תשמ"ח
(1997-98)
The progression of knowledge and service of וָאֵל in ספֶּר שֵׁמוֹת, through the use of fire imagery

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The Burning Truth

IS THE DRAMATIC TALE of the Jewish people’s formation as a nation. This nationhood, however, did not come easily. It took many hard-learned lessons before בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל could accept וָּהָיָה as their G-d and serve Him in the proper way. The process through which בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל attained this level is illustrated throughout ספר שֵׁמוֹת through the imagery of fire.

The first time that וָּהָיָה appears in ספר שֵׁמוֹת it is בְּלִכְבַּל כֵּלֶק אֶשׁ מְט֥וֹדֶהאַ (בָּא). It was in the form of a pillar of fire that וָּהָיָה chose to first reveal Himself to Moses, when He appointed him as the leader, savior, and teacher of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The mishnah continues to relate that what caught Moses’s attention was the fire that burned within the bush, yet failed to consume it; מרדכי וָּהָיָה כָּלַל בָּא עַם בַּשַּׁמֶּה. From the outset, it is apparent that whatever it was that וָּהָיָה wished to teach His future nation and their leader, would be accomplished through the imagery of fire.

However, וָּהָיָה, however, was reluctant to accept G-d’s message. In fact, וָּהָיָה had to be cajoled, convinced, and finally forced to accept His existence and assume his role as the leader of the Jewish people. וָּהָיָה’s strongest argument to Hashem, as to why he considered himself unworthy for this mission, was that he was כְּרַנְרֵיהוּ הַמַּכַּבֵּד לָשׁוֹר (ר”). The Midrash Rabbah on this mishnah tells us that when וָּהָיָה was a baby, living in the house of מְט֥וֹדֶהאַ, he was once subjected to a test. "When וָּהָיָה wished to ascertain whether וָּהָיָה had tendencies to covet the מָרָה מְט֥וֹדֶהאַ, as he had placed מַרָּה מְט֥וֹדֶהאַ’s crown upon his head. The baby was placed before two trays — one laden with gold, and the other with burning coals — and his fate was to be determined by which item he grabbed. Had he picked up the gold, that would determine that he was destined to usurp the throne. According to the Midrash, וָּהָיָה automatically reached for the gold, however, a מַרָּה מְט֥וֹדֶהאַ intervened and pushed him towards the coals. He then picked one up and placed it in his mouth, causing permanent damage to the inside of his mouth. Thus, וָּהָיָה’s first encounter with fire, brought
about through Divine intervention, left him scathed for life, and the second would forever change his life.

If, in fact, Hashem utilized fire so conspicuously as a form of Divine intervention, then one might assume that there would be some reference to אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה in the ten מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, all of which were directly from Hashem. In fact, אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה is found in the description of the seventh מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, (arguably the most miraculous of the ten מִן הַתְּרוּפָי): מִן הַתְּרוּפָי is the single מִן הַתְּרוּפָי involving fire, and it is also the only מִן הַתְּרוּפָי for which Hashem’s primary goal is explicitly stated, as it says: יִכְוָם שָׁמַע בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה. In this paradoxical מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, Hashem utilized fire in order to punish בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה, and to teach them of His reality and greatness.

Before בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה could be redeemed from בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה, they were commanded to bring the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי was the primary lesson that בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה had to learn regarding the service of Hashem. The commandment itself came replete with details of the process through which the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי should be brought, and אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה is referred to three different times. The first time is in the positive commandment to prepare the meat and eat it roasted, or אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה. The second reference to fire is in regard to the negative command elaborating that the meat should be none other than roasted by fire, as it says: יֵלְדוּת שֶׁחֲמֵשׁ מְשֹׁרֵי מלְכָיו אָדָם אֵלָיו אָשָׁה (נְחָל). Further, it is explicitly commanded that any remainder of the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי after that night מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, should be burned in fire. In this way מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, and מִן הַתְּרוּפָי all received lessons from Hashem, on some level, through אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה.

Once בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה had been redeemed from מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the Torah says that Hashem led them in the form of a cloud by day, and at night מִן הַתְּרוּפָי. A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי began to pursue them. However, something stopped them from being successful in their pursuit. The מִן הַתְּרוּפָי says: יִשָּׂא הַר מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִשָּׂא מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). A pillar of fire led מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, both protecting them and constantly reminding them of Hashem’s presence. While מִן הַתְּרוּפָי were crossing the מִן הַתְּרוּפָי, the מִן הַחֲּלֶב of the מִן הַחֲּלֶב so that they were unable to advance and attack בְּעָרְבֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֵשָׁה. Thus, Hashem once again chose to appear in the form of fire in this divine intervention to protect מִן הַתְּרוּפָי and teach vital lessons.

The single most prominent example of Hashem’s intervention in this world was the giving of the Torah at מִן הַתְּרוּפָי. The Torah describes this event in the following terms: יִרְאֶה מִן הַתְּרוּפָי כל מֶשֶׁח הַתְּרוּפָי מֵעָלָיו היה בֵּית וּמְלֹא עָלָיו כָּמָם מֶשֶׁח הַתְּרוּפָי. After מֶשֶׁח מִן הַחֲּלֶב descended from the mountain, the מֶשֶׁח says that in the eyes of מֶשֶׁח מִן הַחֲּלֶב the glory of Hashem was apparent; יִרְאֶה מִן הַתְּרוּפָי (יִרְאֶה מִן הַתְּרוּפָי). The one and only time in history that Hashem re-
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vealed Himself to all of יישרائל and taught them Himself, speaking directly to them, was through fire. The Jewish people’s most important lesson, and the milestone which made them a nation and was meant to ultimately bring them to the knowledge and service of Hashem, was done.

What is extremely significant during and following_fire, is that Hashem was no longer merely demonstrating his presence to יישרائל. Rather, יישרائל began to see it for themselves, and it actually became a part of יישרائל’s very essence. This can be illustrated effectively by the aforementioned פסוק which says: יורהה הבור היא楂 אכלה בררא היה ולהי ייישרואל (ד:כ:ל). ייישרואל finally saw for themselves that which Hashem had been impressing upon them from the very beginning of פסוק ייישרואל’s fundamental lesson manifests itself not only in his consciousness and אומן, but in his physical appearance as well, and it was who recognized this reality. The פסוק states that when ייישרואל descended from ייישרואל, הר ייישרואל saw a divine light radiating from ייישרואל face: ייישרואל את פניו נראו והוה השמש ייישרואל על קור פניו (ד:כ:ל). The Torah further elaborates on ייישרואל’s shining skin in a subsequent פסוק which says: ייישרואל את פניו נראו והוה השמש ייישרואל על קור פניו על קור ייישרואל (ד:כ:ל). Such was the high level attained by ייישרואל and ייישרואל, illustrated through fire imagery.

Although ייישרואל did learn to recognize Hashem’s hand in the world, they still had many אנושית and gravely misused their newfound knowledge. While ייישרואל was on מעון learning Torah directly from Hashem, the Jewish People were busy creating the ייעוט, through no means other than the use of fire. ייישרואל evidently took the gold of ייישרואל in answer to their requests and threw it into a fire, allowing the ייעוט to emerge in its grotesque form, as the פסוק says: יאמר להם יהוה התיכננו יהוה לא מתסכלות השם יהוה ייישרואל (ל:כ:ב:ד). When ייישרואל saw the atrocity of the ייעוט, he immediately corrected the situation by throwing the ייעוט into a fire to burn, as it says: ייושק את ייישרואל (ל:כ:ב:ד). Thus, ייישרואל were almost lost, and were finally saved, through the ייעוט, the very medium through which Hashem always wished to teach them the right way. This, too, served as an integral lesson for the future.

