

**Kol**

קול

**Mevaseret**

מבשרת

A Compilation of  
Insights and Analyses  
of Torah Topics

by the students of

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	בחירה חופשית
ג .....	קורין מלאכי
	שכר מצווה בהאי עלמא – ליכא?
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# INTRODUCTION

It is our duty, to ourselves and to Am Yisrael, to dream. To dream means to push boundaries, to spend more time than expected analyzing a complicated daf of Gemara, or to spend an extra hour after night seder learning to truly understand what you've learned.

These examples are representations of pushing boundaries, and this year, in MMY, we have collectively overcome every obstacle we found before us. Our year of learning has enabled us to dream in a more daring and adventurous fashion, and subsequently our future aspirations will push further boundaries, so that we can achieve ever more.

In *Tanach*, we see a number of incidents that exemplify the importance of dreaming. For example, *Yoseph's* first elucidation of the cupbearer's and baker's dreams when they were imprisoned together highlights the importance of dreaming, as the dreams of his fellow prisoners ultimately saved his life. The dream that *Yoseph* then interpreted for *Paroh* while he remained imprisoned highlight the idea that dreams can even give insight into the will of God, as it says,

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל פְּרֹעֹה הַלּוֹם פְּרֹעֹה אֶחָד הוּא אֵת אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה הַגִּיד לְפְרֹעֹה:<sup>1</sup>

*Yoseph* was subsequently elevated to the position of *Mishneh Lamelech*, which was an unprecedented action showing that when *Hashem* 'wills something, nature and politics alike yield to make the impossible possible.<sup>2</sup> *Yoseph's* ability to understand the dreams of others not only saved his life but also gave him an immense connection to *Hashem*.

Although we do not have the abilities of *Yoseph*, we too can dream, and realize our desires. *Hashem* has given us the ability to live

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<sup>1</sup> בראשית מא:כה

Artscroll Stone Edition *Tanach*, p. 102<sup>2</sup>

with hope, and the more we aspire the closer we are to Him. Our dreams can excite us and ignite our passion in all aspects of life, and can, metaphorically speaking, save us from a monotonous existence.

*Daniel's* visions are also a source of inspiration. While exiled in *Bavel*, *Daniel* served as *Nevuchadnezar's* and subsequently *Belshazzar's* dream interpreter. Not only was *Daniel* exceptional at understanding his master's bizarre dreams, he was also capable of recognizing *Hashem's* omnipotence.

*Daniel* had a vision in which he saw four beasts, each representing great empires. The fourth beast destroyed the other beasts, but eventually was annihilated and everlasting redemption began,

Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise; and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the seasons and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. But the judgment shall sit, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and to be destroyed unto the end.'<sup>3</sup>

There is a reference to dreaming in this excerpt, which itself stirs the imagination. Rav Saadia Gaon was puzzled by the reference to 'two times and half a time', and came up with a mathematical calculation to interpret it as meaning 1,335 years. He got to this number by understanding the phrase 'two times' to refer to the 480 years from *yetziat mitzrayim* until the first *Beit Hamikdash* was

constructed, and the 410 years during the period of the first *Beit Hamikdash*. He believes that the expression 'half a time' represents half of 890, which is the sum of 480 and 410. Half of this number is 445 and then if you add this to 890 you get to 1,335.

This calculation was thought to reveal the time of the final redemption; albeit, with hindsight, we know that this was merely a possibility, rather than a certainty. Even though the year where we thought we would gain redemption has passed, the dreaming continues. When one realizes that there is a tangible basis for his *emunah*, he can feel free to dream, knowing his dreams will eventually come true.

*Daniel*, like *Yoseph*, used his abilities to dream and to interpret visions to save himself and ultimately *Bnei Yisrael*. The exceptional *emunah* that *Daniel* and *Yoseph* had, allowed them to survive in the most trying of circumstances. We must learn to dream like them, to edge closer to the final redemption.

Rav Yehuda Amital, *zt"l*, in his speech to *Yeshivat Har Etzion's* first graduating class said, 'I have a request to make of you, our alumni...you, our partners in this grand dream: Don't stop dreaming.'<sup>4</sup>

Several weeks ago, Rabbi Haber informed us of his surprising decision to leave MMY at the end of this year. He explained to us that the reason he is doing this is in order to fulfill this message; he had a dream to start a women's learning institution, a goal that he accomplished with immense success. Now he will be following a new dream, and we should all see his continued aspiration as an inspiration.

This year's *Kol Mevaseret* is dedicated to Rabbi Haber, to his past and future achievements. May his dreams inspire us all.

Liora Richman

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E. Reichner, *By Faith Alone, The Story of Rav Amital* (2008), p. 15<sup>4</sup>





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תנ"ך

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## בקנאו את קנאתי

The story of *Pinchas ben Elazar* is an intriguing and confusing conclusion to *Parshat Balak*, containing a number of ambiguities and apparent contradictions. The *Mefarshim* attempt to clarify this *sugya* in different ways and many fascinating and diverse pictures emerge.

- א. וישב ישראל בשטים ויחל העם לזנות אל בנות מואב:  
 ב. ותקראנן לעם לזכורי אלהיהן ויאכל העם וישתחוו לאלהיהן:  
 ג. ויצמד ישראל לבעל פעור ויחר אף ה' בישראל:  
 ד. ויאמר ה' אל משה קח את כל ראשי העם והזקע אותם לה' נגד השמש וישב חרון אף ה' מישראל:  
 ה. ויאמר משה אל שפטי ישראל הרגו איש אנשיו הנצמדים לבעל פעור:  
 ו. והנה איש מבני ישראל בא ויקרב אל אחיו את המדניית לעיני משה ולעיני כל עדת בני ישראל והמה בכים פתח אהל מועד:  
 ז. וירא פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן ונקם מתוך העדה ויקח רמח בידו:  
 ח. ויבא אחר איש ישראל אל הקבה וידקר את שניהם את איש ישראל ואת האשה אל קבתה ותעצר המגפה מעל בני ישראל:  
 ט. ויהיו המתים במגפה ארבעה ועשרים אלה<sup>1</sup>

The first question that needs to be addressed pertains to the nationality of the seducers. In earlier *pesukim*, they are referred to as *Moavi* (בנות מואב); however, *Zimri* brought a *Midyani* woman before the *Ohel Moed* (המדניית). *Abarbanel* gives an interesting response to this problem. He concludes that the women in this *parsha* were, in fact, *Midyani*, and that *Bil'am* had persuaded *Midyan's* leaders to force their daughters to disguise themselves as *Moavi* women and to sin with the Jewish men. *Bnei Yisrael* knew to be wary of the *Midyanim*,

<sup>1</sup> במדבר פרק כ"ה

but not of the *Moavim*, since the nations were at peace with one another.<sup>2</sup> This explains the shift in the *pasuk* as well as the fact that *Bnei Yisrael* subsequently attacked *Midyan*.<sup>3</sup>

*Abarbanel's* opinion is further supported by the fact that while it is mentioned in several places that *Bnei Yisrael* had complaints against *Moavi* men, and *Moavi* men cannot marry into *Bnei Yisrael* even upon conversion, the *Moavi* women are exempt from this restriction, as in the case of *Rut*. However, not everyone accepts this opinion. It appears that *Rashi* believes the women were in fact *Moaviot*. In support of the opposing arguments, one could say that the *Moavi* women were forced by the men of their own country to seduce *Bnei Yisrael*, which *Rashi* does hold, and therefore *Hashem* doesn't hold them responsible for this action as much as *Moav's* other sins.

Either way, *Bnei Yisrael's* quick fall to *zenut* was entirely their own responsibility. But how did they go from adultery to idolatry in the space of half a *pasuk*? *Rashi* projects that this was all part of *Moav's* plan: the women would seduce the men until they were weak with lust and then pull out their *Ba'al Peor* figurines and instruct the men to bow to them.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps *Rashi* gets this from the unique phrasing in the *pasuk*, וַיִּחַל הָעָם לְזַנוֹת אֶל בְּנוֹת, וַיִּחַל הָעָם לְזַנוֹת אֶל בְּנוֹת... The word וַיִּחַל, began, hints to the fact that the act was interrupted by this *Ba'al Peor* worship, just as *Rashi* postulates. *Sforno* takes a slightly different approach, saying that the Jews only intended to intermarry, but that it is the nature of evil to follow evil.<sup>5</sup> This idea is implied in

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<sup>2</sup> אברבנאל כה

<sup>3</sup> במדבר כה:יז-יח – "צָרוּר אֶת הַמְדֻיָּנִים וְהַכִּיתֶם אוֹתָם: כִּי צָרְרִים הֵם לָכֶם בְּנִקְלֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר נָקְלוּ לָכֶם עַל דָּבַר פְּעוֹר וְעַל דָּבַר קְזָבִי בֵּת נְשֵׂי אֲמֹדִי אֲהַתֶּם הַמָּקֵה בְּיוֹם הַמַּגֵּפָה עַל דָּבַר פְּעוֹר:"

<sup>4</sup> רש"י כה:ב

<sup>5</sup> ספורנו כה:ב

the way the *pasuk* jumps from adultery to *Peor*. *Abarbanel* interprets וַיִּחַל along the lines of חוּלִין and חָלַל: the Jews desecrated themselves and *Hashem* with their זנות.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the portion the *pasuk* tells us וַתֵּעָצֵר הַמַּגֵּפָה מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, that the plague stopped. No plague has been mentioned until now, but *Haemek Davar* connects this to an earlier mention of *Hashem's* anger. He argues that *Hashem's* anger is represented in the form of a plague.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is shared by the *Rashi*, *Rashbam*<sup>8</sup>, and others. After *Hashem* sent the plague, He told *Moshe* how to cure it, telling him to gather the *shoftim* and to tell them to kill (by hanging or stoning) 'them' in public. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל מֹשֶׁה קַח אֶת כָּל רְאֵשֵׁי הָעָם וְהוֹקֵעַ אוֹתָם לִפְנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיָשֵׁב חֲרוֹן אַפַּי הַמִּיִּשְׁרָאֵל. *Rashi* and most others take 'them' to mean the sinners, since *Moshe* subsequently commanded the *shoftim* to kill those who sinned with *Peor*.<sup>9</sup> *Rashi* believes that the *shoftim* did exactly as *Moshe* commanded, so there was no need to elaborate.<sup>10</sup> *Ibn Ezra* explains that the *shoftim* were each in charge of one tribe, and that הִרְגוּ אִישׁ אֶת אֶנְשֵׁי, each man should kill his men, refers to the leaders of the *shvatim* killing members of their tribe. *Rashi* says that there were 78,000 *Shoftim*, (some versions say 88,000), and that they each killed two men, based on the plural usage in הִרְגוּ אִישׁ אֶנְשֵׁי. It is unclear whether the number two refers to two sinning Jews or to a couple consisting of a Jew and a *Moavi* woman, but the number of dead would be 78,000-176,000 Jewish men hanged, plus the 24,000 that died in the plague.

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<sup>6</sup> אברבנאל כה

<sup>7</sup> העמק דבר כהג

<sup>8</sup> רש"י, רשב"ם כהג

<sup>9</sup> רש"י, אבן עזרא כהד

<sup>10</sup> רש"י כהה

*Ramban* spots a problem with this approach in the next census, *אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאַלְפֵי שֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים*.<sup>11</sup> There were 601,730 men of fighting age in Israel, only 1,820 less than the last census. Unless there was a baby boom seventeen or so years earlier, it is difficult to account for the 76,000-174,000 men who didn't disappear. *Ramban* therefore says that the *pasuk* doesn't mention the *shoftim* again because the order was never carried out; *Pinchas's* deed redeemed *Bnei Yisrael* in *Hashem's* eyes and He decided to delay punishment. This makes perfect sense based on the *pasuk* *פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֱלֶעָזָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הִפְלִיחַ אֶת הַמִּטָּה מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְיָאָא* *וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְיָאָתָי*. According to *Ramban*, *Pinchas's* act prevented *Hashem* from destroying a significant portion of *Bnei Yisrael*. *Rashi* interprets this statement similarly, and probably takes *וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְיָאָתָי* at its literal meaning: *Hashem* refrained from destroying the entire *Bnei Yisrael*, because of *Pinchas*.<sup>12</sup>

*Abarbanel* interprets the entire statement differently. He says that *Hashem's* original command was exactly as it sounds: *הַקָּהֹל כָּל רֹאשֵׁי הָעָם וְהוֹקֵעֵ אוֹתָם*, meaning they were to kill all the leaders that did not prevent the worship of *Ba'al Peor*. But *Moshe* wanted to give them a chance, so he instructed the nation's leaders to kill the worshippers instead. In that way they might redeem themselves and end *Hashem's* anger and avert the death sentence.<sup>13</sup> *Abarbanel* agrees with *Ramban* and says that *Pinchas's* act of killing *Zimri* was enough for the Jews to go back to worshipping *Hashem*, and the death toll stopped at 24,000.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>11</sup> רמב"ן כה:ה

<sup>12</sup> רש"י כה:יא

<sup>13</sup> אברבנאל כה

<sup>14</sup> אברבנאל שם

both *Abarbanel* and *Ramban* hold that the sinners didn't get off scot-free; they were killed before they crossed the *Yarden*.<sup>15</sup>

According to *Rashi*, *Hashem* just declared all worshippers of the *Ba'al Peor* hanged or stoned.<sup>16</sup> So it's a bit confusing as to why *Zimri*, leader of *Shimon*, subsequently cohabited with a *Midyani* woman before the entire nation and brought her to his brothers. וַיִּקְרַב אֶל אֶחָיו can be understood in a few different ways. *Rashbam* seems to understand it literally and brings in a *pasuk*<sup>17</sup> warning against adultery.<sup>18</sup> *Ibn Ezra* says that *Zimri* brought her to his family.<sup>19</sup> But most intriguingly, *Rashi* says that the tribe of *Shimon* gathered around *Zimri* and said "We've been sentenced to death. Do something!"<sup>20</sup> R' Mendel Kalmenson explains a possible interpretation of *Rashi's* words. *Zimri*, seeing his brothers so deeply entrenched in this sin, wanted to find a way of showing *Bnei Yisrael* and *Moshe* how easy it was to sin this way in hopes of obtaining a lighter judgment. So he sinned with *Cosbi* in the most public way possible.<sup>21</sup>

With this we can understand *Hashem's* commandment of killing the sinners בְּנֶגַד הַשָּׁמַיִם, in public. *Sforno* takes this as an extra hint to *Bnei Yisrael's* sin: they did not intercede even while the sin

<sup>15</sup> הרמב"ן מביא פסוק בדברים ג:ד, "עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאוּת אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּבַעַל פְּעוֹר כִּי כָל הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הִלֵּךְ אַחֲרָיו בְּעַל פְּעוֹר הַשָּׁמַיִם ה' אֱלֹהֵיךְ מִקְרָבָד: וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בָּה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים בְּלַכְּם הַיּוֹם"

<sup>16</sup> רש"י כה:ד

<sup>17</sup> ויקרא יא:י

<sup>18</sup> רשב"ם כה:ז

<sup>19</sup> אבן עזרא כה:י

<sup>20</sup> רש"י כה:ז

was going on in plain sight.<sup>22</sup> But it is possible that *Bnei Yisrael* didn't know or care about the law. *Zimri* sinned with *Cosbi* in view of *Moshe* and *Bnei Yisrael*, right in front of the *Ohel Moed*, and all anyone could do was to weep at the disgrace. Why did they weep? *Abarbanel* says weeping means praying that they shouldn't be killed.<sup>23</sup> *Rashi* has a different idea. He says that *Zimri* dragged *Cosbi* to *Moshe* and said "Is she permitted or not? And if not, how could you marry the daughter of *Yitro* who is also a *Midyanite*?", and *Moshe* couldn't remember the *halacha*. (This would explain *Moshe's* inaction as well as the weeping.) At that one moment, it appeared to all of *Bnei Yisrael* that *Zimri* was right!<sup>24</sup>

That is when *Pinchas* stepped in, recalling the *halacha* of קנאים פוגעים בו,<sup>25</sup> and stabbed the couple אֶל קִבְתָּהּ. *Ibn Ezra* says this refers to *Zimri's* brother's tent, referencing the earlier אֶל אֶהְיֶינָהּ.<sup>26</sup> But *Rashi* says the term refers to the sexual organs, and that *Pinchas* did this so that everyone would know that he had killed them specifically for this sin. He adds that many miracles took place to allow this to happen.<sup>27</sup>

The *Gemara* says that had *Pinchas* killed them at any other time, *Zimri's* relatives would have been allowed to avenge him, and had *Pinchas* not succeeded, *Zimri* could have turned around and killed him, claiming self-defense.<sup>28</sup> *Pinchas's* deed sent a

<sup>22</sup> ספורנו כה:ד

<sup>23</sup> אברבנאל שם

<sup>24</sup> רש"י כה:ו

<sup>25</sup> שם

<sup>26</sup> אבן עזרא כה:ו

<sup>27</sup> רש"י שם

<sup>28</sup> סנהדרין פב:



definitive message to *Bnei Yisrael* that *Zimri's* act was not acceptable, and perhaps it was *Bnei Yisrael's* acceptance of that message that prevented *Hashem* from destroying them.

