶיהָ:
 ז קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּנּוּ דְרֹד יְהוָה יִשְׁרוּ בְּעֵרְבָה
 מְסֻלָּה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ: ח כָּל-נִיָּא וְנִשְׂא וְכַל-הָר וְגִבְעָה
 יִשְׁפְּלוּ וְהָיָה הָעֵקֶב לְמִישׁוֹר וְהָרְכָסִים לְבָקְעָה:
 ט וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד יְהוָה וְרָאוּ כָּל-בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי יְהוָה
 דִּבֶּר: י קוֹל אֹמֵר קָרָא וְאֹמֵר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל-הַבָּשָׂר
 חֲצִיר וְכָל-חֲסֵדוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה: יא יִבֶּשׂ חֲצִיר נָבֵל

^{40:1} God will say (to the prophets), “Comfort, oh comfort My people! ² Speak (in a way that will enter the) heart of Jerusalem and announce to her that her period (of exile) has been fulfilled and that her sins have been forgiven, for she has (already) been punished for all her sins twice by God (with two exiles).”

³ (It is as if) a voice is calling out: “Clear a path in the desert for God (to return the exiles)! Make a straight road in the wilderness for our God (to go ahead of them)! ⁴ Every valley will be raised. Every mountain and hill will be lowered. The crooked (paths) will be made straight, and the high places will become a plain.”

⁵ Then God’s Glory will be revealed and all flesh will see together that God has spoken (words of comfort).

⁶ A voice says (to the prophet): “Announce (in public)!”

“What shall I announce?” (asks the prophet).

Prophecy of Redemption

(“Announce the following,” says the voice), “All the people (who will come with Gog to Jerusalem to war will wither like) grass. Even their good (people will wither) like the flowers of the field, ⁷ (for) grass withers and flowers fade when God’s breath

Enemies will wither like grass

he was “distant from the earth,” he told it to “hear,” from afar. Yeshayah, however, told the earth to “listen,” since he was “closer to the earth, and more distant from the heavens” (Sifri, beginning of Parshas Ha’azinu).

Being closer to the heavens, Moshe was able to take the Torah from its supernatural source and act as a channel for it to be brought below. Yeshayah, on the other hand, worked in the opposite direction. Being closer to earth, he was able to address the real issues in people’s lives, lifting them out of their difficulties so as to progress to a higher spiritual level. So both prophets aimed to spiritualize, but Moshe “delivered” spirituality in the form of mystical revelation, whereas Yeshayah cajoled and challenged the people to become more spiritual themselves (Likutei Sichos vol 2, p. 415ff).

27. צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדָּה וְשָׁבִיָּה בְּצְדָקָה.—(The city of) Tziyon will be redeemed through (the observance of) law, and those who return there (will come) due to (their acts of) righteousness. The last verses of the Haftarah describe two phases of restoration: 1.) First, in verses 25-26, we

read of the correction and transformation of evil: “I will smelt your impurities as (if cleaning them) with soap, and I will remove all your (impurities) of tin. I will restore your judges (to be righteous) as they were at first, and your advisers as they were in the beginning.” 2.) Verse 27 then concludes by stressing the observance of good deeds alone: “(the observance of) law,” and “(acts of) righteousness.”

The message here appears to be that pure good (verse 27) is a spiritual progression from—and thus superior to—the transformation of evil into good (verses 25-26), a conclusion which seems to fly in the face of the traditional understanding that the ba’al teshuvah (penitent) is greater than the tzadik (naturally pious person). And are we not taught that there is a superiority to “light” which comes from a setting of spiritual “darkness” (cf. Ecclesiastes 2:13)?

In truth, however, there is a development of spiritual intensity here. Initially, there is a superior quality to “light which comes from a setting of

blows over it. Indeed, the people (of Gog will be like) grass! ⁸ (They are like) grass (that) withers and flowers (that fade), but the word of our God will endure forever!”

Prophets announce Redemption
⁹ (You prophets) who bring news (of redemption) to Tziyon, go up on a high mountain (so your voices can be heard from afar! You prophets) who bring news (of redemption) to Jerusalem, raise your voice powerfully! Raise it, do not be afraid (that somebody will deny it)! Declare to the cities of Yehudah, “God is coming (to redeem you)!” ¹⁰ Look! God Almighty is coming with power, and His arm will rule for Him (without any help). His reward (for every person) is (ready) with Him! His payment (for good deeds) is (ready) before Him! ¹¹ (God will lead you out of exile) like a shepherd pasturing his flock, who gathers the lambs with His arm (and not his stick) and carries them in his bosom, leading the nurslings carefully.

Omniscience of God
¹² Who (is like God, Who knows the depth of) the waters (as if) He measured (them) with His fist, and (He knows the length of) the skies (as if) He measured them with a ruler? (He knows) the amount of earth on the ground (as if) He measured it. (He knows) the weight of the mountains and the hills (as if He had used) a scale and a balance. ¹³ Who (could) influence God’s will (to accord with his own will)? What man is His advisor that informs Him? ¹⁴ Whom did He consult and who taught Him? Who instructed Him in the way of justice, taught Him knowledge, or guided Him in the path of wisdom?

Omnipotence of God
¹⁵ The (strength of the) nations is like a drop (which runs down the back of) a bucket (and becomes) bitter (from the mold) on the bucket. They are like (moldy) dust on a (copper) balance (which can easily be blown away). He casts away the islands as if (they were) dust, (so surely He can save the Jewish people from the nations)? ¹⁶ All the wood (of) Lebanon is not enough to burn (on His Altar), and its animals do not provide sufficient burnt offerings (before Him). ¹⁷ All the nations are like nothing to him. He considers them void and empty.

¹⁸ To whom can you compare God? What image is of any value compared to Him? ¹⁹ (Could you possibly compare Him to) idols cast by a smith and plated with gold by a goldsmith, with cast silver chains (to pull it along, because it cannot move on

צִיּוֹן כִּי רוּחַ יְהוָה נִשְׁבָּה בּוֹ אֶבֶן חֲצִיר הָעֵם: ה יִבֶּשׁ חֲצִיר נִבְּלָל צִיּוֹן וּדְבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִקּוּם לְעוֹלָם: ט עַל הַר־גְּבוּהָ עָלִי־לָךְ מִבְּשָׂרֵת צִיּוֹן הָרִימִי בְּכַח קוֹלְךָ מִבְּשָׂרֵת יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרִימִי אֶל־תִּירָאִי אִמְרֵי לְעָרֵי יְהוּדָה הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: י הִנֵּה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה בַּחֹק יָבֹוא וְזָרְעוּ מִשְׁלָה לּוֹ הִנֵּה שְׂכָרוֹ אִתּוֹ וּפְעֻלָּתוֹ לְפָנָיו: יא כָּרְעָה עֲדָרוֹ יִרְעָה בְּזָרְעוֹ יִקְבֹּץ מְלֵאִים וּבְחִיקוֹ יִשָּׂא עֲלוֹת יִנְהַל: יב מִי־מָרַד בְּשַׁעְלוֹ מִים וּשְׂמִים בְּזֹרֵת תִּלְּךָ וְכָל בְּשַׁלְשׁ עַפְרַי הָאָרֶץ וּשְׁקַל בְּפָלֶם הָרִים וּגְבָעוֹת בְּמֵאוֹנָיִם: יג מִי־תִכֵּן אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה וְאִישׁ עֲצָתוֹ יוֹדִיעֵנוּ: יד אֶת־מִי נוֹעֵץ וַיְבִינֶהוּ וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ בְּאֵרֶחַ מִשְׁפָּט וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ דַעַת וְדַרְךָ תְּבוּנוֹת יוֹדִיעֵנוּ: טו הֵן גּוֹיִם כְּמֶר מִדְּלֵי וּכְשַׁחַק מְאֹזְנִים נִחְשְׁבוּ הֵן אֵיִם כְּדָק יִפּוֹל: טז וּלְכַזּוֹן אֵין דֵּי בָעַר וְחֵיתוֹ אֵין דֵּי עוֹלָה: יז כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם כְּאֵין נִגְדּוּ מֵאַפֶּס וְתָהוּ נִחְשְׁבוּ־לוֹ: יח וְאַל־מִי תִדְמִיוֹן אֵל וּמַה־דְּמוּת תִּעְרְבוּ־לוֹ: יט הַפֶּסֶל נִסְכָּךְ חָרָשׁ וְצַרְף

darkness,” but once the light has “learned” and “acquired” this advantage from the darkness, it can then progress on its own to unprecedented levels of pure holiness (light) that vastly transcend the spiritual illumination of teshuvah and correction. In other words, becoming a ba'al teshuvah is not the highest level of spiritual achievement in itself; rather it is a springboard to becoming an even greater tzadik than would have been possible without the teshuvah process (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim 5748).

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN

This is the first of a series of “Seven Haftaros of Comfort” which are read between the ninth of Av and Rosh Hashanah. The Shabbos when this Haftarah is read is commonly known as Shabbos Nachamu (“Shabbos of Comfort”). The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile at the end of the 6th century B.C.E, and to the ruins of Jerusalem.

The Haftarah opens with a message of comfort and images of redemption (40:1-5). We read how the enemies of Jerusalem will ultimately wither like grass (6-8), and how the prophets will herald redemption from the mountaintops (9-11). The latter section of the Haftarah praises the greatness of God, His omnipotence and the fallacy of idol-worship (12-26).

1. נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ בְּנֵהְמוּ עָמִי—Comfort, oh comfort My people! Noting the obvious repetition in this verse, the Midrash explains that the prophet was offering a double measure of comfort here, “for the First Temple and for the Second Temple” (Eichah Rabah end of ch. 1; Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayah, remez 445).

Here we see a connection to the Parsha. (Strictly speaking, the “Seven Haftaros of Comfort” are not directly connected to the Parshiyos when they are read (see Orach Chaim 428), but Shaloh writes that, by Divine Providence, a connection will always be evident). Parshas Va'eschanan takes its name from Moshe's petition to God to enter the Land of Israel

בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעְנֵנוּ וּרְתִקוֹת כֶּסֶף צוֹרֵף: ד הַמְסַכֵּן תְּרוּמָה
 עֵץ לֹא יִרְקַב יִבְחַר חֲרָשׁ חָכֵם יִבְקֹשׁ-לוֹ לְהַכִּין
 פֶּסֶל לֹא יִמוּט: כה הֲלֹא תִדְעוּ הֲלֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ הֲלֹא
 הֲגֵד מֶרֶאשׁ לְכֶם הֲלֹא הִבִּינְתֶם מוֹסְדוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
 כו הֲיִשָּׁב עַל-חוּג הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁבֶּיהָ כַּחֲגֻבִים הַנוֹטֶה
 כְּדֹק שָׁמַיִם וַיִּמְתְּחֶם כְּאֹהֶל לְשָׁבֶת: כז הַנּוֹתֵן רוּזְזִים
 לְאֵין שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ כְּתִהוּ עֲשֵׂה: כח אֶף בְּלִי-נִפְעוּ אֶף
 בְּלִי-זָרְעוּ אֶף בְּלִי-שֶׁרֶשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ גְּזֻעַם וְגַם-נִשְׁאֵף בָּהֶם
 וַיִּכְשׁוּ וּסְעָרָה בִּקְשׁ תִּשְׁאָם: כט וְאֵל-מִי תִדְמִינִי
 וְאִשּׁוּהָ יֹאמֶר קְדוֹשׁ: לו שְׂאוּ-מְרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ
 מִי-בָרָא אֱלֹהֵי הַמוֹצֵי'א בְּמִסְפָּר צִבְיָאִם לְכֹלֵם בְּשֵׁם
 יְקָרָא מְרַב אוֹנִים וְאִמְיִן כֹּחַ אִישׁ לֹא נִעְדָּר:

its own). ²⁰ A poor person sets aside (large amounts of money for his idol, as if he were rich). He (pays a) professional to choose a wood which will not rot, and he seeks an expert to prepare an idol which will not fall apart (and shame him for worshipping it).

²¹ Don't you know (who the Master of the world is by working it out by yourself)? Haven't you heard (from somebody else that worked it out)? Haven't you been told (about God) from ancient tradition? Haven't you understood that the earth (is not resting on any) foundations (for it is a globe surrounded by sky, so God must be decreeing it to stand)?

²² (God) sits above the skies that encompass the earth, and those who live on it seem like grasshoppers. He stretches out the skies like a sheet and spreads them like a tent for dwelling. ²³ He makes princes into nothing and turns rulers of the land to worthlessness. ²⁴ (They are as if) they were never planted or never sown, (as if) they never even took root in the earth. (Even) by blowing at them (with an ordinary breath) they dry up, and the storm carries them away like straw (blowing in the wind).

Divine Providence

²⁵ "So to whom can you liken Me? To whom can you compare Me?" asks the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens and see who created these (stars)! He brings out their hosts by number, calling each (star) by name. Because of His great might and tremendous strength, not one (star) is lost (because He made them exist permanently).

God is unique

עִקֵּב / EIKEV

(Isaiah 49:14 – 51:3)

מַט יִי וַתֹּאמֶר צִיּוֹן עֲזַבְנִי יְהוָה וְאֶדְנִי שָׁכַחְנִי:
 טו הַתְּשַׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה מִרְחֶם בֶּן-בִּטְנָה גַם-אֱלֹהֵי
 תִשְׁכַּחְנָה וְאַנְכִי לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחְךָ: טז הֲנֵן עַל-בָּפְיָם
 חֲקִיתֶיךָ חוֹמֹתֶיךָ נִגְדִי תָמִיד: יז מְהֵרָה בְּנִיךָ מְהֵרָסֶיךָ

^{49:14} Tziyon will (want to) say, "God has abandoned me! My God has forgotten me." ¹⁵ (But this cannot be the case, for) could a woman forget her baby, or not have compassion on the child of her womb? (Even if it is conceivable that) she would forget (her children, nevertheless), I will not forget you! ¹⁶ Indeed, (My memory of you is so vivid, it is as if) I have engraved you on My palms, and your (ruined) walls are

God will not abandon Tziyon

always (a reminder) before Me (that I must rebuild them). ¹⁷ In fact it is your children (and not I, who) quickly (forgot about their land! It was the wicked ones) that came from you, (and not I) who destroyed you and laid waste to you, (O Tziyon).

and, as Megaleh Amukos writes (par. 185), if this request had been granted, the Jews would never have gone into exile because Moshe's conquest would have been eternal. This parallels the theme of "double comfort" in the *Haftarah*, since the only consolation for the destruction of the first two Temples will be the rebuilding of the Third Temple, which will be eternal (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan* 5748).

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS EIKEV

This is the second of a series of "Seven *Haftaros* of Comfort" which are read between the ninth of *Au* and *Rosh Hashanah*. The *Haftarah* was

addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

The *Haftarah* opens with God's consolation to Tziyon (Zion) that she will not be abandoned, and promises of restoration (49:14-21). In a second declaration, God reaffirms the ingathering of the exiles and punishment of the nations with more vivid imagery (22-26). In the following chapter, the mood shifts from consolation to criticism. Exile ("divorce") has come, not due to a weakness on God's part, but because of Israel's sins (50:1-3). On a personal note, the prophet declares his own loyalty to God, and his determination to deliver God's word regardless of

¹⁸ Lift up your eyes and see (how your children) have all gathered and come to you. “As I live,” says God, “you will (be proud of) them all like (one who) wears jewels, and you will tie them to yourself like silk adornments of a bride.”

Ingather-
ing of the
exiles

¹⁹ For your (worries about your) ruins, desolate places, and destroyed land (will end, as your land) will now be swarming with inhabitants, and your destroyers will be distant from you. ²⁰ Your ears (will hear) that your children (from whom you thought you were) bereaved are saying (to each other): “This place is too crowded for me. Make room for me to settle (too)!”

²¹ Then you will say in your heart, “Who gave birth to (all) these (people) for me? I was bereft and alone (for so long, with my children) exiled and wandering (from me). Who raised them? For I was by myself—where have these (people come from)?”

²² This is what God Almighty says: “Look! I will lift up My hand to the nations and hoist My banner to the peoples (to arouse their hearts). They will bring your sons in their corners (of their garments) and carry your daughters on their shoulders.”

²³ “Kings will be your child-minders and their princesses your wetnurses. They will bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet, and you will know that I am God (Who is all-powerful, so) that those who trust in Me will not be ashamed.”

Enemies
punished

²⁴ Can spoil be taken away from the mighty (Eisav)? Or captives saved from (Ya’akov) the righteous? ²⁵ But God says: “Captives can be freed from the mighty and spoil taken back from tyrants, for I will fight your enemies and save your children. ²⁶ I will feed the flesh of those who verbally abused you (to wild animals), and (birds) will become drunk on their blood as if it were wine. Then All flesh will know that I am God, your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Ya’akov!”

^{50:1} God says, “What is (the reason for) the bill of divorce with which I sent away your mother, (the congregation of Israel)? To which of My creditors did I sell you (to pay back My loan)? You were sold because of your sins, and your mother was sent away because of your transgressions, (so all this will end when you repent).

וּמְחַרְבֵיךָ מִמֶּנָּה יֵצְאוּ: ה' שְׂאֵי סָבִיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵי כָלֵם
נִקְבְּצוּ בְּאוֹרֶךְ חַי־אֲנִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי כָלֵם כְּעַדֵי
תִּלְבָּשִׁי וְתִקְשְׂרִים כַּכֶּלֶה: י' כִּי חֲרַבְתִּיךָ וְשִׁמְמַתִּיךָ
וְאַרְצֵן הִרְסַתְךָ כִּי עֲתָה תִּעָרֵי מִיּוֹשֵׁב וְרַחֲקוּ
מִבְּלַעֲיֶיךָ: כ' עוֹד יֵאמְרוּ בְּאָזְנֶיךָ בְּנֵי שְׂבָלֶיךָ צַר־לִי
הַמָּקוֹם גִּשְׁה־לִּי וְאַשְׁבָּה: כ"א וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְּךָ מִי
יִלְד־לִי אֶת־אֱלֹהִים וְאֲנִי שְׂכוּלָה וְנִלְמוּדָה גִּלְהָה |
וְסוּרָה וְאֱלֹהִים מִי גִדְּלָהּ הֵן אֲנִי נִשְׂאָרְתִּי לְבִדִּי אֱלֹהִים
אִיפֹה הֵם: כ"ב כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲשַׂא
אֶל־גּוֹיִם יָדַי וְאֶל־עַמִּים אָרִים נָסִי וְהִבִּיאוּ בְנֵיךָ
בְּחֶזֶן וּבְגַתֶיךָ עַל־כַּתְּף תִּנְשָׂאנָה: כ"ג וְהָיוּ מְלָכִים
אֲמֹנֶיךָ וְשָׂרוּתֵיהֶם מִיַּנִּיקְתֶיךָ אֲפִים אָרֶץ יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶוּ
לְךָ וְעַפְרָה רִגְלֶיךָ יִלְחָכוּ וְיִדְעַתָּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־יִבְשׁוּ קַיִי: כ"ד הִיָּקַח מִגִּבּוֹר מְלָקוֹחַ וְאִם־שָׁבִי
צַדִּיק יִמְלֹט: כ"ה כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה גַּם־שָׁבִי גִבּוֹר
יָקַח וּמְלָקוֹחַ עֲרִיץ יִמְלֹט וְאֶת־יְרִיבֶךָ אֲנֹכִי אֲרִיב
וְאֶת־בְּנֵיךָ אֲנֹכִי אוֹשִׁיעַ: כ"ו וְהִאֲכַלְתִּי אֶת־מוֹנֵיךָ
אֶת־בְּשָׂרָם וְכַעֲסִים דָּמָם יִשְׁפְּרוּן וְיִדְעוּ כָל־בָּשָׂר
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מוֹשִׁיעַךָ וְגֹאֲלֶךָ אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב: כ"ז כֹּה |
אָמַר יְהוָה אֵי זֶה סִפֵּר כְּרִיתוֹת אֲמַכֶּם אֲשֶׁר
שָׁלַחְתִּיהָ אוֹ מִי מְנוֹשִׁי אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לֹא הֵן
בְּעוֹנֹתֵיכֶם נִמְכַרְתֶּם וּבַפְּשָׁעֵיכֶם שָׁלַח אֲמַכֶּם:

any opposition (4-9). The only solution, therefore, is to listen to the prophet and trust in God (10-11). The conclusion of the *Haftarah*, from yet another chapter, sees the tone return to conciliation. The Jewish people are advised to find hope in the story of Avraham and Sarah, that God will soon comfort all the ruins of Tziyon (51:1-3).

49:14. וְתֵאמַר צִיּוֹן עֲזַבְנִי ה'—*Tziyon will (want to) say, “God has abandoned me!* Chasidic thought describes a two-phase interaction that forms the basis of man’s relationship with God. Initially, there must be an “arousal from Above.” God must spark an interest in the relationship and send messages that He desires the person to respond. But while these revelations are both inspiring and effective, they do not form a true

relationship with God, which must come from within the person himself. The “response from below” ensures that God’s initial “arousal” does not evaporate, but instead becomes a source of real, lasting inspiration.