Only after the ייעוט did ייישרואל understand the true essence of ייעוט, and what it was that Hashem was trying to impress upon them. It is now, as the פסוק approaches its conclusion, that the culmination of all of the lessons taught to ייישרואל through ייעוט is finally reached. Not only did Hashem no longer have to force the ייעוט upon them, and not only did יישרואל emulate the essence of the ייעוט itself, and not only could ייישרואל now recognize the true and proper use of this ייעוט, but they could now offer to Hashem a piece
of themselves המشعך של צרכנות of the המشعך and its various לכלמ and its various for the עבורה and its various for the עבורה. Three of the של כלמ of the המشعך embody the concept of של עז. One, the הצלת of the המشعך and the symbol of the Jewish people for all time, was the הצלת של עז. The purpose of the המشعך was to bring light to the people; המشعך של עז, once again utiliz-ing anyhow to demonstrate proper service to ג-d. In the very construction of the elaborate המشعך, it states that Hashem demonstrated the exact appearance that it should have by eliciting the image of a fiery המشعך של עז, once again utiliz-ing anyhow to demonstrate proper service to ג-d. (拜师学艺, לדי הרה ושימה). In the center of the המشعך were the המЊה המЊה and המЊה המЊה, and the המЊה comprised the main של עבורה of the המشعך של עבורה. As taught to של עבורה on של עבורה, the המЊה to be brought with fire, as it says: יאת ברה המЊה או המЊה המЊה м وعن המЊה. Furthermore, that which remained of the meat of the המЊה or המЊה was also burned, as it is stated: י.getWritableDatabase את המЊה But אל יאכל י่วย המЊה (拜师学艺). Thus, כלימ began to serve Hashem in the very way that they were taught to trust Hashem, and using that which made them an עז; it was all through anyhow. The very last anyhow of של עבורה of של עבורה פסוק describes Hashem’s resting of His presence in the newly built המЊה, and says: כי עז הוא על המЊה ואש ואתו יעלה לילה וב (משלכ). This perfectly captures the essence of של עבורה of של עבורה פסוק. One can finally see with clarity that Hashem has succeeded in teaching anyhow, how to be anyhow, beilim个国家 and serve Hashem so that Hashem can rest His presence, the anyhow, within beilim, and all know and can recognize Hashem’s presence in their midst.
WHEN ONE READS through בראשת פרק ול, many questions can be raised concerning the actions of שמעון מיכאל in the city of שכם. The following are the questions which will be focused on in this article:

1. Is there any justification for the act of שמעון מיכאל, killing not only the guilty but the innocent as well?
2. If yes, why was 삶יעב angry with his sons at the end of the פרק, and at the end of his life, in שכם זכרון? If not, then why did 삶יעב stay quiet when his sons spoke to זכרון ול? 4. Why does it seem as if the Torah actually justifies the act a few פסוקים after, יוהי חתת אל-לחש על העירה...?

To answer the first question, we can look at a עליות מלחמות and a רמב"ם. Both agree that when שמעון מיכאל kidnapped he violated one of the מותה של מנה (kidnapping is included under the general prohibition of גנול-theft) Non-Jews — are subject to violations of any of their seven מותה. Therefore, he was מותה. The issue that they are divided upon is whether or not the whole city deserved to die as well. רמב"ם, however, strongly disagrees. In his הובעה, he writes that מותה של מנה is a מותה מנה, as opposed to the other six, which are מותה מנה. Therefore, since people of the city only violated a מותה מנה, they were not
worthy of death, and and had right to kill them. brings two proofs to establish his point. The first is that a non-Jewish judge is allowed to drop a case and not bring judgment if he so desires. This is opposed to a Jewish judge who is only allowed to do so when he is positive that someone is lying or if there is not enough evidence to prosecute. Therefore, even if knew what did, they were not obligated to judge. The second proof comes directly from the in the Torah. are commanded in many places not to follow the ways of the other nations — (הבריה היה). Although from this we see that the were violating the , there is no one who condemns them to death for their transgression.

, therefore, writes that when the states , it was not talking about the act of killing the whole city. and his sons wanted to trick so that they could get back. The "trickery" was asking them to get a , so on the third day, that which is the most painful, the brothers would go into the city and take back. agreed to this part of the plan. But, and decided to take this plan to a "higher" level — in the words of — they wanted to take revenge. took out his wrath on and for this very reason — they killed innocent people. believed that due to this one act, and put their whole family in a very dangerous and precarious position; living amongst foreign people, any of the surrounding cities could have potentially started a war. adds that if were in fact worthy of death, would have been the one to kill them — was his daughter! No one gave and the authority to hand out punishment. had the potential to do , and return to Hashem, as can be seen when they were contemplating the , the people of both families would sit together and — be one nation.

agrees with on his main points. He states that if would have only killed , no fuss would have been made over it. But, under no circumstances was the killing of innocent people justified. Only for this did reproach them. In the eyes of and , their act was justified because they only wanted to protect the honor and purity of a , and to show the world that such an act was unacceptable and intolerable. But, nonetheless, instead of "taking revenge on innocent people for that which powerful ones had done", they could have illustrated their point less forcefully.

, on the other hand, finds reasons to defend in the killing of the people of . On , he asks two questions:
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a. Why did they kill those who were not guilty?
b. Why did they not first kill those who actually did the killing?

The first answer that he gives actually answers both questions. When דים come to take back, they saw the men of the city attempting to defend themselves. As such, they found themselves in danger and then killed the ones who were actually for the original sin. Hence, קרחנכ ול זכ...זאת "הורונכ ול זכ...זאת קרחנכ את שמס ב ב החור..."

A second reason he gives for the killing of כל בני נוער is that since the whole city was in on the plan to kidnap, they were all guilty. How do we know that they were all in on it? In it says, "בְּכֵן עַקְבוּ בַּאֲלֵי הַחֲתְלֵיתֵי יְבּוֹז פָּסָק כַּֽתּוֹ בָּ֑א אֲלֵי הַחֲתְלֵיתֵי יְבּוֹז". The plural is inherent connected to "כַּֽתּוֹ בָּ֑א אֲלֵי הַחֲתְלֵיתֵי יְבּוֹז" — the city which טפוא "טפוא" their sister. Then connects this reason to what the wrote in "וספו היה חתבייב ב כָּֽכּלַּו — הַלְּכָּת מַלְכֵי מְרֹבָּֽסַּו שֶׁסְּכַּמְּסַו הרמור". Although he agrees that the city deserved to be killed, he disagrees with 's reasoning, for he does not see a source that indicates that a city is obligated to judge its inhabitants. Therefore, one must say that the whole city helped דים in the kidnapping of דים.

But, if the sin was גול (kidnapping), then the should have said, גול "יאש "! So, יאש explains, one is only worthy of death for גול when that which was "stolen" is not returned. But they were planning on returning גול. If it were not for כי שמוס and would not have killed. defiled their sister and for that they wanted revenge. Nevertheless, יאש emphasizes the fact that they had no right to take the responsibility for judging אֶנֶּשׁ שמס to death.

At the end of the קרחנכ, we see יאש's anger. The same anger, perhaps even a bit sharper, can also be seen at the end of his life, when gives his sons their . There, he reprimands כי שמוס and for their murderous act. Even when many years have passed and the family is no longer living in אֶרֶץ in danger of being attacked, יאש still feels strongly about their acts. In fact he reprimands them when he gives most of his children וֹרֶה, but says that there was no justification for the deeds of כי שמוס and .

Thus far, we have attempted to answer our questions according to three different סריפש. The basic conclusion we can come up with is that none of the reasons that כי שמוס had to kill the whole city were justifiable enough to condone what they did (except for the first reason given by יאש). Although יאש was aware of the "מרמא", he only intended it to be used to get גול back. In no way gave his consent to murder, and he therefore displayed tremendous anger at the end of the קרחנכ.
This brings us to the fourth question. If one reads וֹּסֵח, it seems as if the Torah actually justifies the act by instilling fear in the surrounding nations and protecting עָשֶׂה and his family. Nechama Leibowitz brings in a beautiful explanation to this seeming contradiction. At the end of her article on פֹּתֵח וֹּסֵח, she explains that an אִזֶּנוֹ נֶאֶס given in the Torah does not always prove the truth or consent from Hashem. We can prove this from the basic fact that a אִזֶּנוֹ can perform אִזֶּנוֹ וֹּסֵח after וֹּסֵח, and yet, it does not prove that Hashem desires this אִזֶּנוֹ וֹּסֵח. So, we can not learn from here that the Torah is justifying the act of murder. Hashem intervenes, but it does not conclusively prove anything.

There is a certain level of קָאָטָה, zealousness, that can be found in what שְׁמַעְתָּו וֹּלָיו did. They had a mission with a purpose and believed with all their hearts that what they were doing was the right thing. We can find a direct parallel and contrast to this in the story of מֹשֶׁה מַה שָּׁאַב פֹּתֵח מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה. When Moshe saw מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה, he immediately lifted his sword and killed them both. Hashem tells Moshe that what מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה did was an act of zealousness for Hashem, והשיב (ספוק צ)退货י את חמתי מעל בני ישראל בכאות את מקאים (במסדר חמאא) comments that the term "קָאָטָה" always denotes one who strives to take revenge for the sake of something. So, it seems as if both acts, of מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב and מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה, were acts of קָאָטָה. But what makes מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה praiseworthy while מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב are subject to curse? In order to see the differences between them, we must first highlight the parallels.

a. Both acts are על זְמַת.
b. Both killed an important non-Jew — ולָיו שְׁמַעְתָּו and killed the leaders of a city, and מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה killed the daughter of the "head of the people of a fathers’ house in Midyan" — זְאָת אֲמוֹת בְּתוֹ בֶּעָבְדו.מָדְבָר חָמאא.
c. Both put נֶאֶס in potential danger from the surrounding nations.
d. Both risked their own lives for this one act.