*Pinchas* did not have it easy after that. According to *Rashi*, *Bnei Yisrael* would later mock *Pinchas*, mentioning that his maternal grandfather *Yitro*<sup>29</sup> had been an idolater himself.<sup>30</sup> The *Torah* refers to *Pinchas* by his paternal lineage back to *Aharon* to counter those remarks, though one might note that to the reader's eye, *Pinchas's* deed is a credit to his grandfather's wholehearted conversion. *Pinchas* was duly rewarded with בְּרִית קְהֵנָה עוֹלָם and בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם. *Rashi* clarifies that even though *Pinchas* was a grandson of *Aharon*, he was born before the *kehuna* was given out and only now received it.<sup>31</sup> *Rashi* translates בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם as a general feeling of 'gratitude' and 'thanks' that *Hashem* expressed towards *Pinchas*.<sup>32</sup>

*Sforno* says that "peace" refers to peace from the angel of death, and that he lived on perhaps even to become *Eliyahu*, which would make him somewhat "alive" even today.<sup>33</sup> *Ibn Ezra* disagrees, saying that the peace was from *Zimri's* brother who was out for *Pinchas's* blood, that the Brit *Kehuna* led to *Pinchas's* children being the best *kohanim*, and that the words וְלִזְרֵעוֹ אֶתְרֵי prove that he must have died.<sup>34</sup> *Abarbanel* says that *Pinchas* was *pasul* for the *kehuna* after having made himself impure by killing *Zimri*, but *Hashem* gave it back to him in reward. *Abarbanel* also

<sup>29</sup> סוטה מג; "אבי אמו מיוסף ואם אמו מיתרו"

<sup>30</sup> רש"י כה:יא

<sup>31</sup> רש"י כה:יג

<sup>32</sup> רש"י כה:יב

<sup>33</sup> ספורנו שם

<sup>34</sup> אבן עזרא שם

takes *קְרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם* to mean peace from *Pinchas's* newfound enemies. While dismissing the idea that *Pinchas* lived on to become *Eliyahu*, *Abarbanel* suggests that *Eliyahu* was a descendant of *Pinchas* because of their shared trait of zealousness.

*Pinchas* is the hero of this *parsha* and was lauded by *Hashem* for his deeds. But was *Pinchas* completely right? The *Gemara* says that the *gedolim* of Israel had a very difficult time trying to figure out what to do with him until his reward was delivered through *Ruach Hakodesh*.<sup>35</sup> *Nechama Leibowitz* suggests a nuanced view of these events: *Pinchas's* act in itself wasn't necessarily a good idea. Wantonly killing people, even sinners, is a bad precedent to set, and *Pinchas* could have gotten into a lot of trouble for it. Moreover, an even worse anarchy might have ensued, transforming Jews into a lawless nation. After all, although *Zimri* and *Cosbi* were guilty of two of the big three sins which one should even die rather than violate, *Pinchas* acted against them with the third. But *Pinchas's* intrinsic righteousness and good character ensured that his act was completely pure and devoid of anger, jealousy, or disgust. He acted as a complete channel of *Hashem's* own will, apparent in the words: *קָנְנָאוּ אֶת-קַנְיָתִי*. *Pinchas* felt for *Hashem's* "feelings" regardless of his own, and for that reason it was right.

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<sup>35</sup> סנהדרין פב:

## ברכת השמן and שבט אשר

אין לך בכל השבטים שנתברך בבנים כאשר<sup>1</sup>

*Leah* named her maidservant's son *Asher* because באשרי כי. The word אשר means happiness or fortune. *Leah* still showed unusual joy at his birth, even though this was *Zilpah*'s second child and *Leah*'s sixth.<sup>2</sup>

We see that *Asher* was a fitting name for this *Shevet* when we look at the *bracha* *Yaakov* gave him: והוא יתן מעדני מלך.<sup>3</sup> This verse refers to the bounty that would come from the land *Asher* would inherit in *Eretz Yisrael*. *Rashi* and other commentaries remark that the reference to *shemen*, oil, meant that there would be so much oil that it would flow like a river.<sup>4</sup> *Radak*, however, explains that the term simply means “the fat of the land” and that it means the people of *Asher* would provide food for the kings from their *nachalah* because everything that grows in their land will of the best quality.<sup>5</sup>

The theme of abundance contained in this *Bracha* definitely fits with the name *Asher*, and continues in the blessing *Moshe* gave to the tribe of *Asher*: ברוך מבנים אשר יהי רצוי אחיו וטבל בשמן רגלו.<sup>6</sup>

ברוך מבנים אשר יהי רצוי אחיו וטבל בשמן רגלו can be understood in one of two different ways:

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<sup>1</sup> ספרי ברכה שנה

<sup>2</sup> בראשית ל:ג

<sup>3</sup> בראשית מט:כ

<sup>4</sup> רש"י שם

<sup>5</sup> רד"ק שם

<sup>6</sup> דברים לג:כד

1. It could refer to the sons of *Asher*; *Ramban* says it means that *Asher's* sons will be princes as it says in *Divrei Hayamim*, <sup>7</sup> כל אלה בני אשר ראשי בית האבות ברורים גבורי חילים ראשי הנשיאים (This is not stated about other tribes.) Additionally, *Arvei Nachal*<sup>8</sup> points out that there was a tremendous increase in the population of *Shevet Asher* – one of the biggest increases – between the two censuses that *Moshe* took in the desert. They went from 41,500 in the first count to 53,000 in the second count. We see that *Shevet Asher* was blessed with a lot of children; potentially this is what the *bracha* was alluding to.

2. Another possibility is that it means *Asher's* descendants would be blessed **among the sons**. As noted above, *Leah* named *Asher* based on her happiness. *Moshe* declared that all the other sons would appreciate *Asher* and consider him to be fortunate. *Rashi* comments that they would appreciate him because of all the oil he would produce (hence the end of *Moshe's* blessing- <sup>9</sup>וטבל בשמן רגלו).

As explained above, *Shevet Asher's* land was known as the land of olive trees, as it says in the *Gemara*<sup>10</sup>, oil flowed in that land like a fountain. Additionally, the symbol of *Shevet Asher* is an olive tree, and the gem of *Shevet Asher* on the *Choshen Mishpat* is *tarshish* (chrysolite) which is a stone the color of clear oil.<sup>11</sup> *Sifri*<sup>12</sup> writes that girls would anoint themselves with

<sup>7</sup> דברי הימים א ז:מ

<sup>8</sup> ספר ערבי נחל (הרב דוד שלמה אייבשיץ), פרשת וזאת הברכה ד"ה ולאשר

<sup>9</sup> דברים לג:כד רש"י שם

<sup>10</sup> מנחות פח:

<sup>11</sup> ראה Polter, Moshe, The Shevatim, Targum Press, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> ספרי שם

this oil, which made them beautiful. Here the parallels to *Yaakov's bracha* are clear.

*Moshe* also gave the tribe a second blessing, ברזל ונחשת מנעלך, <sup>13</sup>וכימיד דבאך. *Ramban* explains that this expression is a metaphor; *Asher's* portion was situated in the extreme north, on the border of Israel. Like iron and copper, they will be able to protect the land from enemies. <sup>14</sup>



*Alshich* teaches that *Moshe* blessed *Asher* with the three basic things people need in life: blessing of sons- “*Asher* shall be blessed with sons,”<sup>15</sup> blessing for wealth- “Iron and copper are your bars,”<sup>16</sup> and blessing for life- “and as were your younger days so shall be your old age”.<sup>17</sup>

*Shevet Asher* was given its portion of land at the northern border of the country, also bordering on the sea. They were praised by *Devorah* in her song for protecting their borders well in the war against the *Canaanim*. *Devorah* rebuked other *Shevatim*

<sup>13</sup> דברים לג:כה

<sup>14</sup> רמב"ן שם

<sup>15</sup> דברים לג:כד

<sup>16</sup> דברים לג:כה

<sup>17</sup> תורת משה, דברים לד:כד

for their lack of participation, but praised *Asher* for the part they played.<sup>18</sup>

### Significance of שמן

As we have seen, olive oil is particularly associated with *Shevet Asher*, and figured prominently in both *Yaakov's* and *Moshe's* blessings to *Asher*.

When describing *Eretz Yisrael* to the nation that would shortly be crossing the Jordan, *Moshe Rabbenu* described it as ארץ חיטה ושעורה, וגפן ותאנה ורמון ארץ זית שמן ודבש<sup>19</sup>. The *Levush* expounds on *Rashi's* comment on ה, דברים which explains why the verse says זית שמן. The olive itself has no important use; it is the oil that makes it important.

It seems that, even more than the other species, olive oil is associated with *Eretz Yisrael*. *Meshech Chochma* explains why the word ארץ is repeated in the *Pasuk* that tells us about the seven species. He suggests that olives and dates (the two species that follow the second usage of the word), are different than the other five, in that they are not found in Egypt. His proof is from a *pasuk* in *Bamidbar*, describing a complaint of *Bnei Yisrael* about life in the desert. They compared their conditions there to what they had in Egypt, and mentioned זרע ותאנה וגפן ורמון<sup>20</sup>.

Furthermore, Rav S.R. Hirsch quotes a German nature researcher named Oken who wrote that Palestine was the original home of the olive tree<sup>21</sup>. The olive's origin is *Eretz Yisrael*. Perhaps this is why the oil of this fruit is used for various holy purposes.

<sup>18</sup> שופטים ה:ז

<sup>19</sup> דברים ח:ה

<sup>20</sup> במדבר כ:ה

<sup>21</sup> פירוש רש"ר הירש, דברים ח:ה

For example, one use for olive oil in *Tanach* is *shemen lameor*, lighting the menorah in the *Mishkan*. The *Torah* commands, <sup>22</sup>ויקהו אלך שמן זית זך כתיב למאור. Many of the *parshanim* explain that the *Kohanim* needed to light the menorah with oil in order for a bright light to always burn in the *Mishkan*, illuminating the *Shulchan*.

Olive oil also has a distinct *halachic* status. The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>23</sup> writes that any fuel may be used to light the candles on *Chanukah*, but it is preferable, to light with olive oil because that was what they used in the *Bet Hamikdash*. Also, the whole purpose of the *mitzvah* is to publicize the miracle, and olive oil gives off the brightest light which enables us to do this in the best way possible.

The *Midrash Shemot Rabba* says that *Bnei Yisrael* can be compared to olive oil. All liquids combine with each other, but oil does not; it stays separate. When *Bnei Yisrael* follows in Hashem's ways they too stand separate from all the other groups. By lighting the *Menorah* with olive oil, we commemorate the separateness of *Bnei Yisrael* that kept them immortal.<sup>24</sup>

The *Bracha* that *Shevet Asher* received was truly exceptional, and goes beyond that particular *Shevet*. Indeed, it represents universal qualities that are significant for all of *Am Yisrael*.

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<sup>22</sup> שמות כז:ב

<sup>23</sup> או:ח תרעג

<sup>24</sup> ראה *Polter, ibid.*





## Let Us Make Man

What is it that makes man's creation unique? In בראשית פרק א, when discussing the order of creation a particular incident stands out. Man was created separately, as well as differently, from the rest of creation.

In ויאמר א-להים נעשה אדם the verse begins by saying (and Hashem said let us make man"). What does נעשה אדם mean? How is it possible that Hashem would have said נעשה אדם in the plural? Who is the "us"? Furthermore, the next two words say בצלמנו כדמותנו. What is צלם and why is the idea that man is created mentioned again in the next verse, but differently (ויברא ויבאר) בצלמנו כדמותנו? What is all of this trying to teach us?

The first question, regarding why נעשה אדם is stated in the plural, is discussed in depth amongst the ראשונים. Rashi says that when Hashem said נעשה אדם, He must have been referring to the מלאכים, because who else could it be referring to? What other heavenly beings were there? Through this we learn an important lesson of humility. Even though no one is greater than Hashem, He still consulted with the מלאכים. Rashbam seems to agree with Rashi and also says that "נעשה" refers to the מלאכים. To support his idea, Rashbam brings down three other places where Hashem consulted the מלאכים; in the books of ישעיה, מלכים and איוב.

As opposed to Rashi and Rashbam, Ibn Ezra doesn't read נעשה as a plural word. Rather, he translates נעשה אדם as a passive verb, meaning "let man be made." Chizkuni seems to connect the ideas of Rashi, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra. He says that נעשה is plural, because Hashem consulted with others in order to create man; nevertheless the actual creation was done by Hashem independently. Chizkuni also points out that נעשה could be

singular because there are other places where *Hashem* says something singular in a plural form, like in ישעיהו, where it says ומי ילך לנו.

In addition to that view, *Radak*, *Ramban* and *Seforno* each give their own interpretations about what נעשה אדם means. *Radak* begins by asserting that man was the final element of creation. He quotes his father and also an explanation taken from the בראשית רבה, by רב שמאל בר נחמן בשם רבי יונתן, רבה, about what "Us" could possibly mean. According to his father, *Hashem* was talking to the elements of the world to help Him (meaning that the elements created the body and the מלאכים contributed to the נשמה). This would make sense because everything, including all the elements, was created before man. *Radak's* father also agrees with the opinion of *Rashi* and *Rashbam*, that "Us" was referring to the מלאכים by stating that they contributed to the spirit of man.

The opinion mentioned in בראשית רבה says that משה רבנו asked *Hashem*, why He was giving the כופרים an opportunity to claim validity on other gods, by writing the פסוק in the plural (implying that there are other gods that *Hashem* needed to consult). According to the מדרש, *Hashem* answered by saying that the כופרים's actions are their own responsibility.

*Ramban* gives an explanation that man was created separately from everything else, because man has a special higher nature than animals. Furthermore, *Ramban* says that only on the first day of creation did *Hashem* create ex nihilo, but from the second day onwards He organized the elements in place into the rest of the world. Therefore, "Us" is *Hashem* speaking to the land, since man was created from the elements of the earth. Additionally, *Ramban* adds that man was created just like animals until *Hashem* blew life into them. *Seforno* says "Us" refers to *Hashem* who gave His servants (מלאכים) the ability to influence His creations. However, he states that man's body was created along with the animals. Only afterwards, when it came to the נשמה, did *Hashem*

say "let's make man in Our image". This explains man's "separate" creation.

We also need to analyze the words בצלמנו כדמותנו. In פסוק כ"ו, Rashi defines both the words בצלמנו and כדמותנו as two different concepts. *Rashi* says that בצלמינו means "Our form", which symbolizes a physical form of *Hashem* and the מלאכים; and כדמותנו means להבין ולהשכל, which symbolizes an intellectual form. *Rashbam*, although saying something similar to *Rashi*, seems to give a more specific definition. He says that בצלמינו means that man is in the image of מלאכים and כדמותנו refers to a man's wisdom. *Radak*, on the other hand, talks about בצלמנו in terms of the differences and partnership between the body and the soul. Here it refers to the צלם רוחני, but in other places it can also be referred to as the צלם גשמי. He also says that the reason כדמותנו has a כ and not a ב is because we are "like" מלאכים in certain aspects (even though we're also very different). We are similar, yet different from them because we also have free will and can thus choose whether or not to emulate their ways.

Similarly, *Ramban* appears to say something along the lines of *Rashi* and *Rashbam*. He says that צלם is just a physical description while דמות refers to wisdom, talent and action. This is because *Ramban* believes that man is similar to the upper and the lower world. Man's creative intellectual power is what allows him to rule over the animals. *Chizkuni* agrees that בצלמנו refers to man having the image of מלאכים in terms of ruling over the rest of the earthly creations, however it's impossible that it could also be referring to the image of *Hashem*, because *Hashem* doesn't have an image. Everything is created by *Hashem* therefore because man has *Hashem's* image he is on a higher level. According to *Seforno*, בצלמנו refers to an eternal and intellectual image, unlike animals who don't have a שכל. *Hashem* created an opening in His Torah for Godly knowledge and understanding.

If so, then what is the use of פסוק כ"ז in צלמו coming to add to פסוק כ"ו in בצלמנו? *Rashi* points out that everything except for man

was created with words, but man was created by hand. He gets this from the word בצלמו (as if man was hand molded). *Radak* says that צלמו refers to the separation between the body and the soul (which he gets from זכריה). *Chizkuni* gave two explanations for what בצלמו means. One of his thoughts is that it is a hint towards the creation of the מלאכים. He also says that it implies that man's form is unique. *Seforno* then adds to that idea by saying, that our unique element is our intellect which separates us from the animals which is our Godly gift.

In conclusion, we have seen that man's essence is unique among creation, and therefore it makes sense that his creation is described differently from that of all other creatures. A lesson that can be learned from the creation of man is that one shouldn't take life for granted. Each human has a צלם א-להים within them and should exemplify that in all that they do.

## The Depth of the באר

When hit with a hammer, a rock will produce many sparks. So too, an apparently simple concept in *Torah* can beget many profound implications. Mentioned 11 times in the *Torah*, the *be'er* carries the seemingly simple connotation of water and wells; however further investigation reveals a deeper meaning behind the concept of *be'er*.

The *mefarshim* often see allusions to two important themes in wells. The first is "מיגון לשמחה"<sup>1</sup>. The *be'er* often appears in a bleak situation, to signal a change for the better for those involved. This can be seen with the very first well mentioned in the *Torah*: ...ועמק השדים בארות בארות חמר...<sup>2</sup>. *Rashi*<sup>3</sup> explains that the king of *Sedom* avoided being trapped in the mud in a well during the war of the four kings verses the five kings. *Rashi* says, ונעשה נס למלך סדם, שיצא משם... וכיון שיצאה מן החמר האמינו באברהם למפרע באר, people then believed that *Avraham* was saved from the האש since he was in the well, and when the people turned to *Hashem*, *simcha* resulted.

Another example of this theme occurred when *Hagar* ran away from *Avraham's* and *Sara's* home<sup>4</sup>. While she was wandering in the desert an angel informed her that she would be merit to have *Yishmael*, and a great nation would be born from him. *Hagar* was in a desperate situation, but after her conversation with the

<sup>1</sup> הגדה של פסח

<sup>2</sup> בראשית י"ד:י

<sup>3</sup> רש"י שם ד"ה "בארות בארות חמר"

<sup>4</sup> בראשית טז:ז-ז:י

angel things improved. Therefore she called the place באר להי ראי because she saw the angel there.