These two phases are represented by *Parshiyos Va’eschanan* and *Eikev*, which are read in the wake of *Tisha b’Av* (the destruction of the Temple), when our relationship with God needs to be rebuilt once again. *Va’eschanan* means an “unearned gift” (*Rashi*), signifying God’s initial “arousal from Above” which comes “free of charge,” without any effort from man. But this only penetrates a person superficially, and it must be followed by *Eikev* (“heel”), i.e. a self-motivated effort to building the relationship that permeates the person’s entire being, down to his heels.

בַּמְדוּעַ בָּאתִי וְאֵין אִישׁ קָרָאתִי וְאֵין עֹנֶה הַקְצוֹר
 קִצְרָה יְדֵי מַפְדּוֹת וְאִם-אֵין-בִּי כַח לְהַצִּיל הֵן
 בְּנִיעַרְתִּי אַחֲרֵיב לָם אֲשִׁים נְהָרוֹת מִדְּבַר תְּבַאֵשׁ
 הַנְּתָם מֵאֵין מַיִם וְתָמַת בְּצַמָּא: 2 אֶלְבִּישׁ שָׁמַיִם
 קִדְרוֹת וְשִׁק אֲשִׁים כְּסוֹתָם: 3 אֶדְגֵּי יְהוָה גִּתְּן לִי
 לְשׁוֹן לְמוֹדִים לְדַעַת לְעוֹת אֶת-יְעֹשֶׂה דְבַר יַעִיר |
 בְּבִקְרָה בְּבִקְרָה לִי יַעִיר לִי אֵינִי לְשִׁמְעַת כְּלַמוֹדִים: 4 אֶדְגֵּי
 יְהוָה פִּתְחֵה-לִי אָזְנוֹ וְאֶנְכִּי לֹא מְרִיתִי אַחֲוֹר לֹא
 נְסוֹגְתִי: 5 גּוֹי נָתַתִּי לְמַכִּים וְלַחֲיִי לְמַרְטִים פָּנֵי לֹא
 הִסְתַּרְתִּי מִכְּלָמוֹת וְרָק: 6 וְאֶדְגֵּי יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר-לִי
 עַל-כֵּן לֹא נִכְלַמְתִּי עַל-כֵּן שָׁמַתִּי פָּנֵי כַחֲלָמִישׁ
 וְאֶדְעַת כִּי-לֹא אִבּוֹשׁ: 7 קָרוֹב מִצְדִּיקִי מִי-יָרִיב אֶתִּי
 נִעְמְדָה יַחַד מִי-בְעַל מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְגֹשׁ אֵלַי: 8 הֵן אֶדְגֵּי
 יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר-לִי מִי-הוּא יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי הֵן כָּלֵם כְּפָגַד יִבְלוּ
 עֵשׂ יֵאכְלֵם: 9 מִי בְכֵם יֵרָא יְהוָה שִׁמְעַת בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר | הַלֵּךְ חֲשׂוֹכִים וְאֵין נֹנֶה לוֹ יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה
 וַיִּשְׁעֵן בְּאֵלֵהוּ: 10 הֵן כָּלֵם קִדְחִי אִשׁ מֵאֲזִירֵי זִיקוֹת
 לָכוּ | בְּאוֹר אֲשַׁכֵּם וּבְזִיקוֹת בְּעֵרְתֶם מִיְדֵי
 הִיתְדֵה-זֹאת לָכֵם לְמַעַצְבָּה תִּשְׁכָּבוּ: 11 נֹא * שִׁמְעוּ
 אֵלַי רְדַפֵּי צֶדֶק מְבַקְשֵׁי יְהוָה הַפִּיטוּ אֶל-צוֹר
 חֲצִבְתֶּם וְאֶל-מִקְבַּת בּוֹר נִקְרְתֶם: 12 הַפִּיטוּ אֶל-
 אֲבֵרֵהֶם אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶל-שָׂרָה תַחֲוֹלְלֵכֶם כִּי-אֶחָד
 קָרָאתִיו וְאֶבְרַכְהוּ וְאֶרְבֶּהוּ: 13 כִּי-נָחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נָחַם
 כָּל-חֲרִיבְתֶיהָ וַיִּשֶׂם מִדְּבָרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעֵרְבַתְהָ כְּגֹן
 יְהוָה שֶׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה יִמְצָא בָּהּ תוֹדָה וְקוֹל זְמֵרָה:

² “Why was no one there when I came (to you), no one to answer when I called? Is My hand too short to redeem? Do I lack strength to save? Indeed, I can dry up a sea (of idol worshippers) with My roar and make the rivers (of them) into a desert, so their fish stink from lack of water and die of thirst. ³ I (can) clothe the heavens in darkness and cover them with sackcloth.”

God complains

⁴ (The prophet says): God Almighty has given me a tongue for teaching, so I should know how to (teach those who) thirst for (God’s) word, (the right thing) at the right time. He wakes (me) every morning and rouses my ears (to hear prophecy), so I will be able to listen like a disciple.

Yeshayah’s statement

⁵ God Almighty opened my ears, and I did not hold myself back or retreat. ⁶ (Even if there was a fear that I would be hurt, I went nonetheless and) I gave over my body to floggers and my cheeks to those who tore out my hair. I did not hide my face from (the fear of) insult and spitting. ⁷ (Despite all odds), God Almighty helped me and so I was not ashamed. (I saw God was helping me) so I have made my face like hard rock (that would deflect any insult), and I know that I will not be ashamed.

⁸ (God, Who is) my defender is near (to me)! So who wants to fight me? (God and I) will stand together! Whoever (wishes to be) my adversary, let him approach me! ⁹ Indeed, God Almighty will help me, so who could declare me guilty? (My opponents) will all be worn out like old clothing and consumed by moths.

¹⁰ Who among you fears God and listens to the voice of His servant (the prophet)? Even he who walked in darkness (of suffering), without (any) light (of hope for salvation), should trust in God’s Name (that salvation will indeed come) and rely on his God. ¹¹ But in truth (nearly) all of you cause the fire (of God’s anger) to blaze and fan the flames. (Consequently), you will walk in the light of your fire and the flame you lit (being punished accordingly)! This (is no accident! It) has come to you from My hand, so that (when) you lie down (to die you will have had only) sadness.

Listen to the prophet

⁵¹⁻¹ Listen to Me, you who pursue justice and seek God! Look to (Avraham), the rock from which you were hewn and to (Sarah), the quarry from which you were dug. ² Look to your father Avraham, and to Sarah, who gave birth to you. For he was alone (without any family) when I called him, but I blessed him and caused him to multiply, (and likewise, I will make the Jewish people, who are now a minority, multiply greatly).
³ For God will comfort Tziyon, (He will) comfort all her ruins. He will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like God’s garden. Joy and gladness will be found there, thanksgiving and the sound of music.

Lesson of Avraham

The two phases are also reflected in the Haftaros. Initially, in the Haftarah of Parshas Va’eschanan, it is God Who arouses the Jewish people: “God will say (to the prophets), ‘Comfort, oh comfort My people!’” But then, in the Haftarah of Parshas Eikev, it is the people that

cry out to God (“God has abandoned me! My God has forgotten me”), because they are struggling with the second, more difficult phase of internalizing their relationship with God so that it integrates smoothly with their real personalities and their real lives (Likutei Sichos vol. 9, p. 76ff).

RE'EH / ראה

(Isaiah 54:11 – 55:5)

Jerusalem filled with gems

54:11 “**O** Jerusalem! You afflicted, storm-tossed one, who has not been comforted! I will lay your (floor) stones upon antimony (instead of sand), and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your windowpanes from emeralds, your gates from carbuncle stones, and (the floor-stones of) all your borders (will become) desirable gems.

Torah knowledge

¹³ “All your children will be (extremely wise, as if they were) disciples of God, and your children will have much peace.

No fear from enemies

¹⁴ “Through (your) righteousness you will be fit (for all this). You will distance yourself from crooks who have no fear of me (at all), and from terror, for it will not come near you. ¹⁵ Indeed, people will fear no one but Me. Whoever attacks you will fall into your power. ¹⁶ Behold, it was I Who created the smith to fan coal fires and make the tools of his trade, and it was I Who created the destroying (enemy) to destroy (itself). ¹⁷ Every weapon engineered against you will not succeed, and every tongue raised against you in judgment you will have condemned. This is the inheritance of God’s servants and their just reward from Me,” says God.

^{55:1} “Come! Everyone who is thirsty (for God’s word), go to (the prophet and drink his) ‘water’! (Even) those who have no money, go and eat! Come and take wine and milk without paying, without charge (for the prophet’s wisdom is free)! ² Why do you ‘pay money’ (and invest your energies in non-Jewish wisdom) without (getting any real substance or) ‘bread’? Why do you labor (in something that) cannot give satisfaction? Listen to me! (Learn Torah) and you will ‘eat’ well and satisfy your souls with rich foods!

Eternal covenant with Mashiach

³ “Incline your ears and come to Me (to hear My words)! Listen, and you will (merit to) live (again, with the revival of the dead)! I will make an eternal covenant with you, as enduring as (My) loyalty to David. ⁴ Indeed, I have made his (enduring dynasty) as a proof to the nations (that My word always endures, and Mashiach, his descendant, will be) a ruler and leader of the nations. ⁵ (Likewise My promises to you will be fulfilled). Indeed, nations that you do not know will call upon you (to serve you), and nations which never knew you will run to you (to follow your orders. But they will not do this due to your own power, but) for the sake of the God your God, the Holy One of Israel (Who dwells among you and) Who has glorified you.

עֲנִיָּה סֶעֱרָה לֹא נִחַמָּה הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מֵרְבִיץ בַּפּוֹךְ אֲבָנֶיךָ וְיִסְדֹּתֶיךָ בַּסַּפִּירִים: יב וְשִׁמְתִי כִדְכֵד שִׁמְשֹׁתֶיךָ וְשִׁעֲרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקֶדָה וְכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ לְאַבְנֵי־חַפְצִין: יג וְכָל־בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה וְרֵב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ: יד בַּעֲדָקָה תִּכְוַנְנִי רַחֲמֵי מַעֲשֶׂק כִּי־לֹא תִיָּרָא וּמִמַּחֲתָה כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ: טו הֵן גֹּר יָגוּר אִפְסֵם מֵאוֹתֵי מִי־גֵר אֶתְּךָ עֲלֶיךָ יִפּוֹל: טז הִגֵּה וְהֵן כִּי אָנֹכִי בָרָאתִי חֶרֶשׁ נִפְחָה בְּאֵשׁ פָּחִם וּמוֹצִיא כָּלִי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ וְאַנְכִי בָרָאתִי מִשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל: יז כָּל־כְּלֵי יוֹעֵר עֲלֶיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח וְכָל־לְשׁוֹן תְּקוּם־אֶתְּךָ לְמַשְׁפָּט תִּרְשָׁעֵי זֹאת נִחַלַת עַבְדֵי יְהוָה וְעַדְקַתֶּם מֵאֵתִי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה: נה הוּי כָּל־צִמָּא לָכוּ לַמַּיִם וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין־לוֹ כֶּסֶף לָכוּ שִׁבְרוּ וְאָכְלוּ וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוֹא־כֶּסֶף וּבְלוֹא מַחִיר יֵין וְחֶלֶב: ז לָמָּה תִשְׁקְלוּ־כֶּסֶף בְּלוֹא־לֶחֶם וַיִּנְיַעְכֶם בְּלוֹא לְשִׁבְעָה שְׂמֵעוּ שְׂמֵעוּ אֵלַי וְאִכְלוּ־ מִזֶּבֶן וְתִתְעַנְּגוּ בְּדָשָׁן נִפְשֵׁכֶם: ח הֲטוֹ אֲזַנְכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלַי שְׂמֵעוּ וּתְחִי נִפְשֵׁכֶם וְאִכְרַתְּהָ לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם חֲסְדֵי דָוִד הַנִּצְמָנִים: ט הֵן עַד לְאוֹמִים נִתְּתוּ נִגִיד וּמַצְנָה לְאֹמִים: י הֵן גְּוֵי לֹא־תִדְעוּ תִקְרָא וְגוֹי לֹא־יִדְעוּ אֵלֶיךָ יְרוּעוּ לְמַעַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פִאֲרֶךְ:

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS RE'EH

This is the third of a series of “Seven Haftaros of Comfort” which are read between the ninth of Av and Rosh Hashanah. The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

The Haftarah describes the magnificent rebuilding of Jerusalem

(54:11-12), and the peace which will then prevail (13-17). In the following chapter, the people are urged to study Torah, and not secular wisdom (55:1-3), and are promised an everlasting covenant (3-5).

12. וְשִׁמְתִי כִדְכֵד שִׁמְשֹׁתֶיךָ—I will make your window panes from emeralds etc. This is not a mere metaphor. This prophecy will materialize physically in the future era (Sefer haMa'amarim 5734, p. 198, 202).

If Sunday is Rosh Chodesh, Chabad communities add (I Samuel 20:18,42):

וַיֹּאמֶר-לוֹ יְהוֹנָתָן מֶחָר חֹדֶשׁ וְנִפְקַדְתָּ כִּי יִפְקַד
 מוֹשָׁבְךָ: ^{כב} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן לְדָוִד לְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ שְׁנֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יְהִי |
 בֵּינוּ וּבֵינְךָ וּבֵין זְרַעִי וּבֵין זְרַעֲךָ עַד-עוֹלָם:

^{20: 18} Yonasan said to him (David), "Tomorrow is the (first of the new) month. You shall be missed, because your seat will be empty.

⁴² Yonasan said to David, "Go in peace, as both of us have sworn in the name of God, saying, 'God be (a witness) between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'"

SHOFTIM / שופטים

(Isaiah 51:12 –52:12)

נֹא יֵב אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְנַחֵמְכֶם מִיָּאֵת וּתְיַרְאֵי
 מֵאֲנוּשׁ יָמוּת וּמִפְּנֵי-אָדָם חָצִיר יִנָּתֵן: ^{יג} וְתִשְׁכַּח
 יְהוָה עֲשֶׂה נֹמְהָ שָׁמַיִם וַיִּסַּד אֲרָצָה וְתִפְחַד תְּמִיד
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם מִפְּנֵי חֶמַת הַמַּצִּיק כַּאֲשֶׁר בּוֹנֵן לְהִשְׁחִית
 וְאֵיךְ חֶמַת הַמַּצִּיק: ^{יד} מֶחָר צִעָה לְהַפְתִּיחַ וְלֹא-
 יָמוּת לְשַׁחַת וְלֹא יִחַסֵּר לְחֶמוֹ: ^{טו} וְאֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 רִנַּע הַיָּם וַיִּהְיוּ גִלְיוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: ^{טז} וְאֲשֵׁיִם
 דְּבָרֶיךָ בְּפִיךָ וּבְצִלְ יָדַי כְּפִיִּיךָ לְנִטְעַ שְׁמַיִם
 וְלִיסַד אֲרָץ וְלֵאמֹר לְצִיּוֹן עַמִּי-אַתָּה: ^{יז} הֲתִעֹרְרִי
 הֲתִעֹרְרִי קוֹמִי יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר שְׁתִּית מִיַּד יְהוָה
 אֶת-כּוֹס חֶמְתוֹ אֶת-קַבְעֵת כּוֹס הַתִּרְעָלָה שְׁתִּית
 מְצִית: ^{יח} אֵינֶן-מִנְהַל לָהּ מִכָּל-בָּנִים יִלְדָה וְאֵין
 מִחֻזֵּיק בְּיָדָהּ מִכָּל-בָּנִים גְּדֹלָה: ^{יט} שְׁתִּיִם הִנָּה
 קָרְאֲתֶיךָ מִי יָנוּד לְךָ הַשֵּׁד וְהַשֶּׁבֶר וְהָרַעֵב וְהַחֶרֶב
 מִי אֲנִיחֶמְךָ: ^כ בְּנִיֶּיךָ עֲלֵפוּ שָׁכְבוּ בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חֻצוֹת
 כִּתּוּא מִכְּמַר הַמְּלָאִים חֶמַת-יְהוָה גְּעַרַת אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

^{51:12} It is I, yes I, Who comforts you. Why do you, (who have so many merits), fear mortal man, human beings who are put (into the world) like grass? ¹³ You have forgotten (the influence of) God, Who made you, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. You are constantly afraid, all day, from the anger of the enemy that is preparing to destroy you. But where is the enemy's anger?

Do not fear mortals

¹⁴ The wanderer (in exile) will be freed quickly. (Even while in exile) He did not die and he was not destroyed, and his bread did not fail.

¹⁵ For I am God your God, Who calms the sea (if He wants, or makes) its waves roar. His name is the God of Hosts.

¹⁶ I have put My Words (of Torah) into your mouth and (in the Torah's merit, I) sheltered you with the shadow of My hand (from the enemy), planting (you in your land like the stars) of the skies, and establishing you (to be as widespread as) the earth. (All the nations) will say to Tziyon: "(God is saying to you), You are My people!"

¹⁷ Wake up! Wake up! Rise, O Jerusalem, you who have been drinking (until now) the cup of wrath from God's hand (to cleanse your sins)! You drank and sucked, the cup of poison, to the dregs (so there are no punishments left for you). ¹⁸ Of all the children to whom she gave birth, there is no one to guide her, no one to hold her hand from all the children she raised. ¹⁹ Double

Jerusalem rebuilt

(suffering) has happened to you, but who will (even) nod (his head to comfort) you (when everybody is your enemy)? (From the double suffering of) robbery and starvation, famine and the sword, who will be able to comfort you? ²⁰ Your children have

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS SHOFTIM

This is the fourth of a series of "Seven Haftaros of Comfort" which are read between the ninth of Av and Rosh Hashanah. The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon, after the exile, at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

As the Haftarah opens, God announces Himself as the comforter of the Jewish people and urges them not to fear the enemies who are just mortal men (51:12-16). God urges Jerusalem to "rise" from her pitiful state, because all the suffering has now come to an end (17-22). In a second awakening call, Jerusalem is told to prepare for imminent redemption, because God hates the exile when His Name "is disgraced

passed out (from the lack of food and drink). They lie (unburied) at the head of every street, like a bison (caught) in a trap, filled with (the effects of) God's fury, the rebuke of your God.

²¹ Therefore, hear this, O afflicted one, who is (like a) drunk (from suffering), and not from wine! ²² This is what your Master, your Almighty God, Who fights for His people, says: "I have taken the cup of poison from your hand and the dregs from the cup of My wrath. You will never drink from it again. ²³ I will place it in the hands of your persecutors, who said to you: "Bow down, and we will walk over you, and make your body like the ground, like the street for passersby."

^{52:1} Wake up (from your slumber of suffering)! Wake up! Clothe yourself with your strength (of old), Tziyon! Put on your beautiful clothes, O Jerusalem, holy city, for the uncircumcised and unclean will no longer enter you (to rule over you)! ² Jerusalem, shake off the dust (of mourning)! Arise and sit (on your throne)! Release the bonds from your neck, O daughter of Tziyon, captured (in Babylon)! ³ For this is what God says: "You were sold for nothing, so you will be redeemed without payment."

⁴ This is what God Almighty says: "My people originally went down to Egypt long ago to live there temporarily, and (Sancheriv, King of) Assyria oppressed them for no reason. ⁵ So why should I (leave my people in exile) here now?" says God. "For My people were taken captive free of charge, and its oppressors are boasting (of their success)," says God. "My Name is disgraced constantly, all day!

⁶ Therefore, (when) My people (are redeemed they) will recognize My Name. Therefore, on that day, (they will know) that I, Who promised (redemption), am here (having fulfilled My word)!" ⁷ How beautiful (it will be when) the feet of one who announces (the redemption goes up) upon the mountains (to make his voice heard from afar), announcing peace, announcing good, (and) announcing salvation! He will declare to Tziyon: "Your God is King (over the whole world)!" ⁸ Your (town) watchmen, (who announce visitors with their) voices, will raise their voices together and sing, for God's return to Tziyon will be seen eye to eye! ⁹ Burst forth in song together, O ruins of Jerusalem, for God has comforted His people and redeemed Jerusalem (from the control of idolaters). ¹⁰ God has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations (when He punished the enemy). All

כא לכן שמעו נא זאת עניה ושכרת ולא מיין:
 כב כה אמר אדניך יהוה ואלהיך יריב עמו הנה
 לקחתי מינדך את-כוס התרעלה את-קבעת כוס
 חמתי לא-תוסיפי לשותתה עוד: כג ושמתיה ביד-
 מוניך אשר-אמרו לנפשך שחי ונעברה ותשימי
 כארץ גוף וכחיוץ לעברים: נב עורי עורי לבשי
 ענף ציון לבשי | בנדי תפארתך ירושלים עיר
 הקדש כי לא יוסיף יבא-בך עוד ערל וטמא:
 ד התנערי מעפר קומי שבי ירושלים התפתחי
 (והתפתחי ב') מוסרי צוארך שביה בת-ציון: ד כיתה
 אמר יהוה חנם נמפרתם ולא בכסף תנאלו: ה כי
 כה אמר אדני יהוה מצרים ירד-עמי בראשנה
 לגור שם ואשור באפס עשקו: ו ועתה-מה ומי ב'
 ל-פה נאם-יהוה כה-לקח עמי חנם משליו (משלו ב')
 יהילילו נאם-יהוה ותמיד כל-היום שמי מנאין:
 ז לכן ידע עמי שמי לכן ביום ההוא כה-אני-הוא
 חמדבר הנני: ח מה-נאוו על-ההרים רגלי מבשר
 משמיע שולם מבשר טוב משמיע ישועה אמר
 לציון מלך אלהיך: ט קול צפנדך גשאו קול יהוה
 ירננו כי עין בעין יראו בשוב יהוה ציון: ט פצחו
 רננו יחדו חרבות ירושלים כה-נתם יהוה עמו נאל
 ירושלים: י חשף יהוה את-זרוע קדשו לעיני כל-

Exile
pains
God

Day of
redemp-
tion

constantly, all day" (52:1-5). The day of redemption is then depicted, with universal recognition of God amid song and rejoicing (6-10). The conclusion of the *Haftarah* backtracks to the time preceding redemption, as the Jewish people are urged to leave the exile without delay (11-12).