The most striking difference between the two stories is that מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה had pure intentions, his was פָּרָס, while מַה שָּׁאַב שְׁמַעְתָּו וֹּלָיו were more selfish in their קָאָטָה. We already discussed that מַה שָּׁאַב שְׁמַעְתָּו וֹּלָיו and מַה שָּׁאַב שְׁמַעְתָּו מַה שָּׁאַב wanted to avenge the honor of their family and take revenge on the horrible act that was done to their sister, מַה שָּׁאַב. Their goals were based more on the personal, on their honor and their embarrassment. מַה שָּׁאַב was only conscious of the fact that a אִזֶּנוֹ was taking place, and therefore created a אִזֶּנוֹ מַה שָּׁאַב רָדִים חיוֹדִית בה by killing מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה. We see this from the Gemara that ספוק צ brings in on מַה שָּׁאַב מַה שָּׁאַב מֹשֶׁה — when Moshe saw this act, he forgot the halacha of what should be done. מַה שָּׁאַב, remembering what Moshe
taught, — one who commits harlotry with an Aramean woman, zealous people have the right to kill him. Moshe immediately told them to go ahead and kill them. His anger was Hashem’s anger; his כָּזְפָה, Hashem’s כָּזְפָה.

Another obvious difference between both stories is that in פָּסָח’s case, clearly deserved the punishment of death. Hashem explicitly states in דברי הימים פסוק 24 that He approved of what פָּסָח did. Although there is no clear indication from the דברי הימים הבארישת פסוק, as we have seen earlier, it is apparent that the whole city of כָּזְפָה did not deserve to die.

In addition to achieving a clearer understanding of what went on in מָטֶרְפָּה on that day, one can find in this story importance in the realm of עֵדֶת. פָּסָח says — “I, G-d, have called you to righteousness. I took your hand, created you, and made you a covenant people, a light for the nations.” and Malbim both say on this פָּסָח פסוק 1 that the job of כָּזְפָה is to teach the true faith in G-d and encourage them to observe the 613 מִצְוֹת, get them to convert and practice our religion. Rather, our goal is to teach them morality, the correct way to live a life of honesty, ethics and virtue. Rav Avraham Yitzchak haCohen Kook writes in his book, "It is in Israel, ‘the core of humanity’, that mankind’s positive qualities find a common denominator (pp. 129-130)." In את האור פליס he continues, “Judaism is the quintessence of humanity, of the all-extensive real” (1, p. 175). What are we to learn from this? Surely, this is not just to give us an “ego-trip”, to tell us that we are the best in the world, and that we must teach those who are on a “lower level.” At the core of the concept of כָּזְפָה lies a great responsibility. This responsibility calls for a type of perfection that only Hashem can expect from us, an ideal that we must strive to achieve on a daily basis. Because we are the chosen people, appointed as a “light for the nations,” whatever we do, on the communal or individual level, is looked at under a fine microscope. But, most importantly, the people of the world will never allow the individual Jew to remain isolated in his own private and separate sphere. Once the act of one or a few is brought into the public domain, he is then used as a harsh indictment against the entire Jewish community. For our purposes, though, this does not serve as a negative comment against the nations of the world. This serves as a negative comment against us. Although we are not perfect and will never be perfect, for G-d created us כָּזְפָה, this is part of the responsibility that comes with the territory of כָּזְפָה. As mentioned earlier, although we must be the teachers of morality, ethics and virtue, we can not
reach that goal if we do not properly keep the entire Torah. If we destroy an entire city in a seemingly justifiable act of revenge. As we have seen, this was wrong- not only because it went against everything their father stood for, but because the integrity of the family of the , the family of the , was disgraced. As says at the end of the in , "you have brought trouble on me to make me odious among the inhabitants of the land..." saw that this one act of murder would lower them in the eyes of the surrounding nations, bring his family down from the level of and give the nations an excuse to not even want to follow the and heed the word of Hashem.

The only way we can properly be is if we learn the lesson taught by . We must live the life of a light unto the nations, using a system of values and justice set forth by the Torah, and never allowing our emotions to dictate and openly justify our actions. We must show the nations of the world that this type of life is truly possible, so that they too can attain a true faith in G-d.
The saga of two dying men standing before a nation of people. One man, 147 years old, lies victim to a dreadful illness. The other, 120 years old, is victim of a dreadful punishment. Both know the end is drawing near, and both are prepared to apportion the blessings and the legacy. Neither one is content to simply bless the people with general good wishes; rather each in his own unique way gives an eternal message to each of his children/tribes. In this essay, we shall seek to understand the nuances of these messages, and their meaning.

In יִכּּּבּ, the מָשָּּׁא of מְשָּׁא are relayed to his sons. While these מְשָּׁא outline the special mission each שָׁבוֹנִי is to fulfill, the מָשָּּׁא of מָשָּׁא, as told in מְשָּׁא מְשָּׁא, are meant to combine both blessing and prophecy and tell each tribe its national responsibility.

The brachot of מְשָּׁא begin in מְשָּׁא מְשָּׁא calls to his sons and says, וְאִשָּׁפָּו אֵין אֹיֵד אָמַר אֲשֶׁר אַחְטַב בְּאֶחְטָבָה וֹחָטֶם. Thezeki von Moshe, comments that יִכּּּבּ wished to reveal the details of the קַז; nevertheless, despite his pleas, Hashem would not allow him to. Rav Hirsch mentions a similar theme with respect to the redundancy in the usage of קַז and יִכּּּבּ. He explains that the קַז of אִסָּק שֵׁלָשׁ connotes “to gather together” for a common goal or purpose; the יִכּּּבּ of קִבּר שֵׁלָשׁ refers to physically staying together in an “external account of space, not mind.” יִכּּּבּ, though clearly cognizant of the fact that his sons were diverse by their very nature, believes that, if they work together and unite into one spirit of mind and body, the מּוֹשָּׁא will come.

Reuven, you are my firstborn, my strength and my initial vigor, foremost in rank and foremost in power. Water-like impetuoso-
The first-born, רוחבול, is the first-born, but he is assumed to be the strong dependable one. However, like water which flows in every direction and cannot be contained on its own, רוחبول too is unstable in his character. According to the משם אשר נתן, it says that his instability and recklessness led him to sleep with his father’s wife, Bilhah. (Others explain that he merely moved his father’s bed into Bilhah’s tent.) And this, according to ירῳ, is the justification for losing his מֶשֶׁה וַתֶּחֶר. One can see the concept of מֶשֶׁה אבָּתוֹ פִּסְקוֹן illustrated by Datan and Aviram, descendants of רְאוֹבֵן. When they lead a rebellion, they turn against מֶשֶׁה in their uncontrollable rage and animosity and challenge both his convictions and leadership capabilities. Datan and Aviram meet their fate when they are swallowed up by the ground; this illustrates an ironic theme based on the fact that water, to which they are compared, always aims for the lowest point.

Shimon and Levi are comrades, their weaponry is a stolen craft. Into their conspiracy, may my soul not enter! With their congregation, do not join, O my honor! For in their rage, they murdered people and at their whim they hamstrung an ox. Accursed is their rage for it is intense, and their wrath for it is harsh; I will separate them within Jacob, and I will disperse them in Israel.

אֲחָדוֹת, אֲחָדוֹת, are commended for their קְדָשָׁה, but are reprimanded for their means of acquiring that which they desired. מְשֻׁם accuses them of harboring hatred and not properly ridding themselves of this enmity. This was evident both in the incident of מְשֻׁם כֵּלָה חָסָר כִּלּות:�וחבול נִשְׁתַּיָּה בֵּיתוֹ, כִּכְּדָה כִּי בֵּאֵמָיו הָרָגָה אֲשֶׁר וְזָרָה נֶקֶדֶר, כִּי זָרָה אֲפֶם כָּזָא וְזָרָה נֶקֶדֶר כִּכְּדָה.

אֲחָדוֹת בְּעַבְרָם אַפּוּסָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.

The translations in this article are taken from the ArtScroll Stone Tanach.
The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a scholar from among his descendants until Shilo arrives and his will be an assemblage of nations. He will tie his donkey to the vine; to the vine branch his donkey’s foal; he will launder his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes. Red eyed from wine, and white toothed from milk.

Judah — you, your brothers shall acknowledge; your hand will be at your enemies’ nape; your father’s sons will prostrate themselves to you. A lion cub is Judah; from the prey, my son, you elevated yourself. He crouches, lies down like a lion, and like an awesome lion, who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a scholar from among his descendants until Shilo arrives and his will be an assemblage of nations. He will tie his donkey to the vine; to the vine branch his donkey’s foal; he will launder his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes. Red eyed from wine, and white toothed from milk.