*Hagar* was a situation of even greater despair later on when she was banished from her *Avraham's* and *Sara's* home with her son, *Yishmael*. They were lost in the desert and the child was on the verge of death. However, an angel saved him by providing water, once again from a well, ותרא באר מים ותלך... ותשק את הנער, bringing her great happiness<sup>5</sup>.

Another example of מיגון לשמחה concerns the dispute between *Avimelech* and *Avraham* and later on with *Yitzchak* regarding the wells<sup>6</sup>. *Avimelech* והוכיח אברהם את אבימלך על אודות באר המים... claimed *Avraham's* wells were his<sup>7</sup>. Years later, *Avimelech's* servants stuffed up *Yitzchak's* wells<sup>8</sup>. At both occurrences a treaty was made, and *Avimelech* and his servants realized the wells belonged to *Avraham* and *Yitzchak*, especially since the water rose for *Avraham*, ויעלו לקראת המים<sup>9</sup>. The יגון that *Avraham* and *Yitzchak* initially faced with *Avimelech* resulted in שמחה when *Avimelech* acknowledged that the wells belonged to them.

Another instance of מיגון לשמחה is when *Eliezer* met *Rivka* at the באר. The *Torah* says he was concerned if he would be able to find the right girl for *Yitzchak*<sup>10</sup>. *Hashem* did *Eliezer* a great

<sup>5</sup> שם כ"א:י"ט

<sup>6</sup> שם כ"ו:ט"ו; כ"א:כה

<sup>7</sup> שם כ"א:כ"ה

<sup>8</sup> שם כ"ו:ט"ו

<sup>9</sup> רש"י שם כא:ל ד"ה "כי חפרתי את הבאר"

<sup>10</sup> שם כ"ד:י"ב-י"ד

chessed, and made sure he spotted the correct one. *Eliezer* reacted with great joy when he saw his request come to fruition<sup>11</sup>.

Yet another example is when *Yaakov* wept upon seeing *Rachel* at the well לקבורה עמו נכנסת עמו לקבורה עמו לפי שצפה ברוח הקדש שאינה נכנסת עמו לקבורה עמו he saw with *ruach hakodesh* that he would not be buried with her<sup>12</sup>. Ultimately, this meeting was a positive occurrence, since *Yaakov* was able to meet *Rachel*, who he would later marry.

*Moshe* also found his way to a well when he was forced to flee from *Paroh*. At first, the daughters of *Yitro* were persecuted at the well, but *Moshe* was able to help them. This led him to meet his future wife as well. <sup>13</sup> *Moshe* learned from *Yaakov*, as *Rashi* states למד מיעקב שנודווג לו זוווג על הבאר<sup>14</sup>.

Lastly, *Miriam's* death caused *Bnei Yisrael's* well to dry up and they began to dehydrate; ולא היה שם מים לעדה<sup>15</sup>. *Hashem* provided them with water, and they sang a song of praises of the well; באר הפרוה שרים<sup>16</sup>.

All of these examples show the well symbolizing the idea of מיגון לשמחה. A second theme is the "life sustaining" aspect of the well, and this theme is evident in all of the above examples as well.

The באר saved the life of the king of *Sedom*, which led to the acknowledgement of God's existence. A few individuals found a

<sup>11</sup> שם כו-כו

<sup>12</sup> רש"י שם כ"ט: א"א ד"ה "ויבך"

<sup>13</sup> שמות ב: ט"ו

<sup>14</sup> רש"י שם ב: ט"ו ד"ה "וישב על הבאר"

<sup>15</sup> במדבר כ: ב

<sup>16</sup> שם כ"א: י"ה

spouse there<sup>17</sup>. Marriage is defined in Judaism as *kidushin*, a holy relationship. Also, when *Rivka* came to meet *Yitzchak* for the first time, it says that *Yitzchak* was *מבא מבאר להי ראי*<sup>18</sup>. He was *davening* that his marriage should work out well, so it would be life sustaining.

In the desert, the well provided *Bnei Yisrael* with obvious physical sustenance, but in addition, *Chazal* point out it had a spiritual component as well. *Bnei Yisrael* had no water in the desert; they later sang a *shira* about the באר after it gave them water, because it saved their lives. The people were thanking God for the water, and in doing so they were adding the spiritual component to their drinking.

Another example of the "life sustaining" concept relates to the *Beit Hamikdash*. The *Beit Hamikdash* is known as מקור מים חיים and the well there is known as באר מים חיים. The phrase מים חיים is used for both the well and the *Beit Hamikdash*.

The *Ramban* adds that the names that *Yitzchak* gave to his wells had great significance. The first well is called "*Esek*" which means conflict, and alludes to the first *Beit Hamikdash*, אשר התעשקו עמנו יעשו אותנו כמה מחלקות וכמה מלחמות. During this Temple period the enemy had many battles and disagreements with the Jews which ultimately lead to its destruction. The name of the second well "*Sitna*" symbolizes the second *Beit Hamikdash*, because the enemy did not want the building itself to exist. This is alluded to in *Ezra* when it says שטנה על יושבי יהודה וירושלים<sup>19</sup>. "*Rechovot*" refers to the final *Beit Hamikdash* which should be built without a fight and

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It is interesting to note that in each of the instances where we find the well<sup>17</sup> relating to marriage that there was an act of *gemilut chasadim* that took place.

<sup>18</sup> בראשית כ"ד:טב

<sup>19</sup> עזרא ד':ו



*Hashem* will expand (ירחיב) our borders. והוא יעשה בלא ריב ומצה והא-ל ירחיב. <sup>20</sup>את גבולנו

This concept of spiritual sustenance emanating from the באר is also mentioned in *HaKataav V'hakabalah*<sup>21</sup>. He says that *Avraham* named the wells as a *zecher* to *Hashem* because he wanted to teach everyone about *Hashem*, and to make clear that *avodah zarah* is false. Everyone goes to wells to get water which is life sustaining, and *Avraham* wanted to emphasize that the real source of sustenance is *Hashem*. *Avimelech* and his servants did not want this; they wanted to continue their *avodah zarah*, and therefore, *Yitzchak* renamed the wells with the same names *Avraham* had given them.

*Rashi* says that *Avimelech's* shepherds claimed that they dug the wells and *Avraham* responded that he dug the wells. In order to resolve this they decided that whoever the water comes up to miraculously, would be recognized as the one who dug the wells. The water came up to *Avraham* which is not a natural occurrence; this further proves how everything is from *Hashem* and not *avodah zarah*.<sup>22</sup> Since the water came up for both *Avraham* and *Rivka*<sup>23</sup> *Chazal* say that the well will be blessed in *Parshat Chukat*, and indeed we see that they sang a tribute to the well. There is thus a relationship between the wells of *Avraham* and *Rivka* and the well in the desert<sup>24</sup>.

The *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* says, עשרה דברים נבראו ערב שבת בין, The באר פי is one of the ten things... פי הארץ... פי הבאר...

<sup>20</sup> בראשית כו:כ ד"ה "ויקרא שם הבאר עשק"

<sup>21</sup> תולדות כ"ו:י"ח- כתב והקבלה

<sup>22</sup> וירא כ"א:ל רש"י "כי חפרתי את הבאר"

<sup>23</sup> רש"י, בראשית כד:יז. ראה גם רש"י שמות ב:כ, שאומר שהבאר גם עלה למשה

<sup>24</sup> בראשית רבה ט:ו

created ערב שבת בין השמשות<sup>25</sup>. However, there is a dispute within *Chazal* as to the definition of פי הבאר. *Rav Ovadiah MiBartinurah* offers two explanations. The first states that פי הבאר refers to בארה של מרים and the second explanation says פיה ואמרה שירה alluding to the well mentioned in *Parshat Chukat* where *Bnei Yisrael* sang the song.

*Rambam*<sup>26</sup> defines the פי הבאר as שתוציא מים. *Tiferet Yisrael* seems similar to *Rambam*, and states that פי הבאר refers to אבן על גול היה שמאז שהכהו משה בחרב נתן בכל עת מימיו והיה מתגלגל עמהם במדבר בכל המקומות כמעין המטלטל. According to *Pirkei DiRabbi Eliezer*<sup>27</sup> the well mentioned in the *Mishnah* refers to the one discovered by *Hagar* and *Yishmael*. *Radal* comments on *Pirkei DiRabbi Eliezer*<sup>28</sup> that פי הבאר could allude to the wells of *Avraham* and *Yitzchak*, or *Moshe*, or *Hagar* and *Yishmael*, or *Yaakov* and *Rachel*. The *Zohar*<sup>29</sup> says פי הבאר refers to the well where *Moshe* met *Yitro*'s daughters or where *Yaakov* met *Rachel*. It would seem that the explanation that פי הבאר refers to *Yaakov* and *Rachel* makes the most sense since the *pasuk* in *Vayeitzei* uses the phrase פי הבאר when *Yaakov* and *Rachel* met. In any case, it is apparent that the פי הבאר must be special, since it was worthy to be created many years prior to its use.

In the *Gemara*<sup>30</sup>, it is apparent that the well is extraordinary in other ways as well. אמר רבי חנניה הרואה באר בחלום רואה שלום שנאמר: ויחפרו עבדו יצחק..... באר מים חיים. רבי נתן אומר מצא תורה שנאמר כי מוצא ימצא חיים וכתבי

<sup>25</sup> אבות ה:ו

<sup>26</sup> פירוש המשניות

<sup>27</sup> פרק ל סז:ב-סח:א

<sup>28</sup> פרק י"ט ס"ק:ב

<sup>29</sup> חלק ב יב:ב

<sup>30</sup> ברכות נו:

הכא באר מים חיים. *Rav Natan* and *Rav Chanina* are showing us that a well is more than a container of water. It symbolizes the spiritual lifeline of the Jews. It is possible to combine the two statements of *Rav Natan* and of *Rav Chanina* together, and say that one will gain the utmost from his *Torah* study if he has peace.

It is apparent from our tradition that באר cannot be understood merely in its mundane sense as a source of water. The *drashot* on this word are typical of *Chazal's* methodology of interpreting the *Torah*. Since we are delving into the *dvar Hashem*, *Chazal* want to explicate as many messages as possible. The themes developed in this paper help the Jew face the world and use every interaction to enhance his devotion to *Hashem*.

The well reminds us that we can be in a state of despair but ultimately the positive will overwhelm the negative. Furthermore, the well reminds us to be vigilant to nourish both the physical and spiritual components of one's being.



## לְדוֹד ה' אֹרֵי

There is a custom to recite *Tehillim* 27, לְדוֹד ה' אֹרֵי *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until *Shmini Atzeret* (or through *Shmini Atzeret* in *chutz la'aretz*)<sup>1</sup>, a time period that is set aside for repentance. We also have a tradition to sound the *shofar* from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* through the entire month to serve as a reminder for us to do *teshuva*. This tradition originates from the time when *Moshe* went up on *Har Sinai* on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, to receive the *luchot* for the second time. *Moshe*'s ascent meant that *Hashem* had forgiven *Bnei Yisrael*'s sin of the Golden Calf. When *Moshe* went up, a *shofar* was sounded throughout the camp as a reminder to the people to maintain their spirit of *teshuva*. The *minhag* of saying לְדוֹד ה' אֹרֵי is based on a *Midrash* which explains that *Hashem* is my light refers to *Rosh Hashanah*, and 'my salvation' to *Yom Kippur*, and that 'He will hide me in His shelter' is an allusion to *Sukkot*.<sup>2</sup>

Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe offers an insight regarding the significance of reciting specifically *Tehillim* 27 during this particular time. Rabbi Yaffe views *Tehillim* 27 as the anthem of the High Holiday season. He explains that "an anthem is a piece of music that expresses the essence of the entity it celebrates, a common theme which unites all of the diverse people and variegated activities of life in that place." The month of *Elul* is a time for "introspection and self-evaluation." *Rosh Hashanah* is the time for us to examine our connection to *Hashem* on a personal level and as a collective community. During *Aseret Yemei Teshuvah* and

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<sup>1</sup> משנה ברורה, תקפא:ב

<sup>2</sup> ראה 170, The Complete Artscroll Siddur, pg.

*Yom Kippur*, we recall our past actions, and through this introspection we can connect to *Hashem* on a deeper level. With this new, deeper connection to *Hashem*, we begin the holiday of *Sukkot*, “where every aspect of our lives is embraced and suffused with the presence of God’s love for us and our reciprocal love of God,” which gives us great happiness that reaches its peak on *Shmini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*.<sup>3</sup>

We recite this *perek* of *Tehillim* twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. The first two words, ה' אורי, encompass the main idea of the experiences we are supposed to have throughout this time period. The function of light is to reveal. The anthem לודו אורי expresses the feeling we should have during this time period that *Hashem* is “uniquely accessible” to us.<sup>4</sup> Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains in his commentary on *Tehillim* that the implication of the fact that this *perek* begins with the word לודו, as opposed to מזמור לודו or מזמור לודו is that *David* “simply expresses the thoughts and attitudes which filled (his) spirit and guided him in his life on earth.” *Tehillim* 27 expresses the “specific concepts that sustained *David* throughout all the vicissitudes of his life.”

In this *mizmor*, *David HaMelech* speaks of the struggles that he faced throughout his life, and how those struggles helped him reinforce his *bitachon* in, and relationship with *Hashem*. *David*’s first major struggle was against his father-in-law *Shaul*. *Hashem* originally chose *Shaul* to be king over Israel, but *Shaul* failed to listen to the word of *Hashem*, so He rejected him and chose *David* to be his replacement.

Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer explains the difference between *Shaul* and *David*. He says, “The outstanding quality which God seeks in a Jewish leader is unshakable faith. In desperate

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<sup>3</sup> ראה Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe, Chabad.org

<sup>4</sup> שם

moments of crisis and fear, *David's* faith only grew stronger. *Shaul* however, panicked and weakened under pressure.”<sup>5</sup> He brings an example from the book of *Shmuel II*, when the Philistines suddenly attacked the Jews in the valley of *Rephaim* soon after *David* began ruling as king. The first thing *David* did was ask *Hashem* what he should do. *Hashem* told him to fight against the Philistines because He would deliver them into the Jews' hands. The Philistines attacked and *David* struck them down. Then they attacked again, and *David* once more asked *Hashem* what to do. This time, *Hashem* told *David*:

לֹא תַעֲלֶה הַסֵּב אֶל אֲחֵרֵיהֶם וּבִאתָ לָהֶם מִמּוֹל בְּכַאֲמִים. וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַד אֵת קוֹל צְעָדָה  
בְּרֹאשֵׁי הַבְּכָאִים אִזְ תִּהְרָץ כִּי אִזְ יֵצֵא ה' לְפָנֶיךָ לְהַכּוֹת בְּמַחֲנֵה פְּלִשְׁתִּים.<sup>6</sup>

*David* listened to *Hashem's* command and was victorious in the battle. *Rashi* explains that the rustling noise at the tops of the trees that *David* was supposed to listen for signified that *Hashem* was sending His angels to come fight for *Bnei Yisrael*. Rabbi Feuer adds, quoting a *Midrash*,<sup>7</sup> that the Philistine army grew closer and closer to the Jewish army until they were four cubits away from each other. The soldiers cried out to *David*, asking how much longer they needed to wait before attacking. *David's* answer was, “We must continue to wait until God signals...Better to die innocent and blameless than to live in guilt and sin! Let us lift up our eyes to God and await His salvation.” As soon as *Bnei Yisrael* looked up, the treetops started rustling, telling them to begin attacking, and again *David* and his forces defeated the Philistines. The third *pasuk* of *Tehillim 27* can be referring to this battle: אִם תִּחַנֶּה עָלַי מַחֲנֶה לֹא יִירָא לְבִי אִם

תִּקְרָה עָלַי מִלְחָמָה בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹשֵׁת.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> ראה 58 עמוד, *Tehillim Treasury*, Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer.

<sup>6</sup> שמואל ב' ה: כג-כד

<sup>7</sup> ילקוט שמעוני קמב

<sup>8</sup> תהלים כז:ג

We can contrast *David's* unshakable *bitachon* in *Hashem* to how *Shaul* reacted when he was being attacked by the Philistines. Shortly after *Shaul* was anointed as king, *Shmuel* told him

וַיְבַרְכֵהוּ לְפָנָיו הַגִּלְגָל וַהֲמָה אֲנֹכִי יָרַד אֵלֶיךָ לְהַעֲלוֹת עֲלוֹת לְזֶבֶחַ זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים שְׂבַעַת יָמִים תּוֹחֵל עַד בּוֹאֵי אֵלֶיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי לְךָ אֶת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה.<sup>9</sup>

*Shmuel* was referring to the upcoming war against the Philistines. *Shaul* waited until the seventh day as instructed, but when *Shmuel* still did not arrive, his soldiers started to disband from him. When *Shaul* saw this happening, he panicked and ordered the people to bring the two offerings. Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, *Shmuel* arrived. *Shmuel* asked *Shaul* what he was doing, and *Shaul* responded by saying that the Philistines were approaching and he had not yet offered a sacrifice to *Hashem*. *Shmuel* then admonished *Shaul* and said,

נִסְפָּלַת לֹא שְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת מִצְוֹת ה' אֶל-לִהְיֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ כִּי עֲתָה הִכִּינוּ ה' אֶת מַמְלַכְתְּךָ אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד עוֹלָם: וְעֲתָה מַמְלַכְתְּךָ לֹא תִקּוּם בְּקֶשׁ ה' לֹא אִישׁ כִּלְכָבוּ וַיִּצְוָהוּ ה' לְנָגִיד עַל עַמּוֹ כִּי לֹא שְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ ה':<sup>10</sup>

*Shaul*, unlike *David*, was unable to stand strong with full *bitachon* in *Hashem* in the face of danger. *Shaul's* lack of unshakable faith was ultimately the cause of his downfall. *Shaul* began pursuing *David* with the intention of killing him even before *David* officially replaced him as king. Time after time *Shaul* attempted to kill *David*, but he failed each time. *David* succeeded because he had *Hashem* on his side, as opposed to *Shaul* who continuously fought against the word of *Hashem*. When *Shmuel* told *Shaul* he was wrong for not listening to *Hashem* when he kept *Agag* alive and didn't kill all of *Amalek's* animals, *Shaul* refused to admit that he had done anything wrong instead of immediately doing *teshuva*.