51:12. אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְנַחֵמְכֶם—It is I, yes I, Who comforts you. The opening of the *Haftarah* is connected with both the beginning and end of the *Parsha*. The *Parsha* begins with the instruction to appoint judges that issue rulings of law, and the *Haftarah* likewise alludes to the significance of law by employing the unusual term *Anochi* ("I") which is associated with the beginning of the Ten Commandments, the basis of all

Jewish law. The repetition of the term here, "*Anochi Anochi*," alludes to the Written and Oral law with which the judges guide the people.

A further connotation of this repetition is the theme of *teshuvah* (repentance; return). At the giving of the Torah, the word *Anochi* was said only once, so its repetition here hints to the superior level of *ba'alei teshuvah* (see commentary to *Haftarah* of *Parshas Ki Sisa* at end, page 1420). Here we see a connection with the conclusion of the *Parsha* which stresses the idea of atonement and *teshuvah*: "Atone for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O God!" (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shoftim* 5750 and 5748).

הגוים וראו כל־אפסי־ארץ את ישועת אלהינו:
 סורו סורו צאו משם ממה אל־תנגעו צאו מתוכה
 הברו נשאי כלי יהוה: ¹¹ כי לא בהפזון תצאו
 ובמוססה לא תלכון כִּי־הלך לפניכם יהוה
 ומאספכם אלהי ישראל:

(those who live at) the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

¹¹ Go out! Go out! Leave that place (of exile quickly)! Do not touch anything unclean! Go out from (the city of your exile)! Keep pure, you who carry God’s weapons (the Torah and its mitzvos)! ¹² But you will not leave too quickly (in a panic) or depart in flight, since God is going before you, and the God of Israel is your rear guard.

End of exile

☞ Ki SEITZEI / כי תצא ☞

(Isaiah 54:1-10)

נד * רני עקרה לא ילדה פצחי רנה וצהלי לא
 חלה כִּי־רבים בני־שוממה מבני בעולה אמר יהוה:
 ב הרחיבי מקום אהלך וריעות משכנותיך יטו
 אל־תחשכי הארכי מיתלך ויתדתיך תוקי:
 ג כִּי־מיון ושמאול תפרצי וזרעך גוים יירש וערים
 נשמות יושיבו: ד אל־תיראי כִּי־לא תבושי
 ואל־תקלמי כִּי לא תחפירי כִּי בשת עלומיך
 תשפחי וחרפת אלמנותיך לא תזכרי־עוד: ה כִּי
 בעליך עשיך יהוה צבאות שמו וגאלך קדוש

54:1 **S**ays God: “(O Jerusalem! During exile times,) you (were like a) barren woman who never gave birth, (since you were a city devoid of people. But now, in the times of the Redemption, you can) sing! (O Jerusalem!) Open your mouth and sing loudly, for you (were a woman who) never had labor pains. (Now), the inhabitants of (Jerusalem—which previously) lay desolate—are more numerous than the inhabitants of the built up cities (of Edom).”

Jerusalem in the times of Redemption

² “(O Jerusalem!) Extend the area of your tent (to include all your children). Stretch the curtains (that mark the edge) of your dwellings so that they spread out far—do not hold (them) back. Lengthen your ropes (of your tents, expanding your borders) and strengthen your fastening-pegs (so that your borders remain enlarged forever). ³ For you will break through, (spilling into the territory) to the right and (to the) left. Your descendants

will inherit nations and (they will multiply so much that they will) inhabit desolate cities.”

⁴ “Do not fear (another exile after the redemption). Do not be ashamed or embarrassed (to proudly display your greatness, for fear that you may be exiled again), for you will not be disgraced (with another exile). You will forget the shame (of the exile) of your youth, and you will no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood (when you were a people without a king). ⁵ For the Name of your Husband, who made you (great), is the God of hosts—(so who could possibly oppose you? Isn’t)

Promise to never bring another exile

52:12. כי לא בהפזון תצאו. *But you will not leave too quickly.* The comfortable pace of the future redemption described in this verse is in contrast to the panic of the Egyptian redemption, when “the people fled” (Shemos 14:5).

According to Chasidic thought, the collective *mitzvah*-acts and good deeds of history have gradually refined the physical fabric of the world such that when the Divine revelation of the redemption emerges, the world itself will be compatible and comfortable with that revelation. Therefore, the redemption will not be a cause of panic. But when the Exodus from Egypt took place, “the evil in the [animal] souls of Israel was still strong” (Tanya, ch. 31), and therefore they had to flee from the evil and impurity of Egypt.

In other words, the Exodus from Egypt occurred despite the world, but the revelations of the future redemption will be effective with the world (Likutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 125).

☞ HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS KI SEITZEI

This *Haftarah* mentions God’s promise to Noach not to bring another flood that will destroy the world (v. 9). In general, the *Haftarah* describes the rebuilding of Jerusalem with the Final Redemption, and the universal knowledge of Torah that will be attained by the Jewish people.

The *Haftarah* opens with a description of how Jerusalem will be repopulated with the Redemption (54:1-3), followed with a promise that the present exile is only temporary (4-10). The prophet then describes how God will rebuild Jerusalem with gems (11-12) and how the Jewish people will master the study of Torah and be righteous, thus averting any threat from potential enemies (13-17). The prophet then lauds the virtues of Torah study (55:1-3) and describes the respect that the nations will have for Israel in the times of Mashiach (4-5).

5. כי בעליך עשיך—*Your Husband, who made you.* Our Sages taught: “A woman [before marriage] is unfinished, and she enters into the

your Redeemer (none other than) the Holy One of Israel, Who will (then) be called ‘God of the entire earth’ (by all, so why be afraid)?”

⁶ “For God has called you (to return to Him) like a (husband who calls to his) forsaken and dejected wife; like a man who was (briefly) disgusted by the wife of his youth (but soon forgives her),” says your God. ⁷ “(When) I abandoned you (it was only) for a short moment (compared to the time when) I will gather you, (which will last forever, due to My) great mercy. ⁸ (Compared to the) everlasting kindness (with which) I will have mercy upon you, I hid My face from you for (just) a moment, (and I was) only a little angry,” says God, your Redeemer.

Waters of Noach ⁹ “This (anger) was for Me like the waters of Noach. Just as I swore never to allow the waters of Noach to pass again over the earth, so too, I swore not to be angry at you or rebuke you.

¹⁰ “For the mountains (may) move away and the hills might collapse (in an earthquake), but My kindness will not leave you, nor will My covenant of peace collapse,” says God, Who is merciful to you.

If Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei occurs on the 14th of Elul, Chabad communities add the following section.

Jerusalem filled with gems ^{54:11} “(O Jerusalem! You) afflicted, storm-tossed one, who has not been comforted! I will lay your (floor) stones upon antimony (instead of sand), and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your window panes from emeralds, your gates from carbuncle stones, and (the floor-stones of) all your borders (will become) desirable gems.

Torah knowledge ¹³ “All your children will be (extremely wise, as if they were) disciples of God, and your children will have much peace.

¹⁴ “Through (your) righteousness, you will be fit (for all this). You will distance yourself from fraudsters who have no fear of Me (at all), and from terror, for it will not come near you. ¹⁵ Indeed, people will fear no one but Me. Whoever attacks you will fall into your power.

No fear from enemies ¹⁶ Behold, it was I who created the smith to fan coal fires and make the tools of his trade, and it was I who created the destroying

יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא: כִּי־כֹאשָׁה עֲזוּבָה וְעֲצוּבַת רוּחַ קָרָאךְ יְהוָה וְאַשְׁתֵּי נְעוּרַיִם כִּי תִמְאֵם אָמַר אֱלֹהֵיךְ: הַבְּרִנָּה קִטְוֵן עֲזוּבְתֶיךָ וּבְרַחֲמַיִם גְּדֹלַיִם אֶקְבָּצֶךָ: ח בְּשִׁצְפָה קָצַף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רָגַע מִפֶּךָ וּבְתִסָּד עוֹלָם רַחֲמֶיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה: ט כִּי־מִי נָח זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְרֵי מִי־נָח עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ כֵּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקָּצַף עֲלֶיךָ וּמִגְעַר־כָּךְ: י כִּי הֶהְרִים יְמוּשׁוּ וְהִגְבַּעוֹת תִּמוּטִינָה וְחִסְדֵּי מֵאֲתָךְ לֹא־יְמוּשׁוּ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט אָמַר מְרַחֵם יְהוָה:

י״א עֲנִיָּה סֶעֱרָה לֹא נִחַמָה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מְרַבִּיץ בַּפּוֹךְ אֲבִיךָ וַיִּסְדַּתֶּיךָ בַּסְּפִירַיִם: יב וְשִׁמְתִי כְּדָד שְׁמֵשְׁתֶּיךָ וְשִׁעְרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקְדָּח וְכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ לְאַבְנֵי־חַפִּץ: יג וְכָל־כְּנִיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה וְרַב שְׁלוֹם כְּנִיךָ: יד בַּעֲדָקָה תִּבְנוּנֵי רַחֲמֵי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי וּמִמַּחֲתָה כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ: טו הֵן גּוֹר יְגוּר אֶפֶס מֵאוֹתֵי מִי־גַר אֲתָךְ עֲלֶיךָ יִפּוֹל: טז הִנֵּה וְהֵן כִּי אֲנֹכִי בְרָאתִי חָרֶשׁ נִפְחָה בְּאֵשׁ פָּחָם וּמוֹצִיא כָּלִי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ

covenant only with a man who will transform her [into] a [finished] vessel, as the verse states, ‘The Name of your Husband, who made you, is the God of hosts’” (Sanhedrin 22b). In the prophet’s analogy of the marriage between the Jewish people and God, the difference between being an “unfinished” or “finished vessel” is whether or not a person is a suitable receptacle to spiritual matters. If he performs mitzvos by rote, without enthusiasm, then he is an “unfinished vessel”; if he finds the mitzvos exciting and inspiring, then he is a truly receptive “vessel” to Godliness. Of course, for most people this does not come naturally, which is why the Chasidic movement stresses the importance of prolonged meditative prayer, which is aimed at transforming oneself into a “finished vessel” (Sefer haMa’amarim 5718, pp. 311-2).

9. **מי נח**—The waters of Noach. At first glance, the term “waters of Noach” appears to be self-contradictory, as Noach was the savior of his generation, whereas the waters constituted the punishment. A simple solution is that the waters eliminated the generation because of Noach, since he failed to pray sufficiently for the people to be saved (Zohar I 67b). However, Chasidic thought explains that the waters were named after Noach because they had a positive effect of cleansing the earth spiritually, like a mikvah, making it more sensitive to spiritual matters (Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 40; Torah Ohr, Noach 8c).
 12. **וְשִׁמְתִי כְּדָד שְׁמֵשְׁתֶּיךָ**—I will make your window panes from emeralds etc. This is not a mere metaphor. This prophecy will materialize physically in the future era (Sefer haMa’amarim 5734, p. 198, 202).

וְאֶנְכִי בְרָאתִי מִשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל: כִּי כָל-כְּלֵי יוֹצֵר עָלַיִךְ
 לֹא יִצְלָח וְכָל-לְשׁוֹן תְּקוּם-אֶתְךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט תִּרְשָׁעִי
 זֹאת נַחֲלַת עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקְתֶּם מֵאֵתִי נְאֻם-יְהוָה:
 נה « הוֹי כָּל-צָמֵא לִבּוֹ לַמַּיִם וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין-לּוֹ כֶּסֶף
 לִבּוֹ שִׁבְרוּ וְאָכְלוּ וְלִבּוֹ שִׁבְרוּ בְלֹא-כֶסֶף וּבְלֹא
 מַחִיר יֵין וְחָלֵב: בִּלְמָה תִּשְׁקְלוּ-כֶּסֶף בְּלֹא-לֶחֶם
 וַיִּנְיַעְכֶם בְּלֹא לְשִׁבְעָה שְׂמֹעוּ שְׂמֹעַ אֱלֹהֵי וְאָכְלוּ-
 טוֹב וְתִתְעַנְּגוּ בִדְשָׁן נִפְשֵׁכֶם: גִּהְטוּ אֲזִנְכֶם וְלִבּוֹ אֱלֹהֵי
 שְׂמֹעוּ וְתִחִי נִפְשֵׁכֶם וְאֶכְרַתְהָ לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם
 חֲסֵדֵי דָוִד הַנְּאֻמָּנִים: הִן עַד לְאוֹמִים נִתְּתִיו נִגִיד
 וּמִצִּיּוֹן לְאוֹמִים: וְהִן גְּוֵי לֹא-תִדְעוּ תִקְרָא וְגוֹי
 לֹא-יִדְעוּד אֱלֹהֵי יְרוּשָׁה לְמַעַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְלִקְרוֹשׁ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פִאֲרָךְ:

(enemy) to destroy (itself). ¹⁷ Every weapon engineered against you will not succeed, and every tongue raised against you in judgment you will have condemned. This is the inheritance of God's servants and their just reward from Me," says God.

^{55:1} "Oh! Everyone who is thirsty (for God's word), go to (the prophet and drink his) 'water'! (Even) those who have no money, go and eat! Come and take wine and milk without paying, without charge (for the prophet's wisdom is free)! ² Why do you 'pay money' (and invest your energies in non-Jewish wisdom) without (getting any real substance or) 'bread'? Why do you labor (in something that) cannot give satisfaction? Listen to Me! (Learn Torah) and you will 'eat' well and satisfy your souls with 'rich foods'!

³ Incline your ears and come to Me (to hear my words)! Listen, and you will (merit to) live (again, with the revival of the dead)! I will make an eternal covenant with you, as enduring as (My) loyalty to David. ⁴ Indeed, I have made his (enduring dynasty) as a proof to the nations (that My word always endures, and Mashiach, his descendant, will be) a ruler and leader of the nations.

Eternal covenant with Mashiach

⁵ (Likewise My promises to you will be fulfilled). Indeed, nations that you do not know will call upon you (to serve you), and nations which never knew you will run to you (to follow your orders. But they will not do this due to your own power, but) for the sake of the God your God, the Holy One of Israel (Who dwells among you and), Who has glorified you."

🕍 Ki Savo / כי תבוא 🕍

(Isaiah 60:1-22)

ס « קוֹמִי אוֹרֵי כִי בָא אוֹרְךָ וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה עָלַיִךָ זֶרַח:
 בִּי-הִנֵּה הַחֹשֶׁךְ יִכְסֶה-אֶרֶץ וְעַרְפָּל לְאוֹמִים וְעָלַיִךָ
 יִזְרַח יְהוָה וּכְבוֹדוֹ עָלַיִךָ יִרְאָה: גִּהְלִכּוּ גוֹיִם לְאוֹרְךָ
 וּמְלָכִים לְנִגְוֵה זֶרַחְךָ: דִּשְׂאֵי-סָבִיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵי כָּל-
 נִקְבְּצוּ בְּאוֹרְךָ בְּנֵיךָ מִרְחוֹק יָבֹאוּ וּבְנִתִּיךָ עַל-צַד

^{60:1} **A**rise, shine (and rejoice, O Jerusalem)! For your light has arrived, and God's Glory has shone upon you. ² Darkness (and suffering) will cover the earth and thick clouds (will cover) the nations, but God will shine (the light of salvation) on you, and His Glory will be seen on you. ³ Nations will follow your (guiding) light, and kings your shining brilliance.

Light of redemption

⁴ (Jerusalem,) raise your eyes! Look around and see

🕍 HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS SAVO

This is the sixth of a series of "Seven Haftaras of Comfort" which are read between the Ninth of Av and Rosh Hashanah. The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon, after the exile, at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

The Haftarah opens in a wondrous, redemptive mood. A new light is shining on Jerusalem and the exiles are returning (60:1-9). The city is fully restored with the finest wood and precious metals, its gates are opened and a new era of prosperity begins (10-18). Divine light is the only source of illumination (19-20), and the expanding nation is completely righteous (21-22).

60:1. קוֹמִי אוֹרֵי כִי בָא אוֹרְךָ—Arise, shine (and rejoice, O Jerusalem)! For your light has arrived. According to the Midrash, this verse refers to the spiritual illumination offered by Mashiach: "When King Mashiach comes, he will stand on the roof of the Temple, and proclaim to the Jewish people. He will say, 'The time of your redemption has arrived! And if you do not believe, see my light which I have shone upon you,' as the verse states, 'Arise, shine! For your light has arrived, and God's Glory has shone upon you.'" (Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayah, remez 499).

The reference here to the roof of the Temple is noteworthy, for, ironically, it is an area of the Temple that is unconsecrated (Rambam, Laws of the Chosen House, 6:7). Why does Mashiach choose to make his declaration from a non-sacred part of the Temple?

how everybody has gathered together and are coming to you! Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters will be reared (by kings). ⁵When you see this, you will glow (with joy). Your heart will throb and swell, for the many (possessions) of the (people who live in) the west will be turned over to you, and the wealth of nations will come to you. ⁶You will be covered by hordes of camels, young camels from Midian and Aifah (brought as gifts). They will all come from Sheba, carrying (gifts to God of) gold and incense and they will declare God's praises. ⁷All the sheep of Kedar will be gathered up (and brought) to you, and the rams of Nevayos will serve all your needs. They will be accepted favorably on My altar, and I will glorify the House of My splendor (by causing the nations to come with gifts of gold and silver).

Prosperity

⁸(People will ask:) Who are these (exiled people that are returning so quickly) like soaring clouds, and like doves to their coop-windows? ⁹For (the people of) the islands are gathering with the ships (which cross the Sea of) Tarshish in the lead, to bring your sons from afar, along with their silver and gold (as a gift for God. All this will happen) for the sake of the Name of God your God, the Holy One of Israel, Who glorifies you.

Gathering of exiles

¹⁰Foreigners will rebuild (the) walls (of your cities), and their kings will serve you. For I struck you in My anger, but in My grace I had mercy on you. ¹¹Your gates will always be open; they will not close day or night, so the wealth of nations may be brought in to you, with their kings in procession. ¹²For whatever nation or kingdom does not serve you will perish, and those people will be utterly destroyed.

Wood for the Temple

¹³The glorious (trees) of Lebanon will be brought to you together—cypresses, fir, and box trees—to glorify the site of My sanctuary. I will (use them to) honor the site of My “footrest,” (the Holy Temple).

¹⁴The children of your oppressors will come to you stooped, and all those who disgraced you will prostrate themselves at the soles of your feet. They will call you “Tziyon, City of God, the Holy One of Israel.” ¹⁵Instead of being abandoned and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you an eternal prodigy, a joy for all generations. ¹⁶You will suckle the milk of nations and nurse from the breast of kings.

Then you will know that I am God your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Ya'akov.