Rav Hirsch adds that Judah received the scepter simply because his eldest brothers were not worthy and he was next in line. He continues to explain the later segment of the blessing invoking imagery of the scepter and the donkey. The donkey does not envision the scepter entering on a proud white stallion, but rather on a young donkey’s foal. The donkey symbolizes pleasant peacefulness, while a stallion signifies military might. Jewish kings are forbidden to own too many horses (Deuteronomy). In addition, a Jewish king cannot be crowned until after a sense of the scepter has been established (Deuteronomy). This emphasizes the lack of importance placed upon military conquests; rather the focus is on settlement. To confirm this trait of the donkey alluding to the coming of the scepter, one notes the scepter in Genesis which does indeed state that the scepter will arrive mounting a pleasant, peaceful donkey. The scepter does not have clothing stained with the blood of his military conquests, but with “דב ענבים".
Zebulun shall settle by seashores. He shall be at the ship’s harbor, and his last border will reach Zidon.

Is the next to receive a blessing as to why receives the next blessing as opposed to his older brother, responds by referring to the blessing of found in where wished to bless that his ships would be the most successful in all the harbor. The result will be that his ships will yield the financial support needed to provide for ’s learning. supports ’s explanation and says that it is impossible for man to exclude himself entirely from the world, and learn Torah without any means of support. As it says in Therefore, is foremost in the two brachot.

is the next to receive a blessing. , following , is compared to a spiritual donkey; as the donkey pulls the plow, is the cultivator of Judaism. states that is prepared for war against those who do not follow the Torah and that he accepts the and of and strives to have good out. In contrast, changes tone in the second half of where , maintains that does not work too hard; rather, only enough so that he can earn a sustenance. works in order to earn leisure time. He realizes that there are other conquests and treasures to be won only through leisure. When requests that every bring men following the death of , the chooses two hundred men, who all possess . This , which Rav Hirsch defines as practical knowledge and understanding of the real relationship of men and matters which the gives, was obtained during the leisure time earned while working. Rav Hirsch asserts that, because realizes that Torah is important, he is the backbone of the Jewish people.
Dan will avenge his people, the tribes of Israel will be united as one. Dan will be a serpent on the highway, a viper by the path, that bites a horse’s heels so its rider galls backward. For Your salvation do I long, O Hashem!

...will judge and avenge their enemies. ...is told of in this verse; he is likened to a ...pillars of the building to destroy the (-pillars). Rav Hirsch adds that ...will defend not with strength, but rather with strategy.

Gad will recruit a regiment and it will retreat on its heel.

...fresh, bold, and courageous, excels in military arts. He is described as quietly resting at the frontiers, not disturbing his neighbors. Only when ...is attacked does he zealously fight back and pursue his raiders over the borders. The importance of ...is shown by external means in that their worth extends beyond the borders of Israel; hence, ...and ...are placed together before and .

From Asher — his bread will have richness, and he will provide kingly delicacies.

While, as previously stated, ...and ...defend their rights externally and militarily fight the land, ...and ...show their notability internally within the Land of Israel. According to Rav Hirsch, ...provides the abundant array of delicacies, because his land is more suitable for growing luxuries than the simple necessities of life. The portends that ...rich “fit-for-a-king” produce will be sought by many kings. ...adds that the people of were desperately in need of oil and sought aid from ...When they finally received the oil, there was not even a single donkey, camel, mule, or horse in ...who rested simply in an attempt to carry the oil to the needy people. This certainly emphasizes ...overabundance.

Naphtali is a hind let loose who delivers beautiful sayings.
is compared to a deer who acts speedily, but not of his own accord. When Barak gathered 10,000 men from a deer, it was only when Barak gathered them together that they took recourse against the oak. Rav Hirsch defines the etymology of the word "šofar" as a hollow animal horn, and a "šophor" is a rounded pavilion. Both the shofar and the "šophor" suggest an inner focus. Thus forth, ופתלי does indeed prove his worth by internal means.

A charming son is Joseph, a charming son to the eye; each of the girls climbed heights to gaze. They embittered him and became antagonists; the arrow-tongued men hated him. But his bow was firmly emplaced and his arms were gilded, from the hands of the Mighty Power of Jacob — from there, he shepherded the stone of Israel. [That was] from the God of your father and He will help you, and with Shaddai — and He will bless you [with] blessings of heaven from above, blessings of the deep crouching below, blessings of the bosom and womb. The blessings of your father surpassed the blessings of my parents to the endless bounds of the world’s hills. Let them be upon Joseph’s head and upon the head of the exile from his brothers.

We now arrive at the ברכות of ופתלי, the beloved son of ופתלי. The first part of the ברכות recounts the negative animosity which befell ופתלי on account of his beauty, namely from the brothers and גבתו. However, ופתלי was able to rise to distinction despite the enmity he experienced. The latter part of the ברכות concludes with ופתלי blessing with children. Rav Soloveitchik points out that, particularly in ופתלי, ופתלי carries the identity of the “Jewish Grandfather” (Man in the Modern World, “First Jewish Grandfather”). ופתלי is referred to, throughout the story, as "ופתלי" (בראשית: ופתלי, ופתלי). Of note is the fact that ופתלי did not live longer than the other two Avot; yet he is the prototypical grandfather because he simply had the disposition of a grandfather. Furthermore, ופתלי, in contrast to the other two Avot, is shown as having an active role in his grandchildren’s lives. He blesses ופתלי and includes them in his last will and testa-
ment. Therefore, it is only appropriate that mention child-bearing and child-rearing in his of the ברכות.

Benjamin is a predatory wolf; in the morning he will devour prey and in the evening he will distribute spoils.

Finally, we come to the given to בני ישראל. He is depicted as being a mighty, fearless, wolf-like warrior. The points out the incident of the פלaméliorer; the lawless men of the city who raped and killed the were from בני ישראל. However, on a more positive note, one can see the transference of the given to בני ישראל in examining the actions of . Rav Hirsch interprets the given to בני ישראל to mean that sees the devastating power of גולה and says that the youngest will eventually drive out the “wolf,” , from the flock of sheep, . This vision is actualized in by virtue of the fact that , both descendants of בני ישראל, were able to defeat , the . As it states, presumably with respect to בני ישראל, “The youngest of the flock will indeed drag them along.”

And this is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, bestowed upon the Children of Israel before his death. He said: Hashem came from Sinai — having shone forth to them from Seir, having appeared from Mount Paran, and then approached with some of the holy myriads — from His right hand He presented the fiery Torah to them. Indeed, You loved the tribes greatly, all its holy ones were in Your hands; for they planted themselves at Your feet, bearing [the yoke] of Your utterances: “The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob.” He became King over Jeshurun when the numbers of the nation gathered — the tribes of Israel in unity.
Because the twelve sons of שבעים have grown into a complete nation, ready to enter הארץ and claim their land, the brachot of משה tend to convey a combination of individuality and national responsibility. Rav Hirsch says that focuses on the aspect, that is uniting the bond of עם the brachot. Rav Hirsch also maintains that משה, in giving the brachot, is termed המוש. He is the man of א-לוהים, the man who was closest to G-d. Though the rest of the Torah was said by משה directly מצה, these brachot told to theבawah the depths of משה's heart rather than בורר. The comments on the organization of משה's brachot that וו was granted רכש, in arranging the brachot in the order in which the received their מחלות in שבעים.

יהי ראובן ולא ימת ויהי שתים מפפר:
May Reuben live and not die, and may his population be included in the count.

The maintains that the brevity of ברכה רזאנה is indicative of the fact that it is a שבועת. He is the man who was closest to G-d. Though the rest of the Torah was said by משה directly מצה, these brachot told to theבawah the depths of Moses's heart rather than בורר. The comments on the organization of משה's brachot that וו was granted רכש, in arranging the brachot in the order in which the received their מחלות in שבעים.

Without much effort, one must note the conspicuous absence of שבעים in the brachot of משה. The states that שבעים is not mentioned because the sinners in the horrible incident of באל פאָר were from שבעים שבעים, point out that there were six families involved in the horrible incident at Baal Peor; one descended from שבעים, while the remaining five came from שבעים. Instead, the suggests that שבעים is not mentioned in order to prove interference of the earlier ברכה תבש in the word of Hashem. Thus, שבעים is given territory within שבעים. Nechama Leibowtitz dissents from this. She instead points out that שבעים lacks a characteristic which רכש possesses. She quotes ריפריש’s explanation that היה לו had much zealously as seen at the incident of פאָר. As soon as שבעים declared שבעים א-לוהים, all of שבעים united together, as it says, שבעים אלוהים כל בני ולש. This occurrence emphasized שבעים’s unique ability to utilize all of their talents and inclinations to fulfill the word of Hashem. She quotes the שבעים who
states that the unique characteristic embodied in Shevet Yiivah was able to perform every action (פירוש רמב"ם לפרק אבות הכ"ט). Nechama Leibowitz introduces a mashal as quoted from the Sifri (פרק ט, ל,ו). Two men once borrowed large sums of money from their king. One man returned the sum of money, and even lent his own money to the king. The other man failed to return the money as he had promised and even borrowed a second time. The first man portrays שבט ייוהד; in uniting together as a nation responding to המשה הבן, it was as though he had returned the money as promised. Lending out money to the king is likened to תמר ואשתו's heroic deed of stabbing the two adulterers (במידות חיאד). One can see that שבט ייוהד corrected his former misdeeds through these two significant acts. שבט שמעון, on the other hand, was never able to rectify his misdeed and instead added another infraction in that specific instance by virtue of the fact that one of the two adulterers, מיר בן פליא, stemmed from שבט שמעון. The mashal of ברכה given to שבט שמעון and ли שבט ייוהד in ספרא דרשא תט is denoted שבט ייוהד שבט ייוהד בדרכו, שבט ייוהד was able to correct its former mishaps and thus stand as an exemplary role model for a nation of people poised on the brink of disaster. שבט שמעון only served to exacerbate its predicament.