<sup>9</sup> שמואל א י:ז

<sup>10</sup> שם יג:יג-יד



The second *pasuk* of *Tehillim* 27 summarizes *Shaul's* and *David's* struggle against each other: בקרב עלי מרעים לאכל את בשרי צרי ואיבי לוי הנמה בשלו ונפלו.<sup>11</sup> The *perek* continues to reference many of *David's* struggles throughout his life. The last *pasuk* emphasizes *David's* main point, the lesson that he learned from all his hardships: קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה'." Rabbi Feuer ads, based on the *Malbim*, "that hoping eagerly for God's assistance is different than hoping for the aid of man. Heartache, disappointment, and despondency are the lot of one who must ask for the favors of man...Not so with God. Placing one's confidence in His beneficence is an...experience which brings encouragement and renewed strength of character and spirit."<sup>13</sup> This quote accurately describes the essence of *Shaul's* downfall and *David's* success. *Shaul* caved under the pressure of man. He felt the need to please the people around him because he feared being left alone, even though doing so meant going against the word of *Hashem*. *David*, however, eagerly placed his full trust in *Hashem*. Even when his enemies were a mere four cubits away from him, he did not fear because he knew that *Hashem* was with him.

The time during which we recite לוד ה' אורי should be a time for us to strive to reach the level of *bitachon* that *David Hamelech* had in *Hashem*. *David Hamelech* repeats קוה אל ה' again at the end of the last *pasuk*; these are the closing words of the entire *perek*. The fact that these words are repeated, and that *David* chose to end with these words, emphasizes the point that we must never forget that when we are in a time of need, the One we need to turn to is *Hashem*. We must remember that if we put all of our trust in *Hashem*, He will be our light and our guide.

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<sup>11</sup> תהלים כז:ב

<sup>12</sup> רש"ר הירש

<sup>13</sup> ראה *Ibid*, pg. 142



## Responsibility: Catalyst for Unity

There is a well-known Jewish refrain, כלל ישראל ערבים זה בזה<sup>1</sup>. What does it mean for one person to be responsible for another? In a number of narratives in *Tanach*, we can manifestations of responsibility on both an individual and on a national scale. By examining the lessons of a few of these stories, we can gain insight into the meaning of this significant concept.

A prime example in *Tanach* of an individual who took responsibility as a leader for others is *Yehuda*, the son of *Yaakov*. His leadership became apparent when *Yoseph* was in the pit and *Yehuda* stood up to his brothers and suggested selling him instead of killing him.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this, the *Midrash* says that *Yehuda* was punished for not going far enough. This was because *Hashem* expected him “to carry *Yoseph* on his shoulders and lead him back to his father.”<sup>3</sup>

Yet despite this, or perhaps because of it, *Yehuda* went on to heroically accept personal accountability at two critical moments. The first was following the incident with *Tamar*. Soon after, *Yehuda* heard that she was pregnant and, assuming it was from an illicit relationship, he demanded that she be publicly burned. When she approached *Yehuda* and placed the items he had given her as a deposit before him, he realized his mistake and declared

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<sup>1</sup> שבועות לט.

<sup>2</sup> בראשית לו:כו

<sup>3</sup> בראשית רבה פה:ג

צדקה ממני<sup>4</sup>. *Yehuda* recognized that she was right and he responded by admitting his mistake and taking responsibility for his actions.

It is interesting to note that the word used for the objects deposited with the “anonymous prostitute” is ערבון<sup>5</sup> which shares the same root as the Hebrew word for responsibility, ערבות. The two are clearly linked, as the collateral was what caused *Yehuda* to take responsibility.

Assuming accountability for his own actions was the first step. Later on, he developed this characteristic further and began to exemplify the concept of ערבים זה בזה – taking responsibility for others. When the bothers got into trouble with *Yoseph* in Egypt and he forced them to bring their younger brother *Binyamin* to him, they returned to their father *Yaakov*, terrified to tell him the news. *Yehuda* spoke up, saying, שלחה הנער אתי...אנכי אערבנו מידי תבקשנו<sup>6</sup>

What enabled *Yehuda* to take this extreme level of responsibility? R' Meir Zlotowitz<sup>7</sup> suggests that since *Yehuda* had lost two of his own sons, *Er* and *Onan*,<sup>8</sup> he was able to personally relate to *Yaakov*'s grief and fear of losing both sons born to *Rachel*. Later on, when *Binyamin* was accused of stealing the royal goblet, *Yehuda* fulfilled his promise to *Yaakov* by assuming personal responsibility for *Binyamin*'s safety.

The *Midrash Tanchuma* says that when the goblet was found in *Binyamin*'s sack, the brother's turned their faces except for *Yehuda*. He courageously stood up to *Yosef* and gave an

<sup>4</sup> בראשית לח:כו

<sup>5</sup> שם לח:יה

<sup>6</sup> שם מג:ה-ט

<sup>7</sup> פירוש "ארטסקרוול" לבראשית מג:ט

<sup>8</sup> בראשית לח:ז,י

eloquent speech requesting *Binyamin's* release.<sup>9</sup> In return for *Yehuda's* brave act of responsibility and his display of leadership, *Yaakov* blessed him befittingly with the promise <sup>ל</sup>לא יסור שבט מיהודה, a promise that *Yehuda* would be the father of the line of *David HaMelech*, and ultimately of the *Mashiach*.<sup>11</sup>

*Tanach* also provides us with examples of ערבות on a national or international scale. At *Matan Torah* the Jewish people gathered together “as one man with one heart”<sup>12</sup> with a singular purpose: to receive the Divine law. Commenting on the *pasuk* מפי עוז עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז<sup>13</sup>, the *Midrash Shochar Tov* says that at the mountain they not only accepted *Torah* for themselves, but they also accepted upon themselves the responsibility to pass on the *Torah* to their children. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks sees this as a “life affirming mission”, as “the courage to take the risk of responsibility, becoming co-authors with God of the world that ought to be.”<sup>14</sup>

Global unity of a very different type can be seen at the creation of *Migdal Bavel*. The generation at that time was שפה אחת ודברים אחדים<sup>15</sup>, united in their purpose to wage war against God. What brought them together was their shared (illegitimate) goal, and as soon as God changed their languages their unity shattered

<sup>9</sup> שם מד: יח-לד

<sup>10</sup> שם מט:י

<sup>11</sup> תוספתא ברכות ד:טז, זוהר ב:קגה

<sup>12</sup> רש"י, שמות יט:ב

<sup>13</sup> תהלים ח:ג

<sup>14</sup> ראה Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World: the Ethics of Responsibility*, p.273

<sup>15</sup> בראשית יא:א

and their mission fell apart. While these people demonstrated unity, it did not translate into mutual responsibility.

There are striking contrasts in the *pshat* discussing these two cases of national unity. Regarding *Dor Haflaga*, humanity had sunk so low that *Hashem* needed to “descend” to see them, as it says וירד ה' לראות את העיר<sup>16</sup>. This is in contrast to *Matan Torah*, in which the meeting between man and God is described with the exact opposite terminology; ומשה עלה אל האלקים, which describes man ascending to the highest possible level.

Another difference is the terms used to describe the two nations. The Babylonians of *dor haflaga* are referred to as “*bnei ha'Adam*” which has a negative connotation connecting man to his lowly origin from “*adama*”, earth. In contrast, at *Matan Torah* the people are referred to as “*Bnei Yisrael*”, connecting the nation back to their holy ancestor *Yaakov*.

Based on these biblical examples, the importance of responsibility on both the individual and national scale is clear.

God speaks to a Jewish leader saying, עד שלא נתמנית לא היית, ועכשיו שנתמנית נעשית ערב על הציבור<sup>17</sup>. His message to the individual is to start caring on a global level, to have “a love for all people and a love for all nations, expressing itself in a desire for their spiritual and material advancement”<sup>18</sup>, as portrayed by *Yehuda's* descendant *David HaMelech* and his future descendant *Mashiach ben David*.

Robert Kennedy said, “Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each

<sup>16</sup> שם יא:ה

<sup>17</sup> מדרש שוחר טוב, תהלים ח:ג

<sup>18</sup> ראה *Rabbi Abraham Kook*, “*Middot Ha-Rayah – The Moral Principles*”, trans.

other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest of walls of oppression and resistance.”<sup>19</sup> Responsibility starts on the level of the individual and hopefully reaches the national scale where it is manifested as unity. May we follow this example and begin by becoming responsible for our own actions, take on responsibility for others, and thereby ultimately create a unified world.

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<sup>19</sup> ‘A Tiny Ripple of Hope’ speech given on June 7,1966 ראה





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# מחשבה ומעשה

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## ערבות: A Halachik Concept

When thinking of *kol yisrael areivim zeh l'zeh*, one's mind might jump to a popular Jewish song or to a person pulling over on the side of a highway to help his fellow Jew. In common discourse, the idea of *areivut* rarely leaves the realm of *hashkafa*. However, this concept is much more deeply woven into *Torah* than is immediately evident. There are many specific ramifications of the concept of *areivut* in *halacha* as well.

The source for *areivut* in *Torah shebichtav* can be found at the end of the covenant made at *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival*. There, *Moshe* gave a final address in which he warned *Bnei Yisrael* about *avoda zara* and its consequences. *Moshe* told the nation 'הַנְּסִתֶּרֶת לֵה' אֲ-לֹהֵינוּ; וְהַנְּגִלֶת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ, עַד עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת<sup>1</sup> This meant that *Hashem* would punish the people who sin in private but it would be the nation's responsibility to punish the public sinners in the way the *Torah* commands. *Rashi* comments that the *pasuk* is teaching that it is our job to punish the people who worship *avoda zara*, לְבַעַר הָרַע בְּקִרְבָּנוּ, to remove the evil amongst us, and if we don't do this the nation will be punished along with the sinner.<sup>2</sup>

From this *pasuk*, we learn the concept of *areivut*, that not only do we have to keep *Hashem's* commandments, but we are also responsible to ensure that everyone else is fulfilling *Hashem's* word. *Rashi* and *Chizkuni* comment on the eleven dots that appear in the *Torah* on top of the words לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ, עַד. These dots correspond

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<sup>1</sup> דברים כט:כה

<sup>2</sup> רש"י שם

to the 11 letters of the prior words לָהֵאָרֶץ לְהִיָּיִנוּ and limit this responsibility to only take effect once *Bnei Yisrael* cross the Jordan and the *brit* of *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival* goes into effect. Until then, it will be up to God, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, to judge the sinners.

Rav S.R. Hirsch explains that when *Bnei Yisrael* would enter *Eretz Yisrael* they would begin to control their physical and civil life. This control comes with the responsibility of maintaining civil morality. Civil morality has two aspects that are elaborated on in *Torah shebichtav* and *Torah shebaal peh*. There are several instances in *Tanach* when *Bnei Yisrael* sought justice and needed to punish sinners: this is called *areivut b'avairot*. Also, *Chazal* learn from the above *pasuk* the concept of *areivut b'mitzvot* – the responsibility of every person to make sure his fellow Jew is observing the *mitzvot*.

### **Areivut in Tanach**

In *sefer Yehoshua*, we read that *Achan* took from the forbidden spoils of *Yericho*. The *pasuk* says <sup>3</sup> וַיִּמְעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל בְּחֶרֶם וַיִּשָּׂא וַיִּמְעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָוֹן...מִן הַחֶרֶם וַיַּחַר אָף ה' בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. *Metzudat David* comments on the fact that the *pasuk* says *Bnei Yisrael* sinned even though only *Achan* took from the spoils. However, since *Bnei Yisrael* failed to fulfill their responsibility in making sure that no one took from the spoils, they are also considered to have sinned. The *Rashi* mentioned above uses this story to prove that the *chiuv* of *areivut*, which the nation accepted at *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival*, only applies once *Bnei Yisrael* enter *Eretz Yisrael*. *Malbim* says that *Bnei Yisrael* are like one body, so when one person sins the entire body gets sick, and it affects the nation. He also says that there are two types of punishment. The sinner receives a specific consequence for his actions, and the nation suffers because *Hashem* removes His *hashgacha* from the nation. Here the *pasuk*

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<sup>3</sup> יהושע ז: א

says *אֵף ה' בְּכַנֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* showing that *Hashem* has removed his *hashgacha* as a punishment for not preventing *Achan* from taking the spoils.

Another example comes from the book of *Shoftim*. *Bnei Yisrael* responded to the horrific sin of *pilegash b'giva* by saying *שִׁימוּ לָכֶם עָלֵיָהּ עֲצוּ וְדַבְּרוּ*<sup>4</sup>. *Metzudat David* notes that this is an example of *Bnei Yisrael* understanding their obligation of *areivut* and seeing the need to immediately respond to a public sin.<sup>5</sup> Later on the *pasuk* says *וַיִּתְנַצְּבוּ פְּנֹת כָּל הָעָם כָּל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִהְלָל עִם הָאֱלֹהִים*<sup>6</sup>. *Malbim* notes that *Bnei Yisrael* are called *עִם הָאֱלֹהִים* here because the entire nation was standing up for the integrity of *Hashem's* name, and maintaining a high level of civil morality throughout the land<sup>7</sup>. *Ralbag* comments that *Bnei Yisrael* were fulfilling the *brit* that they made at *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival* to destroy the evil from amongst the nation in the manner that the *Torah* commands.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Areivut in Torah Sh'Baal Peh:**

The *Gemara* discusses how many *britot Hashem* made with *Bnei Yisrael* to keep the *Torah* and *mitzvot*, including the one made on *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival*. It explains, *אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה ה' את משה וגו' וכתוב ושמתם את דברי הברית הזאת וגו' נמצא מ"ח בריתות על כל מצוה ומצוה*<sup>9</sup>. The *Gemara* then brings two opinions. *Rabbi Shimeon* says *אין לך מצוה ומצוה שכתובה בתורה שלא נכרתו עליה ארבעים ושמונה בריתות של שש מאות אלף ושלושת*

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<sup>4</sup> שופטים יט:ל

<sup>5</sup> מצודת דוד שם

<sup>6</sup> שופטים כ:ב

<sup>7</sup> מלבי"ם שם

<sup>8</sup> רלב"ג שם

<sup>9</sup> סוטה לו:

*Yisrael*). *Rashi* explains that he means each of the 603,550 people took on the responsibility, *areivut*, of every other person's 48 *britot*, in addition to his own 48. *Rebbe* seems to make the same statement as *Rabbi Shimeon* but *Rav* explains that *Rebbe* meant משרשיא ערבה וערבה דערבא איכא בנייה; *Rashi* then explains what *Rebbe* was adding to *Rabbi Shimon's* statement. *Rebbe* understood that not only did each person have *areivut* for everyone else's *britot*, but he also took on the *chiuv* of *areivut* for everyone else. This is the start of *kol Yisrael areivim zeh l'zeh*; in addition to keeping their own covenant they also had to make sure everyone else was keeping his own.

### ***Areivut in Halacha:***

In addition to its meanings in the realms of *Tanach* and *hashkafah*, the concept of *areivut* also has serious *halachic* ramifications. Someone who has a *chiuv* in a *mitzvah*, even if he already performed it, can fulfill that *mitzvah* on behalf of others (colloquially referred to by the term "be *motzi* them"). The *Gemara* says <sup>10</sup>אף על פי שיצא מוציא<sup>10</sup>, even someone who already fulfilled his *chiuv* can still be *motzi* someone else. *Rashi* explains that this is because כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה<sup>11</sup>. *Areivut* creates a *maaseh mitzvah* for someone who technically fulfilled his *chiuv*. However, the *Gemara* clarifies that this only applies to *birchat hamitzvah* and not to *birchat hanehenin*.

This principle can be demonstrated with the *mitzvah* of *mikrah megilla*. It says in the *Shulchan Aruch* that even if someone already completed his obligation in *mikrah megilla*, he can still make the *brachot* and read the *megilla* again in order for other

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<sup>10</sup> ראש השנה כט. -כט:

<sup>11</sup> רש"י שם

people to fulfill their obligation.<sup>12</sup> The *Mishna Berurah* quotes *poskim* who say that if the person who has not yet fulfilled his obligation is able to make the *brachot*, it is preferable for him to say them himself, but we are usually lenient and follow the *Magen Avraham* who says that the person who is reading the *megilla* again can also say the *brachot* again.<sup>13</sup>

Another example is the *mitzvah* of *kiddush*. The *Shulchan Aruch* states that women have a *chiuv d'oraita* in *kiddush* (even though it is a *mitzvat aseï shehazman grama*) and therefore can be *motzi* other people, including men, in the *mitzvah*.<sup>14</sup> The *Mishna Berurah* comments there that a woman can be *motzi* others even if she herself was already *yotzei* in *kiddush*<sup>15</sup>; the *Aruch HaShulchan*<sup>16</sup> agrees with the *Mishna Berura*, but the *Shaar Hatzion* quotes the *Pri Megaddim* who doubts if the *chiuv* of *areivut* applies to women; according to him, if a woman was already *yotzei*, she can't be *motzi* others.<sup>17</sup>

The *Dagul Mirvava* asks the following question: There is an opinion of the *Magen Avraham* that one fulfills his *chiuv d'oraita* of *kiddush* through *tefillat arvit* on Friday night. According to this, he asks, how can a woman who did not *daven maariv* be *yotzei* in *kiddush* with a man who already *davened maariv* and therefore only has a *chiuv d'rabbanan*?<sup>18</sup> Rabbi Akiva Eigar says that the

<sup>12</sup> שו"ע או"ח תרצב:ג.