תִּאֲמַנְנָה: ה אִז תִּרְאִי וְנִהַרְתְּ וּפָתַר וְרָחַב לְבַבְךָ כִּי־
 יִהְיֶה עֲלֶיךָ הַמּוֹן לִם חֵיל גּוֹיִם יִבְאוּ לָךְ: ו שִׁפְעַת
 גְּמֻלָּיִם תִּכְסֹּף בְּכַרִּי מִדִּין וְעֵיפָה כָּלֵם מִשְׁבָּא יִבְאוּ
 וְהָב וּלְבוּנָה יִשְׂאוּ וּתְהִלּוֹת יְהוָה יִבְשִׁרוּ: ז כָּל־צֹאן
 קֶדֶר יִקְבְּצוּ לָךְ אֵילֵי נְבוֹיֹת יִשְׂרָתוּנְךָ יַעֲלוּ עַל־רִצּוֹן
 מִזְבְּחִי וּבֵית תִּפְאָרְתִּי אֶפְאֵר: ח מִי־אֵלֶּה כְּעַב
 תַּעֲוִיפִנָּה וּכְיוֹנִים אֶל־אַרְבְּתֵיהֶם: ט כִּי־לִי א אֵיִים
 יִקְוּ וְאֲנִיֹּת תִּרְשִׁישׁ בְּרֵאשִׁינָה לְהַבִּיא בְנֵיךָ מִרְחוֹק
 כֶּסֶפֶם וְזָהָבִם אִתָּם לְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פֶאֶרְךָ: י וּבָנוּ בְנֵי־נֹכַר תְּמִיתֶיךָ וּמְלִכֵיהֶם
 יִשְׂרָתוּנְךָ כִּי בְקֶצֶפִי הַכִּיתֶיךָ וּבְרִצּוֹנִי רִחַמְתֶּיךָ:
 יא וּפְתָחוּ שַׁעְרֶיךָ תָּמִיד יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה לֹא יִסָּגְרוּ
 לְהַבִּיא אֱלֶיךָ חֵיל גּוֹיִם וּמְלִכֵיהֶם נְהוּגִים: יב כִּי־הִגְוִי
 וְהַמְּלֻכָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹדְךָ יִאֲבְדוּ וְהַגּוֹיִם חָרַב
 יִחַרְבוּ: יג כָּבוֹד הַלְּבָנוֹן אֱלֶיךָ יָבֹא בְרוֹשׁ תִּגְדָּהָר
 וּתְאֲשׁוּר יַחֲדוּ לְפֶאֶר מְקוֹם מְקַדְּשֵׁי וּמְקוֹם רִגְלֵי
 אֲבֹתֶיךָ: יד וְהִלְכוּ אֲלֶיךָ שְׂחוֹת בְּנֵי מַעֲנִיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ
 עַל־כַּפּוֹת רִגְלֶיךָ כָּל־מְנַאֲצֶיךָ וְקָרְאוּ לָךְ עֵיר יְהוָה
 צִיּוֹן קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: טו תַּחַת הַיּוֹתֵךְ עֲזוּבָה וּשְׁנוּאָה
 וְאִין עוֹבֵר וּשְׂמֵתֶיךָ לְגֵאוֹן עוֹלָם מְשׁוֹשׁ דָּוָר וְדָוָר:
 טז וַיִּנְקַת חֶלֶב גּוֹיִם וְשֵׁד מְלָכִים תִּינָקִי וַיִּדְעַת כִּי אֲנִי

The Midrash alludes to the fact that Mashiach is a Jewish leader who lives with the Jewish people in exile, outside the Land of Israel, and that therefore he announces the imminence of redemption from the Diaspora, an “unconsecrated” location (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5751, note 108).

9. כְּסָפָם וְזָהָבָם אִתָּם—Along with their silver and gold. The unique accomplishment of the final redemption is that everything will be freed. Nothing will remain “lost” in exile, and nothing will be left behind. Even those who are “lost” or those who are “outcasts” will be redeemed. The redemption will be true and complete in quantity and quality in all areas, from the most all-encompassing of principles, to the most minute of

details. Each and every Jew, “with our youth and with our elders...with our sons and with our daughters” (Shemos 10:9), will be redeemed, including their allotted portion of the world, “along with their silver and gold,” and all their activities and possessions from exile. The redemption will free each and every person (including non-Jews) and all their worldly affairs, and each individual will be preserved with all his effects.

All (positive) things in exile will remain and continue; only the state of exile will cease to exist. The concealment which masks the true and inner identity of the world will be eliminated, including the subjugation to nature and physicality, which is a result of the concealment.

As Rambam rules, “Do not think that in the Messianic Era any aspect

יהוה מושיעך ונאלך אביר יעקב: ¹⁷ תחת הנחשת
 אביא זהב ותחת הפרזל אביא כסף ותחת העצים
 נחשת ותחת האבנים ברזל ושמתי פקדתך שלום
 ונשיך צדקה: ¹⁸ לא ישמע עוד חמס בארצך שר
 ושבר בגבולך וקראת ישועה חומתך ושערך
 תהלה: ¹⁹ לא יהיה לך עוד השמש לאור יומם
 ולננה תירח לא יאיר לך והיה לך יהוה לאור
 עולם ואלהך לתפארתך: ²⁰ לא יבוא עוד שמשך
 וירחך לא יאסף פי יהוה יהיה לך לאור עולם
 ושלמו ימי אבולך: ²¹ ועמד כלם צדיקים לעולם
 יירשו ארץ נצר מטעי [מטעו ב'] מעשה ידי
 להתפאר: ²² הקטן יהיה לאלף והצעיר לגוי עצום
 אני יהוה בעתה אחישנה:

¹⁷ In the place of the bronze (which the nations took from you), I will bring gold, and in the place of the iron I will bring silver. In the place of the wood (I will bring) bronze, and in the place of the stone (I will bring) iron. (In the place of) your (aggressive, tax-collecting) government, I will make (a) peace(ful, friendly one), and (in the place of) your debt-collectors, (I will place people that come to perform) justice. ¹⁸ Corruption will no longer be heard of in your land, nor robbery and ruin in your borders. You will call your walls “Salvation (of God),” and your gates “Glory (of God).”

End of corruption

¹⁹ You will no longer need the sun for daylight nor the moon to shine at night. God will always be your light, and your God will be your glory. ²⁰ Your sun will never set and your moon will not be eclipsed (by another nation), for God will always be your light (and source of power). Your days of mourning will come to an end.

God will be your light

²¹ Your people will all be righteous (since the wicked will have perished). They will inherit the land forever, (never to be exiled again). They are the shoot I planted, My handiwork in which I take pride. ²² The smallest (tribe) will become a thousand (times the size), and the youngest (tribe), a mighty nation. (Since) I am (the all-powerful) God, I will hasten (the smallest tribe to expand) in the time (of the redemption)!

People will be righteous

🌀 NITZAVIM (& NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH) / (נצבים (נצבים -וילך) 🌀

(Isaiah 61:10 - 63:9)

סא , שוש אשיש ביהוה תגל נפשי באלהי פי
 הלבישני בגדי ישיע מעיל צדקה יעטני כחתן וכהן
 פאר וכפלה תעדה כליה: ¹¹ פי כארץ תוציא
 צמחה וכננה זרועיה תצמיח בן | ארני יהוה יצמיח

^{61:10} I will rejoice greatly in God(’s salvation). My soul will be glad with my God, for He has clothed me in garments of salvation and wrapped me in a robe of righteousness; like a bridegroom who wears majestic clothing, and a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry. ¹¹ For just like the earth brings forth its growth, and a garden makes its seeds grow, so too will God

Joy of redemption

of world order will become nullified or that there will be an innovation in the act of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its normal order” (Laws of Kings 12:1; Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5751).

🌀 HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS NITZAVIM

This is the last in a series of “Seven Haftaros of Comfort” which are read between the ninth of Av and Rosh Hashanah. The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile at the end of the 6th century B.C.E. This Haftarah is always read on the Shabbos preceding Rosh Hashanah.

As the Haftarah opens, Tziyon (Zion) rejoices in her redemption, as God clothes her in “garments of salvation” (61:10-11). God promises to

protect Tziyon and she will consequently be known by more positive names than in the past (62:1-7). God then reinforces His words with an oath (8-9). In a tone of exultation, the prophet declares that the roads should be smoothed for the ingathering of the Jewish people, because God is now going to pay His “wages” to the Jewish people and redeem them (10-12). In the following chapter, the prophet depicts God as wearing bloodstained garments after wreaking vengeance on the wicked nations (63:1-6). The Haftarah concludes by praising God’s kindness, His love for Israel, and His sympathy for their distress (7-9).

61:10. שוש אשיש בה' תגל נפשי באלהי—I will rejoice greatly in God(’s salvation). My soul will be glad with my God. The distinction between rejoicing and being glad is that rejoicing is expressed outwardly

Almighty cause the righteousness and praise (of Israel) to sprout before all the nations.

God will protect Tziyon
 62:1 For Tziyon's sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be still, until her righteousness emerges like shining light, and her salvation like a burning torch. ² Nations will see (the) righteousness (which I will do for you), and all the kings, your glory. You will be called a new name, pronounced by the Mouth of God.

³ You will be (protected like) a crown of beauty in God's hand, a royal coronet in the palm of your God. ⁴ You will no longer be called "Abandoned (by God)," and your land will no longer be called "Desolation." Rather, you will be called "I desire her" and your land "inhabited," for God will desire you, and your land will be inhabited. ⁵ As a young man (marries a) maiden and settles (with her), so will your children settle you, and your God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. ⁶ Over your walls, Jerusalem, I have appointed (the stones as) watchmen. They will never be silent (from crying and mourning), day or night. (Do not be silent,) you (stones) who speak of God! ⁷ Do not let Him be idle (and free from complaint) until He restores Jerusalem and establishes it in glory amid the earth!

God's oath
 8 God has sworn by His right hand and His mighty arm: "I will never again give your grain as food to your enemies or let foreigners drink the wine for which you labored. ⁹ Rather, those who harvest (the grain) will eat it and praise God (in thanks), and those who gathered (the grapes) will drink (wine) in (their homes, in) My holy courts (of Jerusalem)."

Roads smoothed for redemption
 10 Go through the gates (you nations), go through (the) gates of your cities, in order to) raise (and smooth) the road for the people. Clear away stones (that obstruct the way). Raise a banner for the nations (telling them to bring the Jewish people home).

¹¹ Look! God has proclaimed to the ends of the earth: "Say to the daughter of Tziyon: Your salvation is coming! Look! His reward (which is due to the Jewish people) is with Him, and His wages (which he owes to the Jewish people are ready) before Him!" ¹² They will be called a holy people, God's redeemed. You, (Tziyon), will be called "sought after, a city not forsaken."

63:1 (When God wreaks vengeance on Edom, people will say), "Who is this coming from Edom, from Batzrah, with (blood)-

צְדָקָה וְתִהְיֶה נִגְדַת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם: סב * לְמַעַן צִיּוֹן לֹא אֲחֻשָׁה וּלְמַעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא אֲשַׁקוּט עַד־יֵצֵא כְנֹנֶה צְדָקָה וְיִשׁוּעַתָּה כְּלֹפִיד יִבְעָר: ד וְרָאוּ גוֹיִם עֲדָרְךָ וְכָל־מְלָכִים כְּבוֹדְךָ וְקָרָא לְךָ שֵׁם הַדָּשׁ אֲשֶׁר פִּי יְהוָה יִקְבְּנוּ: ז וְהָיִית עֲמֻרַת תְּפִאֲרַת בְּיַד־יְהוָה וְצִנְיָהּ וְצִנּוּף כ"ו מְלוּכָה בְּכַף־אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ח לֹא־יֹאמֶר לְךָ עוֹד עֲזוּבָה וּלְאַרְצֶךָ לֹא־יֹאמֶר עוֹד שְׁמֵמָה כִּי לְךָ יִקְרָא חֲפְצֵי־בָהּ וּלְאַרְצֶךָ בְּעוֹלָה כִּי־חֲפִיץ יְהוָה בְּךָ וְאַרְצֶךָ תִּבְעַל: ט כִּי־יִבְעַל בַּחֹר בְּתוֹלָה יִבְעַלְוּךָ בְּנִיךָ וּמִשׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל־בְּלָה יִשֵּׁשׂ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ: י עַל־חֻמּוֹתֶיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם הַפְּקָדוֹתַי שְׂמֹרִים כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה תָּמִיד לֹא יִחְשׂוּ הַמְּזוֹכְרִים אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָמַי לָכֶם: יא וְאֵל־תִּתְּנוּ דָמַי לוֹ עַד־יִכּוֹזֵן וְעַד־יִשִּׁים אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּהְיֶה בְּאַרְץ: יב נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּיָמֵינוּ וּבִירוּעַ עֵזוֹ אִם־אֶתְּוֹ אֶת־דִּגְדָנְךָ עוֹד מֵאֲכָל לֹא־יִבֶיךָ וְאִם־יִשְׁתּוּ בְּנֵי־נֶכֶד תִּירוּשָׁךְ אֲשֶׁר יִנְעַת בּוֹ: יג כִּי מֵאֲסָפְיוֹ יֵאָכְלוּ וְהִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וּמִקְבָּצָיו יִשְׁתְּהוּ בַּחֲצֵרוֹת קִדְשָׁיו: יד עֲבְרוּ עֲבְרוּ בַּשָּׁעָרִים פָּנוּ דֶרֶךְ הָעַם סְלוּ סְלוּ הַמַּסְלָה סְקְלוּ מֵאֲבָן הַרִימוּ נֶס עַל־הָעַמִּים: טו הִנֵּה יְהוָה הַשְׁמִיעַ אֶל־קוֹצֵה הָאָרֶץ אָמְרוּ לְבַת־צִיּוֹן הִנֵּה יִשְׁעֶךָ בָּא הִנֵּה שְׁכְרוּ אֶתּוֹ וּפְעֻלָּתוֹ לְפָנָיו: יז וְקָרְאוּ לָהֶם עַם־הַקֹּדֶשׁ גְּאוּלַי יְהוָה וְלְךָ יִקְרָא דְרוּשָׁה עִיר לֹא נִעְזְבָה: סג * מִי־

whereas being glad is only felt inwardly because one's joy is tempered by other concerns or fears, as the verse states, "Be glad in times of trepidation" (Psalms 2:11).

"I will rejoice greatly" thus alludes to the joy of the festival of Succos, which is expressed outwardly, whereas, "My soul will be glad with my God" refers to the more restrained joy of the High Holidays which are festivals in their own right, but are tempered by the trepidation of judgment (Likutei Torah, Nitzavim 47a).

This, however, begs the question: Why does the verse mention rejoicing (Succos) before gladness (Rosh Hashanah), when these festivals

occur in the reverse order? And why is this Haftarah, which opens with the theme of outward joy, read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah and not the Shabbos before Succos?

The answer is that Rosh Hashanah itself is associated with both an element of outward rejoicing and a sensation of restrained joy, one preceding the other. First, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah there is a feeling of joy, in anticipation of celebrating the holy day, and this can be expressed outwardly because the time of judgment has not yet begun (see Tur, Orach Chaim 581). This is then followed by the more restrained feeling of "gladness" on Rosh Hashanah itself. Thus the verse reads, "I

זֶה אֲנִי מְאֻדוֹם חֲמוּץ בְּגָדִים מְבֻצָּה זֶה הַדָּוָר
 בְּלִבוֹשׁוֹ צִעָה בָּרַב כְּחוֹ אֲנִי מְדַבֵּר בְּעִדְקָה רַב
 לְהוֹשִׁיעַ: ב מְדוּעַ אָרָם לְלִבוֹשֶׁךָ וּבְגָדֶיךָ כְּדָרְךָ בְּנֵת:
 ג פּוֹרָה א דַּרְכֹתַי לְבָדִי וּמַעֲמִים אֵין-אִישׁ אֶתִּי
 וְאֶדְרָכֶם בְּאִפִּי וְאֶרְמָסֶם בְּחַמְתִּי וְיִזוּ נַצְחָם עַל-בְּגָדֵי
 וְכָל-מַלְבוּשֵׁי אֲנָאֶלְתִּי: ה בְּי יוֹם נִקָּם בְּלִבִּי וּשְׁנַת
 גְּאוּלֵי בָּאָה: ו וְאֶבִּיט וְאֵין עֹזֵר וְאֶשְׁתַּמֵּם וְאֵין סוֹמֵךְ
 וְתוֹשִׁעַ לִי זְרַעִי וְחַמְתִּי הִיא סְמִכְתִּנִּי: ז וְאֶבּוֹס עַמִּים
 בְּאִפִּי וְאֶשְׁכַּרֶם בְּחַמְתִּי וְאוֹרִיד לְאָרֶץ נַצְחָם: ח חֲסִדֵי
 יְהוָה א אֲזַכִּיר תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה כְּעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר-נִמְלָנוּ
 יְהוָה וְרַב-טוֹב לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-נִמְלַם כְּרַחֲמֵי
 וּכְרַב חֲסִדָּיו: ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֶדְ-עַמִּי הֵמָּה בָּנִים לֹא
 יִשְׁקָרוּ וַיְהִי לָהֶם לְמוֹשִׁיעַ: י בְּכָל-צָרָתָם א לֹ [לא כן]
 צָר וּמְלֹאךָ פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּאֶהְבֵּתוֹ וּבְחַמְלָתוֹ הוּא
 נֹאֲלָם וַיִּנְטָלֵם וַיִּנְשָׂאֵם כָּל-יְמֵי עוֹלָם:

stained clothing? This one (who used to be) dressed majestically and ordered (people) from place to place with his great power!”

(Says God), “It is I, Who say (and fulfill My promises of) justice (for the Jewish people and I Who am) mighty to save.”

² (People will say), “Why is your clothing red, and your garments like (those of) one who treads in a winepress?”

³ (Says God), “I trod the winepress (of blood in My righteousness) alone, (not in the merit of the Jewish people). Not one person from the nations was (able to stand against) Me. I trod them in My anger and trampled them in My rage. The (blood of their) strength splashed on My garments and stained all My clothing.”

⁴ “For I have (been) planning a day of vengeance (against the nations for a long time), and the year of redemption (for My people) has (now) come. ⁵ I looked around (for a merit with which the Jewish people might be redeemed), but there was no (merit) to help. I was amazed that there was no (merit) to be of help (in redeeming them). So My arm wrought (their) salvation for Me (and not their own merit), and My anger (against the nations) supported Me (in wreaking vengeance upon them). ⁶ I trampled peoples in My wrath and made them drunk with (the cup of) My rage. I cast (the blood of) their strength down to the ground.”

God avenges the wicked nations

⁷ (The prophet says, “Israel) will relate God’s kind deeds and His praise for everything He has done for us—all the good He has granted to the House of Israel in His mercy and great kindness.” ⁸ (When God took them out of Egypt), He said, “Indeed, they (alone) are My people, children who were not unfaithful (and did not forsake Me),” and He became their Savior.

God’s love for Israel

⁹ All their sufferings caused Him pain and the angel (who stands) before Him saved them. (Likewise), out of His love and mercy He redeemed them. He will bear them and carry them forever.

SHABBOS SHUVAH / שבת שובה

(Hosea 14:2-10; Joel 2:11-27; Micah 7:18-20)

יֵד ב שׁוֹבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כִשְׁלֵת
 בְּעוֹנֶיךָ: ג קַחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֵל-יְהוָה אֱמַרוּ
 אֵלָיו כָּל-תְּשׁוּאָה עוֹן וְקַח-טוֹב וְנִשְׁלַמְהָ פְרִים

^{14:2} Israel, return to God your God, for you have stumbled on account of your sins. ³ (You do not need to take sacrifices. Just) take words (of confession) with you and return to God. Say to Him: “Lift away all sin and accept (our promises for) good (behavior in the

Return to God

will rejoice greatly in God—on Erev Rosh Hashanah—My soul will be glad with my God—on Rosh Hashanah itself. (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5735, par. 2).

HAFTARAH OF SHABBOS SHUVAH

The Shabbos preceding Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is known as Shabbos Shuvah (Shabbos of Return), after its special Haftarah that stresses the need for repentance by man, and God’s forgiveness.

According to Chasidic thought, this Shabbos spiritually elevates and “mends” every Shabbos of the past year (Sefer Hama’amarim Melukat vol. 1, p. 345). Of all times in the year, the “Ten Days” between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most opportune for teshuvah (Rambam, Laws of Teshuvah 2:6), and among these days themselves, Shabbos Shuvah is the pinnacle (Sicha of Shabbos Shuvah 5749).

It is customary that men, women and children come to the synagogue on this day, because the theme of teshuvah is of universal relevance

future). Let (the confession) of our lips be in place of (the sacrificing of) bullocks.”

Trust in God alone
 4 “We will no longer (ask) to be saved by Assyria, and we will not (put our trust in) riding (powerful) horses (into battle). We will never again call the (idol) made by our hands, ‘our god,’ because (we know that) the orphan finds compassion through You (alone).” 5 Then (after they confess) I will forgive them for their rebelliousness. I will love them deeply, because My anger will have turned away from them. 6 (My love) for Israel will be (perpetual) like dew. He will blossom like a rose, and his roots will spread like (the roots of a cedar from) Lebanon. 7 His young leaves will spread out, he will be beautiful like an olive tree, and he will have the aroma of Lebanon. 8 Those who sat in His shade will be peaceful. They will be peacefully self-sufficient like grain (which sustains life), and they will blossom like the vine. Their fame will be like that of the wine of Lebanon.

Heed the prophet's words
 9 (When) Efrayim asks, “What do I need idolaters for anymore?” I will answer (all his requests) and look over (and supervise his needs). I (will attend to him) like a fresh cypress tree (which bends its head over its roots). The fruit of your (success) comes from Me. 10 Whoever is wise will understand these (words). The discerning will recognize them. For the ways of God are straight and the righteous will walk in them, but the wicked will stumble in them.

Chabad and Sefardic communities omit the following (Yoel 2:11-27) and continue below:

Day of destruction looms
 2:11 God makes His voice heard (through the prophets) before His army (of locusts arrive). His camp is extremely large, and those who carry out His Word (on a mission of destruction) are awesome. The day of (destruction from) God is great and very formidable. Who could endure it?

Call for repentance
 12 Yet even now—says God—return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping and lamenting. 13 Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to God your God. For He is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, very kind and renounces bad (decrees). 14 Let anyone who knows (what sin he has done) repent and regret. Then, (when the locusts come) they will (not destroy, but rather) leave behind a blessing (from which to bring) a meal-offering and a wine libation to God your God.