This to Judah, and he said: Hearken, O Hashem, to Judah’s voice, and return to him his people; may his hands fight his grievance and may You be a Helper against his enemies.

Rashi, explaining why ברכה לויוהד immediately follows that of ראובן, states that both ראובן and יהודה ראובן confessed to their respective sins of switching the beds and having relations with a ביאה ונה. But, the Gemara Sanhedrin tells us more details. During the forty years in the ה columnHeader, שמעון’s bones were ashamedly turning over in his coffin because he failed to care for בינה as he had promised his father (בראשית א,ב). Therefore noted that, as reparation for his earlier misdeeds, שמעון persuaded ראובן to confess to his sin. Noting this, therefore refers to ראובן’s confession. The phrasearchs therefore refers to יהודה himself, as opposed to יהודה בר פלג. This could perhaps explain the juxtaposition of ראובן and יהודה’s brachot.

Alliflower תמר הואו אורי אליאו חסד עםות שתפשו כמות תרבות על מי מ러ין
เอกל לצביא וליאו אל ראנייהו את אחיו את הכיר את בני לאידע כים שמרו

The תכרות of תכרות and the תכרות of תכרות
Of Levi he said: Your Tumim and Your Urim befit Your devout one, whom You tested at Massah, and whom You challenged at the waters of Meribah. The one who said of his father and mother, “I have not favored him”; his brothers he did not give recognition and his children he did not know; for they [the Levites] have observed Your word and Your covenant they preserved. They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel; they shall place incense before Your presence, and burnt offerings on Your Altar. Bless, O Hashem, his resources, and favor the work of his hands; smash the loins of his foes and his enemies, that they may not rise.

According to Rav Hirsch, the Tumim represent the highest, moral perfection, while the Urim represent mental perfection. The one which receives the Tumim and Urim must therefore have moral and mental perfection. One can ask why Yiśmael is to receive the breastplate after his harsh recourse in the killing of Shechem. Doesn’t it seem that Yiśmael, though his actions were justified, displayed an extreme lack of moral perfection? Furthermore, the Tumim are unusually mentioned first, indicating that moral perfection was Yiśmael’s strength. We see, though, that Yiśmael redeemed himself at the unnegligible urging of Shechem that he continue to serve Hashem by saying, and Yiśmael’s breast was gathered before him. Because of this seemingly inconsequential action, Yiśmael became worthy of the breastplate.

Of Benjamin he said: May Hashem’s beloved dwell securely by Him; He hovers over him all day long; and he rests between his shoulders.

Rav Hirsch believes that the breastplate concerning Benjamin must follow the breastplate which deals with the shoulders. After Yerushalayim was chosen, the breastplate could not be found anywhere else. בנים, בנים is compared to a שור. The most beautiful part of the שור is his shoulders. Therefore blesses that the breastplate should always rest between his shoulders. Rav Hirsch notes that the shoulders, theакם המכדיש, and the relevant, but rather in that of the weakest. Also striking, points out Rav Hirsch, is the fact that the word ל Illustrator,
a haven or an enclosed protective area, stems from the word chupah to which the bride and groom enter. Metaphorically speaking, the chupah is a remarkable expression for the location of the three aforementioned areas which serve to renew the loving union between Hashem and his bride and groom. Furthermore, the Sifri points out that Yosef was the only brother who was born in Egypt, the only one who never felt the extreme enmity of the brothers towards him, and the one who became the prop and support to his dying father.

Of Joseph he said: Blessed by Hashem is his land — with the heavenly bounty of dew, and with the deep waters crouching below; with the bounty of the sun’s crops, and with the bounty of the moon’s yield; with the quick ripening crops of the early mountains, and with the bounty of eternal hills; with the thornbush may this blessing rest upon Joseph’s head, and upon the crown of him who was separated from his brothers. A sovereignty is his ox-like one — majesty is his. And his glory will be like the horns of a re’eim; with them shall he gore nations together, to the ends of the Land; they are the myriads of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh.

Rav Hirsch tells that, because the land of Ephraim, the land of Manasseh, and the site of the tribe of Joseph were given to Yosef bin Menasheh respectively, therefore was deserving of the richest abundance of soil. The Sifri says that רashi means that the moon brings forth fruits from month to month. The Sifri says that ירחו של ברכה י יודע יוסי’s יוסי refers to the fruits which the moon yields, for example cucumbers and pumpkins; or it simply means that the moon brings forth fruits from month to month. The Sifri says that ירחו של ברכה י יודע יוסי because יוסי was separated from his brothers when he was sold into slavery. The יוסי cited in this ברכה is used to indicate greatness and כור ברכה שור. This is proven through two usages of the word, in שמות ובספרא ובספרא i.e., in the first book of Moses and in the book of Genesis.

The Talmud states: ברכה ידע כי שופט יוסי משלים👑יוסי. To Yosef he said: Rejoice, O Zebulun, in your excursions, and Issachar in your tents. The tribes will assemble at the mount, there they will slaughter offerings of righteousness, for by the
riches of the sea they will be nourished, and by the treasures concealed in the sand.

Rav Hirsch attributes the sharing of one blessing by brothers and the riches of the sea they will be nourished, and by the treasures concealed in the sand. Rav Hirsch attributes the sharing of one blessing by brothers to the fact that the brothers worked together in each other’s territory. They, in a fraternal union, brought about the first secular world acquaintance with spirit, life, and laws; they caused strangers, upon meeting them, to love Judaism and its halachot.

It adds that the concluding five blessings were mentioned last because they were the weakest tribes, as can be seen in the last blessing mentioned when Yosef brought them before the Patriarch. Hence, they restated their names in each of the concluding brachot to strengthen them.

Of Gad he said: Blessed is He Who broadens Gad; he dwells like a lion, tearing off arm and even head. He chose the first portion for himself, for that is where the lawgiver’s plot is hidden; he came at the head of the nation, carrying out Hashem’s justice and His ordinance with Israel.

According to Rav Hirsch, Gad has already rightfully won his portion and can now peacefully rest like a lion in his possession. The blessing alludes to the name Gad, whose name rests in his blessing. Gad blesses and thanks Hashem for He decreed that no battles will occur near Gad. Rabbi Shimon brings down the Sifri which says that Gad blesses Hashem for enlarging Gad’s portion. The, however, says that the blessing is really an appreciation for bestowing upon Gad the quality of Gad and is thus compared to a lion. The, though, points out that the two who gained the blessing did not take them by chance; instead, they were granted to them by Hashem who enabled them to receive these blessings from Hashem. This fact is not mentioned because Gad received a larger portion as a result of their greater strength.

Of Dan he said: Dan is a lion cub, leaping forth from the Bashan.

Rav Hirsch maintains that Dan was not satisfied with his portion. This can be seen by the fact that they began with one portion and conquer several more territories.

The תֵּעָכָכְת בַּרְכָּת and the מְשֵׁה בַּרְכָּת

ם וֶלֶד אָמָר דְּוַג נָוָר אֲרָוָה יִוָמָה מְבָשֶׂה:

Of Dan he said: Dan is a lion cub, leaping forth from the Bashan.
as a lion cub leaps onto his prey and continuously tears it to shreds, even after it is declared dead, simply to be more secure in its newly-found acquirement, so too, it extends beyond his natural boundaries and attempts to conquer more lands simply in order to become more secure in its possessions. The Bashan refers to the “chosen of the flock” as is shown in וַהֲלֹא אֵלֶּה אָמָר נְפִיתָלִים שֶבַע נֹאְרִי בְּרָכָה הָיָה וּרְדוֹת יְרֵשׁ.

Of Naphtali he said: Naphtali, satiated with favor, and filled with Hashem’s blessing; go possess the sea and its south shore.

The מָשָל asserts that the יְרוּם דּוֹא is a מֶשֶל for וְעַלְּכֵנְיָה. The former can be seen by the fact that אחד泰国י begging Hashem to give him the שֶכֶל שֶכֶל to fathom Hashem and His ways, but ‘רְבַּת מַגֵּג וְעַלְּכֵנְיָה’ is constantly referred to as being an arid desert, חוּקַמְי. The latter can be seen by the fact that זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה citing the בָּחֵר שֶׁרָא יִתֵּן says that all who enter the Land will see the palatable fruits of נְפִיתָלִים, and bless and thank Hashem. Thus says the Sifri, מְלַמְדִּי שָׁלוֹחָה יִפְתִּלִים שְׁמַח בְּחָלָקָיו.