<sup>13</sup> משנה ברורה שם ס"ק י, ושער הציון ס"ק יד

<sup>14</sup> שו"ע או"ח רעא:ב

<sup>15</sup> משנה ברורה שם ס"ק ה

<sup>16</sup> ערוך השוהלן רעא:ו

<sup>17</sup> ס"ק ט שו"ע שם, שער הציון

<sup>18</sup> שו"ע שם, מ"א ס"ק ב

man who *davens maariv* can still be *motzi* the woman in *kiddush* because of the *din* of *areivut*.<sup>19</sup> But *Dagul Mirvava* says based on the *Rosh*<sup>20</sup> that women are not actually included in the *din* of *areivut*, so maybe there really is a problem with a man being *motzi* a woman.

Rabbi Akiva Eigar strongly disagrees with the *Dagul Mirvava*. He holds that, even if the *din* of *areivut* does not apply to women, a man could still be *motzi* a woman. He proves this from a *Gemara* in *Brachot*<sup>21</sup> which tells the story about *Yanai Hamelech* and his queen who wanted *Shimon ben Shetach* to recite *birchat hamazon* for them. *Shimon ben Shetach* did not eat enough to have a *chiuv d'oraita* in *birchat hamazon*, yet the reason he could say the *bracha* for them is because of *areivut*. But if *areivut* does not apply to women, then how could *Shimon ben Shetach* be *motzi* the queen, if she might have a *chiuv d'oraita* in *birchat hamazon*? We can conclude from this that at the very least men must be able to use *areivut* to be *motzi* women in a *mitzvah*. Therefore there should be no problem with *kiddush*.

Furthermore, Rabbi Akiva Eigar thinks there is no difference between men and women regarding *areivut*; we do not find anywhere that the rule *אדם יצא מוציא* does not apply to women. He says that really the *Rosh* is just clarifying that only someone who is *chayav* in a *mitzvah* can be *motzi* someone else with a *chiuv* in that *mitzvah*. However, someone who only has a *chiuv d'rabbanan* cannot be *motzi* someone with a *chiuv d'oraita*. Therefore if women have a *chiuv d'oraita* in *birchat hamazon*, they can be *motzi* men in the *mitzvah* even if they already fulfilled the *mitzvah*. However, if women only have a *chiuv d'rabbanan* this would not fall into the

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<sup>19</sup> ר' עקיבא איגר שם

<sup>20</sup> רא"ש ברכות פרק ג' סימן י"ג

<sup>21</sup> ברכות מז.



category of *areivut* as they have a lesser *chiuv* than men. The *Rosh* is not specifically stating that *areivut* does not apply to women, rather he is explaining a general rule of *areivut*: since women might only have a *chiuv d'rabbanan* in *birkat hamazon* they cannot be *motzi* a man who has a *chiuv d'oraita* because *areivut* does not apply in this case. This rule would apply in any case when two people do not have an equal level of *chiuv*. Also, the *Rosh* specifically says that a woman could still be *motzi* anyone who has a *chiuv d'rabbanan*.

Conversely, the *Pri Megadim*<sup>22</sup> still says he is not sure if women have the *chiuv* of *areivut*, and *Dagul Meravavah* holds that women do not have a *chiuv* of *areivut*. Their basis for this is their understanding of the *Rosh* that women are not included in *areivut*. Rabbi A. Eisenberger in his footnotes on the *Pri Megadim*'s "Petichah Kollelet" tries to explain the logic behind this.<sup>23</sup> The *Gemarah* in *Kiddushin*<sup>24</sup> says that women also have a *chiuv* of *kibbud av v'eim*, and we know this from the words איש אמו ואביו תיראו. The word תיראו is plural and therefore includes both men and women. But, the *Gemara* asks, why does it specifically say איש? It explains that a married woman's first and foremost obligation is to her household, and therefore it is not always in her control to honor her parents. From this, it's possible the *Rosh* reasons that since women's time and availability is not always in their control, women cannot be part of *areivut*. There is another explanation in the *Gemara*<sup>25</sup> that even though a blind person may be exempt from *mitzvot* he still has a *chiuv d'rabbanan* because, as the *Rosh*

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<sup>22</sup> פרי מגדים פתיחה כוללת, חלק שני, ט"ז

<sup>23</sup> פירוש ר"א אייזנברגר על הפתיחה כוללת של הפרי מגדים, עמ' שכו-של

<sup>24</sup> קידושין ל:

<sup>25</sup> קידושין לא:

explains, he is from the same *min*, type, as people who have a real *chiuv*. However, women are a different *min* than men, and therefore *areivut* may not apply to them.

The *Pri Megadim* quotes the *Sama D'chai*<sup>26</sup> who also asks the question of whether the *chiuv* of *areivut* includes women and converts, and additionally if it applies to *mitzvot d'rabbanan*. The *Sama D'chai* quotes *Zera Avraham* who says that there is no *chiuv* of *areivut* for *mitzvot d'rabbanan*. To prove this, he brings the *halacha* that a person cannot make a vow which nullifies a previous vow. At *Har Sinai* we promised to keep the *mitzvot*, so swearing to violate a *mitzvah* would be violating a previous vow. This promise at *Har Sinai* did not include *mitvot d'rabbanan* so it seems that one could swear against a *mitvah d'rabbanan*. However, there was a separate *brit*, recorded in *Parshat Nitzavim*<sup>27</sup> that specifically states, *שָׁמַעְתֶּם הַיּוֹם וְגִרְתֶּם אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבֵּי מִתְּנִיעֶיךָ... לְעִבְרָה בְּבְרִית ה' אֶל-לִהְיוֹתֶךָ*, showing that their promise to keep the *mitzvot* also applies to all future people, converts, and *mitzvot* (meaning *mitzvot d'rabbanan*). But in this second promise they only swore regarding the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* themselves, but not about their *chiuv* of *areivut*. *Zera Avraham* proves that *areivut* does not apply to anything which was added in *Nitzavim* by quoting the *Tosfos*<sup>28</sup> who say that converts are not included in the rule of *areivut*. We can infer from this that *areivut* does not apply to anything else that the nation accepted in *Parashat Nitzavim*, like *mitzvot d'rabbanan*. This logic could also apply to women, who are specifically mentioned in *Nitzavim*. This is another explanation for why women might not be included in *areivut*. After quoting *Zera Avraham*, the *Sama D'chai* disagrees with him. He says that even though

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<sup>26</sup> סמא דחיי או"ח יג-יד

<sup>27</sup> דברים כט:י-יא

<sup>28</sup> תוס' קידושין ע:

converts may not have a *chiuv* of *areivut*, this concept cannot be applied to *mitzvot d'rabbanan*. When *Bnei Yisrael* took a vow to accept all *mitzvot d'rabbanan* in the future they also included the concept of *areivut*.

Why does *Tosfot* say that converts are not obligated in *areivut*? *Tosfot* and *Rash*<sup>29</sup> say that since the *Gemara* in *Sota*<sup>30</sup> mentions the number of people in *Bnei Yisrael* who took on the *brit*, and this number does not include the *erev rav*, it must be that converts are not included in the *chiuv* of *areivut*. Yet, in another place, *Tosfot* disagree with this idea. They say that converts really are included in *areivut*, and the number mentioned in *Sota* is not so exact or important. They did not know the number of the *erev rav*, and that is why the number does not include them.<sup>31</sup> (However the *Mechilta* says that the number of *erev rav* was twice as many as when they left Egypt.) The *Maharit* says that converts do have an obligation of *areivut*, and he disagrees with the concept that the *erev rav* were not included in the *brit*. He instead explains like *Tosfot* in *Masechet Niddah* that the *Gemara* in *Sota* is not meant to be taken literally, and the exact number does not matter.

The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>32</sup> says יש מונעים גר מלהיות שליח ציבור ונדחו דבריהם, that some say converts cannot be the *shliach tzibbur*, but that this is incorrect. A convert is allowed to be the *shliach tzibbur*. Based on this, the *Pri Megadim* corrects his earlier statement and

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<sup>29</sup> רש"י נדה יג:

<sup>30</sup> סוטה לז:

<sup>31</sup> תוס' נדה יג:

<sup>32</sup> שו"ע או"ח נג:יט

says that if a convert can be the *shliach tzibbur*, he must have a *chiuv* of *areivut*.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, there is a lot of discussion on the inclusion of women, converts, and *mitzvot d'rabbanan* in the *chiuv* of *areivut*. However, it seems that most of the *poskim* do consider women to have a *chiuv*. The *Pri Megadim* leaves the *machloket* unresolved but the *Dagul Meravavah* holds that women are excluded from the *chiuv* and views this as the opinion of the *Rosh*. However, many of the other *poskim* disagree with this analysis. There is also a *machloket* between the *Sama D'chai* and *Zera Avraham* over whether *mitzvot d'rabbanan* are included in *areivut*. Based on one *Tosfot* which held that converts are excluded from *areivut*, *Zera Avraham* says that *mitzvot d'rabbanan* are also excluded. But the *Sama D'chai* disagrees with *Zera Avraham's* logic and says that *mitzvot d'rabbanan* are included. There is also a discussion over a convert's *chiuv* in *areivut*. *Zera Avraham*, possibly the *Sama D'chai*, one of the *Baalei Tosfot*, and *Rashi* all agree that converts do not have a *chiuv*. On the other hand, a different one of the *Baalei Tosfot*, the *Maharit*, the *Pri Megadim* (after he changes his opinion), and seemingly the *Shulchan Aruch* explain that converts do have a *chiuv*. All this *halachic* discussion teaches that *areivut* is not a simple idea but a complex part of the *halachic* system and is found in *halachot* that we encounter every day.

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אשל אברהם שם ס"ק יט<sup>33</sup>

## Physicality through the Torah's Eyes

וייצר ה' א-להים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים...<sup>1</sup>

*Rashi* famously comments on this *pasuk* that *Hashem* created man from two opposing forces: the body, which is from the earth, and the soul, which is from *shamayim*. Because of this, man has to constantly reconcile both parts of his being, *gashmiut* (the part belonging to the physical world) and *ruchniut* (his spiritual component). However, this is still open to much interpretation; does it mean that man should be striving to push one of the two out of the picture, or should he be working towards finding the balance between the two?

In general, many *Torah* sources seem to look down upon *gashmiut*, so does this mean we should suppress it as much as we can? On the other hand, we were created in a physical world, so should we instead embrace the physical and try to find a way to raise it to a higher level? This issue is the subject of much debate among the *mefarshim*.

One main source where physicality is addressed by the *Torah* is the concept of *nezirut*. As part of the laws of the *nazir*, the *Torah* says: ועשה הכהן אחד לחטאת ואחד לעלה וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש וקדש את <sup>2</sup> The *nazir* has to bring a *korban chatat*, assumedly for having sinned. What does this mean? What sin has the *nazir* committed?

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<sup>1</sup> בראשית ב:ז

<sup>2</sup> במדבר ו:יא

*Rashi* comments on this by quoting *R' Elazar Hakapar*, a *Tanna*, who explains that his sin was that he pained himself by abstaining from wine.<sup>3</sup> In other words, his sin was not that he ended the *nezirut*, rather that he started the *nezirut* in the first place. It sounds as if this *Gemara* is saying one should *not* refrain from anything physical. Similarly, *Ramban* explains *nezirut* as something to be opposed to, unless it is done for the proper reasons. Meaning, if one uses *nezirut* as a “penalty” on oneself for not doing something, then he is a *rasha*. But if one uses *nezirut* as a tool to help fix a behavioral problem, then it is praiseworthy.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, *Ramban* explains *nezirut* as an ideal, something to strive for. Regarding the question of why the *nazir* brings a *chatat*, *Ramban* extrapolates *al derech ha'pshat* that he brings a *chatat* for ending the state of *nezirut*, which is a holy state of being. So the *chatat*, in a way, is criticizing the former *nazir* as if to say, “you have diminished yourself to a ‘commoner’; you should have remained a *nazir* forever.”<sup>5</sup>

*Ramban* expounds on this idea in *Parshat Kedoshim*, where he says that one should refrain from *assur* things, and it is also good to shy away from *mutar* things. For example, although it is not *assur* to be *tamei*, one should still shy away from it. *Ramban* feels that because there are so many problems of desire and lust in this world, it is good to place oneself in another world; disconnecting from physicality is a way to get to *kedusha*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> גמרא בבא קמא צא:

<sup>4</sup> רמב"ם משנה תורה: הלכות דעות ג:א והלכות נדרים יג:כג

<sup>5</sup> רמב"ן במדבר ו:ד

<sup>6</sup> רמב"ן ויקרא יט:ב

Along the same lines, there is a *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* that states, ועל הארץ תישן, ומים במשורה תשתה, ופת במלח תאכל, וכך היא דרכה של תורה: פת במלח תאכל, ומים במשורה תשתה, ועל הארץ תישן, וחיי צער תחיה ובתורה אתה עמל...<sup>7</sup>

“The way of *Torah* is to eat bread with salt, drink water in small amount, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation- but toil in *Torah*...” This *Mishnah* seems to disagree with the opinion of *R' Elazar Hakapar*, and imply that one should deprive himself of all physicality except for the absolute basics. Is this in fact a contradiction?

Of the many *mefarshim* that comment on this *Mishnah*, the general view is that this life of deprivation is all for Talmud Torah. *Rashi* and the *Meiri* take the stand that the *Mishnah* is not advocating asceticism. A life dependent on delicacies can lead to neglect of Talmud Torah, but one does not have to give his wealth away and live a life of poverty; one has to be healthy and strong in order to fulfill his potential. But at the same time, it is all a balance and one has to be prepared to sacrifice personal comfort for *Torah*.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, the *Rambam*, *Midrash Shmuel*, *Chida*, *Mesilat Yesharim*, and many others do emphasize the idea of sacrificing for *Torah*. They say that Talmud Torah should not be subservient to the fulfillment of any physical needs; one should live a life of physical deprivation. One should not devote his attention to anything but *Torah* because there *Torah* cannot coexist with wealth and honor.<sup>9</sup> If one becomes dependent on comforts, this will be at the expense of time that would have been

<sup>7</sup> פרקי אבות ו:ד

<sup>8</sup> רשי ומאירי על פרקי אבות ו:ד, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury*, Artscroll, R' Moshe Lieber

<sup>9</sup> רמב"ם על פרקי אבות ו:ד, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury*, Artscroll, R' Moshe Lieber

devoted to Talmud Torah.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, one's love for *Torah* should be so deep that he is oblivious to material hardship.<sup>11</sup> *Mesilat Yesharim* says that we are not here in this world for relaxation, but for labor. We are supposed to be like soldiers on the front lines who eat in haste, sleep at irregular intervals, and are always prepared for battle.<sup>12</sup> Despite the circumstances, physicality is disregarded when it comes to *Torah*.

Furthermore, *Ramchal* writes in *Derech Hashem* that man is composed of two opposing forces: the body and soul. Nevertheless, he is born completely physical and all material is inherently dark. Similarly, Rav Shimshon Pincus writes in *Nefesh Chaya* that physicality is relatively bad because nothing in this world can compare to real pleasure in the next world.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, *Ramchal* says that man must make every effort for his soul to overcome the physical and elevate himself. But man is constantly involved in the physical; it is impossible to live without eating, drinking, etc. Yet despite the challenge of continuously being occupied with the physical, man is able to elevate the physical when he transforms mundane activities into acts of spiritual perfection.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the many opinions that shun physicality, it is still a fundamental part of several *mitzvot*, such as *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. As part of *Shabbat*, we have the *mitzvah* of Oneg Shabbat.

<sup>10</sup> *The Pirkei Avos Treasury*, Artscroll, R' Moshe , מדרש שמואל על פרקי אבות ו:ד, Lieber

<sup>11</sup> *The Pirkei Avos Treasury*, Artscroll, R' Moshe , חידה/חידא על פרקי אבות ו:ד, Lieber

<sup>12</sup> מסילת ישרים פרק א

<sup>13</sup> ראה 15-17 *Nefesh Chaya*, Rav Pincus,

<sup>14</sup> דרך ה' ד-א-ד



*Ramban* comments on the words <sup>15</sup>שבת שבתון מקרא קודש, that *Oneg Shabbat* should be specifically with נקיה ובכסות נקיה. This means with physical items, such as food and clothing, and through these we transform the *chol* to *kodesh*.

Not only that, but we learn the *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbat* from a *pasuk*, which says <sup>16</sup>וקראת לשבת עונג *Radak* comments on this *pasuk*, that the *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbat* is so that we will come to glorify *Hashem*. *Shabbat* is different from the other days of the week because it is the day designated to remember that *Hashem* created the world. Therefore by eating tasty foods, we are praising and thanking *Hashem* for everything that He created; we glorify *Hashem* on *Shabbat* through eating!<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, on *Yom Tov* we have a *mitzvah* of *simcha*. But what does that mean? *Rebbe Eliezer* in the *Gemara* says that *Simchat Yom Tov* means eating, drinking, sleeping, etc. However, *Rebbe Yochanan* says that it is עזרת ה'יהי לכם or עזרת לה'. Either the *simcha* is intended for us or for *Hashem*; it must be either כולו לה' or כולו לכם. But *Rav Yehoshua*, whose opinion is accepted by the *halacha*, explains that it should be half for *Hashem* and half for us. <sup>18</sup> In short, this means that the day is all about a balance between physicality, which is for us, and spirituality, which is for *Hashem*.