Public fast
 15 Sound the shofar in Tziyon (to awaken the people to repent), announce a fast, call an assembly. 16 Gather the people, instruct the congregation (to fast), bring together the elders, gather the children and the nursing babies. The groom

שָׁפְתֵינוּ: - אֲשׁוּר | לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ עַל-סוּס לֹא נִרְכָּב
 וְלֹא-נֹאמַר עוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר-בְּיָד
 יָרַחם יְתוֹם: ה אֲרַפֵּא מְשׁוֹבְתָם אֲהַבֶּם נִדְבָה כִּי שָׁב
 אִפִּי מִמֶּנּוּ: ו אֱהִיָּה כַסֵּל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִפְרַח כְּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה
 וַיֵּךְ שָׁרְשָׁיו כַּלְבָּנוֹן: ז יִלְכוּ יוֹנְקוֹתָיו וַיְהִי כַגִּית הוֹדוּ
 וְרִיחַ לֹו כַּלְבָּנוֹן: ח יֵשְׁבוּ יִשְׁבֵּי כְצֵלוֹ יַחֲיוּ דָגָן וַיִּפְרְחוּ
 כַּנֶּפֶן זָכְרוּ כִיִּין לְבָנוֹן: ט אִפְרָיִם מֵהֶלֶי עוֹד
 לְעַצְבִּים אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי וְאֲשׁוּרֹנוּ אֲנִי כִבְרוֹשׁ רַעֲוֵן מִמֶּנִּי
 פָּרַחַתְיָ נִמְצָא: י מִי חָכֵם וַיִּבֶן אֱלֹהֵי נִבּוֹן וַיִּדְעֵם
 כִּי-יִשְׁרָאֵל דְּרָכָי יְהוּה וְצַדִּיקִים יִלְכוּ בָּם וּפְשָׁעִים
 יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּם:

יֵהוּה נָתַן קוֹלוֹ לְפָנָי חִילוֹ כִּי רַב מְאֹד מִחֲזֵהוּ
 כִּי עָצוּם עֲשֵׂה דְבָרוֹ כִּי-גִדּוֹל יוֹם-יְהוּה וְנוֹרָא מְאֹד
 וּמִי יִכִּילָנוּ: יב וְגַם-עַתָּה נֹאם-יְהוּה שָׁבוּ עָרֵי
 בְּכַל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְצוּם וּבִבְכִי וּבִמְסָפָד: יג וּקְרָעוּ
 לְבַבְכֶם וְאַל-בְּגָדֵיכֶם וּשְׁבוּ אֶל-יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי-
 חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא אֲרַךְ אַפָּיִם וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְנִחָם
 עַל-הֲרָעָה: יד מִי יוֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנִחָם וְהִשְׁאִיר אַחֲרָיו
 בְּרִכָּה מִנְחָה וְנִסִּיךְ לַיהוּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: טו תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר
 בְּצִיּוֹן קִדְשׁוֹ-צוּם קְרָאוּ עֲצֵרָה: טז אִסְפוּ-עִם קִדְשׁוֹ
 קְהָל קִבְצוּ זְקֵנִים אִסְפוּ עוֹלָלִים וַיּוֹנְקֵי שָׂרָיִם יֵצֵא

(ibid.). Nevertheless, one must be careful not to let a child be called to Maftir and read the Haftarah on this Shabbos—which is permissible during the rest of the year, though not practiced by Chabad—since a child cannot fully appreciate the concept of teshuvah (Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch 284:8; Likutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 144).

In the opening passage of the Haftarah, the prophet Hoshea (7th century B.C.E.) urges the people to sincere verbal confession (14:2-3) and to trust in God (4). God will then forgive Israel and love them forever (5-9). The passage concludes with a plea to take the prophet’s words to heart (10). In the following section, from Yoel (read only by Ashkenazim),

חָתָן מִחֲדָרוֹ וּכְלָה מִחַפְצָתָהּ: יי בֵּין הָאוֹלָם וְלִמְזֻבְחַ
 יִבְכוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים מִשָּׁרְתֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ חוּסָה יְהוָה
 עַל-עַמּוּךָ וְאַל-תִּתֵּן נַחֲלָתְךָ לְחֹרֶפָה לְמִשְׁלַל-בָּם
 גּוֹיִם לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ בְעַמִּים אֵיחָ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: יג וַיִּקְרָא
 יְהוָה לְאַרְצוֹ וַיְהַמְלֵל עַל-עַמּוֹ: יד וַיַּעַן יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר
 לְעַמּוֹ הַנְּגִי שַׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת-הַדְּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיְצָהָר
 וּשְׂבַעְתֶּם אֹתוֹ וְלֹא-אֶתֶן אֶתְכֶם עוֹד חֹרֶפָה בְּגוֹיִם:
 כ וְאֶת-הַצִּפּוֹנִי אֲרַחֵק מֵעֲלֵיכֶם וְהַדְּחִיתִיו אֶל-אֶרֶץ
 צִיָּה וּשְׂמַמָּה אֶת-פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי־הַקְּדֻמָּי וּסְפוּ
 אֶל-הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרוֹן וְעֵלָה בְּאִשׁוֹ וְתַעַל צִחְנָתוֹ כִּי
 הַגְּדִיל לַעֲשׂוֹת: כא אֶל-תִּירָאִי אֲדַמָּה גִילִי וּשְׂמַחִי
 בִּי-הַגְּדִיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת: כב אֶל-תִּירָאוּ בְּהַמּוֹת
 שִׁדְי כִּי דָשְׂאוּ נְאוֹת מַדְבָּר כִּי-עֵץ נִשְׂא פְרִי תִּאֲנָה
 וְנִפְן נִתְּנוּ חֵילָם: כג וּבְנֵי צִיּוֹן גִּילוּ וּשְׂמְחוּ בִיהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי-נָתַן לָכֶם אֶת-הַמּוֹרָה לְצַדִּיקָה וַיֹּרֵד
 לָכֶם גֶּשֶׁם מוֹרָה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּרֹאשׁוֹן: כד וּמִלְאוּ
 הַגְּרָנוֹת בָּר וְהַשִּׁיקוּ הַיִּקְבִּים תִּירוֹשׁ וַיְצַהֲרֵ:
 כה וּשְׁלַמְתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-הַשָּׂנִים אֲשֶׁר אָכַל הָאֲרָבָה
 הַיִּלָּק וְהַחֲסִיל וְהַגֹּזֵם חֵילִי הַגְּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר שַׁלַּחְתִּי
 בְּכֶם: כו וַאֲכַלְתֶּם אָכּוֹל וּשְׂבֹעַ וְהִלַּלְתֶּם אֶת-שֵׁם
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה עִמָּכֶם לְהַפְלִיא
 וְלֹא-יִבְשׁוּ עַמִּי לְעוֹלָם: כז וַיִּדְעֶתֶם כִּי בִקְרֵב
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנִי וְאֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֲנִי עוֹד וְלֹא-יִבְשׁוּ
 עַמִּי לְעוֹלָם:

should leave his room and the bride her chupah (to participate; they should not rejoice).

¹⁷ Let the priests, the ministers of God, cry out between the Hall and the Altar. Let them say, "God! Have pity on Your people! Do not allow Your inheritance, (Your people,) to be shamed by letting nations rule over them (when they come to beg for food after the locusts destroy everything they have). Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?'"

¹⁸ Then, (when you repent) God will become jealous for His Land and have pity on His people. ¹⁹ God will respond and say to His people, "(From now on), I will send you grain, wine and oil, and it will satisfy you. I will no longer let you be shamed among the nations. ²⁰ I will distance from you the (locusts that come from the) north and drive them to (their death in) a barren and desolate land. (I will send) the first (locusts that come) to the (Salt) Sea in the east, and the last (locusts) to the Western Sea. The stench (of the dead locusts) will go up and its odor will rise, for there were many locusts (ready) to do (harm).

God will give sustenance

²¹ Do not be afraid, Land (of Israel, that the locusts may return. Rather), be glad and rejoice, because God (has decided from now on to do) many great things. ²² Do not be afraid of the animals of the field (that pasture may be lacking), because the pastures in the wilderness have sprouted. (Even) trees (which need much more rain than pasture) have borne their fruit, and the fig tree and vine have produced their yield.

Promise of safety

²³ Rejoice and be happy with God your God, children of Tziyon, because He has given you the early rain as charity (and not according to what you deserve). He caused the early and late rain to fall in the first (part of the season). ²⁴ The granaries will be filled with grain and the vats will ring (with the noise of flowing) wine and oil.

Prosperity

²⁵ I will repay you for (your losses in) the years that were consumed by the (different species of locust) arbeh, yelek, chasil and gazam, My mighty army which I sent against you. ²⁶ Then, you will eat and be satisfied, and

praise the Name of God your God, Who performed such wondrous acts. My people will never be shamed again (by being forced to live in other lands due to lack of food). ²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel's midst, that I am God your God, and there is no other. My people will never be shamed again.

All communities conclude here (Micah 7:18-20):

ז יי מִי-אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעִבֵּר עַל-פֶּשַׁע
 לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ לֹא-הַחֲזִיק לְעַד אָפוּ כִּי-חַפְּזִין

^{7:18} Who is like You, O God, forgiving iniquity and overlooking transgression for those who remain of His heritage (after the birth pangs of Mashiach? Even when

the prophet inspires the people towards repentance in order to avert an imminent day of locust destruction (2:11-14). A public fast is

declared, and the priests are advised to cry out to God (15-17). In response, God will bring ample sustenance and safety from the enemy,

God forgives *He does become angry) He does not maintain His anger forever, because He is a lover of kindness. ¹⁹ He will (once again) have mercy on us. He will grasp our iniquities (preventing them from being held against us), and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ Give (to us the fulfillment of the) true (words that You spoke) to Ya'akov, (and the words of) lovingkindness (you spoke) to Avraham, which you promised our fathers long ago (at the Akeida).*

חֶסֶד הוּא: י' יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלַח בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל-חַטָּאתָם: ד תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לִיעֶקֶב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִיְמֵי קָדָם:

HA'AZINU / האזינו

(II Samuel 22:1-51)

If Parshas Ha'azinu occurs between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the Haftarah of Shabbos Shuvah is read (page 290).

22:1 **T**hen David chanted the words of this song to God (in his old age) on the day God saved him from all of his enemies and from Sha'ul. ²He said: God is my Rock and my Fortress, Who saves me. ³God! My Rock in Whom I trust! My shield! My saving power! My support and my refuge! My savior! Save me from (men of) corruption! ⁴(When) I call out God's praises I am saved from my enemies. ⁵When the pains of death engulfed me, and the sicknesses brought by treacherous men frightened me; ⁶when the pains of the grave surrounded me, and the snares of death came before me; ⁷when I am pained (by all these things), I call on God! I call out to my God! He hears my voice from His Temple, and my plea reaches His ears. ⁸The earth shook and trembled, the foundations of heaven shuddered; they shake because He is angry. ⁹Smoke rises in His nostrils, fire from His mouth devours (those that rise against Him when) live coals

כב * וַיִּדְבֹר דָּוִד לַיהוָה אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הַצִּיל יְהוָה אֹתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל-אֹיְבָיו וּמִכַּף שָׂאוֹל: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמִצְדָּתִי וּמִפְלִטֵי-לִי: ג אֱלֹהֵי צוּרֵי אַחֲסֵה-בּוּ מִנְּי וְקָרַן יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגַּבִּי וּמִנוֹסֵי מִשְׁעֵי מַחֲסֵם תִּשְׁעֲנֵי: ה מִהַלֵּל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וּמֵאֵיבֵי אֲשֶׁע: ה כִּי אֶפְנִי מִשְׁבְּרֵי-מוֹת נַחֲלִי כְּלִיעַל יִבְעֲתָנִי: ו חֲבַלִּי שָׂאוֹל סִבְּנֵי קִדְמֵי מְקַשֵּׁי-מוֹת: ז בְּצַר-לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהִיכָלוֹ קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי בְּאָזְנוֹ: ח וַיִּתְנַעַשׂ [וּתְנַעַשׂ כ'] וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ מוֹסְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם יִרְגָּזוּ וַיִּתְנַעַשׂוּ כִּי-תָרָה לוֹ: ט עָלָה עֶשֶׂן בְּאַפּוֹ וְאֵשׁ מִפִּיו תֹּאכַל

and a spirit of joy will consequently prevail (18-27). A final passage from Michah, read by all communities, stresses God's attributes of forgiveness, kindness and compassion.

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS HA'AZINU

This Haftarah relates the Song of David, similar to the Song of Ha'azinu sung by Moshe in the Parsha. The Haftarah is also read on the seventh day of Pesach.

The Tzemach Tzedek once asked why the Song of Devorah is not read on the seventh day of Pesach, which commemorates the splitting of the Reed Sea, since the women rejoiced more than the men when the sea split. (In fact, this is the reason why the Song of Devorah was chosen as the Haftarah for Parshas Beshalach, which recounts the splitting of the Reed Sea, rather than the Song of David—see commentary to the Haftarah of Parshas Beshalach).

The Tzemach Tzedek answered: "On the seventh day of Pesach, the Haftarah is the Song of David because on the seventh and final days of Pesach there is a revelation of Mashiach, who is a descendant of David. Thus, it is to honor Mashiach that we recite the Song of David" (*Sefer Hasichos* 5698, p. 283). The Song of David thus alludes to the "Tenth Song" that will be chanted with the coming of Mashiach (*Likutei Sichos* vol. 37, p. 111).

The Song was recited by David in his old age in gratitude to God, Who "saved him from all of his enemies and from Sha'ul" (22:1). David praises God as a "rock" and personal savior Who responded in times of emergency (2-7), and God's methods of deliverance are depicted with rich imagery (8-20). David then attests to his own loyalty to God (21-24) and hopes for just reward (25-28). The theme of personal gratitude is then redeveloped, as David depicts God's involvement in his victories at length (29-46). In his closing words, David reiterates and intensifies His

גַּחְלִים בְּעֵרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: וַיִּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֵד וְעָרְפֵל תַּחַת רִגְלָיו: וַיִּרְכַּב עַל-כְּרוּב וַיַּעֲף וַיֵּרָא עַל-פְּנֵי-רוּחַ: וַיֵּשֶׁת חֶשֶׁךְ סְבִיבֹתָיו סָבֹת חֲשֻׁר־תַּמִּים עֲבֵי שְׁחָקִים: מִגְּוָה נִגְדָּו בְּעֵרוּ גַחְלֵי-אֵשׁ: יָרַעַם מִן-שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה וְעַלְיוֹן יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ: וַיִּשְׁלַח הַצִּיִּים וַיִּפְיֵצֵם בָּרֶק וַיְהִם (וַיִּהַמּם כו'): וַיֵּרְאוּ אַפְקֵי יָם וַיִּגְלוּ מִסְדּוֹת תֵּבֵל בְּגַעַרְתָּ יְהוָה מִנְשַׁמַּת רוּחַ אַפּוֹ: וַיִּשְׁלַח מִמְרוֹם יִקְחֵנִי יְמֹשְׁנֵי מַמִּים רַבִּים: יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאִיְבֵי עֵז מִשְׁנָאֵי כִּי אֲמַצּוּ מִמֶּנִּי: יִקְדַּמְנִי בַיּוֹם אִירֵי וַיְהִי יְהוָה מִשְׁעַן לִי: וַיֵּצֵא לְמַרְחָב אֶתִּי יַחְלִצֵנִי כִּי-חַפְזִן בֵּי: וַיִּגְמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצַדִּיקְתִּי כְּכֹר יָדַי וַיִּשִׁיב לִי: כִּי שָׁמְרֹתַי דְּרָכַי יְהוָה וְלֹא רָשָׁעֵתִי מֵאַלְהֵי: כִּי כָל-מִשְׁפָּטָיו (מִשְׁפָּטוֹ כו') לִנְגֹדִי וְחֻקְתָּיו לֹא-אֶסוּר מִמֶּנּוּ: וְאַהֲיָה תָמִים לוֹ וְאַשְׁתַּמְרָה מֵעוֹנֵי: כִּי וַיִּשָּׁב יְהוָה לִי בְּצַדִּיקְתִּי כְּכֹרִי לִנְגֹד עֵינָיו: כִּי עִם-חֲסִיד תִּתְחַסֵּד עִם-גִּבּוֹר תָּמִים תִּתַּמֵּם: כִּי עִם-נֶבֶר תִּתְבַּר וְעִם-עֶקֶשׁ תִּתְפַּל: כִּי וְאַתָּה עֲנֵי תוֹשִׁיעַ וְעֵינֶיךָ עַל-רַמִּים תִּשְׁפִּיל: כִּי אֶתָּה נִירֵי יְהוָה וַיְהוָה יִגְיָה חֶשְׁבֵּי: כִּי בָכָה אֲרוּץ גָּדוֹד בְּאֵלֵהִי אֲדַלֵּג-שׁוֹר: לֹא הָאֵל תָּמִים דְּרָכּוֹ אִמְרַת יְהוָה צְרוּפָה מִגֵּן הוּא לְכֹל הַחֲסִים בּוֹ: כִּי מִי-אֵל מִבְּלַעְדֵי יְהוָה וּמִי צוֹר מִבְּלַעְדֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ: לֹא הָאֵל מְעוֹזֵי חֵיל וַיִּתֵּר תָּמִים דְּרָכַי (דְּרָכּוֹ כו'): מִשְׁוֶה רִגְלֵי (וּרְגָלָיו כו') כְּאֵילוֹת וְעַל-כַּמּוֹתַי יַעֲמַדְנִי: לֹא מִלְּמַד יָדַי לְמַלְחָמָה וְנַחַת קִשְׁת־נְחוּשָׁה זָרַעְתִּי: לֹא וְתַתֵּן-לִי מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְעֲנִתֶךָ תְּרַבֵּנִי: לֹא תִרְחִיב צַעְדֵי תַחְתָּנִי

strength and power. He springs me onto my path of perfection. ³⁴He makes my legs straight like a doe's, He stands me on the high places. ³⁵He teaches my hands to fight, (and he gives) my arms (the strength) to break a copper bow. ³⁶You grant me the shield of Your protection, and Your humility (in caring for me) made me (powerful like) a large number (of people). ³⁷You

blaze forth from Him (to consume them). ¹⁰He bent the heavens and descended (to reach the enemy), with a thick cloud under His feet (with which to punish them). ¹¹He mounted a cherub and flew off. He appeared on the wings of the wind. ¹²He surrounded Himself with a canopy of darkness (ready to punish the enemy), from clouds of water bound together (under the) heavens. ¹³From the brightness before Him (which he shone to save me) blazed fiery coals (against those who stood against me). ¹⁴God thundered from heaven. The Supreme One sent forth His voice. ¹⁵He shot arrows and scattered (the enemy. He sent) lightning and he confused them. ¹⁶With God's roar and the blast of His nostrils, the depths of the sea were visible and (the earth split), revealing the world's foundations.

God's fantastic assistance

¹⁷He sent (His salvation) from on high and took me. He drew me from deep waters. ¹⁸He saved me from my powerful enemy, from those who hated me, when they were stronger than me. ¹⁹They took advantage of me (by attacking me) on the day of my calamity, but God was a support for me. ²⁰He brought me out to a wide place. He delivered me (from the straits), because He wants me.

²¹May God reward me according to my righteousness. May He repay me according to the purity of my hands. ²²For I have kept God's ways, and I have not acted wickedly before my God. ²³For all His laws are (in my mind) before me, and I have not turned away from (any one) of His suprarational commands. ²⁴I was wholehearted with Him, and I guarded myself from my sin. ²⁵So may God pay me according to my righteousness, according to my purity in His eyes. ²⁶With the kind man You deal kindly, with the wholehearted man, wholeheartedly, ²⁷with the pure, in purity, with the crooked, You act with guile. ²⁸You save a humble nation but You look down on the haughty.

David's righteousness

²⁹You are my lamp, O God! God lights my darkness! ³⁰For with you(r help) I can run through a troop (of the enemy). With my God I can jump on a wall (to conquer cities). ³¹God's Way (of justice) is perfect. God's Word is refined, He is a shield to all who trust in Him. ³²For who has any power (against) God (to stop Him carrying out His word)? Who is a rock but our God? ³³God is my

David's strength comes from God

praises (47-48), promises to publicize God's acts among the nations (50), and prays that God should continue to bestow kindness on his descendants forever (51).

34. משנה רגלי כאילת.—He makes my legs straight like a doe's. Rashi explains, "The legs of the female deer (doe) are straighter than the

male's." According to Chasidic thought, the legs represent "that which supports the entire body, with the head which stands over them, and they bring a person to his desired destination. Just as this is the case physically, so too it is true spiritually...Faith is referred to as 'legs' since it upholds and sustains the head, namely the intellect, which meditates upon the

have broadened my step, so my feet have not slipped.
³⁸ I pursue my enemies and destroy them, not turning back until I annihilate them. ³⁹ I annihilate them and strike them so they rise no more, and they fall beneath my feet. ⁴⁰ You gird me with strength for battle, and cause my attackers to fall before me. ⁴¹ You made my enemies and foes turn around before me, but I (still chased them and) destroyed them. ⁴² They turned (for help), but there was no one to save them. (They turned) to God, but He did not answer.