Of Asher he said: The most blessed of children is Asher; he shall be pleasing to his brothers, and dip his feet in oil.

וַהֲלֹא אֵלֶּה אָמָר בּוֹרֵזׇי מְכֻנָּא אָשָׁר יִתְּנוּ אָשָׁר וָגוּלְבִּי תְשׁוּבָה יְלָה:

Of Asher he said: Asher evidently received the best. However does not understand how he received the best. Perhaps, says Asher, ‘רִשְׁי אֵשֶר’ was blessed with sons (expressed by ‘רְמֶכֶן’) as opposed to the rest of the זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה. But, the other disagrees with ‘רִשְׁי אֵשֶר’, saying that it is not clear if כְּרֶמֶן אֵשֶר was ever fulfilled. The רְמֶכֶן believes that the זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה refers to an overabundance of oil found in נְפִיתָלִים; the brothers would always rush to Asher to get the proper minerals, oils, etc. (This is mentioned earlier with respect to the זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה given to Asher by יִנְכָּב אֵשֶר.) According to the רְמֶכֶן, this is why Asher is the most blessed and loved by all his brothers.

The notion of the two brachot is striking; they contain the legacy and will of two dying men to a nation of people. Regarding the brachot of יִנְכָּב, one might say that some seem to be more like זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה rather than זָכַר נְקוּב נְתָנְיָה. But, בּוֹרֵזׇי מְכֻנָּא described each’s personality, he blessed each accordingly so that they might find happiness and satisfaction. Rav Hirsch states, “For, against [one’s] will and without [one’s]
cooperation, G-d can make no man happy. And the reverse also holds true, the true Jew changes the bitterest experience into a source of the richest blessing, ‘Not’, runs a saying of our sages ‘because he apportioned the strength of lions to Judah, the boldness of wolves to Benjamin, the speed of deer to Naphtali, should you think that all were not included in the blessing, that is why it says, each one according to his blessing, he blessed them, not him, but all of them ‘each one participated in a general blessing, and the special blessing of each one was for the benefit of all.’ ”

Moshe imparted his brachot with a remarkable mixture of love and praise. Unlike previous threats of G-d abandoning and punishing בִּנְיָמִין, these last words contain both a blessing and a reassurance. And, like the brachot of עִקְבָּא, these brachot too give a lasting hope that, ultimately, the וַעֲבַר will come.
Animal Imagery in ספרишעיהו

Melissa Rothenberg

SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE of his generation as well as to future generations of Jews. ספרишעיהו includes words of rebuke and punishment, as well as encouragement, all of which are still very relevant today. To strengthen his message to населיה, uses many examples, metaphors and parables containing animal imagery.

This style of writing is a popular tool in ספרישעיהו, as well as in ספר ישעיהו, מmalachim, מmalachim. For example, the Torah itself uses animals, such as the חיות, קדש, as representatives of certain human characteristics and failings. There are also numerous examples of this style throughout ספר ישעיהו, קדש, which are relevant today. The חיות is a visibly hard worker, which is why населיה deems it necessary for man to learn from the ant and eschew laziness. Similarly, the Gemara in teaches the trait of ענות through the actions of a cat. населיה uses animal imagery in prophesies to the Jewish people and to the world, specifically to emphasize the idea of יבגו ישראל's punishment for disobedience, the description of the ישועה and the revenge in store for the oppressors of населיה.

One can ask why the 살ומא, and after it, would refer specifically to animals to portray human behavior? The 살ומא describes the difference between man and beasts through references to both 살ומא's words והרותו, 살ומא's discussion of 살ומא's words in his book 살ומא מmalachim. 살ומא interprets 살ומא's words as an instruction to man to remain an איש, as opposed to allowing oneself to be lowered to the status of an animal. 살ומא, who explains that man's lack of watchfulness reflects a moral level lower than that of an animal, agrees with 살ומא that man and animal are closely related.

The살ומא explains that every man is created with both a שעון הבוחר, an animalistic nature, and a שעון, human intelligence. One must use his/her שעון to reign over the שעון הבוחר. Only after the animalistic behavior in man is conquered by the spiritual or intellectual element in human life can
man achieve his purpose on this earth. If one does fall prey to his/her animalistic instincts then, in essence, he/she descends to a level lower than that of the animal. This is due to the fact that every creation has its own individual purpose. Therefore, animals that follow instinct, which is what they were created to do, are on a level above those humans who harm themselves spiritually, by ignoring their human, spiritual instincts. Since man was created in the image of G-d, he has an obligation to act on a level above the animal. שיעווה, like the other sources we have mentioned, recognized the innate animalistic tendencies in humans and therefore chose to refer to the familiar in the human psyche, in order to further emphasize their particular lessons.

Шיעווה’s first usage of animal imagery comes to admonish בֵּין יִשְׂרָאל for their lack of recognition of Hashem. He phrases his rebuke as follows: חַיָּיוֹן שָׁרָה קְוִיָּה וְחָמָר אֵבוּס בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לَا יְדַעְתָּא תַּל אֵל הַתּוֹבּוֹת (אמו). The different פרשות all conclude that שיעווה is describing a fallacy in בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל, but each commentary differs in the interpretation of why שיעווה specifically uses imagery of the ox and donkey to emphasize his point. The מְלִיבִים explains that the ox and donkey are two animals that recognize the sources of their sustenance. The ox recognizes his master and the donkey, his food. שיעווה, according to מְלִיבִים, tries to emphasize to בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל how much they have wronged Hashem. Not only do they refuse to recognize their master, but they deliberately overlook the One who sustained them throughout all these years.

לכָּל describes two different levels of recognition: the ox that identifies his master after a few whips, and the donkey that has a lower level of recognition; until he is fed his owner is unknown to him. שיעווה tries to show that although they witnessed תַּפְסָרָה, and saw Hashem’s strength plus the sustenance they received in the desert, they remained intentionally unaware of their Master. They were thus on a lower level than the ox, and even than the donkey. שיעווה then suggests an additional interpretation which deviates from the initial responses of the other פרשׁים. He refers back to his interpretation of the beginning of בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל, when he describes שיעווה’s use of מְשִׁיעָה and אֵרוּר as being representative of beings that continually fulfill their purpose, even though they receive no reward. Here again, שיעווה’s mention of the ox and donkey is a general reference to obedient animals that serve their masters unquestionably, even though they receive absolutely no promise of reward.

לְדַיָּרִך, like שיעווה’s first interpretation, is bothered by מְלִיבִים’s use of these specific animals. Therefore, he explains the שיעווה according to other phrases in Tanach. לְדַיָּרִך speaks of the ox and donkey as animals devoid of all升华, and uses them to represent בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל, who, שיעווה is implying,
are themselves absent of intelligence because of their intentional blindness to their Master. רדיק refers to each part of the פסוק as an additional rebuke towards בני ישראל. He says that even after Hashem, the קאוה ט導 אופר, identified Himself to the Jewish people, they refused to recognize Him. All three מפרשים, in their different ways, demonstrate the power of the donkey and ox imagery to strengthen ישעיהו's lesson.

 ישעיהו follows a theme which begins with rebuke to בני ישראל and then continues to relate the punishment the nation would receive for not heeding his warning. In פסוק י', ישעיהו speaks of a fly and a bee which wreak havoc on the Jewish people. Once again, ישעיהו uses an analogy depicting animals to relate an idea. רדיק, הן, and Malbim agree on the understanding of this פסוק and explain the symbolism in reference to the nations of צרי ישראל's attackers.

Barukh attempts to explain why ישעיהו uses a fly to represent צרי ישראל and a bee for בני ישראל. He explains that flies attack in large numbers, and thereby alludes to בני ישראל's gargantuan armies, while a bee is a stronger creature than others of its size, and therefore signifies בני ישראל's strength. The Malbim adds that just as the bee is stronger than the fly, בני ישראל was stronger than צרי ישראל, although he too tries to fit the חמש of the bee and the fly into בני ישראל and בני ישראל in a slightly different way than ישעיהו and Malbim. He refers back to the preceding פסוק in פסוק I which the נביא נביא tells of Hashem's plan to have the enemy nations attack quickly. The fly and bee are two creatures that strike in haste and, since the two most threatening nations of that time were צרי ישראל and בני ישראל, it can therefore be assumed that the fly and the bee refer to these two nations. Thus, when ישעיהו speaks of the haste of the fly and the bee, he uses meaningful animal imagery for בני ישראל's punishment and their punishers.