Practically, *Rambam* explains how to apply this: for *Simchat Yom Tov*, children should get nuts (or perhaps candies nowadays), women should get new clothing or jewelry, and men should eat meat or drink wine, as it says, אין שמחה אלא בבשר ואין שמחה

<sup>15</sup> ויקרא כג:ג

<sup>16</sup> ישעיהו נח:יג

<sup>17</sup> רד"ק בישעיהו נח:יג

<sup>18</sup> ביצה טו:

אלא ביין.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, one should be careful not to drink too much, lest he get drunk or not share with the needy; when one eats and drinks, he also has to feed the poor, since there is not real *simcha* unless one shares with others. In addition, one should not only eat and drink throughout the entire day; one should do some spiritual activities, such as *davening*, or reading from the *Torah*. In summary, the *Rambam* comes to a similar conclusion: one should have food (physicality) to enhance *Yom Tov*, but balance it out by injecting spiritual content into the experience.<sup>20</sup>

Along the same lines, Rabbi S.R. Hirsch believes that there needs to be a balance between the two aspects. He explains that the meaning of the *shoresh* נור is to set apart. The *nazir* undertakes to dedicate his entire self exclusively to God. He draws a circle around himself in which only God is to be present. But this is not isolation like living on a hilltop in the middle of nowhere; it is the isolation of one's mind in the midst of ordinary life.<sup>21</sup> In other words, one should strive and work hard to connect with *Hashem*, but still live in the world.

Perhaps this approach is the easiest to connect to in today's world. It instructs us to get a job, build a family and a home, and even indulge in some pleasures, but at the same time to be a growing Jew, constantly working towards a relationship with *Hashem*.

At the end of the day, this is a legitimate argument with two valid sides. But it is important to point out that whichever opinion one lives by, everyone agrees that one should not relate to physicality as a goal of itself. At least according to some it can be a means to a goal, but never a goal itself.

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<sup>19</sup> גמרא פסחים קט.

<sup>20</sup> רמב"ם הלכות יום טוב ו:יח-כ

<sup>21</sup> רש"ר הירש במדבר ו:ב

## Learning vs. Earning

The *Mishnah* in *Masechet Avot* makes two apparently contradictory statements. On the one hand, it says *ועל במלה תאכל, ומים במשורה תשתה*, ועל <sup>1</sup>הארץ תישן, וחיי צער תחיה, ובתורה אתה עמל. However, the *Mishnah* also says <sup>2</sup>אהוב את המלאכה and <sup>3</sup>יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ, which the *meforshim* explain as teaching us to learn *Torah* while having an occupation. So is a person supposed to spend all his time learning *Torah* while living in poverty, or is he supposed to devote his time to earning a decent living?

The *Gemara* mentions a *machloket* between *R' Yishmael* and *R' Shimon bar Yochai* that echoes the dilemma in the *mishnah*. *R' Yishmael* says that one should earn a *parnasa*. He explains that although it says in *Yehoshua* <sup>4</sup>ולא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיד והגית בו יומם ולילה *Devarim* specifically states <sup>5</sup>ואספת דגנך, תירושך ויצהרך to prove that the former *pasuk* should not be taken literally. *R' Shimon bar Yochai* questions this opinion, saying <sup>6</sup>אפשר אדם חורש בשעת חרישה וזורע בשעת זריעה? He argues that when *Bnei Yisrael* keep the *Torah*, others will work for them, as it says in *Yeshayahu*, <sup>7</sup>ועמדו זרים, ורעו צאנכם. However, when *Bnei*

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<sup>1</sup> אבות ו:ד

<sup>2</sup> אבות א:י

אבות ב:ב

<sup>4</sup> יהושע א:ח

<sup>5</sup> דברים יא:יד

<sup>6</sup> ברכות לה:

<sup>7</sup> ישעיהו סא:ה

*Yisrael* do not keep the *Torah*, they will be forced to do their own work and the work of others, as it says in *Devarim*, ועבדת את אויבך.<sup>8</sup> Which of these two views are we to follow?

*Rambam* has a clear opinion on this matter: one is to work as hard as necessary to support oneself, and do anything in his power not to be dependent on charity. He says לעולם ידחוק אדם עצמו, ויתלגלג בצער, ואל יצטרך לבריות, ואל ישליך אדם עצמו על הציבור.<sup>9</sup> He also says that it is forbidden to accept money for learning *Torah*<sup>10</sup>, and points out that historically, the greatest of *Chachmei Yisrael* were woodchoppers and water-drawers.<sup>11</sup> In addition, we know that *Rashi* owned a vineyard, and *Rambam* himself was a renowned doctor.

These great Rabbis had occupations and still found time to learn an enormous amount of *Torah*. However, one might counter that this is not practical for the average Jew, and therefore it is important to know a man's basic obligation in *Talmud Torah*. On the one hand, the *Gemara* explains that the minimum requirement that a man has to learn to fulfill his obligation is פרק אחד שחרית ופרק אחד ערבית,<sup>12</sup> referring to saying *Shema* in the morning and at night. But the *Mishnah*<sup>13</sup> states תלמוד... להם שיעור... תורה, implying that the obligation of learning *Torah* is unlimited. The *Shulchan Aruch* quotes this obligation and explains that one must set aside time to learn even if he wishes to make a lot of

<sup>8</sup> דברים כח:מח

<sup>9</sup> הלכות מתנות עניים י"ח

<sup>10</sup> הלכות תלמוד תורה ג:י"א

<sup>11</sup> הלכות תלמוד תורה א:ט

<sup>12</sup> מנחות צט:

<sup>13</sup> פאה א:א

money.<sup>14</sup> According to the *Beur Halacha*, man's simple obligation is to set aside time every day to learn.<sup>15</sup>

How are men who learn all day supposed to afford their physical needs? One way is to learn in a *kollel* that relies on the charity of others to support its members.<sup>16</sup> *Rambam* is vehemently against this lifestyle and even goes so far as to say כל המשים על ליבו שיעסוק בתורה ולא יעשה מלאכה, ויתפרנס מן הצדקה הרי זה חילל את השם, וביזה את התורה.<sup>17</sup> However, in his commentary on *Pirkei Avot*, *Rambam* admits that most *talmidei chachamim* disagree with him.<sup>18</sup> R' Moshe Feinstein<sup>19</sup>, a later *posek*, states that *kollel* is certainly allowed. He says in the name of the *Maharshal* that the *kollel* system prevents *Torah* from being lost because it's impossible for someone to be a *talmid chacham* and have a job, and Rav Moshe adamantly encourages people to do whatever is necessary to learn *Torah*, and not to be overly concerned for the position of the *Rambam*. However, the *Rama* seems to say the opposite. He says that if one wants to be *machmir*, he should support himself and learn *Torah*, as the *Rambam* holds. While justifying accepting money to learn *Torah* in cases of necessity, the *Rama* views those who live a *kollel* life as relying on a leniency, since the *halacha* is that one should not take money for *talmud Torah*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> אורח חיים קנו:א

<sup>15</sup> אורח חיים רלא:א

<sup>16</sup> In *Eretz Yisrael*, *Kollels* are also supported by tax money.

<sup>17</sup> הלכות תלמוד תורה ג:י

<sup>18</sup> אבות ד:ה

<sup>19</sup> יורה דעה ב:קטז

<sup>20</sup> יורה דעה רמו:כא

Since *kollels* can be controversial, many *Torah* scholars choose instead to enter into something known as a *Yissachar-Zevulun* partnership. The source for this goes all the way back to the *shevatim*. According to *Chazal*, *Yissachar* was a scholar who would spend all of his time learning *Torah*, and *Zevulun*, the businessman, would support him. According to the *Tur*, this fulfilled *Zevulun's* obligation to learn *Torah*, and *Zevulun* received a share of *Yissachar's* reward in *olam habah*.<sup>21</sup> The *Rama* explains that two people may draw up a contract that allows a working man to support someone who is learning, and it is considered as if the working man did the learning as well.<sup>22</sup> The *Gemara* tells a story about two brothers, *Hillel HaNasi* and *Shavna*, who discussed entering into such an agreement.<sup>23</sup> This system has been used for thousands of years, and nowadays many *yeshivot* have written *halachically* binding contracts for those who want to create a *Yissachar-Zevulun* partnership.

The *Gemara* says that when one faces ultimate judgment, one of the questions he will be asked is *קבעת עתים לתורה*?<sup>24</sup> *Rambam* and the *Shulchan Aruch* explain:

כל איש מישראל, חייב בתלמוד תורה: בין עני בין עשיר, בין שלם בגופו בין בעל ייסורין, בין בחור בין שהיה זקן גדול שתשש כוחו, אפילו עני המחזר על הפתחים, ואפילו בעל אישה ובנים--חייב לקבוע לו זמן לתלמוד תורה ביום ובלילה

Every man in *Yisrael* is required to learn *Torah*: whether he is rich or poor, healthy or afflicted, young

<sup>21</sup> שם

<sup>22</sup> יורה דעה רמ"א

<sup>23</sup> סוטה כ"א.

<sup>24</sup> שבת ל"א.

<sup>25</sup> רמב"ם הל' תלמוד תורה א:ח, שו"ע יו"ד רמ"א

or old and weak. Even a poor person who has to beg for money at the gates and a man with a wife and children have to set time for *talmud Torah* during the day and at night.

Once we realize that *Torah* is the priority, we can achieve a healthy balance between *talmud Torah* and earning a *parnasa*.





## ציצית

ויאמר ה' אל משה לאמר: דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם ועשו לכם ציצית<sup>1</sup> כל המקיים מצוות ציצית כאילו קיים כל התורה כולה say: חז"ל Why is it that if a person fulfills the מצווה of ציצית it is as if they have fulfilled all of the מצוות in the תורה? What is so unique about the מצווה of ציצית in particular?

The מדרש רבה brings a משל of a person on a boat who falls into the sea. The captain throws him a rope and says "hold on and you will live, if not you will surely drown!" So too, ה' tells בני ישראל that as long as they keep the מצוות they will live. The ציצית are the "rope" that connects a person to ה'.

The תורה continues: <sup>2</sup> וראיתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצוות ה' תרי"ג plus the eight strings and five knots is גמטריה. When a person looks at his ציצית, he not only remembers his connection to ה' but also all of the מצוות. Perhaps this is the unique characteristic of ציצית and this is why חז"ל say that if you fulfill the מצווה of ציצית, it is as if you are fulfilling the entire תורה.

According to רש"י on פסוק לה רש"י, the word ציצית comes from the root ציץ meaning 'to gaze' as it says in שיר השירים לעופר דומה דודי לצבי או לעופר שיר השירים. האילים הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרקים<sup>3</sup> ביאור הגר"א explains that a man's sins cause a separation between him and ה' as it says אחר כתלנו ה' עומד אחר כתלנו ה' wants to bring the גאולה, but our sins are in the way. תשובה is a way to break down the wall between us and ה'.

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<sup>1</sup> במדבר טו:טז

<sup>2</sup> במדבר טו:לט

<sup>3</sup> שיר השירים ב:ט

The תשובה explains that there are two forms of תשובה: תשובה גר"א explains that there are two forms of תשובה: תשובה במעשה and תשובה שבלב, and תשובה שבלב refers to תשובה במעשה which is visible to all, just as one can see clearly through a window. תשובה שבלב refers to תשובה שבלב where only ה' knows what is in a person's heart. ה' is "gazing through the cracks" to see what a person's true intentions are, even when one's actions are hidden.

This idea can be related to what happened in מצרים. When בני ישראל did תשובה שבלב, מצרים עבודת פרך stopped. Yet it was not until they did תשובה במעשה that ה' took them out of מצרים. בני ישראל publicly did תשובה שבלב, ה' publicly saved them. This is the difference between תשובה שבלב and תשובה במעשה. The שיר השירים in מצרים מן החרקים and מצרים מן החלונות can therefore also remind one of מצרים יציאת as it says in פרשת יציאת מצרים: -אני ה' -פרשת יציאת מצרים: -אני ה' -פרשת יציאת מצרים: -אני ה'... להיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים...

There is another question in the פסוק of יציאת מצרים. The פסוק says: "וַתֵּיזַבְּרֵן הַיָּם כִּי תֵיזַבְּרֵן הַשָּׁמַיִם" (The sea is like the sky, the sky is like the sea). Why do the ימים have to have a תכלת? תכלת תכלת?

The תכלת דומה לים, וים דומה לרקיע, ורקיע דומה לכסא הכבוד<sup>5</sup> say: "הז"ל. The תכלת is like the sea, the sea is like the sky, and the sky is like the תכלת. Rav Avigdor Nevenzah<sup>6</sup> asks a fundamental question: One can easily understand that the sea looks תכלת (maybe not each individual drop of water but all of the drops together). The sky is a bit harder to understand because even though to the eye the sky looks תכלת, it is really made up of billions of particles that when joined together appear to the eye as תכלת. However, it is impossible to understand how the כסא הכבוד appears as תכלת! How can we say that the כסא הכבוד has a color? It is not a physical object!

In order to understand the words of הז"ל, one has to understand that these three things are not in the same realm. Every physical object in this world has a שורש עליון, a root in the upper

<sup>4</sup> במדבר טו:לה

<sup>5</sup> תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה יז.

<sup>6</sup> שיחות מוסר

world. The sea and the sky are in the tangible realm while the כסא הכבוד is in the spiritual realm. The כסא הכבוד is the שורש עליון of תכלת in this world. Therefore, תכלת must be put in the ציצית so that one's thoughts will be channeled to the כסא הכבוד, to the שורש עליון.

This idea may be used to explain the vast amount of תכלת used in the משכן as well as in the כהונה בגדי כהונה. The משכן was the house of the שכינה and the כהן גדול was a person who was very close to ה' and who had the ability to bring forgiveness for all of בני ישראל on Yom Kippur. Then תכלת helped channel the thoughts of the כהן גדול towards the כסא הכבוד throughout the daily עבודה.

ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זונים אחריהם.<sup>7</sup> פסוק לט  
The תכלת prevents a person's eyes and heart from straying from the תורה, and connects a person back to ה'. It makes sense that the תכלת helps a person's heart not to stray because a person's desires are always in his heart. But how can a person's eyes stray? Eyes don't have desires!

רשיי<sup>8</sup> says that the word תתורו comes from the same root as הלב והעינים מרגלים לגוף ומסרסים לו את העבירות, העין: לתור. He continues to say: – רואה והלב חומד והגוף עושה עבירה. The heart and the eyes are spies for the body; the eye sees, the heart desires and then the person does an עברה. The eyes are really the root of the תאוה. When the eyes see something, the heart wants it.

Furthermore, people sometimes have selective sight. We choose what we want to see and what we want to ignore.<sup>9</sup> וראיתם את בני הארץ מה היא – the מרגלים thought that they knew what was best for בני ישראל and decided that they wanted to see ארץ ישראל for themselves because they didn't trust what ה' said about the land. They also had selective sight and only saw what they wanted to see, all the

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<sup>7</sup> במדבר טו:לט

<sup>8</sup> שם

<sup>9</sup> במדבר יג:יה

bad things in the land, in order to convince בני ישראל that they should not go there. יהושע and כלב were the only ones who saw the positive attributes of the land and tried to convince בני ישראל that they were true.

This can explain why פרשת ציצית appears in the תורה after the חטא המרגלים. The מרגלים didn't have a strong connection with ה', they did not trust that ה' was doing what was best for בני ישראל by bringing them into ארץ ישראל. They wanted to spy out the land that ה' said was a good land, but they only recognized what they wanted to see. Because of this ה' gave בני ישראל the מצווה of ציצית, something that they could always look at to remember their connection to ה' and the מצוות.

In addition to this, the ציצית have תכלת in order to remind בני ישראל to look up to the כסא הכבוד and remember that ה' is the source of everything in the world. The מצווה of ציצית was a תיקון for one of the mistakes that מרגלים made, and also has an important message for all of בני ישראל. They represent one's ability to do תשובה and to return to ה', just like the כהן גדול atoned for the sins of the nation on יום כיפור.

## Science and Torah

One of the challenges of living in the modern world is how to reconcile scientific findings with what we learn in the *Torah*. Particularly, concepts such as evolution, the age of the universe and the existence of dinosaurs all seem (at first glance) to contradict the narrative of Creation found in *Sefer Bereishit*. It is therefore no wonder that some sects of Judaism oppose exposing students to the sciences, and that many Jewish schools are hesitant to teach evolution in their biology classes. However, a deeper look at *Bereishit* can help us see how most of today's scientific realities are in harmony with the *Torah* and may even have been known to *talmidei chachamim* many generations ago.

The first question that needs to be addressed is about the age of the universe. Our calendar tells us that the world has existed for only 5,773 years. However, according to various scientific discoveries, the world seems to have existed for billions of years. How do we reconcile such a glaring contradiction?

First we have to see if this is really a contradiction at all. The year 5773 comes from counting the years between the creation of *Adam* and the present. It does not take into account the first five days of the Creation narrative. It might not seem to make a big difference that only five days are missing in this count, but when we take a look at how *Ramban* sees the creation of the world, we can understand how much recent scientific discoveries agree with our traditions.

*Ramban* describes the world as being created *ex nihilo* – “*yeish m'ayin*.”<sup>1</sup> He also describes the creation process as begin-

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<sup>1</sup> רמב"ן בראשית א:א

ning with something called “*heyuli*,” a substance that expanded to create time and space and everything contained in the universe. Dr. Gerald Schroeder<sup>2</sup> suggests that *Ramban’s* “*heyuli*” is what modern science calls energy. Energy is the only unquantifiable substance that can create mass “*yeish m’ayin*”. This energy turned into the universe as we know it today.

*Ramban’s* explanation is strikingly similar to the Big Bang Theory, except of course that he describes the entire process as being controlled by God. Additionally, Dr. Schroeder explains that when we combine *Ramban’s* view with the basic principles of Einstein’s theory of relativity, we can see that there really is no contradiction, both *Torah* and science see the world as billions of years old.