⁴³ I ground them like dust of the earth, I pulverized and crushed them like the mud of the streets. ⁴⁴ You saved me from the enemy (from among) my own people, You protected me (from them all until I became) the head of nations, (and now even) a people unfamiliar to me serves me. ⁴⁵ Foreigners (desperately) lie to me (out of fear, but) because of what they heard about me, they listened to me. ⁴⁶ Foreigners wither, and become lame from their confinement (that I decree on them).

⁴⁷ God lives! May my Rock be blessed! My exalted God is the Rock of my salvation. ⁴⁸ The God, Who avenges on my behalf, Who subdues nations before me, ⁴⁹ Who saves me from my enemies, Who lifts me above my attackers, Who rescues me from corrupt men!

⁵⁰ Therefore, (for these acts of kindness) I will thank God (and publicize His acts) among the nations and sing to Your Name. ⁵¹ He granted His king great victories, and He has acted kindly to His anointed one. (As he did) to David, (so may He do) to his descendants forever!

David will publicize God's kindness

וְלֹא מָעַדוּ קַרְסָלָי: ^ל אֶרְדָּפָה אִיבֵי וְאַשְׁמִידֵם וְלֹא אָשׁוּב עַד-כְּלוֹתֵם: ^ל וְאַכְלֵם וְאַמְחָצֵם וְלֹא יִקְוּמוּן וַיִּפְּלוּ תַּחַת רַגְלֵי: ^מ וַתִּזְרַנֵּי חֵיל לְמַלְחָמָה תִּכְרִיעַ קַמִּי תַּחְתָּנִי: ^מ וְאַיִבֵי תַתָּה לִי עָרַף מִשְׁנֵאֵי וְאַצְמִיתֵם: ^מ יִשְׁעוּ וְאִין מִשְׁיַע אֶל-יְהוָה וְלֹא עָנָם: ^מ וְאַשְׁחָקֵם כַּעֲפַר-אַרְצָן כְּטִיט־חֻצוֹת אֲדָקֵם אֲרַקֵּם: ^מ וַתִּפְּלֹטְנִי מִרִיבֵי עַמִּי תִשְׁמַרְנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם עִם לֹא-יִדְעֵתִי יַעֲבֹדְנִי: ^מ בְּנִי נִכְר יִתְפַּח־שׁוּר לִי לְשִׁמוֹעַ אֶזֶן יִשְׁמְעוּ לִי: ^מ בְּנִי נִכְר יִבְלוּ וַיַּחֲגְרוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵם: ^מ חֵי-יְהוָה וּבְרִיךְ צוּרֵי וַיִּרְם אֱלֹהֵי צוּר יִשְׁעֵי: ^מ הָאֵל הַנִּתֵּן נִקְמַת לִי וּמְרִיד עַמִּים תַּחְתָּנִי: ^מ וּמוֹצֵאֵי מַאִיבֵי וּמְקַמֵי תְרוֹמֹמְנֵי מַאִישׁ חֲמָסִים תַּצִּילְנִי: ^נ עַל-בֵּן אֹדֶה יְהוָה בְּגוֹיִם וְלִשְׁמֹד אֲזַמֵּר: ^נ מִגְדֹּל [מְגִדֵּל בֵּן] יִשׁוּעוֹת מִלְבוּ וְעֵשֶׂה-חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְדוֹר וּלְדוֹר עַד-עוֹלָם:

VEZOS HABRACHAH / (שמחת תורה) וזאת הברכה

(Joshua 1:1-18)

^{1:1} It was after the death of Moshe, God's servant, that God said to Moshe's attendant, Yehoshua son of Nun:

² "My servant Moshe is dead. Now, set off and cross this (river) Jordan now—both you and this entire people—to the land which I am giving the children of Israel. ³ I will give you every place on which the soles of

God appoints Yehoshua

א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נּוּן מִשְׁרַת מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ^ב מֹשֶׁה עֶבְדִּי מָת וְעַתָּה קוּם עֲבֹר אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה אֶתָּה וְכָל-הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לָהֶם לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ג כָּל-מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרֹךְ כַּף-רַגְלְכֶם

greatness of God” (Tanya, Igeres Hakodesh ch. 1). By suggesting that the female deer has “straighter” legs, the verse points to the fact that women are generally endowed with a greater measure of faith in God than men. (For example, we find that the women did not wish to contribute their jewelry for the construction of the Golden Calf.) Thus, with these words, David praised God for giving him the superior quality of faith usually possessed only by women (Ohr Hatorah, Nach vol. 2, p. 927).

HAFTARAH OF SIMCHAS TORAH

This Haftarah mentions the passing of Moshe, which is related in the Torah portion for Simchas Torah. It is also a direct continuation of the Five Books of Moshe which are completed on this day (for a further explanation see Sichah of the night of Simchas Torah 5747, par. 39). The Haftarah opens with God's communication to Yehoshua after Moshe's

בו לְכֶם נִתְּנָיו כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל-מֹשֶׁה: - מִהַמִּדְבָּר
וְהַלְבָנוֹן הַזֶּה וְעַד-הַנָּהָר הַגָּדוֹל נְהַר-פָּרָת בַּל אֲרֶץ
הַחִתִּים וְעַד-הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל מִבּוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יִהְיֶה
גְבוּלְכֶם: ה לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ
כַּאֲשֶׁר הֵייתִי עִם-מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ לֹא אֲרַפֶּךָ וְלֹא
אֲעֻזְבֶּךָ: ו חֹזֵק וְאַמִּץ כִּי אֲתָה תִנְחִיל אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה
אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתָם לָתֵת לָהֶם:
ו רַק חֹזֵק וְאַמִּץ מְאֹד לִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל-הַתּוֹרָה
אֲשֶׁר צִוֶּךָ מֹשֶׁה עַבְדִּי אֶל-תִּסּוּר מִמֶּנּוּ יְמִין
וּשְׂמֹאל לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכִּיל בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּלְדֶּה: ה לֹא-יִמּוּשׁ
סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהִגִּיתָ בוּ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל-הַכְּתוּב בוּ כִּי-אֲנִי
תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת-דְּרָכְךָ וְאֲנִי תִשְׁכִּיל: ו הֲלוֹא צִוִּיתִיךָ חֹזֵק
וְאַמִּץ אֶל-תַּעֲרֹץ וְאֶל-תַּחַת כִּי עִמָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּלְדֶּה:

your feet tread, as I said to Moshe: ⁴Your borders will be from the desert and Lebanon here, to the Great River, the Euphrates River—all the land of the Chittites, to the Great Sea to the direction where the sun sets.

⁵ “No one will stand against you all the days of your life. I will be with you, as I was with Moshe. I will not weaken (My support of) you and I will not abandon you.

⁶ “Be strong and firm, for you will bring this people to take possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

⁷ “But you must be very strong and firm to be careful to observe the entire Torah which My servant Moshe commanded you. Do not turn aside from it to the right or the left, so that you succeed wherever you go. ⁸This book of the Torah must not depart from your mouth. You must pore over it day and night, so you will be careful to observe everything written in it. (Only) then will you prosper in (all) your ways and be successful.

⁹Have I not commanded you: Be strong and firm! Do not be anxious or afraid, for God your God is with you wherever you go.”

Keep the Torah

Prepare for war

Sefardic communities conclude here. Chabad and Ashkenazic communities continue:

ו יִצְוּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-שֹׁמְרֵי הָעָם לֵאמֹר:
”עֲבְרוּ | בְּקֶרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה וּצְווּ אֶת-הָעָם
לֵאמֹר הִכֵּינוּ לָכֶם צִידָה כִּי בְּעוֹד | שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים
אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה לְבוֹא לְרִשְׁתׁ אֶת-
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:
ו וְלְרֵאוּבֵנִי וְלְגָדִי וְלַחֲצֵי שֵׁבֶט הַמְּנַשֶּׁה אָמַר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
לֵאמֹר: ” זְכוּר אֶת-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם מֹשֶׁה
עַבְדֵי-יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מְנִיחַ לָכֶם וְנָתַן

¹⁰ Yehoshua then commanded the officers of the people:

¹¹ “Go through the camp and instruct the people, saying, ‘Prepare provisions for yourselves, for in another three days you will cross this Jordan (river) to enter and take possession of the land which God your God is giving you as an inheritance.’”

¹² Yehoshua then told the tribes of Re’uvain, Gad and half the tribe of Menasheh, saying: ¹³ “Remember the words which Moshe, God’s servant, commanded you, saying: ‘God your God is granting you a place to settle, and He has given you land on this (side of the Jordan).’

Promise of Re’uvain, Gad and Menasheh

passing, instructing him to lead the conquest of the Land (1:1-4). God promises to assist Yehoshua, encourages him to be “strong and firm,” and warns him that he must observe the Torah (5-9). Yehoshua immediately instructs the people to prepare for war (10-11). He reminds the tribes of Re’uvain and Gad and the half-tribe of Menasheh of their promise to lead the battle before returning to settle in the Transjordan (12-15), and they wholeheartedly consent (16-18).

8. לְיָלֵהּ—You must pore over it day and night. “Technically speaking, a person can fulfill his obligation to study Torah by allocating specific times, thus satisfying the requirement to “pore over it day and night,” by allocating specific times in the day and the night when he will learn and memorize well at least those ideas that have practical

relevance, which is a universal obligation. This includes the parts of the Code of Jewish Law which every person needs to know himself—which do not require further Rabbinical clarification—and the study of non-legal *Midrashim* or texts of ethical refinement that are based on the wisdom of our Sages” (*Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Torah Study* 3:4).

Every *mitzvah* has a *preferable* standard to which it should be observed (*lechatchilah*), and a *minimal* standard which is acceptable only under extenuating circumstances (*b’dieved*).

The preferable way of observing the *mitzvah* to study Torah is to follow the verse literally and “pore over it day and night,” i.e. all day and all night. The notion of merely allocating a time during the day and a time at night, mentioned here in the *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch*, is a dispensation for those who are only capable of fulfilling a minimal

¹⁴ Your wives, children, and flocks can settle in this land which Moshe has assigned you across the Jordan (from the Land of Israel), but all of you—all your mighty warriors—must pass armed ahead of your brothers and help them, ¹⁵ until God grants your brothers a place to settle as you (have), and they take possession of the land which God your God has given them. Then you will return to the land of your inheritance which Moshe, God’s servant, gave you on the east side of the Jordan, where the sun (rises), and take possession of it.”

¹⁶ They answered Yehoshua: “Everything you have commanded us, we will do, and wherever you send us, we will go! ¹⁷ Just as we listen to everything Moshe (said), so will we listen to you, so long as God your God is with you, as He was with Moshe. ¹⁸ Any man who rebels against you and does not listen to your words concerning anything you command us will be put to death. Just be strong and firm (to punish them, and do not forgo your honor)!”

לְכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת: י' נְשִׁיכֶם מִפְּכֶם וּמִקְנֵיכֶם יֵשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְכֶם מֹשֶׁה בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן וְאַתֶּם תַּעֲבְרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים לְפָנָי אַחֲיֵיכֶם כָּל גְּבוּרֵי הַחֵיל וְעִזְרַתֶם אוֹתָם: טו' עַד אֲשֶׁר־יָנִיחַ יְהוָה אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם כָּכֶם וַיֵּרְשׁוּ גַם־הֵמָּה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָהֶם וְשַׁבְתֶּם לְאֶרֶץ יְרֻשַׁתְכֶם וַיֵּרְשֶׁתֶם אוֹתָהּ אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּנֶה לְכֶם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד יְהוָה בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִזֶּרֶחַ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: טז' וַיַּעֲנוּ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתָנוּ נַעֲשֶׂה וְאֵל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלַחֵנוּ נִלְדָּה: יז' כָּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֶּן נִשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים רַק יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ עִמָּךְ כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם־מֹשֶׁה: יח' כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִמְרָה אֶת־פִּיךָ וְלֹא־יִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֶיךָ לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־תִּצְוֶנוּ יוּמָת רַק חֲזַק וְאַמִּין:

🌀 EREV ROSH CHODESH / ערב ראש חודש שחל בשבת 🌀

(I Samuel 20:18-42)

The Plan

^{20:18} Yonasan said to (David), “Tomorrow is the (first of the) new month. You shall be missed, because your seat will be empty. ¹⁹ For three (days) you should go down (and hide yourself) well. Come to the place where you hid on the day of the incident (when the King swore to me not to kill you), and sit by the traveler’s (marker) stone. ²⁰ “I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. ²¹ Then, I will send a lad (saying to him), ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the lad, ‘look!—the arrows

כ' וַיֹּאמְרוּ־לוֹ יְהוֹנָתָן מִחֵר הַדָּשׁ וְנִפְקַדְתָּ כִּי יִפְקַד מוֹשְׁבֶדְךָ: יא' וְשִׁלַּשְׁתָּ תַרְדּוּ מְאֹד וּבֵאתָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־נִסְתַּרְתָּ שָׁם בְּיוֹם הַמַּעֲשֶׂה וַיִּשְׁבֶּתָ אֶצֶל הָאֶבֶן הָאֵוֶל: יב' וְאָנֹכִי שְׁלִשֶׁת הַחֲצַיִם עֲדָה אוֹרְהָ לְשַׁלַּח־לִי לְמַטְרָה: יג' וְהִנֵּה אֶשְׁלַח אֶת־הַנְּעָר לְךָ מִצֵּא אֶת־הַחֲצַיִם אִם־אָמַר אָמַר לְנְעָר הִנֵּה

obligation, for Torah study is, in essence, a continual obligation (Likutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 21, note 6).

🌀 HAFTARAH OF EREV ROSH CHODESH

This *Haftarah* mentions the eve of *Rosh Chodesh*: “Tomorrow is the (first of the) new month” (20:18). At first glance, this connection appears to be somewhat tenuous, as the remaining narrative of the *Haftarah* is not connected with the theme of *Erev Rosh Chodesh*. Why should this be more pertinent than reading the *Haftarah* connected with the weekly *Parsha*? Chasidic thought explains that the renewal of the moon signifies redemption, and therefore, by logical extension, the eve of the new moon (*Erev Rosh Chodesh*) represents the work carried out during exile in order to bring the redemption. Being that this is the underlying significance of

all our activities, it was considered a sufficiently important replacement for the *Haftarah* of the week (*Hisvaduys* 5711, vol. 2, p. 50, 56).

The *Haftarah* describes a climactic moment in the rift between David and Sha’ul, which arose from David’s successful military career. Sha’ul, who was king at the time, perceived David as a rebel that needed to be eliminated. Fearing for his life, David seeks the assistance of Yonasan, the king’s son, who was David’s passionate admirer, but Yonasan finds the conspiracy theory difficult to believe. In order to verify his suspicions, David suggests a plan: he will disappear for three days to test the king’s reaction, which would then be reported to David by Yonasan with a secret sign.

The *Haftarah* opens as Yonasan reviews David’s plan and confirms a secret sign to be enacted by shooting arrows and instructing certain

החצים | ממך והנה קחנו | וכאֵה כִּי־שְׁלוֹם לְךָ וְאִין
 דָּבָר חַי־יְהוָה: כִּבּ וְאִם־כֹּה אָמַר לְעֵלָם הִנֵּה הַחֲצִים
 מִמֶּךָ וְהִלָּאָה לְךָ כִּי שְׁלַחְךָ יְהוָה: כִּבּ וְהִדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר
 דִּבַּרְנוּ אָנֹכִי וְאַתָּה הִנֵּה יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:
 כִּבּ וַיִּסְתֵּר דָּוִד בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיְהִי הַחֹדֶשׁ וַיֵּשֶׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־
 עֵל כִּבּ | הִלָּחֵם לֶאֱכֹל: כִּבּ וַיֵּשֶׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־מוֹשְׁבֹו כְּפַעַם |
 בְּפַעַם אֶל־מוֹשֵׁב הַקִּיר וַיִּקָּם יְהוֹנָתָן וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְנֵר
 מִצַּד שְׂאוּל וַיִּפְקֹד מְקוֹם דָּוִד: כִּבּ וְלֹא־דָבַר שְׂאוּל
 מְאוּמָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי אָמַר מְקַרְהָ הוּא בְּלַתִּי
 טְהוֹר הוּא כִּי־לֹא טְהוֹר: כִּבּ וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרַת הַחֹדֶשׁ
 הַשֵּׁנִי וַיִּפְקֹד מְקוֹם דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל אֶל־יְהוֹנָתָן
 בְּנֹו מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־בָא בְּנ־יִשָּׁי גַם־תָּמוּל גַּם־הַיּוֹם
 אֶל־הַלְחָם: כִּבּ וַיַּעַן יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת־שְׂאוּל נִשְׂאָל נִשְׂאָל
 דָּוִד מֵעַמְדִי עַד־בֵּית לָחֵם: כִּבּ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחְנִי נָא כִּי
 זָבַח מִשְׁפָּחָה לָּנוּ בְּעִיר וְהוּא עוֹדֶה־לִי אָחִי וְעַתָּה
 אִם־מִצָּאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אִמְלָטָה נָא וְאַרְאֶה
 אֶת־אָחִי עַל־כֵּן לֹא־כָּא אֶל־שְׁלַחַן הַמֶּלֶךְ:
 ל וַיַּחֲרֵאֵף שְׂאוּל בִּיהוֹנָתָן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ בֶּן־נַעֲנוּת
 הַמַּרְדּוֹת הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־בָחַר אֶתָּה לְבֶן־יִשָּׁי
 לְבִשְׂתֶךָ וּלְבִשְׂת עֵרוֹת אִמְךָ: ל וְכִי כָל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר
 בְּנ־יִשָּׁי חַי עַל־הָאָרֶץ מָה לֹא תִכּוֹן אֶתָּה וּמִלְכוּתְךָ
 וְעַתָּה שְׁלַח וְקַח אֶתֹו אֵלַי כִּי בֶן־מוֹת הוּא: ל וַיַּעַן
 יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת־שְׂאוּל אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לָמָּה יוֹמַת מֶה
 עֲשֵׂה: ל וַיִּטֵּל שְׂאוּל אֶת־הַחֲנִית עָלָיו לְהַכּוֹתוֹ וַיִּדַע
 יְהוֹנָתָן כִּי־כָלָה הִיא מֵעַם אָבִיו לְהַמִּית אֶת־דָּוִד:
 ל וַיִּקָּם יְהוֹנָתָן מֵעַם הַשְׁלַחַן בַּחֲרִי־אֵף וְלֹא־אָכַל

are on this side of you,' then you should take them and return, for it is safe for you, and there is no (dangerous) thing (looming. I swear this) as God lives.

²² "But if I say this to the young man, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you,' then go, because God has sent you.

²³ "This matter of which you and I have spoken, behold!—God is (a witness) between me and you forever."

²⁴ David hid himself in the field. When the (first of the new) month came, the King sat down to eat the meal.

²⁵ The King sat at his seat, as usual, on a seat by the wall. Yonasan stood up so that Avner could sit at Sha'ul's side. David's place was empty.

²⁶ Nevertheless Sha'ul said nothing on that day, for he thought, "(He had) a (nocturnal) accident. He is not ritually pure. (He didn't come because) he has not been ritually purified."

²⁷ It came to pass on the next day, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. Sha'ul said to Yonasan his son, "Why didn't the son of Yishai come to the meal, neither yesterday, nor today?"

²⁸ Yonasan answered Sha'ul, "David asked me permission to go to Beis Lechem. ²⁹ He said, 'Please let me go, because our family (is offering) sacrifice(s) today in the city and my (oldest) brother (Eliav) has instructed me (to be there). Now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please excuse me (from the King's duties) to see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the King's table."

³⁰ Sha'ul became furious with Yonasan, and he said to him, "You are the son of a sinful and rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Yishai (for the monarchy) to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness (for the fact that you prefer that my enemy will lead people to suspect that you are not my son)?" ³¹ For as long as the son of Yishai lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your Kingdom. Now (since you sent him away) send (for him) and fetch him to me, for he deserves death."

³² Yonasan answered Sha'ul, his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?"

³³ Sha'ul raised a spear to strike him. Yonasan realized that his father was determined to slay David.

³⁴ Yonasan rose from the table in fierce anger. He ate

David goes into hiding

The king is furious

phrases to his servant (20:18-23). Initially, the king appears indifferent to David's absence (24-28), but on the second day he becomes furious with Yonasan and states that David "deserves death" (29-34). So, the next morning, Yonasan goes out to the field and communicates their pre-arranged sign by shooting arrows, and sends his servant home (35-40). David then comes out of hiding, and they part amid tears, swearing an oath "between my descendants and your descendants forever" (41-42).

21. החצים ממך וגו'.—The arrows are on this side of you, etc. When arrows are shot from a bow, the more the bow is extended backwards,

the further the arrows will reach. This is a metaphor for the spiritual accomplishments of exile: The more the Jewish people "extend themselves" to deal with the physical world in the most difficult of circumstances, the greater and more "far reaching" is the spiritual accomplishment. David wanted to know if these accomplishments had already been completed, heralding the time of redemption. So Yonasan told him that if "the arrows are on this side of you," i.e. if the task of exile, represented by the arrows, is complete, "then you should take them and return, for it is safe for you," i.e. the time of redemption has arrived. But if the arrows are beyond you," then there is still much work to be done in

no food on the second day of the new moon, for he was upset for David, and his father had put him to shame (by insulting and threatening him).