The Vilna Gaon interprets these פסוקים on a more philosophic level. He too relates the fly and bee to nations, yet he does not limit the analogy to בני ישראל, for he feels the message of ישעיהו through the animals applies even after the terrible reign of צרי ישראל's oppression. The fly, he says, is known to attack when its victim has a physical deficiency, just like the enemies of the Jewish people who strike when בני ישראל are at their spiritual nadir.

Evidently, ישעיהו chose his analogies with great care and his messages, depicted through his various imageries, still trigger our consciousness to react with great fervor. Humans are especially aware of flies and bees, and it is extremely frightening to imagine what it would be like if the enemies that surround us would attack violently like a swarm of killer bees.

To relieve the painful image of bee stings, ישעיהו writes of the days of
Animal Imagery in ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ

Mashiach. His description of יומת המשיח is delineated in several ways, two of which also include the very poignant משלים involving animals, including the צפר. In ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ, there are several animals mentioned: the צפר, הנס ו-יומת, all of which were familiar animals to the Jewish People for both their religious significance as well as their ubiquity. All of these animals are natives to the Middle East, and inhabited the areas surrounding ארץ ישראל.

All of the משלים on these פסוקים describe the analogy in terms of the peace prescribed for ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ. For example, interprets the משל in two ways. At first he suggests ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ’s use of these animals to be not an analogy, but a statement of literal significance. He feels ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ speaks of a change of nature in the behavior of these animals, like the peaceful behaviors of the animals in Ó˘ÈÁ. ÒÙ¯ÈÌ also relates the משל and and for he believes wants to compare the different personalities of these animals to the varying personalities among כלל ישראל. The predatory animals, ÒÙ¯ÈÌ says, correspond to theراعי והעפר, and the prey refers to the ירעים — who will be at peace with each other in the time of ÒÙ¯ÈÌ. The Malbim also tries to find symbolic significance in the words of ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ’s analogy, and relates the parable to the specific animals. These animals, the Malbim explains, range from the strongest to extremely weak animals, thereby further emphasizing יומת המשיח ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ’s idea that in ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ, there will be complete peace within the animal kingdom. ÒÙ¯ÈÌ explains this פסוק in relation to the succeeding analogy of the ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ described in Ù¯Ì ÙÒ˜. ÒÙ¯ÈÌ explains, like the Malbim, that there will be complete peace, beginning with the animals and then leading to peace among the animals and man. ÒÙ¯ÈÌ does not refer to this second interpretation when he explains the imagery of the צפר, and suggests that the extent of the peace in Ó˘ÈÁ will allow a baby to play at the opening of the snake’s dwelling place, without fear of imminent danger. ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ’s use of familiar animals carries strong significance in our personal understanding of the peace destined for the time of ÒÙ¯ÈÌ.

An additional essential topic that ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ chooses to describe in a משל is the punishment of the oppressors of Ó˘ÈÁ. In ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ, ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ expresses the massive punishment in store for כלל ישראל’s foes, through a detailed description of the צפר ו-יומת and its deadly bite. In ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ, ÒÙ¯ È˘ÚȉÂ describes a צפר and a ויוספ which all of the משלים agree to mean יחוספה and יחוספה. The warned the Nations of their impending doom which, at that time, came with יחוספה’s miraculous victory. The צפר is identified as a venomous viper that attacks its enemies suddenly and leaves a lethal remnant in its victim. The same way this צפר bites and kills, יחוספה left his mark on the foes of ÒÙ¯ÈÌ.
In סрус יִשְׁעָיוֹת describes a flying serpent (חלות) and a crooked serpent as well as a crocodile, all of which will be destroyed by the נְשָׁך - day of revenge. This time the analogy of the נְשָׁך is applied to the nations themselves, to relate the conniving characteristics of רַשִ'י, אָשַׁר and אָדוֹם, which fall to the all encompassing power of רֳשֵׁי and the Malbim limit their explanations of the various references to the נְשָׁך as symbolizing אָדוֹם, אָשַׁר and אֶרֶבכֶל - the נְשָׁך stretches these images to fit all of the enemies of נֶפֶש and to the fact that on the day of the ultimate revenge, every nation that harmed נֶפֶש will receive restitution for their actions.

The image of נְשָׁך carried the same symbolism as the נְשָׁך - namely, the punishment in store for the nation of יִשְׁעָיוֹת. מואב, according to the Malbim, uses a bird to express his image to emphasize the idea that נְשָׁך will be left “flying” about the world, ownerless and homeless.

The many references to animals in סрус יִשְׁעָיוֹת serve as a constant reminder of יִשְׁעָיוֹת’s messages. יִשְׁעָיוֹת chose animals that were prevalent during his day, as well as creatures that are familiar to man today. One can analyze each יִשְׁעָיוֹת for its unique significance, and find an example or an understanding that penetrates his or her psyche. Since all human beings have an animalistic nature, יִשְׁעָיוֹת realized the importance of using aspects of life that relate to every person on some level. Whether one reacts to the stubbornness of the יַצָּר and אֶרֶב, the fear of the מַלְאָך and הָאֲזֵר; the comforting feeling of peace displayed in the animals; or the sweet revenge of the נְשָׁך - one is certain to learn a strong lesson from the animal imagery in סрус יִשְׁעָיוֹת.
Maimonides in *Halakhic Man*: Providence and Prophecy

*Tzippy Katz*

RABBI SOLOVEITCHIK’S masterpiece of the 1940’s, *Halakhic Man*, is an essay depicting the unique typology of the Halakhic Man and the philosophy of Halakha. The philosophical concepts and ideas quoted by Rabbi Soloveitchik are deeply rooted in his study of philosophers preceding him. Throughout the essay, Rabbi Soloveitchik quotes and develops ideas from the philosophies of various schools of thought, ranging from Aristotelian to Neo-Kantian. One of the most commonly quoted thinkers in all his works of both philosophy and halakha is Maimonides.

As is in many of his various essays and speeches, Rabbi Soloveitchik uses Maimonidean thought as the springboard for many of his own philosophical ideas. In the second half of *Halakhic Man* entitled “His Creative Capacity,” particularly in his discussion of Divine providence and prophecy, Rabbi Soloveitchik bases much of what he says on quotes and ideas from Maimonides.

Often when quoting Maimonides, Rabbi Soloveitchik’s own explanation diverges considerably from the classic or simple reading of the Maimonidean text, particularly when dealing with passages from the *Guide of the Perplexed*. These variations are ultimately due to Rabbi Soloveitchik’s influence from other schools of thought, which impact upon his entire perception of Halakha and Halakhic Man.

In the last two chapters of *Halakhic Man*, Rabbi Soloveitchik discusses Divine providence and prophecy based on quotes and concepts from Maimonides. In his discussion of providence, Maimonides merges Aristotle’s idea of providence existing only in universal forms with the Jewish idea of individual providence. Maimonides’ own opinion is similar to Aristotle’s with reference to plants and animals: he believes they are subject only to universal providence. However, he maintains that “divine providence watches only over the individual belonging to the human species…” *(Guide
of the Perplexed III:17, p. 471; translations and page numbers follow the Pines edition). Because man is endowed with tzelem Elokim, the intellect, he is able to aspire to receive Divine providence. But in Chapter 18, Maimonides explains that not every man receives this individual providence; one must do something to take himself out of the universal realm and into the particular. The way for man to achieve this is through gaining knowledge of G-d, thereby reaching a higher level of perfection and receiving the Divine Overflow. “Divine Providence does not watch in an equal manner over all individuals of the human species, but providence is graded as their human perfection is graded” (Guide III:18, p. 475). The more knowledge man has of G-d, the more perfect he is; therefore, he will receive more Divine Overflow and acquire a greater individual providence. Accordingly, Maimonides states that if man is ignorant and has no Divine Overflow, he will be among the rank of animals and receive no individual providence.

In Maimonides’ discussion of prophesy in Guide II, he again bases his own opinion on Aristotle’s. As Maimonides writes in the Guide, Aristotle posits that prophecy is a natural process entirely up to man, “a certain perfection in the nature of man” (Guide II:32, p. 361). There is no G-dly aspect to Aristotle’s conception of prophecy; rather it occurs automatically when man reaches intellectual perfection. “When in the case of a superior individual who is perfect with respect to his rational and moral qualities…and when he has been prepared…he will necessarily become a prophet” (ibid). This perfection that man must achieve is intellectual perfection, as Maimonides writes, “it is not possible that an ignoramus should turn into a prophet” (ibid). Maimonides fully agrees with this approach, except for one crucial detail: “it may happen that one who is fit for prophecy and prepared for it should not become a prophet, namely, on account of the Divine Will” (ibid). Although prophecy is a completely natural process, G-d can prevent man from achieving prophecy. But essentially, the achievement of prophecy is based in man’s perfection and his intellectual cognition of G-d. In this way, both prophecy and providence are achieved in a similar vein: by man intellectualizing and cognizing G-d, he disassociates himself from the universal realm and makes himself worthy of obtaining the Divine Overflow.