To further explain this point one must have a basic understanding of Einstein’s theory. According to Einstein, the movement of time changes from one place in the universe to another. For example, time moves more slowly on the moon than on Earth. If this is true, then according to *Ramban’s* explanation that the creation of the world was an expansion that slowly formed, then when the universe was still in the state of *heyuli*, a “day” could be what we call billions of years. As the world gradually expanded, time slowed down, and the second day became half of day one. This process continued throughout the six days of creation, gradually becoming the twenty four hour day of which we know.

*Tehillim* says כי אלף שנים בעיניך כיום אתמול כי יעבר ואשמורה בלילה.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the concept of a “day” means something very different for us than it does for Hashem. This is because the *Torah’s* perspective of time is a lot slower than ours, since we are looking at time

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Teacher at Aish Ha Torah and author of *Genesis and the Big Bang*<sup>2</sup>

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from different points in the universe, namely, before and after it expanded. Einstein's theory and *Ramban's peirush* on *Bereishit* weave together perfectly, to show how science and *Torah* really do agree with each other.

Furthermore, בראשית רבה ב:ו says that the letter *vav* in ויהי "ערב" shows that there was a *seder zman* prior to this. With this explanation even if you were to say that each day of creation was a 24 hour period (which is the opinion of *Rashi* and *Rambam* in *Moreh Nevuchim*), there was time before those days which we do not include in our calendar. This idea finds further support in the *Gemara*<sup>4</sup> which says that the *Torah* was created 974 generations before the creation of the world. This could very well explain the billions of years that seem to be missing in the *pshat* of *Sefer Bereishit*.

Another important factor to take into account is how the age of the world is counted. בראשית רבה says that Hashem created worlds and destroyed them. According to *Rav Pinchas*, this is derived from the words והנה טוב מאד implying that this one was good and the others were not.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to say that dinosaurs were part of the worlds that were destroyed.

Additionally, this explanation fits in with the *pshat* of *Bereishit*. First of all, the sun and moon were not created until day four. Therefore, it would be impossible for there to be a 24 hour system before then. Also, it says ויהי ערב ויהי בקר.<sup>6</sup> Each *erev* cannot be night and each *boker* cannot be morning because that didn't exist yet. Dr. Schroder explains that *erev* means disorder and chaos, while *boker* signifies order. This change is not simply from sunrise to sunset and it does not happen spontaneously. It is the

<sup>4</sup> שבת פה:

<sup>5</sup> בראשית א:לא

<sup>6</sup> בראשית א:ה

laws of nature that guide the *erev* into a state of *boker*. This gradual progression from chaos to order sounds like evolution. Is it? Is the Torah implying that evolution is true?

Before evaluating a Torah approach to evolution, we must attempt to differentiate between different theories of evolution. It goes without saying that we cannot accept any theory that rejects the idea of a soul and denies the need for *Torah* and religion. Furthermore, there are different theories within evolutionary science, including some who believe that new species developed randomly and not gradually. This idea can be aligned with the fact that the Torah describes each creation on a new day, completely disconnected from the day before.

*Rav Kook* writes that just like *Bnei Yisrael* evolved spiritually from 49 levels of *tumah* to 49 levels of *tehora*, so too, Hashem used evolution in the physical process of creation.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, *Seforno*, when discussing the creation of man says that *Adam* came after a long process which had begun with an animal that gradually evolved until this creature was given a divine soul and became *b'tzelem elokim*.

Therefore, I believe it is necessary for all God-fearing Jews to learn science. However, we must emphasize two points. First of all, scientific assumptions are subject to change, while Torah remains constant. Second of all, certain things believed by scientists in the past have turned out to be completely false, but necessary to understand in order to learn the development of present day science.

If we study science with these two ideas in mind, then science can lead to a better understanding of *Hashem* and how He functions in this world. Science is slowly becoming more in line with *Torah* and one can only know and appreciate that if he learns the ways of the world.

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<sup>7</sup> אורות הקודש



Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world.<sup>8</sup> It is our job to study science and realize how that statement is becoming a reality to scientists and how the prophecy of *Yeshayahu* is coming true: וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד ה' וְרָאוּ כָל בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי ה' דָּבָר.<sup>9</sup> The gradual alignment of science and Torah may be a clear sign of *Mashiach's* imminent arrival!

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<sup>8</sup> זוהר הקודש על בראשית דף קס"א ע"ב

<sup>9</sup> ישעיהו מ:ה



## The Torah of Diets; Physical and Spiritual Fulfillment

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter's doctor relates that of all his patients, Rav Yisrael was the most careful to follow his instructions. How is this possible? One would think that someone as busy as Rav Salanter would not have the extra time necessary to care properly for his health. When asked, though, Rav Yisrael answered that he followed his doctor's instructions to the letter, simply because the *Torah* commands us to guard our health. The *Torah* says <sup>1</sup> רק השקט לך ושמר נפשך קאד; *Chazal* interpret this as meaning "watch out for yourself (meaning your body) and for your soul".

Why does the *Torah* care so much about our health, and how do we go about following this commandment?<sup>2</sup>

Imagine the typical morning: waking up, getting dressed, going to *shul* and eating breakfast. The average person finds these early morning tasks tiring even when he is perfectly healthy. Now think back to the last time you had a virus or the flu. Just getting out of bed to *daven* at home may have been a challenge. What about someone grossly overweight who has trouble getting around? Building a *sukkah* or even just walking to *shul* on *Shabbat* could be a daunting task. Based on this, it's obvious that *Hashem* wants us to keep ourselves healthy so that we can serve Him properly.

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<sup>1</sup> דברים ד:ט

Many of the ideas quoted below were found in "The Life-Transforming Diet" <sup>2</sup>  
by David J. Zulberg

Many have studied the connection between our eating habits and our spiritual state. In *Rambam's* introduction to the *Mishnah*, he says that *Rav Yehuda Hanassi* began the *Mishnah* with *Seder Zeraim* because it discusses the halachot of agriculture and produce. The food we grow sustains us and allows us to serve *Hashem*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, several Jewish sources have noted that eating a light lunch will give a person more energy during the day, thus enabling him to concentrate more on his *Torah* learning. Furthermore, classical sources considered health and wellness as a factor in *Hilchot Shabbat*. A prime example is the ruling told to David Zulberg that the law for eating bread at all three meals on *Shabbat* only applies to healthy people. Dieters who normally eat bread once a day or people who are overweight are permitted to eat fruit for both the third meal and for *melava malka*. If such a person was required to eat the bread at all three meals, he may come to dislike *Shabbat* instead of observing it with joy.

As shown from the two examples above, the *halacha* views eating as having many connections to a Jew's spiritual health. The *Rambam* notes that positive behavioral characteristics are formed through the repetition of many positive acts.<sup>4</sup> *Chovot Halevavot* adds that just as ethics and wisdom are used to strengthen one's spiritual muscle, one must strengthen his physical muscles, and his body in general, with nutritional foods and drinks<sup>5</sup>. A person can sometimes indulge in physical things to keep his body functioning as long as these indulgences are not constant.<sup>6</sup> If one neglects either the body or the soul, both will be weakened. In fact,

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<sup>3</sup> פירוש המשניות

<sup>4</sup> פירוש לאבות ג:ה

<sup>5</sup> חובות הלבבות שער חשבון הנפש ג:כה

<sup>6</sup> ראה Rabbi Noah Weinberg (Aish.com)

there are Jews who actually do this. When a boy becomes *bar mitzvah* in New Square, New York, he chooses a food that he likes and abstains from it to teach himself this lesson exactly.

The *Rambam* places so much importance on the relationship between food and personal characteristics that when he wrote *Hilchot Deiot* he placed health and eating advice in the same section as character traits and emotions. In his *sefer* “*Moreh Nevuchim*”, *Rambam* discusses *achilah gassa*, gross overeating, which really cannot even be considered eating. Overindulging in unhealthy food leads to evil characteristics because the body gets used to these things and then wants other unnecessary things.<sup>7</sup> Supporting this idea, *Rav Avraham ben Harambam*<sup>8</sup> believed that all of man’s behaviors are connected, both spiritual and physical. Therefore, if a person overindulges, he may be led to sin as well.

Man’s biblical name Adam consists of two parts: *adama* (meaning the earth which he was fashioned from, his physical side) and *adameh li elyon* (similar to Hashem, his spiritual side).<sup>9</sup> When one overeats, he gives into the physical aspect of man while ultimately man’s goal is to overindulge in spirituality. Accordingly, the Torah places importance on guarding our physical bodies and keeping ourselves healthy in order to complete the spiritual tasks at hand. While it is commonly said that “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach,” a more apt expression may be “the way to Hashem is through *shmirat haguf*.”

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<sup>7</sup> מורה נבוכים ג:יב

<sup>8</sup> המספיק לעובדי ה' פרק ב'

<sup>9</sup> של"ה תולדות אדם פתיחה ד"ה כג



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# **FACULTY**

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## Greater Than Grasshoppers

When the *meraglim* returned from their mission to scout out Eretz Yisrael, they described their impressions of seeing the remaining giants in the land. “We were like grasshoppers in our eyes and so we were in their eyes.” The Kotzker Rebbe comments that the root of their sin lies in this sentence. It is one thing to express their own feelings, how they felt. But it is of no concern how others felt about them. The opinion of others does not determine our worth.

One might, however, suggest that it is in the first part of their statement where the fault lies. The Torah tells us that these scouts were leaders, distinguished men, princes of their tribes, sent on a holy mission by Moshe Rabbenu. Although they were shorter in physical stature than the giants, they certainly were not spiritual midgets. [The story is told about the Emperor Napoleon who was quite short. Someone once came to him and boasted that even he was greater than Napoleon. The Emperor replied: Not greater, just taller.] It is because the *meraglim* viewed themselves as inferior grasshoppers that others took an equal view of them.

During your year in MMY, you have hopefully developed a set of priorities and principles of a *Bat Torah*. Unfortunately, not everyone in *chutz l'aretz* shares these values and at times you might feel very much in the minority. Nevertheless, being small in number should not translate into a sense of inferiority.

In the very first halacha in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the *Rama* writes that a person should never feel embarrassed about his (or her) *Avodat Hashem* even when others mock their behavior. Without preaching to anyone, you should feel confident about the way you choose to dress, your *kavanna* during *davening*, how you spend your leisure time and your desire to fill your life with a bit more *ruchniyut*.

Even though others may be taller, you have the ability to achieve greatness.



## Between בית דוד and בית שאול

ויאמר שמואל אל שאול לא אשוב עמך, כי מאסת את דבר ה' וימאסך ה' מהיות מלך על ישראל. ויסב שמואל ללכת ויחזק בכנף מעילו ויקרע. ויאמר אליו שמואל, קרע ה' את ממלכות ישראל מעליך היום, ונתנה לרעך הטוב ממך.<sup>1</sup>

*Shaul*, the first king of Israel, was ousted from his position by *Hashem* and informed by the prophet *Shmuel* that the kingdom would be given to one who was better than he. That second king, of course, was *David*. But in contrast to *Shaul*, *David* was promised that his dynasty would last forever.<sup>2</sup>

It is necessary to question why this is. *Shaul* was told very clearly that his kingdom could not continue because of the fact that he sinned, and defied the word of God (first by failing to wait for *Shmuel* as he had been instructed before offering the sacrifice prior to the battle against the *Plishtim*, and then by failing to completely fulfill the *mitzvah* of destroying *Amalek*). The lesson seems to be clear – a king of Israel is obligated to follow the *Torah* and lead the nation to *mitzvah* observance<sup>3</sup>; one who violates the *Torah* is not qualified to be that leader.

However, this understanding immediately leads to a question. After all, *David* was certainly not free of sin!<sup>4</sup> And although

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<sup>1</sup> שמואל א טו:כו-כה

<sup>2</sup> שמואל ב ז:יא-יד, מלכים א יא:יג ועוד. ראה גם ישעיה יא:א.

<sup>3</sup> ראה דברים יז:יח-יט

<sup>4</sup> ידועים דברי ר' שמואל בר נחמני, "כל האומר דוד חטא אינו אלא טועה" (שבת נ.ו.). כוונתו שדוד לא חטא באשת איש ממש, כי לדעתו בת-שבע הייתה גרושה בזמן שדוד שכב עמה (בכתובות ט. יש דעה החולקת על ר' שמואל בר נחמני, וסוברת שדוד אכן חטא באשת איש, וגם באונס). אבל ברור שגם לפי ר' שמואל בר נחמני, אין הכוונה שדוד לא חטא בכלל – הרי הוא נענש בעונשים חמורים

there is some debate about the exact nature of *David's* sins, it appears that he was guilty of offenses that were at least as serious (and probably much more serious) than those for which *Shaul* lost his kingdom. If so, we must ask why *Shaul* was rejected but *David* merited to found the eternal dynasty of *Am Yisrael*. What was the difference between the two?

I suggest that in order to understand this, we must look beyond the individual sins that each of the two kings was guilty of. We must study the *Tanach* text thoroughly and carefully, in order to gain a proper understanding of what the text communicates about these two men, their personalities, opinions, strengths and weaknesses, and – perhaps most importantly – about the policies and priorities that each instituted in his royal administration.

Let us begin with *Shaul*. A superficial reading of the book of *Shmuel Aleph* might lead one to believe that *Shaul* was a terrible failure as a king. But a more careful reading shows that this understanding is clearly false! In fact, the opposite is true: *Shaul* was an incredibly successful king in every way. He ruled for a fairly short period of time (the exact length of his reign is unclear<sup>5</sup>, but certainly cannot have lasted more than a few decades<sup>6</sup>. David

על המעשים שעשה! לכן המחלוקת בחז"ל היא על הפרטים המדויקים והאופי של חטאי דוד – אבל אין שום ספק שדוד אכן חטא. בספרו "דוד ובת-שבע: החטא, העונש והתיקון" (הוצאת תבונות, תשס"ב) עמ' 139-145, הרב יעקב מדן טוען שבאמת עונשו העיקרי של דוד היה הרבה יותר חמור מזה של שאול. ההבדל ביניהם, לדעת ר' מדן, נמצא בדרך שהם הגיבו לעונש, וכדלהלן.

<sup>5</sup> משמואל א יג:א משמע שמלך רק שנתיים. אבל ברור שאי אפשר להבין את הפסוק כפשוטו, כי לא יתכן שכל האירועים שהנביא מספר בזמן מלכות שאול התרחשו כולם במהלך שנתיים בלבד. לכן המפרשים טורחים לפרש את הפסוק בצורה אחרת. יש אומרים שמדובר רק בתקופה הראשונה במלכותו, עד שנמשח דוד (כי למרות ששאול המשיך למלוך בפועל הרבה שנים אחר כך, באופן מהותי מלכותו כבר נקרעה ממנו). ויש גם הסברים אחרים – ראה פירוש "דעת מקרא" על הפסוק.

<sup>6</sup> יש מסורת שמובאת ברמב"ם הל' בית הבחירה א:ב, שהתקופה שבה המשכן עמד בנוב ובגבעון נמשכה שבעים וחמש שנים. מפרק זמן זה צריך להוציא את התקופה שבין חורבן שילה והעברת

was anointed king shortly after *Shaul's* sin with *Amalek*, and at that time *David* was at least old enough to be tending his father's sheep<sup>7</sup>. Yet when *Shaul* died, *David* was no more than thirty years old<sup>8</sup>). Nevertheless, if we compare the situation in the country prior to *Shaul's* reign with the situation at the time of his death, we can see that he accomplished a tremendous amount in every way: politically, militarily and spiritually.

Politically speaking, *Shaul* took over a loosely associated collection of tribes. The book of *Shoftim* makes this very clear – when faced with assaults from enemies, the people were defended by local rulers representing at most a regional coalition of several tribes. There was no standing army representing the entire nation, and there was also no central government. Indeed, there were even incidents of civil war between the tribes.<sup>9</sup> *Shmuel Hanavi* had taken the first steps towards building a national administration, but he was not a king and in any case, the nation ruled out any succession of *Shmuel* by his sons, since they were corrupt.<sup>10</sup> Immediately after becoming king, though, *Shaul* assembled a national army numbering 330,000 troops<sup>11</sup> and began to build the apparatus of government. By the time *Shaul* died and *David* became the king, there was an established country for *David* to take over. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that *Shaul* was the founder of *Malchut Yisrael*.

המשכן לנוב עד המלכתו של שאול, וגם ארבעים שנות מלכותו של דוד ותחילת ימי שלמה עד בנין בית ה' בירושלים. לא נותרים יותר מכמה עשרות שנים.

<sup>7</sup> שמואל א טז:יא

<sup>8</sup> שמואל ב ה:ד

<sup>9</sup> ראה שופטים פרק ט ופרק כ

<sup>10</sup> שמואל א ח:א-ה

<sup>11</sup> שם יא:ח

Militarily as well, *Shaul's* accomplishments were extraordinary. He became king in the wake of the terrible defeat against the *Plishtim* at *Even HaEzer*, which resulted in the destruction of the *Mishkan* in *Shilo*, the capture of the *Aron* and the death of *Eli HaCohen*.<sup>12</sup> When *Shaul* was anointed, the nation was under the complete military occupation of the *Plishtim*, who had ruling officers stationed in the heart of the country<sup>13</sup>, and even prohibited *Bnei Yisrael* from forging metal tools, so that they could not make weapons to use in a rebellion.<sup>14</sup> *Shaul* managed to defeat the *Plishtim* and drive them out of the country. Although the *Plishtim* tried several times to reconquer the land<sup>15</sup>, they were unable to do so.