³⁵ In the morning, that Yonasan went out to the field to the appointed place (he had arranged) with David, and a young lad was with him. ³⁶ He said to his lad, "Run! Find now the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran (for the first arrow), he shot an arrow beyond him.

Yonasan gives the sign

³⁷ When the lad came to the place of the (first) arrow which Yonasan had shot, Yonasan called out after the lad and said, "Isn't the (last) arrow beyond you?"

³⁸ Yonasan called out after the lad, "Go quickly! Hurry (after the second arrow). Don't stay (by the first)!"

Yonasan's lad gathered up (both) the arrows, and came to his master. ³⁹ The lad knew nothing (about the sign). Only Yonasan and David knew the matter.

⁴⁰ Yonasan gave his bow and arrows to his lad, and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city." ⁴¹ As soon as the lad had gone (towards the city), David (understood that it was safe and) stood up from near the south (side of the stone). He fell on his face to the ground, and prostrated himself three times. They kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David (wept) greatly (more than Yonasan).

Yonasan and David part

⁴² Yonasan said to David, "Go in peace, as both of us have sworn in the name of God, saying, 'God be (a witness) between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'"

בְּיוֹם-הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי לַחֹם כִּי נִעְצַב אֶל-דָּוִד כִּי הִבְלִמוּ אָבוֹיו: ^ל וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַיֵּצֵא יְהוֹנָתָן הַשֹּׁדֶה לְמוֹעֵד דָּוִד וְנָעַר קָמָן עִמּוֹ: ^מ וַיֹּאמֶר לְנַעֲרוֹ רֵץ מִצָּאֵן-נָא אֶת-הַחֲצִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מוֹרֶה הַנָּעַר רֵץ וְהוֹא-יָרָה הַחֲצִי הַחַצִּי לְהַעֲבֵרוֹ: ^נ וַיָּבֵא הַנָּעַר עַד-מְקוֹם הַחֲצִי אֲשֶׁר יָרָה יְהוֹנָתָן וַיִּקְרָא יְהוֹנָתָן אַחֲרָי הַנָּעַר וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא הַחֲצִי מִמֶּךָ וְהִלָּא-הִ: ^ס וַיִּקְרָא יְהוֹנָתָן אַחֲרָי הַנָּעַר מִהֲרָה הוֹשֵׁה אֶל-תַּעֲמֹד וַיִּלְקֹט נֶעַר יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת-הַחֲצִים ^{הַחֲצִי כ"ו} וַיָּבֵא אֶל-אֲדֹנָיו: ^פ וְהַנָּעַר לֹא-יָדַע מֵאוֹמֶה אֵד יְהוֹנָתָן וְדָוִד יָדָעוּ אֶת-הַדְּבָר: ^צ וַיִּתֵּן יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת-כִּלָּיו אֶל-הַנָּעַר אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֵךְ הִבֵּיָה הָעִיר: ^ק הַנָּעַר בָּא וְדָוִד קָם מֵאֶצֶל הַנֶּזֶב וַיִּפֹּל לְאַפָּיו אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים וַיִּשְׁקּוּ | אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ עַד-דָּוִד הִגִּיד: ^{קכ} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן לְדָוִד לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ שְׁנֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יְהִיָּה | בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין זֵרְעִי וּבֵין זֵרְעֶךָ עַד-עוֹלָם:

SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH / שבת ראש חודש

(Isaiah 66:1-24, ibid. 23)

The Maftir reading for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is on page 302. (Bamidbar 28:9-15)

God is every-where ^{66:1} **T**his is what God said: "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool, (so) what house could you build (worthy) for Me, and what place

סו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסְאִי וְהָאָרֶץ הַדָּם רַגְלִי אֵי-יָה בֵּית אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנֶנּוּ-לִי וְאֵי-יָה מְקוֹם

exile. But do not be afraid to continue this work, "because God has sent you" (Hisvaduys ibid.).

HAFTARAH OF SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH

This *Haftarah* mentions the sacrificial worship that will occur every new month (*Rosh Chodesh*) after the ingathering of the exiles. The *Haftarah* was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile, at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

The *Haftarah* opens with God's proclamation of omnipresence and the insufficiency of one House to contain Him (66:1). God will turn His attention to those that fear Him (2), and all types of insincere worship are abhorred by Him (3-4). Those who fear God will ultimately be joyous,

but those who hate and ostracize God's servants will be chastised by a "voice from the Temple" (5-6). Tziyon's (Zion's) deliverance is compared to that of a mother who gives birth without pain (7-9), and the rejoicing at Jerusalem's rebuilding is depicted (10-14). All enemies and idol-worshippers will be punished (15-18) and the nations that remain will come to Tziyon, bringing the Jewish people along with them (19-20). New priests will be appointed, and all mankind will worship God (21-23). The rebels' corpses will remain in the valley of Yehoshafat as an ominous reminder to all mankind (24; verse 23 is then repeated so as to finish on a positive note).

1. אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ עַד-דָּוִד הִגִּיד:—*The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.* According to Chasidic thought, the various

מְנוּחָתִי: ^ג וְאֶת־כָּל־אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה עֲשֵׂתָהּ וַיְהִי כָל־אֱלֹהֵי
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְאֵלֶּיזָה אֲבִיט עֲנִי וּנְבַח־רוּחַ וַחֲרָד
 עַל־דְּבָרֵי: ^ד שׁוֹחֵט הַשּׁוֹר מִכֶּה־אִישׁ זֹבַח הַשֶּׁה
 עֲרַף לְלֵב מַעֲלָה מִנְחָה דַם־חֹזִיר מִזְכִּיר לְבָנָה
 מִכֶּרֶד אֲזֵן גַּם־הֵמָּה בָּחֲרוּ בְּדַרְכֵיהֶם וּבִשְׁקֹוצֵיהֶם
 נִפְשָׁם חֲפָצָה: ^ה גַּם־אֲנִי אֶבְחַר בְּתַעֲלָלֵיהֶם
 וּמְגֹרֹתָם אֲבִיא לָהֶם יַעַן קָרָאתִי וְאִין עֹנָה דְבַרְתִּי
 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ הָרַע בְּעֵינַי וּבִאֲשֶׁר לֹא־חֲפָצָתִי
 בָּחֲרוּ: ^ו שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה הַחֲרָדִים אֶל־דְּבָרוֹ אָמְרוּ
 אַחֲיֵכֶם שְׂנֵאִיכֶם מִנְדִּיכֶם לְמַעַן שָׁמִי יִכְבֵּד יְהוָה
 וּנְרָאָה בְּשִׂמְחַתְכֶם וְהֵם יִבְשׁוּ: ^ז קוֹל שְׂאוֹן מַעִיר
 קוֹל מְהִיכָל קוֹל יְהוָה מְשַׁלֵּם גָּמוֹל לְאִיבֵיו: ^ח בְּטָרָם
 תַּחֲלִיל יִלְדָה בְּטָרָם יָבֹוא חֶבֶל לָהּ וְהַמְלִיטָה זָכָר:
^ט מִי־שָׁמַע בְּזֹאת מִי רָאָה כָּאֱלֹהֵי הַיּוֹחֵל אֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם
 אֶחָד אִם־יִוָּלֵד גּוֹי פֶּעַם אַחַת כִּי־חָלָה גַּם־יִלְדָה
 צִיּוֹן אֶת־בְּנֵיהָ: ^י הֲאֲנִי אֲשַׁבֵּיר וְלֹא אוֹלִיד יֹאמֶר
 יְהוָה אִם־אֲנִי הַמוֹלִיד וְעַצְרָתִי אֹמֵר אֱלֹהֵי־דָ:
 שְׂמַחֲו אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְגִלּוֹ בָהּ כָּל־אֲהַבְיָהּ שִׁישׁוּ
 אֶתָּה מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל־הַמְתָּאֲבָלִים עָלֶיהָ: ^{יא} לְמַעַן תִּינָקוּ
 וּשְׂבַעְתֶּם מִשֵּׂד תִּנְחַמְיָה לְמַעַן תִּמְצְוּ וְהַתְעַנְנֶתֶם
 מִזִּז כְּבוֹדָה: ^{יב} כִּי־כֹה אֹמֵר יְהוָה הִנְנִי נֹטֶה־אֶלְיָהּ
 בְּנֶהֱרַר שָׁלוֹם וּכְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם וַיִּנְקָתֶם
 עַל־צַד תִּנְשְׂאוּ וְעַל־בְּרָכִים תִּשְׁעֲשְׂעוּ: ^{יג} כָּאִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר אָמוּ תִנְחַמְנוּ בֵּן אֲנָכִי אֲנַחֲמְכֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם

(is worthy for) My (Presence to) rest? ² My hand has made all these things (Heaven and earth), and (therefore) all these things came into being,” says God. “But (even though I am so exalted), to this I will pay attention: to he who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word. ³ “However, he who kills an ox (offering his sacrifice without trembling at My word) it is as if he slew a man. He who sacrifices a lamb (without trembling), is as if he cut off a dog’s neck. He who offers a meal-offering (without trembling), is as if he offered swine’s blood. He who burns incense (without trembling), is as if he blessed an idol. He who offers up frankincense (without trembling) is as if he offered an inappropriate gift. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. ⁴ So too I will choose to mock them, and will bring their fears upon them, because when I called (to them through the prophets), none answered. When I spoke, they did not listen. They did evil before My eyes, and chose what I did not desire.”

God hates insincere service

⁵ “Hear the word of God, you who tremble at His word! Your (wicked) brothers who hate you and who ostracize you say, ‘(I am so great that) God is glorified because of my name!’ (But in truth) we shall see your joy and they shall be shamed. ⁶ (Then there will be) a voice of rumbling from the city (of Tziyon), a voice from the Temple, the voice of God rendering recompense to his enemies (Gog and Magog).”

Enemies will be judged

⁷ “Before she (Tziyon) feels labor pains she will give birth. Before her labor pain will come, she will be delivered a son. ⁸ Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such a thing? Has a land gone through its labor in one day? Has a nation been born all at once, for Tziyon labored and gave birth to her children? ⁹ Shall I bring to the birthstool, and not cause her to give birth?” says God. “Shall I, who cause birth, hold back?” says your God.

Tziyon will have no labor pains

¹⁰ “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her (to see her rebuilt). Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her (in her destruction),

Jerusalem will rejoice

¹¹ so that you may (be rewarded to) nurse, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations. That you may drink deeply, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. ¹² For this is what God says: ‘Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations (will rush to her) like a flowing stream. (You who mourned for her) shall (be rewarded) to draw (effortlessly from) the wealth of the nations. You shall be (honored by the nations, like a baby who is) carried on (its mother’s) sides, and dandled on her knees. ¹³ Like one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in

gradations of the human soul can be divided into three broad categories: a.) *Internal*. Those powers which rest within the body and interact with it. These parts of the soul give life to the body and control its intellectual and emotional activity. b.) *External*. The aura (*makif*) of the soul which surrounds the body and ordinarily has no direct contact with it.

On occasion, however, one can draw from these energies of the soul in order to break free from existing limitations in one’s life.

c.) *Essence*. Then there is the very essence of the soul which is not limited to being inside or outside the body. The route to access the soul’s essence is through humility, simplicity and sincere dedication.

Jerusalem (for your suffering). ¹⁴ When you see (Jerusalem rebuilt), your heart will rejoice, and (the health of) your bones will (be strengthened) like flourishing grass. The (mighty) Hand of God will be known to His servants, and His anger toward His enemies.

Gog and Magog destroyed

¹⁵ For, behold, God will come with fire (to destroy the armies of Gog and Magog), and with His chariots like a storm to repay (His enemies) with fury. His rebuke (will be) with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire God will execute judgment, and by His sword upon all flesh. The slain by God will be many.”

¹⁷ “Those who prepare and purify themselves (to go) to the gardens (of idolatry, one group) after another (to worship the idol) in the center (of the garden); those who eat swine’s flesh, abominable creatures, and mice—they will all perish together,” says God. ¹⁸ “I (know) their works and their thoughts. (The time) has come, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹ I will scar them, but from them I will let survivors escape to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, the archers, to Tual, and Yavan, to far off islands, that have not heard My fame, nor have they seen My glory. They shall declare My glory among the nations.

Nations will return

²⁰ They will (then) bring all your brothers from all nations as an offering to God, on horses, in chariots, in covered wagons, on mules and with songs and dances to My holy mountain in Jerusalem,” says God, “just as (respectfully as) the people of Israel bring an offering in a pure utensil to the House of God.

New priests

²¹ From them too I will take to be priests and Levites (even though they will have forgotten their lineage),” says God. ²² “For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make (in those days), shall remain before Me, says God, so shall your descendants and your name remain (forever).”

Worship on every new month

²³ “It will then be, that every (first of the) new month, and every Shabbos, all mankind shall come to worship before Me (in the holy Temple),” says God. ²⁴ The (non-Jews) shall go out (of Jerusalem, to the valley of Yehoshafat), and look upon the corpses of the men (of Gog and Magog) who have rebelled against Me, for the worms (that eat them) will not

תִּנְחָמוּ: ה' וּרְאִיתֶם וְשָׂשׁ לְבָבְכֶם וְעֲצְמוֹתֵיכֶם כִּדְשָׂא
 תִּפְרַחְנָה וְנִודְעָה יַד־יְהוָה אֶת־עַבְדָּיו וְזֹעֵם
 אֶת־אֵיבָיו: טו כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ יָבֹא וְכִסְפוּהָ
 מִרְכַּבְתָּיו לְהַשִּׁיב בְּחֵמָה אֶפְוֹ וְנִעְרַתּוּ בְּלֶהֱבִי־אֵשׁ:
 טז כִּי בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה נִשְׁפָּט וּבַחֲרָבוֹ אֶת־כָּל־בָּשָׂר וְרָבוּ
 חֲלָלֵי יְהוָה: יז הַמִּתְקַדְּשִׁים וְהַמְטַהֲרִים אֶל־הַנְּזוֹת
 אַחַר אַחַת וְאַחַד כ"ז בַּתְּנוּךְ אֶכְלִי בָשָׂר הַחֲזִיר וְהַשֶּׁקֶץ
 וְהַעֲכָבֵר יַחֲדוּ יִסְפוּ נַאֲם־יְהוָה: יח וְאֲנֹכִי מַעֲשִׂיהֶם
 וּמַחֲשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם בָּאָה לְקַבֵּץ אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְהַלְשֹׁנֹת
 וּבָאוּ וְרָאוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי: יט וְשַׁמְתִּי בָהֶם אוֹת וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי
 מֵהֶם אֶפְלִיטִים אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם תִּרְשִׁישׁ פּוּל וְלוּד מִשְׁכֵּי
 קָשֶׁת תִּבָּל וַיּוֹן הָאֲיִים הָרַחֲקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ
 אֶת־שִׁמְעִי וְלֹא־רָאוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי וְהִגִּידוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי
 בְּגוֹיִם: כ וְהִבִּיאוּ אֶת־כָּל־אֲחֵיכֶם מִכָּל־הַגּוֹיִם |
 מִנְּחָה | לַיהוָה בְּסוּסִים וּבְרֻכָב וּבַצִּבְצִים וּבַפָּרָדִים
 וּבַבְּרָכוֹת עַל הַר קָדְשִׁי יְרוּשָׁלַם אָמַר יְהוָה
 כִּי־אֲשֶׁר יָבִיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה בְּכִלֵי טָהוֹר
 בֵּית יְהוָה: כא וְגַם־מֵהֶם אֶקַּח לְכֹהֲנִים לְלוֹיִם אָמַר
 יְהוָה: כב כִּי כִּי־אֲשֶׁר הַשָּׁמַיִם הַחֲדָשִׁים וְהָאָרֶץ
 הַחֲדָשָׁה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּדִים לְפָנַי נַאֲם־יְהוָה בֵּן
 יַעֲמֵד זִרְעֵכֶם וְשִׁמְכֶם: כג וְהָיָה מִדֵּי־חֲדָשׁ בְּחֲדָשׁוֹ
 וּמִדֵּי שַׁבָּת בְּשַׁבְתּוֹ יָבֹא כָל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנַי
 אָמַר יְהוָה: כד וַיֵּצְאוּ וְרָאוּ בַּפְּגָרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַפְּשָׁעִים

These three levels of the soul are alluded to in the opening of the Haftarah. “The heavens” and “earth” allude to Torah and mitzvos respectively (because Torah was given from Heaven, and the mitzvos are performed with physical objects here on earth), i.e. things which are observed in everyday life with the normal faculties of the soul found in the body. The “house” mentioned by the verse alludes to the soul powers which encompass the body, just as a house encompasses a person. While these powers are indeed impressive, scripture nevertheless bemoans their insufficiency (“What house could you build (worthy) for Me?”), because

the most profound form of Divine service comes from the essence of the soul. And this essence is reached through humility: “To this I will pay attention: to he who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word” (v. 2). This explanation adds further significance to the reading of this passage on Rosh Chodesh (new moon). For just as the disappearance of the moon and its re-emergence as a miniscule point is the key to its later growth, likewise it is the path of humility and self-renunciation which reaches the essence of the soul, bringing the person to a genuine spiritual rebirth (Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat vol. 3, p. 133).

בִּי כִּי תוֹלַעְתֶּם לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשֶּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה וְהָיוּ
 דְרָאוֹן לְכָל־בָּשָׂר: 23 וְהָיָה מִדֵּי־חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ וּמִדֵּי
 שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ יָבֹוא כָּל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנָי
 אֲמַר יְהוָה:

die, and the fire (that burns them) shall not be
 extinguished. They shall be a (symbol of) disgrace to all
 mankind.”

²³ “It will then be, that every (first of the) new month,
 and every Shabbos, all flesh shall come to worship
 before Me,” says God.

If Sunday is also Rosh Chodesh, Chabad communities add (I Samuel 20:18,42):

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ יְהוֹנָתָן מִחֵר חֹדֶשׁ וְנִפְקְדָתָ כִּי יִפְקֹד
 מוֹשָׁבְךָ: 24 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן לְדָוִד לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ שְׁנֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יִהְיֶה אִלָּי
 כִּינִי וּכְיִנְךָ וּכְיֵין וּכְיֵין וְרַעֲי וּכְיֵין וְרַעֲי עַד־עוֹלָם:

^{20:18} Yonasan said to (David), “Tomorrow is the (first of
 the) new month. You shall be missed, because your seat
 will be empty.

⁴² Yonasan said to David, “Go in peace, as both of us
 have sworn in the name of God, saying, ‘God be (a
 witness) between me and you, and between my
 descendants and your descendants forever.’”

MAFTIR FOR SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH / מפטיר לשבת ראש חודש

(Bamidbar 28:9-15)

בְּשֶׁמֶן לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: 25 וְעֵשְׂרֵן עֶשְׂרוֹן סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה
 בְּשֶׁמֶן לְכַבֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד עֵלָה רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה: 26 וְנִסְבִּיהֶם
 חֲצִי הַחֵיץ יִהְיֶה לְפָר וּשְׁלִישִׁתָּהּ הַחֵיץ לְאֵיל וּרְבִיעֶתָהּ הַחֵיץ
 לְכַבֵּשׁ יֵין זֹאת עֵלָת חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: 27 וּשְׁעִיר
 עֲזִים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת לַיהוָה עַל־עֵלָת הַתְּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְבּוּ: 28

25 וּבְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שְׁנֵי־כִבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִינִים
 סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וְנִסְבּוּ: 26 עֵלָת שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ
 עַל־עֵלָת הַתְּמִיד וְנִסְבּוּ: 27 וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֹדְשֵׁיכֶם תִּקְרִיבוּ
 עֹלָה לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׁים
 בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שְׁבַע תְּמִימִם: 28 וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינִים סֶלֶת מִנְחָה
 בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לְפָר הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִינִים סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה

Haftarah is on page 299.



Appendix

תוספת

APPENDIX: THE LOCATION OF KADAISH-BARNE'A

(See illustration on page 28).

In *Parshas Masei*, where the Torah describes the borders of the Land of Cana'an, Kadaish-Barne'a is listed as one of the towns along the southern border of Cana'an (*Bamidbar* 34:4). Thus when we read, at the opening of the Book of *Devarim*, that the Jewish people traveled from Mount Sinai to Kadaish-Barne'a (*Devarim* 1:2, 19), one would presume that the Torah refers to the previously mentioned town bearing this name, located on the southern border of the Land of Cana'an.

However, several statements of *Rashi* indicate that this is not the case, and that the Kadaish-Barne'a referred to here is in fact to the south of the Land of Edom and therefore far south of Cana'an:

a.) Earlier, in *Parshas Masei*, *Rashi* writes: "Three lands lie south of the Land of Israel, each adjoining the other - part of Egypt, the entire land of Edom, and the entire land of Mo'av. The land of Egypt is in the southwestern corner... The land of Edom adjoins it from the east, and the land of Mo'av adjoins the land of Edom at the southeastern corner [of the Land of Israel]" (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 34:3).