Rabbi Soloveitchik’s interpretation of Maimonides’ view on prophecy and providence differs considerably from this more classic reading of Maimonides. Rabbi Soloveitchik adapts Maimonides’ view that man has the ability to take himself out of the realm of the universal and reinstate himself into the realm of individual providence. However, for Rabbi Soloveitchik, this is achieved not only through cognition, but through creation as well. “The man who has a particular existence of his own is not
merely a passive, receptive creature, but acts and creates” (Halakhic Man, p. 125). According to Rabbi Soloveitchik, creativity is the way for man to acquire a particular existence for himself. But it is not only creation within the world which makes man distinct and awards him a particular providence. It is also incumbent upon man’s self-creation, his re-creation of himself, to give himself a particular existence in which G-d will allow His providence to rest. “When a person creates himself, ceases to be a mere species man, and becomes a man of G-d, then he has fulfilled that commandment which is implicit in the principle of providence” (Halakhic Man, p. 128).

Man takes on the command to “create himself”, becoming a unique existence, taking himself out of the universal realm, and thereby merits individual providence. Rabbi Soloveitchik posits the same idea in reference to prophecy. A prophet “must carry through his own self-creation until he actualizes the idea of prophecy – until he is worthy and fit to receive the divine overflow” (ibid). For Rabbi Soloveitchik, a prophet must also do something in particular to merit his receiving prophecy from G-d. Prophecy is “a binding ethical ideal…an act of self-creation and self-renewal” (Halakhic Man, p. 134). Man must create a new personality for himself, a new “I” awareness in order to be someone who is worthy of receiving prophecy.

In the philosophy of Rabbi Soloveitchik, the way for man to create in the world and “create himself” is through Halakha. Man is instructed to actualize theoretical Halakha in the world and in himself and cause G-d’s Halakhic system to become part of him. By using Halakhah and implementing it within his existence, man liberates himself from the universal species and gives himself particular, unique existence. Once this occurs, man not only achieves individual providence, but can also reach the level of a prophet. “When a person actualizes the ideal Halakhah in the very midst of the real world, he approaches the level of that godly man, the prophet – the creator of worlds” (Halakhic Man, p. 90).

Although Rabbi Soloveitchik states that his interpretation of prophecy is based on Maimonides, he has added an important dimension and modified the ideas significantly. While Maimonides stresses man’s intellect and abstract intellectualizing, Rabbi Soloveitchik emphasizes man’s acts of creation, particularly man’s “creation” of himself. Although both ideas underscore the individuality of man and his shift from being a mere member of the universal, Rabbi Soloveitchik takes this idea even further by interpreting Maimonides’ “cognition” as “creation”. In Aristotelian/Maimonidean thought, cognition is the process by which potential intellect passes into actuality and the potentially cognizing subject becomes one with the object being cognized. “Before a man intellectually cognizes a thing, he is potentially the intellectually cognizing subject…if he has intellectually cognized
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a thing...at that time the man would become one who has intellectual cognition *in actu* (Guide I:68, p. 164). For Rabbi Soloveitchik, the same principle applies regarding creation; for man to create, “the potentiality must transform itself into actuality” (Halakhic Man, p. 131). When man creates himself anew, he passes his potential into actual existence. “Man, initially, must cause all the potentialities of the species implanted in him to pass into actuality,” and then create a unique personality within himself (Halakhic Man, p. 135). He does this through implementing Halakha into himself and using his free choice to liberate himself from mere existence among the species by following the ethics of Halakha. In this manner, Rabbi Soloveitchik equates the idea of creation with Maimonides’ principle of intellectual perfection because both are ways in which the potentiality is brought into actuality.

Another element that contributes to Rabbi Soloveitchik’s broad interpretation of Maimonides is the significance that both Rabbi Soloveitchik and Maimonides place on the Biblical command of “And thou shalt walk in His ways” (imitatio dei). For Maimonides, a prophet must fulfill this command by studying the cosmos, G-d’s attributes of action, and then acting on his observations by emulating them. For example, imitating G-d’s ways in this world is necessary for a prophet who is supposed to be a political leader, in order to successfully be a governor of a city. “It behooves the governor of a city, if he is a prophet, to acquire similarity to these attributes [of G-d], so that his actions may proceed from him according to a determined measure and according to the deserts of the people who are affected by them...” (Guide I:54, p.126).

For Rabbi Soloveitchik, the command of *imitatio dei* is achieved by emulating G-d’s act of creation and becoming a partner in creation of worlds. “The principle of ‘And thou shalt walk in His ways” (Deut. 28:9) (imitatio dei) flows from halakhic man’s normative relationship to the world” (Halakhic Man, p. 64), “man as a partner of the Almighty in the act of creation, man as a creator of worlds (p. 99). The most important way that man can be a creator is by actualizing the ideal ethical Halakhah into the real world. By following Halakhah, man imitates G-d’s ethical attributes of action. Rabbi Soloveitchik stresses many times that “the most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself” (Halakhic Man, p. 109). By imposing ethical Halakhah on himself, man implements the ethical norm onto himself. Through this process, he becomes a man of G-d, bestowing upon himself an individual existence capable of receiving Divine providence, and eventually prophecy. Both Maimonides and Rabbi Soloveitchik stress the importance of following and imitating G-d’s ways and giving oneself special individual existence to achieve prophecy and providence, but again the
ways in which this is accomplished are different. For Maimonides, it is by studying the cosmos, cognizing G-d’s ways and using observation to reach perfection, for Rabbi Soloveitchik it is by implementing G-d’s command of Halakhah to create oneself as a Halakhic Man and eventually a “man of G-d”.

Rabbi Soloveitchik’s modification of the Maimonidean concept, his movement from cognition as the act that sets man apart for prophecy and providence, to self-creation by implementation of Halakhah, is ultimately due to two major influences on his thought and philosophy, which can be perceived throughout his writings. On one hand, Rabbi Soloveitchik was influenced by his Lithuanian family tradition, the Brisker school of thought and its emphasis on Halakhah and the Halakhic system. For Rabbi Soloveitchik, Halakhah is not just a group of laws that require observation, but rather a complete, ideal system with which to approach the world, “an ideal world which he bears in his Halakhic consciousness” (Halakhic Man, p. 23). Everything the Halachik man does is based on this system of Halakhah, for it is the way to connect him to G-d. Rabbi Soloveitchik’s background of Lithuanian scholarship also focuses on this idea of the study of Halakhah as the way to connect to G-d. As R’ Hayyim of Volozhin wrote, “through studying Talmud and commentaries…everything is made to cling to the Holy One, Blessed by He…and by cleaving to His Torah, it is as if one is cleaving to Him” (Nefesh HaHayyim IV:10).

In addition to his Talmudic tradition, Rabbi Soloveitchik’s stress on the “creation of man” through Halakhah can be traced to his sources in modern schools of thought, mainly Neo-Kantian. Kant established the concept of a priori, ideal existence, creating an ideal structure in one’s mind and implementing it into the world, as opposed to cognizing based on experience. Rabbi Soloveitchik applies this concept to Halakhah and “emphasizes the speculative and abstract nature of Halakhic creativity, its a priori and ideal approach to reality similar to scientific cognition” (Aviezer Ravitzky, “Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik on Human Knowledge: Between Maimonidean and Neo-Kantian Philosophy”, Modern Judaism 6, 1986, p. 169). He interpreted “the Halakhah not only as a group of norms guiding our activities, but also as a conceptual theoretical structure, addressed toward our cognition” (ibid). In this way, the Halakhic system is similar to Kant’s idea of a priori cognition, in which an a priori system is cognized and constructed and then actualized in the world. Creation, through actualizing an ideal, therefore, takes a central role in Rabbi Soloveitchik’s philosophy because of his Neo-Kantian perspective.

Rabbi Soloveitchik also prioritizes ethical actions through Halakhah as the way to create due to his modern philosophical influences. According
to Professor Ravitzky, Rabbi Soloveitchik’s main influence in this line of thought was Neo-Kantian philosopher Herman Cohen, the subject of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s doctoral thesis. Cohen stressed the Platonic aspects of Maimonidean thought, mainly the focus on ethics, the “ought” rather than just cognition of the “is”. Somewhat influenced by this ethical interpretation of Maimonides, Rabbi Soloveitchik changes his focus in his discussion of prophecy and providence from “human cognition of the cosmos to ethics”, from pure cognition as the way to reach perfection and give oneself a particular existence, to creation and implementation of ethics through Halakhah as the way to achieve this goal (p. 173).

Due to Rabbi Soloveitchik’s focus on Halakhah and creation in his works, particularly in *Halakhic Man*, these two themes take full force in his discussion of providence and prophecy. Even when interpreting Maimonides, Rabbi Soloveitchik introduces the aspects of ethical Halakhic creation, self-creation and renewal through Halakhah as the way to achieve a particular existence and reach the ultimate goal of Divine providence and prophecy.