Perhaps most importantly, in addition to being a great political and military leader, *Shaul* fulfilled the primary mission of a *Melech Yisrael* – he enforced the *Torah's* laws and led the people towards greater observance of the *mitzvot*. This can be seen towards the end of *Shaul's* life, when in desperation he turned to the *Eshet Baalat Ov* in order to communicate with *Shmuel*, who was no longer alive. Although this was a violation of the *Torah's* laws, it is clear from that incident that in general, *Shaul* enforced these laws and changed the previous status quo, during which the people had openly engaged in these idolatrous practices.<sup>16</sup> In

<sup>12</sup> שם ד:א-ב, י-יב

<sup>13</sup> שם יג:ג

<sup>14</sup> שם יג:ט

<sup>15</sup> שמואל א פרק יז, שמואל ב כג:כו-כד:א. ולמרות שהפלישתים הרגו את שאול וניצחו את ישראל בגלבוע, נראה שבני ישראל הצליחו לכבוש את השטח מחדש זמן קצר לאחר מכן – ראה שמואל ב ב:ט ופירוש "דעת מקרא" שם.

<sup>16</sup> שמואל א כח:ט

addition, the *Talmud* praises *Shaul* for his great modesty.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore clear that, by every measure, *Shaul* was an excellent king. So why did he lose the kingdom?

Perhaps the difference between *Shaul* and *David* can be found not in their actions and particular mistakes, but in their attitude: their approach to the *melucha* and its purpose.

It has often been pointed out that when *Shaul* was confronted by *Shmuel* regarding his sins, he provided excuses for his actions<sup>18</sup>, in contrast to *David* who, when confronted by the prophet *Natan*, immediately responded by saying, "I have sinned"<sup>19</sup>. Perhaps this is reflective of something larger – although *Shaul* was initially reluctant to become king<sup>20</sup>, once placed in the position, *Shaul* seemed to feel it was his responsibility to protect the *melucha* at just about any cost. Assumedly, this was not merely a matter of his ego and personal quest for power; as noted above *Shaul* was a devoted leader of *Am Yisrael* who engaged in crucial battles to protect the nation's physical and spiritual safety. In his mind, these considerations came before all else. And therefore, although he was able to acknowledge his sins<sup>21</sup>, he seems to have been unable to accept the need to step aside.

We are told that after *David* was anointed, *Shaul* was afflicted by a רוח רעה מאת ה', which can be understood as some sort of spiritual/psychological condition that caused depression or anxiety. His advisors suggested that music might help stabilize his condition, and the one musician whose music was able to accom-

<sup>17</sup> מגילה יג:

<sup>18</sup> שם יג:יא-יב, טו:יג-טו

<sup>19</sup> שמואל ב יב:יג

<sup>20</sup> שמואל א י:כא-כד

<sup>21</sup> שם טו:כד

plish this was none other than *David* himself<sup>22</sup>. Later on, after it became clear to *Shaul* that in fact *David* was the one who would succeed him as king, *Shaul* began to relentlessly pursue *David*, and attempted on two separate occasions to kill him as he was playing the harp to assist *Shaul*<sup>23</sup>.

*Shaul* undoubtedly pursued *David* because he saw him as a *mored b'malchut* – a potential rebel who represented a threat to national security. And yet, the symbolism is striking: it was clearly no coincidence that of all people in the kingdom, it was specifically *David* who was able to assist *Shaul*. *David's* harp contained a powerful message to *Shaul* – perhaps it seemed that *David* was the source of his troubles, that if he could only rid himself of *David* he would be able to complete his mission on behalf of *Am Yisrael*. But the reality was quite different – the source of *Shaul's* troubles were the imperfections within himself, and *David* – far from being the source of the problem, was actually the solution<sup>24</sup>.

*Shaul* continued this policy throughout the rest of his life. Even after promising on several occasions to desist from pursuing *David*, he continually reneged on those commitments and continued to chase him. At times *Shaul* even resorted to highly extreme measures in his quest to defeat *David*. Perhaps the strongest example of this is the tragic massacre of the *Kohanim* of *Nov* (and destruction of the *Mishkan* that was there), simply because *Shaul*

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<sup>22</sup> שם טז:ד-כג

<sup>23</sup> שם יח:י-יא, יט:ח-י

<sup>24</sup> הרב מדן, בקטע הנ"ל, מסביר שאם שאול היה מקבל את הגזירה ומפנה את מקומו לטובת דוד, הוא היה יכול בסופו של דבר לקבל את מה שהוא רצה יותר מכל – המשך למלכותו. כי מיכל בתו הייתה אשתו של דוד, ולכן הייתה אפשרות לאחד את בית שאול עם בית דוד, וכל מלכי בית דוד היו יכולים להיות גם צאצאיו של שאול, דרך מיכל.



had been deceived by *Doeg HaEdomi* and led to believe that they had knowingly aided *David*.<sup>25</sup>

Had *Shaul* been an evil king, perhaps we could understand his decision to murder a city full of *Kohanim* and destroy the *Mishkan* in order to advance his own agenda. But we have already established that *Shaul* was anything but an evil king. Therefore, the only reasonable explanation for his decision to take such extreme measures against *Nov* must be that he genuinely believed (or convinced himself) that the security of the nation was at stake. He must have believed that the *Kohanim* of *Nov*, who he viewed as his own enemies, were by extension also the enemies of *Hashem*. Only such a theory could have enabled *Shaul* to take such actions. The terrible irony, though, is that in his zeal to defend *Am Yisrael* and the glory of *Hashem*, he wound up destroying the *Mishkan* of *Hashem*.

This flawed sense of priorities, in which *Shaul* acted in what he believed was defense of the nation and fulfillment of God's will but wound up violating God's will in the process, was not limited to his interactions with *David*. Towards the end of the book of *Shmuel*, we learn that *Shaul* and members of his household had unjustly persecuted the *Givonim*, to the point that *Hashem* endorsed the harsh demand of the *Givonim* to execute seven of *Shaul's* descendants<sup>26</sup>. Although *Shaul's* descendants were punished harshly for this action, the text acknowledges that *Shaul* did this בקנאתו לבני ישראל ויהודה. Again, he believed, or allowed himself to believe, that he was acting on behalf of the people and *Hashem*, but he violated *Hashem's* will in the process.

It is on this issue that we see the greatest contrast with *David*. He also worked tirelessly on behalf of the nation and of

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<sup>25</sup> שם כב:ט-יט

<sup>26</sup> שמואל ב כא:א-ט: "אל שאול ואל בית הדמים על אשר המית את הגבעונים".

*Hashem* and also suffered setbacks as a result of his own errors – but unlike *Shaul*, he not only accepted personal responsibility for those errors, but also made sure to always differentiate between the needs of the nation and his own personal interests.

Perhaps the clearest example of this contrast can be seen in an incident that took place during the rebellion of *Avshalom*. *Avshalom* was on his way to *Yerushalayim* to attack the city, and *David* decided to flee rather than to confront him there. As he left the city, the *Kohanim* and *Levīm* decided to bring the *Aron* into exile with *David*. From their perspective, this made a lot of sense – *David* was the one who had brought the *Aron* to *Yerushalayim*; if he was leaving the city, then the *Aron* should go with him. But *David* saw the situation differently:

ויאמר המלך לצדוק השב את ארון הא-להים העיר. אם אמצא חן בעיני ה' והשבני  
והראני אתו ואת נוהו. ואם כה יאמר לא חפצתי בכך הנני יעשה לי כאשר טוב  
בעיניו.<sup>27</sup>

One of *David's* main goals as king was to build a House of God in *Yerushalayim*. He worked tirelessly towards the goal, and spared no effort that he thought could advance this objective.<sup>28</sup> A first step in this process was his decision to bring the *Aron* to *Yerushalayim*.<sup>29</sup> He saw this as a necessary prerequisite to building the *Bet HaMikdash*, and sharply criticized *Shaul* for having neglected the *Aron* during the entire period of his reign.<sup>30</sup> Once informed by *Natan* that he would not be allowed to actually build the *Bet HaMikdash*, he took upon himself to do all the preparatory work, so that the next king would be able to complete

<sup>27</sup> שם טו:כז

<sup>28</sup> תהלים קלב

<sup>29</sup> שמואל ב פרק ו; דברי הימים א פרק יג ופרק טו

<sup>30</sup> דברי הימים א יג:ג

the task as soon as possible.<sup>31</sup> The decision to send the Aron back to Yerushalayim was thus a very clear statement – indeed, the Aron and Yerushalayim symbolized David's life mission more than perhaps anything else. David's priorities were clear – the mission comes first, and his own personal well-being a distant second. These are the qualities necessary for Malchut Yisrael, and how different they are from Shaul's actions at Nov!

In truth, the difference in philosophy between Bet Shaul and Bet David could have been apparent even earlier, when David brought the Aron to Yerushalayim:

ודוד ומכרכר בכל עז לפני ה' ודוד חגור אפוד בד. ודוד וכל בית ישראל מעלים את ארון ה' בתרועה ובקול שופר. והיה ארון ה' בא עיר דוד ומיכל בת שאול נשקפה בעד החלון ותרא את המלך דוד מפוז ומכרכר לפני ה' ותבו לו בלבה.... וישב דוד לברך את ביתו ותצא מיכל בת שאול לקראת דוד ותאמר מה נכבד היום מלך ישראל אשר נגלה היום לעיני אמהות עבדיו כהגלות נגלות אחד הרקים. ויאמר דוד אל מיכל, לפני ה' אשר בחר בי מאביך ומכל ביתו לצות אתי נגיד על עם ה' על ישראל, ושחקתי לפני ה'. ונקלתי עוד מזאת והייתי שפל בעיני ועם האמהות אשר אמרת עמם אכבדה.<sup>32</sup>

This exchange represented a fundamental difference in ideology. For Michal (who is quite significantly referred to here as the daughter of Shaul, and not as the wife of David) the dignity and glory of the king must come first, for the sake of the kingdom. But for David, the glory of the king was only meaningful if the king represents the glory of God. Perhaps for this reason, the incident results in a tragic ending: ולמיכל בת שאול לא היה לה ילד עד יום מותה.<sup>33</sup> The exchange reported above demonstrated that Michal shared the philosophy of Bet Shaul, and Bet Shaul needed to give way. Michal

<sup>31</sup> שם כב:ב-ו, כח:יא-כט:ט

<sup>32</sup> שמואל ב' ו:טז-טז, כ-כב

<sup>33</sup> שם כג

couldn't have a son, because the future kings of *Bet David* could not come from her.

*Shaul* accomplished many great things in his life, and for these the Jewish People must be grateful. But the eternal *malchut* could not come from *Shaul*, and *Bet Shaul* needed to give way to *Bet David*.

<sup>34</sup> מגדול ישועות מלכו ועשה חסד למשיחו לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם.

שבת אחים גם יחד?

## **Ashkenazim eating in the home of Sefardim on Pesach**

Over the past century, we have been privileged to witness *Kibutz Galuyot*, an ingathering of the exiles, before our very eyes. Especially in Israel, Jews whose families came from Poland or Russia will be neighbors and friends with Jews from Morocco or Syria. *Olim* from the United States, the UK, and Australia, for example, will share meals together with Israelis or other Jews from around the world.

But on *Pesach*, this Jewish melting pot is confronted by a major challenge: What happens when an *Ashkenazi* family is invited for a *Yom Tov* meal to the home of their *Sefardic* neighbors? After all, *Ashkenazi* Jews generally retain the centuries old custom of abstaining from *kitniyot*, while many of their *Sefardic* brethren never had any such custom.<sup>1</sup> Must the *Ashkenazim* refuse the invitation? Even if the *Sefardim* accommodate their

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In truth, there are *Sefardim* who also do not eat *kitniyot* on *Pesach*, including many <sup>1</sup> North African *Sefardim* (Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Egyptian); this was also the practice of many Turkish communities (*Teshuvot Lev Chayim* 2:33). Although Iraqi communities usually ate *kitniyot* on *Pesach*, many families in Baghdad did not eat rice and most did not eat chickpeas (*Teshuvot Rav Pe'alim* 3:30). Similarly, the *Chida* reports that the *Sefardim* in Yerushalayim in his day did not eat rice. See Rabbi Yirmiyahu Kaganoff's article at <http://www.yeshiva.co/midrash/shiur.asp?cat=328&id=7487&q>,

who notes this point.

guests and ensure that they do not consume any *kitniyot*, aren't the pots and utensils used to cook the food problematic since they may have been used in the past to cook *kitniyot*? After all, we know that halachically, pots absorb the taste of foods cooked in them and can later transfer that taste to other food items.<sup>2</sup>

Rabbinic authorities are usually sensitive to such questions, and have taken a number of different approaches to address this problem, of which we will outline three general categories.

### **I. The strictest approach:**

#### **Use separate utensils to cook the non-*kitniyot* food**

*Teshuvot Maharam Schick* (241) discusses a case where someone who was ill needed to consume *kitniyot* on *Pesach*, so he advised the family to designate special “*kitniyot* only” utensils to be used for cooking the *kitniyot*. The same would presumably apply for families where the children require *kitniyot*, or where they wish to heat up baby formula which contains *kitniyot*. Although this *halachic* stance is not necessarily a strict requirement, nevertheless the *Maharam Schick* feels that this is the prevalent and appropriate custom.

One may argue that he would suggest the same solution for a *Sefardic* family hosting *Ashkenazim*: use separate utensils for cooking non-*kitniyot* food for the *Ashkenazim*, that were not previously used for cooking *kitniyot*.

This approach is accepted by *Teshuvot Rav Pe'alim* (3:30), also known as the *Ben Ish Chai*, and in our times by poskim including Rav Ephraim Greenblatt, who recommends that an *Ashkenazi* who eats at the home of a *Sefardi* on *Pesach* should make sure that his hosts use separate utensils for food that he will be eating.<sup>3</sup>

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עבודה זרה עה: <sup>2</sup>

See Rabbi Chaim Jachter, *Gray Matter* volume 1, page 249. ראה <sup>3</sup>

## II. The middle approach:

### Use utensils that are *Eino Ben Yomo* for *kitniyot*

The *Kaf HaChayim* (OC 453:27) suggests that although it is inappropriate to use utensils that have been used for cooking *kitniyot* within the last 24 hours, known as *Ben Yomo*, and perhaps these utensils would require *kashering* before being used for *Ashkenazim*, it is permitted to use *keilim* that are *Eino Ben Yomo*, meaning they have not been used for cooking *kitniyot* within 24 hours. Generally, utensils which are *Eino Ben Yomo* are assumed to not transfer taste (even when hot) to other foods.<sup>4</sup> Although as mentioned some poskim are more stringent than this, it would seem that this approach is clearly that of “*ikar hadin*,” the strict halacha, and one is not required to be stricter than this, since the concept of *Eino Ben Yomo* is a standard principle within the laws of *kashrut*.<sup>5</sup> This approach is accepted by other poskim as well, such as Rav Hershel Schachter,<sup>6</sup> Rav Elyashiv *zt”l*,<sup>7</sup> Rav Elyakim Levanon,<sup>8</sup> and Rav Rafael Evers<sup>9</sup> from Amsterdam.

However, these poskim would not allow using *keilim* that are *Ben Yomo*, due to the taste transfer involved. According to this approach, it would be permitted for the *Sefardic* family to simply

<sup>4</sup> עבודה זרה עה:

<sup>5</sup> See for example *Avodah Zarah 67b* and *Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 103:5)*, among other locations, where this rule is mentioned..

<sup>6</sup> In a shiur given at Yeshiva University

<sup>7</sup> As cited in his *Hagadah shel Pesach* (p.12), and as referred to at [http://www.theveshivaworld.com/weekly\\_torah.php?id=677](http://www.theveshivaworld.com/weekly_torah.php?id=677).

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.kipa.co.il/ask/show/239724-%D7%90%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%90%D7%A6%D7%9C-%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%94-%D7%90%D7%97%D7%A8%D7%AA>

<sup>9</sup> תשובות ושב ורפא (סימן טו)

be careful to use utensils that weren't used within 24 hours to cook *kitniyot*. However, this solution requires some foresight and planning to ensure that nothing goes wrong and they don't get confused as to which pots they use.

### III. The lenient approach:

#### Can use even *Ben Yomo* utensils to cook non-*kitniyot* food

Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Teshuvot Yechaveh Daat* 5:32) goes even one step further. In his opinion, a *Sefardi* may even cook non-*kitniyot* food for an *Ashkenazi* in pots that have absorbed *kitniyot* taste in the last 24 hours. Although normally such an action would transfer taste to the food, in this case Rav Ovadia argues that it is permitted due to the following argument: According to the *Rama* (Orach Chaim 453), if one mixes *kitniyot* and non-*kitniyot* together, the mixture is permitted as long as the *kitniyot* are *Batel B'rov*, meaning that they constitute less than 50% of the mixture. Although normally a forbidden mixture, such as milk and meat, or non-kosher and kosher, is only *Batel B'shishim* (nullified in a proportion of 1/60) he says that since *kitniyot* is only a custom, we can be more lenient. He compares this case to *Challah* separated for the *mitzvah* of *Hafrashat Challah* in *chutz laaretz*, which if mixed together with regular dough is *batel b'rov* (Bechorot 27a) and a few other specific cases of forbidden foods where according to many *acharonim* it seems that even *lechatchilah*, ideally, we are not *machmir* to forbid using the utensils afterwards since the absorbed taste is certainly less than 50% of the food presently being cooked in the pot. This approach is also accepted by *Teshuvot Zera Emet* (3:48) and R.Binyamin Zilber (*Teshuvot Az Nidberu* 8:20:4).

Although the *poskim* in the three categories above delineate different guidelines with varying levels of stringency to address our question, it is clear that *halachic* solutions may be found to



these types of dilemmas, and if we so desire, we can certainly find ways to unite with our brothers even on *Pesach*. We should all merit on this holiday of freedom to unite with all other segments of the Jewish people while at the same time retain our own sacred customs and hand them down to our children.