Since the three lands to the south of the Land of Israel were adjoining each other, it follows that there was no access to the southern border of Cana'an, other than passing through the land of Edom. At the literal level, it is not feasible that the entire Jewish camp would have passed through the Land of Edom without being challenged, so we can presume that they must have stopped south of Edom.

Thus, in *Parshas Devarim*, *Rashi* did not have to inform the reader that Kadaish-Barne'a, where the Jewish people camped, was not the town on the southern border of Cana'an bearing that name, since it is self-understood (at the literal level) that the Jewish people would not have been able to pass through Edom without being granted permission, or being challenged at battle.

b.) While in Kadaish-Barne'a, the sin of the spies occurred (*Devarim* 1:19ff), and the entry into the Land of Israel was postponed until the next generation. *Rashi* writes, "I thought [previously] to let you pass through the breadth of the land of Edom northward, to enter the Land, but you sinned and caused a delay for yourselves" (*Rashi* to v. 40 *ibid.*). Clearly, "Kadaish-Barne'a," where the Jewish people were located, was not on the southern border of the Land of Cana'an, but to the south of Edom (Mount Se'ir).

c.) At the end of the 38 years of wandering in the Desert the Jewish people finally reached a place called "Kadaish" (*Bamidbar* 33:36) which is to the south of Edom. At this point, Moshe requested rights of passage from the King of Edom, to pass northwards through Edom into Cana'an (*ibid.* 20:14ff). While some commentators argue that this is a different location than the "Kadaish-Barne'a" from where the spies were sent (see *Ramban* to *Bamidbar* 20:1), *Rashi* stresses that, "for nineteen years they were continually wandering about, and they returned to Kadaish" (*Rashi* to *Devarim* 1:46). I.e. the "Kadaish" at the south of Edom where the Jewish people ended up after wandering in the desert, is the very same place from where the spies had been sent out.

In conclusion we see that, according to *Rashi*:

i.) The Kadaish-Barne'a referred to at the beginning of the Book of *Devarim* is not the town on the southern border of the Land of Cana'an. (Incidentally, this appears to be the view of *Ramban* in *Moreh Nevuchim* III:50). This is because the Jewish people could not have reached the southern border of Cana'an without passing through enemy territory of Edom which bordered the southern border of Cana'an. *Rashi* did not need to clarify this point at the beginning of the Book of *Devarim* as it is self-evident from his description of the borders in *Bamidbar* 34:3.

ii.) The town to the south of Edom from which the Jewish people sent the spies was the same town to which they returned after wandering in the desert.

iii.) This town is referred to in the Torah both by the names of "Kadaish-Barne'a" and "Kadaish."

Another point that remains to be clarified is: What forced *Rashi* to conclude, at the literal level, that the Land of Edom spanned the entire southern border of Cana'an, from Egypt to Mo'av? Surely it would be simpler to conclude, at the literal level, that there was some direct access point to the southern border of Cana'an, without having to pass through another land, and thus it is feasible that the Jewish people did indeed reach Kadaish-Barne'a on the southern border of Cana'an. With this approach, *Rashi* would have avoided the slightly difficult conclusion (argued above), that the Torah sometimes refers to the same place by different names ("Kadaish-Barne'a" and "Kadaish").

Perhaps it could be argued that *Rashi* rejected the notion that there was an access point to the south of the Land of Cana'an without passing through Edom, for then we would be left with the question: Why did Moshe ask Edom for the right of passage through his land (*Bamidbar* 20:14ff), if there was a direct access point to Cana'an without passing through Edom? Clearly, at the literal level, there was no route into the south of Cana'an other than passing through Edom.

Therefore, *Rashi* concluded that the "Kadaish-Barne'a" referred to at the beginning of *Devarim* must be synonymous with the town of "Kadaish" on the southern border of Edom.

As for the fact that we are left with the difficulty that the Torah refers to the same place with two slightly different names, it could be argued that:

i.) They are not different names, but rather, one is an abbreviated form of the other.*

ii.) This is a problem that applies equally to the interpretation that Kadaish-Barne'a (at the beginning of *Devarim*) is the town at the southern border of Cana'an, since the Torah states, in reference to this location, "You stayed in Kadaish for a long time" (*Devarim* 1:46). Here we see that the names Kadaish and Kadaish-Barne'a are used interchangeably according to all interpretations. (*Editor's note*)

* cf. Masah u'Merivah (*Shemos* 17:7) which is also referred to as just "Masah" (*Devarim* 6:16).

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- Matnos Kehunah** — Commentary on *Midrash Rabbah* by Rabbi Yissachar Ber HaKohen (c.1520-1590), a student of the *Rama*.
- Mechilta** — Halachic *Midrash* of the Tannaic period to the Book of Exodus.
- Megaleh Amukos** — 252 explanations of Moshe's Prayer in *Parshas Vaeschanan* and 1000 explanations on the small alef in the first word of *Vayikra*, according to Kabbalah, by R' Noson Noteh Shapiro. First printed in Cracow in 1637.
- Megilas Esther** — Scholarly commentary to *Sefer haMitzvos* defending the *Rambam* against attacks from the *Ramban*, by Rabbi Yitzchok Lioven. First published in Venice in 1591.
- Me'or Einayim** — Chasidic commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730-1797), a student of the *Baal Shem Tov* and the *Maggid of Mezritch*. First published in Slavita, 1798.
- Meiri** — Extensive Commentary to the Talmud by R' Menachem HaMeiri (c. 1249-c. 1306).
- Metzudos** — Commentary to the Prophets and Writings, consisting of two parts, *Metzudas Tziyon*, which explains the meaning of individual words, and *Metzudos David*, a running commentary to the text. Initial manuscripts of the commentary were authored by Rabbi David Altschuler, and published shortly before his passing in 1753. The commentary was edited and completed by his son, Rabbi Yechiel Hillel, and published in 1780. The commentary has attained great popularity for being concise and comprehensive.
- Midrash** — Aggadic and Halachic teachings of the Talmudic period arranged according to the verses of the Torah.
- Midrash Hagadol** — Midrashic anthology arranged by R' David al-Adeni of South Arabia (13th century). Many Midrashic teachings which were lost throughout the course of time have been preserved in this work. First printed in 1967 in Jerusalem.
- Midrash Lekach Tov** — (also known as *Pesikta Zutrasa*). Midrashic anthology arranged by R' Toviah Hagadol (1036-1108) of Greece and Bulgaria.
- Midrash Rabah** — A major collection of homilies and commentaries on the Torah, ascribed to R' Oshiah Rabah (c. 3rd century), perhaps assembled during the early Geonic period. First printed in Constantinople 1512.
- Mikdash Melech** — Commentary to the *Zohar* culled from the works of R. Chaim Vital, R. Avraham Azulai, and their students R. Yaakov Pinto, R. Yeshaya Cohen and R. Moshe Zacutto.
- Minchah Belulah** — Commentary to the Torah by R' Avraham Menachem Rapaport (c. 1540-1604), Italian Torah scholar, doctor and grammarian.
- Minchas Chinuch** — Scholarly supercommentary to *Sefer haChinuch* by Rabbi Yosef Babad (1800-1875), Rabbi of Tarnipol, Poland.
- Mishnah** — Fundamental collection of the legal pronouncements and discussion of the *Tanna'im*, edited by Rabbi Yehuda haNassi early in the third century. The *Mishnah* is the basic text of the Oral Law.
- Mishneh Torah** — 14-volume halachic code by *Rambam* (Maimonides) encompassing all the laws found in the Talmud.
- Mitteler Rebbe** — Rabbi Dov Ber Schneuri (1773-1827), son of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi; second Lubavitcher Rebbe.
- Mizrachi** — Exhaustive supercommentary to Rashi's commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi (1450-1525) of Constantinople, Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Empire.
- Moreh Nevuchim** — "Guide for the Perplexed" by Maimonides.
- Moshav Zekeinim** — Anthology of comments of about 130 different sources, the majority of whom are Tosafists of France and Germany, circa. 1100-1300. First printed in 1959.
- Nachalas Ya'akov** — Supercommentary to Rashi's commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Ya'akov Yekl Solnick. First published in Cracow in 1642.
- Nimukei Yosef** — Halachic commentary on *Sefer Hahalachos* (of the *Rif*), by R' Yosef Chaviva of Spain (14-15th centuries).
- Noda Biyehudah** — Halachic Responsa of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, (1713-1793) Chief Rabbi of Prague.
- Ohr haChayim** — Commentary on the Torah by Talmudic and Kabbalist scholar Rabbi Chaim ben Attar (1696-1743).
- Ohr haTorah** — Extensive exposition of *Chabad* chasidic thought by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (the *Tzemach Tzedek*, 1789-1866). Printed in New York between 1951 and 1983 in 48 volumes.
- Ohr Torah** — Anthology of Chasidic commentaries by Rabbi Dovber, the *Maggid of Mezritch* (d. 1773). First published in Koretz in 1781.
- Orach Chayim** — One of the four sections of the *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, dealing with laws that follow a time cycle.

- Onkelos** — Proselyte (c. 90 C.E.) who reinstated a forgotten, authoritative translation of the Torah into Aramaic, which was read alongside the Torah in Talmudic times to assist the congregation in understanding the Torah reading.
- Pane'ach Raza** — Commentary to the Torah by R' Yitzhak ben Yehudah Halevi of France, 13th century. First printed in Prague in 1607.
- Parashas Derachim** — Treatises by Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes (1657-1727) of Constantinople, Turkey, author of *Mishneh Lemelech*, a major commentary to *Rambam's Mishneh Torah*.
- Pesachim** — Tractate of Talmud in the Order of *Moed* (Festivals).
- Pesikta Rabasi** — Compendium of teachings by Sages of the Talmud, first published in Prague in 1653.
- Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer** — Midrashic work by the school of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (c. 100). First published in Constantinople in 1514.
- Pnei Moshe** — Running commentary to the *Jerusalem Talmud*, by Rabbi Moshe Margulies of Amsterdam and Zamut. (1710-1781).
- Rabeinu Chananel** — (died c. 1056). Author of important commentary to the Talmud, and commentary to the Torah. Headed Yeshivah in Kairouan, North Africa.
- Rabeinu Tam** — Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir (1100-1171), his Talmudic discourses served as the basis for the *Tosfos* commentary to the *Talmud*. He often challenged *Rashi's* interpretations, offering original and brilliant insights. *Rabeinu Tam* was also a successful wine merchant and financier.
- Radvaz** — (c. 1480-1573) Acronym for Rabbi David ibn Zimra, Chief Rabbi of Egypt. Author of a commentary to the *Rambam's Mishneh Torah* and extensive responsa.
- Ralbag** — “Gersonides,” acronym for Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (1288-1344). Author of rationalistic commentary to the Bible.
- Ramak** — R' Moses Cordovero, Kabbalist of 16th century Safed. Student of R' Yosef Caro. Author of numerous works, including *Pardes Rimonim*, a classic work which explains fundamental concepts of Kabbalah.
- Rambam** — “Maimonides,” acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, (1135-1204) leading Torah scholar of the Middle Ages. His major works are *Sefer haMitzvos*, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, *Mishneh Torah (Yad Hachazakah)*, a comprehensive code of Jewish law, *Moreh Nevuchim*, “Guide for the Perplexed,” a primary work of Jewish philosophy.
- Ramban** — “Nachmanides” (1194-1270), Acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman of Gerona, Spain, one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages; author of major commentary to the Torah and numerous other works.
- Ran** — Acronym for Rabbenu Nissim (1308-1376). Authored an important commentary to the Talmud, published in most major editions.
- Rashbam** — Acronym for Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, Talmud and Torah Commentator, who supplemented *Rashi's* (his grandfather's) commentary on the Talmud (c. 1085-1174). Brother of *Rabeinu Tam*.
- Rashi** — Acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), author of basic commentary on the Bible and Talmud. According to Chasidic tradition, his commentary to the Torah contains allusions to kabalistic concepts.
- Rema** — R' Moshe Isserles (1530-1572), Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Cracow. Author of many works. Most famous are his Ashkenazic annotations to Rabbi Yosef Caro's *Shulchan Aruch*, which transformed this predominantly Sephardic work into a universal Code of Jewish Law.
- Ritvah** — Acronym for R' Yom Tov Ibn Asevili (1248-1330), Talmudic Commentator and Halachist.
- Riva** — R' Yehudah ben Eliezer. Authored commentary to the Torah in 1313. First printed in Warsaw in 1776.
- Rosh** — Acronym for R' Asher ben Yechiel, Talmudic commentator and author of halachic compendium arranged on the tractates of the *Talmud* (c. 1250-1327).
- Sa'adiah Ga'on** — (882-942) Author of works in many areas of Torah, including the philosophical work, *Emunos v'Deos*.
- Sanhedrin** — Tractate of Talmud in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages).
- S'dei Chemed** — Extensive Halachic encyclopedia by R' Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini (1832-1904), Rav of Karasubazar in Crimea, Russia, and later Chief Rabbi of Chevron in the Land of Israel. Revised edition by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, New York, 1949-1953 (Kehos Publication Society).
- Seder Hadoros** — A chronology of events and personalities from creation until 1696, based on rabbinic sources, by Rabbi Yechiel Heilprin (1660-1746) Lithuanian Rabbi, Kabbalist, and chronicler. First published in 1769.
- Sefer Chasidim** — Classical work of ethical and halachic instruction by R' Yehudah haChasid, (c. 1150-1217).
- Sefer Ha'Agur** — Halachic compendium by R. Yaakov ben Yehuda Landa (Germany, fifteenth century), based primarily on the Tur. Widely used as a source for halachic decisions until the appearance of the *Shulchan Aruch*.

- Sefer haChinuch** — Compendium of basic explanations on the 613 mitzvos by an unknown Spanish author among the *Rishonim* of the 13th century.
- Sefer haMa'amarim Melukat** — Chasidic discourses of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, in six volumes, published by Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos (Kehos) between 1987 and 1992.
- Sefer haMitzvos** — Comprehensive list of the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah and their basic requirements, by *Rambam*.
- Sefer haSichos** — Public talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, from the years 1986-92.
- Sefer haZikaron** — Supercommentary to *Rashi's* commentary to the Torah, by R' Avraham Bukrat Halevi (15th Century) of Spain. First published in Leghorn in 1845.
- Sforno** — Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Ovadiah Sforno of Rome and Bologna, Italy (1470-1550).
- Sha'ar haGemul** — Short eschatological treatise of the *Ramban* discussing reward and punishment. In this work the author refutes *Rambam's* assertion that the climax of Creation will be a spiritual "soul world," arguing instead that the Resurrection of the Dead will be the ultimate era of perfection.
- Shach al Hatorah** — Abbreviation for *Sifsei Kohein*, a commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Mordechai Hakohein, incorporating numerous mystical interpretations and *gematrios*. First published in 1610. (Not to be confused with Rabbi Shabsai Hakohein of Cracow, author of *Shach*, a major commentary to the *Shulchan Aruch*).
- Shaloh** — Acronym for *Shnei Luchos Habris* ("The two tablets of the Covenant"), by Rabbi Yeshayah Hurwitz (1560-1630). There is a tradition that the *Tanya* is significantly based on the *Shaloh*.
- Shemoneh Perakim** — Philosophical treatise of *Rambam*, discussing the ills and cures of man's soul, prophecy, reward and punishment, free will, and the rule of the "golden mean."
- Shemos Rabah** — The section of Midrash Rabah on the Book of Exodus. See "*Midrash Rabah*."
- Shitah Mekubetzes** — Compilation of numerous medieval commentaries to the Talmud by R' Betzalel Ashkenazi (1520-1592).
- Shulchan Aruch** — Universally accepted halachic code encompassing all areas of practical halacha, by Rabbi Yosef Caro (1488-1575).
- Sifri** — *Halachic Midrash* on the books of *Bamidbar* and *Devarim*.
- Sifri debay Rav** — Comprehensive commentary to *Sifri* by Rabbi David Pardo (1710-1792), author of *Maskil leDavid*.
- Sifsei Chachomim** — Anthology of supercommentary to *Rashi's* commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Shabsai Bass (1641-1719). First published in 1712.
- Smag** — Acronym for *Sefer Mitzvos Gadol*, an important compendium of the 613 *mitzvos* by the *Tosafist* R' Moshe ben Ya'akov of Coucy (13th century).
- Talmud** — Comprehensive term for the *Mishnah* and *Gemara* as joined in the two compilations known as Babylonian Talmud (6th century) and Jerusalem Talmud (5th century).
- Tanchuma** — Aggadic Midrash on the Torah by Rabbi Tanchuma bar Abba (4th cen.)
- Tanna debey Eliyahu** — A *Midrash*, consisting of two parts, whose final redaction took place at the end of the tenth century of the Common Era. The first part is called "Seder Eliyahu Rabah" (31 chapters); the second, "Seder Eliyahu Zuta" (15 chapters).
- Tanya** — Primary chasidic text authored by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. (See: *Alter Rebbe*)
- Targum Yonason** — Elaborate Aramaic translation of the Torah by Yonason ben Uziel, a disciple of Hillel.
- Tiferes Yehonason** — Commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Yehonason Eybeshutz (d. 1764) of Prague, Metz and Altona.
- Tikunei Zohar** — Section of the *Zohar* discussing seventy permutations of the first word of the Torah – *Bereishis*, and commentaries on various other sections of Scripture.
- Torah Shlaimah** — Comprehensive encyclopedia of all Talmudic and Midrashic commentaries on the Torah, with scholarly notes and essays, by R' Menachem Kasher (1895-1983). This work is still being compiled and currently spans 47 volumes, covering the books of *Bereishis-Bamidbar*, *Megillos* and *Hagadah Shel Pesach*.
- Torah Temimah** — Anthology of main Talmudic references to the Torah, along with commentary, by Rabbi Baruch Epstein (1860-1942), son of Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, author of *Aruch Hashulchan*.
- Toras Ha'olah** — A work discussing the measurements of the Holy Temple and reasons for sacrifices according to philosophy by *Rema*. (See: *Rema*)
- Toras Kohanim** — *Halachic Midrash* to the Book of Leviticus. Also known as *Sifra*.
- Toras Levi Yitzchak** — Kabbalistic commentary to the Talmud by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1878-1944), Chief Rabbi of the Ukrainian city of Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) from 1907-1939, and father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. First published in New York in 1971.
- Tosfos** — Talmudic commentary of the French, German and English rabbis of the 12th and 13th centuries.
- Tsafnas Pane'ach** — Precedent setting commentary to the Torah and *Rambam's Mishneh Torah* which innovated a fresh, deeply analytical approach to Talmudic study, by Rabbi

Yosef Rozin, Chief Rabbi of Dvinsk, known as the *Rogatchover Gaon* (1858-1936). He also authored Responsa and a commentary on the Torah by the same name. *Likutei Sichos* makes much use of the Rogatchover's methodology.

Tzemach Tzedek — Title of responsa authored by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789-1866), after which he is usually referred to.

Tzror Hamor — Commentary to the Torah by R' Avraham Saba (15th century) of Portugal, and later Morocco.

Tur Ha'aruch — Second half of commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Ya'akov Meir ben Asher (1268-1340), author of the Tur. (See *Ba'al Haturim*)

Turei Even — Prodigious commentary to tractates *Rosh Hashanah*, *Chagigah*, *Taanis* and *Megilah* by Rabbi Aryeh Leib of Metz, author of *Sha'agas Aryeh*.

Tzeidah Laderech — Supercommentary to *Rashi's* commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Yissachar Ber Ailenberg. First printed in Prague in 1623.

Vayikra Rabah — The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Leviticus. (See "*Midrash Rabah*")

Vilna Ga'on — R' Eliyahu ben Shlomo of Vilna (1720-1797) Lithuanian Talmudist, Kabbalist, grammarian, and mathematician.

Yad Malachi — Compendium of rules and principles on which various major Rabbinic texts are based (including the principles on which the *Mishneh Torah* is based) by R' Malachi ben R' Yaakov haKohain, published in 1767.

Yefay To'ar — Major commentary on *Midrash Rabah*, by R' Shmuel Yaffa-Ashkenazi, Rabbi in Constantinople, 16th century.

Yalkut Re'uvaini — An anthology of Midrashic and Kabbalistic commentaries on the Torah, collected by Rabbi Avraham Re'uvain Hakohain Katz of Prague (d. 1673).

Yalkut Shimoni — Comprehensive Midrashic anthology, covering the entire Bible, attributed to Rabbi Shimon HaDarshan of Frankfurt (13th century).

Yere'im — Halachic discussion of the *mitzvos*, by Tosafist R. Eliezer ben R. Shmuel of Metz (France, twelfth century) a student of *Rabeinu Tam*. First printed in condensed form in Venice, in 1565. Unabridged version published in 1892 in Vilna.

Yerios Shlomo — Supercommentary to *Rashi's* commentary on the Torah. (See: *Maharshal*)

Yoma — Tractate of Talmud in the Order of *Mo'ed* (Festivals).

Zohar — Basic text of Kabbalah, compiled by Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and his disciples in the form of a commentary on the Torah. First published in the late 13th century by Rabbi Moshe de Leon (c.1250-1305), in Spain.



לזכות

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' **יעקב** בן ר' **מנחם דוב**

ניומאן

זכרונו לברכה

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.



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לחיזוק התקשרות
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